

# METRO & IOWA

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## Primate center woos top expert for research

D.C.'s Shumaker, others will be able to conduct 'unprecedented' research at the planned D.M. site.

By **CARLOS RODRIGUEZ**  
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

One of the world's top orangutan researchers said Thursday that he and two of his subjects will move from the East Coast to a primate sanctuary planned for Des Moines.

Robert Shumaker, who works at the Smithsonian National Zoological Park in Washington, D.C., said he will bring Azy and Indah to the Iowa Primate Learning

Sanctuary, a portion of which is expected to open next spring on 137 acres of land in southeastern Des Moines.

Businessman Ted Townsend, who has committed \$10 million to the sanctuary effort, said Shumaker's work is "respected around the world and has been enjoyed by thousands of zoo visitors."

Shumaker quickly dispelled any doubt that sanctuary visitors won't be able to



SPECIAL TO THE REGISTER

**Research:** The Iowa Primate Learning Sanctuary in Des Moines will host orangutans and other primates.

watch him work.

"Absolutely, 100 percent, yes," Shumaker said. "We've never had a question about that."

City leaders who donated land for the sanctuary in the 4200 block of East Brooks Drive waived a clause in the agreement that required

Townsend to include a facility where visitors can observe the research subjects.

Townsend promised earlier this month that the public will be allowed to "learn more about the scientific studies conducted" at the sanctuary,

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## Joint look taken at cities' fires

Minneapolis, D.M. departments work on downtown residential development blazes.

By **TIM PALUCH**  
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

Fire investigators in Minneapolis and Des Moines have begun working together after a fire Tuesday destroyed a Minneapolis residential complex being developed by the same company that saw its downtown Des Moines residential property go up in flames two

months ago.

Both projects, developed by Minneapolis-based Lander Group, Inc., were being constructed when the fires hit. Both suffered total losses.

"We certainly aren't saying that there is a link," Des Moines fire Lt. Linda Frangenberg said. "But we don't want to overlook anything."

Fire roared through the West River Commons, a three-story residential and commercial project on Lake Street in Minneapolis overlooking the Mississippi River, early Tuesday. It moved into a residential neighborhood,

destroying several garages and vehicles and damaging houses, according to a Minneapolis Star Tribune article.

Sue Fallon of the Minneapolis Fire Department said investigators haven't determined a cause yet. She said investigators are looking into the possibility that a lightning storm that hit the area just before the fire started could be the culprit.

Des Moines fire investigators earlier this month said they may never know what caused the April 5 fire that

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# Primate center attracts expert for research

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but stopped short of specifics.

No blueprints for a visitor center or observation area are on the drawing board, he said Thursday, adding: "The sanctuary is not about performance or entertainment."

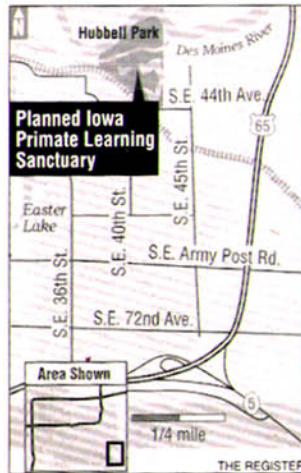
Townsend and Shumaker pointed out that the sanctuary's subjects will be unlike the chimpanzees in zoos. They said visitors shouldn't expect to get too close to the animals, but they will get to see the subjects and researchers interact.

"We're here to work out a way to do that," Townsend said. "We don't know exactly how we are going to do that."

Eight chimpanzee-like primates known as bonobos will first move to the sanctuary from a facility at Georgia State University in Atlanta. Gorillas and chimpanzees will follow the orangutans when money is available, Townsend has said.

Shumaker, in remarks prepared for Thursday's news conference, said there are roughly 40,000 wild orangutans left in the world, and that researchers predict they could be extinct from the wild within 10 years.

"We want people to experience a new reality, to have a better understanding of great apes and respect them at the level they deserve," he said.



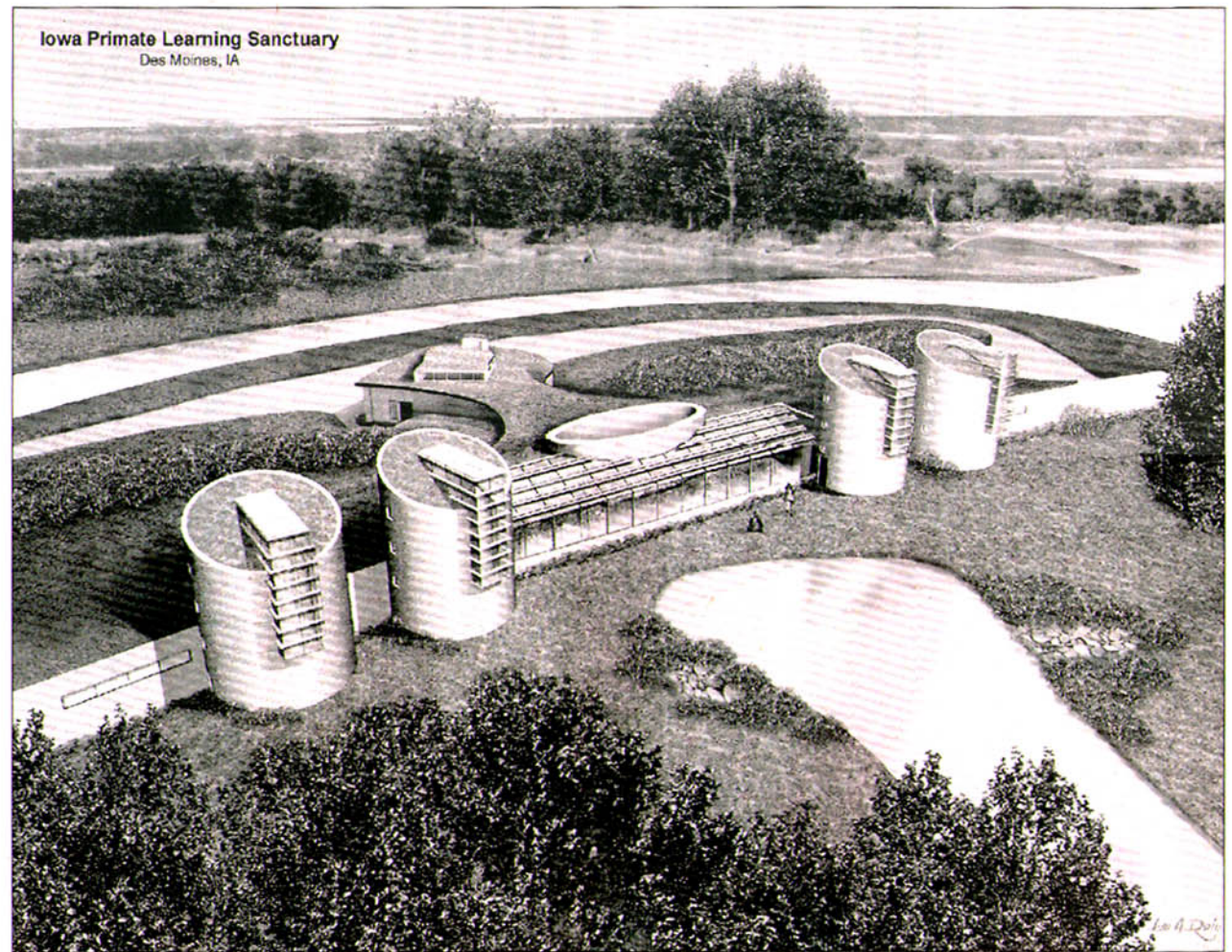
## On the Web

- To take a virtual tour of the planned ape sanctuary, log on to [DesMoinesRegister.com](http://DesMoinesRegister.com).
- Information about the research scientists and the first ape family to live at the sanctuary is available at [IowaGreatApes.org](http://IowaGreatApes.org).

Shumaker's research focuses on apes' mental abilities. He said the "world class" Des Moines facility will allow for work that is "simply unprecedented."

*"We want people to experience a new reality."*

— Robert Shumaker



**The plan:** The Iowa Primate Learning Sanctuary will be located on 137 acres of land in southeastern Des Moines.

Townsend, whose family owns an engineering firm, said private contributions and income from a foundation he established will pay for the sanctuary's completion. He

has promised that no more public money will be used.

The sanctuary will have berms, overhangs, heated pathways and tropical vegetation inside the

buildings. Ape research, centered on communication and behavior, will be headed by noted scientist Sue Savage-Rumbaugh.

Organizers also considered

Maui, Hawaii, for the sanctuary but confronted opposition from residents and Hawaiian legislators who feared the apes would harm native plants on the island.

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