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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Maryland Zoo and BGE Partner to Provide Fresh Tree Trimming to Animals

BALTIMORE (August 7, 2018) – BGE’s annual tree trimming program maintains a safe and reliable electric delivery system for customers. But beginning this summer, branches cut from healthy trees will also become part of the menu for the animals at The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore.

“BGE employees work every day to maintain quality electric power for our customers. By proactively trimming trees that could pose a threat to overhead electric lines serving our customers, we are able to reduce the number one cause of service interruptions,” said Derrick Dickens, vice president of Technical Services for BGE. “By partnering with the Maryland Zoo, we also are finding a use for the trimmings that enhances the animals’ diets and quality of life, leading to a better visitor experience.”

Once BGE vegetation management crews identify healthy and diet-appropriate trees, trimmings are bundled and delivered to the Zoo twice a week. Animals both small and tall, from tortoises and rabbits to elephants and giraffes, are fed the browse, which is spread throughout their enclosures to encourage natural foraging behaviors. Zoo visitors who observe this behavior experience more natural animal behavior. The browse program also saves the Zoo nearly \$2,000 each week by reducing the need to purchase browse from out-of-state farms.

“BGE has been a long-time supporter of The Maryland Zoo and we couldn’t be more proud to partner with them on this unique program,” said Don Hutchinson, president/CEO of The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore. “Not only are the animals benefiting from such fresh vegetation, we are able to funnel the funds we are saving to other areas of animal care within the Zoo.”

Tree-related power outages have dropped by nearly 40 percent since 2011, a direct result of BGE’s preventative maintenance including tree trimming and continuing investments in upgrades to the electrical distribution system. In 2017, BGE customers experienced the lowest average number of electric outages and the fastest restoration of outages in the company’s history. Since 2008, the number of total electric outages has decreased 49 percent, and outage length has been reduced by 41 percent.

BGE cleared vegetation from more than 2,300 hundred miles of circuit lines throughout its service area in 2017. This work is performed by licensed contractors trained to safely work near power lines, and managed by certified arborists.

BGE invested approximately \$1.1 billion in the company’s electric system operations and maintenance and through infrastructure improvements during 2017. In total, the company has invested \$8 billion in gas and electric infrastructure since 2002 and will invest \$5.3 billion during the next five years.

In addition to BGE, a number of Exelon’s energy delivery companies provide browse to zoos, including ComEd in Illinois, which provides browse to the Brookfield Zoo in Chicago, and PECO in Pennsylvania, which delivers browse to the Philadelphia Zoo.

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BGE, founded in 1816 as the nation's first gas utility and headquartered in Baltimore, is Maryland's largest natural gas and electric utility. The company's approximately 3,200 employees are committed to safe and reliable power delivery to more than 1.28 million electric customers and more than 675,000 natural gas customers in central Maryland, as well as enhanced energy management, conservation, environmental stewardship and community assistance. J.D. Power's 2017 Electric Utility Business Customer Satisfaction Study(SM) ranked BGE highest in customer satisfaction with business electric service in the east among large utilities. The company also has an estimated annual economic impact of \$5 billion of output in its service area, supporting more than 9,500 local jobs and producing \$923 million in labor income. BGE is a subsidiary of Exelon Corporation (NYSE: EXC), the nation's leading competitive energy provider. Like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) and [Flickr](#).

About The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore

Founded in 1876, The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is the third oldest zoo in the United States and is internationally known for its contributions in conservation and research. More than 1,500 animals are represented in the Zoo's varied natural habitat exhibits such as the AZA-Award winning Penguin Coast, Polar Bear Watch, the Maryland Wilderness, African Journey and the award-winning Children's Zoo. Situated in Druid Hill Park near downtown Baltimore, the Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums. For more information, visit www.marylandzoo.org.