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Purple Coneflower Mister at Chicago's Brookfield Zoo E-Coated & Powder Coated by B. L. Downey Company LLC

This summer children visiting the famous Brookfield Zoo, outside Chicago, can cool off in an unusual way – by “getting misted” from a new ten-foot tall metal purple coneflower. The sculpture was designed and created by zoo personnel from steel pieces that were welded together by Chicago Zoological Society employee Craig Tichelar, said Kathryn Applebaum, an exhibit designer for the Society, who came up with the idea for the mister.

“We thought the purple coneflower would be a fun way to teach zoo visitors about our native midwest flora and fauna,” said Appelbaum. “It really came together nicely and we are looking forward to summer when visitors will have a chance to use it,” she said.

The mister is located half way between the Roosevelt Fountain and the Hamill Family Play Zoo. Participants can push a misting button on the sculpture that will allow an amount of mist to spray – a fun way to cool down during hot summer months.

B. L. Downey Company was selected to provide e-coating and powder coating for the metal sculpture for best rust protection from the misting waters, as well as to generate that distinct, rich, purple coneflower color.

“It’s exciting to know that our work will touch generations of children and families who are visiting Brookfield Zoo,” said David C. Wasz, president of B.L. Downey Company. “We coated the flower and stem with our specialized three step process – steel shot-blasting, e-coating and powder coating – which provides the ultimate protection against corrosion as well as producing an extremely attractive and durable finish,” said Wasz.

Appelbaum said the Brookfield Zoo will introduce the new mister to the public sometime in late spring when the weather turns warmer.

About B.L. Downey Company LLC Founded in 1956, B.L. Downey Company specializes in coating metal products and is one of the largest e-coating and powder coating facilities in the nation with 325,000 sq. ft. and 175 employees under one roof. The Company operates twelve powder and dip coating lines, six electrodeposition-coating (e-coating) lines for epoxy in five colors, and four Wheelabrator shot blast machines. Powder and dip coating in epoxy, vinyl, nylon, plastisol, polyester, or acrylic is available in any color. In addition to coating metal products for OEMs and contractors, B.L. Downey Company also fabricates, coats and delivers light poles with or without a special anti-graffiti coating for municipalities and commercial customers around the nation. The Company is ISO 9001-2000 certified and has a 52-year track record of experience and flexibility to meet any customer’s needs, including quick turn-arounds, and can handle large volumes of small parts, as well as very large and awkward parts measuring up to 50’ long and weighing up to 10,000 lbs.

