Economy Expected To Slow Development Of Massive Dubailand

By Erik Swanson, Staff Writer

USC-Marshall Sports Business Institute Exec Dir David Carter this weekend will return to the U.S. following a weeklong trip to study the convergence of sports and entertainment in Dubai, and he said the inevitability that the massive Dubailand development will "measurably slow down is already evident to Dubailand management." After previous meetings with Dubai Sports City (DSC) officials and International Cricket Council and Dubai Sports Council execs, Carter met with officials for Dubailand, which he called Dubai's "most extensive and unbelievable undertaking." DSC is one of 45 proposed mega-projects visualized within Dubailand, and in all, less than half of the projects are underway with five already operational. With an anticipated total of 3 billion square feet and measuring 28 miles across at its greatest width, elements of the development can be seen for miles. Dubailand ultimately will host around 10 full 18-hole golf courses, highlighted by Tiger Woods Dubai, scheduled to open next year. Universal Studios and Dreamworks also are anticipated to have a major presence, including a "Restless Planet" theme park that will have life size electronic dinosaurs roaming around.

UNIMAGINABLE AMBITION: Carter said Dubai's "unimaginable ambition is on full display with this planned mega-mega-mega development," which as conceived, is "completely over the top." Carter noted real Bengal tigers greeted his group in the lobby atrium at Dubailand corporate offices. And while it is expected that Dubailand officials will scale back the timing of the delivery of some elements given the economy, they are not expected to restrict the size or scale of them. Carter said it "remains their goal to have 15 million visitors by 2015 and 2.5 million residents by 2018," though he noted these targets "will surely slip." But tourism is essential...
Carter said the emirate is "hoping to offset any decline in oil revenue in the decades to come by becoming the destination city throughout the Middle East." Carter: "With so much at stake long-term, one has to believe that they will work feverishly to ensure a compelling sports and entertainment mix, even if it takes far longer than originally anticipated."