

Sun, Oct 21, 2007, 07:44 GMT

Cold Stone Creamery Launches Flagship Store in the Middle East

Press Release

Patrick Wall, Commercial Attaché, US Commercial Service

19 October 2007

- Dhs 30 million to be invested in 40 stores across the Middle East by end of 2008

Dubai, UAE - Cold Stone Creamery, one of America's biggest ice cream retailers, last night launched its first ice cream outlet in the UAE's Dubai Festival City development as part of its Middle East expansion plans.

To celebrate its entry into the region Lee Knowlton, President of Kahala•Cold Stone, made a special visit to Dubai to inaugurate the new store, alongside Paul Sutphin, U.S. Consul General in Dubai. The evening boasted a vibrant display of music and entertainment with a live VJ for the public to enjoy.

Commenting on the launch Arif Ahmed, General Manager of Cold Stone Creamery Middle East said, "The Middle East is an

enormous market for the Food sector, which was reflected by the overwhelming response to the opening of Cold Stone Creamery at DFC. We are positive that the new ice cream outlet is going to be a huge success in the region."

This 1500 square feet store located in the Festival Square, Water Front Centre adds excitement to the overall ambience of the square. "It is like having a few minutes holiday," narrated one of the customers when asked on his overall experience.

It was pleasing to see the Cold Stone Creamery service crew taking curious customers through what is know as "beginning of the ice cream entertainment experience".

"The region's growing population has fuelled a boom for sweet snacks and with this in mind we are confident that we will sell above 1000 ice creams a day at our store."

The event, which drew huge crowd, saw families lining up for hours to receive their Cold Stone Creamery ice cream and experience of making their personalized and signature creations.

Cold Stone will open a further four stores in Dubai by the end of this year, starting with Al Ghurair branch in Deira, and 40 across the whole region by the end of 2008, with an investment of Dhs 30 million.

Cold Stone is targeting an annual turnover next year in the region of Dhs 32 million and aims to gain 10 per cent of the region's ice cream market by the end of 2008. By 2009, the company plans to have 25 to 30 per cent share.

It has partnered with **APPAREL GROUP**, a leading retailer to bring "The Ultimate Ice Cream Experience" to Ice Cream lovers in the Middle East.

Currently, APPAREL GROUP operates in 10 different countries, with 30 different brands such as Bally, Tommy Hilfiger, Kenneth Cole, Nine West, The Athlete's Foot, Sketchers, Raoul and has over 350 stores in these countries.

Based in Arizona in the United States, **Kahala•Cold Stone** reported total revenues of over Dh 4.4 billion last year.

Ahmed said, "**Cold Stone is in the business of making people happy**," indeed seeing the customers' response in Dubai Festival City. Without any doubt Cold Stone Creamery is the big threat to its competition in UAE and other Middle East countries.

- Ends -