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Kalahari Resorts Plans Expansion in Pocono Mountains

Family-owned resort working to bring its unique African themed park to East Coast

Wisconsin Dells, Wis. (Jan. 10, 2013) – Kalahari Resorts, home to one of America’s most successful family-owned indoor water parks, has begun planning and development on a proposed expansion in the Pocono Mountains – a \$350 million, 150-acre complex in Monroe County at Pocono Manor, tentatively scheduled to open in late 2014 or early 2015. The project would be completed in three phases. The first phase includes a resort with 450 luxury guest rooms and suites, a 100,000-square-foot indoor water park, a two-acre outdoor water park, a 65,000-square-foot convention center, a 30,000-square-foot indoor theme park/arcade and 6,000 square feet of retail space including two full-service restaurants.

Currently, Kalahari Resorts operates thriving resorts in Wisconsin Dells, Wis., and Sandusky, Ohio.

Kalahari recently submitted preliminary land development plans for the proposed Kalahari Resorts & Convention Center – Poconos development, which is expected to create over 1,500 new jobs once completed and boost the Pocono Mountains \$2.1 billion tourism industry. An economic impact study prepared by Hotel and Leisure Advisors estimates that the project would add about 1,200 construction jobs and another 700 full- and part-time jobs during its first year of operation. Visitors to the resort are also expected to contribute over \$18 million annually to the local economy.

“Our goal in the Pocono Mountains is to build on the success of our Midwest locations by providing regional tourists with a world-class destination for families and unmatched convention facilities for business groups,” says Todd Nelson, Owner and President of Kalahari Resorts. “As a family-owned business, it is always our goal to exceed the expectations of our guests in terms of service, amenities, food and entertainment. As we look to expand in the Pocono Mountains and contribute to the local economy, we want to extend a long-lasting welcome to area residents, visiting tourists and business travelers.”

The Kalahari development team is talking with local officials about a possible Tax Increment Financing (TIF) plan to help advance the new development and pay for infrastructure including gas, sewer, water and street improvements. The TIF is paid for by the real estate taxes assessed on the value of the Kalahari project. Kalahari will pay 100 percent of the TIF financing, not the community.

In Sandusky, where Kalahari opened a resort in 2005, a similar TIF agreement was put in place. Along with the \$7.4 million in public infrastructure improvements the project generated, \$1.4 million in surplus funds has also been realized from Kalahari's property taxes, far more than anticipated when the TIF was initially approved. The surplus tax money in Sandusky is slated for the local school district.

Kalahari Resorts are inspired by an African philosophy that embraces the spirit of ubuntu, a belief that every person's humanity is tied to everyone else's so that what you do affects the whole world. This philosophy is brought to life through Kalahari Resorts hospitality and African-themed décor featuring authentic art, furniture, and handicrafts from African artisans.

Founded in Wisconsin Dells in 2000 by owner Todd Nelson, the authentically African themed Kalahari Resorts debuted one of the most innovative and exciting water park resort and convention center destinations in the country, featuring a newly designed "all-under-one-roof" concept. In 2005, Nelson took his waterpark resort and convention center concept to Sandusky, Ohio, and the resort quickly became one of the region's most popular tourism and business travel destinations.

Since its conception, Kalahari Resorts has acted as a unique, family-owned and operated business, which is evident in the company's overall family oriented business plan and its day-to-day operations. Members of the Nelson family are located at both the Sandusky and Wisconsin Dells properties to regularly interact with customers and to work closely within local communities. The Nelson family is also dedicated to philanthropic efforts through its support of local charities, such as the United Way, and local schools through cash, in-kind donations and fundraising activities.

While additional details of the proposed Kalahari Poconos expansion are currently pending, Nelson continues to personally lead ongoing development discussions with local government officials, planning commissioners, and tourism officials. A key priority of these discussions is the assessment of systems and processes for the Kalahari development to help ensure a positive impact on the community's natural resources, including the local waterways. In addition, Nelson is dedicated to seeking out various sustainable efficiencies for the new expansion, which would result in improved lasting effects on the local environment.

"I have exceedingly high expectations of success for this expansion – not a day goes by that we're not all excited and eager to bring this plan to life," Nelson says. "We're looking forward to our continued work with members of the Poconos community as we strive to bring jobs and an unmatched entertainment experience to the region."

For more information about the current Kalahari resort locations, please visit <http://www.kalahariresorts.com/>.

About Kalahari Resorts

Kalahari Resorts in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin and Sandusky, Ohio deliver a "world-away" waterpark resort and conference experience beyond expectations. The authentically African-themed Kalahari Resorts, privately owned by the Nelson family, are home to America's largest indoor waterparks. All Kalahari resorts feature well-appointed guestrooms, full-service Spa Kalahari, a fully equipped fitness center, on-site restaurants, unique retail shops, and a state-of-the-art conference center. For reservation and guest information, call 1-877-KALAHARI

(525-2427) or visit: KalahariResorts.com. To learn more about Kalahari Resorts, members of the media are encouraged to visit KalahariMedia.com.