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For Immediate Release

Birdair to Provide “Cloud” Cover at Zoo Miami

Going to the zoo can be the experience of a lifetime. Guests to [Zoo Miami](#), also known as The Miami-Dade Zoological Park and Gardens, will long be talking about their visit after the new Front Entry Plaza is completed. The new plaza will include a special “cloud” structure that will encircle the plaza from above, treating visitors to an awesome light show that is especially mesmerizing at nighttime. This free form steel structure will be wrapped with approximately 38,000 square feet of [Birdair’s](#) PTFE fiberglass on both the top side and façade and with PVC mesh on the underside of the cloud, supported by tree-like columns.

Pretty as a Peacock (or Flamingo)

The new plaza will amaze visitors with charming creature art and unique design elements. The Front Entry will come to life with artistic and visual signature features, including an Art in Public Places installation and a 100-foot tower with animal silhouettes and video screens.

The new Front Entry Plaza will also include a brand new gift shop and café, a multi-purpose event space and guest relations. And for the first time, an animal exhibit will be located outside of the gate, featuring the beautiful pink flamingos in a pond under the “cloud” structure. The splendor and state-of-the-art design of the new Front Entry Plaza will set the tone for visitors, adding a special artistic touch to the Florida project.

“The new Front Entry Plaza will be a great addition to Zoo Miami, and Birdair’s cloud is an integral part of that design, helping to create an iconic look that zoo guests—both young and old—will enjoy,” Tom Connell, Business Development Manager for Birdair.

Teamwork

Architecture firm [URS Design](#) and general contractor [PCL Construction](#) are working to complete the Front Entry Plaza project. During the planning process they realized they needed something special to make the Front Entry Plaza beautiful and unique, something which would provide sunlight while offering weather protection for zoo guests. They turned to Birdair, the expert on custom tensile structures, to help with the overall design of the tensile cloud. As a result, Birdair will be designing, fabricating, supplying and installing PTFE fiberglass membrane, clamping and the structural supporting steel.

Part of History

Zoo Miami is the largest and oldest zoological garden in Florida, and the only tropical zoo in the United States. Opened in 1980 as Miami Metro Zoo with only 12 exhibits, Zoo Miami now houses more than 2,000 animals on 740 acres and has more than 100 exhibits. After suffering damage along with the rest of Miami when Hurricane Andrew, a Category 5 Hurricane, made

landfall in southern Florida and devastated parts of Miami in 1992, Zoo Miami slowly recovered and regained a substantial following. It now hopes to attract even more visitors to the area with the new plaza.

A Material that Matters

Fabric structures are not only visually appealing but also environmentally sensitive and economically competitive. [PTFE fiberglass](#) is Energy Star and Cool Roof Rating Council certified. PTFE fiberglass membranes reflect as much as 73 percent of the sun's energy, and certain grades of PTFE fiberglass can absorb 14 percent of the sun's energy while allowing 13 percent of natural daylight and seven percent of re-radiated energy (solar heat) to transmit through, meaning that zoo guests will enjoy the sunlight without the scorching heat.

The lightweight membrane also provides a cost-effective solution requiring less structural steel to support the roof or façade, and enabling long spans of column-free space. In addition, membrane offers building owners reduced construction costs and maintenance costs compared to traditional building materials.

Fabric roof forms are curved between supporting elements in a manner reflective of the flow of tension forces within the membrane. With the exception of air-supported structures, these curvatures are anticlastic in nature. The curving forms of fabric roofs have dramatic appeal. Another attractive feature of tensioned fabric structures is their enormous range of spanning capability, giving it the ability to create unique structures, such as Zoo Miami's "cloud."

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***About Birdair:** Birdair, Inc. is the leading specialty design build contractor of custom tensile structures throughout the world. In addition to pre-construction services such as design assistance, budgeting, construction methodologies and project scheduling, Birdair provides design-build solutions in all aspects of project design, fabrication, installation and maintenance. The company offers a selection of architectural fabric membranes, including PTFE fiberglass, ETFE film, PVC and Tensotherm™, an insulated tensioned membrane system. Birdair, based in Buffalo, NY, is a member of the Taiyo Kogyo Group, with operations serving North and South America and other international locations. For more information about Birdair, [like us on Facebook](#), call 1-800-622-2246 or visit www.birdair.com.*

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