

Mine Blower bursts onto the scene at Fun Spot

The Gravity Group delivers dynamite action at Kissimmee

AT: Tim Baldwin
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KISSIMMEE, Fla. — “The Mine Blower is an amazing ride in such a small footprint that really packs a punch. This is a one-of-a-kind custom coaster that you can’t ride anywhere else in the world,” said John Arie, Jr., chief operating officer of Fun Spot America Theme Parks.

A small footprint is correct. Shoehorned into a piece of land that used to hold a go-kart track, Mine Blower is the latest installation by The

Gravity Group.

Korey Kiepert, engineer and partner with The Gravity Group, commented on the snug fit: “We had to optimize the ride for the site. The far end is narrower than the front end; the challenge was to fit many passes into the ride. Because of the Timberliners, we can have a super-tight radius at the top of the lift hill.”

Standing at 83 feet tall, Mine Blower begins with a snappy turn off the lift speeding directly into an 80-foot first drop that belies its height. The 65-degree plunge starts the ride off with a huge bang that continues into an upside-down barrel roll directly over

► See FUN SPOT, page 5



A nine-month, \$14 million project at Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk has resulted in this formal park gateway and two new thrill rides. COURTESY SANTA CRUZ BEACH BOARDWALK

Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk expands

New main entrance brings added room for rides, food, fun

AT: Dean Lamanna
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SANTA CRUZ, Calif. — Northern California’s beloved seaside amusement institution, Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk (SCBB), is celebrating its 110th anniversary this summer with a just-completed \$14 million facelift that includes expanded offerings and new-found space for showcasing major rides.

Central to the nine-month improvement project was a new main entrance for the park, which never had a formal gate facing Beach Street across from its parking lots. An older building containing games and attractions was razed over the winter to make

way for a welcoming arched entry that leads into a bright, open plaza stretching across to the beach side of the promenade.

Two new thrill rides — a Zamperla Mega Disk’O called Shockwave and an ARM dual-arm Screamer named Typhoon — occupy high-profile positions in the new plaza, while a new food experience, a new birthday party room, more ticket windows, and several relocated and upgraded attractions and games round out the impressively reimagined and reorganized area.

“The goal of the project was to take a part of the park — our main entrance — that, to a large degree, was sort of an afterthought and create a grander sense of arrival,” said Santa Cruz Seaside Co. (and SCCB) President Karl Rice, the grandnephew of company CEO Charles Canfield, who

named Rice to the position two years ago. “We’re always focused on enhancing the guest experience, so that was an underlying theme.”

Rice told *Amusement Today* that the project, more than a decade in the planning, was based on factors ranging from guest surveys and spending patterns to how people generally interact with the park. SCBB’s in-house creative team collaborated with several outside design firms and vendors to arrive at plans that were both practical and aesthetically appealing.

“Over that 10-year period, there were a lot of changes,” Rice said. “But we kept massaging it. If you look back at all of the different concepts on paper, from where we started to where we ended up is very different. But it was a very

► See SCBB, page 6



At Fun Spot in Kissimmee, Fla., an inversion sends riders upside down directly over the station on the new Mine Blower coaster. COURTESY FUN SPOT

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NEWTALK

EDITORIAL: Tim Baldwin, tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

The barefoot challenge



Baldwin

Earlier this summer, I enjoyed several visits to various water parks. Some were all-day affairs and others were just brief stops for an hour or two.

I have enough water park experience under my belt to know that some type of water shoes can be a valuable benefit. But when planning to be on site for a brief time, I don't always have the footwear in hand on each visit. And looking around, I see more than half of water park visitors are barefoot as well.

While this is nothing new, there is no denying that a problem exists — a major one. At virtually every water park I visited, I saw many guests hopping about because concrete walkways became sizzling hot. Painfully so. And, yes, I can bear witness from personal experience.

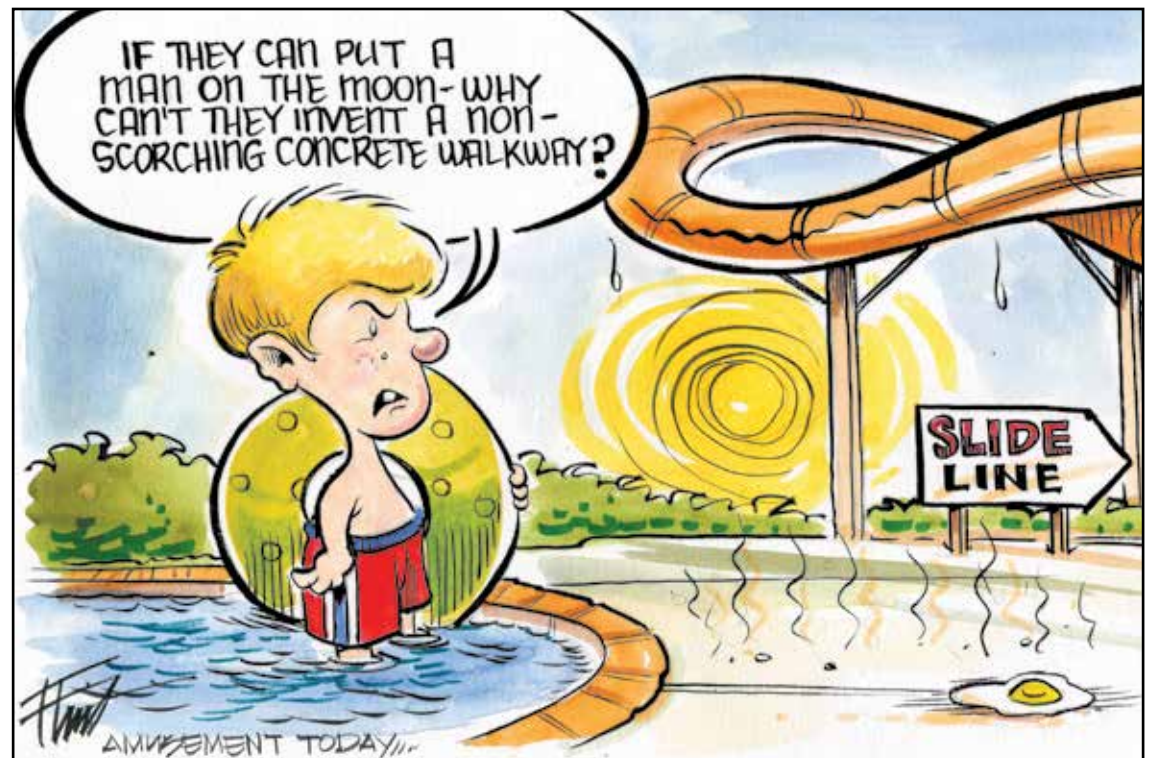
Within weeks I noticed how vast the range of effort was placed into alleviating the problem. Some parks offered shaded areas to ward off the severity and some purposefully sprayed the walkways down to cool them off. Sadly, more often than not, there was no relief to be found for guests feeling their feet scorched to excruciating levels.

I found the apathy to this problem to be quite disheartening. The solution can't just be: "We have footwear for purchase in our gift shops." The guest experience then spirals downward from pained to pained so badly they feel gouged by having to purchase extra items for their children.

To water park operators everywhere, I offer this challenge: Before the hot days of summer come to a close, make a move to where it is mandatory that all supervisors must walk barefoot in the middle of the afternoon. Even if it is for only 15 minutes. If management is subjected to the hot walkways for even a fraction of the time guests are, problem areas will certainly be determined. From this challenge, hopefully progress can be made and the guest experience can climb even higher.

Details on "The Networking Event of the Year" have been released and amusement industry parks and suppliers are invited. The Golden Ticket Awards, presented annually by *Amusement Today* and hosted this year by Lake Compounce & Quassy Amusement Park, are set for Sept. 8 and 9 in Bristol, Conn. View the schedule of events or register at: www.GoldenTicketAwards.com.

FLINT'S VIEW: Bubba Flint



EDITORIAL: Andrew Mellor, amellor@amusementtoday.com

Quality counts

We all appreciate a quality product, no matter what it might be. From a decent cup of coffee or a meal in a clean, well-maintained establishment, to the purchase of an item or a day out in pleasant, cared-for surroundings, we all recognize when things are done right and standards are good.

With the ease of travel that we all enjoy these days, the world is a much smaller place, enabling us to sample different locations and experiences literally all over the world. When it comes to theme parks, water parks and FECs, people regularly enjoy such facilities in different countries and can therefore compare them with those back home — and often do.

Guests obviously appreciate that the likes of Disney and Universal have extremely high standards which are at the very top of the tree when it comes to the parks industry, but many other venues also maintain excellent standards throughout their facilities and set the bar when it comes to overall excellence.

Having experienced such top-class venues, expectations are not surprisingly raised when

people return home and inevitably they want to see similar standards if they visit a theme park, for example, more locally. But sadly, those high standards are not always to be found.

Of course, not all locations can be expected to match the quality of some of the major players in our industry for a number of reasons, but

having visited a major theme park recently which one would expect to lead the way in creating experiential value, it was disappointing to see many areas of the venue that were clearly lacking in the care and attention that could make such a difference to the visitor experience. And this was not a park that would struggle for the budget to do so.

There's nothing worse than seeing a park which doesn't really seem to care, or rather an operator not making the effort. Tired, uncared-for areas, buildings, facilities and even attractions detract terribly from a property and clearly give a bad impression. High standards and quality count and should surely be at the forefront of every operator's mind at all times.



Mellor

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Your Amusement Industry NEWS Leader

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THE INDUSTRY SEEN

Quassy Amusement Park crew gives time to kids



Employees of Quassy Amusement Park in Middlebury, Conn., shared their goodwill during the United Way of Greater Waterbury's Day of Action on June 21. The volunteers, who spent time reading and working on art projects with preschoolers, included (above, front row, from left) Zak Lavish, Erica Stephen, Jamie Cormier, Lisa Sherwood and Angi Colella; (back row, from left) Mitch Fallon, Alex Fortuna, Adrianna Thompson and Lizz Crabtree; and (at right) Mitch Myers. COURTESY QUASSY AMUSEMENT PARK



CHARACTER CORNER

Prof. Cyrus Cosmo, Six Flags Over Texas

In 1975, Six Flag Over Texas introduced Prof. Cyrus Cosmo. The creation of Dallas native Paul Osborne, a local entertainer and magician, the Professor was described as a "part-time inventor, full-time showman and permanent purveyor of fun and fantasy." He worked electronic marvels in the Cyrus Cosmo Wonder Show, a production of magic and illusions. Every evening the Professor boarded the Cosmobile and led the Incredible Electric Light Brigade Parade. He was responsible for two rides that debuted in 1975. Rotoriculous, a Reverchon indoor Super Himalaya, featured music and lighting effects. For the smaller patrons, the C. Cosmo Flying Machine Co. offered a gentle flight on antique aircraft. The Professor amazed guests for five years, and was retired after the 1979 season. CARTOON BUBBA FLINT; HISTORY JEFFREY SEIFERT



2 MINUTE DRILL



AT: Janice Witherow



As manager of communications for Six Flags Over Texas, Sharon Parker maintains a high energy level. COURTESY SIX FLAGS OVER TEXAS

Sharon Parker, Six Flags Over Texas

Sharon Parker loves being busy and active – that's a good thing, since her job as manager of communications at **Six Flags Over Texas** keeps her hopping. Prior to joining the Six Flags team in 2007, Sharon worked in television news, so making the switch to communications in the amusement industry was a natural. Her upbeat personality, boundless energy and ability to multi-task with ease are all virtues that are obvious upon meeting her ... plus, she's just pure fun to be around!

Title: Manager of Communications.

Years at Six Flags: 10 years and 2 months.

Best thing about the industry: The list is long, but I can sum it up by saying it's the passion.

Favorite amusement ride: New Texas Giant.

If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be: Living on a beach, but I need to make money, so I'll go with my second passion — sports. I'd totally dig working in the athletics department for a college team.

Biggest challenge facing our industry: Sensational journalism. It's disheartening to see misguided information flippantly shared about an industry that has an overall excellent track record, is so meticulous about its operations and prides itself on keeping its guests safe.

The thing I like most about amusement/water park season is ... I absolutely love seeing the excitement on people's faces as they're heading into the park and realizing that I play a part in their having a good day.

Favorite childhood television show: *Popeye*. Whenever Popeye would open a can of spinach, I'd run to the kitchen and grab a pickle (it was the closest green item I could snag quickly) and eat it.

If you could learn something new tomorrow and succeed at it for life, what would it be? Learning a second language. It's on my list of things to accomplish, and I have two Rosetta Stone language sets waiting to be put to good use.

The most comfortable place in my home: Wherever my family has set up camp.

Favorite outdoor activity: Softball, but my reflexes have told me otherwise, so now it's just good ol' fashion running around with my kids.

Favorite place to unwind: Home – either in my craft room or in our family room listening to my husband yell at the game on TV and my kids running around.

What would you say is a big waste of time? Negative people. They truly are the pits.

This always makes me smile: Seeing my kids eyes light up when they see me or driving in to work and seeing the park skyline.

My idea of a good surprise: Coming home and realizing my hubby has cooked dinner and already fed the kids OR when my boss does my monthly forecast budget for me.

What would you rather give up ... ice cream or popcorn? Popcorn.

Yuckiest thing ever eaten: Liver and onions.

Which do you usually listen to, your head or your heart? My heart, but I'm learning to allow the two to talk to one another before I act.

What topic makes your brain ache? Dishonest people. I don't get it and I don't believe in it. So many things can be easily discussed, and if a mistake is made it can be rectified, if you just tell the truth.

If you could invent one thing that could make the world a better place what would it be? Mandatory dance breaks. Dancing fires up your positive endorphins and can make you feel better and make you happy.

What month of the year best describes who you are? I'm year-round, baby! Non-stop!

The last movie I saw was: *Wonder Woman*. If everyone had her compassion, looks and the ability to kick butt without breaking a sweat, I truly believe this world would be a better place!

My next vacation is to: Galveston, Texas. Schlitterbahn, Moody Gardens, and Galveston's Pleasure Pier! Yes, my family visits amusement and water parks when we go on vacation.

In one word, my job is: Supercalifranchilisticexpialidocious (translation: AWESOME!).

People say I remind them of: I'll go with the Energizer Bunny. I just keep going and going and going...

►FUN SPOT

Continued from page 1

the station — one of the rides most dramatic visual statements. This inversion rockets immediately into a sharp, overbanked turnaround which proceeds directly into a double-down. This opening act is unmistakably intense.

The remainder of the ride continues to speed through the course that ducks in and out of the steel structure. Both ends of the compact twister feature overbanked turns, the steepest of which is 115 degrees. The track length is 2,290 feet and top speed is just shy of 50 mph.

"You are always doing something — going round and round or up and down, even upside down!" said Arie. "This thing is so thrilling that when you hit the brake [run] you think about what your favorite part of the ride is but can't identify where it was because so much just happened to you."

"The beauty of this ride is that our trains allow us to do things we weren't able to do several years ago," said Kiepert. "We're able to make tighter turns and inversions now. We really tried to be efficient with our use of track on this project."

The ride was engineered to feature 12 moments of air-time during the layout.

Pat Tuten, creative director for Fun Spot, came up



Above, LED flood lights make for a fantastic view from across the small pond at night. At left, the barrel roll makes Mine Blower the only wooden coaster in Florida with an inversion.

COURTESY THE GRAVITY GROUP/MICHAEL GRAHAM AND FUN SPOT

sport a bottle rocket type of explosive thematic on the front of the lead car. The trains are built by GravityKraft, a sister company of The Gravity Group.

"This is the smallest ride we've done to date that features an inversion. Typically, our rides that feature inversions are over a hundred feet tall," Kiepert told *Amusement Today*. "We had to be creative in how we designed the inversion. John Jr. thought it would be cool to have the inversion over the station."

"Right now our concentration was on getting the ride open," said Bart Parsons, director of special projects, Fun Spot. "Later on this year we hope to add the tunnels. That will bring online more excitement."

Parsons also said two flat rides were relocated to make room for the Mine Blower project and that they would be reintroduced later this year. He noted the Kissimmee location does more per-ride sales in contrast to armbands compared to the Orlando Fun Spot location. "It's sort of a fun place to hang out at night, particularly when people come into town and have just checked into their hotels."

Fun Spot Kissimmee could be considered to have the higher thrill attractions of the two Florida properties as it features the world's largest Skycoaster and the steepest bank on any go-kart in the world. Mine Blower seems to

be a good fit for the property.

"Our things are a little more extreme here," said Tuten.

At night, programmable LED floodlights projected on the white structure make the ride a standout upon arrival and while in the park.

Arie said, "Our guests are raving about their experience when they get off the ride and look at the pictures of themselves while they were upside down in the barrel roll. This coaster in such a short time has proven to us to be a huge success!"

Mine Blower officially opened on June 23, 2017.

Fun Spot expands brand into Georgia

FAYETTEVILLE, Ga. — Fun Spot America is extending its reach beyond the Central Florida area. As the company begins its growth to become more of a chain of parks, it recently purchased Fun Junction USA in Fayetteville, Ga., just south of Atlanta. Fayetteville is a town of approximately 16,000 people.

Fun Junction already has go-kart tracks, rides and miniature golf. The park opened in 1990.

"We wanted to expand our brand and culture outside of the Orlando market," said John Arie Jr., chief operating officer, Fun Spot America Theme Parks. Fayetteville is a growing city that shows huge potential for an amusement park. This existing location has been operating as a family business for almost 30 years. It has a lot of the hands-on ownership in the daily ops, which is just how we are in our ops. We see what the Williams family has done over the years, and it is really impressive and makes it a lot easier for us to step in and operate the business."

Because of the large area of real estate, Fun Spot management is excited about the opportunity to master plan the development.

"This park has almost 100 acres, which really helped us make the decision," Arie told *Amusement Today*. "We have so many options when it comes to expanding."

Trader's Village opens pair of Chance Rides



Following the installation of Village Vortex (a Larson International Giant Loop) over the winter months, two new rides by Chance Rides were added in early summer to Traders Village in Grand Prairie, Texas. A sparkling new Yo-Yo and Wipeout have expanded the complement of rides on the flea market's midway. Traders Village President Tim Anderson is pleased with the new additions. "They have exceeded expectations," Anderson told *Amusement Today*. He went on to say the larger midway has the property contemplating opportunities to stay open later or to cater to private events. Traders Village currently is open Saturdays and Sundays 52 weeks a year. AT/TIM BALDWIN

►SCBB

Continued from page 1

healthy process, and what we have today is the best iteration. It's very exciting to see it come to fruition."

Rice credited Dublin, Ohio-based attractions design firm Roto and its work with the SCBB team for providing "the key ingredient... we brought Roto in a couple years ago, toward the end of the process, and they added some fresh perspective. It was important for us to have multiple perspectives, because the Boardwalk doesn't necessarily have one theme or style. So, we wanted a cross-representational group of folks thinking about design."

Daniels Wood Land, Inc., a family-owned design and theming company based in Paso Robles, Calif. (featured on the Animal Planet TV series *Redwood Kings*), worked on exteriors for games and attractions inside the new main entrance. A number of local vendors and contractors, including William S. Bagnall Architects, Slatter Construction and Nielsen Studios also con-

tributed to the project.

With SCBB so historically anchored in the community, Rice acknowledged that making such major changes to the park had to be undertaken with care.

"Our guests and those who've worked here a long time come to know the Boardwalk and take a level of ownership of it — which is a great thing. But when we propose changes of any sort, we need to be very mindful of how they may impact the park and people's perception of it."

Rice indicated that he was most eager to see how park guests would interact with the new entrance plaza and its attractions.

"It's far more open than the rest of our park," he said. "We're physically and geographically challenged; we don't have a lot of open, fluid space. Any time we can place new rides in the park where we don't have to take something else away is a good thing for us."

Rice added that the center of the new plaza, currently home to the whirling machinations of the 60-foot-tall, wildly lit Typhoon ride, will be "a showcase for new rides as we move them in and out."

Contacted by SCBB in the spring of 2016, ARM (U.S.A.), Inc., supplied the plaza's inaugural centerpiece.

"They were looking for a ride with a high presence and visual impact," said Mike Gill, president of the Wintersville, Ohio-based amusement company. "They were also interested in face-to-face seating that provided customer interaction, as well as a fully suspended vehicle. We were able to fill all of those desires in Typhoon. Working with the Boardwalk team was an absolute pleasure."

Adjacent to Typhoon, on the edge of the plaza, Shockwave is no slouch visually; it is elevated on a new ride deck and produces distinctive motion (and, at night, an exotic LED light show) of its own. "It's very prominent when you're arriving at the Boardwalk," said Karl Rice.

The demolition required for the new gateway and plaza necessitated the relocation and rebuilding of two existing attractions: Fright Walk, a popular fixture since 2004, and The Vault Lazer Maze. The park seized the opportunity to improve both — even



The Boardwalk's expanded entrance plaza plays host to a new Zamperla Disk'O (above, foreground) and a new A.R.M. dual-arm Screamer (below).

COURTESY SANTA CRUZ BEACH BOARDWALK



giving Fright Walk a dungeon-like twist (and maximizing the use of the park's real estate) by placing most of it beneath the promenade.

"It's literally in the basement," Rice said of the haunted walkthrough. "We're playing that up as part of the attraction: You still enter at the main level, but then you descend down a staircase into depths of the underbelly of the park. It adds a unique element to the attraction. The experience is a little longer, too — there are more gags and scares, and it's generally a higher-level-of-detail attraction."

Similarly, a more thoroughly themed façade and interior — along with some new technology — greet guests at The Vault, wherein a second laser arena has been added to meet demand.

Other elements of the project include a new food concession called Cruzin' Crêpes, offering made-to-order crêpes filled with sweet or savory fillings, as well as serving flavored teas. Two midway games, Ring Toss and Pitch In, also are part of the mix.

An expensive, publicly unseen part of the project is the additional basement space created not just to house Fright Walk, but to accommo-

terproofing and various ways to keep our basement facilities dry."

Such concerns are all in a day's work for the 35-year-old father of two young children, who joined the family business in 2012 and has loved riding the park's classic Giant Dipper roller coaster since childhood.

"My job primarily is to ensure that the company and the park are moving in the right direction," said Rice, who holds an M.B.A. in finance and real estate from the University of California Los Angeles, and oversees about 1,300 employees during peak season. "At this point in time, I'm more involved in the financial and administrative side of the business. I let the folks who know how to operate the park on a day-to-day basis do just that, and I try not to get in their way too much."

The family legacy aspect of the business, Rice noted, also requires constant tending.

"The Boardwalk is a really important part of who we are," he said. "And we try to promote that kind of emotional connection with the people who work here. It's a great source of pride for us to know that we're employing generation after generation of people, of young kids, where often this is their first job. We're teaching them skills that hopefully will benefit them throughout their lives."

"From the family, employee and philanthropic standpoints, we're also very proud of the fact that we can take some of our success and create a positive impact in the community."

• beachboardwalk.com

FAST FACTS

Name/Park

Main Entrance Plaza
Santa Cruz
Beach Boardwalk
Santa Cruz, Calif.

Rides/Info

SHOCKWAVE

Type: Mega Disk'O
Max. Height: 65 ft.
Seating: 24
PPH: 600

Manufacturer: Zamperla,
Vicenza, Italy

TYPHOON

Type: Dual-Arm Screamer
Max. Height: 60 ft.
Seating: 32 (16 per arm)
PPH: 550
Manufacturer: ARM, Inc.,
Wintersville, Ohio

Design/Construction

Roto, Dublin, Ohio;
Daniels Wood Land, Inc.,
Paso Robles, Calif.;
William S. Bagnall
Architects,
Santa Cruz, Calif.;
Nielsen Studios
Architecture & Design,
Santa Cruz, Calif.;
Slatter Construction,
Santa Cruz, Calif.

Opening Day
May 27, 2017



Shrieks and treats are in fresh supply at the Boardwalk with the upgraded, newly dungeon-ized Fright Walk and the made-to-order Cruzin' Crêpes.

COURTESY SANTA CRUZ BEACH BOARDWALK



Thank you!



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INTERNATIONAL

► AAE recap — Page 9 / Bellewaerde debuts Dawson Duel Alpine coaster — Page 11

Ireland's Tayto Park opens Viking-themed Interlink super flume

AT: Andrew Mellor
amellor@amusementtoday.com

ASHBOURNE, Ireland – Tayto Park near Ashbourne in County Meath, close to Dublin, Ireland's one and only theme park, has continued its development this season with the opening on June 16 of its latest major attraction, the Viking Voyage water ride.



Superbly themed, as the name suggests, as a voyage with the Vikings, the park's latest addition is a super flume ride from water ride specialist Interlink. It features a 700-meter-long route which incorporates three major elements along the way. Meandering through intricately themed Viking villages and scenery which put guests at the center of a great Viking adventure the flume provides the park with a hugely impressive new addition to its ride arsenal.

With a total project cost of €8m (\$8.9m), Viking Voyage has guests board one of 12, six-seater boats for their approximately eight-minute journey which, among other things, takes them up a lift hill and through a Viking helmet into a central moun-



One of the outstanding elements of the theming work is the Viking helmet through which riders are taken on one of the lift sections. Meanwhile (left), the reverse drop section comes out of the monastery. In suitable company, Tayto Park owner Ray Coyle (below) cuts a ribbon to mark the official opening of the new Viking Voyage super flume ride.

AT/ANDREW MELLOR; COURTESY TAYTO PARK



► See TAYTO, page 9



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►TAYTO

Continued from page 8

tain, through caves, up another lift hill into a monastery and through a variety of suitably themed landscapes and villages. On the way, riders also experience three major elements in the shape of a drop into a speed curve, a reverse drop out of the monastery and a final 12-meter (39-foot) high drop. The attraction has a theoretical capacity of 700 riders per hour.

Since opening in 2010, Tayto Park has expanded and invested in new attractions on an annual basis and having added a series of flat

rides in more recent years, along with a major wooden roller coaster, the Cú Chulainn from The Gravity Group, a big water ride was perhaps always going to be the next major addition.

"We are delighted with the end result," commented general manager Charles Coyle, who added that the ride is expected to increase the current annual visitor numbers of more than 750,000 by 10 per cent.

An aerial view of part of the new Viking Voyage ride at Tayto Park shows the speed turn section in the foreground.
COURTESY TAYTO PARK



AAE reflects growth of industry in Asia-Pacific region

AT: Andrew Mellor
amellor@amusementtoday.com

MARINA BAY SANDS, Singapore – The continued growth of the attractions industry within the Asia-Pacific region was evident once again at this year's Asian Attractions Expo (AAE) which took place at the Sands Expo and Convention Center at Marina Bay Sands from June 13 to 16.

According to IAAPA, more than 50 percent of the buyers attended for the first time, while participation in education sessions almost doubled from the previous year. The event also featured the second largest trade show floor in event history at 10,170 net sq.m.

AAE 2017 attracted more than 7,500 participants, including 5,100 buyers and 375 exhibiting companies from 34 different countries, the total number of attendees from theme parks, waterparks, FECs, zoos, aquariums and other venues represented a 42 percent increase over AAE 2013 when the event was last held in Singapore.

Attendance for the educational conference was ap-

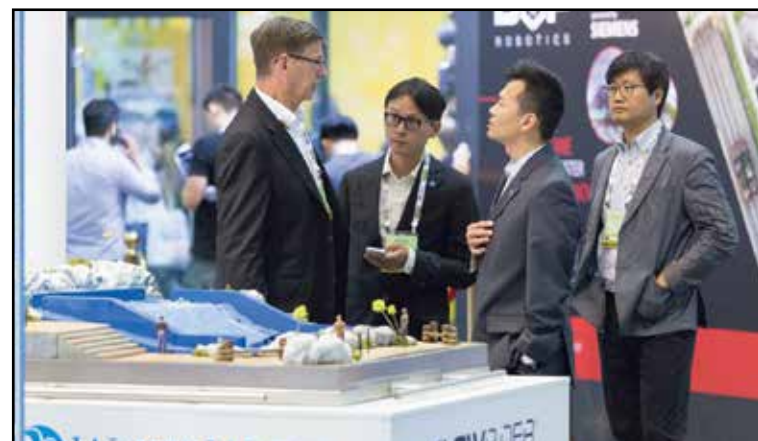


proximately 1,700, including 50 participants for the sold out IAAPA Institute for Attractions Managers and 90 attendees at the also sold out IAAPA Safety Institute. 600 attendees took part in the opening night reception held at Universal Studios Singapore, while 280 heard a keynote address from Andrew Kam, vice-president, Wanda Cultural Industry Group and president, Wanda Themed Entertainment, at the Leadership Breakfast.

A new Lunch and Learn event which covered the use of intellectual properties and maintaining show quality attracted 100 participants, while around 90 people took part in an EDUTour to Singapore Zoo and 70 people participated in an



Above, exhibiting companies came to AAE 2017 from 34 different countries. High tech products could be found on the show floor in abundance at this year's AAE. Not surprisingly Virtual Reality products were a popular draw on the trade show floor. COURTESY IAAPA



WhiteWater's Geoff Chutter pictured with visitors to his company's booth at AAE. COURTESY IAAPA

EDUTour to Mega Adventure.

IAAPA also hosted Ms. Low Yen Ling, Singapore's senior parliamentary secretary, Ministry of Trade and Industry and Ministry of Education at AAE. She addressed a full house during the event's Opening Ceremony and attended two press events on the trade show floor, while also talking to a number of exhibiting companies during her visit.

"As the industry in Asia continues to grow, we see a lot of new faces coming to Asian Attractions Expo. These new attendees are very engaged and eager to learn from the industry and the association. Education has been fantastic and extremely popular. The desire for industry knowledge continues to grow in this area," said IAAPA second vice-chairman David Rosenberg, ICAE, from Monterey Bay Aquarium.

Asian Attractions Expo 2018 will be held in Hong Kong at the Hong Kong Exhibition and Convention Center from June 5 to 8.



Shanghai Disney Resort hosts anniversary celebration

SHANGHAI, China - Shanghai Disney Resort marked its first anniversary on June 16. Floating lanterns representing good fortune for the past, present and future hovered above Shanghai Disneyland during a celebration at the resort's Enchanted Storybook Castle.

"Shanghai Disney Resort's first anniversary is cause for great celebration for everyone involved in bringing this spectacular dream to life," said Bob Iger, chairman and CEO of The Walt Disney Company. "We're grateful to the people of China for making this unique destination a tremendous success – more than 11 million guests have already visited, and we look forward to welcoming many more in the years to come."

Guests were entertained by the Mandarin version of "When You Wish Upon a Star" as a montage of photos and videos highlighting events of the first year at Shanghai Disney Resort were projected on the façade

of Enchanted Storybook Castle, as well as actual guest videos and images of magical memories from their visits to the authentically Disney, distinctly Chinese destination.

Shanghai Disneyland has proved to be enormously popular with guests from home and abroad, welcoming more than 11 million guests in its first year of operation. The resort exceeded every one of The Walt Disney Company's expectations, from theme park attendance to guest satisfaction.

With its tremendous popularity with guests from across China, the resort has already announced its first post-opening expansion, a new immersive land themed to the Toy Story franchise, set to open in 2018.

The innovative attractions and entertainment at Shanghai Disneyland have earned top honors from across the theme park industry over the past year, including the Themed Entertainment Association (TEA), International Association of Amusement Parks

and Attractions (IAAPA), Visual Effects Society (VES) and China Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (CAAPA).

Shanghai Disney Resort was one of the most ambitious projects in the history of The Walt Disney Company. One year ago, the wonder and imagination of Disney greeted the people of China in magical new ways as the gates opened to Shanghai Disneyland, a theme park like no other with the biggest, tallest castle in any Disney park, the first pirate-themed land and Disney's most technologically advanced park to date.

Shanghai Disney Resort is filled with immersive Disney storytelling, thrilling attractions, spectacular live entertainment and memory-making experiences designed to inspire and delight Chinese guests. The world-class vacation destination includes a theme park with six themed lands, two imaginatively designed hotels, a Disneytown shopping and dining district, and Wishing Star Park recreational area.

DP Leisure announces development of sixth 360 Play FEC

FARNBOROUGH, U.K. - Following the continued success of its five existing venues, DP Leisure (DPL), operator of the 360 Play children's entertainment Center brand, has announced that it will open a sixth UK site in 2017, this time in Farnborough Town Centre in Hampshire.

Already firmly established as a leading brand name within the U.K.'s children's entertainment center sector,

with sites in Milton Keynes, Stevenage, Leicester, Basildon and most recently Redditch, the newest 20,000-square-foot 360 Play unit will be located in Farnborough at the Meads Shopping Centre.

The development is owned by St. Modwen and the complex is home to a Sainsbury's food store, The Gym, coffee shop chain Starbucks and other retailers. The wider Town Centre regenera-

tion includes a new Vue cinema, casual dining restaurants and a Premier Inn. The addition of 360 Play will bring a whole new offer to the area as a destination for families, putting leisure trips back in the heart of Farnborough.

The opening of 360 Play Farnborough is scheduled for late 2017 and once again the design and master planning of the project will be carried out by DP Associates (DPA), the sister company to DP Leisure, which will project manage the build. The new Centre site will be home to all the classic 360 Play elements, which have proved so popular with families with young children over the years. Pre-manufacturing of many of the key play elements and structures that will be accommodated within the new location is already underway in workshops at DPL's headquarters in Milton Keynes.

The design and content will follow the company's tried and tested formula of a wide range of activities for all young children, from toddlers up to the age of 12, and with everything designed so that adults can join in too, it will be a true family day out offering.

Among the key attractions will be a three-story play structure, family bumper cars and a carousel. The rides are being supplied by specialist Italian manufacturer IE Park/SOLI Bumper cars which has supplied the same attractions to all the previously opened Centers. Additionally, the 360 Street creative play zone,

a key feature at all 360 Play sites, will once again be made up of individual play units such as a fire station, supermarket, pizza parlour, vets, car garage/body shop and dressing up shop. This role play and free play element is designed to stimulate the creativity in young minds, while also providing an opportunity for parents to get involved in play with their children. 360 Play Farnborough will also incorporate some new elements yet to be announced, along with a party zone offering a dedicated area for children's parties.

IE Park/SOLI Bumper Cars Managing Director Andrea Munari commented: "We congratulate 360 Play for once again choosing IE Park's products for their sixth project in Farnborough. Both products for this latest project are custom designed – a special mix of junior and mid-size Sport 1 themed dodgem cars and a carousel themed as the 'Circus Roundabout' – and will integrate perfectly with the concept and the family entertainment Center business model that has already proved so successful at 360 Play's five other sites. As always, we wish Duncan Phillips and the entire 360 Play team all the best with this latest venture and thank them for once again choosing IE Park as the supplier for these key attractions."

Also new will be an area where "the outside comes inside" as there is no option at this site for a dedicated outdoor area, as found at some of

the other 360 Play sites across the UK. The venue will employ around 40 new operational staff recruited locally, provide year round employment.

"We are delighted to announce plans for our sixth 360 Play site which continues the roll out of the brand around the U.K.," said Founder and Managing Director Duncan Phillips. "The Town Centre location is, like our recently opened Redditch site, a move away from our more familiar type of site on leisure parks but we are confident it will be another successful venture. Key location drivers in choosing the site have been the great communications links the area has with the M3 corridor from the M25 out to Basingstoke, which bode well for our normal visitor catchment area of up to a 45 minute drive away. We are confident our offering will complement what is currently available to those coming to the Town Centre and will become a key element for visiting families with young children.

Alastair Budd of landlords St. Modwen, said: "This is a terrific addition to the Meads. We have been building a rounded Town Centre offer in Farnborough with a strong line-up of shops, convenience stores, coffee bars, dining and leisure. 360 Play will add a new dimension to this and bring something really different to attract a core family audience. We're really looking forward to the opening."

•360play.co.uk



Above, the masterplan drawing of 360 Play Farnborough. The new facility will be loaded with popular 360 Play elements and activities. COURTESY DP LEISURE



Bellewaerde debuts Europe's first Dawson Duel alpine coaster

AT: Andrew Mellor
amellor@amusementtoday.com

IEPER, Belgium – The first duelling Alpine coaster to open in Europe made its debut earlier this season at Bellewaerde in Belgium.

Dawson Duel was designed and built by Josef Wiegand GmbH and Co. and represents an investment by the park of €4m (approximately \$4.5m). In addition to being the first such ride to open in Europe, it is the first alpine coaster not to be constructed on a natural hillside, instead being custom built on stilts.



Situated in the park's Canada zone, the name of the ride pays homage to Dawson City in Canada and the annual international dog sled race in which the city plays an important role. To ride, guests must first walk through a wooded area up to a height of 25-meter to a tower structure where the adventure begins. From there, stunning views can be enjoyed before guests embark on their journey back down to the lower ground level.

The attraction consists of two parallel tracks of 450 meters (1,476 feet) which allow visitors to duel with each other as they race down to the finish in one of 20, two-seater gondolas. Riders reach a maximum speed of 40 km/h (25mph) on their journey and experience two downward helix turns.



Dawson Duel is the first duelling Alpine Coaster to open in Europe.
COURTESY BELLEWAERDE

Hourly capacity on the attraction is 800 and guests must be a minimum of 1m (3.28 feet) to ride.

"After a long preparation time and an intensive construction phase, we can finally introduce this double European first to the public," said park General Manager Stefaan Lemey, "a typical family attraction where young and old can experience fun and adventure together in a green environment."

"This unique attraction is custom-made for our familial target group, whereas the walk to 25 meters high as well as the race downwards



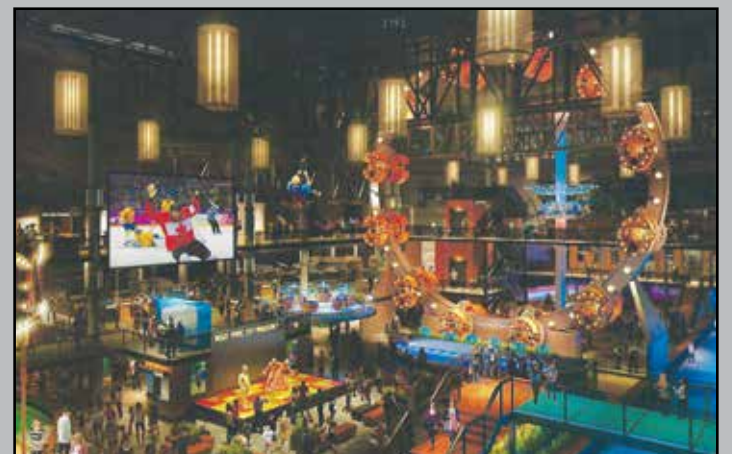
will be a challenging duel. The investment in this attraction is one of the biggest since 1999 and emphasizes the trust our parent company Compagnie des Alpes has in Bellewaerde."

The park also recently announced plans to build a new indoor water park. Development work on the €17m (\$19m) project is expected to take approximately 18 months, with opening predicted for the spring of 2019.



Dawson Duel is the first duelling alpine coaster to open in Europe. COURTESY BELLEWAERDE

Les Galeries de la Capitale invests in new Méga Parc



QUEBEC CITY, Quebec – On July 5, Les Galeries de la Capitale announced the construction of a new Méga Parc for \$52 million. The popular amusement park people have known and loved for more than 30 years will be fully revamped and transformed into an entertainment zone inspired by the Industrial Era. Construction, slated to begin on September 5, will extend over a period of 18 months during which mall shoppers will have access to a full lineup of temporary entertainment options.

With the complete Méga Parc overhaul, Les Galeries de la Capitale will deliver a ground-breaking and surreal experience straight out of the Industrial Revolution—through the lens of the fantasy world of steampunk. Kids of all ages will travel back in time to the turn of the 19th century in an alternate age where technology has evolved in a completely different way. Steam-powered machines, factories, and steel are omnipresent in this retro-futuristic industrial environment.

The new Méga Parc will feature more than 18 attractions, and most of the existing rides and attractions will be replaced. Those that are kept, including the rollercoaster and merry-go-round, will get a facelift in line with the new theme. The whole family — toddlers, kids, teens, and adults alike — will enjoy the new selection of rides, which range from gentle fun to adrenaline-pumping action.

WATER PARKS & RESORTS

► NEW H2OBX water park opens in North Carolina — Page 15

Wet'n'Wild Splashtown beams down Alien Chaser

ProSlide supplies high-speed, themed saucer thrill slide

AT: Tim Baldwin
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SPRING, Texas — After a rebranding in 2014, Wet'n'Wild Splashtown in the Greater Houston metro area introduced fresh new colors and comforts for visitors. Following that successful re-launch, the park has attracted the attention of observers who wish to join in the fun. Aliens, to be exact.

Park management and ProSlide Technologies have unveiled a popular new attraction called Alien Chaser. ProSlide's new "saucer" line of slides appears to be a hot trend. This new installation is delivering exhilarating thrills.

"It's really fast," said Jody Kneupper, general manager. "I think that is surprising some people. They aren't expecting that."

At 60 feet in height and 429 feet long, the slalom "drop and dive" slide zigzags its way to a splash pool.



Kneupper

The slide features three saucers that place riders banked high on the curves as it zips in and out of tunnels. The double dip finale sends riders two at a time into the splash-down pool at top speeds. All riders must be 48 inches or taller in height. The ride officially opened on June 16.

When it came to selection of the attraction, Kneupper

said, "We wanted a ride people could ride together. It has been well received. [The saucers] were new. We have a lot of rides, and we look and see what's out there. Even from our side, we like new too! There weren't any in Texas and we thought it was really different for the Houston market. That's what attracted us to it."

"Shapes can be really cool," said Philip Hayles, vice president business development, ProSlide Technology Inc. "That was proven when the funnel was such a runaway hit on our Tornado. These saucers let ProSlide breathe new life into the traditional serpentine waterslide. They just look fantastic — the drop and dive sensation makes for a great visual throughout the ride for the riders awaiting their turn. Plus, it's incredibly fun."

To make room for the new addition, management used an existing tower and retired two slides on the structure. Previously, Runaway Rapids had three slides that were similar in experience and ridership had decreased over the years. Keeping one of the three, management admits that every attraction has its fans, so the decision to keep one would still satisfy those who enjoyed the attraction but allowed for something new to be installed. The staircase that was in place allows riders to reach both Runaway Rapids and Alien Chaser.

"I was one of the first riders on it. When you look at it, you can see the steepness of those saucers," said Kneupper. "Even when we purchased it, we didn't quite know how steep it was from



Alien Chaser is one of a few waterslides in North America that feature ProSlide's new saucer elements. Riders bank high in the curves on this high speed experience.

AT/TIM BALDWIN

the pictures. [In line] you see the speed as they come through those turns and the drops into the saucers ...it's a thrill ride."

As spectators look on from the stairs, they can appreciate the whimsical sets of eyes that are placed into each saucer which represent an alien visage.

"When we knew we were going with the name Alien Chaser and theme, we tried to go with something a little more different in choice of colors," said Kneupper. "We liked the combination of black and lime green in the saucers and then adding the purple to the slides... it was a group effort."



A pair of riders must be within a 400-pound weight limit and a single rider cannot exceed 250 pounds.

Z-Pro was the supplier for tubes on the new attraction.

The line is kept moving briskly by dispatching pairs of riders every 20-30 seconds, making for a theoretical capacity between 250 – 300 riders

per hour. Alien Chaser is one of only a handful of slides in the United States that incorporates the saucer element from ProSlide.

Wet'n'Wild Splashtown turned to Launch Logic for its dispatch lights and Audio Innovators for the safety repeaters. The ride was installed by USA Inc.

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Schlitterbahn Corpus Christi, Texas opens Hopkins Shoot the Chute

Schlitterbahn Riverpark & Resort in Corpus Christi, Texas, opened the last attraction that was originally planned for the park. Padre Plunge, a Hopkins Shoot the Chute ride began operation in May of this year with a soft opening. The ride has quickly become popular with its thrilling drop and 20-foot wall of water generated at the splashdown. Although parks get new attractions every few years, Padre Plunge is likely to be the last addition to the water park for a while. Groundbreaking of the resort took place in February 2013, but the park was retooled several times. The current park is nearly triple the size that was originally envisioned. Grand opening of the park was held April 2016 with the completion of the park's Transportainment River system. Officials for Schlitterbahn Waterparks & Resorts said the park is now where they want it to be in terms of attractions. Although popular in amusement parks worldwide, a Shoot the Chute in a water park is very rare. This particular ride originally operated at Alabama Adventure, Bessemer, Ala., and was acquired by Schlitterbahn several years ago. The only other full-fledged water park that operates a Shoot the Chute is Noah's Ark in Wisconsin Dells, Wis. Two other parks — Worlds of Fun, Kansas City, Kan., and Hersheypark, Hershey, Pa., have Shoot the Chute rides that are shared with the water park and theme park. COURTESY SCHLITTERBAHN RESORTS



NEWSPLASH

AT: Jeffery L. Seifert

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Connecticut's **Quassy Amusement Park** is gearing up for a large 2018 water park expansion. **ProSlide Technology** of Ottawa, Canada, will provide three high-profile slides off a new tower to be constructed at the north side of the property. The largest of the three new slides will be a **TantrumTwist** which will accommodate two-person rafts. Riders will twist through an enclosed mammoth river before dropping into a funnel slide, where they will oscillate back and forth. The remaining two slides will both be Pipeline serpentine slides designed for one- or two-person rafts. Construction should be well underway as this issue goes to press.

"We're thrilled that we can start the project later this summer and have it completed for the water park's opening next year," said park President **Eric Anderson**.

The water park expansion will be the single-largest investment in the park's history, Anderson noted.

"Within the past several years, we have invested heavily in the park with new water attractions, amusement rides and infrastructure improvements," Anderson added. "Two new rides were added this year as well as our new candy shop and administration offices."

With the opening of **Volcano Bay** at the **Universal Orlando Resort, Kentucky Kingdom** in Louisville had to surrender its record for world's tallest drop capsule slide. At 121 feet, **Deep Water Dive** at the Kingdom's **Hurricane Bay Water Park** held the record since 2014. But records are made to be broken and this past June, Universal's **Ko'okir Body Plunge** narrowly overtook Kentucky Kingdom with a drop capsule ride that is 4 feet taller — a record-breaking 125 feet.

The record holder for the world's tallest body slide — without a drop capsule — is debatable. **Insano**, at **Beach Park** in Brazil, stands 135 feet tall and features an equal length drop. It is also the world's fastest, with thrillseekers topping out at 65 mph. **Kilimanjaro** at **Aldeia das Aguas Park Resort**, also in Brazil, does not stand as tall as **Insano**, but utilizes the side of hill to achieve its outrageous 164-foot drop. Top speed on that slide is approximately 60 mph.

Hydro Adventures, Poplar Bluff, Mo., has opened a brand-new 2,500-square-foot **Lasertron** Laser Tag arena, classic Route 66 mini bowling lanes and added arcade games to the **Mega Arcade**. The **Lasertron** arena can support both team and individual competition. The Route 66 bowling lanes are **QubicaAMF's** popular Highway 66 mini bowling lanes that require 40 percent less space than a traditional bowling alley. With the addition of the several new arcade games this season, the **Mega Arcade** now offers a total of 45 games.

Hydro Adventures opened in 2003 as **Bluff Falls Water Park**. It was purchased in 2014 by **United Parks** and has continued to expand significantly with the addition of new water rides and several dry attractions including two roller coasters, several flat rides and an FEC-style games arcade.

Recent oversight regulations passed by **Kansas** lawmakers have resulted in confusion among property owners and the closing of multiple waterslides across the state. A new law which took

effect July 1, imposes inspection and permit requirements on amusement rides. The law defines a waterslide that is at least 15 feet in height and uses water to propel a patron through the ride as an amusement ride. It was likely aimed at blaster-type waterslides that have uphill portions, but the legislation, as it is written, is confusing to park owners. It isn't very clear whether or not the water on some slides is propelling people forward.

Many officials in cities across the state contend gravity, not water, is the main force propelling riders. Lawmakers haven't officially addressed this confusion, causing cities to close their waterslides until they can get a determination as to whether or not they need an inspection. As is typical with newly passed regulations, there are not enough inspectors in place to provide the inspections needed. Critics note the timing of the law — July 1 — in the middle of the busy season, has made it difficult for parks to adhere to the new regulations and get their waterslides back up and running. Temperatures start to climb into the century mark in July and some cities fear their waterslides could remain closed for the rest of the season.

The city of **Oswego, N.Y.**, will build a new water park thanks to an award from the State of New York. Last year Oswego was one of ten cities to receive \$10 million from **Governor Andrew Cuomo's** Downtown Revitalization Initiative. Under the program, communities are awarded \$10 million to develop downtown strategic investment plans and implement key catalytic projects that advance the community's vision for revitalization. Oswego will use the money to renovate the **Children's Museum** as well as create the indoor **Lake Ontario Water Park** to connect to an existing hotel and conference center near the Lake Ontario waterfront.

"This funding is more than an investment in Oswego — it's an investment in the future of the entire region," Governor Cuomo said. "These investments will help make this downtown an economic engine that will support local businesses, foster growth, and have ripple effects that will keep Central New York rising for decades to come."

Following an eight-year absence, California's **Wild Rivers** water park may finally make a comeback. Officials from Irvine, Calif., have finally approved an agreement with the owners of **Wild Rivers** to build a 30-acre water park at the **Orange Country Great Park**. Construction is expected to begin by summer 2018 with a goal to open by summer 2019.

The original **Wild Rivers** water park was forced to close in 2011 when owners of the land, Irvine Company LLC, refused to renew the park's lease in favor of building apartments on the property.

Plans to redevelop the park have been ongoing since 2012 in or near the **Orange County Great Park**. The park had planned to re-open in 2014, but that was delayed until 2015, then plans were cancelled altogether in 2016 over land approval issues. Three months later the **Great Park Board** under control of the city of Irvine proposed two sites within the park. It appears that all of the hurdles have been cleared and the park can finally begin construction. **Orange County Public Park** occupies 28.8% of the land that once belonged to the **Marine Air Corps Station El Toro**.

New H2OBX water park opens in North Carolina

WhiteWater, ADG provide variety of themed attractions

POWELL'S POINT, N.C. — The much-anticipated H2OBX Waterpark opened June 22 in the Outer Banks (OBX) recreation area on the coast of North Carolina.

Designed with classic coastal architecture at the forefront, Aquatic Development Group provided the unique water park design to reflect the feel of the Outer Banks, offering resort-style comfort along with traditional family fun. H2OBX, the newest waterpark in North Carolina, sprawls across 20-plus acres near the Wright Memorial Bridge, the northern gateway to the Outer Banks coastal region. The convenient location allows 70 percent of the inbound and outbound Outer Banks tourism traffic a window view of the new water park, including slide towers and pools.

The \$46 million H2OBX offers a new attractions venue in Carolina coastal tourism that hopes to attract some of the hundreds of thousands of families who vacation in the Tide Water and Outer Banks regions.

ADG, along with the Indiana-based Weber Group, carefully designed and themed H2OBX to embrace the culture of the Outer Banks in a relaxed and scenic environment. Vacationers, families and water park enthusiasts will be immersed in the rich history of coastal Carolina as H2OBX pays tribute to legendary pirates, boat building and the Wright brothers, while enjoying modern amenities and exciting new attractions.

H2OBX delivers many popular attractions as well as several slides all delivering varying degrees of thrills, lengths, drops, turns and intensity suitable for guests of all ages. Many of the attractions at H2OBX offer ADG's own in-



This aerial view of the sparkling new water park just prior to opening shows a number of slides and attractions ready to thrill guests in the Outer Banks recreation area. COURTESY H2OBX

novative water ride attractions. Twin Tides Wave Pool delivers an ocean-simulated current, tide and waves that guests love, but unlike traditional wave pools, it features "dual beachfront" entrance points on opposite ends. Deep Six Adventure Lagoon is an adventure attraction that features climb, crawl and balance soft mat obstacles from Wibit Sports. These floating obstacle courses have become extremely popular with the young, hip, active generations in recent years.

Additional attractions include multiple slide complexes from WhiteWater West including a Boomerango and Flatline Loop with AquaDrop. River rides and Calico Jack's Cove, an immersive, multi-level, pirate-themed, play structure, both offer waterslides specially designed for children and multiple interactive water effects. Several fusion waterslides, boast special effects including aqua-lucent lighting to increase the thrill factor.

In keeping with the resort feel, ADG carefully designed H2OBX's park layout to include numerous places to relax and spend the day enjoying the at-



mosphere. 50 private cabanas offer first-class amenities and luxury guest service in a private oasis setting. Shaded seating areas, and multiple food and beverage outlets deliver variety and quality, from snacks to gourmet.

For food and beverage, H2OBX turned to Global Management Amusement Professionals for its expertise in the operation of food and beverage service at some of the country's most iconic water park venues. Aside from the usual grab-and-go options — pizza, chicken tenders, burgers and hot dogs — guests will be able to enjoy local specialties such as Carolina BBQ platters, wraps and fish tacos. Flyboys Bar features 12 beers on tap including local craft beers as well as specialty drinks and wines. Healthy food choices like fruit, fruit cups, salads, yogurt and more can be found throughout the food and beverage out-

lets at the park.

"H2OBX will certainly be showcased by the World Waterpark Association in a class of its own. We take great pride in having the opportunity to deliver the most progressive and exciting water park attraction to open on the Outer Banks," said Brian Czarnecki, vice president of sales and marketing for H2OBX. "We are thrilled to be welcoming our first guests and honored to show off this incredible park."

H2OBX developers Ken Ellis, Arthur Berry III, Tim Gantz and Jeff Malarney each bring substantial experience in waterpark development, planning, operations and market tourism. Ken Ellis, president and CEO of ADG is also co-owner with Arthur Berry III of Camelback Resort, home to Aquatopia indoor water park and Camelbeach outdoor waterpark. Tim Gantz is the former owner and operator of Noah's Ark, and Jeff Malarney, former Navy JAGC, has been involved in the North Carolina vacation rental industry, recently serving two terms on the North Carolina Real Estate

Commission, and a local Outer Banks resident and practicing attorney.

"This has been an extraordinary project because of my own personal involvement and vested interest in H2OBX," said Ellis. "I'm extremely proud of the talented and diligent team at ADG and the work put forth by so many others who have created such a unique waterpark. H2OBX is incredibly innovative because we had the full force of the industry's best people behind it."

—Jeffrey Seifert



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World's Largest Swimming Lesson helps spread awareness

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. — Thousands of children at more than 600 locations in 27 countries, from Australia to Zimbabwe, Bahrain to Brazil, and Panama to Poland, came together on June 22, 2017, to help spread an important safety message in their communities, Swimming Lessons Save Lives. *Amusement Today* is proud to have been a media sponsor of the event to help spread the word that a significant number of drowning deaths can be prevented.

The 8th Annual World's Largest Swimming Lesson took place at water parks, community pools and swim schools in 47 states in the

"The World's Largest Swimming Lesson is a perfect way to engage with the community and help people understand how crucially important it is to learn how to float, roll over, recover your breath and swim to an exit to prevent drowning."

—Rowdy Gaines, three-time Olympic Medalist and champion for WLSL Event

U.S. as the summer season officially kicked off. The purpose of the events? Provide kids and parents exposure to life-saving water safety skills and build awareness about the vital importance of parental vigilance and teaching children to swim to help prevent drowning.

"Seeing so many kids from so many different cultures, all focused on this same mission is really inspiring," said Rowdy Gaines, three-time Olympic Gold Medalist and champion for the WLSL event. "The World's Largest Swimming Lesson is a perfect way to engage with the community and help people understand how crucially

important it is to learn how to float, roll over, recover your breath and swim to an exit to prevent drowning."

Tragically, in the U.S., drowning remains the leading cause of accidental death for kids ages one to four and the second leading cause for kids under the age of 14, due in large part, to a lack of basic water safety and swimming skills and a lack of constant adult supervision while kids are in the water. Internationally, the World Health Organization estimates drowning is one of the top five causes of death for people aged 1-14 in 48 of the 85 countries it monitors.

In 2014, the American



Rowdy Gaines, three-time Olympic Gold Medalist and event spokesperson, works with a young swimmer at the World's Largest Swimming Lesson at Seaworld's Aquatica Waterpark in Orlando. The park was one of more than 600 locations in 27 countries around the globe that participated in the event to help spread the word Swimming Lessons Save Lives.

COURTESY WWA

Red Cross, one of WLSL's supporting organizations, found more than half of Americans (54 percent) either can't swim or don't have foundational swimming skills needed to prevent drowning.

The WLSL is working to change that. Since its inception in 2010, almost 200,000 children have participated in

WLSL lessons, and organizers have shared the importance of swim lessons more than half a billion times. By 2019, organizers hope to make more than one billion people fully aware of the importance of enrolling children in swim lessons.

WLSL 2018 takes place on June 21, 2018.

—Jeffrey Seifert





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PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► Pandora expansion creates a 'must do' at Disney's Animal Kingdom — Page 28 / Fairs — Pages 30-34

Firecracker restoration is an adventure for Holiday World's calypso crew

AT: Pam Sherborne

psherborne@amusementtoday.com

SANTA CLAUS, Ind. — Holiday World & Splashin' Safari opened its 71st season with a bevy of new attractions and renovations.

One new attraction is the Firecracker calypso ride that was manufactured by Robles Bouso in 1972. With its now patriotic theme and color, it sits in Holiday World's Fourth of July section. It's dazzling reflective colors and the brand new LEDs on the cars have brought on a great response from parkgoers, said Paula Werne, director of communications.

The smooth spinning action keeps riders coming back.

By looking at the ride now it is hard to tell the somewhat dubious start it had when it arrived at the Holiday World warehouse last November from the now shuttered Fun Spot Amusement Park and Zoo in Angola, Ind.. With rusted steel and tremendous amounts of water damage, a worn-out crew of six park employees, that would soon to be known as the calypso crew, had their doubts.

Holiday World's Firecracker first opened in 1972 at LeSourdsville Lake Amusement Park near Cincinnati, Ohio. It operated there until 2002. It later moved to Fun Spot and remained in operation

until 2008 when that park closed.

It had been sitting for almost a decade when last November a management team from Holiday World went up to look at it. The decision was made to purchase it and restore it.

After the purchase, Holiday World sent its calypso crew to dismantle it and bring it to its new home. The six were Sean Strahl, Andy Kreyling, Jon Stogner, Sean Bull, Billy Sosh and Tony Perkins.

"We pulled up to the gates and had to wait for someone to let us in," recalled Sean Strahl, the park's maintenance planner. "We just drove through the park. Everything had grown up, the trees, weeds. We pulled up to the ride and that was when we wondered what we had gotten ourselves into."

"Some of the guys didn't think we could do it in a week, because that was all we had was a week to get it down," Strahl said.

But the calypso crew waded in that afternoon and into the night on that first day. They turned their cars around and used headlights so they could see what they were doing.

"Everyone pulled together," Strahl said. "Everyone knew what they had to do."

Almost daily, though, through that process, it seemed they were faced with new challenges.

The crew first discovered there had been no drainage system on the ride so it had been sitting in water for quite some time. The water had rusted the steel frame.

In addition, they realized the former park owners had converted the carnival model into a park model by wielding everything together. The crew had to rent a chop saw to get it apart.

"And, I guess they had painted it a few times because there were layers of paint just sitting on the pad," Strahl said.

They took pictures of every step while dismantling it. These photos became extremely important when they later put it back together without any manuals or instructions.

The crew did accomplish their goal by getting the ride down in a week, but the adventure for the calypso crew was far from over.

After getting the ride to the Holiday World warehouse, the cars were removed. They stripped off the car lights, and began sanding and repairing them.

Because the ride's frame had rusted, it had to be completely replaced, which took employing three different local machine shops to get the job done.

Perkins couldn't find the needed slip rings, the rings that provide the electricity to the cars



This is how the 1972 Firecracker looks today at Holiday World & Splashin' Safari. The vintage ride, purchased from the shuttered Fun Spot Amusement Park and Zoo, Angola, Ind., had been out of operation for almost a decade. The complete restoration was done in-house.

COURTESY HOLIDAY WORLD

as the ride is spinning. No company could be found that made them. He ended up having to hire a company, Mohler Technology, Boonville, Ind., to custom make them. That went for the brush holdings, too.

Strahl had the task of finding the lights. How hard could that be?

"Everyone thought they were Volkswagen lights," he said. "So I took one over to a place in Boonville, that is all the guy does is work on Volkswagens. But he said they weren't Volkswagen lights."

The suggestion he got was to look at Mercedes-Benz or BMW. Mercedes-Benz had some small lights that were red, white and amber with chrome around them. They measured about three and one-half inches, which were a little larger than the original lights, but they could work.

Strahl went to the Internet to find and purchase some, but could only locate a few here and there. He needed 144 lights.

Somewhere along the way, there was a suggestion to look at semi trailer lights. Strahl found four-inch lights and found he could get red, white and blue alternating LEDs — sold. They were made by Trux Accessories out of

Canada.

Lauren Koch Crosby was involved in picking out the paint for the cars. They wanted to paint the cars blue and red. But, finding the exact red turned out to be a little difficult.

"At first we were just looking at metallic colors," Crosby said. "But, when you do that, all the red is a deep, deep, deep red, not a true red. That was when we found the flake."

Small metal flakes can be used in paints to give it that reflective property without using an actual metallic paint. In this case, they could use a true red with the metal flakes to get the desired color and look.

Things finally seemed to be coming together. But, as they began to put the cars back on the platform, they discovered another problem with the ride.

"That was when we discovered that all the holes (for the cars) had been hand-drilled and they weren't drilled straight," Strahl said.

They couldn't get the cars on. They had to fill in all the original holes and drill new ones.

"But, we got that done in a day," he said.



Left, Holiday World's calypso crew stand on the Firecracker platform while dismantling it last November. From left are Sean Strahl, Andy Kreyling, Jon Stogner, Sean Bull, and Billy Sosh. Tony Perkins is seen (right) loading the cars of the 1972 Firecracker. AT/PAM SHERBORNE

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Skyline Attractions sells first Skywarp

ORLANDO, Fla. — Skyline Attractions has altered the landscape of thrill rides with its latest scream maker – Skywarp. As part of the company's third anniversary, Skyline is excited to announce the sale of its first of many Skywarps, which will make its public debut in the summer of 2018. This exciting experience offers 32 passengers a unique journey as they board the competing ride vehicles. The train begins rocking back and forth, building up to full speed before completing several thrilling forward and reverse rotations through the twin Immelmann inversions.

The unique concept was first shown to the world at the 2016 IAAPA Attractions Expo in Orlando, Fla. Skywarp was one of the most unique concepts displayed at the annual event. This innovative attraction combines the speed, inversions, and capacity of a big coaster with a fraction of the necessary investment needed. The clever design of Skywarp allows it to deliver the thrills a modern rider expects, with the reliability, ease of maintenance and ultra-compact footprint that fits in nearly any park.

"Skywarp has everything that operators of all sizes desire: Big impact, big thrills, big visibility, and big capacity with a small footprint and a small price," said Evan Souliere, founding partner of Skyline Attractions.

The small 120-foot-by-30-foot footprint al-



Skywarp's small footprint allows placement in nearly any location.

COURTESY SKYLINE ATTRACTIONS

lows for the placement of the attraction in nearly any location, and topping out at 62 feet in height, it can even fit in many indoor locations.

"The flexibility of Skywarp, combined with the excitement it delivers to guests, makes it a great addition to any park. We are thrilled to be placing the first of what we believe will be many Skywarp attractions," commented Chris Gray, vice president at Skyline Attractions. "Visitors can see us at booth 5808 at the 2017 IAAPA Attractions Expo as we unveil where the first Skywarp will be taking guests on a wild ride," he continued.

Ride Entertainment is the sales partner for Skyline Attractions.

•skylineattractions.com

•rideentertainment.com

SeaWorld Orlando adds evening, coaster dazzle

ORLANDO, Fla. — SeaWorld Orlando has turned up the flash this summer, rolling out cutting-edge forms of showmanship and immersive technology for a new evening celebration and a roller coaster virtual reality (VR) overlay.

The park's after-dark summer presentation, "Electric Ocean," offers a menu of activities and entertainment. Guests are invited to participate directly in the fun with interactive RFID (radio-frequency identification) accessories that glow, blink and react to musical beats.

Some highlights:

•**Shamu's Celebration: Light Up the Night** — This ongoing show continues to inspire guests and is an ideal warm-up for "Electric Ocean" festivities.

•**Club Sea Glow** — A family-friendly dance party starring top DJs and 35 live performers, including puppeteers, specialty acts and characters in LED-lit costumes.

•**Sea Lions Tonite** — A returning favorite, this skit about a SeaWorld visit as seen through the eyes of sea lion superstars Clyde and Seamore also features one of the park's favorite acts, the SeaWorld Mime.



Live performers and characters in LED-lit costumes light up the night during Club Sea Glow at SeaWorld Orlando.

COURTESY SEAWORLD ORLANDO

•**Ignite** — Erupting at the end of the night across the park's lake, this all-new fireworks display incorporates laser projections and water effects that shoot 100 feet skyward, all synchronized to music.

"Electric Ocean"-branded presentations debuted in mid-June at both SeaWorld Orlando and SeaWorld San Diego (see *Amusement Today*, July 2017). The Florida version runs daily through Aug. 5, while the differently-programmed California version runs on selected

dates until Sept. 4.

Also in mid-June, SeaWorld Orlando introduced a new roller coaster VR experience, Kraken Unleashed — turning Kraken, the park's 2000-built, Bolliger & Mabilard (B&M) steel floorless coaster into an elaborate "motion platform."

All three of the ride's 32-passenger trains have been equipped with VR headsets that are both mechanically and electronically integrated into the seats.

The VR experience, which is optional, takes riders on an exploratory journey under the sea. The story unfolds as they sail along the track, complete with deep dives, steep turns and seven inversions — sharing encounters with giant sea creatures and the legendary Kraken sea monster.

The VR technology and content for Kraken Unleashed was supplied by Guildford, U.K.-based Figment Productions, which created a VR overlay for the B&M flying coaster Galactica (formerly known as Air) at Alton Towers in Staffordshire, England, last year.

—Dean Lamanna

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SeaWorld San Antonio installs new Intamin coaster

**Wave Breaker:
The Rescue Coaster
features jet ski theme**

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — SeaWorld parks continue to reimagine its brand placing more of an emphasis on conservation, environment and animal rescue. While marine life shows still play a part in a family's visit, the revamped direction is intertwined with new rides and new guest experiences.

SeaWorld San Antonio had not installed a new high-profile ride since Journey to Atlantis (Mack Super Splash water coaster) in 2007.

The theme park company had turned to Intamin previously with a multi-launch coaster at Busch Gardens Tampa in 2011. SeaWorld returned to the ride manufacturer again since Intamin had previously supplied a jet ski theme at a park in Australia. As SeaWorld was pursuing this direction, the collaboration of the two entities appeared to be a good fit.

The message of "rescue" is front and center. SeaWorld Park President Carl Lum said, "One of the primary purposes of SeaWorld is to help guests understand that it is important to help save animals in the wild. Mankind has not been the best steward of the ocean. There are a lot of challenges our oceans have now with pollution and overfishing. I think it's important that while guests enjoy a great ride, they also can understand how they may be able to help. All of us can be better stewards."



Above, riders experience two launches reaching speeds up to 44 mph. Jet ski-style seating (left and below) makes Wave Breaker the only ride of its type in North America. More than 90 percent of the ride is positioned over water.

AT/TIM BALDWIN AND GARY SLADE



Positioned over the park's central lake, Wave Breaker: The Rescue Coaster officially opened on June 16.

Visitors are drawn into the rescue theme in numerous ways as they queue for the new coaster. A large video board entrance focuses on the rescue of threatened and injured animals, as well as ride stats.

Within the shaded queue is an assortment of signs and video presentations spotlighting specific rescues and animals that are regularly saved. Stories are told from some of the 30,000 rescues the SeaWorld Rescue Team has been involved with for more than half a century.

Once in the station, riders board 16-person coaster trains that resemble jet skis. Following dispatch, passengers enter a show room where they are given their rescue assignment. Once their mission is established, a door opens and the train is launched into a series of twists, turns and dives that take place over the water of the park's lake.

"The sensation of speed you get and being on a jet ski in a straddle style position over the water is one of the things that make the ride very unique," said Lum.

Mid-ride, the trains enter a second launch that offers another series of curves and maneuvers before returning to the station.

Being built over the water didn't come without challenges.

"We had to partially drain our lake," said Lum. "We had to responsibly discharge that water and get it back into lakes and areas here in San Antonio to where it would go back in the aquifer. We had to build a temporary bladder dam to keep half the lake dry while we put in ride foundations and footers in. From a construction standpoint, it was very challenging. Our engineering team did a great job figuring out how to get all that done safely and responsibly."

When originally announced at the end of summer in 2016, the plan was to use linear motors in the launch. In time, that became a tire-driven launch.

"The tire launch is proven. The technology accomplishes the same objective. We worked closely with Intamin, and their recommendation was a good one. The ride has great up time," Lum told *Amusement Today*.



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SeaWorld San Antonio already offers two high-speed thrillers — Steel Eel, a 150-foot mega-nonlooping coaster by Morgan Manufacturing; and Great White, a Bolliger & Mabillard inverted looping coaster. Wave Breaker provides a smooth family ride with just enough thrill to reach all demographics. Its placement over the water is the ride's most dramatic element.

"We've seen appeal for Wave Breaker across the board," said Lindsey Campbell, public relations manager. "The thing about it is it's the only coaster of its kind in North America. It's a thrilling ride. Enthusiasts are enjoying how smooth and unique a ride it is, but at the same time you also see families enjoying it. Kids nine or 10 are going on it with their parents and really having a great time. It's a fantastic thrill for our park, but it is very family friendly, which is a good for our San Antonio audience."

"That particular ride vehicle and it being a one-of-a-kind in North America riding experience made this a good fit for SeaWorld," added Lum. "This particular design really integrates very well the message of helping to save animals in the wild."

Wave Breaker can operate with three trains. Track length is 2,600 feet, standing at a top height of 61 feet. Riders must be 48 inches in height or taller and are launched to a top speed of 44 mph.

"Wave Breaker provides a coaster experience unlike anything in the current theme park landscape," said SeaWorld Vice President of Theme Park Development Mike Denninger. "Once you hit Wave Breaker's first launch, you'll be moving fast throughout the entire ride. When you combine that consistent high speed with the banked and serpentine turns throughout the ride track that is 90 percent over the surface of the water, you get an unparalleled ride experience."

"When people come back to the station clapping and cheering, that's a barometer right there," said Lum.



The theme of animal rescue was a good fit for the Wave Breaker jet ski coaster manufactured by Intamin. Seen here at the ride's opening are (from left) SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment executives Mike Denninger and Joel Manby and Sandor Kernacs, Intamin/IntaRide. AT/GARY SLADE



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Eye of the Storm attracts riders and non-riders at Kentucky Kingdom

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Management at Kentucky Kingdom opened the 2017 season with a variety of improvements and additions, but it seems the 73-foot-tall Larson International Giant Loop is capturing most of the attention.

The new ride, called the Eye of the Storm, has attracted an abundance of riders and non-riders alike since it opened on the first day of this season on April 29. And, the response has been great, according to Julie Johnson, Kentucky Kingdom's director of sales and marketing.

"There's a set of bleachers right in front of the ride and lots of folks like to sit and watch, even if they don't dare ride," Johnson said.

The Eye of the Storm can seat up to 24 riders who sit back to back. It rocks back and forth, eventually looping over 360 degrees, going both backward and forward. The duration of the ride is controlled by the operator.

"Right now our operators are instructed to keep the ride duration to between 60 and 90 seconds," Johnson said.

For that reason, calculating an exact hourly capacity is a bit

difficult, but including loading and unloading time, Johnson said they have estimated about 480 persons per hour.

"All in all, including purchase of the ride itself, site preparation, foundation, electrical work, installation, etc., the cost was just under \$1 million," Johnson said. "It is located on the site of the former Dragsters attraction, which was closed years ago, so there was space available for the new ride without displacing another."

The installation was a joint effort of both Larson International and Kentucky Kingdom. Kentucky Kingdom purchased the ride in 2016. The actual installation, once the groundwork was laid, took only three days.

Kentucky Kingdom is located just outside the park's front gates of the Kentucky Expo Center, home to the Kentucky State Fair, which runs from mid to late August. Johnson said at last year's fair, park staff became intrigued with a portable version of the giant loop that was on the fair midway, where, she said, it was the most popular ride. The midway is provided by N.A.M.E.

"We thought the larger (seven-story) park version of the giant loop would make an exciting addition to Kentucky Kingdom,"



Park management has been very pleased with the response to the brand new 73-foot-tall Giant Loop, manufactured by Larson International. COURTESY KENTUCKY KINGDOM

Johnson said.

The Eye of the Storm and other 2017 improvements are just part of the millions of dollars Ed Hart, park CEO, and a group of investors are pumping into the Kentucky Kingdom. In 2013, the Kentucky State Fair Board and the investment group reached an agreement with the group committing \$43.5 million into the park.

But, by last year, the group already had surpassed that figure by \$10 million with the addition of the Storm Chaser coaster. That coaster, built by Rocky Mountain Construction (RMC), was the second Kentucky Kingdom coaster to open in a three-year time span.

The Eye of the Storm is on the path leading to the Storm Chaser.

"That's why we called it 'Eye of the Storm!'" Johnson said.

Other Kentucky Kingdom additions and improvements this year include two children's rides, Rowdy Racers and Loony Balloony, both classics by Zamperla that were rebuilt by the park's Technical Services team.

A food stand called "Shiver Me (Chicken) Tenders" was added to the water park and a new Craft Beer Garden opened featuring a selection of distinctive beers from local and regional breweries.

"We installed three new soft drink stations," Johnson said. "We

made a number of improvements to existing buildings, among them an expansion of our commissary, a new entrance to the 5D Cinema Store, a remodeling of the Kingdom Collections merchandise shop, and the addition of three new ticket windows at the park's entrance."

New lockers were added near the park entrance and in the water park. A ride photo booth was installed at the T3 suspended looping coaster.

"We created a new water park entrance near the Thunder Run coaster and transformed a former service road into a new midway and alternate path to Storm Chaser, as well as to the Carousel Courtyard area of the park," she said. "This makes circulation through the park more convenient for our guests."

To enhance their experience further, a number of new tables, chairs, benches, and umbrellas were added throughout the park.

Attendance in 2016 was approximately 800,000, representing a 30 percent increase over the preceding year.

"It's still early in the season, yet we are very pleased with the attendance to date and are enjoying strong momentum," Johnson said.

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5 p.m. to 7 p.m. – Rides on the award-winning *Wooden Warrior*, *Frantic*, *Reverse Time*, *Tea Cups*, *Grand Carousel*, *Free Fall'N Drop Tower*, *Quassy Express train*, *Skipper's Clippers* and *Up, Up & Away*

5 p.m. to 8 p.m. – Live entertainment

5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. – Appetizers at Bella & Bessie's Sweet Shop & Potato Patch In The Park

6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. – Dinner at Quassy Restaurant and Patio Party area overlooking Lake Quassapaug

8:15 p.m. – 3-D Fireworks Spectacular over Lake Quassapaug

9 p.m. – Event closes

Saturday, September 9 Lake Compounce Amusement Park

11 a.m. to 4 p.m. – Free to roam & enjoy Lake Compounce

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4 p.m. – Cocktail hour with music and catering

5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. – Dinner

6:30 p.m. – Procession to the *Starlight Theater*

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Sally Corp.'s latest install boasts Harley Quinn, greater gameplay

Six Flags Magic Mountain's 'Justice' in a 'League' of its own

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

VALENCIA, Calif. — Comic book and cartoon characters are having a field day at theme parks nationally, and especially in Greater Los Angeles, this summer. And proving its determination to compete on the intellectual property-fueled attraction front while maintaining its regional thrill ride dominance, Six Flags Magic Mountain (SFMM) has delivered the finest-tuned version yet of the two-year-old, award-winning Justice League: Battle for Metropolis concept.

The park's next-gen iteration of the 4D gaming dark ride, the seventh Battle for Metropolis installation from Jacksonville, Fla.-based Sally Corp., follows others that opened this past spring at Six Flags Over Georgia in Austell and Six Flags Great Escape in Jackson, N.J. Unlike the previous rides, the one at SFMM features the Joker's favorite sidekick, the villainess Harley Quinn, in a new finale and a slightly larger (at 23,624 square feet) Hall of Justice show building.

During an all-out media preview party for Justice League on

July 11, Bonnie Sherman Weber, president of SFMM, told *Amusement Today* that the technical achievement and family appeal of Justice League conveys a message to competitors that have similar high-profile, consumer-branded attractions: "Six Flags is here, and we've arrived."

"We've taken the traditional dark ride and pushed the limits to create the most innovative and multifaceted attraction this park has ever built," Weber said, lauding not only the creative collaboration between Sally Corp., Six Flags corporate and SFMM's in-house crew but the two-decade-plus licensing partnership between Six Flags and Warner Bros. Consumer Products / DC Entertainment. "We are so fortunate to work hand in hand with this amazing team to bring the best of DC to Southern California."

The multi-sensory, four-minute, high-definition 3D game experience incorporates 4D wind, fire, fog and special effects as guests, seated in whirling, pitching six-passenger vehicles, battle alongside the iconic DC Super Heroes — Batman, Superman, Wonder Woman, the Flash, Green Lantern and Supergirl — to save



Villainess Harley Quinn (right) sets the new Justice League apart from the others. COURTESY SIX FLAGS MAGIC MOUNTAIN

Metropolis from the Super Villains. The latter include Lex Luthor, the Joker and his henchmen, and Harley Quinn.

With vehicles supplied by Oceaneering Entertainment Systems, interactive gameplay elements provided by Alterface and digital animation created by Pure Imagination Studios, Justice League presents a nonstop barrage of targets that allows guests to score points against fellow passengers during a high-speed chase through the streets of Metropolis. A newly reworked pre-

show establishes the plot for the ride action, which is highlighted by a virtual loop, an intense scene in a subway station and interspersed animatronics.

Justice League, located adjacent to the Riddler standup roller coaster, serves as a backdrop for a five-acre area of the park that has been made over as Metropolis. It includes the new Metro Park Pub and other attractions, eateries, retail and costume characters that support the new theme.

The importance of Justice League's Southern California de-



but was reflected by the phalanx of top brass present at the media preview. Among others were John Duffey, (now former) CEO of Six Flags Entertainment; John Wood, CEO and chairman of Sally Corp.; Peter van Roden, senior vice president of global themed entertainment for Warner Bros. Consumer Products; and Sam Rhodes, director of design for Six Flags Entertainment.

Sally's John Wood told *AT* that his company, now in its 40th

► See SFMM, page 27

SixFlags
MAGIC MOUNTAIN

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►SFMM

Continued from page 26

year, could have rested on its laurels after successfully introducing the ride — the first to marry motion-based vehicles, 3D and gameplay — at Six Flags Over Texas and Six Flags St. Louis in 2015. Instead, it has pushed the envelope.

"Every time we've had a chance to redo Justice League, we look for ways to improve it," he said.

"This year, for Atlanta and New Jersey, we did live motion-capture video [via Pure Imagination Studios] to improve our computer-generated character graphics. We also added targeting and changed a little bit of the dialogue. But for Magic Mountain, both Six Flags and Sally wanted to really show off. So, we threw everything we had at this one."

SFMM's version, according to Wood, has more animatronics, 180-degree wraparound screens (instead of merely curved ones) as wide as 44 feet and to-the-hilt programming for optimal movement. It has the same number of scenes as other versions (10), although some have been reshuffled for improved transitional and dramatic effect.

Six Flags' Sam Rhodes, who has worked on all of the Justice League rides, said the company skipped a 2.0 version and jumped right to "3.0" for SFMM.

"We learned a lot of things with the other rides, and we also wanted to make sure that we were competitive in this market," he said, referring to the general upgrades, surprises and Harley Quinn's edginess. "We've added gaming throughout the entire ride, where on the other ones we only have it in every other room."

Meanwhile, the two other Six Flags properties that received Justice League this year are pleased with the patron raves the ride has been earning.

"It's an incredible addition to Six Flags Great Adventure, because our guests are a mix of thrill-seekers and families," said Kristin Siebeneicher, the park's communications director. "Aside from being our first interactive dark ride, Justice League is cutting-edge and thrilling — a fabulous attraction that everyone can enjoy."

Dale Kaetzel, president of Six Flags Over Georgia, echoed that observation.

"Justice League can be ridden by everybody from grandparents to kids, and the reaction we've gotten from guests really has validated that. It's just great."

—Additional reporting
AT/Tim Baldwin

Gully Washer surges into Frontier City

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. — Visitors to Frontier City are enjoying the 60th season of the small Oklahoma theme park. This summer, the park got a little more eye-catching, both for guests and traveling motorists on adjacent Interstate 35.

Turning to ProSlide, park management has installed Gully Washer, a triple-slide Turbo Twister tower that stands 66 feet tall. Three serpentine slides offer a combined length of 1,249 feet. The tagline used: Take a ride on the Wild Slides!

In contrast to many theme parks that have nearby water parks, Frontier City's sister park is White Water Bay on a corner of Oklahoma City diagonally opposite the theme park approximately 20 minutes away on the other side of the city's downtown.

Like most states in the south, theme parks can be quite hot in the summer. While the park offered two water rides — a rapids ride and flume — in 2012, they grabbed the bull by the horns and addressed the heat. A water play structure named Wild West Water Works was built to offer more splashing entertainment. Play structures are typically marketed at younger guests, and the 1,000-gallon tipping bucket, seven slides and various water gadgets marvelously entertained the smaller guests willing to don swimsuits, while parents could relax in the shade nearby.

Now offering more for kids of all ages, Gully Washer delivers more thrills for those with higher expectations. Riders 48 inches and taller can experience tight curves, back-to-back turns and twisting tunnels. All three slides have two-tone colored segments. Purple, green and orange slides are each built with dark and light sections so that passengers can experience moments of light as well as periods of darkness.

General Manager Stephen Ball told *Amusement Today*, "It was a very simple installation and went very smoothly. We're really happy with how things turned out. ProSlide hit the mark with what we were

asking for. We wanted something tall, something that was a thrill, and it goes really well with the [play structure] we already had installed."

"The rain fortress has done really well with younger kids, so the idea was to expand that market into more of the teens and adults to have something fun and exciting to do," said Ball.

Because of the height of the tower and the placement next to the Wildcat roller coaster, riders on each now have an interaction between the two attractions because of their proximity to each other.

No rides or attractions were removed to install the new waterslides. Management made good use of previously unused land to expand the water park offerings. Unlike a full day water park, Frontier City's offerings increase a length of stay to the theme park by allowing a small portion of the day to be dedicated to cooling off entertainment.

In addition to Gully Washer, the park has also had other improvements around facility. "We've really had our hands busy this off-season," said Ball. "We've made upgrades and improvements to the food locations, dining and some of the gift shops." Enhancements included new floors, new tables, new back-of-house equipment and new counters to speed up service and improve quality.

The Wildcat wooden coaster also received a completely refurbished train from Philadelphia Toboggan Coasters Inc.



For the 2017 season, Frontier City added to its water park area with the addition of Gully Washer. This triple-slide Turbo Twister was supplied by ProSlide. It stands 66 feet tall and offers a combined 1,249 feet of sliding thrills.

Also new was this completely refurbished coaster train (below) for the Wildcat. The train rehab was completed this past winter by Philadelphia Toboggan Coasters, Inc.
AT/GARY SLADE



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Pandora expansion creates a 'must do' at Disney's Animal Kingdom

AT: Tim Baldwin
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ORLANDO, Fla. — At 580 acres, Disney's Animal Kingdom not only is the largest theme park at Walt Disney World, but could debatably be the largest theme park in the world. When the park opened in 1998 (on Earth Day), it was clearly a different direction for Disney. Taking a page from the Busch Gardens playbook, the park featured a focus on animals, conservation and the environment. The architecture, lush landscaping and theming placed the park among the world's most beautiful. But with all these accolades, it was quickly determined to be a "partial day visit" for most visitors who quickly hopped to another of the resort's parks for the evening. In fact, for a long period of time, the park closed before dark.

All that has changed. New attractions and extended hours have now cemented the park as an all-day experience if one is to see and do all the activities and attractions on offer.

The newest and most spectacular addition is Pandora — The World of Avatar. Instantly a worldwide destination for fans of the 2009 film by James Cameron, the new land is mesmerizing for those who have not even seen the movie — the first to ever gross more than \$2 billion. Even without knowledge of *Avatar*, the uninitiated quickly catch on with the storyline as fantastic thematic details are on display throughout the entire new land.

Two main attractions are featured in Pandora. Flight of Passage is an incredibly immersive flying theater. Na'vi River Journey is a float-through dark ride that allows passengers to enjoy the bioluminescent flora and fauna of the famed film.

Dining and retail are also in the area, with the restaurant options being individually customized for each guest and served very efficiently. A big seller is a pet banshee. Sold with a true Harry Potter influence, a banshee "chooses" its owner. Street entertainment will also appear sporadically in the outdoor areas throughout the day.

However, the monumental theming of floating islands in the sky, spectacular landscaping and other-worldly objects simply captivate every onlooker into the area. It cannot be overstated.

Flight of Passage takes guests through an elaborately themed journey in its queue starting with stunning landscaping (some real; some themed) and continuing through caverns, forests and mining operations. Once in a scientific lab, guests become onlookers of all sorts of fascinating equipment, as well as a life-size avatar animatronic floating in hibernation liquid. At this point, visitors have been so engrossed into entering this other world, that the storyline has become unnecessary. As it is, the premise goes that the park experience takes place 100 years following the film, and a new group — the Pandora Conservation Initiative — has been established to monitor years of



The Na'vi River Journey (above) takes passengers into the bioluminescent world of the Na'vi. Guests queueing for Flight of Passage observe a floating animatronic avatar in hibernation. Below, the theming in the Pandora area captivates onlookers. COURTESY WALT DISNEY WORLD; AT/TIM BALDWIN



The perfect pet from Pandora



The must-have item at Pandora is the pet banshee. Part of the retail niche is that banshees "choose" their owners. Popular with kids and adults alike, guests can position them on their shoulders and make them move throughout their visit. AT/TIM BALDWIN

abuse humans have played in affecting Pandora's ecosystem. Who cares? It's all about riding a banshee! But it's all a masterstroke of storytelling, quite possibly Disney's finest.

Once in the simulator theater, riders are linked to their avatar which allows each guest to fly on the back of a banshee. The industry has seen its share of flying theaters and simulators, but Flight of Passage takes it further in a big way. There is 3-D, there are scents, there is motion, but this attraction allows guests to actually feel negative Gs as they duck and fly through another world. Even more impressive, each rider can feel the banshee breathe and pulse between his or her legs. Lines, particularly early in the day, can reach significant waits. Still, following each flight, screams of "It was worth it!" erupt regularly.

There are four theaters, each seating 64 avatars (in four rows of 16). The journey lasts four-and-a-half minutes placing hourly throughput estimates between 2,400 – 3,000 an hour.

Construction of Pandora began in 2014. Prior to this, the area was known as Camp Minnie-Mickey. It served as a meet-and-greet location for costumed characters. The show

Festival of the Lion King also took place here. That show was moved to a new theater in the park once construction began.

Documented reports from the 1990s speak of Camp Minnie-Mickey being a "placeholder" for an area under development called Beastly Kingdom, a section dedicated to mythological animals such as dragons and unicorns. By the turn of the millennium, those plans were placed aside as Imagineers felt there were other stories to be told more effectively.

Film director James Cameron was approached in 2011 for the prospect of *Avatar*-themed attractions to be developed.

Eventually, a whole land was envisioned and the conservation component seemed to be a good fit for Disney's Animal Kingdom over the resort's Hollywood-themed park. Cameron's company, Lightstorm Entertainment, worked in conjunction with Walt Disney Imagineering to develop the area. Industry speculations price the new land at close to half a billion, although Disney has not released any monetary figures.

At night, Pandora takes on a new mystique as walkways, plants and thematic objects glow and deliver a surreal experience in the darkness.

Animal Kingdom debuts Rivers of Light



Helping to solidify Disney's Animal Kingdom as being an all-day experience is the new nighttime show, Rivers of Light. Debuting in February, the show features an original soundtrack, projections, floats, boats, fountains and fire. Housed in a new 5,000-seat amphitheater, the show features a collaboration with DisneyNature to incorporate rare nature cinematography showcasing tender animal moments adding authenticity to the storyline. Many are never-before-seen moments from DisneyNature films. The show opened as part the largest expansion in the history of Disney's Animal Kingdom which culminated with the opening of Pandora. COURTESY WALT DISNEY WORLD

Joyland adds Dragon coaster

As Joyland opened for the summer, younger kids were finding new ways to smile and giggle. New for 2017 was the Dragon Wagon.

Brokered through International Rides Management (Wildwood, N.J.) at last fall's IAAPA Expo, the children's coaster finds a fresh new home in Lubbock, Texas. Previously, it had operated at Santa's Village AZoosement Park in Dundee, Ill. That park had acquired it from another facility in Illinois, Go Bonkers.

The new coaster replaced an older children's coaster, the Dipsy Doodle. That coaster, a long-serving Miler coaster dating back to the 1950s, was retired for good.

"Well, we didn't really set out to replace the Dipsy Doodle," said David Dean, president of Joyland Park. "We became aware of the Wisdom Dragon Coaster for sale and it seemed like a good opportunity to add something new and fresh to our list of rides. Kids — as well as adults — really liked the Miler coaster and its action, but it was a bit noisy. Sometimes the noise would keep kids from trying it for the first time. We thought replacing it with the Wisdom coaster would add something new for kids and families."

The Dragon Wagon is one of three coasters at the park, the other two being an SDC Galaxi and an Allen Herschell Mad Mouse.

"So far, we have received positive feedback from both kids and families that have ridden it. Kids really like the dragon theme, and I must agree that it is a cute ride," added Dean.

While it was slightly sad to say goodbye to Dipsy Doodle, Dean said it had served both Joyland and McKenzie Park well.

"Both coasters are very different," he said. "The Miler coaster had a lift chain while the Wisdom Coaster uses tires to push the train up the first hill. The Wisdom model has a dip and a spiral, while the Miler just had dips."

—Tim Baldwin



The Wisdom Dragon coaster, relocated from Santa's Village AZoosement Park, added something new for kids and families visiting Joyland. AT/GARY SLADE



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2017 San Diego County Fair draws over 1.5 million fairgoers

Number of contest participants, food items continues to grow

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

DEL MAR, Calif. — The San Diego County Fair drew its second largest attendance this year, with a total of 1,565,933 fairgoers passing through the gates during the 26 days of the event that ran June 2-July 4.

The 2016 fair still holds the largest attendance record at 1,609,874, but fair officials were certainly pleased with their 1.5 million-plus fairgoers this year. The largest day attendance this year was Sunday, July 2, with 93,874 fairgoers.

To go along with this year's theme, "Where the West is Fun" and to spread the fair word, fair planners organized a first-time-ever authentic cattle drive through the skyscrapers of downtown San Diego. The cattle drive was presented, 20 miles away from the fairgrounds and included 200 head of cattle, 40 cowpokes and nearly 20 scruffy and super fit herding dogs.

"We wanted to bring something unique to our greater San Diego community to promote this year's fair," said General Manager/CEO Tim Fennell. "The cattle drive fit right in with our western theme while, at the same time, supported our mission to educate about local agriculture."

Other new attractions this year included: the Jade Peacock Speakeasy, held on Friday and Saturday nights, for



An authentic cattle drive through the downtown streets of San Diego, Calif., kicked off this year's San Diego County Fair, Del Mar, Calif., June 2-July 4. The cattle drive was 20 miles away from the fairgrounds and included 200 head of cattle, 40 cowpokes and nearly 20 scruffy and super fit herding dogs. This was a first-time event for the fair. COURTESY SAN DIEGO COUNTY FAIR

fairgoers to enjoy spirits and craft cocktails from some of San Diego's award-winning distilleries, and Native American dancing, with Eric Runningpath of the Navajo Nation performing traditional Indian grass dance.

New foods top many fairgoer's schedules. Some of those included: Bacon-wrapped asparagus, a new spicy and sweet "vittle" offered at the Bacon A-Fair; Krispy Kreme Chicken Ice Cream Sandwich, dinner and dessert at the same time at Chicken Charlie's; and Peanut Butter Meatballs, also from Chicken Charlie's.

There were 48 rides in the Fun Zone area of the midway this year and 45 in



Having a little fun during the 2017 San Diego County Fair, Del Mar, are from left Greg Stewart, general manager, Central Washington Fair, Yakima, Wash.; Tim Fennell, general manager and CEO, San Diego County Fair, Del Mar, Calif.; and Steve Chambers, executive director, Western Fairs Assn. AT/SUE NICHOLS

the Kids Zone.

San Diego County Fair is an independent midway.

The top ride this year was the Crazy Mouse, owned by Steve Vandervorst and manu-

factured by Reverchon. The Big Wheel, brought in by Ray Cammack Shows and manufactured by Carousel Holland, placed second, followed by G-Force, owned by Southern Cross Rides and manufactured by KMG.

About 2,500 people braved the Bungee Plunge this year. The oldest jumper was 71 and the youngest was eight years old. About 50 people got cold feet at the top.

Special festivals at the fair this year were: the 2017 San Diego International Beer Festival, which drew 6,055 attendees over the three-day event; the 2017 Toast of the Coast Wine Competition and Festival, which drew 1,058 guests at two tasting sessions during the one-day event; and the 2017 Distilled, Spirit and Cocktail Festival, which hosted 652 guests at the one-day event.

San Diego County Fair organizers not only focus on new attractions, midway rides, and special festivals, but also on educational and agricultural activities. Some of the educational activities this year included special promotion days for groups such as Girl Scouts, student showcases, scout groups that help the fair staff raise the flag daily, a field trip program, and a school staff appreciation day.

Agricultural is celebrated by exhibits as well with the fair's livestock auction. This was the 68th auction for the San Diego fair. It raised over \$500,000 for 4-H and FFA

► See SAN DIEGO, page 31

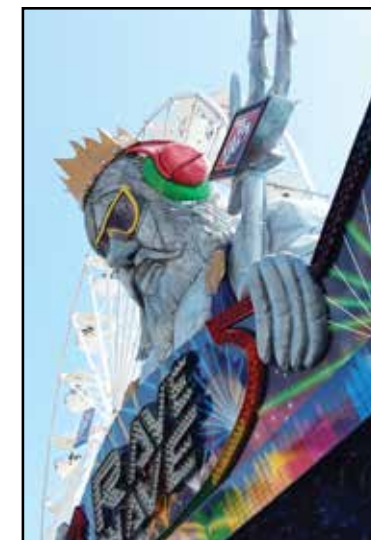
FAST FACTS

Top 10 rides

1. **Crazy Mouse**, Steve Vandervorst, Reverchon
2. **Big Wheel**, RCS, Carousel Holland
3. **G-Force**, Southern Cross Rides, KMG
4. **Magnum**, Wood Entertainment, Mondial
5. **Skyflyer**, Bishop Amusements, Zamperla
6. **Olympic Bobsled**, Helm & Sons, SDC
7. **Fast Trax Slide**, State Fair Spectacular, Fabbri
8. **Alien Abduction**, RCS, Wisdom
9. **Rave Wave**, RCS, Reverchon
10. **Infield Carousel**, Helm & Sons, Chance



Connie Everett's pretzel trailer was just one of the many food concessions at this year's San Diego County Fair, Del Mar, Calif. The trailer was manufactured by Hitch-Hiker Trailers. AT/SUE NICHOLS



Ray Cammack Shows' Rave Wave came in at the ninth spot on the top 10 rides at the San Diego County Fair, Del Mar, Calif. The ride was manufactured by Reverchon. AT/SUE NICHOLS



Helm & Sons' Olympic Bobsled ride ranked number six in the top 10 rides at the 2017 San Diego County Fair, Del Mar, Calif. AT/SUE NICHOLS

► **SAN DIEGO**

Continued from page 30

youth, by selling 121 hogs, 74 lambs, 46 cattle, and 53 goats.

Fireworks America of Lakeside California designed the 4th of July Fireworks Show. The 20-minute display consisted of 220, 2.5-inch shells; 515, three-inch shells; 209, four-inch shells; 122, five-inch shells; 96, six-inch shells; 32, eight-inch shells; 1,200 units of fire from bombardment, and 2,394 aerial shots.

For its popular fried potato treats, vendor Australian Battered Potatoes used more than 14,000 pounds of potatoes, 8,400 pints of oil, 240 gallons of ranch dressing, 60 cases of cheese sauce, 200 pounds of bacon, and 150 pounds of sour cream.

Other numbers of pounds and food units include:

- Bacon-A-Fair used more than 30,000 pounds of bacon this season in their various offerings.

- Biggie's Meat Market used three-fourths of a semi-

trailer truck filled with potatoes for their Curly Fried Cone.

- Candy Factory used 14 tanks of liquid nitrogen for their Nitro Candy Popcorn.

- Chicken Charlie sold over 30,000 Peanut Butter Meatballs, 10,000 Bacon Wrapped Chicken Legs, and close to 7,000 Krispy Kreme Ice Cream Chicken Sandwiches.

- Corn Star grilled 48,000 ears of corn.

- Dixie's Donuts fried more than 281,000 mini donuts.

- The Fair's signature craft beer, the Blood Orange IPA from Hess Brewery was a hit, with 76 kegs of the beer consumed, which equates to over 12,000 beers.

- Pignotti's new food item also was a hit. They sold over 1,000 orders of deep fried octopus.

- Pink's sold 2,600 pounds of hot dogs and 7,500 pounds of French Fries.

Of the 154 Cell Phones turned into the Guest Services Department, fair employees have been able to return all but 26.

FAST FACTS

San Diego County Fair contests and special events by the numbers

40: Number of babies entered in three Baby Derby Contests

62: Number of participants in the Father/Child Lookalike Contest

88: Number of National Anthem singers at Opening Ceremonies

140: Number of Scout Troops that participated in the Flag Raising at Opening Ceremonies

170: Number of kids learning magic at the Abra-Kid-Abra Magic Camp

207: Number of pieces of bubble gum chewed in the Bubble Gum Blowing Contest

240: Number of pies consumed at the daily Coco's Pie Eating Contest

254: Number of cars in the Car Shows at the Fair

890: Number of participants at Three O'Clock Fun contests

1,097: Number of participants in the Flag Raising program at daily Opening Ceremonies (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Marines)



MIDWAYLIGHTS

COMPILED: Pam Sherborne

psherborne@amusementtoday.com

A new app introduced for the **Kentucky State Fair**, Louisville, is helping fairgoers get their hands on advanced tickets to the 2017 fair, which runs August 17-27.

The free app is available on Google Play and the App Store. A fairgoer not only can get advanced tickets from the app, but they also are able to plan their fair trip with a complete schedule and discover Tastes of the Fair favorites among other features.

Another fair, the **Illinois State Fair**, Indianapolis, is continuing its trek into the digital age. Last year, the fair unveiled a new mobile app that allowed fairgoers to customize their visit to the state fairgrounds. This year, the fair is offering an online payment option for gate admission, parking passes and mega passes with more features to be added as this year's fair dates approach. The Illinois State Fair runs August 4-20.

The fair will be able to scan fairgoers' phones as well, instead of having to print a hard ticket. Of course, that also is an option through the app.

"Technology is allowing the Illinois State Fair to evolve," said State Fair Manager **Kevin Gordon**. "Scanning tickets is something we have been able to do that at the Grandstand for a couple of years now, and we hope expanding this service to our 12 gates will be an added convenience for our fairgoers."

The **Utah State Fairpark**, Salt Lake City, finished its newest addition last month, a 10,000-seat arena.

State lawmakers approved the \$17 million facility last July, after years of debate on the future of the Fairpark and whether the state should step in to save the home of the **Utah State Fair**.

When lawmakers met last year, **Gov. Gary Herbert** said: "We either need to invest money into it and fix the buildings and the structures out there — or raze the buildings and subdivide it and sell it off."

When breaking ground on the project last fall, officials said the new arena is expected to make Fairpark more self-sustaining by drawing additional revenue from larger events. And, hopefully, the new building will draw more year-round events.

The bulk of the cost for the new arena was shared by four groups: \$10 million from the state, \$3 million from Salt Lake City and Salt Lake County, and \$3 million from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Jeff Kooring, the Fairpark's sales and marketing director, said the arena will hold rodeos, motorsports events, concerts, demolition derbies, and equestrian events.

The LDS Church agreed to donate to "express our appreciation for your leadership on the project to upgrade the fairgrounds and feel confident that it would be a marvelous blessing for the people of the state of Utah," according to a letter from the church's Presiding Bishopric.

"This was a really good opportunity to bring the private sector and the public sector together to continue taking care of this place, which is really important to not only the community on the west side, but also the whole state of Utah," said **Sen. Luz Escamilla**, D-Salt Lake City. "I truly believe this will help bring more life to the west side."

A minor clause in a recently passed California State Senate bill could lead to a dramatic increase in funnel cake sales at county fairs across the state.

Last month, **Gov. Jerry Brown** signed SB-94, which combined the medical and recreational marijuana laws into one set of rules. The massive bill includes a section that allows for cannabis sales on state-owned fairgrounds, either at county fairs or during private events, provided certain conditions are met. These include securing proper permits and, in the case of county fairs, having a designated enclosed space for pot. No recreational marijuana sales are legal until Jan. 1, 2018.

According to an online story on The Fresno Bee site, the CEOs of the Fresno, Kings, Tulare and Madera county fairs had reactions that ranged from cautious suspicion to disgust when asked about the new rules. Three said a final decision would come after their governing boards had time to analyze the new rule, but the largest of the four offered a definitive response.

"The **Big Fresno Fair** (Fresno, Calif., with 2017 dates set October 4-15) has no plans at this time to allow any cannabis-related vendors at the annual Big Fresno Fair, nor hold or permit cannabis-related events at the **Fresno Fairgrounds** as part of our year-round rental facility operations," **John Alkire**, CEO for The Big Fresno Fair, told the news site.

Alkire's stance is in line with both the city that surrounds the state-owned fairgrounds and the county that shares its name. The City of Fresno voted last month to move forward on various pot-related bans, while the county has maintained strict rules that include a \$1,000-per-plant fine that has led to several court battles.

Madera (Calif.) District Fair CEO **Tom Mitchell** said his fair does not have a policy regarding cannabis sales, as it is waiting for guidelines from the state to decide either way. He noted that Madera has not received any requests to host a marijuana-related event. The 2017 version of that fair is set for Sept. 7-10.

In Hanford, home to the **Kings Fair** and where voters will decide in 2018 whether to allow some commercial pot activity, Fair CEO **Angie Avila** said the fair's governing board will consult with the City of Hanford and its police department, as well as state guidelines from the **California Division of Fairs and Expositions**, before making any decisions. The 2017 fair ran in mid-June.

Tulare County has a few legal medical cannabis dispensaries, but **Tulare County Fair** CEO **Pamela Fyock** said she'd likely echo Alkire's comments after talking it over with her board. The 2017 fair is set for Sept. 13-17.

Once again, it seems discussions are taking place about moving the **Tennessee State Fair** from its site in Nashville, where it has been held for the past century. This move, some say, would most likely place the event outside of Metropolitan Nashville to another county. A state commission is set to consider relocating it.

This is not the first time in the recent past this issue has come up for the Tennessee State Fair. The fair has seen years of struggling attendance that has lagged behind the fairs in Wilson and Williamson counties.

The Tennessee State Fair's 2016 attendance was 101,000. The **Wilson County Fair**, Lebanon, Tenn., drew 467,236 fairgoers last year and the **Williamson County Fair**, Franklin, Tenn., drew 204,000. Both of the latter fairs were impacted by rain in 2016.

The goal is to have the Tennessee State Fair moved by 2019. This year the fair is set for Sept. 7-18 in Nashville.

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On the Road: Penn Wood Shows



Penn Wood Shows personnel were on hand at the recently held Fireman's Carnival in Gettysburg, Pa. Show here are (l to r): Jeff Koontz, partial show owner, Linda Koontz and Heidi Long, Penn Wood Shows owner. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

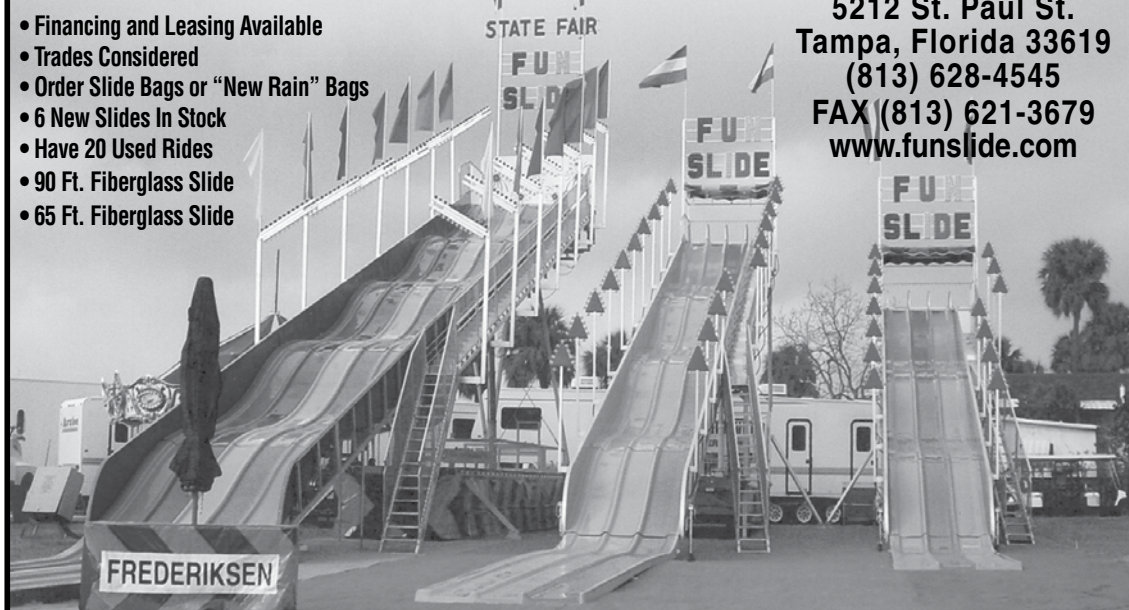
Penn Wood Shows recently bought and refurbished five rides from Mickey "Mildred" Billets with Billets Amusements, York, Pa. Shown at right is one ride, a Hrubetz Paratrooper. Also refurbished were a Lost Treasure Fun House; Swing Ride and a Kiddie Roller Coaster (all manufactured by Hi-Light). The previous year, the Watkins Tempest was refurbished. The show had 19 rides for the five-day spot. Ironically Billets Paratrooper was on the same lot in 1969 (as they had the show,) returning again, this time with LED lighting. bottom right, Penn Wood Shows plays spots primarily in south central Pennsylvania and northern Maryland. The show hopes to add 2-3 rides for the 2018 season, with possibly a Chance Zipper as one of the attractions.

AT/B. DEREK SHAW



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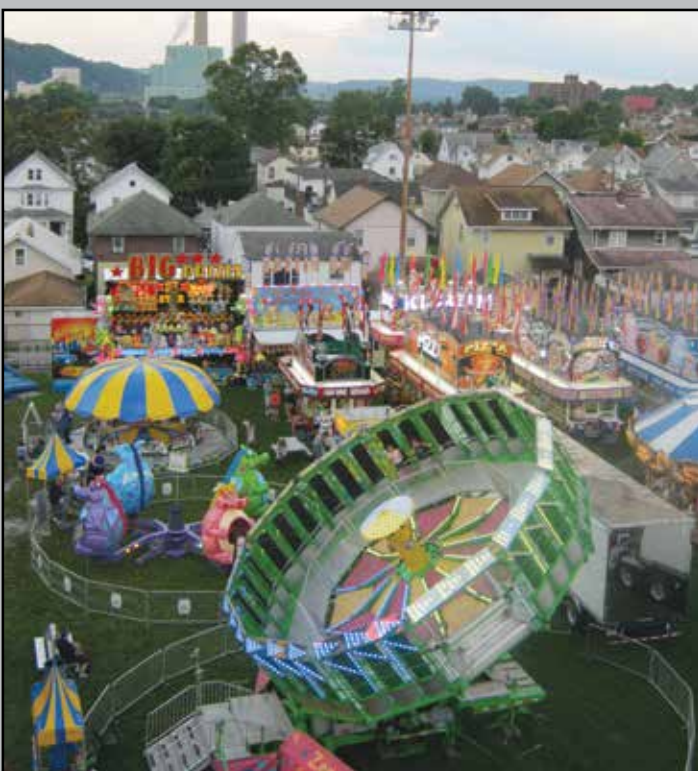
Powers & Thomas Midway Entertainment



Amy Powers and R.J. Thomas, principals of Powers and Thomas Midway Entertainment pose in front of their new Hitchhiker Ice Cream location when AT caught up to them at the Fireman's Jubilee in Springdale, Pa. AT/B. DEREK SHAW



Powers and Thomas Midway Entertainment added this new Chance Rides, three-abreast carousel featuring Bradley & Kaye outside horses along with a distinctive decorative top. AT/B. DEREK SHAW



Powers and Thomas Midway Entertainment has the contract in Springdale, Pa., for the six-day run of the Fireman's Jubilee always occurring around the July 4th holiday. This year it had 15 rides at that location, seen here. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

Rain dampens Poor Jack Amusements dates; Scrambler, new Black Widow shining

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

MILTON, Ind. — Since it was founded in 1967 by the Bohlander family, Poor Jack Amusements has had many rides come and go, but there are three rides that started with the show 50 years ago that still operate every season and every date, the Eli Bridge Scrambler, Eyerly Rock-O-Plane and Allan Herschell carousel.

This past winter, the show owners decided to take their Scrambler, which was actually built in 1962, back to Eli Bridge and have it overhauled and re-racked to fit a 28-foot trailer.

"My brother, Gary, and I feel our Scrambler has been our most profitable piece of equipment over the years," Tim Bohlander said. "We have other rides that have earned more money but the operating and maintenance costs have detracted from the profits.

"The Scrambler has given us the best return on our dollar," he said.

Much of the steel in the Scrambler remains intact. The gears in the center of the ride and a lot of the iron remains the same as well. They did replace the cars, but Bohlander said they really didn't need to.

"But, they were 50 years old and sort of looked 50 years old," he said. "They also put on a new LED lighting package."

Of the three original rides to the show, the Rock-O-Plane probably has most of its original parts.

"We have replaced so many

parts of the carousel that there aren't that many now," Bohlander said. "I think the iron in the horses are where most of the original parts are."

During the second week in July, Poor Jack Amusements had split into three units, something they don't do regularly. They do run two units often in the summer and come together for the bigger dates.

They play Indiana and have four fairs in Ohio. Bohlander said there is no lack of business in the area.

"Fifteen years ago, the Indiana fair association had 50 fairs registered that played in the state," he said. "This year there are 13."

It has been wet so far this season for the show. Bohlander said the summer weather in Indiana has a tendency to be quite

nice during the day, but will become cloudy and rain often in the afternoons -- "right when we are getting ready to open."

"It has definitely impacted us this year," he said. "But, overall it has been pretty good, as long as the weather holds."

Along with having the Scrambler overhauled for this season, a new Black Widow ride from Batech was purchased. For the 2016 season, a new Wadkins Expo Wheel was added as was a tractor ride from Dalton.

Other equipment also has been purchased such as a new bunk house last year along with several new trucks.

The show owns about 34 rides. It mostly stays within an 80-to-100-mile radius to the headquarters in Milton, Ind. There is one date which is 140 miles away.



Poor Jack Amusements, headquartered in Milton, Ind., is now the proud owner of a 28-foot-tall Eli Bridge trailer-mounted Scrambler. Seen here in front of the trailer-mounted ride is, from left Phillip Berry, William Howard, John Spaulding, and Tim Bohlander, all with Poor Jack Amusements, along with Patty Sullivan, president/CEO, Eli Bridge, and Gary Woods, Eli Bridge shop supervisor. COURTESY TIM NOLAND

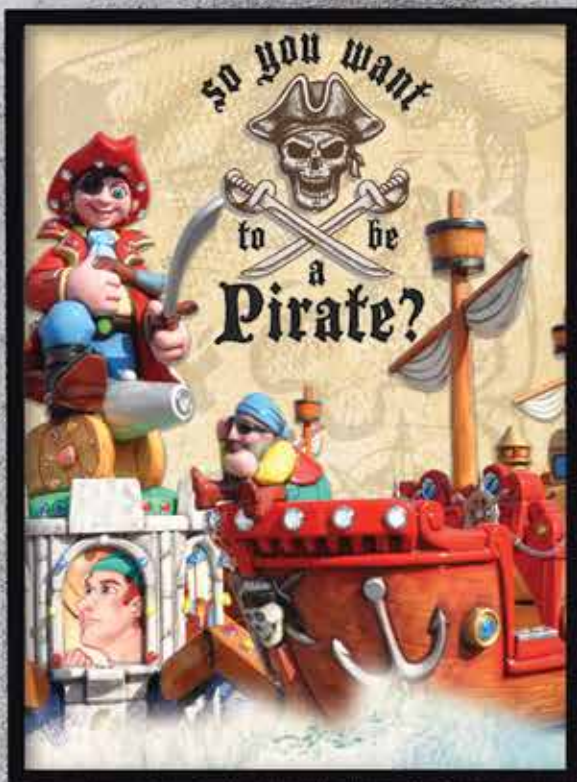
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BUSINESS, SAFETY & CLASSIFIED

► Obituaries — Page 38 / MarketWatch — Page 40 / SAFETY — 43-45 / CLASSIFIEDS — Pages 46

Waldameer Park and Water World Hosts PAPA Summer Meeting

First female president of organization leads event

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

ERIE, Pa. — Nearly seventy members of the **Pennsylvania Amusement Parks Association (PAPA)** convened on July 17-18 for the organization's annual Summer Meeting at **Waldameer Park and Water World**.

Day One started with a golf tournament at Whispering Woods Golf Club in Erie, generating a substantial amount for the **Barbara J. Knoebel** scholarship fund. This fund annually helps student employees of PAPA member parks in the form of scholarships for educational purposes.



That evening, attendees socialized over dinner at the Bel-Aire/Clarion Hotel, which is within walking distance of the park. Pre-dinner remarks were delivered by **Erika Scheffer**, director of state advocacy for **IAAPA**, who explained the organization's decision to relocate its headquarters from Alexandria, Va., to Orlando. Land has been purchased in Orlando, with groundbreaking scheduled for next January and a move-in date during the second quarter of 2019. The majority of the government affairs team will remain in the Washington, D.C., area.

Scheffer also discussed an FAA bill regarding drones over amusement park air space and the J-1 visa program.

Gina Romano, representing the **IAAPA Foundation**, said they

annually provide three \$7,000 scholarships to deserving students. The foundation is hoping to offer three additional scholarships this year. Romano also discussed an initiative with Colorado Springs, Colo.-based **Junior Achievement Worldwide** to aid those students and help them gain real insight into working in the amusement industry.

On Day Two, following a continental breakfast at Waldameer, behind-the-scenes tours of the park were conducted by **Paul Nelson, Steve Gorman** and **Brian Gorman**. The tours were tailored to members' specific interests. These included a look at the Water World water park area and a lights-on walk through the classic, Bill Tracy-designed Whacky Shack dark ride.

The PAPA Board of Directors meeting took place mid-morning. **Leanna Muscato** of **Knoebels Amusement Resort**, current PAPA president and the organization's first female leader in its 82-year history, presided.

Discussion included the recent Amusement Park Legislative Day at the state capitol in Harrisburg and the announcement of three new member companies to PAPA. Committee reports included the new bylaws that were approved, changing the wording, "life" members to "hall of fame" members, waterpark issues including media coverage of water borne illness early in the season and the need for another member to serve on the Amusement Ride Safety Advisory Board.

A few remarks were also made

by **Fred Strathmeyer, Jr.** Deputy Secretary with the **Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture**, Bureau of Ride Safety. In summing up his comments, Strathmeyer said, "[We are] the leader of safety in the nation."

There was also discussion about possibly changing the name of the organization to better reflect the interests of all members. While amusement parks have traditionally been the primary members, these days there is representation from water parks, family entertainment centers, ride manufacturers, suppliers, family campgrounds, miniature golf courses and other attractions.

Muscato was asked about being the first woman at the helm of PAPA. "There are not that many women of my generation that have been involved with amusement parks as long as I have," she said. "I started at age five or six."

Organizational success is one goal during her two-year term.

"We want to see growth all across the industry," said Muscato. "In order to do that, we need to become strong." She has already recruited a few new members to the organization who are suppliers with whom she works in her position at Knoebels.

Muscato was quick to point out the mutual cooperation between member organizations. "That's one of the best things about PAPA: We share information. We are not in competition. I give them my good hints, they give me their good hints, and that makes us all stronger and better in the industry." She added that this applies across the board with games, rides, food and other areas.

Finally, Muscato said she wanted member parks to maintain their focus on creating a positive experience guests and to continue providing value, safety and enjoyment in a family-friendly environment.

The 2017 PACE (Parks and

Carnivals Educational) ride safety seminar will occur Oct. 30-Nov. 2 at a hotel to be determined in Bloomsburg, Pa. Hands-on training will be available at Knoebels Amusement Resort in Elysburg, Pa. This portion of the program is held outside — rain or shine. This annual seminar is held in conjunction with the **Pennsylvania State Showmen's Association (PSSA)** and offers both 24- and 32-hour certification training sessions. The educational portion of the seminar is led by instructors from **NAARSO**. Inspector testing also is offered for Pennsylvania Certified Inspectors and/or NAARSO levels. Contact **Gary Chubb** at **Hersheypark** for more information.

PAPA formed in 1935 to promote the industry, exchange



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VIDEO TRACK
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knowledge among members, uphold a good public image and exert influence upon legislation. **R.L. Plarr** of **Dorney Park** served as the organization's first president. In 1946, roller coaster designer **Herbert P. Schmeck** of **Philadelphia Toboggan Company** served as president.

Each year, the Summer Meeting travels to a different member facility in Pennsylvania, while the Spring Meeting is held annually at the **Hershey Lodge** in Hershey, Pa. The next Spring Meeting is Feb. 26-27.

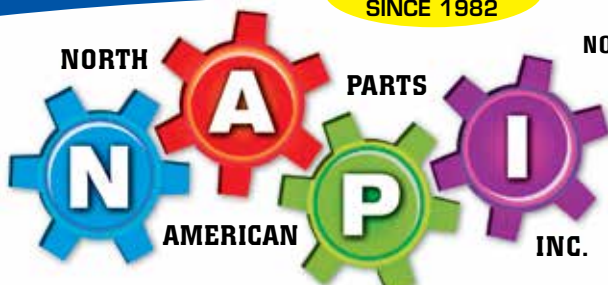


Above, Waldameer's **Steve Gorman** (third from left) shares insights on the park's water park expansion and plans with PAPA members. Below, PAPA members and attendees enjoy dinner together on the first night of the annual summer meeting. **AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON**



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Chance Rides names new president

WICHITA, Kan. — **Chance Rides** recently announced that **Aaron Landrum**, 41, has joined the company as president & chief operating officer effective June 26, 2017.

Aaron will report directly to CEO/Chairman, **Dick Chance**, and oversee all operations of the company including Engineering, Production, Customer Service, Finance, and Sales and Marketing.

Additionally, Aaron will work closely with Dick and his son, **John Chance**, to execute the company's strategic and growth objectives.

With more than 18 years of experience in man-



Landrum

ufacturing operations, Aaron was previously the general manager at **PCC Aerostructures - Brittain Machine**, a large structural component machining operation in Wichita, Kansas. Prior to PCC, Aaron was the general manager at **Circor Aerospace & Defense** in Hauppauge, New York designing and producing highly engineered defense, aerospace, and medical products.

"We are thrilled to have Aaron onboard and I couldn't feel more optimistic about the future success of Chance Rides under Aaron's stewardship," said Dick Chance. "I will continue to have an active role in the business while my primary focus shifts to the strategic direction of the company."

Merlin promotes Jones to new role

WINTER HAVEN, Fla. — **Adrian Jones**, who has led **Legoland Florida Resort** through nearly seven years of growth and expansion, has accepted a new role as divisional director of Midway North America, parent company **Merlin Entertainments Group** announced.

Jones will be responsible for a rapidly expanding portfolio of two dozen U.S. and Canadian attractions that include iconic brands such as **Madame Tussauds**, **Sea Life Aquarium** and **Legoland Discovery Center**.

Named general manager of the future Legoland Florida in August 2010, Jones oversaw a dramatic transformation of the former **Cypress Gardens** site

into the globe's fifth Legoland theme park, which opened to enthusiastic crowds Oct. 15, 2011.

In a three-decade career with U.K.-based **Merlin Entertainments**, Jones previously served as divisional director of Midway Attractions in the western United States, where in 2008 he opened Legoland Discovery Center near Chicago, Ill., the first in North America; and in 2009, Madame Tussauds Hollywood, the first of the premier celebrity wax attractions to be built from the ground up in 200 years.



Jones

Weldon, Williams & Lick, Inc. completes acquisition of Worldwide Ticketcraft

FORT SMITH, Ark. — **Erik Covitz**, founder and CEO of **Worldwide Ticketcraft** (WWTC), and **Jim Walcott**, president and CEO of **Weldon, Williams & Lick, Inc.** (WW&L) jointly announce the closing of the acquisition of Worldwide Ticketcraft by Weldon, Williams & Lick, Inc. to better serve their respective customers. This move will consolidate the entrepreneurial drive of WWTC with the strength and capacity of WW&L. Combining the best practices of each company will offer the admissions industry a full suite of products and smart solution choices. Worldwide Ticketcraft will remain in Florida and continue to serve their customers with an expanded product line. Covitz will serve as vice president of Market Development for WW&L where he will focus on bringing new products and services to the customers of both companies.

"This is very exciting news for our customers and employees," said Walcott. "It's truly an honor to have the opportunity to join with Erik Covitz and his entire team at Worldwide Ticketcraft."

Covitz added, "The resources that Weldon, Williams & Lick brings to our company and customers will drive our future growth and new opportunities for our employees."

Weldon, Williams & Lick, Inc. continues to be an industry leader in ticket design and printing for more than 100 years. Weldon, Williams and Lick, Inc. was founded in 1898 and offers a complete array of admission tickets, parking permits, event ticket printing and distribution services, hang tags, credentials, kiosks, and RFID products. The company is a leading provider of high quality printed ticket products for international events, leading professional and collegiate sports, and marquee productions.

Worldwide Ticketcraft was founded in 1999 and headquartered in Boynton Beach, Fla. Worldwide Ticketcraft is a customer-focused, service-driven leader in the ticket design and printing business. In 2006, Worldwide Ticket and Label acquired New York based, Ticketcraft, Inc. and merged both companies to form Worldwide Ticketcraft. The company produces hundreds of millions of thermal and digital products each year, including reserved seating, point of sale, season books and pre-designed tickets.

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MUSEUM PROGRESS REPORT

This space is provided courtesy of Amusement Today, a corporate partner of the National Roller Coaster Museum & Archives.

Information boards take shape

NRCMA has started the process of getting information boards created and placed on display by each donated vehicle that is in storage, or on display, in the current archival facility in Plainview, Texas. To create display stands, the staff recycled wood from the Texas Cyclone (AstroWorld) wooden coaster and sprayed a clear coat to protect the original paint. Future guests will also see the Douglas Fir growth rings on the stands where cuts to the boards have been made. The information signs were written by Jeffrey Seifert and designed by John Robinson, both AT staffers. Boards seen below are (clockwise from top left): Recycling Texas Cyclone, Texas Splashdown (SeaWorld San Antonio); City Jet (Gillian's Wonderland Pier) and Little Dipper (Memphis Kiddie Park).

RECYCLING:

TEXAS CYCLONE

(OPERATED 1976-2005 • ASTROWORLD)

These information stands have been recycled from extra Texas Cyclone wooden support structure that the NRCMA has in its inventory. The stands have not been repainted thus showcasing both the ride's original paint, and the detail of the Douglas Fir wood grain on the cut sections. Once complete, they were clear coated for added protection.



DONATION COURTESY ASTROWORLD (2005)

LOG, SIGNAGE AND TROUGH FROM

TEXAS SPLASHDOWN

(OPERATED 1989-2011 • SEAWORLD SAN ANTONIO)

Originally opened in 1987, this flume dates back to the days of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, the textbook publishers who owned the Sea World marine life parks. In 1986, HBJ purchased, what was then Circus World theme park in Haines City, Florida. HBJ rethemed the park and reopened it in 1987 as Boardwalk & Baseball. New attractions included Grand Rapids, an Arrow Dynamics log flume with an extended elevated section. HBJ built a fourth Sea World in San Antonio, Texas, that opened in 1988. In 1989 HBJ sold its theme park division to Busch Entertainment Corp. Busch closed Boardwalk & Baseball and relocated the flume to Sea World of Texas. It operated there until 2011.



DONATION COURTESY SEAWORLD SAN ANTONIO (2011)

PARK SIGN FROM

KIDDEILAND AMUSEMENT PARK

(OPERATED 1929-2009 • KIDDEILAND AMUSEMENT PARK)

Kiddieland Amusement Park opened in 1929 in Melrose, Ill., a suburb of Chicago. The park was home to a number of rides for children and adults including a 1950 Herbert P. Schmeck-designed Little Dipper wooden coaster. Throughout its 81-year history, the park was lovingly maintained, and rides were continually washed, waxed and dusted to keep them looking like new. The park became a summertime tradition for families in the Chicago area. Unfortunately, it all came to end on September 27, 2009. A decades-long dispute among the heirs of the original founding family finally took its toll. Members of the family who owned the land, decided it was too valuable to be used for an amusement park and refused to extend a lease allowing the remaining family members to operate the park. Most of the rides were sold off and relocated, with the Little Dipper roller coaster moving to nearby Six Flags Great Escape in Gurnee.



DONATION COURTESY KIDDEILAND (2009)

LEAD CAR FROM

CITY JET

(OPERATED 1996-2014 • GILLIAN'S WONDERLAND PIER)

The City Jet, also known as a Jet Star 400, was the fourth coaster of the Jet Star series from coaster designer Anton Schwarzkopf. Although designed to be portable, many operated at the same location for multiple seasons. The Jet Stars were known for having high-speed, highly banked turns. The City Jet was slightly smaller than a Jet Star 2, but its stronger support structure allowed it to run two cars chained together to form a small train. This City Jet first operated at Steel Pier in Atlantic City from around 1973 to 1976 when it was moved to Gillian's Wonderland Pier. For the 2004 season, Gillian's purchased two new trains from Wieland Schwarzkopf and donated this car to the NRCMA. Gillian's sold the City Jet at the end of the 2004 season and the fate of this City Jet is unknown.



DONATION COURTESY GILLIAN'S WONDERLAND PIER (2004)

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

Presented by the National Rollercoaster Museum

AT: Richard Munch



AUGUST

•**1918:** On the evening of August 11, the grandstand at the **Waco Cotton Palace race track**, in Waco, Texas, was completely destroyed by fire. The adjacent roller coaster and other buildings were also damaged, with the loss estimated at about \$10,000. Begun in November 1894, the Cotton Palace was organized to feature local live-stock, agriculture (highlighting the cotton industry), concerts and floral exhibits. It lasted all but one year, when a fire in January 1895 took out most of the buildings. It reopened in 1910, with larger facilities for exhibits, including the amusement section known as the War Path featuring a Ferris wheel, wood roller coaster, merry go round and Old Mill. Ironically, while most structures were rebuilt after the fire, another major blaze destroyed more exhibit buildings the following April. The Cotton Palace eventually closed in October 1930, linked to dropping cotton prices related to the Great Depression.

•**1922: Rendezvous Park**, in Atlantic City, N.J., was the scene of an unusual incident in which a man was apparently hurt by a falling fire bucket from the Scenic Railway at the boardwalk park. **Bill MacAfee** was found unconscious late August 16 in his cot, after being struck on the head by the metal container. Typically, these buckets were filled with sand or water, to put out any fire. Employed as a handyman by the concessionaires, MacAfee had established sleeping quarters under the ride for almost a year. It was never explained how the bucket fell onto the sleeping man, nor if he ever recovered at the local hospital from the head injury.

•**1922: Bertram Wilson**, general manager of **Sea Breeze Park**, Rochester, N.Y., was interviewed for the local newspaper on August 11. He said, "If the people who use the roller coaster would obey instructions, they would not keep us on a nervous edge most of the time. We have to watch people who are using these devices all the time. Some of them apparently have not the slightest conception of what danger is, for they will go down in a standing position, ride backwards or kneel inside the cars." He stated that this made him nervous most of the time and concluded, "the proper way to use a toboggan is to sit down and not attempt any funny business, but on average one out of every half dozen persons resort to some freak stunt. I have no doubt if they thought they could get away with it without breaking their necks, they would attempt to ride standing on their heads!"

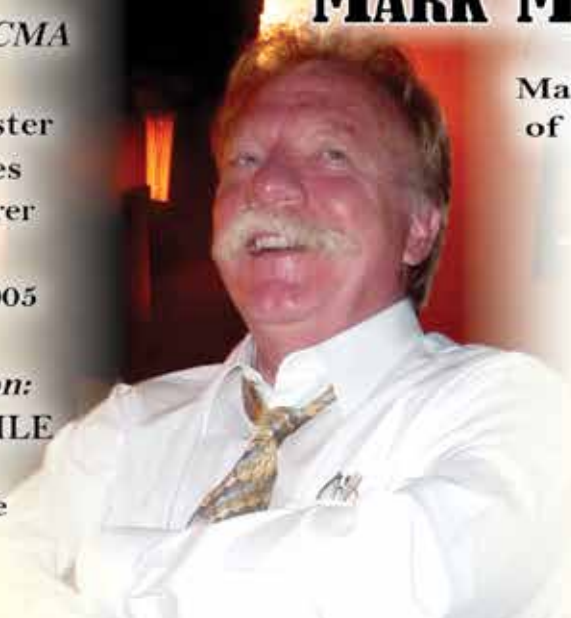
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-Gary Slade, Amusement Today

OBITUARIES

Former Playland Park and Bell's park manager Jack Johnson dies

FREDERICKSBURG, Texas — **Jack Johnson**, former manager of now-defunct **Playland Amusement Park** in San Antonio and **Bell's Amusement Park** in Tulsa, Okla., passed away on June 1 after a lengthy battle with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). He was 80.

Johnson was born in Chicago in 1936. His adoptive parents, **James E. (Jimmy)** and **Vivian Johnson**, moved to San Antonio's Alamo Heights when he and his twin sister, Jill, were six years old. The elder Johnson opened Playland Park in San Antonio in 1943.

Jack Johnson studied at several local colleges before completing his education at Trinity University in San Antonio, where he earned a B.S. degree in physics. Upon graduation, he received a commission into the U.S. Army as a second lieutenant. He was honorably discharged as a captain after serving two years at Fort Sill, Okla.

Returning to San Antonio, Johnson became a member of the city's Rotary Club and managed Playland Amusement Park until it closed in 1981.

From 1981 to 1986, Johnson lived in Tulsa, where he managed Bell's Amusement Park. He relocated to Fredericksburg and became head of the engineering department at Hill Country Memorial Hospital. Following his departure from that position, Johnson worked at Herbort Auto Supply/Carquest until he suffered a stroke several years later.

Dick Knoebel, owner of **Knoebels Amusement Resort** in Elysburg, Pa., described Johnson as "a great friend. Jack was a great host and was definitely an amusement industry person."

Knoebel, who bought Playland Park's still standing Rocket wooden roller coaster and moved it to his own property from Texas in the mid-1980s — successfully refurbishing the ride and renaming it Phoenix — recalled that Johnson traveled to Pennsylvania to attend the coaster's grand reopening.

"Jack stated: 'It never ran this good in San Antonio.'"

Johnson had many interests that kept him busy, including collecting and restoring antique cars, working on and repairing old engines and machines, and operating ham radio. He was a history buff who assembled an extensive library of Civil War history.

Johnson is survived by his wife of 56 years, **Betty Johnson**, and their two daughters — **Jennifer Johnson** of Fredericksburg and **Julie Pici** of Austin — as well as his sister, **Jill Johnson**, who resides in Kerrville.

Jack Niedzwiecki, 89, ran Knoebels bumper cars

SHAMOKIN, Pa. — "Turn The Wheel To Your Left!, NO! Your OTHER Left! Don't You Know Your Right From Your Left?" Those words and many other similar instructions were uttered many times to thousands of riders of the Auto Scooters at **Knoebels Amusement Resort** by **John (Bumper Car Jack) Niedzwiecki** of Shamokin, Pa. Jack suffered from congestive heart failure. He was 89.

For over 35 years Jack was employed by Knoebels in various capacities, more recently at the vintage Lusse bumper car ride, which he ran until 2014. Lately he was tasked with prepping each car in the morning before the park opened for the day and then worked the rest of the morning in the shop where other bumper cars were being repaired and reconditioned. Jack still took great pride in keeping "his" bumper cars polished with a new car-like finish. Jack had always said he wanted to go with his boots on, working. That is where he was found prior to the park opening on June 28th.

Funny, kind and generous are just a few of the many attributes he had. Jack had legions of fans — not just amusement park enthusiasts, but also the general patrons of the park who enjoyed being in his company during their visits. In fact his likeness is found inside the bumper car building saying "No Head-Ons" and outside the ride entrance is a "To ride the Scooters without an adult you must be as tall as I am 54 inches" sign, affectionately referred to as "Flat Jack." Early on, Jack served in the U.S. Navy and was a member of two different local fire companies. In addition to his wife of 53 years, Marge, he is survived by two sons, John and Kevin.

"Bumper Car Jack was a major fixture of the park, an attraction himself. He was known internationally. Jack definitely will be missed," said Dick Knoebel.



Johnson



Niedzwiecki

PEOPLE WATCH

RWS Entertainment Group appoints Deborah Eicher to team

NEW YORK, N.Y. — **RWS Entertainment Group**, a New York-based live entertainment production company that creates custom entertainment, live events and brand experiences for top resorts, cruise lines and theme parks, announced on July 11 the appointment of **Deborah Eicher** as head of International Business Development. Eicher will be based in London and lead RWS' ongoing business expansion efforts in global markets with an emphasis on Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

Eicher brings over 17 years of commercial and marketing experience in the leisure and entertainments industry, has an MBA, ICAE and is on the board of directors of the **IAAPA** Foundation. Eicher recently worked as Global Business Development Director at **Scruffy Dog Ltd.**, HB Leisure and was President, Global Industry Relations and Business Development for **Picsolve** focusing on the U.S., Far East, and Middle East.

"I'm thrilled to be working with such a talented team at RWS Entertainment Group," says Eicher. "I look forward to heading our global expansion and offering our Broadway caliber entertainment productions to theme parks and attractions around the world."

"Deborah's past success and experience within the leisure and attractions industry make her the perfect candidate to lead RWS' expansion efforts on an international level," said **Ryan Stana**, CEO and founder of RWS Entertainment Group. "We are confident in her ability to introduce RWS' services to businesses abroad and be a valuable member of our fast-growing company."

Picsolve appoints Dan Maunder as new Chief Technology Officer

LONDON — **Picsolve**, a leading digital content creation partner for world-class visitor destinations, recently announced the appointment of **Dan Maunder**, who joins the company as Chief Technology Officer. With more than 15 years' experience in technology and product development, he will be responsible for Picsolve's overall technology strategy as the company continues to develop its innovative offering and further its growth into new markets and sectors.

Maunder will be responsible for overseeing the company's research and development, digital product development and technology teams and will be a key driver in its digital transformation ambitions. He will be instrumental in the continuous development of Picsolve's visionary imaging technology ensuring full integration with customer systems, all of which is supported through the evolution of its open standard ecosystem and digital infrastructure.

Maunder joins Picsolve with a wealth of IT industry leadership experience from consumer-centric brands. He most recently served as the VP of Software Development at **Experian Consumer Services**, the credit experts, helping the company's American, U.K. and Europe markets derive insight and customer understanding from data, as well as supporting its rebrand.

Picsolve CEO **Alan Wright** said, "As a world-leading digital content creation partner, we're focused on driving innovation within our business

so that our customers can reap the benefits and attract and satisfy the visitors who frequent their world-class destinations. Dan brings a wealth of experience in driving technology advancement and managing highly ambitious teams. He is a proven strategist with operational expertise and I look forward to seeing his ambitious, transformative projects flourish."

Falcon's Creative Group adds Wallace

ORLANDO, Fla. — **Falcon's Creative Group**, the Orlando-based creative services firm specializing in the design and production of themed experiences, has announced the addition of industry veteran **Mike Wallace** as its new creative director. In his role at Falcon's Creative Group, Wallace will be responsible for leading and overseeing the company's creative team, which consists of an experienced, interdisciplinary group of designers, animators, writers and architects representing decades of experience in every facet of themed environmental concept, design and construction.

Prior to joining Falcon's Creative Group, Wallace spent nearly 10 years at **Universal Creative**, the design and engineering group within **Universal Parks and Resorts**, where he worked as an architectural designer, facility design manager, resort master planner, and field art director for some of the theme park's most impactful projects.

"Mike's architectural background and field experience make him an ideal choice to lead a group of artists and designers who are imagining concepts that will translate to real-world creations," said **Cecil D. Magpuri**, president and chief creative officer at Falcon's Creative Group. "The relationship between the creative team and the architects and engineers who transform creative ideas into reality is crucial for a project's success, so having someone with Mike's expertise on both sides of the development process is extremely valuable to our team. We are thrilled to have him."

George Reider joins Magic Memories

ORLANDO, Fla. — **Magic Memories**, the leader in capturing, creating and sharing memories, announced the appointment of **George Reider** as North American Chief Executive Officer. Reporting to Group CEO **Chris Warhurst**, George will be responsible for the growth and direction of Magic Memories' operations in the United States and Canada. This announcement follows Magic Memories' recent appointment of two Silicon Valley veterans to its board, **Jeff Ryan** and **Sanjay Dholakia**.

"George's appointment marks another exciting milestone in the development of our North American operations," said Warhurst. "The combination of his retail ecommerce experience with our growing business will create a solid foundation on which to build our future efforts."

"I am thrilled and honored to join such a dynamic and passionate leadership team," said Reider. "Magic Memories has experienced tremendous growth and success, and I am committed to leading the North American team down its current path using innovative strategies to enhance the experiences of our team members and guests."

Magic Memories was founded in 1995 in New Zealand.



Eicher



Wallace

SeaWorld Ent. releases corporate responsibility report

Inaugural report highlights company's key initiatives

ORLANDO, Fla. — **SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.** (NYSE: SEAS), a leading theme park and entertainment company, released its 2016 Corporate Responsibility Report on June 27, 2017. The report provides an overview of the company's everyday operations that support its mission to provide experiences that matter, inspiring people to protect animals and the wild wonders of our world.

The inaugural report showcases the actions **SeaWorld** is taking to ensure the health and well-being of the animals in its care, rescue and protect animals in the wild, minimize the environmental impact of its operations and create a strong culture where employees are engaged and connected to the company's mission.

"People want to know that they are supporting companies and causes they believe in," said **Joel Manby**, President and Chief Executive Officer of SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc. "We are demonstrating that our parks can be fun and thrilling while also being educational and inspirational. When our guests visit one of our parks, we want them to know they are helping support the rescue of thousands of animals every year, as well as ongoing research and conservation efforts around the world."

Highlights from SeaWorld's 2016 Corporate Responsibility Report include:

- SeaWorld is a world leader in animal rescue, having rescued and rehabilitated more than 2,000 animals in 2016 alone. The company recently announced a major milestone in 2017 – over 30,000 ill, injured, orphaned or abandoned animal rescues since the company was founded.

- Caring for imperiled animals has always been a core value of SeaWorld. Each year, the company dedicates its experienced animal care personnel, including veterinarians, trainers and specialists, to fulfill the company's purpose. This commitment, together with materials, facilities and equipment, has been valued at approximately \$10M annually.

- In addition to this in-kind support, in 2016 SeaWorld provided \$3.5M in cash donations to conservation organizations and local community nonprofit organizations. SeaWorld has also supported the **SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund** since its founding in 2003. In 2016, the fund granted \$1.6M in support for wildlife research, habitat protection, animal rescue and conservation projects around the world, bringing the total granted by the Fund since it began to more than \$14M. In fact, the Fund has supported over 1,100 projects in 75 countries and on all seven continents.

- All three SeaWorld parks (Orlando, San Diego and San Antonio), Discovery

Cove and Busch Gardens Tampa Bay are accredited members of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA), reflecting SeaWorld's commitment to applying world-class standards of animal care.

- SeaWorld's commitment to conservation includes efforts to reduce the environmental footprint of its operations. Over the last three years, SeaWorld's parks have improved their rate of recycling by 20 percent and reduced their energy usage by approximately 4 percent.

- Employees of SeaWorld are engaged and committed to the company's purpose and mission. Nearly 90 percent of SeaWorld's employees stated they understood and believed in the company's core purpose.

- Half of SeaWorld's leaders are women and 43 percent of its leaders are minorities, a reflection of SeaWorld's commitment to create an inclusive workplace that reflects the diversity of the millions of guests who visit its parks every year.

"This first Corporate Responsibility Report is an important step in SeaWorld's commitment to be open, transparent and proactive in how we engage and communicate on key issues," said Manby. "We hope it will provide a platform for ongoing conversation and feedback from our stakeholders."

Visit www.SeaWorldEntertainment.com to read the full report.

•seaworldentertainment.com

Zipper manufacturer in business to stay

WICHITA, Kan. — It was recently incorrectly reported in an article written by Carolyn Kury de Castillo, a reporter with Global News, that the manufacturer of the Zipper is no longer in business. The Zipper originally went into production in 1968. **Chance Rides** is the successor of the original Zipper manufacturer and the company has been providing maintenance support with replacement parts and service ever since. Chance Rides has also manufactured newer original models as well as refurbishing some of the models seen on the midway to make original rides run like new. In 2016, a newer seat design for the Zipper was released further enhancing the classic ride.

The company sales manager, **Jeff Miller**, is working with North American Midway Entertainment to make sure that they have all they need to keep their ride assortment thrilling their fans for years to come!

•chancerides.com



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MARKETWATCH



COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 07/13/17	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	33.87	34.55	23.33
Merlin Entertainments Group/ Legoland	MERL	LSE	479.00	537.50	422.5
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	71.65	72.56	56.23
Comcast Corp./ NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	39.31	42.18	30.02
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	104.29	116.10	90.31
Dubai Parks & Resorts	DXBE:UH	DFM	0.76	1.77	0.73
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	71.78	84.67	65.50
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	9010	TYO	1177.00	1478.99	950.00
Haicahang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	1.71	1.95	1.53
Leofoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	8.21	9.00	7
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	31.95	34.34	22.87
Parques Reunidos Servicios Centrales S.A.	ES:PQR	MCE	16.70	17.45	11.99
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	15.40	20.13	11.77
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	59.61	65.19	47.61
Skyocean International	HK:0593	SEHK	13.60	17.4	8.1
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	597.00	676.00	425.00
Village Roadshow	VRL	ASX	3.99	5.54	3.22

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

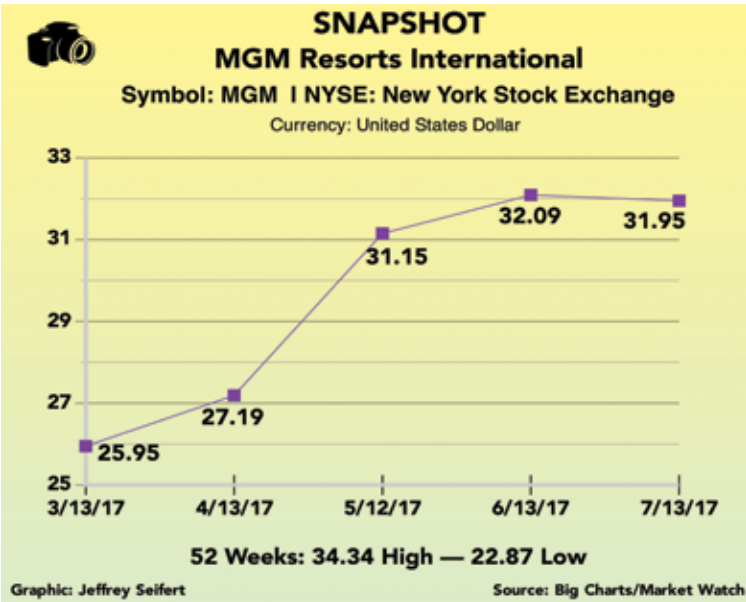
DIESEL PRICES

Region (U.S.)	As of 07/10/17	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$2.523	+\$0.099
Midwest	\$2.421	+\$0.036
Gulf Coast	\$2.311	+\$0.050
Mountain	\$2.584	+\$0.139
West Coast	\$2.653	+\$0.057
California	\$2.867	+\$0.069

CURRENCY

On 07/14/17 \$1 USD =

0.8761	EURO
0.7736	GBP (British Pound)
113.18	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9653	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.2956	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.2739	CAD (Canadian Dollar)



BUSINESS WATCH

Wanda Group sells park, hotel assets

BEIJING, China —The Wall Street Journal reported on July 12 that **Dalian Wanda Group** would be helping to finance almost half of the \$9.28 billion sale of its theme parks and hotels to **Sunac China Holdings Ltd.** Regulatory filings show that Wanda will take out a three-year bank loan of 29.6 billion yuan (\$4.35 billion) to lend to Sunac. Sunac will use the borrowed funds to pay Wanda, and in return, gain ownership of its theme park business. Both companies declined to provide further details than those outlined in the public filing.

West End Media Groups adds two parks

FRISCO, Texas — **T.J. Donnelly**, owner manager, **West End Media Group** (WEMG) has announced recent contracts with **Magic Springs Theme and Water Park** in Hot Springs, Ark., and **Wild Waves Theme and Water Park** in Federal Way, Wash. According to Donnelly, WEMG will be working to enhance promotions and advertising of the parks through a bartering arrangement, primarily with radio stations targeted to reach the clients' customers. In addition, WEMG will work with radio stations to design enhanced "on air" contests and promotions that give WEMG park clients further value added exposure. Donnelly reports such arrangements typically gain 70 percent more coverage than traditional media buys offered by ad agencies that work directly with theme parks. Since his company was founded in 1981, it has placed more than \$410 million in advertising and promotions for its clients.

"We are pleased to add these two water and amusement parks to our inventory of ticket trades for the media and to our client list," says Donnelly. Currently WEMG has over \$6 million in prepaid advertising credits plus goods and services in its inventory. Other clients include **Eltch Gardens**, Denver, Colo.; **Frontier City and White Water Bay**, Oklahoma City, Okla.; **Kentucky Kingdom**, Louisville, Ky.; **Nashville Shores**, Nashville, Tenn.; **Wet 'n' Wild Splashtown**, Houston, Texas; and **Wet 'n' Wild** parks in Phoenix, Ariz.; and Palm Springs, Calif.

In Brief...

•**The Walt Disney Company** (NYSE: DIS) board of directors declared on June 28, 2017, a semi-annual cash dividend of \$0.78 per share, paid July 27, 2017 to shareholders of record at the close of business on July 10, 2017. "We are pleased to deliver another strong dividend to shareholders, following a 15 percent increase in diluted EPS for the second quarter," said **Robert A. Iger**, chairman and CEO, The Walt Disney Company.

•**Six Flags Entertainment Corporation** announced its board of directors has appointed **Jim Reid-Anderson**, who has been serving as Executive Chairman of the company since February 2016, as the company's new Chairman, President and CEO effective immediately, replacing **John M. Duffey** who has retired from the company. Reid-Anderson formerly served as Chairman, President and CEO of Six Flags from August 2010 through February 2016. Under his leadership the company set a new strategic direction, achieved all-time high guest and employee satisfaction ratings and significant operational improvements, and drove a ten times return on investment for shareholders. Among other leadership roles, Reid-Anderson previously served as Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer of **Dade Behring Inc.**, a manufacturer and distributor of medical diagnostics equipment and supplies, where he also drove a ten times return on investment for shareholders along with significant employee morale improvements and customer satisfaction increases.

•**Picsolve**, a digital content creation partner for world-class visitor destinations, has announced its innovative imaging technology will be at the heart of Berlin's latest attraction, **Little BIG City**, letting consumers capture and instantly share their experience. Little BIG City invites visitors to discover the most epic events that have shaped Berlin's history through 3D interactive miniature sets, projection mapping and other special and interactive effects.

•**The 5th Annual International Association of Trampoline Parks Conference & Trade Show** will be held at the Westin Mission Hills in Palm Springs, Calif. on Sept. 19-21, 2017. To register: indoortrampolineparks.org.

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Catching up with the man behind a billion screams

Stan Checketts still innovating, diversifying via Soaring Eagle

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

LOGAN, Utah — At age 76, **Stan Checketts**, it seems, is just getting started.

Never mind that the renowned thrill ride inventor holds more than 20 major patents and a couple of Guinness World Records. Or that the hydraulic and pneumatically powered tower and coaster marvels he has engineered have been delighting people in 28 countries around the globe for more than four decades. There's just no quitting for a man who knows that the future is as close as his next big idea.

Life itself has been a wild ride for Checketts, who grew up poor in Providence, Utah, and later became the toast of nearby Logan when he founded his extreme ride company, **S&S Sports, Inc.** (now **S&S-Sansei Technologies**) there in 1994.

"I sold S&S a couple different times, and took it back a couple times," said Checketts, who partnered on the establishment of a new company, **Soaring Eagle Zipline, Inc.**, in Logan in 2010. "Right now, S&S has a lot of work going and it's doing fabulous. I'm excited for them."

Checketts is excited for Soaring Eagle, too. With major new ride installations opening between late July and mid-

August at **Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park** in Colorado and **Foxwoods Casino Resort** in Mashantucket, Conn., the company's crew of 15 — headed up **Cody Davis**, Soaring Eagle's vice president and the CEO's right-hand man — has been busy.

Checketts exudes the confidence of someone who has made mistakes and learned from them. He credits his faith, his family and especially his wife of 35 years, **Sandy** — the other "S" in "S&S" — with keeping him energized, upbeat and centered. Not to mention adventurous: the couple enjoys tooling around the wide-open West on Stan's Honda Goldwing as part of the Logan-based **Renegade Rebels** motorcycle club.

As Checketts likes to say: "Can't" is a four-letter word."

Amusement Today managed to get the passionate fun-maker to sit still for a half-hour chat.

How has business been at Soaring Eagle?

We're still putting ziplines all over. Our product is unique and really cool — a thrill ride as opposed to a traditional [gravity] zipline. It's efficient, too: It launches from and returns to the same loading point, so you need only one employee instead of eight or 10 to operate it.

The ride goes forward in one direction and backward in the other, so you get a different kind of thrill from each. It can even be installed at ground level with a 100-foot or higher pole at the opposite, distant



Sandy and Stan Checketts take flight on one of Stan's popular, highly efficient zipline installations.
COURTESY SOARING EAGLE ZIPLINE, INC.

point.

The huge thing that distinguishes our zipline from most of the others is that it has a cart that carries two people seated side by side. The ride has only seatbelts, so your legs and arms are free, but it also has sensors and is completely monitored, so it meets ASTM standards. Our ziplines are safe, fun rides.

We've sold more than 60 of them around the world. People really love them.

What else has your company been up to?

One neat thing we've developed is our **Aerial Dive** swing ride, which we put on the edge of a cliff three years ago at **Cave of the Winds Mountain Park** over in Manitou Springs, Colorado. They named it **Terror-Dactyl**.

You sit in a two-person cart attached to a cable, and then you're comfortably harnessed with my less-restrictive restraint system. The cart hydraulically leans forward until you're looking down at the bottom of a canyon. And off you go, swinging down about 200 feet. It's intense, and it's one of my favorite things that I've ever designed.

We've been doing towers of 120, 150 feet with our **Saddle Sling** ride [two riders, secured back to back, flung and flipped skyward

with limbs free] on one side and our **Daring Drop** freefall ride on the other. We're putting one of those in at the **Foxwoods** in Connecticut. We've also done tower installations in **Myrtle Beach [N.C.]** and **Branson, Missouri**.

Additionally, **Soaring Eagle** is offering a full thrill tower with dive, drop, saddle and zipline rides all in one structure. We're building a 200-foot version right now to go into **Pigeon Forge, Tennessee**.

Most of your innovations have been well above ground. How did your Haunted Mine Drop project at Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park come about?

My buddy who's the owner there, **Steve Beckley**, whom I've known for years, already had two of my ziplines and a **Screamin' Swing** ride from my S&S days perched on a 1,300-foot cliff. He asked me if I could do a drop ride into a mine, and I said, "Heck, yeah!" So, we got together and designed it.

He brought a crew in with dynamite and jackhammers and dug out a 110-foot-deep hole in the ground. They had to keep blasting and chipping at the rock, and they actually to shovel a lot of it into buckets by hand and winch it up out there. We then lowered the

ride tower into the hole and fastened it. It was pretty crazy.

Can you describe the attraction?

You walk into this mill-type building, and it's covering a haunted mine. There's a lot of cobwebs and creepy stuff. Then you get into these seats — it's a row of six — and get strapped in. You don't feel this, really, but you'll move up maybe six inches... and then the floor quietly slides out from under you as the room darkens. And we drop you into the hole. [laughs]

The ride bounces at the bottom and then you're lifted back up. I hear they have something scary at the base of the shaft, but that should remain a surprise.

Peering into the mine of childhood memories, what were some of your favorite amusements growing up?

You know, I didn't have that. My dad was a security cop and tried lots of things. But he never made it in anything and went bankrupt. So, I didn't go to amusement parks. I'd go out to the barn or up to the lakes and make all kinds of big swings to jump from. [laughs] Just crazy stuff.

When I got older, I knew I had to make money. I became a journey wireman, doing electrical jobs. I had to go to school on nights to get my certificate, and then I served as an apprentice for three years. Eventually, I bought a truck and trailer, sold everything I had and took my two little kids on the road.

Back in those days, with a union card, you could call ahead to a business agent in, say, **Corpus Christi**, go down and give him your card and he'd put you to work that day. I'd work a week, two weeks, and move on. I went from one end of the country to the other and learned so much. If you name the product, I helped build the factory that made the product.

What brought you back to making devices for fun?

Quite a bit later in life, I heard about these guys jumping off of bridges on bungee cords in **New Zealand**. I got all excited about that. That's what motivated me to start making bungee equipment and tow-

► See **CHECKETTS**, page 42



Stan Checketts (far left) confers with the Haunted Mine Drop construction crew at Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park in Glenwood Springs, Colo.

COURTESY GLENWOOD CAVERNS ADVENTURE PARK.

An increase in ridership had Chance Giant Wheel spinning during Men's College World Series

Chance Century Wheel brought in for event by Crabtree Amusements

AT: Pam Sherborne
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OMAHA, Neb. — This was the second year **Michael Doolan** contracted with the **Metropolitan Entertainment Convention Authority (MECA)** to provide a wheel to baseball fans attending the Men's College World Series (CWS) here at the **TD Ameritrade Park**, which ran June 17-28.

The wheel was set adjacent to the baseball park on the grass to the north of the **CenturyLink Center** (the city's convention center). It is a 90-foot **Chance Century Wheel** owned by **Pat Crabtree, Crabtree Amusements**. Doolan said he produces the operation of the wheel for MECA, contracting with that organization as well as Crabtree to bring the wheel to the location. MECA is the nonprofit, which operates the CenturyLink Center and TD Ameritrade Park.

Doolan definitely saw an increase in ridership this year compared to 2016. The Men's College World Series, a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) event, drew its largest attendance in 2017 in its 70-plus-year history. There were 357,646 fans who turned out for the games. There could have been many more taking part in the activities outside the baseball stadium. MECA's event is only a part of that.

"They (MECA) are trying to create another area of activi-

LOCATION BASED ENTERTAINMENT

ties during the series," Doolan said. "They have an area for college-age fans so they are trying to create this more family-friendly area."

Doolan said they had some inflatables out there, but the wheel was the only ride. There were food trucks available in several different areas.

The CWS Fan Fest, presented by Capital One, also is located adjacent to the baseball diamond and offers a bevy of activities. It is free for fans of all ages. Capital One is one of NCAA's sponsors.

Doolan said last year and this year, a crew from Crabtree's show brings the wheel to the site, sets it up and operates it.

"I stay there with it the entire time as well," he said. "It is a change of pace for me. I like it."

The Giant Wheel has 20 gondolas and is equipped with a **Maxtron** lighting package.

They open everyday during the CWS at noon and run it until at least 11 p.m. They have to close down at midnight.

Doolan gets a flat rate price for the wheel and is paid by MECA. That organization sells the ride tickets. In 2016, they charged \$5 a ride. A story in a local newspaper quoted some city representatives wanting to get more people on the wheel by providing free rides.

"We offered free rides one day," Doolan said. "It was an off day when there was no game."

Otherwise, tickets ran \$5



At 90 feet, this Chance Giant Wheel could be seen without any trouble during the Men's College World Series, TD Ameritrade Park, Omaha, Neb. Michael Doolan was the operator of record during the festivities outside of the baseball park. Doolan uses the company name Fun Time Inc. for corporate events and Doolan Amusement Company for his amusement ride company. AT/PAM SHERBORNE

for adults, \$3 for children, or a pack of 10 tickets for \$20.

Doolan said he doesn't know if he or a wheel will be back for 2018. He didn't find out until April of this year he would be back for the June event.

At one time, MECA had even considered a zip line. Members of the MECA board want to keep the focus on family and community.

Doolan operates events such as this one under the company name of **Fun Time Inc.** He also owns 12 rides and

some food trailers and operates that business under **Doolan Amusement Company Inc.**

His amusement company operates as an independent company during the peak times of the year, booking in with such shows as **Cole Amusement Company, Amusements of America, Powers Great American Midways, Fiesta Shows and Rockwell Amusements**, traveling the eastern states. His show is headquartered in Jensen Beach, Fla.

He does some dates alone.

Knott's Berry Farm. When I think about all the people who have screamed and smiled and laughed on rides I helped create — we've determined the collective ridership to be over a billion — I just choke up. I can hardly comprehend it. But it's a good feeling.

What thrills me is when I see people enjoying my inventions. One of the funniest things is when I go to a park and stand by one of my rides to watch, and some kid will say, "Are you going to ride it, Mister? You're not too old." And I think, *You smart little sucker... I stood on top of it!*

•soaringeagleziplines.com

VRoundup

Amusement Today highlights recent news and developments in the virtual reality (VR) amusement business sector:

•According to a spring report by VR/augmented reality (AR) market research firm **Greenlight Insights**, VR revenues across all industries utilizing the technology are forecast to reach \$7.2 billion worldwide by the end of this year. Head-mounted displays alone are expected to represent about \$4.7 billion of that total. By 2021, the report predicted, global revenues could reach \$74.8 billion — thanks in part to increased spending in location-based entertainment.

•London-based startup **Improbable** has raised more than \$500 million from investors, including the Japanese telecommunications and internet corporation **SoftBank**. The independent company, founded five years ago by **Herman Narula** and **Rob Whitehead**, who were fellow computer science students at Cambridge University, is focused on building large-scale virtual worlds and simulations for a variety of clients — primarily game makers.

•**Universal Parks & Resorts** has submitted a patent that seeks to apply VR/AR-capable goggles to ride systems. Described as "systems and methods for generating augmented and virtual reality images," the patent pertains to both indoor and outdoor park settings.

•**Kings Dominion** in Doswell, Va., debuted a Pokémon Go-style mobile AR game for park visitors in mid-May called *The Battle for Kings Dominion*. The game, developed by Lutterworth, U.K.-based **Holovis** for iOS and Android devices, calls for users to declare allegiance to one of the park's five roller coasters — each represented by an animated avatar. The teams compete via trivia and AR mini-games triggered by visual elements around the park, earning points for the alliance. This is the second Holovis-produced game for the park's operator, **Cedar Fair Entertainment Co.**, which introduced *The Battle for Cedar Point* last year.

—Compiled by Dean Lamanna

►CHECKETTS

Continued from page 41

ers, for which I got my first patents. That got me going in this business.

Did you have a guiding industry principle?

I just asked myself, *Okay, what thrills people?* What thrilled all my kids when they were little was when I threw them in the air and caught them. I thought, *Well, hell — just throw people 185 feet in the air and then catch them.* That's a true story. And that's how the Space Shot tower ride was born. I built about 200 of those around the

world, including the Big Shot on top of the **Stratosphere Tower** in Las Vegas.

And the rest, as they say, is history. Are you content with your success?

When I traveled all over as a journey wireman, I'd ask these guys I worked with, "What do you do?" "Oh, I'm a plumber." And I'd say, "Well, what do you like to do?" "I go home, drink beer and go to bed." Well, I swore to God that I would never have that attitude.

Every day, I love my wife with all my heart. We disagree sometimes; she's very loving and I'm kind

of a dragon slayer. [laughs] We live in Providence, right up against the mountains. Because we've got 11 kids and 35 grandkids, I built a big recreation center with a bowling alley and pool tables and all these things like they've got at amusement parks.

You've gone from creating fun for yourself as a kid to amusing your family to thrilling the general public. That's an amazing, full-circle accomplishment.

You know, I'm sitting here in my conference room looking at pictures of the Stratosphere and the big tower rides I did at Cedar Point and

Portable structure supplier creates proactive safety system

For bounce houses, other equipment susceptible to wind

AT: B. Derek Shaw
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GREENVILLE, Wisc. — Strong wind conditions can develop unexpectedly and rapidly. Therefore, it is critical for owners and operators of tents, bounce houses, inflatables and other lightweight portable structures to have quick, concise monitoring and alerting for the safety of their patrons and themselves.

Peter McVey, principal of McVey Tent and Expo, describes himself as a “tent disaster junkie.” He specializes in outdoor safety.

“Any time a tent goes down that I hear about, I get on the internet and try and figure out what went wrong,” McVey said. “Was it wind, rain or human error?”

A few years back, McVey learned of a tent fatality at a civic festival in Wood Dale, Ill. By then, he had already start-

SAFETY

ed noticing a commonality in such news accounts.

“There was a police officer herding people back into the tent, which is totally opposite of what you should do,” he said, noting that the evacuation plan had called for the use of the adjacent school gymnasium. “Unfortunately, we lost a life.

“At that point, I said [to myself], ‘It is time to get the human intervention out. No one [with my product] is involved in decision-making, alerting people or directing people.’”

McVey’s product is called WIND (Wind Information Notification Device). It is a wind speed sensor that provides an early warning in the event of escalating weather conditions. And much like the common smoke detector, the WIND system saves lives by alerting organizers, staff and guests early about possibly dangerous weather as it occurs, giving people time to seek safety.

“It is user configurable,” McVey explained. “You can set it for when it goes on, when it goes off, what it says, how it flashes — it’s wide open.”

The system allows for site-specific readings of wind that can be set to manufacturer’s specifications for portable equipment, typically starting at 15 mph.

The WIND unit has two alarms. One is an amber-flashing light (or pre-alarm) that goes off when wind starts to become an issue (25-35 mph range). When wind speed achieves evacuation level (40 mph and higher), a strobing white beacon and loud evacuation siren, together with an announcement pre-recorded by the facility, kick in. These three features continue looping as long as dangerous conditions persist.

The WIND system also sends a text message to a cell phone indicating that a wind event is in progress at a specific location. Additionally, it emits a radio signal to all the exit lights in the facility, ensuring that they are on and



Peter McVey, principal of Greenville, Wisc.-based McVey Tent and Expo, is shown with his weather safety system called WIND (Wind Information Notification Device), designed for outdoor events. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

flashing. This works in concert with the voice message to get people out quickly and safely.

McVey feels his innovation is more foolproof, removing human error. “The idea was to make an infallible system that tells you what to do and shows you how to do it — to let people have a good time and not have to worry about what’s going on around them.”

Production of the WIND system commenced last November after its unveiling at

the Mid-Atlantic Tent Renters Association Show in New York, N.Y. Two models are available: one for tents and a smaller unit for bounce houses.

“Acceptance is huge,” said McVey, who expected the unit to start appearing at events with 250 or more attendees, including public gatherings, alcohol-serving fetes and street festivals. “There is no down side to this at all.”

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Fiesta Texas makes upgrades to improve ride capacity

AT: Tim Baldwin
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SAN ANTONIO, Texas — On a recent visit to **Six Flags Fiesta Texas**, *Amusement Today* sat down with **Sean Lynch**, electrical lead, and discussed some accomplishments park management has been extremely happy with.

“When we say: ‘Innovation is in our DNA,’ we really mean that,” said Lynch. “We do a lot of continuous improvement and innovation. A lot of little things add up to a big impact, as well as large improvements. Our goal is to make the guest experience better, but also the team experience better, too — whether that is the ride operator or the maintenance person. We try to go for the win-win when possible.”

Lynch illustrates a prime example of this win for all parties involved was the changes made to two loading areas in the stations of the Scooby-Doo (**Sally**) dark ride and the Pandemonium (**Gerstlauer**) spinning coaster.

“Pandemonium is now a dream ride to work,” said Lynch. “It’s so easy for our guests. We were able to improve rider throughput by 33 percent. For the maintenance department, there is a lot less wear-and-tear and maintenance calls, even with the larger number of dispatches. We believe that one of our foremost things is to make the job easier and make the job better. When you do those two things, it makes the job faster. It also makes things cost effective.”

An improvement of 30 percent capacity was also

reached on the park’s Scooby-Doo Ghost Blasters.

“The ride is easier to operate. The operator runs the main panel and can check lap bars; it’s just easy. It allows them more time to focus on the guests,” he said. “From the guest perspective, having the cars [move] through the station at a reasonable pace gives them a ‘sense of urgency’ to get in the vehicles. Because the dark ride and queue are air-conditioned, we can now comfort more guests ... get them out of the heat, get them cooled down. When they go back out into the park, their experience is better. And once again from maintenance, the ride has less wear-and-tear and there are fewer service calls.”

In the past, Lynch had noticed guest loading issues with the park’s (**Intamin**) rapids ride, Gully Washer.

“This was another win-win for everybody. We did two main things. First, and most importantly, we slowed down the turntable loading platform. This decreased the number of stops and starts of the turntable. It seems most of the turntables in the industry run too fast in the loading area. By slowing it down, we actually reduced the stops and starts which increased the throughput. It sounds a little bit counter-intuitive. The next thing we did is we added a function to the lift hill that automatically spaces the rafts for the operator. That way the boats are coming through the station at a consistent pace; they don’t bunch up together and then have vast spaces between them. The combination of these two things —



Fiesta Texas worked with the timing of the rapids ride turntable (above) to increase the attraction’s capacity by 39 percent. The park’s electrical lead, Sean Lynch (left), is seen with one of the property’s other heroes.

COURTESY SEAN LYNCH/SIX FLAGS FIESTA TEXAS



By using a moving station, the park’s Pandemonium coaster (left) increased throughput and reduced maintenance calls. An elevated platform, makes it easier to board a moving dark ride vehicle at flush level. COURTESY SEAN LYNCH/SIX FLAGS FIESTA TEXAS



which was actually a simple process to do — had a 39 percent increase in throughput.”

Lynch says internally the park has a “rule of 12.” If a ride moves 12 guests or fewer, they seriously consider moving stations on all new installations. Today, the park currently operates five rides with moving stations.

Lynch also explained improvements to the park’s energy management system. He jokes that the original system when the park opened in 1992 was the proverbial square peg forced into a round hole.

“Energy management systems that are on the

market are designed for offices, hotels, schools, malls ... but with the theme park industry, we have a lot of variation in our operations. Sometimes we are only open on weekends, sometimes daily, sometimes long weekends ... so the decision was made to upgrade our energy management system and we decided to do it in-house. We used standard off-the-shelf components; we then wrote our own program and tailored it to a theme park. For example, when we create our operating schedule at the beginning of the year, I can do all the schedules for all the days of the year in one sitting in less than 30

minutes. We tell it if the park is open or closed on a certain day, the hours, and the system automatically adjusts the loads for the operating hours.”

This programmed system affects air conditioning, lighting both indoors and outdoors, ceiling fans, audio systems, etc.

“With the ride audio systems, we want those to come on at the last possible minute,” said Lynch. “When the maintenance departments are checking out the rides, we want it to be as quiet as possible so they can hear any problems. This way we aren’t competing. We’re using our IT network, which has been a huge asset. It has become the corporate model. Any park in our system who is trying to upgrade their energy management system is directed to copy ours. We are cross-pollinating those good ideas to other parks. That makes me very proud of our team here at Fiesta Texas.”

Lynch goes on to say fans in the park are set not only for time, but also temperature, which is more efficient and even more so is geared toward guest comfort.



NEWS & NOTES

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AIMS Safety Seminar early registration is now open!

The **2018 AIMS Safety Seminar** will be held January 7-12 in Galveston, Texas at the Galveston Island Convention Center at the San Luis Resort. AIMS has secured a special discounted hotel rate for attendees, \$115 per night at the adjacent Galveston Hilton. The setting is perfect for the AIMS Safety Seminar, with all classes being held in one central area, a great hotel in the beautiful San Luis Resort, plenty of nearby places to eat and shop, plus the added attraction of Galveston's Pleasure Pier and Schlitterbahn Waterpark nearby.

Early registration is now open at www.aimsintl.org. Registration is \$595 and includes all class materials, two breaks and lunch each day and an opening reception on Sunday night. Those who register and prepay will have early access to class selection when registration opens in October. Once registration is open, students can also sign up for AIMS Certification testing on Levels I-III in Maintenance, Operations, Ride Inspection and Level I Aquatics as well as several add on series and certifications.

For those who like to plan ahead, we recommend attendees book flights into Houston Hobby Airport (HOU), south of Houston served by most major airlines and Southwest. From there, it is an easy shuttle ride to Galveston Island. More information can be

found on our website.

The seminar is a must attend for both operators and manufacturers and suppliers who need to stay abreast on the latest trends and topics surrounding the industry's No. 1 priority worldwide - SAFETY.

Scholarships are available!

Thanks to the generosity of two great industry associations, scholarships to the AIMS Safety Seminar are available to qualified individuals.

IAAPA (The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions) provides five scholarships to the AIMS Safety Seminar in memory of **Alan Ramsay** who was an avid industry supporter and safety advocate. Applications can be found on the AIMS website at www.aimsintl.org.

OABA (the Outdoor Amusement Business Association) offers four scholarships to the AIMS Safety Seminar for OABA members who are first-time Safety Seminar attendees. One of these scholarships is dedicated in memory of **June Hardin**, owner of **Wapello Fabrications**, who strived for quality, safety and ASTM standards throughout her career. OABA members can contact oaba@oaba.org for more information and AIMS scholarship applications.

All AIMS Safety Seminar scholarships cover the

\$595 tuition fee, which includes class materials, an opening reception, all lunches and breaks, a completion certificate, and Continuing Education Units (CEU). Additional fees for testing and certification and travel expenses are not included.

Upcoming events

The **AIMS International Annual Board Meeting** will be held on September 7, 2017 in Bristol Connecticut prior to the **2017 Golden Ticket Awards**, presented by **Amusement Today**, at **Lake Compounce** and **Quassy Amusement Park**. The board will have the opportunity to enjoy lunch with board members of the **National Roller Coaster Museum Association (NRCMA)**, who are also holding their annual BOD meeting.

The **AIMS International Safety Award** will be presented during the **Golden Ticket Awards** on September 9, 2017, at Lake Compounce. The award will be presented to an individual or organization that demonstrates leadership, innovation, and foresight in improving safety in the amusement industry.

Come see us at the **IAAPA Attractions Expo**, November 14-17 in Orlando. **AIMS** will be at booth #4527.

Enjoy your summer and stay SAFE!

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