

Dubai: An International City Changing the World

By Thornton J. Williams, Williams McMillian PA

As the world comes out of the global recession, Dubai is poised to take center stage as one of the world's most dynamic cities.

Dubai is a city and emirate in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Over the last three decades, Dubai has become a major business center with a dynamic and diversified economy. With its strategic location, emergent infrastructure and increasing accessibility, Dubai is served by over 120 shipping lines and is linked via 85 airlines to over 130 global destinations. Additionally, the Emirate has two world class seaports, a major international airport and cargo village, and a modern highway network.

Likewise, a well-functioning public transportation system is critical to the economic development and growth prospects of every modern metropolis. In recent years, Dubai City has emerged as a global city and a business hub with an advanced public transport system including buses, a new Metro system, monorails, trams, taxis (by far the most frequently used means of public transport within the emirate), abras and water buses.

The Dubai Roads and Transport Authority ("RTA"), established a few years ago pursuant to Law No. 17, is responsible for planning and providing the regulatory requirements for transport, roads and traffic in the Emirate of Dubai, between Dubai and other UAE Emirates, and between Dubai and neighboring countries. Dubai is also investing heavily in developing the reach of its airline air transportation ability so that passengers from any city can fly direct to Dubai. The Dubai International Airport has won numerous awards for its excellence in design and services.

Although Dubai's economy has been built on the oil industry, the government recently made the decision to diversify the emirate's model of business with its main revenue source coming now from tourism, real estate, and financial services. With tourism driving its economy, Dubai is determined to be main contender worldwide in the world tourism

industry. Dubai is a top favorite tourist destination and an increased building boom in the emirate has led to many of the world's most breathtaking architectural projects being constructed in a city, including the largest skyscraper in the world, the highest apartment, the biggest mall, and one of the world's most unique luxury resorts.



Burj Al Arab, Dubai shown in foreground is one of the most photographed structures in the world, and consistently voted the world's most luxurious hotel. Designed to resemble a billowing sail, Burj Al Arab soars to a height of 1,053 feet, dominating the Dubai skyline. Illuminated at night by choreographed lighting representing water and fire.

Additionally, Dubai has recently attracted world attention through many innovative large construction projects and sports events. With projects like the Burj Al-Arab, the world's largest seven star hotel; the Burj Dubai (also known as the Burj Tower), currently the tallest man-made skyscraper structure on the face of the planet; the Palm Islands (also known as the Palm Dubai or The Palms), three man-made islands considered the Eighth Wonder of the World; Dubailand, the largest entertainment theme park on the planet twice the size of Disney World (a tourism, real estate, hospitality, entertainment, leisure and retail mega project); Dubai Sports City, the world's first purpose-built sports city; the Mall of Arabia; etc., the bar has been set high by Dubai. And Dubai is pouring massive amounts of capital into developing even bigger, more luxurious and expansive projects in the future.

In fact, construction on such a large scale has turned Dubai into one of the fastest growing cities in the world and is a part of Dubai's Strategic Plan 2015 to maintain economic growth and to put Dubai on the map of the world as a tourist destination of the world. Dubai is the second most expensive city in the region, and 20th most expensive city in the world. A City Mayors survey rated Dubai as 44th among the world's best financial cities in 2007, while another report by City Mayors indicated that Dubai was the world's 33rd richest city in 2009, in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP). Dubai is also an international financial centre and has been ranked 37th within the top 50 global financial cities as surveyed by the Mastercard Worldwide Centres of Commerce Index (2007), and 1st within the Middle East.

Undoubtedly, with the boom in Dubai's economy due to increased infrastructure growth, the Dubai engineering industry has more jobs than engineers to fill them. The amount of building and construction projects underway in Dubai has led to additional job growth in the City. Dubai's ambitious government plans to build for its rapidly expanding population and increased tourism has resulted in attractive investment opportunities to both the public and private sectors. The result being increased construction projects arising. With such amazing innovations and growth, it is easy to see how the 21st century is quickly becoming known as the "Age of Dubai." ■

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