

Amusement TODAY

Your Amusement
Industry
NEWS Leader

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AMUSEMENT VIEWS

AT NOTEBOOK: John W.C. Robinson, jrobinson@amusementtoday.com

A restless Christmas Eve



Robinson

For all of the childhood memories that have been blurred, forgotten or replaced, there's one feeling we can all still clearly remember. It's that feeling, as a child, on Christmas Eve when we were being put to bed with full knowledge of what the next morning would bring.

It was hours away and the excitement was abundant: Santa Claus would visit overnight and the next morning the tree would be loaded with presents. That feeling persisted even as an adult — long after the dreams of Santa's existence had been quieted — because our kids still believed, and we were just as eager to see their faces in the morning when they awoke to the gifts from the overnight visit of the jolly old fat man.

The effects of 2020's shutdowns and the COVID-19 pandemic are still being felt. Infection numbers continue to climb, stocks are still trying to rebound and most of us will celebrate the holidays with only our immediate household. The amusement industry was hit extremely hard during 2020, and many of us are holding our breath trying to balance hope for 2021 with the reality 2020 has present us with.

And yet, if you close your eyes and just take a moment, it almost feels like that childhood Christmas Eve. Something special is just moments away.

While right now, we're all still dealing with COVID-19 and its realities, in recent weeks not one but two promising vaccines have made it through testing. Earliest estimates have one or both of them available to the public at large by March of 2021, with later estimates putting that timeline at sometime this forthcoming summer. Either way, it's a light at the end of the pandemic tunnel and one that holds promise not only for the world at large, but for the 2021 tourist and attraction season.

In addition, while the requirements of 2020 was something none of the industry was ready for, the 2021 season will be greeted with a prepared amusement industry. One that's ready to welcome guests with or without masks, one that's ready to sanitize rides and promote healthy visits.

Right now, it's Christmas Eve. Santa hasn't arrived yet, but the industry is eager and ready to unwrap the gift of 2021 and its hopeful promises.

FLINT'S VIEW: Bubba Flint



INDUSTRY VOICE: Michael Sean Comerford, author, *American OZ*

Adapting to survive

The most visible tragedies of the pandemic are the deaths and the people whose long-term health is hurt. Yet people are hard wired to need communal celebrations. We want to have fun along with our friends and family. Our health is linked to it. Depression. Stress. Feelings of isolation. Drug/alcohol abuse. All are the results of fewer carnivals and state fairs. We need joy and we need to share it.

Carnival people suffer those stressors even more acutely. Many carnies live most of the year in their bunkhouse. The offseason, or winter quarters, is often a time of unemployment and housing uncertainty. They are living in winter quarters all year now.

Traveling carnivals were born at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893. It was a time of the Asian flu, which killed 1 million people, when the world was 25% of today's population. There were race riots. The pandemic touched off a depression that lasted a decade and rivaled the Great Depression of the 1930s.



Comerford

Carnivals were born in a time of a pandemic, racial unrest, a depression and income inequality.

In 2014, when I was working in carnivals, I found about 350 traveling carnivals listed on the internet. Earlier this year, a search of Carnival Midways online site showed a few more than 200 active carnivals in the US.

It's a safe guess there will be fewer carnivals next year and many of those will likely be smaller, as carnivals adjust to social distancing and financial demands. Most carnivals are highly leveraged. Yet carnivals were born in a time with many of the same problems we have today and they adjusted.

When climate change floods parts of America, traveling carnivals will go where the people go. When the Dust Bowl in the 1930s drove people from their homes and people went hungry, traveling carnivals offered cheap games and baskets of food instead of plush.

My prediction is there is much pain ahead but traveling carnivals will evolve and survive.

Opinions expressed on this page are those of the columnist(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.

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Your Amusement Industry NEWS Leader

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2 MINUTE DRILL



AT: Janice Witherow

Drew Edward Hunter, Sally Dark Rides

Wow. In one word, that describes **Drew Edward Hunter** and the amazing creativity and over-the-top talent he brings to the amusement industry. As vice president of creative design for **Sally Dark Rides**, Drew oversees a team of designers, sculptors, scenic and finish artists with an unmatched flair that shines through from each project he manages. He is an award-winning artist, theater and musical guru, a founding member of the **International Association of Haunted Attractions** and has even performed as Bozo the Clown on television. Drew lives in a historic district in Jacksonville, Fla., in a house dubbed the "Drewseum" where each room has an elaborate theme – people actually think it's a tourist attraction and offer to pay admission! Again, wow.

Title: Vice President/Creative Design.

Number of years in the industry:

It has been 45 years since my first professional attraction design in 1975.

Best thing about the industry ...

Forming life-long friendships with colleagues around the world from all areas of amusement and theme park attraction development who celebrate the joy of creativity.

If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be ... A movie director or a stage actor.

Biggest challenge facing our industry:

Obviously COVID-19. Beyond that, making sure that dazzling and remarkable technical achievements enhance our products, but do not overwhelm the most important element: Entertainment.

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

My first visit to a park in the new season.

It's December! My favorite winter sport is ...

Staying warm. I grew up in the south. No cold, ice or snow for me, please!

Santa's best kept secret: It isn't discussed much, but Santa drinks gallons of highly caffeinated coffee during his worldwide Christmas Eve flight so he can stay awake, all the while dreaming of December 26th when his annual vacation to Bali begins.

On December 25, you can find me ...

For decades, at my parents' home in Louisiana. This year, in Florida.

When it comes to Christmas trees ... white or colored lights?

It's a polychromatic Christmas!

Favorite holiday tradition:

I look forward to relaxing in a cozy room late at night listening to low-key, mellow holiday music and remembering friends, Christmases and good times of the past.

Best buzz word: "Seriously??" — Seriously.



Drew Edward Hunter of Sally Dark Rides brings over-the-top creativity and talent to the amusement industry.

COURTESY DREW EDWARD HUNTER

The best holiday movie of all time is ...

A tie between the musical "Scrooge" (1970); "The Bishop's Wife" (1947); and "National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation" (1989).

When I say snow, you say ... "No!" — Snow is beautiful – on calendars and Christmas cards.

In one word, sum up 2020: Endurance.

Dream car : A 1933 Packard 12.

The last concert I attended was ...

A fabulous pre-COVID-19 concert of the Jacksonville Symphony.

If I didn't live in Florida, I would live in ...

The Vieux Carre' in New Orleans.

On my lunch hour, I usually spend my time ...

At my house reading and visiting with my cats.

Proudest moment: Whenever my parents would tell me they were proud I am their son.

Margaritas ... on the rocks or frozen?

Machine frozen – though there is a restaurant I frequent in Jacksonville which makes a superb on-the-rocks margarita. The BEST (and tastiest, smallest and most lethal) on-the-rocks marg I ever encountered was in 1989 at a restaurant on the River Walk in San Antonio. Wow. Still remember. Still reeling.

Favorite fast food: Taco Bell original tacos and McDonald's original hamburgers. I know, this is so pathetic. Yet — for some inexplicable reason — they are yummy, nostalgic and satisfying.

If I was marooned on a desert island, the three things I would absolutely have to have with me would be ...

My cats, drawing pad with pencils and a copy of Disney's *Fantasia* with playback system and great sound.

I get most of my news from ... The internet, usually via CNN, and from radio via NPR.

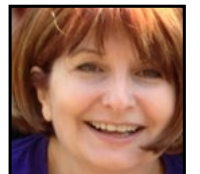
THE INDUSTRY SEEN

Final day at Six Flags



ARLINGTON, Texas — *Amusement Today's* Tim Baldwin and Jeffrey Seifert ventured out to visit with Six Flags Over Texas' Operations Manager Matt Hughey (right) on his final day at the park. Hughey has taken a new position at the Circuit of the Americas in Austin. His new role will be to oversee the installation of a small family amusement park at the racing site. AT/TIM BALDWIN

Reflections ON FUN



AT: Lottie Minick

A gift for the generations

The roots of **Bell's Amusement Park** (Tulsa, Oklahoma) truly began on Christmas 1946, when six-year-old **Robert K. Bell, Jr.**, realized his family was on a very tight budget. The child wanted nothing for himself, just a dollhouse for his baby sister. His dad, **Robert K. Bell, Sr.**, built one for her alongside his son. However, without the younger Bell's knowledge, his father was also building his son a midget racer powered by a **Maytag** motor with a steering wheel crank adapted from a hospital bed. After Christmas morning festivities, Mr. Bell presented his son with the gift.

Their neighbor, upon seeing how handy the elder Bell was, said: "Bob, with my expertise about paint and body work and your mechanical engineering talents, we can make a miniature train for the kids and pick-up extra money on the weekend." This was the beginning for Bell's Amusement Park.

In 1967, the Bells were designing and constructing a new, large, wooden roller coaster, Zingo, which has since become an industry icon. The bents were built like a reverse domino plunge with the shortest to tallest erected. Around Christmas, Bell, Sr. put his three-year-old grandson **Robert K. Bell III** on his shoulders, walked up the incline to the tallest bent and topped out the coaster with a Christmas tree for the holidays. Upon seeing photos, **Sally Bell** — young Bell's mother — was not amused at the daredevil excursion by her son and his grandfather.

With three generations of the Bell family behind it, Bell's Amusement Park continued the tradition of making wonderful memories for millions of people up until its closure in 2006.

Lottie Minick is a 46-year attractions industry veteran and co-owner of Dallas-based Minick Associates, a design firm founded by her late husband, Bob. Her monthly column features behind-the-scenes anecdotes of her own and from those who have worked in the business. Got a fun industry story? Email lottie@minickassociates.com.

Amusement, theme parks around the world offer holiday festivities

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

Despite the on-going global coronavirus pandemic, or maybe even because of it, amusement and theme parks around the world are doing what they can to lift spirits during this holiday season by offering celebrations.

While some are doing more limiting for social distancing, others have had to offer drive-throughs due to local and state mandates.

The following are some of the 2020 holiday offerings.

Efteling, Kaatsheuvel, the Netherlands

Visitors to Winter Efteling this year are finding some changes, yet the Efteling magic of the holiday season with its lights, festive garlands and bonfires, among other gay winter-time decor, is still in full view.

The wonderland event, in its 22nd year, began Nov. 16 and is running through Jan. 31, 2021.

"We are very happy that Winter Efteling can take place again this year, including the beautiful addition of our Warme Winter Weide winter garden," said **Koen Sanders**, Efteling's commerce, creation and development director.

As in previous years, the Fairy Tale Forest is beautifully illuminated at night, there is winter entertainment again and every evening ends with the spectacular Aquanara water show.

Not returning due to social distancing mandates associated with the global pandemic are the ice skating rink, the cross-country ski track and the Winter Efteling Illusions shows.

New this year is the Warme Winter Weide winter garden, an open-air section within the park featuring partly-covered seating, catering, stalls and live entertainment. Bonfires are lit



An artist rendering of the new Warme Winter Weide winter garden (above left) at Efteling's holiday offerings which has been redesigned to allow for more social distancing. Kings Dominion (above right) reopened in November with a new limited-time, limited-capacity event: Taste of the Season: An Outdoor Holiday Experience. COURTESY EFTELING, KINGS DOMINION

so visitors can warm up while enjoying snacks and drinks.

There also is live entertainment in the new Warme Winter Weide winter garden.

In addition, the water coaster De Vliegende Hollander (The Flying Dutchman) is open and will remain so until Jan. 3, 2021, weather permitting.

New Year's Eve also will be celebrated at Efteling. But, instead of the usual fireworks show, there will be an enchanting light show that can be seen from anywhere in the park. This will allow everyone to usher in the new year in a special way without having to gather in large groups.

Reservations to Winter Efteling and the New Year's Eve at Efteling have to be made in advance.

•efteling.com

Kings Dominion, Doswell, Va.

The park has reopened with a new limited-time, limited-capacity event, Kings Dominion's Taste of the Season: An Outdoor Holiday Experience.

This new holiday celebration is featuring 25 sweet and savory tastings, festive themed areas, live shows and 16 popular rides throughout the park.

The event is set to run Dec. 5-27.

Park officials have developed stringent health, safety and hygiene protocols, which align with CDC guidance and incorporate information from company and industry health and safety experts, along with state and local government officials to protect guests and associates.

"Kings Dominion has a comprehensive safety plan in place that has proven to be effective in all of our sister parks that were allowed to safely operate earlier this year," said **Tony Johnson**, vice president and general manager. "We can't wait for families to return to the park and make treasured holiday memories safely."

Reservations will be required for all guests to manage capacity and maintain social distance standards.

•kingsdominion.com

Space Center Houston, Houston, Texas

Galaxy Lights, Space Center Houston's holiday season celebration, kicked off Nov. 15 and is set to run through Jan. 3, 2021.

Galaxy Lights is an immersive holiday lights Space City tradition, bringing guests one of the most interactive and technologically advanced light



displays in Texas. The opening weekend debuted with a live SpaceX Crew-1 launch viewing for those lucky visitors.

In partnership with **Reliant Energy**, Space Center Houston expanded Galaxy Lights this year to include new spacious outdoor and indoor experiences.

Highlights include two high-tech kinetic light shows, a new outdoor path, a 200-foot LED light tunnel made of more than 250,000 lights synchronized to festive holiday music and a new interactive light pad made of 143 multicolor platforms under the wing of the historic shuttle carrier aircraft.

Other highlights are six, 20-foot trees representing each of the six International Space Station partners, a 15-foot wreath made of all the ISS partner flags and a massive 40-foot-tall, 100-foot-long sparkling shooting star set near the SpaceX Falcon 9 exhibit.

There also is plenty of holiday food and beverages.

•spacecenter.org

Legoland California Resort, Carlsbad, California

The holiday season is always special at **Legoland California Resort** and, while the park is not open at this time, the resort

has created a special experience for its guests to celebrate winter, Holidays at Legoland! The event kicked off on Nov. 20 and will run through Jan. 20, 2021.

Visitors have the opportunity to holiday shop and dine and enjoy shimmering lights, live entertainment, the famous 30-foot-tall Lego Christmas tree, festive decor and more.

The park's Fun Town turns into a winter wonderland as buildings are trimmed with twinkling lights and holiday décor. Lego characters also are on-hand including Santa, Toy Soldier and Gingerbread Man.

Visitors also may enjoy seasonal treats and live music performances, walk around a newly themed Miniland U.S.A and enjoy building Lego ornaments among other building activities.

Families are welcome to extend the Lego holiday by staying overnight at the magical Legoland Castle Hotel.

Guests are required to purchase tickets online in advance. Other health mandates are being required.

Legoland California Resort includes Legoland California, Sea Life aquarium, Legoland Water Park, Legoland Hotel and Legoland Castle Hotel.

•legoland.com

SeaWorld Parks

Christmas Celebration has returned to **SeaWorld San Diego, California**, this year with an ocean of holiday cheer across more than 100 acres of outdoor space decked with sparkling lights, decorations, holiday festivities and an earlier start than ever before. The celebration kicked off Nov. 13 and runs on select dates through Jan. 4, 2021.

Under local pandemic mandates, SeaWorld is open as

► See HOLIDAYS, page 6



Guests at this year's Space Center Houston's Galaxy Lights (above left) have a variety of attractions to choose from this year including this 200-foot LED light tunnel made of more than 250,000 lights synchronized to festive holiday music. While Legoland California is not open, the resort has created a special experience for its guests to celebrate winter, Holidays at Legoland (above right).

COURTESY SPACE CENTER HOUSTON, LEGOLAND CALIFORNIA RESORT

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Christmas Celebration has returned to SeaWorld San Diego (left) this year with thousands of twinkling lights, decorations and holiday festivities. Six Flags Magic Mountain is presenting a first-ever, drive-through holiday event this year dubbed Holiday in the Park Drive-thru (above). COURTESY SEAWORLD SAN DIEGO; SIX FLAGS MAGIC MOUNTAIN

► HOLIDAYS

Continued from page 4

an accredited zoo with limited capacity and enhanced health and safety measures.

Returning highlights this year include thousands of twinkling lights at the Sesame Street Christmas Village where families may enjoy physically-distanced photo opportunities with everyone's favorite furry friends. Also returning are Holly Jolly Marketplace, Hanukkah Celebration and special backdrops for photos.

An array of new features this year includes Santa Presents: Christmas Animals Around the World outdoor presentation with live animals including camels and reindeer. Also new this year is Rudolph's Movie Experience, Kwanzaa Festivities, Cookies and Photos with Santa, Stocking Stuffer Christmas Trail and Christmas Treasure Hunt.

There will be no shortage of holiday food and beverage.

To celebrate the season safely, SeaWorld consulted with medical experts to offer a modified event with required reservations and limited capacity. This seasonal event features open-air entertainment and experiences as well as enhanced health and safety measures.

SeaWorld San Antonio also is presenting a Christmas Celebration this year. That event kicked off Nov. 20 and is set to run through Jan. 3, 2021.

SeaWorld San Antonio has modified the event to allow guests to safely visit the park, roam its expansive 250-acre grounds and enjoy holiday events. In addition to enhancing the park's already strict health and safety measures, capacity will be significantly limited to create even more open space for a visit that provides plenty of opportunity to maintain physical distancing in a

safe environment.

Along with returning favorites, new this year are Christmas Fireworks Finale, Hanukkah Celebration and Kwanzaa Festivities.

Games are being offered, holiday food and beverage are plentiful and photo opportunities are everywhere.

SeaWorld Orlando Florida rolled out its Christmas Celebration on Nov. 14. It is set to run through Dec. 31. Like its sister parks, guests at the Florida park are enjoying new events such as Hanukkah Celebration and Kwanzaa Festivities. There also is a new Christmas carol show called *It's a Wonderful Night: A New Story to Tell*.

Sesame Street Land has gotten into the spirit with characters singing and dancing to holiday songs. Visitors are enjoying the return of the park's Sea of Trees and Rudolph's Christmas Town. The Christmas Market is featuring festive entertainment and holiday-themed food and drinks.

In addition to the new show, SeaWorld Orlando is offering visitors an outdoor ice skating rink at Bayside Stadium.

•seaworld.com

Washington State Fair Puyallup, Washington

The Washington State Fair, Puyallup, Washington, is bringing the magic of Christmas to the Puyallup area with its first Holiday Magic, a festive, drive-through holiday experience. The event will run Dec. 4-Jan. 3, 2021.

Holiday Magic will provide the opportunity for guests to drive through the fairgrounds and immerse themselves in the true magic of the season. There will be thousands of lights displaying the fun that only the holiday season can bring.

Along with the sights and sounds, guests will also be able to enjoy scrumptious treats and

Candy Cane Lane Cocoa and Coffee Bar.

•thefair.com

Six Flags Theme Parks

With California theme parks remaining closed due to state government mandates, **Six Flags Magic Mountain**, Valencia, California, is presenting Holiday in the Park Drive-thru Experience in an effort to provide safe outdoor holiday family fun.

The event kicked off Nov. 20 and will run through Jan. 3, 2021.

This first-time, drive-through experience takes visitors on a counter-clockwise route through the 125-acre park and past millions of holiday lights choreographed to music. The route includes eight distinctly different areas throughout the park, including Rockin' Universe in the DC Universe area, Merry Lane in Metropolis, The Underground at the West Coast Racers coaster, and Winter Wonderland at Viper coaster.

Magic Mountain's rides will remain closed during the event.

Advance, online reservations are required.

Six Flags Great Adventure, Jackson, New Jersey, kicked off its Holiday in the Park festivities Nov. 14. It is set to run through Jan. 3, 2021.

The spectacular winter festival is sparkling with more than a million glittering lights, festive foods, thrilling rides and holiday entertainment with a continued focus on safety.

This immersive and enchanting holiday experience is bigger than ever before with 14 specially-themed areas. Coordinated sights, sounds, scents and attractions will give each section a distinct character.

Opening for its sixth season, Holiday in the Park is debuting new attractions including the Jolly Jamboree party in the park's catering area and the Illuminated Animals with new lit animals. The Wild Safari

area of the park has extended its season to offer the Wild Safari Drive-Thru Adventure.

Returning signature attractions include Holiday Magic: A Celebration of the Season, character appearances, Gingerbread Junction with the giant inflatable gingerbread man, Polar Point ice-blue trees, Joy to the World lit pathway, wood-burning fire pits, holiday eats and festive photo spots.

The park has held two new holiday events, the Holiday Wine Fest Nov. 14 and 15 and Holiday Food Drive event on Nov. 21 and 22.

•sixflags.com

Dollywood

Pigeon Forge, Tennessee

Dollywood's Smoky Mountain Christmas kicked off Nov. 7 and will run through Jan. 3, 2021. With more than five million gleaming Christmas lights and a dazzling new holiday fireworks show, guests are surrounded and immersed in the holiday season.

While many favorites of the Christmas celebration have returned, new attractions also are being offered such as the Christmas fireworks display called Merry & Bright. The show features a number of holi-

day songs synced to the fireworks. Performance dates will be available on Dollywood.com and the Dollywood app.

The spotlight also shines brightly on the park's award-winning entertainment this season. Some of the shows include: Christmas in the Smokies, a new show called Heart of the Holidays, a Christmas with the Kingdom Heirs, O' Holy Night, Appalachian Christmas with the Smoky Mountain String Band, Holiday Wild Roots, The Mistletoes and the Candlelight Carolers.

Glacier Ridge offers an expansive arctic experience where guests stop by at the Wilderness Pass Plaza to watch the Wonderful Christmas tree show featuring a 50-foot-tall animated tree that sparkles to life to present a fully-synchronized, dazzling light show throughout the evening.

Santa's workshop is on full display and the park's rides will thrill and chill.

And for those looking to celebrate the holidays with the perfect family meal, Dollywood's team of chefs have a menu full of culinary surprises sure to delight in several food and beverage locations throughout the park.

•dollywood.com



Dollywood's Smoky Mountain Christmas is offering a full array of activities and rides. COURTESY DOLLYWOOD

*Celebrate the Holidays with
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*Dear Santa,
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Amusement TODAY

ANNUAL HOLIDAY COOKING GUIDE

There is no denying that 2020 has been a year for the record books. The industry has never seen ups and downs like this one. With that train of thought in mind, *Amusement Today* reached out to roller coaster manufacturers to share some of their favorite family recipes. Enjoy!



Michele Jehle

Intamin Amusement Rides

Graubünden's Most Famous Soup

Graubünden is a region and canton of Switzerland. While it is Switzerland's biggest canton by area, it is also the most sparsely populated and the only canton in Switzerland to be officially trilingual: German, Italian and Romansh are spoken in different areas.

Everyone prepares this soup a little differently. However, it always contains barley, which has been soaked the night before, as well as many vegetables and smoked meat. Whichever the variant may be, this rich hot soup sure tastes good and fills the stomach and warms you up on cold winter days.

Ingredients:

- 1 Tbs butter
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 200g (7 oz) leeks, cut into fine strips
- 200g (7 oz) carrots, cut into small cubes
- 150g (5¼ oz) celery, cut into small cubes
- 50g (1¾ oz) air-dried meat [e.g. beef jerky] or bacon cut into small pieces
- 80g (2¾ oz) pearl barley
- 1L (4¼ cups) beef stock
- 2dl (6¾ oz) full cream
- 3 Tbs chives, finely chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions (serves 4, preparation time of 90 minutes):

Soak barley the night before. Melt butter in a large pan. Simmer the onion, leeks, carrots, celery and meat. Add the barley, heat a little longer. Add the stock, bring to a boil and then cover. Reduce heat and simmer for approx. 1 hour. Season. Add cream, heat up (do not boil) and garnish with chives.

Prepare soup approx. one day in advance; allow to cool and keep in fridge, covered. You can also add: bacon, kidney beans or even try smoked tofu instead of meat.



Jake Kilcup

Rocky Mountain Construction

Kilcup Huevos Ranchero

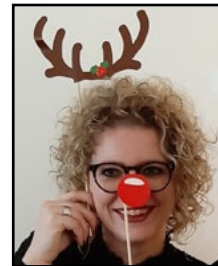
Ingredients:

- Cooking oil • 4 corn tortillas • 8 eggs
- Grated cheddar cheese • 1 lb chorizo
- ½ cup red enchilada sauce

Directions (serves 4): On the stove, fry the tortillas in oil until slightly crispy. Salt lightly. Cook chorizo and remove from pan to a plate with a paper towel to drain. Fry eggs over easy in chorizo pan. Place tortillas on a sheet pan, top with 1/4 cup chorizo per tortilla, drizzle two tablespoons of enchilada sauce per tortilla, two eggs per tortilla, top with grated cheddar. Broil in the oven until cheese is warm and melty. Enjoy hot!

Carin Davits

Vekoma Rides Manufacturing BV



Reindeer Cake

Every birthday or whatever reason there is to celebrate, my mother always bakes a "themed" cake. Last Christmas I surprised my colleagues at Vekoma with a homemade Reindeer Cake, using the family recipe — success guaranteed!

Ingredients (Cake):

- 6 eggs
- 160g (5½ oz) flour
- 40g (1½ oz) corn starch
- 250g (8¾ oz) sugar
- 16g (½ oz) vanilla sugar
- 5g (1 tsp) baking powder

Ingredients (Frosting):

- 1 egg
- 250 g (8¾ oz) butter
- 250 g (8¾ oz) icing sugar
- 8g (.3 oz) vanilla sugar
- fondant red and black
- cookies and golden pearl sprinkles (garnish)

Cake

- Preheat the oven to 350°F (177°C). Grease and lightly flour an 11-inch cake pan.
- Break the eggs and add the sugar into a bowl.
- Use a handheld or stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment, beat the eggs and sugar on medium speed for about 20-30 minutes until fluffy mass and set aside.
- Take a separate bowl and sift the flour and corn starch. When ready, stir into the egg mixture with a wooden spoon (don't whisk).
- Pour batter into the cake pan. Bake for around 30 minutes or until the cake is baked through. To test for doneness, insert a toothpick into the center of the cake. If it comes out clean, it is done.
- Allow the cake to cool completely in the pan set on a wire rack. The cake must be completely cool before frosting and assembling.

Frosting

- In a large bowl, using a hand-held mixer or stand mixer fitted with a whisk or paddle attachment, beat the butter on medium speed until creamy — about 2 minutes.
- Add the icing sugar and vanilla sugar with the mixer running on low. Increase to high speed and beat for 3 full minutes and set aside.
- Split the egg white in a cup and add the egg yolk to the bowl with the butter and sugar and mix for 5 minutes.
- Separately beat the egg whites and add this into the bowl. Add the cacao for the chocolate flavor and mix all together.

Assemble and frost

- Using a large, serrated knife, slice the cake into two halves. Place 1 cake layer on your cake stand or serving plate. Evenly cover the top with frosting by using a pastry bag.
- Top with 2nd layer and spread the frosting all over the top and sides. • Save some chocolate cream to decorate the reindeer's hair on top of the cake with some golden pearl sprinkles.
- Take some cookies to create the antler.
- Use red fondant and roll a small ball for Rudolph's nose which you can apply by inserting a toothpick into the cake.
- Use the black fondant to create the eyes and lashes and stick this onto the chocolate cream.





Sara Seay

Premier Rides

Red Velvet Cake

This red velvet cake was special in our family and even has its own family legend to accompany it. I love to share this with friends and family for special occasions like the holidays. Premier Red,

what could be more appropriate? It was our wedding cake!

Ingredients (Cake):

- 2 oz. food coloring
- ½ cup shortening
- 1 ½ cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons cocoa
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 2 ½ cups sifted cake flour
- 1 Tbs white vinegar
- 1 Tbs baking soda
- 1 tsp vanilla

Directions (frosting): Cook flour and milk until thick. Cream butter, sugar and vanilla. Add to flour mixture and beat until thick enough to spread. When finished, it will look like whipped cream.

Directions (cake):

- Cream sugar, shortening and eggs.
- Make a paste of food coloring and cocoa. Add to creamed mixture.
- Mix salt and vanilla with buttermilk.
- Add alternately with flour to creamed mixture.
- Mix soda and vinegar and fold in (do not beat).
- Bake in 9-inch greased, floured pans for 30 minutes at 350 degrees. (put waxed paper in bottom of pans)
- When cakes is cool, split layers in half and frost.

Ingredients (Frosting):

- 5 Tbs flour
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup (½ lb) butter
- 1 tsp vanilla

Christian von Elverfeldt

Mack Rides



Apfelstrudel

I actually have to say I am not a very good cook, but what I love and sometimes try to make by myself (my wife knows it much better) is the famous German/Austrian Apfelstrudel, which is a kind of apple cake.

Ingredients (filling):

- 2 Tbs rum
- 100g (3½ oz) raisins
- 1.2 kg (2½ lbs) of apples
- 80 g (2¾ oz) sugar
- ½ tsp cinnamon powder
- 2 Tbs lemon juice
- 50g (1¾ oz) breadcrumbs
- 50g (1¾ oz) butter

Ingredients (dough):

- 220g (7¾ oz) all-purpose flour
- 50g (1¾ oz) unsalted butter
- 1 egg
- pinch of salt
- 80ml (2¾ oz) lukewarm water

Directions: Combine all the ingredients for the dough in a mixer and form a smooth and elastic dough. Let it sit for at least 30 minutes and start with the filling. Meanwhile, in a small bowl combine raisins and rum. Let sit for 30 minutes. Then discard the rum. Wash the apples, peel them and slice them in small pieces. Mix them with the sugar, cinnamon, lemon juice in a bowl. Also bring in the breadcrumbs and the raisins. Lay a thin kitchen towel preferably with a pattern flat on the counter. Sprinkle with flour. Roll the dough out as thin as you can. Brush it with a little bit of melted butter — especially the margins. Then pile the apple filling and fold the margins inside and gently roll up the strudel with the help of the towel underneath. Tuck the ends and transfer the strudel to a baking sheet with the seam facing downward. Brush the outside again with a little melted butter. Put it in the preheated oven (180°C/355 F) and bake it 40-50 minutes. Every 20 minutes brush the strudel with the remaining butter.

Personally, I love the strudel slices with a light vanilla sauce.



Charlotte van Etten

Vekoma Rides Manufacturing BV

Oliebollen en Appelflappen (Appel Beignets)

Here is a typical Dutch New Year's eve tradition. I don't mind the mess in the kitchen: the taste and tradition is well worth it.

Ingredients:

- 1 pack of Koopmans Oliebollen*/500 g (4 cups) Koopmans mix
- 5dl or 500ml lukewarm water
- 250g, possibly currants and / or raisins
- oil for frying

Cookware:

- Mixer with dough hooks or ladle
- Frying pan

Directions (cake):

- Soak the currants and/or raisins and pat them dry.
- Stir the currants and / or raisins into the batter.
- Put the mix in a mixing bowl. Add the water (or even better with beer to make them less oily).
- Stir everything with a wooden spoon or a mixer with dough hooks to a smooth batter.
- Leave the batter in the bowl, covered with plastic or a towel, to rise at room temperature for about 45 minutes.
- Do not stir the batter during rising and baking.
- In a deep pan or deep fryer, let the oil get hot until vapor slightly comes off (approx. 190 ° C /375 degrees F)
- Form balls of batter with two spoons or donutball tongs (ice tongs). Slip the balls into the hot oil and immerse them briefly.
- Fry the oliebolle for about 3-4 minutes until golden brown on all sides.
- Remove the oliebolle from the oil with a slotted spoon/skimmer.
- Let them drain in a colander or on kitchen paper.
- Complete the oliebolle recipe by sprinkling the oliebolle with powdered sugar.

*Although a Dutch recipe, van Etten says the Koopman's mix can be found in the U.S. One example is: jacksonvillecroquettes.com.
"Once you try, you'll be hooked," she told AT.



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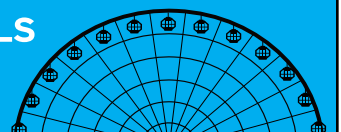
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PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

▶ ZDTs acquires historical art — page 15 / Eventful 2020 for Powers Great America Midway — page 22

Park reimagines front entrance in 2020

Six Flags St. Louis creates new sculptural icon for arriving guests

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

EUREKA, Mo. — Not everything planned for 2020 has come to fruition. A year of unprecedented circumstances makes the successful projects that did debut even more rewarding.

Management at **Six Flags St. Louis** were excited to show off the theme park's latest flair.

"The park entrance had not changed since we opened in 1971," said **Elizabeth Gotway**, public relations and marketing manager. "It had looked the same."

With the removal of the long stretch of ticket booths, the space was wide open, and it made for a perfect opportunity to add something iconic to represent that "sense of arrival" as guests entered the park. As Six Flags St. Louis prepared to open for the spring, finishing touches were being placed on a new welcoming sculpture.

"We had never really had a good photo op for our guests when they get here," said Gotway. "Everyone looks for that spot that says 'I'm here. This is where I am.' It's really exciting."

When *Amusement Today* asked about the origins of the project, Gotway reflected to many months ago. "We've had the tagline 'The Coaster Capitol of Missouri' for a long time," she said. "As taglines go, you occasionally change them. **Katy [Enrique, marketing director]** talked about doing something with 'Gateway to Thrills.' Everyone knows we have the beautiful Gateway Arch in St. Louis. When it opened, it became the symbol of 'The Gateway to the West.' When she mentioned that, we thought, 'Yeah, that's cool; let's



By removing the ticket booths, Six Flags opened up the entrance plaza. The new sculpture icon (inset) gives guests a sense of arrival. COURTESY SIX FLAGS

company was willing to sell it to Six Flags.

The sculpture was a to-scale replica of the actual Gateway Arch. The Real monument is 630 feet tall and 630 feet wide (the height and width are indeed the same). The acquired piece was 12 feet tall by 12 feet wide.

"It even has the windows on top," said Gotway.

From there, the Six Flags team went to work. Being made of aluminum, the iconic piece was sturdy but only weighed around 200 pounds. It was placed in a large flower bed at the park entrance. The logo detailing was added, and the landscaping department embraced the beauty of the installation.

"It always has people around it," said Gotway. "I love it!"

However, as with many things in 2020, the park had

has created a whole new feel. As many attractions have been delayed, this was an immediate fresh change that guests could experience.

"We get so many people that tag us in the photos at our front gate," said Gotway. "It's amazing if you search it."

In today's world, an entrance plaza built before the internet and the creation of memberships was due for a change. The need for a long stretch of ticket booths is no longer necessary. Now, ticket sales and guest relations have a new area off to the side to facilitate those reduced needs. Historic light posts were able to be retained. All new concrete was poured for the new widened entrance. Onlookers might notice swirls of color in the concrete.

One aspect the park is enjoying is the creative opportunity to fashion the project with the change of the seasons and the various festivals. In 2021, the park is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Ideas are being formulated to expand the new design. Management feels 2020 is a "first step."

As the enhanced entrance was debuting in the summer, park management enjoyed observing their efforts. On busier days, they were pleased to see guests actually forming a line to have their picture taken in front of the artistic creation.

"It adds so much to the front gate. To see our longtime passholders who have been so many times, they would come through the temperature check and then come up and just stop. They just had a look on their face. And then they would spot the new arch with our logo and go right to it. It's been great. It really has. We're thrilled with it," said Gotway.

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RES New Dual Wheel

Give Kids The World Village shines with hope, illuminates for the holidays

AT: David Fake
Special to Amusement Today

KISSIMMEE, Fla. — Under normal circumstances and in a world without a global pandemic, this time of year would find the staff and volunteers at Give Kids The World Village busy about their work of hosting some of the more than 7,600 annual “wish-trips” for critically ill children and their families.

This year, however, things have been a little different. The Village has been silent of the laughter, excitement, and joy that the 89-acre nonprofit resort was created to bring to these children and their families. Sadly, Give Kids The World Village has been closed since mid-March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, delaying some 6,000 wishes to date.

Thankfully even amidst the most daunting of times, the holiday season brings with it a special kind of magic. That magic sparked the idea of a way to bring the joy and laughter back to Give Kids The World Village while the staff and volunteers await the ability to welcome back their most special guests. That Idea developed into Night of a Million Lights, an event that, for the first time, opens the Village to the public through January 3.

Most importantly, Night of a Million Lights will raise funds to ensure that the wishes of critically ill children can be fulfilled once the Village reopens, while providing the public that rare glimpse inside the magical, whimsical resort illuminated in festive, sparkling holiday lights.

Thanks to the donation of more than three million lights by Walt Disney World Resort, along with more than 45 additional partners, including IAAPA, Fun Spot America, Legoland Florida, SeaWorld Orlando and Universal Orlando Resort, Give Kids The World Village has been festooned with dazzling lights and larger-than-life holiday displays. These partners have joined in the holiday spirit by adopting and decorating some of the resort’s 166 family villas with their own unique flair. In addition to the decorated villas, the event includes a glittering 150-foot tunnel; more than 50 holiday-themed wireframes, some spanning more than 40 feet; an enchanting gingerbread arch; an out-of-this-world space-themed decor adorning the Village’s delectable new centerpiece, Henri’s Starlite Scoops ice cream shop.

Admission to the walk-



Night of a Million lights is a glimpse into the magical Give Kids The World Village. Guests are welcome to unlimited access of the Village’s accessible rides and attractions. Thoughtful details abound including the Wish Tree, (right) an oak covered in thousands of purple lights representing all the wishes granted and those yet to be made. AT/DAVID FAKE



through, socially distanced holiday light spectacular includes complimentary ice cream and hot cocoa, as well as unlimited access to the Village’s beautiful, wheelchair-accessible rides and attractions, three of which have been donated by Zamperla.

Pamela Landwirth, the President and CEO of Give Kids The World Village spoke with AT about Night of a Million Lights, the Village and the amusement industry. When asked how the idea for the event came to be, she said, “Since March, there are 600-700 wish families a month whose wishes are being postponed; by the end of the year, 6,000. We’ve promised never to turn down a child. So, we’re going to have to find a way to make that up. Events like this help make that happen.”

Landwirth is no stranger to the amusement industry. The IAAPA Hall of Fame inductee spent 16 Years with Disney before joining Give Kids The World in 1992. Then, in 1995, she was tapped to lead the Village. When asked how fundraising is going for the Village and what our industry can do to help, she put it this way: “Our biggest challenge right now is that our major partners are part of an industry that has been hit the hardest, the hospitality industry, the theme park industry. Let’s face it, our industry is suffering, as is everyone’s, but ours has been hit particularly hard. Still, the continuous fundraising by IAAPA, the parks, continues to amaze me. I mean, it is absolutely incredible what

our industry can do.”

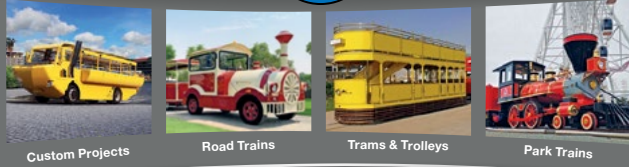
Just this past month, IAAPA members raised more than \$47,000 through its virtual “Footprints from the Heart 5K Fun Run, as part of this year’s virtual IAAPA Expo.

“So, yes, IAAPA and all of its great members have been such wonderful partners,” Landwirth continued. “We’re just so blessed to be part of an industry that’s really a family, right? We’re kindred spirits. I share the same desire as theme parks to provide the perfect guest experience. They want to provide the perfect guest experience so that their guests keep coming back time and time again. I want to provide a perfect guest experience because our guests can’t come back again. We have just one shot. And that’s what’s so sad about this closure, because we know there are those children who weren’t able to have that wish fulfilled, and we will not get the chance to make it up to them.”

Landwirth wrapped up the conversation by explaining how she answers when people ask her, “what can I do?” She said she responds with these three things: “Give. Serve. Share. Give money, give gifts, give tickets, do those kinds of things. Serve by volunteering time; we normally fill 1,800 volunteer shifts a week. Finally, if you do nothing else, share the word, share our story, because we are the world’s best kept secret. There are still so many more children out there that we’re not reaching.”

•gktw.org

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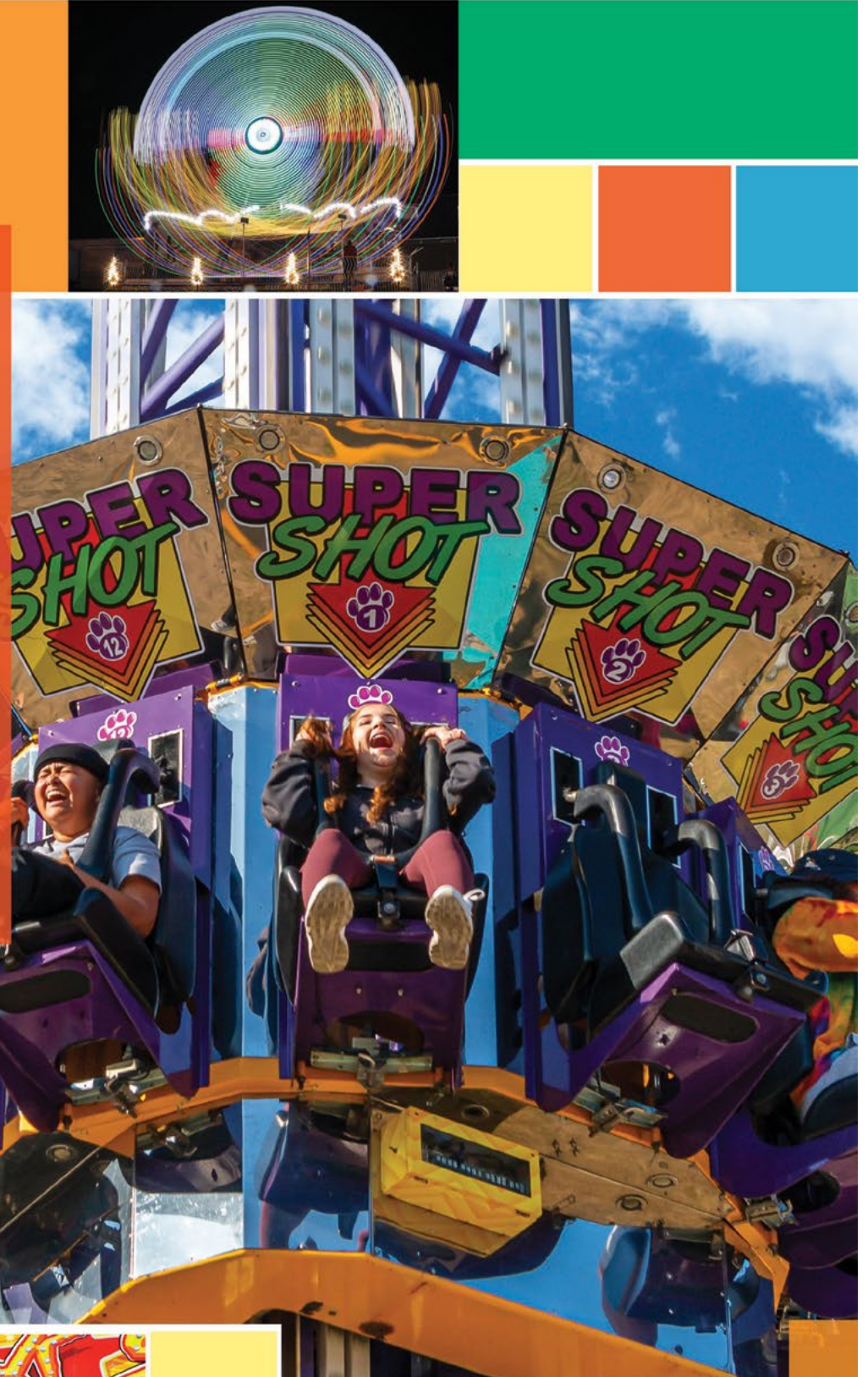


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Rotating office space



TOKYO — Several tourist attractions in Japan have been hit by the pandemic, and some amusement parks have explored other ways to lure visitors. Yomiuriland amusement park has turned into a new workplace for teleworkers. In October, the park launched the amusement workstation package to include a work space next to its pool, and a ride on its observation Ferris wheel with a portable WiFi router. It's a fun office alternative that even allows guests to join conference calls while riding the Giant Ferris Wheel.

AT FILE/GARY SLADE

Ohio's Funtimes Fun Park makes upgrades in 2020

ALLIANCE, Ohio — Facing a challenging 2020 season, Funtimes Fun Park in Ohio called upon **International Ride Management (IRM)** to provide consulting and several upgrades. IRM previously supplied and relocated three classic kiddie rides and several midway-style skill games from **Lakemont Park** (Altoona, Pennsylvania) to transform the facility from an outdoor FEC to a hard ride park which focused on families.

For the 2020 season, Funtimes took delivery from IRM on several additional midway-style skill games formerly of Cincinnati's **Coney Island** including a large Duck Pond and a Goblet Pitch. The midway was extended to allow for the installation of the games and additional room cleared for two new rides. New this summer at Funtimes Fun Park was an IRM-supplied **Hampton Tubs of Fun**, relocated from **Santa's Village Azoosment Park** in East Dundee, Illinois. The ride, which arrived in early June, was ready to open when Ohio cleared outdoor parks to open for the summer after the COVID-19 shutdown.

Park owners **Jason** and **Dawn Dlugokecki** are planning for the future and are looking forward to creating new family memories for generations to come with forthcoming additions and announcements already in the planning.

• funtimespark.com



A relocated Tubs of Fun ride from Santa's Village Azoosment Park was just one of several additions to Funtimes Fun Park in 2020. COURTESY IRM

Park Post-its



AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

The City of Gilroy, California, is reaching out to developers to see if they have a plan to turn the 536 acres around **Gilroy Gardens** into a recreation destination.

The Gilroy City Council last month agreed to circulate a request for proposals for the "Hecker Pass Highway Tourism and Recreation Development Opportunity." The RFP was released mid-November, with submissions due by Jan. 19. City officials feel the RFP will give them an idea of what options are out there for that acreage. All options are being explored, including selling the city-owned property.

The 536 acres have been the subject of proposed development in recent years. In 2017, the city was in negotiations with **Great Wolf Lodge** to build a 700-room resort on a portion of the property. The Lodge owners eventually decided on a different location.

Gilroy Gardens, meanwhile, is considering an expansion that would add bike trails, zip lines and other recreational activities on a 350-acre hillside behind the gardens.

The 20-page RFP document describes the property as well as the city's goals for it. It adds that potential redevelopment projects could include "portions occupied by Gilroy Gardens."

The **Blue Zoo**, located inside the **Quail Springs Mall**, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, has started live mermaid shows. The shows take place on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays in and around the shark tank. Mermaids swim with the sharks and stingrays and the show includes a meet-and-greet time with the mermaids for guests.

The Blue Zoo follows the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's COVID-19 safety guidelines, as well as local and state mandates.

Museum Fiasco, Las Vegas, Nevada, opened last month on the mezzanine of **AREA15**, a purpose-built experiential art and entertainment complex. Museum Fiasco is Las Vegas' first Kunsthalle-style museum, a term which refers to a museum that is a noncollecting institution presenting art on loan from other institutions or individuals.

The first exhibit is called Cluster, an award-winning installation by **Playmodes Studio**. The exhibit pushes boundaries in light, technology and creativity in a large-scale audio-visual experience, presenting an interactive show that engages the senses.

The virtuosic play tells a story through a collection of lights that strobe in harmony with the extraordinary soundscape. The 360-degree experience explores the chaotic feeling of being inside the kernel of a glitchy computer processor.

• **Dippin' Dots Ice Cream** announced dur-

ing the **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) Expo Virtual Education Conference** a new flavor to be introduced in 2021. The new flavor is Ultimate Brownie Batter, a decadent combination of Brownie Batter ice cream and rich brownie batter bits.

Find the new flavor at a Dippin' Dots location next year. Dippin' Dots is headquartered in Paducah, Kentucky.

• Owners of the **Land of Illusion** in Madison Township, Ohio, presented a new expansion proposal to their county commissioners last month in hopes of getting the revamped plan approved. The owners had planned to submit a slightly different proposal in July, but withdrew it when they learned that the plans faced community opposition.

Owners are asking to rezone 206 acres from agricultural, residential to general business classifications. Plans are to make Land of Illusion a year-round facility that would include a larger family entertainment venue with a campground, indoor water park, hotel, outdoor adventure area and other entertainment activities.

The second proposal submitted last month reduced the number of acres from the original number, removed the proposed park rides and reduced the planned building heights.

About 75% of the project is estimated to be indoors.

Land of Illusion currently sits on just under 200 acres and has been operating for 22 years. It is known for its Christmas drive-through at the holidays, Haunted Scream at Halloween and its Aqua Adventures in the summer.

• Officials at **Vekoma Rides Manufacturing** hope to expand the company's operations by installing rides at shopping centers. They feel that such installations can add an extra dimension to customers' shopping experiences and increase traffic to brick-and-mortar locations.

Vekoma installed 49 rides under the company's "retainmentment" concept in Indonesia. The success of those rides is inspiring Vekoma to expand worldwide.

• After months of mini-crises ranging from delays in materials to frantic hurricane preparations, the **Museum of Fine Arts**, Houston (MFAH) opened its crowning element Nov. 21 in its ambitious \$450 million expansion, the **Nancy and Rich Kinder Building**, devoted to the institution's deep holdings in modern and contemporary art.

The new structure was designed by **Steven Holl Architects**, which also created the 2012 master plan for the expansion of the museum campus. With more than 100,000 square feet devoted to galleries, the building increases the museum's overall exhibition space by nearly 75%.

The trapezoidal concrete building is notable for its porosity, with seven gardens slicing the perimeter. Two pedestrian tunnels link the Kinder Building to the museum's **Caroline Wiess Law Building** across the street and to the **Glassell School of Art**, which was also designed by Holl and completed in 2018.

The first tunnel features a series of three chromatic chambers by the artist **Carlos Cruz-Diez**. The other tunnel installation, by **Olafur Eliasson**, is using 19 light fixtures to immerse the viewer in a live-action, alternately yellow-or purpled-tinted, film.

ZDTs acquires historic art from Playland Park for event building

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

SEGUIN, Texas — ZDTs owners Sarah and Danny Donhauser are no strangers to artwork for their small amusement park. The indoor arcade and snack bar boast incredible murals painted on the walls. In 2016, the park opened Turning Point, an event space for group outings. In 2020, the owners added something of historic flair.

Two pieces of artwork that were displayed at Playland Park 32 miles away in San Antonio were discovered by Samuel Ehrlich, a collector and appraiser. He knew these special pieces needed the right home. Playland Park operated from 1940 to 1980. One of its greatest claims to amusement park history was its wooden roller coaster built by Herb Schmeck of Philadelphia Toboggan Company in 1948. Dubbed The Rocket, it could have been lost forever when the park closed in 1980. However, Dick Knoebel of Knoebels Amusement Resort defied naysayers in his attempts to relocate the wooden coaster. It opened in 1985 and has consistently ranked as a Top Ten coaster. Phoenix has won the Golden Ticket Award from *Amusement*



Sarah Donhauser and art collector Samuel Ehrlich stand near a work of art (above left) that was part of signage at Playland Park, a facility that closed 40 years ago in San Antonio. A second piece (middle) was determined to also be from Playland Park. Playland's Rocket was relocated to Knoebels Amusement Resort as Phoenix (above right). COURTESY ZDTS; AT/TIM BALDWIN

Today for Best Wooden Coaster in 2018 and 2019, the last two years that category was voted on by a panel of experts.

"We bought the artwork in December — not a good time of year for us to spend money, but it was pre-pandemic," said Sarah Donhauser. "Sam Ehrlich, the art dealer, gave us a really good deal despite its value to give it the right home, knowing that it would be in the hands of coaster enthusiasts

and on the wall for other coaster enthusiasts to enjoy. This would also keep the piece local so that he can come by and visit it."

The two pieces stand 10 and 11 feet tall. One was clearly evident as artwork from Playland as a child is seen riding a rocket. The other sign's origin was in question as the words Kiddie Land were painted on it. It was unsure if that was an area of Playland or a different defunct park in the area.

At a recent event with *American Coaster Enthusiasts*, one of the attendees was able to confirm that it was indeed a portion of Playland because of some documents she was able to obtain.

The Turning Point building was named for its location adjacent to the park's notable Switchback coaster from *The Gravity Group*. A bar counter separates patrons from riders zooming by with railing and Plexiglas as the coaster

screams into a banked turn. The historic amusement park signage is one more distinct attribute to give the event space character.

"We promised [Ehrlich] we would not sell it," said Donhauser. "Though he has other amusement-related art, now is not the time for us to invest. However, he will continue to look for other pieces to decorate Turning Point with when he comes across deals."

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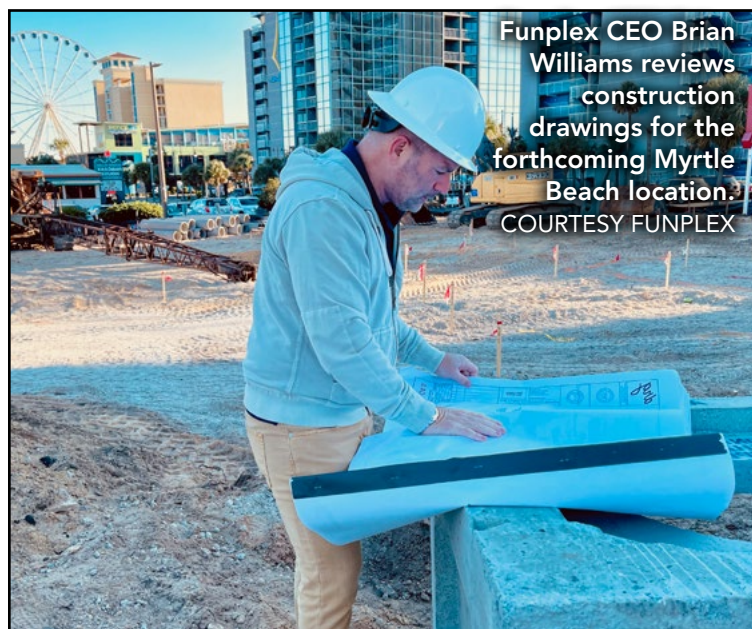
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Funplex Myrtle Beach holds ground breaking



Funplex CEO Brian Williams reviews construction drawings for the forthcoming Myrtle Beach location. COURTESY FUNPLEX

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. — A transformation is taking place to the parking lot located on North Ocean Boulevard in Myrtle Beach. Just steps from the beach, sitework has begun on the new **Funplex Myrtle Beach**.

Promising a big punch in a compact footprint, Funplex Myrtle Beach was designed to maximize every square foot. Tropically themed, Myrtle Beach's newest edition will feature seven family-thrill rides surrounding a walk-up bar and restaurant.

Designed for families and thrill seekers alike, rides will be themed to match the Grand Strand beach vibe and include the tallest, interactive Tower Planes (Visa) ride on the market, a first-of-its-kind in North America. All rides will be encompassed by the track of a custom Big Air Coaster (Visa). All attractions were provided in deals brokered by **Rides 4 U** of Somerville, New Jersey.

"The Funplex Myrtle Beach has been a long time in the making," said Funplex CEO **Brian Williams**. "And we are excited to finally break ground on our next generation of family fun!"

Off-the-Coast Beach Bar and Grill, Funplex Myrtle Beach's new bar and restaurant, will feature signature food and drink options just steps from the beach. This two-sided, walk-up bar and restaurant will offer eight domestic and local draft beers, custom frozen drinks and traditional bar and seafood options.

The general contractor selected for the new amusement park is family-owned **Chancel HRT, Inc.** The architect is **Nathan Rapp** of **Insight Design Architects, LLC** with engineering and design work provided by Myrtle Beach-based **Development Resource Group, LLC**.

Rezoned as an "amusement zone" last year, The Funplex design received Myrtle Beach Community Appearance Board approval in June and began in mid-November with plans to complete construction and open in Spring 2021.

•thefunplex.com



The new Funplex Myrtle Beach will feature seven rides when it opens in 2021, including an interactive Visa Tower Planes ride, as well as an SBF Drop N' Twist tower and an SBF Reverse Time. The entire facility will be encompassed by a unique Big Air Coaster, also from Visa. COURTESY FUNPLEX



FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL

AT: John W.C. Robinson

jrobinson@amusementtoday.com

Pat and **Lisa Ciniello**, owners of **HeadPinz Entertainment Centers** in Florida, were hoping to expand and build FastTrax Entertainment in Fort Myers. However, the new construction was put on hold by the pandemic.

"That was sort of scary to try and do during this particular point in time," said Ciniello. "We put everything on hold up there."

The COVID-19 pandemic had shut down the **Zoomers** of Fort Myers, Florida, in mid-March. By mid-July, then-owner **Mike Barnes** just couldn't handle the challenge brought on by the novel coronavirus any more. The Ciniellos opted to purchase the Zoomers location from Barnes for \$2.8 million and renovate it into a FastTrax.

Renovations began in the fall to transform Zoomers into FastTrax, which will retain some of the park rides and the indoor arcade with about 80 games. But Ciniello is spending about \$6 million to upgrade the rest of the park.

All of the gas-powered go-karts have been replaced with electric-running cars instead. A new, electric-powered bumper car attraction will be added. Fresh coats of paint will be applied to the existing roller coaster. The miniature golf course will be improved. Duck-pin bowling will also be added with seven bowling lanes installed inside on the second floor.

In spring 2021, a new **TAG** e-karting and amusement center will open at Sainte-Thérèse, Quebec. There will be three karting tracks, a laser tag arena, six axe-throwing lanes, six bowling lanes, a **Triotech** 7D interactive cinema, interactive trampolines, a VR experience and many arcade games plus a climbing wall.

The location will cover 65,000 square feet of a new building in **Plaza Sainte-Thérèse**, which is currently undergoing a major makeover by the **MACH Group**. The location is an \$18m investment between race drive **Alex Tagliani** and a number of partners.

"I think of all the young people and thrill seekers who want to let off steam and get their adrenaline flowing," said Tagliani. "The TAG center will be the new generation recreational center for choice; an exhilarating place for an outing and as the first multi-level electric karting center in Canada. I see it as a springboard to eventually develop talents that will shape the future Quebec karting champions."

The karting tracks will consist of one for adults, one for children and a super track combining the two in a half-kilometre length. The karts are imported from Italy and are 100% electric. They will feature digital steering wheels, bumper-integrated sensors for safety and a boost button for acceleration.

Lehigh Valley in Pennsylvania is opening its first **Urban Air Adventure Park** on December 5. The indoor amusement park will feature go-karts, trampolines, climbing walls and an arcade.

The park occupies 64,000 square feet of space that previously housed **The Bon-Ton** department store in **The Shops at Trexlertown**. It's 20,000-square-foot, multi-level go-kart track will be one of its centerpiece attractions.

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, the business has implemented a variety of enhanced cleaning procedures and safety precautions, including limiting the number of guests, taking the temperatures of staff and guests upon arrival and having dedicated sanitation team members wipe down frequently touched equipment.

In the spring of 2021, **Topgolf Entertainment Group** will open its fourth location in the state of Georgia in Buford. Construction is already underway on the two-level, 72-bay venue. The new location will feature climate-controlled hitting bays all designed for any age group.

Altitude Trampoline Park and Fitness Center of Spokane, Washington, reopened in September, despite Governor **Jay Inslee's** orders to remain closed. Two months later, the business was given a \$10,000 fine.

"Park owners said they knew exactly what they were doing and said they understood the risk of getting fined. They did not care," Altitude General Manager **Kenadee Gadish** said.

"Because for us, it doesn't make sense to stay closed — we've already been closed for six months," Gadish explained. "And at that point, we just decided that it was time for us to be open."

After losing six months of income, Gadish said the owners reopened the indoor park, but an inspector showed up less than a month later.

"They told us that we needed to shut down, just because of our business classification," Gadish added. "We were in their system as a family entertainment center instead of a fitness center."

Vennersys announced the launch of a new, content-rich website. The new website contains information on the attraction industry, case studies from the company's customers and blogs designed to help attractions.

Vennersys's integrated ticketing and EPOS system provides benefits for family entertainment centers. FECs can easily plan and arrange an array of events in VenposCloud including birthday parties, seasonal events, school bookings and corporate bookings.

Unique Badlands mini golf course from Adventure Golf proves popular

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. — Medora, North Dakota is a popular tourist town, steeped in history and situated at the entrance to the Theodore Roosevelt National Park. In 2019, the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation decided to replace its 1970s era Little Bully Pulpit 18-hole miniature golf with a new one, the foundation reached out to Adventure Golf and Sports (AGS) to expand the course by having the new front nine holes encompass the entire space of the original mini-golf area as well as building the back nine holes into a Badlands hill across the street from the original mini golf location. The new mini golf course is twice the size of the former one.

“One of our objectives was to make the course feel more like it belonged in Medora — to have some of that Badlands topography,” said Kinley Slaughter, the Burning Hills Amphitheatre manager for the Medora Foundation who was also tasked with overseeing the design and construction of the new miniature golf course.

The course theme is built around the history of the region. Sponsored panels at each tee state the name of the hole and help tell the story of the area. For example, players must putt through a large stone chimney structure on hole 8. The chimney represents the Medora Meat Packing Plant built in 1883 by the Marquis de Morés. Through the use of refrigerated railroad cars, de Morés was able to dress and ship beef directly to the east coast, effectively cutting out the previously required Slaughterhouses in Chicago — a revolutionary concept in 1883.

Other hole elements pay tribute to the pre-Ice Age forest of the area, the Wind Canyon of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park, native Indian tipis, bison, early wagon and railroad transportation, generating energy

using windmills, drilling for oil and other characteristics of the region. There’s even a hole paying tribute to the Bully Pulpit Golf Course — the full-sized big brother 18-hole golf course just south of Medora. The name Bully Pulpit was inspired by Theodore Roosevelt who used the moniker to describe the U.S. Presidency.

“The course turned out really well,” stated Slaughter. “It was a great collaboration with Adventure Golf to get some of the custom items and fit it around the pool and on the hillside, including the ‘slant house.’” The “slant house” refers to its posture on the hillside and is a separate attraction from the mini golf course. Other aspects of the project included a zipline above the mini golf course, along with a proposed lazy river and walking trail above the back nine holes.

“Medora is a special place in this country and, while it was challenging to build a course on a hillside with a number of soil, water drainage and concrete build issues, our team made it happen,” said Scott Lundmark, president of AGS. “In fact, since we were working during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a period where our crew never left the construction site or the nearby motel rooms where they boarded. Food was brought to them.”

During the design process, “There was a lot of back and forth with Adventure Golf,” says Slaughter, “particularly related to fitting the course at the bottom of that hill and making sure we had what we were looking for — both a good flow of the course, but also getting some of the holes higher to change the viewpoint around the top.”

While the front nine holes replaced the original course site on virtually flat ground next to the Badlands Motel pool, the Medora Foundation had a general con-

tractor excavate the hillside site for the back nine holes according to Adventure Golf’s initial design and install a retaining wall. Adventure Golf then handled the final grading to add contours, inclines and some significant downslopes for the concrete construction of various holes.

“Probably the hardest thing was, because of that retaining wall where it has different heights, Adventure Golf had to layout holes and build it in certain ways in order to get materials in to install the holes and make the holes fit the terrain,” explained Slaughter.

“Our goal was to have it look like the miniature golf holes were just dropped into the natural badlands terrain of the hill,” added Slaughter. “It was important to manage the water that was coming down the hill, keeping it off the golf holes.” No pipes or other manmade materials were used for water drainage. The sub base of crushed stone serves as the water runoff control.

“Early in the pandemic, from Mid-March into early summer, North Dakota was in a really good place in terms of a minimal number of cases and not a lot of community transmission. The town was quiet because visitors and activities are very seasonal,” said Slaughter. “We were able to have the crew out and everything went smoothly. The construction site was a quarantined area for a time, but [AGS] were able to do their work. We had an unusual situation where the hotel rooms for the crew were adjacent to the work site. So they were able to live in one pod for a few days. Fortunately, that was only for a few days and then regulations changed and no longer required a quarantine of workers.”

The well-received course opened to the public on June 20.

•agsgolfandsports.com

District 850 entertainment center opens in Tallahassee



COURTESY AMUSEMENT ENTERTAINMENT MANAGEMENT

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — **District 850**, a next-generation entertainment and dining venue opened its doors in mid-November. The 45,000-square-foot bowling-anchored venue hopes to redefine entertainment for Tallahassee by combining a premium dining experience with a dynamic portfolio of interactive and immersive attractions.

Developer **Nilesh Patel** selected industry consultant **Amusement Entertainment Management** to spearhead the project’s development, including the formulation of the business case, investment strategy and coordination plan. The three-year undertaking included the ground-up construction of the facility, which has been designed to support family, adult and corporate users with generous private event, conference and lounge areas. A chef-inspired menu and fully themed interior promise an experience that exceeds expectations.

•aemllc.com

Boomers Parks reopens Speedzone Los Angeles

CITY OF INDUSTRY, Calif. — **Speedzone Los Angeles** reopened November 11 to provide fun and relief for Los Angeles area residents.



With ongoing uncertainty since March, there have been limited options to get out of the house and engage in fun activities with friends, peers and loved ones. Speedzone has adapted its operations to meet California’s state and county guidelines and continues to be a destination for a fun-filled outing.

Some of the park’s operations officially reopened Wednesdays through Sundays with reduced capacity for social distancing and enhanced health and safety measures. Speedzone offers go karts, mini golf and outdoor dining.

Guests and staff are temperature-checked upon entering the park and all team members have been given personal protective gear for every shift. Rides, bathrooms and high touch areas are rigorously cleaned throughout the day and numerous, accessible sanitation stations are placed throughout the park.

“We are providing our guests with a much-needed day of fun. We know that means instilling confidence in them that we are going above and beyond to provide a clean, safe place for fun,” said **Tim Murphy**, CEO of **Boomers Parks**. “These enhanced safety protocols have become the normal for our team members. They are happy to be back at work and helping to provide guests with a happy experience in such uncertain times.”

Boomers is comprised of eight parks: six family entertainment centers and two water parks. All locations are currently open to the public including: **Boomers Irvine**, Livermore, Modesto and Santa Maria; **Boomers Boca Raton**; **Speedzone Los Angeles**; **Sahara Sam’s Water Park** in West Berlin, New Jersey and **Big Kahuna’s Water and Adventure Park** in Destin, Florida.

As directives come out from their respective states, Boomers Parks will comply and open or close attractions as indicated to ensure guests can confidently enjoy their visit.

•speedzone.com

The “back 9” of the new “Little Bully Pulpit” miniature golf course is built into a Badlands hill. Designed and installed by Adventure Golf and Sports, it’s a family-friendly activity for the popular tourist town.
COURTESY ADVENTURE GOLF AND SPORTS



Greater Gulf State Fair extends run, attendance remains strong

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

MOBILE, Ala. — “2020 gave us many challenges to overcome. Our first weekend was over shadowed by Hurricane Zeta’s arrival on the Gulf Coast, forcing us to open one day later than planned. But, overall, our decrease in attendance can be attributed to the COVID-19 epidemic that has dominated news cycles as well as conversations,” said **Joshua Woods** executive director of the **Greater Gulf State Fair**.

Attendance at the 66th annual fair, that was extended two additional days, came in at 73,933 compared to 89,722 in 2019. The 10-year average attendance is 100,000. Capacity was capped each day, so additional days were added to cut down on crowding.

For the 16th time, **North American Midway Entertainment (NAME)**, provided the amusements at the fair operated by the **Mobile Jaycees**. They offered 58 rides, of which 24 were kiddie ones, along with 44 game joints and 12 food stands. The **Amor Express (Wisdom Rides)** **Himalaya** was new to this fair. The three most popular rides included **Star Dancer (Technical Park)**, **Crazy Mouse** roller coaster, (**Zamperla**), and **Mega Drop (Fabbri Group)**.

The ride midway revenue is confidential per contract; however the Greater



The 2020 Greater Gulf State Fair was extended two days to cut down on crowding due to COVID-19. NAME held the midway contract with ride revenue only down 1% from the previous year. There were 58 rides, of which 24 were kiddie ones, along with 44 game joints and 12 food stands. Practices and protocols used at the Mississippi State Fair where NAME also played were adopted in Mobile. The fair is an operation of the Mobile Jaycees, a national leadership training and civic organization open to people below the age of 40. COURTESY GREATER GULF STATE FAIR, SKOOTER KOREK, NAME

Gulf State Fair was only down 1% compared to the prior year. “In this day and age, this is a testament of hope for the fair and outdoor industry. What happened there [Mobile] will give people a lot of hope. This could set the tone,” said **Greg “Scooter” Korek** vice president of client services for NAME.

“We are proud of our long-term relationship with NAME as our midway provider. Thank you to **Danny Huston** and his team for pushing forward with the season despite all the obstacles in their way. More than ever, we are happy to say that in the midst of 2020 they were able to again provide



the largest midway on the Gulf Coast, something we at Greater Gulf State Fair are proud to present to our patrons,” said Woods.

Korek was pleased with the fair operation. “They are

► See GULF, page 20



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►GULF

Continued from page 18

a great bunch of people, with youthful and bright ideas. The Mobile Jaycees [are a] “whole bunch of young people putting on a great event.” (Note: The United States Junior Chamber, also known as the Jaycees, is a leadership training and civic organization for people between the ages of 18 and 40.)

Woods shared what sets this fair apart from others. “We are a fair that plays in a smaller market compared to our peers around the country, yet we have one of the best midway presentations from our midway company of them all. In addition, our community buy-in and the support of our event has been on the rise over the last five years. We attribute our success to our organizational mission of creating memorable experiences. As a team, we want every patron, concessionaire, entertainer, vendor, carnival worker, and employee to have a memorable experience as they attend or conduct business with the Greater Gulf State Fair.”

Special promotions were limited due to the pandemic and the fairs’ capacity plan. On Halloween the traditional “College Night” promotion when college students with ID received free admission was again offered. The second Wednesday featured a flat \$5.00 entry for every patron.

The fair has a \$150,000 advertising budget, with a mix of guerilla-style marketing, traditional (radio, print, television, and billboards), as well as digital (social, and readvertising aspects). “For 2020, our organization operated under the expectation of a 40% decrease in revenue. So, we planned our marketing campaign around that. Between tangible dollars, cashing in goodwill and trade-out, we were able to maximize our advertising spend and hit the demographics and areas we felt we must hit,” explained **Andrea Little**, marketing and communications coordinator.

“We are eternally grateful to our media partners for stepping up and helping us in a year as bleak as 2020. But, this also goes back to



our goal of developing relationships instead of transactions. We focus on building relationships in every aspect of what we do.”

The fair had multiple COVID-19 options. “We had four detailed plans and were able to execute those at any point. When game time came, we executed a plan in conjunction with NAME that provided patron, employee and vendor confidence. For that, I will always be proud to say we opened in 2020,” said Woods.

NAME had a plan they had used for the **Mississippi State Fair**, held a month prior. “We gave the consumer a lot of confidence with our safety protocols and programs,” said Korek.

Phelps Concessions topped the list of best food offering with their Bacon Bombs and Conecuh (a hyper local sausage) Cheese Fries.

Highlights and firsts included an online sales record, a “gear” sales record, the first black female president of the board of directors and, of course, the first hurricane during the fair.

“In March and at times throughout the year it appeared that we would not be able to accomplish our mission. But, we found a way, although it wasn’t easy. We opened. We provided a place to make memories in 2020. Our heart remains with all our friends that could not find opening day in the cards this year,” said Woods.

Korek was also happy with the outcome. “We trail blazed the path for the future: you can open and be successful.”

In addition to the Greater Gulf State Fair, the Mobile Jaycees is the parent organization of the **Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo** and the **Azalea Trail Maids**.

The 2021 edition of the Greater Gulf State Fair is scheduled to take place October 29-November 7.

• greatergulfstatefair.com



MIDWAYSCENE

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

The **San Diego Fair** is currently soliciting Request for Proposals for a single, new midway provider for next year. Previously it operated as an independent midway. In 2019, a total of 77 rides were brought in via 17 different operators. At that time, it was the third largest independent midway, behind the **State Fair of Texas** and the **Minnesota State Fair**. The RFP is for all rides, games, food and digital ticketing. After 2021, there are up to two, two-year options that may be exercised at the discretion of the 22nd **District Agricultural Association**, for a maximum total of five years.

The RFP sent out December 1 is due back by January 6, with the winning proposal announced by January 25. The 2021 San Diego County Fair will tentatively be held June 11-July 4.

The new Florida inspection fee structure that is being implemented doubles the cost for many carnival operators. The fees fall under the jurisdiction of the **Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)**. Florida is now believed to be the state with the highest inspection fees in the United States.

The fee restructuring creates a disincentive for midway providers to play the Sunshine State. The new fees are \$150 (kiddie ride); \$200 (non-kiddie); and \$300 (super amusement) with no annual permit fee for each ride. Under the previous system there was an annual permit fee of \$500 for each ride, along with per-event inspection fees of \$45 (kiddie ride); \$90 (non-kiddie); and \$175 (super amusement). In 2019 there was a 20% increase, the first since 2010.

Hardest hit will be the small fundraising events at churches, high school festivals and fire departments, that typically last only one weekend. This may force operators to not do them because of the prohibitive fee structure. If there is no ride midway, this will greatly diminish their fundraising efforts. The new fees sit easier with large operators who run longer in one spot.

The new fees are also for permanent amusement parks. FDACS says in the past companies were not paying the true costs of sending an inspector to inspect rides.

The **Ocean County Fair & Event Center**, Costa Mesa, California, is now using 18 Angora goats as landscapers in challenging areas throughout the grounds. They are guarded by a miniature donkey that keeps watch. The animals are hard at work solving problems by clearing weeds and improving the soil on the berm around Pacific Amphitheatre.

“The berm is a challenging area for our landscaping crew and the goats are the perfect solution, but we do have some coyotes around the property so the two miniature donkeys will help protect the herd,” said **Barbara Gregerson**, landscape supervisor. “Not only will the goats and donkeys eat the vegetation, they will fertilize and break up the soil, preparing it for planting.”

The berm has been divided into quadrants where the animals will be rotated to evenly work the land. In addition to the weeds and grasses on the berm, the goats will have shelter, water and supplemental feed to ensure they are getting a well-rounded diet. They will also receive regular veterinary care like the animals that reside year-round at nearby **Centennial Farm**. The goats and miniature

donkeys are on loan from Eureka Mohair Farm in Tollhouse, California. They will be on the property through December, returning in March and work until the annual OC Fair in July.

Dr. Sally Nolt, president of the **Pennsylvania State Association of County Fairs (PSACF)**, recently presented an update in *Fair Talk*, the PSACF quarterly newsletter about fairs around the Commonwealth. “Sadly, the 2020 Pennsylvania fair season has come to an end with 103 canceled or modified fairs and only five fairs operating. I would like to thank **Harry Reffner** and the other members of the PSACF Board for their unending dedication and patience as we have dealt with issues placed upon us by the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Officers have been in contact with the **Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture** and lobbyists, as they await the passing of SB1182. This will pay fairs at their 2019 funding rate and also allow fairs to proceed with capital improvements that were submitted. “Please continue to keep in contact with your legislators,” said Nolt.

The **Maryland Association of Agricultural Fairs and Shows (MAAFS)** held a virtual two-day convention in early November. Borrowing on the famous Mary Poppins movie theme, it was called, “SuperCowaFairgiliticExpoAgradocius.”

Eighteen of the 24 member fairs participated which included a total of 65 on-line attendees. “Considering the current environment, it went well,” said 2020 President **Bob Fogle**. Typically, the in-person convention draws 165 people.

Friday evening featured a talent showcase. On Saturday before the annual meeting, four workshop times were offered with two topics to choose from. Some of the subjects covered included Perseverance in Trying Times, **Maryland Department of Agriculture** update, The Long-Lasting Effects of COVID on Fairs and Events, a marketing workshop and additional topics.

Keynote speaker **Nancy Smith, IAFE** chair, took folks on her personal fair journey, including highlights of visiting others in the fair family during her year as chair. “It’s important for us, especially in this difficult year, to remember the positive influence and difference that fairs make around our world. This year’s theme is 2020 Clear Vision. It may seem a bit out of order in this COVID world; however we know from the attendance and comments from our patrons that have attended our food drive-throughs, livestock shows and/or our fairs that were able to go forward, just how important we, as an industry, are to so many. Let’s encourage each other to keep focused on moving forward, to keep our vision clear, and to keep doing what we do best and that is ‘to make the best better.’”

Fogle said throughout this unusual year, MAAFS offered “chat sessions” with speakers across the country sharing ideas. “This [method] opened our eyes on other ways to disseminate information. We were introduced to options through technology.”

The 2021 officer team includes President **Sue Sullivan, Montgomery County Agricultural Fair**; Vice President, **Debbie Friend, Garrett County Agricultural Fair**; Secretary, **Janice Coroneos, Baltimore County 4-H Fair** and Treasurer **Connie Palmer, The Great Frederick Fair**.

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An unusual, but eventful 2020 for Powers Great America Midways

AT: Ron Gustafson
Special to Amusement Today

WHITEVILLE, N.C. — A curtailed season for Powers Great American Midways (PGAM) ended much the same way it began: the show was forced to remove its rides from a still date in Jacksonville, N.C.

"We were halfway set up this week and they (state) closed us down," disappointed show owner **Corky (Les) Powers** told *Amusement Today* in early November from the carnival's offices and shop complex.

The same thing happened this past spring when PGAM was in Jacksonville for its first spot — a still date — of the 2020 season. But the carnival did get open for a brief run before officials pulled the plug due to the COVID-19 crisis.

"We were told we could keep the food trailers and games, but no rides," Powers said of the November dilemma. "What irks me is that the state was going to allow



Powers

amusement parks to reopen at 30 percent capacity, yet they closed us down. We had all of the proper permits — everything was in order."

Jacksonville was slated to be the final stop of a shortened season for the 72-year-old veteran showman, who has been in the industry all of this life.

The latest closure was costly — perhaps as much as \$50,000 — he said after transporting the rides and concessions to North Carolina following a successful run in Florence, S.C.

"We had to send our



Corky Powers welcomes guests in the lobby of the show's shop complex. COURTESY RON GUSTAFSON



The Powers Great American Midways attractions at the show's shop complex in Whiteville, N.C. (above). Show owners Corky and Debbie Powers (right) have long been advocates

of industry associations

such as OABA.

COURTESY

RON GUSTAFSON

H-2B [temporary work visa] people back home and move the rides back to Whiteville," Powers noted. "Everything that happened there and the costs — well it gets complicated to explain."

The carnival generally opens in March with a strong route of still dates and festivals until the fair season starts in early July in Butler, Pa., a location PGAM has held for years.

Route wiped out

But the 2020 route was a complete wash after the pandemic brought much of the amusement industry to a screeching halt.

"We didn't play a single



location on our original 2020 route — not a one," the show owner noted.

PGAM's circuit includes the states of Connecticut, New York, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and North Carolina. South Carolina became a viable option this year due to fewer regulations related to the pandemic.

With the carnival parked back at the shop and a hefty payroll of around 30 personnel eating away at capital, PGAM was finally able to get some equipment back on the road in late July.

It was then that Powers supplemented **Frank Zaitshik's Wade Shows** during the **Delaware State Fair** in Harrington (July 23-Aug. 1) after state officials there allowed the annual exposition to be held under strict COVID protocols.

It marked the first time PGAM sent rides to the Delaware location, which was under contract with Wade Shows. However, Wade Shows has supplemented Powers at the North

Carolina State Fair, Raleigh, since Powers secured the contract in 2006.

It worked, but...

The Delaware State Fair, according to Powers, was run under a blueprint so other fair managers and politicians could witness how a large event could be held without detrimental impact related to COVID.

"Everybody looked at us and Frank did a great job there," he said. "Safety measures were all in place and we did our thing (operating the midway)."

Yet, Powers emphasized that the financial takeaway was not a positive one. He said the carnival business needs to be aware of the downside of situations like the one that existed in Delaware under COVID protocols.

He continued, saying: "I came to realize you cannot operate at any fair — small, medium or large — under those limited capacity conditions. There simply was not enough revenue generated for

the show when you have to pay expenses on top of the contracted percentage obligations."

And even though social distancing was stressed in the fair's guidelines, it was "virtually impossible" for the carnival to enforce it on the fairgrounds.

Into Virginia

PGAM then headed into Virginia to play six two-week still dates it secured to bring in some additional cash flow.

Depending on the lot size, 10 to 14 rides were fielded along with food and game concessions and initial crowd sizes were limited to 250 persons.

"We had gated fences, checked temperatures and counted people going in and coming out," Powers said of safety measures in place. "We were able to maintain lines and did everything the local officials asked us to do, including having local police for security."

► See POWERS, page 23

► **POWERS**

Continued from page 22

The show's diligence paid off as the capacity cap was increased to 1,000.

"We didn't encounter a single person with a high fever and we checked out our staff every day," he added. "The lots could get jammed up in a hurry, but we had no issues whatsoever running in those Virginia locations."

The carnival moved into South Carolina and finished there with a "great run" in Florence in late October.

The limited season and lot sizes also forced PGAM to idle its larger attractions for the season, including its 33-meter Lamberink Ferris wheel, Wave Swinger (Zierer) and Flying Bobs (Chance), to mention a few.

"All of the rides we fielded this year were one trailer, with the exception of the Mulligan Wheel," the show owner said. "We had our Downdraft (Battech), F5 (KMG) and Rock Star (A.R.M.) on location as they have better drawing capacity."

He continued to comment about the success of the Virginia spots, saying: "People were thanking us for being there — everyone was so sick of being tied up."

Powers is also concerned that event organizers are looking too far down the road in regard to what 2021 may bring.

"I've had one long-time festival already call and say they may operate under limited conditions next year," he explained. "People come from all over the East Coast for this event because of its entertainment and parade and I have to wonder how they can make predictions

now. You can't make any judgment calls now, especially with talk of vaccines coming out for COVID."

North Carolina State Fair

The largest void for PGAM this year was October's North Carolina State Fair, which was officially scratched during a press conference in late July. The massive midway generally has around 100 rides and more than a million guests have passed through the gates five separate years since Powers acquired the contract 15 years ago.

In 2010, the fair set an all-time attendance record of 1,091,887.

In an effort to keep some segment of the fair going, organizers did have drive-through food days Oct. 15-25, the same dates the state fair was scheduled for, with more than 20 vendors participating.

"We took our funnel cake trailer in and actually did as well as we've done at the fair," Powers said of the event.

Junior livestock shows were also held during the same schedule, but not open to the public.

Thankful that the carnival did get in a handful of spots this season, he was quick to point out that one new ride had been delivered for 2021 and he hopes to have a new Sky Hawk (A.R.M.) for the Florida State Fair in February. PGAM also has a new gondola wheel being built in Mexico to replace its Mulligan version

State of the industry

As a fourth-generation to be involved in the carnival industry, Powers is known and respected throughout the business. He built a

OABA President Greg Chiecko comments on state of industry

WEST SPRINGFIELD, Mass. — *Amusement Today* contacted the **Outdoor Amusement Business Association (OABA)** for comments related to the state of the industry and **Powers Great American Midways**. President **Greg Chiecko** responded with the following:

"2020 has been a very difficult year for our industry. We have been basically shut down for an entire season. However, we are a resilient group and many regrouped and found some way to generate income. Several of our members mobilized their food stands, some created drive-in movies and some went into the sanitizing business. While none of these operations replicated a 'normal' season, most have been able to hold on. However, we cannot replicate 2020 in 2021."

He continued: "Powers Great American Midways has been a longtime supporter of the OABA. Even through this most difficult year, they continue to support our industry any way they can. Debbie has offered her time to be chair of our organization in 2020. Our board of directors has voted to retain our 2020 officers for 2021. Hopefully, she will be able to lead us to greatness in the year to come."



Chiecko

world-class operation from the ground up and always offers support to others at a moment's notice.

He owns and operates PGAM with wife, **Debbie**, who is also chair of the **Outdoor Amusement Business Association (OABA)** Board of Directors.

When asked about the state of the industry, he said, "We, like others, took a big hit this year. I'm moving ahead and thank God we got through it. We're doing a lot of outside work (at the shop) for other people. We've painted trailers, done some fabrication and other jobs, which helps cover the light bill."

"There's not a time in my life I couldn't find something to do in my shop," he reflected. "I'm keeping my key personnel on to work on our equipment and have some other people's equipment coming in for work as well."

He acknowledged that some smaller carnivals went out of business due to the pandemic and many others limped along with partial routes.

Of particular interest, he said, was that "South Dakota never shut down. It was business as usual there, and they were fine. And outside of a storm, Pensacola (**Pensacola Interstate Fair, Fla.**) did very well."

As for manufacturers and suppliers he has had contact with, Powers said most are "hanging in there," with some doing outside work as well in their diverse facilities.

"They are doing the same thing (outside work) as we're all in the same boat," he noted.

And obtaining ride parts has not been an issue thus far.

While carrying 50 on payroll during the short season, he has cut staffing down to around 15 at the carnival's huge Whiteville complex for

the off-season.

Advocate of OABA

Corky and Debbie Powers have long been advocates of industry associations with OABA at the forefront.

"We're certainly one of the largest fundraisers for OABA," Powers said of support the show has for the organization. "During normal years, we raise in excess of \$150,000 for them — perhaps upwards of \$175,000. One jamboree we held raised more than \$50,000."

He asserted that everyone who travels with PGAM maintains loyalty with the show, but also OABA.

As for looking toward the future, Powers summed it up this way: "I'm an optimist. I always think positive and I'm going to move on like I'm going to have the best year ever."

•powersmidways.com



Corky Powers (left) was inducted into the OABA Hall of Fame alongside Frank Zaitshik (right). COURTESY RON GUSTAFSON

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WATER PARKS & RECREATION

▶ Liseberg's Oceana Water Park construction approved — page 26 / News Splash — page 26

WhiteWater is building new Jungle Bay water park in Dubai

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

DUBAI, UAE — **Jungle Bay**, a new water park currently under construction, is on track to open in January 2021. It is being built right on the beach at Mina Seyahi adjacent to two resorts. The water park will be exclusively available to guests of **Le Méridien Mina Seyahi Beach Resort & Marina** and the **Westin Dubai Mina Seyahi Beach Resort & Marina**. The Mina Seyahi area boasts a massive stretch of beautiful white-sand beach and amazing views out across the azure waves of the Arabian Gulf.

The water park's design is inspired by the Cyclades, a group of islands in the Aegean Sea, between mainland Greece and Turkey. Often considered some of the most beautiful islands in the world, the Cyclades are known for rugged, sun-drenched outcrops of rock, white-sand beaches and snow-white buildings with blue rooftops situated in coastal Greek villages. It is popular with tourists who prefer a quieter, simpler vacation without the usual tourist trappings.

The water park plans to capture that charm and essence with clean Cycladic architecture, providing a minimalist style with a bold water park aesthetic. The design concept was developed by Queensland, Australia-based **Sanderson Group**, which has been specializing in thematic park design and construction since 1989. **WhiteWater** of Richmond, Canada, will provide the slides and attractions including a Whizzard multi-lane mat racer slide, an open body slide and two enclosed body slides including one with a 360-degree spiral. These slides will originate from an impressive Grecian lighthouse that will serve as the focal point of the park.

A separate AquaPlay water play structure will have multiple slides and interactive water elements for kids and entire families. The area is designed with



These overviews show the distinctive blue and white color scheme and buildings reflective of the architecture commonly found throughout the Cyclades Islands. COURTESY WHITEWATER WEST AND THE SANDERSON GROUP



supervising parents in mind, so they don't need to worry about keeping watch while the smaller kids play.

A small pneumatic wave pool is capable of providing different-style waves in a clean, safe and controlled environment. Ironically, the calm waters of the nearby Arabian Sea at Mina Seyahi has very little wave activity as a result of its position between the Palm and World manmade islands.

Guests can enjoy food and refreshments throughout their day at the Refuel Café and Bar which will offer local favorites and specialty drinks.

Mike Rigby, executive vice president, Middle East and India for WhiteWater, said of the project: "We're

delighted to be working with such a prestigious hotel brand on this exciting new project, which we're sure will add immeasurable value to the property's proposition for guests. Dubai is the ideal destination for a water amenity as part of a hotel or resort, with Mina Seyahi being a prime location within the emirate, and Jungle Bay will only enhance the already irresistible experience for visitors."

Tolga Lacin, area general manager for **Marriott International**, said: "the Westin Mina Seyahi and Le Meridien Mina Seyahi are already two of Dubai's most popular hotels, attracting thousands of guests year after year. The addition of Jungle Bay will place the proper-

ties firmly at the forefront of the tourism offering in the emirate. We're excited to be partnering with WhiteWater, having spent many months working with them to design the perfect water amenity for our properties, and we look forward to our first guests enjoying all the action in the park very soon."

Mina Seyahi covers part of Jumeirah Beach and the recently opened **Dubai Harbour**, a world-class maritime destination featuring a state-of-the-art cruise ship terminal and an 800-berth marina — one of the largest in the region, making it a natural draw for tourists. Le Méridien is a well-known five-star hotel located near the Jumeirah Beach Residence area in the shadows of the

spectacular skyscrapers along Sheikh Zayed Road. The Westin is a recent addition offering sea-view rooms with exceptional vistas of Jumeirah Beach and the Arabian Gulf. Both properties belong to Marriott International's portfolio. Guests at the Jungle Bay Water Park must have a room at one of these two properties.

With almost year-round sunshine, blue skies and warm winters, Dubai has emerged as an international business and tourist hub in the Middle East. Along with its beautiful beaches, Dubai is already home to famous water park resorts **Aquaventure Water Park** at **Atlantis The Palm** and **Wild Wadi** at the **Jumeirah Beach Hotel** as well as **Laguna Waterpark** and **Legoland Waterpark**.

Construction is approved for Liseberg's Oceana Water Park

GOTHENBURG, Sweden — As part of **Liseberg Amusement Park's** plan to become a year-round destination, approval has been given to build **Oceana Water Park**.

The new park will cover 3.4 acres and include a 65,000-square-foot indoor water park. Oceana will have 14 slides, a wave pool, current river and other aquatic activities.

The park has been designed by one of Sweden's leading architects, **Wingårdhs**, and Swedish builder **NCC** has been awarded the contract to construct the park. The water attractions will be designed and manufactured by **WhiteWater**.

The expansion represents an investment of SEK 1.06 billion (\$129.5 million). Financing has been arranged by the city and is not dependant on proceeds from the amusement park itself. Gothenburg City Council owns the park through its municipal company **Liseberg AB**. The city purchased Liseberg in 1924 just one year after it was established as an amusement park.

The amusement park has not been able to open a single day in 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic and has therefore seen no income. However, Liseberg's CEO, **Andreas Andersen**, made it clear that the water park will be financed with funds other than those that the amusement park normally draws in. "The financing is on its own, that is why we can move on," said Andersen.

The water park represents the second phase of an expansion started in October 2019 with the construction of the Liseberg Grand Curiosa Hotel. The hotel is on track to open in 2023 in time to celebrate Liseberg's centennial. The water park is scheduled to open a little later in the first quarter of 2024.

Both the hotel and the water park will have a completely unique theme, inspired by Gothenburg's history and the **Swedish East India Company**. In the late 1700s and 1800s Gothenburg was a European center for trade with China and the Far East.

Although specific rides have yet to be announced, attractions are expected to include the first six-person raft ride in Europe, a mega-drop Master Blaster — possibly the largest in the world, and a boomerang slide. An eastern-inspired water play structure and several small slides will be designed for families with children. A half-circle glass roof will cover most of the indoor water park. Several of the high-profile slides will be reached from a separate, but attached, 130-foot slide tower that is designed to accommodate the tallest slides. As is typical, the bulk of the slides are positioned outside the water park ending with an indoor splash pool. However, most of the Master Blaster slide appears to be inside the glass enclosure as well as the finale section of the boomerang slide. The indoor water park has a capacity of 1,250 guests which can increase to 1,750 during the summer months when the outdoor water park is open.

In a press release, Liseberg's Chairman of the Board **Christer Holmgren** said, "This is exactly what the destination Gothenburg needs to get the tourism industry going again after the Corona crisis. The water park will be able to receive half a million visitors a year and generate 185,000 extra guest nights to the city. It will give new life to a crisis-ridden industry."

However, Andersen also pointed out, "The Liseberg expansion project does not just represent an investment to counter this crisis — but an investment in Liseberg's next centennial."

— Jeffrey Seifert



As seen in the concept art, several high-profile slides are boarded from a separate slide tower, with the bulk of the slides positioned outside the water park. COURTESY LISEBERG



NEWS SPLASH

AT: Jeffrey L. Seifert

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Plans for a new aquatic facility for Santa Barbara, California, were revealed in November as part of a master plan to update **Ortega Park**. The \$14 million renovation project includes a 26,870-square-foot aquatic facility with a splash pad, a warm wading pool with a beach entrance, a pool slide and play features, and a five-foot-deep noncompetitive lap pool. The facility will include a welcome house with changing area, showers and restrooms.

The renovation also includes a multi-sport artificial turf field for soccer, baseball, lacrosse and more.

A multi-generational recreation zone will include a 12,300-square-foot skate park with bowls, transitions and street skating. Basketball courts, cornhole, bocce ball, ping pong and other game tables comprise the recreation zone. A family plaza with a playground, shaded seating and bike racks will be located between the recreation area and the aquatic facilities.

The park area will be open from sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset; the lap pool includes lighting and will be open for evening swims. The sports field is also lit for evening play.

With the warm Southern California climate, the facilities are able to operate year round.

While construction of a new aquatic facility for Kirksville, Missouri, is ongoing, city council members have authorized a change to the original plans. The authorization allows for the construction of three large shade structures for an additional \$63,731. The multipoint shade sails will cover the concessions stand seating area and a portion of the pool decking. City staffers say the structures should provide a more enjoyable patron experience. Adding the shade structures now will alleviate the need to remove concrete later in order to accommodate the structure foundations.

The new facility, which includes a new pool, lazy river and waterslides, is expected to be completed in time for a May 2021 opening.

Great Wolf Resorts is now offering buy-outs at several of its indoor water parks. For winter 2020 to 2021 an "Own the Park" package allows families or quarantine pods to reserve the resort's expansive indoor water park after regular operating hours and have it all to themselves.

With the package, guests will get two and a half hours of park access including slides, water toys, and access to a refreshment station with complimentary soft drinks, water, iced tea, and snacks. The package also includes overnight accommodations for up to 10 family suites, a welcome gift valued at up to \$50 per each suite, private breakfast for the group, and all the usual complimentary services and amenities available at the lodge.

The package begins at \$10,000 and is available at **Great Wolf Lodge** locations in the Pocono Mountains, Pennsylvania; Williamsburg, Virginia; La Grange, Georgia;

Grapevine, Texas; Colorado Springs, Colorado; and Scottsdale, Arizona.

"Historically, this type of intimate, personalized experience has been limited to the luxury travel sector, and we feel there is a unique opportunity to enter this space with a one-of-a-kind package that focuses solely on families," **Murray Hennessy**, chief executive officer of Great Wolf Resorts, shared in a statement. "Now more than ever, families are craving experiences they can share with close friends and extended family, and this package offers that with the enviable backdrop of our popular water parks."

Plans are proceeding for a new splash pad and playground at Fuller Park in Barnwell, South Carolina. The city council has awarded the construction contract to Bluffton-based **Churchich Recreation & Design**. Final renderings are being completed and construction is expected to get underway soon.

The nature-themed splash pad and playground are being funded by a 1% capital project sales tax. The city plans to unveil the new splash pad and playground in May 2021.

A refurbished **Arizona Biltmore** in Phoenix will reopen in 2021 with new pools, a waterslide, a renovated spa and a fitness center. The historic property, with **Frank Lloyd Wright**-inspired architecture closed in March but plans to reopen in January.

According to the resort, the new Catalina Pool will be reserved for tranquil experiences among new cabanas and a poolside bar. The resort's main pool, the Paradise Pool, will have a new 65-foot triple waterslide tower and a children's splash pad as well as 15 reimagined cabanas and a cabana restaurant for guests of all ages to enjoy.

Renovations are taking place on the hotel's spa and fitness center, but those details will be released closer to the reopening date.

Work on the **Greenbriar Valley Aquatic Center** in Fairlea, West Virginia, has resumed. After breaking ground in February, construction was brought to a halt as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. With the foundation laid in mid-November, the construction company hopes to have the building up by December.

"We think we can get the steel and get a roof on and start construction of the pools under that room," said **Tag Galyean**, president of the aquatic center. "There's a lot of coordination to do, of course, it's a complicated building."

The \$6 million center is being called a jump start to wellness, prosperity and economic growth in southern West Virginia.

The idea for the aquatic center came as a result of a student project at **Greenbrier East High School** five years ago. Architecture, engineering and business students collaborated on the project.

The completed project will have a competition pool, recreation pool, therapy pool, splash pad and other amenities.



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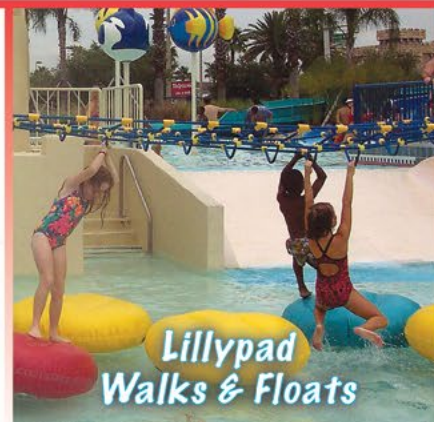
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► Universal's Endless Summer Resort opens — page 30 / IAAPA Virtual Education Conference — page 32

IAFE Virtual Vision offers education, networking and connecting

AT: B. Derek Shaw
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SPRINGFIELD, Mo. — Organizers of the largest fair convention in North America were hoping to offer a hybrid convention, both in-person and on-line, when registration opened in early August. Shortly into October staff realized that was not going to be a possibility this year. “With the added uncertainty regarding the potential arc of the disease not only in Texas but across the United States over the next two months, it is the prudent thing to do,” stated **International Association of Fairs & Expositions (IAFE)** President and CEO **Marla Calico**.



Calico

Regulatory restrictions made it impossible for 90% of the member fairs to operate this season. This also affected related businesses and vendors. On top of that, a large percentage of projected participants are currently unable to travel either due to the quarantine restrictions upon return to their state or country, or employer travel restrictions.

“We learned much from our member fairs about canceling events and how to position something ‘reimagined’ to replace it, as many did. The primary thing was that we had to protect the ‘brand’ — anything we did 100% virtually would not be the convention. It would be different, but it would address the top three needs of our members: education, networking, connecting buyers and sellers. And thus we are not even calling this experience the



Nearly 3,000 people attended the IAFE trade show and convention in 2019 (above). The in-person show had 272 exhibitors occupying 385 spaces at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has forced the 2020 version of the show to reinvent itself as the IAFE Virtual Vision and be held online. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

‘convention,’” said Calico.

Virtual Vision, taking place November 30 to December 1, is an entirely different experience which focuses first on education. There are 28 different workshops (panel or single presenter), covering all aspects of fair operation, marketing, management and more. These workshops will be available via on-demand recordings through December 31. Additionally, there will be dozens of pre-recorded PowerTalks (15 minutes on a single topic by a single presenter) and Champion Circles (winners of the various contest categories talking about their entry into that contest) — all available through the end of the year. Virtual Vision hours are 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. CST, both days, with breaks included.

Keynote Speaker is **Amy Herman** who will talk about The Art of Perception. Herman,

a lawyer and art historian, uses works of art to sharpen observation and perception skills as well as refine communication of vision, mission, and strategy.

Another focus of the event is the Marketplace where associate members can still connect with the buyers of their services and products. Each exhibitor in the Marketplace has the option to make that experience very robust with video, live Zoom interaction, downloadable content, etc. Finally, by utilizing Zoom breakout rooms, IAFE will be able to facilitate networking among attendees. “We all know it is not the same as meeting in the hallway during coffee breaks or at the bar at the end of the day, but it is a viable means of staying connected. Additionally, all registered attendees have the ability within the event

platform to schedule appointments with other attendees and exhibitors,” said Calico.

The best way to imagine Virtual Vision is to think using a TV news show model. Good Morning IAFE kicks off each day with 30 minutes of

general fair news and inspiration. At 10 a.m. there are four different concurrent channels participants can choose from. Should they want to see another channel, all will be recorded for participant access when convenient upon conclusion of Virtual Vision.

Of course, the always popular happy hour takes place from 5 to 6 p.m. both days with an emcee and talent showcases.

Work began in earnest on this virtual option in late May, in the event it would be needed. A team from IAFE met weekly and bi/weekly, when needed, to discuss, plan and implement the online event. “We have a top notch team. I encouraged them to think like a TV producer when putting the event together,” said Calico. The team includes **Kate Turner**, CMP, director of meetings, **Steve Siever**, director of sales and **Lori Hart**, CFE, director of education and member services.

The 2021 IAFE Convention and Trade Show is scheduled to be held in San Antonio, November 28-December 1.

• fairsandexpos.com



The IAFE 2020 Virtual Vision will be presented entirely online with a focus on education, but buyers can still connect with members via exhibits that can include videos, live Zoom and downloadable content. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

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Universal Orlando's Endless Summer Resort set for December opening



Universal Orlando's Endless Summer Resort — Docksider Inn and Suites will be the second hotel in the destination's value category. The new property is set to welcome guests on December 15, 2020. COURTESY UNIVERSAL ORLANDO RESORT

ORLANDO — Universal's Endless Summer Resort — Docksider Inn and Suites, the newest hotel at Universal Orlando Resort, will open to guests for the first time on December 15, 2020. Loews Portofino Bay Hotel at Universal Orlando will also resume operations on December 1, 2020. Safety and well-being protocols will be in place throughout both hotels, as they are across all of Universal Orlando's hotels and theme parks.

Brought to life by the award-winning Universal creative team, Docksider Inn and Suites will make guests feel like they have escaped to the perfect sunset with the cool, calm feeling of a beach retreat. It's the destination's eighth property in partnership with Loews Hotels & Co., providing Universal Orlando guests with a variety of hotel options for every style and budget, complete with exclusive theme park benefits and a seamless vacation experience.

Loews Portofino Bay Hotel will welcome back guests with newly-renovated rooms and suites throughout the hotel. Guests can relax in surroundings inspired by the beauty, romance and charm of the picturesque seaside village of Portofino, Italy.

The resort's suites, which make up more than half the rooms at both Docksider Inn and Suites & Surfside Inn and Suites, sleep up to six and offer guests an unrivaled value. There is a kitchenette area, a picnic table for meals and hanging out, and a bathroom with separate bath and vanity areas so multiple people can get ready at once.

Docksider Inn and Suites will be the second hotel in the destination's value category, joining sister property Surfside Inn and Suites. The extra-affordable resort will add 2,050 guest rooms, featuring standard rooms and spacious two-bedroom suites. And with the low \$79 per night rate, the all-new hotel creates a value experience.

Pier 8 Market offers casual dining for breakfast, lunch and dinner within the resort area. The menu features extra-affordable options with most dishes under \$12, ranging from themed comfort foods to convenient on-the-go options.

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IAAPA Virtual Education Conference receives positive feedback

Members eagerly anticipating return of Expo in 2021

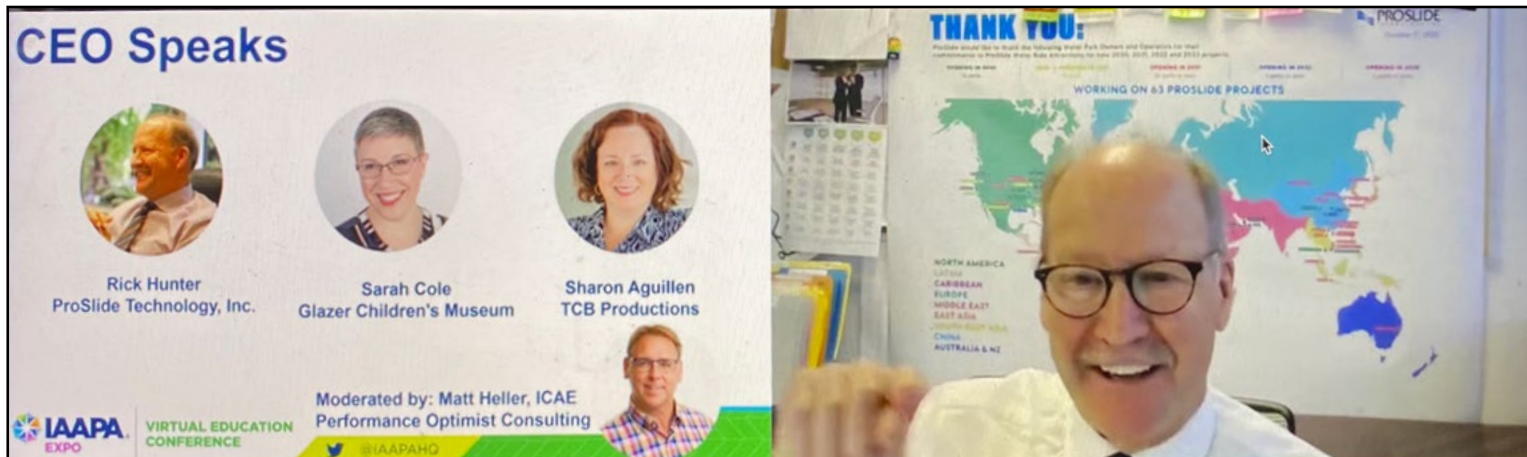
AT: Pam Sherborne
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ORLANDO, Fla. — Staff of the **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA)** pivoted quickly after canceling the in-person annual IAAPA Expo to put together the organization's first virtual conference.

The **IAAPA Expo Virtual Education Conference**, held Nov. 16-18, was packed with industry professionals donating their time and expertise to continue the IAAPA tradition.

Susan Storey, IAAPA global communications, said they were very pleased with this first-time conference.

"We have been receiv-



Rick Hunter, president and CEO, ProSlide Technology, Inc., participated in the CEO Speaks session during the 2020 IAAPA Virtual Conference, held November 16-18 (above). Amanda Thompson (below), OBE, ICAE, IAAPA chairman and managing director, Blackpool Pleasure Beach, U.K., also participated, following Hal McEvoy. COURTESY IAAPA

ing a great deal of positive feedback from attendees and the presenters," Storey said. "While we all missed being together in person in Orlando for the IAAPA Expo, this Virtual Education Conference was a great way to bring the industry together."

Hal McEvoy, IAAPA

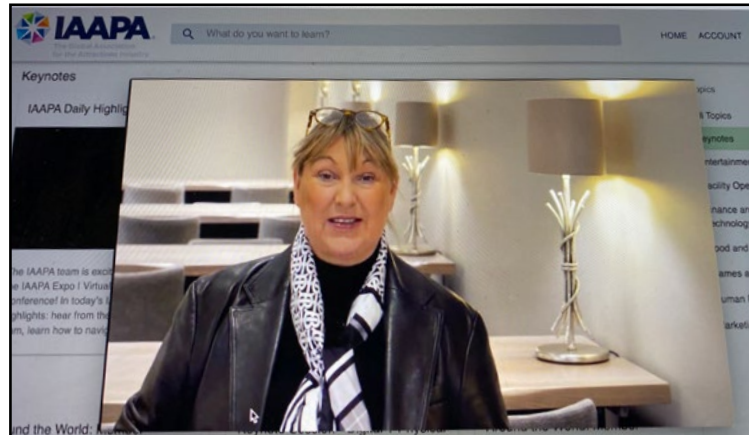
president and CEO, began the three-day event by thanking all participants to this year's unique event.

Amanda Thompson, OBE, ICAE, IAAPA chairman and managing director of Blackpool Pleasure Beach, U.K., followed McEvoy.

In a heartfelt first-day introduction, Thompson said: "Today we are going to present to you new and exciting ways forward for our industry to come out of this COVID pandemic."

"We are all learning," Thompson said. "We are all sharing our experiences and we are all working together to make a better future. Our industry has had to take a big leap of faith. We have had to all learn new ways forward. Some of us have been open and some of us, sadly, have not. But these times are difficult. They are difficult for us all and we are facing them together. We will get through this. We will find a brave new way forward and we will all learn everything that has happened."

She went on to say that



she has learned much about the world's regions that are supported by IAAPA.

"We have all been working together to make a better future for IAAPA, a stronger new IAAPA, a way forward that we can all manage well and learn from the experience we have been enduring," Thompson said.

In that first day of the conference, two keynote addresses were presented. The first was presented by **Josh D'Amaro**, chairman of **Disney Parks, Experiences, and Products**. He delivered a message of hope and inspiration to the global attractions industry.

"Our industry is hurting," he said. "It's hurting from the presence of COVID-19 in our communities. But unlike some industries impacted by the pandemic, our industry is here to stay, and it's here to grow."

Tilak Mandadi, executive vice president, digital and global chief technology officer, Disney Parks, Experiences and Products, addressed the virtual group later in the afternoon. He gave a glimpse into the future of the technological impact.

Also on day one, honors were given to two park mem-

► See IAAPA, page 33

IAAPA Hall of Fame

The IAAPA Hall of Fame awards program honors those who inspire their peers and colleagues around the world, through their innovative contributions that leave a lasting impact on the global attractions industry.

Winners this year are:

Imagineer and Storyteller: Tony Baxter

Baxter started his career in 1965 as an ice cream scooper at **Disneyland** in Anaheim, California. He became a Disney Imagineer in 1970 working on an array of iconic attractions. He retired in 2013, being named "Disney Legend."



Baxter

Innovator, Leader, Advocate: Greg Hale

Hale joined **Walt Disney World** in 1988 as manager of electrical and electronics engineering. That began a three-decade career that has had a lasting impact on amusement ride safety around the world.



Hale

In 2002, Hale became the first vice president and chief safety officer for **Walt Disney Parks and Resorts** and today continues to lead a global team of ride design, operations, and maintenance professionals.

He is a prolific inventor, and his name is on more than 80 patents worldwide.

Theme Park Visionary Mats Wedin

Wedin entered the attractions industry in 1988, while looking for a new professional challenge. The opportunity to join **Liseberg** amusement park in Gothenburg attracted him, and within five years, he was promoted to CEO.



Wedin

Under his leadership and guidance, the park added innovative rides and attractions that transformed the guest experience.



Pamela Landwirth of Give Kids The World delivered a keynote presentation on the third day of the virtual conference. COURTESY IAAPA



► **IAAPA**
Continued from page 32

bers that have put in 50 years supporting IAAPA. They were **Morey's Piers**, Wildwood, New Jersey, and **Jolly Rogers**, Ocean City, Maryland.

Keynote speakers on day two included: **Rick Hunter**, president and CEO, **ProSlide Technology, Inc.**; **Sharon Aguilien**, president, **TCB Productions** and **Sarah Cole**, president and CEO, **Glazer Children's Museum**. All three participated in the CEO Speaks. It was moderated by **Matt Heller**, **Performance Optimist Consulting**.

Heller posed questions to the three on topics facing the industry and, of course, the pandemic was a focus. All three shared lessons learned along the way touching on topics from keeping employees working to employing zoom technology to stay in touch and to supporting employees' health both physically and mentally.

"I actually ended up sending messages to our employees to make sure they knew mental health support was covered 100% by their insurance," Cole said.

Hunter said keeping their employees was a very important mission for ProSlide even though they knew it would be hard.

"We had at least half of our projects deferred after the pandemic hit," Hunter said. "But that was enough to be able to keep all our employees."

"The spirit of this industry is unstoppable," he said. "Thank God for Zoom. There is nothing better, though, than in-person trade shows. I can't wait to see you all and give you all big hugs."

The second day also saw the presentation of the 2020 IAAPA Hall of Fame recipients, 2020 Service Awards recipients and the 2020 Young Professional award.

The third day saw keynote addresses by **Pamela Landwirth**, president, Give



Tilak Mandadi of Disney Parks gave a glimpse into the future of the technological impact.
COURTESY IAAPA

Kids The World, and **Andreas Andersen**, president and CEO, **Liseberg**. Landwirth spoke on the Give Kids the World Village and how donations have been able to give wishes to over 175,000 critically ill children. Andersen addressed the virtual audience about the rapid change in attractions.

Over the three days of the

conference, IAAPA presented 25 educational sessions with topics ranging from finance and information technology, food and beverage, human resource, merchandising and games, marketing and facility operations.

Pop-up lounges throughout the week gave IAAPA members the opportunity to network with others in live

virtual sessions. A daily question-and-answer segment gave members a chance to ask questions and have one of their colleagues suggest solutions and remedies.

Offered along with the Virtual Conference was IAAPA's Buyers Guide that offered companies the opportunities to show off their products.

• iaapa.org

2020 IAAPA Service Awards

The IAAPA Service Awards honor individuals for their outstanding contributions to the global attractions industry. This year's winners are:

IAAPA Meritorious Service Award

Corrine Brindley, SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment, San Diego, California

IAAPA Outstanding Service Award

Andreas Andersen, Liseberg, Gothenburg, Sweden

IAAPA Lifetime Service Award

David Bromilow, Mobarro, London, United Kingdom

IAAPA Young Professional of the Year Award

Charles Coyle, Tayto Park, Kilbrew, Ireland.

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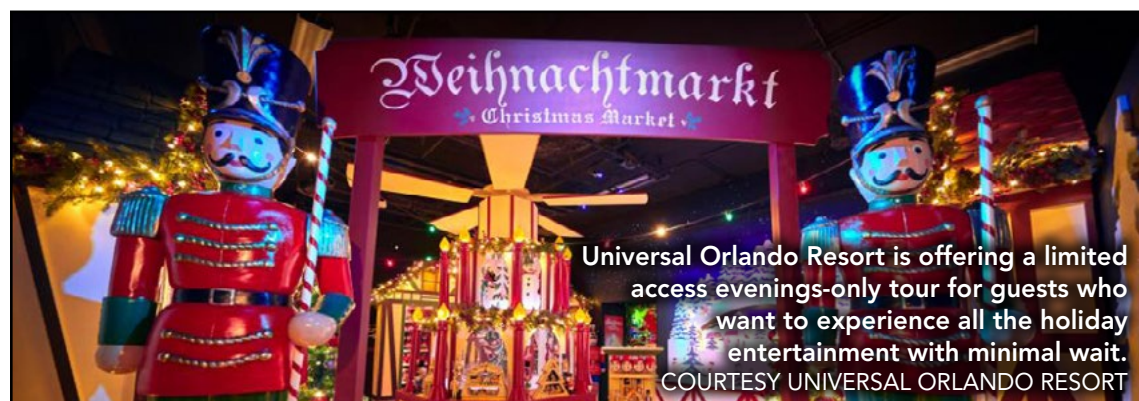
MARKET WATCH

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 11/17/20	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	57.69	64.97	33.00
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	35.65	56.70	13.00
Comcast Corp./NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	49.78	49.98	31.70
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	144.50	153.41	79.07
Dubai Parks & Resorts	DXBE:UH	DFM	0.12	0.22	0.09
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	31.45	74.64	12.55
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	9010	TYO	5130.00	5450.00	2080.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	0.41	1.09	0.38
Leofoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	22.35	23.05	9.08
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	26.42	34.63	5.90
Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd.	RCL	NYSE	75.34	135.31	19.25
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	JP:6357	TYO	606.00	971.00	490.00
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	26.89	36.96	6.75
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	29.78	46.86	8.75
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	708.00	788.00	550.00
Village Roadshow	AU:VRL	ASX	2.45	4.10	0.77

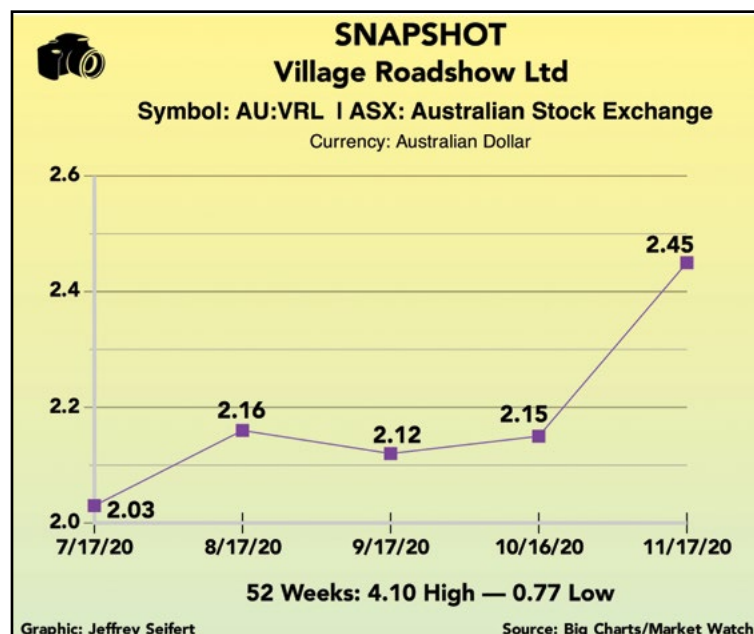
STOCK PRICES ABOVE ARE GENERALLY QUOTED IN THE FOREIGN CURRENCY IN WHICH THE COMPANY IS LOCATED

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



Universal Orlando Resort is offering a limited access evenings-only tour for guests who want to experience all the holiday entertainment with minimal wait. COURTESY UNIVERSAL ORLANDO RESORT



DIESEL PRICES

Region (U.S.)	As of 11/16/20	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$2.487	-\$0.566
Midwest	\$2.339	-\$0.632
Gulf Coast	\$2.180	-\$0.612
Mountain	\$2.490	-\$0.742
West Coast	\$2.686	-\$0.758
California	\$3.240	-\$0.763

CURRENCY

On 11/17/20 \$1 USD =

0.8441	EURO
0.7573	GBP (British Pound)
104.59	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9122	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.3695	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.3095	CAD (Canadian Dollar)

BUSINESS WATCH

Disney reports Q4, prioritizes Disney+

ANAHEIM, Calif. — **The Walt Disney Company** (DIS) swung to a fourth-quarter loss and saw revenue slide over last year, as the still-raging coronavirus pandemic continued to weigh on its theme parks, studio and media businesses. Revenue declined by 23% for the quarter and the company reported a loss of \$710 million. However, the results still came in better than feared, and the company's nascent streaming service saw subscribers jump more than anticipated. Shares jumped 5.9% in after-hours trading.

"Even with the disruption caused by COVID-19, we've been able to effectively manage our businesses while also taking bold, deliberate steps to position our company for greater long-term growth," Disney CEO **Bob Chapek** said in a statement. "The real bright spot has been our direct-to-consumer business, which is key to the future of our company, and on this anniversary of the launch of Disney+ we're pleased to report that, as of the end of the fourth quarter, the service had more than 73 million paid subscribers — far surpassing our expectations in just its first year."

Given the impact of the pandemic on many of Disney's legacy businesses, investors were poised to focus closely on growth at Disney+, the company's one-year-old streaming service. Disney reported that Disney+ had brought on 73.7 million subscribers as of the end of the fourth quarter, topping estimates for 65.5 million.

Fun Spot America receives award

ORLANDO — **The International Drive Resort Area Chamber of Commerce** launched the Harris Rosen Philanthropic Award in 2017 recognizing local businesses or persons who demonstrate exceptional philanthropic work. This annual award was given to **Fun Spot America Theme Parks**, as a result of the company's generosity through its Golden Rule Campaign.

The Golden Rule Campaign has crafted a culture of giving throughout the parks over the last 22 years, treating others the way one wants to be treated. After receiving the Award, CEO John Arie, Jr., challenged the audience to adopt a simple seven-step Golden Rule program molded after *Love Works*, by Joel Manby. He asked that over the next 21 days, they practice patience, kindness, trustfulness, selflessness, truthfulness, forgiveness and dedication.

"These seven steps will make you a better person. It's worked in our parks and has taken us above the rest. I'm truly proud of our team," said Arie.

In the last two years Fun Spot America has given more than \$475,000 to local charities in Orlando. The park has also been the host for the Central Florida Region St. Jude's National Run/Walk. Other local charities Fun Spot employees fundraise for include Compassionate Hearts and Hands Foundation, cancer research, UCP and Autism Speaks. Past recipients of this award include **SeaWorld** and **Universal Orlando**.

Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk reopens, closes

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. — After opening for a single weekend — November 6 and 7 — rides and most other attractions at the **Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk** were closed amid a countywide increase in coronavirus cases. The facility was the first amusement park to reopen in California under its recently released COVID-19 protocols.

Santa Cruz County on November 10 reverted to the red tier of the state's color-coded reopening system — indicating a substantial risk of infection — after spending two weeks in the more moderate orange tier.

Public health officials stated that the number of active cases in the county has doubled since late October.

The Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk announced the closure of rides, mini golf, indoor arcades, its bowling alley and Neptune's Kingdom entertainment center on November 11. Boardwalk officials were disappointed but not surprised by the decision.

"We anticipated the likelihood Santa Cruz County might move back and forth within tiers, and have prepared to adjust our operations accordingly," said **Kris Reyes** of Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, noting that the health and safety remains the park's top priority.

ON THE MOVE

Six Flags Entertainment Corporation announced that **Ron McKenzie** has been named park president of the company's flagship park, **Six Flags Over Texas**, and **Six Flags Hurricane Harbor** in Arlington. McKenzie succeeds **Steve Martindale** who retired after more than 45 years with the company, 13 of them as park president of the two parks. McKenzie has nearly 30 years of experience with Six Flags. He most recently served as marketing director at Six Flags Fiesta Texas in San Antonio and Six Flags Hurricane Harbor in Houston. He also previously served in the same capacity at Six Flags St. Louis.

**McKenzie**

"We are thrilled to have Ron in this new role. His proven track record of success, along with his extensive industry knowledge, energy, and collaborative leadership style will serve him well as the park president of our flagship property," said Six Flags SVP of Park Operations **Bonnie Weber**.

McKenzie began his theme park career in 1993, at **Six Flags Fiesta Texas**, where he juggled the full-time responsibility of group sales manager while attending college at the **University of Texas-San Antonio**, and earning a BA in Management. He enjoyed a brief stint in the hotel industry but quickly found his way back to Six Flags, moving to **Six Flags St. Louis**, where he served as group sales manager before being promoted to marketing director. McKenzie returned to the Lone Star State in 2016, where he assumed the role of marketing director at Six Flags Fiesta Texas, in San Antonio, prior to being promoted to this latest role.

Cedar Fair announced that **Louis Carr** has been appointed to the Board of Directors of its general partner, Cedar Fair Management, Inc., effective immediately. Carr will serve the remaining portion of **John Scott's**

board term, which expires in 2022. Scott, who was appointed to the Cedar Fair board in 2010, stepped down effective Sept. 24, 2020, to focus on personal business interests.

"I'm delighted to welcome Louis Carr to the Company's board of directors," said **Dan Hanrahan**, Cedar Fair's chairman of the board. "Louis brings to Cedar Fair more than three decades of executive leadership and senior management experience in the entertainment, media and advertising industries, and is heralded by his professional peer group for his work around diversity, primarily with the African American community."

**Carr**

Themed Entertainment Association (TEA) Chief Operating Officer **Jennie Nevin** is stepping down after seven years at the end of November. She will consult with TEA during the transition period.

"Jennie has been instrumental in the growth and stabilization of the TEA since she was brought on board seven years ago," said **Michael Blau**, outgoing President of the TEA International Board. "She managed to formalize and professionalize the TEA through tremendous efforts, dedication, time and unwavering commitment."

During her tenure, Nevin stewarded the TEA to achieve its goals of financial recovery, stability and to reach new levels of sponsorship and membership growth. Nevin's work enabled TEA to eliminate its debt, significantly increase annual income, establish a large operational reserve, more than quadruple its membership, expand its sponsorship base, and dramatically enhance the quantity and quality of its member events worldwide. She also took

**Nevin**

steps to foster a greater emphasis on diversity within the association.

In response to the global pandemic, Nevin successfully pivoted the Themed Entertainment Association's programming from in-person to virtual, helping to produce over 55 TEA Digital events, including the inaugural Thea Awards Digital Case Studies.

Tigapo, the cloud-based arcade management and monetization system designed for coin-operated machines, announced the hire of **Chris Vecchione** as sales manager. Vecchione has 35 years of experience working primarily within the coin-operated entertainment, gaming, and hospitality industries.

**Vecchione**

Most recently, as owner of **MVP Network Sales**, Vecchione has represented multiple providers of products and services to the hospitality location owners, including arcade game sales, placements, and consulting for fun centers, ATM sales and equipment for bar and restaurant businesses. Vecchione has also represented VR hardware and solutions for amusement locations and **Sacoa's** cashless payment systems.

"I've spent the lion's share of my career in front of both street and FEC operators and locations so the shift to selling mobile payment systems will be seamless," noted Vecchione. "I am excited by the tremendous opportunity to work with such a talented Tigapo team and help operators understand the real value of touchless payment systems."

"Chris's extensive experience in many facets of sales and operations in the amusement industry makes him uniquely qualified to talk to operators and locations about their concerns and present Tigapo's solutions," stated **Ted Parsons**.

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Women INFLUENCE

A view from the top...

Sue Nichols is an independent contractor in sales at *Amusement Today*.

She also is the sole proprietor **5centride**, a business she created with her art talent. She water colors on canvas and has the art transferred to coffee mugs, tiles, tissue boxes, knick-knack boxes, compacts and other items.

She also sells some of her originals.

Accomplishments and affiliations...

- Member, Outdoor Amusement Business Association (OABA)
- Member, Showmen's League of America (SLA)
- Member, International Independent Showmen's Association (IISA)
- Member, National Amusement Park Historical Association (NAPHA)
- Member, Furnace Art Guild of Dickson, Tennessee

Nichols would not change a thing

DICKSON, Tenn. — Over the last decade, members of the outdoor amusement business industry attending the IISA trade show in Gibsonton, Florida, make time to stop by Sue Nichols' booth.

They stop to chat with their long-time friend while perusing her merchandise of coffee mugs, tiles, tissue boxes, compacts, knick-knack boxes and more, all adorned with her artwork depicting a scene inspired by their industry.

Sometimes they can find one of their own rides or concession trailers on an item. Sometimes they will recognize another carnival's ride or trailer.

In addition, they may place orders with her that she will send at a later time.

Oh, and, yes, they can purchase an ad in *Amusement Today* from her since she works as an independent contractor for the trade magazine.

To Nichols, she is living the life she loves. She is a salesperson at heart. She loves the live entertainment industry, particularly the outdoor mobile industry: "It is so family oriented."

And she has found that her art, while always being a source of relaxation, in its uniqueness, has become a lucrative side business for her, which she calls 5centride.

Nichols may have been surprised at some of her career decisions along the way, but there are very few things she would want to reverse.

Born and raised in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, a community in the north central mountainous part of the state, Nichols can recall stomping around midways with her grandparents, parents, her two brothers and sister at local fireman's carnivals. She even ended up working the Cake Wheel game one week at one of these events when she was 16 years of age.

She couldn't have known then that

later in her life she would personally know the people that owned the rides at those fireman's carnivals, the Reithoffer family.

Her family also regularly attended the Bloomsburg Fair, Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania. Every year her family made the annual trek with to Knoebels Amusement Park in Elysburg, Pennsylvania, to her dad's company picnics.

"I wasn't afraid of any rides," Nichols said. "I liked it all."

She still has that affinity. She said she will ride any ride at least once and that includes the thrill of the 300-foot-tall Skycoaster at Fun Spot in Orlando, Florida.

Nichols also had an art talent that she fed throughout high school by enrolling in art classes.

She began her college education at a community college, attending there for two years before transferring to Kutztown University in Kutztown, Pennsylvania, for the school's art program.

"I ended up not liking it there," she said. "We were told what to paint everyday from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m."

She transferred to Penn State University, University Park, Pennsylvania, putting her art on the back burner and graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Advertising.

She entered into an internship right after college graduation at a local daily newspaper where she had the opportunity to experience different positions.

"I was shocked to realize that I liked the outside sales the best," she said.

After her internship, she took a job at a chain of local weekly newspapers in the Washington, D.C. area in outside sales.

The job was stressful. She began to question her career choice. She



took a few career tests that showed she was, indeed, in the right field but, perhaps, with the wrong company.

Trusting the results of the test, she took that leap of faith so many do along the way. She answered a blind ad for a job at a printing company that offered a company car and promised a lot of traveling.

She took the job and settled in working at National Ticket Company in 1981, becoming the first woman sales representative at National Ticket.

This was her first experience working in the live entertainment industry. She fell in love with it.

That first year at National Ticket she traveled to her first International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions convention in Kansas City, Missouri. There have been many more.

She also traveled to trade show fair conventions, baseball meetings, horse racing conferences, movie theater conventions and arena managers conventions.

She met carnival owners, fair managers and arena managers, attributing many of these introductions to her boss, Bill Alter, "who knew everyone."

Sue Nichols
Independent Contractor, Sales
Amusement Today
Sole proprietor of 5centride

She also met young professionals working for a trade publication called *Amusement Business*. In 1988, that company ended up hiring her away from National Ticket and she continued in sales and travel.

While working for *Amusement Business*, she once again took up her artwork, primarily for relaxation. She concentrated on watercolors during those years. And even after leaving *Amusement Business* in 2001 to concentrate on being an independent contractor with a couple of other publications, she continued her painting.

At first, she focused primarily on landscapes. She threw in a painting of a bumper car one evening and the rest is history. Since 2004, she has sold thousands of pieces of artwork.

She began selling ads for *Amusement Today* as an independent contractor in 2003. That is where she is today.

She feels lucky to have been able to maintain her professional skills and her artistic talents. She knows it could have been just one or the other.

But the door opened for her and she walked in and hasn't looked back.

—Pam Sherborne

SAFETY, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

► IRT making plans for 2021 — page 38 / 3DX offers unique scenic design — page 40

Palace Entertainment offers guarantee on season passes

PITTSBURGH — As **Palace Entertainment** leisure venues across the United States launch their annual Black Friday promotions, each park is making a commitment to guests: they will get their money's worth on 2021 season passes, even if the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact the amusement and attractions industry.

From National Historic Landmark **Kennywood** to California's **Raging Waters Los Angeles** and the popular **Noah's Ark Waterpark** in Wisconsin Dells, all 21 Palace Parks are offering a Dayback Guarantee on 2021 season and annual passes. If a park's 2021 operating schedule is disrupted by an unexpected closure for reasons related to COVID-19, passholders will have their passes extended into the 2022 Season for an equal number of operating days at no additional cost. They will also receive a prorated renewal offer for the rest of 2022.

"I can't say enough how much we appreciate our guests who have supported our parks through the difficulties of the past year and the uncertain times still ahead," said Palace Chief Operating Officer **John Reilly**. "As we look to 2021 and hope for better conditions, we want our guests to know they will not only have a clean, safe and fun experience with us, we will make sure they receive proper value for any season pass purchased."

In addition to the Dayback Guarantee to safeguard guests' investment against future impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, Palace is offering a company-wide season pass for the first time in its history. The Platinum Pass will allow patrons to visit any of Palace's 21 U.S. parks — from **Story Land** in Glen, New Hampshire to Hawaii's **Sea Life Park**. Palace Entertainment boasts a unique portfolio including America's oldest operating amusement park, **Lake Compounce**, and the reigning Best Family Park, **Dutch Wonderland** in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, as recognized by *Amusement Today's* 2019 Golden Ticket Awards. The Platinum Pass also includes water parks in North Carolina, New York, New Hampshire and California, as well as the **Miami Seaquarium** in Florida.

Retailing at \$159.99, the Platinum Pass also offers specialized benefits based on the park it is purchased through.

•palaceentertainment.com

Guests purchasing season passes for the Palace Entertainment family of parks are offered the security of the chain's Dayback Guarantee. COURTESY DUTCH WONDERLAND



COURTESY
GARNER HOLT EDUCATION
THROUGH IMAGINATION

Garner Holt Productions creates virtual experiences for schools across country

REDLANDS, Calif. — Animatronics are essentially moving life-like art with fascinating characteristics and abilities that coax the imagination one step closer to belief. Realistic movements, costumes and sounds work together to transform fantasy into reality. Regardless of the outer believability, the real magic is everything you cannot see. Never has there been a greater partnership between art and engineering, creativity and math, technology and imagination.

Inspired by the work of **Garner Holt Productions, Inc.**, the world's largest manufacturer of theme park animatronics, **Garner Holt Education through Imagination** is creating solutions to the inherent challenges of distance learning. In partnerships with schools and educators, Garner Holt Education through Imagination offers hands-on learning experiences through its virtual field trips and workshops. Each virtual experience is paired with an activity kit sent directly to



students that are built together with a live expert. The virtual platform removes geographic barriers and makes it possible to provide these virtual opportunities to schools all over the U.S.

The projects are based on animatronic concepts that combine the STEAM areas of science, technology, engineering, art and math in an engaging, interactive, fun, and creative way. Inside the virtual field trips, students see first-hand all of the different and distinct careers involved in building animatronics. From concept to completion and from spark to spectacular there are 50 specific STEAM careers collaborating and playing distinctive roles in bringing an animatronic to life. These

careers are all in high demand across a wide range of industries and offer students a real-life connection to career exploration.

The workshops and field trips put a relatable face on careers such as: engineering, architecture, computer-aided design, fabrication, welding, computer programming, animation, audio-visual production and woodworking.

These virtual experiences help students begin to align their interests as they visualize themselves in careers they may not have understood or known about. Imagination and excitement are the result as they explore their future life and career.

The great value in this conceptual introduction to the inner workings of animatronics represents a broad range of student interests. In other words, there is something for everyone in animatronics. This fascinating world is an excellent way to stimulate the minds of our next generation's dreamers, innovators, and entrepreneurs.

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International Ride Training planning a different, yet busy 2021

AT: Pam Sherborne
 psherborne@amusementtoday.com

NASHVILLE, Tennessee — In light of the continued challenges being imposed by the novel coronavirus during the fall, **International Ride Training (IRT)** has planned a different type of **International Ride Operator Certification (iROC) Safety School Ride Camp** for 2021. This is the 10th anniversary of the iROC Ride Camps.

IRT had announced last month it would hold a blend of in-person educational opportunities as well as a virtual option. There are to be five in-person regional seminars.

Plans are now complete as to where they will be held, but dates have yet to be determined except for the first of the five. That event is locked in for Feb. 23-25 at **Carowinds**, Charlotte, North Carolina.

Locations for the remaining Ride Camps, which will be two-day events instead of three, are: **California's Great America**, Santa Clara, California; **Nickelodeon Universe at Mall of America**, Bloomington, Minnesota; **Kings Island**, Mason, Ohio, and **Nickelodeon Universe and Dream-**

works Waterpark at American Dream, East Rutherford, New Jersey.

"Holding regional Ride Camps in 2021 will allow our clients to attend smaller in-person gatherings in accordance with state and local public-health recommendations," said **Patty Beazley**, IRT co-owner. "(It also will) allow most attendees to choose a regional Camp within reasonable driving distance to minimize air travel while still replicating the hands-on experience that is Ride Camp's hallmark."

Cindee Huddy, another IRT co-owner, said IRT's Ride Camps have become very popular. Keeping the annual tradition alive was extremely important for the co-owners.

"It brings industry leaders together for a deep dive into the world of ride and aquatic operations in a way that perfectly combines education, hands-on training, networking, and an amazing sense of comradery," Huddy said.

Regional Ride Camp attendees will have the opportunity to access a host of on-demand Ride Camp course offerings online and to participate virtually



International Ride Training (IRT) faculty will be busy in 2021 with its five regional in-person International Ride Operator Certification (iROC) Safety School Ride Camps. IRT also will offer a virtual option as well next year. COURTESY IRT

in a few live sessions during the Carowinds event.

IRT will have strict COVID-19 safety practices in place at all Ride Camp locations in accordance with applicable state and local requirements.

The iROC Ride Camp has never been limited to just iROC facilities exclusively and this year will be only slightly different in that regard.

"One of the strengths of Ride Camp historically is that

we have a huge variety of facilities represented, whether they are iROC clients or not, to share their experiences and learn best practices," said **Erik Beard**, also a co-owner. "To continue that tradition, the virtual aspects of Ride Camp 2021 are open and available to all regardless of whether their facility is iROC Certified."

For those facilities that are not iROC certified and, thus, do not need to renew or obtain

iROC Instructor Certification, they will be offered the opportunity to participate in the full array of virtual course offerings, including on-demand sessions and live course broadcasts. This structure allows IRT to offer top-of-the-line training content to facilities that aren't yet iROC-certified at a greatly reduced cost as compared to previous Ride Camps.

Next year's Ride Camps will continue the focus on topics including IRT's 10 Critical Components of Ride Operator Safety, Guest Service and Efficiency, Operations in a COVID-19 World, Accessibility and the ADA, Hiring and Staffing Strategies, Motivating Ride Operators, Training Tools and Techniques, and Incident Response and Investigation, among others.

There also will be sessions giving participants the opportunity to share best practices, discuss industry hot topics and learn directly from one another.

Huddy said registration for Ride Camp 2021 will be open soon. More information may be obtained by contacting Huddy at Cindee@ridetraining.com or at 615.545.8109.

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NEWS & NOTES

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10 reasons to participate in the AIMS International Virtual Safety

1. Safety is the #1 priority in the amusement industry and the **AIMS International Safety Seminar** is consistently rated the best and most comprehensive amusement industry safety seminar worldwide.

2. No other seminar offers such a diverse range of classes. At the AIMS International Virtual Safety Seminar, you can choose classes that fit your needs. There are six tracks to choose from: Maintenance, Inspection, Operations, Aquatics, Safety and, new this year, a Spanish Language track with topics covering maintenance, operations and inspection.

3. New this year — **Ellis & Associates**, a leader in aquatics risk management and safety training, will be delivering the Aquatics track for the virtual safety seminar.

4. Learning takes place in the comfort and convenience of your own home or workplace — on your sched-



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10. Whether in-person or virtual, there will be opportunities to sit for AIMS Certification exams shortly after the 2021 Seminar.

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3dx Scenic offers limitless dimensions in theming, scenic design

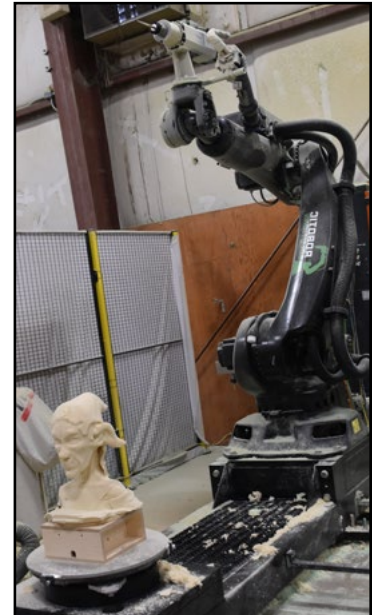
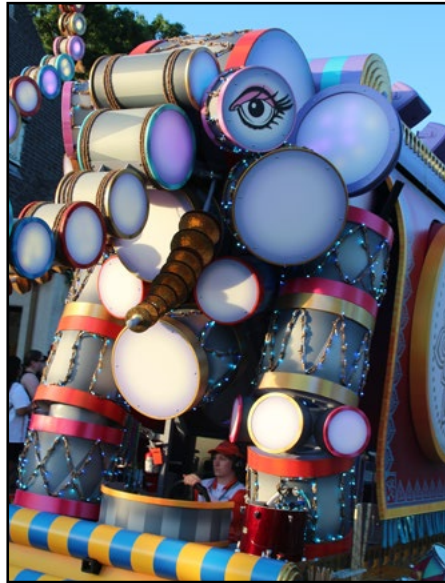
AT: John W.C. Robinson
jrobinson@amusementtoday.com

CINCINNATI, Ohio — In the amusement industry, theming and scenic design are essential. Park signage, ride scenes, special events, walkways and more all tend to need that special unique touch that helps visitors escape from everyday life and enjoy a day at the park. That is exactly why 3dx Scenic (3dx) of Cincinnati, Ohio, specializes in all of the above.

Originally existing as the scenic fabrication division of LIVE — a full-service production and AV rental company — 3dx has since expanded its offerings and evolved into its own entity. The company now provides custom scenic design options for campgrounds, theme parks, theatrical productions and promotional events.

"It really was an organic shift," said Nate Thieme, 3dx's VP of scenic experiences. "In the early 2000s, we were continuing to build more elaborate and large sets for live events. Many of the early employees came from the scenic fabrication division at Kings Island.

"We networked with our friends in the [amusement] industry to begin fabricating items outside of live events. In 2006 a more concentrated marketing effort outside of live corporate events was undertaken and we attended our first IAAPA Expo in



For Cedar Fair's popular Grand Carnivale events, the team at 3dx Scenic produced two sets of three unique parade floats. The floats were then shipped between parks so that four different Cedar Fair facilities could showcase the festive event. The 3dx Scenic floats were not towed, but rather featured an interior vehicle that drove the sculpted designs during each parade. COURTESY MICHELLE MOMANY PHOTOGRAPHY

Orlando in 2010."

3dx believes in creating relevant experiences and giving rise to remarkable expressions. As such, its team of engineers, riggers, carpenters, welders, seamstresses and storytellers work together to create unique expressions for the company's clientele. This rare collaboration between modern technologists, skilled tradespeople and creative artists help to create scenic experiences that reflect and express unique and vivid imagery.

The company's first foray into the amusement industry happened locally. "We had hired a shop manager who came from Kings Island early

2000," explained Thieme. "He brought several projects along with him for the theaters within the park as well as some smaller scenic items."

However, that local relationship has been maintained, with 3dx recently creating several parade floats for the popular Grand Carnivale event held at multiple Cedar Fair parks, including Kings Island. Unique among parade floats, 3dx creations are driven by a hidden vehicle rather than towed from in front of the float.

"Our parade float chassis are manufactured by Lawless Industries," offered 3dx Senior Account Executive

Mark Rosenzweig. "Lawless custom fabricates each chassis to meet the load demands for each float's scenic elements."

Cedar Fair reached out to 3dx even more recently to create parade floats for the Cedar Point's upcoming 150th birthday celebration. Originally planned for 2020 but delayed by the park as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, 3dx's creations will now debut in 2021. The massive floats were created at 3dx's Cincinnati workshop, then dismantled and shipped to the park in Sandusky, Ohio.

"For the six parade floats we recently delivered to Cedar Point for their

Many of 3dx Scenic's unique creations are generated by their massive 3D sculpting robot. The robot can rapidly cut accurate copies at a pace much faster than hand-sculpting.

AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

150th Anniversary Parade, we had two team members on site for five days to assist and oversee a local crew from the park for the assembly and handoff to the client," said Rosenzweig.

From conception to stunning completion, the creations from 3dx are realized via a multitude of in-house methods. Sculptors and carpenters create with their hands and old school tools. Large format printers tackle signage and other two-dimensional needs. One of 3dx's most powerful tools is its 3D printing/sculpting robot arm, a seven-axis CNC router. The robot uses digital design files to create whatever 3dx artists or their clients' imaginations can dream. Plus, it aids in quickly reproducing identical scenic elements when needed.

"Once a 3D digital file is created, the robot does not deviate from that file and can cut exact copies repeatedly, much faster and more accurate than hand sculpting," explained Rosenzweig.

3dx works to ensure that its designs are not just visually stunning, but also long-lasting and structurally sound.

"Our floats are designed and crafted to be as weather resistant as possible, however they are not sealed up and protected like a vehicle," said Rosenzweig. "They are stored indoors when not being used in a performance and typi-

► See 3DX, page 42



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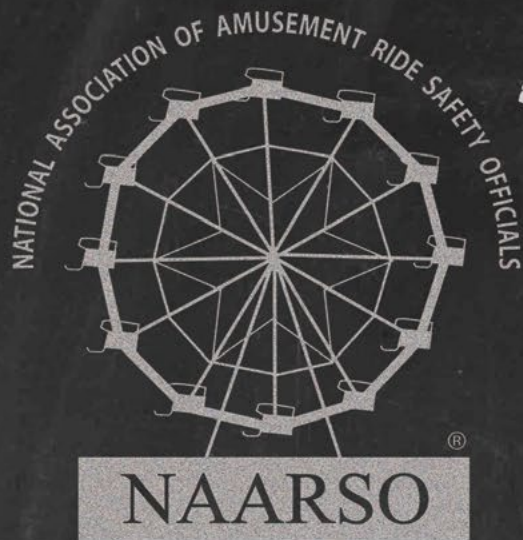
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Mark Rosenzweig (seen holding a Predator creation from 3dx) brought over 20 years of amusement industry experience to 3dx Scenic when he joined the company in summer 2020.
 AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON



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► **3DX**
 Continued from page 40

cally do not run in inclement weather. However, if a project is needed to be continuously outdoor year-round, additional efforts are taken to account for that."

"For SeaWorld Parks and Attractions, 3dx has produced 30 parade floats that are featured in the Sesame Street Parades at SeaWorld San Antonio, SeaWorld Orlando and SeaWorld San Diego," detailed Thieme. "The San Diego floats will be getting refurbished over the winter and moved down the road to the new Sesame Place park in Chula Vista, California, set to open in 2022."

Innovation and imagination combine with talent, skills and technology at 3dx Scenic. The result allows for no boundaries in the future of amusement industry theming.
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Only imagination limits the capabilities of 3dx Scenic's 3D printing robot. An early test of the system's possibilities yielded this unique "Darth Buddha" figure.
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IRM video meetings create business ideas, hope for family operations

WILDWOOD, N.J. — With COVID-19 causing many parks, FECs and ride manufacturers to make changes in order to move forward. **International Ride Management (IRM)** went into listening mode with many of its clients. Throughout April, May and June, IRM hosted and moderated a series of regional video meetings with over two dozen of its clients.

Covering topics including mass cost cutting, line-staff engagement during a shutdown, creative hiring without J-1 foreign labor or local job fairs, new revenue opportunities as well as cash flow management for the next 12 months. IRM also created a private Facebook page for family-owned amusement parks to exchange ideas and assist each other throughout the year.

IRM's newest partner — **Fibrart** of Mexico — remained busy working on proposals for IRM clients. "Alejandro and his design team, have proven that even the smallest project such as water slide replacements to new play structures and incredible splash pads, can be both high quality and economical to facilities of any size," stated **Sam Shurgott**, owner of IRM. "They can turn projects around in under 48 hours and that has been a tremendous help to us in our offerings."

IRM is planning to announce a new North American partner soon to its family of premium built equipment to complement their stable of vintage rides and games for sale along with an updated consulting, master planning and behind the scenes assistance such as operation manuals and online services custom tailored for each park and attraction.

The company reduced all consulting, appraisal and sales commission fees to reduce spending for its clients. "We can't exist without our clients," Shurgott explained. "We will never go deep into anyone's pockets. We will do what we need to do on all three sides of a deal to make a project or sale work, and it is paying off for all parties."

In an outside-the-box approach by IRM to show commitment to recovery was to purchase several games including midway-style and coin-op units. IRM then gave them to parks to operate in a revenue-sharing agreement.

"Boosting revenue is key to stabilizing the double-digit losses with the resources and time available. Every new revenue dollar is valuable this season and future seasons moving forward," added Shurgott. "We are creating long-term partnerships with simple decisions and with guidance from long-term industry veterans."

•irmrides.com



AT/JEFFREY SEIFERT

Standard establishes practices for amusement railway locomotives

W. CONSHOHOCKEN, Pa. — **ASTM International's** amusement rides and devices committee (F24) is developing a standard to establish new inspection and maintenance requirements for steam propelled locomotives found at amusement parks.

According to **Ron Lwin**, a committee task group chair, the original manufacturers of historic steam locomotives are often no longer in existence and unable to give recommendations for maintenance, offering little guidance to steam operators. The proposed standard will provide minimum maintenance requirements based on widely accepted historical practices and currently used railroad industry benchmarks.

"The steam locomotives typically found in amusement parks, museums, and at tourist railroads may not currently have an appropriate maintenance standard to reference," says Lwin, senior quality engineer for **Walt Disney World**. "This standard will serve as the primary reference for maintenance requirements of steam locomotives."

The new proposed standard (WK67138) will provide minimum requirements for suitable locomotive operation that fall outside the U.S. Federal Railroad Administration jurisdiction or other local authority having jurisdiction with existing steam train rules, while the expanded appendix will include more specific best practices.

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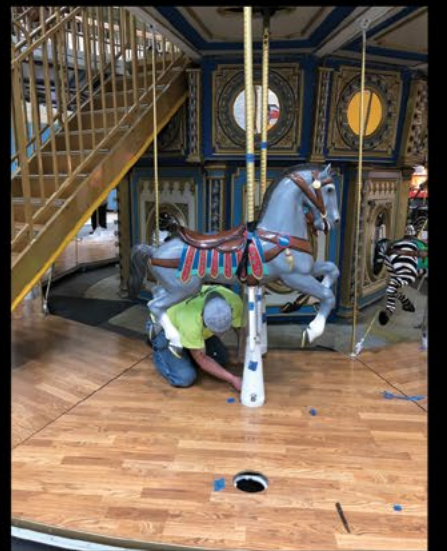
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REVIEW

One year, ten carnivals and 21,000 miles; author tells the story of being on the road

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

BARRINGTON, ILL. — This year COVID-19 greatly changed everyone's lives. Back in February 2013, being on the road for an entire year changed Michael Sean Comerford's life as well, however in a different way. Originally intended to be a behind-the-scenes look at one carnival and the industry, *American OZ*, soon morphed into 10 employers. Only the first operator knew about his writing project. The rest had no idea. The carnivals included: **Butler Amusements, Classic Amusements, McDaniel Brothers Shows, Modern Midways, Golden Wheel Amusements, Amusements of America**, along with three independent fairs, **Minnesota State Fair, Oklahoma State Fair and State Fair of Texas**. Early on in this mesmerizing, 311-page account, Comerford exclaimed, "What have I done?"

Most of the time Comerford set up, tore down and ran rides, along with running a few games, or as he says, "From ride jockey to jointee." Near the end of his year he briefly worked for the Super Trade Show & Extravaganza in Gibtown and **Ward Hall and the World of Wonders** side show. Comerford stopped using his name as nicknames quickly evolve in the carnival world. "When I deep-sixed my real name, I felt like a fiction in a traveling fiction land. My background didn't hold me back because identities shift in carnivals." He was known as Crocodile, Cowboy, El Grande, High Street, Mike Love, Slim and The Priest during his odyssey. "I wasn't a real carry but it would be an honor to be called one."

Quite a few of the workers on the shows had interesting names as well, including Monster, Rose Dog, Eagle, Picky-Picky, Lone Wolf, Metal Head, Jimmy Tattoos, Chunk of Cheese, Peanut, Boogie, Sis, Breeze, Batman, Miss Trudy, Irish Patrick, Chango, Tub Thug, Q, and Dance. All had stories to go with their name of choice.

Blogging his days' adventure at night raised an eyebrow



from some, "Everyone was suspicious of me because I used every spare moment to 'play' on my laptop. In some towns, I came back to the motel at 3 am from the all-night diner with wife, and people never asked me about it. A couple people wondered if I was a cop, spying on their drug abuse."

Comerford's travel between carnival operations was accomplished by bus, train and mostly hitchhiking. Those "thumbing" events provided colorful experiences along with an equally colorful cast of fellow travelers including Electric Leprechaun, Apocalypse Julie and Rainbow Eric.

The Chicago-land native explained why he wanted to embark on this journey. "When I was 22 years old, I rode my bicycle from Chicago to Seattle. On the way, I stopped in Wyoming for the **Cody Stampede Rodeo** and worked a dart game. In Cody, I loved calling in the customers, and I thought the carnival people were interesting, with complicated secrets moving town to town. I thought, if ever I do write books, I want to include some of these people." 32 years later, Comerford put his idea into motion.

There were numerous reasons for the name *American OZ*. "L. Frank Baum was a Chicago newspaper man when he wrote the first Wizard of OZ book." It was turned into a movie in 1939. "The movie was a hero's story, a journey of self-

discovery in a fantasy land. Traveling carnivals trade in fantasies and I was looking for adventure, original characters and self-discovery along the way too. This is [also] a book of immersion journalism. I worried that it would be a long series of blogs with no story arc. My book cover makes it look like a novel, not a true story. The way I tell the story, there are surprises, reversals of fortune and near death experiences just like a novel."

Comerford has the highest respect for the workers. "Carnival people are the hardest working people in the world. Yet they get no credit for holding in their hands what people need the most but don't know it; carnival people know how to create communal joy. We need carnivals and carnival people more than ever. *American OZ* shows that we are connected more than we know and our mutual happiness revolves in circles like so many carnival rides."

Comerford knows all of us have the same life issues. "I want people who go to carnivals to know that carnies and show people aren't existing in different worlds. They're working on the same issues but they work on their lives while on the road. Carnival people seek love and meaning in their lives and the answer always seems to be somewhere down the road. We all are searching for our place in this universe, for meaning and love."

Summing things up Comerford wrote in *American OZ*: "The lessons I learned on the road apply to life outside carnivals. Play is worthy of stingy time. Imaginations must be fattened. A great carnival can change our DNA. Since I left carnival life, pop songs remind me of midways. Commercials become ballys. I walk by lakes looking for monster goldfish. At sunset, I watch for the sun poking through the rib iron of a carousel. I can hear their voices. No funny, no money. No flash, no cash. Happy children are the hope of the future."

American OZ, a self-published book, was released earlier this year.

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