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\$250 million indoor water park resort opens Great Wolf Lodge raises a winning howl in Southern California

AT: Dean Lamanna

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GARDEN GROVE, Calif. — Combining fanfare and family affair, and mixing in plenty of splash, a wiley-but-welcoming wolf mascot and a whole lot of happy kids, Great Wolf Lodge Southern California opened here March 4.

There was good reason for the excitement. This is the first California location for Madison, Wis.-based Great Wolf Resorts, Inc. (GWR), North America's largest chain of indoor water park resorts. Built at a cost of \$250 million, the project — a partnership between GWR and Colorado-based real estate development company McWhinney — took about a decade to



plan and two years to complete. It is the largest of the brand's 13 resorts.

It also exemplifies the old real estate maxim: "Location, location, location." With a Harbor Boulevard address about a mile south of the Disneyland Resort, Great Wolf Lodge brings a world-class indoor water park

— the region's first — and 603 spacious suites to Orange County's themed entertainment hub. It will generate an estimated \$8 million in annual tax revenue for the City of Garden Grove.

"Southern California is one of the top destinations for family fun in the country — and we are thrilled to bring our unique experience to the area," said company CEO Rubén A. Rodríguez in remarks to the gathered media and guests.

Added Chad McWhinney, CEO and co-founder of McWhinney: "We are proud to partner with the respected team at Great Wolf Resorts to expand upon McWhinney's

► See GREAT WOLF, page 4



Great Wolf Resorts CEO Rubén A. Rodríguez, flanked by Southern California project partner Chad McWhinney and company mascot Wiley the Wolf, welcomes media and guests to the new Great Wolf Lodge in Garden Grove. on March 4. COURTESY GREAT WOLF RESORTS

Six Flags, Samsung roll out coaster-enhancing VR system



A virtual reality system developed by Six Flags and Samsung will be bringing new excitement to nine of the theme park chain's U.S. roller coasters this season. The optional game-play gear offers two different action-adventure experiences synched to each ride's course elements.

COURTESY SIX FLAGS ENTERTAINMENT CORP.

High-tech thrills to be applied to nine rides

AT: Dean Lamanna

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GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas — Six Flags Entertainment Corp. is raising the thrill factor on several of its U.S. roller coasters this season with a special effects-filled, on-ride video system upgrade.

The theme park company, in partnership with Ridgefield Park, N.J.-based consumer electronics maker Samsung Electronics America, Inc., is augmenting the attractions with fully immersive virtual reality (VR) experiences using Samsung Gear VR, powered by Oculus. With the aid of gyros, accelerometers and proximity sensors, the optional-use headset system synchronizes the realistic, 360-degree action of a virtual reality world with each ride's drops, twists and loops — creating a new kind of adrenaline rush

from the basic coaster experience.

"This remarkable technology is a definite game-changer for theme park rides," said John Duffey, president and CEO of Six Flags. "It represents everything our brand stands for — delivering the most thrilling and innovative rides and attractions in the world."

Marc Mathieu, chief marketing officer for Samsung, agreed.

"What makes this partnership so compelling for consumers and the broader tech industry alike is that both companies are committed to pushing the boundaries of what's possible — and bringing a VR coaster to life is certainly a new and thrilling proposition," Mathieu said. "This transforms the modern roller coaster into a totally new, one-of-a-kind sensorial experience."

► See SIX FLAGS, page 4

NEWSPAPER

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NEWSTALK

EDITORIAL: Gary Slade, gslade@amusementtoday.com

Two decades of trade publishing witness the growth of gadgetry



Slade

This issue of *Amusement Today* marks the beginning of the company's 20th year of publishing news for the greater amusement industry. It's been a roller coaster-like ride — one full of memories, friendships and electronic change.

It's remarkable that only two decades ago the Internet and email were still in their infancy and the broadcast media were struggling to read a website correctly on air: <http://> or www. period com or dot com? Thank goodness dot com fell into favor.

It should have been an easy guess that the birth of the Internet would lead to so many computer innovations that almost all Americans now carry a PC with them in the form of a smartphone.

The smartphone now gives the print media the immediacy of posting photos on their newspaper websites live from where news is happening. Technology is changing the media industry as fast as it is the world.

Now, the latest turn in the evolution of the smartphone has arrived in the amusement industry in the form of virtual reality headsets.

During spring break, Six Flags Over Texas (and Georgia), in cooperation with Samsung, were among the first of nine Six Flags parks to debut virtual reality (VR) technology on roller coasters — giving riders a new fully immersive experience. (See story, page 1.)

The key to the headsets is a smartphone located inside each of them. The smartphone provides a pre-loaded movie, a screen for watching and the technology that makes the entire system work — all in live time. It's so live, in fact, that the front of the train is watching the same footage a few seconds ahead of the back of the train. The headset picks up the riders seat location before leaving the station and then keeps the signal and the rider's position on the coaster track in sync during the experience.

In our youth, we read about the same technology in comic books. And while they may not realize it, today's youth are living our comic book world.

FLINT'S VIEW: Bubba Flint



INDUSTRY OPINION: Dean Lamanna, dlamanna@amusementtoday.com
Enthusiasts move beyond fun to forge lasting legacy

As host of the landmark late-1970s television documentary *America Screams*, the late Vincent Price happily discussed and rode — among other great thrill machines — the then-record-breaking new Revolution and Colossus "rolly coasters" at (pre-Six Flags) Magic Mountain in Valencia, Calif.

The film, produced by Scott Campbell and Gary Kyriazi at the height of the theme park boom and just as an organization called the American Coaster Enthusiasts (ACE) was gaining speed, was among the first to chronicle the history of amusements in America.

Nearly 40 years later, a new crop of amusement documentaries has appeared. Like *America Screams* and umpteen TV programs that followed, they're anchored in our obsession with thrill-seeking. But they're also the products of maturing enthusiasts using their experience, passion and expertise to preserve — in digital amber — amusement history.

For *Signature Attraction*, Australian filmmaker Malcolm Burt spent three years traveling internationally to interview sociologists, professors and fellow enthusiasts about the appeal of parks and roller coasters. While "escapism" is the common answer, Burt pushes beyond that to discuss how they fulfill



Lamanna

human needs at once personal and universal.

"I was never good at sports as a kid," he says in his thoughtful narration, "but I felt I could prove my braveness by riding big coasters."

Some of those coasters, in fact, were created by the titular "star" of *The Legacy of Arrow Development*. The primarily ACE-funded, feature-length film, produced by Kristopher Rowberry and directed by Nicholas Laschkewitsch, traces Arrow from its inception through its multiple incarnations over seven decades — illustrating the company's importance and ongoing influence in the business of fun.

An inadvertent revelation of these documentaries (both are available on YouTube) is that yesterday's enthusiasts have become today's industry leaders, designers, manufacturers and historians. They are, for example, the driving force behind the Texas-based National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives — which, bringing history full circle, just negotiated Six Flags Magic Mountain's generous donation of vintage coaster cars from Revolution and Colossus.

Vincent Price is surely smiling somewhere.

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2 MINUTE DRILL



COMPILED: Janice Witherow

Eric Dziedzic, Story Land

Eric Dziedzic enters a fantasyland every time he goes to work. As general manager of **Story Land** in Glen, N.H., Eric oversees all areas of this idyllic amusement park where story-book characters come to life and scenes from favorite childhood books are re-created for families to enjoy. Eric is a hands-on manager who leads his staff with a personal approach that also carries over to the welcoming way in which Story Land guests are greeted.

He is involved in several community and industry organizations, and while not working, family time ranks at the top of his list of how he enjoys spending his time.

Title:
General Manager.

Number of years with Story Land?
Seven.

Best thing about the industry...

Change, every day brings new challenges, new experiences, and the opportunity to create new memories.

Favorite amusement ride?

The Cuckoo Clockenspiel at Story Land! The inner workings of the clock (all done in house) are spectacular; if we are talking thrilling, I would have to say Boulder Dash at Lake Compounce.

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

Love to think I would own a boat with deep sea charters.

Biggest challenge facing our industry?

Creating the best experience for our guests while dealing with skyrocketing prices, tumultuous economies, and crazy weather patterns.

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

Seeing all of the hard work and planning from the off-season culminate into the best product and most wonderful memories for our guests. Summertime is also when I am most likely to spend quality time with one of the smartest men I know, Rolf Paegert.

Favorite springtime chore?

Setting up the trampoline

When I say politics, you say...

Nothing at all.

The best thing about living in New Hampshire is...

The White Mountains! What a spectacular area with so much to do for everyone, especially when it is centered around a trip to Story Land.

Take your pick: iced tea or lemonade?

Lemonade.

The last time I went shopping, I bought...

Pig Candy. (Google it!)



Eric Dziedzic, general manager of Story Land in Glen, N.H.

The first thing I do when I get to my office is...

Say hello/good morning to everyone in the building and reflect on how lucky I am to be able to work around such wonderful, talented people.

The neatest place I have seen a sunrise is...

The summit of Mount Washington.

You are going on a safari. What three things would you take with you?

A camera and my wife and kids.

The best pizza I ever tasted would have to be...

Mashed potato pizza from Little City Pizza in Simsbury, Conn.

At home, my television is most often set to...

The best sports teams in the world ... either the Boston Red Sox or New York Giants, depending on the season.

Favorite childhood book?

Blueberries for Sal.

The person I would most like to be stuck in an elevator with is...

David Blaine. It would make the time go by much quicker.

Favorite reality show?

"Survivor."

It's a Friday night. Where would we typically find you?

I wish I had a more romantic answer, but in reality it would either be dance class (not for me) or hockey practice with my kids.

In 10 years, I would like to be...

Watching my children achieve their dreams!

My ideal business wear is...

I am very casual... comfortable shoes, khakis and a nice button down shirt.

On my way to work, I usually...

Listen to the radio and enjoy the view. I live in an unbelievable area that should be seen by everyone.

Favorite weekend getaway?

Anywhere with my family. In the White Mountains, I can step out my door and in minutes be floating down the Saco River, hiking Mount Washington or playing at Story Land! Can you think of a better place to get away?

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

Presented by the National Roller Coaster Museum

COMPILED: Richard Munch



APRIL 2016

•**1885:** What is considered the first recorded accident on a roller coaster, a party of school children were injured when the platform collapsed on a circular roller coaster in Toledo, Ohio. The April 14 incident threw 25 children a distance of 20 feet, fatally injuring one boy and seriously hurting about a dozen others. The early wooden ride was listed at about 22 feet in height, with the station platform 13 feet above the ground. Built by **P.M. Stevenson** of Toledo, the ride operated in a great circle, and had just opened for the first time that day.

•**1904:** The water from Jamaica Bay and two Brooklyn Rapid Transit trolley cars were the heroes of a \$25,000 afternoon fire which threatened **Bergen Beach** (Brooklyn, New York) with destruction on April 14. The trolley cars made it possible for the fire engines to get to the remote property, and the rising tide accommodated the firefighters, providing them with sufficient water to fight the flames. Planned by **Percy G. Williams**, the resort opened in 1896, and operated an early L.A. Thompson Scenic Railway. Today, the Belt Parkway runs through the property, a forgotten amusement center in the history of Kings County (Brooklyn).

•**1920:** The April 28 edition of the *New York Clipper* claimed that there were more than 500 parks in the United States, with 15 in Canada. Pennsylvania led all states with 58 parks; New York had 48 and Ohio, 44. The article included a listing of all states, with the following having six or more parks: Alabama, eight; California, 13; Colorado, six; Connecticut, 17; Georgia, seven; Illinois, 29; Indiana, 19; Iowa, 18; Kansas, eight; Kentucky, six; Maine, seven; Maryland, 12; Massachusetts, 28; Michigan, 20; Minnesota, six; Missouri, eight; New Hampshire, six; New Jersey, 28; Rhode Island, seven; Tennessee, six; Texas, 12; Virginia, seven; West Virginia, 10 and Wisconsin, 14.

•**1922:** The contract for a new roller coaster at **Peck's Park** in Arnolds Park, Iowa, was signed the week of April 24th by **Dr. Alonzo L. Peck**. The new coaster was designed to replace the existing coaster at the park on the shores of Lake Okoboji. **John A. Miller**, of the firm of **Miller & Baker**, of Bridgeport, Connecticut, who had been at the park for several days, had just completed the plans and specifications for the new ride. He would state that the plans were along the same lines as all recent Miller and Baker designs — built for safety, speed and thrills. On May 1, a large force of workers began tearing down the old coaster, as the new ride would be built on the same site. Ownership announced that the new ride, the Jack Rabbit, would be completed and in operation by summer.

•**1999:** **Dollywood** in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, opened the Tennessee Tornado steel coaster on April 17. Designed by **Alan Schilke** for **Arrow Dynamics**, the ride is one of the last major roller coaster built under the Arrow name. With three inversions, the 2,682-foot-long, 163-foot-high coaster took the place of an earlier **Arrow Development** ride, the Thunder Express Mine Ride (which had been relocated from **Six Flags St. Louis**, Missouri). The coaster continues to thrill guests at Dollywood, and contains the largest loop on an Arrow design, at 110 feet high.

FAST FACTS

Name/LocationGreat Wolf Lodge/
Garden Grove, Calif.**Type**All-suite hotel
with indoor water park**Number of Suites**

603

**Number of
Waterslides/Pools**

10/5

**Key Contractors
& Suppliers**Aquatic Design Group;
Architectural Design
Consultants;
Neuman Pools;
ProSlide Technology, Inc.;
Turner Construction;
Ware Malcomb;
Water Technology, Inc.
and Weber Group**Employees**

650 (full and part-time)

Co-ownersGreat Wolf Resorts, Inc.,
Madison, Wis. and
McWhinney, Loveland
Denver, Colo.**Cost/Opened**\$250 million/
March 4, 2016► **GREAT WOLF**

Continued from page 1

strong history of developing properties in Southern California. We are honored by the opportunity to create a development of this caliber...."

The centerpiece of Great Wolf Lodge is a 105,000-square-foot indoor water park. Kept at a comfortable 84 degrees year-round, the airy, 75-foot-tall complex contains 10 waterslides and five pools for children and parents alike. Attractions include the six-story Howlin' Tornado funnel slide and Wolf Rider Wipeout body surfing experience, as well as a massive wave pool called Slap Tail Pond and a lazy river, Crooked Creek.

Admission to the indoor water park is free and exclusively for the use of resort guests.

Great Wolf Lodge offers many "dry" attractions and activities, too. The motion simulator-based Howly Wood XD Theater transports riders directly into the movie action. The nine-hole Howl at the Moon Mini Golf and Ten Paw Alley bowling lanes encourage family-friendly competition, while the Northern Lights Arcade stocks more than 100 interactive video and point-redemption games.

On the activities side, MagiQuest, a kid-friendly live action interactive game, gives players magic wands as they



embark on an adventure-filled scavenger hunt. Girls looking for manicures and beauty treatments with an ice cream theme can visit Scoops Kid Spa. And Story Time, held each evening in the Grand Lobby, is a warm family way to cap the day.

Accommodations are designed for clans of all sizes, especially with youngsters' enjoyment in mind. Themed Wolf Den and KidCabin suites feature bunk beds in a private, club-like sleeping area. The larger Grand Bear and Grizzly Bear suites offer additional bathrooms and bedrooms and sleep up to eight guests.

Even dining is an adventure here. Among several themed eateries, guests can try the breakfast and dinner buffet at the Loose Moose Family Kitchen buffet or a specialty menu at the Lodge Wood Fired Grill. Handcrafted pizza and pasta are the highlights at Hungry as a Wolf. And grab-and-go favorites are avail-

Great Wolf Lodge, along with 603 suites, offers a 105,000-square-foot indoor water park featuring the Howlin' Tornado funnel slide (above right) and the Wolf Rider Wipeout (right). Being located in drought-conscious Southern California, the park uses a state-of-the-art water filtration, treatment and recirculation system. COURTESY GREAT WOLF RESORTS

able inside the resort at the area's only Dunkin' Donuts outlet.

Month-long seasonal events planned by Great Wolf Lodge include Howl-O-Ween in October and Snowland in December. The latter will feature daily snow showers in the Grand Lobby.

In addition to its accommodations and amusements, Great Wolf Lodge has more than 20,000 square feet of flexible meeting space. The resort's conference center comes complete with a dedicated group entrance, built-



in audio/video technology and customizable catering options.

"We offer value, convenience, and endless amounts of fun — all under one roof," said GWR's Rodriguez. "With spring break right around the corner and summer vacations soon thereafter, we look forward to welcoming many families to Great Wolf Lodge Southern California."

•greatwolf.com

► **SIX FLAGS**

Continued from page 1

Six Flags and Samsung began launching the high-definition VR coaster experiences in March and will continue to roll them out into summer.

Six of the nine coasters enhanced will be additionally dubbed New Revolution Virtual Reality Coasters due to the creative content of the system they are receiving. In this VR storyline, riders are transported into a futuristic battle to save Earth from an alien invasion. Riders are the co-pilots in their own fighter jets as they strap in for air-to-air combat and, using the world's first-ever gameplay technology on a coaster, can fire their weapons at the alien mother ship and its swooping drones.

This elite fighter squadron experience will be introduced on the following six coasters:

- Shock Wave at Six Flags Over Texas in Arlington (sneak-previewed to season pass holders March 10).

- Dare Devil Dive at Six Flags Over Georgia in Austell (sneak previewed to season pass holders March 12).

- The New Revolution at Six Flags Magic Mountain in Valencia, Calif. (sneak-previewed to season pass holders March 26).

- Ninja at Six Flags St. Louis in Eureka, Mo.
- Steamin' Demon at Six Flags Great Escape in Lake George, N.Y.

- Goliath at La Ronde in Montreal, Canada.

Three additional rides will be alternately

identified as Superman Virtual Reality Coasters. In this storyline, riders will be fully immersed in the comic book world of Metropolis, where they will encounter Lex Luthor and his army of LexBots. The villain wields an anti-gravity gun to create chaos throughout the city, causing cars, taxis and buses to float in mid-air around the rider's vehicle. As the LexBots continue shooting at the vehicle, Superman uses heat vision to destroy the anti-gravity gun, causing all objects to suddenly fall — including the train as it takes the first drop of the roller coaster.

This superhero adventure experience will debut on these Superman-branded coasters:

- Superman: Krypton Coaster at Six Flags Fiesta Texas in San Antonio.

- Superman: The Ride at Six Flags New England in Agawam, Mass.

- Superman: Ride of Steel at Six Flags America in Upper Marlboro, Md.

Beyond theme parks, VR technology, which some observers predict will become a \$30 billion industry by 2020, is making rapid inroads into all areas of entertainment.

For example, Southern California's annual, hugely successful Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival — more commonly known as Coachella and typically including a Ferris wheel, interactive exhibits and holographic performances — will be offering ticket holders a VR alternative to viewing its lineup of live music acts when it takes place over two consecutive weekends this month.

•sixflags.com

Revolution at 40: freshened-up and shoulder-restraint free

VALENCIA, Calif. — Celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, Revolution, the world's first modern, full-circuit vertical looping roller coaster, has been given an impressive facelift by Six Flags Magic Mountain.

The ride has been rechristened The New Revolution. In addition to an optional virtual reality experience applied in a project partnership between Six Flags Entertainment Corp. and Samsung Electronics America, Inc. (see story, page 1), the makeover includes a new white-and-blue track paint job, landscaping and entrance improvements, and — most significantly — spanking-new, fabricated-in-house fiberglass red trains (see inset photo) with an Old Glory theme and no bothersome shoulder restraints.

"We are thrilled that one of our signature coasters is getting the innovative ride updates that Six Flags is known for," said Bonnie Sherman Weber, park president. "With the new trains and beautiful paint colors, The New Revolution has been transformed into today's newest technological marvel and is certain to be around for many more generations of coaster fans to enjoy."

Among other adjustments made for comfort, safety and a smoother ride experience, the new trains are fitted with snug lap and calf bars and promise to offer more "airtime." The coaster's maximum speed will remain at about 55 mph, with a running time of two minutes along its 3,457-foot-long, terrain-hugging course.

Designed by Werner Stengel and manufactured by Anton Schwarzkopf, Revolution opened on May 8, 1976, as the Great American Revolution in honor of the country's bicentennial. The coaster, a star of movies and TV shows, has thrilled about 48 million riders in its four decades of operation.

Although media and season pass holder previews for The New Revolution were scheduled in late March, an official public opening date had not been set as *Amusement Today* went to press.

—Dean Lamanna





INTERNATIONAL

► **WhiteWater Attractions' new Super Flume debuts at Everland — Page 6**

Parc Asterix adds themed Zamperla Disk'O Coaster

AT: Andrew Mellor

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PLAILLY, France — Parc Asterix, situated 30 km north of Paris, France, continues to expand and add new attractions with the start of the 2016 season witnessing the introduction of Discobélix.

The ride has been supplied by Zamperla and is one of the company's Disk'O Coasters. Opened on the first day of the new season on April 2, it is located within the Greek themed area and takes riders on a journey to the ancient city of Olympia where children and adults get the chance to enter the world of the Asterix at the Olympic Games comic by experiencing a discus throw first-hand, with Obelix himself!

The story behind the ride is of when Obelix ripped a bronze disc off a giant statue of a discus thrower and threw it so hard it remained in perpetual motion. Now Parc Asterix visitors can take their place on the spinning discus for a fun ride.



The new Discobélix from Zamperla will entertain visitors in the Ancient Greece themed area of the park.
COURTESY PARC ASTERIX

"In the life of a theme park, there's an ongoing policy of development and adapting the product to visitors' expectations," explains Thierry Bourgeois, the park's project manager and artistic consultant. "We regularly conduct visitor surveys and, at the same time, strive to make sure that they feel at all times as though they've been dropped

straight into one of Goscinny and Uderzo's comics. Once we had chosen the attraction, we just needed to find a place for it in Asterix and Obelix's world. That's where Julien Bertévas, our scenographer, comes in."

The idea of Obelix and the Ancient Olympic Games quickly became a clear focus for Julien Bertévas and the

Parc Astérix team. Surrounded by props that would be at home among Ancient Greece's finest treasures, the new ride constantly brushes past the columns of the imposing Greek temple which houses part of the queuing area. As it travels back and forth, the discus ricochets off a pool of water before pivoting at the top of a steep slope, causing a

flame to be lit — all under the amused eye of an immense Obelix, 6 meters (20 feet) tall and the spitting image of an ancient discus-thrower.

With a diameter of 10 meters and a track length of 80 meters, Discobélix seats 40 riders, represents an investment of €3 million (\$3.25 million) and involved seven months of construction work.

Dreamworld opens world's first Hot Wheels-branded coaster

AT: Andrew Mellor

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QUEENSLAND, Australia — The world's first Hot Wheels themed roller coaster, the Hot Wheels SideWinder, opened recently at Dreamworld Australia as part of the park's new Motorsports Experience themed zone.

The ride was first installed at Dreamworld in 2001, having been purchased from Luna Park in Sydney where it opened in 1994. Built by Arrow Dynam-

ics, the coaster was named the Cyclone at its new home until being renamed and re-themed at the end of last year as the Hot Wheels SideWinder.

At 40 meters (131 feet) high and reaching speeds of up to 85 kph (53mph), the Hot Wheels SideWinder is one of the tallest high-speed coasters in the southern hemisphere and one of the "Big 9" thrill rides at Dreamworld.

► See DREAMWORLD, page 6

Dreamworld's newly themed Hot Wheels SideWinder coaster originally began life at Luna Park, Sydney, and came to the Queensland park in 2001 as the Cyclone.
COURTESY DREAMWORLD



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WhiteWater Attractions' new Super Flume debuts at Everland

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
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YONGIN-SI, South Korea — WhiteWater Attractions has created a top-notch attraction for Korea's largest theme park. Everland Theme Park in Yongin-Si, has replaced their 30-year-old flume ride with a Super Flume: Thunder Falls.

The new Thunder Falls greatly increases the experience provided by the previous 30-year-old ride. The larger boats allow park guests to ride with more of their friends and family members, while also providing a longer ride experience with a more thrilling finale. The best part is that guests do not have to wait in the queue as long thanks to the higher capacity of the eight-passenger boats. The replacement of the four-passenger boats has substantially boosted Everland's ride capacity. The resulting throughput averages 1,400 riders per hour.

PGAV Destinations of St. Louis, Missouri, designed the overall attraction. The new ride takes advantage of the hilly terrain, and features turntables and backward drops. A turntable off the largest lift allows the boat to pivot almost 270 degrees to line up with the large drop finale. The design is efficient as no flume water is needed at the top of the lift to transport the boat to the drop. The only water that needs to be pumped to the top of the drop is "showwater" to give the final drop a waterfall effect. The turntable also serves as a blocking system, releasing the boat only when the runout at the bottom of the drop is clear.

Thunder Falls is WhiteWater Attractions' largest ride



South Korea's Everland Theme Park recently opened Thunder Falls, a heavily themed super flume ride designed to give 1,400 pph. The overall design and theming was supplied by PGAV Destinations. COURTESY PGAV AND WHITEWATER



ever built in terms of the number of unique features integrated into the ride experience. It is also the first Super Flume ride manufactured under the WhiteWater Attractions brand. The flume technology is from Hopkins Rides, which has more than 45 years of amusement industry experience. Hopkins Rides is a division of WhiteWater West Industries Ltd. and part of the WhiteWater Attractions Family.



The addition, or in this case, replacement of, a water ride in a traditional theme park gives guests a place to escape the sweltering heat of the summer sun. Flume rides such as Thunder Falls have been a traditional staple in theme parks for years, providing ride diversity and the quintessential splash every park needs. Although traditional, the new Super Flume has taken the guest experience

up a notch.

"We've packed a huge number of fun features into the 485 meter long ride, comments Mark Miller, flume ride specialist, WhiteWater Attractions.

"The full one-eighty direction changes combined with varying degrees of drops, from five meters up to a whopping 20 meters, creates an experience that is full of surprises. This Super Flume will have

guests lining up again and again."

Everland has been entertaining guests since it opened in 1976 and today ranks 16th in the world for theme park attendance, entertaining over 7.3 million guests annually. The resort includes the Everland Theme Park, zoo, spectacular gardens, and the Caribbean Bay Water Park. It is South Korea's largest theme park.

►DREAMWORLD Continued from page 5

With new train bodies supplied by Vekoma, riders are seated in a series of Hot Wheels themed cars complete with racing harnesses and music, which is pumped through speakers installed next to the riders. Key features include a loop and side-winder section, and the ride is one of the headline attractions in the Motorsports Experience. This also features the world's largest collection of Peter Brock cars in Brock's Garage — 28

replica and original Brock cars including some of his most famous drives like the Big Banger, — V8 Supercar simulators featuring famous V8 circuits, the Grid Burgers and Sports Bar and the Trackside retail outlet, offering the latest racing gear and Hot Wheels merchandise.

Commenting on the partnership with Hot Wheels, Dreamworld CEO Craig Davidson said: "We are delighted to welcome Hot Wheels as one of our key partners in our new Motorsports Experience and a valued addition to our stable

of well-known entertainment brands that have a strong presence in-park. From theming our coaster to in-park promotions and merchandise, Hot Wheels will add an exciting new dimension to the park."

On behalf of Mattel, John Louie, VP and country manager Australia/New Zealand, said: "Hot Wheels provides hours of fun and creative play for families through its cars and track sets and now the Hot Wheels SideWinder at Dreamworld is an awesome new experience for kids and parents who are

seeking next-level, adrenaline-pumping experiences. Hot Wheels is all about making it epic and the Hot Wheels SideWinder certainly is an epic ride."

Other key partners in Dreamworld's new Motorsports Experience include Dunlop, V8 Supercars, RACQ and the Brock family.

The Hot Wheels-themed coaster takes riders up to 40 meters high and reaches speeds of up to 85 kph.
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Assistant General Manager
Sunway Lagoon, Malaysia



WATER PARKS & RESORTS

► Schlitterbahn Galveston announces world's tallest water coaster — Page 9

Nickelodeon Lost Lagoon opens at Malaysia's Sunway Park

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

SUBANG JAYA, Malaysia — Sunway Lagoon, an 88-acre theme park in Selangor Province, Malaysia, has opened the Nickelodeon Lost Lagoon. Sunway Lagoon, already popular with its various parks and spectacular theming, is hoping to attract even more families and children with the addition of SpongeBob SquarePants and his Bikini Bottom friends.

Nickelodeon Lost Lagoon is Asia's first Nickelodeon themed land and Viacom's first partnership with a theme park in Malaysia. The 10-acre addition comes with 14 attractions and was built at a cost of RM100 million (U.S. \$23.8 million). The new site takes advantage of the topography of a natural hillside, and the thick, lush, jungle-like environment was carefully preserved. The theming has a very "lost civilization" appearance, but the so-called "civilization" is that of the famous Nickelodeon cartoon characters. In addition to SpongeBob, there are attractions themed to Dora the Explorer and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

The attractions are equipped with the latest in reactive technology and include waterslides, water play structures, retail shops, games and food outlets. Meandering walkways, rest spots and lots of greenery add to the immersive atmosphere. A mass sliming event — a Nickelodeon tradition — occurs daily at 4 p.m.

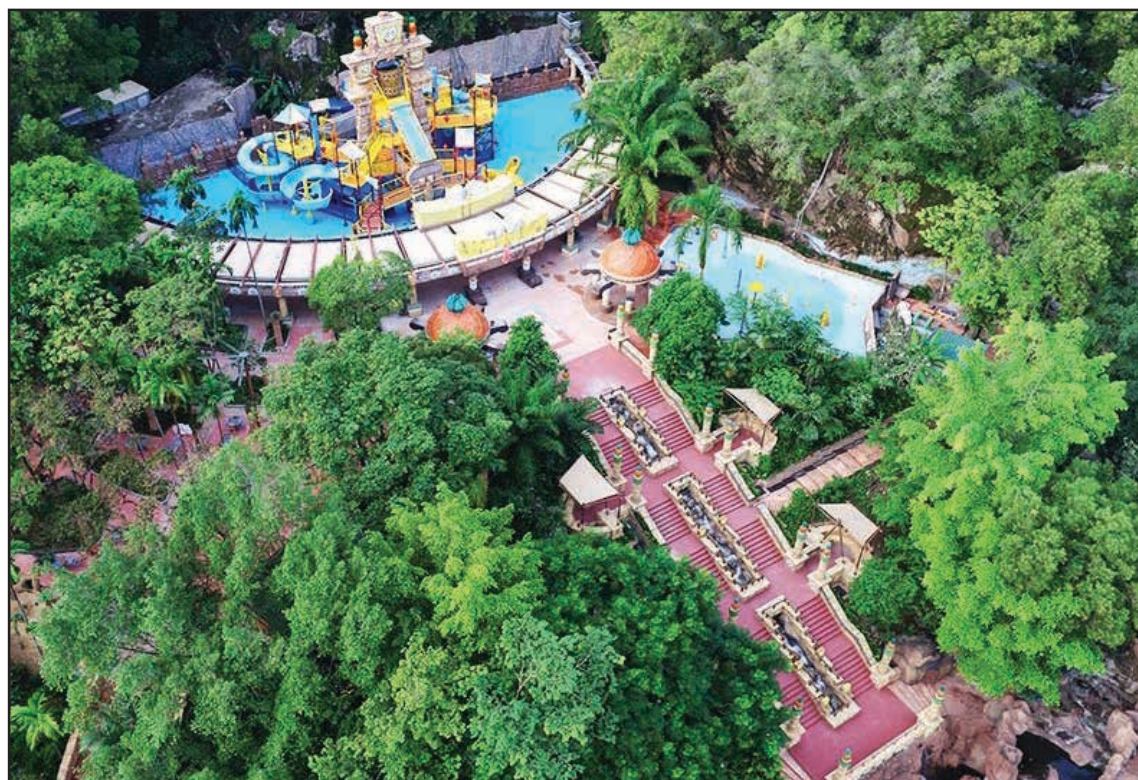
"Nickelodeon Lost Lagoon will enable kids and families in Malaysia and around Southeast Asia to connect with our brand and Nickelodeon's iconic characters in a unique and meaningful way that will further deepen their relationship with Nickelodeon," said Mark Whitehead, executive vice president and managing director, Viacom International Media Networks Asia.

WhiteWater West of

Canada supplied all of the attractions for the Lost Lagoon. Highlights include SpongeBob Splash Adventure, a water play structure with a jungle-ruin façade including orange pineapples and everyone's favorite buck-toothed porifera just above a tipping bucket. For those not quite big enough for the water play structure, Splish Splash, an interactive water spray area, offers gentler thrills.

Older kids and adults can tackle the larger thrill rides like Kubarango, a WhiteWater Boomerango, Jungle Fury family raft ride, Moolalah River Adventure and Primeval tube slides along with a mix of body slides. Those looking for more excitement can challenge Monsoon 360, and choose either an AquaLoop or Flatline Loop, both with an AquaDrop capsule.

"This was a fantastic opportunity to collaborate closely with the design team at Nickelodeon, who conceived the initial concept for the 'Indiana Jones meets SpongeBob' themed Aqua-Play RainFortress, commented Michael Ayotte, project manager, WhiteWater West Industries Ltd. "WhiteWater's theming department ran with the concept and exceeded all expectations by bringing SpongeBob to life through their skilled carving and painting skills," he



added. "Sunway is extremely passionate about delivering exceptional experiences to their visitors and we are very proud to have helped them achieve that at their new Nickelodeon Lost Lagoon water park."

Sunway Lagoon opened in 1997 and has grown to become Sunway Resort City encompassing an amusement park, extreme park, scream park, Surf Beach water park, interactive Wildlife Park, Sunway Resort Hotel and Spa, Sunway Pyramid Shopping Mall, Sunway Pyramid Convention Center and Sunway Pyramid Tower East and West hotels.

Above, The lush, tropical greenery and hillside setting are clearly seen in this photo showing the jungle-ruin themed aquatic play structure at the top. Below, more jungle-ruin theming accents the splash down pool.

COURTESY SUNWAY LAGOON



Left to right: Jungle Fury offers fun for the entire family. Thrillseekers can enjoy sliding backward on Kubarango and Moolalah River Adventure is an exciting raft ride. COURTESY SUNWAY LAGOON

Exact height of Massiv being kept secret until spring

Schlitterbahn Galveston Island building world's tallest water coaster

GALVESTON, Texas — Schlitterbahn Waterparks & Resorts is building the world's tallest water coaster at its award-winning Galveston Island waterpark.

Called Massiv, the German word for massive, the water coaster will be in place in time for the water park's 10th anniversary celebration this summer. Schlitterbahn Galveston Island is home to more thrill rides than any other Schlitterbahn Waterpark, making it the perfect home for this record-breaking ride.

The exact height of Massiv is being kept secret until later this spring. Schlitterbahn has indicated that riders will need to climb 123 steps to the ride dispatch area. The length of the ride is 926 feet with seven green translucent sections and four uphill water blasts. The finale will include a thrilling triple-down.

Riders will need to be at least 48 inches in height. The combined weight of both riders cannot exceed 400 pounds

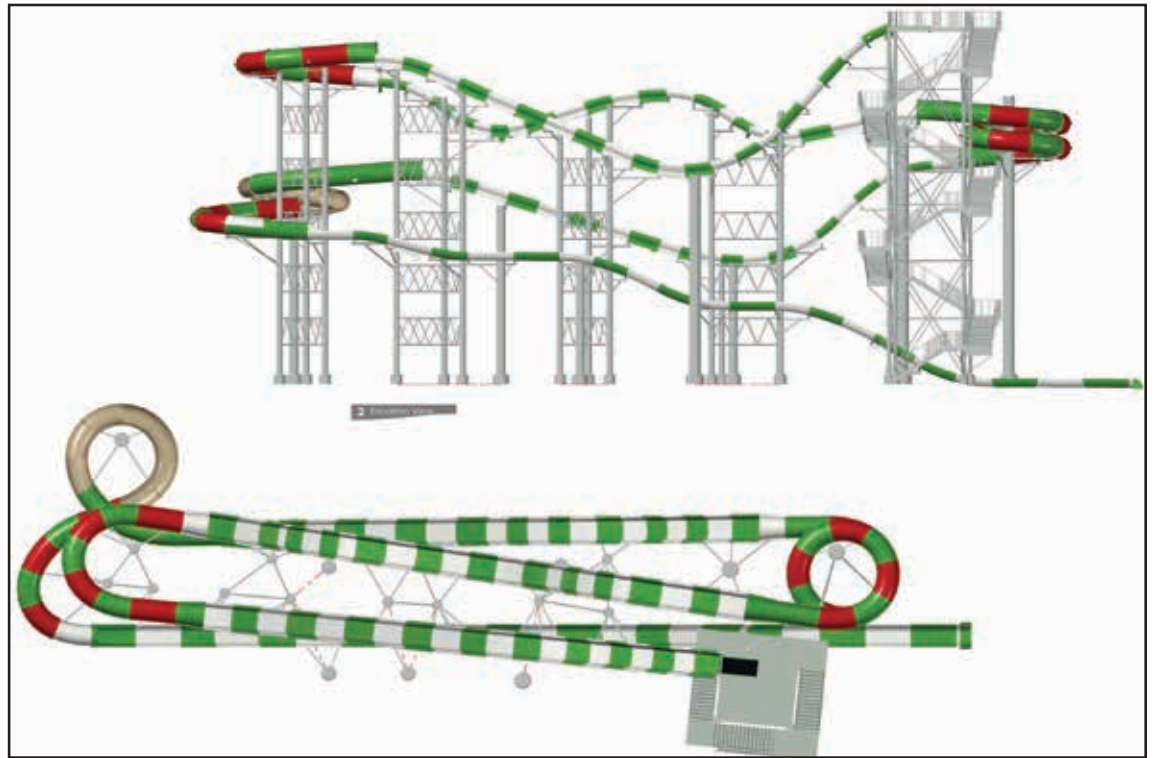


and the maximum weight for a single rider is 300 pounds. Riders are required to carry the tube up the stairs with them.

Massiv utilizes Master Blaster technology, which was invented 22 years ago by Schlitterbahn's wizard of water, Jeff Henry. This technology was licensed to WhiteWater West, of British Columbia, Canada, which is the company constructing Massiv.

"We are thrilled to be bringing this iconic ride to Galveston Island," said Ron Sutula, general manager for Schlitterbahn Galveston Island. "It's a massive anniversary present to all our guests, and is going to be a blast to ride!"

Schlitterbahn Waterpark Galveston Island has won numerous awards, includ-



Massiv Monster Blaster is the new-for-2016 water coaster currently under construction at Schlitterbahn Galveston Island. When completed, the 926-foot-long ride will be the world's tallest water coaster. The exact height of Massiv is being kept a secret until later this spring. This season marks the 10th anniversary for the indoor/outdoor water park located on the Texas Gulf coast. COURTESY SCHLITTERBAHN GALVESTON ISLAND

ing *Amusement Today's* coveted Golden Ticket Award for world's best indoor water

park, for the last eight years. Massiv will be twice as long as any water slide in the

park and it will be the tallest ride in the park.

—Jeffrey Seifert



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Typhoon Texas Water Park nears completion in Katy, Texas

AT: Jeffrey Seifert

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KATY, Texas — Typhoon Texas, a new water park next to the Katy Mills Mall in Katy, Texas, is gearing up for a grand opening on May 28. In February the park started accepting applications for the nearly 800 seasonal part-time jobs it will need to keep the park staffed throughout the summer. Katy is west of Houston and part of the Houston, Woodlands, Sugar Land metropolitan area commonly known as Greater Houston. It is the fifth largest metropolitan area in the United States.

The water park, built at cost of \$45 million, will feature a number of attractions from White Water West of British Columbia, Canada, that range from an AquaSpray play ground to a seven-story AquaLoop/Flatline Loop combo tower with AquaDrop capsules. Other sections of the park were supplied by Brannon Corporation of Tyler, Texas. Brannon's aquatic portfolio includes multiple parks and aquatic centers in Texas and Oklahoma including the Hawaiian Falls and Splash Kingdom parks.

The entire Typhoon Texas Water Park is Texas themed, perhaps a little over the top for outsiders, but Texans are very proud of their state and their water parks. The front entrance, known as Sundance Square, features a huge planter in the shape of Texas, and Texas icons are everywhere. Texas flag-like red, white and blue colors with a lone star emblem will grace rooftops and shade cloths. Even the red white and blue Boomerango slide will feature a lone star embedded in the fiberglass. That slide complex, themed to the often tumultuous Texas weather, is known as Monster Storms and features a Boomerango as well as an AquaSphere with Constrictor combination slide.

The Snake Pit features multiple slides including body slides, raft slides and WhiteWater's latest interactive attraction — slideboarding — which has riders playing a video-like game while sliding through an enclosed tube chute.

At seven stories, the Duelin' Daltons features three AquaDrop capsules, two drop into either an AquaLoop or Flatline loop that are intertwined with each other. The third is straight drop into a speed chute. Lone Star Racers, an eight-lane Whizzard Twist will offer high capacity as eight thrill seekers negotiate a twisted top section then align next to each other for the racing finale.

An AquaPlay Rainfortress known as the Gully Washer, Lazy-T lazy river and Tidal Wave Bay wave pool complete the water attractions package. Dressing rooms, shops, eateries — including the River Grille Smokin' BBQ and Ray's Pizza and Italian Ices — round out the property. A Birthday Barn is available for special celebrations along with specially priced birthday packages.

A state-of-the-art filtration system will be employed to provide the cleanest water possible. The park will need 3 million gallons of water to fill all the attractions.

The park will open with 25 developed acres and has plenty of room for future expansion. Daily operation is 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. with special events, including dive-in movies, extending into the evening. The park's grand opening is scheduled for May 28, although the park may be in soft opening as this issue goes to press. The actual season has not been announced, but water parks in this part of the country can open as early as March and stay open well into October.



NEWS SPLASH

COMPILED: Jeffrey L. Seifert

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Six Flags Entertainment has reached an agreement with Mexico to operate the 67-acre **Parque Aquatico Oaxtepec** which closed several years ago. **Hurricane Harbor Oaxtepec**, located in the District of Morales is expected to open in 2017. Six Flags is planning a multi-million dollar investment in the property that will include several new attractions as well as new culinary and retail establishments.

In March, **United Parks** unveiled its \$2 million-plus vision for the revitalization of **Daytona Lagoon** water park in Daytona Beach, Florida. Plans include an overall face-lift, new attractions, broader food selections and improved amenities. United Parks, which also operates **Hydro Adventures** in Poplar Bluff, Mo. is headed by company CEO **Jack Falfas**. Falfas has more than 40 years of industry experience including a number of significant park turnarounds, including one that led to a tenfold increase in the profitability of the legendary **Knott's Berry Farm** in Orange County, Calif.

"We're truly excited for the Daytona Beach community to get its first look at what we have planned for Daytona Lagoon," Falfas said. "The park has created so many great memories for Daytona Beach residents and visitors over the years, and we've worked very hard to preserve the park's original charm while adding new attractions and amenities that will make Daytona Lagoon a must-visit attraction for many years to come."

Polin Waterparks has been honored by Turkey's leading online career and recruitment job platform, **Kariyer.net**, with its Respect for Humans Award. The award was created to promote the successful efforts of businesses in the area of human resources. It honors companies that make it a priority to treat job applicants at every level of hiring with the utmost dignity and consideration.

Companies who qualify for the award must fulfill specific criteria, including: Fast response to candidates' applications, high rates of employment, and largest number of applicants.

Kariyer.net is respected for having the largest applicant database in the country. The firm presented the award to Polin during its 15th Annual Respect for Humans Awards ceremony, which took place during the Human Resources Summit on Feb. 17 at the **Lütfi Kırdar International Convention and Exhibition Center** in Istanbul.

The kids' area at Oklahoma City's **White Water Bay** is getting a new name and a new look. The former Kids Kove will become Barefootin' Bay. Along with a thorough update, a new water play structure with 35 hands-on spray elements, two mini slides and a giant tipping bucket will be added to the area.

"Bringing new life to our kids' area has been a top request from our guests in recent years," says **David Riddles**, general manager

of White Water Bay. "We're excited to finally get this project underway and offer families a fun, new area to spend their days in at the Bay."

Raging Waves Water Park in Yorkville, Illinois, is adding a **ProSlide TornadoWave** to the park for the 2016 season. In keeping with the park's Australian Theme, the new attraction will be called **Wonambi** — after a prehistoric snake native to the Outback.

"Wonambi...is one of the most dynamic and thrilling rides that a water park has to offer," said **Randy Witt**, Raging Waves co-owner. "When it comes to offering thrills, Raging Waves leads the way in the Midwest."

Raging Waves, a 45-acre, family owned water park, opened in 2008. Wonambi is the largest addition to the park since it opened.

Hawaiian Falls Waterparks recently announced a partnership with **Jeff Ellis & Associates** (E&A) to provide the International Lifeguard Training Program (ILTP) to the Hawaiian Falls properties.

Hawaiian Falls began hiring lifeguards in February to man the seven water parks it operates in Texas. The lifeguards will undergo rigorous training before the Hawaiian Falls season begins Memorial Day weekend, with continual training, as well as unannounced auditing by E&A, occurring throughout the summer. The parks close Labor Day for the year.

E & A was founded in 1983 with a mission of reducing the loss of life due to drowning. The company has a highly respected program and in the past three decades has become the most trusted company in the world to eliminate drowning events through Proactive Aquatic Risk Management — a philosophy Hawaiian Falls specifically sought out in aquatics safety professional training.

The City of Wallkill, New York, may soon welcome a new indoor water park. Delegates from Orange County have made visits to Wisconsin Dells in recent months and at least four groups who manage water parks in the Dells area have taken an interest in Wallkill. According to the town supervisor, the average occupancy rate for hotel rooms in Wallkill is 80 percent. **La Quinta** and **Hilton** are both planning to add properties to the city.

Wallkill is located about 75 miles northwest of New York City, and is within a two-hour drive from New York City, Albany and Hartford, Connecticut.

Oman is about to open its first water park. **Majarat Oman** is a 25,000 square-foot indoor water park built at the Al Sawadi Beach in the Barka province. Designed by the **Sanderson Group of Australia**, the 40-million-riyal (U.S. \$110-million) park can accommodate 1,200 visitors daily. Oman, which lies just to the south of the United Arab Emirates, plans to step up tourism with the addition of at least five more water parks in the coming years.



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PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► Disney California Adventure opens Luigi's Rollickin' Roadsters — Page 18 / Fairs — Pages 19-22

Tiny Towne takes FECs to the next level — drivers' education

AT: Tim Baldwin

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NORCROSS, Ga. — Think quick! There are currently 11 designated colors used in road signs. Most people probably don't know this fact. Parents bringing their children to Tiny Towne just might find themselves surprised that even they have a little to learn when they can't identify all 11 — and that's only one of the steps. This new concept is what makes Tiny Towne one of the most innovative FECs in quite some time. It's a win-win-win; the kids love to drive, parents love to see them learning while having fun, and the owner of the facility enjoys a nice return on investment with a newfangled idea.

Ingenuous as it is, the idea had been in development for years. Owner and founder Pierre Maalouf explained that he experimented with the concept in his home country of Lebanon. In its first installation here in the U.S., the technology is now developed for the educational component to be in place. Not only do kids have fun learning to drive, but they actually look forward to learning. The technology created in-house for the facility allows patrons and management to accomplish many goals.

Upon arrival, kids obtain their learner's permit. Once created (just like a license with the driver's photo), it is embedded with the technology information to where all tests taken, all classes attended, and the driver's hours of experience (as well as any tickets received) are stored electronically on the learner's permit. The software also takes care of all financial transactions (cars, arcade, train rides) except for food and drink.



There are three sizes of vehicles. The youngest children are not required to take tests to be able to drive. One track is separate from the main town, with only one stoplight. Tiny cars and booster cars alternate on the track. These two vehicles are based upon the driver's size.

The real fun comes when bigger kids (age 10 or 57 inches in height) want to take on the streets of Tiny Towne. In order for that to happen, kids have to pass a course with 100 percent accuracy. Full disclosure, on AT's visit, three questions were missed by this author. The primary goal of Tiny Towne is to teach children to be good drivers starting at a young age. In reality, students who have had exposure driving at the FEC will undoubtedly be safer drivers once obtaining a real driver's license. Before taking the larger cars on the streets of Tiny Towne, students must also complete a simulator experience.

FECs are common places for birthday parties, and Tiny Towne is no exception. "Every child that is invited shows up if the party is at Tiny Towne,"

Above, an overview of Tiny Towne is seen from the VID party deck. Right, Business Representative Steve Boney, (left) and owner Pierre Maalouf stand aside one of Tiny Towne's patrolling "officers." Bottom right, another amusement that all visitors can participate in is the Tiny Towne Express Train. COURTESY TINY TOWNE; AT/TIM BALDWIN

laughs Maalouf. The facility has multiple party rooms as well as a VIP (oops, make that VID — Very Important Driver) upper deck that overlooks the town from above. Likewise, there are your other obligatory staples — an arcade and snack bar — as well as a train ride that goes around the driving course. After all, students need to be able to react correctly to a railroad crossing. Of note, the food outlet doesn't just heat up frozen product, but offers freshly prepared offerings from Philly sandwiches to pizza to grilled chicken salads.

An advantage Tiny Towne has over other FECs is the field

► See TOWNE, page 14





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Above, students must pass their driver's exam with 100 percent accuracy. All education courses are free. Above right, Tiny Towne offers three sizes of cars to cater to all ages. COURTESY TINY TOWNE

►TOWNE Continued from page 13

trip advantage. While a typical center is sheerly recreational, Tiny Towne actually teaches and caters to school groups. The logo has the 'e' in Towne smaller and raised like an exponent. When asked, Maalouf explained that it is "fun to the power of education." He even goes to say older students don't shy away from the name Tiny Towne. It's all about learning to drive, so even high school students are engaged.

With learning being a primary focus, parents are excited to see the educational aspects are all free. People can walk in, test their knowledge and bone up on safety details, all at no cost. It's upon entering the cars that patrons actually use credits. Whether first timers or returning visitors, customers purchase credits in which to enjoy the cars, train and arcade games. Different packages offer discounts and gift cards are even available.

But make no mistake, all this learning going on doesn't stop the fun for these emerging motorists. Tiny Towne is totally about driving. Parents continuously go up to Maalouf, who is frequently seen engaging the patrons, and tell him how much their kids love coming back. The way the program is set up, the more driving experience a child has and the more classes he or she has attended results in a higher level rating on each individual learner's permit. The higher the rating, the faster the cars are engineered to go. And who doesn't want to drive faster? It just encourages repeat business.

It's serious, too. Anyone tempted to engage in horseplay will quickly find out that their vehicle becomes disabled. "Officers" are also driving the town, patrolling for anyone not following driving laws. If a driver is found to be in vio-

lation of any posted signs or rules of the road, they can receive a warning or ticket. A ticket comes with a reduction of points earned at their level, not to mention their vehicle being motionless for a matter of minutes as the driver just watches their time tick away on their screen. For a child, this is quite the consequence.

"We're not here to give tickets," explains Maalouf. "We don't want to take the fun time away. Most of the time they make mistakes. Our officers are trained to be nice and explain what they did wrong. Next time they will get a ticket. Those drivers doing it right earn extra speed." Speed is earned after 30 minutes of driving safely, which lets you advance to the next higher level, of which there are seven in all.

Steve Boney serves as an executive business developer and looks for new locations for the Tiny Towne philosophy. Already in the works are centers in Brazil and Canada. "There's nothing out there that has this type of progression," he says. "There's nothing like it that ties into the schools. And then it has that social benefit that helps society in the long run."

Tiny Towne received the award for Best New Business in Norcross in 2015.

Classes offered range from Blind Spots, Driving with Teenagers, Shapes and Colors, Following Too Close, How to Avoid Accidents, etc. There are 11 in all. The ultimate goal is to have your learner's permit exchanged for a Tiny Towne driver's license. To do so, drivers must attend all 11 courses, which are free. All tests must be passed with 100 percent accuracy. "That's tougher than the state of Georgia," smiles Boney. Students are encouraged to study the questions they've missed and retake the test. Parallel parking is required, and all tests combined total 150 questions.

There is even notification to all drivers of operating hours where kids can learn to drive in reverse.

AT was particularly impressed with the architectural detailing of the facility. As it turns out, Maalouf has an architecture background and put it to use when Tiny Towne transformed a former 34,000 square foot Winn Dixie grocery store into the facility it is today. He also repurposed many materials that remained on property into touches in the mock city streets.

One of the most remarkable successes of Tiny Towne might be its operations. The FEC uses Smart Car golf carts for its large vehicles, upgraded with the facility's technology. The trackless train was supplied by True American Classics in Statham, Ga. Car maintenance is low; so low in fact that management says any costs per day are negligible, less than two dollars involving battery life, tires, etc. The batteries alone come with a four year warranty from the manufacturer. The park also boasts such a safety record that insurance on the facility dropped 20 percent after the first year of operation as Tiny Towne didn't have a single incident. This incredible record has been maintained since the property opened in July of 2014. Maalouf notes the drastic difference between his concept compared to "jumping" type facilities.

Tiny Towne appears to be on the verge of solid growth. In reality, each FEC of this nature makes the streets and roadways safer. "I had a parent come up to me and say 'My son now gives me tickets. He let's me know when I am doing something wrong.' This is one of the best stories I've received," smiles Maalouf. "She is a much better driver now than before her son first came here. We are selling amusement, but delivering education."



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'Lego Movie' sequel adds sensory effects

U.S. Legoland Parks and Discovery Centers premiere 4D film



AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

WINTER HAVEN, Fla. — A theme park bearing a resemblance to Legoland is the dynamic setting of *The Lego Movie 4D A New Adventure* — a sequel to the surprise-hit 2014 computer-animated feature *The Lego Movie*, which drew more than \$450 million at the box office.

The multisensory film-based attraction debuted at Legoland Florida Resort here in late January and at Legoland California Resort in Carlsbad in early February. Those openings were to be followed by a rollout of the production at Legoland theme parks and Legoland Discovery Centers worldwide.

The all-new plotline picks up after the story told by the sharp-witted feature film, with the Lego characters Emmet, Wyldstyle, Unikitty, MetalBeard and Benny reuniting at the invitation of a villainous character, Risky Business, who plans to open a theme park called Brick World.

Returning to voice the parts they originated are actors Elizabeth Banks (leading lady Wyldstyle), Nick Offerman (armed-to-the-teeth pirate MetalBeard), Charlie Day (spaceman Benny) and Alison Brie (unicorn/anime feline Unikitty).

Actor, writer and comedian Patton Os-

walt lends his voice to the character of Risky Business, whose evil secret scheme requires the heroes to call on the Master Builder skills of a surprise ally to save the day. Voice actor A.J. LoCascio replaces the feature's Chris Pratt in the role of construction worker Emmet Brickowski.

The 12-and-a-half-minute movie plays several times a day at each Legoland location. The film itself is in 3D, with "fourth dimension" effects such as wind, water and fog thrusting the action off the screen and into the audience.

Los Angeles-based Pure Imagination Studios created *The Lego Movie 4D A New Adventure* with input from writer-directors Phil Lord and Christopher Miller, who made the feature film two years ago. Also having contributed is Rob Schrab, who is directing a feature-length sequel for general theatrical distribution in 2018. Merlin Entertainments and Warner Bros. Consumer Products partnered on the production of the attraction.

Merlin Entertainments, meanwhile, has submitted plans for a second, castle-themed hotel at Legoland California to the city of Carlsbad. The resort's current 250-room, Lego-toy themed hotel has enjoyed an average 80 percent occupancy rate since its opening in 2013.

• legoland.com

The toy characters Wyldstyle, Emmet and Unikitty from *The Lego Movie* are back in *The Lego Movie 4D A New Adventure*, a sequel in the form of a multisensory film-based attraction created exclusively for Legoland Parks and Discovery Centers. COURTESY MERLIN ENTERTAINMENTS

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New ride exchanges a 'flat' for a cartoon Fiat

Roadsters replace Flying Tires at Disney California Adventure

AT: Dean Lamanna
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ANAHEIM, Calif. — Ladies, gents and kids, start your engines: Luigi's Rollickin' Roadsters are now motoring at Disney California Adventure (DCA).

Officially opened March 7, the much-anticipated new ride replaces Luigi's Flying Tires. The former levitating bumper car attraction, which debuted in 2012 along with Cars Land as part of DCA's major expansion, was closed after about two years due to technical problems and deflated guest expectations.

In terms of style, reliability and history, the Flying Tires was virtually a retread of the Flying Saucers, a ride that ran in Disneyland's Tomorrowland from 1961-66.

Luigi's Rollickin' Roadsters, like other attractions in Cars Land, begins with a story. It quite literally revolves around Luigi — the friendly, vintage Fiat 500 from Disney/Pixar's *Cars* films.

Twenty of Luigi's *cugini* (cousins) are visiting from Carsoli, Italy, to help celebrate Race Day in Radiator Springs with music and dancing at Casa della Tires. Guests are invited to join the 90-second party by hopping

aboard miniature Italian roadsters inspired by late 1950s open-top, two-seater micro cars.

Each car then performs the traditional dances of Carsoli, moving independently to its own choreographed routine across a trackless "dance floor" to upbeat music and Luigi's singing. (As in the *Cars* movies, Luigi is voiced by actor Tony Shalhoub.) The vehicles represent an equal number of male and female characters, and each has its own personality and name.

"Here at Luigi's, the roadsters seem to have a mind of their own," said Kevin Rafferty, executive creative director of Walt Disney Imagineering and a 38-year company veteran. "When you come back to ride again, chances are you'll enjoy an experience that's different than the last time you rode — especially since each of the cars has a signature move they love to perform."

The trackless platform upon which the cars move — the first of its type for a Disney attraction in the U.S. — is approximately 125 feet long and 70 feet wide. Unlike a traditional bumper car ride, the vehicles themselves are controlled via a Wi-Fi system and are programmed not to collide.

•disneylandresort.com



Luigi's Rollickin' Roadsters, a uniquely choreographed, musically augmented ride that takes place on a trackless "dance floor," debuted March 7 in Cars Land at Disney California Adventure. It replaces the technically troubled Luigi's Flying Tires.
COURTESY DISNEYLAND RESORT/PAUL HIFFMEYER



Indiana Beach Boardwalk Resort undergoing transformation

MONTICELLO, Ind. — Indiana Beach Boardwalk Resort is making renovations at an aggressive pace in preparation for the start of the 90th anniversary season.

A long list of upgrades and renovations have been ongoing since new resort owner, Apex Parks Group, purchased the resort in September 2015. From a new main gate to the campground ferryboat landing, improvements are unfolding throughout the resort. "We cannot wait for the Indiana Beach fans and Monticello locals to come out and see their favorite park looking like it did back in the glory days," said park general manager John Collins. "There will be a few other surprises along the way, too."

The Giant Wheel, an iconic Indiana Beach ride, was dismantled in November and sent to the ride's

manufacturer, Chance Rides of Wichita, Kansas. The massive refurbishment is in the final stages of completion and the ride is expected to be reinstalled at the park by spring.

The Shafer Queen paddle wheel boat, is receiving a complete makeover from bow to stern. Fresh paint, improved seating, and an engine and transmission overhaul will allow the Shafer Queen to cruise Lake Shafer proudly with her guests for many years to come.

An Indiana Beach favorite, the Tig'rr Rollercoaster is undergoing track and passenger car renovations for the 2016 season. The Tig'rr will be painted in a colorful theme to match the name of this classic roller coaster.

All entrance, ride, and concession signage will be upgraded to reflect a brighter and cleaner look



Under new resort owner, Apex Parks Group, Indiana Beach is receiving multiple off-season upgrades and renovations, including this Tilt-A-Whirl. COURTESY INDIANA BEACH RESORT

for guests. The park is receiving fresh paint, upgraded lighting, updated boardwalk, plus many other improvements. The VIP parking lot will be enhanced and there will be renovations to the lodging area. Additionally, many

concession stands will have new and improved menus to allow for easier, guest-friendly ordering.

Many food favorites such as Beach Tacos, Pronto Pups, and Elephant Ears will once again be available for guests to enjoy. Addi-

tionally, Pepsi-Cola is now the official soft drink provider at all Indiana Beach concession stands.

Ideal Beach RV Resort will debut in 2016 as IB Crow Campground, a Family RV Resort and will be the second home of the iconic mascot, IB Crow. The campground will not only have a new name, but will also undergo facility improvements and upgrades.

Apex CEO Al Weber said, "We are so excited to be a part of updating and upgrading this iconic Indiana resort. With respect for the past and an eye on the future, these important changes at Indiana Beach should not only improve the guest experience but give guests reason to come back time and again. The park team is so excited to have everyone come out and see the new Indiana Beach Boardwalk Resort."

•indianabeach.com

Attendance slightly up, revenue dips at 2016 Florida State Fair

Wade Shows enjoys second year as midway provider

AT: B. Derek Shaw
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TAMPA, Fla. — The 2016 edition of the Florida State Fair did well in spite of a few weather setbacks. The 12-day fair had a total attendance of 395,435, up 1.7 percent from last year (388,830). “This is impressive due to the inclement weather — either rain, wind, cold or a combination thereof, that persisted for the first six days of the fair,” said Cheryl Flood, acting executive director of the Florida State Fair.

John Prestianni, senior director of finance for the fair commented on where the revenue side of things came in. He said, “Midway revenue was slightly down this year by 3.4 percent to \$4,251,000. We had very poor weather the first weekend, but set midway records on the last three days of our fair, which enabled us to get close to our prior year’s numbers.”

The Florida State Fair is one of the first fairs to take place early each year. Boasting 115 rides with 37 of those being kiddie rides, it is also one of the larger ride midways in the country. For the second year, Wade Shows had the entire midway, working like a midway manager with help from a few independents to complete the ride offerings. “They have done a very nice job at improving our midway presentation and continue to bring in an amazing diversity of special rides,” said Flood.

Frank Zaitshik, owner of Wade Shows was pleased as well. “I’ve played this fair as an independent ride operator since 1992. Then last year was the first year as the sole carnival provider. We have a commitment to the fair to provide the “best of the best,” meaning that even though we can provide all the rides, what we do is we take a certain percentage of the rides for us and the balance are rides that we feel would be a tremendous asset to the fair.” The Myers family brought in the new Gosetto four-story Fun House called New York, New York. Other rides came from Powers Great American Midways, Michael Wood (outgoing OABA presi-



dent), Dreamland and Land of Fun. Zaitshik was quick to add, “We got great people that augment our equipment here. We’re not a one man team. This is not a Wade Show event. It’s a Wade Show with the help of a lot of really great people.”

When asked about new rides for this edition of the fair, Flood replied, “Care was taken to ensure that entire families could enjoy rides of every level of thrill together at the 2016 Florida State Fair. The Super Cyclone (Pinfari coaster), Jungle Twist (Wisdom spinning coaster) and Balloon Wheel (Zamperla) offered fun for parents and kids alike, while the Stampede, Hurricane and Disk’O (Zamperla) ensured that the more daring riders would not be disappointed. The traveling roller coaster, the Comet II (Schwarzkopf), also returned this year to the delight of many.” The new completely illuminated gondola Dream Wheel car with LED lights (Technical Park) was also on the midway.

There were numerous new attractions at the fair. The White House Experience featured presidential memorabilia from the Franklin D. Roosevelt era through today, along with replicas of the Oval Office and White House Briefing Room. The display even featured a selection of former first ladies’ dresses.

Amusement Today asked Hayes about the food aspect of the fair. He replied, “It wouldn’t be the Florida State Fair without the debut of outrageous — and outrageously delicious — new concoctions. For the second year, the Florida State Fair held the People’s Choice Burger contest, allowing patrons to cast an online vote for their favorite burger from a list of remarkable imaginings. Bacon continues to rule as evidenced by the selection of the Bacon Bomb Burger as the Fair favorite,



This is the second year that Wade Shows has been the sole provider for the Florida State Fair. They served in the capacity of midway manager, utilizing a few rides from four other operators. Below, Corky Powers (left), owner of Powers Great American Midways was on the fair grounds with Frank Zaitshik, owner of Wade Shows. Powers had a few of his rides on the midway. COURTESY STEVE O’DONNELL; AT/B. DEREK SHAW

with the Redneck Burger — a creation that included fried bologna and baked beans — coming in a distant second.”

There was even more new fair food as Hayes continued, “Also generating a great culinary buzz was the new funnel cake pizza, the Double Barrel burger (a burger patty sandwiched between two doughnuts — with another half doughnut in the middle for good measure) and the PB&J and bacon quesadilla. For fair goers with more of a sweet tooth, there was the deep-fried birthday cake pop or a yummy glazed Amish doughnut (hold the burger).”

Numerous other enhancements were made to the fair-



grounds in time for the 2016 edition. “The Special Events Center renovation continued with the completion of the restroom improvements and the interior painting. This building houses the Arts and Craft Marketplace and also was the location of the Governor’s

Day Luncheon and the Agricultural Hall of Fame Banquet. In addition, our asphalt-paving project continued as we upgraded several areas of our parking lot roadways. The Expo Hall was upgraded to include new meeting rooms,” said Flood.



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CARNIVAL LIGHTS

COMPILED: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

Officials of the **Illinois Department of Agriculture**, Springfield, said in February that planning for the **2016 Illinois State Fair**, Aug. 11-21, held in Springfield, and the **2016 DuQuoin (Ill.) State Fair**, Aug. 26-Sept. 5, continues despite upheavals in leadership along with restructuring plans.

The restructuring has involved combining the operations of the two fairs. In addition, **Kevin Gorden**, longtime operations director at the state fair, was named as division manager of Fairs and Promotional Services. He will oversee the management of both the Illinois State Fair and DuQuoin State Fair.

In February, **Shawn Mayernick**, 36, of Springfield, was named assistant state fair manager in Springfield where he will focus on the Illinois State Fair. Mayernick has worked for the **Prairie Capital Convention Center** since 2013 where he was director of business partnerships for the center.

The search for an assistant state fair manager in DuQuoin is ongoing.

The last state fair manager, **Patrick Buchen**, left his job overseeing both state fairs in September. At the time, he cited interference from **Gov. Bruce Rauner's** office and said he was forced to resign. The administration said that Buchen had a hard time communicating with other employees and was creating a "toxic atmosphere" in the workplace.

In addition to dealing with the reorganization and leadership challenges, the Illinois State is still behind on paying some vendors from the 2015 fair. Vendors who provided services to the 2015 state fair — things like garbage collection, portable toilet rentals, hay and straw for the animals and sculpting the butter cow — still hadn't been paid at the first of this year because a state budget hadn't been passed. Without a budget, there is no spending authority.

According to a news story in *State Journal Register*, vendors are owed about \$1.59 million from the 2015 fair. The largest amount is \$252,000 owed to judges, superintendents and show employees, the figures show.

Clifford "Rip" Rippetoe, president and CEO of the **Kentucky State Fair Board**, is leaving the state job to head up the staff of the **San Diego (Calif.) Convention Center**.

Rippetoe's decision was disclosed in a press release from the fair board last month. He had been in the fair board post since January 2013, when he was hired at \$250,000 a year. He starts work as president and CEO of the San Diego facility April 15.

The Kentucky board oversees the operation of the state-owned **Kentucky Exposition Center** and the downtown **Kentucky International Convention Center**. It has a staff of more than 200 and a multi-million annual budget.

Rippetoe, who is from Las Vegas, said that it was a personal decision to be closer to his children and grandchildren. During his tenure at the fair board, he helped orchestrate funding to expand and renovate the downtown convention facility, a \$180 million project due

to get underway in August and take two years to complete. The center will stay closed during the construction.

Also under his leadership, the fair board moved toward financial stability, gradually reducing the amount of the state subsidy.

An interim CEO will be named by the fair board until it decides on a process to name a replacement.

Officials of the **Brown County Fair**, Aberteen, S.D., set to run this year August 15-21, have decided to use **ShowClix** to better manage ticket sales, and hopefully remove the headache of customers buying tickets for Brown County's largest event.

A credit card breach forced the Brown County fair to use an in-house ticketing service for sales last fall. But that system over sold rodeo tickets. It caused a tremendous amount of confusion and a lack of space, something they're hoping to avoid this year.

Fair Manager **Derek Ricci** is hoping ShowClix is the solution.

"One of the things that ShowClix will allow us to do is be better engaged on social media," Ricci was quoted as saying in a local newspaper. "They've got some social media components that we can generate through Facebook and Twitter."

Ricci said making customers buy separate passes for the rodeo will eliminate mistakes made in the past. Fair officials are expecting about 300,000 visitors this year.

The **Ottawa County Fair Board**, Holland, Mich., has petitioned Park Township to allow alcohol sales at the annual week long event and potentially other concerts through the year.

Park Township owns the fairgrounds and township ordinance bars alcoholic beverages on municipally owned property. Officials were expected to consider the request that would likely require adjustments both to the law and to the 20-year lease between the fair board and township. The lease is up in 2020.

The idea came from the township. To celebrate its centennial, Park Township waived its own policy for one day in August and had a beer tent during its celebration at township-owned Winstrom Park.

With state lawmakers and Baltimore County Council members considering bills to limit gambling at the state fairgrounds in Timonium, **Maryland State Fair** officials are seriously considering a move out of the county, according to a March 4, 2016 story in the *Baltimore Sun*.

William C. Marlow, an attorney for the **Maryland State Fair and Agricultural Society**, which owns the fairgrounds and operates the annual state fair, was quoted as saying: "We are not the Timonium fair. We are not the Baltimore County fair. We are the state fair ... We're looking elsewhere."

The state fair property is about 89 acres with a mix of manufacturing and business zoning. It's valued at about \$50 million for tax purposes.



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Storms dampen grounds, but not spirits, South Florida Fair

AT: Pam Sherborne
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WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — Despite multiple tornado watches and warnings, thunderstorms and nonstop rain on consecutive days, South Florida Fair officials are declaring this year's fair a success.

The wet 2016 edition of the fair ran January 15-31.

South Florida Fair and Palm Beach County Expositions Inc. President and CEO Rick Vymlatil said the unaudited, unofficial numbers for the 2016 event reflected an increase in per capital spending on 12 of the 17 days of the fair pointing to an improved area economy. Pricing remained the same for fair admission and rides.

All totaled, the fair's 2016 edition may be one of the top three fairs in the fair's 104-year history from a gross revenue. Unaudited attendance numbers showed a 28 percent drop from the 558,675 visitors in 2015 to 402,620 this year.

"On days that were not impacted by weather, fairgoers flocked to the fair, establishing new records for admis-

sions and midway revenues on eight of the 17 days," Vymlatil said.

This year's South Florida Fair experienced more than five inches of rain during its 17-day run. The weather-impacted days were Friday, Jan. 15, when tornado warnings were announced in the early afternoon and .49 inches of rain fell; Friday, Jan. 22, which brought 1.31 inches of rain; Wednesday, Jan. 27, resulted in 2.44 inches of rain; and .71 inches of rain came down on Thursday, Jan. 28.

The carnival midway, provided by Wade Shows, was completely closed for two days due to safety concerns. The weather also resulted in the midway only being open for approximately five hours on two other days of the fair.

The sun shone on the closing weekend, but despite experiencing record attendance on the final weekend, it was still not enough to make up for those four weather-impacted days.

"Given the five inches of rain we experienced on four days during the fair and the fact that we just about didn't



The 2016 South Florida Fair, West Palm Beach, which ran January 15-31, was dampened when storms dumped five inches of rain during the 17-day fair. The rainy weather resulted in the midway being closed for two days and opened with limited hours on two others. Yet, in spite of all that, officials were very pleased with the overall results, specifically in the area of revenue. Wade Shows provided the midway. COURTESY SOUTH FLORIDA FAIR

open at all on two days and had two other days that were severely impacted by weather, that's not a bad result," Vymlatil said.

Wade Shows provided over 200 rides, games and attractions including four new rides. Those rides were Super Cyclone Roller Coaster, manu-

factured by Pinfari; Disk'O, manufactured by Zamperla; Jungle Twist, Wisdom; and New York New York Fun House, Gosetto.

Guests also were treated to four stages of music and entertainment, as well as grounds entertainment.

The event kicked off on

the evening of January 14 with its Ride-A-Thon. Admission and rides cost \$10 with a coupon that could be obtained from the fair's website.

That evening included a fireworks show.

The agriculture and livestock programs featured more than 1,000 exhibitors.

2016 Fort Worth Stock Show unveiled grounds improvements

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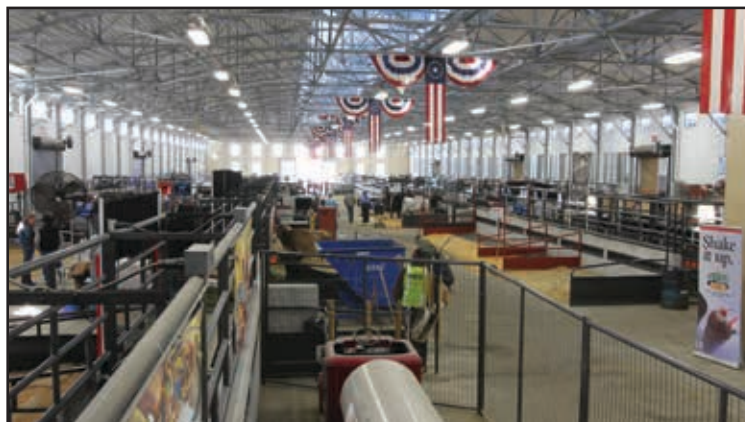
FORT WORTH, Texas — Fort Worth Stock Show, along with city officials, unveiled three completed components of a grounds overhaul prior to this year's running of the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo, Jan. 15-Feb. 6.

Those components were the 300-foot-long Tower Promenade that runs between Cattle Barns 1 and 2, an all-new Milking Parlor, and a fully renovated Cattle Barn 2.

The wide, arched pedestrian walkway was built to make it easier for thousands of visitors to get from parking lots on the south side of the Will Rogers complex to the north side without having to work their way through a barn.

"It will eventually take visitors to our new multipurpose arena that is set to open in 2020," said Matt Brockman, publicity manager.

Brockman said Cattle



The newly renovated Cattle Barn 2 was unveiled at the 2016 Fort Worth (Texas) Stock Show and Rodeo, January 15-February 6. Featuring electric outlets for each cattle tie and, new lighting and ventilation systems, the Cattle Barn 2 renovations are a prototype for planned renovations to Cattle Barns, 1, 3, and 4, as well as the swine and sheep barns in 2020. COURTESY FORT WORTH STOCK SHOW & RODEO

Barn 2 was basically taken down to the frame and rebuilt. It features electrical outlets for each cattle tie "so it will now be very hard to overload the system."

Originally built in 1948 as were many of the barns, Cattle Barn 2, also features improved lighting, ventilation and space for the animals as well as improved hallways and rest rooms,

and wider walkways.

Improvements were also made to the Stockman's Cafe.

Going into the last weekend of the show, Brockman said the new Milking Parlor, which is attached to Cattle Barn 2, was staying packed.

"We have bleacher style seating for up to 120, a state-of-the-art sound system and digital screens," Brockman



Here is a look at the new 300-foot-long Tower Promenade during this year's Fort Worth (Texas) Stock Show and Rodeo, which ran January 15-February 6. The promenade connects the parking lots on the south side of the Will Rogers complex to the north side.

COURTESY FORT WORTH STOCK SHOW & RODEO

said. "We have had to station people there so that it doesn't get overcrowded during the programs running throughout the day of the show.

"We have been very, very excited about this," he said.

Cattle Barn 2 renovations are a prototype for planned renovations to Cattle Barns 1, 3 and 4 as well as the swine and sheep barns.

Officials want all the ren-

ovation projects complete at the same time the new arena is ready in 2020.

The cost for this first part of the project, Tower Promenade, Cattle Barn 2 and Milking Parlor, was \$14.5 million. Estimated cost for the multi-purpose arena is \$450 million, with the city funding \$225 of that and the remainder coming from private funding.



BUSINESS, SAFETY & CLASSIFIED

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Disney Springs expansion attracts more retail, restaurants

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — **Disney Springs**, the open-air, waterfront retail and restaurant complex designed to bring a touch of sophistication to **Walt Disney Resort**, is rapidly doubling in size — expanding to offer more than 150 shopping, dining and entertainment options.

More than 30 new tenants recently have been announced. Among the high-profile brands joining the plaza are **Anthropologie**, **Lacoste**, **Under Armour**, **Kate Spade New York**, **Sephora** and **Lucky Brand**. They are slated to open in phases beginning May 15.

Inspired by Florida's waterfront towns and natural beauty, Disney Springs has four distinct outdoor neighborhoods — The Landing, Marketplace, West Side and Town Center — all interconnected by a flowing spring and vibrant lakefront. Guests can enjoy a colorful assortment of restaurants and high-quality retailers, including premium, affordable luxury and fast fashion options.

"Disney Springs has quickly become a favorite destination for our guests — and they are going to love what's to come," said **George A. Kalogridis**, resort president. "Guests will enjoy an experience unlike any other in Central Florida with even more opportunities to shop in unique and distinctive stores and enjoy world-class dining. Disney Springs offers something for everyone and does it in a way that only Disney can. It truly is the place to be."

Twenty-eight new stores



will be located in Town Center, which offers a mix of shops and eateries along with a promenade where guests can relax, refresh and reconnect. It features Spanish Revival-style architecture drawing from a rich history of explorers who landed in Florida centuries ago.

New dining options in Town Center include **D-Luxe Burger**, a Disney-owned concept offering gourmet burgers made from a signature blend of beef, unique toppings and freshly baked buns; **Amorette's Patisserie**, featuring the art of pastry-making; **Tablas Frontera**, a contemporary Mexican-themed restaurant from renowned chef **Rick Bayless**; and **Homecoming — Florida Kitchen and Shine Bar** by chef **Art Smith**, showcasing farm-to-fork cuisine inspired by the Sunshine State.

Additional aesthetic en-

Disney Springs is providing even more opportunities for guests to relax and enjoy themselves. When completed in 2016, the expanded open-air shopping, dining and entertainment complex will double its offerings from Disney and other noteworthy brands.

COURTESY WALT DISNEY WORLD RESORT

hancements are being made to the complex.

As guests enter Town Center, they will be warmly greeted at the Welcome Center, where guests can relax and take in the landscaping and waterfront views. In the Marketplace, **Fulton's Crab House** will open a new concept this fall. The re-imagined restaurant will welcome guests with a bow-to-stern update including interiors reflecting the luxury of modern yachting and a lushly ap-



pointed rooftop lounge overlooking Disney Springs.

Relocating to the Marketplace is **Bibbidi Bobbidi Boutique**, which is moving from **World of Disney** into a new, expanded space near **Once Upon a Toy**. Here, guests ages 3-12 will receive the royal treatment — getting made up like their favorite Disney princess with the help of their own Fairy

Godmother-in-Training. This country parlor-inspired location will include an enlarged salon and a photo room to capture memories.

The Disney Springs expansion project, which is nearing completion this year, will create an estimated 1,200 construction jobs and nearly 4,000 full- and part-time operational roles.

—Dean Lamanna

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Cedar Fair responds to reports of possible park sale

New attractions affirm Great America's desire to 'stay put'

AT: Dean Lamanna
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SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Having commenced its 40th anniversary season on March 25, **California's Great America** is looking forward to a busy 2016 operating schedule that includes a recently announced winter holiday event, WinterFest, and the opening of a new motion simulator-based attraction called Mass Effect: New Earth 4D Holographic Journey.

But shadowing the park's celebratory mood and promotion of its expanding list of attractions have been rumors and some media reports suggesting a possible sale of Great America. The 116-acre park, operating since 1976, sits on increasingly valuable leased land adjacent to the two-year-old **Levi's Stadium** (home of the NFL **San Francisco 49ers** football team and site of this year's Super Bowl) — and developers have been circling for some time in the red-hot Silicon Valley real estate market.

The Great America parcel was formerly owned by the City of **Santa Clara's Redevelopment Agency**, with which the park negotiated its long-term lease. The land is now held by the Successor Agency to the Santa Clara Redevelopment Agency, which — under a state mandate — will be putting it and other former redevelopment holdings up for sale later this year.

Amusement Today obtained the following statement via Great America from the park's Sandusky, Ohio-based parent company, **Cedar Fair**, clarifying its local business position:

"We believe that Great America has compelling potential for future development as an amusement park and entertainment venue. Consistent with our long-term vision for Great America, we have filed a rezoning application with the City of Santa Clara that would allow for the addition of new attractions, shows and events that will enhance the guest experience.

"In light of the fact that our ground lease runs through 2074, we have the



necessary control of the property to pursue our long-term vision. In addition, we have created enough financial flexibility to exercise our right of first refusal for the purchase of the property and that option will be considered as the land sale process moves forward."

Cedar Fair's major investment in Great America's new Mass Effect 4D attraction, which was expected to debut shortly after *AT* went to press, and WinterFest, for which it is budgeting several hundred thousand dollars, appear to affirm the company's commitment to remaining in Santa Clara.

In fact, WinterFest is designed to extend the park's operating season through the end of the year. The five-week celebration begins Nov. 25 on

weekends, running daily Dec. 19-23 and 26-30.

"WinterFest will be one of Northern California's most spectacular winter events — delivering a unique experience where friends and families can create memories and traditions during the holiday season," said **Raul Rehnborg**, park vice president and general manager. "Mass Effect and WinterFest are the first of many exciting additions planned for Great America in the coming years."

WinterFest will transform the park into a winter wonderland wherein guests can skate in front of the iconic Carousel Columbia, admire extensive displays of lights and décor, view live holiday shows, see Santa's workshop and Mrs. Claus's kitchen, and enjoy scrumptious holiday fare, as well as experience 18 rides and attractions.

The winter scene will be dominated by one of the San Francisco Bay Area's tallest Christmas trees, flanked by giant toy soldiers greeting guests.

•cagreatamerica.com

OdySea Aquarium rising in Arizona, major hires announced

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — On track for a summer opening, **OdySea Aquarium** has completed the extensive steelwork and many of the towering, ornately stamped concrete walls that comprise the three-story, 200,000-square-foot facility.

Amusement Today was invited on a construction tour of the state-of-the-art building in February. It is the centerpiece of a 35-acre, \$200 million complex within the Talking Stick Cultural

and Entertainment Destination Area, which is part of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community.

"This is truly an engineering marvel and a major accomplishment," said **Amram Knishinsky**, Ph.D, the project's founder. "We are now ramping up our team that will actively manage the aquarium as we rapidly progress on this highly innovative project."

The aquarium has made several major hires.

Greg Charbeneau, for-

merly of **Atlantis Resort & Dolphin Cay** in Nassau, Bahamas, and a 28-year industry veteran, has been appointed general manager. He will oversee all operations at OdySea.

Also new to the senior management team are **David Peranteau**, curator of husbandry, and **Jessica Peranteau**, curator of animal behavior. They join OdySea from **Six Flags Great Adventure & Safari** in Jackson, N.J., and bring a combined 40 years of expe-

rience working with both land and sea animals. They will oversee the aquarium's 5,000 animals and approximately 300 different species.

OdySea has contracted

with multi-award-winning **MacGillivray Freeman Films** of Laguna Beach, Calif., to produce a signature film for the facility's 3D theater. —Dean Lamanna



The 200,000-square-foot OdySea Aquarium in Scottsdale (above) is tentatively set to open in July. Aaron Studebaker, representative of the Talking Stick Cultural and Entertainment Destination Area, and OdySea's **Ran Knishinsky** stand before the attraction's giant, under-wraps martini glass-shaped tank. COURTESY ODYSEA/McCARTHY BUILDING COMPANIES (ABOVE); AT/DEAN LAMANNA



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Auction conducted by Rides 4U

Everything sells at Miracle Strip Amusement Park auction

PANAMA CITY BEACH, Fla. — A successful silent auction of the rides and attractions of **Miracle Strip Amusement Park** in February has left the former park site empty.

Len Soled, Rides 4U, Somerville, N.J., the company which conducted the auction, said there was not a piece of equipment left unsold. And, everything had been moved away by the first week of March.

"The rides and attractions were bought by both carnivals and parks," Soled said. "It went really well. Everyone, buyers and landowners, were satisfied with the way things went."

The silent auction began at

the first of February and ended February 22. It was first announced that all rides had to be removed by February 29, but the purchasers were given to March 9.

After reopening in 2014, Miracle Strip Amusement Park closed last September among rumors of the park being sold. That never took place. The

parks owners were evicted from the land in November for not paying rent. Miracle Strip Amusement Park originally opened in 1963.

Some of the rides sold included **SDC 51 Meter Galaxy Coaster**; 1991 **Sellner Tilt-A-Whirl**; 2 **Eli Bridge** rides, 1975 (Eli 16) rim drive park model wheel and a 1974 **Scrambler**

on 1995 **Frederickson Trailer**; from **Allen Herschel** a 1958 **Red Baron**, 1964 **Carousel**, 1949 **Car Ride**, 1955 **Sea Plane Ride**; 1970 **Philadelphia Toboggan Company Boat Ride** and 1963 **Starliner Roller Coaster**; 1966 **Floyd Baxter Scooter Structure** with **Soli & Duce** cars; 1977 **Eyerly Loop-O-Plane** and a 1975 **Rock-O-Plane**.

Others were a 1985 **Zamperla Tea Cup Ride**; 2011 **Outdoor Jumpling Pillow**; 1959 **Mangles Dry Boat Ride**; 1969 **Chance Trabant**; Six 1990 **Skee Ball Co. Skee Ball** machines; 1937 **Alan Herschel Caterpillar Ride**; **E-Z-Go Club Golf Cart** and a **Com-Pac Water Ride**.

—Pam Sherborne

Betson opens Charlotte, N.C. vending facility

CARLSTADT, N.J. — **Betson Enterprises**, a division of **H. Betti Industries Inc.**, recently announced the opening of a new facility located in Charlotte, North Carolina. This new office is located at the former **Choice Equipment Sales, Inc.** location, 2701 Hutchinson McDonald Road, Suite M, Charlotte, North Carolina.

The 12,000 square foot facility will serve as Betson's primary vending equipment reconditioning and distribution center. This expansion will allow Betson Enterprises to better service their customers as business continues to grow.

"We look forward to expanding our sales efforts into an already established Southeastern vending market as well as serving our current customer base better out of this dedicated facility," commented **Christopher Betti**, National Vending sales manager of Betson Enterprises.

For more information regarding this location, contact Christopher Betti at (201) 806-7728 or email at: cbetti@betson.com

Betson Enterprises is a division of H.Betti Industries and is headquartered in Carlstadt, New Jersey and has 14 distribution offices nationwide.

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Annual NJAA trade show hosts 30 vendors, 500-plus attendees

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — The annual **NJAA East Coast Gift and Variety Show** was recently held for the seventh time at the **Golden Nugget Resort and Casino** near the famed Boardwalk and just off the Atlantic City Marina. The show is held each mid-February in conjunction with the East Coast/Mid-Atlantic regionalized **NAARSO** (National Association of Amusement Ride Safety Officials) Outreach Safety School, attended by 125 people.

The 30 vendors occupied nearly 100 booths in the 15,000-square-foot Grand Ballroom. Over 500 amusement industry staff, owners and operators were in attendance. Exhibitors included ice cream, plush, licensed toys, games of chance, staff shirts and uniforms, novelties and other vendors. This show was established to provide close-to-home buying and business opportunities for New Jersey amusement operators.

Kimberle Samarelli, executive director of the **New Jersey Amusement Association** described the overall show feeling, "Excellent. It was very upbeat and positive vibes and happy faces on the show floor."

The gift and variety show started as a motel show

in the mid 1970's at the **Aztec Hotel** in Seaside Heights, N.J. Vendors operated out of their rooms, with attendees traveling room to room.

Attendees typically travel from all over the mid-Atlantic region, as far south as the Carolinas and north from New England.

On Wednesday evening a Scholarship Fund Cocktail Party was held on the trade show floor, for the second time. "It was a huge success. People (vendors) love to grab a cocktail and appetizers and write orders. It is great to network and socialize amongst friends and close the show and go to dinner," said Samarelli.

On Thursday, before the start of the trade show, a ride regulations briefing and panel discussion to discuss the RCMT (Recognized Certified Maintenance Technician Program) and other issues took place.

Before the trade show opened on Friday a 10 a.m. session by the Legalized Games of Chance Control Commission was held. The speakers presented on the Certification and Policy Update.

In summary, Samarelli feels, "It was very well attended. Running the NAARSO training at the same time

always helps both the trade show and NAARSO." The 2017 East Coast Gift and Variety Show occurs February 22-23 and NAARSO training will be February 21-23, 2017.

Other NJAA events this year includes the 57th Annual Dinner Dance, May 9th; 19th Annual **Give Kids the World** Golf Outing, September 20, at **Sea Oaks Golf Club**, Little Egg Harbor, N.J.; and the NJAA annual membership breakfast meeting, November 17, in Orlando, Fla., during the IAAPA Trade Show.

The 2016 NJAA East Coast Gift and Variety Show was sponsored by: **Allied Insurance; Bruno and Company, Haas & Wilkerson Insurance; Jersey Paper** and **Naughton Insurance, Inc.**

The New Jersey Amusement Association is a proactive organization, identifying concerns, while working for the safety, health and overall economic betterment of the amusement industry. The New Jersey Amusement Association Scholarship Fund, Inc., a separate non-profit corporation was formed in October, 1988. Scholarships to one or more students employed in the industry have been presented annually since 1990.

—B. Derek Shaw

PAPA Spring Meeting again held in Chocolatetown, USA

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

HERSHEY, Pa. — Ninety members and guests of the **Pennsylvania Amusement Parks Association (PAPA)** met February 29 and March 1 for their annual spring meeting at **Hershey Lodge and Convention Center**. Fourteen of the 19 member Pennsylvania parks/attractions participated, along with 18 member suppliers/manufacturers. Guests included staff from the **Pennsylvania Association of Travel & Tourism** and the **Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Bureau of Ride and Measurements Standards**. New member organizations this year include **Extreme Engineering; AAA Mid-Atlantic; In Gate Solutions** and **Tons of Fun Shows**.

The first day started with a PAPA board of directors meeting followed by a reception and banquet that evening. The invocation before the meal was provided by **Franklin Shearer**, retired **Hersheypark** general manager. The evening proceedings were led by **Jeff Davis**, Operations manager of **Sesame Place** and 2016 PAPA president.

The organization again held

a 50/50 Raffle for their scholarship fund. As a result, nearly \$730 was raised for the **Barbara J. Knoebel Scholarship Fund**. The winner, **Carl Crider, Jr.**, general manager of **DelGrosso's Park & Laguna Splash Water Park**, donated his portion back to the fund. Each year four, \$1,000 scholarships are awarded to students who work at any of the participating member parks/attractions. Upon conclusion of dinner, many attendees retired to The Forebay Lounge to continue networking and imbibing.

The second day started with the annual breakfast membership meeting. Association business included reports in various aspects of the industry: legislative progress, Amusement Ride Safety Advisory Board, the fall **Parks and Carnivals Education (PACE)** ride safety seminar, water park issues, PAPA website and human resource issues. While this is normally handled by the chair of each committee, this time it was ably handled by president **Jeff Davis** who streamlined the proceedings. "The biggest highlight was that I kept it short," quipped Davis. He went on to provide a summary of



Jeff Davis, Sesame Place, is the president of PAPA while Leanna Muscato, Knoebels Amusement Resort, serves as vice president of PAPA. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

three meeting points. "The tourism study that was just released really hits it home. When you tell people those numbers it is kind of eye opening and shocking. We love that we offer these scholarships. Although it is only a thousand dollars in an expensive educational system, every dollar got to help with students. We have really been working on the website (paamusementparks.com)." The website is volunteer led and has been improved and updated.

The "Sweetest Place on Earth" is traditionally where the meeting is held. Davis explained the thinking. "In the spring we always meet in Hershey. It is kind of central in the state. Of course it's cold out, so nobody is open. In the summer we rotate it to the different member parks. So it's really a great opportunity to see a park that maybe you haven't seen before. I know my park president has never been to **Knoebels**. I have never been to **Waldameer** which is in 2017, so it's kind of a neat way to see each other's facilities and for the hosting facilities — kind of a show off which is fun to do with your counterparts. It's like having a party at your house."

AT asked Davis about his first year in office: "It's been a great year." He went on to share his thoughts on an on-going, state-wide issue. "The sales tax exemption that has been proposed in the state budget of removing that sales tax from amusement park tickets, that's when you see the strength of the organization. When you have to rally around a topic together — everybody is speaking one voice. Even though we are competitors understanding this is something we need to do for the good of the industry and for tourism in Pennsylvania that helps us all. That's when I think you see the strength of an organization."

Davis talked about his 2016 priorities: "We are close with the tourism funding for the state. We want to make sure that we have a seat at the table and a voice in that. We are working with **Pennsylvania Restaurant & Lodging Association (PRLA)** and **Pennsylvania Association of Travel & Tourism (PATT)** to make sure that we are doing our part as an industry to really push that. If we could have the funding that we had 10 years ago (\$30-35 million dollars), we're all going to benefit from it. On top

of the regular things we do, like scholarship and the PACE ride seminar and the legislation that is out there, we need to stay focused on sales tax and funding for tourism." The organization also contributed funding for marketing research with the **Pennsylvania Tourism Partnership**.

The Case for Tourism Funding Executive Summary was distributed to members. In six years the state lost \$324 million in state taxes by defunding tourism. (Funding was at 7.3 million in 2015, down from \$29.8 million on 2009.) Pennsylvania has lost \$7.7 billion in visitor spending the last six years, ranking the state last in the country for state tourism funding relative to industry size. The study contends that tourism is not an expense, rather an investment in Pennsylvania. The full report can be found at prla.org/patourismstudy.

Summing things up Davis commented, "We don't run with an executive staff — any staff, so it's truly a volunteer organization, which makes it even more incredible, having been around 81 years. It keeps us very close to the topics at hand."

Upon conclusion of the PAPA spring meeting, over 35 attendees participated in the ever-popular open roundtable discussion in the Press Room of the **Giant Center**, next door to **Hersheypark**. This is the fifth year the roundtable session has been held. The discussion, coordinated by **Gary Chubb**, senior director of Maintenance at **Hersheypark** covered the entire gamut. Topics included: ADA Water Park Compliance, drone policies, metal detectors, employee recognition, early and late season staffing, best food items along with new retail items and more.



The always popular round table discussions took place after the official portion of the PAPA meeting in the press room of the Giant Center, Hershey, Pa. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

Knott's Boysenberry Festival serves up innovative flavors

BUENA PARK, Calif. — Knott's Berry Farm is shifting its focus to fun-seeking foodies for its annual two-week Boysenberry Festival. This year's event began showcasing the eponymous fruit — the historically home-grown cross between four different berry species — on March 19 and will continue presenting creative variations on its zesty flavor through April 3.

Set in the park's Ghost Town section, which currently is ramping up its own 75th anniversary celebration, the festival features over 70 boysenberry-inspired dishes, desserts and drinks. Taste treats run an impressive gamut — from deep-fried alligator bites and fries with boysenberry aioli to boysenberry BBQ short ribs (slathered with Knott's own **Berry Market**-brand sauce) to boysenberry trifle.

(Yes, this is your opportunity to sample boysenberry meatballs!)

The park's Wine and Craft Brew Tasting Garden offers plenty to wash it all down: boysenberry wine, boysenberry cider and Belgium boysenberry beer are available for the slaking.



All this culinary indulgence takes place against a backdrop of special festival entertainment. From sun up to sun down, live music, dueling fiddlers, "vine" dancing, a dance party called Jammin' in the Dark and a Party in the Park with the **Peanuts** characters can be enjoyed by guests of all ages. Festivalgoers also can watch or participate in daily pie-eating contests and shop for handmade gifts at dozens of craft vendors.

In addition to boysenberry-themed banners and décor, the iconic Charleston Circle foun-

tain has been transformed into a floral waterfall adorned with colorful flowers and boysenberries. For a piece of living history, **Walter and Cordelia Knott's** original roadside boysenberry stand offers guests the opportunity to purchase authentic boysenberry plants.

Knott's Boysenberry Festival is included with admission to the park, which has extended its hours from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. for the event. Food-tasting experiences are offered at an additional cost.

—Dean Lamanna



The annual Knott's Boysenberry Festival, which runs through April 3, is presenting an array of goodies incorporating the tasty hybrid berry, including a boysenberry chicken and sausage sandwich (above left), raspberry BBQ ribs (above) and boysenberry cheesecake. COURTESY KNOTT'S BERRY FARM



ZiX, Intermark Ride Group selected

Ride Entertainment names sales partners for Skycoaster brand

STEVENSVILLE, Md. — Ride Entertainment has selected ZiX and Intermark Ride Group to represent their world-famous Skycoaster attraction in Mexico, Central and South America. They will offer customers both sales and revenue share opportunities for the thrilling attraction.

"The ZiX and Intermark partnership was a natural choice for us because of these company's strong ties to these markets," said Mark Rosenzweig, managing director of Skycoaster. "We feel that they will be able to grow the ride's regional presence. It is already the most popular extreme ride in the world, we cannot think of a better way to celebrate Skycoaster's 25th Anniversary than to partner with a great team like this."

"This partnership has been fantastic for us and we look forward to seeing it grow" added Rosenzweig. "ZiX is known for bringing South America the most cutting-edge attractions. Intermark Ride Group has been our partner for a decade, helping us in our expansion all over the Americas, and Skycoaster is the ultimate

About the companies

Ride Entertainment is a leader in providing sales, operations, financial partnerships, and installations to the attractions industry.

Skycoaster is the premier extreme thrill ride in the attractions industry. The company has given more than 30 million flights at nearly 100 sites on six continents since the ride's inception in 1992.

ZiX is a company specializing in the amusement industry focusing on amusement parks, waters parks and events.

Intermark Ride Group is an international sales, marketing and consulting company specializing in new and used ride equipment for the amusement-theme park and attractions industries.

thrilling customer-active experience in parks. Together we'll make an enormous shift in the market from Tijuana (Mexico) to Ushuaia (Argentina)."

Skycoaster attractions can be found on six continents in a myriad of sizes, from 100 feet (30.5 meters) to

the towering 300-foot (91.5 meter) model found in Florida. By requiring the riders to pull the "ripcord" to start the experience, it was the first interactive thrill ride.

Adam Sandy, Ride Entertainment's chief Business Development officer, is excited about continuing the ride's current momentum. "Skycoaster has seen a rejuvenation in popularity under Ride Entertainment's decade-long ownership. We saw three ride openings in 2015, two of them in Mexico at **Six Flags Mexico** and **El Rollo Waterpark**, and we feel that this is a market for extreme thrills that has not been served to date. We are excited to see the growth continue," he said.

"We are thrilled to be partnering with a powerhouse brand like Skycoaster for the rapidly growing Latin American park and attractions market," stated **Gina Guglielmi**, Intermark Ride Group. "We see huge potential for expanding the reach of this dynamic attraction in Mexico, Central and South America. We look forward to working with Skycoaster and the Ride Entertainment team," she said.



Above, the 180-foot-tall monopole Skycoaster at Parque de la Costa in Argentina. Ride Entertainment has selected ZiX and Intermark ride Group as sales partners for the Skycoaster brand. COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT

XL Group plc announces completion of Allied International Holdings, Inc. acquisition

DUBLIN, Ireland — **XL Group plc** (NYSE: XL) announced on February 1 that its indirect wholly-owned subsidiary, **XL Reinsurance America Inc.**, has completed the acquisition of **Allied International Holdings, Inc.**, the holding company of **Allied Specialty Insurance, Inc.** and **T.H.E. Insurance Company**, a leading insurer of the outdoor entertainment industry in the U.S.

XL CEO **Mike McGavick** said: "We're pleased to officially welcome our Allied colleagues to **XL Catlin**. Their underwriting expertise in this niche specialty risk business along with their exceptional client service further enhances our ability as a leading provider of specialty insurance and reinsurance to meet the ever evolving needs of clients in the entertainment industry."

T.H.E. Insurance Company, which had approximately \$70 million of gross written premium in 2014, provides general liability, workers comp, inland marine, auto-liability, and certain property insurance to clients in the amusement and entertainment industry, including carnivals, amusement parks, fairs and festivals, hot air balloons, fireworks, concessionaires, family entertainment centers and waterparks. The privately held company was founded in 1983 and has an AM Best A- rating.

"We're proud to be an official part of XL Catlin," said **Mary Chris Smith**, chairman and president of Allied Specialty Insurance, Inc. "Given the success of Allied and XL Catlin's individual track records in the specialty underwriting area, we are confident that together this is a winning combination for Allied, XL Catlin and our clients."

Bay Tek completes purchase of Skee-Ball

Plans to keep five Skee-Ball products, retire all others

PULASKI, Wis. — **Bay Tek Games Inc.**, new owners of **Skee-Ball Inc.**, will move five of Skee-Ball's 10 games into their product line and retire five. At least those were the plans last month.

"We are not 100 percent sure, at this time, but that is what we are looking to do," said **Holly Hampton**, director of marketing and innovation for Bay Tek.

Bay Tek's purchase of Skee-Ball was final February 23.

Four of the five games Bay Tek plans to keep were to be exhibited at the Amusement Expo held, as *AT* went to press, at the Las Vegas (Nev.) Convention Center. Those games are the classic Skee-Ball game, two basketball games and the six-foot Spin-N-Win.

"We plan to retire the four-

foot Spin-N-Win," Hampton said. "We used to have a full size basketball game, but we retired that one some years ago because we couldn't compete in that area."

The fifth game will be the Centennial Alley Skee-Ball game.

"At the end of the day, we are really excited about all of this," Hampton said. "It will help to further diversify our line."

Bay Tek and Skee-Ball representatives have been working together to make the transition as smooth as possible. Hampton said it is Bay Tek's policy to offer relocation packages to workers of acquired companies.

"But, there is usually a very small percentage that actually pick up and move," she said.

When Bay Tek purchased Skee-Ball, it also purchased the latter's building in Chalfont, Pa. Bay Tek is in the process of putting that building on the

market for sale.

Bay Tek also plans to exhibit the Skee-Ball products at the Licensing Expo set for June 21-23 at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nev.

In news reports released at the time of the sale in February, **Joseph W. Sladek**, who bought Skee-Ball in 1985, called the sale a "bittersweet goodbye."

A purchase price was not disclosed.

Skee-Ball was invented and patented by **J.D. Estes** of Philadelphia in 1909. The first Skee-Ball alleys were sold and distributed to the outdoor amusement industry market by **Maurice Piesen** in 1914.

Bay Tek Games is a family owned and operated company founded in 1977. Other acquisitions by Bay Tek include **Coin Concept**, purchased in 1997; **Seidel Amusements** in 1999; **Meltec Games**, 2003; **Victory Lane Ideas**, 2004, and **Wood Chuck Woods LLC**, 2006.

Former Disneyland president, ad guru Jack Lindquist dies at 88

ANAHEIM, Calif. — **Jack Lindquist**, the former president of **Disneyland** and longtime executive with **The Walt Disney Company**, died of natural causes at his home on February 28. He was 88.

A native of Chicago who found work as a child actor in Hollywood, Lindquist graduated from the **University of Southern California** and began his career with The Walt Disney Company following the debut of Disneyland in 1955. His job as the park's first advertising manager led to greater, increasingly influential com-

OBITUARIES

pany roles in succeeding decades — including head of marketing and entertainment for Disney parks in the U.S. and overseas — before he was named president of Disneyland in 1990.

Among the promotional innovations he developed were Disney Dollars, Grad Nights, off-site ticket sales and the wildly popular "I'm going to Disneyland / Disney World!" campaign. He led the push for the expansion of Disneyland into a full-fledged resort with a second gate, which ulti-



Jack Lindquist at Disneyland, where he served as president beginning in 1990. COURTESY THE WALT DISNEY COMPANY

mately became **Disney California Adventure**, before he retired after nearly four de-

the good fortune to know Jack will always remember the kindness, humility and dedication that made him such an important part of this company and a true Disney legend," said **Robert A. Iger**, chairman and chief executive officer for The Walt Disney Company, in a statement.

Last November, Lindquist was named to the **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions'** Hall of Fame for his Disney work, executive mentorship and larger contributions to the business.

—Dean Lamanna

Mendel S. "Mickey" Kaliff, Kaliff Insurance and WWII veteran, dies at 92

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — **Mendel S. "Mickey" Kaliff**, 92, of **Kaliff Insurance Co.**, a family owned and operated insurance company founded in 1917, died February 16, 2016 in San Antonio, Texas. Kaliff's parents, Cecelia Soloman Kaliff and Morris H. Kaliff, founded the company, which has grown over the years to one of the top providers of specialty entertainment insurance coverage in the areas that include fairs and festivals, carnivals, inland marines, properties, concessionaires, circuses, liquor, rain, autos, haunted houses and directors and officers.

Kaliff was an alumnus of the **Texas Military Institute** and the **University of Texas**. In WWII, he was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant **U.S. Army** at age 18, Parachute Infantry, assigned to the Office of Strategic Service and served behind enemy lines in North Burma.

After the war, he joined his father's insurance business. He retired in 2000. His son, Mitchell H. Kaliff, is now the company owner.

Kaliff served as officer or director of: American Israel Public Affairs Committee, Anti-Defamation League, American Civil Liberties Union, Presidents Council Brandies University, Incarnate World College, **Texas Bank**, People to People International, **U.S.**



Mendel S. "Mickey" Kaliff

Small Business Administration, Hall of Fame Showmen's League of America, Name of Lloyd's of London, Planned Parenthood, and covert member of Texas Cavaliers.

Kaliff is survived by his cherished wife of 36 years, Gemey Gilbert Hutchison Kaliff, children Melissa Kaliff, Melani Kaliff Skybell and spouse Nic, Mitchell Kaliff and spouse Bruce Smiley-Kaliff, Matthew Kaliff and spouse Beth; stepchildren Dr. Renee Hutchison, Gregory Hutchison and predeceased by stepson Jeffrey Hutchison; sister Dorothy Kaliff Jonas and companion Joshua Pierce, six grandchildren and friend Charles Skibell.

A reception in celebration of Kaliff's life was held March 6, at the Kaliff Building, San Antonio, Texas.

Terry Van Gorder, 82; former head of Magic Mountain, Knott's Berry Farm

COTTAGE GROVE, Ore. — **Terry Van Gorder**, a former president of **Magic Mountain** theme park in Valencia, Calif., and **Knott's Berry Farm** in Buena Park, Calif., died March 2. He was 82.

Van Gorder, born in Palo Alto, Calif., was a **Yale University** graduate who served in **U.S. Naval Intelligence** before developing deep roots in the amusement industry. Having learned golf course construction and maintenance from his father, he joined the **Newhall Land & Farming Co.** in 1964 — rising to senior vice president. During this time he built **Valencia Golf Course** and designed and built **Vista Valencia** and **Vista Chica** golf courses, as well as **Indian Dunes Motor Recreation Park** in



**Terry Van Gorder
1934-2016**

Valencia.

From 1971-79, Van Gorder served as president and CEO of Magic Mountain, and from 1981-98, he was president and CEO of Knott's Berry Farm. While with the latter park, he conceptualized and oversaw the creation of attractions including Knott's Camp Snoopy, Kingdom of the Dinosaurs, Wild Water Wilderness/Bigfoot

Rapids, Indian Trails and Mystery Lodge. Under his direction, Knott's won the Applause Award — a prestigious international theme park industry honor presented biannually.

Van Gorder also was instrumental in the conception, planning and development of **Knott's Camp Snoopy** at the **Mall of America** in Bloomington, Minn.

Following his retirement in 1998, Van Gorder relocated to Cottage Grove, Ore., with his wife, Elaine. In addition to his wife, he is survived by his former wife, Priscilla Lowe, and his son, Eric; his daughter, Catherine, and son-in-law, Ed Faciana; plus two grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

—Dean Lamanna



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PEOPLE WATCH

Walt Disney Imagineering gains Bob Weis as new president

GLENDAL, Calif. — **The Walt Disney Company** has announced the promotion of **Bob Weis** to president of **Walt Disney Imagineering**, replacing **Bruce Vaughn**, with a few months cross over during the transitional period. With a big push to boost the theme parks with new attractions and improvements to existing parks, plus the opening of the **Shanghai Disney Resort**, led to Bob's promotion.

Bob Chapek, chairman of **Walt Disney Parks and Resorts**, announced the changes in an internal memo. "Since creativity is at the heart of what we do," the memo said, "we need to relentlessly innovate and evolve our organization." There have been some other reshuffles of top staff with **Craig Russell** now working in Project Integration and **Kathy Mangum** will now be responsible for the creative side of **Disney Cruise Line** and **Disneyland Paris**.

SeaWorld Entertainment announces leadership changes

ORLANDO, Fla., — **SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.** announced on February 19 changes in its operational management team at its corporate headquarters and its San Diego, San Antonio and Williamsburg locations. The company also announced the creation of its **Resorts Development Group**.

John Reilly, **SeaWorld San Diego** park president, has been promoted to chief parks Operations officer replacing **Daniel B. Brown**, who announced his retirement, both effective April 1.

Dr. Christopher (Chris) Dold, vice president of veterinary services, has been promoted to chief Zoological officer. He succeeds **Brad Andrews**, who will continue to serve the company as Zoological director emeritus, helping to drive the company's conservation efforts, support new product development, and assist during the transition. These changes are effective April 1.

"These leaders bring to their new roles an extraordinary depth of knowledge and talent and the right expertise to deliver on our strategic priorities," said **Joel Manby**, president and chief executive officer of **SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.** "John is a strong and experienced operator who has proven his leadership, both at **Busch Gardens Williamsburg** and amidst a challenging operating environment at our California location."

As Chief Parks Operations Officer, Reilly will have operational oversight over all of the company's theme parks. Reilly has led **SeaWorld San Diego's** park operations since 2010 and has held a variety of leadership positions at



other company parks and the corporate office.

"Chris is a highly respected veterinarian and scientist under whose leadership our animal care programs and contributions to conservation have helped further advance the care for animals in zoological settings and in the wild. I am confident that both John and Chris can drive forward our strategic priorities," Manby added.

As Chief Zoological Officer, Dold will lead the company's team of zoological professionals and oversee all animal programs that provide comprehensive care for the marine and terrestrial animals at the company's parks, as well as the animals assisted as part of the company's rescue program. Dold joined the company in 2005 as a senior veterinarian at the company's **SeaWorld Orlando** theme park.

Other staff changes

The company also announced that **Marilyn Hannes**, vice president of Global Sales, has been promoted to **SeaWorld San Diego** and **Aquatica San Diego** park president effective April 1. Hannes has served in a number of roles since joining the company in 1997, including vice president of Marketing and Sales for the company's California parks.

In addition, **Carl Lum**, **Busch Gar-**

dens Williamsburg and **Water Country USA** park president, has been named **SeaWorld San Antonio** park president effective February 19. He succeeds **Dan Decker**, who is leaving the company. Lum will be responsible for leading the company's Texas parks, **SeaWorld** and **Aquatica**. Lum has been with the company since 1999 and has held various leadership roles within the company, including vice president of Finance for **Busch Gardens Tampa** before being promoted to **Busch Gardens Williamsburg** park president in 2010.

The company is considering both internal and external candidates for the vacancies created by the promotions described above.

Resort Development Group

The company announced the formation of its Resort Development Group and the appointment of **Steve Iandolo** to the position of vice president of Resort Development, effective February 1. Iandolo is responsible for leading the resort construction and development effort that was introduced in November as part of the company's plan for organic and strategic growth. Iandolo has nearly 30 years of successful experience in design and construction in the hospitality industry. While with **Universal Studios Parks and Resorts**, he was creative director for the development of Orlando's **Royal Pacific Resort**, **Hard Rock Hotel** and **Portofino Bay Hotel**. Iandolo joined the company in February from **Herschend Family Entertainment** where he was vice president, Hospitality Development.

Six Flags Entertainment names Jim Reid-Anderson executive chairman

John Duffey promoted to president and CEO; **Marshall Barber** named chief financial officer

GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas — **Six Flags Entertainment Corporation** announced on February 18 that its board of directors has split executive leadership roles at the company by naming **Jim Reid-Anderson** the company's executive chairman and promoting **John Duffey**

to president and CEO, both effective February 19, 2016. Duffey has also been

appointed a **Reid-Anderson** director of the company.

"The company has strong momentum and tremendous growth opportunities over the next decade, and I am proud to have helped our team deliver record guest satisfaction, industry-leading innovation, all-time high employee satisfaction, and our sixth consecutive year of record financial performance," said **Jim Reid-Anderson**. "Strategically and operationally, we are firing on all cylinders and I am extremely excited to mentor the company's next-generation of leaders."



Reid-Anderson



John Duffey has been instrumental in our past success and is a proven leader within the company, and this is an excellent time to transition responsibilities and develop others on our management team as we continue building the **Six Flags** brand globally."

"I am honored and excited to become the CEO of **Six Flags** and work side-by-side with the best team in the industry," said **John Duf-**

fey. "We are extremely well-positioned for long term growth and shareholder value creation."

The company also announced that **Marshall Barber** has been promoted to chief financial officer. Barber has built a successful career at **Six Flags** over the last 20 years, serving most recently as the company's vice president financial planning & analysis. He is extremely experienced, having previously held both corporate level and park-based roles with increasing levels of responsibility.

In addition, the company announced its senior vice president of in-park serv-



Barber

es, **John Bement**, has retired from **Six Flags** following 48 years of dedicated service. Bement has been honored by Reid-Anderson for his incredible work, and received the company's prestigious **Angus Wynne Lifetime Achievement Award**, which has only been awarded to a handful of people who have devoted their lives to enhancing both **Six Flags** and the theme park industry.

David McKillips, formerly senior vice president of corporate alliances, was named the new senior vice president of in-park services and **Brett Petit**, senior vice president of marketing and sales, has assumed the responsibility of the corporate alliances sales team, consolidating all marketing and sales functions under one leader.



PEOPLE WATCH

Crayola Experience names new GM

ORLANDO, Fla. — The **Crayola Experience**, located at **The Florida Mall**, has named former Revenue Manager **David Norton** as its new general manager, effective immediately.

The position was recently vacated by **Scott Poling**, who came from the brand's headquarters and original location in Easton, Pa. Poling has moved to Bloomington, Minn., to open the family attraction's new facility at **Mall of America** which will open this spring.

Norton joined the Crayola Experience team shortly after its grand opening last summer. Prior to that, Norton spent many years with **Silverwood Theme Park** and **Boulder Beach Water Park** in Athol, Idaho. He held positions ranging from director of operations and director of revenue and entertainment, to general manager and vice president.

Norton earned his degree at North Idaho College and has a background in culinary arts, having once served as a private chef on yachts in countries from Singapore to Australia.

"We are very proud to have David join our team and assume a major leadership role for us," said **Dan Aylward**, the brand's chief operating executive. "His knowledge and expertise are valuable to ensuring the best guest experience for everyone who visits."

The Lifeguard Store announces new rep

NORMAL, Ill. — **The Lifeguard Store** announced the hiring of **Faithanne Molyneaux** in Waterpark & Resort sales.

"As we continue to grow as the leader and most trusted provider to water parks and resorts, Faithanne brings years of aquatic experience and knowledge to our team. Her positive attitude and strong work ethic are a perfect fit for our expanding company. We are excited to have her on board" said **Amy Hilten**, COO of The Lifeguard Store.

Molyneaux has long been an active member of the aquatics industry having served as a Lifeguard Instructor and Trainer for the last 19 years, and leading both water parks and **YMCA** aquatics programming. "I am very excited to join this group of very talented, innovative professionals at The Lifeguard Store. Pools are a passion for me and I am looking forward to reconnecting with former colleagues and friends across the country. I'm also excited to meet new friends — helping to bring not only the best equipment and uniforms to their facilities, but also the best value."

Molyneaux has spent the last 2 years working for the **Blue Zones Project**, and was previously Group Vice President for the YMCA of Greater Omaha. Prior to working with the Y, Molyneaux led numerous water parks including **Kalahari Resort** in Ohio, **SomerSplash** in Kentucky, and **The Beach Ottumwa** in Iowa.

Gold Medal adds to executive team

CINCINNATI, Ohio — Ongoing growth and success have prompted the recent expansion of the **Gold Medal Products Co.** executive team. In order to facilitate future development, the company has hired the following: **Curt Fisher** as vice president - Sales, U.S. and Canada; **Mark Wallach** as vice president of Manufacturing and **Craig Oaks** as vice president of Human Resources.

Fisher joins Gold Medal with over 20 years of experience in the sales field. With a background in manufacturing and durable goods, his career history includes more than 13 years of progressive leadership roles with **Whirlpool** and **Goodman Distribution**.

As an expert in leading operations, Wallach has an impressive resume of improving efficiency and productivity. Within his 24-year career, he served as Plant Manager at **Pella Corporation**, where he strengthened workflow processes and implemented strategies to maximize performance. In addition, as Director of Continuous Improvement with **Sunrise Windows**, he was responsible for the direction and execution of initiatives company wide that resulted in double digit productivity improvements.

Oaks has spent his career building profound experi-



Fisher



Wallach

Duane Wiechman celebrates 50 years with Chance rides

WICHITA, Kan. — **Duane Wiechman** is celebrating 50 years of service this year with **Chance Rides**. Wiechman, a carnival and used ride expert with Chance Rides, was hired by **Harold Chance**, founder of the company, in 1966 in the position of office manager.

The story goes that Wiechman "cautiously accepted" the job fearing that Harold Chance wouldn't be able to keep him busy.

That fear, however, quickly waned. Fifty years later, Wiechman is busier than ever.

According to a Chance Rides press release: "All of us at Chance Rides greatly appreciate Duane's service to the company and his ever pleasant demeanor."

Chance Rides honored Wiechman on March 1 with recognition, along with a cake.

He is the first employee to reach 50 years at Chance Rides.



Wiechman



Enjoying a good laugh together in the Chance Rides factory are (l to r): Duane Wiechman, Dick Chance and Mike Chance. Wiechman is the first Chance Rides employee to reach the 50 years of service milestone for the Wichita, Kansas ride supplier. COURTESY CHANCE RIDES

ence in managing human resources for such companies as **Comair Airlines**, **Cornerstone Brands** and **Apex Supply Chain Technologies**. Under his leadership, he has directed strategic planning, innovated processes and deployed effective employee relations programs. Oaks fills the position of vice president of HR following the retirement of **Sally Evans-Lloyd**.



Oaks

WhiteWater makes Strategic Partnership hire

RICHMOND, B.C. — **WhiteWater** recently announced its latest senior hire, **Chris Perry**, to the WhiteWater team as executive vice president of Strategic Partnerships. Perry brings an enviable reputation in water park operations, having helped some of the world's best water parks as an operational consultant. He has spent the last 15 years with **Wild Wadi Waterpark**, eight of those years as the youngest general manager in the group, having full accountability for the water park and overseeing aquatic safety for some of the most luxurious hotels in the world.

He has spent his entire life in the industry, starting in operations as a teen doing everything from cleaning locker rooms and lifeguarding, to serving food; having done almost every job in a park gave him a perspective which helped him motivate teams to create exceptional guest experiences.



Perry

Gateway employee serving on committee

GILBERTSVILLE, Pa. — One of **Gateway Ticketing Systems** Business Solutions Architects, **Charlie Broschart**, has been invited to serve on the 2016 **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions** (IAAPA) Global Manufacturers and Suppliers Committee.

"Charlie is an industry veteran who has traveled the globe to support our customers and the industries in which they operate," says **Michael Andre**, Gateway's president and chief executive officer. "I'm pleased to see his value to the attraction community recognized by IAAPA in his appointment to the Manufacturers and Suppliers Committee. They have gained a valuable asset and will benefit from his knowledge and experience."



Broschart

Accesso promotes multiple executives

ORLANDO, Fla. — **Accesso Technology Group plc**, a technology solutions provider to leisure, entertainment and cultural markets, has promoted four executives following a year of unprecedented growth and rapid global expansion.

As President, **Accesso LoQueue** and managing director, Europe, **Andrew Jacobs** will lead development, technical services, and operations for all aspects of the queuing side of Accesso's business globally. Jacobs' expanded re-

sponsibilities also include managing client partnerships and operations within Europe across all Accesso product lines.

Over the past seven years, **Janel Pisorchik** has played a key role in expanding the company's ticketing and queuing business. In her new role as president, Accesso Passport, she will be responsible for the growth, development and delivery of Accesso Passport ticketing solutions in North America.

Eric Petrusic has played a critical role in the development of Accesso technology utilized by leading attractions across North America. In his expanded role as chief technology officer, Petrusic will serve as a technical advisor, providing support and consultation on development efforts and technology infrastructure for the company's ticketing and queuing product lines.

T.J. Christensen has extensive background in marketing and sales and has played an integral role in developing the Accesso brand and marketing presence. As executive vice president, sales and marketing, Christensen will lead the firm's global sales and marketing team and together present a highly integrated set of solutions for current and prospective customers around the world.

"We are proud to recognize these key individuals for their outstanding leadership, innovative direction and relentless commitment to the customer service that sets Accesso apart," said **Steve Brown**, Accesso COO.

PGAV Destinations promotes Emily Pelcak

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — **PGAV Destinations** Project Manager **Emily Pelcak** has been promoted to director of Practice and Innovation at the St. Louis-based design firm.

In her new position, Pelcak will be fostering staff training and development, researching and encouraging innovative design, and implementing quality design documentation practices to cultivate PGAV's technical expertise in building construction practices.

"One of the most exciting aspects in my new role is the opportunity to have more one-on-one mentoring opportunities with our rising leaders," said Pelcak. "It's a privilege to be on the cutting edge of an industry leading company, researching and creating from scratch methodologies to continue to grow our reputation of providing creative services with quality implementation."



Jacobs



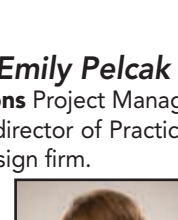
Pisorchik



Petrusic



Christensen



Pelcak

MARKETWATCH



COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 03/14/16	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	27.31	43.58	22.31
Merlin Entertainments Group/ Legoland	MERL	LSE	458.10	473.30	360.93
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	57.27	60.64	48.45
Comcast Corp./ NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	59.23	64.99	50.01
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	97.88	122.08	86.25
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	9010	TYO	1283.00	1321.00	1021.00
Haicahang Holdings Ltd.	2255HK	SEHK	1.76	2.13	1.09
Leofoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	10.55	12.90	8.22
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	20.94	24.41	16.18
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	17.40	22.68	16.86
Shenzhen Overseas Chinese Town Co., Ltd. (OCT)	000069	SZSE	6.78	14.78	5.88
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	53.53	55.35	41.6
Skyocean International	00593HK	SEHK	8.60	12.46	5.8
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	3832.00	4000.00	3304.00
Village Roadshow	VRL	ASX	5.23	7.68	5.06

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

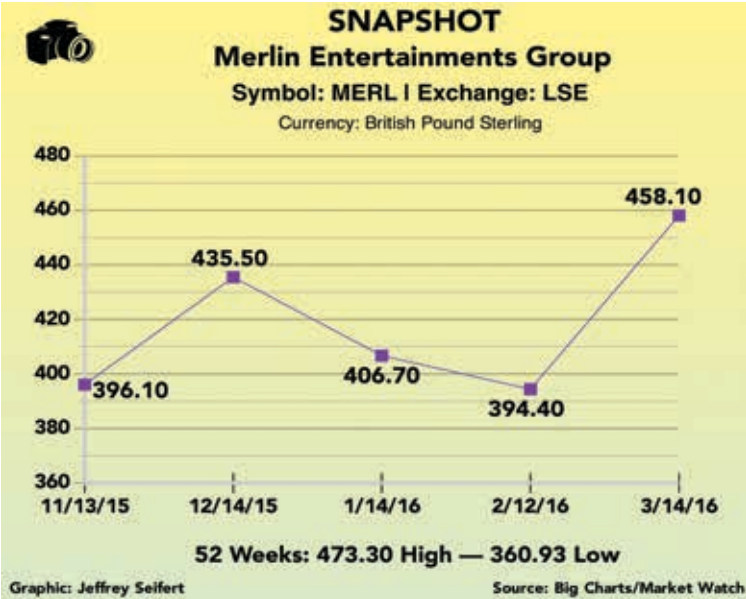
Worldwide Markets: **ASX**, Australian Securities Exchange; **CSE**, Copenhagen Stock Exchange; **LSE**, London Stock Exchange; **NYSE**, New York Stock Exchange; **NASDAQ**, National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations; **SEHK**, Hong Kong Stock Exchange; **SZSE**, Shenzhen Stock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

DIESEL PRICES

Region (U.S.)	As of 03/14/16	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$2.153	-\$0.929
Midwest	\$2.065	-\$0.755
Gulf Coast	\$1.990	-\$0.773
Mountain	\$1.999	-\$0.813
West Coast	\$2.153	-\$0.741
California	\$2.390	-\$0.812

CURRENCY

On 03/15/16 \$1 USD =	
0.8983	EURO
0.6965	GBP (British Pound)
113.75	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9852	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.3260	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.3258	CAD (Canadian Dollar)



BUSINESS WATCH

The Lifeguard Store enters into partnership

NORMAL, Ill. — **The Lifeguard Store** CEO **Mark Oostman** announced on March 8 that the company has entered into a definitive agreement with **Swim Shops of the Southwest**, a leading provider of swim team suits and training equipment in Houston Texas.

“The combination of The Lifeguard Store’s expertise within the lifeguard and facility equipment business with Swim Shops vast swimming knowledge will provide our customers with everything they need poolside,” said Oostman. “As with all important business decisions, we will work closely with our customers, vendors and employees to make the integration process as smooth as possible.”

“This partnership with The Lifeguard Store is all about better serving our nationwide customer base and taking our work to the next level” said **TJ Fry**, owner of Swim Shops of the Southwest. “We are excited to offer a wider range of products to our customers, especially the **RISE Aquatics** brand,” said Fry, who will continue to serve as general manager.

Viacom, Parques Reunidos partner in Europe

MADRID, Spain — **Viacom International Media Networks** (VIMN), a division of **Viacom Inc.** (NASDAQ: VIA, VIAB), a leading provider of youth and general entertainment content, and **Parques Reunidos**, one of the leading and fastest growing leisure park operators in the world, announced on March 8 that they will partner to bring **Nickelodeon Family Entertainment Centers** to Europe with the first opening in Spain 2017. The new deal expands VIMN and Parques Reunidos’ existing partnership following the success of Nickelodeon Land at **Parque de Atracciones** in Madrid, and Nick-Land at **Movie Park Germany**. These unique experiences will mark Nickelodeon and Parques Reunidos’ first foray in the family entertainment center business.

Tulsa State Fair awards midway to NAME

TULSA, Okla. — **North American Midway Entertainment** (NAME), a wholly-owned subsidiary of **Townsquare Media, Inc.** (NYSE: TSQ), announced on Feb. 22 that it has entered into a new agreement with the **Tulsa County Public Facilities Authority** to be the sole midway provider for the **Tulsa State Fair** from 2016 through 2018. “We are thrilled to be selected as the midway provider for the Tulsa State Fair, and are committed to providing high quality entertainment to its patrons,” said **Danny Huston**, president of North American Midway Entertainment.

Stock Earnings...

•SANDUSKY, Ohio — **Cedar Fair** (NYSE: FUN) reported on Feb. 17 record financial results for the year ended December 31, 2015. Highlights include: the company reported record full-year net revenues of \$1.24 billion, up 7 percent from 2014; net income of \$112 million, or \$1.99 per diluted limited partner (LP) unit, was up \$8 million from a year ago; adjusted EBITDA for the full year was a record \$459 million, up approximately 7% from last year and attendance at Cedar Fair’s parks was a record 24.4 million guests, a 1.1 million-visit, or 5 percent, increase from 2014.

•BURBANK, Calif. — **The Walt Disney Company** (NYSE: DIS) reported on Feb. 9 record quarterly earnings of \$2.9 billion for its first fiscal quarter ended January 2, 2016 compared to \$2.2 billion for the prior-year quarter. Diluted earnings per share (EPS) for the quarter increased 36 percent to \$1.73 from \$1.27 in the prior-year quarter. Excluding certain items affecting comparability, EPS for the quarter increased 28% to \$1.63. “Driven by the phenomenal success of *Star Wars*, we delivered the highest quarterly earnings in the history of our company, marking our 10th consecutive quarter of double-digit EPS growth,” said **Robert A. Iger**, chairman and chief executive officer, The Walt Disney Company. “We’re very pleased with our results, which continue to validate our strategic focus and investments in brands and franchises to drive long-term growth across the entire company.”

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More than 350 attend Pennsylvania Ride Safety Seminar

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Held twice each year, the **Pennsylvania Ride Safety Seminar** trains and tests hundreds of amusement ride operators in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. During February 23-25, more than 350 people from various amusement operations received safety training conducted by the **Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Bureau of Ride and Measurements Standards**. Course areas included: Inflatable Rides, Extreme Sports, Water Attractions, Haunted Attractions, Go Karts, Bumper Boats and more. "All of this training basically involves amusement rides, amusement devices, amusement facilities, targeting maintenance inspection and operation of amusement devices and attractions and amusement rides themselves," related **Phil Slaggert** coordinator of the three day educational program.

Seminar participants choose the specialty courses that are the most beneficial for their career path, job description, abilities, and employer benefit. When asked how this benefits the attendees, **Joe Filoromo**, supervisor, **Amusement Ride Safety Division, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture** said, "They are able to concentrate on what they need and not just go to a one-size fits all training, then learn about stuff they are never going to have their hands on." This spring, there were a total of 194 course options. Testing is provided for Class 1 and 2 Ride Inspectors and General Qualified Inspectors and Specialized Inspectors. The testing is independent of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture;

however it is sanctioned by them.

Filoromo explained who typically attends the seminar, "We have the traditional amusement parks and carnivals. We also have people that own only go-karts or only water slides or only inflatables, or only extreme sports. The newest big ride-type is trampoline parks."

The instructors for the three day training are all volunteers with a wide spectrum of specialties that impact the amusement industry, from all around the country. "This program is one of many that provide training for some aspect of the amusement, entertainment, recreation, leisure industry. All of the programs are top notch. Some of them target very specific categories; some are more broad-based. All of them have this wide variety of high caliber people that they try to bring in and try to present topics of interest," said Slaggert. He continued, "We hope we hold ourselves to that same bar. We try very hard to find people that bring in a high quality of knowledge and professionalism and can do a good conversation, do a good interaction with our participants, so that they go away with a good fundamental understanding of their specific operations. Hopefully we give them some information that in turn they can take as a baseline and keep expanding that once they leave us. It's all about learning and improving as an industry."

New this year was the use of web-X video technology that allowed some instructors who may not be able to travel to the program to participate. "It's not something we would do for most courses because there's still that live interaction ele-

SAFETY

ment to it. But in a few special cases we were able to bring instructors in that have never been able to attend before," said Slaggert. He continued, "As an example, **Albert Freedman** from **Battech Enterprises** was able to talk about **Dartron, Hrubetz, Manco** equipment that has never been able to attend before."

The Pennsylvania certification is recognized in many states across the country. In reference to the strong participation from New Jersey, Filoromo told AT: "They are training people for their program (RCMT, Recognized Certified Maintenance Technician). They have an on-going education requirement and they recognize the Pennsylvania training program." He went on to say, "A lot of people come here that don't work in Pennsylvania. They'll register in Pennsylvania just to have the credential of that Pennsylvania plate on their ride, or the credential of the amusement ride inspector license."

"We've been doing the program in Pennsylvania for 11 years, two times a year, said Slaggert who is also vice president of Risk Management for **Sky Zone** trampoline parks. "This will be the 22nd program we have produced in the commonwealth."

An expanded risk management program was offered as an all-day seminar the final day of training. Last year's offering — Entertainment Venues Crowd Control Seminar, run by A.J. Slaggert — was tweaked with additional new material for the spring 2016 version.

Topics covered in the day long program included: emergency planning, historic disasters case studies, corrective and preventive actions to lessen the impact of a negative incident, tent safety protocols, crowd control, management techniques and barricades, social media and instant communications, active shooter defense and more. The weather watching portion was presented by a member of the National Weather Service.

During their portion, the **Pennsylvania State Police** made a presentation on the **Pennsylvania Criminal Intelligence Center**, (PaCIC). This 24-hours-a-day "fusion center"



Some of the Pennsylvania Ride Safety Department Staff, I to r, are: **John Jardine**, Quality Assurance inspector, **Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture**; **Joe Filoromo**, supervisor, **Amusement Ride Safety Division, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture** and **Randall Arndt**, Quality Assurance inspector, **Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture**.

AT/B. DEREK SHAW

created in July, 2003, is a collaborative effort by numerous state agencies to provide resources, information and expertise to maximize the ability to detect, prevent, investigate and respond to criminal and terrorism activity.

The PaCIC organization operates with a threat analysis group, drug analysis unit, violent criminal groups, organized and general crimes areas as well. PaCIC always works with local municipalities, townships and counties for a unified front. The center representatives also talked about the reporting of suspicious activity to aide them in their job. They then went on to describe all the different types of activity that this encompasses.

The speakers went on to talk about threats to events that tax security teams including: large crowds, weather, unpredictable behavior, unanticipated situations and even disease. Facility vulnerabilities were also discussed and many security tips were shared. Even changing music to alter the situation will modify the energy of an event.

A couple of different group gatherings were discussed in length. A flash mob is when a group of people suddenly assemble in a public place and perform an unusual, seemingly pointless act for a brief time. Usually it is for a good cause, without damage or inconvenience and is fermented in social media.

Wilding occurs when people come out solely for the purpose of hurting or damaging your event. Those crowd leaders are usually in the back — they don't want to be injured. The crowd surge can be a di-

version for something else. The presenter reminded attendees that if you flush out a crowd, make sure you have a place to send them.

Commenting on his overall feeling of the three day seminar, Slaggert said, "It's a privilege to be able to put the program together and present it to people who want a high level of training that is very, very specific to the amusement industry."

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture has inspected and registered amusement rides under the Amusement Ride Safety Act since 1984 and regularly participates in education and outreach seminars that include classes and hands-on demonstrations. The next Pennsylvania Ride Safety Seminar is scheduled for November 1 - 3 at the **Holiday Inn Harrisburg, Grantville, Pa.** The Pa. Ride Safety program can be reached at: <http://paridesafety.com/>.

Editor's Note: The Pennsylvania Ride Safety Seminars are not to be confused with the annual PACE (Parks and Carnival Education) seminar, jointly sponsored by the Pennsylvania State Showmen's Association (PSSA) and the Pennsylvania Amusement Parks Association (PAPA). That seminar, presented by National Association of Amusement Ride Safety Officials, is scheduled for October and includes a "hands on" training session at one of Pennsylvania's amusement parks or at the seminar hotel with portable equipment brought in by local showmen. PACE offers inspector training for Pennsylvania Certified Inspectors and/or NAARSO levels. Program information can be found on the PSSA website: <http://pashowmen.com/> and PAPA website: <http://www.paamusementparks.com/>.



More than 190 different course selections were available to the attendees. Here, **Greg George** with **Rail Mechanical Services of Columbia, PA**, presents a class on hydraulic motors during the Pennsylvania Ride Safety Seminar.

AT/B. DEREK SHAW

2016 Northwestern Showmen's safety seminar another success

AT: Pam Sherborne
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SAFETY

This year's **Northwestern Showmen's Club Safety Seminar** went off without a hitch, drawing more than 200 participants, including instructors.

"I don't know what the exact numbers were," said **John Hinde**, one of the seminar's planners, "but I know we had 176 chairs set up for our opening event and those chairs were completely full. We had some people standing. Everyone was tickled to death at how well it went."

The seminar ran February 14-19, at **Oaks Amusement Park** and at the winter headquarters of **Funtastic Rides Inc.**, both located in Portland.

Hinde said the first days of the seminar were spent at the park and, fortunately, the weather held for some of the

outdoor activities. Then, the group moved over to the headquarters of Funtastic Rides.

The only thing he says they really need to expand on for next year is the space.

"We have plenty at the Funtastic Rides headquarters, but it is just that one room at Oaks," he said. "We will need to figure this out for next year because we know we will have a bigger crowd."

The Northwestern Showmen's Club (NWSC) is a non-profit organization consisting of members from the amusement, entertainment, fairs, and festival industry.

The club's safety seminar was established 35 years ago to provide a venue to promote continued education for the carnival industry and to provide an annual classroom setting for rais-



The 2016 Northwestern Showmen's Club Safety Seminar, held February 14-19 at the winter headquarter of Funtastic Shows, Inc. (above) and Oaks Amusement Park, drew 200 plus. Planners and participants were very happy with the results. Below, some of the attendees participated in classroom training and in the fall protection class held at Oaks Amusement Park. COURTESY JOHN HINDE



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ing the level of safety within the amusement industry by amusement industry professionals.

One of the educational areas they intend on expanding for next year is the fall protection class.

All of the planning, production, and education that goes into this seminar is done by volunteers from the Northwestern Showmen's Club.

Attendees can build a tailored course curriculum that best suits their needs. They also build long-lasting relationships

with instructors and their counterparts, encouraging the exchange of information between people performing the same functions within the carnival industry.

Hinde said this year there were 35 **NAARSO** tests administered during the NWSC seminar, as were 25 **Carnival Tech** tests (the NWSC-sponsored test), and six **AIMS** certification tests.

Forty-five people participated in the CPR/First Aid/Defibrillator courses.

Exhibitors push safety during IISF trade show

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SAFETY

RIVERVIEW, Fla. — A good portion of the vendors on the IISF Trade Show floor were connected with the safety aspect of the industry with the product or service they provided. Here's but a small sample of those companies.

Daniel O'Connor & Sons Inc. is a company based in Monson, Massachusetts, that specializes in drive cables and other parts. Brian Lemay told *Amusement Today*: "We're a manufacturer of drive cables for Ferris wheels, Tilt-A-Whirls — all the cable rides from years back up to now, even with the drops (rides) we manufacture cables for them. We supply the industry with wire rope." The cables are manufactured for both driving and operating the rides.

The company, in business since 1948, was once known as the largest manufacturer of endless drive cables for both parks and traveling shows. Lemay explained why their company participates each year. "You're here because this is a sight unseen business. If you're not here I don't think they still believe you are still in the business." Lemay added, "And you get to visit old friends." O'Connor & Sons has been participating for 47 of the past 48 years the trade show has been in existence, only missing the first one in 1969.

Grand Rapids, Michigan, is the home of **Advance Caster & Wheel Company**. *Amusement Today* spoke Jason Lindsey, sales representative: "We've been in business over 44 years selling different type of casters and wheels. Recently in the last year, we got into selling all different type of carnival ride wheels." This

new direction came about through a partnership with Millennium Elastomers.

Lindsey went on to describe the type of wheels he had on display for the show. "I brought the Zipper hard and Zipper soft wheel, the Dragon wagon and Go Gator wheels, Ring of Fire and Super Loop nylon and polyurethane and aluminum wheels, the mini Himalaya wheels, the Jalopy Junction wheel, the Wacky Worm wheel and the speedway caster, the ten inch Majestic bumper car wheel and the Tilt-A-Whirl cable drive trolley wheel retread."

Judy Sisson is a representative for **Knight Equipment Company**. She explained their operation: "We make the drive cables for all of the rides. We make segmented cables for the Zipper. We sell anything to do with nylon (and) galvanized. We sell duplex sleeves that they use for crimping. We also do the inspections and electromagnetic testing and splicing for ski areas all over the United States and half

way around the world.

Their display included crimping tools and cutters for wire rope, duplex sleeves and buttons along with other cable cutting materials. "We sell all the drive cables. They can order them from us and we ship them out UPS every day," explained Sisson about their service.

LJM & Associates, a company based right in Gibston was represented by Lewis Merz. Asked what the company offers, Merz explained, "We provide risk management services for the amusement and sports industry, domestically and nationally." Their business works with amusement parks, fairs, festivals, carnivals with inspections as well as insurance surveys.

Some of the businesses LJM has worked with include: Six Flags, Palace Entertainment, Apex Park Group, T.H.E. Insurance and American Specialty Insurance. In addition to work in the United States, the company has worked with parks in China, Brazil, Mexico and Canada. They also provide services for



Shown here at the Gibtown show is Brian Lemay with Daniel O'Connor & Sons. The company specializes in drive cables and other parts. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

large scale concerts and off-shore racing events.

Carnivals and parks who own any Eyerly Aircraft Company rides may want to get to know Guy Sherbourne with **G&S Consulting**, Stayton, Oregon. Products that were manufactured by Eyerly include: Rock-O-Plane, Roll-O-Plane, Loop-O-Plane, Fly-O-Plane, Spider, Monster, Bulgy the Whale, Toon cars, Ladybugs and more. The company was purchased by Oregon Rides, Inc.

Sherbourne repairs Eyerly equipment, teaches ride safety seminars and does ride inspections for insurance companies. Where all does Sherbourne travel? He explained, "Any place that they need me. I spent 10 days over in Australia, teaching an ASTM class to the Australian government this (past) summer. I've taken complete carnivals down to Panama. I've done installations in Turkey and the United Arab Emirates."



Lewis Merz with LJM & Associates offers inspections and insurance surveys for amusement parks, fairs, festivals and carnivals along with large scale concerts and sporting events. AT/B. DEREK SHAW



Guy Sherbourne with G & S Consulting Service does repairs for all types of Eyerly equipment. He also teaches ride safety seminars and does ride inspections for insurance companies. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

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Floats award-winning Cloud Coaster globally

Extreme Engineering CEO merges market savvy, imagination

AT: Dean Lamanna

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NEWCASTLE, Calif. — Growing up in the seaside city of Santa Cruz and amid the farmlands of Northern California, Jeff Wilson was an adventurous kid. He scavenged dumps for discarded electronics and, at age eight, built his first crude mini-bike from old farm parts. With five siblings, his ability to escape and find ways to entertain himself — and to learn how to focus — were youthful accomplishments.

“Even today, there could be atomic bombs going off around me, and if I’m concentrating on something I don’t notice it,” said Wilson from his machine shop-outfitted home here in the forested Sierra Nevada foothills, where he lives with his wife of 40 years, Joana. Though a trout thrashing in the stream on his property is likely the loudest sound for miles.

As CEO and founder of Extreme Engineering, which has offices in nearby Penryn and a manufacturing plant in Athens, Texas, Wilson has spent the last two decades building an award-winning company that creates interactive adventure equipment and attractions not only for the amusement and resort industries, but for Cirque du Soleil, NASA, the U.S. Army and other diverse clients.

While mobile climbing walls and portable ziplines are among its mainstays, Extreme Engineering’s introduction of the Cloud Coaster turned heads and was awarded Best in Show at the IAAPA Attractions Expo last fall. *USA Today* has predicted the ride — Wilson described it as a “cartless” roller coaster, with one passenger at a time suspended in a harness swinging along a twisting course — will become one of this year’s top amusements. The first of six planned installations in 2016 is expected to debut in Biloxi, Miss., in May.

Wilson, the son of a rock quarry equipment mechanic and a licensed vocational



nurse, got his undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering at Cal State Long Beach and holds certificates in polymer chemistry and aerospace — with further education in biomedical engineering. Prior to establishing Extreme Engineering, the father of three (son Philip, 35, handles sales and marketing for his dad) held mid- to upper-level management positions with the likes of Hughes Aircraft, American Hospital Supply and Hewlett-Packard.

Wilson’s company employs about 30 and works with numerous subcontractors; the CEO himself puts in only “cameo appearances” at the plant these days but remains creator-in-chief. He spoke with *Amusement Today* about his latest innovation.

What led you to create the Cloud Coaster?

We looked at products at the lower end of the roller coaster industry, which is about \$5 million. And then there’s a set of amusement rides that are as low as \$1.5 million. After that, there’s a big gap that goes down to the high-end ropes courses, mini-golf and go-kart tracks, which kind of fill a niche of up to about \$150,000 to \$300,000. Between \$300,000 and \$1.5 million, there are very few product offerings — and that’s the marketplace we knew we had to hit.

How did the concept evolve?

The think process began at least five years ago. And it morphed a lot. Ziplines came up, but they come and go. So we looked at a plethora of opportunities from which came a lot of cool product ideas and technologies that we could dominate pretty easily.

We settled on a “cartless” roller coaster that hangs underneath the track, unlike a traditional coaster where you’re riding on top. You’re

hanging from a trolley, to which you can connect anything — a couple seats, a harness, you name it.

The ride is largely gravity-fed, with the ability to add mechanical lift mechanisms like on a traditional coaster. This allows you to install it in a variety of terrains, outdoors or indoors, and make it as big or small as you want. We even designed a solar-powered mechanism so that you could be off the grid entirely, yet still lift people up a mountainside.

We heard that the popular video game *BioShock Infinite* — specifically, the transportation system seen in it — helped inspire the Cloud Coaster’s basic design.

Yeah, we’ve got a bunch of nerds on staff. [laughs] I remember all of us playing the video game, and someone going, “Hey, it may be cool if we can make a ride like that.”

Does the Cloud Coaster employ a traditional braking method?

We’ve developed magnetic brakes that don’t physically touch and are maintenance free. Our calculation is that it would be 300 years before you’d have to switch out the magnets.

The magnetic brakes looked good when we did all the calculations on paper; in reality, when we tried to have them work for a rider weight range of 45 pounds [minimum] to 300 pounds [maximum], we found that we could adjust it to where it would work great with a 300 pounder, but it would stop a 100-pound person dead in their tracks. And then, if you had the brake just slow down a 45-pounder, a 300-pounder would blow through it like it wasn’t there. So we had to figure that out. We got it nailed, and it’s great.

Were there any other technical hurdles?

Yes, scaling an electric lift mechanism. While a mechanism using current technology would lift a 300-pound person smoothly, it was so fast and strong it would jerk a 45-pound kid out of their clothes. To make it scalable, we had to utilize something out of the elevator industry

Jeff Wilson, CEO and founder of Extreme Engineering, produces top adventure products and also happily pitches them — as he did at IAAPA Attractions Expo 2015 in Orlando, where his company’s Cloud Coaster won the award for Best in Show. COURTESY EXTREME ENGINEERING



called a variable frequency drive, which comfortably regulates elevator speeds.

When you start looking at wheels on the trolleys, [other companies] are using roller skate wheels. The problem with those is that they’re made for low weights and not a commercial durability.... So we actually had to develop wheels that would work in a Disneyland kind of park environment safely.

How many Cloud Coaster inquiries have you had?

We’ve had hundreds, about 20 to 30 of them serious. Our goal this year is to limit it to six installations in which each application is unique and will allow us to learn something valuable.

The first one’s going inside a former Jimmy Buffet’s Margaritaville in Biloxi; it’s a large concrete building with a water park on top. A customer in Penang, Malaysia, has us putting one on a 68-story building; we’re taking people out over the edge from the top, looking down 700, 800 feet. We’ll make great money selling replacement underwear. [laughs]

What do your customers find most attractive about the Cloud Coaster?

Everybody who couldn’t afford a roller coaster now can. The other big appeal is that every amusement park is always out of space. By going vertical and monetizing unused space above some-

thing that’s existing, you don’t lose the revenue from what’s below it — you only enhance it. Imagine playing mini-golf or driving a go-kart and somebody’s flying above you. You’ll probably crash the go-kart, but at least it’s more interesting. [laughs]

Why did you move your manufacturing plant to Texas?

Seventy to 80 percent of our customers are east of the Mississippi, so moving closer to them made sense. Our products are large, and shipping is big. The Port of Houston is fairly close to our plant. Now that the Panama Canal is taking super freighters, we can ship anywhere worldwide as easy as we would on the West Coast.

Are you satisfied with your career and your success with Extreme Engineering?

No one would hire me specifically to do this kind of job, so I had to create it. A hard day’s work for me is walking around Disneyland looking at opportunities and things they need.

With Extreme Engineering, we’ve developed this unique amusement park-building cog in the middle of all these gears, and we’re an integral part of the machine. It’s been a real pleasure and a lot of fun; every day, I’m learning something. And I’m looking forward to continuing.

•extremeengineering.com

Walt Bowser joins Baynum Painting; named VP of Amusements

NEWPORT, Ky. — If you caught last year's 2015 **Golden Ticket Awards** presented by *Amusement Today* in New York City, you'll remember the skit from **Chris Baynum** and **Walt Bowser**, appearing as a hilarious ride painting duo.

Baynum first met Bowser in the late 1990s, and their close personal and professional relationship has remained strong after almost 20 years.

Now in 2016 the duo have officially teamed up, with Walt Bowser coming aboard as vice president of **Baynum Painting Inc.'s** Amusement Park division. "We are thrilled to have Walt as part of Baynum Painting's operation. He's a very well respected professional, and his industry experience and knowledge will be a huge help in managing the continued growth we're seeing as a service provider to so many important clients," said Chris Baynum, company founder.

While Baynum Painting's specialty has remained major roller coaster repaint projects, their expanded portfolio also includes water park ride structures, slide gel-coating, flat ride painting, and ride-car automotive

finishes — all important elements to maintaining any amusement park's image.

Bowser is also on the board of directors for the National Roller Coaster Museum.

Walt Bowser can be reached at (859) 491-9800, or by email at: walt@baynumpainting.com.

• baynumpainting.com

Live Oak Bancshares officially launches eLending initiative

WILMINGTON, N.C. — **Live Oak Bancshares** (Live Oak) announced on March 11 that it has officially launched its eLending initiative. This initiative offers expedited loans from \$75,000 to \$350,000 that are perfect for the purchase of games and equipment in an industry that has historically struggled to find financing. The process has been streamlined with quick approvals and fast closings, generally within 30 days, so borrowers can get the funds fast and get back to work. Additionally, the program offers competitive rates, 10 to 15 year terms, no prepayment penalties, no balloons or covenants and no fees charged by or paid to Live Oak.

"We plan to compete with bank and non-bank lenders with a completely transparent lending experience. Customers can expect to get a loan decision within 48 hours of a completed application, with a dedicated eLender to work with along the way. As a bank, we have the advantage of a lower cost of funds than non-bank lenders, which we pass on to our customers giving them a lower monthly payment," said **Neil Underwood**, president, Live Oak Bank.

Jason Lumpkin, formerly a senior loan officer within Live Oak's Emerging Markets division, has been tasked with leading the eLending team as general manager. Lumpkin joined Live Oak in 2011 and has served in multiple capacities within the company, from portfolio management and servicing to loan origination and new vertical business development.



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Walt Bowser, left, and Chris Baynum, Baynum Painting share a laugh onstage during the 2015 Golden Ticket Awards in NYC. Bowser has now joined the Kentucky-based company as vice president of the Amusement Division. AT FILE

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Las Vegas Happenings

• **Kiss by Monster Mini Golf**, a unique rock 'n roll themed amusement attraction based around the world-renowned band Kiss, is swinging into the **Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino** with an opening set for Spring 2016. Kiss by Monster Mini Golf closed its original location on the corner of Harmon Avenue and Paradise Road on February 6 to make its way to an expanded space and rock 'n roll environment located inside Rio All-Suite Hotel & Casino. The original location opened its doors in March 2012, and has hosted numerous Kiss band member appearances, rock 'n roll memorabilia shows, weddings, birthday parties, rock legend autograph signings, unique private events and nearly half a million mini golf enthusiasts.

• The **Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino Convention Center** expansion is now complete with February's opening of the 70,000-square-foot Oceanside Ballroom. The \$70 million expansion includes 350,000 square feet of new exhibit space, a 20,000-square-foot foyer and underground parking, which all opened in August 2015. The Mandalay Bay Convention Center now boasts more than two-million total square feet and more than 900,000 square feet of contiguous exhibit space with the ability to grow current shows and attract new corporate, association and incentive groups. Now that the expansion is complete, the final phase of Mandalay Bay's multi-year transformation can begin; the \$100 million redesign of more than 3,000 guest rooms. Mandalay Bay's Convention center has hosted the **World Waterpark Association's** annual trade show and convention in the past.

• **MGM Resorts International** will debut its dynamic park, dining and entertainment district on the Las Vegas Strip April 4. An eclectic blend of restaurants, bars and entertainment tucked into rich desert landscaping, The Park will become a central gathering place on The Strip's west side connecting **New York-New York** and **Monte Carlo** resorts as well as the new 20,000-seat world-class **T-Mobile Arena**. An interactive and social environment, The Park aims to build a sense of community through innovative programming and events.

• The Spa and Salon at the **Landry's Restaurants**-owned **Golden Nugget Las Vegas** was recently enhanced with an \$800,000 renovation. The 15,000-square-foot retreat features eight treatment rooms in the spa, including couples massage rooms and male and female spa lounges designed to serve as downtown Las Vegas' rest and relaxation destination. The spa lounges offer whirlpool Jacuzzis, dry saunas with cedar wood benches, herbal steam saunas, showers, vanity areas and re-furnished locker rooms overlooking the downtown Las Vegas skyline. In addition to these amenities, The Spa also offers an upgraded fitness center featuring state-of-the-art fitness and cardio equipment and a premium view of The Tank pool, Golden Nugget's picturesque year-round outdoor swimming experience.

• Your next tour of **The Mob Museum**, the **National Museum of Organized Crime and Law Enforcement**, could be via a robotic device you control from the comfort and privacy of your own home. Beginning April 1, Moe-Bot, a BeamPro telepresence robot created by **Suitable Technologies**, will enable museum guests to visit the museum via their computer screen or mobile device and direct their experience almost as personally as if they were physically there. Introduced as a way to expand the museum's audience reach to include anyone who cannot visit the museum in person, Moe-Bot will be used to enable visitors to participate in live, immersive, interactive, guided tours of the museum by a computer from virtually anywhere in the world.

• Adding a modern twist to the medieval flair for which **Excalibur Hotel & Casino** is known, the hotel is remodeling 1,995 guest rooms and suites in its newly renamed Royal Tower. Vibrant accents and splashes of color match the energy and atmosphere of Excalibur. The upgraded accommodations feature a completely smoke-free experience, new carpeting and bedding, modern furnishings and 40-inch flat-screen TVs. The overall project is scheduled for completion in April 2016.

• The **Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority** reported that the city of **Las Vegas** ended 2015 with continued strength in visitation. The destination welcomed 3.2 million visitors in December 2015.

New book highlights Roland Mack's success

REVIEW: Tim Baldwin
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RUST, Germany — Author **Benno Stieber** is a freelance writer in Germany that typically covers economic and political issues. In a departure from his norm, Benno offers a portrait of **Europa-Park** co-founder and ultimate figure-head — **Roland Mack**. In his new book *Roland Mack: King of Fun*, Benno traces the life of Mack via extensive interviews with Roland Mack himself, as well as family, friends and co-workers. In doing so, he not only shares the life of one of the most impressive and pioneering individuals in the amusement industry, but also the changing perspectives of the German culture. As would be logical, the book was originally written in German, but is now also available in English.

The first chapter connects to the time and philosophy of the German mindset as Europa-Park was being conceived. Not many decades ago, Germans didn't have a high regard for amusements. In referring to the dedication of Roland Mack and his wife **Marianne**, the author states, "They feel a duty to make the park something meaningful, and not just a place of diversion and amusement." In so doing, Roland Mack has become one with the park.

As would be expected, the book portrays Mack in an inspirational light, and deservedly so, but not necessarily 100 percent of the time. On rare occasion, the industry legend is noted with a harsh tone when it comes to demands and expectations he places on others and certainly upon himself. According to Mack, success has to be earned every day.

Chapter two looks at the Mack family. Throughout the park, traces of the family are everywhere. The family has said they have no interest in replicating success elsewhere; in other words, they have no desire to create a "chain" of theme parks. The family's heart and soul has been and always will be in the small town of Rust, Germany. The Macks have a deep loyalty to banks and vendors who believed in them at the beginning when most were skeptical. For them, the business is their private life and in turn, makes it difficult to be away from "the business" for long. Growing up and liv-



ing inside a park instills this into a person to a point. The ability to see the park through the eyes of its visitors is something Roland Mack tries to exemplify to his staff.

To say the book is entirely about Roland Mack is not completely accurate. It admittedly strays aimlessly a bit, such as delving into the deep 235-year history of Mack Rides in chapter three, as well as discussing the park in chapter four. However, both of these are intricately linked into the childhood, psyche and experiences of Roland Mack. With all the naysayers in the early 1970s proclaiming the park could never be a success, the family knew immediately it was all up to them. A death of a family friend made it even more so.

Walt Disney was a role model, and the Mack family never lost sight of having a wide range of attractions. Despite the fact the park originally had a limited lineup of attractions, the park greeted 700,000 in its first season. According to the family, Roland Mack's father, **Franz Mack**, said when observing the crowds of people waiting to get in, "Now we've gotten ourselves into a fine mess."

Success was apparent, but with it came growing pains as illustrated in the following chapter. Exits from the motorways became congested. As the park grew, longer stays became needed, but the region offered only limited accommodations. Virtually reminiscent of the investors originally approached, hoteliers responded to the Mack family with too much skepticism and no support. Eventually, Europa-Park got into the hotel business on its own, and in so doing became not only a resort, but one

of the largest private operators of hotels in the country.

With that challenge met, another one struck close to home a decade ago. Mack Rides was dealing with changes in business. Things were so drastic, the company discussed closing up shop. However, the family determination prevailed and the company today is as strong as ever with new product being contracted by parks around the world.

Chapter six is not about Roland Mack at all, but instead focuses on an overview of the amusement industry, leisure time and how Europa-Park fits into it.

The book concludes by examining Roland Mack's relationship with family, ranging from times past with his father to his current leadership role of preparing his sons to eventually take over. At his most reflective, Mack recalls his father's difficulty in expressing pride in his son's accomplishments, and how today even he admits the surprising challenge in doing so with his own sons. Both of his sons, **Thomas** and **Michael** are heavily involved in running the park, one overseeing the hotels and restaurants, the other heavily involved in **Mack Media** productions.

The business is the family and the family is the business. There is never a moment where they simply just sit together. They use every chance they get to talk about the customers or to negotiate about a new project.

The future is looking bigger and brighter. The well-publicized water park second gate and new hotels beckon on the horizon. Roland Mack isn't ready to call it quits. Not even a serious injury made him feel so inclined. He still feels too young to look back over his life's work.

The author concludes in saying Roland Mack is "one of the pioneers of the entertainment industry in Germany, and one of the first to introduce Germans to the concept of service. In short, he is one of the greatest German family entrepreneurs of all time."

Roland Mack: King of Fun is available at **www.Europark-shop.de**. It is essential reading for CEOs, general managers and park presidents. For anyone else, it is truly inspirational for all industry professionals.



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