

Al Ain Wildlife Park & Resort Partners with SSA

The Al Ain Wildlife Park & Resort (AWPR,) located in the United Arab Emirates, has selected Service Systems Associates (SSA) to provide key strategic planning support for its visitor service operations.



AWPR is transforming the existing Al Ain Zoo into a center dedicated to exhibiting and conserving the wildlife of the desert. Last year, the facility attracted over 700,000 guests and projects more than one million guests in 2010.

The AWPR selected SSA to advise and consult on their visitor service amenities, including such areas as concession and retail departments, rentals, rides, and related support features. Tasks include assisting with visitor service facility design, providing operating procedures, advising on employee recruiting and training, creating menus and developing a retail buying plan. Also, SSA will provide a master-plan analysis for future food and beverage and retail facility designs.

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AL AIN WILDLIFE
PARK & RESORT

Tom Kaferle, Director of Zoo and Wildlife Operations for AWPR, explains the decision, "We are entering a very dynamic phase of growth, and we looked for a strategic partner to help us. We wanted a strong partner with a wealth of industry experience and knowledge that can help us develop our program within a short timeframe. With the resources that the SSA team has, it's a perfect fit. They'll help us develop our current operations as well as help with our future operations in making sure we have the right amount of restaurants and gift shops as well as the right product our guests want when the new Wildlife Park opens in 2011."

First established as Al Ain Zoo in 1968 by the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the zoo is currently home to 4,300 animals, 30% of which are considered to be endangered. Current guest service facilities include a restaurant and two concession stands. At the end of 2011, the space that the current zoo inhabits will close and become a "behind the scenes" facility for conservation and research, while the Al Ain Wildlife Park & Resort will open its gates and welcome guests.

The AWPR is a multi-faceted development designed around wildlife to create a sustainable leisure and learning destination. Themed desert wildlife experiences will take visitors on either day and night safaris through African, Arabian, and Asian desert. This will make AWPR one of largest desert safari parks in the Northern Hemisphere.

Strategically located in the heart of a booming economic and tourism region, the Wildlife Park is located 1½ hours by road from both the capital Abu Dhabi, and Dubai. Construction of the 2,000-acre Wildlife Park and Resort will be completed in phases. The first phase of the project including an African Safari and the Sheikh Zayed Desert Learning Centre, is already under construction. Other phases will be completed over the next 5 years.

“We are very excited at how well our values align with the vision and values of Al Ain Wildlife Park & Resort,” said Kevin McNicholas, President of SSA. “This partnership is built on the understanding that a guest’s experience plays a major role in determining the overall perception of the attraction. Our focus will be on assisting the AWPR in developing and offering a positive guest experience to millions of guests who will visit in the coming years.”

Long time executive Doc Collins is serving as SSA’s “Designated Representative” on-site for AWPR, with corporate management and oversight resting with SSA Executive Vice President David Goetz in Denver.

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*Headquartered in Denver, **Service Systems Associates** manages retail and culinary departments at museums, botanic gardens, zoos and aquariums in the United States, including the Denver, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Dallas Zoos, Pittsburgh Zoo and PPG Aquarium, Tampa’s Museum of Science and Industry and the Monterey Bay Aquarium. The company is a national leader in visitor service operations for cultural attractions, serving over 17 million guests annually. Service Systems Associates celebrated 20 years of service in 2009. For more information, please visit the website at www.KMSSA.com*

About Al Ain Wildlife Park & Resort

First established as Al Ain Zoo in 1968 by the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the Al Ain Wildlife Park & Resort is a multi-faceted development designed around wildlife to create an outstanding sustainable leisure and learning destination aimed at bringing people in touch with nature. The Al Ain Wildlife Park & Resort will include more than 900 hectares of land and is currently home to 4,300 animals, 30% of which are considered to be endangered. Following the principles established in the Abu Dhabi 2030 Urban Framework Plan, the Al Ain Wildlife Park & Resort will become a model for cultural and ecological sustainability, conservation and education.

The natural wildlife of the park and educational centres, in addition to the themed desert safaris, and a world leading arid land botanic gardens and plant collection, will provide both a centre of learning excellence and a leisure destination. As part of the transformation into a wildlife resort, significant development is currently being undertaken to set the standards globally for conservation efforts. Construction of the Al Ain Wildlife Park & Resort (AWPR) will be completed in phases between 2011 and 2015.

For more information on AWPR, please visit the website: www.awpr.ae