

Trumpeting An Elephant's Success

(NAPSA)—One conservation group has worked to help ensure that elephants are not forgotten—and recently, it has celebrated some enormous successes.

On April 6, 2006, a healthy, 295-pound, female Asian elephant named Mable was born at the *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Center for Elephant Conservation*® (CEC) in central Florida. The \$5 million breeding and retirement facility was founded by *Ringling Bros.* to help conserve and study Asian elephants. This year marks the 11th anniversary of the CEC.

Built in 1995, the *Ringling Bros.* CEC is a 200-acre, state-of-the-art facility that looks after new and retired circus elephants. Elephants in the wild are threatened by poachers—many of whom hunt the animals for their ivory tusks—and by the destruction of their natural habitat. It's believed that facilities such as the *Ringling Bros.* CEC could help elephants thrive once again.

The *Ringling Bros.* CEC also welcomes conservation researchers and scientists, such as Bets Rasmussen of the University of Oregon, who is studying elephant pheromones, which are emitted by older male elephants and influence both a female elephant's interest in mating and how other surrounding elephants behave.

The *Ringling Bros.* CEC facility is considered to be among the most accomplished Asian elephant



Asian elephants are making a comeback at the *Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Center for Elephant Conservation*® in central Florida.

breeding programs outside of Southeast Asia and it is dedicated to the reproduction, research and retirement of the endangered Asian elephant.

To date, 20 Asian elephants have been born at the facility, including Irvin and Aree, both arriving just last year. The pachyderms will enjoy a life of fine dining at the preserve (the elephants there eat about 2.5 tons of hay daily). Just as important, though, the elephants could help people learn more about the species.

Scientists say elephant numbers are dwindling worldwide. In fact, it's estimated that only 35,000 Asian elephants are left on the planet.

For more information, visit www.elephantcenter.com.