



Project Data

Key Scope Items:

- Business Plan Analysis; Review for KTDA Compliance
- Economic, Fiscal and Employment Impact Analysis

Development Budget: \$172,500,000

HSP Professionals Involved in Project: Rob Hunden, Evan Holmes, Rob Smitherman

Time of Service: 2011

Ark Encounter Theme Park KTDA Review & Impact Analysis

Williamstown, Kentucky

Hunden Strategic Partners evaluated the application to the Kentucky Tourism Development Act (KTDA) to develop the Ark Encounter Theme Park. The Park is proposed as an 800-acre modern-day interpretation of Biblical events and would include a full-scale Noah's Ark, Tower of Babel and other attractions. The project has not been without controversy. It is proposed by Answers in Genesis, a religious organization that also built the Creation Museum near Cincinnati, a museum that depicts the beginning of the world from a Creationist standpoint.

HSP completed a number of analyses related to the project, including a review of the park's business plan, a projection of annual attendance and revenue from ticket sales, parking, food and beverage, entertainment and retail sales. Most important, HSP conducted an economic, fiscal and employment impact analysis for the project under two different scenarios. The analysis showed the new economic and other impacts to Kentucky from spending outside the Commonwealth over a ten-year period. The results showed if the project would be eligible for rebates under the Kentucky Tourism Development Act.

The Park faced criticism from various groups and garnered national media attention regarding the Commonwealth's proposed use of sales tax rebates for a religious-themed project. The analysis concluded that the project was eligible for rebates as outlined by the KTDA and was approved. The project is expected to begin construction in late-2011 and open to the public by 2014.