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## Silver Dollar City debuts \$8 million Fireman's Landing section

*S&S, WhiteWater, Zamperla supply 10 new family rides and attractions*

**AT:** Scott Rutherford  
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BRANSON, Mo. — Silver Dollar City has a treat in store for guests this season as the popular Missouri themer unveils an imaginative, all-new section dubbed Fireman's Landing.

Officially opened to the public on March 14, 2015, the \$8 million Fireman's Landing salutes the spirit and training activities of community volunteer firefighters. Similar to a section opened last year at sister park Dollywood, the Fireman's Landing storyline creates the atmosphere of the rides serving as "training" adventures for recruits and community heroes — all seeking to become part of the Silver Dollar City Fire Brigade.

Silver Dollar City designers did their homework when researching the thematic aspects of Fireman's Landing. As it turns out, the historical significance of the new area is based on the fact that the 1880s town of Marmaros, Missouri — once located on the site of Silver Dollar City — was completely burned to the ground by a blaze more than 100 years ago. "Now fast forward to the fictional story for Fireman's Landing, where the citizens share a desire to

band together to prevent such an event — to be ready with volunteer recruits who have trained to test their preparedness," explained Brad Thomas, general manager of Silver Dollar City. "The message carries that everyone can give back through volunteerism and community spirit."

Fireman's Landing expands into a previously undeveloped region of Silver Dollar City, which substantially increases the park's attractions arsenal with six new family rides and four interactive play zones for younger kids. These newest additions bring the number of rides and attractions to over 40 and increases ride capacity to over 21,000 per hour.

To supply the equipment for Fireman's Landing, Silver Dollar City turned to three of the industry's most respected manufacturers — S&S, WhiteWater West and Zamperla. Centered around the headquarters of Fire Station No. 3, the new rides include:

- FireFall, an eight-story fire tower-themed Double-Shot ride (S&S/Sansei).
- Fire Spotter, which features whirling balloons for spotting fire dangers (Zamperla).
- Fire Wagon Frenzy, a bouncing ride for bucket brigade volunteers (Zamperla).
- Lucky's Dizzy Dogs, a galloping ride on Dalmatians racing around a fire hydrant

► See FIREMEN'S, page 4



Fireman's Landing, above, Silver Dollar City's new \$8 million area, offers six family rides along with four interactive play zones for younger kids. The section opened on March 14, 2015 after extensive planning. Below, two of the area's Zamperla-designed rides, Up the Ladder and Dizzy Dogs, thrill youngsters. COURTESY SDC



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# NEWSTALK

**EDITORIAL:** Gary Slade, [gslade@amusementtoday.com](mailto:gslade@amusementtoday.com)

## Tidbits



Slade

Quick reminder to our supplier advertisers that our next issue (May) will be our annual What's New Guide compiled by AT's Jeffrey Seifert. To make sure your company is included in our annual listing, please send your 2015 project lists to [jseifert@amusementtoday.com](mailto:jseifert@amusementtoday.com) by April 3.

Congratulations to Mike Apple who just retired from Six Flags Over Texas as Operations manager after 47 years with the Arlington, Texas theme park. Those of us who got to know Apple knew of his love for the history of park and his storytelling. Let's hope he will put some of those stories into a book, now that he has his new found time. AT's Janice Witherow has profiled Apple in this month's 2 Minute Drill feature on page 3, so check it out!

Planning is well underway on the 2015 Golden Ticket Awards, set for Sept. 11 & 12, 2015 at two completely different New York City amusement facilities. This year's event is centered around networking opportunities, so make plans now to attend. Our Big Apple hosts, Zamperla and CAI, have a great agenda planned.

The tentative agenda begins Friday, Sept. 11 with a night under the stars in the famed Central Park to see Victorian Gardens, where a reception, dinner and networking all await, before a short walk back to the Park Lane Hotel.

Saturday, Sept. 12 is free time to explore the city until mid-afternoon when buses will arrive at our host hotel for transport to the birthplace of the amusement industry — Coney Island! There you will enjoy the famous Coney Island Cyclone roller coaster, Luna Park, the Wonder Wheel, Thunderbolt and B&B Carousel before settling down at the historic Gargiulo's Restaurant for dinner and the 2015 Golden Ticket Awards ceremony. Outside, a fireworks show will cap off our wonderful evening as we board our buses for transportation back to the hotel.

A complete schedule of events and hotel discount room booking information is coming in mid April to [www.GoldenTicketAwards.com](http://www.GoldenTicketAwards.com). Watch AT's daily email newsletter and [amusementtoday.com](http://amusementtoday.com) for the announcement. See you soon in NYC!

**FLINT'S VIEW:** Bubba Flint



**INDUSTRY OPINION:** Andrew Mellor, [amellor@amusementtoday.com](mailto:amellor@amusementtoday.com)

## The benefits of going 'undercover!'

Here in the U.K. (and I'm sure in many other countries too) we have a TV program called *Undercover Boss* which, as the title implies, sees the overall boss or a director of a company taking the role of a new employee in their business so that he or she can see first-hand how it is operating and where improvements can be made.

The exercise always provides the bosses with a fascinating insight into their businesses and reveals to them a wide variety of areas that can be changed for the better, from simple things that will make a huge difference to an individual employee's job to other areas that will make for a healthier bottom line.

One example I saw a few months ago was with the boss of a chain of Italian restaurants. He worked as a waiter for a couple of days in one of his venues and saw that staff were queuing up to use the POS system where they were punching in the orders they had taken. Clearly, this was a particularly inefficient way to do things, so having seen the problem he brought in individual, handheld devices for each member of staff. Problem



Mellor

solved, staff and customer frustration alleviated and efficiency vastly improved through a relatively simple solution. I hate to think how long this issue would have continued if the boss hadn't been doing his "undercover" role.

The program made me wonder how much similar 'undercover' work goes on in the theme park industry. It's clearly hugely beneficial to do and can create

some great opportunities for improvements and ultimately more profit. I guess it's akin to mystery shopping but it obviously provides bosses with direct contact with staff as they do their daily jobs, which can only provide a wonderful insight into the business. Of course managers are put in place to pick up on where things are not going quite right, but a fresh pair of eyes and ears will always see and hear things that others may not.

I guess in some smaller parks being an 'undercover' boss might be difficult but where that's the case, a mystery shopping exercise by an outside third party would provide similar benefits. For larger organizations, however, who knows what the actual boss may find?



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 National Roller Coaster Museum & Archives



# 2 MINUTE DRILL



COMPILED: Janice Witherow

## Mike Apple, Six Flags Over Texas

This summer will be a very different summer for Mike Apple. Instead of spending his days working at Six Flags Over Texas, he will be enjoying his recent retirement by traveling and gardening. Mike started at the park as a ride operator in 1967, only six years after it opened its gates, and worked his way up the ranks where he eventually became Director of Operations. Affectionately called "Apple" by his co-workers, Mike has the longest tenure of anyone at Six Flags Over Texas, was an incredibly dedicated employee and was the park historian. Known for his great story-telling, Mike will no doubt have many stories to share in his retirement days that lie ahead. Congratulations and all the best, Mike.



Mike Apple, with Six Flags Over Texas Park President Steve Martindale, during Apple's retirement party.

**Title**  
(Former) Director of Operations.

**Number of years in the industry**  
47.

**Best thing about the industry**  
Allowing people to forget their problems and have a day of fun.

**Favorite amusement park ride**  
The old Runaway Mine Train.

**If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be...**  
Off my blood pressure meds. Seriously, an archeologist.

**Biggest challenge facing our industry**  
Competition for the dollar.

**The thing I like most about amusement park season is...**  
Getting the park ready for Opening Day.

**At the ballpark...hotdog or hamburger?**  
Hot dog, of course.

**Favorite city**  
Arlington, Texas.

**Your house is on fire...the first thing you grab is...**  
My wallet!

**Favorite Texan food**  
Chicken-fried steak.



Apple

**On my screensaver right now is...**  
A picture of the ruins of the village of Akrotiri on Santorini.

**In one word, my Six Flags career has been...**  
Awesome!

**On a typical Saturday night, I am...**  
Either at work or at home. Now I'll be just at home.

**My favorite springtime activity is...**  
Gardening.

**The best advice I ever got was...**  
Always sweat the details.

**My very first job was...**  
A "sacker" at Safeway Food Stores.

**When on an airplane, I typically...**  
Am bored out of my mind.

**People say I remind them of...**  
Someone they know (whatever that means)!

**Three things on my retirement to-do list are...**  
Relax, travel and gardening.

**Favorite time of day**  
Early morning.

**The last movie I saw was...**  
*The Monuments Men*.

**All-time favorite sports moment**  
Roger Maris hitting that 61st home run to break Babe Ruth's record.

**When I say politics, you say...**  
Ok, here we go...

**My dream vacation is...**  
An Aegean cruise.

# THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

Presented by the National Rollercoaster Museum

COMPILED: Richard Munch



## APRIL

•**1904:** *Billboard* magazine confirmed in the April 9 issue that **Chester E. Albright** was completing the site work for **Pabst Park**, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The updated site amenities were part of its 10th season celebration, as the small park would be "made into a Coney Island as soon as the snow disappears." Albright had begun a partnership with **Henry B. Auchy** that January, to form the **Philadelphia Toboggan Company**, in Germantown, Pa. They would eventually lease many park operations, including Pabst Park. As a site engineer, Albright's work could be found in **Chestnut Park**, outside of Philadelphia (1898) and at **Willow Grove Park** (1896) just north of the city. Albright died in 1938, at the age of 66.

•**1927: West View Park**, in West View, Pennsylvania (north of Pittsburgh), announced in the April 30 issue of *Billboard*, that the park was getting \$100,000 in improvements for the 1927 season, which included a new ride, the Racing Whippet coaster. Designed by **Edward Vettel Sr.**, the amazing racing coaster was erected in the rear of the park, utilizing a deep gully. The station was constructed as a trestle above the park, with the storage tracks built off of a turntable. It is the opinion of many historians today that the ride was Vettel's true masterpiece. Based on its success, the popularity of the new ride allowed West View to continue upgrading the park – first updating the old Speed-O-Plane, in 1928, to the Greyhound, than rebuilding the Dips for the 1929 season, from a side friction to a modern design. The Racing Whippet closed with the park after a disappointing 1977 season.

•**1946:** The **Iowa State Fairgrounds** in Des Moines, Iowa, was one of only a handful of American fairs that included a permanent wooden roller coaster. The ride erected at the edge of the racetrack opened during the 1915 fair season, but would not survive World War II. With little maintenance after 1941 (the fair did not run between 1942 and 1945) it was discovered that the side-friction coaster had rotting structure near the ground. With no lumber readily available during the post-war period, the ride was dismantled by mid-April and sold to local builders. The old coaster would become part of new homes built for returning soldiers from the war.

•**1975:** In late April, **Arnie Lane** and his son **Phillip Lane Sr.** founded **Maclan Corporation** in Lakeland, Florida. The family business would begin producing a variety of ride equipment, including urethane wheels for roller coasters and water flume rides, as the relatively new material replaced steel wheels on many rides. Set to celebrate its 40th anniversary on April 29, it remains one of the few companies in the country that supply and overhaul wheels to the amusement and carnival industry. Today, Maclan has grown to over 10 acres, with more than 40 employees working in 80,000 square feet of manufacturing space.

•**1987:** The first roller coaster in the world to feature six upside down inversions opened on April 11, at **Kings Island**, Kings Mills, Ohio. The 148-foot-tall Vortex was designed by **Ronald Toomer**, of Arrow Dynamics, Clearfield, Utah. It incorporated the typical loop and corkscrew elements, plus a bat wing shaped element. It was a basic replacement for the suspended coaster, the Bat, which was removed from the park in 1984. The ride utilized some of the Bat's concrete footings, especially in the station area, where the decorative wooden station was re-purposed to fit the new track size.



## ► FIREMEN'S

Continued from page 1

(Zamperla).

•Up The Ladder, a smaller tower drop ride for junior recruits (Zamperla).

•Fireman's Flyer, a low-flying swing ride for little firefighters (Zamperla).

Other attractions include the in-house designed Firehouse Splash Yard with squirting water jets and pump hoses for outdoor play. Inside Fire Station No. 3, enclosed and temperature controlled

for season-long comfortable play, are Firefighter's Fire Drill, with buckets, pumpers, foam ball cannons and targets for showering mock fires (WhiteWater West); Firefighter's Fire Junior Escape, an obstacle course of tubes, mazes, climbing structures and slides (WhiteWater West); and Firefighter's Junior Fire Escape, a soft play area for toddlers (WhiteWater West).

Kids can also meet the Fireman's Landing official chief rescue dog Lucky, a costumed character that encourages new recruits to have fun and be ready in the firefighters' tradition of neighbors helping neighbors.

AT sat down with SDC's Brad Thomas to discuss the concept and execution of Fireman's Landing, and why now was the right time to develop a new area aimed primarily at families with children. "For decades, Silver Dollar City has made decisions based upon guest research. At an increasing pace, our guest-moms were telling us that they would like to see more things at Silver Dollar City for their entire family to enjoy including their younger children," said Thomas. "In addition, our former treehouse, 'Geyser Gulch' had served us well for 17 years, but was in need of updating. As we explored our options, we came to the conclusion we would dramatically improve our guest experience if we built a new area on the site of Geyser Gulch.

"Once we knew what type of area we were going to build, we then began exploring our theme options. We considered a variety of themes which could match Silver Dollar City's 1880's overall historic theme. For over four decades, Silver Dollar City's classic Fire in the Hole has told the factual story of the night a local vigilante group burned down the town which sat on the current park site. We then chose to create Fireman's Landing," continued Thomas.

"Firstly, to pick up the Fire in the Hole storyline with a bit of fiction 'The Good citizens of Silver Dollar City created a special part of town which would always recruit and train volunteers so the town would never again be burned.'"

"Secondly, we wanted to celebrate firefighters across



Above, Firefighter's Fire Drill (WhiteWater) is an indoor play area with buckets, pumpers, foam ball cannons and targets. Right, the Fireman's Flyer is a low-flying swing ride from little firefighters from Zamperla. Below, the S&S/Sansei supplied FireFall, is an eight-story Double Shot tower ride relocated from the closed Celebration City park in Branson. COURTESY SDC



America and hopefully help recruit more firefighters. Rural and volunteer fire departments across the U.S. are in need of members of our communities to volunteer to serve those fire protection districts.

"In 2013, Silver Dollar City successfully themed our Golden Ticket-winning Outlaw Run wood coaster by celebrating heroes in law enforcement. Our actions included special recognition, a permanent monument and a tag line 'The Good Guys Always Win.' Fireman's Land-

ing continues that tradition," concluded Thomas. "We love to bring families closer together. We hope that through special memories at Silver Dollar City, kids and adults can be encouraged to be the good guys serving as everyday heroes throughout our communities."

Despite rain until noon, Silver Dollar City's opening day attendance on March 14 was an impressive 11 percent over last year. It's a solid bet that Fireman's Landing will help to continue that trend throughout the 2015 season.



The centerpiece of the new Fireman's Landing is this bell tower that includes a 640-pound, American-made iron bell forged in 1895 and the Firefighter's Pledge. It reads:

A Firefighter's Pledge  
I promise concern for others.  
A willingness to help  
all those in need.  
I promise courage — courage to  
face and conquer my fears.  
Courage to share and endure the  
ordeal of those who need me.  
I promise strength — strength of  
heart to bear whatever  
burdens might be placed upon me.  
Strength of body to deliver to  
safety all those placed  
within my care.  
I promise the wisdom to lead,  
the compassion to comfort,  
and the love to serve unselfishly  
whenever I am called.

—Author Unknown  
COURTESY SDC

## Showboat Branson Belle celebrates 20th anniversary

BRANSON, Mo. — The Showboat Branson Belle, one of the country's most popular dinner cruises, is marking 20 years of live entertainment in 2015 with an all-new show, Celebrate!

This energetic new production features the Showboat Branson Belle's biggest cast ever with returning favorites, award-winners and new talent including the four-man dance troupe, Rhythm and Cassandr  Faimon-Haygood, Branson's own award-winning vocalist. Returning audience favorites include magician Christopher James, vocal group The ShowMen with live music from The Rockin' Dockers.

During the two-hour cruise, guests will also enjoy a three-course meal freshly prepared in the ship's galley while they take in panoramic views of Table Rock Lake.

## FAST FACTS

### Name/Park

Fireman's Landing/  
Silver Dollar City  
Branson, Mo.

### Theme

Salutes the spirit and training activities of community volunteer firefighters. Rides serving as training adventures for recruits and local heroes

### Rides

**FireFall**, an eight-story fire tower-themed Double-Shot ride (S&S/Sansei);  
**Fire Spotter**, whirling balloons for spotting fire dangers (Zamperla);  
**Fire Wagon Frenzy**, bouncing ride for bucket brigade volunteers (Zamperla);  
**Lucky's Dizzy Dogs**, galloping ride on Dalmatians racing around a fire hydrant (Zamperla)  
**Up The Ladder**, kids drop ride (Zamperla);  
**Fireman's Flyer**, low-flying swing ride for little firefighters (Zamperla)

### Attractions

**Firehouse Splash Yard** with squirting water jets and pump hoses for outdoor play (SDC);  
**Firefighter's Fire Drill**, indoor play area with buckets, pumpers, foam ball cannons and targets (WhiteWater West);  
**Firefighter's Fire Junior Escape**, obstacle course of tubes, mazes, climbing structures and slides (WhiteWater West)  
**Firefighter's Junior Fire Escape**, a soft play area for toddlers (WhiteWater West)

### Cost/Opened

\$8 million/March 14, 2015



# PAPA Spring Meeting held at the Sweetest Place on Earth

AT: Dean Lamanna  
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HERSHEY, Pa. — One hundred three members of the Pennsylvania Amusement Parks Association (PAPA) met March 9 and 10 for their annual spring meeting at Hershey Lodge. Thirteen of the 19 member Pennsylvania parks participated, along with 23 member suppliers/manufacturers and five guests of PAPA. There are two new member attractions since the last annual meeting: Costa's Family Fun Park, Hawley, Pa. and Crayola Experience, Easton, Pa.

Day one started with a board of directors meeting followed by a reception and banquet that evening. The proceedings were led by Brian Bossuyt, director of Marketing at the Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau (formerly with Camelbeach Mountain Waterpark). He is the out-going president of PAPA, completing his second year at the conclusion of the two-day meeting.

The PAPA held a 50/50 Raffle, for the first time. This was an idea they grabbed from the NJAA (New Jersey Amusement Association), who recently held their East Coast Gift and Variety Show. As a result, nearly \$400 was raised for the Barbara J. Knoebel Scholarship Fund.

A highlight of the dinner was special recognition given to Dick Knoebel who recently was inducted into the IAAPA



Hall of Fame. The award was presented by Gary Chubb, senior director of Maintenance at Hersheypark, who said to get the record straight, "Hersheypark is not buying Knoebels!" After Dick received the award, he jokingly retorted, "Knoebels may be buying Hersheypark!" Also heard during the well-deserved applause was Leanna Knoebel Muscato who enthusiastically shouted at Dick, "He changed my diaper!"

Upon conclusion of dinner, many attendees retired to The Forebay Lounge to continue networking and imbibing.

Day two was reserved for the annual breakfast membership meeting. Association business included reports in various aspects of the industry: legislative progress, Amusement Ride Safety Advisory Board, the fall PACE (Parks and Carnivals Education) ride safety seminar, waterpark issues, PAPA website and human resource issues.

Rob Fulton, President/CEO of the Pennsylvania Association of Travel and Tourism, discussed a few pressing issues that are of great interest to the amusement industry. One is the proposed reform to allow each



**Incoming PAPA President Jeff Davis from Sesame Place shakes hand with outgoing President Brian Bossuyt, Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau (formerly with Camelbeach Mountain Waterpark).** AT/B. DEREK SHAW

of the 67 counties to raise the hotel room occupancy tax rate from 3 percent up to 6 percent, should a particular county want to. Another concern is the passing of Pennsylvania House Bill 75 Opening School after Labor Day Holiday. The bill was introduced to ensure Pennsylvania families get all the benefits of a full, traditional summer vacation while not negatively impacting the education of students.

Fulton went on to say that Pennsylvania dropped from 4th most visited state in the country, to 7th; while room stays increased 6 percent versus 9 percent nationwide. When talking about state tourism dollars, Fulton said, "There were more dollars in 1978 to promote Pennsylvania, than in 2014."

Other business included

the election of the 2015 officers. They include: Jeff Davis, president (Sesame Place); Leanna Muscato, first vice president (Knoebels Amusement Resort); Brian Gorman, second vice president, (Waldameer Park & Water World) and Secretary/Treasurer Dick Knoebel (Knoebels Amusement Resort).

Upon conclusion of the event, over 30 attendees participated in an open roundtable discussion at Hersheypark Service Center training room. This is the fourth year the roundtable session has been held. The discussion, coordinated by Gary Chubb, senior director of Maintenance at Hersheypark covered the entire gamut. Topics included: unhappy guests and compensation policies, security operations, first aid, employee recognition, early and late season staffing, guest scams and more. Policies on Segways and drones in parks along with service animals vs. companion animals and guests with autism were discussed. Pork on a Stick, available at Knoebels Amusement Resort, was mentioned as one of the best new food items offered.

The hottest topic that roundtable attendees discussed was the handling of complaints. "Guest expectations have changed in the past five years," said Jody Bennett, manager, Guest Services at Hershey Entertainment & Resorts. Every guest interaction is logged in a database and managers, in the department where a

guest concern is logged, will communicate with the guest within 3 – 5 days. Bennett went on to discuss the rain ticket policy Hersheypark offers which has recently been re-written. Now, if rain continues for 60 minutes or longer and impacts major attractions, a return visit ticket will be offered that is valid for the remainder of the operating season.

Knoebels Amusement Resort uses signs throughout the park and at many of the kiosks with a number for guests to use to text any complements or concerns. On a busy day, Knoebels may field as many as 100 texts. One example given was a picture text of a customer unhappy with how the food looked after waiting an exceedingly long time. The staff located where the guests were seated and offered coupons to try other park food for free. Needless to say the guests were extremely impressed with the quick turn-around time and positive response to correct the problem.

Camelbeach Mountain Water Park has an appeals policy where the customer may ask for the General Manager or owner. Issues are put in writing with a response soon after. Sesame Place has "Fix It Fast" kits throughout the park. These include park maps, meal vouchers, dessert coupons and other things should management staff need these items to help reach a solution to the concern. Transactions like these are documented and tracked.

This was the 80th spring meeting of the Pennsylvania Amusement Parks Association. It was formed in 1935 with R.L. Plarr from Dorney Park serving as the first president. In 1946, roller coaster designer Herbert P. Schmeck from Philadelphia Toboggan was president.

The 2015 Summer Meeting will be held at Hersheypark, Hershey, Pa. July 20 and 21. Knoebels Amusement Resort will be hosting the 2016 Summer meeting (date: TBD) while Waldameer Park & Water World will be hosting the 2017 Summer meeting (date: TBD).



**Celebrating with Dick Knoebel on his induction into the IAAPA Hall of fame during PAPA are members of the Knoebel family. Shown left to right are: Mary Francis Knoebel, Trevor Knoebel, Leanna Muscato, Dick Knoebel, Brian Knoebel, Rick Knoebel and Dawn Knoebel. Hersheypark presented him with a five pound chocolate bar with outer specially designed sleeve.** AT/B. DEREK SHAW



## SPOTLIGHT – FOOD &amp; CONCESSIONS

## A 'berry' good time for fun-seeking foodies

## Knott's Boysenberry Festival features tastings and more

AT: Dean Lamanna  
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

BUENA PARK, Calif. — Sweet taste sensations enjoy the spotlight at **Knott's Berry Farm** as the park's Boysenberry Festival flavors the premises from March 28 to April 12.

The annual spring break event celebrating the little berry that started it all — the boysenberry — returns with an extensive lineup of tasty treats, gourmet food and the Wine and Craft Brew Tasting Garden, plus, for a limited time, the classic Bear-y Tales characters in a pie-making kitchen.

In honor of the delectable berry, guests can wine, dine, dance, and buy boysenberry inspired products throughout the winding streets of the Old West. Festival entrances are adorned with rustic banners and oversized boysenberries.

Specially recreated for the event is Walter and Cordelia Knott's original roadside boysenberry stand, from which guests can purchase authentic boysenberry plants. The Wine and Craft Brew Garden, located inside of Ghost Town's Wilderness Dance Hall, features an assortment of wine and craft brew labels along with boysenberry-inspired gourmet foods.

The Boysenberry Festival also offers live entertainment



**Knott's Berry Farm is celebrating its delicious roots during the park's annual Boysenberry Festival, running March 28 to April 12. The food and entertainment event returns with pie-eating contests, wine tastings for adults and a lineup of special entertainment for the whole family.**

COURTESY  
KNOTT'S BERRY FARM

at Birdcage Square. Located in front of the famous Birdcage Theatre, this location hosts daily contests such as pie eating, a pie walk and Grandpa's Boysenberry PJs Contest, in which guests race to stuff oversized long johns with balloons.

Evenings in Birdcage Square find guests kicking up their heels with dancing, a down-home jug band and dueling fiddlers and banjos. Inside the Birdcage Theatre, a country comedy show is performed by

► See **BOYSENBERRY**, page 7

## It's not all about the berry at the Florida Strawberry Festival, but almost

AT: Pam Sherborne  
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PLANT CITY, Fla. — The **2015 Strawberry Festival**, which ran Feb. 26-March 8 this year, is all about berries....and entertainment, exhibits, and rides.

But, there is no getting away from the strawberry and the 2015 festival was no different. In fact, local farmers sell flats of them at the event, at gate locations and in the main exhibit hall.

Traditional strawberry food fare includes strawberry pizza, strawberry fries, strawberry crepes, strawberry ice cream, strawberry shortcakes, strawberry milk shakes, strawberry pies and strawberry lemonade.

And, there is the ever-popular Strawberry Shortcake Eating Contest sponsored by **St. Clement's** (Make-Your-Own-Strawberry Shortcake). Participants, which are chosen by lottery, are given four pounds of strawberry shortcake, complete with whipped cream. Whoever eats the most, or all of it, in 10 minutes wins.

There was a first annual Strawberry Spaghetti Eating Contest, sponsored by **Spaghetti Eddies**, and the third



annual Strawberry Mashed Potato Pie Eating Contest, sponsored by **Pickle Barrel Sirloin**.

A new food this year was the Strawberry Hamburger created by Cheryl Reas, **Carousel Foods**. That burger started with a grilled beef patty. Then, Reas grounded up Parkesdale Farm Market's strawberry cookies, coated the patty and, then, re-fried it.

Then the patty, encrusted in strawberry cookie pieces, was topped with bacon, provolone cheese, sliced strawberries and drizzled with strawberry sauce.

Instead of a bun, the patty was placed between two pieces of Strawberry French Toast, made by **Texas Toast** dripped

► See **STRAWBERRY**, page 7

## Lake Compounce to offer new menu items, food location in 2015

BRISTOL, Conn. — Opening day for **Lake Compounce** and **Crocodile Cove** is coming up quickly. And, as patrons find themselves greeted with a variety of new attractions and exhibitions, new foods and a new food location are also being offered.

The first day for the 2015 season at Lake Compounce, established in 1846, is May 9.

On tap for park patrons in 2015 is the new Croc Pot menu.

The park's food team has updated the historic restaurant with a new menu featuring southern-style fried chicken and delicious sides, including macaroni and cheese, biscuits, mashed potatoes and more.

The Lake Compounce Watering Hole is the newest food and refreshment location within the park, featuring beverages from local breweries to give guests a taste of Connecticut's best.



New special events have been added as well. Included will be a Mother's Day event, a Father's Day event, and even a luau complete with a pig roast,

steel drums and hula dancers.

New attractions include the Dinosaur Exhibition, a prehistoric themed walk-through area. An attraction for all ages, guests will be given the opportunity to encounter moving and breathing lifelike dinosaurs and explore their history through a variety of facts and trivia.

**Bear Creek Campground** at Lake Compounce, which opens for the season May 1,

2015, also is offering new additions such as new lodging and entertainment.

In addition to the existing 20 fully-furnished cabins at the campground, 56 RV, 30 tent sites, and five tipis, the campground will add six Cub Huts. Each Cub Hut comfortably sleeps four people on two full-size beds.

Lake Compounce is a part of the **Palace Entertainment** family of parks.

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## SPOTLIGHT – FOOD & CONCESSIONS

### ►BOYSENBERRY

Continued from page 6

Krazy Kirk and the Hillbillies.

New this year, for an additional charge, kids can join the classic Bear-y Tales characters in making their very own boysenberry tarts complete with a crumble topping.

In Charleston Circle, the iconic fountain has been transformed into a centerpiece for the celebration — decorated with colorful flowers and boysenberry-laden vines.

Other highlights:

•**Jammin' in the Dark** transforms the Charleston Circle into an immersive dance party complete with illuminated boysenberries and LED lighting effects affixed to the central fountain. DJ HowLy spins the hottest dance music for all ages.

•**Peanuts' Party in the Park** celebrates spring in a big way with infectious music, vibrant set design, and an invitation for the audience to be a part of the show,

•**Ghost Town** has been outfitted with boysenberry themed stand-in cutouts for fun photo opportunities. Guests can also watch special demonstrations, including chainsaw wood-sculpting, glass blowing and blacksmithing.

The symbiotic relationship between the boysenberry and the Knott family began in the 1930s. Walter Knott harvested the zesty fruit — a cross between the loganberry, the red raspberry and the blackberry — and named the new berry after its originator, Rudolph Boysen. Today, all boysenberries in the world can trace their roots back to Knott's Berry Farm.

The park promises to make history again during the current festival with the debut of its very own Berry Market-brand Boysenberry BBQ Sauce. Other featured treats include fried cheese curds paired with a spicy boysenberry dipping sauce, a fish-and-chips sandwich with boysenberry tartar sauce, boysenberry Icee floats, and boysenberry frappuccinos and lattes. Still more treats charbroiled to perfection on open-air barbecues are available throughout the celebration.

The Boysenberry Festival is included with admission to Knott's Berry Farm, with additional charges for food tasting experiences. The park is extending its daily operating from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. during the 16-day event.

•[www.knotts.com](http://www.knotts.com)

### ►STRAWBERRY

Continued from page 6

in French toast batter and mixed with pureed strawberries.

Reas told a reporter with a local news agency that people expect new food creations.

She was quoted in the *Tampa Bay Times* as saying: "It's getting harder, but now our brains are always working and we are coming up with all kinds of ideas. We are thinking five burgers ahead."

But, festival guests can't ignore all the non-strawberry foods.

In fact, there are several non-strawberry contests such as the Corn Dog Eating Contest, sponsored by **Super Dog**, and the Fried Corn on a Stick Eating Contest, sponsored by **Bayshore Catering**.



Strawberry Hamburger as seen at the 2015 Strawberry Festival.

A new non-strawberry food this year included two boneless chicken breasts, deep friend in Frosted Flakes batter. This was created by **Netterfield Concessions**.

Another new non-strawberry food was funnel bacon on a stick created by **Best Around Concessions**. A strip of bacon is deep-fried in funnel cake batter and drizzled with caramel.

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## SPOTLIGHT – FOOD &amp; CONCESSIONS

Catering and event space boosts park's fortunes

## Bay Area embraces new pavilion at California's Great America

AT: Dean Lamanna  
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — Having entertained more than 75 million guests as it launches its 40th season, **California's Great America** has long prided itself with being one of the Bay Area's top destinations for family fun.

Last summer, the park bumped its regional appeal and marketability up to a whole new level — opening a classy catering and event facility called Great America Pavilion between its amusement property and the brand-new Levi's Stadium, home of the **San Francisco 49ers** football team.

At 18,000 square feet, the venue is situated on two acres capable of accommodating an array of related indoor and outdoor activities. It is dividable into three separate spaces and offers catering from steak and lobster to traditional fare — all prepared on-site under the supervision of Great America's executive chef. The pavilion is wired for all the latest technology, including 54 high-definition video monitors, and is appointed with hardwood floors and polished fixtures throughout; the VIP Room even features an inviting floor-to-ceiling gas fireplace.

The facility quickly became the "in place" last fall and winter as it hosted the 49ers' Red Zone Rally. This series of pre-game events, complete with Gold Rush cheerleaders and alumni, were held three hours prior to kickoff during the team's home contests.

"For 49ers fans and attendees of other Levi's Stadium events, Great America Pavilion is the perfect venue to enjoy the game day atmosphere, dine on delicious food offerings and easily access the stadium," said Raul Rehnberg, vice president and general manager of California's Great America. "It's an ideal setting for first-class corporate and community events throughout the year, and we're very excited to be partnering with the 49ers on its Red Zone Rally events."



### Building for success

The idea for Great America Pavilion was conceived as work got underway on the adjacent NFL stadium in 2012. With plans for a refurbishment of the park's existing, late 1990s-built catering area — essentially an open-air steel frame with a plywood roof and curtains — in the works, the stadium's arrival became a game changer for Great America.

"A combination of things led us to recognize early on that there would be some synergies and some potential new lines of business," Rehnberg said. "Our event and group sales business had been growing for several years, so we knew we had outgrown the existing facility. And it wasn't hospitable to some of the higher-end events that we seemed to be attracting. We're underneath the San Jose Airport flight corridor, so there were some sound issues, as well."

"The new design we developed addressed all of this. We weren't just looking at it from a catering / amusement park standpoint, but really as a unique space — a very flexible-use pavilion. The business of the stadium and our relationship with the 49ers has really helped to energize what we knew was already

going to be a top-notch facility. And it has exceeded our expectations in every way."

The Red Zone Rally, which Rehnberg described as the "tailgate party" for all 49ers home games, afforded the chance to showcase the park's relationship with the team while demonstrating how the Great America Pavilion could execute events and food service on a higher level.

"Our partnership with the 49ers has really allowed us to seize upon opportunities arising from events occurring at the stadium in addition to the football games," Rehnberg said. "We've had a lot of influential people and business people from the Silicon Valley that, at one point or another, made their way to the Red Zone Rally — and it has really helped bring additional business."

Great America also has been proactive in promoting the new facility — most recently producing a two-and-a-half-minute video utilizing drone technology to show off from every interior and exterior angle. At its early Red Zone Rally events, sales reps served as hosts in order to address any questions from guests. Others who have inquired have been invited to the park for a tour of the pavilion and to discuss the

The new Great America Pavilion (left) has brought a higher-end catering facility to its host park. The venue's savory culinary offerings tantalize guests of events ranging from official NFL football parties and company picnics to anniversary celebrations. COURTESY CALIFORNIA'S GREAT AMERICA

various ways an event experience can be customized.

"That's the great thing about this venue: It is unique, and it can take advantage of some of the other assets we have at the park," Rehnberg noted. "We can do events where we take advantage of the adjacent Redwood Amphitheatre, which has 8,500 seats, and our inverted coaster, Flight Deck, which is right next to the pavilion. We can combine these assets into different kinds of event packages and really leverage this as a year-round facility independent of the park, which operates seasonally."

### Feeding word of mouth

Creating an appealing, multi-use structure and setting was only half the battle for the park. In order to host everything from VIP events and anniversary parties to company picnics and corporate product launches, the Great America Pavilion also had to deliver quality in food service. This meant calling on the culinary resources of the park's parent company, **Cedar Fair Entertainment**, and revamping Great America's in-house culinary crew.

"We're blessed at Cedar Fair to have multiple talented culinary teams from various parks," Rehnberg said. "For the first couple of pavilion events, we actually pulled the executive chefs from some of our sister parks, in-

cluding **Knott's Berry Farm** and **Worlds of Fun**. So it was really a collaborative effort to get things up and running."

Executive Chef Wilf Seymour was recruited from Great America's sister park in Toronto, **Canada's Wonderland**. Seymour came in right at the start of the football season and helped the pavilion launch with the highest-caliber dishes and desserts possible.

Rehnberg couldn't be happier with the results.

"We were notified by the 49ers a while back that the Red Zone Rally was given the distinction of being designated as best out-of-stadium fan experience for 2014. And we know that the culinary offering is a major component of that. When patrons entering the venue saw not only the elegance of the facility, but the carving stations and superior food presentation, it just blew them away."

That, in turn, has translated into returning and new customers.

"We've had a lot of repeat business from tech companies that have always been here," Rehnberg said. "The pavilion also has allowed us to attract new business in conjunction with the stadium. For instance, we hosted the VIP pre-game party for the Pac 12 Championship in December — a major event. The same month, we hosted the San Francisco Foster Farms Bowl VIP tailgate party. In February, we welcomed the NHL Outdoor Stadium Series VIP hospitality party. These particular events weren't open to the public."

Scoring highly with the pavilion's guests has been the facility itself. In building upon the footprint of the original structure, as well as

► See PAVILION, page 9



## SPOTLIGHT - FOOD & CONCESSIONS

### ► PAVILION

**Continued from page 8**

enclosing and expanding it, Rehnborg and his planners — led by Rob Decker, Cedar Fair's Sandusky, Ohio-based corporate vice president, planning and design — wanted to avoid creating a space with a purely functional or institutional character.

"We knew we wanted it to be elegant; we didn't want you to feel that you were in a traditional park catering facility. Rob came up with a great building design that is very complimentary visually to having Levi's Stadium as a backdrop, but it also complements the park. We're very proud of it."

Along with the flexibility designed into the venue and

its setting has come increased capacity. Great America Pavilion can hold up to 1,300 guests — a number that, Rehnborg happily repeats, increases into the thousands if the outdoor areas and the Redwood Amphitheatre also are utilized.

"The extent of the experience we can provide is really only limited to what the clients want to limit themselves

to," he said. "For some of our events, we've had everything from inflatables and games to outdoor bars, smokers and outdoor monitors."

An important side benefit of the facility's year-round operation, Rehnborg pointed out, is that it keeps a number of employees — as many as 80 — working at least part-time. "The majority of those people are focused on the

culinary side," he said. "It's kind of like its own mini-division of the theme park."

And fittingly, Great America Pavilion has arrived in time to help the park celebrate its 40th season, which also has seen the expansion of the Planet Snoopy children's area and will — by this summer — extend the park's weekday operating schedule by two hours to 10

p.m.

"It's all part of the re-awakening of Great America — our taking of the brand to new levels and taking advantage of the opportunities in our market," Rehnborg said. "It's great to be able to look at all the history and the evolution of this park. We are excited by what the next 40 years may bring."

• [www.cagreatamerica.com](http://www.cagreatamerica.com)

### Great America expands Planet Snoopy's universe

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — The Peanuts Gang and their fans are enjoying roomier digs at California's Great America, which unveiled a newly expanded Planet Snoopy section when the park commenced its 40th season March 28-29.

Formerly known as Kidville, the area has been enlarged with three new rides and fully rebranded as Planet Snoopy.

"Great America is known for its thrill rides, but... enhancing Planet Snoopy and introducing three attractions parents can ride with their children adds to our inclusive family atmosphere," said Raul Rehnborg, vice president and general manager of the park. "I'm a longtime fan of the Peanuts characters; they transcend generations. It's exciting to see parents and grandparents introducing these characters to the littlest ones. It's something the whole family can share."

The new rides are Joe Cool's Gr8Sk8, Peanuts 500 and Snoopy's Space Buggies. Gr8Sk8 is an interactive ride atop Snoopy's giant skateboard with the feeling of going off the edge. Peanuts 500 lets racers slingshot around the racetrack's ends, while Snoopy's Space Buggies carries riders into the air for a gravity-defying lunar landing.

—Dean Lamanna



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## SPOTLIGHT – FOOD & CONCESSIONS

### DelGrosso's pasta sauce started it all

AT: Pam Sherborne  
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

TIPTON, Pa. — **DelGrosso's Amusement Park** was created in 1946 as a vessel, as it were, to serve up a family pasta recipe brought from Italy to this country in 1914 by Marianna Pulcino.

From that early park kitchen, Fred DelGrosso and Mafalda "Murf" DelGrosso (Marianna Pulcino's daughter) worked 10-hour days to make one "batch" of five cases, using four 10-gallon pots and a hand sealer, which took 24 revolutions to seal one can.



DelGrosso's Amusement Park boosts an annual attendance of about 300,000 annually. Many of those guests have taken part in sampling some of the famous sauces.

And, today, LaFamiglia DelGrosso, a specialty sauce line started in 2006 under **DelGrosso Foods**, one of the companies under the **DelGrosso Family of Companies**, is available in 48 states in retail grocers.

DelGrosso Foods has had a regional sauce line, offered in limited regional areas. And, of course, the pasta sauce has continued to be served in the park in a variety of ways including pizza, of course.

"Food is very important to us," said Amy Mearkle, director of marketing, DelGrosso's Amusement Park. "We are serving homemade food in an amusement park."

DelGrosso's offers free parking and free admission making it very easy for guests who just want to walk around the park and, perhaps, purchase a meal or merchandise.

"We are known for our Spaghetti Wednesdays," Mearkle said. "Every Wednesday during the park's operating season



DelGrosso's Amusement Park, Tipton, Pa., is famous for many reasons — one of the biggest is the food. In fact, the park was founded as a venue to serve up its pasta sauce, a family specialty brought from Italy in 1918. Spaghetti Wednesday, held throughout the regular operating season, offers a specialty pasta each Wednesday. Murf's potato salad is another fan favorite. The park serves hundreds of thousands of pounds of the popular potato salad every season.

COURTESY DELGROSSO'S AMUSEMENT PARK



the head chef creates a special pasta dish to serve that day."

There is a lunch session served from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and a dinner session from 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

"When you are owned by six Italians who pride themselves on delicious food, they make sure only the highest quality food is served to park guests," Mearkle said. "We are famous for our Murf's Famous Potato Salad. This was started as a side dish to picnics by our founder Mafalda (Murf) DelGrosso."

Mearkle said on opening weekend alone, the park will sell around 1,000 pounds of the potato salad.

"During the 4th of July, we will double that and sell close to 2,000 pounds," she said. "The potatoes are still cut by hand and it is made fresh right here at the park."

DelGrosso's Amusement Park hosts between 800-900 picnics each year and potato salad is a staple

at almost every picnic.

The park offers concession stands with a variety of foods including the pasta dishes. Last year the park opened a brand new stand called Corner Bistro serving such fare as chicken wraps.

Other concession stands include: Murf's Kitchen, with a menu that includes hamburgers, hot dogs, and sandwiches; Midway Concessions, offerings includes funnel cakes and cotton candy; Tipton Creek Deli, char-broiled hamburgers, chicken tenders, chicken sandwiches, and salads; Sauce Boss Pizzeria, pizza; Tipton Creek Dairy, Galliker's hand-dipped ice cream; Waterworks Concessions, sandwiches, pizza, salads, and a Dippin' Dots location.

There also are new LaFamiglia DelGrosso products available for 2015. Those include Aunt Linda's Classic Alfredo Sauce, the first white sauce in the line; Joe Joe's Sloppy Joe Sauce, and Grandma Murf's Italian Style Meat.



**SPOTLIGHT – FOOD & CONCESSIONS****Food and drink concessions industry shows signs of strength in 2015**

**AT:** Pam Sherborne  
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

The food and drink concessions industry continues to show strength and growth as proven by those industry members finding themselves very occupied as the 2015 season gets underway.

For example, **Hitch-Hiker Manufacturing Co.** has found itself hard at work until August of this year.

"We have been very busy," said the company's Holly Swartz.

At the 2015 International Independent Showmen's Association (IISA) Extravaganza and Trade Show, Gibsonton, Fla., two months ago, the company exhibited its newest trailers. One was a cheese curds trailer for Jeremy Solem, a concession-

aire out of Minnesota. The 24-footer is offering a variety of flavored cheese curds.

Even though Hitch-Hiker's trailers are customized, the company's Holly Swartz said there are still consistencies almost every customer wants. The strongest one right now is the utilization of LED lights.

"I would say that in the last two years, all of our trailers have LED lighting," she said.

She also is seeing more and more customers using cash registers over cash drawers, giving them sales updates in real time.

**Midway Stainless Fabricators** has found a new revenue avenue over the last couple of years that is quickly becoming a successful niche.

That avenue is creating a kiosk, but not "technically." Company founder Mike Curci said he has created the look of a kiosk by utilizing three of his Roll Out Carts, snapping them together, and then putting a cover them.

The carts suddenly look like a kiosk. And, it functions as a kiosk. But, by keeping the wheels on the carts, it is technically not a kiosk. And, the good part of that is there are no building permits that will slow things down and the carts are less costly.

"**Six Flags** purchased kiosks last year for its Coca Cola products, but then asked for some of these Roll Out Carts," Curci said. "These Roll Out Carts are getting a lot of attention."

Curci said he is putting the word out to potential buyers that if they will purchase one this year at his cost, he will build it and take



**Mike Curci, founder, Midway Stainless Fabricators, and Cindi Wright, who works with Curci, stayed busy during the 2015 International Independent Showmen's Association held this past February in Gibsonton, Fla. In fact, Curci has stayed busy no matter where he is, especially with his new kiosks found in places such as Six Flags Over Texas, Arlington.**

AT/SUE NICHOLS

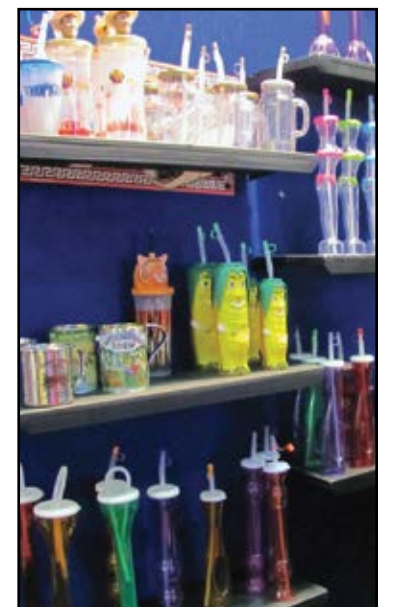


**This Cheese Curds trailer manufactured by Hitch-Hiker Manufacturing was seen at the 2015 International Independent Showmen's Association Extravaganza and Trade Show held at the first of February in Gibsonton, Fla. The 24-foot trailer was made for Jeremy Solem, out of Minnesota.**

AT/SUE NICHOLS

Last fall **Ashland Technologies** unveiled its new tiki hut kiosk made for **Honolulu Hot Dog**, an Hawaiian take on the American classic. The company took the new stand to the 2014 IAAPA show and kept a line of attendees wanting to taste the dogs that came with an array of sauce choices. There was a mustard sauce, a guava sauce, mango, lava, lemon, coconut, and pineapple.

A long time supplier to the amusement industry, **Montgomery Inn**, Cincinnati, Ohio, continues to supply barbecue and chicken food products to parks. Also, the company is now offering its world-famous barbecue sauce to enhance the food taste even more.



**Berk Enterprises keeps busy creating new drinkware items, among other products, to keep items fresh and new. Here are some of the items the company displayed in its booth last November at the 2014 International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions trade show in Orlando, Fla.**

AT/PAM SHERBORNE

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## SPOTLIGHT – FOOD &amp; CONCESSIONS

## New Memphis restaurant now offers carnival food — year round

*Memphis restaurant offers funnel cakes, candy apples, and more every day*

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — For some folks, the best part of going to a carnival is the food. Guests know the popular items: funnel cakes, candy apples, turkey legs, corn dogs, cotton candy, Polish sausage and the like.

The tasty delights of carnival food is unique to the midway. But now that food can be found off the midway.

Lynette Hill is using that principle to run a new type of restaurant in her hometown of Memphis. It's called Carnival Food Year Round and offers these tasty treats every day.

"Before we set up shop, you could only get this type of food maybe two

weeks out of the year, when there's a country fair or the carnival was in town, or when you visited an amusement park," notes Hill. "We've found that these food items are popular all the time and built up a nice business around it."

"There's nowhere else in the USA you can walk into a place and purchase carnival food year round. We started out in our concession trailer at flea markets, school events, and local festivals, and now we've got a thriving, family-oriented restaurant that is unique."

Carnival Food Year Round also offers traditional fare, like burgers, salads, chicken dishes and sandwiches. The core of the business, however, is the carnival food. Because it's such a unique culinary item, carnival food has been sold by Hill for fundraisers



**Carnival Food Year Round offers popular carnival food items such as Funnel Cake & Strawberries Cream, shown here.** COURTESY CARNIVAL FOOD YEAR ROUND

around the country. Hill is now looking to expand the business. She wants to offer entertainment with the food, constructing

a facility that has rides, a skating rink and popular carnival games. Basically, it will be an indoor carnival that runs year round: the Carnival Food Recreation Center.

Hill is hoping to raise about \$500,000 to accomplish her goal. To generate this capital, she has launched two crowdfunding campaigns.

Hill is hoping that food lovers around the country will help fund her expansion project, making Memphis the center of the carnival food universe.

"No one else is doing this," says Hill. "We are the only business that has combined the most popular profitable fair items into one menu, all year round."

•carnivalfoods.net

## Frozen food vendors exhibit at NJAA show



Since 1894, Hershey's Ice Cream has been providing ice cream and other novelty items using only fresh, wholesome ingredients (most of which are Kosher). Today, the company services 26,000 locations in 30 states (ice parlors parlors, convenience stores, educational institutions, amusement parks and other places). Shown here, l to r, are: Bill Allison, Branch Manager, Hammonton, N.J. branch; Bill Allison, Jr.; John Spross and Jon Gall.



The Hershey's Ice Cream Company also offers their Shake Shop Express. This recent addition makes shakes very quickly, occupying a very small footprint. Hershey Ice Cream (no relation to Hershey Foods or Hershey Entertainment) is headquartered in Harrisburg, Pa. with a large distribution center in Middletown, Pa. Their mantra, "Real Ingredients. Real Ice Cream. Real Smiles."

AT/B. DEREK SHAW



Resnick Distributors is a products distribution company carrying snacks, grocery, frozen food and food service. Based in New Brunswick, N.Y., the company services a broad spectrum of markets including the amusement industry. Founded in 1945, the company has been owned and operated by the Resnick family since 1966. Shown l to r are: Howard Diamond, Jon Resnick (third generation) and Anthony Raimo.



Based in Norwich, Conn., Mini Melts, U.S.A., founded in 1995, sells beaded (cryogenic) ice cream that is made at 40 degrees below zero. The gourmet treat is now available in 20 countries. The kosher product, is self-contained with a spoon inside each serving. The product can be found throughout facilities in the amusement industry.



The Scara brothers, Joe, Jim and Doug, began making Gourmet Italian Ices during the early 1990's for friends and family. The response to their product was overwhelming and in 1995 they opened a retail store in Keyport, N.J. On hand at the NJAA show for the company was National Account Manager, Adam Lerman.



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# INTERNATIONAL

► Slagharen opening new water park — Page 15 / Holovis brings Foxtron Locks back to life — Page 16

## Bobbejaanland to open new €5 million Forbidden Caves ride

*Holovis, Super 78 creating dark ride*

AT: Andrew Mellor  
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LICHTAART, Belgium — A new immersive tunnel style attraction is set to be the major new attraction at Belgium's Bobbejaanland for 2015.

With a scheduled opening date of May 1, The Forbidden Caves takes visitors on an exciting trip to the rain-forests of Khyonesia in South East Asia. The story visitors are immersed in is that the forests were once inhabited by tribes, but the entire population disappeared mysteriously. According to ancient legend, this population used magic crystals, found in deep concealed caves, to worship their gods, but now there is not a single trace left of the civilization that once thrived there and the crystals have also never been seen again.

**Bobbejaanland** family park

Visitors to The Forbidden Caves on a cave expedition arrive unexpectedly in mysterious hidden caves, where they stumble across the crystals that have appealed to the imagination for centuries. But danger lurks in every corner and the exotic beings that live there are unhappy at having their peaceful lives disturbed.

The immersive tunnel attraction is unique in the Benelux and uses the most up-to-date video and animation techniques to immerse visitors in the storyline and to stimulate their senses.

Park manager Roland Kleve commented: "The Forbidden Caves is a new kind of attraction in the Bobbejaanland portfolio, and I am very proud that we are able to offer our visitors this ride. It is not just the adrenaline rush but also the exploration, the interaction and the surprise effects that are the main factors in this attraction."

"Just like every season, we want to offer our visitors the perfect mix of entertainment and attractions," Kleve added. "With The Forbidden Caves we are treating our fans to a new ride this year. We have been working hard on the story and the theming is unprecedented for Bobbejaanland. It is a showpiece that takes our range of attractions to an even higher level!"

Representing an investment of €5 million (U.S. \$5.6 million), the attraction was designed and built by U.K.-based Holovis, with audio visual assistance from U.S.-based Super 78. The ride features a dual, 30-seat motion platform (minimum height one meter (38 inches) and the adventure lasts a total of 10 minutes.

With the introduction of The Forbidden Caves, Bobbejaanland has also inaugurated a second themed area in addition to Cowboy Town, namely Adventure Valley. Here, in addition to The Forbidden Caves and the King Kong, Banana Battle and Revolution attractions, visitors will also find a new catering point, Coffee Cave, and Jasper's Supply Depot, a new souvenir shop.



Belgium's Bobbejaanland will open a new immersive tunnel ride/attraction (above) in 2015 called The Forbidden Caves. It is being supplied by Holovis and Super 78. Once inside, (below) visitors will experience a make-believe trip to the rain-forests of Khyonesia in South East Asia where adventure and danger awaits. COURTESY BOBBEJAANLAND



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# Slagharen to open new indoor/outdoor Aqua Mexicana water park

**AT:** Andrew Mellor  
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SLAGHAREN, the Netherlands — Slagharen Theme Park and Resort in the Netherlands is expected to open in May, a major new water park, featuring both indoor and outdoor areas.

Themed to Mexico, Aqua Mexicana will cover a total area of 5,200 square meters (55,972 square feet) and will feature 10 slides providing a total sliding length of 546 meters (1,791 feet). Three of these will be major slide attractions and will feature a variety of interactive special effects, sound and 3D animations. The water park will also incorporate a jacuzzi for up to 70 people, something that does not currently exist at water park or aquatic facilities in the Netherlands.

Aqua Mexicana will have a covered area of 3,173 square meters (34,153 square feet) and an indoor space of 2,083 square meters (22,421 square feet) and upon completion will be among the largest water parks in the country. Along with the various water slides, the complex will house a waterfall with a whirlpool, a water play area, indoor and outdoor spray



**Slagharen Theme Park & Resort's General Manager Wouter Dekkers and head of technical services Ben Nigkamp share a toast to the new water park after construction work reached the highest point of the new facility.**  
COURTESY SLAGHAREN THEME PARK & RESORT

parks, paddling pools, various pool areas, a restaurant and a retail outlet. The slides and play areas have all been supplied by Dutch company Van Egdom.

Among the main rides, the MexiCone slide will contain two cones of 5 by 6 meters with unique 3D animations and sound, while another of the slides will have a unique transparent section at a significant height and a diameter of 1.4 meters (4.5 feet).

The introduction of Aqua Mexicana has resulted in

the redirection of the park's monorail and the creation of a new monorail station located at the Main Street area. It has also meant the removal of the Flying Cloud attraction, also known as the Dream Boat, which may or may not return, according to the park.

"The introduction of Aqua Mexicana is proof that Amusement and Holiday Park Slagharen innovates in order to differentiate itself within the market," said General Manager Wouter Dekkers, who recently



**Slagharen's new Aqua Mexicana will have both indoor and outdoor areas. The slides, similar to those shown here, and related play areas have all been supplied by Dutch company Van Egdom.**  
COURTESY SLAGHAREN THEME PARK & RESORT

moved to his current position from Movie Park in Germany. "Previous investments were sometimes seen as replacement investments, but the water park actually contributes to a strong competitive position in the Netherlands and the German border."

Aqua Mexicana will be open daily from 10 a.m. to

9 p.m. and for those guests staying at the resort, admission is included, with the exception of those staying in the camping area or in a Wigwam. For park visitors purchasing a theme park entry ticket, entry to the water park will be an additional €7.00 (U.S. \$7.80).

## Yas Waterworld marks successful second year, plans more for 2015

**AT:** Andrew Mellor  
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ABU DHABI, U.A.E. — Yas Waterworld marked two highly successful years of operation in January while at the same time also celebrating three million riders from the region and around the world on four of its 45 attractions.

The water park, which opened in January 2013, has reported a blockbuster second year with visitor numbers continuing to rise. Having registered over three million riders on tracked rides including Dawwama, Liwa Loop, Bandit Bomber and Slithers Slides last year, 2014 also saw the park win a range of industry awards, host a number of VIPs from around the world and host the globally renowned World Flowboarding Championships, with Team UAE securing the international world title.



**Yas Waterworld in Abu Dhabi celebrated two very successful first years of operation in January. The park will offer guests a range of special events and offers during 2015.**  
COURTESY YAS WATERWORLD

Yas Waterworld's second anniversary marked the beginning of another year which is set to offer a variety of special events, offers and announcements, with more

themed entertainment set to be revealed later in the year. New promotions also kick-started the park's third year of operations, with a new family annual pass available

for a limited time for families of four.

"Throughout its second year of operations, the park has continued to exceed all of our expectations. We have witnessed incredible visitor numbers, as well as an increasingly positive response from local, regional and international visitors," said general manager Tim Mow.

"Still just two years old, the water park has already strongly grounded itself as a leading family-fun destination in the UAE, with a world-first offering and first class level of service. We would like to say a huge thank you to all of our guests who have visited the park in the past two years to experience our world-first rides and attractions and we look forward to welcoming familiar and new faces throughout year three as we announce some very exciting news very soon," he added.

Further cementing the water park's reputation as the leading family destination in the U.A.E., Yas Waterworld offered families a packed calendar of hugely successful celebrations, activities and offers from September to December 2014 as part of its 100 Family Days campaign. With events including the Festival of Flavors, Festival of Lights and the World Flowboarding Championships, the campaign is set to return later this year following a very positive response from guests.

Additionally, building on the array of awards secured in its first year, the park received six regional and international awards for its world-first offering and marketing initiatives during 2014, including the world's largest travel site, TripAdvisor, presenting it with two of its acclaimed accolades, the Certificate of Excellence and the Travellers' Choice Award.



## Holovis brings Foxton Locks back to life at Foxton Canal Museum

LEICESTERSHIRE, U.K. — Visitors to Foxton Locks, Leicestershire, will once again be able to see the boats using the old Inclined Plane, albeit virtually, through the development of an Augmented Reality (AR) app.

This innovative idea is part of a wider redevelopment of Foxton Locks and is designed to not only bring the Inclined Plane back to life, but also to engage, educate and inspire visitors of all ages with a new museum experience integrated with the existing Foxton Locks Trail. When it goes live at Easter 2015, the project will create a new visitor experience at Foxton Canal Museum as well as boosting ticket revenues and visitor spend.

Virtual reality specialist Holovis will be developing and delivering the AR app as well as a new curved screen theatre which will immerse visitors into history of the locks and an interactive experience for children and families, challenging them to simulate the stoking of

the boiler to drive the massive boat lift.

The project began on the Holovis Innovation Campus in nearby Lutterworth, where a 3D model of the Inclined Plane is being created in augmented reality. Using a fiducial marker system at Foxton Locks, visitors will be able to use their smart phones and tablets to view the Inclined Plane working, all in the exact position barges would have made their actual journeys and all in real time.

The interpretation project is supported by the Arts Council Renaissance Strategic Support Fund. The successful bid to secure this funding was led by Leicester Shire Promotions with support from The Canal and River Trust, Foxton Inclined Plane Trust, Leicestershire County Council and Harborough District Council.

Stuart Hetherington, CEO of Holovis explained: "We are delighted to be deploying our knowledge and expertise to preserve this fantastic piece of



The Foxton Locks will come to life thanks to virtual reality specialist Holovis through a new app and visitors experience at the Foxton Canal Museum. COURTESY HOLOVIS

local history by bringing it back to life using the latest technology. Usually, we use virtual and augmented reality to help our commercial clients create sophisticated 3D design environments within the automotive, manufacturing, defense, and theme park industries. Saving

them time, costs and labor, so creating the conditions whereby they only need to commit to building physical models or actual prototypes when they are certain about the final design."

Martin Peters, chief executive of Leicester Shire Promotions, the tourism organization

for Leicester and Leicestershire said: "We're privileged to work with Holovis as the key delivery partner for this project. As well as bringing a different perspective to the brief, they have also supported the technology hardware requirements of the project."



Celebrating their newly-formed partnership are Dynamic Concepts Consultancy CEO Mark de Ruiter (left) and DP Associates Managing Director Duncan Phillips. COURTESY DP ASSOCIATES

### DP Associates joins forces with Dynamic Concepts Consultancy

UNITED KINGDOM — DP Associates (DPA) has formed a partnership with Dutch company Dynamic Concepts Consultancy (DCC) to deliver a wide range of theme park and leisure related services to clients seeking support in a variety of areas.

The new partnership also enables DPA and DCC to provide their extensive services and expertise to support emerging 360 Play franchise operators looking to open sites across Europe, including within the U.K. DPA's sister company, DP Leisure (DPL), the operating company behind the 360 Play children's play centers, recently launched the franchise opportunity which will allow potential operators to benefit from the success of the 360 Play brand.

As part of the new partnership arrangement, DCC will open a U.K. office, to be situated within DP House in Milton Keynes, the headquarters building of DPA. Backed by its main office in Eindhoven in the Netherlands, DCC will offer its services to the U.K. leisure market, with research, feasibility studies, guest experience, branding and other expertise all being available.

## Taronga Zoo Centenary theatre project to be helmed by AO&A and Mousetrappe

SYDNEY, Australia — Tonga Zoo will soon mark its 100th year of operation in Sydney Harbor. Zoo officials recently announced the development of a multi-media experience which will stand as a new park icon. The project will be helmed by experts at Acomb, Ostendorf and Associates (AO&A) and Mousetrappe. The two American companies will collaborate on design and creative content, crafting a high-impact experience to anchor the park's ambitious renewal efforts.

The technologically sophisticated show will allow visitors to view animals in the natural world in exciting new ways, highlighting Taronga Zoo's continuing commitment to wildlife conservation and environmental sustainability. Mousetrappe and AO&A share a goal to make this new offering the park's marquee attraction, one that helps tie together the entire zoo experience.

Daren Ulmer, Mousetrappe president and chief of Creative looks forward to the



The Tonga Zoo in Sydney, Australia is readying for its 100th year of operation with the help of two American companies. COURTESY TONGA ZOO

challenges and rewards of this project. "We're thrilled for the opportunity to work on this experience and help build an attraction that supports Taronga's dedication to comprehensive global conservation." Mousetrappe Director David Briggs adds, "This is an opportunity to transport the audience into a whole new world that they can explore in their own way so they can discover their own unique and personal connection with the wild."

Tom Acomb of AO&A points out his own team's long history with animal and conservation themed projects. "We've built a versatile pool of talented experts who understand the importance of storytelling in every aspect of design. Getting the public to understand and care about animals in the wild starts with engaging them in a seamless, accessible story, one they don't just watch, they experience."

"Australia's Taronga Zoo is working with AO&A and Mousetrappe to create a world-leading multi-media environmental experience ahead of the zoo's Centenary in 2016 with the aim to transform the entire zoo visit by making visitors inspired and more knowledgeable about how they can help wildlife," says Paul Maguire, manager of Visitor Experience and Learning. "The use of latest technology and compelling content will enable Taronga to set a new standard in inspiring visitors so they'll take action for wildlife conservation."





# WATER PARKS & RESORTS

► WWA kicks off details for annual World's Largest Swim Lesson — Page 22

## Adventure Island spring break guests enjoying new Colossal Curl

TAMPA, Fla. — On March 4, 2015, just in time for spring break, Adventure Island introduced its newest attraction — Colossal Curl.

Like its namesake at sister park Water Country in Williamsburg, Va., this new attraction was built by ProSlide Technology of Ottawa, Canada.

Colossal Curl stands 70 feet tall and the bright blue, green and yellow structure provides a new tall landmark to an already impressive-looking skyline. Colossal Curl is near the center of the park and replaces Gulf Scream, a pair of water slides that twisted around each other, resembling a strand of DNA. Construction began in October with the demolition of the old slides that had outlived their usefulness.



Hidden from below, the inside of the funnel element can only be seen from the ride tower. When riders swoop up this wall-like wave element, they experience a feeling of weightlessness, before plunging into one final tunnel before the splash pool. COURTESY ADVENTURE ISLAND

The foundation for the ride required more than 65 truckloads of concrete.

Four riders at a time can experience the attraction together, making it perfect for families. What makes Colossal Curl distinctive is that it

is only the second slide in North America to have both a 24-foot funnel featured with a 40-foot wave element on one slide.

Guests ride in cloverleaf tubes, which are conveniently brought to the top of the

attraction via conveyor. Riders encounter enclosed portions of the slide as they navigate the more than 552 feet of twists and turns as well as the occasional water curtain to ensure a good drenching. The two feature elements are

both open, with the funnel visible to guests waiting in line near the top of the tower and the weightlessness-producing wave element viewable by spectators below, enticing them to join in the fun.

## WhiteWater adds new team members

RICHMOND, B.C., Canada — WhiteWater Attractions has expanded its sales force with four new faces joining the team as well as a relocation of one member. This growth will open up communications lines even further, offering expanding services to their clients.

WhiteWater Attractions has seen a surge of activity in all regions since its launch in Fall of 2013 and is excited to welcome **Tania Bayona, Erika Kulbach, Lavendar Zhang** and **Erik Vos** to assist with the development of international markets.

Each new member brings a highly valuable skill set to the table. Erika Kulbach, who will be based in Richmond, B.C., holds a Masters of Architecture and leverages her design expertise to provide integrated solutions for clients. Her understanding of effective entertainment facility configuration combines with a passion to help clients realize their goals and ultimately drive revenue by improving every guest's visit.

Based in Bogota, Colombia, WhiteWater adds Tania Bayona who comes to WhiteWater with extensive experience in international business development and project management. She also has an impressive humanitarian background having provided post-earthquake assistance in Haiti for two years.

Overseas, Erik Vos and Lavendar Zhang are based in Barcelona and Shanghai respectively, strengthening the support offered in WhiteWater's international of-

fices. Erik will focus on business development throughout Europe, Africa and Russia equipped with years of experience in the aquatics industry as well as a Masters in Marketing & Mathematics. Erik will be the first Dutch speaking team member, and is also fluent in French, Spanish and English. In Shanghai, Lavendar will be establishing and enhancing relationships within the Chinese amusement industry. Previous to WhiteWater Attractions, Lavendar had worked at Overseas Chinese Town (OCT) Holding Company supporting OCT Shanghai Happy Valley to become one of the most thriving parks in the region.

**Mike Rigby**, an existing sales team member, is transitioning to expand his efforts to new regions. Mike will be based in Dubai supporting the Middle East, South East Asia and India for both WhiteWater Waterparks and WhiteWater Attractions. He brings with him a Masters in International Business as well as project management and account management experience.

"We've welcomed some exceptionally talented people to our team and are very enthusiastic about the new opportunities for our new team and WhiteWater Attractions over the next year," comments **Doug Smith**, president of WhiteWater Attractions.

WhiteWater Attractions is an evolution of WhiteWater's two dry attractions companies: Hopkins Rides, and Prime Interactives (Formerly Prime Play).

## Core Cashless seeing growth in water park industry

LENEXA, Kansas — An ever-increasing number of water parks are partnering with Core Cashless to provide their guests the ability to enjoy their day at the park without having to keep track of cash or credit cards — nothing to carry, nothing to lose on the way down the water slide.

Core offers a payment solution that allows guests to load an account with the funding method of their choice and then pay conveniently at any point of sale by simply scanning a waterproof wristband. Core also offers online and onsite ticketing, gift card sales, season pass and group sales, coupon management and membership programs.

For those items that do need to be kept secure, Core partners with Smarte Carte to provide lockers that can integrate with Core systems. Locker Link lets guests rent all-day lockers for their belongings and access them easily using the same waterproof wristband used for transactions.

New clients for 2015 include Myrtle Waves Water Park in Myrtle Beach, S.C. Myrtle Waves will be provided with ticketing, cashless payments, online sales and food and beverage point of sale. Core partners Smarte Carte will also be providing the park with their integrated Locker Link solutions.

At Pooler Water Park in Savannah, Georgia, Core will be equipping the park with handheld and stand-alone barcode scanners with integrated turnstiles for access control. In addition, Core will configure custom online sales portals for Pooler that will let guests go online and purchase their admissions before coming to the park. Pooler will also be equipped with Smarte Carte's Locker Link system.

Core Cashless and water parks are a natural fit. Cash and credit cards are almost impossible to carry in a swim suit and no one wants to handle wet money.

—Jeffrey Seifert



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## NEWS SPLASH

COMPILED: Jeffrey L. Seifert, [jseifert@amusementtoday.com](mailto:jseifert@amusementtoday.com)

A naming contest for new waterslides at the **Parrot Island Waterpark** under construction at Ben Geren Park in Fort Smith, Arkansas, generated more than 1,000 responses. The contest was held in an effort to build public interest and enthusiasm for the project. The water park asked the public to offer up suggestions for names of each of the attractions in the water park including the wave pool, lazy river and waterslides. Those who submitted the winning names will receive a full season pass as well as an invitation for the winners and their immediate family to attend a grand opening celebration and a pizza party at the park.

For rides in which numerous contestants submitted the same winning name, the first entry received was named winner, but the other contestants who submitted the winning name will receive a family pack of day passes valid for all immediate family members. A second-chance drawing will be held for all entrants whose names were not chosen. Three family packs of day passes will be awarded in the second-chance drawing.

Winning ride names chosen include Crocodile Creek for the lazy river, Caribbean Splash for the wave pool, and slide names Pineapple Plunge, Pelican Plunge, Tangerine Twist and Blue Macaw.

Parrot Island Waterpark is expected to open on Memorial Day weekend.

**Dollywood's DreamMore Resort** under construction in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, has revealed plans for the resort's outdoor pool area. Covering more than 4,000 square feet, the pool will be designed to fit in with the beautiful natural surroundings. A zero-entry gradual slope allows families to wade into the water just like a natural pond or lake — minus the tadpoles, fish and other aquatic life. The pool, with a maximum depth of five feet, will meander through a lushly-landscaped pool deck with natural alcoves and escapes. Two waterfalls will cascade into the pool with one creating a lazy stream. An interactive family splash pad allows for even more water play and the pool patio and decks will offer spots for sunbathers to soak in the rays of the sun and shaded areas for those who prefer to stay cool. The DreamMore Resort will also feature an indoor pool, but details have yet to be released.

**Sandcastle Waterpark**, Blackpool, England, has been presented with two awards relating to the work environment for employees and the guest experience.

Investors in People, which champions effective people management, presented Sandcastle with the Investors in People Gold Award, placing the water park in the top seven percent of U.K. organizations.

The national Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance scheme (VAQAS) awarded the park the Gold Accolade. VAQAS monitors visitor attractions in the U.K. identifying those that go above and beyond to insure a memorable and enjoyable experience for their guests.

Sandcastle had high scores across eight categories that included cleanliness, efficiency, customer service and engagement, and the attraction itself.

**John Child**, managing director at the Sandcastle, said: "It is a fantastic achievement for Sandcastle Waterpark to be accredited with both the Investors in People Gold Award and the VAQAS Gold Accolade.

"Sandcastle Waterpark is committed to

guest service excellence, and so these awards are a testament to the hard work and dedication of the whole team, and I hope they continue to feel appreciated and supported."

History may be repeating itself at New Jersey's **Action Park** water park. In 1985, Action Park debuted Cannonball Loop, the world's first waterslide to incorporate a true vertical loop. The slide operated for less than a week before it was closed over safety concerns, but over the years it achieved legendary status.

Now, some 30 years later, the reborn Action Park has teamed up with **Sky Turtle Technologies** of Vancouver, B.C. and **Avalanche Waterslides** of Carthage, Mo., to produce a 90-foot tall vertical looping waterslide. Unlike the previous body slide, the new ride will utilize a ride vehicle capsule designed to eliminate the variables in friction that can cause rider to slow down and not complete the loop. Hundreds of test runs have already been conducted, and once completed Action Park will seek state approval. The new slide is expected to debut the summer of 2016.

The citizens of Corsicana, Texas, will have to wait a little while longer for the opening of **Splashicana** water park. Ground breaking for the 23-acre, \$9 million park was held back in July 2013, with a projected opening in 2014. Financing delays pushed the opening to 2015, and now into 2016. Work is now taking place on the site and although full operations are not expected until 2016, the park could open for previews by the end of this year.

A half-finished luxury hotel in Colorado Springs may become a **Great Wolf Resort**. Construction of the 11-story **Renaissance Hotel** stopped in 2009 when billionaire **John Q. Hammonds** ran into financing troubles. Hammonds died two years later, leaving a multi-story eyesore on the city's north side for more than five years. Great Wolf Resorts has submitted a proposal to complete the hotel and add an adjacent indoor water park. Although specific details have yet to be released, Great Wolf indoor water parks range in size from 38,000 to more than 100,000 square feet. The hotel would be renamed **Great Wolf Lodge at InterQuest Marketplace**.

Meanwhile, a second hotel and water park complex has been proposed for the Polaris Pointe retail center, just two miles away from InterQuest. Developers of the **Colorado Grand Resort**, announced more than three years ago, claim they are ready to break ground next month and could have the resort operational by summer 2016. The 165-room resort includes a 60,000 square foot indoor water park with 10 slides. The water park was designed by **Integrity Pool Builders** of Denver and **WhiteWater West** of British Columbia.

Developers of the Colorado Grand Resort feel confident that a second water park resort will help draw visitors to the area, but some city officials have expressed concerns over whether or not two similar properties so close to each other can both remain viable.

**Gary Erickson**, developer of the Polaris Pointe retail center noted that indoor water park resorts are often found in clusters, citing the Wisconsin Dells area, with more than a dozen such properties, as one example. Sandusky, Ohio, and the Pocono Mountains resort area of Pennsylvania also have both successfully supported multiple resorts in one location.





Kinnaree at Siam Park, Spain

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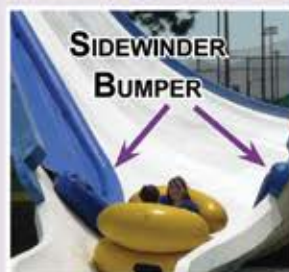
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# 2015 World's Largest Swimming Lesson facility registration continues

*New global 10 a.m. start time announced for all locations*

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. — Host location registration for the 2015 World's Largest Swimming Lesson (WLSL) opened on Feb. 14 and remains in full swing for the annual event scheduled for June

18, 2015.

New this year, all host locations will teach their lessons at 10 a.m. in their local markets as the lesson travels around the globe over the course of 24 hours. In prior years, aquatic facilities hosting WLSL events conducted lessons simultaneously at 3 p.m. GMT.

The 2015 event will mark



Team WLSL's sixth Guinness World Record attempt for the largest swimming lesson ever conducted. The international

team, made up primarily of kids, works together to prevent childhood drowning by participating in a global swim lesson to spread the vital message: Swimming Lessons Save Lives.

Aquatic facilities, pools and water parks interested in becoming an official WLSL host location can register at: <http://www.wsl.org/teach/>.

Team WLSL set its fifth Guinness World Record on June 20, 2014 with 36,564 participants from 22 countries. Since its inception more than 120,000 people have participated in WLSL lessons generating more than 150 million media impressions.

Tragically, drowning remains the leading cause of unintended, injury related death for children ages 1-5, and the second leading cause for children under 14. Research shows participation in formal swimming lessons can reduce the risk of drowning by 88 percent among children aged 1 to 4, yet many children do not receive formal swimming or water safety training.

More than 40 different aquatics and safety organizations and publications support Team WLSL in their mission and encourage their members and constituencies to join the effort by registering as an official WLSL host location or participating in a local lesson.

The World's Largest Swimming Lesson was founded by the World Waterpark Association in 2010 as a platform to help aquatic facilities and the many different regional, national and international water safety organizations work together to communicate the fundamental importance of teaching children to swim.

## FAST FACTS

### 2015 World's Largest Swim Lesson

June 18, 2015

10 a.m. local facility start time (worldwide)

### 2014 Numbers

- 36,564 participants from 22 counties, a Guinness World Record
- 40 supporting aquatic facilities, safety organization and media publications

### History

- To date more than 120,000 people have participated in the WLSL event
- WLSL was founded in 2010 by the World Waterpark Association as a tool aquatic facilities could use to tea the importance of teaching children how to swim

### Information

- [www.wsl.org](http://www.wsl.org)
- [www.wsl.org/teach/](http://www.wsl.org/teach/)



WLSL.org

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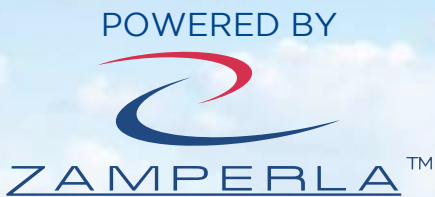
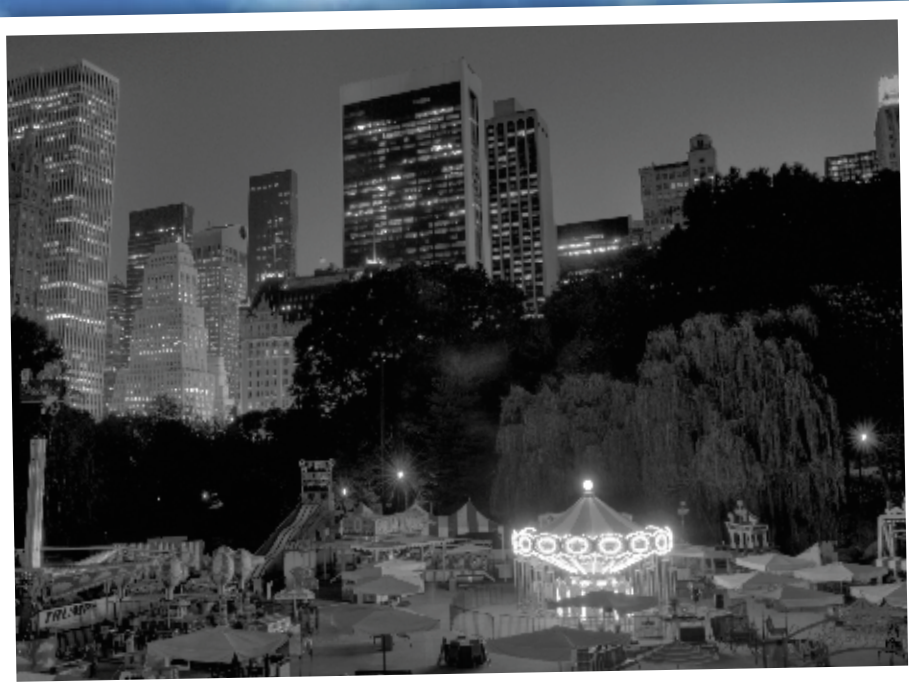


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# PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► DelGrosso's adding new A.R.M. Rock Star for 2015 — Page 26 / Fairs & Attractions News — Pages 32-34

Frontier City, Darien Lake latest to announce

## Larson Giant Loop sales steadily increasing, six on tap in 2015

**AT:** Jeffrey Seifert  
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

PLAINVIEW, Texas — It's not the same carnival ride that has been a popular staple at traveling carnivals since the 1970s. Larson's Giant Loop is a park model that stands taller – 72 feet – and features a number of improvements over the transportable model. It is a solid piece, standalone unit that does not need cable supports, and the trains and harnesses have been redesigned and feature updated over-the-shoulder harnesses offering better site lines and a less restrictive feel. The larger ride has two and one-half times more steel than its smaller counterpart.

"Our other versions are manufactured to go down a highway," said Jeff Novotny, Larson's owner. "But, we did make the larger one to fit inside an ocean freight container for international transport."

Although the Giant Loops seem to be making big news this year, the product has been a steady seller since its introduction in 2009. However, the first permanent loop was actually installed in Taiwan 15 years ago. That was a one-of-a-kind loop custom designed to withstand typhoon-force winds. It wasn't until nine years later that Larson made a permanent loop part of its ride catalog.

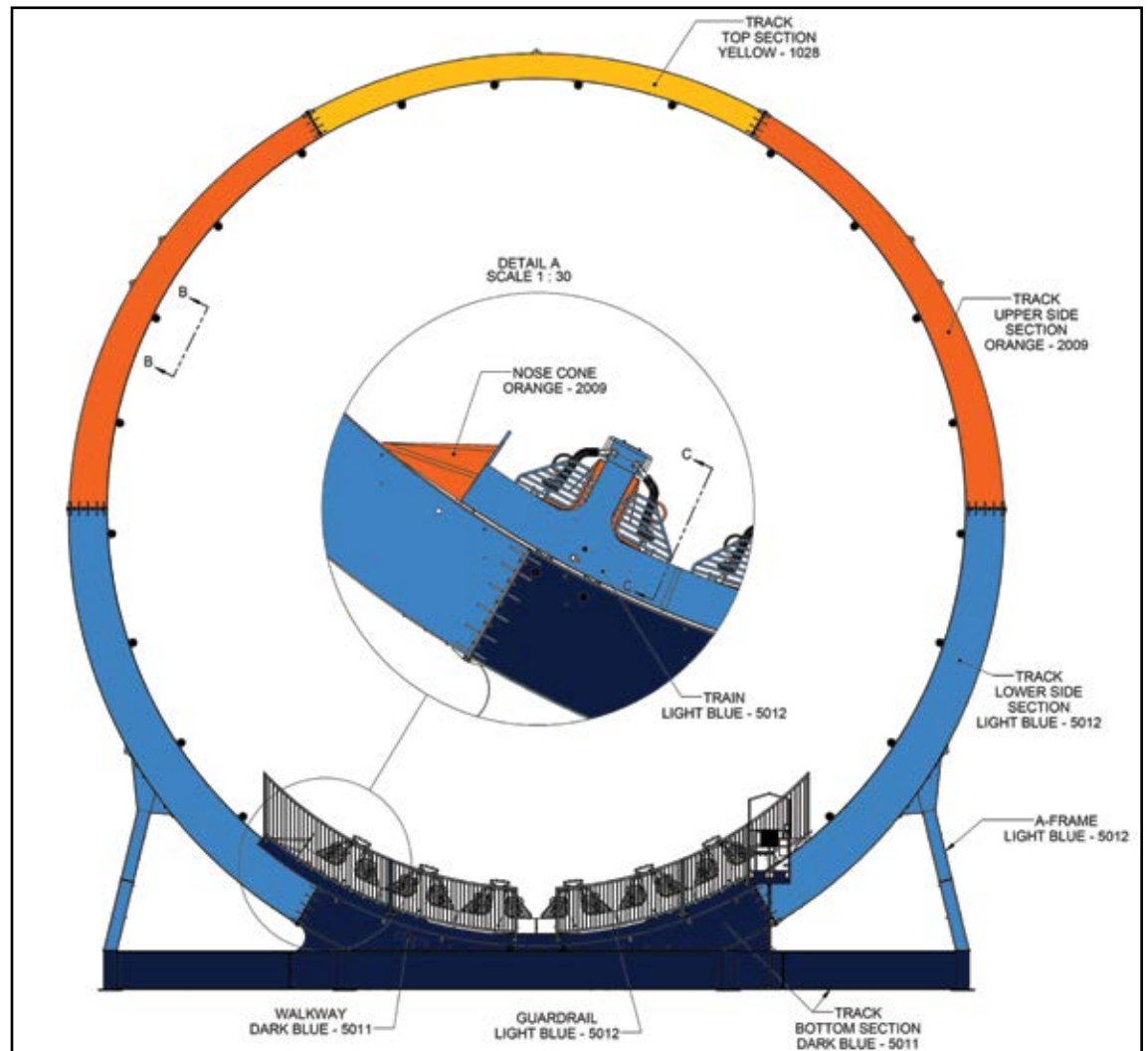
The 2009 loop was installed at Lotte World in South Korea, where it is

known simply as Giant Loop. The following year Cliff's Amusement Park, Albuquerque, New Mexico, received the first loop to be installed in North America. Fire Ball was also the first to feature an optional LED light package. LED lights, now supplied by Denny's Electronics of Nokomis, Florida, have been installed on every Giant Loop sold since then.

Prior to this year, loops had been installed at Elitch Gardens, Kemah Boardwalk, and a smaller, but permanent loop at Galveston Pleasure Pier. Originally targeted to smaller and mid-size parks, the giant loops received a lot of attention this year when Six Flags Theme Parks ordered four. Although two bear a "coaster" moniker, it will be interesting to see if park patrons really think of these thrill rides as coasters. Each will have a unique name, but three will share a similar "fiery" motif, with the fourth going all Gotham to fit in with the themed area of Six Flags Over Georgia.

Additional installations for 2015 include Brain Drain currently under construction at Oklahoma's Frontier City and another Brain Drain for Darien Lake, New York.

Novotny could not comment on future installations, but did indicate that interest remains strong with a number of parks making soft commitments on Giant Loops for 2016 and 2017.



This computer plan (above) shows the paint colors by steel section on the Larson Giant Loop going to Frontier City. The park's new Brain Drain will soon be flipping riders upside down multiple times.

COURTESY FRONTIER CITY

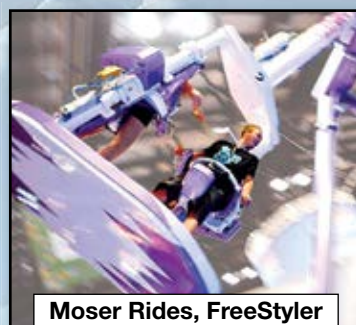


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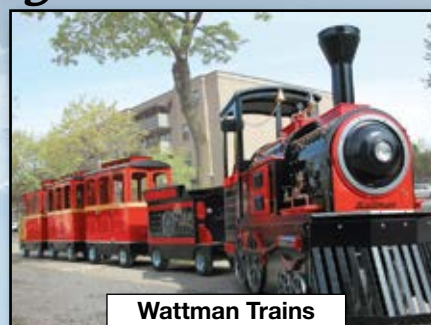
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# DelGrosso's adding new A.R.M. Rock Star ride for 2015



*Expansion of water park on tap for 2016 with new lazy river and wave pool*

**AT:** Pam Sherborne  
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

TIPTON, Pa. — DelGrosso's Amusement Park will open the 2015 season with

**DelGrosso's Amusement Park, Tipton, Pa., will open the 2015 season with a new ride, A.R.M. Rock Star. The ride is a re-themed Ali Baba and, according to A.R.M. officials, it has been extremely popular.**

COURTESY DELGROSSO'S

a new thrill ride, as long as mother nature allows it.

The new ride area has been deluged with snow and ice and at the first of March when AT reached Amy Mearkle, director of marketing, she said they were bracing for yet another six inches of the white stuff, after already suffering from an ice storm the night before.

"You never want to wish time away, but I am really ready for opening season," said Mearkle.

So, barring too many more destructive winter-named storms in the area, construction and installation of the new A.R.M. Rock Star should go without a hitch and the ride will open on the first day of this season, May 9.

The Rock Star is a redesign of A.R.M.'s Ali Baba. Mearkle said their guests had been asking for more thrill rides. They are obliging.

A.R.M.'s Mike Gill said: "We are very excited about the Rock Star going into Del Grosso's."

"The Ali Baba has been a very successful ride for many customers and since its re-invention as Rock Star, it has become more popular than ever," Gill said. "Several have been sold to the portable market, although this is the first Rock Star being installed in a park."

"The ride is going to look fantastic nestled into the beautiful landscape at DelGrosso's," he said.

The Rock Star has not only been modernized cosmetically, but offers many modernized technical control features and custom LED lighting throughout. The ride still offers a 22-rider capacity at 440 riders per hour and is a family fun ride.

The park already has the site in pretty good shape. Mearkle said three seasons ago, DelGrosso's park officials had removed their Space Odyssey ride, a small domed coaster.

"For two seasons, we had a blank space," she said.

Then, last year, they began negotiations for the Rock Star. Because it couldn't be ready for the 2014 season, Mearkle said the park rented an Music Express from A.R.M. for last season to fill the blank space.

"It is actually an A.R.M. Quasar originally built in the

early '80s," said Gill, "and recently completely refurbished and re-themed as Music Express."

DelGrosso's Amusement Park boasts over 30 rides and attractions, including water attractions, a kiddie area, 15 games, gift shops and food concessions.

For the 2014 season, park officials built a brand new gift shop and added a new food location called Corner Bistro serving such fare as chicken wraps.

The Corner Bistro was added to the already popular food concessions, especially those that serve the DelGrosso's brand pasta sauce. Mearkle said Spaghetti Wednesdays at the park have become very well known.

Because the park offers free parking and free admission (guests do pay admission for entrance into the water area), there are many guests who come just for the food and Spaghetti Wednesdays.

"Every Wednesday our chef prepares a special sauce," Mearkle said. "We serve a lunch session from, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and then a dinner session from 4:30-7 p.m."

## New for 2016

Already planned for 2016 are additions to the park's existing water attractions area called Tipton Waterworks & Rapids.

Existing water attractions include: the Tipton Rapids, with two slide towers, Red and Green. The Red Tower has three slides and the Green Tower has one racing slide. The slides were manufactured by New Braunfels General Store (NBGS).

There is also a water play area, manufactured by SCS Interactive.

The new additions are a Lazy River and a Wave Pool.

Designer of the new water park expansion project is Weston and Sampson's Aquatic Division, Aquatics Group, Boston, Mass.

Builder for the Wave Pool and Lazy River is Rick Last, USA, Inc.

The water features for the Lazy River are being manufactured by Wizard Works, Albany, N.Y.

The park operates weekends during May. Memorial Day marks the official fulltime operation and then the park is open seven days a week.

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## Legoland California further taps 'The Force'

CARLSBAD, Calif. — Augmenting an already expansive and jaw-dropping display of toy brick handiwork, Legoland California Resort unveiled a large Lego replica of the *Stars Wars* movie Death Star on March 5.

The planet-shaped model, constructed with more than a half million Lego bricks, stands 13 feet high and eight feet wide and weighs in at over 1,900 pounds. It is the largest model to be added to the park's Lego Star Wars Miniland, which debuted in 2011.

Under the watchful eye of R2-D2, a team of builders used a forklift to raise the massive model into position high above the existing Star Wars exhibit. The Lego Death Star is designed after the version seen in *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope*.

The new model display also features the famous trench run scene in which

Luke Skywalker maneuvers his X-Wing fighter through the combat zone to destroy the Death Star. Below the Lego Death Star, guests are invited to use their imaginations to create their own Lego starships at building stations — all while Lego X-Wings, Tie Fighters and Y-Wings circle overhead.

The Death Star model's dramatic arrival kicked off a lively Lego Star Wars Days event at the park on March 7 and 8.

—Dean Lamanna

The *Star Wars* movie Death Star, replicated with 500,000-plus Lego bricks, was installed at Legoland California Resort in February and publicly unveiled March 5. COURTESY LEGOLAND CALIFORNIA RESORT



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## FASTTRACK

COMPILED: Scott Rutherford  
srutherford@amusementtoday.com

**Disney VoluntEARS** have joined representatives from American Heart Association (AHA) and Walt Disney Elementary School teachers, students and parents to build the first AHA Teaching Garden in Anaheim, Calif., funded by the **Disneyland Resort**. Since the build and initial planting last November, the garden has continued to serve as a learning laboratory where students nurture growing plants, harvest produce and, in the process, learn the value of healthy eating.

The newest interactive experience at **Moody Gardens**, Galveston, Texas, will take guests on an undersea voyage with the debut of the **SpongeBob SubPants Adventure** attraction this Memorial Day weekend, May 23-25. This first-of-its-kind, immersive experience lets visitors join friends from Nickelodeon's **SpongeBob SquarePants** for a submarine adventure to Bikini Bottom. The **SpongeBob SubPants Adventure** lets guests explore the world of Bikini Bottom through a 3D digital show that features live narration; a unique interactive option that allows guests to choose which locations to visit on their underwater journey; and exciting 4D sensory elements, such as wind, seat sensors, bubbles, leg ticklers and scents that make the aquatic town come to life.

**Morey's Piers & Beachfront Water Parks** kicks-off its 2015 season with the grand opening of **Mariner's Pier** on Saturday, April 4 and annual Easter celebration on Sunday, April 5. Families are invited to hop over to the pier starting at noon on Easter Sunday for special activities including pictures with the Easter Bunny at the Parents Pavilion located behind the Carousel. Children 12 years of age and younger can pick an Easter egg for a chance to win an assortment of fun prizes, ranging from stuffed animals and Curley's Fries buckets, to one-day pier passes and water park passes. Two lucky participants will win the grand prize of a **Morey's Piers** season pass.

Designs have been unveiled for a 320-foot-tall observation tower and vertical gondola ride in New Orleans. **The Tricentennial Tower** concept is part of plans to redevelop the World Trade Center New Orleans building. The Tricentennial Tower concept is designed by **U.S. Thrill Rides**, the same firm responsible for the **Skyscraper** vertical roller coaster due to open in Orlando next year. It is a tourist and family attraction with a double helix gondola ride wrapped around its exterior providing 360-degree views of the city. The tower would have a Sky-High restaurant and an Observation Deck, as well as a planned New Orleans 360 Interactive Experience, which would provide visitors with a panoramic virtual reality tour of New Orleans through the ages.

Officials developing the **Grand Texas Sports and Entertainment District** under construction in New Caney, Texas, have announced that a new 30-acre attraction is expected to debut in December. The new **Speedsportz Racing Park** will feature a European-style rental kart facility and track and a separate high-speed performance track, according to Alan Rudolph, co-owner of **Speedsportz Racing Park** and professional karting driver and racing train-

er. **Speedsportz** is designed to offer outdoor recreational racing for drivers age 10 and up with regular karts that can travel up to 50 mph and high-powered karts that can reach speeds of up to 90 mph. The facility will also be able to accommodate lightweight race cars and other vehicles on its two tracks and will house a snack bar, arcade and meeting spaces for corporate gatherings and parties.

A piece of Hollywood has come to Australia's **Luna Park Sydney** as the traditional fun spot launches its own Walk of Fame. As part of its 80th anniversary, the amusement park has unveiled the **Luna Park Star Path**. Inspired by famed walk at Hollywood Grauman's Chinese Theater, it will be signed by numerous Australian celebrities over the coming months. Children's entertainment group **The Wiggles** was the first to make its mark, with members Anthony, Emma, Lachy and Simon all signing and making their hand prints in cement in front of an excited young fan crowd. "Luna Park is extremely happy that **The Wiggles**, a famous Sydney band, have agreed to launch our Star Path," said Luna Park's Director Warwick Doughty. "Luna Park Sydney is truly inspired by the fantastic work **The Wiggles** do for children across Australia and worldwide, and we're very excited to partner with them to bring further joy and smiles to Luna Park Sydney."

Even before they soar above the rooftops of London on their way to Never Land, **Magic Kingdom** guests experiencing Peter Pan's Flight at **Walt Disney World** are immersed in a magical world thanks to a new interactive queue. The opening scene includes a corridor of interactive murals. Tinker Bell flies around the room and gets playful in the nursery of the Darling children. Guests are able to interact with some of the toys; their own shadows dance and play on the walls with the characters of the epic story, before being sprinkled with pixie dust and flying away. The new, air-conditioned queue joins other entertaining first scenes such as **Seven Dwarfs Mine Train**, **Dumbo the Flying Elephant**, **The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh** and **Haunted Mansion**.

Construction has started on the new 3,500-square-foot **Rainforest Adventure** scheduled to open this summer at **Sea Life Grapevine (Texas) Aquarium**. The new permanent exhibit takes guests to the lush environment of the world's rainforests where they will encounter brand new species to **Sea Life**, including crocodiles, piranha, anaconda and more.

The five-gallery display replaces the freshwater lakes exhibit and spotlights a variety of animals native to exotic locations from around the world. Unique features include a piranha walk-through tunnel, a domed pop-up tank in the middle of the anaconda cave, and touch tanks with fish and invertebrates.

"This is the biggest investment we've made since our opening in 2011," says Iain Scouller, regional general manager **Sea Life Grapevine**. "The new **Rainforest Adventure** exhibit will recreate extraordinary natural environments with exciting architectural elements, creating a highly immersive experience for visitors."





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Wade Shows provides 100 rides for midway area

## 2015 Florida State Fair posts gain in gate and midway revenues

AT: Pam Sherborne  
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

TAMPA, Fla. — Preliminary unaudited numbers show attendance at the 2015 Florida State Fair, which ran February 5-16, was 388,830, up about 6,500 from last year.

"The other good news is that gate revenues increased about six percent and midway revenue increased almost 15 percent," said Jennifer O'Brien, fair marketing and communications manager.

This was the first year in a decade that the Florida State Fair had a sole carnival operator. It had offered an independent midway in recent years, but officials felt the fair might be better served by using just one operator and hired Wade Shows in 2014.

It seemed fair officials were correct.

O'Brien said the transition from an independent midway to a sole carnival operator went smoothly.

"As one of the largest midway operators in the nation, Wade Shows' expertise and fresh perspective was an additional benefit for the Florida State Fair," she said. "Changing over to Wade Shows resulted in a substantial cost savings per year in rentals, employee labor and contracted services."

Other benefits to the Fair Authority included a sponsorship fee from Wade Shows and a guaranteed fee

on games and food licensing in the midway. The guarantee allowed the fair staff to concentrate their efforts elsewhere.

Moreover, Wade Shows took on the financial investment to have portions of the midway expanded with new asphalt, add new rest areas, and provide uniquely Florida State Fair customized canvas for all rides and vendors.

The paving and widening of the midway aisles cost approximately \$80,000. The new Florida State Fair-branded canvas, lighting, additional covered seating areas and other infrastructure was approximately \$100,000.

"This resulted in a top-notch looking midway with great consistency," O'Brien said. "Additionally, with the hybrid midway agreement, the Fair Authority retained control over the midway sales and had the right to approve the ride list."

Wade Shows provided over 100 rides at this year's Florida State Fair. New rides for those fairgoers included such rides as the Star Dancer Observation Tower, manufactured by Larson International; Delusion, by Technical Park; Frenzy, A.R.M.; Disk 'O Riders, Zamperla, and the Mighty Mouse coaster, Zamperla.

Other improvements to the fairgrounds for this year's fair included the addition of a new surveillance system featuring 240 security



The 2015 Florida State Fair, Tampa, which ran Feb. 5-16, was the first in a decade to have a sole carnival operator, going from an independent midway. Wade Shows provided over 100 rides. It also invested thousands in improvements to the midway including widening and paving some of the midway aisles. The fair's unaudited attendance was 388,830, up about 6,500 from last year. Midway revenues increased by 15 percent.

COURTESY FLORIDA STATE FAIR

cameras placed strategically throughout the fairgrounds and in the parking lots with feeds from the cameras routed to a new Hillsborough County Sheriff's command center. This cost approximately \$100,000.

In 2015, the Florida State Fair brought in many new exhibits. For the first time, the fair implemented key promotional exhibits, The Wall That Heals, and 9-11/ Never Forget.

As a complement to the diverse range of educational and entertaining exhibits, this programming targeted and brought in numerous patrons that might had not otherwise attended the fair.

Other new exhibits included Balloonopolis' giant balloon sculpture, the Backyard Dream exhibit, the Arts & Crafts Center featuring hand-made works from artisans all over the country, and the newly refurbished Florida Center with family living and competitive exhibits.

Food is always a big draw at the Florida fair. A new twist this year had fairgoers being able to vote for two of their favorite People's Choice burgers.

Fans could go online for a specific time period in the

month before the fair to vote. The top two burgers were to appear on the menu at the fair. In the running were: Jalapeno Crusted Burger; Burger of the Gods; Deep Fried Oreo Burger; Holiday

Express Burger; Parmesan Crusted Burger.

The winners were the Jalapeno Crusted Burger and the Parmesan Crusted Burger. Both appeared on the menu.



Wade Shows' investment in new Florida State Fair branded canvas gave the 2015 edition a brand new consistent look. The carnival signed a contract with the fair last year, making it the first sole carnival operator the fair has had in 10 years. The decision to go from an independent midway to a sole operator proved to be beneficial to both the fair and carnival with a 15 percent increase in midway revenue from this year over 2014.

COURTESY FLORIDA STATE FAIR

### Wade Shows kicks off 2015 season at South Florida Fair

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — Wade Shows had a very good kick-off to the 2015 season at the South Florida Fair, West Palm Beach, Jan. 16-Feb. 1. Although exact attendance had yet to be released at the first of March, officials believe it was over the 500,000 mark.

However, whether up or down from last year's 550,173 figure, fair officials are pleased with the results they have been tallying and releasing such as the increase in ride revenue, which reportedly was 19 percent over 2014 coming in at over \$4.620 million. Per capita spending also increased.

Wade Show provided the midway with between 70 and 80 rides including a good line-up of new ones.

Those new rides include: the Delusion, manufactured by Technical Park; Frenzy by A.R.M.; Centrifuge, Wisdom; Beach Shack, Zamperla; Star Dancer Observation Tower, Larson International; Monster Trucks, Wisdom, and the Mighty Mouse Coaster, Zamperla.

Wade Shows moved on to the Florida State Fair, Tampa, for the carnival's first solo provider of that fair since it went independent 10 years ago.

—Pam Sherborne





## CARNIVAL LIGHTS

COMPILED: Pam Sherborne, [psherborne@amusementtoday.com](mailto:psherborne@amusementtoday.com)

**Chris Borovansky**, chief executive officer, **Stanislaus County Fair**, Turlock, Calif., announced last month he will retire after five years with the Stanislaus fair and after more than 30 years in the industry.

He told a local news agency he would like to spend more time with this family. He was quoted as saying: "I want to spend time with my kids and watch them grow up during the summer, because as CEO of Stanislaus County Fair, when the summer gets here, my time is usually shot. I've been involved with the fair for most of my life so I haven't had a summer vacation since I was a junior in high school."

The fair board will conduct an industry-wide search for Borovansky's replacement.

The **Orange County Fair Board**, Costa Mesa, Calif., ratified a new smoking policy last month, a decision that was greeted with praise from anti-smoking advocates but skepticism from fair-time vendors.

Those areas are still to be determined.

Per state law, smoking is also not allowed within 20 feet of buildings. At the fairgrounds, those include Centennial Farm and the Pacific Amphitheatre.

The vote was met with enthusiasm from advocates, including the American Lung Assn., but some vendors expressed concern about the rules hurting their business.

The sale of tobacco products will not be banned.

**Beverly Gruber**, a career teacher and businesswoman, has spent her entire life in agriculture and competitive agricultural exhibits.

Last month she became the first female president of the 163-year-old Lehigh County Agricultural Society, the nonprofit owner and operator of the **Allentown (Pa.) Fairgrounds** and **The Great Allentown Fair**.

She succeeds **William J. Albert**, who died on Sept. 28.

Gruber said she has three goals for the Allentown Fair: improving communications with the public, developing a strategic plan on the fair's future, and adding new items to the food menu.

This year's Great Allentown Fair is scheduled for Sept. 1 to 7.

The **Solano County Fair Association**, Vallejo, Calif., announced in February its new "FairHands Sponsorship Program" designed to help sustain Youth Ag Day and the Solano County Fair's youth exhibits, including the livestock competition and auction.

For an annual contribution of \$100, FairHands will receive a package of benefits, including two admission tickets and one parking pass to the Solano County Fair, coupons for two-for-one admission to the Solano Race Place, and a coupon for \$200 off any fairgrounds facility rental Monday through Friday.

New York Gov. **Andrew Cuomo** has included \$50 million in his proposed 2015-2016 budget for improvements at the **New York State Fairgrounds**, Syracuse.

No specific details have been released on just what improvements are proposed to the grounds, but, in discussion according to local news reports, are building a second, indoor horse show area, refurbishing the coliseum and improving stables in hopes of bolstering horse events at the grounds.

A spokesman for the state's Department of Agriculture & Markets, which oversees the fairgrounds, has declined to detail the improvements. But, Cuomo has claimed his interest in making the 375-acre fair site a prosperous year-round venture.

There also are needs for infrastructure improvements throughout the grounds.

Miami-Dade Mayor **Carlos Gimenez** announced last month that **Tropical Park**, a regional park in Miami-Dade County, is not an option for relocating the **Miami-Dade County Fair & Exposition** (also known for generations as the Miami-Dade Youth Fair) in order to clear the way for an expansion of Florida International University onto the current fairgrounds.

Last November, Miami-Dade County voters supported a county charter amendment by a margin of 65 percent to allow Florida International University (FIU) to expand onto up to 64 acres of land in **Tamiami Park**, the current home of the fair. The fair utilizes 86 acres.

The 2015 edition of the Miami-Dade County Fair & Exposition is set to run March 12-April 5, with the exclusion of March 16-17 and 30-31.

In 2014 the fair hosted over 589,800 guests, ranking it the largest fair in Florida. It includes over 90 rides, with two kiddie-lands provided by **North American Midway Entertainment**. It also includes livestock and agricultural competitions, live concerts, and a circus.

The **Iowa State Fair Board**, Des Moines, has decided to not have any races at the Grandstand Racetrack during the 2015 fair set for Aug. 13-23.

A state fair spokeswoman said the decision to drop racing during the fair this year was based on numbers. With concerts and other activities better attended, the effort will be to substitute other events for the three previously scheduled race days.

The Friday night races at the grandstand will go on as scheduled every week until the fair begins.

**Eastern States Exposition (ESE)** Vice President **Sue Lavoie** has retired after a 49-year career with the West Springfield organization. She joined the staff of ESE in June, 1966, and has held a number of positions, culminating in her appointment of vice president in 1986.

Lavoie said in a press release last month that announced her decision: "I remember the Exposition with dirt roads and old buildings and have seen this organization grow and change with numerous new structures and a thriving year-round show business. I am proud of the spectacular showcase Eastern States Exposition has become and pleased to have been a part of its evolution."

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# BUSINESS & CLASSIFIED

▶MarketWatch — Page 37 / Safety News — Pages 40, 41 / CLASSIFIED — Page 43

Plans include film/TV production facility

## Proposed park aims to enhance Palm Springs-area family fun

AT: Dean Lamanna  
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

PALM SPRINGS, Calif. — Plans for a theme park 25 minutes to the southeast of this famous Southern California desert city are raising excitement, and some questions, throughout the Coachella Valley.

A chunk of real estate bordering Interstate 10 in the city of Coachella, not far from the location of the massive annual spring music festival of the same name, is being eyed for Return to Aztlán — a 48-acre, Aztec-themed park containing water attractions and rides.

Palm Springs-based Aztlán Development is behind the project. The company, comprised of several amusement and entertainment industry executives and creatives, has produced a demographics report, a site plan and several renderings that show a wave pool, slides and roller coasters surrounding a 200-foot-tall replica of an Aztec pyramid.

Return to Aztlán would be part of a larger, two-square-mile entertainment district straddling I-10 that is more or less bookended by two existing, Native American-owned casino properties. Plans also include a resort hotel connected to the adjacent Eagle Falls Golf Course, a sound stage for film and television production, a cultural museum, a 12-screen movie theater, a plaza for gatherings of up to 10,000 and an amphitheater seating 1,000, along with branded dining experiences and retail.

All properties will be linked by a tunnel under the interstate.

The park's design is partly inspired by the Atlantis resort in The Bahamas. According to an Aztlán Development press release, the project is patterned after the successful Schlitterbahn water park model based out of New Braunfels, Texas, and is intended to operate year-round.

"Our illustrious entertainment collaborators will help us follow the current trend of Paramount, Universal, Disney and Sony in creating an entertainment venue based upon popular movie, television and Internet themes," said Mark Stuart, Aztlán Development's CEO and chief architect, who also coordinates architect design and engineering and services for Schlitterbahn Development Group.

Stuart expressed enthusiasm for the project's secondary goal to bring film and TV production to the eastern end of the valley.

"We are currently in talks with a top studio consultant team to bring an award-winning curriculum to the Coachella Valley to educate local and foreign students on how to work behind and in front of the cameras at Aztlán Studios. The completed project will create 700 direct jobs, and we plan to partner with local schools and colleges to create an active work-study program for students interested in filmmaking and entertainment."

"We are very excited



**Return to Aztlán, a 48-acre waterslide and ride park with an Aztec theme and tropical landscaping, has been proposed for the city of Coachella — about half an hour southeast of Palm Springs. Plans call for a 200-foot-tall replica of an Aztec pyramid as the park's centerpiece.**

COURTESY AZTLAN DEVELOPMENT

about working on this project," added Roy Hahn, a former publisher and casino resort event producer who is COO of Aztlán Development. "The East Valley is growing so fast, and it has become world renowned for its entertainment venues — including the Coachella Music Festival and Stagecoach Country Music Festival just five miles away."

Local officials also see Return to Aztlán as an opportunity to tap into the Greater Palm Springs tourism market.

"We are hopeful that this project comes to fruition just because of the economic impact it would have, including the hiring of local individuals," Coachella Mayor Pro Tem Manuel Pérez told local newspaper *The Desert Sun*.

Per the company's demographics report, some 35 million people live within a 3.5-hour drive of the Coachella Valley, with 24 million residing in Southern California alone.

Some have questioned whether this desert region,

which traditionally has been home to a large population of retirees and seasonal residents and is subject to extremely high temperatures from June through August, is a viable location for a large, continuously operating theme park. Southern California already is home to half a dozen major parks and many smaller amusement facilities — including Wet 'n' Wild Palm Springs and a Boomers! family entertainment center in Cathedral City, both within a half-hour drive of the proposed park.

Aztlán Development, however, believes in its project's feasibility and has said it is confident it can raise the needed funding. According to Stuart, Zhongying Investment Group Ltd. of Hong Kong is committing \$20 million as an equity partner and USA Huali United Holding, LLC, a California-based investment banking concern, is expected to provide \$50 million in construction financing. Additional investors are being courted.

Provided that all financing is in place and city planning commission approvals and permits have been obtained, construction on Return to Aztlán may begin as early as April 2016, with a projected opening in 2018.

According to Aztlán Development's website, the park, before it opens to the public, will serve as the backdrop of a fantasy feature film "spanning 500 years of Meso-American history" and described as "Indiana Jones meets Maleficent."

•aztlandevelopment.com

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# Attendance light, sales strong at 20th annual NJAA trade show

AT: B. Derek Shaw  
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — “The vibe is upbeat and positive. The energy is flowing,” said Kimberle Samarelli, executive director of the New Jersey Amusement Association, when describing the mid-February show she orchestrates each year. The NJAA is the host of the annual East Coast Gift and Variety Show, held the past two years in the Grand Ballroom of the Golden Nugget Resort and Casino near the famed Boardwalk and just off the Atlantic City Marina. This was the 20th annual edition of the show that was established to provide close-to-home buying and business opportunities.

The 29 vendors occupied 64 booths nearly filling the 15,000 square foot ballroom. The exhibitor breakdown included: 12, plush (toys and novelties); 6, ice cream; 2, coin op/arcade and 9, miscellaneous (including ticket/wristband, industrial paint, new/used ride broker, shirt and promotional item vendors as well as the Council on International Educational Exchange).

The show was attended by 100 professionals in the New Jersey amusement industry as well as representation of three Pennsylvania amusement parks: Knoebel's, Hersheypark and Sesame Place. Samarelli attributed the diminished attendance to the cold weather, making it more difficult to get people to venture out. “It's a small, intimate show,” she said. “However, there are buyers here.”

The history of the show is fascinating. It started as a motel show in the mid 1970's at the Aztec Hotel in Seaside Heights, N.J. The vendors operated out of their rooms, moving the beds against the walls and lining up their goods in the middle of the room. Attendees would travel room to room, visiting each one. During the past 20 years under NJAA auspices, the show has been at a few Holiday Inns, a Hilton and a Sheraton in Toms River, Brick, Long Branch and Atlantic City West, N.J. For two years, the show was at the Garden State Exhibit Center in Somerset, N.J. Atlantic City casino venues have been



**Taking a break from the action on the Trade Show floor (l to r): Davina Resto, Kim Samarelli, NJAA executive director and Amanda Pepe. Resto and Pepe are second year business students from Ocean County College, Toms River, N.J. who served as interns during the NJAA East Coast Gift and Variety Show. AT/B. DEREK SHAW**



**All Smiles – All the Way Around (l to r): Sal Mirando, and Lenny Dean, both of Coastal Amusements, Lakewood, N.J.; Glenn Kramer, Elaut, USA, Lakewood, N.J. and Angelo Cappetta, Carousel Family Entertainment Center, Seaside Heights, N.J. Cappetta is also second vice president of the New Jersey Amusement Association. AT/B. DEREK SHAW**

the norm lately with Trump Marina six times, Taj Mahal twice and the current Golden Nugget location twice as well.

Prior to the 11 a.m. opening on Feb. 18, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs held a workshop on Annual Ride Regulations Briefing and Panel Discussion. This was followed by a question and answer session.

The show's first evening was highlighted by a Scholarship Fund Cocktail Party on the Trade Show Floor, featuring acoustic guitar music. This was a new twist for the event that was well attended. Doing it this way allowed vendors and attendees alike to continue doing business, while enjoying beverages and hors d'oeuvres.

In concert with the show, the 7th Annual East Coast/Mid-Atlantic Regionalized NAARSO (National Association of Amusement Ride Safety Officials) Outreach Safety School took place February 17-18, with Certification Exams occurring on the 19th. It

was attended by 125 people.

In front of the Thursday Trade show, a 10 a.m. session by the Legalized Games of Chance Control Commission was held. The speakers presented on the Certification and Policy Update. This was followed by a question and answer session. The Trade Show concluded at 3 a.m. that day.

The 2015 NJAA East Coast Gift and Variety Show was sponsored by: Allied Insurance; Haas & Wilkerson Insurance; Jersey Paper and Naughton Insurance, Inc.

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

## BRIEFS

### Strong turnout seen at FEC Dallas 2015

ROCKWALL, Texas — Nearly 150 family entertainment center (FEC) industry leaders from 26 states and 13 countries participated in FEC Dallas 2015, the leading conference for FEC operators. The two-day event, which is organized and produced by the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), took place at the Hilton Dallas Rockwall Lakefront Hotel, Feb. 8-10, in Rockwall, Texas.

Veteran FEC owners and operators representing hundreds of facilities from around the world gathered to discuss the latest industry trends, expand their business networks, gain insight from colleagues, and share their best practices and experiences. Keynote speaker Brandon Steiner, CEO of Steiner Sports and Marketing, spoke on entrepreneurship, the importance of balance in life, and his experiences with professional sports. FEC Dallas breakout sessions covered a variety of topics, including building and maintaining a positive company culture, attracting and keeping top sales talent, reducing expenses, planning for the future of family businesses, increasing efficiency with point-of-sale technology, food and beverage operations, risk management, capital investment and expansion, and profitability.

Attendees also took part in a networking event at the newly opened Pinstack bowling and entertainment center in Plano, Texas, that included an exclusive behind-the-scenes tour. And new this year, the event included a post-tour, which featured detailed looks at the operations of Dallas-area FECs Amazing Jakes, SpeedZone, iT'Z, and Celebration Station.

FEC Dallas 2015 provided a collaborative environment for operators to share and engage with one another, producing real-world takeaways for each participant to apply to their businesses. The event was open exclusively to IAAPA members.

“What stood out to me most was being able to be around like-minded people who share similar issues and opportunities in our industry,” said Ryan Curtis, owner of Quarters in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. “What made it special was the owners and top management coming together and sharing vital information that could help our businesses.”

“I was very impressed with the organization and execution of FEC Dallas,” said Ted Marek, general manager, Celebration Station, Mesquite, Texas. “As a first-time attendee I was not sure what to expect... and walked away feeling it was a great investment of my time. I will definitely explore attending future IAAPA FEC programs, and would encourage other members and FEC operators to attend.”

### Asian Attractions Expo registration open

HONG KONG — The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) will welcome more than 7,000 participants from 65 countries to the Hong Kong Exhibition and Convention Center, June 16-19 for Asian Attractions Expo (AAE) 2015. The 8,500-square-meter trade show floor will feature more than 300 exhibiting companies displaying the latest innovations, products, and services which will shape the future of the industry.

Exhibitors producing state-of-the-art rides, motion simulators, water attractions, video and skill games, theming, technology, food and beverage, and more, will spend three days connecting with more than 5,000 buyers from theme parks, water parks, family entertainment centers, zoos, aquariums, science centers, museums, and resorts.

“Asian Attractions Expo 2015 is a one-stop-shop for new and expanding theme parks and attractions in the Asia-Pacific region,” said IAAPA president and CEO Paul Noland.

According to the IAAPA Global Theme and Amusement Park Outlook 2014-2018 report, the attractions industry in the Asia-Pacific region is projected to grow at a rapid rate over the next several years. A wide variety of new projects and park expansions in China, India, Japan, and southeast Asia are contributing to the explosive market growth. The report estimates theme park attendance to increase 8.9 percent in 2015 as the region's parks are expected to host 436 million people. By 2018, theme park attendance in the Asia-Pacific region will account for 48 percent of all global attendance, making it the largest theme park market in the world.



# MARKETWATCH



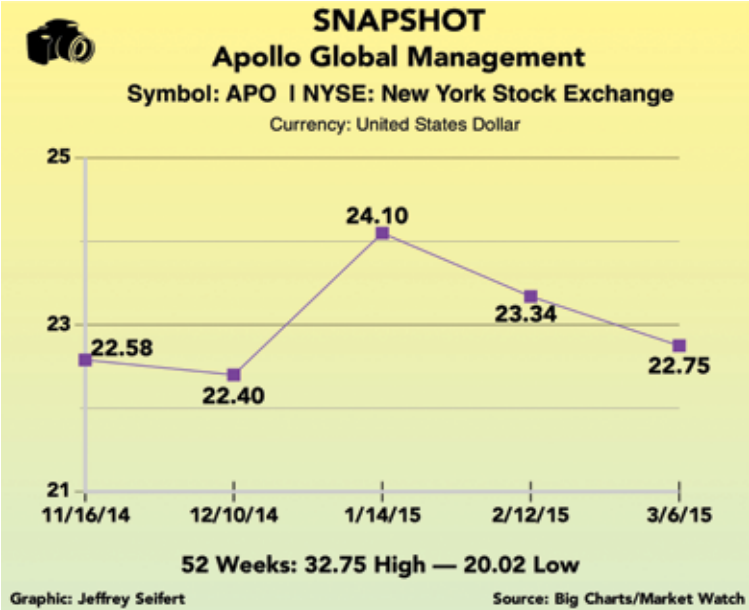
| COMPANY   | SYMBOL  | MARKET | PRICE<br>03/16/15 | HIGH<br>52-Week | LOW<br>52-Week |
|---|---------|--------|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Apollo Global Management<br>(Great Wolf Resorts)  | APO     | NYSE   | 22.75             | 32.75           | 20.02          |
| The Blackstone Group                              | BX      | NYSE   | 38.32             | 39.62           | 26.56          |
| Merlin Entertainments Group/<br>Legoland          | MERL    | LSE    | 435.00            | 435.50          | 3.277          |
| Cedar Fair, L.P.                                  | FUN     | NYSE   | 55.24             | 56.81           | 42.75          |
| Comcast Corp./<br>NBCUniversal Media              | CMCSA   | NASDAQ | 59.75             | 60.70           | 47.74          |
|   | CMCSK   | NASDAQ | 59.31             | 60.19           | 47.21          |
| The Walt Disney Company                           | DIS     | NYSE   | 107.37            | 107.73          | 76.31          |
| Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.                              | 9010    | TYO    | 1185.00           | 1298.00         | 864.00         |
| Haicahang Holdings Ltd.                           | 2255HK  | SEHK   | 1.21              | 2.00            | 1.02           |
| Leofoo Development Co.                            | TW:2705 | TSEC   | 11.30             | 13.70           | 10.30          |
| MGM Resorts International                         | MGM     | NYSE   | 19.66             | 27.64           | 17.25          |
| SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.                      | SEAS    | NYSE   | 19.04             | 33.33           | 15.11          |
| Shenzhen Overseas Chinese Town<br>Co., Ltd. (OCT) | 000069  | SZSE   | 7.88              | 8.97            | 4.30           |
| Six Flags Entertainment Co.                       | SIX     | NYSE   | 45.92             | 49.00           | 31.77          |
| Tivoli A/S  | DK:TIV  | CSE    | 3499.00           | 3500.00         | 2941.00        |
| Village Roadshow                                  | VRL     | ASX    | 5.50              | 8.44            | 5.08           |

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

| DIESEL PRICES    |                   |                           |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Region<br>(U.S.) | As of<br>03/09/15 | Change from<br>1 year ago |
| East Coast       | \$3.105           | - \$1.053                 |
| Midwest          | \$2.852           | - \$1.161                 |
| Gulf Coast       | \$2.795           | - \$1.019                 |
| Mountain         | \$2.801           | - \$1.199                 |
| West Coast       | \$2.926           | - \$1.034                 |
| California       | \$3.233           | - \$0.879                 |

| CURRENCY              |                         |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| On 03/12/15 \$1 USD = |                         |
| 0.9405                | EURO                    |
| 0.6652                | GBP (British Pound)     |
| 121.34                | JPY (Japanese Yen)      |
| 1.0030                | CHF (Swiss Franc)       |
| 1.3143                | AUD (Australian Dollar) |
| 1.2705                | CAD (Canadian Dollar)   |



## BUSINESS WATCH


**SeaWorld Entertainment announces dividend**  
ORLANDO, Fla. — The board of directors of **SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.** declared, on March 3, a cash dividend of \$0.21 per share of common stock. The dividend is payable on April 1, 2015 to shareholders of record at the close of business on March 13, 2015.

**Cedar Fair declares 2015 Q1 cash distribution**  
SANDUSKY, Ohio — **Cedar Fair Entertainment Company**, announced on Feb. 25, the declaration of a regular quarterly cash distribution of \$0.75 per limited partner (LP) unit. This quarterly distribution rate is consistent with the company's annualized distribution rate of \$3.00 per LP unit announced in November of last year. The distribution, which was payable March 25, 2015 to unitholders of record as of March 13, 2015, represents the company's 29th consecutive year of paying a cash distribution to its unitholders.

**Apollo Management reports Q4, full year results**  
NEW YORK — **Apollo Global Management, LLC** (together with its consolidated subsidiaries, "Apollo") reported on Feb. 5 results for the fourth quarter and year ended December 31, 2014.  
"In 2014 Apollo continued to position itself for consistent long term growth, investment excellence and diversification," said Leon Black, chairman and CEO. "We maintained our strong pace of realization activity, which resulted in total distributions for 2014 of more than \$16 billion for our fund investors and \$2.89 in cash distributions for our shareholders. In addition, the funds we manage deployed approximately \$10 billion during the year across Apollo's integrated investment platform, which we believe can generate meaningful future returns for our investors and shareholders."  
Apollo Global Management, LLC has declared a fourth quarter 2014 cash distribution of \$0.86 per Class A share. This distribution was paid on February 27, 2015 to holders of record at the close of business on February 17, 2015.  
Apollo issued full detailed earnings release of its fourth quarter and full year 2014 results, through the Investor Relations section of Apollo's website at <http://ir.agm.com>.

**Bob Chapek named chairman, Walt Disney Parks**  
BURBANK, Calif. — **Bob Chapek** has been named Chairman, **Walt Disney Parks and Resorts**, it was announced on Feb. 23 by **Robert A. Iger**, chairman and CEO, and **Thomas O. Staggs**, COO, **The Walt Disney Company**.  
A 22-year veteran of The Walt Disney Company, Chapek has served since 2011 as President of **Disney Consumer Products**, driving a technology-led transformation of the company's consumer products, retail and publishing operations. He assumes his new role effective immediately.  
As Chairman of Parks and Resorts, Chapek succeeds Staggs, who was named Disney's Chief Operating Officer earlier this month.

**At a Glance...**  
•**The Walt Disney Co.** announced on Feb. 23 that it raised ticket prices at both of its U.S. resort parks. **Disneyland** and **California Adventure** parks in Anaheim, Calif raised \$3 to \$99 for a one-day ticket. In Florida, **Magic Kingdom** one-day tickets rose from \$99 to \$105.  
•**Six Flags Entertainment Group** announced in Feb. that it lost \$34.1 million in its fourth quarter as a result of compensation for its executives. The Grand Prairie, Texas-based company said it paid out \$50.7 million in stock-based compensation during the quarter, compared with \$5.5 million in the fourth quarter of 2013. Six Flags also announced earnings (adjusted EBITDA) totaled a record of \$439 million last year, a 9 percent increase over 2013.  
•**Correction:** In the April 2015 issue of AT, page 33, **Kent Bachmann** obituary, third paragraph, first sentence should read, "He was certified with the Department of Agriculture – Amusement Ride Division (Inspector Class II) and was appointed to the Amusement Ride Safety Board of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as the board's engineer by former Governor Edward Rendell."



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# Smoky Mountains explode with Alpine Coaster installations

AT: B. Derek Shaw  
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

PIGEON FORGE, Tenn. — There's been a sudden proliferation of alpine/mountain coasters in a relatively small area in the Gatlinburg/Pigeon Forge area. The first alpine coaster, (a bobsled-type car secured on metal tracks) opened just a year and a half ago in the area. Much like the miniature golf, zip line crazes and go kart tracks of the past, thrill seekers are supportive of this next step, the latest adrenaline rush, the new wave of the future.

Three of the alpine coasters are from Wiegand Sports, LLC (the American affiliate to the German company Josef Wiegand GmbH & CoKg, Rasdorf, Germany), while competitor Aquatic Development Group (ADG)/Alpine Sports in Cohoes, N.Y. is hoping to have their installation at Ober Gatlinburg open by this summer. This will bring the total count in the area to four. Competition in that region is not a new concept. There are now at least 10 zip lines and countless more miniature golf operations all vying for that coveted consumer dollar from tourists and locals alike.

The granddaddy of them all is the Smoky Mountain Alpine Coaster in Pigeon Forge, Tenn. that opened to screams of joy on August 3, 2013. "We were the first to build one in Tennessee," exclaims Robb Mabbitt, general manager of the attraction.

The ride starts with a lift of 1,375 feet and then a drop of 3,994 feet totaling 5,369 feet, with a two mile downhill track, making it the second longest mountain coaster in North America. Mabbitt says expect a five to eight degree change in temperature as you ascend and descend the mountain. A great effort was made to maintain the majority of the aesthetics of the mountain. Night rides were introduced late last year, with the addition of \$50,000 LED lighting package. Just introduced by the manufacturer for 2015 are removable rain shields.

The attraction has had a variety of customers of ages, including a 94 year old, "who screamed all the way down!" said Mabbitt. He is proud of his staff. "Our employees are



Shown here at the Smoky Mountain Alpine Coaster is the first small hill before the main lift area. The ride opened Aug. 3, 2013. COURTESY LARRY HAYS/WIEGAND NORTH AMERICA

trained with customer orientation. They know the product and any specials that might be available."

The Gatlinburg Mountain Coaster in Gatlinburg, Tenn. opened on August 31, 2014. The Wiegand ride starts with a lift of 700 feet and then a drop of 2,600 feet totaling to 3,300 feet with a maximum speed of 31 miles per hour. Total ride time is between five and six minutes. Lisa Williford, co-owner says the ride is popular. "Riders experience a lot of great turns, including a 360 and a 180. It's an exhilarating ride — people love it."

When asked about the competition from other similar attractions, Williford said, "There are so many people that

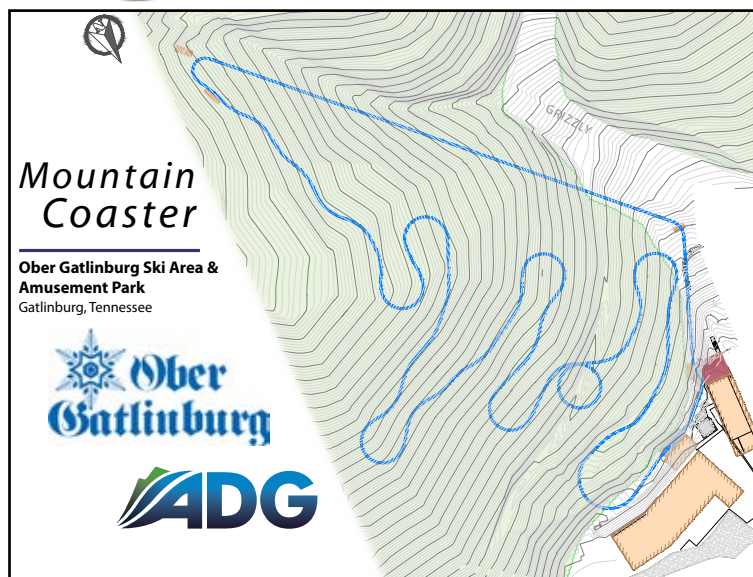
come through this area there is no problem with competition. We all get along. Most (folks) are on vacation, they are happy anyway." The on-ride photos that guests can purchase prove that. Williford says, riders are "screaming, laughing and hollering!"

Goats on the Roof opened as a quirky, tourist attraction in late 2013. They carry Amish foods, homemade fudge, ice cream and offer gem mining. Visitors can even feed the goats that are on the roof and become an official Goat Ranger. Opening January 17, 2015 to an hour long line, the "Coaster at Goats on the Roof" was well received, even on a cold,

► See COASTERS, page 39



After climbing 700 feet, riders then have another 2,600 feet to traverse on the Gatlinburg Mountain Coaster. COURTESY NICK VOYLES/GATLINBURG MOUNTAIN COASTER



This rendering, of the ADG mountain coaster, shows the layout of the ride opening this summer at Ober Gatlinburg. Construction crews have been working to prep Mt. Harrison for the 3,750 feet of track the mountain coaster will use to traverse the area. COURTESY OBER GATLINBURG



The main entrance building at Goats on the Roof is nestled inside the track layout of Wiegand's third Alpine Coaster in the Smoky Mountains. The ride made its debut on January 17, 2015. Thanks to a new Intelligence Distance Control (anti-collision) safety system designed by Wiegand, riders can be dispatched at 15 second intervals to keep capacity up on the 4,325 foot long ride. COURTESY THE COASTER AT GOATS ON THE ROOF AT GOATS ON THE ROOF



## ► COASTERS

Continued from page 38

yet sunny day. Regarding the weather, Co-Owner Matthew Ayer said, "We were thankful for the initial weekend," feeling conditions could have been worse.

The Wiegand installation, originally named Goat Coaster, features a new, "Intelligence Distance Control," that is an anti-collision device. The ride starts with a 1,325 foot long ascent, followed by a 3,050 foot descent, totaling to 4,375 feet with a maximum speed of 27 miles per hour. "Coaster at Goats on the Roof" was in the works the past year, with over seven months in the construction aspect. Commenting on the German crew who constructed the ride, Ayers said, "They can be a little harsh at times, however they worked many nights until midnight or later to get the job done."

When asked about the proliferation of alpine/mountain coasters in the region, Ayers mentioned that the area is home to special terrain that makes the ride possible, "This gives people other options — now they have other

ones to choose from. This is such a popular concept in the area. This is a perfect fit for our property."

This brings Wiegand USA to three installations in the Smoky Mountain region and 18 throughout North America. Ayers said that there were no restrictions from the city or the manufacturer. "Who knows? Maybe there will be five more in the future," said Ayers.

With more than 180 installations, the Wiegand Alpine Coaster is the world's market leader in the Mountain Coaster

industry. Their Alpine Coaster, first appeared in 1997. Other products include toboggan runs, electric bobskarts, dry and water rides and more. Nearly 80 percent of Wiegand's market in Europe and the United States are ski resorts. Larry Hays, Wiegand North American sales representative says, "The ski industry is very similar to the park industry. Weather and length of season are both factors. What (ski) operators are seeing is a different (clientele) market, so they are dealing with their demograph-

ic changes. Summer becomes an integral part."

Down the road and up the mountain at Ober Gatlinburg Inc. (Gatlinburg, TN) an ADG/Alpine Products alpine coaster is currently under construction. The project has been a couple of years in the making. When it opens this summer, the ADG Mountain Coaster (exact name, TBD) will be nestled just below the peak of Mt. Harrison, bordering Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The ride will last approximately five and one-half minutes (or longer depending on each rider) and cover nearly 4000 feet. Riders can enjoy the high-speed adventure, hugging every turn and dip as they zoom down the mountain at speeds up to 25 mph, or choose a more relaxed pace suitable to their own enjoyment level, using the braking system that is built into each of the 30 cars.

Full construction was halted in mid-October and resumes in mid-March after completion of the current ski season. When asked about progress and the opening day timetable, Kate Barido, director of Sales and Marketing said, "The terrain is steeper than anticipated,

which made it difficult to commit to a specific opening date. This is, however guaranteed to be a more thrilling ride!" Barido says the ride is becoming popular at ski areas as a year round activity. (Ober Gatlinburg also has an Alpine Slide, since August of 1976. The twin 1,800 foot combined concrete & Fiberglass concave free-wheeling trough ride that is an earlier generation of ones that now feature cars secured to tracks.)

The ADG carts feature higher back rests and shorter brake levers for easier handling and control. They are designed with a built-in collision avoidance and a seatbelt monitoring system.

ADG designs and builds water parks and recreational water and mountainside attractions for all types of venues from amusement parks and resorts to ski mountains and small aquatic settings.

Vacationers and locals as well have a wealth of options when it comes to taking a spin down a mountain. With plenty of mountains in the Smoky's, there should be even more alpine/mountain coaster installations popping up in the future.

### FAST FACTS

Mountain Coasters in the Smoky Mountains, Tennessee

**Name / Location**

**Opened / Supplier / Total Track / Speed / No. of Sleds**

**Smoky Mountain Alpine Coaster** / Pigeon Forge, Tenn.  
Aug. 3, 2013 / Wiegand Sports, USA / 5,369 feet / 27 mph / 60

**Gatlinburg Mountain Coaster** / Gatlinburg, Tenn.  
Aug. 31, 2014 / Wiegand Sports, USA / 3,330 feet / 31 mph / 39

**Coaster at Goats on the Roof** / Pigeon Forge, Tenn.  
Jan. 17, 2015 / Wiegand Sports, USA / 4,375 feet / 30 mph / 46

**Mountain Coaster** / Ober Gatlinburg, Tenn.  
Summer 2015 / ADG-Alpine Products / 3,750 feet / TBD / 30

—Compiled by AT research/B. Derek Shaw

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### UP CLOSE – AIMS International Board President, Timo Klaus

**Timo Klaus**, executive vice president of KumbaK – The Amusement Engineers takes over the reins as board president of AIMS International effective April 1, 2015. He follows



**Klaus**

**Roger Berry** who has worked diligently and tirelessly on behalf of AIMS as board president for the past two years.

AIMS News & Notes recently had the opportunity to sit down with Timo to learn a bit more about him and his plans for AIMS International:

**Tell us about your background in the amusement industry. What brought you into it in the first place?**

My original background is in mechanical engineering. I started working as a development engineer for a pump manufacturing company where I eventually became a pump application specialist in a more client focused role. After five years, I left to work in the wind turbine business, an exciting new industry where I was responsible for sales and product support. There, we set up a maintenance department and, as a result of that experi-

ence, I was hired by Vekoma to lead their maintenance department where I ultimately held responsibility for the worldwide product support of all Vekoma attractions. Unfortunately, the company entered into bankruptcy in 2001, and, together with some former Vekoma colleagues, we started KumbaK later that year. I'm still working for KumbaK and hope to continue doing this for many years to come.

**How did you learn about AIMS and become involved as a member of the board of directors?**

KumbaK has been involved with AIMS for quite some time, but my first AIMS experience was the 2008 Safety Seminar in Tulsa, Okla. where I presented our company class. I quickly got the opportunity to start teaching two more general classes. In 2010, I assisted with the AIMS booth for the Asian Attractions Expo in Kuala Lumpur and, later that year, I joined the board of directors.

**Everyone agrees, safety is of utmost importance to the amusement industry worldwide. How can AIMS make a difference in terms of safety education and certification?**

Safety starts with recognizing

hazards. The interaction of students, teachers, staff and volunteers at the AIMS Safety Seminars — all people with vast experiences in safety in the amusement industry — will make everybody better in the recognition of hazards. In addition, all these people also have bright ideas and experiences they can share on how to control and mitigate these hazards to ensure that our guests are safe.

**From your perspective as the first AIMS board president who is not from the U.S., how do you see AIMS as an International organization?**

Safety in the amusement industry is a global matter and experiences should be shared around the world to achieve the highest possible level of safety. The seminar and certification that AIMS is offering in the U.S. is also very well suited for other countries and markets. The AIMS Seminar already welcomes many students to the seminar from parks all around the world. It is a truly international organization.

**What do you hope to accomplish in your term as board president of AIMS?**

One of the main goals of AIMS is

to grow the annual safety seminar in size and quality. I want to contribute to that goal and leave a stable professional organization ready for the future. Basically continue the work of my predecessors as I believe all our board members have the same vision, which is to make sure that safety in our industry is of the highest possible level, and educating our people is crucial in achieving this.

**Tell us about where you live, your family, and what you enjoy doing for fun.**

I live near the city of Eindhoven in the south of The Netherlands. It's the city where Philips, the well known electronics company, was started and where many high tech companies are based.

My wife, Dorine, and I have two children, a daughter Noortje (nearly 22) and a son Jasper (21). Both are students: Noortje in hospitality management and Jasper in game architecture and design.

My hobbies are cooking, reading, walking and I don't mind travelling, which is nice as I'm on the road for my work very often.

Space for this AIMS page is provided courtesy of Amusement Today as a corporate partner of AIMS Intl. Content is provided by AT & AIMS.



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## ASTM conducts Industry Panel for Students



At the recently concluded ASTM Intl. F-24 Amusement Rides and Devices meeting in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., a total of 15 current and past ASTM students were in attendance for the Industry Panel for Students, hosted by Mike Withers. In attendance were, front row: Chris Noveral, ATA Engineering (Penn State alumnus); Eric Kaminsky, Universal Orlando, (Penn State alumnus); Amanda Zielkowski, Universal Creative, (Cooper Union alumna); Mitch Tabor, Penn State; Chris Romano, Penn State; Tanya Moller, Penn State; Harrison Katz, Drexel University; Jason Cripps, Ryerson University. Back row: Cooper Pedersen, Normandale College; Ian Kopack, Penn State; Reuben Mille-Davis, The Ohio State University; Nicholas Philips, Drexel University; Matthew Calabrese, Ryerson University; Alex Yamich, Ryerson University.

COURTESY KAREN OERTLEY, AIMS INTL.

## Proposed new ASTM standard highlights stationary wave systems

### SAFETY

W. CONSHOHOCKEN, Pa., — Stationary wave systems bring the thrill of surfing to water parks. A proposed new ASTM standard (WK31624, Practice for the Classification, Design, Manufacture, Construction and Operation of Standing Wave Systems) will provide a reference tool for safe construction and operation that will prove useful to both manufacturers and owners of standing wave systems.

"Riding a sheet wave is an exhilarating experience," says ASTM member Marshall Myrman, leader of the FlowRider and Waves division of White-Water West Industries Ltd. "Since the participant is riding a 25 mile per hour sheet of water, there are certain issues that need to be addressed to ensure the safest experience possible, and that is what we are doing."

The proposed standard will present such manufacturing guidelines as structural design requirements, identification markings and design

responsibilities. Regulatory agencies will be able to use the standard as a tool for enforcement and laboratories will find it helpful for benchmark testing.

This proposed standard is being developed by Subcommittee F24.70 on Water-Related Amusement Rides and Devices, part of ASTM Committee F24 on Amusement Rides and Devices. Myrman welcomes all interested parties, particularly those representing standing wave manufacturers, to join in the development of WK31624.

ASTM welcomes participation in the development of its standards.

ASTM Committee F24 on Amusement Rides and Devices next meeting is scheduled for Oct. 14-17, 2015 in San Diego, Calif.

For more news in this sector, visit [www.astm.org/sn-consumer](http://www.astm.org/sn-consumer).

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# New book chronicles Baltimore area amusement parks back to 1870s

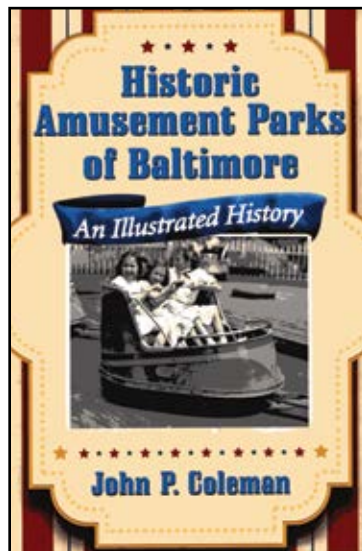
**REVIEW:** Jeffrey Seifert  
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

Those not familiar with amusement park history might be surprised to learn that there is enough history of Baltimore-area amusement parks to fill a book. But such was the case for many of the country's large metropolitan areas in the early 1900s. Before the advent of the mega-regional theme park, hundreds of small amusement parks could be found on beaches, piers, or the outskirts of the city. Park goers didn't have to drive miles to get to a park, they could hop on a streetcar, steamship, city bus or school bus and often had many options from which to choose for close, affordable, family fun.

Like most parks of the era, many of Baltimore's parks trace their history back to the 1800s when locals would visit a picnic ground or resort that featured dance halls, bowling alleys, music pavilions, or simply a pleasant, quiet area to get away from the city and enjoy a picnic lunch.

*Historic Parks of Baltimore* presents the rich history of the old amusement parks and beach resorts frequented by Baltimoreans beginning in the 1870s and stretching into the late 20th century. Readers may recognize such popular amusement parks as Gwynn Oak, Carlin's, and Tolchester Beach, and will learn about some of the more obscure places like Frederick Road Park and Hollywood Park. Each of the major parks is documented, complete with a detailed history of the sites they were built on, the creative owners behind the parks' inceptions, the individuals and companies who provided the rides and attractions, and, the people that frequented their favorite park or resort.

Author John P. Coleman is a senior software engineer living in Omaha, Nebraska. He has a lifelong interest in amusement parks and is a member of the National



Amusement Park Historical Association (NAPHA). With the assistance of fellow NAPHA members, amusement industry connections, and several local libraries and historical societies, he was able to assemble a written history of the amusement locations that Baltimoreans frequented throughout the 20th century. The book is the culmination of several years of research.

Following acknowledgements and introductions, the book contains 14 chapters, each dedicated to a specific amusement park, presented in alphabetical order. An index at the end of the book will be of particular interest to researchers who will appreciate the ease in locating specific information about a park.

Each chapter tells a somewhat chronological story of the park, beginning with how it became established as an amusement park, its glory days as a thriving amusement center to each park's unfortunate demise. Some parks, such as



Above, PTC Carousel no. 52 was delivered to Frederick Road Park in 1920. It survived the park's fire & operated in at least three other amusement parks. Its fate is unknown, but it was likely dismantled. Right, along with a Miller-designed PTC coaster, Carlin's Amusement had a classic PTC Old Mill featuring a mill chute drop. COURTESY JOHN COLEMAN



Above, at its zenith, Riverview amusement park could boast of having three roller coasters, a mill chute, large carousel and a band shell down by the river. Below, this Tolchester Switchback Railway was perhaps one of Baltimore's earliest gravity rides. COURTESY JOHN COLEMAN



Frederick Road survived for only a short time, eventually succumbing to a number of devastating — and suspicious — fires during its brief ten-year existence. Of the 14 parks highlighted, only Enchanted Forest survived into the 1980s. Fires, hurricanes, changing social habits and escalating property values helped bring an end to Baltimore's old tradition-

al amusement parks.

Augmenting each chapter are historic photos, images or copies of brochures. The soft-cover book fills more 252 pages and is filled with numerous black and white photos — likely the first time that so many images of Baltimore parks have been brought together in one resource.

All of the photos are

nicely captioned and the chapters are a pleasure to read. *Historic Amusement Parks of Baltimore* sells for \$39.95 and is available through McFarland Publishing's website, mcfarlandpub.com or McFarland's phone order line, 800-523-2187. The book is also for sale at Amazon.com, and major book retailers such as Barnes & Noble.







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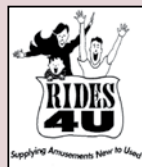
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