



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
31 January 2011

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THE MARYLAND ZOO SELECTS SERVICE SYSTEMS ASSOCIATES AS NEW CONCESSIONNAIRE AND RETAIL PARTNER

BALTIMORE, MD - The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore has selected Denver-based Service Systems Associates (SSA) to manage the culinary and retail operations at the facility beginning February 1, 2011. The Maryland Zoo features two concession areas -- The Village Green, near the Farmyard, and the Oasis in Africa across from the Giraffe House -- as well as a large retail store at the Main Gate and two smaller shops at the Jones Falls Zephyr train station and the Giraffe Feeding Station.

"We went through a rigorous process to select a new vendor, from sending out the RFP to interviews and meetings with the top candidates," said Don Hutchinson, President/CEO of The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore. "It was very important to us to find a company that not only offered good products, but also shared our commitment to providing a high quality visitor experience in every aspect of our facility. We believe we have found that partner in SSA."

"SSA is honored to partner with The Maryland Zoo and to have the opportunity to enhance the food and beverage and retail merchandise offerings at the zoo," said Kevin McNicholas, President and CEO of SSA. "We greatly respect the Zoo's longstanding commitment of excellence in guest services, and we will build on that tradition. Guests can count on SSA for the highest level of service when they come to the Zoo."

"The guest experience is extremely important to both the zoo and SSA, and we expect that everyone will benefit from this new partnership through expanded culinary and retail options, quality offerings and significant facility upgrades," added McNicholas.

"The team that SSA has been assembling in Baltimore is already becoming integrated into our staff, and we are looking forward to sampling new food offerings as they are introduced," continued Hutchinson. "We were also impressed with the merchandise and style of the shops they manage at other zoos, aquariums and museums around the country and are eager to see what they do with our retail operations."

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SSA has a strong reputation in the industry for its culinary and retail expertise while delivering outstanding customer service. The company also is a leader in environmental stewardship. McNicholas said SSA will support the Zoo's conservation mission through "green" practices and products.

In addition to operating the culinary and retail operations, SSA will handle vending, stroller and wheelchair rentals, and picnic catering.

The Maryland Zoo is the third oldest zoo in the country, having been created by an Act of the Maryland General Assembly in 1876. The zoo's animal collection encompasses more than 1,500 birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles representing nearly 200 species in habitat exhibits, including the Maryland Wilderness, which features the award-winning Children's Zoo, the Polar Bear Watch and the African Journey. The zoo is spread across 135 acres in a 745-acre urban park.

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About The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore

Founded in 1876, The Maryland Zoo in Baltimore is the third oldest zoo in the United States and is internationally known for its contributions in conservation and research. More than 1,500 animals are represented in the Zoo's varied natural habitat exhibits in areas such as Polar Bear Watch, the Maryland Wilderness, African Journey and the award-winning Children's Zoo. Situated in Druid Hill Park near downtown Baltimore, the Zoo is accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA). For more information, visit www.marylandzoo.org.

About Service Systems Associates

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 Monterey Bay Aquarium. The company is a national leader in guest service operations for cultural attractions, serving over 16 million guests annually. Service Systems Associates celebrated 20 years of service in 2009. For more information, please visit the website at www.KMSSA.com

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