

# NEWS RELEASE

For information contact  
David Goetz (303) 322-3031 ext. 2101; DGoetz@kmssa.com

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## SSA selected to enhance team at Fort Wayne Children's Zoo

Service Systems Associates Inc. (SSA) has been selected to manage the retail operations at Fort Wayne Children's Zoo, which *Child Magazine* named one of the nation's best zoos for kids and families.

Zoo Director Jim Anderson said the Zoo already has a beautiful gift shop with good sales, but believes that Service Systems Associates can raise the bar and make shopping another unique experience for visitors. "With SSA's deep experience in merchandising, purchasing, inventory management and guest service, we expect immediate, noticeable improvements in the guest experience and gross sales," he added.



"The retail operations play a vital role in supporting the mission of Fort Wayne Children's Zoo. We plan to offer products that provide Zoo guests with mementos and educational materials related to their experience," said Kevin McNicholas, President of Service Systems Associates Inc. "SSA has a proven track record in providing the highest level of guest services in the zoo and aquarium industry, and we plan to continue this successful model at the Fort Wayne Children's Zoo.

Fostering an appreciation of wildlife has always been the Zoo's mission – from its humble beginnings as a nature preserve to its current status as a world-class zoological facility. The Zoo can trace its origins to 1952 when 54 acres were added to Franke Park in Fort Wayne, Indiana, to establish a nature preserve. Over the next few years, the popularity of the preserve encouraged city officials to build a full-fledged zoo. On July 3, 1965, the new Fort Wayne Children's Zoo opened on 5½ acres with 18 animal exhibits with the emphasis on educating children about animals. Major exhibits at the Zoo include the Australian Adventure area, an Indiana Family Farm, Indonesian Rainforest. The Zoo attracts around 500,000 guests each year to the 38-acre facility. Those figures will change when the Zoo opens its \$9 million African Journey exhibit in 2009. Zoo Director Anderson said it's the Zoo's largest improvement ever.

SSA Senior Vice President Tim Brantley said, "We look forward to being part of this new 22-acre African Journey exhibit. With the new retail presence, in addition to the main gift shop, our retail professionals will ensure we deliver services exceeding the Zoo's expectations. This partnership promises to be a great opportunity for both of us."

And Zoo Director Anderson concurs. He said, "Even in these challenging economic times, we hope visitors will enjoy the Zoo and stop to see the new store on the way out of the exhibit. We believe SSA will create the kind of shopping experience that will draw guests in through the door of the shop. They won't be able to walk by!" Anderson added, "We expect a **wild** 2009 season!"

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Headquartered in Denver, Service Systems Associates (SSA), ([www.KMSSA.com](http://www.KMSSA.com)) manages retail and food service concessions at museums, botanic gardens, zoos and aquariums in the United States, including the San Francisco, Los Angeles and Denver Zoos, and Monterey Bay Aquarium. The company is a national leader in visitor service operations for zoos and aquariums, serving over 15 million guests annually. Service Systems Associates is celebrating 20 years of service in 2009.