

INSIDE:

**Al Weber,
Apex make
market inroads
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February 2016 | Vol. 19 • Issue 11

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15 new exhibitors have signed up 2016 IISF Trade Show and Extravaganza looking strong

AT: Pam Sherborne

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GIBSONTON, Fla. — Teresa Rimes, part of the production team responsible for putting on the International Independent Showmen's Foundation (IISF) Trade Show and Extravaganza, could barely find a moment during January as she tweaked the scheduling of educational sessions, booked vendors for booths during the trade show, and helped with attendance registration.

The IISF is the foundation arm of the International Independent Showmen's Association. The club grounds in Gibsonton host the trade show and most of the activities associated with it.

Rimes said, in mid-January, booth and attendance registration for this year's event, set for Feb. 9-13 on club grounds in Gibsonton, appeared to be on par for the 2015 event.

"We are actually a little bit ahead of last year," Rimes said. "The inside booth space is just about full, maybe five or six booths short of that."

"We have 15 new exhibitors," she said. "They are only renting 'onesies' but they are new and that is good."

One of those first-time exhibitors is Gosetto, manufacturer of rides, dark rides and

fun houses. Gina Guglielmi, Intermark Ride Group, is representing Gosetto and will be at the show.

"We will be focusing on our dark rides and fun houses for the carnival business," she said. "We also are focusing on our new portable family spin coaster and Dance Party interactive ride."

Exhibitors to the trade show run the gamut of products for the mobile amusement operators, from food concession companies to novelty, trailer, ride and game manufacturing companies.

Some of the ride companies include Eli Bridge Co., Wisdom Rides, A.R.M., Battech Enterprises, Majestic Manufacturing and Zamperla.

In addition, ride brokerage companies Rides 4-U and Ital International will be on hand, both representing companies that provide new rides as well as selling used rides.

Other exhibiting companies include Bob's Space Racers, Dobco Enterprises, Gold Medal Products, Berk's Enterprise, Rhode Island Novelty, Classic Toy Company, BJ Toy Company, Chestnut Identity Apparel, Hitch-Hiker Manufacturing, Owen Trailers, Schantz Manufac-



turing and Waterloo Tent and Tarp.

Len Soled of Rides 4-U said the IISF event has always been good for him. It is sort of a last chance order opportunity for some shows.

"Sometimes, if they go ahead and order at this show, they will get it before the 4th of July," Soled said.

Of course, that is not always the case. Soled said last year was sort of a stressful year because some ride manufacturers overbooked their production.

"I like to deliver and I like to deliver on time," he said. "I think I was able to hold onto to about 99.9 percent of it last year, but it was a stressful year."

Soled represents KMG, SBF/Visa and S&S Worldwide rides. For Gibsonton, he plans to show SBF/Visa's Compact Spinning Coaster, Air Show, Drop 'n Twist and Groovy Bus. He also will have an S&S Worldwide Frog Hopper, a ride that continues to do well in the industry.

KMG, he said, is backed up for two years for new production, but he will be able to deliver two new Inversions,

one to Butler Amusements and another to Mr. Ed's Magical Midways, at the Gibtown show.

Ramon Rosario, Zamperla, said his company has had a very busy year and will be glad to be at the Gibsonton show. Zamperla plans to exhibit a Balloon Fiesta, the 36-foot-tall ride that debuted at IAAPA Expo. The company also will have on display an Air Race, a kiddie version of the Sky Race ride, and a Happy Swing.

Bob's Space Racers' Tony Cassata said his company will bring a Whopper Water race game, trailer mounted, and a water race game in the company's lineup configuration. There also will be a Fishing Hole game on display at the booth.

"Our business has been going very well," Cassata said. "There just has not been enough hours in the day to take care of all our business. It looks like the industry is doing well."

Berk's Enterprises will feature more new products than they ever have, said spokesperson Beth Sanders. Some of those new products include six differently designed 32-ounce Mini Tanks, Zombie Cups, Tap Towers, and a new Family Entertainment Package.

Denny's Electronics' Jim Allen said in mid-January that his company hadn't made final plans for the Gibtown show, but knew they would be exhibiting newer products such as their small, roundish turbo lights.

"We have them in six LED and nine LED," Allen said. "We have new controllers to go with them."

Allen said business is busy.

"In the last seven days, we have added five new products to our plate," he said.

The IISF Trade Show will run 11 a.m.-6 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 9 through Friday, Feb. 12. Saturday, Feb. 13, times are 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.

The week also will include an array of educational sessions and nightly social events.

Activities on the books in mid-January included: Super Bowl Party and Trade Show Kick-Off Party, Sunday, Feb. 7; Big Hearted Jerry's Memorial Golf Tournament, Monday, Feb. 8; Museum Building Fund Dinner and Jamboree Fundraiser, Feb. 10; Richie's Ragin' Cajun Banquet and Ball, Feb. 11; Casino Night Fundraiser for the Museum, Feb. 12; Memorial Service with Mass to Follow, Feb. 13.

NEWSPAPER

POSTMASTER: Dated material.
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NEWSTALK

EDITORIAL: Gary Slade, gslade@amusementtoday.com

IISF attendees fine tune for 2016



Slade

As the amusement industry winter season is fully underway, we are reminded of the work that is still ahead as both parks and carnival operators gear up for the upcoming 2016 season.

The 2016 IISF Trade Show and Extravaganza, Feb. 9-13, in Gibsonton, Fla. is one of the final opportunities owners and operators will have to fine tune their 2016 plans.

As we've seen in the past, some carnival owners will be on hand to shop for used ride equipment, or in some cases, may try to do a last minute ride purchase with the hopes of a July 4 delivery for their road units. Others will attend to see if they can land a good deal on a new ride that is on display at the show, while some are in attendance to accept delivery of their new ride piece that is proudly on display. The same goes for interested parties who have come to Gibtown to shop for new games and new concession trailers.

Inside the display area, we see many small park operators, and numerous state fairs, attend the show to shop for their games department prizes and selection of plush.

The Gibtown show also provides attendees plenty of time to network. Time and time again, we get attendees coming to the AT booth asking for help in trying to locate an individual, a contact to a current supplier or even another operator that has a certain type of ride — in an effort to contact them and discuss maintenance on that particular ride.

Some are fresh back from one of the recently concluded safety seminars and are quick to share new safety knowledge they have learned.

The parks and the traveling shows may be silent now, but the sounds of hard work and dedication are clearly heard throughout the grounds of the annual IISF (Gibtown) meeting.

Here's hoping everyone has a wonderful IISF show and successful 2016 season!

FLINT'S VIEW: Bubba Flint



INDUSTRY OPINION: Dean Lamanna, dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

Enhanced park security is sensible, embraceable policy

It's a conundrum with which park operators have wrestled quietly: How much security is enough? And how best to meet the public's safety expectations while maintaining an environment of fun and escape?

Becoming more urgent in recent years following acts of horrific violence committed at movie theaters and other venues, these questions were thrust to the forefront in late 2015 by the terrorist attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, Calif. Creeping, collective agoraphobia turned into bona fide, widespread unease.

Stateside, San Bernardino was particularly troubling not only for its notoriety as the worst act of terrorism in the U.S. since 9/11, but its proximity to Southern California's major cities and theme parks.

In addition to the general awareness of regular employees, virtually all parks rely on surveillance equipment and security personnel, both uniformed and undercover. But while the Six Flags chain has had metal detectors at its main gates for more than a decade, others have stationed security guards at the turnstiles — deploying walk-through metal detectors and metal-detecting wands only for nighttime Halloween programs and other special events.

This changed after San Bernardino. Safety reviews by the country's top theme park operators were immediate. In mid-December, SeaWorld and Universal



Lamanna

announced enhanced park and gate security. Disney, initially, is screening guests randomly using walk-through detectors; Universal and SeaWorld are using wands.

The companies downplayed their moves in the media.

"We continually review our comprehensive approach to security and are implementing additional security measures, as appropriate," said Disney in a statement.

Communications from Universal and SeaWorld, while also emphasizing a long-standing commitment to safety, suggested that their own stepped-up security was being implemented on an experimental and/or seasonal basis.

This public relations approach was designed to quell any panic. Yet perhaps the language needn't have been so coy, as park visitors have long known what is at stake — and they will accept, even welcome, added gate security just as they have at airports, sports arenas and elsewhere. Patrons and park operators are on the same page in wanting no compromises when it comes to the safety.

After all, the examination of bags and purses and the checking of pockets are minor inconveniences to endure before entering a special place that provides good memories and needed relief from life's harsher realities.

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Amusement Today is an independent, privately-owned trade newspaper published 14 times per year by Amusement Today Inc., P.O. Box 5427, Arlington, Texas 76005. Print issues are \$50 per year and are mailed Presort Standard Postage (permit No. 2069) Pre-Paid Fort Worth, Texas. The entire contents of this newspaper, and its related web sites, are Copyrighted and Trademarked 2016 by Amusement Today Inc., all rights reserved.

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2 MINUTE DRILL



COMPILED: Janice Witherow

Jerry Brick, Lake Compounce

According to **Jerry Brick**, his first job in the amusement industry was not a complete success — making cotton candy at Darien Lake near Buffalo, N.Y., was not one of his many talents. He sure has come a long way since those days and now serves as the General Manager for Lake Compounce in Bristol, Conn. Jerry has a work philosophy of being out in the park while managing it and surrounding himself with a team of people who shares his vision for quality service.

When not on the job, Jerry enjoys being with his family, especially watching his son's wrestling and lacrosse teams and cheering on his daughter with her horseback riding and performances in stage plays.

Title

General Manager.

Number of years in the industry?

Started in 1986 making cotton candy at Darien Lake (I was terrible at it)!

Best thing about the industry...

The people I have been fortunate to meet and work with.

Favorite amusement ride...

Boulder Dash of course!

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

A farmer or a history teacher, I guess.

Biggest challenge facing our industry...

Connecting to our young work force and keeping them focused on the company goals and values.

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

People-watching.

When I say winter, you say...

My son's wrestling season.

Favorite vegetable...

Peas.

The best time of day to catch me in my office is...

First thing in the morning or late at night.

Complete this sentence: Donald Trump is...

Like watching MTV reality television.



Jerry Brick stays busy between Lake Compounce and spending quality time with his loving family.

COURTESY LAKE COMPOUNCE



Brick

The last time I wore a tuxedo was...

My wedding, I think.

The one thing I like to splurge on is...

My kids.

Pick one: ice cream cone or Popsicle?

Ice cream definitely!

You are stuck in a traffic jam. What do you do to pass the time?

Sing out loud and embarrass my daughter.

When I feel stressed out, I...

As I get stressed, I have been reading more lately (currently *Killing Patton* by Bill O'Reilly).

What TV show would you most like to have a guest appearance on?

"The Newsroom" (an HBO series).

I get most of my news from...

"Today Show."

Favorite way to spend Saturday night...

Anything with my family.

Three items that are always in my wallet are...

I had to look, but my license, insurance card and coaching card.

All-time favorite sports team...

Buffalo Sabres (ice hockey team).

My celebrity crush is...

Halle Berry.

The best vacation I ever took was...

San Antonio with my wife and kids.

American Idol is in its final season. Is it time or do you want more?

I never watched it!

Would you rather skydive or bungee jump?

Bungee jump. Why jump out of a good plane?

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

Presented by the National Rollercoaster Museum

COMPILED: Richard Munch



FEBRUARY

•**1894:** Designer **L.A. Thompson** was highlighted by the *San Francisco Call* newspaper in early February during the **Midwinter Fair** in that city. They reported that the fair's Scenic Railway was being personally supervised by the inventor and suggested that he had built and operated scenic and gravity railways all over the United States and Europe in more than 100 different localities. In all his extended and varied experience, the newspaper reported, he had never had an accident on any road he had operated. It stated, "As a manager of these enjoyable and entertaining rides, he is the personification of carefulness. So perfect are his operations that there is not the least element of danger. As a matter of fact, the scenic railways everywhere are enviable freedom from accidents. It has not one-tenth of the danger of an electric or even a cable car system."

•**1904:** It was announced in late February that 63-year-old **Lina Beecher** would be leaving his residence in New York to run his concession at the **Louisiana Purchase Exposition** in St. Louis, Missouri. He would become superintendent of the new spiral Loop the Loop coaster, which had recently been constructed by his company, the **Beecher Construction Company**. The Civil War veteran also announced that he had just been granted a patent for a new pleasure railway, called the Aerial Railway to Mars, claiming it was a more thrilling novelty than the Loop-the-Loop. Beecher, the inventor of the original Flip Flap Railway, died on October 1915 in Lapeer, Michigan.

•**1917:** Construction of Ohio's newest summer resort began in earnest on February 20 when carpenters began building the park's first wooden roller coaster at **Summit Beach Park**, just south of Akron. Park planning began in August 1916 with the incorporation of the Summit Beach Company, with plans to include every form of amusement device in the ride arsenal. Located on the east side of Summit Lake, the resort covered 18 acres and open in early July. "Akron's Coney Island" would have a successful run for over forty years, closing in 1958. Public housing was eventually built on the site.

•**1922:** The *New York Tribune* ran an advertisement for the April 8 auction of **L.A. Thompson's** home in Glen Cove, Long Island, New York, on February 19. It was an unrestricted public sale of the late L.A. Thompson's "beautiful North Shore Country Residence." Noted as the inventor and founder of the **L.A. Thompson Scenic Railway Company**, the Thompson home included a garage, greenhouse, superintendent's cottage and observation tower on 29 acres. Thompson, who had died three years earlier, developed **Thompson Park** in 1909, offering beautiful lots for estate homes on 55 acres overlooking the Sea Cliff area of Long Island.

•**1935:** Reported in the *Tonawanda News* (New York) on February 26, local North Tonawanda engineer **Norman Bartlett** discussed having installed three Flying Turns in 1934, in parks in St. Louis, **Coney Island** and Paris. The inventor of the Flying Turns in 1929, Bartlett, who also acted as salesman for the device, used the installation of the Flying Turns at the **Chicago Century of Progress** in 1933 as proof of its potential. He estimated that the ride grossed as much or more than any other device at the fair and that world famous aviators "got a kick" out of the unique ride. With Flying Turns highlighted in *News Reels* all over the country, it was acclaimed as the "Ride Sensation" at the Chicago fair. The ride would be moved a short distance to the city's **Riverview Park** for the 1935 season and is the origin for the design of **Knoebels Resort's** (Elysburg, Pennsylvania) newest incarnation of the ride, opened in 2013.

Baynum Painting gives new look to iconic Coney Island Cyclone

BROOKLYN, N.Y. — Kentucky-based Baynum Painting has recently completed the painting of the iconic Coney Island Cyclone. The project consisted of 12-15 full-time painters working on-site for 10 weeks. The crew applied 700 gallons of paint. *Amusement Today* asked the owner Chris Baynum what the biggest challenges were for this job: "It had to be waiting 23 years to win the job, after submitting our first proposal way back in 1992! A close second would be the removal of so many decades of layered paint coatings, accomplished only with the help of our 40,000 PSI ultra-high pressure hydro jetting equipment." Since additional refurbishment of the track is ongoing, the layered wooden bed was left unpainted.



Before (above) and after views of the Coney Island Cyclone's new 700-gallon painting project, performed by Baynum Painting. Bottom, the Cyclone's first drop. COURTESY LUNA PARK



S&S to provide towers to Wanda Group

LOGAN, Utah – S&S Worldwide, Inc. announced in early January that it has signed contracts with the Wanda Group to build and install a 16-Seat Dual Tower ride at their Guangzhou Wanda park and a 12-seat Space Shot Tower at their Wuxi Wanda park.

Wanda Cultural Industry Group is reportedly China's largest cultural enterprise, with operations in commercial property, department stores, luxury hotels, and culture/tourism, which includes cinemas, film and television production, and both indoor and outdoor theme parks.

S&S Worldwide, the largest U.S. manufacturer of major amusement rides and roller coasters, has been manufacturing air-launched rides since 1994. The company has installed

more than 450 rides and roller coasters in 30 countries, including over 160 tower rides. Gerald Ryan, executive director of Sales and Marketing for S&S said, "The tower rides will be a great addition to both parks. S&S has proven its tower technology and know that Wanda will be very pleased with the product that is delivered." The Wuxi Wanda tower is projected to open in March 2018. The Guangzhou Wanda towers are projected to open August 2018.

Ryan added, "S&S appreciates the great relationship that has been built over the years with Wanda. We are excited to begin these new projects and hope to continue working with the Wanda Group on their expansions throughout China."

•engineeringexcitement.com

Six Flags Discovery Kingdom opens Pacific Rim 5-D Experience

VALLEJO, Calif. — From acclaimed filmmaker Guillermo del Toro, Warner Bros. Pictures' and Legendary Pictures' sci-fi action adventure *Pacific Rim* is now a pulse-pounding new 5D ride experience at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom. Presented in Six Flags Discovery Kingdom's Iwerks 5D Theater, in partnership with Warner Bros. Consumer Products and SimEx-Iwerks Entertainment, *Pacific Rim* 5-D opened with special limited sneak previews in January, with an official opening following soon after.

Loaded with suspense, action and monstrous creatures, *Pacific Rim* 5-D pairs the explosive special effects from the popular action-based science fiction film with a thrilling new ride simulation experience. The result is the world's only motion-based *Pacific Rim*-themed ride attraction and the very first version of this film to be adapted as a ride in the U.S.

"Bringing in an intense, high-energy and popular movie like *Pacific Rim* to our Iwerks 5D Theater is a great

Six Flags Discovery Kingdom, opened in mid-January, the world's only motion-based *Pacific Rim* 5-D experience in the park's Iwerks Theater. The attraction is created in partnership with Warner Bros. Consumer Products and SimEx-Iwerks Entertainment. COURTESY SIX FLAGS DISCOVERY KINGDOM



addition to our thrill lineup," said Don McCoy, park president. "As Northern California's most thrilling theme park, kids and adults alike will be blown away being part of the ground-shaking action."

Inspired by Warner Bros. Pictures' and Legendary Pictures' sci-fi adventure *Pacific Rim*, the storyline follows monstrous creatures rising from the sea without warning, attacking cities and threatening mankind. In a unified show of force, the world's most powerful na-

tions have joined together and built massive robot fighting machines. When the rate of monster attacks suddenly increases, the inevitable showdown takes place. In a no holds barred brawl, the last standing robot fighter — Earth's final weapon — must take on the biggest and baddest of the monsters. With eye-popping 4-D and explosive in-theater special effects, Six Flags guests are ready to experience the ground-shaking action of *Pacific Rim* 5-D.

•sixflags.com/discoverykingdom

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INTERNATIONAL

► **Ferrari World's newest coaster ready for takeoff — Page 6 / GCII China coaster ready to roll — Page 7**

A successful festive extravaganza held in London's Hyde Park

Mellors Group, other U.K.-based showmen provide ride mix; 3 million attend event

AT: Andrew Mellor
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LONDON, England — Hyde Park Winter Wonderland was held once again over the Christmas and New Year period in the U.K. capital, the event running from November 20 until January 3.

Having first operated in December 2007, the event has grown annually and features attractions for all ages and tastes, from thrill rides and children's attractions to live shows and a host of suitably themed festive entertainment.

Open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. each day, and only closed on Christmas Day, the six week event offered free admission, operating a pre-booking facility for such attractions as the Ski Zillertal Ice Rink, The Magical Ice Kingdom, the Bar Ice ice bar, the Giant Observation Wheel and Zippos Circus, while the rides were operated on a token system.

All of these pre-booked attractions were making a welcome return visit to Winter Wonderland, as was Santa Land, aimed specifically at the younger visitors, and the Angels Christmas Market, a traditional German Christmas market with over 200 chalets offering a huge range of unusual and handmade items. The ever-popular Bavarian Village provided bratwurst and mulled wine, among other things, while also hosting live music throughout the day and evening. Numerous other restaurants and bars also catered to visitors.

While all of the above obviously set the winter scene, the

► **See EVENT, page 6**



Top, Winter Wonderland covered a huge area of London's Hyde Park. Above, the Bavarian Village provided event visitors with a host of F&B and live entertainment options. Right, The Giant Observation Wheel and Star Flyer were two of the standout attractions at Winter Wonderland.

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Santa's Land (above) was one of the themed areas at the Hyde Park event. Rides included this XXL coaster (right) while attractions from Irvin's Traditional Fun Fair (bottom) included this Helter Skelter Lighthouse Slip and an array of games. COURTESY PWR EVENTS LTD.



►EVENT

Continued from page 5

extensive array of rides and other attractions on offer is hugely impressive. In addition to the aforementioned Mondial-built Observation Wheel, supplied by the Mellors Group, many of the rides are provided by the Manning Organization and included their Alpine Thriller coaster (a Pinfari RC50), double deck carousel (Chance Rides), a KMG XXL and After Burner, a Mondial Capriolo Infinity and Turbine, a Helter Skelter, two sets of bumper cars and a host of family and children's attractions in the Santa Land themed area.

Other rides were supplied by fellow U.K.-based operators as well as those from around Europe. Among these were a Wave Swinger from Chris Danter, Helter Skelter/Lighthouse Slip and Gallopers from George Irvin, a Waltzer from James Irvin, a Crazy Mouse Spinning Coaster

and Star Flyer from James Mellors and a Huss Top Spin from Paul Hart.

From the continent, rides included a Reverchon-built Euro Coaster from the Buwalda family in Holland, the Bayern Breaker Break Dance of Monty Lagerin from Germany, the Airmaxx Smashing Jump of Fabrice Dotremont from Belgium, Ewald Schneider's 85 meter Hangover Freefall Tower (built by Fun Time) from Germany, Michael Schneider's Pirates Adventure giant walk-through, again from Germany, and the Wilde Maus XXL coaster from Max Eberhard in Germany.

The full list of rides, as noted, was extensive and the above is just a taste of what this hugely successful event now has to offer. With side stalls, games and much more to add further to the entertainment available, it's certainly an occasion not to be missed. Three million visitors can't be wrong!

Intamin Flying Aces coaster due for takeoff at Ferrari World Abu Dhabi

AT: Andrew Mellor
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ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates — Ferrari World Abu Dhabi is set to up the thrill level in 2016 with the introduction of the record breaking roller coaster Flying Aces.

Acclaimed for having the world's tallest loop and steepest starting hill inclination, the new attraction is due to open during the first quarter of 2016 and is the first of many surprises to be unveiled as part of Ferrari World Abu Dhabi's expansion. Built by Intamin, Flying Aces will take guests to speeds of up to 120 kph (74.5 mph) along a 1.5 kilometer (approx. 1 mile) track featuring a 52-meter (170-foot) tall loop and a 51 degree lift. The structure will offer extreme, gravity defying flight acrobatics that include a non-inverted loop, down flips and plenty of airtime.

The plane-themed coaster is the first of five major rides and attractions to be launched as part of Ferrari World Abu Dhabi's major expansion program. Already home to the world's fastest roller coaster, Formula Rossa, the new bi-plane-themed coaster represents the latest addition to the park's offering. Flying Aces brings to life the story behind Ferrari's



Jesse Vargas, general manager at Ferrari World Abu Dhabi.
COURTESY
FERRARI WORLD ABU DHABI

Cavallino logo that is inspired by Italy's "ace of aces" Count Francesco Baracca, a famous Italian aviator from the 1900s whose legendary Prancing Horse emblem was inherited by Enzo Ferrari for good luck.

"The groundbreaking engineering and technologies behind this bi-plane coaster will give guests the thrill of their lives," said Jesse Vargas, general manager at Ferrari World Abu Dhabi. "We have completed 50 percent of the construction of Flying Aces (at the time of writing) and are simultaneously working on other rides and attractions to launch in 2016. We have made a com-

plex roller coaster emerge under our red roof in less than a year, an amazing achievement."

The new rides and attractions being introduced this year will appeal to guests of all ages and are expected to increase the park's overall capacity by 40 percent, reduce waiting time and enhancing the overall guest experience.

In regards to the expansion, Vargas added: "We are very proud of our expansion's progress to date and how close we are to achieving our goal. There hasn't been a theme park that has been adding to its offerings at the pace we are setting. The amount we have invested in our expansion is roughly the same it would cost to open a new park. We are confident that the new rides and attractions will satisfy our guests' thirst for family excitement and white knuckle thrills."

The park recently launched Karting Academy, featuring electric powered go-karts, while for younger visitors the all-new Junior Training Camp has been enhanced with a soft play area and a mix of climbing activities. In addition, guests can also now "drive the dream" aboard a Ferrari California in the brand new Driving Experience.



Ferrari World Abu Dhabi's new Flying Aces will incorporate the world's tallest coaster loop, standing 52 meters (170 feet) tall. COURTESY FERRARI WORLD ABU DHABI

Wind turbine theme park concept unveiled

AT: Andrew Mellor
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AMSTERDAM, Holland — Holland is well-known for its windmills which over the years have been used for pumping water and generating electricity. But now a Dutch company has taken their potential use a big step further by embracing an ambitious idea to transform a wind farm into the world's first sustainable theme park.

Qurrent, an innovative renewable energy company, says that one of the aims of the park is to showcase Dutch renewable energy and to prove that wind turbines, far from being an eyesore, are in fact a celebration of environmental contribution.

"Within 10 years from now, wind energy will be ubiquitous," says Richard Klatten, CEO of Qurrent. "We strive to be ahead of things and shape the future of renewable energy. Creating an environment where people can experience clean energy in a fun and educational way could be one of those. And



The Beaufort Buster would be the world's tallest spiraling water slide.

COURTESY QURRENT

hey, how neat would it be to tell your friends you took a ride on an actual wind turbine?"

Graphics of the park show thrilling experiences such as the Beaufort Buster, which would be the world's tallest, spiraling water slide, and Blade Runner, a super-fast ride on a turbine blade

booster. Guests would also be able to drop down a scream-inducing 96 meter freefall (351 feet) in 1.5 seconds on Newton's Nightmare, or take a roller coaster ride in the Happy Hurricane, all of which would serve every eco-friendly thrill seeker's needs.

Klatten believes that an appreciation of what wind turbines do for the environment will accelerate the renewable wave, although he admits there might be "some bumps on the way." Clearly safety is one, as might be the impact on local businesses.

But this is where, the company says, the theming expertise of fellow Dutch company Jora Entertainment comes in. The leisure industry specialist has envisioned a theme park that is not just about adrenaline-inducing ecotourism attractions, but also about educating guests on the importance of sustainability practices, which could be shown in solar powered, in-park F&B outlets and extensive recycling programs in parks.

Great Coasters Intl. completes record-breaking coaster for China park

SUNBURY, Pa. — Clair Hain, president of Great Coaster International, Inc., (GCII) recently announced the completion and final testing of its newest wooden roller coaster in Nanchang, China for Wanda City Theme Park. This giant coaster is on schedule to break new records in China for the tallest at 160 feet and the longest at 5,111 feet. In addition the new behemoth, Viper, boasts the longest wooden coaster drop in China at a thrilling 142.5 feet.

Hain was on-site to personally oversee final elements of the ride including a speed of 62 mph, their fastest wooden coaster to date. "We are extremely happy to have been in such a close relationship with Nanchang Wanda City Investment Co. throughout this project and can't wait for the Grand opening in 2016. Wanda has been absolutely great, and we are honored to have been their choice for this amazing wood coaster."

Tim Viox of Leisure Labs, which represents GCII, added "Our past, present and coming success stories in China are a testament that quality matters, especially in wood coasters, in Asia just as much as it does in western countries. Our work, and that of our customers, is made so much easier when you represent a company and product with this type of stellar reputation."

According to David Callen in an online posting last month for Vertical Horizons, a coaster enthusiast website, citing views from the latest Google Earth maps update, he said, "We can get a peek of what's to come, and to be honest, it looks awesome."

Great Coasters International, Inc. offers extremely smooth, wildly twisted and the highest quality roller coaster attractions in the world. Their staff of engineers, project coordinators and field construction supervisors have earned the reputation for being exceptionally conscientious to their customers.





WATER PARKS & RESORTS

► Brazil's Beach Park opens largest funnel slide — Page 10 / Fibrart a 35-year international success — Page 11

ProSlide delivering four-slide complex

Beech Bend adding significant water park attractions

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
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BOWLING GREEN, Kentucky — Beech Bend Park has announced the largest water park expansion in the park's history. The multi-million dollar expansion includes Cyclone Saucers, the first-ever North American installation of ProSlide's FlyingSaucer ride. Thrill seekers on two-person tubes will fly around the edge of three "flying saucers" at high speeds. The centrifugal force created by the saucer section will keep the rafts banked high along the wall and with turns in each direction, riders will feel as if they are traversing a giant slalom ski course — all in perfect control. At nearly 500 feet long with a 55-foot elevation change, Cyclone Saucers will offer a unique ride experience.

Joining Cyclone Saucers in 2016 are three more new iconic rides. Tidal Wave, a ProSlide PipelineWave, positions riders face to face as they surge up a thrilling wall and hang weightless before rocketing back down. Riptide features an intense dark ride section, before riders plummet into two separate ProSlide Tornado24 funnels. The two funnels will feature a notched-funnel design that is also new to North America. The open-top funnel will allow natural light to fill the Tornado, in contrast to the dark slide tube sections leading to the funnels. The combination of dark-light-dark-light will provide additional thrills. Polynesian Plunge drops riders from the top of the slide tower into a swirling CannonBowl 40. All four slides will share a common 55-foot access tower and splash down pool.

The slide complex was designed for Beech Bend Park by ProSlide Technology, Inc. of Canada. The four slides, each with a unique color-scheme, are intertwined with each other and will add visual appeal to the Splash Lagoon water park. The new rides are expected to open in June, 2016.

Beech Bend Park is a family



Showing off the renderings of their new-for-2016 water park attractions are Beech Bend Park's Charlotte Gonzalez and Alfreda and Dallas Jones. The new four-slide complex (below) is being supplied by ProSlide and will include the first North American installation of the company's FlyingSaucer ride.

AT/SUE NICHOLS;
RENDERING COURTESY
BEECH BEND PARK

owned park, which dates back to the 1950s as an amusement park, and as a picnic grove as far back as the Civil War era. It fell into a state of disrepair in the 1980s until rescued by current owners Dallas and Alfreda Jones. The two reopened the Beech Bend Race Track and after it started generating income, opened the park's pool. In 1992 Jones began adding rides to the



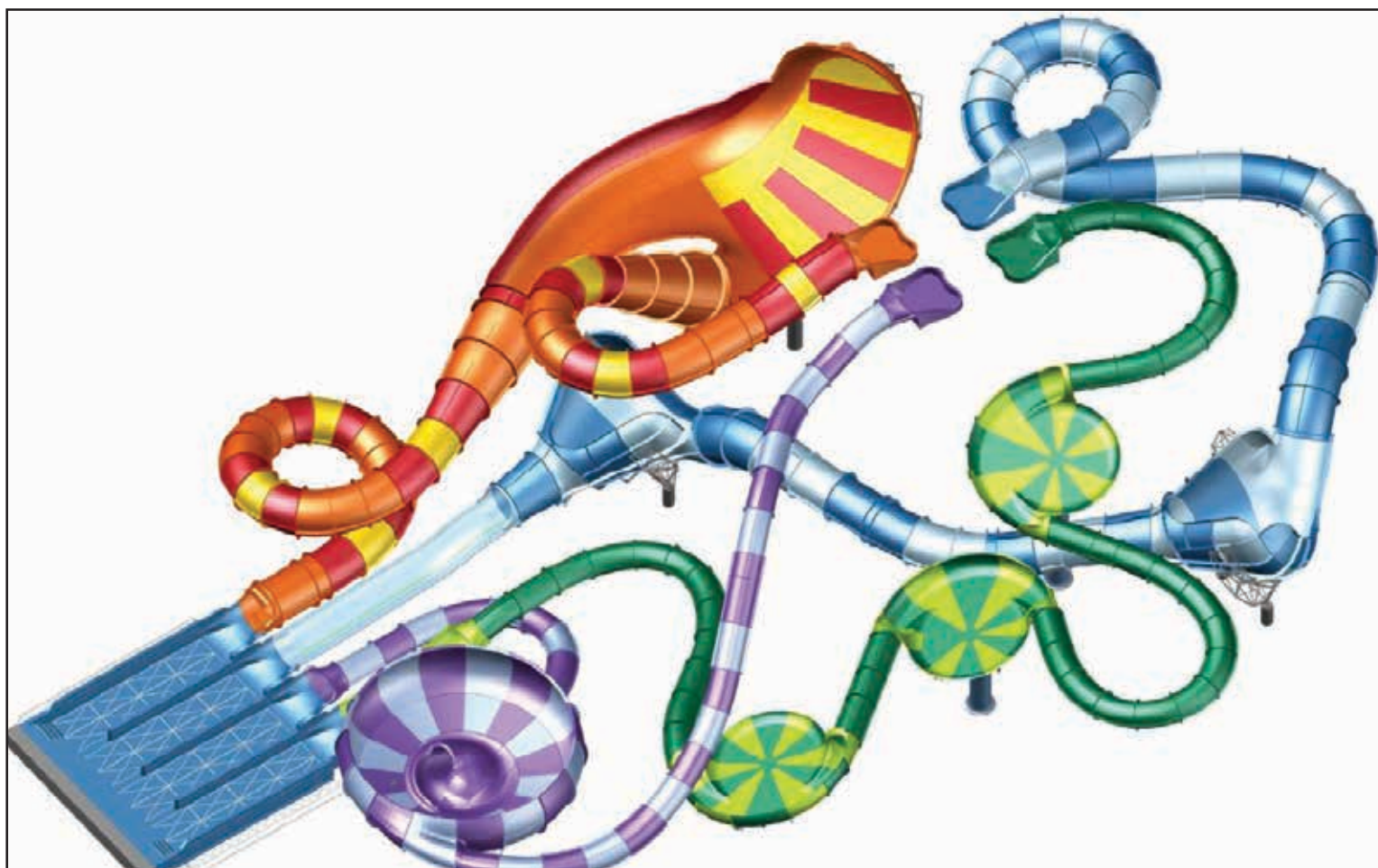
amusement park. The pool area and amusement park continued to grow with new rides each year. With a 2004 expansion, the water park was given its own name — Splash Lagoon. The significant addition of the GCII-built Kentucky Rumbler roller coaster in 2006 put the park back on the map again, proving it was here to stay.

Despite damaging floods in

2010, the park opened a water park expansion that included a wave pool, lazy river, and water play structure.

Beech Bend employs approximately 300 people per season. The new expansion will increase those numbers by approximately 25 people, which includes positions for lifeguards and slide attendants. Beech Bend is also

seeking a ride mechanic/safety inspector supervisor, a food and beverage manager, an aquatics manager, and a marketing manager. Beech Bend Park is part of a large entertainment complex that includes Beech Bend Raceway and Beech Bend Campground, and brings almost one million visitors to the Bowling Green area each year.





NEWS SPLASH

COMPILED: Jeffrey L. Seifert
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WhiteWater West recently celebrated its 35th birthday. It was 35 years ago in December that ground was broken on the **WhiteWater Waterslide & Recreation Complex** in Penticton, B.C. The company celebrated with its amazing team in the Richmond, B.C., office and thanked them for making WhiteWater into the global leader it has become.

WhiteWater has pioneered innovations throughout the waterpark industry such as the first Boomerango (and later the Family Boomerango) and the world's largest waterslide complex (52 slides off one tower), as well as pushing the boundaries of technology with its latest invention: Slideboarding.

The company is understandably proud to have such a great team along for the ride, especially after such a fantastic year. 2015 marked one of WhiteWater's best years winning 17 awards for business excellence, product innovation and contributions to amazing international projects.

Staff members toasted with sparkling apple juice and cookies!.

Innovative Attraction Management (IAM) and the **Starfish Aquatics Institute** (SAI) are merging business operations for elite life-guard training and comprehensive aquatic risk management programs to create **IAM StarGuard Elite, LLC**.

Since 2013 the companies have been in a strategic alliance to expand the program offerings for both organizations which has resulted in quick growth. Building upon this success, the new company will be made up exclusively of executives from the two organizations. IAM StarGuard Elite incorporates all the benefits of the very successful strategic alliance plus includes the strategic merging of select facilities within the two organizations combined client base. This pushes the overall portfolio of clients for IAM StarGuard Elite to 70-plus water park and large public/private facility organizations both domestically and internationally, licensing over 10,000 lifeguards and slide operators worldwide. Some of the most recognized brands in the water park industry are among the clients that will now be a part of IAM StarGuard Elite.

IAM will continue to provide turnkey attraction management (which will include the IAM StarGuard Elite comprehensive risk management system), and expand their amusement industry consulting services. SAI will continue to provide aquatic education products and service aquatic facilities worldwide where a life-guard certificate program delivered through a training center system (vs license) is more appropriate. The new structure will also allow SAI more time to expand its highly successful Starfish Swimming and PADI Swim School programs and increase drowning prevention and international outreach efforts.

A giant retaining pool at the **Deodoro Olympic Park** in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, is open to the public. Until the start of the **Olympic Games**, local citizens are welcome to enjoy the giant open-air swimming pool free of charge. The reservoir holds water for the white water

rapids canoe and kayak competitions.

The pool has a shallow entry and three different depth levels. The pool is open to the public when the rapids are not being used for competition. Entry is free of charge, but controlled by turnstiles. Local citizens must show an ID for admittance to the park. The park will be open from 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. Wednesday to Sunday until March 1, when the city government will hand over the stewardship of the venue to the **Rio 2016 Organizing Committee**, to make final preparations for the Olympic Games, which start on August 5. Following the Games, the pool will become part of a huge recreational park designed to serve as a lasting legacy to the city and 10 underprivileged neighborhoods in close proximity to the venue.

The **Colorado Economic Development Commission** has approved \$86 million to build four tourist attractions in northern Colorado, two of the four involve an indoor water park hotel and a U.S. whitewater adventure Park. The projects were put together by **Go NoCO** a non-profit organization of public and private partners whose mission is to bring economic development to northern Colorado. Although specific details have yet to be released, the proposed **Waterpark Resort at the Rockies** will feature a 75,000 square-foot indoor water park, a 55,000 square-foot outdoor water park, 330-room hotel and other amenities including a family entertainment center, coffee shop, restaurants, spa, retail establishments, ballroom and conference center.

The newest **Great Wolf Lodge** in Garden Grove, California, was expected to open as scheduled on February 19 as this issue was going to press. The 603-suite hotel with its 105,000 square-foot indoor water park was on a hiring spree in January as it was looking for nearly 700 people to man the resort. Needed was everything from housekeepers to lifeguards, waiters to water park engineers. Of the 700 positions available, about half were full-time.

Plans to turn Atlantic City's **Atlantic Club Hotel** into a massive water park have fallen through. The **Atlantic City Club Hotel** closed two years ago and has since been sitting unused. Pennsylvania-based **Endeavor AC LLC** had announced plans to purchase the hotel and turn the shuttered casino into an 81,000 square-foot indoor water park. Endeavor, which specializes in senior-citizen housing, was unable to secure financing for the project.

Garden City Mall in Nairobi, Kenya, has opened a water play area for children. Located within the mall in the children's playground within central park, the water play area has proven to be a popular addition to the mall. Palm tree fountains, an array of water jets and sprays on a soft non-slip surface comprise the mini water park specifically designed for children. Garden City Mall is part of Garden City, a planned community that integrates shopping, living, working and recreation.

Vortex wins prestigious award for its Water Journey Solution

MONTREAL, Canada — Vortex Aquatic Structures International, a manufacturer in aquatic play landscapes and entertainment solutions, recently announced its Water Journey aquatic play solution has been recognized with a Good Design Award by the Chicago Athenaeum.

This year represents the 65th annual Good Design awards, organized by the Chicago Athenaeum Museum of Architecture and Design in cooperation with the European Centre for Architecture, Art, Design and Urban Studies.

Water Journey is a collection of four different events – Labyrinth, Jet Dance, Race, and Tide Pool – that are inspired by nature's flowing streams. Each event can be used separately or connected to provide unique play experiences, providing guests with the ability to engage with different life-like stream behavior as water encounters creeks, flood plains, ripples and cascades.

"Water Journey is an example of how we try to think about play differently," said Vortex President and CEO, Stephen Hamelin. "It enables social, physical and cognitive development of children through playing with water but not necessarily getting wet. We're honored that it has been recognized by the Good Design awards."

This is the second award in 2015 for Water Journey, marketed by Vortex and developed with design firms, Dikini and Daily Tous les Jours. Water Journey was previously recognized with a Grands Prix Du Design Award for Best Street Furniture.

More information about Water Journey can be found at <http://www.vortex-intl.com/solutions/solution-types/water-journeytm>.

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Ellis & Associates expands with new training services

Five new training programs in mix of services offered

OCOE, Florida — Ellis & Associates, Inc. is expanding once again, with the introduction of its new safety and health training services for professionals and laypersons.

Beyond its acclaimed International Lifeguard Training Program (ILTP), E&A will now offer a full line of additional certification programs including Health Care Provider Basic Life Support, Community CPR and AED, Standard First Aid, Bloodborne and Airborne Disease Prevention, and others.

According to Richard Carroll, E&A chief operating officer, "We are pleased to be able to once again pro-

vide our clients with more choices. Clients will now have the opportunity to assess their individual facility needs and choose options for training any staff members, as well as providing training to local community members, in important lifesaving skills."

Jeff Ellis, E&A founder, explains, "For years we have been training lifeguards to confidently perform skills that include first aid, CPR, AED, and BBP awareness. We are responding to requests from our clients for new certification programs for aquatic staff, as well as non-aquatic staff for facilities worldwide. Adapting to ever-changing client needs is what we at

E&A are all about."

E&A's presence in the industry is staggering. E&A works with over 600 organizations around the world, conducting over 2,000 Safety Operational Audits and training over 45,000 aquatic professionals annually while serving over 100 million facility guests each year.

Jeff Ellis adds, "At E&A, our mission has always been about safety. We feel that, through our extensive cadre of experienced instructors, we can broaden our mission to help save even more lives through client and community safety education programs."

About Ellis & Associates

Jeff Ellis & Associates, Inc. (E&A) was founded in 1983 with the purpose of reducing the loss of life due to drowning through Proactive Aquatic Risk Management. Over the years, Ellis & Associates has been recognized as the innovative leader in the aquatic industry through its International Lifeguard Training Program (ILTP), its flagship Comprehensive Aquatic Risk Management Program (CARMP) that utilizes the ILTP Training as a foundation for aquatic safety protection systems deployed at client facilities, and its Customized Risk Prevention Program.

Beach Park opens Vaikuntudo: the world's largest Tornado slide

AQUIRAZ, Brazil — Beach Park, a prominent water park and tourist resort situated on the Porto das Dunas Beach, has opened a record breaking water slide. Vaikuntudo is the world's largest whirlwind water slide.

The ProSlide Tornado 60 is elevated to provide an extended run out section following the exit of the iconic Tornado portion. But the excitement begins long before that, an extended lead-in section with both open and enclosed portions, allows the rafts to build up speed before plummeting into the Tornado. The entire attraction stands more than six stories high and is 240 meters in length.

Following a steep climb, riders in groups of four start with a 25-meter tube chute. Guests are then whipped through a colossal, 60-foot funnel at nearly 43 miles per hour. Vaikuntudo overlooks the entire Beach Park complex as well as the Atlantic Ocean. As Beach Park's newest extreme attraction, the brilliantly colored Vaikuntudo provides a dizzying amount of fun.

"Imagine standing six-stories high, as tall as a great whale, and taking a ride down one of the world's largest funnels with a feeling of total weightlessness — that's Vaikuntudo," said Beach Park General Manager

Murilo Pascoal. "Our goal is to continue to innovate and build the world's most exciting water attractions. Together with our long-time partners, ProSlide, we're excited to debut yet another thrilling, world-class experience for more than one million people this year."

With an investment of R \$13 million (U.S. \$3.2 million), Vaikuntudo is the world's largest in its category. Vaikuntudo is part of Beach Park's innovation program aimed at the development of new experiences and services to offer unprecedented options for entertainment and leisure to guests.

Beach Park is comprised of an expansive water park, four resorts, spa and restaurants, situated on the Porto das Dunas (Port of Dunes) beach in northeast Brazil. Porta da Dunas features 10 kilometers of white sand beach surrounded by stunning sand dunes. It is known for its constant breeze and warm water, making it popular for wind and kite surfing.

Beach Park Resorts is one of the most popular choices for visitors to the Porto das Dunas area. Beach Park, one of the largest water parks in South America, offers family, moderate and world-famous extreme attractions including, Insano, one of the world's tallest water slides.

— Jeffrey Seifert



Beach Park, a prominent water park and tourist resort situated on the Porto das Dunas Beach in Brazil, has opened a record-breaking water slide. Vaikuntudo is the world's largest Tornado water slide. It is a ProSlide Tornado 60. COURTESY BEACH PARK



An international success for 35 years

Fibrart's commitment to water park fun continues momentum

AT: Dean Lamanna
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ACATLÁNDEJUÁREZ, Jalisco, Mexico — Adapting and staying fresh in a dynamic, evolving industry is a slippery challenge for any company. And in the world of water park attractions, astute manufacturers don't so much rest on their laurels as use them to keep sliding confidently and ever-faster forward.

Fibrart has done just that for well over three decades. Commencing its founding operations in 1979 and officially registering as a company in 1981, it has designed and manufactured water park and water play equipment for some 3,000 locations worldwide.

Fibrart's appearance at the 35th Annual World Waterpark Association Symposium & Trade Show in Palm Springs, Calif., last October was a testament to the company's success: its booth hosted nonstop meetings for the full two days of the convention.

Alejandro Mestas, sales manager for Fibrart, told *Amusement Today* that the company typically begins working with new and prospective customers a few months ahead of the annual WWA event.

"We meet with them at WWA and show them proposals that have been worked on by our designers since August or Septem-



The colorfully themed Sidewinder at Raging Waters San Jose is Fibrart's SnakeRacer waterslide model. The course of the Northern California park's four-lane mat racer, which is 45 feet high and 354 long, is alternately open and closed. The slide utilizes foam mats with plastic handles and, with an average dispatch rate of 30 seconds, has an optimal rider throughput of 480 pph. COURTESY PALACE ENTERTAINMENT

ber," Mestas explained. "We work with our clients to do any modifications to their project and then we meet with them at the IAAPA [in November], usually to finalize a deal. In many cases, we end up signing contracts during the IAAPA Show."

Over the past two years, Fibrart has completed numerous attraction deals with clients large and small. They include properties of three major water park chains in the U.S.

Raging Waters San Jose in Northern California purchased Fibrart's SnakeRacer waterslide, a heavily themed mat racer christened Sidewinder by the park, for its 2015 season. On the opposite coast, Wet 'n Wild Emer-

ald Pointe in North Carolina ordered the company's TurboRacer mat slide, named Riptide Racer, for debut last summer.

In 2014, Fibrart supplied a complete children's play area, Cowabunga Kids Cove, for Cowabunga Bay Las Vegas water park in Henderson, Nev.

Aside from meeting or exceeding ATSM and European (EN) standards, Fibrart's product manufacturing has a high degree of design flexibility that appeals to the company's customers, according to Mestas.

"We don't have standard products, heights, lengths or theming," he said. "When developing a project, we consider numerous factors to help our clients grow, succeed and come back to buy other products from us."

Fibrart, Mestas added, is able to work closely with the client in designing equipment that is compatible with — and maximizes the potential of — the available real estate and budget, the targeted market and the type of host business (be it a water park, a hotel or a recreation center). The local economy and competition also are considered early in the process.

"These factors together give us the ability to create a



customized project for each client," Mestas said.

Fibrart's selection of mat racer waterslides, which can be modified in a variety of ways, comprise its most popular product line.

"We have the typical open, straight multi-lane mat racer, but we also have developed new designs for different clients," Mestas said. "For example, Splashway water park in Sheridan, Texas, asked for a four-lane mat racer that was 30-percent enclosed. Oasis Aquatic Park in Isla de Maipo, Chile, near Santiago, requested a four-lane mat racer with two straight, enclosed lanes on the sides and two straight open lanes at the center — and at the halfway point, the enclosed lanes open and the slide turns into a straight four-lane racer."

Raging Waters San Jose's mandate that its Sidewinder waterslide be something unique led Fibrart to create a new, patented mat racer

model — the SnakeRacer — with an alternately enclosed and open course. For added serpentine drama, Fibrart's designer created giant fiberglass snake heads for each lane to enhance the new slide's theming.

Mestas noted that Fibrart's colorful children's water play area packages, such as the one at Cowabunga Bay Las Vegas, are now made almost entirely from non-corrosive materials. "They have almost no maintenance," he said, pointing out that the company is able to apply any theme or storyline to a children's water play installation. While the pirate theme is most common, Fibrart has created everything from jungle to beach and Polynesian themes, and it currently is developing a surf-themed play structure.

"What really makes us different," emphasized Mestas, "is that we adapt our projects to our customers' needs."

• fibrart.com.mx



Fibrart's skill with customization and design is on full display at Cowabunga Kids Cove, the cheerfully beachy children's water play area it created for Cowabunga Bay Las Vegas in Henderson, Nev. The company's play structures utilize non-corrosive materials to reduce maintenance and are adaptable to virtually any theme or storyline. COURTESY FIBRART



Riptide Racer at Wet'n Wild Emerald Pointe in North Carolina is Fibrart's TurboRacer waterslide model. The four-lane mat racer begins with a dramatic, fully enclosed spiral that opens into a speed-boosting straightaway before the run-out. The slide, which is 33 feet high and 258 feet long, has an optimal 480 pph throughput with a dispatch rate averaging 30 seconds. COURTESY FIBRART



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PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► **Star Wars mania lands at U.S. Disney parks in full force — Pages 20-21 / Fairs — Pages 24-28**

SeaWorld San Antonio announces new Discovery Point for 2016

Includes dolphin, guest interaction; Aquatica to get separate gate

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — SeaWorld San Antonio recently announced details of significant park enhancements coming in 2016, including new ways for guests to experience and interact with dolphins at its Discovery Point attraction, as well as the evolution of Aquatica as a stand-alone water park. The news coincides with the launch of a special offer – guests get three months free when they purchase a 2016 annual pass now.

“All of our expansions and innovations are grounded on guest feedback and the desire to provide experiences that matter,” said Dan Decker, park president, SeaWorld & Aquatica San Antonio. “Whether guests want to experience ocean life up-close by swimming with a dolphin at Discovery Point, or spend the day floating among beautiful exotic birds at Aquatica, SeaWorld is making it easier than ever to have those opportunities right here in Texas.”

Discovery Point

Discovery Point is scheduled to open in late spring of 2016. Access to this new realm will be included with SeaWorld admission; the interaction opportunities with dolphins will be a separate charge.

The breathtaking centerpiece of Discovery Point is Dolphin Lagoon, a new coastal-themed habitat that will provide a multi-dimensional

2016 park pricing

SeaWorld San Antonio pricing at the parks has been simplified for 2016:

- Single-day admission to SeaWorld for the 2016 season will be \$65 per person;

- Aquatica single-day admission starts at \$40;

- A one-park annual pass to either Aquatica or SeaWorld will be \$102;

- The best value will be a 2-park annual pass for \$135. This includes unlimited admission to both SeaWorld and Aquatica for 12 months, free parking (a \$20 savings per visit), 20 percent in-park purchase discounts, and discounts on swim programs, camps and educational tours, early park entry on select dates, exclusive previews, and no blackout dates.

experience for guests and nearly doubles the size of the previous habitat. SeaWorld visitors will be able to observe dolphins above the surface from the habitat’s sandy shores and playing beneath the surface from an underwater viewing area.

Explorer’s Reef, the park’s popular shark, fish and coral reef aquarium, will reopen as part of Discovery Point, featuring updates that enhance its showcase of ocean life.

In addition, guests who wish to come nose-to-nose with these amazing marine mammals will have the opportunity to swim with dolphins as a special add-on experience – the only one of its kind in Texas.

During the swim encounters, guests are not only introduced to these wondrous mammals, but through edu-

cational programming are able to develop a deeper understanding of the sea and importance of protecting the wild wonders of the world.

After changing into a SeaWorld-provided wetsuit, guests participating in the dolphin swim will receive training on how to interact with dolphins, and get a better understanding of the challenges that face dolphins in the wild. Participants will then wade into Dolphin Lagoon to meet the animals nose-to-nose during a swim. Following the in-water experience, guests may linger in a cabana to talk with trainers and review photos and video of their encounter.

The new dolphin interactions at Discovery Point will complement SeaWorld’s existing marine mammal interaction programs for sea lions and beluga whales. SeaWorld San Antonio is one of few places in the United States that offers the opportunity to swim with these species.

A new website to help facilitate reservations and designing the ultimate day is also being launched at seaworlddiscoverypoint.com. The site is now accepting reservations for dolphin interactions in 2016.

Aquatica

Starting with the season opening March 5, guests will also have the new option to visit SeaWorld San Antonio or Aquatica separately, allowing for more focused time to spend in each park.

Entry into SeaWorld’s highly-acclaimed water park previously required the purchase of a 2-park ticket. The evolution of Aquatica as



Later this spring, SeaWorld San Antonio will debut its new Discovery Point where guests will now have the opportunity to schedule swimming with a dolphin experience or may wish to enjoy the new underwater viewing areas.

COURTESY SEAWORLD

stand-alone park was prompted by market research and guest feedback that showed strong consumer demand to visit Aquatica a separate experience with its own single-day ticket.

FAST FACTS

SeaWorld San Antonio 2016 special events

Providing even more reasons to visit and purchase an annual pass, SeaWorld is enriching its strong lineup of consumer events for 2016. All of these special events are included with SeaWorld park admission.

- **Wild Days** kicks off weekends in February featuring interactive shows from top ambassadors of animal rescue and rehabilitation including the ever-popular Jack Hanna.

- **Spring into Night** is SeaWorld San Antonio’s spring break festival featuring Texan lumberjacks competing against Alaskan rivals, and also includes special shows and nightly fireworks.

- **Seven Seas Food Festival** sets sail weekends in April and May. Guests can sample and sip their way around the park’s craft beers, unique wines and global fusion food.

- **Summer Nights** provides later park hours and seasonal entertainment.

- **Howl-O-Scream** transforms SeaWorld San Antonio from a theme park to a scream park during weekends in October with sinister houses and “terror-tories.”

- **Christmas Celebration** brings waves of holiday cheer, millions of lights, and Santa in November and December.



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I-Drive's proposed Skyplex gets approved by Orange County

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO, Fla. — Setting the stage for a new Central Florida landmark featuring two record-breaking thrill rides, commissioners for Orange County on Dec. 1, 2015, unanimously approved plans for Skyplex — a retail, hotel and entertainment center in development since

2012 and announced two years ago.

The oft-modified and largely indoor attraction, anchored by a 570-foot observation tower encircled from top to bottom by what is being described as the world's tallest roller coaster, will be built on a 14-acre site at International Drive and Sand Lake Road. Reports of its budget

have ranged from \$300-500 million.

Skyplex required a rezoning approval from the county in order to move forward. Most of those attending the public commissioners' meeting, including 41 I-Drive business operators and many residents with adjacent communities, expressed their enthusiasm for the project.

Universal Orlando Resort, which reportedly has an interest in expanding in the area and disapproved of the tower's height, lobbied unsuccessfully against the project for several months. The Federal Aviation Administration had already cleared the proposal for a height of up to 700 feet last July.

The developer behind

Skyplex, Wallack Holdings, which owns Mango's Tropical Cafés on I-Drive and in Miami's South Beach, indicated that the tower would be the first part of the project to rise. A groundbreaking date has not been determined, pending the participation of investors from China.

Skyplex's signature attraction, called The Sky-scraper, is the planet's first Polercoaster vertical roller coaster. It will incorporate wild inversions and a record-breaking 524-foot-long vertical lift within its 5,200-foot track length.

"From day one, we have been committed to creating a roller coaster experience for Orlando unlike any in the world," said Bill Kitchen, founder of Orlando-based US Thrill Rides and creator of the Polercoaster, last year. The company is working with Swiss manufacturer Intamin on the ride.

Also part of the project is SkyFall, a 450-foot drop ride — the tallest of its kind — from Intamin that will be attached to the tower's central support structure.

Skyplex is expected to debut in 2018.

•usthrrides.com



Skyplex will include The Sky-scraper — a record-breaking, 5,200-foot-long steel roller coaster from US Thrill Rides and Intamin topping out above 500 feet and reaching 65 mph. Intamin is also supplying SkyFall, a 450-foot drop ride on the tower.

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Indiana Beach announces renovation of its popular Chance Giant Wheel



Park to celebrate its 90th anniversary throughout 2016

MONTICELLO, Ind. — Indiana Beach has started a major renovation project on the Giant Gondola Wheel in preparation for the park's 90th anniversary in 2016.

The Giant Wheel, an iconic Indiana Beach ride, was dismantled in November and sent to the ride's manufacturer, Chance Rides of Wichita, Kansas. The refurbishment will be completed over a four-month period at their facility. Chance Rides was the original manufacturer of the Wheel.

"The Giant Wheel refurbishment is just one project of many that will be completed before next season," stated John Collins, general manager of Indiana Beach Boardwalk Resort. "This off-season promises to be an exciting and busy one under the new ownership of Apex Parks Group. Watch for additional announcements in the near future as we prepare for the upcoming 2016 season."

This is the first time the Giant Wheel has undergone a complete updating since it was erected on the historic Indiana Beach boardwalk in 1989. The Giant Wheel has 20 gondolas and can accommodate up to 120 riders at one time. It stands over 90 feet tall and can be seen throughout the park and along the shores of Lake Shafer.

The Giant Gondola Wheel is one the most photographed rides by Indiana Beach guests and has been featured in several Indiana Beach TV commercials and area tourism marketing campaigns.

•indianabeach.com
•apexparksgroup.com

To help Indiana Beach celebrate its 90th anniversary this season, the park has sent its iconic Giant Gondola Wheel back to its original supplier, Chance Rides, for a complete refurbishment. COURTESY INDIANA BEACH



Quassy Amusement Park's new Slide City, a five-slide ProSlide complex for kiddies, is nearing completion for the new season. COURTESY QUASSY

Quassy readies for its 108th season of operation

MIDDLEBURY, Conn. — It's about time! Or, in the case of Quassy Amusement & Waterpark, it's about Reverse Time as the family-owned property opens April 23, for its 108th season.

Quassy will introduce a new family thrill ride, Reverse Time, this year as well as a new waterslide complex and other improvements, according to park officials.

"We're certainly excited about all that's happening at the park this year," said Quassy's George Frantzis II, a park owner. "We will have the first Reverse Time (ride) in all of North America and five new slides for children at Splash Away Bay (waterpark)."

New ride

Reverse Time, themed as a giant clock, accommodates 24 riders seated in a circular configuration facing outward. As the ride starts to spin it is lifted into the air with the supporting turntable rotating in the opposite direction.

Guests will dip and dive as the ride reaches a maximum speed of 20 revolutions per minute. Mid-cycle, the ride will change direction adding

to the exciting experience.

"This is the ideal fit for us," noted Frantzis. "It's a thrilling ride, yet not too extreme for our clientele."

Quassy worked with SBF/VISA Group, the Italian manufacturer, in devising the color scheme for the attraction with the park's artist creating a logo for the new ride. Rides 4U, Somerville, N.J., represents SBF/VISA in the United States.

New slides

The off-season at the lake-side property has been anything but quiet as construction workers have been busy putting the finishing touches on Slide City, a new five-slide complex for children at Splash Away Bay.

"We really saw the need for more water park attractions geared toward youngsters," Quassy President Eric Anderson said of the project. "We introduced an interactive splash pad a couple of years ago and Slide City will greatly enhance the experience for younger guests."

The new slides were provided by ProSlide Technology, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

New photo spot

The award-winning Wooden Warrior roller coaster will sport a new vantage point for guests wanting to capture photos of the exciting ride. The Eagle's Nest Observation Deck, located adjacent to the exit ramp of the thrill ride, will provide guests with a bird's-eye view of the coaster as it screams back toward the loading station. Quassy's maintenance staff built the deck during the off-season.

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Immersive land to begin making magic April 7

Universal Studios Hollywood heralds Harry Potter's big debut

AT: Dean Lamanna

dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

UNIVERSAL CITY, Calif. — It is the news for which fans of Universal Studios Hollywood (USH) and the *Harry Potter* books and films have been feverishly waiting: the movie theme park will open The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, its new immersive land, on April 7.

In making the announcement, USH illuminated the land's towering and iconic Hogwarts Castle. Finishing details are now being applied to the new area.

More than five years in the making, and inspired by J.K. Rowling's compelling stories and characters, The Wizarding World of Harry Potter will be faithful to the visual landscape of the fiction and films.

From its snow-capped roofs and cobblestone streets to the historic British sensibilities that characterize the Potter tales' whimsical look and feel, the new land will transport visitors to the very places



Hogwarts Castle, the towering centerpiece of The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, will be ready to welcome visitors at Universal Studios Hollywood this spring. The new immersive land features two major new rides, including Flight of the Hippogriff, the park's first outdoor roller coaster. COURTESY UNIVERSAL STUDIOS HOLLYWOOD

they read about in the stories or watched in theaters.

Upon entering the Wizarding World through an archway, guests will be greet-

ed by the bustling village of Hogsmeade — with merchants hard at work, a train conductor welcoming new arrivals and a lively pub. Two

new rides also await: Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey and the first outdoor roller coaster at USH, Flight of the Hippogriff.

An achievement in pioneering theme park ride technology, Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey will make its U.S. debut at USH in hyper-realistic 3D-HD. The multidimensional indoor thrill ride features a groundbreaking robotics ride system fused with elaborate filmed action sequences and visceral effects. Guests will sport 3D goggles as they travel with Harry and his friends, spiraling and pivoting 360 degrees along an elevated track.

Details about the Wizarding World's signature ride, as well as actor and production team commentary, can be found at USH's website, which offers a virtual tour of the new area.

Currently, park guests can experience and purchase Harry Potter merchandise, including wands, robes and other collectibles, at the Features Presentation shop, located just inside USH's main entrance.

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Edaville USA adds Thomas Land to the mix

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

SOUTH CARVER, Mass. — Edaville USA expanded its operations by over 11 acres this past August with the introduction of Thomas Land. Considered one of the oldest heritage railroad operations in North America, Edaville opened in 1947. Edaville is named after its original owner, Ellis D. Atwood. (His initials spell E.D.A.) Atwood started the railroad by purchasing two-foot gauge rail from some of the tracks once dotting the Maine landscape. He had it all transported to his cranberry plantation in southeastern Massachusetts, about 50 miles from Boston.

During the IAAPA Attractions Expo in November, much of the attention at the Mattel booth (in addition to the “You can Be Anything Barbie” roll-out for this spring) was on the Thomas and Friends Day Out programming attraction. Mattel partnered with Edaville USA, to make a one day show a permanent attraction. On August 15, 2015, the first Thomas Land in North America opened in a section of Edaville. The Thomas and Friends site occupies 11.5 acres.

“The highlight is a train ride told by Thomas. It goes around the entire perimeter of the park (2.5 miles). There are 11 rides and contraptions,” explained Alaina Way, with Mattel. She continued, “One of the highlights is the Troublesome Trucks Runaway Coaster (Zamperla). There’s also Cranky’s Crane Drop and Harold’s Helicopter ride. So there’s a lot of great rides for children and families that they can enjoy together.”

The relationship Edaville has with Mattel began many years ago when Mattel offered their Day Out with Thomas touring attraction to the park. Edaville USA is in a picturesque setting with cranberry bogs and a lush, green environment. “Customers always commented that the park looked like the Island of Sodor,” said General Manager Brenda Johnson. She continued, “It took twelve years for Thomas Land to come to fruition because Thomas was bought and sold a few times in the interim. The groundbreaking for Thomas Land



was in October 2014 and work was done through the winter months while the park was closed to the public.”

Opening weekend of Thomas Land generated 300 percent over park manage-

ment’s expectations. (Current annual attendance is 250,000. The park hopes to quadruple their numbers with this new area.) Way said, “It’s the first Thomas Land in North America. There’s definitely a huge appetite for Thomas and his friends. People also make this a destination.” Johnson also has enjoyed this relationship. “The partnership with Mattel has been wonderful! The

Grand Opening of Thomas Land was highly anticipated and we have had visitors coming from all over the world to see Thomas and his friends here at Edaville USA,” said Johnson.

When asked about what new features are being added to Thomas Land for 2016, Johnson replied, “There is a soft play area adjacent to the Winston aerial ride that is be-

ing completed this winter. It is a two story climbing structure with netted sides, slides and a ball pit. It will be open in the summer of 2016. There are also remote control boats coming in the summer of 2016.”

Editor’s note: Other Thomas Lands are located in the United Kingdom with a third one in Japan; however, the American site is the largest one to date.



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Several Disneyland attractions closed in prep for themed land

Early 'Star Wars' tie-ins tap The Force at Disney's U.S. parks

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

ANAHEIM, Calif. — The Walt Disney Company, new home of the *Star Wars* feature film franchise and associated merchandising, opened temporary attractions based on the space fantasy at Disney resorts here and in Florida ahead of the mid-December debut of *The Force Awakens*, the latest *Star Wars* movie.

The new experiences at Disney's domestic parks were positioned to capitalize on the massive hype surrounding the film, which drew largely positive reviews and broke box office records, grossing over \$1 billion worldwide in its first 12 days of release. The Associated Press joined the parade of huzzahs, naming *Star Wars* its 2015 "Entertainer of the Year" — a back-to-back win for Disney, which also enjoyed the honor in 2014 for its animated feature *Frozen*.

The excitement was especially evident at the Disneyland Resort, where Disneyland had to close its gates temporarily on Christmas Day after reaching capacity. (Sister park Disney California Adventure remained open.) Even before rolling out its in-park "Season of The Force" promotion, Disney reported in October that attendance at its U.S. parks was up 15 percent.

Celebrating the *Star Wars* pop culture phenomenon, Disneyland's Tomorrowland and, at the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Disney's Hollywood Stu-

dios are hosting exhibits and rethemed rides designed to keep visitors happy until the respective parks can unveil their larger, previously announced *Star Wars*-themed lands. Completion dates for the new lands, with groundbreaking taking place this year, have not been set.

In early January, Disneyland closed a chunk of Frontierland to start clearing the way for the park's permanent 14-acre home of Luke Skywalker and company. Shuttered for good are Big Thunder Ranch and its associated attractions, including the petting zoo; the recently refurbished Big Thunder Mountain Railroad roller coaster is not affected. Temporary closures include the Mark Twain Riverboat, Sailing Ship Columbia, Pirate's Lair on Tom Sawyer Island, Disneyland Railroad and Davey Crockett Explorer Canoes.

The advance *Star Wars* attractions, which debuted November 16 on the West Coast and December 15 on the East Coast, are — with a few site-specific exceptions — virtually identical at both locations.

The hub of the sci-fi fun is the *Star Wars* Launch Bay, featuring:

•**Special Character Encounters** — After entering a themed atrium complete with authentic replicas of *Star Wars* props, guests journey to the dark side and come face to face with Darth Vader in a 360-degree immersive area themed around the Star Destroyer, or they



From Hollywood to Anaheim, Calif., and Orlando, Fla., The Walt Disney Company's "Season of The Force" is in full swing. At Disneyland park, Tomorrowland and its iconic indoor roller coaster, Space Mountain, have undergone a *Star Wars* makeover in advance of a new themed land being built around the enduring space fantasy.

COURTESY DISNEYLAND RESORT

may choose the "light side" by stepping into a makeshift Rebel base to meet the most famous co-pilot in the galaxy, Chewbacca.

•**Launch Bay Theater** — Guests hear directly from the creative minds behind the *Star Wars* saga in a short video that includes exclusive

interviews with the directors, writers, producers, key movie crew members and Imagineers who bring the saga to life.

•**The Cantina** — This setting, inspired by the unsavory "hives of scum and villainy" in the *Star Wars* galaxy, is a place to explore and take

photos near elements of the cantina, such as a holographic chess game table.

•**Star Wars Game Center** — Here, guests can play current and upcoming video games, including new Disney Infinity 3.0 content created exclusively for this attraction.

► See DISNEY, page 21



Star Wars Launch Bay, the introductory hub of the new wave of sci-fi saga fun at Disney's U.S. parks, features themed galleries showcasing authentic replicas of movie props.

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DISNEYLAND RESORT



►DISNEY

Continued from page 20

•**Themed Galleries** — Special immersive galleries featuring authentic replicas of movie props, starships and more are located throughout *Star Wars* Launch Bay.

•**Launch Bay Cargo** — Guests may browse and purchase a variety of *Star Wars* merchandise, including original artwork and collector's items.

Other attractions presented by both parks:

•**Star Wars — The Adventures Continue** carries guests on motion simulator-based journeys involving new characters, situations and destinations from *The Force Awakens*, all in Dolby 3D.

•**Star Wars: Path of the Jedi** allows guests to relive, or discover, the stories and characters from the *Star Wars* saga (episodes I-VII) via an abridged cinematic reel in a theater setting. It connects iconic scenes from the movies in fun new ways as it follows the journey of Luke Skywalker.

•**Jedi Training: Trials of**



Disneyland's Galactic Grill offers *Star Wars* sweets like the BB-8 Droid Crisped-Rice Treat (above) and Darth by Chocolate and The Pastry Menace.

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the Temple has been reimagined with new characters and a new villain to battle from *Star Wars Rebels*, the popular Disney XD series. Younglings are magically transported to a secret and ancient Jedi temple, where they will face villains such as Darth Vader and the Sev-

enth Sister Inquisitor from *Star Wars Rebels* — and learn if they have the makings of a true Jedi.

Attractions specific to the California and Florida locations:

•**Hyperspace Mountain** at the Disneyland Resort is a reimagining of the classic Space Mountain indoor roller coaster. The ride rockets guests into deep space for an action-packed battle between Rebel X-wings and Imperial TIE fighters.

•**"Symphony in the Stars: A Galactic Spectacular"** at the Walt Disney World Resort presents a luminous nighttime finish to guests' visit with a fireworks show set to music from the *Star Wars* saga.

Disney visitors on both coasts will have other opportunities daily to explore and interact with The Force. They may encounter First Order Stormtroopers patrolling the area around *Star Wars* Launch Bay, and they may indulge in a variety of *Star Wars*-themed foods and treats — all courtesy of a galaxy far, far away.

•disneyparksblog.com



Princess Jasmine and Aladdin shared one last flight on the magic carpet in January as "Disney's Aladdin — A Musical Spectacular" concluded its 13-year run at Disney California Adventure. COURTESY DISNEYLAND RESORT

DCA's 'Aladdin' rolls up magic carpet

ANAHEIM, Calif. — "Disney's Aladdin — A Musical Spectacular" was presented for the final time January 10 in the Hyperion Theater at Disney California Adventure (DCA).

It was originally hoped by Disney that "Aladdin" would run for at least five years at the venue. The show's huge popularity powered it well past that expectation.

"Thanks to our amazing cast and the many, many fans, 'Disney's Aladdin — A Musical Spectacular' has enjoyed a longer run... than we could have ever imagined," said Kris Theiler, DCA's vice president of operations.

The 40-minute, Broadway-quality "Aladdin" production was presented some 14,000 times during its 13 years at the Hyperion, located in the park's Hollywood Land area. During its run, about 13 million people enjoyed the show, which was based on the 1992 Disney animated film and employed more than 100 performers.

This summer, the Hyperion will host a new stage musical based on Disney's 2013 feature *Frozen*, the highest-grossing animated film of all time.

—Dean Lamanna



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Knott's Berry Farm has announced that in March it will open a Starbucks just outside the park's main gate at the California MarketPlace. COURTESY KNOTT'S BERRY FARM

Knott's Berry Farm to open Starbucks store in California MarketPlace

BUENA PARK, Calif. — Knott's Berry Farm recently announced that it will open its first Starbucks location. The 935-square foot Starbucks store will open in March 2016 in the California MarketPlace, just outside the park's main entrance, and will offer the brand's world-class coffee drinks and entrees.

Knott's follows Cedar Point, King's Island and Canada's Wonderland as the fourth Cedar Fair park to open a Starbucks location at its theme park.

As a themed entertainment destination, Knott's has partnered with Starbucks to design a welcoming gathering place that evokes themes of the Knott family's original roadside stand with the familiar, contemporary aesthetic of Starbucks stores.

"With Knott's rooted in rich culinary traditions, Starbucks brings a level of quality and service to the park that our guests have come to expect," said Russ Knibbs, vice president of food and beverage service at Knott's Berry Farm. "The partnership with Starbucks will help us continue to bring great refreshments and dining, while delivering the very best experiences to our guests."

Just south of the new Starbucks construction site is the ongoing restoration of Mrs. Knott's Chicken Dinner Restaurant. The restaurant and the quick-service option Chicken-To-Go closed in early January as construction continues in preparation for a spring 2016 reopening. To ensure Mrs. Knott's famous fried chicken is still available during construction, a temporary Chicken-To-Go counter service location has opened in the retail space where Cable Car Kitchen restaurant formerly operated. While the restaurant's main kitchen is being renovated, the famous fried chicken with all the fixings will continue to be prepared using Mrs. Knott's legendary recipe.



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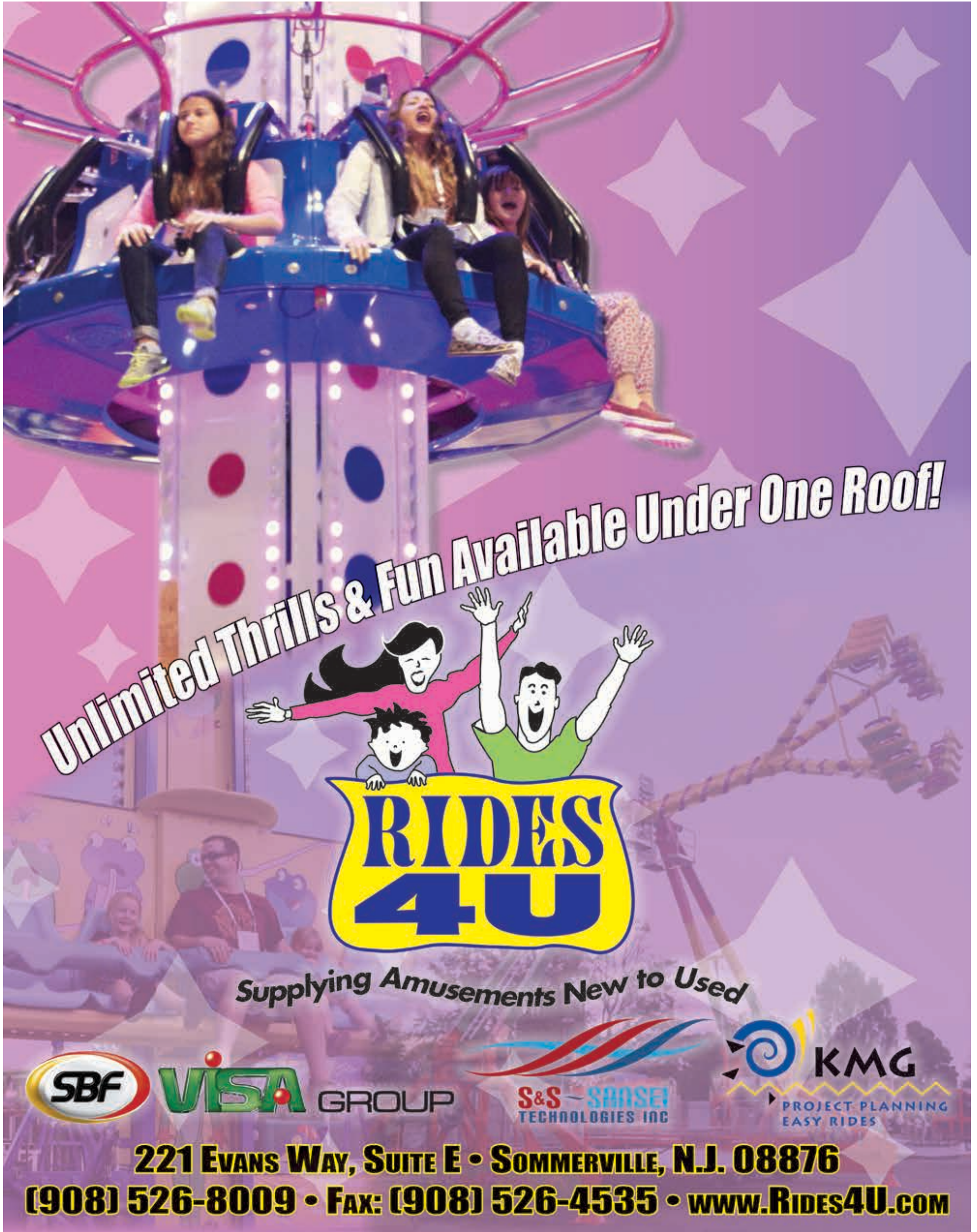
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Inducted into IAFE Hall of Fame

Industry awaits what McKoy will do in his "next" career



AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — Errol McKoy was surprised when, at the 125th convention of the International Association of Fairs and Expos (IAFE) held last November in Las Vegas, Nev., he was inducted into that associa-

Errol McKoy, who retired as the president of the State Fair of Texas last year after more than 25 years at the helm, was surprised at his induction into the International Association of Fairs & Expos Hall of Fame last November during the association's convention in Las Vegas. Here, he stands with award in hand.

COURTESY ERROL MCKOY

tion's Hall of Fame.

"I am retired," said McKoy, who was president of the State Fair of Texas from 1988 to his retirement in 2014. "I thought, normally, those types of awards go to people who are still active. I really thought that might be behind me. It is really nice. It is really nice to think people remember you."

McKoy may say he is in retirement, but, when he begins to list the things that he is doing "in his retirement," he is far from sitting in a rocking chair on the front porch.

"I guess I am entering my fourth career," McKoy said.

For one thing, he is still consulting with the State Fair of Texas. That was something he agreed to when he left. He agreed to a consulting position for three years. That will end this year.

"But, I am still keenly interested in the agricultural part of the State Fair of Texas," he said.

He also recently accepted an offer from the IAFE to chair that organization's Educational Foundation.

"For the last eight years, I donated \$10,000 annually to that Foundation," he said. "This is an area that is very important to me."

In addition, he is working with Intamin, a ride manufacturing company with which he has entered into a licensing

agreement. Intamin is developing McKoy's patented ride technology and will manufacture his new speedboat ride, LMS Speedboat.

The agreement also allows Intamin to develop McKoy's ride technology for other rides as well.

McKoy has entered into a similar agreement with ProSlide Technology, Ontario, Canada, a manufacturer of water-related attractions.

The speedboat ride has been described as more of a "drag race on water." It takes two 24-passenger speedboats from zero to 62 miles per hour in four seconds. Riders experience the roaring sounds and jostling motion of a real speedboat, while flames shoot from the exhaust pipes and 20-foot water rooster tails spout from the sterns.

It's all in the special effects. The idea, he said, is to create the feel of a massive, 1,500-horsepower speedboat.

"I can see this ride being a centerpiece for a city park, for example," he said.

For Intamin, McKoy is marketing the speedboat ride to municipalities and looking at other opportunities outside of the theme park industry. Intamin is marketing the ride to theme parks worldwide.

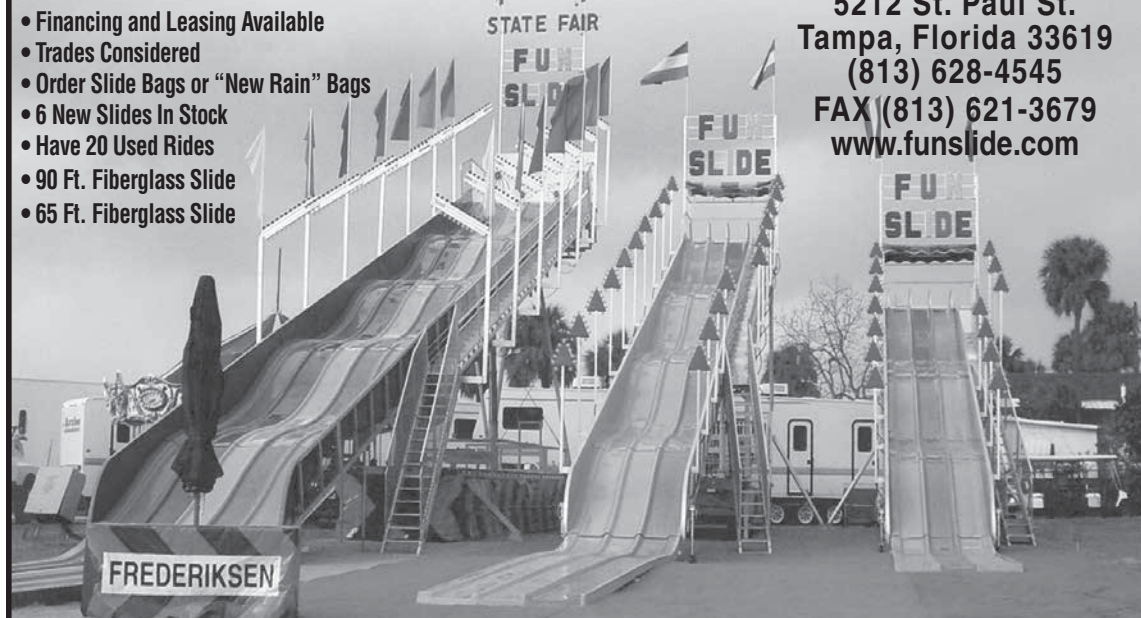
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► See MCKOY, page 26

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►MCKOY

Continued from page 24

ies that say you live a longer healthier life if you stay busy," he said.

The IAFE Hall of Fame induction is the highest honor bestowed by the IAFE. It is presented annually in recognition of an individual's distinguished achievement in, or contribution to, the fair industry.

McKoy served as president of the State Fair of Texas from 1988 to 2014. During his tenure, the fair ranked consistently as one of the most attended fairs in North America and grew from 17 to 24 days with annual gross revenues more than tripling.

He oversaw numerous grounds improvements including a \$50 million renovation of the Cotton Bowl stadium. Under his leadership, Texas SkyWay, an aerial sky ride that gives fairgoers expansive views of the grounds, opened in 2007, and the Top 'O Texas Tower, the tallest observation tower from Intamin opened soon after.

Raised in Tulsa, Okla., McKoy attended Northeastern State University, where he received a degree in Economics. He began his theme park career at 19 years old during college. He was hired by Six Flags Over Texas, Arlington, when it opened in 1961 as a member of the Astro Lift crew. Within weeks, McKoy was promoted to night foreman of the aerial tramway.

He continued to spend his summers at the park working as a seasonal supervisor and general trouble-shooter until he

graduated from college in 1965.

The summer after his graduation, Six Flags tapped him to manage the Lake Amusement Area at the New York World's Fair.

McKoy said he had a ring-side seat to appreciate innovative attractions such as Disney's It's a Small World and the General Electric Carousel of Progress. He also took advantage of the proximity to Coney Island to learn more about traditional amusement rides and shows.

When the World's Fair closed, Six Flags offered McKoy a permanent position as director of human resources at the corporation's soon-to-open theme park in Atlanta.

From 1966-1968, he was fast-tracked with increasing responsibilities, and in 1969 at the age of 26, Errol McKoy became the youngest general manager of a major theme park when he was elevated to the top job at Six Flags Over Georgia.

McKoy headed up the Georgia operation for 10 years. Most notable during his tenure was his decision to build the biggest, tallest, fastest roller coaster in the world. The Great American Scream Machine was introduced in 1973 and generated an attendance increase of two million visitors by 1975.

Theme parks across the country followed suit setting off an arms race to build the next super-coaster. The Great American Scream Machine triggered another McKoy innovation, the "fast pass," a time-stamped mechanism to expedite the coaster's line flow. The system



Former State Fair of Texas President Errol McKoy, (right) cuts the ribbon to open the 2011 State Fair. Assisting McKoy are Alan Walne, former chairman of the State Fair of Texas board member and former United States Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison.

COURTESY KEVIN BROWN/STATE FAIR OF TEXAS

proved highly effective, and the concept has since been expanded by other major parks including Disney and Universal.

In 1979, new corporate ownership asked McKoy to return to Six Flags Over Texas as general manager to lead a transition team. The following year he was named Six Flags executive vice president, responsible for the six parks existing at that time. With the company's headquarters relocated to California, McKoy elected to commute between Los Angeles and his home in Dallas.

By 1984, he was ready for a job that entailed less travel. Water parks were the newest phenomena, and McKoy accepted

an offer to become president and an investor in White Water, Inc. Based in Dallas, the company owned two parks in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, two more in Atlanta and Oklahoma City, plus land for another in San Antonio.

The early water park business literally and figuratively had its ups and downs. In 1987, competition from Six Flags began squeezing out the smaller White Water operations, and McKoy opted to cash in his holdings and form a business developing his own thrill rides.

In the spring of 1988, he was approached to take over the reins of America's largest annual exposition, the State Fair

of Texas. Under McKoy's leadership, the fair emerged from a troubled decade of security and ride safety problems. Working closely with the Dallas Police Department, he pioneered the use of scissor-jack platforms and elevated stands for officers in the park and in the parking lots, creating effective eyes-in-the-sky and providing reassurance for guests.

One of McKoy's goals was to bring young families back to the fair. To this end, he introduced theme park-styled amenities such as uniforms and orientation for all fair employees, dedicated clean-up crews, shade structures and picnic areas, colorful landscaping, and new programming geared to toddlers and tweens.

In his first year on the job, McKoy hired the experts from Stone Mountain, Georgia to produce a huge laser and fireworks show choreographed to a broad spectrum of musical favorites.

For year two, he sought out bird trainer extraordinaire Steve Martin to create the riveting and educational "Kings of the Wind."

McKoy added an endless variety of on-grounds entertainment from walk-around to live tiger shows to ride-and-drive tracks. He championed the construction of sophisticated new rides including the Texas SkyWay and the Top 'O Texas Tower.

Consistently, he booked the best talent and borrowed the best ideas from theme parks, World fairs, Olympic venues, flower shows and international attractions. The State Fair of Texas enjoyed unparalleled success for the 25-plus years he served as the organization's president.

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CARNIVAL LIGHTS

COMPILED: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

The **International Association of Fairs & Expos (IAFE)** members ushered in a new year as 2015 ended and 2016 began just like most folks across the U.S. But, as the new year began, IAFE members also ushered in a new President and CEO, **Marla Calico**.

Jim Tucker, who held that position for the past 15 years, had his final day in that position on the last day of 2015.

He plans to resume a limited law practice in his hometown of Springfield, Mo. He also will return to the 1,300-acre farm, which has been part of his family since the 1830s. He will renew his role as IAFE counsel, a role he was initially hired into in 1980.

The **California State Fair**, Sacramento, received the coveted IAFE Best Marketing Campaign Award for its 2015 Best 17 Days of Summer Campaign. Not only did the California State Fair win among its Division 4 competitors, which includes fairs between 500,000 and one million visitors, but it won the top award out of all IAFE member fairs and festivals.

Overall, the California State Fair took home 35 awards in the 2015 competition in the areas of marketing, agricultural programming and communication ideas and concepts.

The 2016 fair will run July 8-24.

The **Missouri State Fair**, Sedalia, also was recognized by the IAFE at that association's convention last November. The fair was the winner of the Overall Judges Creative Award for its agricultural event titled "Let's Talk Livestock." The educational session is one of many that has been rolled out by the fair.

In 2016, the annual Missouri State Fair will be held Aug. 11-21. In 2015, the fair drew more than 352,000 visitors.

The **Humboldt County Fair Association**, Ferndale, Calif., has settled a wrongful termination and federal civil rights lawsuit filed by the former general manager and his wife for \$150,000.

Stuart and Caroline Titus, the latter the publisher and editor of *The Ferndale Enterprise* newspaper, claimed the couple's First Amendment rights were violated when fair board members tried to censor the paper, according to the Tituses' lawyer Peter Martin.

"They didn't like the coverage of some of the board members and, in particular, one board member who got a DUI arrest and the prosecution that was covered," Martin has been quoted as saying.

Information released last month by the fair association said the settlement "was made as a compromise and was not an admission of liability."

After serving 22 years as the association's general manager, the fair board voted not to renew Titus' contract in early 2013. The Tituses filed the lawsuit in March 2014, claiming the association declined to renew the contract in retaliation for his refusal to censor the paper.

New York State officials are looking for contractors to build a new recreational vehicle park, expand the midway area and improve

the front gate at the **New York State Fair**, Syracuse.

The work, estimated to cost as much as \$33 million, is part of New York's plan to revamp much of the fairgrounds.

The bids for the RV park, midway and front gate were due last month. The RV park and midway expansion is expected to cost between \$20-\$30 million. The front gate area improvement is expected to cost between \$2-\$3 million.

The grandstand on the fairgrounds was demolished last month to make room for the expansions. The New York State Fair concerts will be moved to the nearby Lakeview Amphitheater on Onondaga Lake.

The 2016 dates for the fair are Aug. 25-Sept. 5.

The **Michigan State Fair**, Detroit, is quickly building a reputation of being committed to community, while growing the fair for the third year in row.

With that in mind, fair officials have created a new program that will give teens a unique opportunity to participate with the fair on the management level.

Along with the help of the Michigan State University Extension's 4-H Youth Development, the Junior Fair Board Program offers teens involvement in fair operations, from reviewing contracts to evaluating midway design. They will be involved on all levels of decision making.

The 2016 fair is set for Sept. 15.

The **Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship** lifted the state ban on bird exhibits January 1 that had been imposed since May 2015, as bird flu spread through the state's turkey and chicken farms. No new cases of bird flu have been confirmed in Iowa since June, 2015.

This announcement will bring back bird exhibits, including chickens, turkeys, ducks and other live birds, at the **Iowa State Fair**, Des Moines, as well as the state's county fairs this year.

The bird flu first surfaced a year ago on the West Coast and spread to flocks in 15 states over six months, resulting in the death of 48 million birds. Iowa lost the most – 32 million – mostly egg-laying chickens.

The Iowa State Fair is set to run this year Aug. 11-21.

The **Muscatine County Fair Board**, Muscatine, Iowa, announced last month that the **Muscatine County Fairgrounds** in West Liberty has been named to the National Register of Historic Places. Listing the fairgrounds on the register will qualify the fair board to apply for historic grants and historic tax credits to assist in the rehabilitation of the historic buildings on the fairgrounds.

In 2014, the **Muscatine County Historic Preservation Commission** received a grant from the State of Iowa to hire a historian, who has since spent approximately nine months documenting a complete history of the fair and answering questions for the state and federal governments in order to refine the nomination.

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Wade Shows to provide Florida State Fair with over 100 rides, 9 new ones

TAMPA, Fla. - The midway of the 112th Florida State Fair will be packed this year with Wade Shows providing more than 100 rides, including nine new ones, when the fair kicks off here on February 4.

The theme this year is "So Much More To Explore." It will run through February 15.

This is the second year Wade Shows has been the

sole midway operator. The Florida State Fair operated under an independent midway structure from 1992-1997 and then again from 2005-2014.

The nine new rides to the fair this year are: New York New York Fun House, manufactured by Gosetto; Super Cyclone Roller Coaster, Pinfari; the Disk'O by Zamperla; Jungle Twist Coaster, Wis-



dom; Dream Wheel, Technical Park; Balloon Fiesta Wheel, Zamperla; Hurricane, KMG; The Stampede, Wisdom; and The Storm, Wisdom.

The Florida State Fair will be packed full of events and entertainment, including daily grounds entertainment and headline musical entertainment.

"There is truly something for everyone at the Florida State Fair," said Charles C. Pesano, executive director of the Florida State Fair Authority. "This is a great year to explore all there is to offer,

while having fun on a budget."

For the first time, the Florida State Fair played a part in Cyber Monday last November 30. The fair kicked off ticket sales with a special armband promotion. The purchase of an Anyday ride armband on the FloridaStateFair.com website came with a Gold Access Pass valued at \$15.00 for free.

The Gold Access Pass is a new upgrade program for 2016 that enables guests to use special express access at midway rides and 10 percent off on selected food and beverage. It was offered for availability for use on Saturdays, Sundays and the last day of the Fair, February 6, 7, 13, 14 and 15.

Cyber Monday was the only opportunity to get a Gold Access Pass until the fair starts when they can be purchased on a limited basis at the fairgrounds.

—Pam Sherborne



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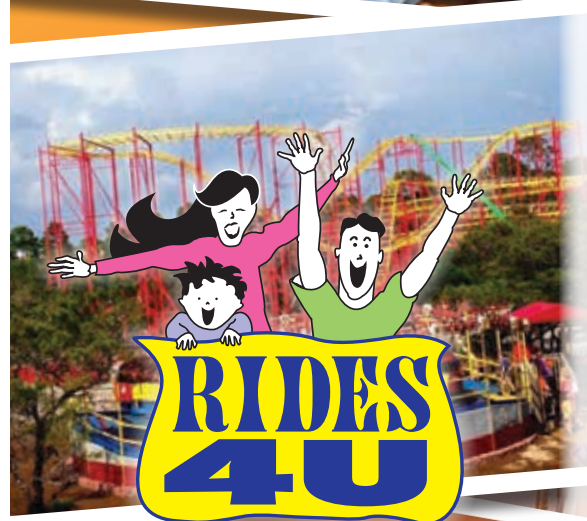
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- 1975 Eyerly Rock-O-Plane
- 1985 Zamperla Tea Cup Ride
- 2011 Outdoor Jumping Pillow 38'6" by 30'
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- 1969 Chance Trabant Ride
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- 1937 Alan Herschel Caterpillar Ride
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Bidding runs through February 22, 2016!

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FAIR BRIEFS

IISA officers to be installed Feb. 16

GIBSONTOWN, Fla. — The International Independent's Showman's Association (IISA) 2016-2017 president will be installed on Tuesday, Feb. 16, following the association's Trade Show and Extravaganza.

Jo Ann Arnold, an independent operator, will take over as president as last year's president, Richard "Richie" George, George's Fun Foods, steps down.

Other officers to be installed at the event to be held in the IISA club include Wesley Burnett, independent food operator, as first vice president, and Jessica Von Ruden, second vice president.

OABA to host annual meeting and reception Feb. 12

TAMPA, Fla. - The Outdoor Amusement Business Association (OABA) will host its Annual Meeting and Chair's Reception on Friday, Feb. 12, at the Sheraton Tampa East Hotel, Tampa, Fla.

The OABA traditionally holds its annual event during the running of the IISF Trade Show and Extravaganza, Gibsonton, Fla., set this year for Feb. 9-13.



BUSINESS, SAFETY & CLASSIFIED

► SAFETY — Pages 32-34 / MarketWatch — Page 35 / Obituaries — Page 36 / CLASSIFIEDS — Page 39

2016 marks 100 years of Mini Golf in the United States

Industry plans to celebrate with June events

ORLANDO, Fla. — The U.S. centennial celebration for miniature golf is estimated to occur in June 2016, according to information revealed in miniature golf historical documents, books (*Miniature Golf* by John Margoles and Nina Garfinkel, 1987 Abbeyville Press), and the Library of Congress. Adventure Golf Services (AGS) hosted a press conference on November 20 during the IAAPA Attractions

Expo 2015 to announce how industry owners and operators can join the celebration.

"Adventure Golf Services is leading the launch of an industry-wide program to celebrate 100 years of miniature golf, its place in pop culture, and its contribution to family entertainment," comments Arne Lundmark, CEO and chief designer for AGS.

"IAAPA is thrilled to join Adventure Golf Services, and its hundreds of U.S. miniature golf members to celebrate this milestone," said Kyle Allison, chairman of the IAAPA FEC committee and Owner, Andy Alligator's Fun Park.



"Is miniature golf a game or a sport? It is referred to both ways, but whatever it is called, miniature golf has been played and revered by millions over the past 100 years," stated Lundmark. "This coming June we will help celebrate the fun and enjoyment experienced by all players over the history of miniature golf. We are en-

couraging others in our business to participate with us or to help miniature golf courses and players celebrate this event," says Lundmark.

For its part, AGS has created a dedicated Facebook and webpage and is offering a "100 year miniature golf toolkit" to all owners, operators, and miniature golf players to help participate in the anniversary celebration. The toolkit contains sample press releases, a commemorative 100 year anniversary logo template, letterhead template, advertising templates, a list of promotional ideas, a compilation of miniature golf fun facts, and

other information to be developed.

The Facebook page will be a place where everyone can reminisce about their fun times at miniature golf courses, provide historical photos, and create a source to share happy memories. Owners and operators can share their experiences as business owners and ideas to help promote this celebration.

The Facebook page launched on November 20 and is available at www.facebook.com/US-Miniature-Golf-100-yr-anniversary. Additional links will be announced in the future.

Vortex International acquires N.C.-based AquaBlue

Acquisition positions Vortex to better serve city and commercial segments with slides

MONTREAL, Canada — Vortex Aquatic Structures International, a manufacturer and leader in aquatic play landscapes and entertainment solutions, announced that it has acquired AquaBlue, a Cornelius, N.C.-based designer and manufacturer of waterslides and water play equipment. Formed in 2008, AquaBlue is a fast-growing waterslide company, and is focused on developing innovative products for the municipal and commercial market segments.

Both companies are privately held. AquaBlue employees will remain with the new company,



and continue to work from the company's North Carolina offices.

AquaBlue's expertise lies in its design, engineering, manufacturing, and project management of its full range of waterslides for city pools, parks and recreation facilities as well as water parks, and theme parks. David Hoy, AquaBlue's president will be staying on, and will drive the company's design and engineering resources to continue to design and build innovative waterslides.

"This acquisition com-

plements Vortex's product line by adding a broad portfolio of waterslides as well as strong relationships with municipal and commercial customers," said Stephen Hamelin, president and CEO of Vortex. "We've long admired AquaBlue's waterslides. They are well engineered and are quality products. Their culture fits well with ours, given a commitment to excellence, innovation and infrastructure. Customers will benefit from having a single design source."

According to Hoy, "The Vortex brand is well-known for innovation. By providing access to Vor-

tex's R&D capabilities and financial strength, this deal provides us with an opportunity to collaborate in the development of new innovative products. We also gain access to Vortex's global marketing, distribution and sales support channels."

The combined company has installations located at park and recreation facilities, municipal pools, community aquatic centers, water parks, theme parks, YMCAs, fitness clubs, hotel/resort water parks, campgrounds, and residential developments.

About Vortex

Vortex Aquatic Structures International, headquartered in Montreal, Canada, was founded in 1995 with the introduction of the first Splashpad. Vortex's use of the highest quality materials coupled with unique, inspiring design and state-of-the-art engineering, positioned the company as the world leader in aquatic play solutions.

In addition to its operations in Montreal, Vortex has regional sales and technical support offices in California, Michigan, Texas and North Carolina as well as locations in France, Spain, Denmark and China.

With over 6,000 installations worldwide, Vortex's mission is to lead the aquatic play industry by continuing to develop the most fun, innovative and safe products for families and children of all ages and abilities.

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Views FECs, modest parks as major growth market

Apex Parks CEO Al Weber sees the big picture in smaller scale

AT: Dean Lamanna

dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

CITY OF INDUSTRY, Cal-iff. — On a sunny winter weekday in this eastern Los Angeles suburb, Al Weber exuded contentment and enthusiasm as he led *Amusement Today* on a quick tour of SpeedZone, a fun spot packed with arcade games and surrounded by go-kart tracks. It's just one of several amusement properties he oversees.

"SpeedZone caters to teens and adults," Weber noted as he climbed behind the wheel of a go-kart on the Slick Trax course for a photo op. "We're more localized than a theme park, drawing probably from a 20-to-30-mile radius. Our customers pay more of an impulse visit here and they don't have to spend a whole day with us to get value. And there's no charge for parking."

Weber is CEO and co-founder of Aliso Viejo, Calif.-based Apex Parks Group, which has become one of the largest players in the family entertainment center (FEC) market since its establishment in September 2014. The privately held company currently owns 16 properties in the U.S. — and it is on the hunt for more. In addition to SpeedZone locations here and in Dallas, Texas, its holdings include Boomers! locations in California, Florida and Texas; Big Kahuna's Water & Adventure Park in Destin, Fla.; and Sahara Sam's Oasis Indoor & Outdoor Water Park in West Berlin, N.J. Apex's latest, and largest, acquisition is the 376-acre Indiana Beach Amusement Resort in Monticello, Ind.

Earlier, relaxing in a conference space adjacent to one of SpeedZone's mirthfully loud party rooms, Weber recalled an amusement industry career that, thus far, has spanned more than 45 years. It began in 1968 when, at age 16, he became a ride operator, and then a ride supervisor, at Coney Island amusement park in his hometown of Cincinnati, Ohio. When locally-based Taft Broadcasting bought Coney Island and relocated its attractions to create Kings Island theme park in 1972, the company retained Weber as a full-time employee.

Building and/or operating theme parks in Richmond, Va., Charlotte, N.C., Santa Clara, Calif. and Toronto, the newly formed Kings Entertainment Company grew quickly. And Weber grew with it, becoming a general manager.

"Every time they built a park, they needed a new team," Weber said. "So the upward mo-



bility was pretty nice in those early years. There was a lot of opportunity for people who loved the business and were good at it. But you had to move."

When Paramount Studios purchased Kings Entertainment in 1992, Weber, who had earned an MBA and a Ph.D in Management and Leadership, was named COO of the new company, Paramount Parks. He was promoted to CEO 10 years later. He led the company for four years before selling it to Cedar Fair for a "very, very high multiple."

In 2007, Weber served as CEO of Palace Entertainment — at that time, the country's largest operator of FECs and water parks. There, he reorganized the corporate structure, created organizational accountability and focus, and set the stage for selling Palace to Madrid, Spain-based Parques Reunidos for a near-record sum.

Then-troubled Six Flags Entertainment appointed Weber CEO in 2010. Twelve days later, the company emerged from bankruptcy, and Weber led a successful three-month organizational and performance turnaround.

Today, Weber makes his home in Ventura, Calif., with his wife of six months, Bonnie Rabjohn, who is park president of Six Flags Magic Mountain in Valencia. "The business is in our DNA," he quipped. "We have some great conversations."

AT's own chat with Weber then turned back to what led him to form Apex.

What was your experience of leading major companies such as Paramount and Six Flags?

They needed to be turned around, to have a strategic change of direction. When Paramount bought Kings Entertainment Company, there was a massive culture change. In addition to wanting their own theme parks, Paramount wanted to put movie studio stuff in the amusement space. But how do you take movie brands and have them make economic sense in the regional [theme park market]? Focusing on the brand and how to morph it, and on what the guest expected, needed a lot of attention. We were evolving a view of the business at Para-



Apex Parks Group CEO Al Weber, Jr., greets AT outside SpeedZone Los Angeles (above), one of his company's acquisitions. At 16, Weber got his industry start as a ride operator at Coney Island in Cincinnati, Ohio.
AT/DEAN LAMANNA (TOP); COURTESY APEX PARKS GROUP



mount in which we were able to be a little more focused on the creative, on pricing structures... [it] was very challenging and really rewarding.

With Six Flags, the brand sensitivity was very helpful. But each park was a little different. How do you leverage a very high-awareness brand? How do you morph that into being strong regionally as well as nationally? Taking what we learned at Paramount and applying that to Six Flags worked out pretty well.

What was your main takeaway from these major theme park chain turnarounds?

That you also have to focus on the expectations of the owner or owners. Going in, you have to be tuned in and have conversations with them. It's a different job when you're reporting to a board or to investors. And what you learned quickly is that you manage up, manage expectations. If you're reporting to the chairman of Paramount Studios, you need to be able to manage up real well.

This worked very effectively at Six Flags. The investors who brought Six Flags out of bankruptcy, for whom I was consulting, were — in their minds at the time — taking on tremendous financial and personal risks. We spent a lot of time on, "What do we need to do to move the business?"

In the cases of both companies, the teams were tremendously loyal and I was just there to help them do what the busi-

ness needed them to do. So, while it's different [structurally] when it's a big company, it's not really dissimilar to what Apex is doing today with Indiana Beach and Sahara Sam's or FECs.

What led to the establishment of Apex Parks Group?

In between Paramount and Six Flags, I was CEO of Palace Entertainment. We bought 15 parks and FECs that we ran in 2007, so I knew the business. Tyler Zachem, the managing partner of the private equity company MidOcean Partners, which owned Palace, brought me in that January, and we sold the company that October.

Three offshore companies came in wanting to buy an asset in the U.S., and it was Parques Reunidos that bought Palace. They knew big parks, mid-size parks, water parks... but they never really understood FECs. Going forward, as part of a global company, Palace focused on the gated parks, not its FECs — which included: Boomers! and SpeedZone. So after I left Six Flags in the fall of 2012, Tyler, who was transitioning to the private equity firm Broad Sky Partners, and I knew there was an opportunity there. We began founding Apex along with Doug Honey, who's our CFO, and Gregg Borman, our senior vice president of operations.

How would you characterize that opportunity?

Six Flags and Cedar Fair are doing tremendously well. And SeaWorld will be fine under Joel Manby's direction. But those big

companies are all optimized. Below that scale in our industry is massive fragmentation: individual parks, family-owned parks, stand-alone water parks, FECs. It's the new frontier. We knew that if you could get in there and start a company of scale — bring in capital, buy assets, bring in management, if need be — there's a lot of consolidation you could do. And that's what we're doing at Apex.

Our experience is somewhat unique in this space because we're able to bring strategy from a Six Flags or a Paramount into a small-scale business — in pricing, creative, advertising. It's our "secret sauce."

What are some key criteria for a prospective Apex property?

The market it is in. The quality of the park and its team. And does it fit our view of business?

We believe in a revenue-growth focus, not necessarily in an expense-management focus. You can manage your expenses into oblivion if you do that tighter and tighter. It's about growing the revenue. And each park is presented differently.

What are some of the changes and improvements you are implementing at your properties?

With Sahara Sam's, we're expanding the indoor space because they were at capacity. At Indiana Beach, it's completely the opposite — that's a 90-year-old jewel that just needs some polishing, which we're doing. [See story, page 16.] The Indiana Beach market is fabulous and very vocal in its opinion of a park. So you've got to listen.

Another way to [gauge] a market, under new management, is to "paint the building." The first one we did was Boom-

► See WEBER, page 31



Weber demonstrates his firm hands-on approach to amusement business at SpeedZone Los Angeles.
AT/DEAN LAMANNA

►WEBER

Continued from page 30

ers! in Boca Raton [Fla.], which already was a very profitable location. You paint the building, install new carpet and new tile. We actually put new games and a couple of attractions in. Very positive response — more guests spending more money. We've done that at a number of locations, and we'll continue going around the portfolio this year.

We're also putting in game card systems. By the end of this year, all parks we own will have these systems. It does away with counting tokens, and it allows you to be very smart about varying pricing and values and redemptions. We're bringing [our systems] up to contemporary standards.

You've got to invest. But you have to do it in strategic collaboration with the people who know the parks best — and they're the people in the field.

How much autonomy do park managers have within Apex?

Once we agree on marketing plans and budgets, it's their

job to run the business. They have a lot of autonomy once we agree on a direction, which we help set. We don't micro-manage them.

You now have properties on both coasts and in the Midwest. What are your goals for reach and growth in the U.S.?

We don't necessarily have a geographic objective. We have a map in the office where we have all these dots in California, and we have some in Texas. There's a lot of space without dots. But we're less focused on "How do

we distribute?" and more on "What are the right properties to add?"

We've doubled our size in our first year of business, in terms of our revenue and EBITDA — and we could be four times our size within another year or two. A diversified portfolio will help us in the long run.

Do you envision Apex expanding overseas?

I don't see that, though we'd probably go to Mexico or Canada. We're not really focused on greenfield projects —

those where we'd have to build a business from scratch. If you can buy an existing business that needs to be fixed, that's better than building something for two years and then opening it up.

What about the amusement industry has really energized you?

Early on, the guest service part of the work was very rewarding. I liked seeing people happy. Having moved out of the field and into corporate, it's the same thing but it's also different: I love to see young, smart people

develop their careers and to give them an opportunity to do that.

Getting people to think differently about how they do business is something else I've enjoyed. Leadership is more about listening than speaking, and sometimes with the right question, you grow and they grow. Creating a healthy, safe company culture — one that is open, collaborative and strategic — pays off in so many ways. Hopefully, I've been able to do that each time.


•apexparksgroup.com

KMG, Big Rock issue statement on intellectual property lawsuit

NEEDE, Netherlands — KMG International, BV (KMG) and U.S.-based Big Rock Amusements, LLC (Big Rock) have entered into a Settlement Agreement in connection with KMG's intellectual property lawsuit against Big Rock. KMG's suit alleged that Big Rock's Extreme ride was similar in design and appearance to KMG's Freak Out ride. Without admitting liability, Big Rock agreed to the entry of an injunction, and payment of a patent licensing fee to KMG, for the purpose of avoiding further expenses and uncertainties of litigation.

The financial terms of the Settlement Agreement are confidential. However, as a matter of public record, the amicable resolution required the entry of a U.S. Federal Court injunction precluding Big Rock from importing any additional Extreme rides into the United States.


Tom Sheehan and the The Sheehan Firm, P.C. in Cary, Ill. successfully assisted KMG in this intellectual property issue.



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Globalization and hybridization are current trends

ASTM standards now harmonized with European safety standards

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

SAFETY

ORLANDO, Fla. — WhiteWater's Franceen Gonzales spoke with *Amusement Today* during the IAA-PA Attractions Expo in Orlando about current safety trends.

She says the big thing in regard to safety these days is the globalization of standards. "Normally what has happened in the past, the governments of these individual countries would create codes and regulations relative to the amusement industry," said Gonzales. With emerging nations, the regulations are not always properly in place through a particular government.

"We're trying to get the word out that ASTM standards have been harmonized with European standards. ASTM standards are the most robust set of

standards that can be used anywhere", explained Gonzales. The plan is to get governments of various countries to adopt the ASTM standard. "Look, you can already use this information, this language. Don't try to invent your own regulation — here it is," said Gonzales. This is especially important for international companies with operations in different parts of the world — one standardized safety system.

Gonzales was quick to thank the people who have spent the better part of 10 years working on this. "Under the leadership of Disney's Greg Hale, he has worked very hard to harmonize the different standards that currently exist and not only that, then to get the word out to all of these emerging markets that these are the industry standards



that we should be using. This is what we can use everywhere."

The latest trend is the hybridization within the industry. "You have theme parks that are adding water parks and water parks that are adding FEC's and FEC's that are adding other elements. So what we are seeing that it is no longer this segmentation of amusement parks, water parks, FEC's, aquariums, museums, science centers," said Gonzales. Location based entertainment might have any one of those things.

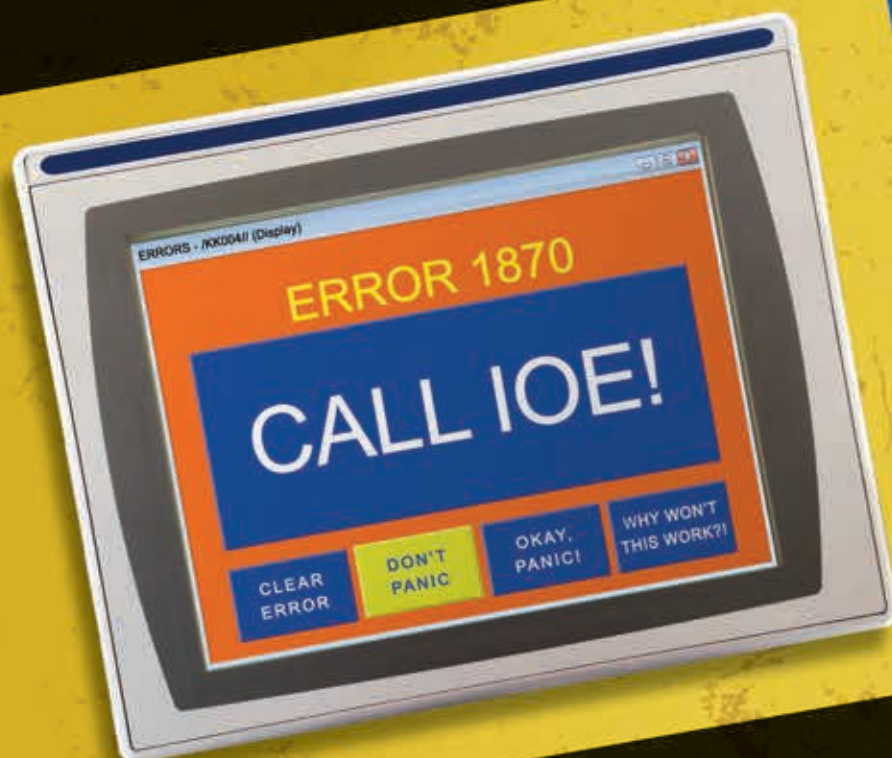
The trend is also occurring with retail and shopping centers that are now

adding entertainment. Where does safety play a role in this mix?

"All of these companies may not be very savvy about what it is to be safe in the amusement industry. They might be a shopping center developer and they just know they want to have this ride or attraction in the middle of it. They may not know everything that goes into it, from a safety standpoint," explained Gonzales. "They're a bit on the outskirts of our industry. We have to be cognizant as an industry of where these attractions are being built and also how they're being operated. When the hotel business started adding indoor water parks, they didn't even know that maybe you need to have lifeguards. You need to educate a hotelier to do that, as that might not be the mindset."

Gonzales feels that this hybridization process must be inclusive while educating new operators at the same time.

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MARKETWATCH



COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 01/12/16	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	25.17	43.58	24.41
Merlin Entertainments Group/ Legoland	MERL	LSE	441.70	473.30	360.93
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	51.50	60.64	48.94
Comcast Corp./ NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	54.87	64.99	50.01
	CMCSK*	NASDAQ			
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	101.46	122.08	90
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	9010	TYO	1125.00	1318.00	1021.00
Haicahang Holdings Ltd.	2255HK	SEHK	1.56	2.13	1.09
Leofoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	10.10	12.90	8.22
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	21.13	24.41	16.84
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	18.75	22.68	16.22
Shenzhen Overseas Chinese Town Co., Ltd. (OCT)	000069	SZSE	7.24	14.78	6.74
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	53.73	55.35	41.61
Skyocean International	00593HK	SEHK	9.19	12.46	5.8
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	3850.00	4000.00	3073.00
Village Roadshow	VRL	ASX	6.63	7.68	5.08

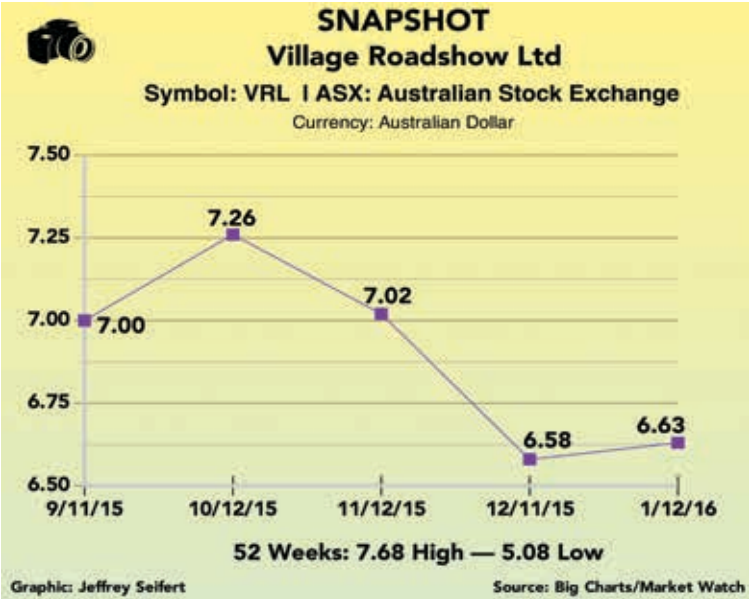
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Worldwide Markets: **ASX**, Australian Securities Exchange; **CSE**, Copenhagen Stock Exchange; **LSE**, London Stock Exchange; **NYSE**, New York Stock Exchange; **NASDAQ**, National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations; **SEHK**, 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 01/11/16	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$2.229	- \$0.905
Midwest	\$2.096	- \$0.914
Gulf Coast	\$2.080	- \$0.884
Mountain	\$2.134	- \$0.893
West Coast	\$2.258	- \$0.720
California	\$2.562	- \$0.688

CURRENCY	
On 01/13/16 \$1 USD =	
0.9207	EURO
0.6903	GBP (British Pound)
117.65	JPY (Japanese Yen)
1.0006	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.4315	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.4235	CAD (Canadian Dollar)



BUSINESS WATCH

SeaWorld announces quarterly dividend
ORLANDO, Fla. — The board of directors of **SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.** (NYSE: SEAS) declared on Jan. 5, 2016, a cash dividend of \$0.21 per share of common stock. The dividend was payable on January 22, 2016 to shareholders of record at the close of business on January 15, 2016. —PR Newswire

Germany's Europa-Park tops 5.5 million visitors
RUST, Germany — Germany's largest amusement park rounds off its jubilee season "40 years of Europa-Park" with a new record. As **Europa-Park** owner **Roland Mack** puts it, "The jubilee year was the best year in our company's history. For the first time, we achieved 5.5 million visitors in one year." 2015 was also a year of double-digit investments in millions of euros. 150 new jobs were created and Europa-Park provided apprenticeships for 120 young people.

Thinkwell publishes Guest Experience Report
LOS ANGELES, Calif. — **Thinkwell Group**, announced the findings of their third annual nationwide survey analyzing the behavior and purchasing decisions by guests at location-based entertainment venues in a white paper report titled **Intellectual Properties & The Branded Experience**. The 2015 Thinkwell Guest Experience Trend Report focuses specifically on consumers' experiences at family-friendly location-based entertainment venues and explores whether infusing these venues with an intellectual property would increase the amount of time and money spent there by visitors.
The survey polled over 1,000 adults with children to analyze their spending choices at these venues, specifically family entertainment centers, children's museums, aquariums & zoos, and restaurants.
The complete report, as well as the companion infographic, are available online at <http://thinkwellgroup.com/intellectual-properties-branded-experience/>.

Las Vegas in brief...
•LAS VEGAS, Nev. — The **Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority** announced that **Las Vegas** continued its historic visitation growth, setting another new record by surpassing 42 million visitors for the first time. This breaks last year's record of 41.1 million, which was the first time the destination had ever topped 40 million.
•LAS VEGAS, Nev. — Cementing its position as one of North America's premier destinations for large-scale meetings and events, **Aria Resort & Casino** announced a major expansion of its award-winning Leed Gold-certified convention center. The \$154-million project will deliver an additional 200,000 square feet of technologically advanced, flexible meeting space across four stories, highlighted by stunning indoor/open-air spaces and a glass-enclosed venue with dramatic views of The Park and spectacular new Las Vegas Arena. With the completion of the expansion, Aria will feature more than 500,000 square feet of superior meeting space for its luxury clientele. Construction is scheduled to begin in May 2016 with anticipated completion in February 2018.
•LAS VEGAS, Nev. — December 15, 2015 marked the date that the one-millionth visitor to visit **The Mob Museum, The National Museum of Organized Crime and Law Enforcement**. The museum is located just a few blocks from the **Golden Nugget Hotel & Casino** in historic downtown Las Vegas. To celebrate this milestone, the museum showered the museum's one-millionth visitor, **Bill Tveitnes** of Las Vegas, with champagne, balloons, a confetti launch and showgirls. He also received a complimentary lifetime membership and the "key" to the museum that was presented by Executive Director **Jonathan Ullman** along with a proclamation by **Oscar B. Goodman**.

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OBITUARIES

RCS to miss the larger-than-life Tony Fiori

PHOENIX, Ariz. — **Tony Fiori**, 64, director of marketing, Ray Cammack Shows (RCS), passed away November 18, 2015, in Phoenix, Ariz., after a long illness.



Fiori

When RCS hits the road this year, Fiori's absence will not go unnoticed for members of Ray Cammack Shows and for the entire carnival industry.

Fiori had been a part of RCS for over 30 years. He was named the director of marketing in 1988. One of his most notable achievements for RCS was overseeing the transition to a paperless midway.

Before finding his way onto the midway, however, Fiori attended Santa Rosa Junior College where he studied Business and Marketing, as well as playing center on the football team. After college, he worked several years in the family business, Fiori Restaurant of Occidental, Calif.

In the 1980s, he and his brother George went into business together selling bottled water from a cart. And, that business sealed his future.

The announcement of Fiori's passing on the RCS Fun social media page on Facebook read: "RCS lost an amazing friend and colleague. Tony Fiori worked at RCS for 30 Years and each day he brought a unique and wonderful spirit to work. He spread joy amongst our team and created a beautiful atmosphere for all to enjoy. From his hilarious sense of humor to his kind warm heart, Tony was one of a kind. He will be sincerely missed by all."

RCS now has a beautiful angel watching over us and we know Tony will forever be looking over the RCSFun Midway. Rest in peace."

Fiori was preceded in death by his parents Edna and George Fiori Sr. He is survived by his brothers, George (Susan) and Steve (Linda) Fiori; sons, Gino (Shelly) and Nick Fiori; stepdaughters, Adrienne Weintz (Jody) and Cheri Mariani; stepson, Mel Rodela (Ramona); six grandchildren; wife, Sharon Fiori; and many loving aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Industry designer, J.R. (Bob) Minick loses battle with cancer

DALLAS, Texas — **J.R. (Bob) Minick**, a beloved husband, father and friend passed away peacefully on January 2 after a brave battle with cancer.

Bob grew up in Fort Worth, Texas, and had a passion for art at an early age. His career path was solidified when, after high school, he moved to California to live and work with his aunt and uncle, Owen and Dolly Pope, in the only house on the grounds at Disneyland. They were the original managers of the Circle D ranch at Disneyland, and the house is still there — historically restored. This area was known as the Pony Farm and at one time, the Pope's with Bob's help, cared for as many as 220 animals. The Pops and Bob Minick are the only people to actually ever live at Disneyland.

Working in that environment, in the early stages of Disneyland, with the influence of the late great Walt Disney provided fuel for Bob's imagination and artistic ability.

His amusement industry knowledge, and connection with Randall Duell Associates, would give Bob the opportunity to be on hand during the construction of several theme parks — most notably Six Flags Over Texas and Magic Mountain.

After working at and



**J.R. (Bob) Minick
1937-2015**

managing several large theme parks, Bob founded Minick Associates, a world renowned design and architectural firm. He specialized in entertainment venues and theme parks with impressive projects from Dubai to the Fort Worth Stockyards. His insider knowledge and management of theme parks gave him a unique perspective to crowd flow and profitability. He was the first to design games in a theme park, designing the skill game operations first at Magic Mountain, then Six Flags Over Texas and many more.

During the peak of his business, Bob completed countless projects for William L. Cobb Associates, John F. Pierce Associates and Bill Crandall's New Wave Rides. Bob's unique

vision for the industry allowed him to complete projects for a large theme park one week only to downsize the concept budget to fit a small indoor FEC the next week.

He married the love of his life, Lottie, and they spent the last 42 years on a fabulous adventure, working together on unique projects around the world. Their relationship was a true partnership in every sense, they encouraged each others creativeness. They enjoyed working together at operations from Billy Bob's Texas to the State Fair of Texas.

Their son James Randall has inherited his parents amazing artistic talents. He is a student at the University of North Texas.

Bob has friends in all walks of life and all parts of the world. He was a loyal friend who al-

ways had a positive attitude and smile on his face. He is described by all who knew him as a kind gentleman, always making generous gifts to friends and strangers.

To perpetuate his kindness, in lieu of flowers, contributions can be made in Bob Minick's memory to his Random Acts of Kindness Fund, c/o Bronco Productions, LLC; P.O. Box 77233, Fort Worth, Texas 76177.

He was preceded in death by his parents Bob and Punkin Minick. He is survived by wife Lottie, and son James Randall of Dallas, Cousin Billy Minick of Argyle, and a wide range of friends who are part of their extended family.

A celebration of Bob's life was held at his Dallas home on Jan. 24. Family, friends and industry colleagues were on hand to share their memories of Bob.

Bob Minick, left, with longtime friend Bill Cobb seen here in this file photo from the floor of the IAAPA Expo AT FILE



J.R. (Bob) Minick remembered

"Bob was one of the unsung pioneers in the amusement industry. He received very little recognition for all the work he has completed in bringing the Disney-themed commitment to the upstart regional theme parks.

"Bob was one of the original members of the Six Flags Over Texas team, having been brought onto the project during its construction phase. I don't know of anyone in the industry that touched more projects in the theme park industry during those early development years of the regional themers."

—**Errol McKoy, retired State Fair of Texas**

"Bob and I met 46 years ago on my first trip to California (two years before Kings Island) to go to Hanna Barbera Studios, (which Taft Broadcasting owned), see Disneyland, and visit Magic Mountain under construction.

"Bob was the general manger, he met me at the site and we walked the entire park under construction. California had just experienced a huge/major earthquake, I was awed by what I saw and felt. As young kid from the Midwest, I had only heard about earthquakes, never seen such force, interstates were tumbled and crushed, it was unbelievable!

"Bob and I remained friends all the years, and even competing on projects from time to time. We are losing too many of our industry pioneers!"

—**Dennis Spiegel, International Theme Park Services, Inc.**

"I considered Bob to be one of my best friends. He was a pleasure to work with and I always looked forward to hearing one of his stories over a drink at the end of the day.

"Errol McKoy tells me that Bob was his first supervisor at Six Flags Over Texas in 1961. He said that Bob encouraged him to stay with Six Flags after Errol finished college.

"Ira West also told me that both he and Randy Duell learned much of their theme park design skills from Bob. I will greatly miss Bob."

—**Bill Haralson, William L. Haralson & Assoc.**

"We are losing another legend. During my first visit to Minick's office years ago, I couldn't help notice a shadow box on his wall — it was a picture of a young boy in a wagon shaking hands with a guy standing next to the wagon.

Upon further inspection, it was Walt Disney, and the little boy was Bob Minick! Next to the picture was an old tattered book with Mickey on the cover that Walt had given him. I was hooked! I always loved talking to Bob about the interesting things he had done. Bob will be missed"

—**Carey Don Risinger, State Fair of Texas**

"I have known Bob since 1965 when I began a career in theme park design with Randall Duell in Los Angeles. Bob worked for Randall in Texas in the early 60s as a designer and moved to Southern California where Randall set up his design office. At the time Bob and I were designing the initial phase of Universal Studios Tour, some development work at Cedar Point and a new addition to Busch Gardens in Los Angeles.

"Bob had worked at Disneyland as a ride operator in his youth, so by virtue of this unique experience, he was considered the expert on rides and the go-to guy for the designers in the office who knew little about rides. At the time, there were no books on how to design a theme park, so we learned by trial and error, and Bob was a very important information source to all of us as well as being a talented designer. Bob moved on from our office in late 1965 with an offer to be the GM of Pirates World in Dania, Florida. He eventually took on the responsibility for designing the park along with Paul Gross, an MGM Art Director. The park was initially successful, but the land eventually became too valuable for a theme park to operate.

"In 1968 Bob was one of the first to be hired by the development team for Magic Mountain in Valencia, Calif., that opened in 1971. Bob helped the Duell office develop the program for rides, entertainment, food service, merchandise and support services. He also helped create the management team to build and operate the park through the first year of operation.

"Over the past 50 years I have worked with Bob on more projects than I can remember, and I can tell you that he has done it all and worn every hat in our industry. He was an encyclopedia of knowledge, and I can't remember asking him a question about our business that he could not answer. He was a good and loyal friend, and I will miss him, especially not being able to pick up the phone to speak to him about a ride or the latest happenings in our industry."

—**Ira West, Theme Park Consultant**

Knoebels introduces a children's book based on two popular park mascots

Books on amusement parks and historical pioneers are more the norm when it comes to published offerings about the amusement industry. Knoebels Amusement Resort offers a different option to its patrons — a children's book. *Roaring Creek Rescue, How Kozmo Met Dexter* is written by Lauren Muscato, fourth generation of the Knoebel family. Paired with local illustrator Michael Tobin, the two recount a tale that visitors to Knoebels can probably relate to. The story involves the significant flood of 2011 which carried away benches and ride vehicles down river, along with the dumping mud and debris everywhere. Attractions also suffered damage. Muscato says, "Knoebels has incredible resiliency." In real life, the park closed for a mere two days following the flood before getting back to an operational state.

Although the story is a simple one, it involves teaching points of friendship, per-



severance, and finding your talent. It's a quick read — a great bedtime story in fact — and children who have visited the park will note iconic details from Knoebels illustrated into the tale. More below the surface are deeper topics which could be discussed when a parent feels the time is appropriate. Dealing with loss and being separated from family are subtext issues that have a secondary role in the story.

The involvement of Tobin on the project is notable. The creative director at AdOne Advertising and Design in Sunbury, Pa., was actually the artist called upon in 1988 to craft the park mascot, Kozmo. The park says since then, the mischievous chipmunk has become the heart and soul of Knoebels, and Tobin has been along for the ride ever since.

In *Roaring Creek Rescue, How Kozmo Met Dexter*, the historic flood causes Dexter to be swept away in the disaster only to be rescued by Kozmo. The raccoon then finds his way of fitting in to his new home. In time, his artistic talent is discovered and put to use in restoring the S&G Merry-Go-Round, which suffered the most damage in the flood. The story concludes with feelings of making new friends and finding one's own gifts.

The book is available for \$10 in the Knoebels gift stores and at their online store: store.knoebels.com.

—Tim Baldwin

First SplashGolf installed on cruise ship Norwegian Epic

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. — The first SplashGolf retrofit to an existing splash pad was installed in early October 2015 on Norwegian Cruise Line's largest ship, Norwegian Epic. Dubbed as a "water mini golf on a splash pad," SplashGolf takes the players and game itself into an interactive water environment.

SplashGolf combines two age-old fun attractions, splash pads and mini golf, into one completely new, interactive water-based game attracting all age groups for more family fun.

"We're thrilled to install the first SplashGolf onboard Norwegian Epic. This exciting and interactive water activity is more inclusive of all family members, and not just toddlers, as the space was originally used," stated Scott Lundmark, president, Adventure Golf services.

The new SplashGolf is part of the ship's Aqua Park, which features two pools, five hot tubs, a kid's pool and three multi-story water slides including the the 200-foot Epic Plunge, the only bowl slide at sea.

SplashGolf has taken Adventure Golf in unanticipated directions, revealed Mike Arnold, vice president of project management. "As we convert Norwegian Epic's existing splash pad area into a five hole course, it's clear that other retrofits, whether on land or sea, can feature customized course sizes depending on the space available. Norwegian Epic's SplashGolf has the same special water effects that are used on the nine hole models where the players get wet and the miniature golf balls go in crazy directions."

"SplashGolf is offered in three models: 5,800 square feet for outdoor use; 2,800 square feet for either indoor or outdoor applications; and a 2,800 square foot model for cruise ships," said Lundmark.

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Industry author Tim O'Brien launches new biography series

Disneyland's Tony Baxter and Cedar Fair's Dick Kinzel are first two editions

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

With his numerous years at *Amusement Business* and with Ripley's, industry veteran Tim O'Brien has authored multiple publications on some of the most integral people that have driven the world of amusement parks. O'Brien has just recently launched a new series: *Legends & Legacies Biographies*. Having visited more than 500 amusement parks and attractions in 27 countries, O'Brien has seen the movers and shakers over the years. To initiate this new biography series, a pairing of books is offered.

Tony Baxter and Dick Kinzel could probably boast of living the dream of most amusement park fans. Baxter went from being an ice cream scooper on Main Street to becoming an Imagineer involved in creating some of Disney's biggest successes. Dick Kinzel's name became virtually synonymous with giant coasters at Cedar Point. Together, these two books venture into the minds and perspectives that took these gentlemen into industry fame during their careers, each with their own approaches to reaching their audience.

Tony Baxter: First of the second generation of Walt Disney Imagineers

From his start as an ice cream scooper in 1965 to being Senior Vice President of Creative Development in 2013, Baxter has been able to see nearly a half century of Disney history unfold before his eyes. With all the brand's successes, there were certainly its share of duds and low points. Baxter experienced it all.

The book is divided into three parts. The first section unfolds Baxter's transformation as part time employee in the Carnation Ice Cream Parlor to receiving his own window on Main Street, U.S.A. inside Disneyland in 2013. His first real job as Imagineer was during the construction of Walt Disney World on the

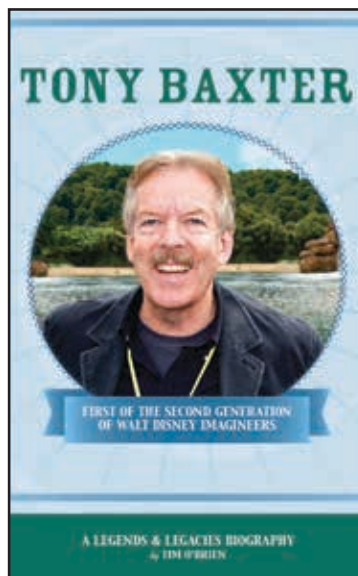
installation of 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea. The on-again-off-again nature of Big Thunder Mountain is interestingly recounted. Baxter's time bouncing back from Florida to California caused his hand to be involved in many Disney iconic attractions including Space Mountain, Splash Mountain and the creation of Epcot. One of Baxter's crowning achievements with the latter was his creation of the Figment character.

The second part of the biography involves the new way of thinking that reinvigorated Imagineering. With Michael Eisner's blessing, new concepts and creative approaches threw out the stigma of "We've always done it that way." Disneyphiles will relish in recalling times when they explored opportunities for Disneyland to continue to reach teens and not become outdated. When the company reached outside of the Disney brand for the first time with Star Tours in 1987, details of the attraction transitioning from a roller coaster concept to a simulator attraction display the thought processes Imagineering went through at a pivotal time. That being an example of a huge success, Baxter's fascinating journey also involves darker times — the teething pains of Euro Disneyland, the never realized Westcot and the ill-fated Rocket Rods.

Part Three is titled "Being Tony Baxter." While not focusing so much on his personal life, which is only minimally discussed, the book focuses more on his philosophies, how he felt being a "media darling," his thoughts on how he decided on the right time to step down and what he would like to pass on to future creative minds.

Dick Kinzel: Roller coaster king of Cedar Point Amusement Park

Although Dick Kinzel was president and CEO of Cedar Fair, he is probably more associated with the monumental giants of Cedar



Book subject Tony Baxter received the rare distinction of having a window placed on Main Street in Disneyland.
COURTESY DISNEY

Point. During his tenure, he was responsible for the installation of 37 multi-million dollar roller coasters across the theme park chain. Cedar Point was the first park to build 200-foot, 300-foot and 400-foot roller coasters, a formula of record setters that Kinzel knew drove attendance.

O'Brien's biography of Dick Kinzel has five parts. The first centers on his 39-year career with the company. Kinzel started at the Sandusky, Ohio amusement park, but once Valleyfair! in Shakopee, Minn. was acquired, he was sent there to run that park. On his return to Cedar Point, he was president and CEO of the newly formed Cedar Fair.

Part Two centers on Kinzel's mindset on how to create and market coasters. A fan of superlatives — fastest and tallest — Kinzel saw the strategy to big records:



an increase of thrills in the ride lineup, increased attendance and marketing value. The debut of the 205-foot Magnum XL-200 is most likely Kinzel's seminal moment in shaping the amusement industry. Its wild success spawned similar creations throughout the world. It was eventually followed by the 300-foot Millennium Force and 400-foot Top Thrill Dragster, among many other coaster installations that featured record-setting dimensions of each particular genre.

Part Three is a short look at rounding out the complete park experience from live entertainment to water rides to food and beverage. Kinzel's penchant for recognized food brands is evident in the many licensed restaurants within the company's chain of parks.

Chapters Four and Five focus on the dramatic acqui-

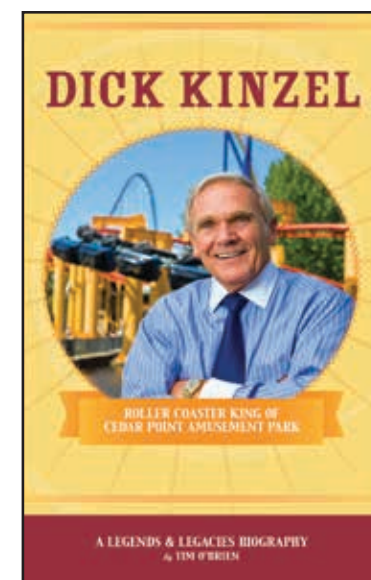
sition of parks within Cedar Fair. Dorney Park and Worlds of Fun were earlier additions, followed by Michigan's Adventure, Knott's Berry Farm and Geauga Lake. The big risk was acquiring the five-property chain of Paramount Parks in excess of \$1 billion in 2006. Following the acquisition, debt took its toll on the company. A takeover attempt from Apollo Global Management and power struggles with Q Investments created a dark time. Although financially strong today, the years of financial unrest, both personally and as a company, crushed Kinzel's spirit. He retired at the end of 2011.

Highs and lows of his career are recalled, sometimes with humor and sometimes with sadness. His recollection of throwing more money after a ride he termed "a dog" (Avalanche Run/Disaster Transport) was his first and only attempt at theming. The loss of his friendship with second-in-command Jack Falfas is something he still regrets. Kinzel also insists to his detractors saying he bought Geauga Lake only to close it down just isn't true. For the most part, his highs have created a wonderful life when viewed as a whole. It's no surprise that a man who had so much passion and energy to walk the park midways every day now finds it very difficult to sit back and relax in retirement.

The book on Tony Baxter retails on Amazon for \$16.99; Dick Kinzel's book is priced at \$17.99.



Above: NASCAR star Jeff Gordon (left) takes a spin on Cedar Point's Millennium Force with Dick Kinzel.
COURTESY TIM O'BRIEN





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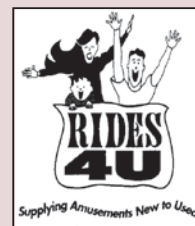


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