Holiday World hosts Golden Ticket event for third time

Amusement Today sees the biggest voter response in survey history

Holiday World & Splashin’ Safari
Host Park • 2011 Golden Ticket Awards • September 16 & 17, 2011

STORY: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

SANTA CLAUS, Indiana — It was Holiday World’s idea for Amusement Today to present the Golden Ticket Awards live in 2000. The ceremony was on the simple side, and now over a decade later, the park welcomes AT for the third time. A lot has changed since that time, as the Golden Ticket Awards ceremony has grown into a popular industry event, filled with networking opportunities and occasions to see what is considered the best in the industry.

What has also grown is the voter response. The 2011 awards saw the biggest response from our panel of experts than ever before. New participants and an increase of international voters have had an impact on several positions on our charts, and Amusement Today looks forward to an ever-growing community of aficionados to point out all that is great about our industry. Simply by looking at the points on our roller coaster charts will demonstrate the big influx of additional voters.

Tabulating hundreds of ballots can seem like a somewhat tedious and daunting task, but a few categories were such close races, that a handful of winners were not determined until the very last ballots in the last hour of tabulation. These ‘nail biters’ always keep us on our toes that there is never a guarantee of any category.

The dedication of our voters is also admirable. People have often gone to great lengths to make sure we receive their ballot in time. And as mentioned before, every vote absolutely counts as just a few ballots determined some winning categories.

One new voter wrote on their ballot: “It is an honor to be asked to vote. Thank you!” And we agree. Not just anybody is qualified. There is a certain distinction and respect that comes with being asked to share a vast wealth of experience. But it is AT and the industry that truly offers the thanks for recognizing the “Best of the Best.”

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EDITORIAL: Gary Slade, gslade@amusementtoday.com

Send us your ideas

As we gather at Holiday World & Splashin’ Safari for the 2011 Golden Tickets Awards, we want to remind our industry friends we are always listening to your ideas on how to improve the awards through new categories to consider or the way the GT ballots are distributed.

This year, at the request of many suppliers, we added the names of 75 well traveled ride suppliers to our ballot mailing list. Those returned ballots were included in the final tabulations that included ballots from four different regions of the United States and one international region. See regions map at the right on page 3 for complete details.

If any industry professional has an idea they would like us to consider, let us know. The Golden Ticket Awards are as much yours as they are AT’s.

Now for a few quick Golden Ticket fun facts:
•  Dollywood is a finalist and/or winner in more categories than any other park — 8.
•  The New Texas Giant is only the 7th coaster in Golden Ticket history to debut in the top 10.
•  The Voyage holds the record for consecutive wins of any coaster — 5.
•  Cedar Point, Schlitterbahn and Busch Gardens Williamsburg have been undefeated in their winning catagories for 14 years.
•  Magnum XL-200 is the only steel roller coaster to appear on every Golden Ticket top 10 list.
•  In 1998, Amusement Today’s first year of producing the Golden Ticket Awards, 14 Golden Tickets were awarded from the first-ever survey. This year, 28 Golden Tickets will be handed out.

Thank you to the Koch family and all the staff at Holiday World as our 2011 host park for another great event. See you in 2012 at Dollywood!

Gary Slade is the founder and publisher of Amusement Today. His love for amusement parks began at age six when he first visited Pontchartrain Beach Amusement Park and Six Flags Over Texas. His long newspaper career helped lead to the launch of AT in 1997.

EDITORIAL: Tim Baldwin, tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

It must be in the genes

I had the privilege to be a part of a group of amusement park enthusiasts doing a tour of German parks this summer. About half of our group were Americans with the other half being European (with a large contingent from the U.K.). It was interesting to listen to the discussions of the parks and the roller coasters. We enjoyed the smallest of children’s parks to the most magnificent theme parks. The group debated the attributes of the roller coasters, and often prodded each other to do the water rides even though many days were on the cool side. The one thing the whole group had in common was that everyone was having a great time.

Maybe there is a certain gene that creates an enthusiast. Children seem to have it, but as some people get older they let that gene become buried. Sure, as the body ages, we might not be able to spin quite as much or hang upside down like we used to. Heaven knows as I get older I sometimes prefer the smoother coaster over one that is a bit more rugged. But, by golly, I still have that gene. I love being in the world of amusement parks. As I watched the group riding a small family coaster over and over in the rain — cheering! — I knew these people had it within them to have fun. Many folks in the industry would have just preferred to stay in their offices, or even head home. But not fans like these.

It is this slice of the public, these enthusiasts, who truly “get” what the industry is about. They can’t get to every park every year, and most assuredly long to get to far away destinations which they may never have the means to visit. But they are out there — riding, photographing, documenting and spending. It is this collective mass of fandom to which AT is indebted for telling us who is doing a great job and what new rides are the “must get to” attractions.

When it is my time to leave this earth, I hope it is after I have had one last chance to enjoy a great amusement park trip with friends like these. After all, we share the same genes.
Our panel of experts

Since Amusement Today introduced the Golden Ticket Awards in 1998, we continue to seek out the most experienced park enthusiasts to participate in our survey. AT follows a fair and balanced protocol of dividing our ballots between four geographical regions (see color map at right) of the United States. In addition to the hundreds of surveys sent to American enthusiasts, international fans are also sought out and we invite such fans to contact us for participation in future years. Amusement Today thanks the hundreds of voters who helped form this year’s panel of experts and make the 2011 Golden Ticket Awards a reality.

Are you a qualified candidate? Contact Golden Ticket Awards Communications Coordinator Tim Baldwin at tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com and we’ll see if you would make a good representative for your region on next year’s new panel.

Of note, park employees, and Amusement Today staff are not eligible to be on the panel.
2011 park winners shine their brightest to take the gold

Since the inception of the Golden Tickets, the categories of Best Park and Best Waterpark have been dominated by winners Cedar Point and Schlitterbahn. Some wonder if this lock can ever be broken. But for this year, both parks take the win for the 14th consecutive year. This uniqueness speaks to the quality of the product these parks offer guests.

In the category for Best Park, Knoebels has now become cozy in the No. 2 spot for the third year in a row.

Continuing to climb is Europa-Park, now rising to the No. 3 spot in 2011. Dollywood is also seen climbing several notches up into the top five at No. 4 with Disneyland just behind.

The second half of the top 10 sees Universal's Islands of Adventure, followed by Busch Gardens Williamsburg, Kennywood and Tokyo DisneySea. A tie for the No. 10 spot — Holiday World and Pleasure Beach Blackpool — lets AT showcase 11 parks on our chart.

For Best Waterpark, Schlitterbahn's win comes from the largest percentage of votes on all of our 2011 charts. A top five is completed by Splashin' Safari, Blizzard Beach, Typhoon Lagoon and Noah's Ark. Each of these parks is known for a particular quality, whether it be the latest waterslide products, exceptional theming or a huge variety of attractions. Regardless of which, all these parks rate high marks for fun.

Idlewild is thrilled to take the Golden Ticket for Best Children's Park for the second year in a row.

"We still can't wipe the smiles from our faces," says Ed Saxton, marketing manager for Idlewild & SoakZone. "The 2010 Golden Ticket was the cornerstone to our entire marketing campaign and we intend for the 2011 Golden Ticket to be the focal point as well." Lipton beams, "What better tagline can you get?"

See PARKS, page 11

Cedar Point's record breaking rides and diverse resort entertainment has swept the category of Best Park for 14 years.

AT/JEFFREY L. SEIFERT

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**Park and Ride Winners**

**BEST PARK**
- Cedar Point: Sandusky, Ohio 23%
- Knoebels Amusement Resort: Elysburg, Pa. 13%
- Europa-Park: Rust, Germany 12%
- Dollywood: Pigeon Forge, Tenn. 8%
- Disneyland: Anaheim, Calif. 7%
- Universal's Islands of Adventure: Orlando, Fla. 6.5%
- Busch Gardens Williamsburg: Williamsburg, Va. 5.5%
- Tokyo DisneySea: Tokyo, Japan 5% (tie)
- Kennywood: West Mifflin, Pa. 5% (tie)
- Holiday World: Santa Claus, Ind. 4.5% (tie)
- Pleasure Beach Blackpool: Blackpool, England 4.5% (tie)

**BEST WATERPARK**
- Schlitterbahn: New Braunfels, Texas 66%
- Splashin' Safari: Santa Claus, Ind. 14%
- Blizzard Beach: Orlando, Fla. 6%
- Typhoon Lagoon: Orlando, Fla. 5%
- Noah's Ark: Wisconsin Dells, Wis. 4%

**BEST CHILDREN'S PARK**
- Idlewild & SoakZone: Ligonier, Pa. 30%
- Legoland California: Carlsbad, Calif. 25%
- Fårup Sommerland: Saltum, Denmark 17%
- Legoland Windsor: Windsor, England 10%
- Dutch Wonderland: Lancaster, Pa. 6%

**BEST MARINE LIFE PARK**
- SeaWorld Orlando: Orlando, Fla. 55%
- SeaWorld San Antonio: San Antonio, Texas 14%
- Discovery Cove: Orlando, Fla. 11%
- SeaWorld San Diego: San Diego, Calif. 10%
- Six Flags Discovery Kingdom: Vallejo, Calif. 6%

**BEST NEW RIDE FOR 2011 (Amusement Park)**
- New Texas Giant: Six Flags Over Texas 45%
- Cheetaah Hunt: Busch Gardens Tampa Bay 13%
- Wooden Warrior: Quassy Amusement Park 11%
- Twister: Gröna Lund 5% (tie)
- Zippin Pippin: Bay Beach Amusement Park 5% (tie)

**BEST NEW RIDE FOR 2011 (Waterpark)**
- The Falls: Schlitterbahn 45%
- Vanish Point: Water Country U.S.A. 15%
- Bombs Away: Raging Waters 8% (tie)
- Viper: NRH2O 8% (tie)

**BEST SEASIDE PARK**
- Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk: Santa Cruz, Calif. 29%
- Pleasure Beach Blackpool: Blackpool, England 28%
- Morey's Piers: Wildwood, N.J. 16%
- Gröna Lund: Stockholm, Sweden 5%
- Kemah Boardwalk: Kemah, Texas 4%

**BEST INDOOR WATERPARK**
- Schlitterbahn Galveston Island: Galveston, Texas 31%
- Kalahari Resort: Sandusky, Ohio 16%
- Kalahari Resort: Wisconsin Dells, Wis. 15%
- World Waterpark: Edmonton, Alberta, Canada 12%
- Splash Landings: Staffordshire, England 11%

**FRIENDLIEST PARK**
- Holiday World: Santa Claus, Ind. 32%
- Dollywood: Pigeon Forge, Tenn. 25%
- Knoebels Amusement Resort: Elysburg, Pa. 13%
- Silver Dollar City: Branson, Mo. 12%
- Beech Bend: Bowling Green, Ky. 5%

**CLEANEST PARK**
- Holiday World: Santa Claus, Ind. 35%
- Busch Gardens Williamsburg: Williamsburg, Va. 15%
- Dollywood: Pigeon Forge, Tenn. 10%
- Magic Kingdom: Orlando, Fla. 9%
- Disneyland: Anaheim, Calif. 8%

**BEST SHOWS**
- Dollywood: Pigeon Forge, Tenn. 30%
- Six Flags Fiesta Texas: San Antonio, Texas 28%
- Silver Dollar City: Branson, Mo. 10%
- SeaWorld Orlando: Orlando, Fla. 8%
- Disney's Hollywood Studios: Orlando, Fla. 7%
### Park and Ride Winners

#### Ranked by percentage of votes cast

**BEST FOOD**
- Knoebels Amusement Resort, Elysburg, Pa. 29%
- Epcot, Orlando, Fla. 17%
- Dollywood, Pigeon Forge, Tenn. 15%
- Silver Dollar City, Branson, Mo. 13%
- Busch Gardens Williamsburg, Williamsburg, Va. 7%

**BEST WATER RIDE (PARK)**
- Dudley Do-Right’s Ripsaw Falls, Universal’s Islands of Adv. 26%
- Valhalla, Pleasure Beach, Blackpool 19%
- Pilgrim’s Plunge, Holiday World 10%
- Splash Mountain, Magic Kingdom 9%
- Journey to Atlantis, SeaWorld Orlando 7%

**BEST WATERPARK RIDE**
- Wildebeest, Splashin’ Safari 34%
- Master Blaster, Schlitterbahn 24%
- Dragon’s Revenge, Schlitterbahn 13%
- Congo River Expedition, Schlitterbahn 8%
- Zoombabwe, Splashin’ Safari 5%

**BEST KIDS’ AREA**
- Kings Island, Kings Mills, Ohio 30%
- Universal’s Islands of Adventure, Orlando, Fla. 16%
- Nickelodeon Universe, Bloomington, Minn. 12%
- Drayton Manor, Staffordshire, England 8%
- Efteling, Kaatsheuvel, The Netherlands 7%

**BEST DARK RIDE**
- Harry Potter and...Forbidden Journey, Universal’s Islands of Adv. 26%
- Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man, Universal’s Islands of Adv. 23%
- Twilight Zone Tower of Terror, Disney’s Hollywood Studios 15%
- Haunted Mansion, Knoebels Amusement Resort 10%
- Indiana Jones and...Forbidden Eye, Disneyland 6%

**BEST OUTDOOR SHOW PRODUCTION**
- Epcot, Orlando, Fla. 34%
- Six Flags Fiesta Texas, San Antonio, Texas 17%
- Disney California Adventure, Anaheim, Calif. 16%
- Disneyland, Anaheim, Calif. 10% (tie)
- Magic Kingdom, Orlando, Fla. 10% (tie)

**BEST FOOD**
- Busch Gardens Williamsburg, Williamsburg, Va. 33%
- Efteling, Kaatsheuvel, The Netherlands 13%
- Gilroy Gardens, Gilroy, Calif. 12%
- Dollywood, Pigeon Forge, Tenn. 9%
- Epcot, Orlando, Fla. 7%

**BEST LANDSCAPING**
- Universal Orlando Resort, Orlando, Fla. 32%
- Knott’s Berry Farm, Buena Park, Calif. 26%
- Knoebels Amusement Resort, Elysburg, Pa. 16%
- Kennywood, West Mifflin, Pa. 10%
- Europa-Park, Rust, Germany 5%

**BEST HALLOWEEN EVENT**
- Universal Orlando Resort, Orlando, Fla. 33%
- Dollywood, Pigeon Forge, Tenn. 38%
- Silver Dollar City, Branson, Mo. 14%
- Magic Kingdom, Orlando, Fla. 13.5%
- Disneyland, Anaheim, Calif. 10%
- Disney’s Hollywood Studios, Orlando, Fla. 7%

**BEST CHRISTMAS EVENT**
- Knoebels Amusement Resort, Elysburg, Pa. 55%
- Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, Santa Cruz, Calif. 18%
- Six Flags Over Georgia, Austell, Ga. 7%
- Kennywood, West Mifflin, Pa. 5%
- Six Flags Great America, Gurnee, Ill. 4%

**BEST CAROUSEL**
- Knoebels Amusement Resort, Elysburg, Pa. 55%
- Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, Santa Cruz, Calif. 18%
- Six Flags Over Georgia, Austell, Ga. 7%
- Kennywood, West Mifflin, Pa. 5%
- Six Flags Great America, Gurnee, Ill. 4%

**BEST INDOOR COASTER**
- Revenge of the Mummy, Universal Studios Orlando 31%
- Space Mountain, Disneyland 15%
- Rock ‘n’ Roller Coaster, Disney’s Hollywood Studios 13%
- Mindbender, Galaxyland 12%
- Space Mountain, Magic Kingdom 9%

**BEST FUNHOUSE/WALK-THRU ATTRACTION**
- Noah’s Ark, Kennywood 24%
- Frankensteins Castle, Indiana Beach 23%
- Noah’s Ark, Pleasure Beach, Blackpool 15%
- Ghost Ship, Morey’s Piers 13%
- Lustiga Huset, Gröna Lund 12%
Thanks for your support in the Golden Ticket Awards!
THANK YOU AMUSEMENT TODAY!

NEW FOR 2011!

THANK YOU FOR SELECTING US FOR A GOLDEN TICKET AWARD. WE ARE DEFINITELY SOAKING UP THE THRILL OF THE MOMENT.

VOTED BEST KIDS PARK IN THE WORLD!
We're on Top of the World

Nik Wallenda performs at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, April 2011

Thanks for voting us Best Seaside Park
2011 World’s Best Indoor Waterpark
4 years in a row!

Thanks Amusement Today!
PARKS
Continued from page 4

Coming in second is Legoland California, who just might see some new competition in 2012 from its new sister park in Florida opening shortly. For now, Legoland Windsor has jumped onto the charts in the No. 4 position. Fårup Sommerland of Denmark (No. 3) and Dutch Wonderland in Pennsylvania (No. 5) complete the top five on our chart.

Best Marine Life Park continues to see a strong lead for SeaWorld Orlando which takes the Golden Ticket for a clean sweep since the category was introduced. The SeaWorld family is further represented by SeaWorld San Antonio (No. 2), Discovery Cove (No. 3) and SeaWorld San Diego (No. 4). Six Flags Discovery Kingdom places fifth.

SeaWorld San Antonio has already announced a new waterpark for the property, Aquatica, for 2012, while SeaWorld San Diego will be adding a new sea themed coaster, Manta.

Best Seaside Park had a closer competition this year. In fact, it was the closest of all races for a Golden Ticket in the 2011 ballot process. Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk still has the historic charm and amazing atmosphere to hold onto the top spot. Dedicated efforts to the park’s historic carousel continued to accentuate the park’s affection for preservation of the seaside amusement park spirit and classic traditional rides.

“The Golden Ticket Award is a real source of pride not only for the Boardwalk family but for our community as well,” states Marq Lipton, VP marketing and sales for Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk. “Being home to the best seaside amusement park in the world validates the care and work of our staff and what generations of Santa Cruzans have known for decades — the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk is a unique treasure that can’t be duplicated.”

In an extremely close second place, Pleasure Beach Blackpool, nestled along the promenade adjacent to the Irish Sea, has a long history of packing in a large amount of rides and roller coasters for park fans in the U.K. The Pleasure Beach is a destination many American enthusiasts commonly strive to visit.

Keeping the top five in the same positions as 2010 is Morey’s Piers on the Jersey Shore; Gröna Lund in Stockholm, Sweden; and Kemah Boardwalk along Texas’s Gulf coast. The three properties have also become quite adept at fitting numerous attractions into limited space.

Schlitterbahn Galveston Island maintains its win as Best Indoor Waterpark. One aspect this park can boast is its ability to transform into an outdoor facility in eight minutes if pleasant weather allows the roof and walls to open. The Galveston Island park also features the only indoor Torrent river. Walkways to other summer attractions are also covered and heated to offer a wide variety of waterpark fun.

Kalahari Ohio and Kalahari Wisconsin once again battle it out for a close second and third place. Both of these sibling properties offer an enormous space under one roof, filled with a variety of attractions. The massive Waterpark in Alberta at West Edmonton Mall, one of the world’s largest malls, and Splash Landings at England’s Alton Towers complete the top five.

Top row l to r: Knoebels, Splashin’ Safari and Legoland California have enough fans to rate them second in their park categories. Bottom row l to r: SeaWorld San Antonio, Pleasure Beach Blackpool and Kalahari Ohio are also No. 2.
It is unquestionable that the industry standards that incorporate cleanliness, friendliness, good food and beautiful landscaping complete the guest experience for many visitors.

Pat Koch, director of values for Holiday World & Splashin’ Safari, says, “I consider our park to be an extension of my home. When I have guests over to my house, I would never have a messy sink or paper towels (or worse!) on the bathroom floor. We strive to keep the same standards here.” Koch continues, “For years I’ve preached ‘cleanliness is everybody’s business’ to our staff. It’s not just the Sweeper Crew, it’s me, it’s Dan, it’s our directors — everyone must pay attention and help to keep the park clean. Our ideal is to have the park look just as nice at closing as it does at opening. It’s not easy, but it’s also not impossible.”

It is this mindset that has Holiday World keeping its long standing record of taking the Golden Ticket for Cleanest Park.

This category retains its common faces with following finalists Busch Gardens Williamsburg, Dollywood, Magic Kingdom and Disneyland.

Many parks have employee programs in place that reward friendliness at the workplace, preparing them for further careers.

The Golden Ticket for Friendliest Park stays this year with Holiday World where customer courtesy is instilled from Day One.

Reputations, both good and bad, are often created over a period of years. These parks — Dollywood, Knoebels, Silver Dollar City and Beech Bend — have captured the hearts of voters and have been long running finalists for their friendly employees.

Knoebels has carried Best Food category for some time. People often wonder how they do it, and voters tell AT they simply look forward to eating at the park. Delicious food, reasonable prices and tasty options make for a solid eating experience.

Our other finalists also have enticing characteristics: Epcot has a wide variety of international cuisine, Dollywood and Silver Dollar City accentuate the home cooking qualities like eating at your grandmother’s place, and Busch Gardens Williamsburg is famous for their in-house ingredients and marvelously prepared dishes suitable to each of the park’s lands.

Best Landscaping goes to Busch Gardens Williamsburg for their 14th straight win. It begs the question, can anyone top them? Their lush color and manicured arrangements are nothing short of breathtaking.

Efteling in The Netherlands has an international reputation for beautiful grounds and Gilroy Gardens in California closely follows.

Holiday World has always prided itself on its dedication to cleanliness, left, and for having outstanding friendly employees, above.

In addition to the great rides, eating at Knoebels has always been considered a food experience. The park takes the Golden Ticket for Best Food.

Dollywood is a new finalist in this category and is recognized for the outstanding colorful displays throughout the park. Epcot completes the top five. Its sheer size allows for massive flower beds and well manicured green space in the Future World section with more intimate arrangements in World Showcase.
Turning a Green Thumb into a Golden Ticket

Thank you to all who voted in Amusement Today’s Golden Ticket Awards. We’re proud to be one of “The Best of the Best”!

2011 “Best Landscaping”
– Busch Gardens, Williamsburg, Va

buschgardens.com/va

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THANKS FOR “DARING THE DROP” ON VANISH POINT

Thank you to all who voted in Amusement Today’s Golden Ticket Awards. We are proud that you enjoyed the pure liquid adrenaline of Vanish Point.

2011 “BEST NEW WATERPARK RIDE” (2ND PLACE)
– Vanish Point, Water Country USA

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Competition became a little more determined this year in a couple of events. One of AT’s tighter battles was in the Best Shows category.

**Dollywood**, a park known for its dedicated fans of great shows, managed to hang onto the Golden Ticket for a third year, but **Six Flags Fiesta Texas** made a solid effort to reclaim the title they held for 10 seasons with a spectacular new show called Ovation. The two competitors were separated by just a handful of ballots.

Rounding out the top five was another close tussle between **Silver Dollar City** in Branson, **SeaWorld Orlando**, and **Disney’s Hollywood Studios** in Orlando.

The category of **Best Outdoor Night Show** production always leans heavily toward Disney. **Epcot** takes the Golden Ticket one more time in 2011, but again **Six Flags Fiesta Texas**, with its new revamped laser and fireworks show, Lone Star Nights, climbs back up a spot to No. 2.

Last year’s introduction of World of Color at **Disney California Adventure** put the park on the charts. Many insiders thought the show might have the caliber to dethrone its sister park in Orlando. If so, not yet. This elaborate water extravaganza does still dazzle in the No. 3 spot. The introduction of Cars Land in 2012 just might bring new voters back to the California themer.

A tie between similar parks **Disneyland** and **Magic Kingdom** complete the top five.

As Halloween continues to be big business and a huge impact on many parks’ attendance, **Universal Orlando** has continued its scary reputation as king of **Best Halloween Event**.

No slouch of its own, **Knott’s Berry Farm** holds on to second place. The Halloween Haunt at Knott’s “Scary” Farm is an established tradition. **Knoebels** and **Kennywood** follow with third and fourth places and the fifth finalist is newcomer **Europa-Park** in Rust, Germany.

Parks continue to extend their seasons and offer a completely different ambience for their guests with special shows, lighting and decorations as the approach of winter brings new marketing opportunities.

For **Best Christmas Event**, **Dollywood** keeps its win for 2011. Their Christmas event has become nationally famous.

Silver Dollar City nudges ahead of **Magic Kingdom** to move up into the No. 2 position. Closing out the top five is **Disneyland** (No. 4), and **Disney’s Hollywood Studios** appears back on the charts in the No. 5 spot.

With a famous namesake such as Dolly Parton at the helm of the Tennessee themer, how could the live entertainment be anything less than marvelous? Dollywood takes the win for Best Shows.

Epcot’s IllumiNations: Reflections of Earth has nightly captivated audiences who visit the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando. This multi-sensory extravaganza wins Best Outdoor Night Show Production.

It’s “a haunting we will go” at Universal Orlando. The Florida theme park resort has earned a legendary status for its Halloween event.

Dollywood has a multitude of fans return to the park as winter approaches to catch a festive spirit for the holidays. Best Christmas Event goes to the park for the fourth year in a row.
No matter the season, thank you for making Dollywood the most entertaining park in the world.
Six Flags Over Texas, Schlitterbahn win Best New Rides

STORY: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

Since introducing this category in 2005, Amusement Today has revealed wooden coasters, steel coasters, and even a dark ride as Best New Ride (Amusement Park). But nothing has ever been quite like this year’s ride, or with such controversy.

Changing a wooden coaster to a steel track coaster might seem outlandish to many enthusiasts, but Six Flags Over Texas proved it could be done to fantastic results. New Texas Giant has been such an amazing transformation that most coaster fans agree that it is nothing like the original version. Taller, faster, steeper and smoother are the string of adjectives (most notably smoother), and if the steel charts are any indication, those descriptions make a hit.

“When we decided to replace the Texas Giant track with the new Iron Horse steel track, we knew we were taking a big chance with a ride that has such a strong legacy,” says Steve Martindale, park president of Six Flags Over Texas. “But we knew that if we could make it work, it would quickly become a new all-time favorite. Many agree the ride is better than the original Texas Giant and some think it’s the best coaster they’ve ever ridden.”

The transformation project featured a dramatic new ride profile engineered by Ride Centerline and manufactured by Rocky Mountain Construction. New style trains were supplied by Gerstlauer. Coming in second is Cheetah Hunt, the new triple launch coaster at Busch Gardens Tampa Bay. This new coaster from IntaRide complements a new animal area that features the preservation and skill of cheetahs. Guests can interact and observe these animals while the new coaster soars overhead.

Wooden Warrior in the No. 3 spot puts Quassy Amusement Park on the map, so to speak. While smaller in stature, the ride has been given high praise by the coaster fans who have ridden it. It creates more of a destination draw than just the park’s usual local audience.

Zippin Pippin at Bay Beach in Wisconsin ties for fourth with Twister, the new wooden coaster at Gröna Lund in Stockholm, Sweden. The former creates a variation of the preservation aspect as the defunct coaster from Libertyland is recreated to thrill a new generation. Twister is a major feat of engineering as the woodie completely entwines with attractions in extremely limited space within the park.

In the category for Best New Ride (Waterpark), many watched the progress of The Falls at Schlitterbahn early in the summer via tours and Web sites. The mid-summer opening delivered on all accounts as the longest waterpark attraction in the world provided rides in length of 25 minutes or more to close to a V.

GOLDEN TICKET AWARDS

BEST OF THE BEST!

The New Texas Giant at Six Flags wowed coaster fans with a smooth new layout and massive doses of negative Gs. It was voted Best New Ride (Park).
AT/SAMMY PICCOLA

The Falls, Schlitterbahn’s amazing new attraction for 2011, offers guests an unending ride of exciting rapids and was voted Best New Ride (Waterpark).
AT/GARY SLADE

Cheetah Hunt at Busch Gardens Tampa Bay was an integral part of the park’s new Cheetah Run area. It came in No. 2 for Best New Ride.
AT/TIM BALDWIN

Quassy Amusement Park is all smiles over their long-awaited new roller coaster. Wooden Warrior (No. 3) was a perfect fit for their family audience.
COURTESY ALLAN REID

See NEW RIDES, page 20
Texas has something new to brag about:
We’d like to thank Amusement Today as well as the dedicated team of professionals who worked so hard to make our new ride such a Giant success.
Hybrid Coaster Trains “Texas Giant”

Thank you for recognizing our work with the Golden Ticket Award for the Best New Ride 2011!

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CONGRATULATIONS
Six Flags Over Texas on your golden ticket!

Rocky Mountain Construction is proud to have delivered...

“THE NEW TEXAS GIANT AS BEST NEW RIDE”
during your 50th anniversary celebration!

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NEW RIDES
Continued from page 16

thousand people an hour. It’s waterpark genius.


Vanish Point at Water Country U.S.A. comes in at No. 2. The trapdoor water-slides were supplied by ProSlide.

Remaining finalists were Bombs Away (also supplied by ProSlide) at Raging Waters in San Jose, California, and Viper, the country’s first Mega-Tube (supplied by WhiteWater West) at NRH20 in North Richland Hills, Texas.

Clockwise from right photo: Vanish Point at Water Country USA, Bombs Away at Raging Waters San Jose, Viper at NRH20, Twister at Gröna Lund, and Zippin Pippin at Bay Beach were all big hits and finalists in the Best New Ride categories.

COURTESY WATER COUNTRY USA
COURTESY PROSLIDE
COURTESY HOWARD GILLOOLY
COURTESY THE GRAVITY GROUP
AT/GARY SLADE
Universal’s IOA beats itself in Best Rides categories

STORY: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

In Golden Ticket history, there has only been one instance where a park has beaten itself in a category. Cedar Point’s Millennium Force beat out Magnum XL-200 for Best Steel Coaster in 2001. Now, it has happened again.

In the category of Best Dark Ride, Universal’s Islands of Adventure has seen the new Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey take over the top spot from perennial winner Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man. The latest offering totally mystifies guests as their enchanted benches lift and carry them unexplainably through thematic environments and visual projections in ways never seen in a dark ride before. However, Spider-Man will soon be receiving a technical upgrade in the months ahead. Is this a new battle brewing?

Rich Costales, senior vice president of resort operations for Universal Orlando exclaims, “Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey takes theme park entertainment to an entirely new level and we are grateful for the recognition.” Costales adds, “We are also happy that The Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man continues to be popular and came in second.”

Due to the rise of Harry Potter, popular favorites Twilight Zone Tower of Terror at Disney’s Hollywood Studios and the very traditional Haunted Mansion at Knoebels slip one notch. Indiana Jones at Disneyland completes the top five in what is one of the most long listed categories in the Golden Ticket Awards.

The category of Best Funhouse/Walk-Through Attraction brought about a very close skirmish between Noah’s Ark at Kennywood, AT’s new winner last year, with previous winner Frankenstein’s Castle at Indiana Beach. Pleasure Beach Blackpool has a Noah’s Ark as well that places in third, followed by the newer Ghost Ship at Morey’s Piers and the elaborate and hysterical Lustiga Huset at Gröna Lund.

Voters continue to give Best Kid’s Area to long running leader Kings Island, the only park to ever hold onto the Ticket. Universal’s Islands of Adventure places second, followed by Nickelodeon Universe at the No. 3 spot. Drayton Manor is a new finalist in this category thanks to their large Thomas Land. Efteling, another international finalist, closes out the top five.

Knoebels once again takes the brass ring in the category of Best Carousel, mostly due to being able to reach for the brass ring. Another U.S. park to allow this age-old tradition is Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk (No. 2), who just refurbished their classic carousel this season in time for the ride’s 100th anniversary.

Completing this category are three carousels known for their beauty: Six Flags Over Georgia, newcomer Kennywood, and Six Flags Great America.

Lights out! The Golden Ticket for Best Indoor Coaster once again goes to Universal Studios Florida for the spooky and thrilling Revenge of the Mummy. Premier Rides provided the coaster portion of the ride.

Space Mountain at Disneyland remains at No. 2, while sister park in Orlando, Disney’s Hollywood Studios charges up two spots to No. 3 with their Rock ’n’ Roller Coaster. Mindbender at

> See RIDES, page 22
Rides
Continued from page 21
West Edmonton Mall’s Galaxyland and Space Mountain at Magic Kingdom round out the five finalists.

Let’s get wet! Universal’s Islands of Adventure takes top prize for Best Water Ride with Dudley Do-Right’s Ripsaw Falls. Supplied by Mack and highly themed by Universal, this attraction mixes humor, thrill and whimsy to both riders and spectators alike.

This category has a long line of high caliber attractions. Among them is Valhalla at Pleasure Beach Blackpool and Pilgrim’s Plunge at Holiday World & Splashin’ Safari (both from Intamin). Splash Mountain at the Magic Kingdom and Journey to Atlantis at SeaWorld Orlando hold the No. 4 and No. 5 spots.

New winner from 2010
→ See RIDES, page 26

Kings Island’s kids’ area, now known as Planet Snoopy, has a loyal fan base keeping it on top in its respective category.

From historic band organ music to snagging the brass ring to its wood carved beauty, Knoebels Grand Carousel wins the Golden Ticket once again.

COURTESY KNOEBELS/DAN FEICHT
Four #1 Golden Ticket Award Winners

BEST DARK RIDE
Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey™

BEST WATER RIDE
Dudley Do-Right’s Ripsaw Falls®

BEST INDOOR COASTER
Revenge of the Mummy®

BEST HALLOWEEN EVENT
Universal Studios Florida® - Halloween Horror Nights®

UniversalOrlando.com
2011 World’s Best Waterpark
14 years in a row!
Voted #1

The Falls
World’s Longest Waterpark Ride

World’s Best Waterpark Rides!

#2 Master Blaster

#3 Dragon’s Revenge

#4 Congo River

Thanks Amusement Today!

The Schlitterbahn family would like to sincerely thank Amusement Today, Golden Ticket voters, park guests and our dedicated team for all of their support and friendship in helping us become the world’s best waterpark fourteen years in a row!
Rides

Continued from page 22

Wildebeest at Splashin’ Safari retains its win in the Best Waterpark Ride category. The longest uphill water coaster in the world has thrilled hundreds of riders an hour, but the park has already announced a bigger brother, Mammoth, for 2012. This looks to be the next competition of a park possibly beating itself.

However, Schlitterbahn has a long string of attractions among our finalists. Master Blaster, Dragon’s Revenge and Congo River Expedition have all brought innovations to the industry. With The Falls opening later than expected this season, look for it to find its place on the charts next year. This is one category sure to change. Completing the top five is Zoombabwe at Splashin’ Safari. With all finalists being in only two parks, the industry should take note and visit these popular places to see what all the fuss is about.

Dudley Do-Right’s Ripsaw Falls delivers big laughs and a big splash at Islands of Adventure. It takes the Golden Ticket for Best Water Ride.
COURTESY DAVE JACKSON

Universal Studios Orlando has chills and thrills on Revenge of the Mummy, voted Best Indoor Roller Coaster.
COURTESY UNIVERSAL ORLANDO

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COURTESY UNIVERSAL ORLANDO

2011 Winners: Best Carousel and Best Food

The Phoenix voted #2 Top Wooden Roller Coaster

Voted #2 Park in 2011

Knoebels

Thank You for Another Great Year!
Kennywood says "Thank You!!" to Amusement Today and its readers for this prestigious award.

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Proud Supplier of Holiday World and Splashin’ Safari’s back-to-back Golden Ticket Award-Winning Wildebeest! Congratulations on Winning the Best Waterpark Ride for 2010 and now 2011!
Thank You For awarding us...

Best of Both Worlds!

Two Years Running

Holiday World and Splashin’ Safari are honored to be the first Golden Ticket Award winner to receive the distinction of having the Best Wooden Coaster and the Best Water Coaster simultaneously... now for two consecutive years.

Wildebeest

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Best Wooden Coaster
For the 5th
Consecutive Year

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Thank you Cedar Fair for hosting the 3rd annual Coasting For Kids fundraiser!

Through this valuable partnership and the efforts of all the participants, more than $62,000 was raised for the mission of Give Kids The World.

Thank you for providing happiness and hope for children who need it most.

California’s Great America • Santa Clara, CA
Canada’s Wonderland • Vaughan, ON
Carowinds • Charlotte, NC
Cedar Point • Sandusky, OH
Dorney Park • Allentown, PA
Kings Dominion • Doswell, VA
Kings Island • Kings Mills, OH
Knott’s Berry Farm • Buena Park, CA
Michigan’s Adventure • Muskegon, MI
Valleyfair • Shakopee, MN
Worlds of Fun • Kansas City, MO
“Join us for the 2012 Golden Ticket Awards at Dollywood and experience what it’s like to fly like an eagle.”

Love Dolly
Sweden’s Gröna Lund has rich history, thrives as big park in a small space

Tivoli Gröna Lund opened on August 3, 1883 on the lush green island of Djurgarden in the city of Stockholm. At only 4,000 square feet it occupied less than one-tenth of an acre. The only ride that first year was a horse-powered carousel; other attractions included a dance hall, small cafe, shooting gallery and a variety of tents hosting circus performers. Over the years it has obviously seen expansion, with its latest acquisition bringing the park’s size up to 11 acres. It is the oldest amusement park in Sweden and attracts more than 1.3 million guests per year, making it one of Sweden’s leading tourist attractions.

Situated on an island, much of the property borders the beautiful Swedish Harbor with sunny boardwalks and decks. Gröna Lund offers 30 attractions, six restaurants a large concert stage and a smaller theater. Many of the rides are close to or right on the water’s edge and some offer spectacular views of the harbor and the city of Stockholm.

During its long history Gröna Lund has seen attractions come and go (including five coasters) but many of the classic attractions such as their famous walk-through funhouse and historic dark rides remain.

Seven coasters adorn the small property with five of them sharing space with each other, creating the world’s densest coaster area. A massive Schwarzkopf steel coaster, occupied a good chunk of real estate when it was installed in 1998. A Gerstlauer Bobsled coaster added in 2003 wove in and out of the Schwarzkopf ride and in some places even shared the same supports. A custom-built suspended coaster from Vekoma Rides was installed in 2007. It also hopped over and under the Schwarzkopf coaster. Then much to everyone’s amazement, just this past year, Gröna Lund added a wooden coaster supplied by the Gravity Group, that takes riders on a wild ride over the dark ride building and intertwines with the big steel coasters. In order to give their classic 1935 dark ride a new lease on life, a new building had to be erected that would support the weight of the wooden coaster on top of the popular dark ride.

The park is also a popular location for concerts, featuring a variety of Swedish and international artists. Since the main concert stage was built in 1928 notable names such as Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, The Who, Abba, Jimi Hendrix, The Eagles, Lady Gaga and even the Beatles have performed here. Today the park can accommodate approximately 32,000 people, and when numbers exceed that, they are forced to close the gates.

Amusement Today salutes Gröna Lund’s rich history, its creative ability to keep its product new and fresh despite its small space, making it AT’s choice for 2011 Park of the Year.

For 50 years, Chance Rides delivers rides, fun to the amusement industry

Richard H. “Harold” Chance started manufacturing rides in 1946 when he took over the train manufacturing operations for the Ottaway Amusement Company. In 1961 he incorporated in Wichita, Kansas, the Chance Manufacturing Company. Taking what he had learned from building trains for Ottaway, he developed a 24-inch gauge replica of the 1864 Collins P. Huntington Steam Locomotive. The C.P. Huntington Train was born and would become their most successful product, with 369 trains built to date. C.P. Huntontons operate worldwide at theme parks, zoos, entertainment centers and city parks.

In 1963 Mack Duce of Dallas, Texas approached Harold Chance and offered to buy the manufacturing rights to a carnival ride that showman Carl Sedlmayr had purchased from a young man in Germany. With no money up-front and a simple handshake it was agreed that Chance would produce the ride and Carl Sedlmayr would receive a royalty for each ride sold. The Trabant turned out to be the second most popular Chance ride with 254 units sold.

These two products helped establish Chance as an amusement ride manufacturing company. Over the next several years additional products were added to the lineup including well-known rides such as the Skydiver, Rotor, Olympic Bobs and Zipper.

In 1970 Chance acquired the assets and manufacturing rights of the Allan Herschell Company. They modernized the Herschell carousel, changed the scenery and replaced the fluorescent lights with incandescent bulbs. With the new look, Chance sold more carousels in 1971 than Herschell had sold in the previous five years. To date, 240 units have been sold.


Today Chance Rides, which encompasses Chance Morgan Industries and Chance Rides Manufacturing, continues to expand and develop exciting new product lines, but hasn’t lost site of its past. Amidst the roller coasters and Giant Wheels; Wipeouts and Revolutions, the old reliable C.P. Huntington train is still blowing its whistle as one of Chance’s best selling attractions.

Nothing symbolizes the amusement industry more than a ride on a carousel, a Ferris wheel or a train ride. Chance Rides has supplied all three of these great staples, and much more, to our amusement industry for the past 50 years, making Chance Rides AT’s choice for 2011 Supplier of the Year.
Amusement Today honors Richard Kinzel as living Legend

One man, one vision, one very impressive career.
Hired in 1972 in the foods division at Cedar Point, even Toledo-native Richard “Dick” Kinzel could not have predicted the path his new amusement career was about to take him on.

In just three years, Kinzel would be promoted to director of park operations at Cedar Point. His hard work would soon pay off again when he was promoted to become general manager of the newly acquired Valleyfair in 1978. It was at Valleyfair that he laid the groundwork that would soon change the entire amusement industry.

In 1986, Kinzel was promoted to President and CEO of Cedar Fair, L.P., the parent company of the company’s two parks.

Seeing that the historic Cedar Point resort numbers were flat, Kinzel knew something big and cutting edge had to be found to bring the crowds back to the Point.

Richard L. Kinzel

That vision would lead him to Arrow Development and the birth of a new wave of steel coaster wars. The end result was the introduction of the world’s tallest and fastest roller coaster, the 205-foot tall Magnum XL-200 hypercoaster. Yes, even new coaster terminology was ushered in.

The guests came to Cedar Point in record numbers year after year. That success would let the company grow in new ways never visioned. More record-setting coasters in the 310-foot tall Millennium Force and the 420-foot tall Top Thrill Dragster would make their place in the history books.

Not content with just two parks, Kinzel’s vision was to expand the CedarFair family the way Six Flags had expanded theirs.

The acquisition of Dorney Park in 1992, Worlds of Fun in 1995, Knott’s Berry Farm in 1997, Michigan’s Adventure in 2001 and Geauga Lake in 2001 were all but building blocks for what was on the horizon. Kinzel shocked the entire amusement industry in 2006 when Cedar Fair was able to pull off the acquisition of Paramounts five parks. That purchase moved Cedar Fair into one of the top 5 amusement companies in the world. The company grew from revenues of $100 million in 1986 to revenues of more than $977 million in 2010.

Under his watch the company also gained the rights to the Peanuts brand of characters with its purchase of Knott’s Berry Farm.

Kinzel’s vision has not just been roller coasters and rides. He has enhanced properties with resort lodging. He has built and expanded waterparks. He has entertained guests with state-of-the-art night shows and special events. And not forgetting the younger set, he has assembled impressive kid’s areas in all his properties.

And through all this, he has maintained his properties with new paint, new walkways, new buildings and new sections. The Cedar Fair parks are not aging, but are still in growth mode as all well managed amusement facilities.

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As Richard Kinzel nears his retirement date from the amusement industry, Amusement Today takes this time to honor him as our first living Legend, 2011.
TACK SÅ MYCKET!*  
THANK YOU FOR SELECTING US FOR A GOLDEN TICKET. WE ARE PROUD AND HONORED TO BE THE FIRST AMUSEMENT PARK IN EUROPE TO RECEIVE THIS AWARD!  

*Tack så mycket, means thank you very much in Swedish.
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Dick,
Congratulations! Thanks for the leadership that made us the best.
The Cedar Fair Family
Millennium Force retains Best Steel Coaster Golden Ticket

New Texas Giant debuts in top 10

STORY: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

Since opening in 2000, both Millennium Force and Bizarro (formerly Superman) have wrestled for the top spot. Up to this year, the tug-of-war has gone back and forth a time or two, with both coasters claiming the Golden Ticket for Best Steel Coaster five times each. After reclaiming it last year, Cedar Point’s 310-foot steel machine hangs onto it once more in 2011, with Six Flags New England’s coaster placing in second once again. This lets Millennium Force have the lead by one year between these two rivals. Both coasters were manufactured by Intamin.

Bizarro at Six Flags Great Adventure holds on to the No. 3 position once more, and that is where the similarities stop. Everything in the top 10 past this point totally changes.

Goliath at Six Flags Over Georgia once again inches up a spot, now residing at No. 4. Kennywood’s Phantom’s Revenge sees a surge of fans and spirits its way from No. 9 last year up to No. 5 in 2011.

The New Texas Giant at Six Flags Over Texas debuts in the top 10 at the sixth position. This is the biggest debut of any roller coaster in the Golden Ticket Awards since 2006. New Texas Giant is only the 7th roller coaster to debut in the top 10 in the history of the Golden Tickets. Most certainly, it is the only coaster ever to jump from the wooden charts — it held the Golden Ticket for Best Wooden Coaster in 1998 and 1999 — to the steel track charts. With its success this year, it begs the question, “Will it be the last?”

Dave Altman, president of American Coaster Enthusiasts, eagerly gives New Texas Giant high marks. “I rode the original Texas Giant in its inaugural season in 1990. It was fast, smooth and intense.” Altman adds, “After riding New Texas Giant this year, all those descriptions are applicable once again due to the new transformation.”

The remainder of the top 10 finds each coaster in a different position than last year, creating a significant jumble: Germany’s Expedition GeForce (Holiday Park) still ranks as Europe’s highest rated roller coaster by tying with Apollo’s Chariot at Busch Gardens Williamsburg for the No. 7 spot. Two coasters from Cedar Point (making three from the park in the top 10) are Top Thrill Dragster (No. 9) and Magnum XL-200 (No. 10). When the Golden Tickets were introduced in 1998, Magnum resided at the No. 1 spot. It is the only roller coaster to appear in every top ten steel chart since that time.

Three international coasters appear on the steel charts for the first time. The highest of these is Piraten at Fårup Sommerland (No. 32). Closely following is Blue Fire from Germany’s Europa-Park (No. 34) and Olympia Looping (tied at No. 45), the only traveling coaster to ever make the list in Golden Ticket history.

Additional international coasters on the charts are: Nemesis at Alton Towers (England) climbing several notches up to No. 12; Behemoth at Canada’s Wonderland (No. 15); Goliath at La Ronde (Canada) at No. 23; Goliath at Walibi Holland (The Netherlands) at No. 36; The Pepsi Max Big One in Blackpool (England) at No. 47; and Lisebergbanan at Liseberg (Sweden) at No. 48.

The largest jump in positions this year was Titan at Six Flags Over Texas, which jumped from No. 42 last year to No. 25 in 2011. An interesting fun fact to note is that none of the top ten steel coasters go upside down. It isn’t until Nemesis appears in the No. 12 spot that inversions play a role in the top rated coasters.

Next year’s competition could be rather fierce as significant installations have just recently been announced at Hersheypark, Canada’s Wonderland and Dollywood among others in the U.S. alone. Stay tuned.
## The List

### 2011 TOP 50 STEEL ROLLER COASTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>PARK</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>SUPPLIER</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Millennium Force</td>
<td>Cedar Point</td>
<td>Sandusky, Ohio</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Intamin</td>
<td>1540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nitro</td>
<td>Six Flags Great Adventure</td>
<td>Jackson, N.J.</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>B &amp; M</td>
<td>864</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Goliath</td>
<td>Six Flags Over Georgia</td>
<td>Austell, Ga.</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>B &amp; M</td>
<td>794</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Phantom's Revenge</td>
<td>Kennywood</td>
<td>West Mifflin, Pa.</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>B &amp; M</td>
<td>756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>New Texas Giant</td>
<td>Six Flags Over Texas</td>
<td>Arlington, Texas</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Rocky Mountain</td>
<td>743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (tie)</td>
<td>Apollo's Chariot</td>
<td>Busch Gardens Williamsburg</td>
<td>Williamsburg, Va.</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>B&amp;M</td>
<td>643</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 (tie)</td>
<td>Expedition GeForce</td>
<td>Holiday Park</td>
<td>Hassloch, Germany</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Intamin</td>
<td>643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Top Thrill Dragster</td>
<td>Cedar Point</td>
<td>Sandusky, Ohio</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Intamin</td>
<td>627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Magnum XL-200</td>
<td>Cedar Point</td>
<td>Sandusky, Ohio</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Arrow</td>
<td>510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Diamondback</td>
<td>Kings Island</td>
<td>Kings Mills, Ohio</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>B &amp; M</td>
<td>493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Nemesis</td>
<td>Alton Towers</td>
<td>Staffordshire, England</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>B &amp; M</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Intimidator 305</td>
<td>Kings Dominion</td>
<td>Doswell, Va.</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>IntaRide</td>
<td>381</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Montu</td>
<td>Busch Gardens Tampa Bay</td>
<td>Tampa, Fla.</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>B &amp; M</td>
<td>331</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Behemoth</td>
<td>Canada’s Wonderland</td>
<td>Vaughan, Ontario, Canada</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>B &amp; M</td>
<td>278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>X2</td>
<td>Six Flags Magic Mountain</td>
<td>Valencia, Calif.</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Arrow</td>
<td>276</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Mind Bender</td>
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# The List

## 2011 TOP 50 STEEL ROLLER COASTERS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>PARK</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
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<td>Anaheim, Calif.</td>
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<td>WED Imagineering</td>
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<td>Pepsi Max Big One</td>
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<td>Lisebergbanan</td>
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<td>Mamba</td>
<td>Worlds of Fun</td>
<td>Kansas City, Mo.</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Morgan</td>
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</table>
Top wooden coasters are shaken up a bit

Three new-for-2011 coasters make chart

The impulse to make top 10 lists might just be as old as the creation of numbers. But sometimes the debate that goes into the selections is as much fun as the list itself.

According to the American Coaster Enthusiasts (ACE) online census, 183 wooden coasters exist worldwide. Of that group, 50 vie and battle to maneuver onto our wooden coaster charts. While the shakeup isn’t as dramatic as the steel list, things have notably changed.

One thing that hasn’t changed is The Voyage in the top spot. With its fifth win for Best Wood Coaster, The Voyage has consecutively held onto the number 1 spot longer than any coaster in the history of the Golden Tickets. Climbing one notch over last year, Knoebels’ Phoenix marginally climbs ahead of El Toro at Great Adventure to take over the No. 2 position. Retaining places from last year are Boulder Dash at Lake Compounce (No. 4) and Thunderhead at Dollywood (No. 5).

Of note, Phoenix shares one trait with The Beast at Kings Island (No. 7). These two coasters are the only woodies to appear in the top 10 in all 14 years of the Golden Ticket Awards.

Two coasters also have battled their way back into the top 10 having resided there previously: Shivering Timbers at Michigan’s Adventure (No. 9) and Worlds of Fun’s Prowler (No. 10). Three new-for-2011 wooden coasters debut on the charts. Gröna Lund’s Twister from The Gravity Group is tied at No. 32, Wooden Warrior at Quassy Amusement Park (also designed by Gravity Group) debuts at No. 40, and Zippin Pippin at Bay Beach — a recreation of Elvis’ favorite coaster from Libertyland in Memphis — races in tying at No. 44.

Other woodies appear on the charts for the first time, including Rutschebanen at Tivoli Gardens in Denmark. Heavy international travel has put this historic coaster on the lists of many. Although exact origins are unconfirmed, it is believed the coaster opened at Tivoli Gardens around 1915, making this the oldest coaster on the charts. It is the first and only scenic railway, a classic style of coaster that utilizes a brakeman to keep speeds in check, to ever land on the Golden Ticket charts.

Another classic also appears this year: the recently re-opened Blue Streak at Conneaut Lake Park (No. 46). After several years of preservation efforts from enthusiasts and the park itself, this rare Vettel designed woodie runs once again. Blackpool’s Wild Mouse (tied at No. 44) is also one of the last remaining of a long lost wooden breed of this particular genre.

Joining Blackpool on the international front are: Balder at Liseberg (Sweden) rising higher to No. 13; Megafobia at Oakwood (Wales) at No. 20; Grand National, also at Blackpool (England) at No. 25; Colossos at Heide Park (Germany) at No. 29; Troy at Toverland (The Netherlands) at No. 33; El Toro at Frieretzpark Plohn (Germany) appearing for the first time at No. 35; Thunderbird at Pow-erLand (Finland) at No. 38; T Express at Everland (South Korea) at No. 39; and Tonnerre de Zeus at Parc Asterix (France) at No. 50. All in all, 12 coasters on the chart are from outside the United States.

Amusement Today also noticed some major jumps by a couple of coasters. Boardwalk Bullet (Kemah Boardwalk) shot from No. 38 last year to No. 17 this year, and Renegade (Valleyfair) charged from No. 42 up to No. 26 in 2011.
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# The List

## 2011 TOP 50 WOODEN ROLLER COASTERS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>PARK</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>SUPPLIER</th>
<th>POINTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Voyage</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>Gravity Group</td>
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<td>Elysburg, Pa.</td>
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<td>Dinn/PTC-Schmeck</td>
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<td>El Toro</td>
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<td>Jackson, N.J.</td>
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<td>Pigeon Forge, Tenn.</td>
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<td>The Beast</td>
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<td>Kings Mills, Ohio</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>KECO</td>
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<td>Wisconsin Dells, Wis.</td>
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# The List

## 2011 TOP 50 WOODEN ROLLER COASTERS

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<tr>
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<th>YEAR</th>
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<td>Playland Wooden Coaster</td>
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<td>Vancouver, B.C. Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>44 (tie)</td>
<td>Zippin Pippin</td>
<td>Bay Beach Amusement Park</td>
<td>Green Bay, Wis.</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>M&amp;V/Gravity Group</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Blue Streak</td>
<td>Conneaut Lake Park</td>
<td>Conneaut Lake, Pa.</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Vettel</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Rattler</td>
<td>Six Flags Fiesta Texas</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Pierce</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Rutschebanen</td>
<td>Tivoli Gardens</td>
<td>Copenhagen, Denmark</td>
<td>ca. 1915</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Blue Streak</td>
<td>Cedar Point</td>
<td>Sandusky, Ohio</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>PTC-Hoover</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Tonnerre de Zeus</td>
<td>Parc Asterix</td>
<td>Plailly, France</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>CCI</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We are THRILLED that the readers of Amusement Today have named the Voyage as the Best Wooden Roller Coaster in the World for the fifth year in a row, as well as Wildebeest the Best Water Park Ride for the second year in a row! We are also proud that you voted us the Friendliest Park Staff for the thirteenth year, and the Cleanest Park for the twelfth consecutive year. We could not have accomplished all this without our wonderful employees. They are the heart and soul of this business, and without them we would not be able to say we’re #1 for Family Fun!