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## AEF Press Release July 3, 2007

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**"Freedom", "Spirit" & "Democracy" To Fly High On Independence Day**

**Tennessee Conservation Group Continues Eagle Recovery Work After ESA Delisting**

**Pigeon Forge, TN, July 3, 2007** - Three bald eaglets named "Freedom", "Spirit" and "Democracy" will be released by the American Eagle Foundation (AEF) from a condo-like artificial nesting tower located in the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains on July 4th - to celebrate "Independence Day" and the comeback of the Bald Eagle to the United States.

Two of the young birds were hatched at the San Francisco Zoo earlier this year, and the third is a wild hatchling rehabilitated by the AEF.

*"The dramatic comeback of the bald eagle from the brink of extinction is a great conservation success story,"* said AEF founder and president Al Cecere. *"The release of these majestic birds on our nation's birthday is a fitting gift to Americans everywhere."*

The Department of Interior officially removed the Bald Eagle from Endangered Species Act protection on June 28th at the Jefferson Memorial. The AEF's trained non-releasable bald eagle "Challenger" performed an educational free-flight demonstration during the announcement.

Over 300 captive-hatched and translocated bald eaglets have been released in Tennessee since the early 1980s (more than any other state) - which had no known occupied bald eagle nests in the early 1980s. The state had an estimated 115 occupied nests and 77 successful nests in 2007 that have fledged about 135 young. The AEF plans to continue releasing captive-hatched eagles into the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains.

Earlier this year, both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives passed a special AEF-proposed resolution to set aside June 20th as "American Eagle Day" - recognizing the bald eagles' recovery and symbolic role as the USA's national emblem. Also, elementary school children and Girl Scouts across America wrote letters to President Bush and their respective Governors encouraging them to do the same - with 22 Governors acknowledging their efforts and signing Proclamations so far.

Cecere is quick to add that the nation's Great Seal symbol isn't out of the woods just yet. *"Although the bald eagle has been removed from the ESA protection, it's still a recovering species. The birds' fight for future survival will be an on-going process. It will cost millions of dollars to monitor and protect thousands of nests located on private lands for the remainder of this decade and beyond - to maintain and promote the eagles' return to America's lands, waterways and skies."*

The conservation group hopes to raise \$10 million from the general public for its American Eagle Fund endowment ([www.eagles.org](http://www.eagles.org)) by 2009 - to help monitor and protect the nation's living symbol of Freedom for future generations. It could receive another \$10 million from a U.S. Mint commemorative eagle coin set to go on sale in 2008, which will celebrate the eagle's successful recovery to America and the 35th Anniversary of the Endangered Species Act.

*"It's the responsibility of every American to remain vigilant and help keep this precious national treasure flying strong and free forever,"* said Cecere.

# # #

**About the AEF:**

Established in 1985, the American Eagle Foundation (AEF) is a not-for-profit charitable organization dedicated to the recovery, protection and preservation of the bald eagle and its habitat. The Federal and State-licensed organization conducts environmental, ecological and eagle-focused education programs, and operates the world's largest bald eagle exhibit and breeding program. Since 1995, the AEF ([www.eagles.org](http://www.eagles.org)) has appeared coast to coast with its trained,

free-flying bald eagle "Challenger", including at the White House, U.S. Capitol Building, Pentagon and various high-profile sporting events such as the World Series, Olympics, Men's Final Four, BCS National Championship and NFL Pro-Bowl.

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