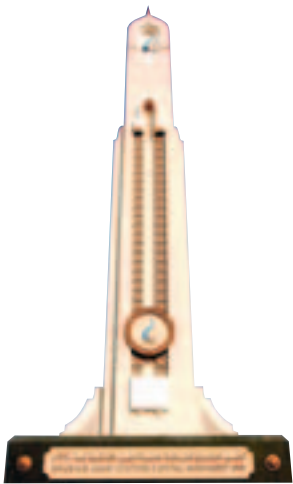


Sharjah

One of seven emirates
forming the enterprising
United Arab Emirates



A burgeoning hub of intellectual and creative endeavor, propelled by the emirate's non-stop efforts to promote academic advancement and cultural affairs, Sharjah is utilizing its strategic position to release its full potential as a quality tourism and leisure destination

PROMOTING THE CULTURE OF UNDERSTANDING

Within the United Arab Emirates, and for that matter, within the developing economies of the world, the Emirate of Sharjah has mapped a path of development that is a distinguished and remarkable departure from the norm. Under the guiding vision of leader H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Qasimi, the emirate has placed an emphasis on social development that is now converting Sharjah into the shining cultural, artistic and educational Mecca of the Arab world.

Sharjah is not only establishing a name for itself that is drawing larger numbers of visitors each year, but also presenting a successful alternative model for development. Its efforts additionally have greater implications for the world at large, opening a door to the Arab world, its rich culture and traditions, and hanging a welcome sign beside it.

"We are not promoting culture for the economy but for good and understanding," states H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan. "I would never bring tourists just for business. It is for people to understand us and vice versa. We like peace, which makes people come together. We should first come together, understand each other and peace



H.H. SHEIKH DR. SULTAN BIN MOHAMMED AL-QASIMI
Ruler of Sharjah

will come. This is my main goal."

Today Sharjah hosts more than 1,000 cultural events per year, many of which are internationally renowned. It has built infrastructure for exhibitions, tourism and the arts. It has invested in libraries and universities, creating an international University City that draws students from all

over the world and which houses the most prestigious university in the Gulf. It has also constructed museums—currently 27 and counting. H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan says that the emirate's emphasis on education and culture is not new, pointing out that Sharjah's history as a trading town developed its openness to other cultures a long time ago. Sharjah was also the first emirate in the UAE to upgrade its schools and establish a network of cultural centers.

A central element in Sharjah's cultural expansion has been the desire to retain traditional values and preserve its heritage. H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan says, "Besides showing visitors our museums, the main goal we would like to achieve from their visit is for them to have a greater understanding of our culture and beliefs." Consequently, throughout the emirate traditional Arab architecture has been maintained, while many of Sharjah's events and museums commemorate Arab history and art. Sharjah's universities, for their part, offer extensive Islamic studies. These efforts to promote Arab culture and heritage were rewarded in 1998 when Unesco aptly proclaimed the emirate the Cultural Capital of the Arab World. ■

A THRIVING NATION THAT IS ALSO A **MODERN AND DYNAMIC** COMMERCIAL CENTER

The well-connected emirate is not only the industrial and manufacturing heart of the UAE, but it is also experiencing a cultural tourism boom

The third largest of the seven emirates and located on the south-eastern tip of the Arabian Peninsula, Sharjah is the only emirate with ports on both the Arabian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. Its unique location on world trade routes has seen its development from a small trading town relying on fishing and pearl diving into one of the most modern and dynamic commercial centers, as well as tourist destinations, in the Gulf.

One of the first emirates to develop tourism, Sharjah has been a growing destination in the Middle East since 1932 when international flights were operated out of its historic airport. Efforts by Ruler H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Qasimi to boost the cultural offering of the emirate have resulted in its growing attraction as a cultural and artistic hub while significant investment has also been made in upgrading tourism infrastructure in new resorts, hotels, shopping centers and en-



H.H. SHEIKH SULTAN BIN MOHAMMED BIN SULTAN AL QASIMI

Crown Prince and Deputy Ruler of Sharjah

tainment facilities. Sharjah's airport, which is also major regional cargo hub, is now undergoing massive expansion that will enable it to handle the emirate's rapidly growing number of visitors.

Three ports have contributed significantly to Sharjah's growth as a major maritime trading center, and its development of world-class free zones, SAIF-Zone at the airport and Hamriyah Port and Free Zone at Hamriyah Port, are now actively supporting this growth. Port Khaled and Hamriyah Port, located on the Arabian Gulf,

serve the markets of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iran as well as points overland further west. Port Khorfakkan on the Gulf of Oman, connected to the UAE interior by a modern highway, opens the door to markets in Africa and all points east. In total, the ports serve a potential market of more than a billion people.

Crown Prince and Deputy Ruler of Sharjah H.H. Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed bin Sultan



Sharjah-based Air Arabia is the first and only low-fares airline in the Middle East and North Africa region, with a vision to be one of the world's leading and innovative budget airlines.

a thriving chemical industries sub-sector. Ample gas supplies have been put to good use fueling the industrial sector in the emirate, which is the only place in the Gulf with a natural gas grid. Today, the public utilities company SEWA is implementing projects to substitute petrol for natural gas in vehicles, and nearly 300 of the company's own vehicles have been successfully switched to date.

The nation's main bet for its sustainable economic development, however, continues to lie in education. Sheikh Al Qasimi explains, "If you raise a well-educated human being, who loves art and appreciates what is around them, they will know how to live in harmony with others. This is what we are working on and this is our long-term plan." ■



Refined, intelligent and high-spirited, the Arabian horse is one of the world's finest and oldest of breeds

THE PRESERVATION OF A PUREBRED HERITAGE

Positioned at the cross-roads of Europe, Asia and Africa, Sharjah is an ancient land with a colorful history dating back more than 6,000 years. The country is a collection of contrasting landscapes, from peaceful beaches and azure sea to low, undulating dunes and the rugged Hajar Mountains. Though it covers only 1,615 square miles, the Emirate of Sharjah is a picture of social and cultural largesse. It is known for its talent in successfully blending modern-day prosperity with a respect for the ancient and the preservation of the authentic.

This passion for preserving

heritage stems from the vision of Sharjah Ruler H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Qasimi. It can be seen in his devotion to the intertwining history of the Arab people and the Arabian horse. As a result of his subsequent love and the pride of the heritage and beauty of the Arabian horse, Sheikh Al-Qasimi began a breeding program at his stables more than twenty years ago. The Al-Qasimi stables endeavor to maintain the purity of the original Arabian breeds by retaining their qualities rather than introducing different lines for commercial purposes. Arabian horses originate from

the desert of Arabia, and their careful selection and lineage was due to the Bedouin, who distinguished a horse as Kehailan (of pure Arabian blood) only when its lineage could be traced back without break to one of the five mares that belonged to a particular Arabian sheikh in history. The Arabian horse is a refined, intelligent, high-spirited horse with outstanding stamina. Its distinctive chiseled head and high tail carriage make it one of the most easily recognizable horse breeds in the world. It is also one of the oldest, dating back some 4,500 years.

MUSEUMS	Page 3
HIGHER EDUCATION	Page 4
PORTS	Page 6
BANKING	Page 8
QANAT AL QASBA	Page 11
TOURISM	Page 12

SUMMIT COMMUNICATIONS TEAM IN SHARJAH

Project Management:
Daoud Assad and Veronica Landry

For further information contact:
SUMMIT COMMUNICATIONS
1040 First Avenue, Suite 395, New York,
NY 10022-2902

Tel: 1 (212) 286-0034

Fax: 1 (212) 286-8376

E-mail: info@summitreports.com

An online version is available at
www.summitreports.com/sharjah

LIVING UP TO ITS NAME: CULTURAL CAPITAL OF THE ARAB WORLD

From the Arts Area to the Heritage Area, Sharjah has no shortage of cultural zones. Extra special efforts are consistently dedicated to building new museums and restoring old ones for a constantly evolving artistic offer



SHARJAH'S ruler, H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Qasimi, has been tireless in his efforts to preserve and promote the emirate as a cultural hub. Recognition of Sharjah's unique offering came in 1998 when Unesco named the emirate the Cultural Capital of the Arab World. Sharjah enjoys a Gulf-wide reputation for its artistic excellence thanks to its annual cultural and literary events. Efforts to maintain traditional architecture, preserve heritage sites and promote Arab culture and art have been complemented by the creation of many artistic centers and museums.

Today Sharjah boasts more than 25 museums, many of which have been constructed by Sheikh Al-Qasimi over the last decade. "His Highness passionately believes in museums as an enriching part of life," comments Sue Underwood, Director of the Sharjah Museums Department. "To believe that if you miss out on the cultural element, you lose, is very

rare. Often when countries are developing, they focus entirely on the economy but what you have here is a focus on the social, educational and cultural aspects as well—it's a winning combination."

Two main areas are devoted to the arts in Sharjah City: the Arts Area in Al Shuwaiheen, home to art institutes and galleries in five restored buildings, and the Arabic Calligraphy Square in Al Sheyokh. The Sharjah Institute of Theatrical Arts is nearby in the district of Al Merraija. The Arts Area is home to the Sharjah Art Institute, artist studios, the Sharjah Art Museum, the largest gallery in the Middle East, and the Sharjah Museum for Contemporary Arab Art. Arabic Calligraphy Square, which is home to the Museum for the Art of Arabic Calligraphy and Ornammentation, is in the heart of the old city in the Heritage Area. The square has been rebuilt with traditional



SUE UNDERWOOD
Director of Sharjah
Museums
Department

materials such as coral, gypsum, mangrove poles and palm leaves.

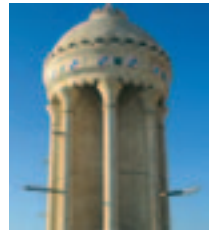
The Heritage Area, a restored district of the old city centered around Heritage Square, is the location of museums such as the Sharjah Heritage Museum, a maritime museum and the Islamic Museum. It also boasts restored historical houses and the oldest market in the city, Souk Al Arsah. The buildings in the area, which were former residences of prominent national families, are filled with regional artifacts and antiques.

"The museums have been developed because His Highness wants to preserve and interpret the culture here," explains Ms. Underwood. "The Archaeological Museum, for instance, not only helps to interpret and display artifacts for the public but also aids research. Some of the collection is continuously evolving because we are still collecting."

The work of the Museums Department, according to Ms. Underwood, is now focused on three main areas: the upgrading of existing museums, the training of staff to promote sustainable development, and the designing of a strategy so that Sharjah's museums may compete globally. Ms. Underwood says a curatorial training program has been established in which fresh university graduates are instructed by experts or are sent abroad to study. The Museums



Sharjah's museums cover topics such as archeology, science, natural history and heritage.



Department is also in talks with local universities to establish postgraduate programs in museum management or heritage studies.

Initiatives underway include a new Maritime Museum and Aquarium that will showcase the importance of the sea in Sharjah's history, a new Islamic Museum and a Sharjah Cultural Trail, complete with a monorail and tours in traditional boats that sail past the Millennium Hotel into the old city's heritage and arts areas. ■



Sharjah. A city of contrasts.

Discover the emirate of Sharjah. A cosmopolitan city of incredible contrasts, where everyone wears a bright smile (it might have something to do with the year-round sunshine). Where history and the future exist side by side. The traditional souks (markets) and museums will open your eyes to a whole new world. And its world-class hotel chains, leisure and recreational facilities will make you wish your visit never ended.



WORKING FOR YOUR SATISFACTION.



UNIVERSITY CITY TAKES EDUCATION TO A HIGHER LEVEL

The emirate's two universities, UoS and AUS, have earned their well-deserved reputations among the most academically competitive institutions in the region while promoting an international outlook and respect for all cultures

Thanks to the foresight of Sharjah Ruler H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Qasimi, Sharjah has become one of the most important learning centers in the Middle East. A visit to the emirate's impressive University City reveals the inspiring vision behind this achievement. Lying to the east of the city of Sharjah, the sprawling University City is graced with stately buildings, green areas and tranquil pools and fountains and is comprised of the University of Sharjah (UoS), the American University of Sharjah (AUS), the Higher Colleges of Technology, Sharjah Police Academy, the Sharjah Institute of Technology and the Sharjah Library. At the heart of the emirate's unique educational offer lies a complete range of traditional academic degrees as well as an open door into the rich world of Islamic and Arabic studies.

democratic performance matches international standards.

With a wide variety of programs that respond to the UAE's growing market needs, UoS is committed to ethical and civic responsibilities in accordance with Islamic teachings and universal humanistic commitment to a supportive modern learning environment that promotes critical thinking, independence of thought and the mastery of advanced technologies, a commitment to high quality standards and continuous improvement in teaching, scholarship and service, promotion of creativity and innovation in the pursuit of academic excellence, dedication to community outreach emphasizing service, transfer of know-how and positive contribution to the welfare of the people and promotion of an international outlook and respect for other individuals and cultures.



ISMAIL M. AL-BISHRI
Chancellor of UoS

"For over five decades, Sharjah has been famous for its investment in education as the key to development and progress. The first school was established in the 1950s and served as a center of knowledge for a select group of UAE nationals who would later become prominent figures in their communities. By the mid-1970s, the number of schools had quadrupled in Sharjah, and by the mid-1990s, the emirate was stepping into a new era of educational enlightenment," comments Chancellor of the University of Sharjah, Dr. Ismail M. Al-Bishri.



WINFRED THOMPSON
Chancellor of AUS

He points out that it was in 1997 that the first two universities were launched in Sharjah: UoS and AUS, ushering in a new phase of educational development in the UAE. According to Dr. Al-Bishri, the emirate's focus on education stems primarily from the visionary leadership of H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Qasimi, who has always emphasized education as the key to success in modern times, and who has spared no effort in working to ensure that aca-

democratic performance matches international standards. For its part, AUS boasts over 4,600 students from 80 different nations and a highly qualified and experienced full-time faculty of 278 dedicated individuals. "Since the first year of its existence, AUS has not only earned a well-deserved reputation as one of the most academically competitive institutions of higher learning in the entire region, but is also admired for its colorful, multicultural campus life," says Dr. Winfred Thompson, Chancellor of AUS.

AUS aims to foster and encourage cross-cultural contact, and its strict adherence to standards of academic excellence has contributed to an enviable reputation. "We are very proud of the fact that as an independently accredited institution of higher learning, AUS is renowned throughout the region for its excellent standard of education," remarks Dr. Thompson, adding that AUS alumni have been admitted to graduate studies at some of the most competitive and prestigious universities worldwide, including Harvard, Columbia and MIT. ■

THE UNIVERSITY OF SHARJAH

THE UNIVERSITY OF SHARJAH has become a prominent institution of higher education in the Gulf region with outstanding study programs and specializations. The University consists of 13 colleges offering around 50 degree programs in graduate and undergraduate programs.



Undergraduate Programs

College of Shari'a and Islamic Studies

- Bachelor of Shari'a and Foundations of Religion
- Bachelor of Jurisprudence and its Foundations

College of Arts and Sciences

- Bachelor of Arts in Arabic Language and Literature
- Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature
- Bachelor of Arts in History and Islamic Civilization
- Bachelor of Arts in Sociology
- Bachelor of Science in Computer Science
- Bachelor of Science in Chemistry

College of Business Administration

- Bachelor of Science in Accounting

- Bachelor of Science in Business and Public Administration

- Bachelor of Science in Information Management Systems

College of Engineering

- Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering
- Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering
- Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering
- Bachelor of Architectural Engineering
- Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering and Management

College of Health Sciences

- Bachelor of Science in Medical Laboratory Technology

- Bachelor of Science in Medical Diagnostic Imaging

- Bachelor of Science in Nursing

- Bachelor of Science in Health Services Administration

- Bachelor of Science in Physiotherapy

- Bachelor of Science in Environmental Health
- Bachelor of Science in Clinical Nutrition

College of Law

- Bachelor of Law

College of Fine Arts and Design

- Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design
- Bachelor of Arts in Jewelry Design
- Bachelor of Arts in Interior Design
- Bachelor of Arts in Multimedia Design
- Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design

College of Communication

- Bachelor of Communication in Print Journalism
- Bachelor of Communication in Broadcast Journalism
- Bachelor of Communication

- Bachelor of Communication in Visual Media

College of Medicine

- Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery

College of Dentistry

- Bachelor of Dental Surgery

College of Pharmacy

- Bachelor of Pharmacy

Community College

College of Graduate Studies and Research

- Offers Master's degrees in Jurisprudence and it's Foundations; Foundations of Religion; Arabic Language and Literature; Translation; History and Islamic Civilization; Computer Science; EMBA; Private Law; Public Law; Civil Engineering; Electrical and Electronics Engineering; and Communication

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF SHARJAH is the leading comprehensive co-educational university in the Gulf, licensed in both the US and the UAE and serving students from all over the world. It currently offers the following programs of study:



Undergraduate Programs

College of Arts and Sciences

- Bachelor of Arts in English Language and Literature
- Bachelor of Arts in International Studies
- Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication
- Bachelor of Science in Chemistry
- Bachelor of Science in Environmental Sciences

School of Architecture and Design

- Bachelor of Architecture
- Bachelor of Interior Design

- Bachelor of Science in Design Management

- Bachelor of Science in Multimedia Design
- Bachelor of Science in Visual Communication

School of Business and Management

- Bachelor of Arts in Economics
- Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration
- Bachelor of Science in Business Administration
- Bachelor of Science in Finance
- Bachelor of Science in Management Information Systems

School of Engineering

- Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering
- Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering
- Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering
- Bachelor of Science in Computer Science
- Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering
- Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering

Graduate Programs College of Arts and Sciences

- Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

- Master of Arts in English/Arabic/English Translation and Interpreting

School of Architecture and Design

- Master of Urban Planning

School of Business and Management

- Master of Business Administration
- Master of Public Administration
- Gulf Executive Master of Public Administration

School of Engineering

- Master of Science in Engineering Systems Management
- Master of Science in Mechatronics Engineering

SHOWCASING A CENTER OF EXCELLENCE IN REGIONAL COMMERCE

The Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry promotes the nation's local businesses and exports as well as its ultra-modern infrastructure and low costs

Sharjah generates nearly 40 percent of the United Arab Emirates' (UAE) industrial output. Consequently, the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), with more than 30,000 members, is considered one of its most important business chambers, along with those of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Serving as a bridge between the emirate's public and private sectors, SCCI is active in promoting Sharjah's exports through participation in international exhibitions and permanent trade centers abroad, as well as through support for local entrepreneurship.

Sharjah currently has 18 industrial parks dedicated to a range of



AHMED MOHAMMED AL MIDFA
Chairman of the SCCI



SAIF MOHAMMAD AL MIDFA
Director General
Expo Centre Sharjah

activities. "Although we have some heavy industries, our economy is based on small and medium companies," remarks SCCI Chairman Ahmed Mohammed Al Midfa, adding that the emirate wants to further diversify through new sectors, such as high tech, and expanding the SME base. Mentioning that Sharjah, the Unesco-designated cultural capital of the Arab world, has begun to attract a large number of tourists, Mr. Al Midfa also points out the emirate's interest in developing its tourism sector.

Sharjah's three ports, located on the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Gulf, play a crucial role in supporting the UAE's status as a re-export hub, and are a lure for new investment.

Falling under the SCCI's umbrella, Expo Centre Sharjah hosts more than 20 international exhibitions each year to introduce the emirate's facilities and services to new businesses and to showcase local



The visually striking SCCI-owned Expo Centre is the most advanced venue in the Middle East.

industries. "We are a partner, rather than an entity that just leases out space," says Director-General Saif Mohammad Al Midfa. "Sharjah has excellent infrastructure and is the best place in the UAE for lower operational costs. Many businessmen and companies are setting up here because of high expenses and traffic issues found in Dubai, which is good for us."

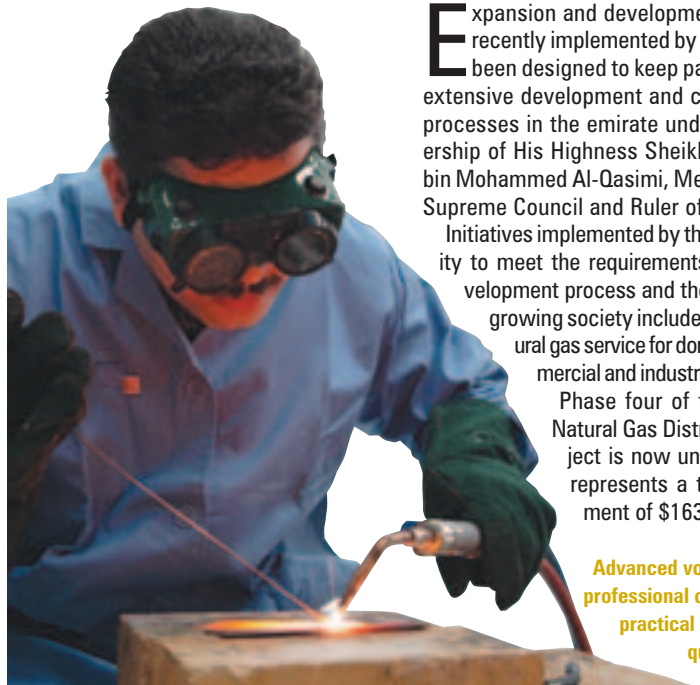
"The Expo Center is the most visually striking and most technically advanced exhibition,

conference and event center in the Middle East, as well as the most user-friendly," the director-general adds. "Bordering the Al Khalid Lagoon, the complex is also the only venue in the region by the sea, which makes it ideal for marine-related events." ■



FUELING UTILITIES WITH INNOVATION AND EDUCATION

The Sharjah Electricity and Water Authority (SEWA) is committed to providing high quality supplies of electricity, water and gas to the emirate, pioneering new projects and facilities that ensure uninterrupted and reliable services to meet the increasing demand and expanding population



Expansion and development projects recently implemented by SEWA have been designed to keep pace with the extensive development and construction processes in the emirate under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah.

Initiatives implemented by the public utility to meet the requirements of the development process and the needs of a growing society include a piped natural gas service for domestic, commercial and industrial purposes.

Phase four of the Sharjah Natural Gas Distribution Project is now underway and represents a total investment of \$163 million.

Advanced vocational and professional courses offer practical international qualifications.

By February 2007, approximately 78,000 residential units and villas had been connected to the piped-gas network. The significance of the project lies in the fact that Sharjah is the first emirate to introduce piped natural gas into the region.

Substituting petrol for compressed natural gas (CNG) as fuel for vehicles is another project of the company. Developed in 2005, the first phase of the scheme saw vehicles belonging to SEWA converted to CNG. Four new stations that will be used to convert and supply taxis and private vehicles with CNG are currently under construction and plans are in the works to begin converting government vehicles to the CNG system.

SEWA has also established the new Zula water facility to produce and bottle high quality drinking water from underground spring sources. The fully automated production process, which includes purification, a filling plant and sterilization with ozone, employs the highest international standards and specifications.

In the field of human resources, the Sharjah Institute of Technology has been developed by SEWA to promote scientific progress and provide the educational

courses needed to satisfy community demands in the high-tech era. Admission to the institute is open to students holding a preparatory certificate.

Plans of the institute aim to develop advanced vocational and professional programs that will meet the needs of the UAE job market. The courses will enable students to obtain UK-based qualifications of the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC) and City & Guilds.

A Ladies Division has also been established at the institute to open opportunities to female students who have gained a secondary qualification. The division offers high quality vocational training and education according to BTEC qualifications. Courses are available in health and social care, art and design, media, hospitality, travel and tourism, beauty therapy, and hairdressing. ■



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Integrity, perseverance and a commitment to quality services are the core principles linked to the success of Sharjah Ports Authority.

With an impressive legacy to its credit, the Sharjah Ports Authority has been creating economic vitality in the region through providing trade and transportation infrastructure to meet the needs of the Arabian Gulf countries, the Indian subcontinent, and the north-east and southern African regions. Our core values have ensured

that quality services and facilities are on hand to help operate as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible.

Being a pioneer with the first container terminal in the region, we have made a significant contribution to the economic growth and development of the United Arab Emirates and the Arabian Peninsula. Through structured thought and coordinated action, we have continued to integrate three strategic maritime access points: Port Khalid, Port

Hamriyah and Port Khorfakkan, to take advantage of the uniqueness of Sharjah in being the only emirate to have seaports on both coasts of the United Arab Emirates.

Our vision and strategy to synchronize administrative enforcements, our commitment to improving our rich milieu of services and our ability to be flexible have acted as catalysts towards indisputable success. Our corporate culture is one of dedication, respect, continuous improvement, and innova-

tion, which are applied to our constant efforts to achieve excellence. We believe that the very backbone of the high quality services we provide is our employees, who are indeed central to our success.

I trust that the insights provided in the following pages will provide you with enough information on our strengths, services and facilities. I would like to take this opportunity to invite all those who want to excel to set out on a voyage of discovery with Sharjah Ports.



SHEIKH KHALED BIN ABDULLAH SULTAN AL QASIMI
Chairman of the Department of Seaports & Customs and Chairman of the Hamriyah Free Zone Authority

EXPANDING A NATURAL TRANSPORTATION AND SHIPPING HUB

A strategic location, business-friendly regulations and world-class infrastructure for logistics and transshipment has led to a booming Hamriyah Free Zone and ports

As the only emirate with ports on both the east and west coasts of the United Arab Emirates, and the only one that borders all of the other six emirates, Sharjah is a natural transportation and shipping hub. A center for maritime trading for centuries, this tradition continues in Sharjah's three modern ports. Port Khalid is on the Arabian Gulf, along with Hamriyah Port and Free Zone, and Port Khorfakkan is on the Gulf of Oman—all of which are owned and controlled by the Government of Sharjah's Department of Seaports and Customs.

Management at Seaports and Customs report directly to Sharjah Ruler H.H. Dr. Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, who has taken an active interest in the ports' development and expansion. Today, the ports handle all types of vessels with cargos ranging from break-bulk to timber, logs, refrigerated vehicles, ro-ros, heavy lifts, and containers—for which the terminals are equipped with the latest ship-shore gantries and modern yard equipment. Two 10,000-ton capacity cold stores are located at Port Khalid, and its close proximity near the city is also beginning to draw a number of cruise lines. Also, the gas terminal at Hamriyah, 12 miles northeast, receives LPG and LNG vessels.

"We believe that proper planning prevents poor performance. This we do with the guidance of His Highness Dr. Sheikh Sultan. We follow his lead and advice step by step," comments Yaqoub H. Abdulla, Director of Marketing and Promotions for Seaports and Customs. "For example, a couple of years ago Khorfakkan was suffering from a lack of depth and space.



Khorfakkan Port offers more possibilities with added depth and space.



The Hamriyah Free Zone Authority is setting up a whole new maritime city.



RASHID AL LEEM
Director General of Hamriyah Free Zone Authority and Director General of the Department of Seaports & Customs

Hamriyah is one of the world's fastest growing free zones, and represents a cornerstone in Sharjah's, and the UAE's, industrial development strategy. Spread over 12 million square meters and boasting 1,500 companies from over 100 countries, Hamriyah has experienced over 50 percent growth in its number of registered companies over the past few years. Consequently, plans for adding

I wouldn't say we lost a lot of lines but we were losing opportunities that we could have had if the port had been bigger. Today, its expansion is almost completed. In addition, Hamriyah Free Zone is booming. The new port has been inaugurated and we have just got the green light to expand its depth. I think we are moving in the right direction."

Created in 1995, an additional ten million square meters are now in the works.

Director General of the Hamriyah Free Zone Authority Dr. Rashid Al Leem remarks, "The UAE's strategic location has attracted a lot of multinationals. We supply one and a half billion consumers because we are surrounded by highly populated nations such as India, Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia, to name but a few. Because of the convenient laws and regulations here, as well as the openness of our people, many companies have shifted their international base for the Middle East into this part of the world."

Dr. Al Leem says that Sharjah's status as an industrial hub has permitted Hamriyah Free Zone to prosper since all the necessary ingredients for success are present—a deepwater port, an inexpensive power plant for cheap utilities, and natural gas—the only free zone to offer this. Hamriyah's port has attracted a growing number of global cement and steel companies,



'WE SUPPLY ONE AND A HALF BILLION CONSUMERS BECAUSE WE ARE SURROUNDED BY HIGHLY POPULATED NATIONS'



as well as oil and gas companies that need terminals close to the shoreline. The port's location as the first point of contact for vessels coming in by the Strait of Hormuz has also served as an advantage as has the fact that it is open for business 24 hours a day.

Hamriyah is regarded as being highly quality driven. It has earned a number of international certifications such as ISO-9001, ISO-14001, and the OHSAS 18001, concerning management, environment and occupational health respectively. Quality control is monitored by Lloyd's. Chairman of Seaports and Customs Sheikh Khaled Bin Abdullah Al Qasimi says, "Commitment and perseverance to high standards of performance and the spirit to excel have been the characteristics that have set Hamriyah Free Zone apart from others. At Hamriyah Free Zone, conditions do not conceal its strategies but reveal its accountability—accountability to business excellence, dedication and quality." ■

ACHIEVING THE BEST **PORT OPERATIONS** PRODUCTIVITY WITH SPEED AND SAFETY FIRST

Record-breaking Gulftainer is one of the nation's largest transport companies and its expertise is now being sought by port authorities around the globe

Established in 1976 to operate and manage container terminals in the ports of Khorfakkan and Sharjah, Gulftainer today has become one of the Middle East's most respected terminal operators.

"Our name and reputation has spread quite nicely throughout the Middle East," comments Director and General Manager Peter Richards, who believes the global profile of the company is set to rise considerably in the next two years. "Three of the biggest shipping lines in the world rank us as number one on productivity. Khorfakkan Port is a very well-oiled machine."

This reputation for managing a tightly run ship has been boosted by feats such as consistent record-breaking moves of 213 containers in an hour and, showing great diversification, also successfully handling a sensitive 7,000 metric ton consignment of coated pipes for the petroleum industry in only 52 hours.

Gulftainer's Khorfakkan terminal handled nearly 10 percent more containers in January 2007 compared with the same month in 2006. The recently expanded Port Khorfakkan, which handles approximately 100,000 containers per month, is one of the world's leading container transshipment ports. It has registered double-digit growth throughout the last decade and 2006 throughput was 1.9 million TEUs. "Productivity and successful operations are achievable because there are very short chains of communication in Gulftainer," Mr. Richards explains. "Our management is very open and can be reached at any time of the day or night. The company policy is to achieve the best productivity for all our customers, safely."

The concept of making investment perform well has always been a priority for the com-



PETER RICHARDS
Director and
General Manager
Gulftainer

pany. Its experience and expertise in logistics and providing seamless interfaces between sea and land transportation has attracted the interest of many ports looking to develop with up-to-date management techniques allied with focused marketing strategies.

A new joint venture announced last November aims to revamp and enhance inland transportation within Pakistan. In partnership with Pak Shaheen, one of the country's most experienced shipping agencies, the new transport fleet will be complemented by three state-of-the-art logistics centers with fully comprehensive IT-controlled bonded container and warehouse facilities.

Gulftainer also owns one of the largest heavy transport fleets in the UAE, Speedtrucks Transport. With 110 heads and 175 trailers, Speedtrucks has been instrumental in securing the growth of both Sharjah ports.



The Sharjah Container Terminal at Port Khalid handles around 25,000 containers per month.

"If you used Khorfakkan, your cargo could be in your warehouse quicker than if the ship sailed to Dubai. Khorfakkan is outside of the Hormuz Straits and Dubai is inside, so vessels take 15 hours to get into Dubai, and of course, 15 hours to get out again," he remarks, pointing out the savings in steaming time and fuel. "If a container is discharged at Khorfakkan, it will be loaded straight onto a truck and go directly to customs in Sharjah; they will clear it and it will be in your warehouse within 12 hours – actually before the same ship can reach Dubai."

Located next to Sharjah's industrial areas, Sharjah Container Terminal at Port Khalid handles more than 45 percent of the UAE's non-oil manufacturing capacity. Gulftainer offers shipping lines cargo handling at both ports as well as the capacity to transport that cargo anywhere in the Middle East. It also boasts container repair facilities at each port and at its new 150,000 square-meter inland container depot, where customers can have their equipment serviced without the need to go offsite. ■



Gulftainer offers transporters a complete one-stop shop at its Sharjah Inland Container Depot.

Spoilt for choice-What a dilemma!

Khorfakkan Container Terminal is on the East Coast of the United Arab Emirates, outside the Gulf, while Sharjah Container Terminal is located in the heartland of the Emirates industrial areas, on the West Coast, within the Arabian Gulf. Managed and operated by Gulftainer, on behalf of Sharjah Ports, Sharjah Container Terminals give you a choice-the right choice!

GULFTAINER CO. LTD.
P.O. Box 225, Sharjah - U.A.E.
Tel : +971 6 5724201/2 Fax : +971 6 5724711
Website : www.gulftainer.com

SHARJAH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT: EXCELLENT, EFFICIENT SERVICES AND INSTALLATIONS

One of the Middle East's leading airports, Sharjah International Airport is capitalizing on its prime location to expand, upgrade and innovate



NAMED BEST GLOBAL AIRPORT 2005 by London's Institute of Travel Management, Sharjah International Airport

is a regional leader and aspiring global contender. New investment to the tune of \$135 million is backing the airport's 2015 master plan that will upgrade, expand and modernize both passenger and freight facilities in a bid to establish Sharjah as the Middle East's favorite airport.

Built in 1932 to serve as a stopover route for British flights on their way to India and points further east, Sharjah International Airport has the distinction of being the UAE's first airport. Today it is served by more than 40 scheduled airlines flying to nearly 250 worldwide destinations, while 70 other airlines use the airport on seasonal long haul routes. In addition, since launching Air Arabia, the first in a new wave of budget



ALI SALEM AL MIDFA
Director of Sharjah Airport Authority

airlines in the Middle East, the airport has experienced an astounding 40 percent monthly jump in passenger traffic.

"We promote the airport in different ways," comments Director of Sharjah Airport Authority, Ali Salem Al Midfa. "We highlight the im-

portance of our location, which has been beneficial for cargo business. Most airlines are also looking for transit points, especially tour operators, and we do business with European carriers who operate during the winter season with tours to the Far East. Sharjah is a good midpoint for these operators."

Representing the largest air-cargo hub in the Middle East and Africa, state-of-the-art facilities have made the airport's freight services famous. Lufthansa operates its second-largest cargo hub after Frankfurt out of Sharjah International Airport, with 360 flights and more than 48,000 tons of cargo movement per month. The adjacent Sharjah Airport International Free Zone (SAIF-Zone) offers world-class facilities, including pre-built warehouses, container parking, storage space, executive offices and leased land for unrestricted development. Sharjah's unique geographical position and its status as the commercial nerve center of the UAE are additional attractions that have drawn the 2,300 companies now operating out of SAIF-Zone.

The airport also has a growing reputation for excellent and efficient customer service and commercial facilities, reflected in its 36 percent increase in passenger flights between 2005 and 2006. Expansion plans will eventually quadruple the airport's size and include a new check-in area, new lounges, a larger duty-free space,



World-class facilities have led to a 40 percent increase in passenger traffic every month.

food courts and expanded parking facilities.

Mr. Al Midfa says that the airport's unprecedented growth in traffic has obliged airport authorities to constantly revise the 2015 plan. "The initial budget for the project was \$60 million, but with the airport experiencing a 35 to 40 percent increase in traffic on a monthly basis, this figure changed for the new requirements. We are putting in extra space for aircraft and have received approval to build an extra terminal for business travelers. Also, we are planning on building a parallel lane for emergencies on the runway and expansion on the cargo side will also take place." ■

UNITED ARAB BANK: RELIABLE, EFFICIENT AND PERSISTENT

UAB has made a name for itself by offering tailor-made financial services in corporate and retail banking, making it the bank of choice in Sharjah

Started as a joint venture between diverse UAE investors and the French international financial conglomerate, Société Générale Group, United Arab Bank (UAB) was incorporated in 1975 and today offers clients tailor-made financial services in both corporate and retail banking. Based in Sharjah and with nine branches throughout the UAE, UAB has established itself as a leading solutions provider for the emirate's growing industrial base. Through the provision of structured finance solutions for complex banking transactions, UAB is the bank of choice among Sharjah's corporate clientele.

CEO Bertrand Giraud says that the nature of business in Sharjah demands adept and flexible responses from financial institutions. Unlike the relatively straightforward financing involved in the real estate sector, the financing of industry, according to Mr. Giraud, is more sophisticated and requires developing more complex products for the specific needs of industrial companies and solutions that cater to their individual investment strategies and development plans.




BERTRAND GIRAUD
CEO of United Arab Bank

"This is where we, at United Arab Bank, bring in our expertise as a strategic partner and advisor," comments Mr. Giraud. "We listen to our customers, analyze their needs, challenge their potential and offer them solutions to help them plan development strategies and forge prospective investment policies. Beyond our financing capacity we are involved in boosting the growth of our corporate customers, stimulating the development of the whole economy across the emirate at large."

UAB's cautious, persistent and operation-rooted policy allowed the bank to continue to register the impressive results posted by Sharjah's banking sector in 2005. Mr. Giraud says the bank's vision does not include volatile, short-term profit objectives. Its main policy of cautious ambition, as well as continuous enhancement of its services, will enable it to remain among the top enduring banks of tomorrow. He remarks, "We are here to endure, to develop and to last. Throughout the years, we have forged a reputation of reliability and efficiency among our customers and we hope to maintain that reputation." ■

YOUR RELIABLE ALLY FOR A PROSPEROUS FUTURE

Corporate Banking • International Trade Services • Personal Banking Services



البنك العربي المتحد
UNITED ARAB BANK

P.O. Box 25022 Sharjah, UAE • Tel : 06 57 33 900 • Fax : 06 57 33 906
Email : uarboe@emirates.net.ae • Website : www.uab.ae

PIONEERING INNOVATION AND CONFIDENCE IN ISLAMIC BANKING EXPANDS SECTOR WORLDWIDE

Fully Shariah-compliant since 2002, Sharjah Islamic Bank has led the way in opening market opportunities

With net profits of over \$54 million last year and growth rates registering 21 percent in 2005, Sharjah Islamic Bank (SIB) is not only one of the United Arab Emirates' leading financial institutions, but also one of the Gulf's top Islamic banks. Ranked Best Bank in the UAE for the second consecutive year by Wachovia last year, SIB is a regional pioneer in Islamic financial tools. The bank's successful 2006 issuing of its global Sukuk – Islamic banking's equivalent to a conventional debt capital market instrument – was a first from a GCC institution. It underpins the broadening range of innovative Islamic financial products from Sharjah's largest and most profitable bank.

"SIB has always been innovative: we were the first Islamic bank to come up with Islamic credit cards when there had only been debit cards before," comments CEO Mohamed A. Abdulla. "Another thing that we introduced was the Ljara product for personal finance. People have always considered Islamic banks to be very rigid. Therefore they did not go to them for financing personal needs or when they needed cash. They only looked to Islamic banking for financing cars or goods, etc. So we came up with the Ljara service."

Ljara allows customers to finance personal expenses such as school tuition or medical expenses through a unique arrangement in which SIB first pays for the service directly and then sells the service to the customer. For example, in the case of school tuition, SIB pays the school directly. The client then buys this product, the tuition, from the bank, and can pay in installments if desired.

The Sharjah Islamic Bank has been around

since 1976 when it was known as the National Bank of Sharjah. Today, SIB offers a complete range of fully Shari'a compliant retail. It currently boasts 18 branches throughout the UAE, with five more planned for this year. The launch of SIB's brokerage subsidiary last year, Sharjah Islamic Financial Services, filled a market gap for Shariah-focused stock market services and is one of the first companies to allow securities trading through the Abu Dhabi and Dubai markets simultaneously. Also last year, SIB's global Sukuk successfully closed at \$225 million, with European and Asian investors representing 41 percent of the demand.

Structured as a floating rate note set to mature in five years' time, the books were closed on the London-listed Sukok within a month. According to Mr. Abdulla, the phones were still

ringing from banks around the globe after closing. He says the bank is now working on a second listing on the Dubai Stock Exchange. "The main reason behind issuing the first rated Sukuk was to know our position in the international market rather than having a fund. So we wanted to test ourselves in the market, to see if we are acceptable to the international banks, and it was extremely successful," he explains.

Diversification has been key in the bank's success. Mr. Abdulla says that SIB has been careful to avoid putting all of its eggs in one basket. It has tempered its growth with sound policies in the office and a strong emphasis on quality human resources.

Investment has been spread across the board in retail, corporate, local and international



SIB reflects the typical Sharjah landmark: plant a seed and with the help of the bank, watch it grow.

investment, along with direct investment and supporting the community by being involved in the general upgrade of the infrastructure of the emirate.

The bank ventured into tourism last year with the purchase of the Sharjah National Hotel Corporation, whose portfolio includes high-end properties like the Marbella Resort, the Holiday International Hotel and the Oceanic Hotel in Khorfakkan. ■

INTERVIEW WITH MOHAMED A. ABDULLA

THE GLOBAL explosion of Islamic banking over the past two decades is testimony of the attraction that the sector wields for both Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Today, there are more than 250 Islamic banks worldwide. Encouraged by phenomenal growth, the banks are now introducing greater flexibility and innovation into their Islamic financial services.



MOHAMED A. ABDULLA
CEO of Sharjah
Islamic Bank

Tell us about SIB's decision to convert to Islamic banking.

We were the first bank in the world to convert entirely from a conventional bank to an Islamic one, and this has been a very challenging mission for us. We knew that

if we succeeded, people would follow in our footsteps and trigger a larger growth of the sector around the world. However, if we did not succeed, then people might have slowly forgotten about Islamic banking, as maybe nobody would have had the courage to attempt the conversion from conventional to Islamic.

What has been the effect of SIB's success?

After we converted, two other banks followed suit, the Emirates Islamic Bank and Dubai Bank. There are a number of Islamic banks that are emerging around the Gulf and some companies here are trying to form Is-

lamic finance companies as subsidiaries, since UAE regulations do not allow conventional banks to have Islamic windows within the bank.

What are your thoughts on the future of Islamic banking?

We truly see a bright future for Islamic banking not only in the UAE, but around the world. Many banks are now seriously considering converting into Islamic banks or having subsidiaries, or are opening Islamic windows in countries that permit this. Islamic banking is a successful economy system with a lot to offer, and it is not restricted only to Muslims. We respect everybody's needs and every religion and whoever tries it will definitely be satisfied. Everybody should feel free to deal with Islamic banks.

Human Resources Award for Banking Sector 2003,05,06

Dubai Human Development Appreciation Award 2006

Recognition Award for Highest Localization Ratio Among GCC Countries 2006

Wachovia Recognition Award 2004,05

Sharjah Economic Excellence Award 2003,05

We value Excellence to be a Bank of choice

مصرف الشارقة الإسلامي
Sharjah Islamic Bank



Taryam Mattar Mohammed Taryam
Director General



Director General's Message

SAIF-Zone is celebrating this year a decade of success as the premier business destination of the Emirate of Sharjah. Its outstanding achievements would not have been possible without the wise and dynamic leadership of H. H. Dr. Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah. The SAIF-Zone has worked to lend stronger impetus to the evolution of Sharjah as a commercial nerve centre and in the process, we have been blessed with the wholehearted support of our valued customers, and we thank them for the same.

The SAIF-Zone's far reaching approach has resulted in the building of treasured relationships with reputed organizations such as Airfreight Aviation Limited, Clipsal Middle East (FZC), INFOSYS Technologies LTD., MSSL MIDEAST (FZE), SUNGWON (FZE), United Nations Food Program (WFP), Veolia Water Systems (GULF), VOLGA-DNEPR GULF (UAE) (FZC), WIPRO Limited, WS ATKINS & Partners Overseas, and many more.

Not resting on our laurels, we are for the future, embarking upon an ambitious growth strategy of expanding new infrastructure of over 3 million square meters of land, committed to the construction of new warehouses of varied sizes, new state of the art executive offices, and businesses have the option of leasing land and developing their own infrastructure. Emphasis will also be made on improving the existing infrastructure and our services.

As the SAIF-Zone moves into the future, it is committed to its mission of "exceeding customer expectations, thrilling them at all times."

We would like to take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to all our prospective customers.

Taryam Mattar Mohammed Taryam
Director General - Sharjah Airport International Free Zone

Sharjah Airport International Free Zone, Sharjah

Welcome to the freedom of doing business your way.



The Sharjah Airport International Free Zone (SAIF-Zone) was set up in 1995 and is the premier business destination of the UAE. Situated in the Emirate of Sharjah, the industrial powerhouse of the UAE, the SAIF-Zone services over 2,738 companies from 91 countries.

Covering a wide cross section of industry, companies include some of the biggest names in the field of IT services, media, consumer durables, light to medium manufacturing and a host of other companies.

Unrivalled Convenience

Strategically located at the cross roads of major trade routes linking the east and west, the SAIF-Zone is a business hub that offers access to more than 2 billion consumers across the GCC, CIS, Indian sub-continent, parts of Africa and the Mediterranean.

The 'Sharjah Link', a unique trade bridge, gives businesses an unmatched logistical advantage. Straddling the Arabian Gulf and the Indian Ocean, this link makes the SAIF-Zone the ideal business hub to the Middle East.



SAIF-Zone is also conveniently located adjacent to the Sharjah International Airport, the largest air cargo hub in the Middle East and North Africa.

In its commitment to providing investors with the perfect conditions for business operation, the SAIF-Zone is constantly upgrading its value-added services, infrastructure facilities, technical and scientific expertise and the availability of 'state-of-the-art' facilities.

With its simple one window solution to all investor requirements, the SAIF-Zone offers fast and simple processing of relevant licenses within 24 hours, sponsorships and visas for all staff, and simplified customs procedure.

Legal services, international couriers, traffic and licensing offices, workshops, access to 50 international banks, restaurants and post office, transportation to and from the city are also available within the zone. Access to low-cost energy and labour, budget accommodation for on-site workforce, consultancy services and computer training, make it the perfect base for any type of business.

Wealth Creation

There are distinct advantages of doing business in Sharjah and the SAIF-Zone. With a trading history dating back to the early 18th century, Sharjah today accounts for more than 40% of all industrial activity in the UAE.

The Sharjah Ports and Free Zone, Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and the Government of Sharjah are extremely pro-active and business savvy entities geared to provide all assistance to potential businessmen.

The cost of setting up a business in Sharjah is less than in any other emirate of the UAE, and the focus on industrialisation has in recent years turned Sharjah into a commercial centre registering an impressive annual growth rate of 12%.

In addition to tax-free operation and an absence of red-tape, the SAIF-Zone offers unbeatable trade incentives and unparalleled benefits to investors:

- 100% foreign ownership
- 100% repatriation of capital and profits
- 100% exemption from personal and corporate income taxes

Economic wage structure and no restriction on hiring of 100% expatriate workers, and many more.

Lifestyle

Acknowledged throughout the gulf region as the seat of learning and culture, Sharjah is blessed with a rich culture, colourful history and age-old traditions. Despite impressive and accelerated business growth there has been deliberate effort to preserve and restore historic monuments and sites.

Sharjah offers cost-effective living and world class educational options for the SAIF-Zone investor. A multinational education system at all levels is available to ensure all educational requirements for families are met.

Sharjah has a booming tourism industry attracting interested visitors from around the globe to enjoy its beautiful beaches, diverse restaurants, shopping and entertainment offerings, and international standard hotels.

These benefits and other initiatives have helped investors across the globe choose SAIF-Zone as their place to do business.

As the SAIF-Zone moves into the future it is committed to its mission of, "exceeding customer expectations and thrilling them at all times".



SAIF-Zone

Sharjah Airport International Free Zone

P.O. Box 8000, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates.

Tel: +9716-5570000, Fax: +9716-5571010.

E-mail: info@saif-zone.com - Website: www.saif-zone.com



The 1,000-meter-long canal is lined with cafés, international restaurants and shopping areas where artisans from across the Gulf display their work.

SHARJAH'S PREMIER WATERFRONT PROMENADE HAS AN EYE FOR QUALITY ENTERTAINMENT

Qanat Al Qasba invites the world to experience Arab heritage and enjoy its culture in an enriching and stimulating modern leisure environment that boasts the region's highest observatory wheel



One of Sharjah's key tourist, cultural and entertainment destinations, Qanat Al Qasba (QAQ) celebrated its grand opening in 2005 by the Qanat

Al Qasba Development Authority and has since become a hub for culture-based entertainment in the emirate.

Visitors to the seaside destination can enjoy leisurely cruises along the canal and around the lagoons in abras (traditional wooden boats), as well as experience a wide range of dining and entertainment choices.

"There is a special feeling here," says QAQ Development Authority CEO Marwan Al Sarkal. "You can see the Andalusian-style architecture of the buildings, which

is really special. They are well designed. You can sit in a café next to the water, or enjoy fine restaurants offering a range of international cuisines, such as Lebanese, Italian, Portuguese, Indian, etc. There are also a lot of events and activities planned every day for the whole family."

Built on 10,000 acres near the Dubai-Sharjah highway, Qanat Al Qasba is centered around a 1,000-meter-long canal crossed by three pedestrian bridges and dotted with cafés and restaurants on both sides.

At the heart of QAQ's northern quarter is the 400-seat Masrah Al Qasba auditorium, which hosts regular events, plays and concerts in both English and Arabic.

The southern quarter boasts a spacious 1,500-meter exhibition area for cultural and educational activities where a number of galleries are located featuring plastic arts and paintings.

QAQ's main attraction, however, is the giant Eye of the Emirates observatory wheel. The tallest wheel of its kind in the region, the Eye of the Emirates is 60 meters

high with 42 futuristic-looking, fully air-conditioned cabins that can take up to 336 riders at a time. At the top of the wheel, visitors are treated to panoramic views of 25 to 30 miles, including breathtaking aerial views of the Sharjah coast and Dubai.

One of Sharjah's most important landmarks, QAQ proudly represents itself as a center for promoting heritage and culture. In addition to hosting international

THERE'S A SPECIAL FEELING HERE; THERE ARE A LOT OF EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES PLANNED EVERY DAY FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY'

events, QAQ holds activities and exhibits that highlight Arab and Islamic heritage throughout the year,

such as Arabic poetry readings, musical concerts, displays of local art and Arabic calligraphy as well as regional sporting events.

Mr. Al Sarkal says that the Development Authority is aiming to host a number of large events annually. Recent successes have included the eighth GCC Ladies' Gulf Tournament, the ISSPA forum for scientists and engineers, and the 2006 Formula One Powerboat World Championship.

Development is ongoing, however, according to Mr. Al Sarkal. "Qanat Al Qasba is already a great area but we want to add more to it," he comments. "We are now creating an area just for kids. We have been working on redesigning the landscaping and the majority of it is finished. Now, we are planning to build the kid's area, a gym, and a restaurant facing the sea."

He adds that another major project in the works is the creation of a large business center with new offices, business facilities and a conference center. ■

INTERVIEW WITH CEO OF QANAT AL QASBA

The Qanat Al Qasba Development Authority was established in 2004 to oversee the development of the Qanat Al Qasba canal area into a family leisure and entertainment district. CEO Marwan Al Sarkal comments on the destination, which is fast growing into a regional attraction.

How does QAQ stand in relation to other UAE destinations?

Qanat Al Qasba is a destination in itself, whether we advertise it or not. This is a great area, with no high buildings surrounding it, so you feel it is a place where you would really like to spend time.

The Eye of the Emirates is more than just a run-of-the-mill Ferris wheel. Can you comment on Sharjah's most visible icon?

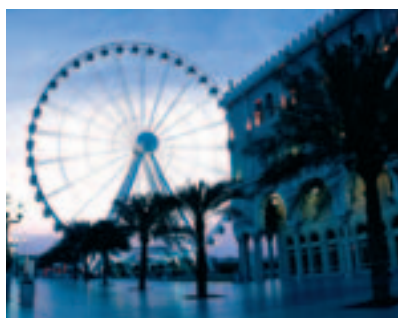
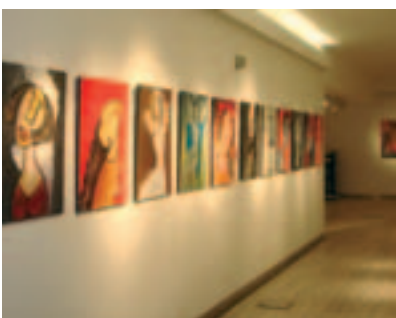
The Eye of the Emirates has been here since 2005. It is one of the landmarks of the emirate of Sharjah, and is our main attraction here at Qanat Al Qasba. It was custom-designed for us and is the only observatory that we have. It is air-conditioned so it can be used in the summer or the winter. We have thousands of visitors a year and it is a real focal point for us. We have had many visitors coming from Oman or Saudi Arabia especially to visit the Eye of the Emirates.

What has the development authority been doing to promote QAQ?

Our marketing strategy is very strong and we are continuously trying to get new events to attract people from all walks of life to this destination. The good thing is that Qanat Al Qasba is a landmark in itself. Even in the other emirates, you will not find the architecture that is here, and really, if you want to know about the Arab world, Qanat Al Qasba is one of the pillars.



MARWAN AL SARKAL
CEO of Qanat Al Qasba



Qanat Al Qasba exhibits exceptional Arabic artifacts and is a hub for culture-based entertainment.

FURTHER DEVELOPING THE EMIRATE'S OFFER, A TOP PRIORITY

The Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority has excellent material to work with, as the emirate has a steadfastly growing list of attractions and activities

Mohamed A. Al Noman, Director General of the Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA), says, "The description the 'Cultural Capital of the Arab World' has been applied to Sharjah because the maintenance of a visible culture is key to identifying who we are." He adds that while the past 30 years has seen a rapid rate of development throughout the country, each emirate is unique. "Sharjah's attribute is its strict adherence to tradition while simultaneously having a worldly outlook."

The emirate's efforts throughout the last decade to promote heritage, culture and arts have gained it a first-class reputation as a premier cultural tourism destination. Sharjah is home to a number of excellent museums and galleries dedicated to Islamic history, art and heritage, and the city has been carefully restored to retain its traditional Arab architecture.

More recently, Sharjah has also stood out for its numerous international events and exhibits. The upgrading of its tourism and leisure facilities with new resorts like Qanat Al Qasba – a major tourism and leisure landmark in the emirate with a number of permanent cul-



The 'Cultural Capital of the Arab World' combines traditional architecture with modern tourism.

tural, recreational and entertainment attractions – along with its sun and beaches, have begun to convert Sharjah into a major leisure destination as well. The combination of year-round sunshine, five-star luxuries and the adventure of a unique Arabian experience is an allure that more and more tourists are finding difficult to resist.

"The Emirate of Sharjah is known in the international tourism market as an excellent destination, different from others in the region and around the world. We have been steadily promoting this fact for the past few years through various high-profile exhibitions," comments Mr. Al Noman. The city, he adds, has over 20 museums, a center for Arabian wildlife, superb facilities for sports, shopping, dining and entertainment and is well equipped to cater to the diverse needs of individual trav-

elers and families.

Further development is in the pipeline. The Sharjah International Airport, which has been registering phenomenal growth rates in passenger traffic, is undergoing a massive expansion that will increase its capacity to eight million travelers. In addition, the government of Sharjah announced last year that it will invest another \$545 million in the sector to further upgrade infrastructure and boost development.

SCTDA's role in the development of Sharjah is central to the emirate's plans to augment its tourism efforts. "We are responsible for the planning and for the devising of strategies to help promote tourism and commerce. We have been engaging in in-depth marketing and promotional activities since our inception. For every tourism-related project and

scheme the emirate embarks upon, we are the ones responsible for conducting the feasibility studies," explains Mr. Al Noman. SCTDA is aiming to attract tourists from 20 countries this year as its 2007 calendar includes numerous road shows abroad. In March, SCTDA's promotional efforts won it the Best Middle Eastern Exhibitor Award at the International Tourism Exchange exhibition in Berlin, the world's largest tourism event.

Another of SCTDA's important contributions has been its involvement in organizing international events in Sharjah. Recent events have included Formula 1 speedboat racing, spring festivals and summer campaigns. Mr. Al Noman says that he believes that Sharjah is already well on its way to becoming, a world-class international sporting destination for the number of successful events it has organized so far and those that are scheduled to come. Sharjah has won several international awards for best event organizer, and would like to eventually host all types of sporting events in the emirate.

"For the future, SCTDA will place an increased focus on developing MICE tourism," says Mr. Al Noman, while adding, "What has made us unique and should continue to differentiate us from others is our strict emphasis on culture and tradition, while at the same time warmly welcoming travelers to our streets and our deserts. This is our ambition and will be part of our priority for the coming years." ■



The emirate is highly regarded as a cultural and world-class international sporting destination.

A BEAUTIFUL, CULTURAL EXPERIENCE WITH INTERNATIONAL APPEAL

Director General of the Sharjah Commerce and Tourism Development Authority (SCTDA), Mohamed A. Al Noman, comments on the emirate's unique attributes and the growth of tourism.

What have been the key drivers behind the rapid success and sudden expansion in Sharjah's tourism sector?

At the SCTDA, we have been pursuing an aggressive promotional campaign by attending many high-profile exhibitions. Various efforts are underway to enhance the sector. The government has dedicated Dh 2 billion (\$545 million) to developing tourism and infrastructure. Also, the Sharjah International Airport expansion should enable our emirate to handle greater numbers of international travelers.

Could you elaborate on any cultural and noteworthy attractions that the emirate has to offer?

The UAE as a whole can be a beautiful, cultural experience, as each emirate compliments



MOHAMED A. AL NOMAN
Director General
SCTDA

every other – after all, we are one country. Some of the attractions Sharjah has to offer include the Natural History Museum, Desert Park, and Arabian Wildlife Center, which visitors can enjoy wherever they are staying within the UAE. Each emirate has its own attractions

and Sharjah has built a reputation for its cultural conservation and preservation of its authentic buildings and souqs. Qanat Al Qasba is a major draw for tourists and residents, and we are always developing new exhibitions and attractions.

What do the SCTDA's responsibilities involve?

Our activities include the organization and sponsorship of various events, such as the an-

nual international UIM-Formula 1 powerboat race, Formula 2000. The Sharjah spring and summer promotions, including the Sharjah Heritage days, are just some of the main local events that we support and sponsor. We organize and represent Sharjah in different tourism and commerce exhibitions all around the world, such as the ITB in Berlin, the ATM and the UAE-Germany Business Summit.

What are some of the opportunities for foreign investors interested in getting involved in the development in Sharjah?

We are always seeking to find new and profitable investment opportunities. Our efforts have seen us target European and Asian nations, and now the U.S. Overall, Sharjah is keen to encourage investment that can make a positive contribution to our growth. This is not just in tourism but also in business and industry, where multinationals are being encouraged to set up foreign direct investment in our emirate and even for firms to establish green field investment.

Go beyond time
reminisce over
the charismatic
city...

Souq Al Arsa

Sharjah

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
www.sharjahtourism.ae

Tel: +971 (6) 5566777, Fax: +971 (6) 5563000

P.O. Box 26661, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, E mail: sctda@sharjah.org

GOVERNMENT OF SHARJAH



SHARJAH COMMERCE & TOURISM
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



FROM REAL ESTATE TO MANUFACTURING, **AL-HASSAWI** CONTINUES IN FULL FORCE

The Al-Hassawi Group of Companies is a success story rooted in excellent leadership, equally outstanding personnel and acute business acumen



Al-Hassawi Group, a Kuwait-based real estate giant, was founded in the emirate of Sharjah in the UAE in the early 1970's by its late founder Mubarak Abdul Aziz Al-Hassawi. Since building its first hotel, the company maintained a steady unflinching momentum, growing from strength to strength, expanding into commercial, residential and office building construction.

Today, the Al-Hassawi Group of Companies in Sharjah includes the Kuwait Commercial Real Estate Centre, Sharjah Steel Pipes Manufacturing Company, SKM Air Conditioning and the Fawaz Refrigeration & Air Conditioning Company.

The perseverance and hard work that went into achieving this miracle has been passed down through the generations, ensuring that the current generation of Al-Hassawis carry on the vision of the company with just as much gusto.

"My grandfather always felt a special connection with Sharjah, which was why he started and grew his business here. This kinship is understood by his sons, daughters, grandsons and granddaughters alike, and we have all come to consider Sharjah as our second home," explains Mubarak Saud Al-Besharah.



The company also comprises a steel pipe manufacturing firm.

sharah, Managing Director of both the Group and the Kuwait Commercial Real Estate Centre Company.

Mr. Al-Hassawi's expansion plans for his company went on to include the establishment of the Bank of Sharjah in collaboration with BNP Paribas, the Government of Sharjah and other investors before heading full force into Sharjah's hotel industry.

The Al-Hassawi Group's present property portfolio in the emirate includes the Radisson



MUBARAK ABDUL AL-HASSAWI
Founder of the Al-Hassawi Group



ABDUL AZIZ AL-HASSAWI
Chairman of the Al-Hassawi Group

Hotel, Golden Beach Motel, Beach Hotel, Nova Park Hotel, Carlton Hotel and Al Mubarak Commercial and Residential Centre: a 15-floor tower with 204 luxury apartments, six floors of commercial space and double-storey retail mall.

Never ones to rely on the glory of their past, the group's new aspirations in the UAE include two hotels and a ten-storey residential building in Dubai's famous Palm Jumeirah and another hotel in Umm Al-Quwain. Also underway in Sharjah is the construction of a 132-apartment, seafront residential complex. The group is in discussion with Sharjah's planning authorities on how to explore the best possible way to develop another coastal site which stretches over 180 meters of beach covering an area of 20,000 m² property.

Mr. Al-Besharah attributes the group's success to the loyalty of its personnel saying, "Many of our employees have been with us



The five-star Radisson offers 300 exquisite rooms and suites.

since the 1970's and function in a family-like environment. We have happy staff with long employment records. This atmosphere of loyalty was created by the founder of the group and exists till today because we do our utmost to maintain and consolidate the same culture."

In the future, the Al-Hassawi Group will continue to expand in the GCC real estate sector aiming to capitalize on the huge potential that still exists in both commercial and residential property. "We endeavor to expand further with the help of new strategic alliances with investors who share in our vision," ends Mr. Al-Besharah. ■

INTERVIEW WITH MUBARAK SAUD AL-BESHARAH

MUBARAK SAUD AL-BESHARAH, Managing Director of the Al-Hassawi Group of Companies and Kuwait Commercial Real Estate in Sharjah speaks about the rise of emirate's star.

How do you see the development of Sharjah coming along?

With the way everything has been planned and coordinated by H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan the Ruler of Sharjah and H.H. the Crown Prince, the emirate has a very bright future. The leaders have an open mind, a great vision and wise consultants and advisers who are well equipped to lead the way and ensure the success of the emirate's development.

What do you think differentiates Sharjah from the other emirates in the UAE? What



MUBARAK SAUD AL-BESHARAH
Managing Director of the Al-Hassawi Group and Kuwait Commercial Real Estate

are its comparative advantages?

Sharjah has a culture that is different from the others. Sheikh Dr. Sultan has placed a heavy emphasis on culture and this is reflected in its architecture, which includes the buildings and mosques and the Arabic motifs and designs found across the emirate. From a business point of view, it has picked up a great deal over the last four to five years. I

believe Sharjah is more of a residential place; it promotes family life, which puts it in a different category from other cosmopolitan emirates like Dubai. Sharjah has become the emirate of choice for residence for expatriates working in Dubai owing to its proximity to the hub and relatively lower housing fees.

How would you describe the business atmosphere in the emirate?

We encounter nothing but encouragement and support from the official authorities regarding our business concerns and future expansion plans. This is emphasized by the ruler extending his relentless personal support and guidance to us, which has been extremely valuable and led to the significant business growth our group has witnessed in recent years.

NUJOOM
I · S · L · A · N · D · S
SHARJAH



ENG. ADNAN SAFFARINI OFFICE
DESIGN SUPERVISION & CONSULTANT



A PROJECT BY
شركة الحانو
AL HANOO
HOTELING COMPANY