



VISITOR SERVICES
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Wild Connections

Your connection to insights about Service Systems Associates and K-M Concessions

October 2009

Sixth largest science center joins SSA

Securing the contract to operate the retail operations at the **Museum of Science and Industry** in Tampa, Service Systems Associates added the largest science center in the southeastern United States to its account roster.



At MOSI, guests can step into the Gulf Coast Hurricane and step out with a tangible memory of gale force winds, cruise the galaxy in The Saunders Planetarium, ride a high wire bike three stories in the air or stroll through a butterfly garden. More than 450 hands-on exhibits make science real for "kids" from 1 to 101 at the 75-acre facility.

MOSI's Chief Operating Officer **Ralph Bosek** said that having SSA as a partner will significantly affect the guest experience in a very

eco connections

As part of its green campaign, the SSA Green Team created an Eco-initiatives Matrix to provide a snap-shot of environmental compliance and as a way to measure progress for each unit. The four categories include: *Energy Savings, Carbon Reduction, Recycling and Community Involvement/Employee /Guest Information.*

Units evaluate their environmental initiatives and complete this matrix on a monthly basis.

Leaders in each category are:

- ◆ Energy Savings – **Houston Zoo** – 8 points.
- ◆ Carbon Reduction – **Dallas Zoo** – 6 points.
- ◆ Recycling - **Houston Zoo** – 12 points, then **Detroit Zoo, Cheyenne Mountain Zoo and Pt. Defiance Zoo and Aquarium**, each with 11.
- ◆ Community Involvement /Employee /Guest Information – **Cheyenne Mountain Zoo** with 9 points, then **Nashville Zoo and Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium**, both with 8.

positive way. And, Bosek added, SSA's training programs will enhance the abilities of the retail staff to increase customer satisfaction.

Bosek said that the museum selected SSA because of the company's experience. "SSA literally blew away the competition during the oral interview with their complete team's enthusiasm and professionalism," he said, "MOSI's

selection committee unanimously rated SSA the number one firm to be the museum's partner and to operate our retail operations."

SSA fully transitioned operations on October 1st!



Words of Wisdom



Kevin McNicholas

Here is a great story about "caring."

A 5 year old boy went next door to visit an elderly man who had just lost his wife of 55 years. The boy climbed onto the old man's lap and sat there. When the little boy's mother asked him what he had said, if anything, to the old man, the boy replied: "nothing, I just helped him cry."

It wouldn't hurt any of us if we could somehow care enough to "help someone cry."

Menu changes and pricing help sales

During a nine-day event, which featured half-price admission along with special activities, the **Dallas Zoo** welcomed more than 27,000 guests. **SSA** also played a role in this Target Zoofari Days promotion. SSA staff set up several stations where guests could purchase \$1 items. The items included \$1 hot dogs, chips, canned drinks, snacks and sno-cones.

Guests enjoyed cool zones set up by the zoo as well as the air-conditioned Zoofari Food Court. The additional food locations allowed for greater line control at other sites with the end result helping to eliminate lines. The event was held during the hottest part of the Texas summer and added attendance during a traditionally slower time.

With the tough economic times, **SSA staff** at the **Reid Park Zoo** redid the menu at the Jaguar Junction Café, to offer numerous \$1 items. Guest can enjoy items, such as hot dogs, chips and soda — all for as little as \$1 each. Staff report that it has proven to be a successful and much appreciated program.

Staff uses its culinary skills to welcome international guests

Six landscape architects at the **Rio Grande Botanic Garden** recently built an incredible 25 x 40-foot garden to welcome guests. Five of the landscape architects came from Japan to volunteer their time. They are members of the respected Ogata Kai organization, which volunteers each year

at a garden designed by a member.

To welcome the team, a reception was held at the Albuquerque Aquarium in front of the shark tank. The food and service, provided by SSA and led by SSA GM **Annie Fedora**, created a gracious introduction for the Japanese guests.

The menu featured seafood and sake. As the group wrapped up their week in New Mexico, SSA fed them Friday lunch, consisting of sushi, noodles and scallops, also prepared by Fedora. The Vice President of the Ogata Kai group said, in Japanese, "it was the best food that they had in Albuquerque."

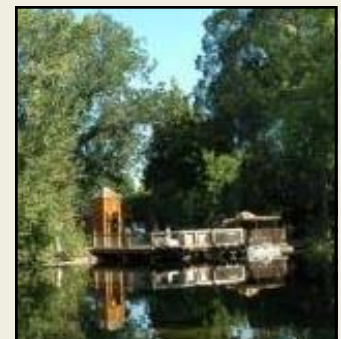
Anchors aweigh at Zoo Boise

SSA staff at **Zoo Boise** have added boating to their responsibilities with the opening of the new African Boat Ride.

Staff welcome guests aboard at the Africa Departure Dock. Once aboard, the boat takes guests to see the new Keynetics Lemur Ex-

hibit, which is only viewable from the ride. Guests disembark at the Africa Arrival Dock where they may see giraffes and lions. The Boat Ride runs daily.

Tickets are \$2 per person, with \$1 being donated to conservation projects.



Zoo Boise now offers a boat ride.

Employee promotions, new hires and honors

Eric Loyall has been named Executive Vice President of Strategic Operations and Business Development at Corporate. He will lead SSA's sales team, while providing key support to the Operations and Marketing departments through strategic planning. Eric joins SSA with a wealth of experience in the hospitality industry.



Loyall

It's all about the team at Reid Park Zoo. In an effort to build team chemistry, SSA spon-

Congratulations to KM/SSA President and CEO Kevin and Mary McNicholas and their family, who were the 2009 recipients of the Distinguished Leadership Award from the Huntington Disease Society of America (Denver Chapter).

sored an employee recreational basketball squad. The team took 2nd place in the 2009 Midnight Hoops league and looks to improve that ranking next year.

Dallas Zoo SSA team expanded its management staff. **Dan Wilson** is the new Operations Manager. He has a background in the zoo and theme park industry. Dan's role is to oversee the daily operation of the park services and support services. Both areas are new for the SSA Dallas operation.. The addition of these departments has come about as part of the transition from the Dallas Zoo moving from a city run facility to being managed by the newly created Dallas Zoo Management.



Wilson

Chris Boatwright was recently promoted to Assistant Manager of

Concessions and Operations.



Boatwright

Chris was also named Employee of the Month by the Dallas Zoo for July. This was the first time an SSA employee was named Employee of the Month. Dallas Zoo Director **Gregg Hudson** said that Chris received the honor because he was color blind. Chris does not see orange or green. (City and Dallas Zoological Employees wear green shirts while SSA employees are in orange shirts.) Chris just has the best interest of the zoo in mind.

Nelda Prado is the Assistant Manager in Retail Operations. Her background in the zoo and theme park industry made her a logical choice to fill **Prado** the vacant role.



Restaurant renovation starts at Reid Park Zoo

The Reid Park Zoo SSA staff has started a complete renovation of the Zoofari Café.

The new restaurant will feature an enclosed

and air conditioned area, surrounded by covered outdoor patios. As a result, an extended menu will be offered. Keeping in line with the com-

pany's eco-initiatives, the renovation will feature the use of "green" materials. The restaurant is scheduled to open January 2010.

Houston Zoo “pre-cycles” waste

SSA staff at the **Houston Zoo and Hermann Park Conservancy** partnered with the Houston Zoo’s Green Team to bring awareness to the overuse of paper in the workplace.

Based on the statistics found on the website *conservatree.com*, the average office worker uses ten thousand sheets of paper a year. The KMSSA.com list of management and corporate personnel alone could use

over 72 trees this year in paper products.

The Team presented the message to all departments with an art project. Employees were asked to create a piece of art with only one sheet of paper. Then the challenge was given: How can you use one sheet less each day? SSA staff no longer prints the entire daily update. They print double sided when possible. This alone reduced the new hire paper-

work from 45 sheets to 19 sheets.

Also, they’re working toward an electronic way of communicating schedules to associates.

Recycling material is not limited to paper and plastic. Electronic waste is an increasingly bigger threat every year. SSA staff now works with the zoo employees to retrieve their electronic waste and properly dispose of it in an eco-friendly way.

Dallas Zoo culinary department caters “green”

At the **Dallas Zoo, TASTE of the WILD** had its first off-site cater, which was centered around a wine tasting with heavy hors d’oeuvres.

The event was held at a zoo supporter’s house for donors as well as the Zoo to Do committee members. Its pur-

pose was to choose the wines for the annual events. The house is in an eco friendly development in Dallas called Urban Reserve and supports a pro eco environment. Houses are constructed from reclaimed materials and follow a strict green initiative. SSA culinary staff used eco

friendly cups, plates and cutlery to show SSA’s commitment to being green.

Guests were very impressed with the commitment that SSA has made. Several local chefs that attended asked for information on the items used in our daily operation.

Minnesota Zoo SSA staff receive accolades

Minnesota Zoo Director **Lee Ehmke** sent all zoo staff a letter acknowledging the zoo’s awards recently received from AZA.

He wrote, “While the press coverage of this recognition has mentioned my involvement as Zoo Director and

part-time exhibit designer, I’ve stressed the point that in fact these marvelous awards are truly due to the combined effort of a vast team, including the entire Zoo staff and an ‘extended family’ of professionals and supporters who made it all possible.”

He added that the zoo’s long-term partners at **SSA** have brought good ideas, flexibility and capital investment to the table, helping make the Central Plaza not only a hub of activity, but a new center for revenue generation at the Zoo as well.

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Employee profile
Jennifer Berrios
Detroit Zoo
Catering Manager

To read, go to
kmssa.com

Customer Service Tips

It all starts with respect. If you respect the customer as an individual and sincerely honor their right to be treated fairly and honestly; the guest service aspect of our job takes care of itself!

*Jason Stover,
Reid Park Zoo GM*

News from our partners

AZA recognizes accomplishments

At the recent Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) national conference held in Portland, several SSA partners received Honors and Awards. Winners include:

Exhibit Award

Top Honor — **Minnesota Zoo**, Russia's Grizzly Coast

North American Conservation Award

Significant Achievement — **Detroit Zoo**, The piper plover captive release project

Marketing Awards

Significant Achievement for budgets over \$175,000 —

Monterey Bay Aquarium

Top Honor — **Minnesota Zoo**

For the second time this year, the **Detroit Zoo** is providing a retired racehorse a permanent home. Buster, a five-year-old thoroughbred, ended his career after only four races to live the good life in the zoo's barnyard.

When three Amur tiger cubs were born in June and introduced to the public in September, **Utah's Hogle Zoo** became the only AZA institution this year to effectively breed and have a successful rearing by an Amur mother.

The **Houston Zoo** recently broke ground on an African exhibit. Phase one will feature a forest habitat with chimpanzees, rhinos and giraffes. The African Forest project is the largest one the zoo has undertaken and will open December 2010.

The **Fort Wayne Children's Zoo** broke its all-time attendance record of 541,399, set in 1996, in early September. The zoo's five-year average annual attendance is 502,426. "The African Journey has generated huge interest," said Zoo Director **Jim Anderson**. The \$9 million African Journey opened on June 6 and is the largest project in zoo history.

Three wildebeest calves born at the **Fort Wayne Children's Zoo** were recently introduced to the African Journey ex-

hibit. The calves were born within a four-week span to three different mothers in the herd.



Four endangered red panda cubs were recently born at the **Denver Zoo**. The birth of the quadruplets is extremely rare and marks only the fifth recorded birth of quadruplets at an accredited U.S. zoo.



A pair of endangered snow leopard cubs was born at the **Los Angeles Zoo** the end of May. The brother and sister duo made their public debut in early September.

Cheyenne Mountain Zoo CEO **Bob Chastain** has been elected to the Association of Zoos and Aquariums' Board of Ethics.

Nancy Schlegel recently started her new role as the Executive Director of the **Tucson Zoological Society**. She brings a world of experience and leadership. Also, new to the Tucson scene is **Jim Schnormeier** — who was named General Curator.