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Vegas presses 'play' for Amusement Expo 2016

Education program to precede show

AT: Dean Lamanna
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LAS VEGAS, Nev. — The 2016 edition of Amusement Expo International, the annual conference and trade show of the coin-op and revenue-generating amusement, music and family entertainment center (FEC) industry, is rolling out March 15-17 at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

Co-sponsored by the American Amusement Ma-

chine Association (AAMA) and the Amusement & Music Operators Association (AMOA), this year's expo will offer comprehensive industry education and a convention floor packed with well over 100 exhibitors. Vendors specializing in coin-op machines, electronics, go-kart equipment, laser games, photo booths, plush/novelties, redemption equipment/merchandise, sports games, tattoos, token dispensers, video



games and more are participating.

The event kicks off with a full day of educational sessions on Tuesday, March 15, at the Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino, the expo's

host hotel. These informative, interactive sessions will cover topics ranging from improving sales and maximizing employee effectiveness to expanding customer reach through social media.

"Amusement Expo International is the complete package," said Brian Glasgow, senior vice president of Mokena, Ill.-based WT Glasgow, Inc., which manages the event. "It offers one day of compelling educational programs designed for street operators, family entertainment centers

and others involved in the amusement and entertainment industry — as well as two full days of a fun, exciting trade show floor showcasing the latest products for the industry."

According to Glasgow, some 3,000 exhibitors and attendees participated in last year's Expo.

"For 2016, we're neck and neck with our exhibitor and attendee numbers from last year," he said. "We expect to meet and exceed them this year."

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Adventureland area puts new spin on Wildlife World

Rides, animals, eatery highlight 15-acre expansion

AT: Dean Lamanna
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LITCHFIELD PARK, Ariz. — More than ever before in its nearly 32-year history, the call of the wild is being punctuated by giddy shrieks at Wildlife World Zoo, Aquarium & Safari Park.

The 100-plus-acre zoo on the northwestern outskirts of Phoenix has upped its family entertainment center quotient in a major way with the debut of Adventureland, a 15-acre expansion featuring four rides and several dozen additional outdoor and indoor animal exhibits.



The new section, which enjoys a high profile along the recently completed Loop 303 freeway, officially opened Feb. 1 following a weekend preview.

On that windy and unusually chilly desert day, *Amusement Today* tooled around Adventureland on a golf cart with the zoo's indefatigable proprietor and director, Mickey Ollson, who beamed like a proud parent as he pointed out the added animal species and rides.

"There's our bobcat!" he said, gesturing to a wild feline ambling about in a roomy outdoor habitat out-

fitted with boulders, climbing logs and hiding places. "He was raised from a kitten in our own nursery building, so this is a whole new environment for him. He loves people and is very friendly."

Rounding a corner on Adventureland's natural dirt path (Wildlife World, in keeping with its overall theme, is refreshingly free of asphalt paving), Ollson waved toward the Soaring Eagle — a scenic zipline from the Stan Checketts-founded company of the same name that rapidly transports passengers backward and forward on an inclined cable in a two-seat cart.

The ride proved a hit during the section's soft opening the previous day. "It's really fun and really

► See WILDLIFE, page 6



The Soaring Eagle zipline, one of four new rides at Adventureland, the new 15-acre amusement and animal exhibit area at Wildlife World Zoo, Aquarium & Safari Park, provides a thrilling raptor's-eye view of the park.

COURTESY WILDLIFE WORLD ZOO/BRITNEY POWERS

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NEWSTALK

EDITORIAL: Gary Slade, gslade@amusementtoday.com

Tree swings to ziplines: We've come a long way



Slade

It may be only March, but our industry is already getting into the "swing."

Amusement Expo International 2016, running March 15-17 at the Las Vegas Convention Center, is an annual early momentum-builder. The event features a day of education sessions followed by two days of trade show activity for owners and operators of family entertainment centers (FECs), arcades and other amusement facilities, as well as the vendors that serve them.

Produced by WT Glasgow Event Management and co-sponsored by the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) and the Amusement & Music Operators Association (AMOA), the event gives exhibitors and attendees the opportunity to learn about the latest industry practices and innovations while finalizing equipment and service transactions ahead of the peak amusement season.

Among the most popular recent trends identified in this segment of our industry by the *Amusement Today* editorial staff are aerial adventures. Evolving technology, coupled with imagination, has led to new zipline attractions appealing to a broader range of customers

It's a fresh take on a recreational tradition.

Baby Boomers will remember the simple pleasures of a backyard swing set or, if a sturdy tree branch and a strong piece of rope were available, the old-fashioned tire swing. These youthful activities allowed us to reach for the sky — or at least grasp for a few tree leaves.

Kids today can find mild-to-wild variations on this type of fun — incorporating the very latest safety systems — at many FEC's, location-based entertainment (LBE) facilities and amusement parks. Even zoos and roadside attractions have welcomed the high-flying act.

Ziplines and rope courses have become dynamic "hands-on" amusement offerings that provide uniquely thrilling, individualized experiences for their participants. It's no wonder fun spot owners and operators are adding them to keep their guests on-site just a little longer.

FLINT'S VIEW: Bubba Flint



INDUSTRY OPINION: Andrew Mellor, amellor@amusementtoday.com

The press release debate

I was intrigued recently by an email from my friend Ron Gustafson, director of marketing and public relations at Quassy Amusement and Waterpark in Connecticut, in which he told me that he had read a comment from a national public relations firm that "the press release is dead." Ron, for one, felt nothing could be further from the truth, and I wonder what other attractions industry PR and marketing people think about this?

I too have heard similar comments on occasion, in particular from younger PR and marketing representatives, and it is an interesting subject to debate. For those readers of a similar generation to me (and older), press releases have always been an "ever present" in a public relations and marketing campaign, being just one element of any organization's promotional activities. They offer valuable opportunities for publicity in local and even national newspapers, and elsewhere depending on which publications and websites pick them up.

Granted, the younger generations today tend to read everything on their mobile devices or PC, but I have to say if I leave a newspaper, for exam-



Mellor

ple, on the kitchen table and my 24-year-old son is sitting there chatting or having a coffee, he'll for sure flick through it and read various items, including press releases!

There is little doubt that the role of the press release is different from what it used to be, but it still serves an important function. They are a necessary part

of content creation, still announcing news but also helping organizations to be located on search engines and to build a following. Written correctly and with genuine news content that appeals to an editor or journalist, a release will inspire the reader to investigate further, and, in the case of an attraction, for example, go to a website to find out more. And, of course, they also help build brand awareness.

Today, printed publications will also have a website, and the content they use in print will also appear on the web. It's what they do, so it is another rock solid reason to keep sending out press releases.

I could go on, but space here doesn't allow much more comment. Suffice to say I agree with Ron — the press release is far from dead!



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2 MINUTE DRILL



COMPILED: Janice Witherow

Michael Mack, Europa-Park

Michael Mack grew up in Europa-Park... literally. As a kid in the family business, Michael worked many different jobs at the park and then eventually gained work experience in the amusement industry by doing internships at various parks around the world. Today he and his brother, Thomas, are the next generation of Europa-Park and are continuing its legacy of daring to provide cutting-edge attractions while focusing on a fantasy-like resort atmosphere for its guests. Michael is an active member of many industry and community boards and committees. He loves spending time with his family, is fiercely loyal and has a great passion for his job.

Number of years in the industry:
As I was kind of born in the park, I'd say that number corresponds to my actual age, 37 years.

Best thing about the industry...
We make people smile. What else can you ask for?

Favorite amusement ride...
I love many rides, but my favorite is probably our Arthur ride, a powered inverted spinning coaster, which we opened in 2014. It's a prototype ride combined with use of media from an external IP in a complete new building.

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

A movie director. I always loved composing stories and images and I'm actually very happy that I was able to bring this passion into the production of our 4D movie *Time Carousel* which we premiered in 2015.

Biggest challenge facing our industry...
Tougher competition by attractive short trips, city trips, public events, festivals, etc. Each Euro and every hour can only be spent once.

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

To see the excited faces of our guests on our attractions and rides which were planned and built by three generations of the Mack family.

Favorite appetizer...
Tomato-mozzarella salad.

The last thing I do before leaving work is...

Take a walk from my office through the empty park to my home, which is directly connected to Europa-Park.

If I could guest star on any television show, it would be...

"House of Cards" or "Lilyhammer."

The last thing I Googled was...

The on-ride video of the new Mack Rides coaster Flash at the Chinese Lewa World, which has the biggest loop ever built!

The scariest thing I have ever done is...

Oh there are many things my brother, Thomas, and I did when we were kids in the empty park. But as our father is reading this as well, we have to keep quiet about it.



The Mack team at Germany's Europa-Park, l to r: Juer-gen Mack, Thomas Mack, Roland Mack and Michael Mack. COURTESY EUROPA-PARK



Mack

When I look out my front door at home, I see...
Europa-Park!

If you were climbing a mountain, what three things would you bring with you?
Proper hiking shoes, a backpack and a paraglider to soar down!

The one thing I always seem to buy but never really use is...
Games for my portable Playstation. I just don't have the time.

It is 3 p.m. on a workday. Where would we typically find you?
Walking the park.

My favorite family activity is...
Doing the closing round of the park with my two sons, Paul and Jacob Arthur.

If you could ask the world to think about one thing for one hour what would it be?
I would actually ask them to NOT think about their phones and emails for one hour and simply talk to each other.

When I need some peace and quiet, I go to...
Play golf! The Europa-Park Golf Club is not far away but gives me the right distance to relax a little.

You are at the grocery store. What aisle do you spend the most time in?
It might sound boring but I really enjoy all kinds of different bread.

Favorite weekend getaway?
I really like the northern Italian lakes. Especially in the summertime; it's simply beautiful there.

My breakfast usually consists of...
I always try to get my cereals in the morning, but sometimes I have a quick snack on the go if it's a very busy morning (which unfortunately happens way too often).

If I could get rid of one electronic device, it would be...

Even if it's not a device on its own, I get highly frustrated by the email culture of today. I most certainly would like to get rid of this!

The song I find myself listening to most often lately is...

The Rustis – celebration. My son Paul loves this song by our own band.

When it comes to wine, do you prefer red or white?

I love the classic white wine spritzer. With sparkling water and ice cubes...very refreshing!

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

Presented by the National Roller Coaster Museum

COMPILED: Richard Munch



MARCH

•**1898:** On March 13, the machinery, rolling stock and hardware to build a Scenic Railway arrived on site at **Idlewilde Park**, in Newark, Ohio, to replace an early Thompson Switch-back Railway. Because of its historic nature, the conversion of a portion of the **Newark Earthworks**, an Indian structure dating back to 300 B.C., to an amusement park in 1895, was considered unwarranted. The park would operate on the property until 1924, when its popularity faded with competition from **Buckeye Lake Park**. In operation was a Ferris Wheel, Shoot-the-Shoot, dancing pavilion, bowling alley and bathing beach adjacent to the earthworks, a 10 foot high 1,200 foot diameter circle. Fortunately the large mounds were mostly protected even when the site was used as an army training camp and later, a golf course. Today it is a landmark and recognized as the oldest man made structure in Ohio.

•**1906:** An article in the March 17 edition of *Billboard* highlighted Cleveland's **White City**, located about one mile west of its main competition, **Euclid Beach Park**. The park opened in 1900 as **Manhattan Beach**, on Lake Erie. **Edward C. Boyce** converted the 14-acre park into a White City with a \$200,000 investment in 1905, including a new Scenic Railway. Modeled after **Dreamland** in Coney Island, the park never grabbed the public's attention, while fire destroyed most of the park in May 1906. Although it was rebuilt, a storm damaged the park in July 1907, after which it was permanently closed. It may have operated with a limited ride lineup in 1908 and is today part of Cleveland's sewage treatment plant.

•**1922: Philadelphia Toboggan Company** provided a March 7 press release to the local newspapers highlighting its 2nd annual dinner for the employees of the company. The directors turned the facility's art shop into a fully decorated dining room at its Germantown location with flowers, scenery and twinkling lights. The fairyland experience was completed with entertainment and a fine catered meal for the nearly 50 employees. President **Henry B. Auchy** was Master of Ceremonies, with help from **Samuel High** and **George Smith**. At the dinner was a long list of employees and draftsmen, including **Charles Mach** and **Herbert Schmeck**. Invited guests included representatives of *Billboard* and in particular, both **John Miller** and **Harry C. Baker** of **Miller and Baker**.

•**1932: Mary Wink** of Mount Vernon, New York asserted before her trial date of March 21 that she received injuries from a revolving barrel in the Bughouse at **Steeplechase Park**, Rockaway Beach, New York in 1927. Her \$10,000 suit against the **L.A. Thompson Scenic Railway Company**, which owned the park, stated that she was accompanied by her husband and was hurt while walking through the barrel. She stated she went into the amusement building seeking fun but came out with injuries that required medical treatment. There was no newspaper follow-up as the case was likely settled out of court.

•**1998:** The first dive coaster, Oblivion, opened on March 14 in the United Kingdom, at **Alton Towers**. At only 65 feet above the midway, most of the 180 foot initial drop was enclosed in a underground tunnel. With the first drop at about 87 degrees, later dive coasters would be adjusted to 90 degrees. Designed by **Bolliger and Mabillard**, with **Wardley and Stengel Consulting**, the 1,232 foot long coaster still packs a punch among its fans. In the United States, **Cedar Point** in Sandusky, Ohio will open their new dive coaster Val-ravn, in spring, 2016. It will be almost three times the length of Oblivion, with a first drop of 218 feet. It will be the fourth Bolliger and Mabillard ride at the park.

►EXPO

Continued from page 1

Opening the Expo's education program will be a keynote presentation by O. Lee Mincey, president of Oliver Mincey Co., which provides human resources and employee training services to the entertainment industry. Mincey has worked with iconic brands including Coca-Cola, Disney and Six Flags in a career spanning more than two decades.

Two full days of exhibit floor time follow on Wednesday and Thursday, March 16-17. Registration includes admission to two co-located events that will increase the number of attending buyers: the National Bulk Vendors Association Conference and the 2016 Laser Tag Convention (lasertagconvention.com).

Other Expo highlights:

•**All Industry Gala** (Tuesday, March 15): This evening gathering will provide guests with an opportunity to mix and network with exhibitors and fellow operators. Cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and live enter-



Amusement Expo International 2016, co-sponsored by the American Amusement Machine Association and the Amusement & Music Operators Association, will include a day of comprehensive industry education sessions in addition to two full days of exhibits presented by vendors and support businesses. COURTESY WT GLASGOW, INC.

tainment provided.

•**AMOA Breakfast & Membership Meeting** (Thursday, March 17): The 2016 Annual Meeting of AMOA will be conducted at this event. Attendees will receive an update on current association business affairs and enjoy a presenta-

tion of service and industry awards.

•**Wayne E. Hesch Memorial Scholarship Raffle** (Thursday, March 17): This fundraiser is the primary source of scholarship monies raised. All attendees are encouraged to stop by the Hesch booth, purchase raf-

fle tickets and qualify for a chance to win great prizes while supporting the industry's longest-running charitable program.

Registration is available in the convention center's Hall N1 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday, March 15; 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednes-

day, March 16; and 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, March 17.

The Exhibit Hall is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Wednesday, March 16, and Thursday, March 17.

Along with the Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino, official accommodations are being provided by Hilton Grand Vacations and Spring Hill Suites Marriott — both within walking distance of the convention center.

Between the convenience of the event's location and all the amenities and attractions Las Vegas offers, the city "remains the destination that has everything attendees are looking for," noted the Expo's Brian Glasgow.

"Walking the show floor, checking out all the new products — it's just a fun show," he said.

The full schedule of events, a complete list of exhibitors and additional information regarding registration and accommodations are available at the Amusement Expo website.

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IAAPA's FEC 2016 - Florida attracts international audience

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — More than 140 family entertainment center (FEC) industry leaders representing 52 companies from 23 states and 11 countries participated in FEC 2016 - Florida, an international conference for FEC owners and operators. The two-day event, which is organized and produced by the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), took place at the Renaissance World Golf Village Resort, Jan. 31 – Feb. 2, in St. Augustine, Florida.

Opening day keynote speaker and entrepreneur Chris White talked about a proven management philosophy to help companies gain traction and a clear focus to increase profitability and revenue. White used FEC business examples to demonstrate how the Entrepreneurial Operating System helps companies grow revenues and profits and achieve a balance of life to

company owners and employees.

The second day's keynote speaker Brandon Gray, client service manager at Crabtree, Rowe & Berger, used real-world examples and data to discuss methods for increasing revenue and growth. Gray urged attendees to examine their cash flow, get a true picture of their current business situation, and simplify to better direct their organizations toward success. Additional breakout sessions covered a variety of topics, including risk management, food and beverage services, sales, and marketing.

Attendees also took part in a networking event at Dave and Busters, and a post-tour to area FECs, including Rebounderz, Adventure Landing, and Autobahn Indoor Speedway.

FEC 2016 provided an interactive and engaging environment for operators to

share with one another ideas and real-world takeaways to apply to their businesses. The event was open exclusively to IAAPA members.

Gregg Borman, senior vice president of Operations at Apex Parks Group said: "It's developing into a must-attend program. Every year has had different content, so if you miss one of these events, you're really missing out. Overall, I think the event has been going great."

"I'll be attending every year going forward," said Mike Abecassis, CEO, Game Time.

Parker Coddington, Partner, Shenanigans Entertainment Centers echoed the same, commenting "Lots of great information and lots of good networking, which is most important for us at Shenanigans."

The dates and locations of the FEC 2017 meeting have not been announced by IAAPA.

Zamperla Power Surge, dubbed Gunslinger, heading to Frontier City

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. — Frontier City has a new Gunslinger in town.

Gunslinger, Frontier City's new-for-2016 ride, is a Zamperla Power Surge. The signature thrill ride debuted in 1999 and remains popular today.

Gunslinger flips, twists, and spins 24 riders in a dizzying up and down adventure. Riders spin in multiple axes, with two motor-controlled rotators and a third pivot point driven only by gravity. The randomness of the gravity-driven rotation assures a unique ride each and every time. At its peak height, riders will reach 60 feet above the ground.

Gunslinger is the third new ride to debut at Frontier City in three years. In 2015, the seven-story steel-looping, Brain Drain (Larson Giant Loop), was introduced and in 2014, Winged Warrior (Larson Flying Scooters) flew in — bringing thrills for the whole family.

"We are extremely excited to bring this new type of ride to our guests," says Stephen Ball, Frontier City's general manager. "The Gunslinger is one of our wildest additions that is sure to please thrillseekers of all ages!"



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►WILDLIFE

Continued from page 1

popular," Ollson said. "It was busy all day long."

Nearby, a painter was still applying accent details to the exterior signage at Zooberto's, Adventureland's large, colorfully appointed café serving Mexican fare. Across the way, at the center of a manmade pond framed by mature, transplanted palm trees, some capuchin monkeys were peeking out of their heated enclosure.

Zippering around and pausing at the section's three new exhibit buildings and remaining attractions, Ollson talked excitedly about his other new "toys": the 35-foot-high, 800-foot-long Family Coaster with strikingly steel-blue track from Chance Rides; the 100-foot-tall Vertigo swing ride from A.R.M.; and the vividly macaw-themed Flying Scooters from Larson International.

The quick tour ended at Adventureland's front-and-center black bear exhibit, which is surrounded by a dry moat 10 feet wide and 10 feet deep. The furry residents were just beginning to stir, poking their heads from their hut under the partial sun.

Land of adventure

Over lunch at Dillon's KC BBQ, a popular full-service, public-access restaurant that occupies a large building he owns adjacent to World Wildlife's entrance, Ollson talked about Adventureland's preview and the park's long history of integrating animal and amusement attractions.

"It's a successful approach that our guests have enjoyed since they took our first African Safari Train ride more than 20 years ago," he said, noting that the new section's four rides boost the park's ride total to 10. "One of the pleasing things about this past weekend is that people seemed to be enjoying the exhibits and the layout. They were getting to all parts of the new area and spending time."

"It isn't a finished project yet. We've got a couple other animals that we're moving in. Just like our aquarium — the first public aquarium in Arizona — matured over the first year or so after we opened it in 2009, in our new area, the animals will eventually feel more at home and the landscaping will fill in. And we'll make some final little tweaks and improvements."

The road to Adventureland, which had an initial work-

ing budget of about \$6 million, was mapped starting seven years ago, when Ollson bought 25 acres used for growing ornamental olive trees at the southwestern end of his property.

"We had a couple other projects ahead of it — a fourth aquarium building, our DragonWorld reptile exhibit, the sea lions and the sea lion show — as well as some smaller projects. We were kind of waiting to see what the schedule was to finish the freeway [Loop 303], because Adventureland was going to have a quarter mile of frontage on it."

Ollson saw opportunity in a number of mature palm trees that were to be cleared from the freeway route. "We made arrangements with the demolition company to move them," he said. "In 2011, after we completed our master planning for the new section in-house, we knew where we wanted these 50-foot-tall palm trees for landscaping."

Wildlife World ramped up preliminary work on Adventureland after it opened its 15-acre Safari Park and wrapped the other projects, and by mid-2014 began hiring contractors. "We didn't have a general contractor," Ollson said. "That was all done by me and my maintenance supervisor."

The passion and level of personal investment in his business helps Ollson maintain a 50 percent customer return visit rate. Attendance runs about 400,000 annually; roughly 80,000 of that number is comprised of



Adventureland's amusement whirlwind includes (clockwise from above) an A.R.M. Vertigo, a Chance Family Coaster and Larson International's Flying Scooters.

WILDLIFE WORLD ZOO/GEORGE VALVERDE (ABOVE AND RIGHT), BRITTNEY POWERS



school children on field trips.

Ollson's operational approach is partly organic.

"When you open a new exhibit, in first few days, the public will show you what you need to change, what you need to do differently," he said. "You can sit down and do all the research or all the thinking you'd like about traffic patterns through the zoo and those kinds of things. But once you open it, the visitors really teach you."

"So far, with Adventureland, I'm very happy with the

response."

Ollson has 17 undeveloped acres left at Wildlife World, with plans for making improvements throughout the property over the next two years. These include expanding the Safari Park with a new rhino exhibit.

"That's what keeps a great zoo great — when you keep updating it, bringing in new exhibits. Making it more interesting and more educational for your visitors. And when you're fine-tuning it and adding new species, it also keeps it fresh for the staff."

Creature comforts

That the zoo's animals appear healthy and happy, and that many exotic and native birds roam freely and comfortably about the property, is a testament both to the care they receive and the haven-like atmosphere of Wildlife World.

The job of Jack Ewert, the park's veteran deputy director and general curator, is to make sure the animals are fed and content, and are getting along. "Each species has its own set of requirements, of criteria, which support it in good health," he said, emphasizing that the safety of guests and animals alike is a priority. "We want each animal to experience maximum welfare while at the same time providing an intimate viewing experience for our visitors."

With more than 6,000 individual animals and over 600 species to look after, Ewert gets an assist from his wife, Gina,

who creates the clear and very concise signage that accompanies each exhibit.

Making the creatures feel at home is largely the task of John Wallick, Wildlife World's exhibitry supervisor for the past three decades. Wallick's detailed rockwork, which he builds from concrete, rebar and metal lath (and, for the zoo's aquariums, from fiberglass), are stained with a variety of non-toxin-releasing hues to create authentic-looking environments. His craftsmanship is a consistent highlight throughout the park.

"We try to make each exhibit look a little different," Wallick said. "When Mickey lets me know what animals we're bringing in, I will research the area where the animals are from. And then I start creating and building from there."

He admitted that he's a perfectionist. "Seeing the public's reaction to the exhibit gives me great satisfaction."

Wallick's boss echoed that.

"You see the public really enjoying it," Ollson said. "And you see them learning conservation ethics: they're building an appreciation for wildlife and wild places. You can see the wonder on a child's face when our zoo's cougar — even though it's just a young animal, not really an adult yet — runs up to the fence within three feet of him and stares him in the eye. You can't get that off a TV set or a movie screen or a computer screen."

•wildlifeworld.com



Zoo proprietor and director Mickey Ollson (right) has expanded his public "family" of more than 6,000 individual animals with, among other additions, a cougar (above) and bison (top). AT/DEAN LAMANNA





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INTERNATIONAL

► Efteling to create its largest, most expensive attractions for 2017 — Page 9

Mythos Adventurer Land launches in China's People's Square

AT: Andrew Mellor
amellor@amusementtoday.com

SHANGHAI, China — The People's Square D Mall in Shanghai, China, has announced the development of a state of the art FEC, Mythos Adventurer Land, by Shanghai Liuyu Investment Company Ltd.

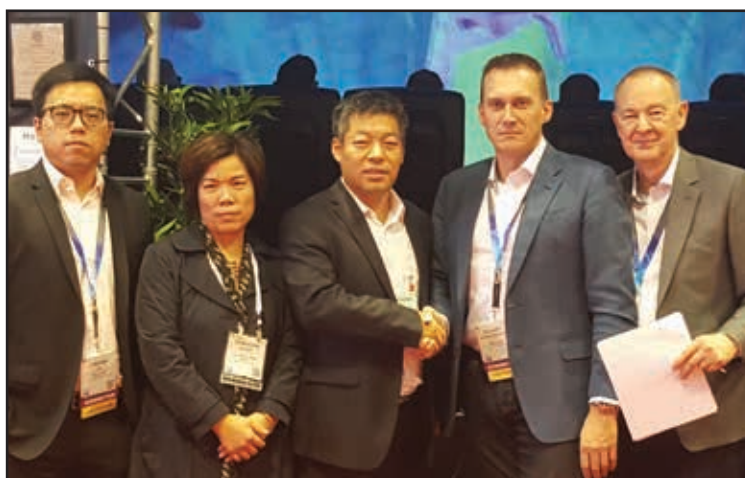
The new attraction, which is due to open in early summer this year, will offer shoppers and visitors a wide array of next-generation, immersive experiences, focusing on media and motion based simulation games in immersive 2D and 3D, complemented by interactivity and augmented reality (AR).

U.K.-based Holovis Attractions has been contracted to provide a turnkey package to design, build and deliver the FEC in partnership with Liuyu Investment Company. To be created within a 2,000 square meter (21,500 square



foot) site, the contract includes all attractions, FEC systems, CGI and interactive gaming content from the Holovis Media team, in addition to a completely new attraction which will be a first in China — a projection mapping show linked with real-time interactive AR.

The new venue will include a range of 3D attractions from Holovis, among which will be a 12-seat Mini Immersive Tunnel, an interactive Immersive Theatre with 12 motion seats and real-time interactive gam-



Pictured at last year's IAAPA Attractions Expo following the contract signing for Mythos Adventurer Land are, from left to right: Haoqin Gu, business development manager for Holovis; Ms. Zhang and Mr. Mu, shareholders of Mythos Adventurer Land; Stuart Hetherington, CEO of Holovis; and Andrew Brown, strategy director for Holovis. COURTESY HOLOVIS

ing, and a two-person MotionDome offering a combination of 360 degree visuals synched to organic motion and gaming interactivity.

Additionally, four Holovis driving rigs incorporat-

ing motion bases and Oculus Rift headsets will offer an accurate motorsport experience.

All media and gaming will be exclusively delivered by the Holovis Media team

while the interactivity within all the attractions will be delivered using Holovis's proprietary InterAct platform Version 3, featuring the company's own unique laser-based interactive devices.

Commenting on the project, Holovis CEO Stuart Hetherington said: "This FEC is a testament to what can be achieved when all parts of the experience are brought together; from the initial concept design to the attraction development, media and software integration all created and managed by the same company, ensuring a much higher level of quality and greater creative impact. This will be the most focused and integrated FEC experience ever delivered, with the attractions inspired by our much larger E-Ticket theme park division but presented using our scalable In-Mo platform."

EAG/VAE trade show success marks strong start to 2016

AT: Andrew Mellor
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LONDON, England - The 2016 edition of the annual EAG/VAE trade show, held at London's Excel Exhibition Centre, took place from January 12-14 and by all accounts was a resounding success.

The event mixes suppliers of coin-op and FEC style games and attractions (in the EAG section) with more amusement and theme park oriented products in the Visitor Attraction Expo (VAE) area, the two combining to create a strong domestic show at the beginning of a new year and an excellent and particularly convivial meeting opportunity for both exhibitors and visitors.

Products on display covered everything from arcade style games and redemption machines, AV equipment and bowling, to kiddie rides and simulators, management systems and cash handling products, while visitors included owners and operators of

FECs, amusement arcades, theme parks, seaside amusement parks, farm parks and more.

While final attendance figures were still to be released at the time of writing, it was clearly noticeable that the event held visitors' interest throughout the three days, with each day providing exhibiting companies with a strong turnout of quality attendees, even on the final day which is well-known at such events can often see very low attendance.

"We've had an extremely positive show," noted Phil Setter at plush supplier Whitehouse Leisure. "Our stands were well attended and there has been an appetite for spending money. We've received good orders."

At Leisure Engineering, which specializes in the supply of children's battery



EAG/VAE featured products and services for the FEC, amusement arcade and theme/amusement park sectors. AT/ANDREW MELLOR

► See SHOW, page 9

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During the EAG/VAE show in London, Bandai Namco Amusement Europe (above left) offered a wide range of coin-op amusement machines. Whitehouse Leisure (left) offered a huge range of generic and licenced plush toys while Sega (above) is a regular exhibitor at the EAG show. AT/ANDREW MELLOR



Efteling to create its largest, most expensive attraction for 2017

KAATSHEUVEL, The Netherlands — The well-known Dutch theme park Efteling will open its largest and most expensive attraction ever next year.

Symbolica: Palace of Fantasy will be a major new dark ride for the whole family in a similar vein to some of the park's other well established indoor attractions such as Droomvlucht, Fata Morgana and Carnaval Festival. To be situated in the center of the park next to the Polles Keuken pancake restaurant, it will revolve around the interplay of reality, dreams and fantasy and will form part of Efteling's 65th anniversary celebrations.

Visitors to the Palace of Fantasy will be hosted by the magic jester Pardoes. They will be invited to rediscover their imagination on an adventure through a series of magical, hidden rooms within the Palace. Up to six people will board a carriage before choosing one of three different routes, each of which will offer a different adventure, with interactive elements, through the Palace of Fantasy.

The new attraction will be built at a cost of approxi-



Opening in 2017, Symbolica: Palace of Fantasy will be Efteling's largest and most expensive attraction ever. COURTESY EFTELING

mately €35 (\$38.1 million) and Efteling president and CEO Fons Jurgens commented: "Symbolica will be the largest and most expensive Efteling attraction ever. By constructing Symbolica, we are renewing and expanding our range of attractions en route to becoming an international destination with five million visits per year.

"Symbolica will be an attraction for the whole family because visitors of all nationalities and generations use their imagination. This dark ride will help Efteling to maintain its distinctive edge and its position at the top of the list of European theme parks, not only through

unique and characteristic storytelling and thematization, but also through our close attention to detail in every aspect of the attraction. Every ride will guarantee wonder and amazement and excite the imagination in a new and different way."

In addition to Symbolica, Efteling is also investing approximately €30 million (\$32.7 million) in the construction of a new holiday village which will border the theme park, the Efteling golf park and the Loonsche Land nature district. Initial works will begin before the end of this year and the first guests are expected to be welcomed in early 2017.

—Andrew Mellor

►SHOW Continued from page 8

powered, coin-operated vehicles, Bill Hammett said: "EAG/VAE was a really good show — our visitors have been genuine buyers."

The largest stand space in the VAE section, Innovative Leisure's Phil Pickersgill commented: "We have gone to great efforts to support one of the few remaining U.K. shows and to support BALPPA's involvement here. The four products on display (which included the new Klime Wallz climbing attraction marking its official European launch) have enjoyed constant attention from existing cus-

tomers and visitors to the show who we have met for the first time. A significant percentage of those visitors came from outside the U.K. which gives the event a good mix."

Many trade associations, including the Independent Operators' Association (IOA), U.K. amusement machine industry organization BACTA and the British Association of Leisure Parks, Piers and Attractions (BALPPA) hosted their own events during the show, while the legendary after-show party and an extremely well-attended Veterans Lunch added to the networking opportunities on offer.

Mondial delivers record-breaking transportable Giant Wheel

PARIS, France — Bob Dean, president of Leisure Labs, LLC, announced recently the opening of the world's largest transportable Giant Wheel at a height of 70 meters. Manufactured by Mondial World of Rides, this major ride proudly towers over Paris's Place de la Concorde and offers thrilling panoramic views from its 48 enclosed gondolas.

Froukje Knijpstra, owner of Mondial World of Rides, notes this newest Roue de Paris replaces the older 55 meter wheel on the same site to extend its run as the grandest and premier tourist venue in the city. While congratulating Marcel Campion, the wheel's owner and operator, Mrs. Knijpstra said, "We find it very heartening this great showman has again entrusted Mondial to provide him such a legacy attraction."

Mondial World of Rides offers one of the largest assortments of amusement rides and attractions in the world. From Giant Wheels to major spinning, park and transportable rides Mondial has been at the forefront of the business for almost 40 years. "We see it as our duty to develop unique, safe and trusted attractions and make them user friendly with the lowest possible maintenance costs and best return on their investment possible," she added.

Headquartered in Terband, The Netherlands, Mondial World of Rides' sales and marketing efforts are represented by Leisure Labs based in Sarasota, Fla.

•mondialrides.com and leisurelabsllc.com



Mondial World of Rides has delivered this record-setting, 70-meter Giant Wheel to Paris's Place de la Concorde. The fully transportable wheel features 48 enclosed gondolas and a programmable LED light package. COURTESY MONDIAL WORLD OF RIDES



WATER PARKS & RESORTS

► Schlitterbahn celebrates multiple anniversaries — Page 14

Polin introduces coats of many colors for slides

New styles were displayed like works of art during IAAPA Expo

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
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ISTANBUL, Turkey — Polin Waterparks has built its reputation on providing beautiful, shiny, colorful waterslides. The company's resin transfer molding (RTM) and light-resin transfer molding (L-RTM) can incorporate a multitude of patterns and colors — both solid and translucent — to create an aesthetically pleasing, vibrant water slide that is perfectly smooth and with a lustrous, glossy surface on both sides. In addition to producing stunning-looking slides, the RTM technology offers other advantages as well. Slides produced with this technology are stronger and lighter than traditional fiberglass water slides. Thickness is uniform throughout and RTM slides are manufactured faster, with less waste and with less of an environmental impact.

Polin has taken that technology one step further with the introduction of artistic



designs to their products. The new collection shown at the IAAPA Attractions Expo was displayed like works of art. The slide samples were presented in a gallery-like setting, framed like art and tastefully lit with soft, directional lighting. Customers were treated to more of a viewing, rather than a presentation.

Sohret Pakis, director of Marketing and Communication for Polin, says the new offerings are proof that Polin is constantly striving to offer new experiences. "We are always taking it one step further — from our current design options" she said. "These offerings are just one more example of how we want our park partners to be able to offer a unique experience for their guests and enhance storytelling."

Currently Polin is offering seven new artistic options:

Slide 'n Roll: This new offering combines all of Polin's exclusive technologies — unique sound, lighting and design special effects — into one slide to create an experience that fulfills the full range of sensory stimuli for guests.

Graffiti: Not quite like it sounds, the design application includes customizable, hand-drawn, exclusive illustrations that will create a strong and unique visual impact. The illustrations on display were more like children's drawings rather than actual graffiti, and parks can even ask local schoolchildren to help provide the artwork for their slides. Imagine the excitement created when a child and/or their



Triangulated features geometrical shapes.



Mosaic features individual tile-like design.



Honey Comb can also take on a reflective look.



Graffiti features hand-drawn illustrations.

parent can see their own musings incorporated into a water slide.

Mosaic: Parks looking for a sophisticated alternative for their slides can choose the Mosaic exterior. Reminiscent of the Italian art of tesserae — a design technique in which individual tiles form a colorful mosaic. Polin's version is one solid piece of design and is available in a wide range of colors.

Triangulated: The three-dimensional, embossed surface of this option reflects light much like a solid prism. The unique geometrical shapes of this



Wood 'n Slade creates a wooden finish look.

design create truly artistic theming options.

Wood 'n Slide: For parks wanting to add a natural look to their slides, this option provides a realistic wooden finish in a variety of wood veneer options. Slides can even take on the look of bamboo. The wood look helps a themed attraction blend into a wooded setting for a natural appearance in contrast to eye-popping colors.

Reflection: Looking like tubes made of steel, the metallic look of Reflection works well with a thematic motif of plumbing or steam-punk. Shiny, reflective and



Reflection offers a metallic appearance.

glossy surface finishes are available in gold, silver, copper and platinum.

Honey Comb: Similar to the triangulated option, this specialty pattern creates a honey-comb appearance. A surprising number of metal patterns can be created from this option. A silver color can make a slide surface take on the appearance of mirrored disco ball.

These new coatings help take water park theming to a new level. Parks are no longer limited to displaying colorful slides in a tropical, Polynesian or Hawaiian setting. The possibilities are endless.



Slide 'n Roll combines sound, lighting and special effects to create virtually any experience needed.

AT/JEFFREY SEIFERT,
TIM BALDWIN (ALL PHOTOS)

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WWA website wins Great Things Award

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. — At the World Waterpark Association show in October, the WWA unveiled two new member services: An advertising and sponsorship program and a new member website. The website, waterparks.org, was designed to provide members easier access to webinars, and added features such as an events calendar and community groups where members are free to converse with other members 24 hours a day.

The website was honored by Advanced Solutions International with a 2015 Great Things Award for its design, functionality and integration. The new website promises to deliver services across all devices including smart phones, tablets and computers.

Highlights of the new waterparks.org website include:

- Easy-to-use member login, which enables you to keep your own data, your park information and your member roster up to date in real time.
- A more accessible membership renewal payment process.
- Directory search functions to find a park, find a supplier or find a fellow WWA member.
- An Events Calendar, featuring news on member meet-ups, committee meetings and water safety events.
- A Jobs Board, where you can post and edit your own job openings anytime.
- Links to How-To videos, Hall of Fame videos and videos celebrating WWA events such as the 2016 Show and the World's Largest Swimming Lesson.
- A shopping cart function which allows you to purchase WWA University online training courses, session recordings from previous shows and much more.
- Easy access to Webinar Wednesdays live programs, as well as an extensive archives.
- Monthly posts of WWA's popular Member Spotlights department, giving you the chance to get to know more about your fellow WWA members.

The WWA invites all of its members to learn how the new, eye-appealing, more modern site will be a time-saving, business building tool in 2016.

Six Flags Hurricane Harbor announces Caribbean Cove interactive play area

JACKSON, N.J. — Six Flags Great Adventure will unveil another expansion for 2016 with the addition of Six Flags Hurricane Harbor's Caribbean Cove, an interactive water play area.

"Hurricane Harbor is already home to some of the most innovative and extreme water slides on the planet, and in 2016 we are excited to offer families a spectacular, new area featuring tons of splashy playtime activities along with refreshing relaxation for children and their parents," said Six Flags Great Adventure President John Fitzgerald.

The key features of Caribbean Cove, supplied by White-Water, include:

- Active and colorful water play center with more than 55 interactive features.
- Spray nozzles, jets, valves, water guns, action slide and a giant tipping bucket towering two stories in the air.
- Two-foot-deep, beach-entry pool.
- Giant beach area with 300 new lounge chairs.
- New shade canopy will provide additional protection from the summer sun.



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NEWS SPLASH

COMPILED: Jeffrey L. Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

New Hampshire's **Liquid Planet Water Park** in Candia, will open this spring with new management and a new name — **Candia Springs Adventure Park**. Liquid Planet opened in 2008 but ran into financial problems due to rainy weather and a recessed economy. By 2015 the owner was behind on mortgage payments which forced Enterprise Bank to foreclose the property. In December the park was sold at auction to **NLI LLC** a New Hampshire-based company that operates two attractions in New Hampshire, a water park and an adventure park. NLI plans to have the water park open by June. The current water park occupies only a small portion of the 45-acre property. NLI has not released specific details but indicates it would expand beyond the water park with an adventure course and an extreme off-road tour using Swiss army transport vehicles.

The **Family Aquatic Center** in Clarksville, Indiana, is going to take a year off for an extreme makeover. The facility is more than 20 years old and its aging equipment needs to be replaced or updated. With a full summer to overhaul the park, the **Clarksville Parks and Recreation Department** plans to introduce a Caribbean theme to the city-owned park. In addition to the new theme, plans include the installation of a new pump system, splash pad, new concessions space and birthday pavilion. The existing slide attractions will have their splash down pools replaced with shallow water runouts. The parks department is also considering giving the aquatic center a new name when it reopens in 2017.

Although the proposal to reopen the former Atlantic City **Atlantic Club Hotel** recently failed, plans are progressing for the **Revel Casino** to reopen with a water park. The immediate strategy is to begin construction on a new water park as soon as May. Hotel rooms could open as early as June. The Revel, the northernmost casino on the boardwalk, opened in April 2012 at a cost of \$2.4 billion. It closed in September 2014 after its second bankruptcy filing. Florida billionaire and real estate developer **Glenn Straub** bought the property for \$82 million.

No timetable was given for when the casino might open, but plans call for the casino to be about half the size of the previous casino. Straub must work through the complicated process of acquiring a state casino license before the casino can be reopened.

Straub indicated that when the property reopens, it will not be named Revel.

Owing to popular demand, **Vana Nava Water Park** in Bangkok, Thailand, has brought back its twilight promotion. The main water park section, Water Jungle Zone, normally closes at 6 p.m., but on Friday and Saturday nights throughout March, that park will remain open until 9 p.m. Guests in the park can stay and enjoy extended hours. Or attendees can enjoy a reduced price twilight admission ticket that is good from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. The separately ticketed Adventure Zone is extending its operating

hours from 9 p.m. To 11 p.m., but the Adventure Zone is not included with the twilight water park ticket.

Big Splash Water Park in Macquarie, Act., Australia, was left without power during a school holiday week. Temperatures were predicted to be in the 90s and the park expected a large crowd when management showed up at 8 a.m. on January 18 to turn on the power, and nothing happened. Not knowing what to expect, the park was forced to turn away busloads of tourists and hundreds of cars at the gate.

It was later learned that the power company cut power for about three hours to trim trees that were close to the power lines. The power company claims it notified local business of the expected outage, but the water park is certain it never received any such notice. By 11 a.m. the power was back on and the park was able to open shortly after that. **Ron Watkins**, manager of The Big Splash Water Park estimates he turned away at least 400 people that morning.

Watkins said power was restored only after he made several complaints to the Chief Minister's office. "We are the only independent water park in Canberra with no economic support from the government; all we get from them is problems," said Watkins.

IAM StarGuard ELITE has announced that **Cowabunga Bay**, Las Vegas, Nev., has joined its portfolio of Risk Prevention Clients. IAM has grown by leaps and bounds over the past two years investing in technology and new curriculum integrations into the industry leading SAI lifeguard text and training programs.

The IAM lifeguard portal is a prime example of this development and a key piece of technology bringing lifeguarding into the digital age. The portal is a living program that continues to be updated as we encourage our clients to provide us continual feedback on how to improve their facilities efficiency and operational safety. **Michael Oostman**, one of the managing partners for IAM noted "IAM StarGuard ELITE is honored to be able to partner with Cowabunga Bay to ensure a safe aquatic experience for their guests. The IAM StarGuard ELITE program will provide unprecedented strength and experience to Cowabunga Bay and the aquatic industry as a whole."

Additionally, as the only true provider of a comprehensive menu of offerings, the management division, **Innovative Attraction Management** will take on the role of turnkey manager for the Cowabunga Bay Aquatics Department. IAM will provide a seamless process for park leadership using its operational experience managing the Aquatics operation. This includes departmental leadership, lifeguards, slide dispatchers, supervisors and EMT staff. "We are thrilled to be able to provide our industry a changing, innovative approach to a great facility like Cowabunga Bay," explained **Mike Friscia**, president of IAM. "We have the experience, ability and, frankly, the foresight to provide the multitude of services that our clients are requesting."



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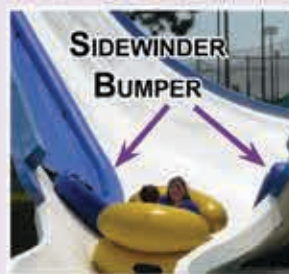
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Schlitterbahn Waterpark & Resorts celebrates multiple anniversaries

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
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NEW BRAUNFELS, Texas — Twenty five years ago this spring, Schlitterbahn debuted Boogie Bahn, the world's first FlowRider surfing simulator. Boogie Bahn was the highlight attraction of a brand new section dubbed Surfenburg, a 25-acre tract of land that was not connected to the original park. But Schlitterbahn, being the unique and quirky resort that it is, solved that dilemma by shuttling guests between the two sections. Surfenburg opened late, about a month after the rest of the resort had opened for the season, but by season's end, attendance had increased nearly 25 percent. According to Jeff Henry, the FlowRider had paid for itself and the rest of Surfenburg in that first season alone.

Boogie Bahn was the result of a collaborative effort involving the Henry Family and Thomas Lochtefeld. In 1988 Lochtefeld had patented a device capable of forcing a stream of water over an inclined surface on which riders could surf. Lochtefeld needed a slick, soft foam coating for the ride surface so surfers would not be injured when they fell off the surf board. Jeff Henry convinced the Henry family to help provide R&D for Lochtefeld's idea. That first FlowRider introduced state of the art water propulsion to the industry and changed water parks forever.

Water goes uphill

Using water propulsion once again Lochtefeld and Jeff Henry incorporated the technology into a water slide. A new patent for water injection technology was granted in 1993 and that same technology swept the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) best new products awards at the annual trade show, winning Best New Major Ride, Best New Technology and Best Water Ride. It was the first, and thus far, only new attraction to garner all three best new products awards. The water jets were capable of propelling tubes uphill bringing an entirely new dimension to the tube chute. Dragon Blaster, the world's first uphill waterslide, made its debut 22 years ago, giving Schlitterbahn guests

even more reason to shuttle over to the detached section of the park. The following year, attendance at Schlitterbahn surpassed every other seasonal water park in the nation, making it the most visited seasonal water park in the U.S., a claim it still boasts of today.

Two years later an even larger slide was built in yet another new section of the resort to the east of Surfenburg. Master Blaster stands 65 feet tall and features several large drops and multiple uphill sections. Master Blaster was, and still is, the centerpiece of Blastenhoff. Master Blaster celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2016.

Beyond New Braunfels

Following more than 20 years of operating the hugely successful water park in New Braunfels, the Henry family decided it was time for Schlitterbahn to spread its wings. Property was acquired on the barrier island beach resort community at the southern tip of Texas, South Padre Island. The coastal area, known for its beautiful beaches and abundance of water recreation activities, attracts more than one million visitors each year. Schlitterbahn Beach opened as a fully-planned 25-acre water park in 2001. Multiple master blaster slides and lazy river were all integrated to form a continuous Transportainment River System designed to maximum guest time in the water and eliminate lines. The 25-acre property, eventually expanded to include a restaurant and 221-room resort, is celebrating its 15th anniversary.

Shortly after opening its second water park, the Henry

family began looking at a third location, this time in Galveston. A massive 50,000 square-foot airplane hanger, constructed in 1943 and located next to Scholes Airport, was to become the location of the first Schlitterbahn water park to feature an indoor section. Unfortunately, during the planning stages, a devastating fire in 2004 destroyed the structure. Schlitterbahn continued with its plans to build a park in that location, but the design had to be drastically changed. Without the hangar building to provide cover, Schlitterbahn constructed a 70,000 square foot greenhouse-like enclosure. However, instead of using glass, poly-carbonite panels comprised the sides, and translucent fabric formed a retractable roof. During the summer, the panels can be lowered and the roof retracted, transforming an indoor water park into an outdoor water park.

Schlitterbahn Galveston Island opened to the public in 2006 as the world's first convertible water park. A large outdoor section is open during the south Texas lengthy summer season, April through October. The indoor water park remains open through the Christmas and New Year's holidays and starts up again for weekends in February, March and April. Schlitterbahn Galveston Island will begin to celebrate its 10th anniversary season right around the time this issue goes to press.

Now with five properties in two states, including two resorts, two indoor water parks, and five outdoor water parks, Schlitterbahn Waterparks & Resorts has come a long way



25 years ago Schlitterbahn debuted Boogie Bahn (right), the world's first FlowRider. That water propulsion technology led to the creation of the world's first uphill water coaster. Tests were done on a plywood prototype shown above. Dragon Blaster, under construction (below) opened 22 years ago. COURTESY SCHLITTERBAHN



from its humble beginnings as a four-waterslide attraction for guests at Camp Landa. The family-owned company has brought to the industry innovation after innovation and is recognized globally for its creativity, daring and ingenuity.

With recent record break-

ers like Verrückt in Kansas City and the announcement of Massiv for Galveston, plus the grand opening of a new park in Corpus Christi, there is no doubt Schlitterbahn will be celebrating monumental anniversaries for years to come.



Schlitterbahn Beach (left) is celebrating its 15th anniversary, while Schlitterbahn Galveston (right) is marking its 10th anniversary. COURTESY SCHLITTERBAHN





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PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► Morey's Piers looks to the future — Page 20 / Calif. Boomers! gets new ride — Page 22 / Fairs — Pages 25-29

Adventure Park USA a family entertainment center exemplar

Children's parties, day care programs bolster business

AT: Dean Lamanna

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NEW MARKET, Md. — Combining the best traditional outdoor and indoor amusements with year-round recreation for kids, Adventure Park USA has perfected the formula for keeping daily business brisk in the otherwise seasonal Northeast market.

The privately owned and operated family entertainment center (FEC) — a past IAAPA Top FEC award winner — celebrated its 10th anniversary last year. With pay-as-you-play attractions including several roller coasters and flat rides and a pair of go-kart tracks, plus a 22,000-square-foot building housing an arcade and party rooms, laser tag, a 140-seat cafeteria and other activities, the 18.5-acre property just outside the city of Frederick bills itself as Maryland's largest family fun center.

Adventure Park USA CEO Larry Stottlemeyer, who runs the facility along with several family members, told *Amusement Today* that he owes the park's first milestone decade to his many loyal customers. "We not only entertain lots of new guests each year, but we have schools, families and all kinds of companies that make us their top entertainment choice," he said, adding that annual attendance averages 240,000.

Stottlemeyer attributed much of his park's patronage



to group functions, birthdays, themed breakfasts and day care programs. Properly valuing the amusements so as to allow for repeat ridership also has contributed significantly to a solid bottom line.

The earliest roots of Adventure Park USA trace to 1980. Stottlemeyer, then 35 — a high school dropout and army enlistee who served for two years before entering the printing business — mortgaged his house and borrowed from friends to open a Putt-Putt golf course and small arcade in Myersville, Md., on an acre and a half. After weathering the economic downturn of the early 1980s, the FEC succeeded. And the addition of batting cages and a laser tag facility in subsequent years caused the operation's attractions and attendance to outgrow its space.

In 2003, Stottlemeyer sold his Putt-Putt property. He then shifted his sights southeast to the opposite side of Frederick and a much-larger parcel along-side Route 70, about 40 miles west of Baltimore and 40 miles north of Washington, D.C. — where he opened Adventure Park USA in 2005.

"I was not in a position to build an \$11.5 million park, which is what it initially cost," Stottlemeyer recalled. "In fact, my wife wanted me to retire, but I wanted to build something for my two kids and six grandchildren. I was able to share my vision with investors and we raised about \$1.6 million that way. And we put everything we had — another mortgage



The Anton Schwarzkopf-designed Wildcat (above) is one of two medium-sized roller coasters at Adventure Park USA, which also features 36 holes of mini-golf, two go-kart tracks and bumper boats, among other outdoor and indoor amusements.

COURTESY
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on our house, the money from the Putt-Putt — into the new facility. I was also able to get a USDA guaranteed loan after a lot of work."

But in a replay of what had happened a quarter century earlier, the economy took a steep dive shortly after Stottlemeyer opened his new park. By the time IAAPA named Adventure Park USA the best FEC in the U.S. in 2007, his was looking at losses totaling \$600,000 due to the recession.

Shortly after scooping up the award at the organization's convention, Stottlemeyer was on his way off the trade show floor when he paused at a booth staffed by Theresa Iliff, who was marketing the idea of adding day care programs to FECs. They exchanged business cards, and eight months later, Adventure Park USA opened a day care center in its massive activi-



ties building with the help of Iliff's company, Camp Iliff (campiliff.com).

"It was profitable from the very beginning," said Stottlemeyer of the year-round education and recreation offering, for which he had to hire a director. "We had about half a million dollars a year in fresh revenue from the day care. Today, we've got day care, before and after school, and summer camp. I don't know why more FECs don't do it. That decision, and everyone pulling together as a team to decide what was best for the park, really helped make us [financially] healthy again."

Describing his Western-themed property as a "dry park," Stottlemeyer has spent seven years planning and trying to

pull together financing for a water park at the site. His proposed expansion may be getting closer to realization under a new partnership Stottlemeyer has formed with Arihant, a worldwide supplier of water park equipment based in India. The company is establishing a stateside sales office and product showcase at the FEC that Stottlemeyer will oversee in exchange for Arihant's investment in his water park.

Staying involved and keeping his operation vital, the amusement operator admitted, keeps him going, too.

"I get a little bit of what Walt Disney felt like," he said. "To have a vision and see it come to life, even on my small scale — it still excites me today."

•adventureparkusa.com



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Pacific Park planning underway for 20th birthday celebration

*First new logo
in 20 years
introduced*

SANTA MONICA, Calif., — Pacific Park is busy preparing for its months-long 20th birthday celebration in 2016. The two-acre amusement park on the Santa Monica Pier is detailing the rides, painting the exterior, refreshing the Ferris wheel with a new lighting package and introducing a new Pacific Park logo.

The first change to the amusement park's logo in 20 years, the new design features a contemporary look for a park that offers an authentic amusement experience, as described in a release: "Pacific Park's logo symbolizes the only park on a pier that faces a sunset — and not any sunset, the iconic Southern California sunset, which echoes the shape of the pier especially when viewed from south of the pier. The



baseline of Pacific Park implies the wooden deck, with water underneath. Santa Monica Pier subtly echoes the pylons beneath the deck, going into the water. Unique to the design is the beautiful double-entendre: sun over horizon — equals — wheel over pier."

Pacific Park's new logo is the leading element in a brand platform that includes a new visual identity for its advertising design, collateral development and in-park signage program, among other marketing activities.

"This is a very special time for Pacific Park and the Santa Monica community as we begin to celebrate our 20th birthday on the Santa Monica Pier,"

said Jeff Klocke, vice president at Pacific Park. "The new logo reflects the rich tradition and unique qualities of the pier and park while celebrating the quintessential California beach and amusement experience. Pacific Park helps attract more than eight million visitors annually to the pier."

As a part of the 20th birthday celebration, the park also introduced a new vision statement: "Our purpose is to provide an authentic California amusement experience, where guests of all ages play together in a safe and unrivaled setting."

Vent, LLC, based in Los Angeles, created Pacific Park's new logo and brand platform.

SimEx-Iwerks Ent. to launch Rudolph in 4-D this year

LOS ANGELES, Calif. — The beloved animated television classic "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" is currently in production for a holiday 2016 release as a magical 4-D Experience. The show will be featured at family-friendly venues including museums, zoos, aquariums and theme parks starting in November 2016. A first-look trailer has been released by its exclusive distributor SimEx-Iwerks Entertainment.

The production will be recreated in traditional stop motion puppet animation in partnership with Bent Image Lab, a studio that has had a long-standing history of work with the Rankin Bass characters. "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" premiered in 1964. It is the longest-running and highest-rated Christmas television program.

"Rudolph is a timeless holiday classic and we are excited and honored to bring it to our clients around the world as an immersive cinematic 4-D experience," said Mike Frueh, senior vice president, licensing and distribution, SimEx-Iwerks Entertainment. "It is a tremendous addition to our film library. We are confident that this show will drive traffic and increase performance for our partners' holiday promotions."

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Morey's Piers looks to the future

AT: Tim Baldwin
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WILDWOOD, N.J. — With news reports covering the January winter storm that crippled much of the eastern U.S., conflicting information about the city of Wildwood had many industry observers wondering how Morey's Piers were affected. Following the storm, *Amusement Today* caught up with Jack Morey, second-generation co-owner of the properties. Morey said, "We had some low-lying areas that will always flood. For that, we've built some flood gates. Most of the damage was expected. Wind blew out a couple of windows. Not too bad. Things are well at the Jersey Shore." That's good news for the facility that recently took the Golden Ticket Award for Best Seaside Park in 2015.

For 2016, Morey's Piers

has a focus on eateries. "Food is becoming more and more an important part of all entertainment experiences, whether it is at our park or someone else's," said Morey. "We are re-inventing our restaurant called Joe's. It will now be Joe's Take-out Tavern." The specialty item there will be fish and chips.

Interestingly, Joe's was an original tenant at the shore that invented Curley's Fries. The reputation was built upon inventive food. Morey's Piers bought out the operation decades ago, but has maintained the allure of the original. "We hang onto the name because it is just a part of the heritage." The top deck at that venue will get a brand new bar. "We need to find better ways to serve the family," commented Morey. "Europa-Park is doing it very well; a lot of public

spaces like Baltimore Harbor are doing it. We better make sure we are serving all members of our families. We're not doing a 20-year-old 'get drunk' place."

Stubborn Brothers will also be a brand that Morey's continues to evolve. Additional investments in cosmetic enhancements to the venue will bring more shade, improved signage, flags and communal tables for the sky cabana. The hope is to take the beach bar vibe up a level to create a fun, vibrant, inviting atmosphere. Food operations are so key to the success of the Piers that the team has brought on a second executive chef: Betsy Garr. Her expertise has brought signature dishes using fresh vegetables and local ingredients to the beach-inspired fare.

Of note, the business aspect is being handed to fu-



The popular Joe's eatery, where fish and chips is the house specialty, will get a new takeout window this season.
COURTESY MOREY'S PIERS

ture generations of the Morey's family. Kyle, son of Will Morey (Jack's brother) will assume the management role at Southern Brothers and Jack's son Jordan will oversee Joe's.

The piers will also be doubling the size of one of their Curley's Fries eateries, as well as adding a new gourmet hot dog stand.

The seaside destination has publicly said they are looking at a water park expansion. "That's on the middle burner," laughed Morey. "Not the back burner or front burner. We're waiting on some important zoning to come through."

Something that is confirmed for the future is a signed contract with Vekoma to re-introduce the suspended looping coaster in 2017.

Amusement Today talked to Charlotte van Etten at the 2015 IAAPA Expo, and she was beaming at the new track development system now being utilized at Vekoma and the exceptional smoothness of the end product. "People are going to say: You need to get a Vekoma!" she said. It would appear that the Morey's team is willing to commit. A \$4 million project that will remove the track from the 1995 coaster and reinstall all new track is certainly a rarity in the industry. To be sure, many parks and key figures will be watching. AT asked if the layout would be similar or if they were intending to make different inversions. Morey stated, "We studied that. The columns are staying in place. In the end we decided to keep it the same. The bending technology has now changed; we are expecting a pretty darn smooth ride. The braking system will now

be magnetic, so it will be smoother as well."

Following such an investment, the park knows that to market it as a new attraction, the project will most likely require a name change, new color scheme and perhaps tunnels. He said with a smile, "How do you like Morey Eel?"

The coaster will not be down for the 2016 season and is expected to run through at least late summer. The new project will continue utilizing the existing trains, which Morey reported are still relatively new, adding that thematic changes may be done cosmetically.

A completely innovative idea by the Morey's folks is to dedicate sections of the old track and let local artists transform it into public art in a Wildwood public park space. "We've hired an architect to come up with an art installation taking the cooler pieces of leftover track and turning it into public sculpture."

One other small change that demonstrates creativity on Morey's part is raising the machine room on the Sea Serpent boomerang coaster, which was previously under the pier. It will be lifted up onto the deck and placed in the queue line. By placing "port holes" in the building, it allows guests to look inside and observe the working mechanics. Port holes are an obvious thematic fit to the attraction. Where the original location had the drawback of being prone to flooding, its new home engages the interest of park guests, a commendable solution created by Morey's management.

Morey's Piers will also be expanding one of the go-kart tracks for 2016.

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California Boomers! gets new ride, other upgrades

Spin Zone bumper cars to be supplied by Amusement Products



MODESTO, Calif. — Apex Parks Group has announced that its Boomers! family entertainment center (FEC) is undergoing a major renovation that will include the installation of an indoor bumper car attraction. The improvements will be completed this spring.

Plans call for the addition of a sports bar-style area offering beer and wine options for adults, a new marquee sign near the freeway, fresh exterior and interior paint, and remodeled party rooms.

The bumper car ride, called Spin Zone, is a colorful variation on the old park favorite from Amusement Products of Chattanooga, Tenn. The round-shaped cars twirl when bumped, creating a wild and unique experience for guests. Spin Zone's arena, to be located inside the arcade building for year-

round operation, will accommodate up to eight riders during each five-minute ride session.

The new bar area will feature 10 flat-screen TVs and serve a selection of beer and wine (pending licensing approval). The café area and prize redemption counter also will be remodeled, and there will be new tile and carpet throughout the building.

"I am really excited about the forthcoming improvements to the park," said Misty Romero, general manager of Boomers! "The overall experience for our guests will be enhanced greatly with a new indoor attraction, the addition of beer and wine, and the facility improvements."

Added Gregg Borman, senior vice president of operations for Apex: "This is



The whirl of renovations coming to the Boomers! family entertainment center in Modesto, Calif., includes Spin Zone, an indoor bumper car ride. COURTESY AMUSEMENT PRODUCTS

the biggest renovation ever at Boomers! Modesto. These updates are our promise for a richer, more fun experience at the facility."

The upgrades are, indeed, part of a larger commitment made by Aliso Viejo,

California-based Apex Parks Group to improve the guest experience at all of its Boomers! locations. The company acquired the FEC brand, and most of the individual Boomers! properties, from Palace Entertainment in late 2014.

Apex is consulting with R&R Creative Amusement Designs of Anaheim, Calif., on the Boomers! renovation in Modesto as well as similar theming improvements at other Boomers! locations.

—Dean Lamanna



Film signals expansion of coaster group's aims

History, education drive new ACE-backed Arrow documentary

AT: Dean Lamanna
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VALENCIA, Calif. — The surprising ups, downs and twists of a legendary and globally influential ride design and manufacturing company are showcased in *The Legacy of Arrow Development*, a new documentary.

Largely financed by the American Coaster Enthusiasts (ACE), the film had its world premiere at the Montgomery Theater in downtown San Jose, Calif., on January 23. The location of the heavily attended screening, presented by Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, was significant: Arrow's four founders met while working for a World War II-era ironworks in the local suburb of Sunnyvale before establishing the company in nearby Mountain View in 1945.

The documentary then traveled to Valencia on January 30 for its Southern California premiere at Six Flags Magic Mountain — home to several landmark Arrow coast-

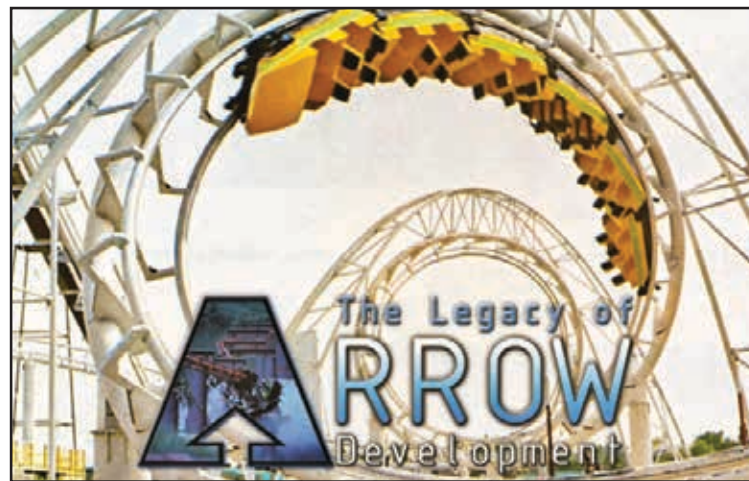
ers. *Amusement Today*, members of ACE and curious parkgoers filled the Gearworks Theatre for the screening, hosted by coaster blogger and expert Kurt Dahlin (a.k.a. The Coaster Guy). It concluded to raucous applause.

Both showings attracted former Arrow associates and featured Q&A sessions with the filmmakers.

The documentary's South Bay-based producer, Kristopher Rowberry, creator of Great-AmericanThrills.net and host of the award-winning television series *The Lost Parks of Northern California*, was pleased with the finished product and its educational intent. The latter was key to winning park cooperation.

"We went to the parks and told them we weren't going to commercialize [the film], basically saying, 'This is about you, and how you fit into this story of Arrow. And how you are quite literally a part of history and might not even realize it,'" noted Rowberry.

Nicholas Laschkewitsch, the documentary's director and ACE's video promotions



coordinator, added: "ACE is all about the preservation of roller coasters. The whole organization is proud to help tell the unique story of a company whose creations have been admired and enjoyed by millions."

The Legacy of Arrow Development engrosses and impresses in its recounting of the company's 70 years in about as many minutes — interweaving interviews with key players and observers with vintage ride images and footage. And it carefully lays out the timeline and corresponding technological breakthroughs of

the manufacturing entity's succeeding incarnations, including Arrow-Huss, Arrow Dynamics and S&S Arrow.

Arrow famously pioneered tubular steel roller coaster track, an innovation that swept the industry. First used with Disneyland's Matterhorn Bobsleds in 1959, the track eventually led to the first modern coaster with inversions: Corkscrew at Knott's Berry Farm in 1975.

Arrow also produced the first log flume ride from its Mountain View facility, as well as a number of much-imitated

rides at Disneyland — such as Dumbo the Flying Elephant and Mad Tea Party. (Walt Disney Productions even acquired one third of the company in 1960.)

Aside from Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk and Six Flags Magic Mountain, among the many revered parks highlighted are Busch Gardens Williamsburg, California's Great America, Cedar Point, Kennywood and Six Flags Over Texas.

The filmmakers' accomplishment is underscored by their tiny \$7,000 budget — \$6,000 of which was supplied by ACE. The remainder was footed by Rowberry, who told AT that a "significant portion" already has been voluntarily paid back to the coaster organization with proceeds from the world premiere.

"This was a big project," said Jerry Willard, president of ACE. "We not only want to preserve the roller coaster but the history of the industry. These guys have done a great job of doing that."

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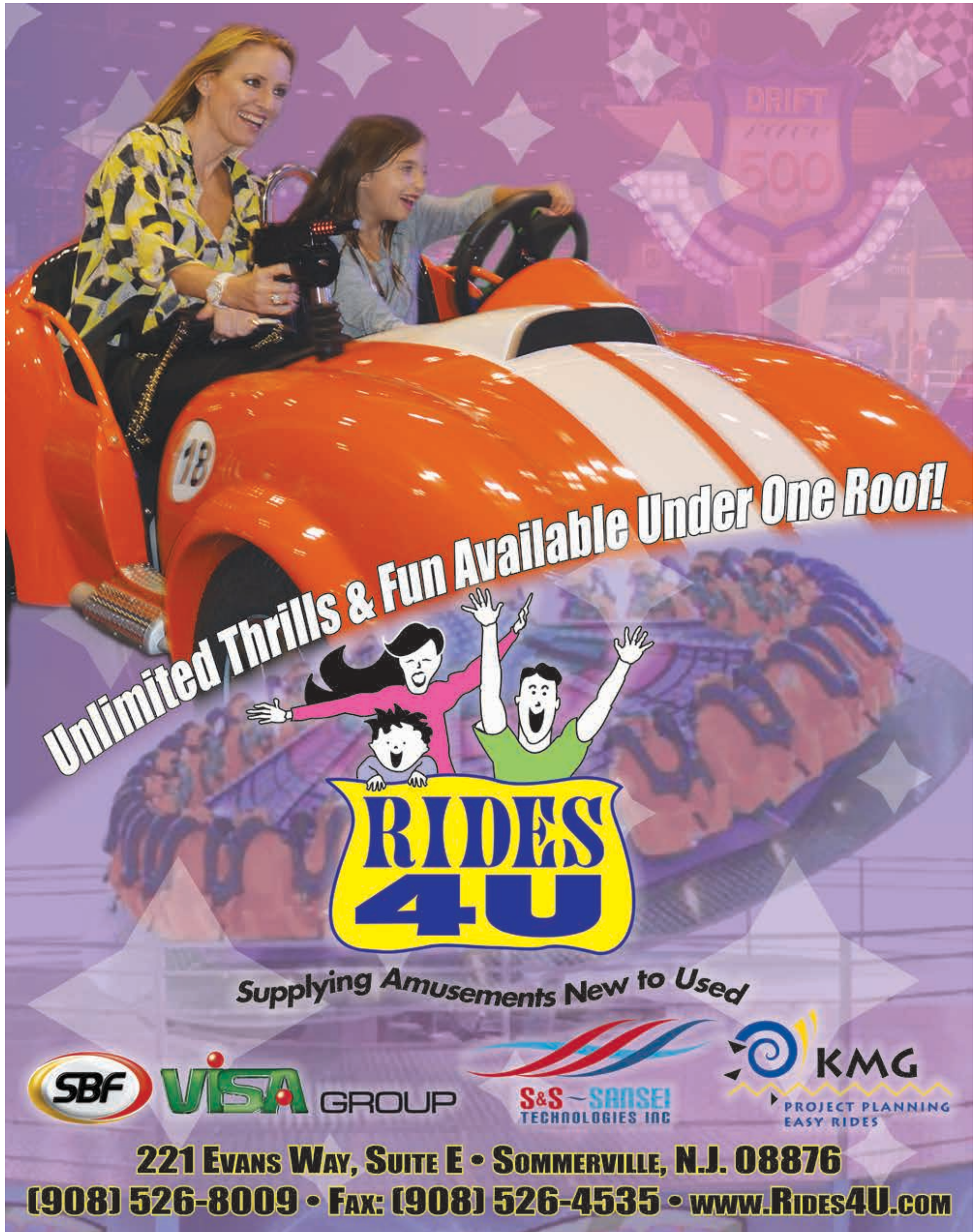
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Fort Worth Stock Show does it again, setting new record attendance

Texas fairs and festivals first to address state's new handgun bill

FORT WORTH, Texas — New legislation making changes to Texas's handgun licensing program had officials at Texas state and county fairs and festivals sifting through the new wordings to determine how it implies to their specific events.

The new law, House Bill 910, became effective January 1, 2016. It "authorizes individuals to obtain a license to openly carry a handgun in the same places that allow the licensed carrying of a concealed handgun with some exceptions. Unconcealed handguns, loaded or unloaded, must be carried in a shoulder or belt holster." This applies to either loaded or unloaded firearms.

The passage of Texas House Bill 910 brings the total number of states recognizing the right of open carry to 44.

Texas Fair Association Executive Director Jennifer Allison said although there was no specific session dedicated to the new law during the association's annual January meeting in San Antonio, there was a great deal of discussion on that subject during legal roundtables.

"It was brought out during our legal sessions," Allison said. "People did have questions on some of the nuances such as what type of facilities, who is in attendance, and how to enforce it. They were just trying to sort it out."

This new law doesn't change where handguns can be carried in the state or where they are prohibited. Texas allows handguns to be carried on a person with some exceptions including sporting events, amusement parks, bars, courts, governmental meetings and places of worship.

The new law does allow a business to ban the visible wearing of handguns by posting signs with specific required wording in English and Spanish.

The Fort Worth (Texas) Stock Show and Rodeo, which ran Jan. 16-Feb. 6, was an early fair and officials there were prepared for the changes.

"We are a city property so we are abiding by the law," said Matt Brockman, publicity

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FORT WORTH, Texas — A new Milking Parlor, a renovated Cattle Barn 2, a new 300-foot-long pedestrian walkway called the Tower Promenade, and a Supernova coaster on the midway certainly were added incentives for fairgoers to turn out at this year's Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo.

And, turn out they did as the show set new attendance records during its 2016 run January 15-February 6. This year's overall attendance of 1,257,900, is the new record for the show. That is up from last year's attendance by 9,400.

The show drew 163,200 visitors on Saturday, Jan. 30, making that day the busiest Saturday of the show's history.

The show drew 105,500 on Sunday, Jan. 31, making that the busiest Sunday in the show's history.

Going into the final two days of the fair Friday, Feb. 5 and Saturday, Feb. 6, the fair's attendance was sitting at 1,026,600, 14,000 over the same period as 2015.

"We don't want to count our chickens yet," Matt Brockman, the show's publicity manager, said during the last week of the event. "But things are looking good to set a new record this year."

He was certainly right. The new Milking Parlor, a huge hit during the show, the renovations on the Cattle 2 Barn and the Tower Promenade are part of a multi-million project on the Fort Worth Stock Show grounds. The price tag of these three components came in at \$14.5 million.

More renovations are coming and all of them will culminate with the opening



The 2016 Fort Worth (Texas) Stock Show and Rodeo broke its 2015 record attendance this year, drawing 1,257,900 when it ran January 15-Feb. 6. That number represents an increase over last year's numbers of 9,400. Talley Amusements provided the midway with 45 rides this year, including this Supernova coaster brought in by Kyle Brady, Playworld Amusements.
AT/SAMMY PICCOLA



▶NEXT MONTH: AT looks at the grounds overhaul in Fort Worth

of the \$450 multi-purpose arena in 2020.

(More about these renovations, expansions and additions will appear in AT's April issue.)

"We also beefed up our Rodeo Red Line shuttle service and we changed up our entertainment some at the Coors Roadhouse," Brockman said.

The Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo also featured grounds entertainment, agricultural exhibits, and livestock exhibits. The

top steer sold at auction for \$210,000.

Of course, there also is rodeo: Best of West Ranch Rodeo, Best of Mexico Celebracion, Cowboys of Color Rodeo, Bulls' Night Out, Super Shootout, and PRCA Rodeo.

On the midway, Talley Amusements provided 45 rides including the Supernova, a Cyclon coaster from Pinfari/Technical Park (Pinfari has been purchased by Technical Park).

The ride is owned by Kyle Brady, Playworld Amusements. Brady purchased the ride in 2015 through Ital International.

It is 32.8 feet (10 meters) tall and has a footprint of 131 feet (39.9 meters) by 50 feet (15.24 meters). It has a track length of 1,100 feet (335 meters).

Talley said the stock show this year had been good, but cool temperatures, while perhaps enhancing the fairgoer's inside exhibit viewings, didn't do a lot for business on the midway.

"It was cold on the weekends," she said. "We would have the highs in the 50s and then it would get cooler at night. While people visiting the fair exhibits were inside, it was cool to be out on the midway riding rides."

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►OPEN CARRY

Continued from page 25

manager. "I haven't seen any handguns on the grounds so far, but I know some people have. We haven't had any issues."

The Fort Worth Stock Show did post its policy on where handguns, either concealed or not, are prohibited. Those areas include: the Will Rogers Coliseum building when the professional rodeo events are taking place; any livestock barn or other building or portion of a building where an FFA, 4H or other high school, collegiate or interscholastic event is taking place; and the Coors Light Roadhouse and Reata at the Backstage Club. All of these areas are prohibited by existing state penal codes.

Kim Hinze, spokesperson, San Antonio (Texas) Stock Show and Rodeo, (Feb. 11-28), said that event, "will maintain its long-standing policy of not allowing firearms on the grounds."

She said the fair is on public property but, "during the duration of our event we take ownership of the property."

They hadn't had any issues with this policy and weren't expecting any.

Karissa Condoianis, director of public relations, State Fair of Texas, Dallas, set this year for Sept. 30-Oct. 23, said

the State Fair of Texas' policy for the open carrying of handguns will be similar to the fair's policy for concealed.

That policy states: "A person holding a valid Texas Concealed Handgun License (or valid CHL from a reciprocating state) is permitted to enter onto State Fair property with his/her concealed handgun; provided, however, that CHL holders will not be permitted to carry their concealed handgun inside the Cotton Bowl Stadium, a facility defined under Texas Penal Code 46.035 as 'the premises where a high school, collegiate or professional sporting event or interscholastic event is taking place.'"

Furthermore, the State Fair of Texas "does not provide lockers for the storage or checking of weapons for CHL holders, so if you plan to attend a game or event in the Cotton Bowl, please secure your weapon at home or in your vehicle prior to entering the fairgrounds. We want the fair to be a fun and safe experience."

Condoianis said the State Fair of Texas leases property owned by the City of Dallas and does not fall into any of the exception categories (amusement park, etc.) that would allow the fair to prohibit the carrying of handguns, "so we will be allowing 'open carry,' according to the Texas statutes."

State of Texas House Bill 910

AUSTIN, Texas — The passage of Texas House Bill 910 during the 84th Regular Legislative Session in Austin, Texas authorizes individuals to obtain a license to openly carry a handgun in the same places that allow the licensed carrying of a concealed handgun with some exceptions. (See Texas Department of Public Safety website for exceptions.)



Other general information:

- Unconcealed handguns, loaded or unloaded, must be carried in a shoulder or belt holster.
- Individuals who hold a valid CHL may continue to carry with valid existing license.
- A separate license will not be required to open carry. No additional fee will be required.
- Individuals currently licensed will not be required to attend additional training. Training curriculum for new applicants will be updated to reflect the new training requirements related to the use of restraint holsters and methods to ensure the secure carrying of openly carried handguns. The new curriculum will be required for all classes beginning January 1, 2016.
- The eligibility criteria to obtain a license to carry do not change.
- The department has updated the website and training materials to reference License to Carry (LTC) instead of Concealed Handgun License (CHL).
- Changes to the laminated license have been implemented. For examples of licenses currently in circulation, see: LTC sample.

•txdps.state.tx.us



CARNIVAL LIGHTS

COMPILED: Pam Sherborne

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The **Minnesota State Fair** will see some improvements to its grounds this year.

The fair's board of managers recently approved a \$6.8 million capital improvements and maintenance budget for 2016. The budget includes money for a new Family Fair Stage at Baldwin Park, a rest room in the Kidway Block, a pedestrian walkway through the Adventure Block, upgrades to horse stalls in the Horse Barn, two new information booth structures and other work.

The fair is set to run its 2016 edition Aug. 25-Sept. 5. The Minnesota State Fair has an independent midway.

Among other promotions at this year's **Florida State Fair**, Tampa, Feb. 4-15, was the partnership the fair formed with **Goodwill Industries-Suncoast**.

Anyone who donated at Tampa Bay area Goodwill drop-off locations from Wed., Jan. 20, through Sunday, Feb. 14, received a coupon good for \$2 off regular admission to the fair.

Daily adult admission to the fair this year was \$11 Monday through Friday and \$13 on Saturdays and Sundays.

The **Colorado State Fair Authority Board** audit for fiscal year 2015, which ended June 30, shows that funding for the fair "is still an ongoing concern," according to former **Colorado State Fair** General Manager and current **Colorado Deputy Commissioner of Agriculture Chris Wiseman**.

The audit, completed and released by **Wall, Smith and Bateman** of Alamosa, brought to light issues with the fair's funding level that will necessitate the request of additional monies from the Joint Budget Committee.

"Seven-hundred and fifty thousand dollars is what the governor is going to ask for," Wiseman said. "We're looking for a budget amendment to the state Long Bill that would increase the fair's general fund allotment from \$250,000 to \$1 million."

This year's fair is set to run Aug. 26-Sept. 5. **Crabtree Amusements** will provide the midway.

Sarah Cummings, from California, is the new general manager of the Colorado State Fair. She began her new job Jan. 20.

The **California Mid-State Fair's** board of directors is searching for a new chief executive officer to succeed **Paso Robles Event Center** CEO **Vivian Robertson**, who announced her retirement in October.

The CEO position manages the annual county fair as well as other year-round events, concerts and community gatherings at the event center, according to a news release. The event center is governed by the board of directors of the **16th District Agricultural Association**. Robertson, who worked 38 years for the fair, was appointed to the CEO position in 2004.

She was credited with numerous changes in the past 11 years, including expanding the center's year-round operation with annual horse shows and conferences, refurbishing buildings, overseeing new features at the fair and attracting big-name entertainers, and ensuring that the fair remains one of the state's largest.

Last summer, unaudited results for the Mid-State Fair showed increases across the board over 2014. A total of 428,807 people attended the fair from July 22 through Aug. 2 — the best results since 2011.

The 2016 fair runs July 20-31. **Davis Enterprises** will provide the midway.

The **Big Fresno Fair** swept the **Western Fairs Association's** Annual Achievement (WFA) Awards ceremony, receiving a total of 26 awards.

The awards were presented during the Western Fairs Association's 93rd Convention and Trade Show in Anaheim, which ran Jan. 3-6. More than 1,200 fair CEOs, directors, staff and fair-related professionals gathered from throughout the Western U.S. to celebrate the accomplishments of 2015.

The Big Fresno Fair was honored with 26 awards ranging from first place for the new Fresno County Historical Museum, to a first place and blue ribbon for the annual theme poster.

The fair received 12 first-place, six second-place and eight third-place awards in honor of the 2015 fair.

The WFA is a nonprofit trade association serving the fair industry within the western United States and Canada.

The **San Joaquin County Fair**, Stockton, Calif., is back in business.

Kelly Olds, the fair's chief executive officer, confirmed that the organization's board unanimously approved a plan last month to hold the event in mid-June following a two-year hiatus.

According to a story which ran on IodineNews.com, Olds said there are still many details to be hammered out, including whether the fair will be held over four or five days. As of now, the proposed dates are June 15-19.

"This was a mandate when I took the job," Olds was quoted as saying in the news story. "I'm just ecstatic. We're going to put on a good show for the community."

The fair will coincide with the livestock show, which continued in the fair's absence. However, Olds said there are no horse races scheduled during the fair with racing already slated for September and October.

The fair, a county staple since being established in 1860, suffered from declining attendance and revenue in the past decade. Then in 2012, the state cut its funding of fairs, which led to a loss of \$200,000. The fair was eventually canceled in 2014.

The **Nebraska State Fair**, Grand Island, board voted to increase admission price into this year fair. Prices will go up \$2 from \$10 to \$12. But, plans are to have cheaper bundle packages for families.

Other price increases include: Livestock vehicle pass (was \$15/now \$25); horse vehicle pass (was \$10/now \$15); Competitive (Open Class) Dairy entry fees (was \$20/now \$30).

The fair is extending its partnership with **Omaha Children's Museum** for at least the next three years and will see the addition of a new dinosaur exhibit, which will include replicas of a woolly mammoth, a tyrannosaurus rex, a stegosaurus, and other interactive features held in the Nebraska Building.

Winter Storm Jonas plays havoc with PSACF/PSSA Convention

30 inches of snow creates load-out and travel challenges

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

HERSHEY, Pa. — The annual Pennsylvania State Association of County Fairs (PSACF) and the Pennsylvania State Showman's Association (PSSA) convention held at Hershey Lodge and Convention Center January 20-23 was anything but conventional. The nearly 1,600 attendees at the 104th edition enjoyed three fourths of the event weather-free. Then Winter Storm Jonas blew through late Friday evening through early Sunday morning, leaving more than 30 inches of snow, creating load out and travel challenges. In fact, Brad and Michelle Dallman with Bates Amusements of Wintersville, Ohio, was part of a seven mile backup involving 500 vehicles stuck on the Pennsylvania Turnpike while trying to head west on Friday evening, January 22. Two jack-knifed tractor-trailers were the culprits. All told they were stranded for 25 hours. Dallman, who is also on the OABA board said, "The weather was just coming in, thought we could beat it." The Dallmans were in good company with busloads of students from various universities and even singer Cassadee Pope from season three of The Voice. The Dallmans waited out their time with Netflix movies, oranges, Chex Mix and the chocolate they give away at trade shows.

The annual convention and trade show brings together board members, volunteers and staff from most of the 109 county and local fairs held throughout the Commonwealth each year. It is also an opportunity for a few dozen carnival/midway owners/operators, along with food/game concessionaires, attractions, entertainers and suppliers to show off their wares by way of a two and a half day trade show, Thursday through noon Saturday. The theme for 2016 was "We Have Good Things Growing."

This year there were 187 vendors, up 20 percent from 2015. The Communication



This aerial view of the PSACF and PSSA trade show floor, inside the Great American Ballroom at the Hershey Convention Center, shows the 187 exhibitors on hand to greet the 1,600 attendees. COURTESY TIM MCGOWAN STUDIO

Exhibits, an aisle devoted to scrapbooks, advertising and memorabilia from 47 participating fairs held throughout the state, were located right inside the trade show floor entrance in the 32,000-square-foot, Great American Hall. The trade show floor was brisk with activity. Vendors who were surveyed were happy with attendance and participation. "It went really well," said Amy Bates with Bates Brothers Amusement Company. The carnival operator was out to sign the Dayton, Pa. fair (Armstrong County, Pa.) to their route. Bates continued, "It was good to see members of other fair boards even if we had no direct business with them." At least three more carnivals had a booth, including Bates, Houghton Enterprises and Tons of Fun.

Harry Reffner, PSACF Secretary and also with Bedford County Fair said, "The trade show is the largest we've had. We had to take space from many other places to accommodate. We have people from California, New York, New Jersey — an exceptional year — quite a large turnout."

In addition, educational seminars, daily workshops, breakfast tabletop topics and banquets each evening completed the schedule of events.

Wednesday evening was the night to showcase entertainment of all types and variety, from musical acts, impersonators, magicians, comedians and clowns, western shows and more.

The keynote speaker for

the opening celebration was well-known motivational speaker Dr. Rick Rigsby who spoke about making an impact, not just an impression. "My greatest calling is to challenge people to do great things. Many people would rather look good than be good. People are not trained to listen — they are trained to talk. You can learn more from listening," said Rigsby. He went on to offer ways that people can make an impact with everyone they come in contact with each day.

Each evening, hospitality rooms were the gathering places after the business of the day concluded. The PSSA, who has been in existence in Pennsylvania the past 48 years, had an active room. Others were hosted by PSACF, Variety Attractions, Reithofer Shows, Goodtime Amusements, Houghton Enterprises and Tropical Amusements.

Thursday evening's banquet, held by the PSACF, featured introductions of all 61 Fair Queens who are vying for the 2016 Pennsylvania Fair Queen title. Remarks were made by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Secretary, Russell Redding and concluded with the announcement of the Fair Person of the Year. This year Karen Dobson, with the Kimberton Fair (Chester County, Pa.) was the honoree.

The PSSA banquet took place Friday evening. Various awards were presented to a variety of showmen for annual and lifetime contribu-

► See FAIR SHOW, page 29

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100th edition of Pennsylvania Farms Show sees solid attendance

Fundraising efforts take in \$44,578 for scholarship programs

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Each year in mid-January agriculture fills the air around this capital city and participants and visitors fill 24 acres with 11 halls and three arenas in one million square feet of livestock, livestock exhibits, food, crafts and more. Billed as the largest indoor agricultural exposition in the nation with nearly 6,000 animals, 10,000 competitive exhibits and 300 commercial exhibits, this is Pennsylvania's equivalent to a state fair, minus the rides. Well, almost.

The 100th edition of the Pennsylvania Farm Show maintained a tradition that has been in place the past 12 years. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture in partnership with the Pennsylvania State Showmen's Association (PSSA), raise money for their respective scholarship programs through the operation of two rides throughout the eight day event that draws upwards of an estimated half million attendees. Attendance figures are not taken, however farm show officials say they parked 71,288 vehicles on their complex. The equipment used at the farm show is on loan by a couple of carnival operators with operations staffed by PSSA members.



In the Weis Exposition Hall, a Hampton farm tractor flat ride was supplied by Powers & Thomas Midway Entertainment, Wilmington, N.C., while in the Main hall a 1946 Allan Herschel carousel was provided by Steve Switka, S&S Amusements, Scott Township, Pa. Rides on both attractions were offered for a \$2.00 donation — money that goes directly back to scholarship programs. In 2015, \$39,000 was split equally between both scholarship programs — 28 scholarships via the Farm Show Foundation and 8 awarded through PSSA. (For 2016, \$44,578 was raised, bringing the total funds raised in 12 years to more than \$400,000.)

Bill Swank told AT: "The flat ride has been very good this year and a good location." Swank is the retired owner of Swank's Steel City Shows, which sold to Powers & Thomas early last year. He and his wife, Patty, were staffing the Hampton ride the day AT visited the show.



An Allan Herschel carousel (above) on loan from S&S Amusements with two rooster animals helped celebrate the 100th Pennsylvania Farm Show. Right, refrigerator magnets were given to the lucky riders who choose either of the two roosters for their ride, awarded upon completion of the ride cycle. AT/B. DEREK SHAW



Elsewhere in the complex, 2015 PSSA President Lisa Bartlebaugh was on hand at the carousel. "So far so good" was her take on the fourth day of the eight-day show. In honor of the 100th Farm Show and helping fill the gap of no chickens at the show (due to avian flu); the carousel was re-equipped with two chickens (actually roosters). Youngsters who happened to select one of those animals for their ride were awarded a souvenir magnet to commemorate the occasion. The magnet reads, "I rode the chicken at the 2016 100th Pennsylvania Farm Show." Commenting on the outlook for ride revenue, Bartlebaugh said, "I'm hoping for a record year."

In another corner of the Main Hall, Knoebels Amusement Resort had a booth. This is the fourth time the park has participated in the annual farm show to promote their park, campground and golf course. Staffers were handing out Scratch-Offs, game cards good for free tickets and discounted tickets and wrist-

bands. All told, there are a half dozen possible prizes, with all cards being winners. The cards are also a big hit at the 22 various off-season events the park participates in, including outdoor and RV shows and Christmas parades. In 2015 Knoebels presence included participation in both the Bloomsburg and Scranton, Pa. parades with the two biggest jaunts

to Fredericksburg, Va. and Verona, N.Y. The park has used the scratch-offs for more than 10 years. This year's prizes included a \$5 discount on a pay-one-price plan or a campground stay, a waterslide upgrade at the Crystal Pool, a \$5 book of tickets, a free round of mini golf and a free pay-one-price plan.



PSSA volunteers at the Hampton tractor ride: Bill and Patty Swank, retired owner of Swank's Steel City Shows, Pittsburgh; and Jerry Bartlebaugh (standing), one of the owners, Bartlebaugh Amusements, Inc. AT/B. DEREK SHAW



The Knoebels team during one of the days of the Pennsylvania Farm Show: Stacy Ososkie, Public Relations; Erik Beagle, Guest Relations team member; and Angie Hetzendorf, Operations team member. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

►FAIR SHOW

Continued from page 27

tions. Karen Michael-Shea, from Danielsville, Pa. with Michael's Family Concessions and S&S Amusements was named Showman of the Year. A check was presented to the Pennsylvania Farm Show Foundation for \$22,289.35 — half the proceeds from the Showman's Herschel Carousel and Hampton mini tractor ride that operated during eight day farm show earlier in January. The use of the carousel was donated by S&S Amusements, Inc, Scott Township, Pa., with Thomas and Powers Midway Entertainment providing the flat ride. The PSSA presented eight scholarships, totaling \$17,612 to students from their half of the Farm Show ride proceeds during the banquet. PSSA has raised and donated more than \$201,000 in scholarships since inception, twelve years ago. The total amount of scholarships, including the Farm Show Foundation portion is over \$400,000. The banquet also featured the installation of the 2016 PSSA President Steven Swika III, with S&S Amusements, Scott Township, Pa. Entertainment was provided by the Justin Fabus Band.

Saturday evening, more than 800 people attended the Queen Coronation banquet in spite of miserable conditions in Central Pennsylvania. Since there is no "official" state fair, the banquet serves as the opportunity to announce the 2016 queen who visits any of the 109 fairs in Pennsylvania, upon request, during the upcoming season. 61 contestants representing their local/regional fair participated in three days of judging activities before a winner to this 30th annual event was selected and crowned. Darby Caspar, representing the Tioga County Fair, from Roseville, Pa., took those honors.

Executive Secretary of PSSA, Beverly Gruber reminisced about the growth of the trade show. "In 1977 there were three booths around the pool at the Host Inn, Harrisburg." This year there were 187 exhibitors. Gruber continued, "That's pretty good improvement in 39 years!" The PSACF and PSSA have signed a contract with Hershey Lodge and Convention Center to continue their annual event in that venue through 2021.

Williford wants more young members in the Showmen's League of America St. Louis chapter

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — The new president of the Showmen's League of America St. Louis (SLA-STL), plans to continue the push started by the previous president to get more of the younger generation involved in the club and industry.

"These kids are our future and getting them involved in the club is very important," said the 2016 SLA-STL President Stephen Williford, independent games concessionaire, in a letter to membership.

Former president, Ron Porter, Porter Foods, started the move.

"So, now I ask everyone to not only sign new young members, but let's get them involved," Williford said.

The Show Kids Club will help with that effort. The Show Kids Club was created to provide young people participation in club activities, such as outings, fund raisers and good will to less fortunate.

Other SLA-STL officers include Phil Tomber, Rio Syrup Co., first vice president; Tony Noerper, Archway Amusements, second vice president; and Mary Chris Smith, Allied Specialty Insurance, third vice president.



Stephen Williford
SLA-STL President

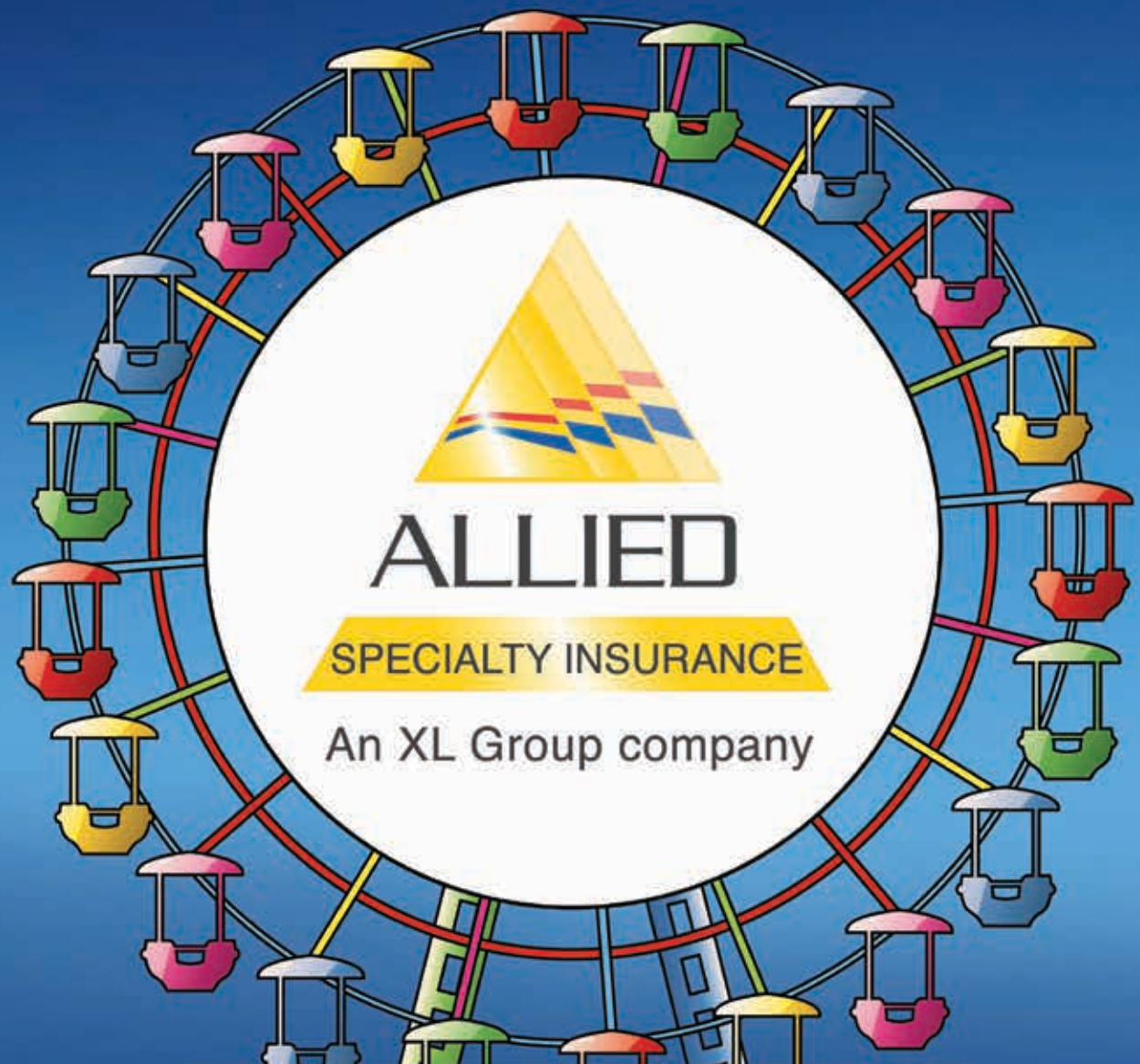


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BUSINESS, SAFETY & CLASSIFIED

► MarketWatch — Page 31 / Obituary — Page 33 / Safety — Pages 35 - 37 / CLASSIFIED — Page 39

Groundbreaking held for first Six Flags park in China

GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas — Six Flags Entertainment Corporation announced on Jan. 19 that Riverside Investment Group Co. Ltd., an award-winning tourism and real estate developer, broke ground on a 30 billion yuan (USD \$4.6 billion) development project that includes China's first-ever Six Flags-branded theme park. The



mixed-use development area is located in Haiyan, south of Shanghai, and the Six Flags theme park is expected to open in 2019.

"Six Flags is synonymous with innovation and thrills for all ages, and we are delighted to partner with the Riverside Group to bring Six Flags thrills to China," said John Odum, president, Six Flags International Development Company. "The Six Flags park in Haiyan will be a spectacular park featuring our signature lineup of record-breaking roller coasters, family rides and attractions and world-class shows—along with themed sections of the park that pay homage to the storied Chinese culture."

The first phase of the mixed-use development project will be a new exhibition center that will open this fall and



Officials from Six Flags Entertainment, Riverside Investment Group and the Haiyan government were at the groundbreaking ceremony for a major development project. It will include the first-ever Six Flags-branded theme park in China. The park is expected to open in 2019. COURTESY BUSINESS WIRE

provide visitors an interactive preview of the upcoming offerings.

"Six Flags will be the centerpiece of the entire new resort development and will provide

a major economic boon to tourism in the Yangtze River Delta and all of Eastern China," said Che Li, chairman of the Riverside Investment Group. "We are proud to partner with

one of the most recognizable brands in the world to create an international destination where visitors can shop, dine and create thrilling memories."

—Business Wire

Lagotronics Projects, Ride Entertainment partner for North America market

STEVENSVILLE, Md. — Lagotronics Projects and Ride Entertainment have announced they are working together in the North American theme park industry. The partnership brings together the industry's premier technology leader with one of the best-known sales companies.

Lagotronics Projects, based in Vento, the Netherlands, is known in the theme park industry for its quality interactive systems and technology throughout the world. By combining this with their audiovisual products, lighting and



games, they create unforgettable memories for visitors of theme parks. Their innovative and high quality solutions are offering great experiences for virtually every leisure business, such as theme parks, museums, amusement parks, shopping centers, and retail areas.

Ride Entertainment, based in Stevensville, Maryland, is known as a leader in providing thrilling rides to



the attractions industry. The company was founded as a one focused on offering the industry some of the best ride selections from around the globe. Over the years, they have expanded to serve every sector of the attractions industry: sales, financial partnerships, installations, proprietary thrill rides based and operations.

Mark Beumers, CEO Lagotronics Projects, said,

"I'm extremely pleased with this promising partnership. Both companies have many commonalities and will strengthen each other tremendously. I believe this partnership will have many advantages, not only for ourselves, but for the whole theme park industry!"

Adam Sandy, Ride Entertainment's chief business development officer, agreed, "We have been looking to add a technological component to the portfolio and are thrilled to partner with Lagotronics Projects. Their combination of innovation, technology and reliability

About the companies

Lagotronics Projects was founded in 1979. The Netherlands-based company has been involved in the attractions industry since 1999 and continues to innovate through technology.

• LagotronicsProjects.com

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

• RideEntertainment.com

are why we feel their potential is limitless."

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MARKETWATCH



COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 02/10/16	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	24.50	43.58	22.31
Merlin Entertainments Group/ Legoland	MERL	LSE	393.90	473.30	360.93
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	50.32	60.64	48.45
Comcast Corp./ NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	55.81	64.99	50.01
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	88.85	122.08	86.25
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	9010	TYO	1247.00	1318.00	1021.00
Haicahang Holdings Ltd.	2255HK	SEHK	1.60	2.13	1.09
Leofoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	10.65	12.90	8.22
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	17.17	24.41	16.18
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	17.68	22.68	16.86
Shenzhen Overseas Chinese Town Co., Ltd. (OCT)	000069	SZSE	6.66	14.78	5.88
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	47.77	55.35	41.6
Skyocean International	00593HK	SEHK	9.20	12.46	5.8
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	3533.00	4000.00	3191.00
Village Roadshow	VRL	ASX	6.44	7.68	5.08

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

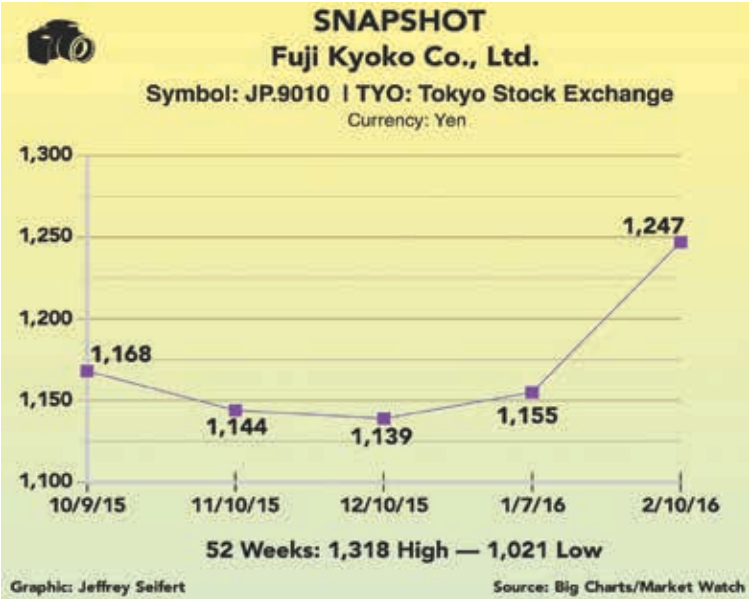
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Region (U.S.)	As of 02/08/16	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$2.087	-\$0.843
Midwest	\$1.929	-\$0.840
Gulf Coast	\$1.896	-\$0.865
Mountain	\$1.914	-\$0.862
West Coast	\$2.073	-\$0.683
California	\$2.369	-\$0.692

CURRENCY

On 02/11/16 \$1 USD =

0.8873	EURO
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1.4119	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.3895	CAD (Canadian Dollar)



BUSINESS WATCH

Legoland Discovery Center announced for Pa.

PLYMOUTH MEETING, Pa. — The newest Legoland Discovery Center will begin construction this summer on the **Legoland Discovery Center Philadelphia** at **PREIT's Plymouth Meeting Mall**. The 33,000 square foot attraction will be a premier destination for adults and children when it opens at the center in Spring 2017.

Specifically designed for families with children aged 3-10, Legoland Discovery Center Philadelphia will offer a fun, highly interactive and educational two to three hour indoor experience.

Owned and operated by global leisure giant **Merlin Entertainments plc** (Merlin), Legoland Discovery Center Philadelphia will be Merlin's ninth Discovery Center to open in the United States. The Legoland Discovery Center Philadelphia will be the state's only location and will represent Merlin's seventeenth Discovery Center globally.

"The Legoland Discovery Centers have been a huge success across the globe, particularly as an opportunity for adults and children to spend fun, quality time together," said **John Jakobsen**, chief new openings officer, Merlin Entertainments plc. "Plymouth Meeting Mall is the ideal location for the attraction as the mall is already a favored destination for Pennsylvania families and tourists from the region."

\$120 million expansion for Gaylord Texan Resort

GRAPEVINE, Texas — The **Gaylord Texan Resort and Convention Center** in Grapevine, Texas, has announced that it will add 300 guest rooms and 86,000-square-feet of new meeting space in a \$120 million expansion that is planned to begin later this year. The project, announced by Gaylord's owner, **Nashville Ryman Hospitality Properties**, also includes a 30,000-square-foot ballroom, 30,000-square-feet of breakout space and a \$5 million expansion of the resort's pool complex. When completed in the second quarter of 2018, the resort will be the second-largest non-gaming hotel in the U.S. trailing only the **Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center** in Nashville, Tenn.

Massanutten Resort now employee owned

HARRISONBURG, Va. — **Massanutten Resort**, a four season resort located outside of Harrisonburg, Va. in the Shenandoah Valley, announced that it is now a 100 percent employee-owned company. All remaining stock of the company, previously owned by company founders **Dice Hammer** and the heirs of **Jim Lambert**, has now been purchased by the company's **Employee Stock Ownership Program** (ESOP) trust.

Steve Krohn, executive vice president and chief operating officer, noted, "This is a momentous event for our company and the community, and everyone should be proud of the accomplishment. The company founders created our ESOP in 1993. That the complete buyout took over 20 years to come to fruition is a testament to their long-term vision. This transition is also a credit to all the hard work and success of our employees."

Massanutten Resort relies upon over 1,500 employees to operate 365 days a year. Including retirees and former employees, more than 3,000 people currently participate in the ESOP program.

In brief...

- ORLANDO, Fla. — The *Orlando Business Journal* recently reported that **CLP Legacy LLC**, a subsidiary of **CNL Lifestyle Properties**, has sold the 399-room **CoCo Key Water Resort** on International Drive to Weston-based **InSite Orlando One LLC**. The purchase price was \$15.1 million according to Orange County deed records. A flurry of new activity on I-Drive was said to be the driving force behind the sale.
- SOUTH MISSISSIPPI - A proposed amusement park project in Mississippi is asking for public backing. **Fun Box Amusement** CEO **Danny Rogers** is wanting to build a \$30 million park, with \$20 million coming from the **BP Oil Spill Relief Fund** that has been earmarked for tourism development along the Gulf coast. To date, no site has been selected.

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OBITUARIES**Nancy Chance Stadnyck dies at 59**

WICHITA, Kan. — The daughter of Chance Rides Founder Harold Chance passed away on January 12, 2016.



Nancy Chance Stadnyck

Nancy Chance Stadnyck, 59, passed away in her home peacefully, after a nearly 12-year battle with cancer. She died surrounded by her family in Metamora, Ill. Born on December 26, 1956 in Wichita, Kan. Nancy was the fifth child of R. Harold and Marjorie Chance who lovingly referred to her as their "Last Chance." She married Douglas Stadnyck, her husband of 37 years, shortly after graduating from St. Louis University in 1978. Nancy was deeply devoted to her family and friends.

She will be remembered for her unwavering enthusiasm for the many in her life whom she loved. Nancy never missed a chance to make someone feel special. She could be counted on to send hundreds of birthday cards each year, just to remind those fortunate to be in her life that they were loved. She was also an adventurous traveler.

Whether golfing with Doug in Ireland, visiting her mother in the Bahamas, or letting her family push her wheelchair around Europe in her final months, she was always looking forward to her next adventure. Enchanted by all things Christmas until the very end, she passed on wearing her Christmas pajamas. For her, her favorite holiday will never have to end. Her yearly Christmas letters will be deeply missed.

She was preceded in death by her father R. Harold Chance and her sister, Kathryn Chance. Nancy is survived by her husband, Douglas Stadnyck, her mother, Marjorie Chance, her siblings, Richard Chance (Carol Chance), Susie Chew (Bill Chew), and Judy Nielsen (Bruce Nielsen), and her three children, Chip Stadnyck (Allison Stadnyck), Jori-ane Stadnyck, and Elizabeth Fitz (Travis Fitz), her devoted dog, Skeeter, and her granddaughter Lyla Fitz.

Dolly Parton's newest dinner show announced

PIGEON FORGE, Tenn. — Dolly Parton announced on Jan. 21 the name of her newest dinner show set to launch this May in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. Dolly Parton's Lumberjack Adventure Dinner & Show features a captivating storyline, a cast of talented performers and family entertainment only Parton can deliver.

"I'm truly excited to be working on a new show for families to enjoy while they are in town," Parton said. "We did a lot of work to come up with the name of the new show and I think we found the perfect fit. My creative team has been working to produce an exciting show which will showcase the amazing competitive skills of our cast. We have a few surprises that will certainly make this an adventure for every member of the family."

Jim Rule, chief executive officer of World Choice Investments,

LLC, noted construction on Lumberjack Adventure's facility is on schedule.

"Facility construction is well underway and we are extremely pleased with the progress to this point," Rule said. "We currently have a number of renovations planned for both the interior and exterior of the facility."

Plans also are in place to remove the former Regency Inn to provide additional parking and to make the dinner attraction more visible from the Parkway, the major thoroughfare in Pigeon Forge.

Much like the fabulous meals at Parton's other dinner attractions, guests will be served a hearty meal truly fit for a lumberjack. Numerous new meal items currently are being tested to create an entirely new menu.



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Cooler weather doesn't slow IISF Gibtown show

Trade show sees record 18 first time exhibitors display

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The 48th annual edition of the trade show that is geared toward the portable amusement industry took place February 9-13 on the grounds of the International Independent Showmen's Association (IISA) club facilities. Regarded by many as "ground zero" for the traveling industry, the Gibsonton/Riverview area is winter home to many traveling shows. Inside the main exhibit building are 266 spaces that were used by 94 exhibitors. The largest indoor vendor display is Rhode Island Novelty showcasing their wares in 19 of the spaces. Outside on the IISA grounds there were 68 exhibitor spaces. The largest outside exhibitor was Rides 4U. The entire show uses over 20 acres of the site. In 2015, 10,006 people attended the show. (As of press-time, the final figure for 2016 attendance had not been determined.)

Jimmy Otterbacher, IISF Show Supervisor commented on the annual event. He said, "The show is pretty good. The first day was a booming big day." Teresa Rimes, with the IISF production team quickly chimed in, "These are the best first two days we've ever had!" Wednesday brought cooler temperatures and a windy afternoon, curtailing some of the outdoor vendor activity. Later in the week, the



The 2016 edition of the IISF Gibtown show saw a variety of new rides, including this Flying Elephants ride from Kolmax Plus (above). Long time exhibitor Zamperla (above right) displayed three popular rides while Rides 4U anchored the back corner of the outdoor exhibit area with multiple ride suppliers represented.

AT/GARY SLADE



temperatures rebounded with more moderate conditions. "There's a lot of interesting new rides – a lot of different rides," said Otterbacher. "There are new food trailers. The inflatables business is booming." When asked about new rides Otterbacher replied, "Kolmax brought a new elephant ride in. They are a manufacturer from the Czech Republic."

The week consisted of many activities in addition to the trade show. A golf tournament kicked off the week followed by fundraising dinners and numerous seminars, round table discussions and

workshops. Topics included: DOT rules and regulations; ride safety, food safety. Commenting on the seminar participation, Otterbacher was quick to point out, "We have more attendees at the seminars this year than any (other), because everybody is changing rules."

OABA Hall of Fame

Mid-week, the Outdoor Amusement Business Association held their informal 2016 Hall of Fame Induction Ceremonies on the second floor of the IISA museum, also located on the grounds. Over 50 attendees were on hand to

witness the presentation. Four individuals were inducted into the OABA Hall of Fame that is housed in the museum. The Pioneer Award went to Joie Chitwood (posthumously) with Joie Chitwood Jr. accepting the award. His father ran the Joie Chitwood Thrill Show. The first inductee in the food side of the industry was Butch Netterfield (Netterfield's Popcorn & Lemonade, Inc.). Rounding out the group were early safety seminar organizer Beverly Burbuck (Funtastic Shows, Inc.) and Jimmy Drew (Drew Expositions). Tommy Gaylin, 51st incoming OABA chair and Bob Johnson, president of the OABA, served as the Master of Ceremonies of the event. The OABA Hall of Fame was started in 2001. This is the second year the awards have been held at the museum.

A formal presentation was held later in the week at the OABA annual meeting.

Show history

The first trade show on the IISA grounds took place in 1969. Early vendors included B. Barton and Sons, Feltman Products, Acme Premium Supply and Triangle Poster. Some of the longest participating vendors include: Showmans Supply, Eli Bridge Company, Bob's Space Racers and Haas-Wilkerson

all with 42 years. Other long time participants include: Allied Specialty Insurance – 38 years, Victor Products Inc. – 37 years and Majestic Manufacturing, Gold Metal Products, Inc. and Waterloo Tent & Tarp Company all with 36 years of participation.

There were 18 first time vendors at the 2016 trade show. The list includes: Advance Caster & Wheel, American Specialty, Baird Extreme, Carnival Depot, Forever Concession Trailers, Gorham Fabrication, Gosetto S.R.L., ID-Card, Inc., ISERA Insurance Brokers, McGowan Insurance, Next Generation Power, Powersource Transportation, Precise Satellite, Sound Concepts, Super Play Park USA, T-Mobile; Uncle John's Pride (sausage) and Zutter Design.

The show now attracts vendors, in addition to those in North America, from Poland, Germany, Italy, and the Czech Republic.

Amusement Today asked Otterbacher about the upcoming 2016 show season: "It looks good. The fuel prices have really helped. That has brought a lot of money back into the industry, as far as expenses. Lower fuel costs scheduled for all year is going to be good. Usually an election year is a slower year. We'll have to see what happens."

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Six Flags Magic Mountain hosts two-day event Skycoaster Owners Meeting and Safety Symposium held in California

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VALENCIA, Calif. — For the first time ever, the Skycoaster Owners Meeting and Safety Symposium moved out of the classroom and into a working Skycoaster site. On January 22 and 23, Six Flags Magic Mountain became the host venue, a dramatic departure from the indoor settings of the annual event held since Skycoaster was created a quarter century ago.

Not to be confused with site controller certification site visits, the Owners Meeting and Safety Symposium is a two-day event for the 67 active Skycoaster sites worldwide to send a site controller representative to go through a series of classes ranging from ride hardware to operations. Where in the past they were commonly held in classrooms, this year allowed attendees hands-on experience with the courses being given.

Mark Rosenzweig, Skycoaster's managing director for Ride Entertainment Group, was elated at the end result. The opportunities for networking were a big asset. "It's a great chance to talk to each other," said Rosenzweig. "It's amazing that parks don't always reach out to each other; it's a great opportunity for people to interact and look at different ways to accomplish the same task."



Rosenzweig explained the progression of the idea moving away from the standard classroom. "While iconic in the industry, the Skycoaster brand is nothing without our sites. We really welcome interfacing and feedback. At the conclusion of last year's seminar, we informed people that we were thinking about holding the event at a park instead of a classroom. Everyone was gung ho," he said. Contacting Six Flags as far back as April, Rosenzweig said the park was enthusiastically on board.

"Very few parks allow operations people to partake in the maintenance procedures. This is due to the different departments getting locked into their day-to-day duties, but also a difference in day-to-day scheduling with maintenance people typically arriving earlier in the morning prior to the operations team," said Rosenzweig. He believes that the new format of the event allowed attendees from operations departments to better understand the day-to-day

SAFETY

maintenance procedures.

This year's safety symposium had a round robin mode of moving attendees divided into thirds through three main sessions.

One was dedicated to flight suits. Instructors were Mike Berge and Betty Rothman of High Energy Sports (Anaheim, Calif.), the flight suit provider.

The second workshop was dedicated to the hydraulic winch and cables. It was led by Andy Cook of Mile High Rigging (Denver, Colo.). The importance of the inspections was stressed as attendees had the actual hands on experience when working with the cables.

Finally, Bill Yeakle of Vestil Manufacturing (Angola, Ind.) gave a course related to the scissor lift system used to position riders in place.

Because attendees are given a written certification test on the second day, they can then go back and administer written tests at their facility to their site's returning site controllers after attending the symposium. All Skycoaster site controllers must take the written test annually to renew their certification.

Engaging attendees in a fun way to study, a game of Skycoaster Jeopardy using computer software at the end of the first day helped people review for the following day's certification.



In contrast to previous classroom settings, the symposium this year offered hands-on experience.
COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

"If you're a certified site controller, that's something to be proud of," says Rosenzweig. "It's not easy, it's not meant to be easy. If you are a Skycoaster site controller, anyone who knows ride operations knows that's an accomplishment."

It was reported that several operators sent more than one attendee. This was attributed to the hands-on aspect, making the travel expense more justifiable. Skycoaster had three other representatives from Ride Entertainment Group in addition to Mark Rosenzweig: Steve Bilton, Michael Gutknecht, and Kirby Collings. Collings helped present with Cook during one of the seminars. REG noted a 25th anniversary logo will be stitched on all flight suits operating this year.

"People loved it. It was like universal acclaim. People left feeling they had a stronger understanding of the operation and more importantly the maintenance aspect," said Rosenzweig.

Rosenzweig was quick to give praise to Six Flags Magic Mountain as the host venue. He was impressed with the level of hospitality showed to the symposium. "It starts with Bonnie Rapjohn all the way down. They went above and beyond." He commended Donald Spiller, director of operations, and Dorian Holden, operations manager, as not only great points of contact for Magic Mountain, but fantastic to work with. As a bonus, the park even provided two hours of exclusive riding for attendees on the park's newest star attraction — Twisted Colossus.



Attendees of the Skycoaster Safety Symposium gathered at the host site of Six Flags Magic Mountain. COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

Annual NAARSO safety forum survives snowstorm in Hershey, Pa.

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SAFETY

HERSHEY, Pa. — This year NAARSO (National Association of Amusement Ride Safety Officials) held their annual safety forum in Hershey on the heels of the Pennsylvania State Association of County Fairs and Pennsylvania State Showmen's Association event ending the day before. Remnants of winter storm Jonas played a little bit of havoc with the 370 attendees who were registered to attend. 310 participants actually were successful in making the trek to the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center January 24-29. Some attendees used three modes of transportation to arrive at the training, when their air flights were altered, including by train and car. "A lot of people were making adjustments. We didn't know what to expect. Some were a day and a half late," said Lenny Cavalier, executive director of NAARSO. However after reflection, he said, "This probably will turn out to be our largest attended."

In 2015, 300 people were in attendance in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Wednesday was devoted to hands-on training with the entire group split into two. Each group spent a half day in two places: the Great American Ballroom of the Hershey Lodge and inside Hersheypark, spending time at three rides. Five of the ballroom rides were supplied by Majestic Midways Dover, Pa. and included: SBF/VISA Groovy VW Bus; Wisdom Orient Express coaster; Chance Carousel; Sellner Bee Bop (Sizzler) and a Tea Cup ride. Hersheypark also set up part of their 12-gauge Mini Train Co. train.

Participants were bussed into Hersheypark, then put on multiple single car trams with three outdoor ride locations: Reese's Extreme Cup Challenge (EOS/Sally themed dark ride); Great Bear (B&M inverted coaster) and Laff Trakk (Maurer AG indoor themed spinning mouse coaster). Rotating with



Single-car trams transported trainees throughout the park to each of the three rides that were part of the training: Great Bear; Laff Trakk and Reese's Extreme Cup Challenge. Attendees are shown examining equipment in the shop area of Laff Trakk coaster. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

those three groups were three in the Hersheypark Service Center maintenance shops. Those tours included visits to the paint/fiberglass/carpenter shop; machine/weld and NDT shop and an area for roller coaster trains from various manufacturers. All the park activity was very well orchestrated by Gary Chubb; senior director of Maintenance and over 20 Hersheypark staff.

Thursday's activities in-

cluded attendees taking seven elective classes followed by operational examinations early that evening.

Friday consisted of two educational sessions with a few class options followed by test orientation; Level I and Level II certification exams and a banquet that evening. Upon banquet conclusion numerous awards were presented including these four. The OABA Red

Wood Award for dedication and support of safety in the amusement ride industry went to Gary Chubb, Hersheypark. The NAARSO past president's (Jimmy Floyd) award for dedication within the realm of safety in the industry went to Gary Chubb, Hersheypark. The Carl Dills award for safety went to James Garybeal, Drew Expositions, Augusta, Ga. The NAARSO Man of the Year was presented to Joe Pandolfo, Pocono Go-Karts, East Stroudsburg, Pa.

Some of the participating organizations include: Alamo Amusements; Amusements of America; Dixie Landing Theme Park; Dollywood; Fiesta Shows; Indiana Beach Resort; James Gang Amusements; Morey's Piers; Ray Cammack Shows; Reithoffer Shows; Strates Shows and West Edmonton Mall. Many of the Cedar Fair properties sent staff to the seminar as well.

NAARSO's 30th annual seminar (2017 dates to be announced) will be held in Orlando, Fla. with Fun Spot America and Universal Studios Florida serving as the host parks.

iROC training event at Knott's Berry Farm fortifies attendees

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SAFETY

BUENA PARK, Calif. — Offering essential instruction along with an engaging mix of informative discussion and fun, the International Ride Operator Certification (iROC) School was held at the Knott's Berry Farm Hotel here Jan. 27-29.

Presented annually by Patty Beazley and Cindee Huddy of Nashville, Tenn.-based When Pigs Fly / Creative Operational Concepts, which provides service and safety training and auditing for the amusement, retail and hospitality industries, the interactive course delivers instructor training for ride and attraction operator trainers.

"We get our trainees to think outside the box, and give them the right tools and equipment to do the job," Huddy told *Amusement Today*. "Our passion lies in developing the skills of young employees and leaders in the parks."

More than 80 park directors, managers and supervisors signed up for this year's school. Participants came from as far as Canada and

Hong Kong, and represented parks from coast to coast (e.g., Pacific Park in Santa Monica, Calif., and Morey's Piers in Wildwood, N.J.).

The program got off to a motivational start with a keynote address by Johnnie Williams, a thought leader and youth activist known for promoting customer engagement and connective communicating. Day 1 also featured educator Lisa Stephani, an amusement industry veteran, who discussed training leadership issues and solutions.

Highlights of Day 2 included iROC staff talks and instruction in trainer presentation skills and training techniques. Legal expert Erik Beard, an associate with the firm Wiggin and Dana, LLP, of Hartford, Conn., spoke on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other key topics — resuming his discussion on Day 3 with an eye-opening exercise involving best practices in the handling of park accidents.

At the conclusion of the second session, students boarded party buses outfit-



Uremet Corporation CEO Charles Cornman, Ph.D (far right), greets iROC School students during a factory tour in Santa Ana, Calif. The company produces high-performance polyurethane wheels for roller coasters and other amusement rides worldwide. AT/DEAN LAMANNA

ted with LED disco lighting and stereo sound for a factory tour and dinner at Uremet Corporation in nearby Santa Ana. Company founder and president Mark Moore arranged the educational and fascinating visit to the facility, which designs and manufactures high-performance polyurethane wheels for roller coasters and amusement rides all over the world.

Day 3 included an open-book exam and ADA harness

demonstration before wrapping with a student awards presentation.

Beazley and Huddy have come a long way with their course offerings: this is their 16th year as managing partners in their company. After befriending each other while working as ride operators in the 1990s, they conducted their first training class at the late Libertyland amusement park in Memphis, Tenn., in 2000.

The duo's basis for formulating iROC was their work in performing assessment and critical component audits based on ASTM and other industry standards, as well as on ride operator behavior. Their goal has been to create standardized procedures in ride operation.

"This is why we started developing the iROC program," Beazley said. "It's not just about telling ride operators to do what they've been told to do, but about helping them to understand why their boss has told them to do something so that the operator will buy into doing it."

Both women believe the industry has made strides in creating standardized procedures and rules in ride operations, particularly among the groups that have passed through their program and used their instructor manual and trainer activities guide in the field.

"If you've got 50 trainers, there needs to be one way that they all teach," Huddy said. "iROC gives them the foundation to do that — to go out and train 600 ride operators the same message."

2016 AIMS Safety Seminar draws 340, Hale delivers keynote

AT: Pam Sherborne
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ORLANDO, Fla. — Greg Hale, Disney Parks and Resorts' chief safety officer, stressed the importance of a robust safety program during his keynote address to attendees of the 2016 AIMS International Safety Seminar held here at the Doubletree by Hilton Orlando at SeaWorld.

He also told attendees that any safety program should include reinforcing detailed training. And, he gave statistics, saying about 80 percent of all incidents can be attributed to visitors whether people are ignoring safety rules or going on rides that aren't appropriate for them because of health conditions.

"Our keynote speaker Greg Hale was a big hit," said AIMS Executive Director Karen Oertley. "He was sponsored by IAAPA as part of their Gold Sponsorship. It was covered in the *Orlando Sentinel*."

Oertley said final numbers to the AIMS seminar were 340 registered attendees, "a big increase over last year." Last year, attendance was reported as 300 with another 120-130 volunteer instructors.

AIMS International is a non-profit organization dedicated to industry safety. It consists of manufacturers, suppliers, organizations, and individuals that have an interest in supplying products or services to the amusement industry.

The seminar offers both sit-down and hands-on classes, with about 15 different classes offered each hour of this year's seminar. Attendees build tailored course curricula that best suit their needs and the needs of their employers.



Norm Paquette with Florida Bearings, a division of Kaman Industrial Technologies, gives a presentation on Roller Chain Maintenance Training during the 2016 AIMS Safety Seminar in Orlando.
AT/GARY SLADE

SAFETY

Two new board members were installed during the 2016 seminar. One is Rick Achard, field service representative/inspector, Coulter Associates, LLC, where he is responsible for on-site ride and facility inspection, report writing, conducting training classes, accident recreation, analysis and summary of incidents for park and carnival/fair grounds clients.

He has more than 32 years of ride inspection experience.

The other is Andreas Tanzer, director of research and design, ProSlide Technology. He has been with ProSlide since its inception almost 30 years ago. He has been a member of



Achard

the ASTM F24 committee for over 12 years and is the Task Group Chair for ASTM on Water Slides.

In addition, he was the ASTM Task Group chair for Aquatic Play Structures. He currently serves as the secretary of the ASTM F24 Executive Commit-



Tanzer

tee (second term) as well as the Sub-Committee chair for ASTM F24.70 for all water related amusement rides and devices.

Achard and Tanzer replaced former board members Mark Moore, founder and president of Uremet Corp., and Brian King, president, Recreation Engineering.

The 2017 AIMS Safety Seminar is set for January 8-13, 2017 in Orlando.



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Eastern States Exposition and *The Republican* partner on book

WEST SPRINGFIELD, Mass. — Eastern States Exposition has partnered with *The Republican* to produce a hard cover, pictorial book to commemorate its 100th anniversary. The book will be part of the newspaper's Heritage Series which includes "Springfield: 375 Years," "Path of Fury," on the 2011 tornado, the recently released "Building a Better Life, the French Canadian Experience in Western Massachusetts" and the first of two books on the Civil War. It is the first book by *The Republican* written in partnership with another organization.

The 144-page hardbound collectible book will be written by *Republican* Executive Editor Wayne Phaneuf and will highlight the rich history of the Exposition from its founding by Joshua L. Brooks, through the decades with important highlights including the creation of Storowton Village, the Storowton Music Tent, hockey in the fabled Coliseum, horse and automobile racing, notable

entertainers, natural disasters that befell the grounds, forgotten attractions like the Skyride, unique exhibits, a presidential visit and much more. The book will also include passages written by Dennis Picard, ESE director of Storowton Village Museum and Noreen Tassinari, ESE director of Marketing.

ESE officially kicked off the countdown to its 100th anniversary celebration at a Community Breakfast held Sept. 3, 2014 in the Coliseum with the unveiling of a new centennial logo.

The book will be released in late summer with copies available to the public at the Centennial Community Breakfast, September 7, in the Coliseum or by pre-order. The book will also be sold during the Fair, September 16-October 2.

"The Exposition is a hallmark of autumn in New England and has been an integral part of the Western Mass. experience since any of us can remember. *The Republican* has more than 30,000 photos in



Wayne Phaneuf (right) executive editor of *The Republican* examines a cache of vintage Eastern States Exposition photos and publications with (left to right) Noreen Tassinari, ESE director of Marketing; Gene Cassidy, ESE president and CEO; and Dennis Picard, director of Storowton Village Museum. COURTESY EASTERN STATES EXPOSITION

its archives and ESE an equal number. There is a great story here to be told through the decades," Phaneuf said. "As a kid, my three favorite days of the year were Christmas, the last day of school, and the opening of the Eastern States Exposition. Throughout my life the excitement of The Big E has never faded," Phaneuf added.

"We at Eastern States Ex-

position are truly blessed to be able to partner with *The Republican* as we celebrate our Centennial. By the time of our founding in 1916, *The Republican* had already been publishing a daily paper for 72 years. They were expert then and remain so now, and they have kept the archive of our times which will now be deployed in an important exciting book that we will

produce together as a record for all posterity," Eugene J. Cassidy, president and CEO of the Exposition, said.

Additionally, there will be a limited opportunity for local businesses to be included in the Community Profiles section of the book. For more information, contact Greg Chiecko, Eastern States Exposition director of Sales at (413) 205-5018 or gchiecko@TheBigE.com. To reserve your copy of the book, email expnews@TheBigE.com.

The Exposition is also gathering memories from visitors far and wide through social media as well as encouraging visitors to share their recollections and Big E experiences by emailing Memories@TheBigE.com.

The Big E will present its 100th edition Sept. 16 to Oct. 2, 2016. Many new and exciting happenings are being planned for the 175-acre West Springfield facility. For a list of all 100th anniversary events and celebrations planned throughout 2016, visit TheBigE.com.

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