

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 14, 2008

Dallas Zoo selects concession operator

The largest zoological experience in Texas just got better when the Dallas Zoological Society contracted with Service System Associates (SSA) to manage the visitor revenue functions at the Zoo. SSA will be responsible for overseeing all concessions, catering and retail operations for the 95-acre zoo, whose mission is *“Serving and Supporting the Future of Wildlife – today and every day!”*

“We’re very excited about working with SSA,” said Michael Meadows, President and CEO, Dallas Zoological Society. “During the selection process, we experienced a great

chemistry with the SSA team and felt that they were on the exact same page as we were in our efforts to take our Zoo to the next level. When we experienced their operations at the Denver Zoo, we were blown away. We wanted that kind of operation here in Dallas. We know there’ll be seamless integration between their staff and ours as SSA clearly understands our vision and the direction that we want to take the Zoo.”

Dallas Zoo Executive Director Gregg Hudson added that he believes that SSA will be an integral part of the planned growth of the Zoo. “SSA understands the ins and outs of running a food and retail operation in a zoo, and they understand how to do it in a way that goes hand in hand with our mission,” said Hudson. “We’re particularly pleased with the environmental footprint they plan to implement. This commitment says a lot about SSA as a company, and it means a lot to our employees that those who sell hot dogs and t-shirts clearly support our mission.”

Key exhibits at the Zoo include the ExxonMobil Endangered Tiger Habitat with Indochinese and Sumatran tigers, the Lacerte Family Children's Zoo with interactive, educational exhibits for children, the award-winning Jake L. Hamon Gorilla Conservation Research Center and the 25-acre Wilds of Africa, which was named the best African exhibit in the United States. The Zoo exhibits about 1,900 animals, including elephants, gorillas, rhinos, chimpanzees and okapis.

At the Zoo, SSA will manage the Prime Meridian Food Court, the main facility; Ndebele Café, a concession in the Africa portion of the Zoo; a concession in the children's zoo; and mobile carts throughout the Zoo. Capital improvement plans include a refurbishment of the Prime Meridian to improve the visual appeal of the food service as well as partnering with the Zoo on an interactive water feature at or near the Ndebele Cafe.

Retail operations at the Zoo are focused on the Zoofari Market, the main gift shop. SSA plans to remodel and enlarge the shop. Other improvements include new furniture and display fixture package, a new point of sale system, flooring, lighting and new entry doors.



In addition, SSA will provide catering services for private parties.

The General Manager will be Cheryl Cobb, who previously was the Guest Services Manager at the Fort Worth Zoo.

“We're looking forward to demonstrating our capabilities to the Dallas Zoo community,” said Kevin McNicholas, President, Service Systems Associates, “We believe this partnership will be a great opportunity for both of us. We plan to deliver a quality of hospitality services exceeding their expectations.”

Nearly 600,000 visitors tour the Dallas Zoo each year, which is owned and operated by the City of Dallas. The Dallas Zoological Society manages the volunteer, marketing, membership, fundraising, gift and food operations. Their mission is to support the Dallas Zoo as an outstanding center of education, entertainment and wildlife conservation.

Headquartered in Denver, Service Systems Associates (SSA), (www.kmssa.com) manages retail and food service concessions at botanic gardens, zoos and aquariums in the United States, including the Detroit, Los Angeles and Denver Zoos, Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium and Monterey Bay Aquarium. The company is the national leader in visitor service operations for zoos and aquariums, serving over 15 million guests annually.

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