

Six Flags Fiesta Texas revamps boardwalk with Zamperla, Larson rides



Six Flags Fiesta Texas recently opened its new Fiesta Bay Boardwalk with a Mega Disk'O (Hurricane Force 5) from Zamperla (left) and two rides from Larson International including a Tilt-A-Whirl (right) named Spinsanity. The revamped section of the park opened May 14.

COURTESY SIX FLAGS
FIESTA TEXAS

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Kentucky Kingdom, Rocky Mountain Construction debut park's newest coaster: Storm Chaser

► SEE STORY: PAGE 5 & 6



Lake Compounce goes big with largest park investment, launching Premier Rides coaster

► SEE STORY: PAGE 8



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NEWSTALK

EDITORIAL: Gary Slade, gslade@amusementtoday.com

The speed of news



Slade

Many Americans have fond memories of the very moment when either the morning newspaper would be delivered, or in some cases — that rare afternoon paper would be tossed right up to the base of the front porch step. Taking the rubber band off the paper and sitting back in a chair to read the newspaper was the current method of getting caught up on all the news, both local and worldwide.

Certainly radio stations, then mostly on the AM dial, fought for their news market share as well against the newspapers reporters — then simply known as "The Press."

Neither could have imagined the rapid growth and success the upstart television networks and local market stations would have once they figured out how to produce a TV news broadcast.

The memories of the Huntley-Brinkley Report (NBC, 1956-1970), or Walter Cronkite (CBS, 1961-1976) giving moment by moment details on the Apollo space missions and the Moon landing is forever etched into broadcasting history.

With *Amusement Today's* printed edition as the company's first priority, and AT's electronic media outlets second, it's easy to forget how quickly news can connect people via the internet, smart phone, tablets or other devices.

This was seen first hand when AT received the sad and shocking news that Chance Rides President Michael Chance had lost his battle with depression at the young age of 42. (See story, pages 46-47) AT rallied around the news and got the information sent out over all of its electronic sources to help get the word out to the amusement industry, should close friends want to consider making last-minute travel plans for the memorial service in Wichita, Kan.

One of the first to respond to AT was Jim Seay of Premier Rides, all the way from Dubai. Seay, sitting at a table with other industry colleagues attending the 2016 DEAL Show, was in shock — just as the industry here in the U.S. was.

Newspapers delivering the news are not going away anytime soon, but thanks to their electronic outlets, they too, now have a chance to deliver the news in a speedy manner. One might say that the speed of news today is as fast as that of a speeding bullet — or was that Superman: The Ride?

FLINT'S VIEW: Bubba Flint



INDUSTRY OPINION: Dean Lamanna, diamanna@amusementtoday.com

Public, industry evolve on large wild animals as performers

Two announcements made in March 2015 have, in just over a year, led to fundamental changes in a century-old live entertainment tradition and a major theme park chain.

Their industry impact is historic.

The first came from Palmetto, Fla.-based Feld Entertainment, owner of the traveling Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. Feld executives, citing "somewhat of a mood shift among our consumers" and an increasing number of restrictive local ordinances, said it would retire the circus's last 13 performing Asian elephants to its 200-acre Florida conservation center by 2018.

The second was Orlando-based SeaWorld Entertainment's hiring of Joel Manby, then head of Herschend Family Entertainment and a highly respected industry executive, as its new CEO. The move came amid falling SeaWorld park attendance after television airings of *Blackfish*, a 2013 documentary critical of SeaWorld's captivity and training of killer whales.

This past March, SeaWorld ceased its orca breeding program and announced a three-year phase-out of killer whale shows. And Feld bumped up its elephant retirement schedule — making May 1, 2016, the final circus ring date for its iconic pachyderms.

SeaWorld's struggle to adjust its successful,



Lamanna

50-year-old business model under pressure from animal rights activists and lawmakers has been particularly tough. But the company appears to have found new philosophical footing under Manby — turning its focus from shows to conservation, education and non-animal-based attractions.

The CEO, while announcing a new partnership with The Humane Society of the United States and a five-year, \$50 million commitment to marine animal rescue earlier this year, described SeaWorld's shift as "bold and impactful... this is about doing the best thing for our orcas, our guests, our [employees] and our company."

Emboldened by these industry decisions, activists, of course, won't be stopping with orcas and elephants, or with these two companies. But whether the public's attitude has been influenced by activism or reflects a generational evolution tied to our growing understanding of large, intelligent animals (thanks partly to the conservation efforts of Feld and SeaWorld), operators must keep their guests happy. Change is business survival.

It is, in this case, also compassionate, forward-looking and moral.



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2 MINUTE DRILL



AT: Janice Witherow

Emily MacKay, Oaks Amusement Park

Working at **Oaks Amusement Park** is a natural fit for **Emily MacKay**, who became a member of the Oaks Park Skating Club at the age of eight. A competitive roller skater, Emily began working at this historic Portland, Ore., amusement park when she was just 14 years old to help pay for lessons and competition fees and continued as an employee in high school and college to fund her education. Today she is right at home overseeing the park's advertising and special events and promoting the midway games, rides and food; plus miniature golf and the renowned roller skating rink. Emily has an undeniable can-do spirit and energy and passion for life that she loves sharing with her two daughters.



Emily MacKay , Oaks Amusement Park

Title:

Promotions and Events Manager.

Number of years in the industry:

21, which people never believe because I'm 35, but really, this is my 21st season working for Oaks Park; 12th as the promotions and events manager. I was hired on my 14th birthday. That was the best birthday present I ever got!



MacKay

Best thing about the industry...

The fun! I can't imagine working somewhere I couldn't hear kids yelling "whooh hoo!" out my window all day... people are FUN.

Favorite amusement ride...

The Tilt-a-Whirl, can't beat a classic, and I dare you not to laugh while you're on it. Impossible!

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

A roller skating coach. I'm a national champion figure roller skater, and my kids, sister, nephews and mother also skate, so I am in the rink any time I'm not at the office. And our rink is here at Oaks Park... so this truly is home.

Biggest challenge facing our industry...

The balancing act between keeping costs reasonable for the average family while still being able to present new and dynamic attractions.

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

The smell of cotton candy in the air, the sunny skies (which we don't see the other eight months of the year in Portland), the thrill of knowing you just went on a ride you always thought you'd be too chicken to try. And most of all just seeing families relax and enjoy having more time with the kids.

Favorite expression:

"Seriously!?" My kids say that I say that about everything... guess I'm a skeptic.

Have you ever missed out on something you really wanted to do ... what was it?

Doing a semester abroad in Belgium my junior year in college. I was set to go, but then met my future husband, so decided not to go. Four years later I was divorced and a single parent to two girls. Of course I wouldn't trade the kids for anything... but that is a missed opportunity that still makes me sad.

If you could have a conversation with any celebrity, who would it be?

I am so not into pop culture. Does Perry Como count as a celebrity nowadays?

The best place I have ever vacationed is...

Orange County, Calif. The weather. The beaches. The parks. Absolute perfection.

This always cheers me up...

My daughters Annie and Susie. They walk into the room and it is like the sun comes out from behind a cloud. They're 13 and 11, and brilliant, beautiful, and the best girls a mama could ask for.

What did you do last year that you would never do this year?

Only committing halfway with my training for my skating competition. I didn't put in the full effort or time that I usually do, and was not satisfied with myself at all. Taking this year off, and next year, watch out... I'm going to work for it!

Favorite flavor of ice cream:

Pistachio.

It's June! My go-to summer drink is...

I'm a Diet Pepsi girl.

When I say politics, you say... Our founding fathers warned us about the two- party system.

The subject I least like talking about is...

Reality TV. I just don't get the appeal.

The last time I wore high heels was...

I wear them all the time. I'm almost 6 feet tall, so why not?

If I could do anything when I come home from work, it would be...

Go roller skating with my daughters, which I get to do... lucky me!

In one word, my garage is...

Immaculate. I don't do disorganized.

If you could have a home with the most beautiful view in the world, where would it be?

At the summit of the Oregon Coast range...ocean to the west, alpine peaks and old growth forests to the east...sign me up!

The song I am most tired of hearing is...

"Stressed Out." Enough already.

Pick one: skiing in the mountains or relaxing by the ocean?

Relaxing by the ocean.

Favorite junk food...

I'm an amusement park person so corn dogs, cotton candy and elephant ears, of course!

The movie I am most looking forward to seeing this summer is...

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them.

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

Presented by the National Roller Coaster Museum

AT: Richard Munch



JUNE

•**1906: Happyland**, the planned amusement park in South Beach, Staten Island, New York, opened for the first time on June 30. The owners promoted the park by stating the new enterprise was bringing **Coney Island** to South Beach. With 50,000 electric lights strung around an artificial lake, the 15-acre park on Lower New York Bay contained attractions designed for both young and old. The ride list included a revolving electric tower, an **L.A. Thompson** Scenic Railway, a Merry Go Round and the Carnival of Venice, with both vaudeville and theatrical shows. The appeal of the park would last until a fire in September 1917, destroying a portion of the Scenic Railway. In May 1919 another fire wiped out the central portion of the property, although the remainder of the park along the boardwalk may have limped along until 1927.

•**1922:** The Sunday, June 11 *Atlanta Constitution* covered a story of the possibility that a significant new amusement park was in the planning stages at a location outside Miami, Florida. In an article titled "Nation's Greatest Park is Planned," it was revealed that several Miami capitalists were planning to build a playground that would be superior to anything found in America. Plans for building the complex near the growing population of Miami included building on a tract of 2,170 acres adjoining the famous Bay View estates, owned by **G. F. Willis**, an Atlanta businessman. While the proposal called for the new park to be the greatest combined winter and summer amusement park in the world, the project never materialized.

•**1935:** The collapse of a rustic dance pavilion took place on a typical Saturday afternoon at **Croops Glen Park**, in Nanticoke, Pennsylvania, on June 30. Taking into consideration the amount of people involved, it is considered the largest tragedy ever recorded in an amusement park. With a large group of spectators jammed into the Croops Glen dance hall for a baby pageant, the auxiliary dance floor broke in half under the weight of the crowd. The resulting mass of spectators, mostly woman and children, fell or slid 30 feet into Hunlock Creek, the shallow stream that ran next to the dance pavilion. About 400 were caught in the collapse, injuring about 250 persons. At least four were hurt seriously, with 24 admitted to the Nanticoke Hospital for observation. Ironically it was the screams of those riding the park's roller coaster who had a clear view of the chaotic mass of humanity on the stream bed, that sent hundreds rushing to the scene of the accident. Miraculously, the roof structure remained standing, so nothing fell on top of the injured.

•**1953: Charles L. Cooper** of Los Angeles was awarded a patent for a roller-coaster power system on June 16 that was designed to eliminate the snap in the passenger's neck that is experienced as the train attaches to the incline chain, as it begins its climb up the first hill. With the new design, the drive equipment would take a firm hold of the train while in the station and would accelerate the cars smoothly to normal speed from a standing start. It would also eliminate the need to run the chain constantly, getting more life out of the motor. It is not known if the **Cooper Drive System** was ever used on any coaster larger than a kiddie size ride, but similar propulsion systems have been designed on steel coasters, providing a smooth transition at the start of the chain lift.

•**1966:** The popular indoor boat ride **It's a Small World** opened at **Disneyland** in Anaheim, California on May 28, 1966, and enjoyed its first full month of operation during June of that year. It began as an attraction to salute **UNICEF** and the World's Children at the Pepsi Cola Pavilion during the 1964-1965 **New York World's Fair**, in Flushing Meadows Park, Queens, New York. Featuring several hundred audio-animatronic dolls in traditional costumes representing various global cultures, It's a Small World would become as much a part of modern culture as anything else Disney has ever created. Having undergone a number of renovations over the decades, the ride was originally created by **WED Enterprises** at **Walt Disney Studios** in Burbank, California, with **Arrow Development** designing and manufacturing the boat and ride system. Today versions of the boat-based dark ride (and its indelible theme song) now operate in Disney parks in Orlando, Hong Kong, Paris and Tokyo. Possibly more importantly, the month of June 1966 would be one of the best attended months in park history.



Kentucky Kingdom adds Storm Chaser, Angry Birds: The Ride

Park's Horticulture Department adds QR codes to 100 species of plants for added guest information; third-year phase in of outer market marketing, advertising now reaches Indianapolis and Nashville



Storm Chaser's thrills begin immediately after leaving the chain lift's 100-foot-high turn when the train dives into a complete barrel roll to begin the trek across the 2,744-foot-long course. Storm Chaser was supplied by Rocky Mountain Construction. Irvine Ondrey Engineering provided the safety control system. AT/GARY SLADE

AT: Pam Sherborne
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LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Ed Hart, president and CEO, Kentucky Kingdom, gave a brief statement to invited media and guests April 28, announcing the completion of a three-year park renovation project as well as officially opening the facility's fifth coaster, Storm Chaser.

The Storm Chaser coaster, built by Rocky Mountain Construction (RMC), is the second coaster built at Kentucky Kingdom in the last three years since the facility reopened under the new operational entity of which Hart is at the helm. Hart is a former Kentucky Kingdom owner from 1988 to 1998.

The park was originally opened in 1987 by a Dallas-based company that went bankrupt after one year.

"I think everyone would agree that we have delivered on our promise," Hart told

attendees eager to board the newest coaster, looming 100-feet tall behind him during the April press conference. "I am happy and gratified, Kentucky Kingdom is back."

The investment group led by Hart was awarded the lease in 2013 by the Kentucky State Fair Board to operate the park located on the fairgrounds.

The park was shuttered in 2009 by Six Flags Corporation amid bankruptcy proceedings. The agreement between the investment group and the fair board stated Hart and his group would commit \$43.5 million over three years.

"In fact," Hart said, "we have spent a total of \$53 million, exceeding our commitment by \$10 million."

The new 2016 highlight, Storm Chaser, incorporates RMC's unique and patented IBox track technology, supported by a steel superstructure. Park officials tout the coaster as having a ride "as smooth as glass, yet also very

fast and intense."

"Our IBox track technology is unique," said Fred Grubb, RMC founder. "We start with flat sheets of steel, the pieces are cut and then the track is welded into a 3-D shape. It is not bent like pipe track. This unique manufacturing process is what makes our coasters so smooth."

The IBox track also allows for the addition of thrill elements not often found on other coasters. One of those thrill elements incorporated in Storm Chaser is the 10-story barrel roll drop from the first lift. Storm Chaser also punches 12 airtime moments, three inversions and two overbanks.

"The complete barrel roll off of the 100-foot drop is unique to North America," Hart said. "It is my understanding that it is the first one in North America."

Grubb added: "It was a

► See STORM CHASER, page 6

IOE Controls the RAW POWER of STORM CHASER

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►STORM CHASER

Continued from page 5

pleasure working with Kentucky Kingdom's team on this exciting one-of-a-kind project."

Irvine Ondrey Engineering (IOE) provided the control systems. Anne Irvine, IOE's CEO, said the project debuts the company's latest technology and is the first experience IOE has had with the coaster's builder.

"IOE was proud to bring the latest in control safety technology to Storm Chaser that will ensure safe and efficient performance for years to come," Irvine said. "The ride was our first project partnering with RMC, and while there can be a learning curve with a new client of matching their specs to our equipment and system designs, the crew at Rocky Mountain made the process easy and enjoyable."

"Fred Grubb leads a hard-working, honest, and down-to-earth team of people, committed to creating quality rides, which deliver some of the most exciting coaster experiences seen yet," she said. "Storm Chaser is an addictive and unique coaster that will leave you already craving another ride before you've even come to a stop back in the station."

Irvine said it is a relentless design, "a true airtime beast, that gives you no time to think before you're already flying into another intense element."

Even before Kentucky Kingdom opened for the season on April 30, Julie Johnson, the park's director of sales and marketing, said *USA Today* had named Storm Chaser one



Riders enjoy the inversion and airtime thrills on Storm Chaser. Far right, *Angry Birds: The Ride* film is showing in the 5-D Cinema this season.

COURTESY KENTUCKY KINGDOM

of the top 10 most anticipated coasters of the year and the *Los Angeles Times* included it on its list of top new rides for 2016.

"And, for the second year in a row, Fodor's Travel listed Kentucky Kingdom as one of the top 10 best amusement parks to visit," Hart said.

More 2016 attractions; expanded outer markets

Hart and his team, however, know "not everyone is a rider." So, they have included other new elements this year.

"For example, in addition to Storm Chaser, we're introducing an exciting, family-friendly film, *Angry Birds: The Ride*, at our 5-D Cinema," Johnson said, in late April.

Also new this year is an initiative undertaken by the park's Horticulture Manager Jason Anderson. His department has labeled more than 100 species of perennials and ornamental grasses, more than 20 cultivars and annuals, and many specimen of coniferous and deciduous trees.

Each label includes a QR code that can be scanned with

smart phones, linking them to Kentucky Kingdom Gardens where they can find photos and detailed information about their selections.

Also added this year were new games, food and beverage locations, and retail shops.

"And, we've installed 25 percent more seating throughout the park," Johnson said. "This is in addition to the 700 seats available in our Aqua Theater, home of the popular Sea Lion Splash show and the 5,000 seats available in our special events arena."

The completion of this three-year commitment doesn't necessarily mean the completion of expansion, additions and further improvements to Kentucky Kingdom. There are still 20 acres that can be used for expansion.

"Sixty-three acres have been developed now," Johnson said. "We still have 20 acres not including parking. We have 19,000 parking spaces."

But, with the completion of the initial commitment, Kentucky Kingdom has



launched itself into surrounding markets in a big way.

According to Johnson, last year's attendance was about 600,000 with 50,000 coming from outside markets in and around Indianapolis and Nashville. They hope these numbers will increase.

Beginning the first of May, Hart said Kentucky Kingdom's advertising was to show up on 60 billboards in Nashville and 80 in Indianapolis. A large push into radio and television also was initiated.

Since 2014: rides reopened; water park size doubled

In the first year under Hart's leadership, Lightning Run, a Hyper GT-X coaster by Chance Rides opened. In addition, Kentucky Kingdom doubled the size of its water park Hurricane Bay. Three new water slide complexes were added as were a 12,000-square-foot wave lagoon and an adventure river, a lazy river-type ride but is much faster.

Also in 2014, park officials re-opened the wooden coaster Thunder Run, the Mile High Falls giant spill ride and the 150-foot Giant Wheel, as well as the remaining rides and attractions.

Park to support NRCMA



Showing his support for preserving amusement history, Kentucky Kingdom President and CEO Ed Hart has announced that this summer the park will donate \$1.00 to the National Roller Coaster Museum & Archives from every shirt sold in The Little Shop of Screams. The shop, geared to enthusiasts and park fans, also features a "Notable Moments in History" wall display presented by American Coaster Enthusiasts. AT/GARY SLADE



FAST FACTS

Storm Chaser

Kentucky Kingdom,
Louisville, Kentucky

•

Height/100 feet

Length/2,744 feet

Speed/52 mph

Ride time/

1 minute, 40 seconds

Features/

13 airtime moments,
2 inversions, 2 overbanks

Capacity/960 pph

•

Supplier

Rocky Mountain Const.

Safety System

Irvine Ondrey Engineering



This season Kentucky Kingdom has introduced QR code labeling on more than 100 species of perennials and ornamental grasses and more than 20 annuals and trees. Guests may scan the codes on their smart phone to be taken to the Kentucky Kingdom Gardens website where they find full details of the plant or flower they are looking at.

AT/GARY SLADE

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Phobia Phear launches into Lake Compounce

Fifth Sky Rocket II launch ride for Premier Rides

AT: B. Derek Shaw
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BRISTOL, Conn. — Kicking off the 170th season for the New England theme is Phobia Phear, a Premier Rides Sky Rocket II model featuring an LSM (Linear Synchronous Motor) magnetic launch. At 11:00 a.m., May 7, a dozen specifically selected riders were the first to experience the latest in-line twisting,



Lake Compounce General Manager Jerry Brick stands in front of his new multi-dimensional Phobia Phear Coaster sign. The sign, like many at the park, are from J3 Design in Elba, N.Y.

AT/GARY SLADE

heartline loop roller coaster. The ride is the largest single ride investment ever added to the historic park.

Amusement Today spoke with Jerry Brick, general manager of Lake Compounce & Crocodile Cove, about the fifth roller coaster at the park. Brick was asked about the planning process that took place for the ride. “About a year and a half ago we started coaster talk with manufacturers and picked Premier Rides to do the ride. On July 1 we led a teaser campaign to introduce the ride and announced it on July 10, 2015. Soon afterwards the Huss Enterprise came out. We surveyed and started foundations in September and just after January 1, Martin & Vleminckx started to erect the ride. Testing began in April.”

Commenting on why this type of roller coaster was selected, Brick said, “We were looking for a high impact coaster that would fit in a tight spot. We were also looking to be the first triple launch in New England.” The park chose Premier Rides, as they are known for launch coasters that offer a smooth and fast ride experience.

Phobia Phear features a triple launch with back-and-forth action on the track until it finally launches upward at 63 mph. The 850-foot-long ride features a twisting heartline inversion at the apex of the 15-story (150-foot-tall) structure along with a non-inverting loop. The rest of the quick ride features a steep drop with tight turns, gravity-defying rolls and a 90-degree swoop turn to the station. Phobia Phear concludes with the train going through the



Lake Compounce's new Phobia Phear Coaster, from Premier Rides, takes riders 150 feet up in the air during a three-launch thrill ride at 63 mph. Right, the park uses LED ground lighting to enhance the purple support structure and orange track at night. Below, AT Publisher Gary Slade and Premier Rides' Jim Seay enjoyed a “Phobia” moment.

COURTESY LAKE COMPOUNCE



station, then it is launched backward before coming to a final stop. The ride does all this in under a minute.

The coaster's tight footprint is located on the bluff behind the first turn of the Wildcat roller coaster and in front of the Giant Wheel. Phobia Phear can be seen from anywhere in the park and around the neighboring town as well. “The entire area has transformed to blend the modern with the history and tradition Lake Compounce has worked hard to keep,” said Brick.

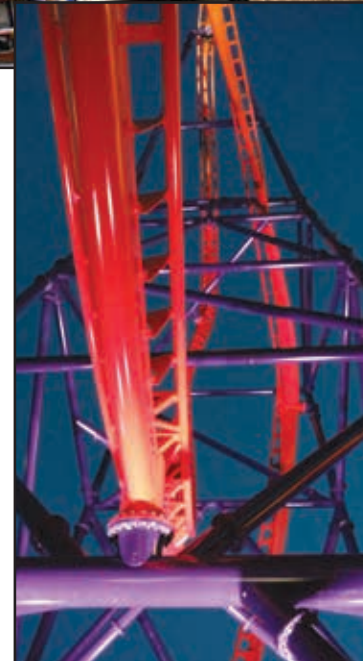
The first ride on opening day was exclusively for people chosen via an online contest based on their own fears (fear of coasters, heights, clowns, chainsaws, butterflies and more). They were also awarded a Season Pass for tackling (or attempting to tackle) their fear.

The ride name is an interesting story as well. Brick

explained, “My wife, Mary Beth, (she also named “Boulder Dash”) came up with the name, and when she told me, I responded “the fear of what” and she said “exactly.” So we played it on the fear of: speed, heights, inversions, and of course, roller coasters.”

Phobia Phear is the fifth Premier Rides Sky Rocket II model in the world. Six Flags Discovery Kingdom, Vallejo, Ca. debuted Superman Ultimate Flight in 2012, followed by Sky Scream at Holiday Park, Hassloch, Germany; Tempesto at Busch Gardens Williamsburg, Va. and Zombie Ride at Bosque Mágico, Guadalupe, Mexico.

Lake Compounce has been in operation since 1846, making it the oldest continuously-operating amusement park in North America. Bakken (Klampenborg, Denmark) is the oldest operating park in the world, having opened in 1583.



Wildcat gets off-season station work

BRISTOL, Conn. — The 1927 Herb Schmeck designed, Philadelphia Toboggan Company-built, Wildcat roller coaster that was rebuilt in 1986 by Charlie Dinn and Curtis Summers received some ongoing off-season work. As Park Manager Jerry Brick explains, “Great Coasters International, Inc. had done some work the past few years on Wildcat and this past year we built a new transfer track, in-house.” Other work was done on the station and brakes. There is only one more turn to re-track. However, any additional work on the coaster in the next off-season has not yet been determined. Magnetic brakes were added to 2,746-foot-long, 85-foot-tall Wildcat for the 2007 season.

—Derek Shaw

FAST FACTS

Name/Park

Phobia Phear
Lake Compounce
& Crocodile Cove
Bristol, Conn.

Type

Sky Rocket II LSM launch
with in-line twist and
non-inverting loop

Height/Speed/Length/ Total ride cycle length

150 feet/63 mph/
850 feet/950 feet of
track is traveled upon

Cycle time/PPH

45 seconds/450-500 pph
(optimum)
380 pph currently

Special features

Three launch elements
High-speed station
experience; 150-foot,
high-speed inversion

Ride vehicle

One, two car,
12 passenger train

Footprint

215 feet by 62 feet

Color Scheme

Purple support structure;
orange track with
lime green train

Height Restriction

52 inches

Ride Supplier

Premier Rides, Inc.,
Baltimore Md.

Ride Erectors

Martin & Vleminckx Rides,
LLC, Haines City, Fla.

Public Opening

May 7, 2016



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INTERNATIONAL

► Paultons Park debuts Lost Kingdom area — Page 12 / Warner Bros. Abu Dhabi underway — Page 14

Tivoli Copenhagen debuts unique Condor 2GH from Huss

AT: Andrew Mellor
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COPENHAGEN, Denmark — The world famous Tivoli amusement park in the center of Copenhagen opened for its 174th summer season in early April.

Denmark's most visited attraction welcomed 4.7 million visitors in 2015, 75 percent of whom were Danes, who came to sample the numerous rides and attractions on offer as well as the city's largest collection of restaurants and a wide range of concerts, theater performances and events, all set among unique gardens and historical surroundings.

For 2016, Tivoli has introduced a new ride from German manufacturer Huss Park Attractions in the shape of Fatamorgana, a Huss Condor 2GH. Standing at total height of 45 meters/148 feet (gondolas are at 30 meters/98 feet) providing what the park describes as a three-in-one experience, it is the first such ride to open anywhere in the world and offers guests the choice of two different ride experiences in different types of passenger gondolas, providing a great view of the city or a hair-raising merry go round ride. The third element is at the base of Fatamorgana where children's mini bumper cars have been added and the investment in the new area is DKK50 million (\$7.8 million).

Music is also a huge part of the entertainment offering at Tivoli throughout the season, with free daily music and entertainment on stages around the park. Every day

during the summer too, visitors can enjoy music and culture performed live at venues including the Open Air stage, the Pavilion Stage and the Tivoli Concert Hall. And every genre is represented, from hip hop to musicals and classical masterpieces.

The Tivoli concert hall will ensure classical music can be heard in Copenhagen right through the summer. Star soprano Sarah Coburn, Wagner diva Irene Theorin, Grammy winner Emanuel Ax and one of the best ensembles in the world, the Budapest Festival Orchestra, are just a few of the highlights. Tivoli Summer Classic festival started on May 15 and continues until September 19 and is a series of 65 concerts, 22 of which are ticketed, seven are free to Tivoli visitors and 36 cost DKK 50 (\$7.80), payable at the entrance to the Tivoli Concert Hall. Those taking part include the Tivoli Copenhagen Phil, a full symphony orchestra consisting of 70 musicians (in winter the orchestra is known as the Copenhagen Phil).

On weekends, the young musicians of the Tivoli Youth Guard play music as they parade through the Gardens while on every night of the week visitors can see the Tivoli Illuminations show on the Lake. On Saturday nights, a firework display lights up the sky near the Concert Hall.

At the Pantomime Theatre special kinds of pantomime that were once played all over Europe can be found, where ballet and comedy go hand in hand, while the theatre also shows true ballets



Above, the new Fatamorgana attraction at Tivoli Copenhagen features two gondolas with traditional Condor-like seatings and two gondolas with new outward facing seats (right) for a more thrilling ride experience. The \$7.8 million attraction takes riders up to a height of 30 meters (98 feet). Bottom right, a wide range of musical entertainment is provided throughout the season at Tivoli Copenhagen. In 2015 the park welcomed 4.7 million visitors, of which 75 percent were considered locals.

COURTESY TIVOLI

created specifically for Tivoli's own ballet company. On June 25, the curtain will rise on the first performance of Cinderella, choreographed by Yuri Possokhov to music by Oh Land. The scenery and costumes are by Denmark's Queen Margrethe.





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Paultons Park debuts stunning Lost Kingdom area

AT: Andrew Mellor
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ROMSEY, England — Paultons Park in Hampshire, in the south of England, has opened a stunning new dinosaur themed area for the 2016 season called Lost Kingdom.

Well-known for having introduced the hugely successful Peppa Pig World in 2011 which saw visitor numbers increase dramatically, although not based on a specific IP, Lost Kingdom is set to add massively once again to a visit to Paultons. Carefully designed within a four acre area to create a truly immersive experience, it is aimed at a wide cross section of ages from three to 12 and their families and brings another superb new area to the park. Masterplan and conceptual theming designs were carried out by RMA Themed Attractions, with all the themed rock work being supplied by Rockart.

Featuring six rides in total, the headline-grabbers will inevitably be the two Vekoma-built roller coasters, the Flight of the Pterosaur and Velociraptor. The former, a U.K. first, is a heavily themed, suspended family coaster which winds its way in and out of prehistoric rock work as it takes riders on a journey along its 395 meter (1,295 foot) track. Its tallest point is 20 meters (65 feet) and it reaches a top speed of 34 mph (55 kmh).

The latter is a custom designed Vekoma family Boomerang featuring a world first track design. The ride is 200 meters (656 feet) in length and reaches speeds of up to 37 mph (60 kmh).

A third coaster, suitable for the youngest of visitors, also features in the new area, this being an existing Zierer Tivoli coaster which has been given a makeover to create the Dino Chase. Other rides include the Dinosaur Tour Co. track ride from Metallbau Emmeln featuring dinosaurs, waterfalls, exotic plants and a host of other themed elements; the Boulder Dash, a Demolition Derby from Zamperla; and the Temple Heights, a Zamperla Magic Carpet that again was already in operation at the park and has undergone a suitable transformation to create its new guise.

But it's not just about the rides. Also included is the Little Explorers adventure play park,



Paultons Park's new Lost Kingdom area offers a variety of new excitement ranging from two new Vekoma coasters (above and right), to this Zamperla-built Boulder Dash demolition derby ride (bottom right) and the Alive Dinosaur Encounter allows visitors to get up close with the park's roaming dinosaur (bottom).

COURTESY PAULTONS PARK



the Discovery Trail sensory boardwalk, the Alive Dinosaur Encounter where guests get to meet Paultons' own roaming dinosaur and a total of 27 animatronic dinosaurs throughout the area. Two F&B outlets and a retail store complete the list.

Richard Mancey, managing director of Paultons Park, said: "Lost Kingdom is going to be very special. It is a truly unique experience where families can be thrown back millions of years to see, hear and feel a prehistoric world. Children and adults of all ages are fascinated by dinosaurs and I think the amazing world we've created here at Paultons Park and the rides within it will thrill both children and adults alike."



Asian Attractions Expo shatters exhibit space record

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Asian Attractions Expo (AAE) 2016's trade show floor continues to grow at a record-breaking rate with 11,500-net-square-meters of exhibit space reserved by more than 350 companies. The strong interest by international manufacturer and supplier companies to showcase their new products and services is reflective of the growth of the attractions industry in the Asia-Pacific region and China specifically. AAE 2016 takes place June 13-16 at the Shanghai New International Exhibition Centre in China with the show floor open June 14-16. The event is the region's premier global conference and trade show for the attractions industry and is owned and produced by the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA).

Evidence of the attractions industry's increased popularity in the region is shown

by the growth of AAE since the event last took place in Shanghai in 2006. At the time, the exhibit floor spanned 2,528 net square meters with 128 exhibiting companies.

According to the IAAPA Global Theme and Amusement Park Outlook Report for 2015 – 2019, major park openings and rising investment will continue to drive the market over the next five years and annual attendance is expected to reach 540 million in 2019. In 2014, Asia Pacific passed North America to become the largest region in terms of attendance entertaining 390 million guests. China specifically still has one of the fastest-growing economies compared with other countries. In 2014, per capita theme park spending reached \$12.9 billion.

Previously, Asian Attractions Expo 2015 in Hong Kong SAR boasted the largest show floor in the event's history with 9,432 net square meters of exhibition space.



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Construction underway on \$1 billion Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi

Opening set for 2018, world's first Warner Bros. branded hotel to follow

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates — Miral and Warner Bros. recently announced that a Warner Bros. themed destination is set to open in Abu Dhabi.

Situated on Yas Island, one of the world's leading business, leisure and entertainment destinations, the development will include the only Warner Bros. branded hotel alongside the immersive theme park.

The first phase of the project, Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi, is set to open in 2018. Construction is underway and rides are in production.

Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi will bring together stories and characters from the studio's unparalleled portfolio of DC Comics Super Heroes universe including Batman, Superman and Wonder Woman as well as Warner Bros. cartoons such as Bugs Bunny, Scooby-Doo and Tom and Jerry. Guests of all ages will be able to step inside Gotham City and Metropolis, and experience the cartoon worlds of



Construction is underway on the new \$1 billion Warner Bros. World on Yas Island in Abu Dhabi, U.A.E. When completed, the project will also include the world's first Warner Bros. branded hotel. The project is a partnership between Miral and Warner Bros. COURTESY WARNER BROS. WORLD

Looney Tunes, Hanna-Barbera and more, all under one roof.

Located alongside the world's first Ferrari branded theme park, Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, and the iconic Emirati themed mega water park, Yas Waterworld, Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi will help Yas Island take its annual visitor tally from 25 million in 2015, to 30 million in 2018, reinforcing Yas Island's leading position as home to ultimate leisure and entertainment experiences.

His Excellency Mohamed Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chair-

man, Miral, said: "It is incredibly exciting to announce that we are bringing the iconic Warner Bros. brand to Yas Island. Miral's investment in the Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi theme park is estimated at 1 billion dollars and is a milestone in the emirate's journey to put Abu Dhabi on the global map and become one of the world's leading tourist destinations."

Kevin Tsujihara, chairman and CEO, Warner Bros. Entertainment commented, "Warner Bros. has been entertaining au-



diences for more than 90 years with the world's most-loved characters and franchises. Working with our partners at Miral, we'll bring this expertise to Yas Island, one of the world's leading entertainment destinations, to create a fully-interactive, innovative and unique experience that will allow fans of all ages to experience the most exciting aspects of Warner Bros. in a completely immersive environment."

Mohamed Abdullah Al Zaabi, CEO of Miral, said: "Yas Island will continue looking to

expand on its offerings for its visitors through strategic partnerships with world leading organizations.

"The Warner Bros. themed destination will be a major step in maintaining Yas Island's momentum and is expected to create more than 1000 jobs for the Emirate. We at Miral are very excited to see Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi take shape over the coming months."

Miral is developing Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi under license from Warner Bros. Consumer Products.



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WATER PARKS & RESORTS

► JW Marriott Hill Country debuts water park — Page 18 / ProSlide expands European office— Page 20

Thailand's Ramayana Water Park opens; WhiteWater key supplier

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
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PATTAYA, Thailand — Ramayana Water Park, in Thailand's Silver Lake area, opened to the public on May 5, 2016. With multiple slides and attractions from WhiteWater West and spanning 184,000 square meters, Ramayana is claiming to be the largest water park in Thailand.

The new park is within the Silver Lake area just east of Pattaya. Located on the east coast of Thailand on the Gulf of Thailand, Pattaya has become a popular tourist destination with its massive bay area providing two principal beach fronts. Pattaya draws more than 10 million visitors annually. The Silver Lake area features natural lakes, hills, vineyards, wineries, shrines, beautiful scenery and a break from the hustle and bustle of nearby Pattaya.

"We are pleased to offer a new and totally unique attraction to visitors to Pattaya and to local residents in Bangkok and Southeast Thailand. Ramayana is more than just Thailand's biggest water park, it is an experience of 21 waterslides, some of them totally unique, which span from high thrills to gentle swings. Apart from the amazing nature around us, there are so many other things to experience — so that one day will probably not be enough to explore all attractions," commented Johannes Pattermann, marketing and sales director, Ramayana Water Park.

Ramayana broke ground back in November 2011. In traditional Thai fashion, Buddhist monks were on hand at the ceremony to give the new venture their blessing.

Themed to a long-forgotten Asian city, the water park was designed by Hassell Architects, an international design firm with studios in Australia, China, Singapore and the United Kingdom.

WhiteWater West provided an exciting lineup of attractions including a Dueling Master Blaster that has thrill seekers racing against each other. Other slides appealing to adrenaline junkies include WhiteWater's AquaLoop and Speed Slide, both with AquaDrop capsules. Occupying the same tower as the AquaLoop is a four-lane Whizzard mat racer.

A second slide complex features the backward and forward Boomerango along with four raft slides in different configurations. A flume-through-flume attraction has a bright red and purple open Family Raft Ride passing through the belly of a teal and green double Python water slide. The intertwining slides not only make for a compact footprint, but up the ante on the coolness factor from the ground and most certainly for riders of both slides.

Guests ready to take a break from sliding can pick up a board and test their skills on a Double FlowRider.

Those looking for a less intense experience will enjoy the dual wave pool with more than 120 meters of "beachfront" seating and the relaxing motion of simulated waves. In the middle of the wave pool stands an island stage for live entertainment or special events. The performance stage includes an overhead canopy and a massive LCD screen.

A lazy river is another way to relax, as guests float through waterfalls, caves, geysers, fountains and two smaller wave



pools. Those two wave areas also provide more lounge chair seating. Behind the main wave pool is a relaxation pool with swim-up bar and a specially-designed teen activity pool.

Cabanas for rent will dot the property and an island in the middle of a natural lake is home to several VIP cabanas.

That indigenous lake with a small river provides a natural separation for the kid's area, which is equipped with AquaPlay RainFortress, splash pad, and kids' slides including a Kiddie Rattler.

The park uses only crystal clear drinking water from its own wells and a state of the art filtration system will keep the water clean and pure.

Ramayana combines many surprising design elements of an ancient Asian city, including a natural island with an iconic sculpture, real elephants, which consumers can feed, and even a typical Asian floating market located in the center of the park. Private cabanas for relaxation, quality food and beverage offerings as well as exciting entertainment events will make a visit to Ramayana a perfect setting for creating long lasting family memories.

The Ramayana Water Park sits within the beautiful hills and natural lakes of the Silverlake area. The AquaLoop and tube slides are seen above on the right side of the park. Below, a dual wave pool with center stage will help the park accommodate its expected 2 million guests per year. Bottom, an AquaPlay Rainfortress is fun for the entire family. The park opened on May 5. COURTESY WHITEWATER



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The six new private cabanas include lounge chairs at the edge of the pool on a ledge, in six inches of water, providing private relaxation. Food and beverage service is also included along with picnic package, and snack service. The crafted wooden structures offer shade and privacy. COURTESY JW MARRIOTT

JW Marriott Hill Country Resort debuts water park additions

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
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SAN ANTONIO, Texas — JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort & Spa opened, in March, a \$16 million expansion to its existing River Bluff Water Experience. The addition increases the water park from six acres to nine with several new attractions. The expansion, designed by EDSA and Blur Workshop, was built to increase activity options and enhance the River Bluff Water Experience.

WhiteWater West supplied the two new water slides. Canyon Oak Twister, a WhiteWater Flat Line Loop with AquaDrop capsule, has guests swirling through a translucent blue tube just like a twister. Hill Country Plunge, as the name implies, is an open-air body slide, with a 47-foot straight drop.

A beach-entry swimming pool offers plenty of shallow area to splash around in, or guests can venture further into the 130-foot long pool by walking a gradual slope to the deeper end.

Adjacent to the pool is a new sandy beach area where guests can lounge on the sandy shores, or try their hand at building a sand castle.

The final water amenity addition is a state of the art whirlpool spa that can seat up to 20 people in the relaxing, bubbling, warm water.

Other additions include the River Bend Pavilion that



The new body slides up the thrill factor for both teens and adults. Guests can choose a straight shot, near free fall or twister-like experience from the 47-foot tower.

COURTESY JW MARRIOTT

can be used to host corporate gatherings, receptions, celebrations — even weddings. The pavilion can host 200 guests seated at round tables, or 400 in a theater-style setting.

Gatherings can also be held on the new 16,000 square-foot event lawn covered with artificial turf. The lawn space expands to an outdoor stage and grill area adding 2,000 more square feet of space.

A 22-foot by 32-foot outdoor stage can be used as a venue on its own, or as a stage for entertainment for the lawn and/or pavilion. Together the lawn, pavilion and stage can accommodate up to 1,200 attendees.

The new expansion also

offers an increase in amenities already popular at the existing park — an additional 230 pool side lounge chairs, six more private cabanas and a second fire pit for nightly s'more making.

The River Bluff Experience is for exclusive use by guests of the JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country resort & Spa. The resort is located northeast of down town San Antonio, just 12 miles from San Antonio International Airport. The 1,000-room resort is surrounded by 600 acres of picturesque, rolling, oak-covered hills.

The resort's activity pools are heated during the cold weather seasons and remain open all year long. The River Bluff Water Park attractions are closed when the temperature dips below 50 degrees.

"At the JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort & Spa we believe in welcoming guests with a warm heart and treating them to the best in class service, experience and amenities that they deserve," said Arthur Coulombe, general manager, JW Marriott San Antonio. "The completion of the River Bluff Water Experience expansion and additional event and meeting space provides our guests with enhanced recreation experiences and amenities to enjoy during their stay with us. We look forward to offering our travelers the ultimate in Texas hospitality and unique experiences when visiting the resort."

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Hawaiian Falls no longer in White Settlement, Texas

AT: Jeffrey Seifert

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WHITE SETTLEMENT, Texas — Just two years after opening, the city of White Settlement sent a notice to Harvest Family Entertainment Texas LP (HFE) that it was terminating the land lease it had to operate a Hawaiian Falls water park on city property.

Hawaiian Falls White Settlement, opened in 2014, as the first North Texas waterpark / adventure park combo, adding a ropes course, zip lines, rappelling walls, a 20,000 square-foot indoor arcade, and an event center to the typical water park offerings.

As with many Hawaiian Falls projects, the parks are a public-private partnership, with cities contributing funds or other incentives to have a water park built on city-owned land. The White Settlement Park cost \$17 million to build. Typically, Hawaiian Falls borrows that money from the city then pays it back through its long-term lease agreement.

The City of White Settlement terminated the agreement on April 21, after just two seasons. According to the city, Hawaiian Falls had been in arrears on its lease payments. The city determined that it was unlikely that delinquent lease payments would be made any time in the near future, and that future lease payments were unlikely to be paid as scheduled.

Hawaiian Falls had already sold season passes to the park and had hired and started training employees for the upcoming season. The company has indicated that season passes are good at all Hawaiian Falls parks, and it will try to relocate current employees into its existing locations.

The City of White Settlement has assumed control of the facility and is fast at work removing signage and preparing the park for the upcoming season. Plans call for the establishment of a new name and to have the park open as soon as possible. The city is currently directing questions regarding season passes, tickets, and event bookings to Hawaiian Falls, instructing customers that Hawaiian Falls still exists but Hawaiian Falls White Settlement does not. The City of White Settlement website states: "The city is adamant to see the park facility grow, provide seasonal employment for our youth and other professionals, as well as ensure excellent customer service during and after the changeover."

Harvest Family Entertainment operates six family-friendly water parks in accordance with Christian principles under the Hawaiian Falls brand. The company was founded by David Busch, Horizon Family Holdings LLC, who had experience building multiple water parks in several states. He came to Texas to start a more community-based entertainment company. The first Hawaiian Falls Water Park open in Garland, Texas, in 2003.

HFE has had financial difficulties in the past resulting in the sale of the first two parks in Garland and The Colony to CNL Properties. CNL Properties leases the parks back to HFE to operate as Hawaiian Falls parks.

ProSlide Technologies announces European office expansion

OTTAWA, Ontario, Canada — ProSlide has announced a new addition to the ProSlide Europe team. Based out of Amsterdam, Geert van Heugten will step into the role of business development/account manager for Europe.

"Given the strong growth that we are seeing in Eastern Europe, we believe that now is a perfect time to expand our sales team," said Lars Lenders, vice president of business development. "We expect this growth to accelerate in the coming years, and want to ensure the best service for our clients."

Geert has recent experience in the European theme park industry, having held roles with Merlin Entertainments and Holiday Park Kownaty. Geert graduated from the Breda University of Applied Sciences with a Bachelor's of Business Administration specializing in Attractions & Theme Park Management. Breda is one of just three leisure expertise centers in the world and is affiliated with IAAPA, TEA and several big-name leisure entertainment companies such as Efteling and Disney.



NEWSPLASH

COMPILED: Jeffrey L. Seifert

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Currituck County, North Carolina, is hoping to build a water park to snag tourist dollars as they pass through the county. U.S. 158/Caratoke Highway is a common route for tourists heading to the popular Outer Banks beaches. The county's planning commission board has given its approval for the proposed **OBX** water park design by **Aquatic Development Group** for an 80-acre site on U.S. 158 just north of the city of Harbinger. Residents will still have an opportunity to voice their views at an upcoming commissioners meeting. Most residents recognize the benefit of a water park, although some have expressed concerns over increased traffic. Before approving the water park, the Planning Board approved some rezoning changes to allow the business to operate in that location and also waived a height restriction allowing the park to build a 110-foot waterslide structure. In addition to waterslides, plans show a lazy river, **FlowRider** or other surfing simulator, wave pool, restaurant, shops, changing facilities and a dorm for seasonal employees.

The **City of Carlsbad**, California, opened a new community water park on Memorial Day Weekend. The new park features multiple slides, a pool, lazy river, splash pad and bathhouse. The moderately sized park is built to accommodate a maximum of 350-400 people. No food stands or concessions were added, but there are picnic areas for people who bring their own food. Although designed for residents with a general admission of \$5 per person, the park will be open to everyone.

Mt. Olympus Water & Theme Park in Wisconsin Dells is adding a massive swimming pool to the resort. The Great Pool of Delphi is a \$4-million, 27,000-square-foot pool that holds 500,000 gallons of water and can accommodate up to 2,000 swimmers. The pool will include four islands with tanning decks, a 100-foot geyser, children's splash pad, a 50-foot waterfall and two zero-depth beach-style entrances. Cabanas will surround the rim of the pool and the entire area can accommodate up to 4,000 people. In contrast to the high energy of the nearby waterslides and wave pool, this new area is designed to give guests the opportunity to slow down, relax, and enjoy time together with friends and family members.

In an effort to give back to the community, owners **Eva and Nick Laskaris** will offer free admission to The Great Pool, as well as the rest of the water park, to all Lake Delton and Wisconsin Dells residents.

The **Mexican Government Ministry of Infrastructure** will invest 160 million Pesos (US \$9.1 million) to build a water park in **San Salvador Atenco**. Plans show the new park will include a wave pool, water play structure, lazy river, multiple slides along with changing facilities and eateries. The new park appears to be designed for the residents as San Sal-

vador Atenco is a quiet, rural town, northeast of Mexico City, and is not known for tourism. Residents of the city defeated a plan to build a new airport for Mexico City which would have displaced hundreds from their family-owned farms.

Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania, has upgraded its community pool with water park-like elements. An existing waterslide will now feature a timer to let thrill seekers know how fast they traversed the slide. "Seeing who can go down the slide the fastest will become a new game for children and fortunately it won't encourage them to do anything unsafe," said **Dave Hutner**, recreation program manager. "The quickest way to get down the slide is also the safest way: lying on your back with your arms at your side," he said.

The community water park has also added a new wading pool with a zero-depth entry on one side, and a tipping bucket on the other. The deep end of the wading pool will now feature a rock climbing wall.

Upgrades also included a new water filtration system that now separates the water from the splash pad, wading pool and main pool.

If an accident contaminates one of the pools the others can remain open until clean-up is complete. The new system will also use ultraviolet light to disinfect the water.

Two cities within **East Montgomery County**, Texas, will both receive new splash pad/spray parks in the coming months. The **East Montgomery County Improvement District** (EMCID) was looking to fund projects to enhance community recreational opportunities. A feasibility study determined that two splash parks within the cities of Splendora and Roman Forest were the best options. Both cities have agreed to contribute \$30,000 of the expected \$300,000 cost of each spray park. Construction, which could be started as early as July, will be handled by **Kraftsman Commercial Playgrounds and Water Parks**. Kraftsman has been building aquatic centers in Texas, Louisiana and Oklahoma for more than 30 years.

On Saturday, April 16, 2016, residents of **Moore**, Oklahoma, celebrated the opening of **The Station at Central Park Recreation Center**, a \$26 million recreation and aquatic facility. Construction of the center was started two years ago while the city was rebuilding after a devastating tornado struck the city in May 2013. The facility covers 100,000 square feet and includes a recreation center with basketball courts and fitness areas. The aquatic center includes three waterslides, a lazy river, diving well, lap pool, kid's pool, splash pad with spray features, lounge areas with shade structures and an outdoor concession stand.

"This serves as a testament to the world that Moore is still here and growing and will continue to grow and prosper," Moore Mayor **Glenn Lewis** said before cutting the ribbon.



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New 'pack leader' facilitates company expansion

Family fun fortifies Great Wolf Resorts CEO Rubén Rodríguez

AT: Dean Lamanna

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CHICAGO, Ill. — Being constantly on the go, the man heading up the world's largest indoor water park resort chain understandably likes to enjoy a little on-site R&R.

"My everyday life is pretty intense," said Rubén Rodríguez, CEO of Madison, Wis.-based Great Wolf Resorts, Inc., speaking from a Windy City satellite office that will be one of his bases for expanding the nearly 20-year-old family leisure company. "If I'm conducting business at one of our properties and I take a break, my favorite thing to do is hang out in an inner tube on the Lazy River."

Not that he would be content to remain adrift. Rodríguez, 53, has the background and drive to take Great Wolf wherever Centerbridge Partners, L.P. — the New York City private equity firm that brought him in last September after completing its \$1.35 billion purchase of the brand in May 2015 — wants it to go.

Prior to his current job, Rodríguez served in senior roles for several hospitality and consumer-focused companies. Most recently he was executive vice president of ship operations for Carnival Cruise Lines, which he initially joined as executive vice president of marketing and guest experience in 2007.

Rodríguez also served as a partner and managing director at The Boston Consulting Group, a global strategy and management consulting firm. Separately, he served as senior vice president of corporate strategy for The Charles Schwab Corporation and as vice president and general manager of eToys International, launching the latter company's international business unit.

The executive holds degrees in mechanical engineering from Princeton University and civil engineering from the University of California, Berkeley, as well as an MBA from Stanford.

As Great Wolf's self-described "pack leader," Rodríguez oversees nearly 6,000



employees and 13 Great Wolf Lodges in North America (a 14th, in Colorado Springs, Colo., is scheduled to open this fall). He arrived at the company just months before the opening of Great Wolf's latest and largest lodge near the Disneyland Resort in Garden Grove, Calif. — a partnership with Colorado-based real estate development company McWhinney.

The married father of two college-age children, who was born and raised in Puerto Rico and considers Miami, Fla., his primary home, said the time was right for a new career calling... or in this case, howling.

"My wife and I recently became empty nesters," said Rodríguez, "and frankly, that facilitated my decision to move to the Midwest and join the pack."

He then fielded some questions from *Amusement Today*.

Entering the Southern California market is a big move for any amusement or hospitality company. What does this arrival mean for Great Wolf?

It's an exciting milestone. Being in this market really positions us as a coast-to-coast family brand. It's a destination for families not just from California and the West Coast, but from around the world.

Most of our guests are within driving distance of our lodges; they stay two to three nights and enjoy all the features we offer. But in some situations, as with our lodges in Sandusky [Ohio] and now California, we're part of a broader vacation destination. And we're off to a great start in Garden Grove.

What special attributes does Great Wolf bring to this major market?

The brand's very corner-

stones — an important one being that we are weather-proof. Although Great Wolf started in the Midwest as a year-round attraction, we have found that in warmer markets, such as Dallas or North Carolina, a weather-proof destination is very attractive. Guests don't have to worry about planning a kid's birthday around a weather forecast or slathering on a lot of sunblock.

Of course, we all know that life is complicated, and our guests — certainly families with young children — have complicated lives. Vacations can become stressful when you're running from one place to another with kids. What they like about a Great Wolf Lodge is that it has a lot of fun things to do under one roof. It's also an exclusive and very safe environment.

How else does Great Wolf give parents a helping hand, particularly with accommodating children with special needs and food allergies?

We go out of our way to accommodate all special needs. Our chefs will even meet with the families in order to prepare special meals. It is the right thing to do, and it's good business. Guests become grateful and loyal when you go out of your way to take care of them — whether it's related to diet or disability.

The attractions matter, of course, and guests appreciate that. But what makes a lodge really successful is the people. We're lucky to have pack members that are very engaged, very motivated to serve, and that makes it more likely our guests will return and recommend us.

How does being a parent yourself influence how you see and evaluate your operations?

It has a tremendous influence. My previous role was also with a leisure brand that was very family oriented. I have a pretty active family; we love to spend time together, travel and have fun. And I love to listen not just to my kids but their friends about what they like and don't like.

Much of the judgment



Rubén Rodríguez, CEO, Great Wolf Resorts, Inc.
COURTESY
GREAT WOLF RESORTS

exercised by the Great Wolf pack relates to personal family experience and observation. We're trying to become a family tradition, and it's a lot easier to make those decisions if you've lived through that yourself.

Great Wolf has seen changes in ownership and leadership in the past year or so. What does this signal for the company's direction?

The whole investment thesis for Centerbridge Partners, and the Great Wolf pack, is around growth. This includes building new lodges and adding more features and amenities within existing lodges.

We're lucky to be in a business where consumers value what we offer. Fortunately, we have the legacy of a management team at all our lodges and in Madison that do a great job delivering on those expectations, so we just want to do more of it, basically.

Have you considered expanding the brand's product reach?

Actually, within our own four walls, my predecessor [former Great Wolf CEO] Kim Schaefer and her team really did a good job of that. Our Great Wolf Kids Store, which has the Creation Station where we create all these wonderful plush versions of our costumed characters, like Wiley the Wolf and Sammy the Squirrel, has been successful. Scoops, our mommy-and-me spa experience, has been, too.

We're thinking about how we can activate the

characters more. This includes how to make them a stronger part of the experience and a stronger part of the planning before the lodge visit. And how we can keep kids, particularly, engaged with the characters using technology beyond the visit. We're going to start exploring some new attractions and experiences with the opening of our Colorado lodge.

After Colorado, where is Great Wolf headed next?

We're in advanced planning for a lodge in Georgia, our first in the state, within driving distance of Atlanta. We've also acquired land in Orlando. Entitlements and approvals take longer in Florida, so it's premature to say more. We've begun exploring opportunities in Arizona and Northern California, too.

This year, we're also working with a consultant to prioritize international markets.

Will Great Wolf be seeking more project partners such as it has in Southern California?

It really depends on the market, the opportunity and the site. McWhinney really understands and supports our brand. We have another great partner with our Niagara Falls lodge, The Jim Pattison Group. Most of our lodges, however, we own as well as operate. In fact, we recently acquired back our lodges in Sandusky and Wisconsin Dells, which at one point the company had sold.

We have access to capital because we're pretty profitable and backed by a private equity firm with significant resources. So when we believe we can do a project without a partner, we do it on our own.

What energizes you most about leading Great Wolf?

The business of making people happy is a very human endeavor, and we try to provide wonderful experiences to the families that entrust their time and vacation money with us. It's been the culture and tradition of the company since the start. I'm very proud to be a part of it.

•greatwolf.com

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PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► Massive B&M Dive coaster, Valravn dives into Cedar Point — Page 34 / Fairs — Pages 37-42

Spin Zone Bumper Cars open at three California Boomers parks

ALISO VIEJO, Calif. — Apex Parks Group recently announced the opening of three new Spin Zone Bumper Cars attractions at Boomers parks in Modesto, Fresno, and Upland, Calif. All three locations opened the bumper cars as an indoor experience.

Spin Zone Bumper Cars are located inside the arcade building, allowing for all-weather operation. Spin Zone is considered the next generation of bumper cars in the amusement industry. The cars are round and will spin and twirl when bumped, creating a wild ride and unique experience for guests. The Spin Zone arena will accommodate approximately 7-8 riders during each 5-minute ride

session. The bumper car rides were supplied by Ride Development Company.

In addition to the Spin Zone Bumper Cars, the three Boomers parks are finishing up upgrades, refurbishments and remodels. Work on each of the parks' upgrades have been progressing since January and are part of a greater commitment made by Apex Parks Group to improve guest experience at all of their park properties.

Boomers Modesto has the largest overhaul of the three parks, with the addition of a sports bar, complete café remodel and new prize redemption counter configuration. General Manager Misty Romero commented, "The



Apex Parks Group has opened Spin Zone Bumper Cars at three California Boomers properties. Here, the ride is seen in operation at the Modesto location.

COURTESY APEX PARKS GROUP

overall experience for our guests will be enhanced greatly with a new indoor attraction, the addition of

beer and wine, and the facility improvements. We have been with Apex Parks Group for a little over a

year now, and the investment that the company has made in the parks is impressive."

Boomers Upland General Manager, Steve Fullerton said, "We are thrilled to bring a fresh take on family-oriented fun that our facility has been providing the City of Upland since 1973. We look forward to seeing the community reaction to our facility as they experience the changes."

Amber Collier, general manager of Boomers Fresno agreed. "It's an exciting time for us," she said. "We look forward to being able to provide more options for family entertainment, celebrations, and dining opportunities to the Fresno community."

Cap'n Crow's Bumper Boats, Zero G new this season at Indiana Beach

MONTICELLO, Ind. — Indiana Beach Boardwalk Resort has announced the addition of Cap'n Crow's Bumper Boats from J&J Amusements and Zero G, a Larson International Ring of Fire for the park's 90th anniversary season. The bumper boat attraction will replace the former Splash Battle ride on the Boardwalk Funway. The Ring of Fire is being relocated from Speed Zone in Dallas, Texas.



The colorful and fun Cap'n Crow's Bumper Boats will allow guests to be the captain of their own boat as they cruise the waters searching for others to bump. Each boat is outfitted with a water sprayer that can soak an opponent from 10 feet away. Up to 12 bumper boats at a time will battle each other for a thrilling guest experience.

"Indiana Beach is thrilled to add Cap'n Crows Bumper Boats as another fun and exciting ride for our guests to enjoy," said John Collins, Indiana Beach Boardwalk Resorts general manager. "With all the park improvements and upgrades being completed in preparation for Indiana Beach's 90th anniversary season, adding a ride as thrilling as Zero G is icing on the cake."

Cap'n Crow's Bumper Boats will be located on the south island on Indiana Beach's and utilize an existing water ride pond area formerly occupied by Splash Battle.

•indianabeach.com

SBF/VISA Reverse Time a big hit at Quassy



Reverse Time, the new thrill ride at Quassy Amusement & Waterpark, Middlebury, Conn., is a huge hit with fans in its first few days of operation. Making its North American debut at Quassy, the ride is shown during spring operation at the family-owned park. Built during the winter by SBF/VISA Group of Italy, Reverse Time arrived at Quassy in early March and was assembled within a week. SBF/VISA Group is represented in the United States by Rides 4U, Somerville, N.J. COURTESY QUASSY



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Triotech delivers 4D ride Legoland California welcomes Ninjago World

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

CARLSBAD, Calif. — Legoland California Resort officially premiered Lego Ninjago World, its new one-acre land, to the public on May 5. The theme park's expansion is based on the hit Lego Ninjago line of construction toys and the Cartoon Network television series *Lego Ninjago: Masters of Spinjitzu*.

The section includes a competitive dark ride and interactive elements featuring the key characters from the Ninjago universe. Lego Ninjago tells the story of four young Ninja heroes — Kai, Jay, Cole and Zane — who train under the watchful eye of Sensei Wu to master the ancient martial art of Spinjitzu.

The characters' tale is told dynamically through Lego Ninjago The Ride, Ninjago World's primary draw. Combining 3D computer-generated animation with fourth-dimension special effects, the three-and-a-half-minute experience allows guests — with just a wave of their hands — to throw lightning bolts, direct shockwaves, send ice soaring and emit fireballs in order to defeat the villains.

"Knowing how popular Ninjago is among our young guests, I'm excited to see them interact and engage as they train to be ninjas," said Peter Ronchetti, general manager of Legoland California Resort.

Lego Ninjago The Ride is the latest multimedia attraction created by Montreal, Canada-based Triotech, which is introducing its new cutting-edge hand gesture technology, called Maestro, on this ride and on versions opening at Legoland Billund in Denmark and Legoland Maylasia. The system enables guests to control the outcome of their adventure through the power of hand gestures, without a handheld device.

"Maestro features the ultimate ergonomics: each guest uses his or her own hands, or hand," said Ernest Yale, president and CEO of Triotech. "They can use left or right, one or two hands. Just like an orchestra conductor, guests create an amazing experience by waving their hands. It is



Lego Ninjago The Ride (above), the centerpiece of Legoland's new Lego Ninjago World section, is a first-of-its-kind 4D interactive experience during which riders aim at targets with martial arts-style hand gestures instead of weapons. The area's Ninja Kitchen eatery offers a Bánh mì Vietnamese sandwich (right) with several meat choices.

COURTESY LEGOLAND



very intuitive and adaptive to the guest's playing style."

Yale further explained that the technology works by first detecting each guest's hand motion, then sophisticated software determines where the guest is aiming. That is then translated to an image showing the projectile's progress on screen. Each guest is assigned a color so he or she will know exactly where they are aiming and receive instant feedback by seeing their projectiles and impacts.

Through 3D imagery, high-tech sensors and the aforementioned hand movements, riders collect points for their training and battle efforts throughout the ride; scores are displayed when their quest is completed. Several 4D effects, such as heat, smoke and wind, enliven the fun.

"Every detail is designed to enhance the guest experience and immerse them in the adventure," said Chris Brzezicki, project manager for Legoland California Resort. "The intent is to blur the line between the real physical theming and the virtual animated projection."

The ride accommodates up to four "ninja warriors" per vehicle.

Before guests board Lego

Ninjago The Ride, they will have the opportunity to train like a ninja in four other attractions throughout Ninjago World: Zane's Temple Build, Kai's Spinners, Cole's Rock Climb and Jay's Lightning Drill. All are designed to test guests' balance, agility and speed.

Also awaiting visitors are a new retail outlet, Wu's Warehouse, and a dining option, Ninja Kitchen — featuring a zesty Asian menu highlighted by Bánh mì Vietnamese sandwiches on steamed buns.

Four Lego Master Model Builders spent 550 hours creating the decorative Lego figures for Ninjago World. Of the 22 new models installed throughout the area, the largest — depicting Nya (ninja of water) hurling water at Zane (ninja of ice) — required 73,600 Lego pieces.

"We are excited to be working with Triotech to bring this global project to three of our parks across three countries," said Hans Aksel Pedersen, managing director of Legoland Parks. "Lego Ninjago The Ride represents a new class of Legoland attraction in terms of technology, immersion and interactivity. This is a world first and completely unique theme park experience."

•legoland.com

Zamperla issues statement regarding ride mishap in India

ALTAVILLA, Vicentina, Italy — Zamperla is saddened to learn of the fatal accident at Kishkinta Park near Chennai, India, which occurred on May 11, 2016, involving a ride called the Disco Dancer. It is important for the public to know that the ride involved in this accident was not a Zamperla product. Zamperla, a leading manufacturer of amusement rides worldwide, devotes considerable resources to developing its unique amusement rides, providing the safest possible experience for the public. The ride involved in this accident was an unauthorized, poorly executed forgery of the Zamperla design. Although outwardly appearing like a Zamperla ride, copies do not receive the level of engineering and manufacturing expertise Zamperla invests in each of its designs. Zamperla urges customers to only purchase genuine Zamperla rides and replacement parts in order to ensure the safety of their customers. Please direct any further inquiries to: Zamperla@zamperla.it.

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Canada's Wonderland takes to the air with two new rides

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

VAUGHAN, Ontario, Canada — Canada's Wonderland celebrates a 35th anniversary in 2016 with two new additions. A SkyRoller, built by Gerstlauer, has been dubbed Skyhawk. The second installation is Flying Eagles, a Larson Flying Scooters.

"The interactive element, along with the aviation experience, plus they accommodate the majority of age groups — those combined factors are what drove the selection of the two rides," said Norm Pirtovshek, vice president and general manager of Canada's Wonderland. "Not to mention the uniform marketing message for both: flying!"

At its tallest point, Skyhawk stands 135 feet tall and seats 24 passengers during the flight. Riders can navigate their experience by utilizing controls at their hands to maneuver wings on the vehicle, causing the carriage to rock or flip.

"We were thrilled with this project," said Adam Sandy of Ride Entertainment Group, who represents Gerstlauer and also interfaced with Canada's Wonderland throughout the project. "The Cedar Fair team had interest in the ride as far back as IAAPA 2014 and we signed a contract last spring."

Skyhawk is the first of its kind in North America, giving Canada's Wonderland even more bragging rights in its eclectic assortment of giant flat rides.

"Skyhawk provided by Gerstlauer was customized at our request to improve the guest experience and the installation," said Pirtovshek. "The base frame was installed in a pit which cleaned up

the look of the ride at ground level where a few changes were made."

Sandy added, "We have had a lot of clients that want interactivity as part of the guest experience. It is not always possible, but I think on an experience like the Sky Roller, it sets the attraction apart from other flat ride options."

Not only is the ride the first of its kind in North America, but Skyhawk also has been taken to a more engaging level.

"The park took the experience to the next step by requesting a counter system for Skyhawk, so after each ride cycle, the video monitors show which rider flipped the most," said Sandy. "This competition is something that I am sure the park will roll out to social media and is a unique way to keep a younger generation of parkgoers engaged and wanting to come back."

Positioned near Windseeker, the Mondial swing ride, which stands more than 300 feet in the air, Skyhawk's height of 135 feet may seem overshadowed. *Amusement Today* asked Pirtovshek about the close juxtaposition.

"Skyhawk is located in our themed area known as Action Zone. We set it on the hill across from Windseeker, which offset some of the height difference," he said. Combining height with the dynamics that Skyhawk delivers differentiates the two rides, but they fit nicely with the many thrilling and unique rides we have in Action Zone."

Even more family friendly is Flying Eagles. Once again, the addition is particularly interactive as guests have the opportunity to control their adventure. Flying Scooters is a time-honored classic that has seen a huge resurgence in the past

► See CANADA'S WONDERLAND, page 31



For 2016, Canada's Wonderland has added two flying rides. Above, the Gerstlauer's SkyRoller is named Skyhawk and keeps track of each rider's number of flips they perform during their ride. Below, the popular Larson Flying Scooters is dubbed the Flying Eagles.

COURTESY CANADA'S WONDERLAND



Carowinds opens attraction based on Plants vs. Zombies Garden Warfare



Above, guests take aim at the attacking zombies or plants, depending on which side of the theater they occupy. Below, Plants vs. Zombies Garden Warfare uses a pre-existing theater re-themed to the new IP. Theming outside the theater helps set the preshow story. AT/TIM BALDWIN



AT: Tim Baldwin

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CHARLOTTE, N.C. — To utilize resources already in hand is not only smart business, but also not uncommon in the amusement industry. Carowinds, which is one of five parks within the Cedar Fair chain once owned by Paramount/Viacom and branded as Paramount Parks, introduced a motion simulator theater in 1994. Based on the film *Days of Thunder*, the attraction ran in each park for a few seasons. Eventually, films were changed out and the name of the venue was simply changed to Action Theater.

In addition to the park's major water park expansion for 2016 (which was wrapping up final details as this issue went to press), Carowinds launched a new attraction as the season opened in early spring: Plants vs. Zombies Garden Warfare 3Z Arena. It is the first attraction to partner with the entertainment brand from PopCap Games and Electronic Arts (EA) studio.

Those not familiar with the popular video game — originally launched in 2014 — can get a quick crash course in the queue



area. Evil Dr. Zomboss, leader of the zombies, secretly overhears horticulturalist Crazy Dave mention something about "golden gnomes." This eavesdropping convinces Dr. Zomboss to challenge Dave to seize the power of the mysterious gnomes for himself. Humor and over-the-top characterization makes this a fun outing for the whole family. General Manager Brad Marcy thinks the experience will really resonate with the younger audience.

"With digital attractions becoming an increasingly popular part of the modern amusement park, partnering with a renowned electronic games company like EA makes great sense," said Marcy. "The height require-

ment is 48 inches, but it really is both feet have to touch the foot pedestals, so if the child is 46 inches, but both feet touch, then they're okay."

A test seat is placed in front of the attraction.

The Action Theater has been thematically revamped, now with the theater divided into two halves, one dedicated to the zombie side and one to the outrageous plant side. This naturally sets the stage for a great battle of hilarious sights, sound and interaction. The experience is enhanced with 3D glasses and motion-based seats mounted motorcycle style. During *Amusement Today's* visit, it was impressive to observe how much more quickly this newer seating allowed the dispatch of the attraction's start time compared to that of the older motion simulator.

Each side of the theater has 32 motion-based seats, making for a combined total of 64. However, each side also has two ADA accessible laser pistols to allow for 68 guests each cycle.

Created by AlterFace (Wavre, Belgium), the 3D interaction comes from players shooting at the marauding opponents

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►CANADA'S WONDERLAND

Continued from page 30

decade. With 2016 additions, Cedar Fair has purchased nine such rides from Larson International.

"The Cedar Fair team is great to work with," says Jeff Novotny, president of Larson International. "The Flying Scooters is a classic ride that offers the interactive element to keep guests actively participating while on the ride."

When it comes to return on investment, Novotny feels the ride is a winner. "The price point of the Flying Scooters is comparable to most children's rides," he said. "However, I think it offers the higher speeds and flying characteristics that appeal to most every age group. The installation expense is reasonable as the ride only takes one day to install, a single concrete column for a foundation and the associated loading surface."

Soulla Lindo, public relations manager, has tried out both of the new additions. When asked about her favorite, she told AT: "I've ridden both, Skyhawk is definitely a thrill ride. Once you get the hang of doing your 360-degree inversions, it's an incredible feeling. Flying Eagles is a family ride, but a lot of parents (who may not like some of the bigger thrill rides) like it as much as the kids!"

"Canada's Wonderland opened [Wonder Mountain] Guardian, which is tech-based interactivity, in 2014 and two years later is opening Skyhawk, an interactive thrill ride," said Sandy. "The Flying Eagles is an interactive family ride. It says a lot to me when one of the most-visited parks in North America is intent on including interactive attractions in their ride lineup."

In addition to new rides, Canada's Wonderland also has countless new offerings for visitors. New for 2016 special events include: Friday Night Movies all summer, a Brew & BBQ Festival in June, a Bacon Festival and Taste of Greece in July, and Taste of Italy in August. This is in addition to many other popular events returning throughout the season. Among its diverse show package, new productions this year include: The Woofjocks Canine All Stars (spring), Stars of the Peking Acrobats (summer), Craz-E-Crew Xtreme Wheels (early summer), KidZFest (early July), Day Tripper Beatles Experience (late July), Ultimate Thrills Circus (late summer), and Acrodunk (late summer).

"I can't wait for the Brew & BBQ Festival and the Bacon Festival," said Lindo. "I love food. I mean, who doesn't love bacon!?" She added, "The shows have me really excited, too. The entertainment lineup is action-packed this year."

►CAROWINDS

Continued from page 30

on screen. As the guest fires at the attacking plants or zombies, the number of his or her corresponding weapon appears on the blast on screen. Throughout the five minute experience, team scores are displayed keeping the rivalry between the two parts of the theater engaged.

"It has been really interesting to work with EA and the designers of the game. We talk weekly to see what we can add and do even more enhancements," Marcy said.

Each half of the theater has a 14.5-foot by 26-foot screen with independent surround sound. Thematic dividers keep players from becoming distracted to the opposing graphics on the opposite side of the theater. The attraction accommodates between 600-700 guests per hour. Of note, when

the theaters were originally built in 1994, there were two sides. Currently Carowinds is only using one side for the renovation. The park, or its sister facilities, could easily expand the attraction by redeveloping the second side as well if the demand ever dictated further investment.

"Initial discussions started last May or June, and they finally made a decision later in the summer," Marcy told AT. "We announced it in the fall after the water park expansion had already been announced."

With new offerings, both in the water park and main park, combined with the seasonal festivals, such as the springtime Taste of the Carolinas, Carowinds seems very positioned to follow up the Best New Ride for 2015 Golden Ticket winner — Fury 325 — to have a great season and continue to grow their market.



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Six Flags Fiesta Texas brings new life to Fiesta Bay Boardwalk

Three new rides, upgrades and colorful lighting are part of the package

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — In 1994, the young Fiesta Texas was opening for its third season. Fiesta Bay Boardwalk was the park's first expansion. It offered a variety of attractions that included rides, pay-extra activities and a boardwalk style atmosphere. Over the past two decades, the area has seen changes in the lineup of attractions on the Boardwalk, and in recent years, simply the closure of a few rides. The area was lacking and in need of some energy.

That changed in 2016. Opening officially to the public on May 14, the revamped Fiesta Bay Boardwalk now beams with color, light and shiny new attractions. Six Flags recognized the need to address the shortcomings of the Boardwalk and has successfully brought new life to the area. Larson International and Zamperla supplied the new ride capital.

Following the removal of one ride retired last fall and some previously closed non-operating rides, the tallest among the new attractions is Fireball, a looping thrill ride (Super Loop) from Larson standing 72 feet tall. Decked out with LED lights around the ring and fire décor along



Multi-color LED lights on Fireball and strung over the boardwalk enhance the nighttime atmosphere. The more than 2,000 lights have been added and the colors can be customized to the season. Like the Fireball, Spinsanity, a new-style Tilt-A-Whirl with custom touches, was built in Texas by Larson International. AT/TIM BALDWIN; COURTESY SIX FLAGS FIESTA TEXAS

the top, the creative team at Six Flags has accented the loop installations for 2016 with custom hot rod detailing at the ends of the train of seats.

"Two of our rides are actually built right here in the great state of Texas," said Neal Thurman, park president of Six Flags Fiesta Texas. That pride comes from Larson being located in Plainview, Texas. The second ride is Spinsanity, the classic Tilt-A-Whirl with the park's own touches thrown in. "Fireball, Hurricane Force 5 and Spinsanity are a perfect fit for the new Fiesta Bay Boardwalk."

Fiesta Texas implemented some enhancements to the midway favorite when installing Spinsanity. What will be most welcome in the Texas heat is the addition of a shade structure over the Tilt-A-Whirl. In addition,

the modern adaptation of this family favorite allows for more unobstructed views than the old "clamshell" cars, plus one of the new vehicles features a special door that helps accommodate visitors in wheelchairs or those with special needs. Like Fireball, Spinsanity is also adorned with LED lights.

Hurricane Force 5 is the first Mega Disk'O from Zamperla to appear in the state. The rotating platform seats 24 passengers motorcycle style facing outward. The back-and-forth rocking motion up the curved track rotates riders up to five stories high.

"As we designed a spectacular new look to the Boardwalk, we wanted to bring our guests some favorite seaside thrills and compliment the current park lineup of rides," Thurman told AT. "We wanted our 'Triple Threat of



Thrills' to fit into the feel of your favorite seaside boardwalk."

To get a sense of the extent of renovation to the area, guests need only look down at their feet. New lumber planking replaced the entire previous boardwalk decking. If laid end to end, the lumber would stretch 90 miles. "From San Antonio to Austin," laughed Sydne Purvis, communications manager.

The revamp also included four new shade structures, 10 new fans and 25 red Adirondack-style rocking chairs. Queuing for all new rides is shaded and high power fans deliver cooling breezes. Of note, temperature sensors automatically turn the fans on when the heat rises to an appropriate warmth.

"Fiesta Bay Boardwalk has such a great seaside ambience during the daytime, but at night, the new enhanced lighting makes the atmosphere totally transformed," said Purvis. "It's fabulous."

More than 2,000 LED lights have been added. Zig-zag lighting is strung overhead in multiple locations. Six Flags management reported that more than 60 different light patterns take place overhead.

Through August, the park has extended the hours until 10:00 p.m. on Saturdays for the first time. When asked about the impact to the fall and winter events, Thurman told AT, "The Boardwalk will be transformed into a terrifying scare zone during Fright Fest. In addition, the look and feel of the Fiesta Bay Boardwalk will compliment Holi-

day in the Park." The LED lights can be customized to reflect the corresponding festivals with appropriate colors and patterns.

Other enhancements include a new signature Jelly Belly store, a Fireball Snacks eatery, and freshly painted facades on Boardwalk offerings as well as the existing rides.

The renovation of the Boardwalk also helped factor into the timing in some upgrades to the park's dark ride at the end of the Boardwalk: Scooby-Doo Ghostbusters. A recent station makeover now allows the ride vehicles to never stop, but have a continually moving loading system.

"We doubled our capacity the very first weekend we re-opened it," said Jeffrey Siebert, marketing director. "Lines commonly went out the door to where we had to build outside queuing."

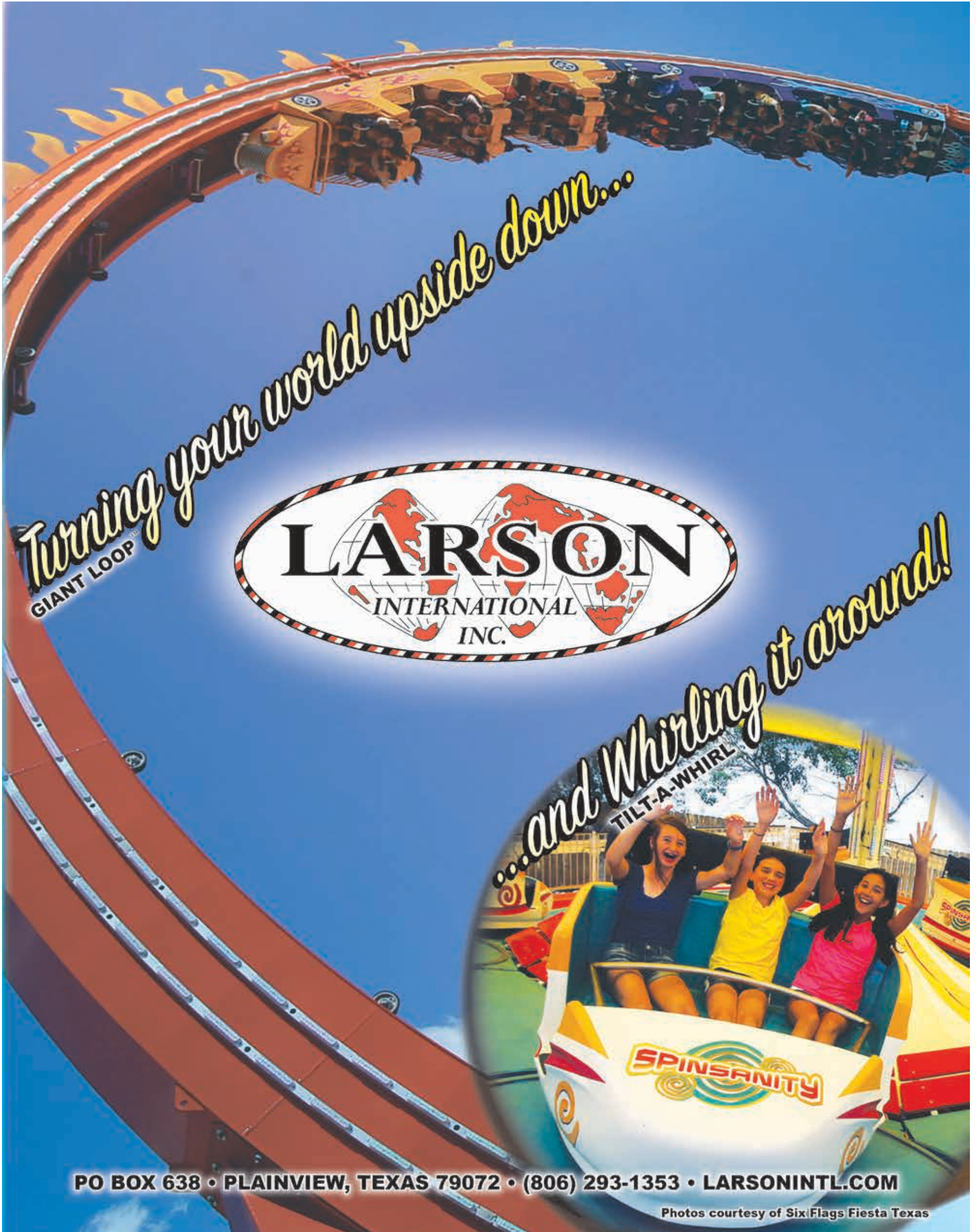
"We are continually looking for opportunities to deliver more ride experiences, and the new loading station allows us to welcome more riders than ever before on this fun family attraction," said Thurman.

The park also has non-stop loading on its Pandemonium roller coaster and Bugs' Whitewater Rapids, the park's flume.

Coming later this month, the park will debut the VR experience on the Superman Krypton Coaster, a Bolliger & Mabillard floorless coaster. It will be one of three Six Flags parks utilizing a Superman theme with the VR system. It officially debuts June 11.



Left to right: A custom front end on Fireball is reminiscent of early model race cars. Park President Neal Thurman, Marketing Director Jeffrey Siebert and Director of Operations Tim Laseter, take a spin on Spinsanity. Colorful Adirondack chairs provide opportunities for riders and non-riders to relax. Ten new fans turn on automatically when temperatures reach the programmed setting. COURTESY SF FIESTA TEXAS; AT/TIM BALDWIN



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Photos courtesy of Six Flags Fiesta Texas

Valravn diversifies Cedar Point's lineup of record-setting coasters

The park turns to B&M for fourth time

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

SANDUSKY, Ohio — Setting records is nothing new for Cedar Point. In fact, it is a reputation for which the park has become quite famous. With a lineup of world-class roller coasters climbing into the upper double digits, the park has set records more than 10 times with its coasters.

For 2016, B&M has delivered one of its massive giants to Cedar Point. This makes a fourth time the legendary Sandusky park has partnered with B&M. Following in true fashion of its predecessors, Valravn takes on the namesake of a “creature.” This follows Raptor, Rougarou (formerly Mantis) and GateKeeper, each with its imposing edge.

What differentiates the new Valravn from the other breeds is its signature moment of pause — for four seconds — at the precipice of a 214-foot drop. What took riders by complete surprise during previews was the spectacular view of not only the park, but the expanse of Lake Erie beyond the shore. Cedar Point is given high praise for the perfect positioning of the ride.

What is particularly im-

pressive about Valravn is not just its record-setting statistics, but the quality of the installation. Notable details are vast, including a brand new midway that not only eliminates the dead end toward the park's venerable Blue Streak, but provides new seating, shade, ornamentation, an expanded restaurant patio and spectator areas. The artistry of pavers, bench walls and shape design of the midway are appreciated even more so from Valravn's dramatic view.

“Valravn and the whole area has a great look and the station is very sleek,” said Jason McClure, vice president and general manager of Cedar Point. “The planning and design team did a fantastic job with creating the features of the Valravn bird with the feathered siding on the building and sleek angles of the building — it's very sharp.”

Rob Decker, senior vice president of planning and design, said, “I like our parks to be a park first. This midway didn't exist before. More importantly, I like to have people in the middle of the ride. There is that visual appeal and physical energy. Why not give the guest a place to relax in shaded



The skyline at Cedar Point has a new addition with the 223-foot-tall Valravn coaster. Passengers experience a spectacular 214-foot-long vertical drop at 75 mph to begin their exciting ride. AT/TIM BALDWIN

comfort of the midway?” He laughed, “Beyond that we probably bought all the pavers in the state of Ohio as we began to dress it up.”

“Compared to other parks, a big difference [at Cedar Point] is the length of stay. It's a day long destination,” said McClure. “We want it to be comfortable and as easy for people as possible. Plenty of seat wall, places to sit and grab something to drink, more shade and we have free wi-fi in the park this year — all those elements make the day a little easier on your feet.”

“For Valravn, I saw it as a dark figure. We like to bring in creatures that give the ride a certain character,” said

Decker.

The park uses such terms as regal blue, majestic bronze and illustrious gold when it comes to the color scheme.

“The colors make it distinctive, compared to the other colors around the park,” added McClure.

This is no understatement, as with the large number of roller coasters and huge number of rides — 71 all totaled — it's no small feat to come up with new looks with much of the color palette already in play. Interestingly, it is the silver backing painted on the boxed spine of the track that accentuates the twists and inversions and particularly shines reflectively with the uplighting once the sun sets. “We always try to think of what a ride will look like at night,” said McClure.

Decker estimates that 10 to 15 percent of the project budget goes toward the aesthetic and comfort aspects of the guests.

“What's new for us is this regal throne,” Decker said. “People want to take their picture with the sign, and we often put a fence up to separate them, so we made this big throne for people to do just that. I think a little league ball team can fit here.”

Valravn's position in the park also made it an opportune time to renovate Cedar Point's Marina Gate, which now looks modern and strikingly beautiful.

“I think a sense of arrival to a park is a big part of it,” said Decker. “You should celebrate that. People have been

waiting for months to bring the kids and saving for this. You want to validate that, give them that sense of arrival, give them that moment.”

The dive coaster's statistics are the park's marketing focus: 223 feet tall, 3,415 feet long, 75 mph and three inversions — all of which are records for a dive coaster. Guests, however, will find the installation goes beyond the coaster itself. Cedar Point has delivered the complete package.

“My favorite moment is seeing guests exit a new coaster for the first time and gauge their feelings by the look of joy — or terror! — on their faces,” said Tony Clark, director of communications. “Hopefully, we've done our job to provide a ride that's different enough to stand out. I'm confident Valravn will be that ride. The experience isn't like anything in our lineup.”

Valravn's placement, along with it being the fifth roller coaster in the park to exceed 200 feet, makes it a dramatic impact for spectators.

“When you see how massive Valravn is as it literally encroaches the midway, you have no choice but to look up and enjoy the ride vicariously through the guests who are screaming,” commented Clark. “I think this is important to our business, as we know that not every guest is going to want to ride.”

Valravn officially opened to the public on May 7, the opening weekend of the 2016 season. The coaster features three trains that seat 24 passengers in three rows of eight. In addition to the three inversions, the dive coaster includes two 90-degree drops. Hourly capacity is expected to approach 1,200 riders.

“B&M is so great to work with. This is their 100th coaster, so that's exciting for us,” said McClure. “Things went really smooth. Anytime you do something of this size and scale you think that not everything will go the way you want to with winter weather, but we had a relatively mild winter, which certainly helped. To have Valravn ready for opening weekend as promised is a testament to B&M.”



Cedar Point's fourth roller coaster from B&M is Valravn, a record-setting Dive Coaster, shown at left. Above, the ride features three rows of eight passengers each. Riders will experience three inversions (Immelmann, dive loop and 270-degree roll) during the 3,415-foot-long ride.

AT/DAN FEICHT

New attractions opening across resort's four parks

Walt Disney World debuts rides, night spectaculars for summer

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — The Walt Disney World Resort is quadrupling down on its annual high-season attraction roll-out — introducing major new show and ride experiences at all four of its theme parks.

The attractions encompass high-tech light and fireworks shows as well as two new rides. And Disney's Animal Kingdom, for the first time in its 18-year history, will have nighttime hours.

One attraction that has not been unveiled as originally announced is Rivers of Light, a nighttime show to be located in Animal Kingdom's Discovery River lagoon. The technically ambitious program combining lighting effects, mist screens, animation and live performers missed its April premiere date and a rescheduled debut had not been announced before *Amusement Today* went to press.

Here's a park-by-park rundown of some of the high-lights:

Disney's Animal Kingdom

The park begins its new evening schedule on Memorial Day weekend, enabling guests to enjoy old favorites such as Expedition Everest and Kali River Rapids in a different way.

•The iconic Tree of Life now awakens each night amid lively Discovery Island music and dance. Through projection mapping and other special effects, animal spirits appear and fireflies weave stories as the tree morphs to showcase the magic of nature.

•Discovery River serves as the stage for music and pageantry in *The Jungle Book: Alive with Magic*, a limited-engagement show inspired by Disney's hit live-action film *The Jungle Book*.

•Discovery Island now is home to Tiffin's, a travel-themed restaurant serving lunch and dinner featuring African, Asian and South American flavors.

Disney's Hollywood Studios

This month, in the record-setting box office wake of *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, new *Star Wars*-themed experiences



begin arriving at light speed.

•The next generation of *Star Wars*-themed fireworks shows, *Star Wars: A Galactic Spectacular*, features lasers, special effects and projection mapping of iconic characters and scenes from the complete saga — all set to the classic score of the film series.

•First Order Stormtroopers led by Captain Phasma march in from *Star Wars* Launch Bay to the park's Center Stage, adding menace to the entertainment.

Epcot

Disney characters are among the new elements bringing added excitement to the 34-year-old park this month.

•Anna, Elsa and their *Frozen* friends will welcome guests aboard the new *Frozen Ever After* boat ride, which sets sail at the Norway Pavilion. Passengers on their way to Arendelle's Winter in Summer Celebration for Queen Elsa visit the ice palace and hear film tunes plus new lyrics by Oscar-winning "Let It Go" songwriters Bobby Lopez and Kristen Anderson-Lopez.

•Also at the Norway Pavilion, Anna and Elsa will greet guests in the new *Royal Sommerhus*, modeled after a traditional Norwegian cabin.

•In Future World, June 17 will mark the U.S. debut of *Soarin' Around the World* at The Land Pavilion. Now with a third Epcot theater, plus new digital screens and projection systems, the expanded attraction takes guests on an exhilarating "flight" above spectacular global landscapes and manmade wonders. (The revamped motion simulator experience premieres at Disney California Adventure in Ana-



The Walt Disney World Resort's theme parks are offering fresh forms of fun, including (clockwise from top left) a light show starring the Tree of Life at Disney's Animal Kingdom; a character-packed Mickey's Royal Friendship Faire at the Magic Kingdom; a digitally upgraded, all-new *Soarin' Around the World* ride film at Epcot; and the technically advanced *Star Wars: A Galactic Spectacular* fireworks show at Disney's Hollywood Studios.

COURTESY WALT DISNEY WORLD RESORT

heim, Calif., on the same date.)

Magic Kingdom

Also in June, Magic Kingdom guests can see classic Disney characters together with contemporary animated film stars in a new extravaganza on the Cinderella Castle stage.

•Tiana of *The Princess*

and the Frog and Rapunzel of *Tangled* co-star with Anna and Elsa of *Frozen* — joining a host of favorite Disney characters in the new Mickey's Royal Friendship Faire show. The presentation combines dance, fireworks and stunts with music.

•Next door to the legend-

ary *Jungle Cruise*, guests can enjoy boldly flavored "jungle cuisine" served by the wise-cracking crew of the new *Jungle Navigation Co. Ltd. Skipper Canteen*.

Visit the resort's website for updates and additional summer season news.

•disneyworld.com



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Amusement park sprouts across from water park

Proprietor cultivates success at Cultus Lake Adventure Park

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

CULTUS LAKE, B.C., Canada — Growing up in British Columbia, Chris Steunenberg never pictured himself having a future in the amusement industry.

Sure, he enjoyed the rides and attractions at Vancouver's Pacific National Exhibition (PNE) and heading out to the water park at Cultus Lake, less than an hour east of the city. But then, these were common youthful distractions — nothing that would alter his route to a lucrative career in construction, heavy steel fabrication and real estate investment.

Then, in 1996, Steunenberg saw an opportunity to buy Cultus Lake Water Park, an 11-year-old build-out by WhiteWater West Industries, Ltd., of Richmond, B.C. — and took it. And in 2014, across the street — after assembling two acres of land centered on a former bumper boat and mini-golf operation and installing several additional rides — he opened Cultus Lake Adventure Park.

"I always liked going to the PNE and riding the wooden roller coaster," Steunenberg told *Amusement Today*. "Having my own roller coaster now is awesome. It's quite amazing, really."

Fun springs eternal

It was his success with Cultus Lake Waterpark that convinced Steunenberg to



take a gamble on the purchase and expansion of neighboring Giggle Ridge Adventure Golf, built in 2000. The water park, which originally was 4.5 acres and had six slides, had tripled in size and number of attractions under his ownership and operation. And its seasonal attendance of 40-50,000 had peaked at more than 200,000.

Working with the mini-golf's builder, Imagination Corporation, an award-winning theme park design and environmental construction company based in nearby Chilliwack, Steunenberg made optimal use of the park's natural, mature evergreen-filled wooded setting by adding Western and whimsical fairy tale themes. He was able to get half of his new amusement park open in 2014; its current incarnation was completed by last season.

Cultus Lake Adventure park now has nine rides and two attractions, including a 28-foot-diameter carousel by Chance and six rides by Zamperla. The latter are a Midi Family Swinger, a Samba Tower, a Sky Tower, a Disk'O 24, a Junior Coaster and a Discovery 360.

"The coaster, which we call the Runaway Mine Train, is our hottest ride," said Steunenberg, who person-

ally test-rode all of the rides before purchasing them. Of his first, and only, boarding of the Discovery 360 (re-themed Round-up 360), he recalled with a laugh: "It swings in a 360-degree loop, you're upside down... it's absolutely horrifying. I'm telling ya, I was screaming like a little kid."

Rounding out the mini-park's offerings are two rides supplied by SBF-VISA Group: a compact spinning coaster called Blastin' Barrels and a unique, 60-foot-tall, chuck wagon-themed Ferris Wheel called the Wagon Wheel.

"The wheel is absolutely beautiful and our guests love it," Steunenberg said.

Border sensibilities

Trying to predict what food offerings his guests will love is another matter. Although his two parks are a mere 20 minutes north of Canada's border with Washington State, and they draw many patrons from the U.S., Steunenberg has found that popular treats in the States don't always go over in Canada.

"I go to amusement parks wherever I travel; I'm always eating and sampling their food," he said. "We tried caramel apple slices here and couldn't sell them. Corndogs don't sell here, either. So we cautiously approach new menu items."

At Cultus Lake Waterpark, opening for the summer June 4, the biggest non-beverage sellers are burgers with fries, fish and chips, and pizza. When Cultus Lake Adventure Park starts its season June 17, trendy pulled pork sandwiches will join hot dogs and nacho chips on the non-dessert menu.

Steunenberg is looking to attract 100,000 customers to the ride park this year. At the water park, where a new slide from WhiteWater called The Rattler will be debuting, he expects another strong season if the weather holds. "We tend to get a lot of rain, even in the summer," he said. "The last two seasons have been drier, so that's good for us."

"Us" includes the Cultus Lake properties' 220 employ-



Cultus Lake Adventure Park's lush evergreen setting features several rides supplied by Zamperla, including the Wave Swinger (Midi Family Swinger, above), which whirls high over Bucky's Bumper Boats; Runaway Mine Train (Junior Coaster, below); Windmill Drop (Samba Tower, bottom left); and Round-up 360 (Discovery 360, bottom right).

COURTESY CULTUS LAKE ADVENTURE PARK



Although it is operated separately from neighboring Cultus Lake Adventure Park, the 15-acre Cultus Lake Waterpark is owned by the same family and has been a Vancouver, B.C.-area leisure magnet since its build-out by WhiteWater West in the mid-1980s. Its success gave rise to the ride park.

COURTESY CULTUS LAKE WATERPARK

ees — members of Steunenberg's family among them. Oldest son Russell, 22, a business school graduate, is general manager of the ride park. Youngest son Dillan, 19, is on the construction team and handles ride technical duties including morning checks and winter maintenance.

Steunenberg's wife, Liz, contributes, too. "I depend on her for all kinds of support, ranging from picking

colors to the layout of the parks. She brings an important perspective to the decision-making."

Steunenberg himself, on the premises every day, admits that he wouldn't want to be anywhere else.

"What I love most is the family atmosphere," he said. "We offer good, clean, wholesome fun. Our customers say thank you, and leave happy, on the way out."

•cultus.com

Strates Shows will be carnival provider at the Erie County Fair until 2026

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

HAMBURG, New York — What was described by outdoor amusement industry professionals as a historical milestone in modern amusement history, Strates Shows' carnival president E. James Strates signed a new 10-year contract with the Erie County Fair held this year August 10-20.

The exclusive relationship between the Erie County Fair and Strates Shows, now in its 92nd year at the fair, is the longest continuous run of any carnival midway at a fair in the United States, according to Bob Johnson, president, Outdoor Amusement Business Association.

"Together, we have been through decades of change and tremendous growth that brings us to the upcoming 2016 fair," Strates said, during the official signing.

"This wonderful, family-oriented event continues to promote and showcase the community's agricultural traditions, talents, diversity and heritage," he said. "We look forward to seeing everyone at the fair."

Fairgoers to the Erie County Fair will have the opportunity to help celebrate the extended relationship by enjoying 90 minutes of free midway rides from 11 a.m.-12:30 a.m., Thursday, August 18.

Strates said when his father, James E. Strates, signed the first contract with the Erie County Fair in 1924, no one could have guessed that, over nine decades later, they would still have a carnival contract.

"Beyond just a contractual relationship, we truly regard the Strates as part of the Erie County Fair family," said Denis R. Lang, fair CEO and manager. "The 10-year contract means that the Strates Shows will be part of the Erie County Fair beyond their 100th anniversary with us. We look forward to a centennial celebration with Strates in 2024."

Strates Shows still arrives at the fair by the Erie Railroad Depot in the Village of Hamburg, 2.35 miles and a 10-minute drive away. Changes to the railway system over the years have created changes for the show, however. They took off



Top, Strates Shows will be at the Erie County Fair, Hamburg, N.Y., for another 10 years after the carnival and fair signed a 10-year extension agreement last month. Above, three generations of Strates family members were on hand during the signing. From left, Strates Shows President E. James Strates; his son, John Strates; and his grandson, Nick Strates. COURTESY TOM WOLF IMAGING

the Pullman cars in 2014. In addition, employees are no longer housed on the train, but the carnival's trailers and equipment still arrive by train.

The carnival provides the fair's midway with approximately 70 rides and 100 games.

Strates said he is expecting a good 2016 season if the success of the show's early winter fairs are indicators.

"We do about five of them a year," he said "They have been pretty good this year — enough to keep people working."

A second wheel was added to Strates' ride arsenal for this season. Strates said the new Technical Park Dream Wheel is beautiful.

The show's winter quarters are in Kissimmee, Fla. Strates said they stay busy during the off-season by refurbishing some of their rides.

"We do a lot of that," he said. "We have rides sitting in the back lot. We like to alternate some of our rides like that. We can have up to 75 rides at our bigger events. We have every-

thing we need."

Strates Shows is now in its third generation of family operations

"And, we are still going strong," he said. "I'll be going out on the road this year, just like the years before. It is a great business to be in."



The Iowa State Fair, Des Moines, has decided to go from an exclusive midway provider to an independent midway for the 2017 fair. Belle City Amusements has provided the midway at the event since 2009 and will be back for the 2016 event. Here is a shot of the midway from the 2015 Iowa State Fair. COURTESY IOWA STATE FAIR

Iowa State Fair goes independent midway in 2017

DES MOINES, Iowa — Iowa State Fair officials have decided to go with an independent midway for the 2017 fair.

"Our fair is built on tradition and family fun," said Mindy Williamson, fair marketing director. "The midway is an important part of the fair experience and by managing each part of the midway, we hope to create an environment that matches the other attractions, food, and contests on our fairgrounds."

"We want to create a unique experience that families come back to see each year," she said.

Belle City Amusements has been the midway provider here since 2009 and will be back for the 2016 fair, set for August 11-12.

The carnival provides about 40 rides for the midway.

Williamson said they haven't set a ride number for the 2017 event.

"We just started the request for proposal process and it will depend on the size and depth of the rides proposed and selected," she said.

Williamson said they will be working on rebranding the 2017 midway to better align with the fair theme and logo.

"Other renovations and improvements are still being discussed at this time," she said.

—Pam Sherborne

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Oklahoma State Fair, a balancing act between the old and the new

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. — It's a fine balance, much like walking a tight rope, staying true to fair traditions while exposing fairgoers to the new and the latest, creating that "wow" factor.

FAIR SPOTLIGHT

Officials at the Oklahoma State Fair, while being able to trace the fair's roots to territorial days 111 years ago, feel maintaining that balance is their priority.

"In general, we ride the line between tradition and something new," said Scott Munz, vice president, marketing and public relations.

Gina Burchfiel, vice president, State Fair Division, said people always want to know what is new.

"But, when we bring something new, we also have to say goodbye to something that perhaps has been here for several years," Burchfiel said. "We try to make sure we do our due diligence."

Even with urbanization sprawling around the perimeter of the 433-acre Fair Park, between 900,000 and one million visitors annually are able to enter barns and see an array of farm animals. One of those barn contains structural elements from the only building moved from the fair's original

FAST FACTS

Oklahoma State Fair
Oklahoma City
September 15-25, 2016

Key staff

President, CEO
Timothy J. O'Toole;
VP Marketing, PR,
Scott Munz;
VP State Fair Division,
Gina Burchfiel

2015 attendance
Approximately 900,000

Midway supplier
Wade Shows

location on the east side of Oklahoma City to the current location on the west side in 1954.

"The barn has had many improvements, but the bones are there," Burchfiel said.

Sometimes bringing in new is more of a trade out. Equine events are very popular at the fair and have been for most of the fair's history. And, fairgoers expect the shows.

So fair officials continue to offer equine events; some are the same while some are brand new.

This same type of programming is used with Disney on Ice, which has become an annual tradition in the Jim Norick State Fair Arena during fair-time. Last year, the fair hosted "Frozen" while this year will be different.

The arena, built in 1965, is in itself an important historical landmark. At the time of the opening, builders touted it as the "largest coliseum-type structure in the Southwest, constructed with the longest catenary roof span in the world."

The roof forms a bowl atop the arena. It consists of steel cables in a grid pattern to support concrete roof panels. Because of the challenges in maintaining it, this type of roof is no longer being built.

Another iconic fairgrounds landmark is the 330-foot-tall Arrows to Atoms Space Tower, an observation tower built in 1962. It was built by Willy Bühler with a Von Roll cabin.

The Space Tower has been inoperable, however, since a June 2010 flash flood in the underground control room caused extensive electrical damage.

"Fixing the damaged underground control room, called 'the vault,' would cost mid-to-high six figures," Munz said. "With the control room out of commission, we have no way of assessing the condition of the wheelhouse at the top of the ride."

Other traditional fair attractions include the City of AGtropolis, an agricultural and educational exhibit, and the Oklahoma Frontier Experience, which explores the fair's "wild west" side.

The midway operator,



Shown here is Wade Shows' Giant Wheel, manufactured by Chance, on the midway of the Oklahoma State Fair, Oklahoma City. In 2017, Oklahoma State Fair officials are looking forward to having the RL45 by Lamberink on the midway. Wade Shows and independent ride operator Michael Wood have purchased the large wheel and plan to take it to the Oklahoma State Fair next year as well as other locations. Below is the A.R.M. Vertigo ride, a popular favorite by fairgoers. COURTESY OKLAHOMA STATE FAIR



Wade Shows, has been the exclusive midway provider at the fair since the early 1990s. Yet, Oklahoma State Fair's association with Wade Shows' owner Frank Zaitshik goes back to the 1960s when Zaitshik worked for Link Carnival, which provided the midway then.

Wade Shows continues to bring the newest to the midway with its large ride arsenal. Some of those rides high on the list of Oklahoma State Fair patrons include: Pinfari's RC-48 coaster and the Super Cyclone coaster; Zamperla's Mighty Mouse coaster; Wisdom's Dragstrip Mega Slide; KMG's Fire Ball; and Fabbri's Mega Drop.

Burchfiel said they are looking forward to the new wheel co-owned by Wade Shows and independent ride operator Michael Wood for the 2017 fair.

The Lamberink RL 45 is manufactured by Lamberink BV, Netherlands. It is 45 meters

(147.6 feet) tall, has 36 gondolas and five loading stations.

Also in 2017, the new 279,000-square-foot Expo Center will open giving fair management 201,000 of contiguous open floor exhibit space, a 12,000-square-foot lobby, concessions areas, a commercial kitchen, ticket space and parking for 2,174 cars.

Since 2009, a massive renovation project that includes updating existing buildings and structures on the grounds have been taking place. Burchfiel said the cost tag for that project so far is close to \$1 million.

Fair Park is owned by the City of Oklahoma City but is managed by a separate entity with the following at the helm: Timothy J. O'Toole, president, CEO; Scott Munz, vice president, marketing and public relations; and Gina Burchfiel, vice president, State Fair Division.



From the Oklahoma State Fair photo archives is this view of the grounds as seen in 1957 (left) and this undated photo of The Whip. COURTESY OKLAHOMA STATE FAIR



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CARNIVAL LIGHTS

COMPILED: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

The 145-year-old **Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus** held its last show featuring elephants last month, in a move that's being applauded by animal rights activists.

Ringling announced its plan in the early spring, saying it is sending all its Asian elephants to live on the company's Florida nature reserve. The original plan called for phasing out elephants' role in the circus by 2018. But in January, Ringling's parent company, **Feld Entertainment**, said it was moving up the timetable.

At the time, Feld Entertainment's vice president of communications, **Steve Payne**, told **NPR's Jackie Northam** that the family that controls the company "decided that removing the elephants from the circus units and bringing them to the Center for Elephant Conservation was in the best interest of the company and, most importantly, the elephants."

The decision came after years of growing public concern for the elephants' well-being, with activists criticizing Ringling for forcing intelligent animals that, in the wild, sustain complex social relationships, to live in captivity and isolation.

A total of 11 elephants took part in the last shows in circuses at Wilkes Barre, Pa., and Providence, R.I. The elephants will join about 30 others at the Ringling Bros. Center for Elephant Conservation, a 200-acre facility that now hosts "the largest Asian elephant herd in the Western Hemisphere."

In addition to Ringling, Feld Entertainment operates a range of high-profile traveling shows, from **Monster Jam** and **Supercross** to **Marvel Universe Live** and **Disney on Ice**.

See editorial commentary on page 2.

The **San Diego County Fair**, Del Mar, Calif., kicks off June 3 and will run through July 4. This year's theme is "Mad About the Fair." And, with that theme, comes new attractions including Sunday tea parties based on Lewis Carroll's classic *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Each Sunday there will be two, 90-minute tea parties, each accommodating 48 people giving all attendees an up close and personal experience.

Another new attraction is **Star Wars Steam-punk Universe Day** set for June 12.

The independent midway fair is featuring an array of midway promotions this year including online packages and pay-one-price ride deals every Wednesday and Thursday of the fair.

A new smoke-free policy was adopted by the **Alaska State Fairgrounds**, Anchorage. It will be in effect for the state fair this year, set for Aug. 25-Sept. 5. The policy covers not only tobacco products, but electronic cigarettes as well.

The new policy is the latest step toward joining other businesses and organizations nationwide in going smoke-free, according to fair officials. In 2015, smoking was prohibited on fairgrounds for an entire day for Wellness Day.

"It's not about the right to smoke, but about the right to not have to breathe second-hand smoke," said General Manager **Jerome Hertel**. "Smoking is an active choice. Breathing second-hand smoke is not."

The new policy states smoking is prohibited "anywhere within the fenced common areas of the fairgrounds property" and at least 40 feet away from the main gate entrances to the fairgrounds.

Banned products include tobacco cigarettes and cigars, "plant material," and any "e-cigarette, which creates a vapor, in any manner or in any form, or the use of any oral smoking device."

Compliance with the smoke-free fair policy is mandatory for all employees, exhibitors, vendors, volunteers, performers and patrons visiting the fair.

South Carolina's largest public event made its television debut last month.

The **South Carolina State Fair**, Columbia, was featured on the sixth season of **Carnival Eats**. The season premier was Thursday, May 5, at 9 p.m., on The Cooking Channel.

Carnival Eats host **Noah Cappe** and crew visited the fair last year.

According to a press release, it was South Carolina's resilience that drew the nationally televised program to Columbia, after Cappe learned that the fair was slated to go on as normal after the devastating October floods.

The fair will run October 12-23 this year.

The carnival ride that ejected a 16-year-old high school student in El Paso, Texas, killing her was operating properly and was not defective, an attorney representing the carnival operator said May 4, just days after the incident.

"We didn't have any doubt that it was not defective," **Robert Skipworth**, an attorney for Las Cruces-based **Playtime Amusements**, operator of the ride, said in a local news story.

Samantha Aguilar was killed Friday, April 29, when the Sizzler ride, manufactured by **Wisdom Industries**, ejected her and a friend. Aguilar was taken to Del Sol hospital and died from her injuries, police said.

Her 17-year-old friend suffered minor injuries. Aguilar was attending the Día de Los Niños fair at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church in El Paso.

An insurance inspector examined the ride after the accident and determined it was not defective, Skipworth said.

Ben Gonzalez, of the Texas Department of Insurance, was quoted as saying Monday the ride was in compliance with state mandates for carnival rides.

"All amusement ride operators are required to have an annual inspection and \$1 million liability insurance," Gonzalez said.

Skipworth said the ride was on loan to Playtime Amusements from **Moore's Greater Shows**, which is based in Lyft, Texas.

Adult general-admission to the **2016 Illinois State Fair**, Springfield, will cost \$3 more this year than last year on all but the opening and closing days of the fair. The 2016 Fair is set to run August 11-21.

The new \$10 admission for ages 13 to 59 is in line with surrounding states and reflects the reality of Illinois finances, said a statement released with the change by the **Illinois Department of Agriculture**.

"In an effort to be fiscally responsible, this year, the Illinois State Fair is implementing a price restructuring for gate admission and parking," the department stated. "Prices have not been evaluated since 2012, and these adjustments will greatly help the Illinois State Fair better serve fairgoers."





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BUSINESS, SAFETY & CLASSIFIED

► PeopleWatch — Page 44 / MarketWatch — Page 45 / Safety — Pages 48-52 / CLASSIFIED — Page 55

SeaWorld Entertainment's Sea Rescue wins Daytime Emmy

ORLANDO, Fla. — **SeaWorld Entertainment's Sea Rescue** was awarded with a Daytime Creative Arts Emmy Award category at this year's **Annual Daytime Emmy Awards** in Los Angeles. *Sea Rescue* was awarded the prize for "Outstanding Children's Series." This is the show's first win and third nomination.

"We cannot overstate how thrilled we are with the national academy's decision," said **Anthony Esparza**, chief creative officer of **SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment**. "*Sea Rescue* emphasizes the critical need for the conservation and preservation of animals, and we believe that's an incredibly important message — and I think many of our viewers agree."

Sea Rescue showcases the touching and inspirational stories of marine animal rescue, rehabilitation and return to the wild by the SeaWorld Rescue Team and partner organizations. Featured episodes this season include the California sea lion crisis, and a record-breaking transfer of hundreds of cold stunned sea turtles from New England to rehabilitation centers around the country. The heartwarming episode "Georgia on my Mind," shares the story of Georgia, a rescued orphaned baby manatee who grows up to become a mom, grandmother, and foster manatee mom.

The show is part of Litton's Weekend Adventure airing nationwide on ABC affiliates.

Standard Amusements, LLC, awarded Rye Playland contract

County on hook for \$32 million in facility repairs

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

WHITE PLAINS, N.Y. — **Westchester County** lawmakers voted 13-4 last month to approve a proposal to have a third party take over operations at Rye Playland.

Standard Amusements, LLC will take over operations of the park. **Westchester County** maintains ownership of the historic amusement parks and grounds.

Standard Amusements' Jack Falfas said a proposal for a third party operator for Rye Playland has been around for about six years.

"We have worked very hard with the county to make sure this is an outstanding project," Falfas told *Amusement Today*, at the first of May. "But we are going step by step to accomplish this."

This means, he said, the 2016 season will be one of observations.

"The county has a certain amount of work to do before we can go in and do our part," Falfas said. "The county's part has a lot to do with the infrastructure."

While the county is completing their part of the deal, which is spelled out in the contract between the two parties, Falfas and his team will look at what rides they might want to add for next season. He was not ready to make any announcements in that area.

Current management will stay the same for this season.

The plan approved by the



Standard Amusements, LLC will spend \$30 million in operations and new rides to Rye Playland while the county (owners of the park and land) will be responsible for another \$32 million, mostly focused on aging facility needs. Here, **Standard Amusements** shows a concept for a new Entry Gate, Fountain Plaza (right).
COURTESY STANDARD AMUSEMENTS



county includes a \$32 million investment by the county and another \$30 million from **Standard Amusements**.

Supporters of the plan said it will reinvigorate Playland.

"We don't want to be the Legislature that kills Playland," said **Michael Kaplowitz**, board president, when making the announcement last month. "Instead we want to be the Legislature that

helps guarantee the future of Playland. And we're hoping as many as a million people a year soon come out to Playland."

Opponents feel the proposal may not be in the best interest of the county, because the county's monetary part of the project will be paid out right away, while **Standard** has months to begin paying out any funds.

Falfas said the infrastruc-

ture improvements will need to be completed before he can go in.

"The county will be checking to make sure everything is working properly, among other things," he said. "When you go in to rent an apartment, you expect the refrigerator to be working. Just things like that."

Playland opened for the season the first weekend in May.

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PEOPLE WATCH

Carolyn McLean joins Weber Group

The **Weber Group**, Sellersburg, Ind., has announced that **Carolyn McLean** has been hired as the new director of Communications & Business Initiatives. Carolyn, as well as the position itself, are both new to the Weber Group.

Carolyn and family relocated to metro Louisville from Charlotte, North Carolina. She will be responsible for leading strategic development, public relations programs and bolstering sales to achieve Weber's goals in the Culture, Leisure and Entertainment industries. She will work closely with marketing in planning and programming external communications, media relations, and brand development.

Her name may be familiar as she is no stranger to the amusement park industry holding former roles as the VP of Corporate Communications for **Cedar Fair Entertainment** and Director of Communications for **Six Flags Kentucky Kingdom**.



McLean

Dan Decker named new TTIA COO

The **Texas Travel Industry Association** has announced that **Dan Decker** will join the TTIA team on August 1 as the association new chief operating officer.

Amusement industry members will remember Dan for his 12-year role at SeaWorld San Antonio, and most recently as the park president. With more than 30 total years in the industry, Dan's background has included theme park operations, human resources, culinary, marketing and park president. In his role as TTIA's COO, Dan will be actively involved with all TTIA programs, including overseeing, developing, and setting the organization's growth strategy through membership, development, public policy and other initiatives.

TTIA's 31st Annual Travel Summit will be held Oct. 10-12 in Houston. For more information visit: ttia.org.



Decker

Harris named CEO of Space Center Houston

A new CEO with extensive fundraising, strategy and communications experience has taken the helm at the nonprofit **Space Center Houston** in the midst of a period of significant growth.

William T. Harris has more than 30 years in nonprofit leadership including senior positions at a renowned science center and universities, where he led multi-million-dollar capital and fundraising campaigns, principal and major gifts, marketing campaigns, communications, government relations and strategy initiatives. Harris previously was at the California Science Center Foundation as senior vice president of development and marketing. He oversaw all external affairs including capital campaigns, board relations, annual and membership programs, public funding, marketing and communications.

Harris was a leader on the team to bring the space shuttle Endeavour to the **California Science Center**, including its funding, promotion, transport, communications, marketing and exhibit opening and looks forward to his new role.



Harris

Scenes from Six Flags Management Reunion

Held at Six Flags Over Texas, May 3-4, 2016



Tour group



Reunion picnic



George Delaney, Joe Schillaci



Tom Hall, Melinda Ashcraft, John Bement



Mike Glennan



Larry Cochran



Ray Williams



Betty Hudson, Lucy Murphy



Bob Johnson, Jim Wintrode, Harold Hudson

PHOTOS COURTESY ANDY BARKLEY, HAROLD HUDSON, AT/GARY SLADE

Redemption Plus celebrates two decades

LENEXA, Kan. — **Redemption Plus** recently announced it celebrated two decades of business on April 1, 2016. Established in 1996 as an incentive distribu-

tion company, Redemption Plus has grown in many ways since its inception. As the first to create a leading edge tagging system and digital packing list for

redemption programs in Family Entertainment Centers (FECs), Redemption Plus continues to push the boundaries of innovation by being endlessly committed to bettering guest experiences. The organization fulfills this goal through insight, data, design, coaching, training and superior redemption merchandise.

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MARKETWATCH

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 05/12/16	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	26.35	43.58	22.31
Merlin Entertainments Group/ Legoland	MERL	LSE	431.40	473.30	360.93
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	58.50	60.64	48.45
Comcast Corp./ NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	62.26	64.99	50.01
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	101.71	122.08	86.25
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	9010	TYO	1405.00	1568.00	1021.00
Haicahang Holdings Ltd.	2255HK	SEHK	1.74	2.13	1.09
Leofoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	8.71	12.90	8.22
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	21.94	24.41	16.18
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	18.27	22.11	16.86
Shenzhen Overseas Chinese Town Co., Ltd. (OCT)	000069	SZSE	6.49	14.78	5.88
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	58.36	62.69	41.6
Skyocean International	00593HK	SEHK	8.43	12.46	7.67
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	460.00	499.50	330.40
Village Roadshow	VRL	ASX	5.1	7.68	5.06

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

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

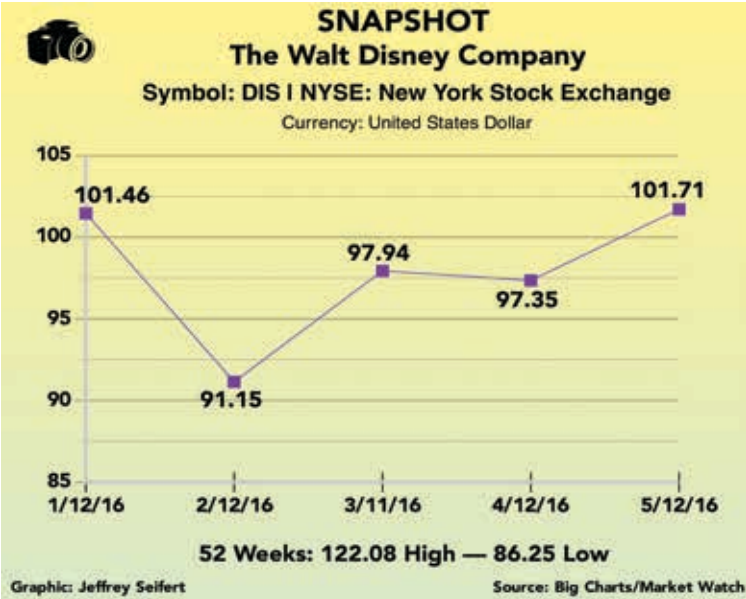
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East Coast	\$2.309	-\$0.688
Midwest	\$2.241	-\$0.507
Gulf Coast	\$2.131	-\$0.640
Mountain	\$2.277	-\$0.495
West Coast	\$2.368	-\$0.634
California	\$2.594	-\$0.656

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1.3623	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.2841	CAD (Canadian Dollar)



BUSINESS WATCH

Walt Disney Co. releases 2nd quarter results
BURBANK, Calif. — **The Walt Disney Company** (NYSE: DIS) on May 10 reported quarterly earnings of \$2.1 billion for its second fiscal quarter ended April 2, 2016, an increase of \$35 million over the prior-year quarter.
Parks and Resorts revenues for the quarter increased 4 percent to \$3.9 billion and segment operating income increased 10 percent to \$624 million. Operating income growth for the quarter was due to an increase at our domestic operations, partially offset by a decrease at international operations.
Lower operating income at the international operations was due to higher pre-opening expenses at **Shanghai Disney Resort**, increased operating costs at **Disneyland Paris** and lower volume at **Hong Kong Disneyland Resort**, partially offset by higher guest spending at Disneyland Paris.

SeaWorld Entertainment reports first quarter
ORLANDO, Fla. — **SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.** (NYSE: SEAS) reported on May 5, 2016 financial results for the first quarter of 2016.
Results overview included: attendance of 3.30 million, compared to 3.21 million in the first quarter of 2015; total revenue of \$220.2 million, compared to \$214.6 million in the first quarter of 2015; adjusted EBITDA loss of \$5.9 million, compared to an adjusted EBITDA loss of \$3.8 million in the first quarter of 2015; net loss of \$84.0 million compared to a net loss of \$43.6 million in the first quarter of 2015 and adjusted net loss of \$46.9 million compared to an adjusted net loss of \$43.5 million in the first quarter of 2015.

Cedar Fair reports record start to 2016
SANDUSKY, Ohio — **Cedar Fair Entertainment Company** (NYSE: FUN), announced on May 4, 2016 positive results for the first quarter ended March 27, 2016.
For the first quarter ended March 27, 2016, Cedar Fair's net revenues were \$58 million, an increase of \$12 million, or 25 percent, compared with the first quarter ended March 29, 2015. In the quarter, the company generated record attendance, along with increases in all revenue categories, including admissions, food and beverage, merchandise, games and accommodations.
Operating costs and expenses for the first quarter of 2016 were \$116 million, an increase of \$7 million, or 6 percent, from the first quarter of 2015.

The net loss for the quarter totaled \$48 million, or \$0.87 per diluted LP unit, versus a net loss of \$84 million, or \$1.50 per diluted LP unit, for the first quarter a year ago.

Six Flags reports record first quarter
GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas — **Six Flags Entertainment Corporation** (NYSE: SIX), announced on April 27, 2016 revenue in the first quarter of 2016 grew 36 percent to \$115 million and Adjusted EBITDA improved 39 percent or \$15 million. Since most of the parks were not open during the first quarter, adjusted EBITDA was a loss of \$23 million, which was the company's best first-quarter performance in its history. Modified EBITDA for the 12 months ending March 31, 2016 was \$534 million, an increase of \$51 million or 11 percent compared to the 12 months ending March 31, 2015. Total guest spending per capita for the first quarter 2016 was \$44.84, which was an increase of \$1.02 or 2 percent over the first quarter of 2015. Sponsorship and international licensing revenue was up \$3 million, or 26 percent, in the first quarter, driven primarily by higher fees associated with development of international Six Flags-branded theme parks.

In brief...
•ORLANDO, Fla. — **Visit Orlando** announced a new all-time record visitation for the destination city. In 2015, 66.1 million people visited Orlando, growing 5.5 percent from 2014.
•ARLINGTON, Texas — The **City of Arlington**, Texas announced that more than 10 million tourists visit the city each year. Arlington is the seventh largest city in Texas.

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Michael Dean Chance, 42, loses battle with depression

WICHITA, Kan. — Michael (Mike) Dean Chance, president, Chance Rides, passed away April 19. He was 42.

Chance, who was dedicated to the amusement industry, joined the family business in 1998 and was named president in 2000 being at the company's helm, like his father, Richard (Dick) Chance, and his grandfather, Harold Chance, before him.

He led Chance Rides through both challenging and prosperous times. He was instrumental in expanding the company into roller coaster design and manufacturing when he purchased the assets of D.H. Morgan Manufacturing, Inc., a roller coaster design and manufacturing firm, forming Chance Morgan, Inc. in 2001.

Chance Rides Manufacturing, Inc., the third generation of manufacturing companies to be owned by the Chance family, was formed later that year to produce the rides sold by Chance Morgan.

He loved taking the first official ride on newly installed attractions, alongside his father.

Duane Wiechman, who was recently honored for his 50 years with Chance Rides, said: "I'm going to miss Mike very much. Mike was so energetic, intelligent and a

OBITUARY

Amusement industry, friends remember Mike Chance — Page 47

hard worker. He enjoyed working for his dad in the family business, but I think he was happiest seeing all the completed projects roll out the door for shipping to the park customers. That always brought a smile to his face."

Dana Morgan, who sold his company to Mike Chance said: "I will always remember Mike for his warm friendliness and sincere caring for those he knew. He was a man of great integrity and well respected in this industry. Mike had a unique ability to get along well with everyone involved in a project and was always a problem solver. Mike was instrumental in the process of establishing Chance as a coaster manufacturer. But most of all I remember Mike for his infectious smile."

Michael Chance was born May 26, 1973, in Wichita to Richard (Dick) Chance and Penny (Pruter) Chance. He attended Wichita Northwest High School and Kansas State University.

He married Mindi Gibbs on June 26, 2000, in Maui, Hawaii.



Mike Chance, 1973-2016

Their son, Carter Michael, was the light of his life.

Chance was an active member of the Kansas chapter of Young Presidents' Organization (YPO). He loved watching K-State football and WSU basketball games, traveling with his family and competing in triathlons (a half Ironman and Escape from Alcatraz were among his most gratifying feats).

In addition to his wife and son, Chance is survived by his father Dick and step-mother Carol Chance, grandmother Marjorie Chance, sister Amie (Alan) Green, brother John (Ritisha) Chance, stepfather Jim (Nancy) Stanelle,

three nieces, two nephews and many other close aunts, uncles and cousins.

Mike was preceded in death by mother Penny Stanelle, grandfather Harold Chance and step-brother TJ Hernandez.

A celebration of his life was held Wednesday, April 27, at Chapel Hill United Methodist Church, Wichita, Kan.

Memorial contributions may be made to the following organizations: KidzCope, 9415 E. Harry, Suite 501, Wichita, Kansas 67207; and Mental Health Association of South Central Kansas, 555 N. Woodlawn, Suite 3105, Wichita, Kansas 67208.

Mike Chance Scholarship Fund started by SLA

CHICAGO, Ill. — The Showmen's League of America (SLA) announced last month the creation of the Mike Chance Scholarship Fund, designed to help fund college educations for deserving students.

In making the announcement about the scholarship, Cindy Henning, SLA executive secretary, said: "As many of you know, Chance Rides President Mike Chance passed away on April 19. Mike's father, Richard (Dick) Chance, served as our president in year 2000."

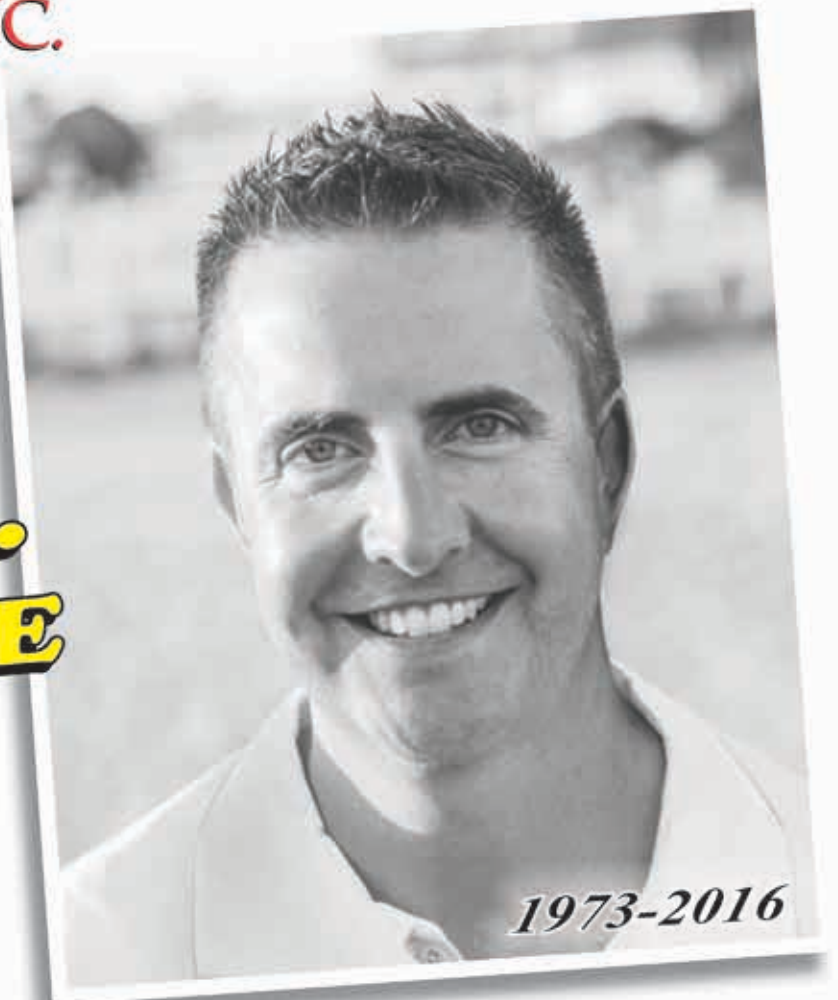
"Dick and Mike are great leaders and contributors," Henning said. "To honor the Chance family, we are creating a Mike Chance Memorial Scholarship." The starting goal is a \$4,000 fund. "Thanks to Jeff Blomsness, North American Midway Entertainment who committed \$1,000 to kick off the effort," said Henning, on May 2.

Please call Henning at (312) 733-9533 to make a contribution.

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Amusement industry, friends remember Mike Chance

"It is with a very heavy heart to say good-bye to a true gentleman and friend! Mike was very good to us here at Circus Circus – Las Vegas and was always very professional and respectful of our wants and needs. He was very quick to come to the table with great visionary ideas to enhance the overall guest experience in our park. He, like his father, always stood by their word and went above and beyond to deliver what was agreed upon. He will truly be missed by us and the industry!"

—**Tom J. Nolan, Adventuredome**

"Simply heart breaking. So young and so much to live for."

—**Tom Iven, Six Flags Entertainment**

"This tragedy was a shock to all of us. We appreciate Mike's dedication to his craft and we truly enjoyed every opportunity we had to work with him. This is a great loss for our community."

—**Katie Grover, Fidelity Bank Wichita**

"I am at the 2016 DEAL Show in Dubai with many of our industry friends. It means a lot that I hear this from AT so fast, but I have tears here of this sad news. So many memories I can't begin to start listing. I am speechless and so sad."

—**Jim Seay, Premier Rides**

"Such a sad disease that really plays havoc on people's lives without any direct signs and symptoms! A constant struggle and battle for many! Many prayers to his immediate family, Chance Rides family and our industry friends."

—**Kimberle Rolle Samarelli, NJAA**

"This terrible news really hit me. All my memories with Mike have come flooding back. Every time I spoke with him he seemed so centered and relaxed — I never would have guessed he suffered from depression. Having fought a deep depression myself some years ago, I know firsthand how devastating it can be. My heart goes out to Mike's family and friends."

—**Rick Knoebel, Knoebel's Amusement Resort**

"Extremely shocking. I believed that Mike and the Chance family are the greats in the industry. And I know and believe that with all my being. God bless the whole family and organization."

—**Jack Falfas, United Parks**

"I considered Mike a real friend, and we conversed frequently not only about the industry, but Kansas State and OU (Oklahoma) sports. To me he was a marketer and tried to make "it" work. My heart is saddened and will feel the loss for his family with a vacancy in my heart."

—**Paul Borchardt, Wonderland Park**

"I keep reading the news in complete shock. There are no words to describe our sadness... we can only hope that the Chance family knows how much support they have from all of us. We will keep them in our thoughts and prayers during this extremely difficult time. We applaud Mike's valiant fight and send our heartfelt sympathy and condolences. He will be greatly missed within our industry."

—**Len Soled, Rides 4-U**

"Like most everyone, I am surprised by this news. Mike always seemed so caring and care free. It just shows how much of a real problem depression is in our society... and how little people understand it. He will be sorely missed."

—**Stephen Ball, Frontier City**



Dick and Mike Chance (right) give a thumbs up after their first ride on the Lightning Run at Kentucky Kingdom. The Hyper GT-X coaster from Chance Rides opened on May 24, 2014. AT FILE

"Mike's death is a tragedy and all of us at Kentucky Kingdom, who knew and worked with him, are so sad. Words are hard to find at times like this, which cause us all to question the very nature of things, but we want the Chance family to know we are thinking about you, the entire Chance team, and remembering Mike as we knew him — a great guy and a credit not only to his family, but to the Chance organization and the entire amusement industry."

—**Ed Hart, Kentucky Kingdom**

"I am sitting here in shock and disbelief. Quite frankly on the verge of tears. Our families have been friends for generations. This is difficult to process. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the Chance family, Chance Rides family, the industry and all the people affected by this horrible, sad disease."

—**Tom Canfield, Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk**

"This news catches me off guard. The article was certainly well written and tastefully handled the subject of depression. Mental illness is not understood by the general population and even most medical doctors do not know much about it. My thoughts are with the family."

—**Mark Moore, Uremet Corp.**

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the Chance family and their employees during this difficult time."

—**Justin Hays, Cliff's Amusement Park**

"We have known the Chance family for years — having a number of iconic Chance rides here — and the news of Mike's death certainly came as a shock to us and countless others within the industry. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family, the many associates at Chance Rides and others closest to Mike. He will be missed!"

—**Eric Anderson, Quassy Amusement & Waterpark**

"Like many others in our industry, I was surprised, shocked and stunned with Mike Chance's death. Not only was I surprised at his passing, but also with the fact of his struggle with depression. I had no clue of such, because, outwardly, no one could tell of his struggles. I considered Mike more than a business relationship, I considered him a friend and confidant. I thank him for all he did for me and my family. I pray for Mindi, their child and their family in this time of loss and despair. May God comfort them and heal the wounds left by Mike's passing."

—**John Arie, Sr., Fun Spot America**

"The entire OABA board was devastated and shocked to hear of Mike Chance's death at such a young age. Our hearts and prayers go out to Dick, Mike's wife, Mindi and their son. We appreciated knowing how awful and debilitating this disease was for Mike to deal with in the announcement from his father. Many OABA members knew him well and we value all the contributions the Chance family make to the amusement industry."

—**Robert "Bob" W. Johnson, OABA**

"The Landry's family is devastated at the passing of Mike Chance. Our thoughts and prayers go to Dick, Mike's family and the entire Chance organization. We have had a 20-plus year relationship with Mike and mourn the loss of a fine person, family man and business associate."

—**Keith W. Beitler, Landry's Inc., Specialty Restaurant and Theme Park Division**

"The amusement industry and the world at large lost a great person. The day I met Michael, it quickly became obvious that he was kind-hearted, friendly, and sincere. Whether you were working at a job site with him or just discussing life while at ease, his sense of humor and calm were the same; a true professional, someone you were always happy to see. Working with Chance Rides on Lightning Run at Kentucky Kingdom is one of my most beloved industry experiences and Michael was one of the biggest reasons that I hold that experience close to my heart. It's close to impossible to put into words how much Michael will be missed. I will cherish my memories of him and remember him always."

—**Anne Irvine, Irvine Ondrey Engineering**

"With great astonishment and sadness we heard about the devastating news of Mike's passing away at such a young age. He will be greatly missed by his family, colleagues and the entire industry. We would like to express our sincere condolences and wish the Chance family a lot of strength to bear this terrible loss."

—**Management and Staff, Vekoma Rides Mfg.**

"Mike was one of those bright young people chosen to lead our industry. The loss of any bright young person in our industry is hard to accept. However the loss of Mike is extremely hard as he learned our business from his father and grandfather and with his added talent was guiding Chance Rides Manufacturing into the future with bigger and brighter ideas. All of us that have any knowledge of the amusement industry are going to miss Mike!"

—**Bill Robinson, William H. Robinson, Inc.**

"I am speechless to hear about Mike's death. I am deeply saddened to hear that such a young man with so many things yet to accomplish has been taken at the age of 42. I had no idea he was sick and fighting depression. He is same age as my brother, Clay, was when he died. I know his entire family will suffer to get through this and the pain never goes away."

—**Charlotte Gonzalez, Beech Bend Park**

"My thoughts and prayers go out to Mike's entire family. I have known Mike and his father Dick for many years and was shocked when I heard the news. I have had the misfortune of having depression in my own family and know firsthand what a horrible disease it is and the effects it can have on the entire family. Hopefully there will be a cure sometime and that our sons and daughters will not have to fight this terrible battle. May Mike rest in peace and may peace be with his family."

—**Jerry Pendelton, Skytrans Mfg.**

Dorney Park's Thunderhawk updated, painted for 2016

Tenth oldest roller coaster in the world gets new set of trains

AT: B. Derek Shaw

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ALLENTOWN, Pa. — **Dorney Park** opened for its 133rd season April 30 with several new additions to enhance the guest experience. New Executive Chef **Malo Jones** has developed innovative and unique dining experiences, which include new menu items that can be found in the Smokehouse Barbecue. Four new special events — Battle of the Bands; KidsFest; Bands, Brews & BBQ and a Food Truck Festival — have been added to the line-up for the 2016 season.

The biggest change to the park this year is the refurbishment of Thunderhawk, Dorney Park's iconic wooden roller coaster, now in its 92nd season. This 1924 **Philadelphia Toboggan** - built, **Herb Schmeck**-designed ride, has two new sets of trains — only the fourth time in the history

SAFETY AND MAINTENANCE

of the ride, replacing rolling stock that has been in place since the early 1980's. Other aspects of the update include fresh new paint for the superstructure and LED tracer lights the entire length of the ride.

Mike Fehnel, vice president and general manager of Dorney Park, shared the enhancements timeline: "Planning started in the spring of 2015 by **Brad Marcy** (former general manager) and **Brad Nesland** (vice president of Maintenance). Orders were placed in the fall in order to ensure delivery in time for the start of 2016. As the oldest remaining coaster from Philadelphia Toboggan Coasters, Inc. (PTCI), Thunderhawk truly is a gem; however, it was time to receive a refresh."

The two new four-car, three-seat trains manufactured by PTCI replace the ride's older rolling stock of the same configuration. A new color



Clockwise from top left: Water dummies were used to test the new trains from PTCI; The PTCI crew posed for a crew photo before shipping the new trains out to Dorney Park; the ride was completely repainted in a banana cream color and outfitted with a stunning LED light program, something not possible in this historic 1930 view.

COURTESY DORNEY PARK

scheme of maroon and gold is used throughout the ride vehicles, which now feature individual lap bars and 3-D Thunderhawk logos. Fehnel explained why PTCI was selected, "This being one of the 10 oldest continuously operating roller coasters in the world, it was key to stay true to its origins. We wanted to maintain a classic roller coaster train, but with all the modern safety systems. The front of the train was elected to be the "open air" design. This gives a unique look and feel to the trains."

The entire ride has been repainted banana cream, a color similar to what was selected the last time it was painted. Rounding out the enhancements are ride profile lights. "The new light package consists of LED tracer lights. They virtually cover the entire ride with thousands of individual clear bulbs. The bright, white lights that outline the classic wooden roller coaster are sure to bring back a bit of nostalgia to Dorney Park," said Fehnel. Aside from the new rolling stock, most of the rest of Thunderhawk enhancements were done in-house.

The new ride vehicles are designed with lead cars with

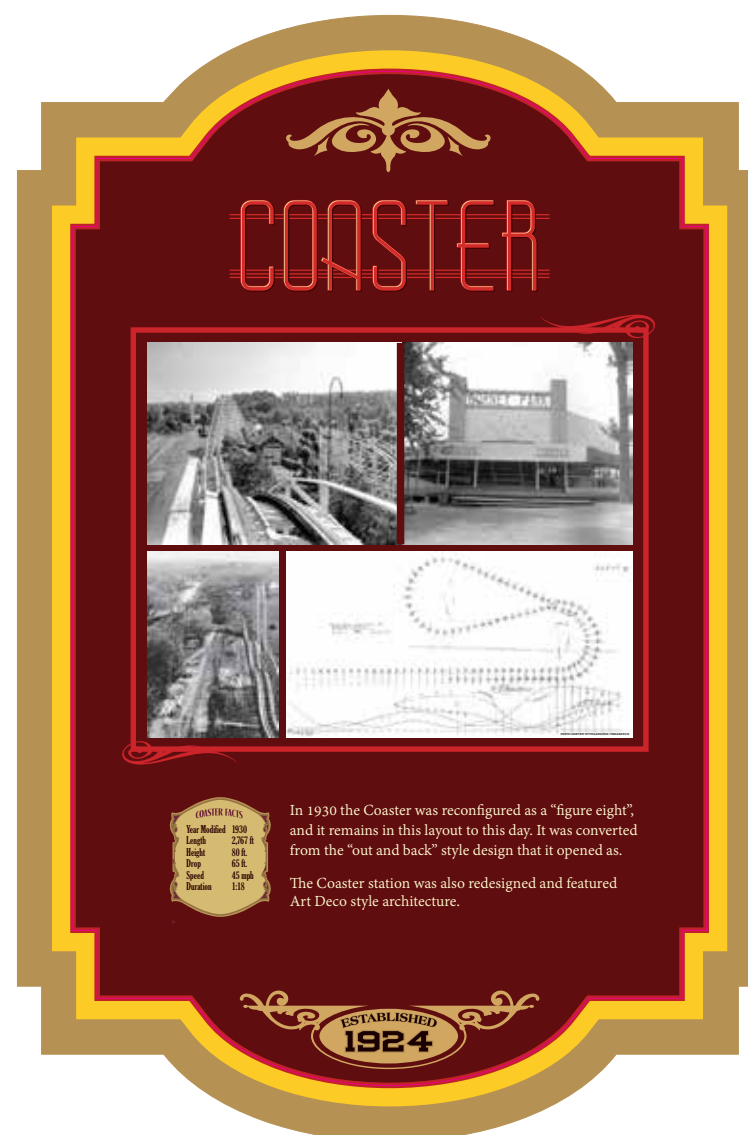
open front panels. This is an adaptation of ride train designs during the wooden roller coaster's first Golden Age in the early 20th century. **Tom Rebbie**, president of PTCI, Hatfield, Pa., was up for the job. "It's an eye-opening experience when you have to adjust 2016 technology on a 92-year-old ride." He continued, "Dorney was great to work with. They were very reasonable. Whatever they asked for we complied. Everything went very smoothly. We thoroughly enjoyed working with them."

Rebbie went on to mention that his crew enjoyed hands-on experience with their ride vehicles on the Thunderhawk track, a mere 28 miles north of the PTCI manufacturing facility. "Guys who normally do not get out of the shop got first-hand experience with the park, on-sight," said Rebbie.

Completing the update are a series of historical markers around Thunderhawk featuring highlights from the ride's 92-year history. "We were discussing the legacy of Thunderhawk, and its past turned out to be quite unique. We also discovered that PTCI had some incredible documents and photos in their ar-

chive, thus what better way to celebrate the 90-plus year history than to show how the ride changed through the decades," said Fehnel. He continued, "The first sign shows the original design of the ride as an 'out and back' coaster. We were even able to include an original contract for the construction which detailed 'Mr. Schmeck's services during the construction of the ride at a rate of \$17.00 per day.' The second sign details the reconfigurations for the 1930 season. Next is the 'yellow coaster' era followed by one for the modern day Thunderhawk."

While park staff was conducting historical research for the markers, they found that Thunderhawk was originally called Joy Ride when it first opened. Most people remember The Coaster designation that was used through the 1988 season. "Thunderhawk remains a classic, old-fashioned American wooden roller coaster with thrilling out-of-seat airtime pops. It is the eighth oldest roller coaster in the United States, the tenth oldest roller coaster in the world and it remains a favorite among Dorney Park guests," said Fehnel.



Rounding out the renovation of the Thunderhawk was the addition of four historical signs around the ride, providing details of its rich 92-year history. COURTESY DORNEY PARK

Lake Compounce trains 500-plus team members



Lake Compounce, Bristol, Conn. prepared for its 170th season by hiring and training more than 500 team members in a variety of departments, including ride operations, shown at left. At right, a total of 175 lifeguards will be trained for the five acre water park that features 13 attractions. Training is certified by Ellis & Associates. COURTESY LAKE COMPOUNCE; AT/GARY SLADE



Sahara Sam's partners for safety education

WEST BERLIN, N.J. — The New Jersey-based **Sambulance** program, a 501(c)3 non-profit with a mission to foster safety education within the special needs community, is partnering with **Sahara Sam's Oasis Indoor and Outdoor Water Park** for a summer gala. The event, Set Sail with Sambulance, is scheduled for June 4 from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. at the water park.

SAFETY

Tickets to the Set Sail with Sambulance event are available to the public and include an evening of live music, a seafood buffet, an auction and access to the indoor and outdoor water park at Sahara Sam's. All proceeds from the nautical-themed event will go to the Sambulance.

"This event is both exciting and extremely important for our program," said **Annie Peters**, executive director of the Sambulance. "As the program grows geographically, and we reach more and more children with special needs, our expenses go up. This event is paramount in allowing us to continue offering free programming to students that really need it."

In 2015 the Sambulance reached 22,895 students with special needs throughout New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The program offers free safety training to help familiarize students with emergency vehicles, 9-1-1 procedures and first aid. In addition to traveling to schools and organizations with a full-sized ambulance, Peters also coordinates and organizes exclusive events at Sahara Sam's Oasis

► See **SAMBULANCE**, page 51



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Laser tag safety keeps up with innovation at Amusement Expo

AT: Dean Lamanna
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SAFETY

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — Even as laser tag technology has become more varied and sophisticated, designers and manufacturers have sought to minimize the risk of accidental injuries.

At **Amusement Expo International 2016**, held March 15-17 at the Las Vegas Convention Center, *Amusement Today* asked several of them how they address player safety.

Shane Zimmerman, vice president of sales, Americas, for **Delta Strike** of Indianapolis, Ind., was on hand to pitch the company's recently introduced Mobile Command Station — a portable, Wi-Fi-controlled laser tag game for up to 20 players or more that can be transported easily for use in any indoor or outdoor location.

The unit's phasers incorporate a safety system to help prevent what Zimmerman described as "the most common injury in laser tag: a chipped tooth from the muzzle." Sensors keep the phaser from firing unless both hands are gripping it.

The two-handed firing sys-

tem also helps prevent wild swinging of the phaser. "When you're wielding the phaser with one hand, everyone wants to go gangster," Zimmerman said.

Accelerometers built into the phasers made by Delta Strike and **Laserforce** of Loveland, Colo., provide an additional safeguard by stopping the equipment when there is excessive flailing.

The latter company, an industry pioneer for 28 years, keeps such movement in check with a phaser attached to the game vest. "You have to use both hands to play it," said **Nancy Rockhill**, Laserforce's sales manager for North, Central and South America. (The phasers are adaptable to single-handed use, however, for handicapped players.)

Laserforce's dynamic, LED light-illuminated Gen7 Battlesuit vests have speakers built into the shoulders that offer scoring updates and alerts about missed targets, as well as warnings about player misbe-



Laser tag companies hawked the latest state-of-the-art game equipment at Amusement Expo International in Las Vegas. Among those showing off new phasers and safety features were Delta Strike's Jenna Rossio and Shane Zimmerman (above left) and Laserforce's Nancy Rockhill and Chance Dana. AT/DEAN LAMANNA

havior. The speakers also preclude the need for a distracting screen built into the phaser — keeping the player focused on the game.

Greenfield, Wis.-based **Laser Tag Pro**, which includes among its clients **Knott's Berry Farm** and **Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park Camp-Resorts**, had some of the coolest "talking" and weapon-style phasers at the show. As with other companies, its phaser is pretty tightly tethered to the tactical harness to prevent wild swinging and the phaser muzzle has a rubber cap to soften accidental colli-

sions.

Safety also must be built into the game environment.

Offering custom-designed laser spaces built on-site and a patent-pending immersive, interactive video system, **Arc Laser Tag Arenas** of Lehigh Acres, Fla., has installed laser tag in more than 350 locations worldwide.

The six-year-old company's **Lathan Gareiss** pointed out that maintaining safety through careful site planning and monthly maintenance (guarding against such things as protruding nail heads) is a

matter of both good business sense and, increasingly, code enforcement. Properly inclined ramps should replace stairs in multi-level laser tag facilities. And enunciating fire alarm systems have become the norm.

"When the alarm goes off, the white cleaning lights in the area should turn on automatically and the game's sound system should shut off," Gareiss said. "Operators need to have these things pre-planned in the design. It shows the fire marshal and the code inspector that we're being proactive with safety."

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WhiteWater's Maintenance Services experiences rapid international growth

New service location opened in Shanghai

RICHMOND, B.C., Canada — Looking after a facility's water park attractions is a key activity during the off-season. A park's cleanliness and curb appeal influences a guest's perception, but more important is that regular maintenance contributes to guest safety and it extends the life of the ride.

Canada's **WhiteWater West Industries** has invested in their After Sales & Service team to support the thousands of global WhiteWater installations to keep them operating safely and properly for water park guests.

WhiteWater's After Sales & Services President **Scott Heke** says, "Maintenance can be an afterthought and is often just seen as a cost because many water parks undervalue the importance of maintenance on their bottom line." WhiteWater has expanded the team located in the Canadian head office by 50 percent while adding a dedicated service person to the Shanghai office to help park operators keep maintenance on their mind.

The importance of local knowledge

With WhiteWater's international installation presence comes an international maintenance approach. Every location has different factors that can affect a water park equip-

ment's lifecycle including UV rays, water quality and distance from the oceans' edge. Local knowledge helps WhiteWater recommended the right schedules and products to ensure operations run smoothly.

More international locations, more personnel, more services

WhiteWater is now offering complete maintenance

MAINTENANCE

packages that provide a water park with what it needs to head into the 2016 summer season and beyond fully prepared. Their maintenance team offers comprehensive solutions to refresh a dull waterslide or bring a tired play structure back to life. The company's recoating services

can change the color of a waterslide and stock theming options can turn a simple play structure into a pirate ship or lush tropical forest where kid's imaginations can run for hours.

Keep time on your side, by loving your slide

Kicking off earlier this year, WhiteWater launched a campaign to remind water

park operators to show their attractions the maintenance love they deserve. WhiteWater's maintenance experts have created a comprehensive guide to help operators keep time on their side by planning ahead and setting aside a budget for any pre-season repairs and regular maintenance during the operating season. The complete guide is available at loveyourwaterslide.com.

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►SAMBULANCE

Continued from page 50

and **Diggerland USA** for the special needs community.

"Partnering with Annie and Sambulance to host this event is exciting for us," said **Ilya Girlya**, CEO of Sahara Sam's. "We've been hosting exclusive special needs nights at our park since 2010 so offering our facility for this gala is a natural fit."

Sambulance also partners with Diggerland USA to host special needs events and has an ongoing partnership with Nemours DuPont Pediatrics in Voorhees, who is providing support for the June 4 fundraiser. Additionally, a number of local and national companies have donated over \$5,000 in raffle items for the Anchor's Up Auction.

•sambulance.org

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What are the most important safety issues facing parks and attractions today?

ORLANDO, Fla. — **AIMS International's** board of directors is responsible for guiding the organization in its mission to promote safety through education and training. Many board members came to AIMS through their affiliation with **ASTM** and also as students and instructors at the AIMS Safety Seminar.

With safety as top priority for the amusement industry, **AIMS News & Notes** asked several board members to share their thoughts on industry safety with an answer to the question, "What are the most important safety issues facing parks and attractions today?"

Guest behavior and rider requirements

"In my opinion, the most important safety issues facing parks, carnivals and attractions are:

1. Getting our patrons to behave according to the rules of the ride.
2. Anticipating what patrons might do on/to a ride, which could cause an accident before they do it.
3. Finding positive ways to deal with the non-traditional rider who does not fit into the existing restraints on a ride.
4. Defining the rider abilities required (criteria) working with the manufacturer, if available, so we do not exclude patrons who could ride safely who have a 'perceived' disability and how to properly exclude those who do not have the abilities required."

—Patty Sullivan, *Eli Bridge Co.*

"For me the most important, and probably most gen-

PART 1 OF A SERIES

eral, is (ever changing) guest behavior requiring more sophisticated safety systems and ensuring safety awareness of attraction operators and manufacturers."

—Timo Klaus, *KumbaK — The Amusement Engineers*

Technology

"Technology used on attractions has drastically changed in the last 20 years, with change occurring more rapidly every year. The skills required to maintain the current generation of safety systems are very different and more in depth than the skills that were needed five years ago."

—Linda Freeman, *Rockwell Automation*

"One of the challenges in our industry today is the technology behind all the amusement rides. Some may have very little technological integration and others may have substantially more. Our industry is maturing very rapidly (especially over the last 5-10 years), we need to take advantage of this technology and understand how it interfaces with what we do on a day to day basis, we also need to maintain a level of common sense to keep things simple, logical, easy to work with and accessible to everyone. One of the other key items that we will be facing in our industry in the next 10 years is the inclusion of a broader base of patrons and the safety considerations that it entails to ensure a good experience for the patron, while maintaining their safety and not impeding the creativity of those companies developing

these new rides for our industry."

—Andreas Tanzer, *ProSlide Technology, Inc.*

Employee safety

"One of the challenges and an area of focus in the industry is to ensure the continued safety of our employees. They work around machines and equipment that is high energy and very unforgiving. As our rides and equipment become more complex, we need training programs that can ensure our operators and maintenance personnel are current. Our track record on employee injuries is not as stellar as it is for our guests. AIMS will continue to play an important role in improving employee safety by developing and delivering training and certification programs that are state of the art."

—Mike Withers, *retired, Walt Disney Imagineering*

Cultural trends

"Safety issues are a constantly evolving concern. A hot topic one year may not be a factor the next year. Who knew five years ago that we would be dealing with drones and selfie sticks? I think that the parks and mobile shows of today need to be alert to new and trending issues."

—Tony Claassen, *Silver Dollar City*

The **AIMS Safety Seminar** will be held January 8-13, 2017 at the Doubletree by SeaWorld in Orlando, Florida. For information and registration, please visit www.aimsintl.org or call (714) 697-6654.

—Karen Oertley

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Three Years in Wonderland details Disneyland's beginnings

REVIEW: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

BOOK REVIEW

Author Todd James Pierce has taken fans of amusement park history to places never been seen before. The extended title of the book: *Three Years in Wonderland: The Disney Brothers, C.V. Wood, and the Making of the Great American Theme Park* tells of the origins of the Anaheim theme park as others have briefly touched upon, but never before detailed with such research, perspective and grit. Upon completion of the book, the reader sits back to almost take a breath and realizes that Disneyland should not only probably never have been built, but was astonishing it ever opened and lasted for more than a few months.

There are some unusual characteristics to the book compared to other Disney homages. There are no pictures. The subjects are both revered, yet highly criticized. Chapter One is titled: How the Story Ends. Those that pick up the book will quickly understand this isn't something they've seen before. The history quickly pulls one in, and the reader, who fully knows that Disneyland has now been an enormous success for six decades, still experiences that anguish of suspense.

The first chapter sets the stage like a well-crafted mystery. C.V. Wood is nowhere to be found in Disneyland history, yet he was the first general manager, and his involvement in Disneyland's origins was clearly vital. Following his departure, C.V. Wood's contributions are described by the author thusly: "Woody believed that Americans were drawn to spectacle." But his work is mostly forgotten.

Chapter Two traces Wood's background — a hooligan as a youth, rambunctious in his college years, and one who learned the ability to charm an audience and the people he met. To reach lofty aspirations, Wood learned to twist facts or even downright fabricate them. What could have been a few-page summary instead vividly lets the reader enter the mindset of Wood and his determination balanced by his unscrupulous tendencies.

The next chapter focuses on Walt Disney and how his inspiration and focus transferred from animation to the dream of an amusement park. Few believed in it, including his brother Roy. Disneyphiles will particularly



enjoy peeking into Walt's early visions of Mickey Mouse Park, which eventually evolved into Disneyland.

As plans progressed, the eventual meeting of Walt Disney and C.V. Wood is recounted. The working arrangement between the two was never a friendly one deep down, but one where the two knew the other's importance to the project.

The following chapters vividly detail the frustration and ordeal of acquiring the land for Disneyland, as well as the financing. Interestingly, Wood helped to successfully overcome these obstacles, but not always by demonstrating the highest integ-

rity. While the reader obviously knows the eventual outcome, one can't help but be drawn into the uncertainty these key figures were experiencing during this pivotal period of amusement history. Author Todd James Pierce has masterfully taken the reader into each board room and construction site.

Another chapter paints a story of the obstacles and woes during the construction of the park. At the time, they seemed virtually insurmountable. Internal fighting and hostile unions became problematic. The uphill battle preparing Disneyland for opening day — including a lack of money and rides that didn't work properly — took its toll on everyone, starting with Walt. The fact that the park ever opened can only be summed up as a miracle. It is here that one gets a true sense of Walt Disney as a human being — with normal fears and disappointments — instead of a legendary icon placed upon a pedestal.

The next to last chapter tells of opening day and the disaster it was. Streets were still being poured that very morning and crowd control became a problem with no solution. Press surrounding the event was harsh. In the days and weeks that followed,

things slowly fell into place. Regardless of the initial bad press, the public still seemed intrigued with this idea of a theme park.

The tale concludes with Wood's eventual departure. The division between Walt's ideals and Wood's questionable methods could no longer be bridged. Although not detailed in this book, Wood would go on to lead other such projects taking what he learned from his three years at Disneyland.

Amusement Today wholeheartedly recommends this book to those who even slightly consider themselves to be Disney fans, theme park buffs or anyone interested in the complete picture of the amusement industry. It's hard to imagine a time when the public didn't understand what a theme park was, but Pierce and *Three Years in Wonderland* take each of us there. It's a shame there are no pictures to make details of the nine years of extensive interviews and archival research jump off the page visually. *Three Years in Wonderland* is printed by University Press of Missouri. The hardback retails for \$30, but discounts are available via purchasing online through Amazon or Barnes & Noble. E-book format is also available.



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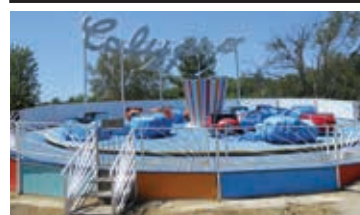


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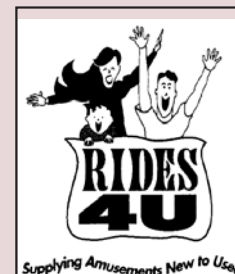


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BREAKING NEWS



Martin's Fantasy Island becomes newest addition to Apex Parks Group

ALISO VIEJO, Calif. — California-based **Apex Parks Group** announced on May 13, 2016 the acquisition of **Martin's Fantasy Island** theme park. This is Apex Parks Group's first acquisition for 2016.

Martin's Fantasy Island is located in Grand Island, New York, less than 10 miles south-east of Niagara Falls in western New York. The park has more than 25 rides and seven water attractions; including the Silver Comet wooden roller coaster. The park's attractions and live shows are geared toward family-oriented and thrilling entertainment for any age. Martin's Fantasy Island is an ideal addition to Apex's family of theme parks, water parks, and family entertainment centers.

Apex Parks Group CEO, **Al Weber, Jr.** commented: "We're excited to work with the Martin's team to continue the successful operation of Martin's Fantasy Island. The addition of this beautiful family-niche park is another step toward Apex's goal of growing to become the leading company in the fragmented out-of-home entertainment business."

Former park owner, **Martin DiPietro** adds, "I bought this park 22 years ago and it's been a labor of love. I decided Apex Parks Group was the best choice to ensure that Martin's Fantasy Island continues to be the best family fun park in the area. Their track record in the family-oriented amusement business is unmatched, and I have every confidence that their success will carry over to Martin's Fantasy Island."

Martin's Fantasy Island opened the 2016 season on May 14 and will continue planned operations during the transition.

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