

INSIDE:
Cedar Fair's Raffi Kaprelyan shares what's new at Knott's
SEE PAGES 28, 30

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www.amusementtoday.com

Typhoon Texas makes landfall in Katy, Texas



The newest Texas water park opened Memorial Day weekend in Katy, Texas. The massive water park features more than 35 slide paths from WhiteWater West stretching more than one-third of a mile. Seen here giving a big Texas welcome are from left, Evan Barnett, general manager; Susan Kruizinga, programming manager; Typhoon, park mascot; and Steve Mayer, marketing director. See full coverage, pages 14 and 16. AT/TIM BALDWIN

Mall of America debuts FlyOver America

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — This past spring, FlyOver America debuted as the latest draw to Mall of America, an attraction in its own right.

The Mall of America opened in 1992 and growth shows no sign of stopping. Reported attendance of more than 40 million visitors annually, the area is now a magnet for shoppers, convention goers and tourists. Hotels in the area continue to house more and more visitors to the Twin Cities area.

The newest attraction is FlyOver America, a project partnership between Brogent Technologies, Soaring Attractions LP and Vekoma. Following on the success of FlyOver

Canada, a stand-alone attraction that opened in 2013, this new installation was deemed to be a good fit for Mall of America, virtually an international destination. Since its opening in Vancouver, the FlyOver Canada attraction welcomed its one millionth visitor in September of last year.

The debut on American soil has been extremely well-received. People have embraced the experience with great enthusiasm.

Andrew Strang, owner and co-founder of Soaring Attractions LP, was excited about the content. "On a big project like this, one of the great benefits is working with a lot of creative people. We really start out looking at what we wanted to capture regionally," Strang said. "Then we looked at texture, color, sea-

► See MALL, page 4

SeaWorld Orlando turns to B&M, again



AT: Tim Baldwin
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ORLANDO, Fla. — With properties across the country, if not the globe, having made the hypercoaster a commonplace theme park staple, it is rather surprising that the vacation Mecca of Orlando, or even Central Florida, has somehow missed out on that component over the past quarter century. But, no more.

SeaWorld Orlando has just recently introduced Mako, a 200-foot coaster that breaks through all sorts of records for the tourist destination. A hypercoaster is typically known for numerous drops without any type of inversions. Although the region is known for a complement of outstanding coasters, many of which are

SeaWorld Orlando's new Mako steel hypercoaster was supplied by B&M and is now their third roller coaster at the marine life park. Mako sets records as the tallest, longest and fastest coaster in Orlando. The new ride opened on June 10, 2016. COURTESY SEAWORLD ORLANDO

► See MAKO, page 6

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NEWSTALK

EDITORIAL: Gary Slade, gslade@amusementtoday.com

Tid Bits



Slade

Details on "The Networking Event of the Year" have been released and all amusement industry professionals are invited. The 2016 Golden Ticket Awards, presented annually by *Amusement Today*, and hosted this year by Cedar Point Resort are set for September 9 and 10 at the beautiful Sandusky, Ohio beachside resort.

The event is free to all attendees to attend, but new this year is a special fundraiser ticket purchase aboard the Jet Express boat tour that will benefit the ongoing efforts and growing collections found at the National Roller Coaster Museum & Archives.

Complete details can be found on page 4. To view the schedule of events or register visit: www.GoldenTicketAwards.com.

Overheard recently by an amusement industry supplier out West while attending a Major League Baseball game: "It's too bad these MLB clubs don't think of themselves as being in the family entertainment business the way amusement parks do. It's still all about pleasing the guest after they have entered the facility. You can trade out the baseball players for the rides and the rest is the same. It all comes down to the cleanliness of the facility, food, entertainment and pricing." *Amusement Today* could not agree more. The two industries [parks and sports facilities] could certainly learn from each other.

Good news from Kissimmee, Fla. where the John Arie family, owners of Fun Spot America there, have announced they have reached a partnership deal with its neighbor Old Town USA to move and operate four rides at the unique shopping/entertainment center by September 2016. Two new rides will be highlighted: a SBF/Visa Group-supplied Head Rush 360 via Rides 4U and a new Fabbri Ferris Wheel that Old Town will install. Visitors who have missed the rides action at Old Town in recent years while strolling the shop sidewalks, won't have to wait much longer for their thrill fix. Congratulations to Fun Spot America and Old Town USA for making this partnership a new reality.

FLINT'S VIEW: Bubba Flint



INDUSTRY OPINION: Andrew Mellor, amellor@amusementtoday.com

The feel good factor

The fact that the attractions industry is in a very good place at the moment and enjoying some very successful and exciting times is pretty clear for all to see when attending some of the key trade shows around the world. There is no shortage of new ride and attraction projects being built in existing parks and other venues, while the number of new parks currently under construction, particularly in China and the Middle East, is adding some major new players to a thriving business.

This encouraging situation is also born out in the recently published 2015 TEA/AECOM Theme Index and Museum Index, the annual study of attendance at top theme parks, waterparks and museums. Now in its 10th year, the study is created and distributed by the Themed Entertainment Association (TEA) and the economics practice at AECOM and this latest version shows that, compared to the previous year, attendance grew by over five per cent at the top 25 theme parks in the world and over seven per cent for the top 10 theme park groups. Attendance at the top 20 waterparks showed a four per cent increase.



Mellor

According to the study, global theme park attendance in 2015 was driven largely by strong performances of the major Asian and U.S. operators. These included OCT Parks China, Chimelong, Fantawild, SongCheng, Disney and Universal, with visits to theme parks in North America being up almost six per cent, while the figure is almost seven per cent in Asia.

As noted, the study looks at the top theme parks, water parks and museums, but the growth and success being shown by these venues is also reflected elsewhere, with numerous other venues also enjoying increased visitor numbers as they too continue to invest in new rides, attractions and facilities to ensure visitors keep coming back for more.

The unprecedented park construction going on in Dubai at present adds even further to the feel good factor for the industry and we can only hope the anticipated number of visitors to those fabulous new destinations will be high enough for long-term success. But it all just adds to a truly great time to be in a great industry

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2 MINUTE DRILL



COMPILED: Janice Witherow

Kristin Siebeneicher, Six Flags Great Adventure

When you first meet **Kristin Siebeneicher**, you notice her boundless energy, sense of humor and skilled gift as a communicator. All of these characteristics come in handy for Kristin on the job as communications manager for **Six Flags Great Adventure** in Jackson, N.J. Kristin grew up traveling around the United States visiting amusement parks with her parents on summer vacations, and she considers herself a true park and industry enthusiast. When not at work, she loves to travel with her fiancé, is an avid "foodie" and enjoys spoiling her dog and two cats.



Six Flags Great Adventure's Kristin Siebeneicher is seen here with the park's popular B&M-built Nitro roller coaster. The steel coaster placed No. 5 in the 2015 Golden Ticket Awards survey conducted annually by *Amusement Today*. COURTESY SIX FLAGS

Title:

Communications Manager.

Number of years with Six Flags:

20.

Best thing about the industry...

It's fun, fast paced and ever changing. There is no "typical" day, which keeps it fresh.



Siebeneicher

Favorite amusement ride...

Nitro.

If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be...

Doing PR somewhere in the entertainment industry – theater, movies, music.

Biggest challenge facing our industry...

The litigious nature of our society.

The thing I like most about amusement/water park season is...

The noise. It's the sound of fun!

The last time I wore tennis shoes was...

Every day I'm in the park. I'm too old to sacrifice comfort for fashion...or at least my back tells me I am!

Coollest national sports mascot:

Phillies Phanatic. That thing is crazy!

When it comes to New Jersey, people are always surprised to learn...

It's green, it's beautiful, and we don't all look and sound like we stepped out of "The Sopranos" or "Jersey Shore."

My favorite Sunday morning activity is...

Making a big breakfast at home with my fiancé.

My childhood ambition was to...

Be a cast member on "Saturday Night Live." I love making people laugh.

I have always wanted to learn how to...

Use a sewing machine!

When I meet someone for the first time, the first thing I notice is...

Their smile.

For lunch: do you grab something on the go or sit down and eat?

Everyone knows food is a major priority for me. I'd always prefer to sit down and decompress over food if time permits.

The best place I have ever eaten ice cream would have to be...

The Wildwood boardwalk. Nothing beats sitting on a bench by the biggest beach you've ever seen, listening to the waves crash and "watch the tram car, please" blasting as the tram rolls by. It's a little slice of heaven.

Your take on your local TV newscasts?

They can really run the gamut of quality depending on the market ranking. It's really fun to see the differences in production value and how they approach a story.

You are invited to the White House. What room would you most want to see?

The Press Briefing Room.

It's July! My favorite thing to grill is...

Hot dogs, just a little burnt is perfect!

The book I am reading right now is...

Outlander. I'm obsessed with the TV show.

I am most afraid of...

Heights. I don't enjoy any extended period of time in the air!

Favorite ballpark food:

Everything. I eat my way through all major sporting events. If I had to narrow it down, I guess I'd say crabby (Old Bay) fries.

My next vacation will be...

Food & wine festival in Aspen this summer.

Least favorite summertime chore...

Trying to keep plants alive! I have a black thumb.

In one word, describe your office...

Cluttered.

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

Presented by the National Rollercoaster Museum

COMPILED: Richard Munch



JULY

•**1903:** The new Figure Eight roller coaster at **Sea Breeze Park**, Rochester, New York opened to the public in July and did a landmark business as cars were filled with passengers all day long. Management emphasized that the ride was safe for children as well as adults. Built by the **Ingersoll Company** of Pittsburgh, and engineered by **Irwin Vettel**, the ride cost \$20,000, which included a large pavilion seating 500, the manager's office and coaster loading platform. Of note was that each cream and maroon car had a girl's name on the front. Sea Breeze competed with **Ontario Beach Park** on the lakefront, and would be recognized as one of the few cities in America with two amusement parks.

•**1913:** Injunction proceedings in a Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, court pitted the management of **Woodside Park** against local residents who wanted to restrain the operation of two coasters at the popular **Fairmount Park** location. This included the Ben Hur Racer and the Whirlwind. The result of the contest was announced on July 22 which permitted the park time to find ways to reduce noise from the two rides. The mansions directly south of the park were mainly objecting to the continual screams of the passengers and the whirling of the motors and machinery. It is noted that boards may have been placed vertically along the catwalks facing the residences, although a later design – the Tornado – was an almost completing tunneled ride. Noise would continue to be an issue at countless parks across the nation including **Playland** in Rye, New York, **Dorney Park** in Allentown, Pennsylvania and even **Bells Amusement Park** in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

•**1921:** Seventy visitors became stranded on **Burlington Island**, Burlington, New Jersey, on the evening of July 4. Serviced by steamship, the last boat returning to Philadelphia had filled to capacity, leaving the remaining visitors to tough it out on the island overnight. Located in the middle of the Delaware River, adjacent to Bristol, Pennsylvania, the amusement park had been crowded the entire day, and many of the visitors, wanting to take advantage of the parks attractions and shows stayed until the last moment. When they arrived at the dock, they were told there was no more room and would have to remain on the island until morning. With no other recourse, the stragglers used the lawns and park benches to sleep, until the first boat from the city arrived the next morning.

•**1937:** *The Daily Argus* (Mount Vernon, New York) newspaper of July 31 carried a story titled 'Speed Thrill Devices Popular at **Playland**' referring to Westchester County, New York's wonderful amusement park. The article suggested that, "Love and fear are the thrill ingredients that go into amusement park coasters and rides." The story emphasized the importance of placing at least one thriller in the park as the signature attraction. It stated that county park officials were especially proud of the Airplane Coaster which they attribute to a lot of marriage proposals, stating that "when a girl screams, her bashful boyfriend puts his arm around her. It helps break the ice." Ironically the article ran an accompanying generic photograph of the **Rosenthal** brothers standing on their new Bobsled ride at **Palisades Amusement Park** in New Jersey, which was actually a competitor to Playland.

•**1962:** The sale of rides at **Celeron Park**, near Jamestown, New York, took place on July 23. The park, which had opened in 1894, had been damaged by a tornado in June 1959, including the wrecking of the park's Greyhound roller coaster, originally opened in 1924. The owner, **Harry A. Illions**, was unable to rebuild the ride and it had become obvious that the park could never rebound without their signature attraction. The coaster's mechanical system was purchased by the owners of **Cabana Beach Park**, in Bridgeville, Pennsylvania, to be used in reconstructing the ride there. Other rides sold included the Magic Carpet, Dodgem, Merry Go Round and Aeroplane ride. No further information could be found about the whereabouts of this equipment.

2016 Golden Ticket Awards event info, registration now online

Two-day event includes boat ride fundraiser for National Roller Coaster Museum

SANDUSKY, Ohio — Save the date for “The Networking Event of the Year”! The red carpet will be rolled out for the amusement industry at the beautiful Cedar Point amusement park and resort in Sandusky, Ohio, for this year’s “don’t miss” event on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 9-10. Visit with long time industry friends and enjoy meeting new colleagues during *Amusement Today’s* annual Golden Ticket Awards. The complete itinerary, registration and hotel information are now available at: GoldenTicketAwards.com.

The Golden Ticket Awards event will officially kick off on Friday, Sept. 9, with specialty tours of Cedar Point, networking opportunities, a festive cocktail reception and Chef’s Table Food Feast. On Saturday, Sept. 10, attendees will enjoy play time in the park, an optional – and unique – Lake Erie cruise with amazing vantage points of Cedar Point (proceeds of the \$75.00 ticket price will benefit the National Roller Coaster Museum & Archives) and finally the awards show itself, which will be an Academy Awards theme... literally walk



the red carpet and dress the part if you wish!

To check out the itinerary and hotel information for the Golden Ticket Awards, as well as to register, please log on to GoldenTicketAwards.com. This event is reserved for working professionals in the amusement industry. Representatives from parks and attractions, manufacturers, suppliers, consultants and more will come together to network and celebrate another industry season.

The lakeside Hotel Breakers at Cedar Point will serve as the host hotel for the event.

Please refer to GoldenTicketAwards.com for specific information and rates.

This is the 19th annual year for the Golden Ticket Awards; they are presented to the “Best of the Best” in the amusement industry and are calculated from an international poll conducted by *Amusement Today*.

Complete results of the 2016 Golden Ticket Award winners will be released on GoldenTicketAwards.com and AmusementToday.com at the close of the awards ceremony.

► MALL

Continued from page 1

sons, activities... We do a lot of preproduction before we even go out and start filming. We have a very good idea of what we want to capture.”

Strang said the Soaring team visited around 40 locations before filming began. The list was whittled down to 28 scenes with more than 50 hours of footage. *Amusement Today* asked how a team edits down such monumental footage to a film of nine minutes. “It involved a lot of arm wrestling and coffee among the creative team,” he joked.

The experience begins with those waiting for their “flight” being positioned in a pre-show area where scenes of the United States and trivia questions help set the stage for the experience. Next, participants are grouped in rows for their positioning in the viewing dome. The obligatory safety briefing might be the most unusual of all aspects of the ride — it’s sung. From blue grass to country to rap, flyers are given instruction on how to board properly through American music. A bit corny, but lighthearted nonetheless.

Many riders have remarked how the ride differs from the attraction’s more well-known predecessor: Disney’s *Soarin’*. In that version, riders other than those on the top row notice feet of those riders hanging above them. The ingenious boarding and ride system on *FlyOver America* differs greatly

from the Disney version originally opened in 2001. Contrary to the swoop up flying apparatus into the screen, riders board in nine different pods, again in three stacked rows. There is no swoop up, but an advancement forward. Once the experience starts, riders move forward away from the floors while in sudden darkness. When the film begins, fog and mist allow passengers to enter the film while in the clouds.

With beautiful scenery from around the country, the experience is accented by mist, motion, music and even scents. “The [music] was recorded with a 50-piece orchestra at the famous and historic Newman Scoring Stage, 20th Century Fox Studios in Los Angeles,” said Strang. “The score was developed in conjunction with the editing of the film. The composer was Jacob Yoffee.”

The ride contains 61 seats that have six degrees of motion — pitching up and down, swaying left and right, and tilting to the left and right. Each pod lets every rider feel these movements that are in sync with the film. Operationally, the clever edge to this design is that each pod works independently. During light periods of the day, all pods do not have to enter the film, minimalizing maintenance and wear and tear when unnecessary.

Filming took place using a jet to gather the footage, including one scene in which USAF jets choreographed the aerobatics. It took six takes



FlyOver America is the newest attraction at Mall of America, placed adjacent to Nickelodeon Universe. The new attraction is a partnership between Brogent Technologies, Soaring Attractions LP and Vekoma Rides.

COURTESY SOARING ATTRACTIONS

to nail it. Another notable scene shows bikers speeding atop mountaintop trails and very thin precipices. During *Amusement Today’s* visit, a row of riders breathlessly mumbled, “That’s nuts!”

Following the captivating film/ride experience, guests exit through the ubiquitous gift shop. While there, many large photographs help explain how the film was produced and a gigantic map of the United States lets riders see where they had just “flown over.” Many riders were engaged in confirming their suspicions of which scenes they recognized and where they had questions. Prior to boarding, guests are photographed in front of a green screen and following the film, can see themselves involved in the flight. The for-purchase photos are done by Amazing Pictures.

For many industry officials, Brogent Technologies

may not be a familiar company. Based in Taiwan, the company has done different attractions at a park in Taiwan, both an I-Ride, such as the *FlyOver* attractions as well as a D-Ride, which is more of an interactive dark ride experience.

“Last year we co-produced a ride film based on the most popular comic in Japan,” said Tim Chen, director of sales & marketing for Brogent. “It’s very popular. It attracts a lot of die-hard comic fans.” The I-Ride can feature both live-action film or CGI content, which Brogent currently produces.

Nathan Jones, vice president of sales & marketing: North America for Vekoma said, “When we first met with Brogent [we] really saw this as an attraction that could be rolled out to amusement parks, theme parks and FECs — and remember at that time that Brogent was just a soft-

ware development company. This was somewhat of a side business for them, but not taking their full attention. [Vekoma] told them ‘This was a full-time company that you could roll out around the world.’ From that point on, discussions began with ‘This isn’t our world.’ And that was the impetus of our partnership — the sales and marketing.”

Jones also said Vekoma helps with experience with the execution side, product management and TUV certification. “The front end,” said Jones.

Domingo Vergoossen, director, ride systems for *FlyOver*, commented, “With *FlyOver Canada*, it was actually built on a pier. There was no crane access. The fact that the I-Ride comes in relatively small modules is very helpful in getting it into a building through roughly a 10 by 10-foot space.”

Strang said *Soaring Attractions* is currently working on *FlyOver Hawaii* and *FlyOver Alaska* films. In addition, seasonal films have already been involved for the *FlyOver* attractions. For example, Santa enlists guests to help save Christmas during the flight. It has already become a popular tradition at *Christmastime in Vancouver*.

When asked why the decision to build at Mall of America, Strang said, “This is a natural place. It really fit into our brand. We looked at the numbers...16 million tourists. That’s why you see *SeaLife* here and the latest *Crayola Experience*.”



CONGRATULATIONS MALL OF AMERICA!

On behalf of Management and Staff of Brogent Technologies and Vekoma Rides Manufacturing we sincerely congratulate Mall of America with the opening of their newest i-Ride attraction FlyOver America®.

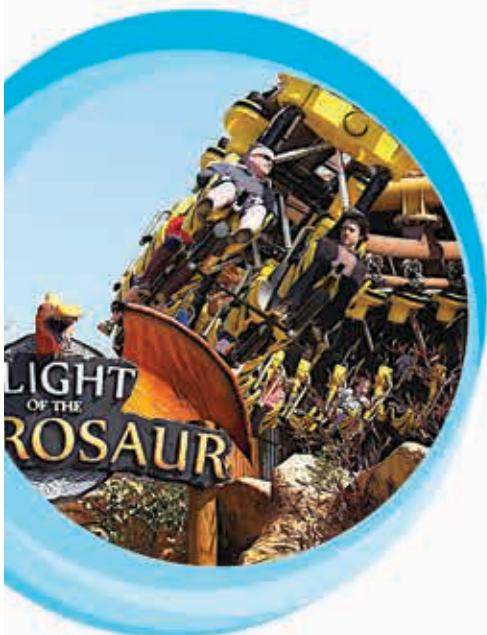
FlyOver America® is a flight simulation ride that brings guests on a breathtaking, aerial tour of some of the greatest landmarks and regions throughout the United States in virtual flight technology. The attraction is a fully immersive experience including wind, mist and even scents while soaring across some of America's most spectacular sights.



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►MAKO

Continued from page 1

manufactured by the Swiss firm of Bolliger and Mabilard (B&M), it is not until the release of Mako that park goers in Orlando can now enjoy this missing ingredient of the theme park spectrum.

Along with sister park Busch Gardens Tampa just over an hour away and Universal Studios down the street, the B&M catalog is highly represented: multi-looping, dive machine, inverted, floorless, flying — those are all accounted for. Now, with two to three years in development, a hypercoaster can be added to the list.

“Our relationship with B&M goes back to the early 90s (with Busch Gardens Tampa),” said Mike



Denninger

Denninger, vice president of theme park development and design. “This is our 10th B&M coaster in our system of parks. We’re very familiar with B&M and we love B&M. When we set out to do this project, we knew we had several products of theirs in our parks, so we saw how Apollo’s Chariot (Busch Gardens Williamsburg) was a fan favorite. We needed to do something like this in this market.”

Mako is the third B&M coaster in the SeaWorld Orlando park, following Kraken (floorless) and Manta (flying).

SeaWorld is all about telling stories, generally in regard to educating people about animals and marine life, in addition to conservation of the environment and protection of a variety of species. Now, park



management feels that the entire storyline of the shark has come to fruition. With shark observations and encounters already in place, not to mention the park’s signature restaurant: Sharks Underwater Grill and Bar, guests are now fully engaged with the entirety of the misunderstood creature of the deep with a new roller coaster to bring the message home.

“There is no doubt the coaster will bring more interest. The Shark Encounter has been a feature of the park for many years and is a stop point for most guests. Mako helps tie this shark realm together,” said Jim Kinsler, assistant curator of fishes. “What’s significant about the area is that we have new educational opportunities out front, so we can teach our guests about shark conservation, which is critically important right now. Folks can move through at their own pace and they have facts and information and comparisons for folks to understand. It helps dispel that myth about sharks being dangerous and scary creatures.” According to Kinsler, the shark population is in danger with a hundred million sharks being lost each year. “They are an animal that needs to be protected. They’re going to disappear, and if they do, it is catastrophic to our oceans.”

“There is a whole story here,” added Denninger. “Records are important, but not the most important. We don’t just put a coaster in; that’s not what we’re about. We wanted to connect guests with nature. Sharks are about speed and agility, and Mako is about that, too.”

After the 200-foot climb, the steel coaster plunges riders



down several hills along with some nicely executed curves with some visual near-misses with support structures. The true distinction between this ride and anything else in Central Florida is an abundance of “airtime,” coaster lingo for negative Gs. The floating sensations occur at least nine times, and are executed perfectly — thrilling, yet comfortable. Secured with just a lap restraint, riders on Mako are provided a dynamic roller coaster experience without any loops, so there is no need for over-the-shoulder harnesses.

“We wanted to overdeliver on airtime,” Denninger told *Amusement Today*.

“Ninety percent of this ride is over water,” said Brian Morrow, vice president of theme park experience and design. “It would be a very strange coaster in a SeaWorld park to not have water involved. We really wanted to make sure we optimized the water we have in our park. These are natural waterways and lakes, and they are very important to us.”

In true SeaWorld fashion, the installation is draped in creativity. The station is beautifully themed and disguised as a shipwreck, with lush landscaping throughout the queue.

One of the more noticeable clever elements is an image of sharks and rays swimming above the riders as they load the train. Once dispatched, that “water” turns purple and all the sharks then converge and leave the station with the riders, in essence making each rider a shark in the experience.

“Building a coaster is

building a coaster, but building a good coaster takes skill and patience and artistry,” said Morrow. “To place the guests in the point of view of a shark takes multiple tools to do that; music and media content are the big tools we used with Mako. You will hear music all around; there are seven synced zones of music. Guests won’t necessarily notice, but they will feel it.”

Spectators are also integrated into the music. The finale to the coaster layout swoops overhead to the plaza of Shark Wreck Reef. As the train approaches, the music builds, using a 48,000-watt surround-sound system, creating a moment to stop guests in their tracks and to engage them in the coaster experience as a non-rider. People in the “shark realm,” as SeaWorld staff refer to it, might also notice a new mural painted by Guy Harvey, artist and conservationist who created the Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation.

“I am a front seat guy,” laughed Morrow, when he was asked where he preferred to sit. Truth be told, there is not a single seat on the coaster that doesn’t deliver a smooth, outstanding experience. It is of little doubt it will do phenomenally well in the Orlando market.



In the Mako-themed area is this beautifully themed Sharks Underwater Grill & Bar (above). Below, the Shark Encounter gives SeaWorld guests an up close and educational look at sharks. AT/TIM BALDWIN



FAST FACTS

Name/Park

SeaWorld Orlando/Mako

Type

Hypercoaster

Marketing

Tallest, fastest and longest roller coaster in Orlando

Height/Length/Speed

200 feet/4,760 feet/
73 mph

Trains

3, 28 passengers each

Manufacturer

Bolliger & Mabilard

Opening

June 10, 2016



Morrow

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INTERNATIONAL

► Mack coaster thrills at Walibi Holland— Page 9 / Disney donates to China children's hospitals — Page 10

Jora Entertainment creates storylines for new Wildlands Adventure Zoo

AT: Andrew Mellor
amellor@amusementtoday.com

EMMEN, The Netherlands — A popular attraction venue in the Netherlands previously known as Zoo Emmen was reopened earlier this year with a new name and with a brand new experience on offer for visitors.

Wildlands Adventure Zoo Emmen as it is now called has undergone a complete transformation to offer guests a journey of discovery within the animal theme park through three different areas and coupled to a strongly related story developed by Dutch company Jora Entertainment.

The company also developed a special 4D movie and was responsible for all show technology, developing custom-made shows and entertainment programs for the entire park. A V-Ride from Brogent/Vekoma, a Mack Rides boat ride and a safari tour created by the park itself are also on offer, while Aniba Productions produced all the shows and street entertainment.

Each of the three individual areas — Jungola, Serenga and Nortica — has its own theme and offers its own experiences. In Jungola guests can embark on a boat trip along the banks of the Rimbula river to discover the jungle where they encounter monkeys and ring-tailed lemurs, discover a cave filled with fireflies and sail close by the elephants. On leaving the boarding station visitors hear the voice of Jungle Jim on the boat radio who guides them along the ride, providing information on the area and how he survived in the jungle. Jora Entertainment developed the story for the boat ride and produced all the sound and special effects.

In the Nortica area, Jora Entertainment also assisted in the development of the Arctic 1, a the 4D ride that takes guests on a test expedition as they fly over the landscape below. For this the company produced the 3D film as well as the pre-show movie in the queuing area and provided the whole area with themed lightning and sound. A sea lion show can also be found in the Nortica area, while in the research station, guests descend into the earth with the Terra Explorer and travel millions of years back in time along the outcrops of Nortica.

In Serenga, guests can enjoy the Serenga Safari, exploring the vast savannah to get up close to animals such as giraffes, rhinos and many more.

Storytelling, Jora Entertainment's core business, distinguishes the park from other zoos in Europe and the company's experience director Johnny Ruisch explained: "Four years ago we were invited to contribute innovating ideas and stories to renew the former zoo. The park was no longer unique and was ready for a complete renovation. By developing a story which is part of the entertainment experience, we have ensured that what is real is even more fun. A wonderful project that we are very proud of."



Above, visitors can give the Wildlands elephants a shower with special water pumps – when they come close enough. Right, Jungle Jim is a character within the storyline of the Jungola area, as well as providing the narrative on the boat ride. Bottom two photos, an assortment of street entertainment forms part of the offering at the new Wildlands Adventure Zoo. COURTESY WILDLANDS ADVENTURE ZOO



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Mirabilandia adds new Far West Valley themed area

AT: Andrew Mellor
amellor@amusementtoday.com

RAVENNA, Italy — A range of new attractions, a new themed area and a variety of new live shows are in store for visitors to Mirabilandia, on Italy's east coast, this year.

Mid-June saw the opening of the new Far West Valley area, designed to entertain the whole family and is inspired by the far west stories and legends. Covering an area of 19,000 square meters (204,500 square feet), Far West Valley takes guests into a replica of an old west town where they can enjoy three new rides inspired by the symbols and characters of this adventurous time in history.

The largest of the new rides is the Buffalo Bill Rodeo, a Zamperla Disk 'O Coaster, themed on Buffalo Bill's exploits in teaching the colonists to domesticate wild horses and organize rodeos. Guests ride on a horse as the main disc rotates and travels along an 80 meter (262 foot) rail, reaching a height at each end of 13 meters (43 feet).



Among the new rides at Mirabilandia for 2016 is the Buffalo Bill Rodeo, a Zamperla Disk 'O Coaster. COURTESY MIRABILANDIA

Also new is Geronimo, a Sunkid Tower ride, themed on climbing big sequoia trees and totems and featuring two, nine-meter (30 foot) interactive towers on which guests young and old can challenge each other in a climbing competition using ropes and pulleys.

The third of the new rides is a Zamperla Kite Flyer called Aquila Tonante which gives guests the sensation of flying among can-

yons. Families can board special two-person vehicles and are positioned face down as they fly around at up to six meters (20 feet) high.

A ghost town called Legends of Dead Town, one of the biggest horror houses in Europe, is also new in 2016, as are two playgrounds, Camp Sioux and Fort Alamo, themed with cowboys and Indians. The area also incorporates existing attrac-



This year's live shows at Mirabilandia include a Il Galeone dei 7 Mari, a pirate themed adventure. COURTESY MIRABILANDIA

tions such as the Gold Digger wild mouse coaster, the Rio Bravo rapids ride and two larger tower rides and old west style food will be served in the Far West Valley restaurant, the Toro Seduto Saloon.

The Mirabilandia show calendar has also been totally renewed this year and began in March. Among the new shows is an exhilarating magic show, a parkour exhibition with fearsome

pirates who challenge each other with acrobatic duels, a steam punk based show mixing together Victorian age and science fiction ingredients, and two dancing performances that take guests back to the 1950s and 1970s. On summer nights Mirabilandia will also host the renewed and enriched version of Le Nuove Avventure di Peter Pan (Peter Pan: the new adventures) a visual and acrobatic theatre show.

Mack coaster brings more thrills to Walibi Holland



Above, the word "gravity" plays a big part in the theming of the ride as well. Left, Lost Gravity takes riders through numerous elements including two inversions, a zero-G roll and a host of sharp turns. The outer seats of the cars provide a thrilling floorless experience. COURTESY WALIBI HOLLAND

BIDDINGHUIZEN, The Netherlands — A new roller coaster from German manufacturer Mack Rides is now providing additional thrills at Walibi Holland, having made its debut at the beginning of the 2016 season.

Situated in the park's Zero Zone, Lost Gravity is based on a storyline of a meteorite hitting the earth in Walibi Holland with the impact causing a rare form of gravity loss in the area. The theming created all around the coaster depicts the scene while the ride itself, not surprisingly, also provides plenty of gravity related excitement.

With an hourly capacity of approximately 800 riders per hour, Lost Gravity has a track length of 680 meters and a ride duration of 143 seconds. The ride utilizes four single, eight-seater cars with passengers seated in two rows of four, the outer riders having no floor below them and being seated almost next to the track. Coupled to the lap bar-only seats, the ride provides a different experience on each seat.

The track features a chain lift hill, two inversions, a dive drop, a zero-G roll and sharp turns, all of which add up to plenty of airtime and a superb addition to the park, all while packed into a relatively small footprint. The maximum height of the coaster is 32 meters, while the minimum rider height is 1.4 meters.

"It may not be the highest or fastest roller coaster in Walibi Holland, but the ride is a unique coming together of different elements which makes the experience very special," said press and PR adviser Stefanie Langezaal. "Our target audience (teenagers and young adults) will definitely love this new type of roller coaster."

For Mack Rides, Maximilian Roeser commented: "The brief was to create a thrill attraction that also is small in footprint. We wanted to create the most thrilling experience with sharp turns, inversions, airtime and a lot of fun."

—Andrew Mellor

Chessington World of Adventures reopens Tomb Blaster

U.K. park turns to Lagotronics Projects to replace aging interactive system, sound, lighting

SURREY, U.K. — Merlin's Chessington World of Adventures is a theme park with more than 40 rides and attractions, a zoo and sealife center. They chose Lagotronics Projects to refurbish their existing dark ride Tomb Blaster.

Tomb Blaster is an interactive ride, where adventurers are on a mission to battle the Curse of the Mummy as they ride through the Ancient Egyptian labyrinth armed with a laser gun to shoot frightening mummies and scarab beetles and rid the tomb of its evil curse.

Park management knew that the interactive system in this ride was outdated and required a lot of maintenance. Chessington's request was an entirely new interactive system with sound, and one that was reliable and durable. Moreover, they were looking for a partner who could provide long-term support for the ride.

Lagotronics Projects was chosen and has installed a complete new interactive system with brand new shooters, targets and score displays. The Tomb Blaster ride has five trains, each with six cars.



Every car can seat five players, and every player has his own shooter and score display. Riders are challenged to hit as many targets as they can with their shooter to score points.

Mark Beumers, CEO of Lagotronics Projects, said, "Despite the very short lead time, we accepted the challenge from Merlin's Chessington World of Adventures to upgrade their Tomb Blaster for the 2016 season. It was the pleasant and thoughtful cooperation and communication with Chessington's team that made it happen. We are very proud to have been part of this project and that our equipment contributes to this great new ride experience."

Lagotronics Projects installed as many as 560 targets in the ride. These are disguised as spiders, or incorporated in the scenery and decoration. A particularly nice

Chessington World of Adventures recently re-opened its popular Tomb Blaster following an extensive makeover. The park called in the support help of Lagotronics Projects to deliver a new interactive system as well as updating the ride with all new sound and LED lighting.

COURTESY
LAGOTRONICS PROJECTS

touch in this ride: initially not all targets are active! Once a visitor hits a certain target, it activates a group of new targets which suddenly appear in the scenery. This unexpected element provides a surprising effect in the game.

Each visitor's personal score is being shown directly on the display in the vehicle. At the end of the ride, the scores of all players are displayed on a giant scoreboard. This helps encourage all guests to ride again so they



can beat their fellow players. An extensive photosystem from Picsolve ensures that a picture is taken of every adventurer in the ride. These are being shown in the scores.

David Lopez, the Engineering duty manager at Chessington said, "The team of Lagotronics Projects managed to achieve great results

in a small timescale with professionalism and respect. We are impressed that they were able to coordinate this job so well and complete ahead of schedule with no major setbacks. We look forward to their continued support with the interactive system in our ride Tomb Blaster in the future."

The Walt Disney Co. makes children's hospital donations in China

SHANGHAI, China — To celebrate the grand opening of Shanghai Disney Resort, The Walt Disney Company announced on June 8 a \$3.1 million USD (RMB 20 million) donation to fund Disney-themed play spaces and therapeutic play activities at children's hospitals across China.

Disney Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Bob Iger announced the gift at the Shanghai Children's Medical Center. Over the course of the five-year program, the donation will provide more than 50 hospitals in China with play rooms and therapeutic play activities. Disney will also donate Shanghai Disneyland theme park tickets to support children and their families as they undergo and recover from treatment.

"In honor of the grand

opening of Shanghai Disney Resort, we are creating a bit of Disney magic where it is needed most. With our gift of 20 million RMB and tickets to our new theme park, we hope to bring happiness and laughter to children and families in hospitals across the country by creating opportunities to play and spend quality time together," Iger said.

The donation will be administered by the Shanghai Charity Foundation for children's hospitals in and around Shanghai, and by the China Soong Ching Ling Foundation for hospitals in the rest of China. The play curriculum and training will be designed and implemented by Right To Play, a non-profit organization that uses the transformative power of play to educate and empower children to overcome

About Shanghai Charity Foundation
Shanghai Charity Foundation is a public non-profit organization approved by Shanghai non-government organization registration authorities. Since its founding in May 1994, SCF has always honored its commitment to raising donations, providing relief and spreading philanthropic awareness.

About China Soong Ching Ling Foundation
Since it was founded in 1982, China Soong Ching Ling Foundation (CSCLF) has actively carried out its social welfare initiatives to support the healthy growth of young Chinese generations. With the support from all sectors of the community, CSCLF is able to provide funding for disadvantaged young people and achieved very positive social impact.

About Right to Play
Right To Play is an international child development organization based in Toronto, Canada. It's mission is to use sport and play to educate and empower children and youth to overcome the effects of poverty, conflict and disease in disadvantaged communities. Since the inception of its pilot program in China in 2007, Right to Play has aided in the development of more than 570,000 children in difficult situations.

adversity.

"Over the past few years, the Shanghai Children's Medical Center has built several children's play spaces with support from The Walt Disney Company," said Jiang Zhon-

gyi, director of Shanghai Children's Medical Center. "This new fund not only showcases Disney's social responsibility and support for children, but also helps promote innovative new therapeutic play concepts

that are helping transform children's healthcare." Disney's support of children's hospitals dates back to the 1930s when Walt Disney would visit with children, often accompanied by Disney characters and animators. Today that support includes millions of dollars in annual grants and donations that provide play spaces, theme park tickets, first-run movies, care packages, in-kind support, and hospital visits from beloved Disney characters. Disney has already supported several children's hospitals in Shanghai through the development of play spaces, play therapy training, and character visits. Disney Volunteers have made more than 150 hospital visits and benefited more than 12,000 children and their families.



WATER PARKS & RESORTS

► Quassy's water park opens Slide City for the younger sliders — Page 16

Carowinds enlarges Carolina Harbor with major expansion

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Carowinds is surfing a wave of success. Following on the heels of the massive Fury 325 in 2015 — and its win of Best New Ride in AT's Golden Ticket Awards last year — the current season continues to develop the property into a nationwide destination. As reported last issue, the park opened for 2016 with the new Plants Vs. Zombies 3Z Arena interactive attraction. With summer having arrived, more additions have opened with a powerful expansion of the Carolina Harbor water park.

"The water park is now 27 acres," said Brad Marcy, vice president and general manager. "It increases [the water park] by 40 percent. It's a big project."

The growth of the water park is slightly bittersweet. To make room, Thunder Road, the racing wooden coaster that crossed both state lines gave its final rides last summer. Taking up part of that cleared land is Surf Club Harbor, a new 27,000-square-foot wave pool. This second large wave pool for the property provides space for 2,000 new lounge and poolside chairs, as well as 30 new cabanas. This brings the total to 60 cabanas for visitors in the water park to be able to reserve for the day. Two party cabanas can hold up to 16 people. These luxury cabanas have hard tops, are bigger, and have more privacy.

"We had two wave pools before," said Marcy, "And wave pools are always popular. They really gear toward the whole family." One smaller wave pool was felt to be outdated and was removed to make space for new attractions. Carowinds used Neuman Pools for the new installation.

Daredevils are drawn to Blackbeard's Revenge,



Carowinds Carolina Harbor Waterpark VP and GM Brad Marcy stands in front of the water park's new lighthouse themed sign. With a 40 percent expansion of the property, the water park now totals 27 acres, highlighted by two wave pools.
AT/TIM BALDWIN

a new six-story waterslide complex. It features six slides incorporated into three separate attractions. Pirate's Plank challenges thrill-seekers with three drop capsules that send riders down a near-vertical freefall before sizzling them through flat loops. Captain's Curse shoots riders in double tubes through four intense 360-degree turns in an enclosed chute. Cannonball Drop, also a two-rider experience, contains a series of sharp drops. WhiteWater West is the supplier of the slide complex.

Kiddy Hawk Cove, a cleverly named family area, provides spray jets, splash areas and small slides. A second new family area is called Myrtle Turtle Beach, specifically geared toward toddlers and their families. Children interact in the water garden where they can control the flow and aim of water play structures. Aimed at the younger set, these new areas have a nod to coastal town names.

Seaside Splashworks, a multilevel play struc-

► See HARBOR, page 12



When the decision was made to expand Carolina Harbor, Carowinds officials called on WhiteWater West to deliver the new water thrills. Above, the Seaside Splashworks Aqua Play structure is seaside themed, complete with lighthouse. Right and below is the impressive six-story waterslide tower named Blackbeard's Revenge. The tower features six different slides.
COURTESY WHITEWATER



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To help Carolina Harbor guests feel as if they are in a seaside town, the park gave all in-park signage careful detail, shown here.
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HARBOR

Continued from page 11

ture contains more than 80 play elements and the iconic 423-gallon tipping bucket. Always a crowd favorite, you can find kids and parents clamoring to get doused by the colossal deluge every few minutes. Slides, bridges, rope ladder and kid-controlled spray elements are all incorporated into the play structure. Shade structures surround the play fortress, making it convenient for parents who want to relax and watch the kids. "We think that will be a huge enhancement," said Marcy. The structure is also provided by WhiteWater West.

These three new family areas combined create two acres where family members, regardless of age, can play together.

In addition to all the water attractions, a new Harbor House restaurant helps feed the increased attendance to the water park. Carolina cuisine is the focus of the menu. In addition to indoor seating, there are two 2,400-square-foot outdoor patios to help accommodate large audiences.

"What we're trying to do with [Harbor House] is what we did with Harmony Hall," said Marcy, referencing the highly-successful 2015 multipurpose indoor facility with various food options. "Harbor House will have a smoker in it. It's built for speed. This enhances the food that we can offer at the water park."

Carowinds has also expanded the main bath house to provide more showers and lockers. Also, new paint schemes, thematic props and seaside colors unify the Carolina Harbor look and feel.

Carolina Harbor is included with park admission. Of note, Carowinds seems mindful of the many guests who may be visiting for just the water park itself and has created a stand-alone gate at the south end of the park that gives entrance directly into the water park. A new bath house has also been built near this new entrance.

"It makes for a more comfortable experience," said Marcy.



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Typhoon Texas opens as newest water park in Lone Star State

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

KATY, Texas — How many Aggies does it take to open a water park? The joke around the management offices of Typhoon Texas places the answer at “three.” As it turns out, college friends from Texas A&M (Keith Dalton, Terry Hlavinka and Ray Delaughter) had previous success of investing in business ventures beforehand. In wondering what could be next, the result turned out to be a water park. The three owners and fellow investors all live locally and take pride in the Katy community. The price tag on the new waterpark is



reported to be \$45 million.

With no water park experience, these investors turned to a trio of experienced industry folk — Evan Barnett, Steve Mayer and Susan Kruizinga — and brought them on board as a team. Even with torrential spring rains, Typhoon Texas was able to officially open Memorial Day weekend. To the management team’s surprise, opening weekend crowds burst all expectations set by the park staff.

“It’s the first privately-owned water park of this size in the United States in 10 years,” said Susan Kruizinga, programming manager.

“They found there was a serious need for family entertainment out here. With it being hot, a water park made sense,” said Steve Mayer, marketing. “They bought the land and broke ground here August 20.”

Mascots are not overly common to water parks, but Typhoon Texas has created a fun character with a horse inside an inner tube. He is named Typhoon. Each morning Typhoon takes his position up on stage on the backside of the wave pool to “turn the waves on.”



Top, an overview of many of the attractions at Typhoon Texas; center, eight lanes on Lone Star Racers have a high throughput; below, the Typhoon creates a lot of banking sensation on its twisted course.
AT/TIM BALDWIN

Contrary to most water parks, Typhoon Texas steered away from the tropical settings of most facilities. “You won’t find a single palm tree,” said Kruizinga. Instead, with Texas as the primary focus for the park, plants, trees, landscaping and rockwork are more indicative of Texas Hill Country. Even the stage and backdrop behind the wave pool have an Old West feel.

For an opening year, the park has a lot to boast in regard to attractions. WhiteWater West was the supplier for the main attractions. All slide complexes are designed to move a lot of people in hourly throughput. The “power hitters” are also placed in the four corners of the park assisting in getting people moved about and spread evenly throughout the day.

From the left of the entrance, Tidal Wave Bay is tucked in at the front of the park. Adjacent to it is The Snake Pit, a five-slide com-

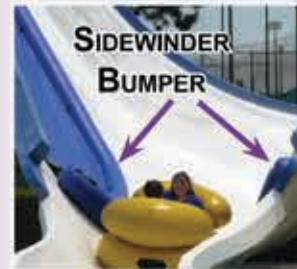


► See TYPHOON, page 16



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Quassy's water park opens Slide City for the younger sliders



Quassy Amusement & Waterpark's new Slide City attraction made its formal debut on May 28 to the delight of parents and their eager youngsters. The five-slide complex from ProSlide is part of Splash Away Bay water park and brings to 12 the number of waterslides at Quassy's H2o attraction. Slide City is geared toward children under 48 inches tall. COURTESY QUASSY



► TYPHOON

Continued from page 14

plex named after various Texas snakes. One of the chutes is the new high-tech Slide Boarding video game attraction. Riders have the option of single or double tubes on the other four slides. Each of these offers unique experiences, one of which includes a bowl element.

In the back left corner, two multi-person raft rides are incorporated into one tower. Texas Twister's serpentine route eventually plunges up to six riders down a steep drop and up a near vertical boomerang wall, which is all decked out as a Texas flag. The Typhoon features a variety of elements both enclosed and open in a large trough that allows for superb banking on its spiraling course.

Duelin' Daltons features five slides, three of which use the AquaLaunch drop capsule. Of note, each of these drop floor ride experiences offer different layouts, making all three unique to each other. Two other tube slides don't utilize the full extent of the six-story tower offering milder, but still fun, family-friendly thrills.

The final tower is an eight-lane headfirst racer. Called Lone Star Racers, it can gobble lines with its large capacity.

There is more to offer in the park's interior. The Gully Washer is a kids' water play area, complete with tipping bucket. Another area that allows mothers to relax as toddlers play close by and within view is the Buckaroo Bayou that offers smaller slides and splash pads for innocent fun.



Riders climb a zero-G wall adorned with a Texas flag, top; top right, teens enjoy competition and interaction at an activity pool. AT/TIM BALDWIN

Other standard amenities include lockers and changing stalls, a 1,500-foot Lazy-T River, private picnic pavilions, a birthday pavilion, Howdy Hollow activity pool, and 60 cabanas, decorated differently for each of the three areas in which they are located.

There is still more to the park's story than just names of big rides. "Even the six pools have different colored finishes," said Mayer. "It was to match different rivers in Texas. We tried to make everything look natural to Texas." Even food takes on a Texas flair with River Grille & Smokin' BBQ offering slow roasted brisket every day as well as rotisserie chicken. The park owns a very large smoker and brisket is smoked overnight, every night. Of note, everything is made on property from scratch.

"We were very careful to put a lot of shade at the bottom of each attraction," said Mayer. "You can watch and have something to do, but we could keep them shaded." This is opposed to having guests wait on stair-

cases or other areas out in the open.

Conservation is also of strong consideration with the park. Typhoon Texas utilizes what they term the most efficient system in the aquatic marketplace. "It is the Ferrari of water filter systems," Kruizinga told AT. The filters do not require backwash, saving 200,000 gallons per week. The system is capable of filtering down to 1 micron, which is 20 times better than the average swimming pool filter. "We get guest comments on how clear our water is," added Kruizinga.

Live bands also use the stage to bring party music to the crowds, beginning with the opening weekend. "Bands were coming to me!" said Kruizinga. Live music is planned for every weekend. Park officials are pleased that booking talent will not be a challenge. The park is also equipped with lighting for nighttime events as well. Thursday nights will feature Splash Cinema. Friday nights are Float, Glide, Go events paired with radio stations.



The birthday pavilion sold out during the park's first three days on Memorial Day weekend and bookings were strong for the season. Typhoon Texas is also working with area day camps. "You have to be confident when selling it. But [kids] are probably even more looked after than when coming with a parent because they have the buddy system and a ratio of supervisors is one to eight," said Kruizinga.

Typhoon Texas has aligned with local hotel chains for marketing and has found great success with limited their partners in these efforts. They also have five Gold Sponsors: Igloo, Remax, West Point Buick Lincoln, Academy Sports and Outdoors and Memorial Hermann Katy (Hospital).

The park resides on 43 acres of land, only 25 of which have been developed so far. The season will follow a traditional schedule through Labor Day, with private functions following during September weekends.

FAST FACTS

Typhoon Texas

Katy, Texas
typhoontexas.com

Key management

GM, Evan Barnett;
Programming Manager,
Susan Kruizinga;
Marketing Dir., Steve Mayer

Features

- More than 35 slide paths stretching a third of a mile
- 1,500-foot Lazy-T River stretches the length of 5 football fields
 - Texas-themed wave pool encompasses 25,000 square feet
- Actual water usage is less than a typical high school
 - Most efficient filtration system in the aquatic marketplace.
- Children's Rain Fortress offers more than 100 spray areas, 8 platforms, 7 slides, elevated walkways and rope bridges
- Waterslide complexes include new high-tech Slideboarding gaming and a beyond horizontal looping waterslide
 - Property owned is 45 acres, a third of which remains undeveloped for future expansion

Opened

May 28, 2016

Medical Center Park in Amarillo, Texas is getting ready to open a new splash pad and play area that is accessible to children with disabilities. The new playground was funded through a public-private partnership with **Southwest Am-bucs**, a non-profit service organization dedicated to helping people with mobility challenges. Am-bucs raised nearly \$400,000 to build a barrier-free playground, then raised another \$440,000 for the splash pad. Both parks will include ADA compliant ramps, sidewalks and a restroom. The play zone includes swings and a zip line specially made for children in wheelchairs. The splash pad is said to be one of the largest of its kind. Businesses and individuals who contributed to the project will be listed on a donor wall within the park.

Another **Wibit** floating water park has opened at Spring Lake in Santa Rosa, California. The swimming lagoon at **Spring Lake Regional Park** has long been a popular with residents offering cool, clean spring-fed water, but attendance has dropped over the last decade. The **Sonoma County Regional Parks Department** had looked at several options to increase attendance at what was considered an underutilized gem. Installation of a waterslides and other water park elements had been investigated, but the cost was significant. The Wibit system, which includes slides, a bounce island, climbing cliffs, and a bouncy bridge among the 20 water features, cost about \$55,000.

Simply known as the Water Park at Spring Lake, a maximum of 60 people will be allowed

NEWS SPLASH



COMPILED: Jeffrey L. Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

to use the water features at one time and all will be required to wear life jackets. Sessions last 45 minutes. As one session ends, another group of up to 60 people moves in. The cost is \$10 for children, \$15 for adults, and \$45 for a family of four. Guests may attend as many sessions as they want from 11 am to 6 pm but they may not do consecutive sessions. Officials noted that with the high level of activity involved, most will welcome the opportunity to rest up for another round. Those not using the water park still have access to the swimming areas and sandy beaches.

The popular water park **Aqualandia** in Benidorm, Spain attracted 2,000 people on May 28, 2016, the first operating day of the season. Guests starting arriving as early as 7 am to be first in line for the park's latest attraction **Verti-Go**, a 33-meter (108-foot) drop capsule speed slide. The new attraction, built into the side of a hill, offers stunning views of Benidorm — until the drop capsule opens. Thrill seekers will reach a speed of up to 62 mph as they plummet down the hillside. Aqualandia claims the slide is the tallest drop-capsule body slide in the world.

Hot Springs Arkansas' latest attraction isn't all that hot. **Magic Springs** and **Crystal Falls** water and theme park has opened a chiller pool. As the name implies, the water is kept at a maximum of 70 degrees — or colder if the outside temperature is cooler. The pool features a shallow entry at one end and a beautiful rock waterfall at the other. But make no mistake, this is not a swimming pool says **Steve Honeycutt**, park manager, "It's not something you stay in because 70 degree water is cold; you're going to want out real quick. It's not like the wave pool where you go in and people stay in for hours; that's not the experience at all." The idea is for people to jump in, cool off, get out quickly, then go enjoy the rest of the park. Park officials expect the attraction to become popular as outside temperatures climb.

Dodge City, Kansas, once the quintessential rough and rowdy town of the Old West, is home to a new aquatics park. Appropriately themed to the Old West, **Long Branch Lagoon** opened its gates on May 26, 2016, just a few blocks from famous landmarks Wyatt Earp Boulevard and the Boot Hill Museum. The \$12.7 million project was financed by Dodge City and Ford County sales tax revenues. **WhiteWater West** supplied the park's signature attractions including Doc's Plunge, a Boomerango and the Gunslinger tube slide. Other attractions include the Wrangler Rapids wave pool, Fort Splash play area, Cowboy Creek lazy river, and Chuck Wagon concessions.

Georgia-based **StandGuard Aquatics** was contracted to operate the water park.

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PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► Six Flags new attractions — Pages 20, 22 / Swamp Fox turns 50 — Page 24 / Fairs — Pages 31-37

Morgan's Wonderland premieres Hartman's House puppet show

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — Hartman's House, an original interactive puppet show about inclusion, is now being presented at Morgan's Wonderland in a specially designed theater that can accommodate performers both with and without special needs.

Hartman, the central character of Hartman's House, is a boy in a wheelchair with a big heart and a big imagination, said Nikki Young, entertainment director for the world's first theme park designed with special-needs individuals in mind and built for everyone's enjoyment. The 20-minute show focuses on adventures with his family, including his parents, sister Holly and pet bird Rico.

"Each episode presents a fun, humorous situation such as planning a surprise birthday party for a friend in which the characters must face their differences," Young explained. "Together, with



Morgan's Wonderland, the 25-acre San Antonio park, built for guests with special needs, has opened Hartman House, an interactive puppet show. COURTESY MORGAN'S WONDERLAND

help from the audience, they use imagination and inspiration to work through those differences and achieve a happy ending."

Longtime Morgan's Wonderland volunteer Randy Ersch of Fredericksburg,

Texas, built the multi-use, 16-foot-wide by 9.5-foot-high theater. It includes multiple doors and windows that let the puppets interact with human performers and the audience in the tradition of The Muppet Show and

Laugh-In TV series. In addition, a ramp enables performers in wheelchairs to take part in shows.

Resa Wohlrabe, art instructor at The Academy at Morgan's Wonderland school for students with spe-

cial needs and designer of the official 2016 Fiesta San Antonio poster, decorated the multi-colored theater. Lead puppeteer David Pitts consulted on the theater's functionality and use of space.

"Puppets are ideal for helping children deal with issues associated with special needs and inclusion," Young said. "Sesame Street has even introduced a Muppet character with autism. Besides, everyone can take part in puppet theater, whether they're in the audience or in the show. So a show like Hartman's House is a perfect fit for Morgan's Wonderland, which emphasizes inclusion."

Morgan's Wonderland is currently developing additional programming for the theater, including *No Strings Attached*, a music series featuring both puppet and human performers that's scheduled to debut this summer.

•MorgansWonderland.com

Original Holiday World train returns for park's 70th birthday

SANTA CLAUS, Indiana — After more than 65 years of operation, Holiday World's original Santa Claus Land Railroad, later known as the Freedom Train, was deemed no longer track worthy and had to be retired. Despite efforts to restore the treasured ride, so much of the original material would have needed replacing that Holiday World felt it would no longer be the same train. It was replaced in 2013 by a brand new Chance C.P. Huntington named Holidog Express.

Now, in honor of the park's 70th birthday, Holiday World and Splashin' Safari has brought back its original ride to put on display for generations to see and reminisce.

Whether it was remembered it as the Freedom Train, the Mother Goose Land Train, or the Santa Claus Land Railroad, chances are visitors to the park

rode it as a child and later as an adult — and maybe even as a grandparent.

The first step in the restoration was to repaint the train in its original colors. But no one remembered what the colors were. After poring over archives of photos and stories, a feature story in the December 1949 edition of the *Saturday Evening Post* included a color photo showing a blue train.

The shop painters started on the restoration by painting the body blue then adding red trim in honor of later color schemes. The train is on display in the 4th of July section so the red and blue color scheme will fit right in.

The restored train now on display this season is across from the Rough Riders Bumper Cars. A timeline and additional artifacts augment the display.

—Jeffrey Seifert



In honor of its 70th birthday, Holiday World has restored its original train, the Santa Claus Railroad and put the train engine on display in the 4th of July section for guests to view. COURTESY HOLIDAY WORLD



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'The Joker' has grip on new Six Flags coasters

Great Adventure adds S&S 4D Free Fly

AT: B. Derek Shaw
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JACKSON TOWNSHIP, N.J. — Following on the success of Batman: The Ride at Six Flags Fiesta Texas (San Antonio), Six Flags Great Adventure unveiled only the second 4th dimension free fly roller coaster in the world at the New Jersey theme park on Memorial Day weekend. (Other 4th dimension coasters from S&S that are not free-spinning are Dinoconda at China Dinosaurs Park, (Jiangsu, China) and Eejanaika Fuji-Q Highland, (Yamanashi, Japan). The first one was built by Arrow Dynamics, (X2, Six Flags Magic Mountain, Valencia, Ca.).

After being lifted straight up a 12-story, 90-degree hill, the Joker offers riders at least six upside down opportunities during the 60 second ride on the floating and twisting I-box track frame. Two sets of parallel tracks are purple and green, The Joker's colors. Situated in the Lakefront section of the park, straight back of the Main Entrance, some riders have likened The Joker ride experience to a Chance Zipper ride on a roller coaster track. Others have said the ride is like a gymnastics class in school with the half dozen somersaults or flips. Although originally it was named Total Mayhem, earlier this year the park renamed the coaster after the DC Comics villain Joker, bringing the total number of DC Comics themed coasters in the park to seven.

"This is a new vertical coaster that delivers gravity defying somersaults with utter unpredictability. It is the perfect addition to our dynamic line up of award-winning roller coasters because this ride delivers total mayhem with its next generation of cutting edge thrills," said John Fitzgerald at the media event prior to the opening to the general pub-

lic a day later. "It is our 14th coaster and is in a class all by itself. It is unlike any other ride at Six Flags Great Adventure because its twisted inspiration is a twisted, deranged genius. The Joker delivers total mayhem, and we wouldn't have it any other way."

Each ride on the Joker is slightly different depending upon the weight of the riders as well as the four different placements that thrill-seekers can be positioned. Leaving the station, pairs of riders face each other, something that will return later in the ride experience. After a quick trip up the elevator-style lift, the ride begins to go through its paces. During the mid-course section pairs of riders are again facing each other, creating a fun, interactive experience with friends and family members.

"It is so different from what we have," said Fitzgerald. "You're going to go for about six flips on each one of the vehicles. It really does spin you a great deal. It is a fantastic ride, and it's completely unpredictable. You don't know when it's going to flip you," said Fitzgerald.

Seating on the Joker is engineered to be quite comfortable to the rider. Even though numerous flips take place, there are no extreme physical demands placed upon the body, making repeat riding easy. The views afforded from the lift really highlight great views of the park's adjacent lake. The Joker opens up this portion of the property that had been encased with buildings.

This coaster has been a long time in the planning stages. "It has been about a two year run for us," said Fitzgerald. He continued, "At Six Flags we do have long range plans for each of the parks, so we knew we would be putting in something of this size, this year. About two

▶ See JOKER, page 22



The Joker is Six Flags Great Adventure's newest roller coaster thriller. Sipped by Utah-based S&S Worldwide, the 4D Free Fly coaster never gives two identical rides, thanks to the individual spinning action on the vehicle's seats. COURTESY SIX FLAGS GREAT ADVENTURE

Discovery Kingdom debuts RMC hybrid

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

VALLEJO, Calif. — When Six Flags Discovery Kingdom announced last summer that its very popular, 1999-built wooden roller coaster, Roar, would be closing for good before the end of the season, many faithful parkgoers thought it was a bad joke.

In fact, the ride was about to transition into The Joker.

Yet another impressive Six Flags hybrid coaster conversion designed and executed by Rocky Mountain Construction (RMC) of Hayden, Idaho, The Joker cut loose for the media May 25 and opened to the public over Memorial Day weekend.

The ecstatic response garnered by the steel-on-wood thriller has thoroughly justified the project's undertaking in the mind of the park's president, Don McCoy.

"Roar was a great ride, but when there's an opportunity to innovate and add one-of-a-kind elements and thrills, it was not a hard decision to make," McCoy told *Amusement Today*. "The Joker is a stand-out among extreme coasters. Working with RMC to create it has been an immense pleasure."

That's also what the coaster — the park's second DC Comics-themed attraction, following the 2012 introduction of the launched looping coaster Superman Ultimate Flight — delivers in rapid-fire fashion.

During a nine-month period beginning in mid-August 2015, RMC pared more than 250 feet from Roar's 3,467-foot course — streamlining portions while replacing some of the hills with elements including a zero-G barrel roll, a 180-degree stall and an Asian camel hump. Between its 100-

foot, 78-degree first drop and three inversions, the revamped coaster now packs 15 distinct moments of airtime.

While a couple mph have been shaved off Roar's maximum of 55, The Joker's acrobatic "gags" are so relentlessly paced throughout its nearly two-minute run that the coaster seems much faster.

"This is a smooth ride and there are no lulls as it takes you into non-stop, unexpected elements and surprises," said McCoy, a 21-year Six Flags employee who has managed Discovery Kingdom since 2013. "It is hard to choose a single favorite element... but if forced to choose, I like the step-up under-flip immediately following the first drop. There isn't anything like it elsewhere."

Setting the tone for The Joker is its funhouse-style entrance, where riders queue through the mouth of a giant clown face. Exiting passengers are funneled through the Funhouse Shoppe, featuring Joker-related merchandise.

Continuing the Batman villain theme, the adjacent interactive water cannon ride Tsunami Soaker has been renamed The Penguin. And this summer, guests will find two new dining spots in the year-round park: Chop Six, serving Asian cuisine, and JB's Sports Bar and Grille, offering local craft beers and wine in addition to a hearty American menu.

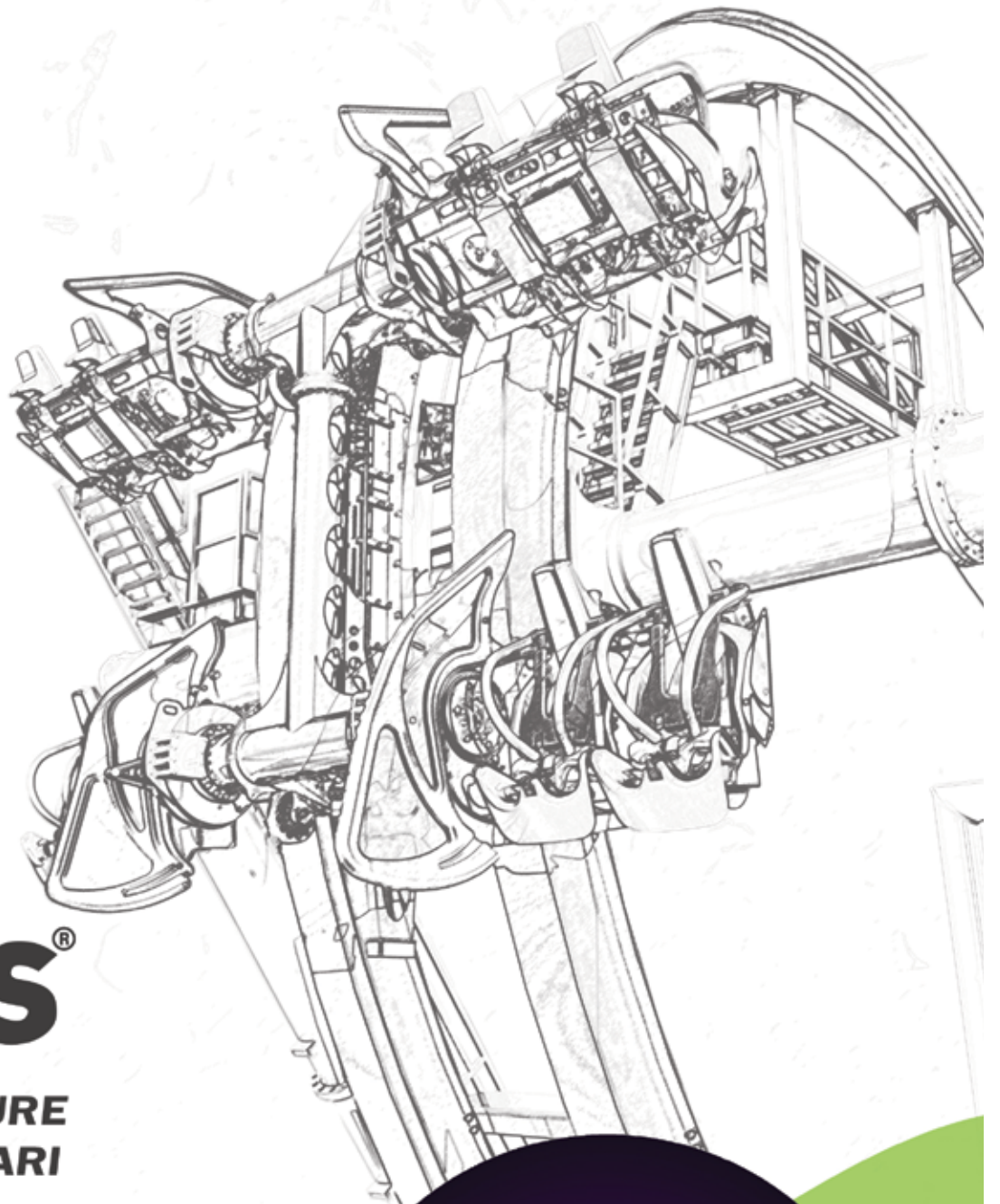
For now, though, the park's mirthfully wicked new roller coaster has stolen the spotlight.

"The Joker has paid off in many ways by virtue of the positive social media and organic word of mouth," McCoy said. "It's a lot of fun to have a ride that meets so many expectations."

• sixflags.com/discoverykingdom



Like the DC Comics "Batman" villain for which it is named, the vivid green-and-purple track of The Joker — a steel-on-wood redo by Rocky Mountain Construction of the former coaster Roar — tears gleefully through the landscape at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom. COURTESY SIX FLAGS DISCOVERY KINGDOM



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Three Six Flags parks roll out a one-two punch of Larson loop and VR coasters

NORTH AMERICA — Six Flags has continued to roll out the VR Coaster concept at several of its properties. As this issue of *AT* went to press, nine parks within the chain had unveiled a re-launch of one of the park's coasters as a virtual reality experience.

At the same time, three of the parks paired this with a second marketable attraction: a Larson Fireball looping thrill ride. Having two new attractions to market has found favor with park management.

At most parks, the Larson loop debuted first.

At Six Flags New England, the looping thriller sits at the front of the park. As the day progresses, its placement helps bring people back to the front area in the center of the property.

"It's the first ride you come to as you come down Main Street. We had not invested in the Rockville area of the park since 1997 and it was time to spend some money in that area," said John Winkler, Six Flags New England park president. "It's a high impact thrill ride that is geared toward families. We love how the seats face each other."

"People come off cheering and clapping. It's been a really big win," Pete Carmichael, park president, Six Flags St. Louis, told *Amusement Today* regarding the Larson installation.

At The Great Escape at Lake George, N.Y., the nam-



Pete Carmichael, park president of Six Flags St. Louis, holds the VR Gear that riders aboard Ninja can wear allowing them to enter the virtual world. The attraction is paired with the park's new Fireball loop ride from Larson. AT/TIM BALDWIN

ing of the loop differs from the other two. While the St. Louis and New England properties rolled theirs out as Fireball, The Great Escape revved up their attraction as Greezed Lightning. Many amusement park fans will remember the long history of this name, dating back to the Schwarzkopf shuttle loop coaster installed at AstroWorld in 1978. The homage is sure to be appreciated.

"We are thrilled to introduce not one, but two brand new ride experiences for our guests in 2016," said Eric Gilbert, Six Flags Great Escape Resort president. "The great thing about these two new attractions, is not only the thrill

and innovation they bring to the park, but that they have also given us the opportunity to revitalize classic areas and rides that have entertained our guests for generations."

AT caught up with Thomas Wagner, co-founder and managing partner of VR Coaster at the ride's debut in St. Louis. "They did a perfect job. When I came here, they already had everything perfectly installed," he said. "I think they will have a lot of fun with this ride. They do a great job."

Tom Harding, director of immersive products & virtual reality at Samsung, said, "Samsung has been working with virtual reality for a couple of years now with the Gear

VR headset. As we developed virtual reality and started to drive consumer awareness, it's really incredible technology that can be applied to medical, therapeutics, entertainment... the marvel is really roller coasters. It felt like a natural collaboration. We're really proud of it." When asked what his friends think when he tells them he is traveling to do VR on roller coasters, Harding laughed, "They are normally very jealous."

Six Flags St. Louis is using the VR Coaster system on Ninja. A multi-looping ride added to the park in 1989. The Great Escape is also using a three-inversion coaster. Both Six Flags St. Louis and The Great Escape are using the New Revolution storyline surrounding an alien attack.

"This technology is really going to be a game changer," said Carmichael. "We wanted to provide a new twist on one of our older rides and virtual reality really accomplishes that goal."

Six Flags New England is one of three Six Flags parks using a Superman branded roller coaster. Those three parks have different graphic content that uses the DC characters where Superman whisks riders away during a battle between the Man of Steel and Lex Luthor.

"I'm still blown away that we can do this," Winkler told *AT*. "I'm amazed at the technology."

—Tim Baldwin

► JOKER Continued from page 20

years ago we made a decision about what it would be, and it is a fantastic addition. Its location is picture perfect. When you walk into the park you can actually see the ride from our ticket booths. With the excitement and the screams you are going to get, it is going to create a lot of atmosphere down here and a lot of vicarious thrills."

During his comments at the media event, Fitzgerald was complimentary of the many contractors, sub-contractors and others who made this ride happen in a timely fashion. "We're grateful to everybody who got involved in helping us get this done and hitting our deadline on time," said Fitzgerald.

Fitzgerald was one of the first humans on board the ride when it was first completed. "I'm usually the crash test dummy, so I usually get to go first. As soon as they take out the water dummies, I'm the next one in. They played a bit of a joke on me because they didn't tell me the dampeners were not put in place. The dampeners actually keep it from spinning too much. No one told me that the dampeners weren't in place, so I got flipped nine times on my first ride, as opposed to the five or six I would normally get," said Fitzgerald.

Two enhancements have been made since the original in San Antonio: the entry into the loading area is streamlined with this model eliminating a need to slightly tilt the seats. Also, magnetic fins have been added to the vertical lift causing some rocking as riders ascend to the top.

Fitzgerald was asked his advice to those who aren't sure they can endure this white knuckle thriller, "People are going to look at it and say, 'Oh no, I don't know about this ride.' It does not create any nauseous feelings, whatsoever. It's actually very different from some rides and what people might expect. Because it is actually a straight line with the flips, it is just thrilling. You get thrown lots of negative G's and lots of great views, although, unfortunately, I don't think people have a lot of time to take them in."

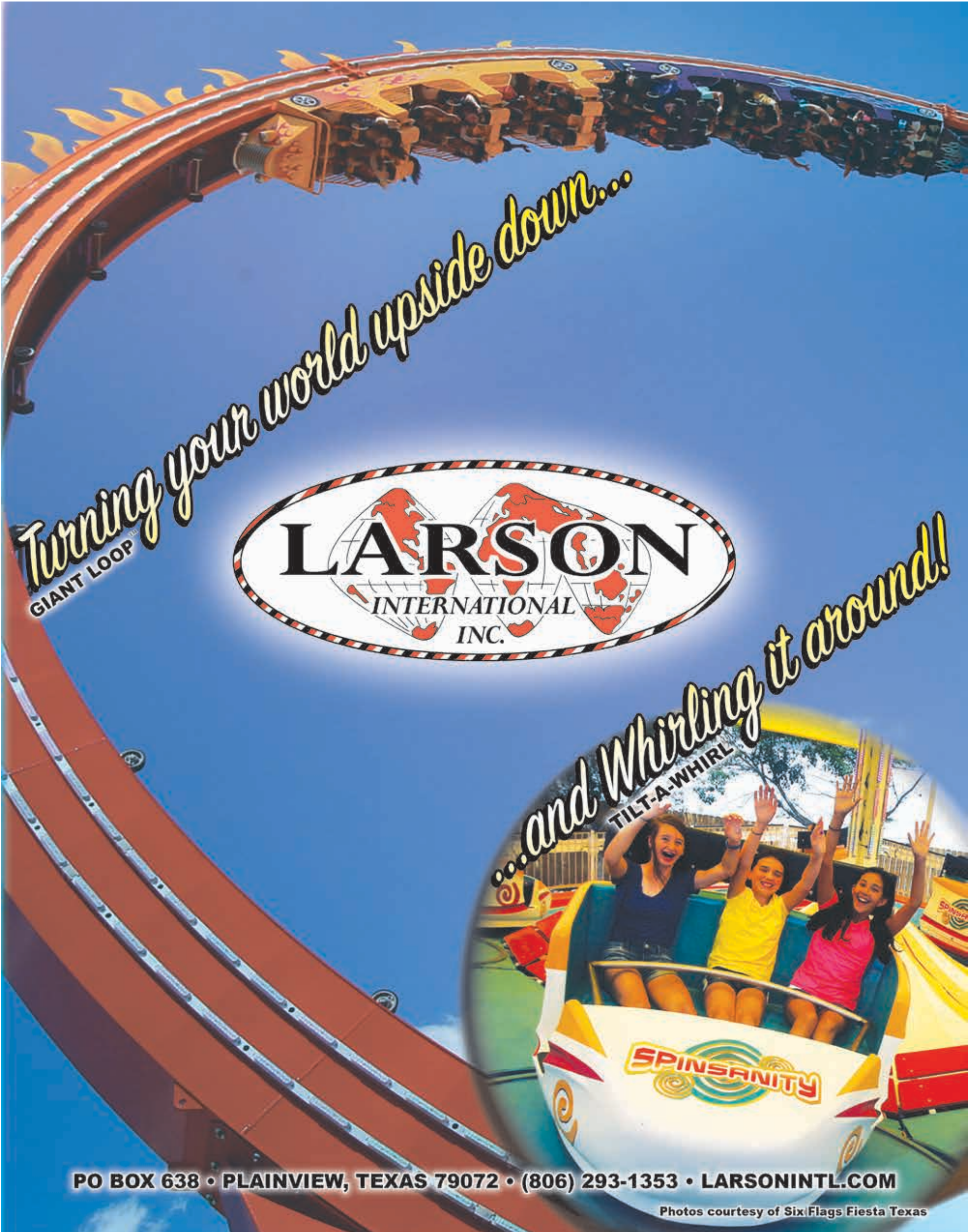
With an arsenal of heavy hitter coasters at the ends of the park's midways, The Joker brings attention back to the center of the park once again.



Left, Eric Gilbert, park president of The Great Escape, stands before Greezed Lightning' at the thrill ride's opening. At right, John Winkler, park president of Six Flags New England, is all smiles about Fireball. AT/TIM BALDWIN



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Photos courtesy of Six Flags Fiesta Texas

Family Kingdom invests in the 50th anniversary of Swamp Fox

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. — Survival is never a guarantee for an attraction or park. Just recently, the East Coast saw yet another loss of a great ride with the demolition of the Hurricane wooden roller coaster built at Boomers in Dania Beach, Fla. Some of the effects of Superstorm Sandy are still being felt along the coasts in the Northeast. Myrtle Beach understands this all too well with the closure of Pavilion in 2006 and the removal of all its rides, as well as the short lived Hard Rock Park/Freestyle Music Park that failed to complete even two seasons.

Through it all, one park has stood notably triumphant. Family Kingdom has stared in the face of changing economic times, shifts in entertainment options and the ever-changing property values. And not to mention, Mother Nature.

The Swamp Fox wooden roller coaster was built by John Allen and the Philadelphia Toboggan Company (PTC) in 1966. At the time, it was the Grand Strand Amusement Park. Hurricane Hugo in 1989



Family Kingdom's General Manager Donnie Sipes (above) made sure the park's signature attraction, the 1966 PTC-built Swamp Fox, got some offseason work to keep the popular roller coaster running and looking like new both by day and at night.
AT/TIM BALDWIN



struck a severe blow to the coaster and the park, leaving them standing idle in need of restoration.

The Ammons family, owners of the landmark Sea Mist Oceanfront Resort, acquired the property and worked to revive the park, the coaster and continue to develop the Myrtle Beach area for future tourism. With two years of revitalization, the park reopened as Family Kingdom in 1992. By keeping the property a Myrtle

Beach favorite, Swamp Fox is now enjoying a 50th anniversary this season.

"Wooden roller coasters are kind of going by the wayside," said Donnie Sipes, general manager. "For us to have the roller coaster here for 50 years and keep it a Myrtle Beach landmark is quite exciting

to us."

Hugo wasn't the only wrath the wooden coaster has had to endure. Over the past five decades, multiple hurricanes have struck the East coast. Today, Swamp Fox is the only wooden coaster on the southern half of the U.S. coastline.

Since its rebirth in

1992, the color scheme of Swamp Fox has always had accents of purple and lime green outlining the white painted lumber structure. This year, in honor of its birthday, it received a whole new look. Now, blue track and red handrails give the ride a sheen of makeover freshness.

"Obviously [the 50th] was a big deal," said Scott Osborn, director of operations. "We're happy to still have it here. We did some upgrades to the coaster over the winter. We had a carpentry crew come in and they redid about 90 percent of the track."

In classic style, the contour of the ride is still outfitted with white chase lights accenting the ride and exemplifying the era and nostalgia of the wooden classic. Standing 72 feet tall, the ride is a quintessential example of the period of when it was built, long before the days of mega thrillers known today. Designed by John Allen and built by PTC, it was one of the legendary builder's 26 coasters during his career, a time which defined wooden coaster construction as the second half of the 19th century saw the shift from traditional parks into the world of theme parks.

"From time to time I'll take a ride with guests," says Sipes. He tells AT that he rides the coaster every year, particularly when the trains come back from off-season overhaul. "I'm a front seat rider totally." He commented on how fast the ride was running this year, pondering if it had a touch too much action.

On April 29, members of American Coaster Enthusiasts celebrated the anniversary occasion with a dedication of an ACE Roller Coaster Landmark designation plaque in front of the ride's entrance ramp.

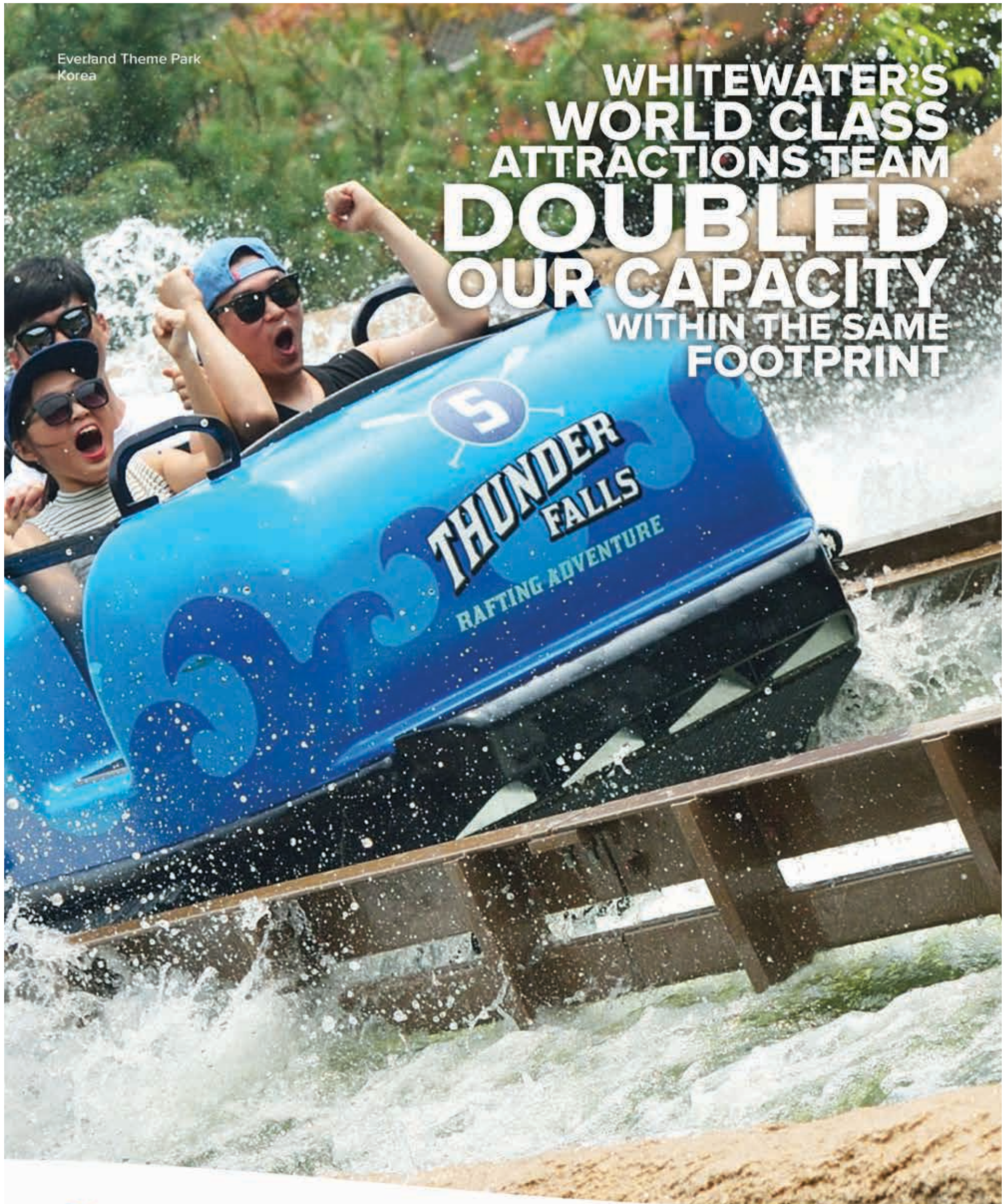
"We hope we're here another 50 years," said Sipes.



In conjunction with the coaster's 50th anniversary, American Coaster Enthusiasts designated the historic Swamp Fox as an ACE Roller Coaster Landmark.
AT/TIM BALDWIN

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Oklahoma's Andy Alligator's Fun Park adds Skycoaster; gains new landmark

NORMAN, Okla. — Motorists traveling along I-35 just 10 miles south of Oklahoma City now have a prime view of the state's newest thrill ride — a 109-foot-tall A-Frame Single Skycoaster that has instantly become the new vertical icon for Andy Alligator's Fun Park.

The combination FEC-water park has steadily grown since its debut, and the addition of the Skycoaster marks a milestone in the park's history. "The FEC business is changing and we continue to look for attractions that meet the demands of our guests. We are excited to add an attraction we feel will take our business to new heights," proclaimed Kyle Allison, the park's general manager. "The Skycoaster is unique and that's what we look for. Our customers are already intrigued by the construction of the towers and we can't wait for the first ride! We are confident

FAST FACTS

Skycoaster/
Andy Alligator's Fun Park
Norman, Okla.

- Height/109 feet
- Top speed/55 mph
- Capacity/Up to 3 flyers
- Height Requirement/42 inches
- Opened/late May 2016

the Skycoaster will take us to the next level. Our customers are excited for a cutting edge thrill attraction."

Skycoaster's Managing Director Mark Rosenzweig is also thrilled with the installation. He added, "This model of Skycoaster is ideal for the FEC and small to medium-sized park market. For the investment, it is tough to find another vertical piece that makes such a strong visual presence. We are confident that the attraction will serve

Andy Alligator's well over the coming years."

The Skycoaster in Norman, Oklahoma opened in late May.

Skycoaster is the world's first interactive thrill ride and continues to thrill riders at parks of all sizes around the globe.

Skycoaster, a Ride Entertainment company, is the premier extreme thrill ride in the attractions industry. Skycoaster attractions have given over 30 million flights at nearly 100 sites on six continents since the ride's inception in 1992.

Mark Rosenzweig (left), managing director of Skycoaster surveys the installation of the new Skycoaster with Kyle Allison, the general manager of Andy Alligator's Fun Park in Norman, Okla. The attraction stands 109 feet tall and opened in late May.
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Iconic ride gets makeover for fun spot's 20th year

Pacific Park dials up the flash with new Ferris wheel lighting



The 130-foot Pacific Wheel at Pacific Park on the Santa Monica Pier revealed its new LED lighting package on May 26 for the amusement area's 20th anniversary celebration. The high-tech display is capable of producing any kind of pattern. COURTESY PACIFIC PARK

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

SANTA MONICA, Calif. — Celebrating its two decades of operation on the historic Santa Monica Pier, Pacific Park has upgraded its famous Ferris wheel with a new LED lighting package that's dazzling visitors to this seaside playground.

Nearly \$1 million was spent to perform the work on the 130-foot Pacific Wheel, which was unveiled with plenty of pomp and fireworks on May 26 — the 20th anniversary of the park's opening.

A whopping 174,000 new LED lights have been mounted on the wheel's structure, including its 40 spokes and two hubs. The illumination on each of the Ferris wheel's spokes has increased from 18 pixels to 64 pixels, creating an overall display comprised of 2,560 pixels (1,900 pixels more than the previous system).

The job specifically involved replacing each primary color LED with one RGB (red, green and blue) LED, providing 81 percent greater efficiency and savings on electricity. The previous eco-friendly LED lights on the wheel — the only solar-powered ride of its type in the world — already provided 75 percent greater energy savings than traditional incandescent bulbs.

But the real bonanza is the purely vi-

sual one: With each RGB LED capable of producing any color in the visible spectrum, the computerized system can deliver programmable imagery in up to 16.7 million color value combinations with high resolution, greater color depth and 24 "frames per second" display speed.

The lighting package was produced by Eworks Pro of Orlando, Fla. Eworks also installed the earlier LED lighting system on the wheel, which replaced 5,392 incandescent bulbs.

The Ferris wheel with which Pacific Park opened in 1996 was replaced with an all-new wheel by Chance Rides in 2008. The park auctioned off the original wheel on eBay, with proceeds benefiting Special Olympics Southern California.

In its 20 years, Pacific Park, which is free to enter and has 12 rides and 14 midway games, has entertained more than 25 million guests. The park and Ferris wheel have enjoyed Hollywood-style celebrity — appearing in more than 500 movies, television shows and music videos.

Pacific Park isn't the only amusement draw celebrating a major milestone at the Santa Monica Pier in 2016. The two-story Looff Hippodrome, with its vintage, beautifully maintained carousel, marked its 100th year with a celebration on June 12.

• pacificpark.com

California's Great America launches 'Mass Effect' 4D attraction

In partnership with gaming giant Electronic Arts

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Thrillseekers and gamers alike are getting a visceral charge out of Mass Effect: New Earth — a 4D Holographic Journey, a new motion-based film experience that opened at California's Great America on May 18.

The Cedar Fair park teamed up with gaming powerhouse Electronic Arts (EA) to create the unique attraction, which features settings and characters from EA's hit Mass Effect video game franchise, developed by BioWare. The sci-fi storyline carries guests through space to face off against gigantic adversaries on a distant planet — where they ultimately help save the day.

Raul Rehnberg, vice president and general manager of Great America, told *Amusement Today* that Mass Effect has something for everyone.

"Cedar Fair has a strong

desire to make sure our guests experience fun in every way possible, and that includes taking advantage of state-of-the-art of technology," he said. "Mass Effect really is cutting-edge; there's nothing else like it. It features the largest highest-definition 3D LED screen in the world."

After a four-minute pre-show, the 4.5-minute adventure begins as guests enter a spaceship-themed, 82-seat theater and don 3D glasses. A live performer "captains" the journey from a podium, appearing to interact with the next-gen visuals. Synchronized with the action on the 4K-resolution, eight-million-pixel screen and dynamic seat movement are holography, surround sound (via 80 different channels), smoke and other 4D effect —



Rehnberg

working together to deliver an adrenaline-boosting experience.

"We're fortunate to be located in the Silicon Valley, so what better place to be able to introduce this kind of interactive and immersive technology?" Rehnberg said, adding that the attraction also was an effective repurposing of the park's 1994-built, and now fully retrofitted, Action Theater.

Joining the Great America/EA project collaboration was Southern California-based 3D Live, which initially developed the patented visual technology used in the Mass Effect attraction for Michael Jackson's never-realized 2009 This Is It tour. Mass Effect is its first use in a theme park application.

"We beta-tested it for a number of weeks, refining and tweaking the set points of all of the attraction's elements," explained Rehnberg. The project, in fact, turned into a crash



Thrillseekers and gamers alike are getting a visceral charge out of Mass Effect: New Earth — a 4D Holographic Journey, a new motion-based film experience that opened at California's Great America on May 18.

COURTESY CALIFORNIA'S GREAT AMERICA

course in today's video game technology and storytelling for the park manager, who admitted with a laugh that he's an "Atari 2600 era" gamer.

Rehnberg also noted that Mass Effect portends greater things for his park.

"Cedar Fair has made a concerted effort to really start developing Great America into a premier amusement park," he said. "We're excited that this is one piece of that evolution."

• cagreatamerica.com

Knott's Berry Farm's Ghost Town more spirited than ever at 75

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

BUENA PARK, Calif. — Everything “Old West” is new again, now that Knott's Berry Farm has officially kicked off the 75th anniversary celebration of its historic Ghost Town section.

It's more than just a big party, however. The park is using the milestone to show off several million dollars' worth of improvements.

With previews of new and enhanced attractions already underway since late May, Knott's invited the media to see and experience its latest handiwork on June 9 — two days before the official public reopening of its retracked and upgraded GhostRider wooden roller coaster.

Park officials and VIPs spoke during a ribbon-cutting ceremony near the new dining patio at Mrs. Knott's Chicken Dinner Restaurant, which has undergone the most visually impressive of this year's renovations.

“Seventy-five years is an awful long time, and a lot of wonderful memories have been made [at Ghost Town] — and to think, it all started with fried chicken and boysenberries,” said Jon Storbeck, a former longtime Disney executive who was recently named vice president and general manager of Knott's. “Walter Knott had a love for the Old West, and it was that interest that led him to build a modest collection of Ghost Town buildings adjacent to the restaurant.

“Many of those Ghost



Storbeck



The interactive Ghost Town Alive! (above left), featuring period characters, turns willing park guests into citizens. Bartender Jennifer greets parched patrons at the gorgeously restored Calico Saloon (above right), while performers risk all creating thrills at a new version of the Wild West Stunt Show (below left). Snoopy and the Peanuts gang offer cool indoor counter-programming at the Blockbuster Beagle! ice show. AT/DEAN LAMANNA (TOP PHOTOS); COURTESY KNOTT'S BERRY FARM



Town buildings still stand today. And this summer, we'll welcome guests to step inside of them for the very first time.”

This degree of public access is key to Ghost Town Alive!, a unique interactive entertainment experience running through Sept. 5. It takes full advantage of the section's newly enhanced facades, lighting and ambient Old West sound effects — creating an environment in which about 20 roaming performers in period costume live out a new daily storyline in the town of Calico.

The hook: the character actors invite park guests to participate as “citizens” and help shape the day's events.

The doors to legendary shops and buildings in Ghost Town, such as the Sheriff's Office and the Barbershop, have been flung open to allow guests to explore. Along the way, they can pledge their allegiance to courageous cowboys or notorious bandits.

Aside from the process of registering to become an official citizen of Calico, specific activities include trying your



luck at a game of cards with the Sheriff, voting for Mayor in the town election, getting a handlebar or walrus mustache applied, and drawing up “Wanted” posters. New citizens also can opt for something more leisurely, such as visiting the Livery Stable to meet the horses.

Outgoing Knott's GM Raffi Kaprelyan, who has been promoted by park owner Cedar Fair Entertainment Company to regional vice president, told *Amusement Today* that the charm of this real-time adventure is rooted in nostalgia and timelessness.

“With movies and TV shows continuing to be made about the Old West, Ghost Town has an appeal that still exists,” Kaprelyan said. “It differentiates us from other parks. It's the heart and soul of Knott's Berry Farm.”



Kaprelyan

A classic rides again
While the rest of Ghost

Town has come alive in creative ways, its biggest attraction also has returned to send shrieks far and wide.

Following nine months of down time, GhostRider, the park's iconic, 1998-built wooden roller coaster, is up and running at full gallop.

Work on the 118-foot-tall coaster — performed by Great Coasters International, Inc. (GCII), of Sunbury, Pa. — included the replacement of all 4,533 feet of track and the swap-out of the original double-axel Philadelphia Toboggan Company rolling stock for GCII's trailer-style Millennium Flyer trains. The new trains sport a wood-grain mining car design, each with gold, silver or copper accents. (GCII is represented by Florida-based Leisure Labs LLC.)

GhostRider has undergone some careful reprofiling to improve transitioning and to allow for the removal of a mid-course block brake, reducing breath-catching time in the L-shaped, multilayered layout's second half. The trains are slowed smoothly on the final

► See KNOTT'S, page 30

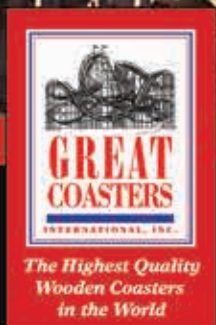


Knott's Berry Farm's GhostRider wooden coaster has been completely retracked and partially reprofiled for a smoother, yet still intense, ride. Great Coasters International, Inc., did the work — and also supplied new mine-car-themed Millennium Flyer trains. AT/DEAN LAMANNA

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Revamped Knott's chicken dinner restaurant serves up tradition anew

AT: Dean Lamanna
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BUENA PARK, Calif. — The good times, and drumsticks, are rolling again at Mrs. Knott's Chicken Dinner Restaurant.

The Orange County landmark, established in 1934 and located on Grand Avenue just outside Knott's Berry Farm's gates, has reopened following a complete refurbishment.

Guests enter the enlarged and redesigned lobby through double doors, checking in at the registration booth, which is lined with wood repurposed from the renovation of the park's historic Wagon Camp theater. If a wait is necessary, guests can peruse the shops of the surrounding California Marketplace and receive a text message when it's time to be seated.

Each of the restaurant's four dining rooms has been lavished with a unique theme that harkens to the eatery's origins. The Tea Room and Pantry Room are particular highlights.

The Tea Room, to the left of the main entrance, was the first dining room to open in 1934. It features cozy booths inspired by the original seating arrangements and offers views of the California Marketplace.



To the right of the main entrance, the Pantry Room has been remodeled with a look inspired by founder Cordelia Knott's kitchen pantry. Nods to her home kitchen, including a potbelly stove, rustic furnishings and a stamped tin ceiling, evoke warmth and family togetherness.

Informed by the architecture and furnishings of a western farmhouse, the Barn Dining Room and its new outdoor patio capture the flavor of rural living.

The restaurant now features a full-service bar offering signature cocktails such as boysenberry martinis, boysenberry margaritas and boysenberry beer. With décor that pays homage to the Garden Dining Room that preceded it, the bar is at once rustic and modern.

Some small bites and other goodies have been added to the menu. But Cordelia's chicken dinner recipes, the enormous popularity of which gave rise to adjacent Ghost Town and the theme park, haven't been changed a bit.

After all, it's the Berry Farm's special embrace of the old-fashioned that spans generations — and keeps visitors coming back again and again.



Along with the addition of a new patio dining area (left), Mrs. Knott's Chicken Dinner Restaurant has seen extensive renovations to its (clockwise from above) Main Room, Tea Room and the former Garden Room — the latter having been transformed into a stylishly rustic bar.

COURTESY KNOTT'S BERRY FARM



Ghost Town inspires artistry



During a historical presentation about Knott's Berry Farm's Ghost Town in the Boardwalk Ballroom on June 9, artist James C. Mulligan — the official fine artist for the Elvis Presley Estate — unveiled his commemorative work "Ghost Town 75: Spirit of the West" as Walter Knott's grandsons Daryl Anderson and Steve Knott looked on. The vivid piece is available as an authenticated lithograph at Virginia's Gift Shop outside the park's gates. The extent of Ghost Town's pop culture influence was further displayed at the presentation by pre-recorded messages from celebrities — including one from actor-comedian Steve Martin, who performed at Ghost Town's Bird Cage Theatre on the way up and offered his congratulations on the themed area's big anniversary. AT/DEAN LAMANNA

► KNOTT'S Continued from page 28

brake run by a new magnetic braking system.

Also expected to reduce overall maintenance on the ride, which runs year-round and reaches speeds exceeding 55 mph, is the retracking effort's two layers of ipe (pronounced ee-pay) — a type of wood native to Central America and South America also known as Brazilian walnut.

"It an extremely durable wood," said Kaprelyan, who carefully planned the coaster work and expected the retracking to last for years to come.

Tying GhostRider even more directly into Ghost Town, the park's old Pan for Gold attraction has been returned to its original location near the coaster's queue — where it has more room to accommodate "prospectors" and create strike-it-rich photo opportunities.

On with the shows

In addition to Ghost Town Alive!, more traditionally staged live entertainment — either new or reimagined for 2016 — is available in Ghost Town and elsewhere in the park through the summer season.

• **Wild West Stunt Show: Frontier Feats of Wonder!** The

historic Wagon Camp theater presents this all-new stunt showcase, featuring the legendary frontier feats of Colonel R. Hawkins. "But beware," said the park's marketing department, "the Mayfield Gang are known to interrupt the fun and cause a mighty bit of rough and tumble trouble."

• **Circus of Wonders:** The all-new Calico Mine Stage is home to this interpretation of an Old West traveling circus, complete with trampoline stunts, trapeze acrobatics and colorful carnival personalities. Perhaps appropriately, it only rolls out after dark.

• **Calico Saloon Show:** The classic 1800s-style Calico Saloon has undergone a stunning restoration and is a great place to enjoy a cold sarsaparilla or boysenberry beer fresh from the tap. It's also home to the high-kickin' Saloon Show, with performances several times throughout the day.

• **Blockbuster Beagle! On Ice:** Need some relief from the rustic environs of Ghost Town? Chill at the Charles M. Schulz Theatre, where Snoopy and the Peanuts gang are bringing Hollywood glamour and movie lot escapades to this Broadway-style ice show. And as a summer bonus, it provides a half hour of air-conditioned comfort.

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Officials at the Baton Rouge (La.) State Fair just recently created a Hall of Fame and named the first inductees. First inductees show here are, from left: Carol Christian, who accepted for her late husband Chris Christian; retired Judge Douglas Gonzales, one of the original organizers of the fair; Margaret Broussard, who accepted for her husband the late David Broussard, one of the original organizers; Terri Wilson, who accepted for the family of the late Kent James; J.H. Martin, one of the original organizers and the first chairman in 1965, and Dusty Manson, who accepted on behalf of her late husband Roger Manson. COURTESY BATON ROUGE (LA.) STATE FAIR

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Greater Baton Rouge fair creates Hall of Fame, installs first members

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

BATON ROUGE, La. — The Greater Baton Rouge (La.) State Fair installed in May the first members in the newly created Hall of Fame.

Six individuals were honored, three of which were original founders of the fair and three were past directors.

Those original founders inducted were: retired Judge Douglas Gonzales, the late David Broussard (whose wife, Margaret Broussard, accepted the honor for him), and J.H. Martin, who was not only an original organizer but also served as the first chairman in 1965.

The three past directors that were honored were: the late Kent James (whose family friend Terri Wilson accepted for him), the late Chris Christian, (whose wife, Carol Christian,

accepted for him), and the late Roger Manson (whose wife, Dusty Manson, accepted for him).

The current board chairman is Cliff Barton.

The fair began as a Jaycee project in 1965 and five of the charter members served as chairman of the fair during the Jaycee era.

In 1985 the State Fair Foundation took over operation of the fair and has donated over \$3.5 million in scholarships and donations to charitable and nonprofit organizations involved with families, children, and quality of life.

The fair will celebrate its 51st anniversary this year when it runs October 27 to November 6.

The carnival provider is Mitchell Brothers & Sons Amusements, based in Slidell, La.

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This beautiful sunset greeted Greater Baton Rouge State Fair visitors during last year's fair. The midway is provided by Mitchell Brothers & Sons Amusements based in Slidell, La. COURTESY GREATER BATON ROUGE (LA.) STATE FAIR

Guglielmi's due diligence adds to Cyclon's success

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Ital International's run of sales for the Interpark Cyclon coaster was not just a stroke of luck.

Carlo Guglielmi's due diligence, in part, has made this ride a success in the U.S. Another main factor is the quality and value of the product. He has sold a total of six Cyclon coasters and has another two expected to be delivered by the end of 2016.

"The Pinfari Zyclon has always been an iconic ride in a way, but since Pinfari went out of business about 10 years ago, what I was seeing was these coasters getting older," Guglielmi said. "At the same time, I started noticing that people began selling their Pinfari coasters and asking an arm and leg."

Guglielmi used to rep for Pinfari, which was bought by Interpark. He saw the used portable coasters being sold for between \$250,000 and \$300,000.

Interpark invited him to come to take a look at the new coaster. He finally did.

"I went to see the coaster that Interpark was building and saw the quality," he said. "With prices coming down some, buying a new coaster became a better value."

In addition, the exchange rate between the dollar and the Euro was getting better for purchasers in the U.S. The new coasters cost between \$450,000 and \$550,000 U.S., making a new coaster a very good value.

"So, at this point, I started to make proposals," Guglielmi said.

Ray Cammack Shows purchased the first Interpark Cyclon from him. Guglielmi said they have been very happy with the response the coaster has received.

Since then, he has brokered sales to Playworld Amusements, Reithoffer Shows, Wade Shows, Dixieland Amusements, and to Ventura Park, Cancun, Mexico. These coasters are up and running.

Expected for delivery by the end of the year are two more — one to Fiesta Shows and one to N.A.M.E.

Dixieland Amusements owner Billy Tucker purchased his coaster for his new amusement park that opened for the



Carlo Guglielmi, right, Ital International, Nashville, Tenn., has now sold six Interpark Cyclon roller coasters, with two more set to be delivered by the end of the year. One of the coasters went to Dixieland Amusements' owner Billy Tucker, left, seen here with Guglielmi. Even though the coaster is a portable model, Tucker has purchased it for his new amusement park, Lake City Amusement Park, Guntersville, Ala. This is the first season for that park.

COURTESY ITAL INTERNATIONAL

first time in 2016. Located in Guntersville, Ala., Tucker still operates his carnival but has the Cyclon at the park.

All but two of these coasters are the Super Cyclons. Playworld and N.A.M.E. have the regular Cyclons, the regular having less cars and aren't as heavy as the super.

The Cyclon coaster is a portable family coaster, disposing of a self-contained base. It features a long track,

about 350 meters (1,148 feet) in one minute and 20 seconds for one round. Interpark's website said the coaster has a very low annual maintenance cost, another plus.

Guglielmi is having a good run on the coasters, but he also reps for Technical Park and Bertazzon, and sells used rides as well. He has sold a 55-meter Technical Park wheel to Steel Pier, N.J., and a 40-meter wheel to Casino Pier, N.J.

He has sold a Technical Park Street Fighter Revolution to Wade Shows, as well to Casino Pier. The Wade Shows ride is the first one on the carnival route. He has sold another one to another traveling show but didn't disclose the name of the show.

In addition, he recently sold Bertazzon bumper cars to Adventureland, Farmingdale, N.Y., and the Jungle Jim's chain.

New Lamberink portable RL45 wheel to arrive in U.S. by December

Wood Entertainment, Wade Shows to spend \$2.5 million on wheel

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — When it is all said and done, Michael Wood, Wood Entertainment, and Frank Zaitshik, Wade Shows, will spend just about \$2.5 million on their new portable Lamberink RL45 wheel.

The two outdoor amusement business veterans partnered to purchase the 45-meter (152 feet) wheel, which they expect to receive delivery on in December.

"The cost of the wheel was about two million Euros," Wood, an independent ride operator, said. "But, we are purchasing four trucks in Europe to carry the pieces for loading. We will end up needing between eight and 10 trucks to transport it here, so we will need to purchase additional trucks."

He said they also plan to install a LED package once it arrives. They were taking bids on that project the first week of June.

With the wheel's arrival in December, there will be two Lamberink company representatives with it to help assemble it for the first time in the U.S. The two reps will return when Wood and Zaitshik are ready to transport it

▶ See WHEEL, page 35

Populous presents at two workshops



Populous recently completed a planning workshop for the Gallatin County Fairgrounds, home of the Big Sky Country State Fair located in Bozeman, Montana. Pictured left to right are: the Gallatin County Fairgrounds General Manager, Lori Cox CFE, Operations Manager, Dennis Voeller, and Populous Principal and Senior Planner, David Forkner ASLA. COURTESY POPULOUS



Charlie Smith, senior architect/senior principal of Populous fairgrounds architects introduced the key note speaker and presented a workshop on "Fairgrounds and Industry Development Trends" at the recent Florida Federation of Fairs & IAFE Zone 2 Conference held at the World of Golf Resort and Conference Center located in St. Augustine, Florida. Shown left to right are: Charlie Smith, Marla Calico, president & CEO of the IAFE and Florida Federation of Fairs and the Greater Hillsborough County Fair Manager, Tom Umiker, CFE. COURTESY POPULOUS

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COMPILED: Pam Sherborne
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New York State government could be getting out of the fair business. New York Gov. **Andrew Cuomo** has launched a privatization task force to look at the ways a private sector developer can help run the **New York State Fair** held annually in Syracuse.

Apparently this is not a new idea for the New York event. It was reported that fair board officials had looked at hiring an outside operator in recent years, but was unable to find any takers. With changes that have been made to the fair organization, officials are hoping it now will be more appealing to an outside operator.

In addition, the state is halfway into a \$50 million state upgrade of the fairgrounds, which changes the dynamics of finding a private operator. Improvements at the fair include a new main gate, an expanded midway with better layout and new infrastructure, and a new RV park.

The fair is set for August 25 to September 5. **Wade Shows** provides the midway. This year represents that carnival's third year of a 10-year contract with the fair.

The **Lake County Fair Association**, Grayslake, Ill., will be without a chief executive heading into that association's biggest event of the year. But, officials have said operations are on track for the 88th annual county fair set for July 27-31.

Matthew Robertson, general manager, recently resigned after 18 months. A Chicago resident, Robertson had been commuting to the fair office in Grayslake and left to take a job closer to his home and family. His last day was May 20. No decisions or changes will be considered until after the 2016 fair. A team was in place and duties were being absorbed by existing staff.

The fair association has struggled financially since closing its home of half a century and building a new home a few miles south. The new location opened in 2009, but the nonprofit fair association was beset by a variety of issues including bad weather and the inability to sell adjoining land it owned for development that had been expected to generate millions of dollars.

Kentucky State Fair board chairman **Mark Lynn** has appointed a three-member search committee to find a replacement for **Clifford "Rip" Rippetoe**, the former fair board president and CEO who recently departed to take a job in San Diego.

Now that the committee is in place, it will work with Minnesota-based executive search firm SearchWide to narrow down the list of candidates for presentation to the fair board for interviews for the Louisville, Ky., based job. Hopes are to have top candidates in for interviews in three or four months and to have a new CEO in place by the end of the 2016.

Since Rippetoe's departure, his duties have been managed by two interim CEOs: **Anthony Leachman**, CFO and chief business development officer, and **Steve Kelly**, executive director of expositions.

The 50th **Hawaii State Fair**, Kapolei, which ran May 27-June 26, scrapped the scrip this year and went to a Fun Pass system to pay for rides, attractions, food, games and admission.

The Fun Pass came as a plastic card. People

arriving at the fair and expecting the old scrip booths at the entrance, instead, were greeted by touch screen machines to purchase the Fun Pass. The Fun Passes were loaded with credits at the touch screen kiosks that took both cash and credit card as payment.

The new system took some fairgoers a while to get used to, but once inside the fair, all it took was a quick touch of the card to a reader. If they had enough credits on the card for a ride, the reader showed a green light.

E.K. Fernandez Shows produces the event. For show employees, the new system meant no more counting ride coupons. And, if a fair visitor didn't use all the credits on the card, they will be able to use them at future fairs.

Karen LaFlame, a 30-year veteran of the **Washington State Fair**, Puyallup, announced last month that she will retire her position as the Public Relations Counsel. Her last day was June 9.

"My immediate plans are to finish my cancer treatment, then kick back and enjoy a more relaxed lifestyle with my husband," LaFlame said, in a press release announcing her retirement. She said the new media contact is **Stacy Howard**, public relations manager. Fair dates this year are September 2-25.

Eastern States Exposition, West Springfield, Mass., began the countdown to its Centennial Fair, set for September 16-October 2, with a 100-day kick-off celebration last month.

The public was invited to join in the fun on June 8 that included music, games, refreshments, cake, giveaways and a special lighting ceremony at sunset.

The Big E will give away a prize every day during the 100-day countdown starting with that June 8 event until the fair opens.

Officials at the **Allen County Fair**, Scottsville, Ky., were able to show off the new livestock building on the fairgrounds during this year's fair held June 11-29.

The building project was funded by the county's own fund raising efforts and will be reimbursed with funds from the Governor's Office of Agricultural Policy.

The open span building is 72 feet by 150 feet. The building includes electricity to power fans, shade and extra-strength cattle panels where livestock can be penned and tied.

The livestock shows had outgrown the only other structure, a pavilion, that the fairgrounds had to offer. Livestock and exhibitors were pretty much at the mercy of the elements. If it rained, they had no where to go.

A grant of \$275,000 from **Great Outdoors Colorado** and \$200,000 approved by El Paso County voters in 2014 will go toward improvements to the **El Paso County Fairgrounds**, Calhan, Colo. Plans include drainage, electrical and roof improvements along with fixes to the fairgrounds racetrack, landscaping and buildings. It also includes an 8,000-sq.-ft. addition to the Owens Livestock Arena, a permanent entertainment pavilion, gate fixes and a playground with a water spray park. The 2016 fair is set for July 16-23.

Bay Tek hires former Skee-Ball employees, plans to retire some games, produce others

It was announced in May that two former Skee-Ball Inc. employees will come on board as part of their team, following the acquisition of the latter by the former.

Former Skee-Ball employee Jeff Hudson will join the sales team with an emphasis on the development and growth of new and existing business for parks, carnivals, and home sales.

Hudson brings to Bay Tek years of coin-op experience starting with Six Flags in 1984 and later moving to Vari-Tech International in 1989. He managed amusement park games at Dollywood, Pigeon Forge, Tenn.; The Great Escape, Lake George, N.Y.; Blackpool Pleasure Beach, U.K.; Holiday Park, Germany; and Port Aventura, Spain.

Along with Hudson, former Skee-Ball employee Mike Pantalone will be joining the Parts and Service department as the customer service manager. Pantalone brings a depth of knowledge about the Skee-Ball product line past and present.

Since the purchase of Skee-Ball, the Bay Tek crew has worked diligently to begin facilitating Skee-Ball products into its production facility. While nothing has been transferred as of mid-May, many employees have made trips to Chalfont, Pa., the former Skee-Ball headquarters, to ensure a smooth transition.

Production at Skee-Ball will officially be shut down this summer and Bay Tek will begin taking on production.

Bay Tek will retire from the Skee-Ball



Jeff Hudson
Sales



Mike Pantalone
Parts and Service

lineup effective immediately: Tower of Power; Crazy Curves; Strike it Rich; and Nothin' But Net.

Currently 14 Spin N Win (the four-foot version) games remain. Bay Tek will sell those, but has no plans to produce this size after they are gone.

Bay Tek is currently working on bringing the following titles into their production facility: Classic Skee-Ball, both 10-foot and 13-foot versions; the six-foot version of Spin N Win; Super Shot; Hot Shot; and Centennial Alley.

Bay Tek is a U.S. designer and manufacturer of redemption games for the entertainment industry. Established in 1977, Bay Tek is based out of Pulaski, Wis.

Bay Tek's purchase of Skee-Ball, which was invented and patented by J.D. Estes of Philadelphia in 1909, was final February 23, 2016. The first Skee-Ball alleys were sold and distributed to the outdoor amusement industry market by Maurice Piesen in 1914.

—Pam Sherborne



This is an artist rendering of the new portable Lamberink RL45 purchased by Wood Entertainment and Wade shows. It is expected to be delivered in December.

COURTESY WOOD ENT.; WADE SHOWS

►WHEEL Continued from page 33

to its first location, which will be the South Florida Fair, West Palm Beach, set for January 13-29, 2017.

"We are very excited about it," Wood said. "This ride is massive."

Wood said he and Zaitshik have estimated that it would take about 20 hours with 10 crew to assemble it and about 14-16 hours with 10 crew to disassemble it.

"We just don't know right now," he said. "We may get more efficient. We just won't know until we do it."

Wood said the wheel partnership began as a casual con-

versation between himself and Zaitshik.

"It just began to make sense logistically for us to do this together," Wood said. "We were thinking along parallel lines. We ended up deciding to be partners on this instead of competitors."

This makes the 10th ride for Wood, while Wade Shows has an arsenal of over 100 rides.

The two plan to not only play fair and carnival dates with the piece, but also special and stand-alone events. They also plan to theme it according to each location using a center digital screen to change the name or sponsorship.





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Fair dates back to 1854

California State Fair sees changes, parallels through the years

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Two-inch long peanuts, 72-pound beets, and a 10-pound carrot measuring three feet long greeted guests to the very first California State Fair.

FAIR SPOTLIGHT

That was 162 years ago and a lot has changed. Yet, many things have stayed the same. The 2016 dates are July 8-24 and officials tout there is something for everyone.

As for changes, in the first four years the fair was held, 1854-1858, it was held in four different California cities starting with Sacramento, then San Jose, Stockton and Marysville.

In 1859, Sacramento was established as the permanent home. The first fair home took up six city square blocks. In 1909, it was moved to a 100-acre site in Sacramento. Today, it is housed at the 356-acre Cal Expo.

"Actually, we are located on a 750-acre site, with 350 acres dedicated to the fair," said Marketing Director Jennifer Castleberry. "The remaining 400 acres



are protected lands with bike paths and trails."

The California State Fair still abounds with entertainment. The fair of yore staged musical entertainment as well as a variety of competitions and contests.

Yet, some of the entertainment is very different.

For example, at the turn of the 20th century, fair organizers staged a train wreck delighting spectators as two locomotives crashed, creating masses of twisted steaming steel. The crash was a huge hit and it continued until the beginning of World War I.

As a contrast, some entertainment set for the 2016 fair are a high dive show, a corn hole championship, the Magic Bean Show, and an interactive transportation exhibit.

And, if fairgoers like the thrills of steel, the midway will give them that.

Just prior to World War I, carnival rides were introduced to the fair. This year, Butler Amusements will provide about 70 rides. In its seventh year at the California State Fair, Butler

Above, Butler Amusements is building a Sky Ride on the grounds of the California State Fair, Sacramento. The permanent \$1.1 million attraction will be up and running by the 2016 fair set for July 8-24. Above right, the midway as seen in 2015. Right, the fair received these large letters from Disneyland, Anaheim, Calif. The letters range between 10 and 15 feet and are made of concrete.

COURTESY CAL EXPO



There still are ample agricultural exhibits and livestock exhibits just like in the early years.

Organizers continue to stress the importance of the horse without which developing the west in those days would have been almost impossible. The fair hosts live harness racing and live thoroughbred racing as well as separate horse shows.

Highlights over the years at the fair abound. Rodriguez pointed to several:

- In 1968, Governor Ronald Reagan officially opened the Cal Expo

- In that same year, the monorail, manufactured by Universal Mobility Inc., was installed providing two stops for fairgoers; and

- In 1983, the fair's farm was established and now provides a year-round educational experience.

The 30-foot tall monorail still operates during the fair. Rodriguez said the monorail has received periodic renovations.

A major renovation was done in 2007 when it went from being manually operated to automation.

"After that, other additions include computer controls, GPS, and converting one of the cars to be ADA accessible," Rodriguez said. "Throughout the fair, a minimum of two trains are running leaving every 10 minutes. A third train is added if necessary."

If two trains are running, there are 12 trips per hour. When there are three trains, trips per hour increase to 18. Each train holds 92 people.

Another highlight for the fair came in 2012 when the Friends of the California State Fair organization raised enough money to purchase the California letters from Disneyland, Anaheim, Calif., and deliver them to the state fair. Castleberry said the letters are somewhere between 10 to 15 feet high and made out of concrete.

FAST FACTS

California State Fair,
Sacramento, Calif.

Key staff

Rick Pickering,
chief executive officer
Tom Martinez,
chief deputy GM
Samantha Brown,
deputy GM, administration
Jennifer Castleberry,
marketing director
Jay Carlson,
acting programs director
Robert Craft,
chief of police
Paul Gillingham,
maintenance manager
Marcia Shell,
assistant GM, Expo Events

2015 attendance
787,833

Midway supplier

Butler Amusements provides about 70 rides; new rides for 2016: Sky Ride, permanent attraction; Quasar, by A.R.M.; Inversion, by KMG; and 1001 Nachts, by A.R.M.



Above left, The California State Fair, Sacramento, has always focused on the agricultural industry in the state. The first fair in 1854 featured two-inch long peanuts, 72-pound beets, and a 10-pound carrot measuring three feet long. Here is just a sampling of other award-winning vegetables over the years. Above right, one of the highlights for fairgoers in 1949 was Chariot Racing, shown here. COURTESY CAL EXPO





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► PeopleWatch — Page 40 / MarketWatch — Page 41 / Safety — Pages 42-44 / CLASSIFIED — Page 47

FAST FACTS

Name/Location

Hershey's Chocolate
World Tour/
Hershey, Pa.

First opened

June 30, 1973

Previous ride renovations

1988: \$4.5 million
(with robot CP-1)
1998: various small updates
2006: Gabby, Harmony
and Olympia singing
animatronic cows added
2014: major renovations,
retail area

Operating Season

364 days
(Closed Christmas Day)

Speed/length/ ride time/hourly capacity

1.95 feet per second/
1,155 feet
Under 10 minutes/
1,671 pph

Ride Vehicle/Capacity

110, 5 passenger cars

Employees

Tour Ride: 50
Chocolate World:
675 employees at peak

Total Visitors to Date

1973: 1.4 million
2016: 40 million plus

Contractors/ Sub-Contractors

On Track Themes, Inc.
Granaroli Design & Ent.
Ride & Show Engineering
Clair Solutions
Bandit Lites
Stoner Graphix
Cenx
Garner Holt Productions
Millennial Pixels
The Jim Henson Company
Visual Terrain I

Hershey Chocolate Tour ride updated for 2016

42-year-old ride
remained open
during rebuild

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

HERSHEY, Pa. — The Hershey Food Company chocolate-making tour ride opened May 14 with numerous upgrades to the attraction — the first since 2006. Arguably one of the most visited factory tours, the ride now features the latest in digital technology and new installations that create a fully immersive and interactive experience for the entire family — a new tour ride for a new generation. The chocolate-making process hasn't changed very much since the tour was last updated; however, story-telling technologies have changed. Even with all the new enhancements, the ride will remain free, as it has been the past 42 years. When Chocolate World opened in 1973, inspiration from previous World's Fair pavilions contributed to the overall building design.

Steve Balliet, senior manager of Hershey's Chocolate World and Times Square (store), explained the development of the refurbishment project. "We actually started working on this project about 14 months ago. We started preliminary design and began working through the process, really envisioning what the project could be with Ty Granaroli (Granaroli Design & Entertainment, Burbank, Ca.), brainstorming how we could elevate the technology on the ride and elevate the storytelling to bring our brands to the next generation. We ended up



engaging Mark Thomas from On Track Themes (Fillmore, Ca.) to bring that vision to life. He's our Technical Director and Producer of the show. He does an amazing job of taking that vision and applying the right technology and the right theatrics to bring it to life in the ride."

Some of the companies involved in the refresh were also involved in the last update 10 years ago. "Both Ty and Mark were involved in the last renovation of the ride in 2006 as well. Fortunately their institutional knowledge is just fantastic and avoid(s) any of the typical pitfalls that you might find on a project. They knew the ride inside and out."

The biggest challenge facing all who were involved with the project is maintaining familiarity while incorporating enhancements as Granaroli ex-

plains, "How do you enhance the ride and make sure you don't lose anything that the guests really have an affinity for. We interviewed dozens of guests asking them what they liked about the ride and even presented some of the concepts — what would you think if we did this. We learned a lot through that process."

Construction started in November, 2015 and proceeded in earnest in January, much of the work overnight, all while keeping the existing ride in operation for the daily visitors. "The very unusual aspect of this is (except for a three week period in February where we shut the ride down completely) we've been open the entire time and changing this ride over — while we are operating. It was a really unique approach that Mark came up with and let us keep



Top left, Taking a moment away from the Hershey Chocolate Tour ride are, left to right: Steve Balliet, senior manager of Hershey's Chocolate World and Times Square (store); Mark Thomas, producer and technologist, On Track Themes; Suzanne Jones, vice president of the Hershey Experience and Ty Granaroli, principal, Granaroli Design & Entertainment. Left, tour riders are greeting with this new opening barnyard scene with soundtrack. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

the ride going," said Balliet.

Thomas explains from his perspective, "One of the challenges is that the Hershey Company did not want us to close the ride. Over four million visitors a year come to ride the ride, and they don't want to disappoint their customer base. Usually you would close the ride four or five months, but we've done this all sort of in a stealth mode. For a logistical point of view, that was a real challenge in the production — trying to start early enough on the production and give ourselves enough time to be able to fit everything in and make the major changes we made and then not have them revealed."

The ride was not without its unique challenges as Granaroli explains, "We're working with an existing ride, so that's good and bad because everything has to fit. We knew exact-

► See HERSHEY, page 39

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►HERSHEY

Continued from page 38

ly what pieces we were going to change when we started. It actually went really smoothly. We worked with On Track Themes; they are the producer. They are so good with taking these designs and making them come to life." Thomas with On Track Themes said, "The Hershey Company approached us and Granaroli Design & Entertainment, (asking) if we would work together to reimagine the ride. We started with concepts and worked our way to this day. Those concepts have become reality. It's a long and laborious process, but that's the nature of these kinds of attractions."

Enhancements to the chocolate making tour ride include:

- New graphics and timeline in the queue area highlighting The Hershey Company's commitment to responsible sourcing and the simple ingredients like milk, cocoa and sugar.

- Photo features that make it easy for families to capture and share the magical memories from their visit. All guests are photographed while in the queue.

- Enhanced sets featuring the latest in projection mapping and holographic imaging effects.

- 13 state-of-the-art animated figures.

- A brand new narration and theme song.

- Power-saving LED lighting.

- A high-resolution interactive finale scene that integrates photos submitted by Hershey's Chocolate World Attraction fans on social media.

Tour riders will have a chance to meet seven new cows in the fan-favorite barnyard scene, which transports visitors to the farms of Pennsylvania where Hershey sources milk for its chocolate. More than 10,000 fans helped name Mocha, Caramel, Strawberry, Blossom, Cocoa and Hazel by voting online for their favorites, inspired by the delicious flavors found in chocolate. Derry, the final cow, was named by employees of The Hershey Company, which was announced at the grand opening when the ride was officially "unwrapped." There was also a special "Cownt-Down" for the first 500 riders that day, who received a special com-

memorative cowbell with the Hershey logo and a specially wrapped chocolate bar to mark the occasion.

Suzanne Jones, vice president of the **Hershey Experience**, sums up the ride update project, "It's been 10 years since we've had an opportunity to refresh the tour ride. We wanted to make sure we struck a balance with maintaining all of the elements of the ride that have such a deep meaning to our guests that have been coming for

many years as well as our new guests and making sure that we maintain the opportunity to really learn about the magic of chocolate-making but use all the new technologies that are available to us today to make it a really fun and engaging and immersive experience. We're really excited about the opportunity of our guests being able to make themselves part of the tour ride as we continue to refine and innovate. There's the opportunity for them to have photos taken of

themselves placed within the ride and using the hash tag #ChocolateWorld; eventually we'll be able to pull those off as Instagrams and make them part of the (ride high-resolution interactive) grand finale."

Ride & Show Engineering, Inc. (San Dimas, Ca.) is designing the new ride vehicles, replacing the Omniver cars made by **Arrow Development** and themed by **Randall Duell and Associates** when the attraction first opened in

1973. The ride originally had a continuous line of cars on the track that was changed to 17 groups of three and a single car for a total of 52 vehicles. The new cars will have the same vehicle configuration. An on-board video with a narrator and vignettes will enhance the storytelling. The cars will be put in operation this fall. (No date has been set at this time.)

The total cost for the make-over was not released by the Hershey Company.



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PEOPLE WATCH

KeyLime Cove announces new HR Director

KeyLime Cove, Gurnee, Ill., announced the appointment of **Myra Morales** to the role of director of human resources. In her role, Morales oversees talent recruitment and management, employee relations and HR strategic planning and development for Chicagoland's largest indoor water park resort and one of Lake County's largest employers.

"Myra plays a vital role in the recruitment and development of KeyLime Cove team members, who are the cornerstone to providing excellence in hospitality and guest service," said **Dale McFarland**, general manager. "She has the expertise and skills needed for this critical position, and we are very excited to welcome her."

Prior to joining KeyLime Cove, Morales worked as director of human resources for several impressive hotel brands in and around Chicago, including Renaissance Chicago O'Hare Suites Hotel, Embassy Suites, Marriott Suites, Crowne Plaza and Double Tree.



Morales

Accesso announces two promotions

London-based **Accesso Technology Group plc** (AIM: ACSO), recently announced that **Tom Burnet** has been appointed executive chairman of the board while current chief operating officer **Steve Brown** has been promoted to chief executive officer, with both of these changes effective immediately. Brown will also continue to serve as president of the company and maintain his position on the board.

"We continue to extend our market leadership position and with our exceptional employees and continued momentum are in prime position to expand our business pipeline well beyond our current level of business and accelerate growth," said Burnet.

Burnet, who joined the company (then **Lo-Q**) as CEO in late 2010 has led the company's growth from a market value of \$20 million to more than \$400 million today, becomes the executive chairman of the board. In this role, he will lead the company's strategy, medium to long term growth opportunities and investor relations.

"With Steve in the CEO position, I am completely confident that the energy and momentum we've enjoyed will continue to build as we work together to fully realize acceso's full potential as a leading solutions platform," said Burnet.



Burnet

APSP names four to water quality committee

Four new members have been appointed to the Recreational Water Quality (RWQ) Committee of **The Association of Pool & Spa Professionals** (APSP) based in Alexandria, Va. **Joseph Laurino**, Ph.D., president and CEO of **Periodic Products**, joins the RWQ Committee as chairman. Laurino replaces **Stanley Pickens**, Ph.D., who has stepped down after a long tenure of exceptional service.

Also new on the RWQ Committee are **Jeff Boynton**, general manager of **Delta UV Corporation**; **Kenneth Gregory**, compliance & safety manager of aquatic systems for **Pentair Water Quality Systems**; and **John Weber**, manager of quality and technical service for **Lonza**.

Knott's Berry Farm names new GM; Raffi Kaprelyan promoted to VP

BUENA PARK, Calif. — **Cedar Fair Entertainment Company** (NYSE: FUN) announce on May 27 that **Jon Storbeck** has been hired as vice president and general manager of **Knott's Berry Farm**. Storbeck joined the company on May 30, after a distinguished career of more than 30 years at **The Walt Disney Company**.

Storbeck replaces **Raffi Kaprelyan**, who has been promoted to regional vice president of Cedar Fair.

"During his time with **Disney Parks & Resorts**, Jon demonstrated the leadership traits that make him particularly well-qualified for this role," said Kaprelyan. "As vice president and general manager, Jon will report di-



Jon Storbeck



Raffi Kaprelyan

rectly to me and oversee all aspects of Knott's Berry Farm's operations, ensuring we continue to deliver the high-quality guest experience that Knott's is known for."

In his new role, Kaprelyan will oversee Knott's Berry Farm as well as several

other parks in the Cedar Fair system. "Raffi has driven the record-performance of Knott's Berry Farm and we are excited to have his leadership applied to more of our parks," said **Richard A. Zimmerman**, chief operating officer of Cedar Fair.

Dippin' Dots sales up, company projects additional 25 percent increase in 2016

Ice cream maker's growth fueled by franchise program, expanded distribution

PADUCAH, Ky. — **Dippin' Dots, LLC**, a leader in the flash-frozen ice cream and frozen treat market, continues to realize surging growth as a result of a focus on developing a strong franchisee base, pursuing strategic partnerships with other well-known brands and expanding its points of presence since being acquired by Oklahoma City-based private equity firm **Fischer Enterprises LLC** in late 2012.

The strategy is paying dividends as total sales of the company's core ice cream products jumped more than



60 percent from 2013 through 2015. The robust sales growth is expected to continue with sales on track for an additional 25 percent growth in 2016.

"As an iconic brand with strong name recognition and consumer loyalty, Dippin' Dots is the cornerstone of our snack food portfolio," said **Scott Fischer**, COO of Fischer Enterprises. "The flash-frozen beaded ice cream was a groundbreaking product when it was invented more than 25 years ago."

Domestic franchising

Domestic franchising remains a key component of the company's success. Year-over-year franchising revenue grew by more than 45 percent in 2015 and is exceeding that pace so far this year. While franchising unit growth is being organically generated from existing franchisees expanding points of presence, Dippin' Dots also expects to bring in approximately 10 new franchise owners in 2016. As a part of that growth, brick-and-mortar franchise-owned units have recently opened in Mobile, Ala., and Destin, Fla.

International distribution

International distribution of Dippin' Dots product continues to see strong growth from both co-branding with Doc Popcorn as well as expanding to new markets. **Hankyu Hanshin Holding Group**, which holds the master license for Dippin' Dots in Japan, began shipping product to Taiwan last month. To continue to grow globally, Dippin' Dots is also considering entering the Chinese market later this year.

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MARKETWATCH



COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 06/08/16	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	26.92	41.91	22.31
Merlin Entertainments Group/ Legoland	MERL	LSE	430.20	471.30	360.93
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	59.08	60.23	48.45
Comcast Corp./ NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	63.22	64.99	50.01
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	98.04	122.08	86.25
MEIN Dubai Parks & Resorts	DUBAIPAR:UH	DFM	1.45	1.51	0.86
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	9010	TYO	1372.00	1568.00	1021.00
Haicahang Holdings Ltd.	2255HK	SEHK	1.66	1.97	1.09
Leofoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	9.08	12.40	8.22
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	24.97	25.29	16.18
MEIN Parques Reunidos Servicios Centrales S.A.	ES:PQR	MCE	15.09	15.53	13.85
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	16.74	21.84	16.42
Shenzhen Overseas Chinese Town Co., Ltd. (OCT)	000069	SZSE	6.59	14.78	5.88
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	58.45	62.69	41.6
Skyocean International	00593HK	SEHK	8.44	12.46	7.67
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	464.00	499.50	330.40
Village Roadshow	VRL	ASX	5.28	7.68	4.95

STOCK PRICES ABOVE ARE GENERALLY QUOTED IN THE FOREIGN CURRENCY IN WHICH THE COMPANY IS LOCATED

Worldwide Markets: ASX, Australian Securities Exchange; CSE, Copenhagen Stock Exchange; LSE, London Stock Exchange; NYSE, New York Stock Exchange; NASDAQ, National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations; SEHK, Hong Kong Stock Exchange; SZSE, Shenzhen Stock Exchange; TSEC, Taiwan Stock Exchange, Corp.; TYO/TSE, Tokyo Stock Exchange

—SOURCES: Bloomberg.com; Wall Street Journal

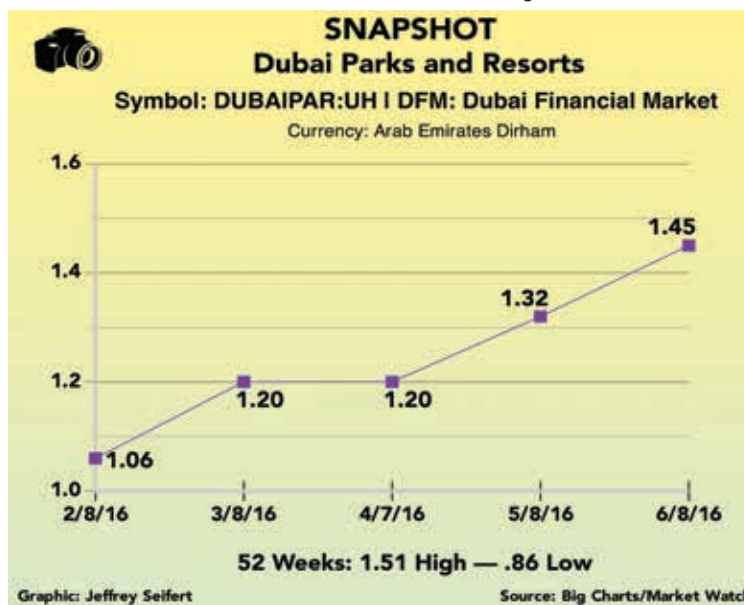
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Mountain	\$2.390	-\$0.435
West Coast	\$2.600	-\$0.401
California	\$2.746	-\$0.481

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1.2717	CAD (Canadian Dollar)



BUSINESS WATCH

Palace Ent. parent company goes public

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. — **Palace Entertainment Holdings LLC's** \$430 million in debt is expected to be repaid as a result of its parent company's recent initial public offering.

Parques Reunidos Servicios Centrales SA in Madrid issued shares worth about \$600 million in the IPO on Spanish stock exchanges April 29.

Palace owns or operates 22 leisure parks in 10 states. Parques Reunidos has 55 parks in 12 countries.

Moody's Investors Service in New York downgraded Palace's corporate rating because of its debt, which was set to come due in early 2017. Moody's raised its rating on Palace from "developing" to "stable" after the IPO and expects the debt to be repaid as a result of Parques Reunidos' move.

Arle Capital Partners Ltd. in London controls Parques Reunidos and sold part of its stake, worth about \$85 million, in the IPO, in addition to the new shares issued.

A statement by Arle said its remaining 34 percent equity was worth about \$480 million which suggests a value for the overall company of about \$1.4 billion. News reports in London said Arle is winding down the investment funds that owns the Parques Reunidos' stake; Arle is under a six-month lock-up period on its remaining equity in Parques Reunidos.

Shares in the newly public company have declined by about 8 percent since the IPO.

Six Flags expands share repurchase plan

GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas — **Six Flags Entertainment Corporation** (NYSE: SIX) on June 7 announced its board of directors approved a stock repurchase plan that allows the company to repurchase an incremental \$500 million of its common stock. The company has repurchased nearly \$1.3 billion of its common stock since beginning its share repurchase program in February 2011 and has approximately \$10 million available under its current plan.

Potomac Riverboat joins Entertainment Cruises

WASHINGTON — Alexandria, Virginia-based **Potomac Riverboat Company** has joined the family of **Entertainment Cruises** (*entertainmentcruises.com*), the largest dining cruise company in the United States. The acquisition expands Entertainment Cruises' national fleet to 38 vessels, serving more than 1.8 million guests annually. Potomac Riverboat Company, owned and operated by the Polak family, has served the Washington, D.C., area with private charters, sightseeing and water taxi cruises since 1974, and will remain headquartered at its home port in Alexandria. The combined organizations' local fleet of 13 vessels makes the Washington, D.C., area Entertainment Cruises' largest operation, with an expanded staff of 500 serving more than 600,000 guests each year.

In brief...

•LONDON — The **Office for National Statistics** announced on May 20 in its International Passenger Survey that a record 31.5 million Great Britain residents and international tourists came to London in 2015, an increase of 20 percent when compared to five years ago.

•MONTREAL, Canada — When **La Ronde** opened for the 2016 season, guests were greeted by metal detectors at its entrances. Communications manager **Jules Hébert** says the company was inspired by other sites in Montreal, such as the Bell Centre and Saputo Stadium. "This year, like every year, we decided to review our security measures," he said. "The security of our guests is our priority." Le Ronde is a member of the **Six Flags** family of parks where metal detectors are common at park entrances.

•QUEENSLAND, Australia — Australia's first **Lego Certified Store** will open at **Dreamworld** later this year, following a new partnership agreement signed this week between global brand, **The Lego Group** and Dreamworld's parent company, **Arden Leisure**.

The store will be the largest retail outlet at Dreamworld covering an area of 350 square metres. Construction will begin in July with the new store due to open in November 2016.

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IAAPA Safety Institutes in Canada and Argentina provide attractions industry with up-to-date safety information

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) is committed to the promotion of safe attractions operations around the world. The association produces safety-related programs across the globe throughout the year to ensure its members are up to date on current safety practices, regulations, standards, and more. More than 125 attractions industry professionals from seven countries attended the most recent IAAPA Safety Institutes held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on April 18, and Edmonton, Canada,

SAFETY

on April 19.

Leading safety experts presented best practices on safety standards, event emergency management, attraction design and creating a culture of safety, operator training, risk management, and incident investigation. The institute in Buenos Aires was held in conjunction with the International Seminar for the Entertainment Industry High Management at the IAE Business School, and featured presentations by industry safety experts including John T. Rig-

gleman, director, global standards and procedures, Universal Parks & Resorts; Jerry A. Loudon, vice president, Universal Parks & Resorts and Michael Mehlhorn, general manager, technical services international development, Universal Parks & Resorts. The Edmonton institute, the first IAAPA Safety Institute to take place in Western Canada, was held at the West Edmonton Mall and attendees heard from Jerry Aldrich, president, Amusement Industry Consulting.

Other IAAPA Safety Institute presenters included: Sgt.

Katherine Severson, emergency management team, Calgary Police Services; Claudio Barrera, engineer and vice president of rides and slides, WhiteWater Industries; Alexander (Sandy) Millar, vice president, sports and hospitality, JLT Canada.

Shanghai next location

The next IAAPA Safety Institute will take place on June 13, 2016, in Shanghai, China, at IAAPA's Asian Attractions Expo 2016, and is included with registration for the Asian Attractions Expo Education conference program.

Fun-Rides-Service launched, focuses on ride and coaster setup

STUTTIGART, Germany — Enrico Becker recently announced that he has started a new company, Fun-Rides-Service, that focuses on the setup of both stationary and portable ride equipment. Their special interest is the construction and installation of roller coasters and are available in any country should owners, operators of fairs, public festivals or amusement parks need assistance with their ride installation.

"The buildup of a roller coaster is debilitating and demanding. Or to put it another way: the construction is a logistical masterpiece," said Becker. "Our team of specialists unloads the transports with own crane and passes the steel

elements directly onto the ride site for placement — all while making sure the customers deadline schedule is met. Our services include a careful assembling and implementing, as well as the maintenance or the reconstruction of existing facilities and their rides."

Fun-Rides-Service

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SAFETY CALENDAR

AIMS International 2017 Safety Seminar
January 8-13, 2017
Doubletree by Hilton
at SeaWorld
Orlando, Fla.
(714) 425-5747
www.aimsintl.org

IRT/iROC Safety Training School
February 7-10, 2017
Knott's Hotel at
Knott's Berry Farm
Buena Park, Calif.
Hands on ride training to be held at Knott's Berry Farm
(615) 714-2617
cindee@ridetraining.com

IISF Trade Show
February 7-11, 2017
Riverview, Fla.
(813) 677-9377
www.gibtownshowmensclub.com

AAMA/AMOA Amusement Expo 2017
March 14-16, 2017
Dallas Convention Center
Dallas, Texas
(708) 226-1300
www.amusementexpo.org



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DelGrosso's Laguna Splash receives safety award

TIPTON, Pa. — DelGrosso's Park and Laguna Splash recently announced that it has been awarded the prestigious Silver International Aquatic Safety Award. Earning this award demonstrates that the aquatic facilities they operate consistently exceed industry standards in risk management and epitomize aquatic safety excellence. International Aquatic Safety Awards are conferred to deserving aquatic facilities by **Jeff Ellis & Associates, Inc.** — international aquatic safety and risk management consultants for the water park industry.

SAFETY

This award is a testament to the culture of safety at DelGrosso's Park and Laguna Splash. Safety continues to be our top priority and I am extremely proud of our lifeguarding team for their dedication to this mission," said **Justin Brown**, director of Aquatics.

International Aquatic Safety Awards are presented annually to participants in E&A's Comprehensive Aquatic Risk Management Program (CARMP) and are based on the results of multiple random Unannounced Aquatic Facility Operational Safety Audits throughout the year. These audits include undercover video surveillance of individual lifeguards while they protect their Zone of Protection areas, in order to accurately evaluate their professional diligence. Additionally, individual and team basic life support and rescue skills are evaluated, along with simulated emergencies that measure the effectiveness of established Emergency Action Plans. The audit concludes with administrative, supervisory and facility evaluations. All E&A client facilities are top performers and represent the finest and safest aquatic facilities in the world. As such, it is of particular note when E&A facilities perform so well that they are granted an International Aquatic Safety Award.

DelGrosso's Park's Laguna Splash water park lifeguards show their excitement after winning the Silver International Aquatic Safety Award from Jeff Ellis & Associates. COURTESY DELGROSSO'S



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NEWS & NOTES

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What are the most important safety issues facing parks and attractions today?

ORLANDO, Fla. — With safety the No. 1 priority for everyone in the amusement industry, **AIMS News & Notes** asked members of the AIMS board of directors to share their thoughts in answer to the question: What are the most important safety issues facing parks and attractions today?

Part 1 of this series, published here last month, touched on topics including guest behavior, technology, employee safety and cultural trends. This second and final part addresses some of the challenges faced by the industry.

On blending the old and new

"A few of the most important issues facing us today are meeting the challenge of new technologies, educating management that safety is continual, and finding our replacements.

"We need to use the new technologies to help us and not hurt us. The designs and machines are evolving to give bigger thrills and hopefully the engineering and maintenance are evolving as well.

"Another issue is that in over 30 years of being in this industry there have been cycles of when SAFETY is paramount and other times when budgets need to be addressed. During those times, it appears that when money is tight, vigilance, continuity and attention to detail are not the main concerns. It also happens following years of low incidents and thinking we have 'it' solved, so

Space for this AIMS page is provided courtesy of *Amusement Today* as a corporate partner of AIMS Intl. Content is provided by AT & AIMS.

PART 2 OF A SERIES

that we can change the personnel and focus is diverted.

"None of us are getting younger but old machines are still out there. How many of us have seen, maintained or operated rides and machines born before 1970? Are we passing on our experiences and are those lessons being used? Are we interested in training our replacements or worried about job security? We must strive to train the next generation to be better than we are."

—Rick Achard, *Coulter Associates*

Challenges and concerns

"These are not issues per se, but rather concerns I have for the long term success of the industry:

- New players entering the amusement industry that are not passionate or focused on safety;
- Erosion of quality in design and manufacturing of rides in a global, price-only decision-making environment of emerging markets;
- Irresponsible reporting of incidents in the media or stigmatizing the industry through mass media making the public perceive that amusement parks, water parks, and FECs are unsafe and/or unsavory. This affects business health, employee retention, and industry growth."

"Not recognizing that human behaviors/interaction need to be considered in design and in operation, facilitat-

ing disengagement of operators and park guests alike."
 —Francean Gonzales, *WhiteWater*

Global standards

"Some attractions take safety more seriously than the others. Obviously, there is a variation. Unfortunately, some are quite behind. The challenge is to influence the others and bring the gap closer."

—George Tso, *Ocean Park, Hong Kong*

Safety is an ongoing effort

"Safety is this multifaceted extension of yourself that you will work on for your entire life but never finish. You put it on like work clothes every day, always refining, always learning, and always sharing. I'm proud to share the culture, be involved in the standards process, and send everyone home to their families with a smile on their face."

—Roger Berry, *R.S. Alberts Co.*

Register now

Pre registration for the **2017 AIMS Safety Seminar** is now open! Register now at www.aimsintl.org and pay by August 31 to get early access to class selection when full registration opens in September. For information, please contact **Holly Coston** at h.coston@aimsintl.org or call (714) 697-6654.

—Karen Oertley

Safety is the #1 Priority in the Amusement Industry!



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Arcadia releases new book on Six Flags Great Adventure

REVIEW: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

It is common to see an author's passion come through in a book, particularly non-fiction. Such is the case of *Six Flags Great Adventure*, the latest in the series of *Images of Modern America* by Arcadia Publishing. Authors Harry Applegate and Thomas Benton, lifelong fans of the park, created the website GreatAdventureHistory.com. Connecting to the park's legion of cheerleaders and employees past and present, this book is a comprehensive look at more than four decades of history, with even a nod to 2016's addition, which opened following the publication of the book.

Like other offerings in the *Images of Modern America*, the primary focus is telling the stories through colorful photos, a pictorial history, if you will. While heavy on photographs, the book also gives very insightful de-

tails to the origins of the park, starting with its roots with **Walter LeRoy**, a man with a lineage of Hollywood royalty. One who loved huge spectacle, LeRoy's dream of creating a cluster of parks eventually consolidated to two. Great Adventure opened in 1974 as a pairing of the **Wild Safari** animal park and the **Enchanted Forest** theme park. LeRoy's original vision was to have a group of parks that would be larger than **Walt Disney World**. The original two, however, proved more than enough to draw huge crowds. So much so, expansion in year two was vital to compensate for the long lines.

History buffs and those old enough to remember the early years will have the fondest memories of the larger-than-life fanciful buildings such as the Super Teepee, Conestoga Wagon and Yum Yum Palace. Although some of the names of changed, the Best of the West, Yum Yum Pal-



Images of Modern America
Six Flags Great Adventure
By Harry Applegate and
Thomas Benton
ISBN: 9781467116572
96 pages, full color,
\$22.99

ace and Gingerbread Fancy still stand, giving the park its strongest sense of charm and character. The first chapter outline those years with construction photos of the four decades of attractions that have graced **Great Adventure**.

Chapter two dedicates itself to the decades of

live entertainment put on throughout the park. From animal acts to song-and-dance to ski shows and parades, entertainment has always been a part of the park's history.

The third chapter is dedicated to rides, many of which a lot of visitors have forgotten about, but will enjoy seeing once again in the pages of the book. Over the years, Six Flags Great Adventure has seen an ever-rotating roster of rides, ranking among the parks with the longest lists of "former rides."

Subsequent chapters delve into the architectural details and thematic elements of the park throughout its history. Six Flags Great Adventure boasts a fantastic forest setting, whimsical architecture and extraordinary experiences for guests on each operating day. Today, the property consists of **Hurricane Harbor**, a neighboring water park, along with the Wild Safari now being

incorporated into the main theme park, making it the largest theme park in the world.

"We worked with all departments to scavenge old photos," says **Kristin Siebeneicher**, communications manager for Six Flags Great Adventure. "I think the book is beautiful. It's a really great stroll through the history of Great Adventure, from the early days to today. It had reminded me of attractions I'd long forgotten about."

Of note, the book avoids any mention of the tragic and devastating 1984 fire that wrote the darkest pages of the park's history.

Six Flags Great Adventure will delight longtime fans as well as locals with its countless color photos spread over the book's 96 pages. Even the most die-hard fans are bound to learn something they didn't know about this popular park. The book retails for \$22.99.





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