

Amusement TODAY

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Your Amusement
Industry
NEWS Leader



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Knoebels welcomes
Impulse coaster
See story, page 24-26



Busch Gardens
debuts Tempesto
See story, page 22



Batman arrives at
Six Flags Fiesta Texas
See story, page 32



Holiday World
launches into its
future...
See story, page 30



Knott's Berry Farm
debuts 4-D dark ride
Voyage to the Iron Reef
See story, page 36

NEWSPAPER

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NEWSTALK

EDITORIAL: Gary Slade, gslade@amusementtoday.com

Golden Ticket Awards registration now open



Slade

Quick reminder that all amusement industry professionals are invited to attend this year's **2015 Golden Ticket Awards** in the Big Apple on Sept. 11 and 12. Our host parks are Victorian Gardens in Central Park and Luna Park at the birthplace of American amusements — Coney Island! Make your plans now to attend this Networking Event of the Year!

Go to www.GoldenTicketAwards.com to register and to book your hotel stay at the beautiful Park Lane Hotel overlooking the massive Central Park and downtown Manhattan!

Your hosts, *Amusement Today* and Zamperla, have reserved plenty of free time in New York City to shop, dine and explore this amazing world destination. We look forward to seeing you there!



FLINT'S VIEW: Bubba Flint



INDUSTRY OPINION: Andrew Mellor, amellor@amusementtoday.com

Knowing your neighbors

We all seek to lead happy and contented lives and nowhere is this more the case than right on our own doorsteps. Our homes and the communities we live in are among the most important parts of our everyday existence.

Neighbors and neighboring properties are a key aspect of this and both can sometimes create certain issues for many different reasons. As far as theme parks are concerned, our industry has often come in for some criticism under circumstances where people who reside close to a park take it upon themselves to complain about the noise levels emanating from a location, despite the fact that in many cases, the park was there first so they should have realized what the situation was!

Here in the U.K. we've witnessed this on many occasions. At Alton Towers, for example, the U.K.'s highest attended theme park, local residents have previously made official complaints about noise levels, the most vociferous in many cases being those who moved to the area knowing full well a major park was in operation just



Mellor

down the road. So what do they expect?

The subject comes to mind on this occasion following an outline planning application to build around 500 new homes on land adjacent to the Flambards theme park in Cornwall, England. The matter will be considered further by the local planning authority in due course, once noise levels have been monitored, but the park owner has already raised a

key concern — that people may buy houses on the development and then complain about noise from the park, which may lead to restrictions on the business. How unfair would that be?

Whether this development goes ahead or not, the whole issue is not exactly rocket science. If you buy a house near a theme park there is going to be a certain amount of noise, from the rides and attractions running all day and from visitors enjoying themselves. Traffic too will inevitably have an impact, particularly at busy times, so the answer is really quite simple. If you can't live with a neighbor that just happens to be a theme park, then don't move in next door!

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Your Amusement Industry NEWS Leader

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2 MINUTE DRILL



COMPILED: Janice Withrow

Melissa Bass, The Coca-Cola Company

No matter where you are in the world, you can find a Coke. And Melissa Bass makes sure guests at the Cedar Fair parks find plenty of Coca-Cola products as it is her job to serve as the relationship manager between this global icon and popular chain of amusement parks ... a job she does with passion, pride and lots of FUN. Melissa's spirit, and drive help produce innovative results for Cedar Fair... and it sure helps that she doesn't hesitate to take a ride on a roller coaster!

Title:

Senior National Account Executive.

Number of years with The Coca-Cola Company:

26. I've had lots of Diet Coke!

Best thing about the amusement industry:

It is fun, and the people are nice and great to work with.

Favorite amusement ride:

GateKeeper at Cedar Point, but I LOVE spinning rides like the Himalaya.

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

Selling Coca-Cola products to other customers, but it wouldn't be as much FUN.

Biggest challenge facing our industry:

Price-value and the competition for the entertainment dollar.

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

It's summer, my favorite season.

My first car was...

A "preowned" Ford Mercury stick shift that my parents bought me when I was in college, which I then had to learn to drive. Nothing sexy about that car!

A recent life-changing moment for me was...

My husband and I went on a 10-day Detox diet. No gluten, dairy, or sugar. Wow! It was difficult but it improved my energy level, and I felt great.

Favorite midnight snack:

Umm...I'm asleep. However, recently, I ate more than my share of those addictive Cadbury Mini Easter eggs. Thank goodness they are only available once a year!

My perfect day is spent...

With my husband and dogs.



Melissa Bass with husband, Joe Burum, during the Final Four held recently in Indianapolis, Ind.

Ten years ago, I was...

Just coming back from a fabulous trip with friends to Machu Picchu.

My pet peeve is...

Lateness. I really appreciate it when everyone is on time.

My favorite Dr. Seuss book is...

Green Eggs & Ham.

If I could live in any home on a television series, it would be...

Gene Simmons' home on *Family Jewels* or maybe one of the Kardashian homes.

The longest I have ever gone without sleep is...

24-36 hours.

I am afraid of...

Snakes.

The all-time best ad slogan hands-down is...

"I'd like to buy the world a Coke".

The best concert I have ever been to is...

I've been to so many. Recently I would say Katy Perry and Pink.

On my last birthday, I...

Had a lovely dinner with my husband, indulged in my favorite cupcakes and took my dogs for a walk.

When it comes to sports, I cheer for...

The Carolina Tarheels. Go Heels!

It is summer! My favorite thing to grill is...

To have my husband grill!

The best vacation I have ever taken was to...

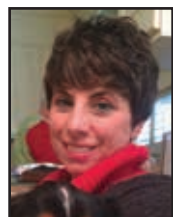
Russia. It was fascinating! But anyone that knows me knows my favorite place is Italy. I have been numerous times, and every vacation to Italy is bellissimo.

My hidden talent is...

Candy making. Although I don't know how "hidden" it is as I make batches of candy every holiday.

When I say Coca-Cola, you say...

Ah, It's the Real Thing.



Bass

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

Presented by the National Rollercoaster Museum

COMPILED: Richard Munch



•**1907:** In what was considered a first in New York City, **Lincoln Beachy**, an early aeronaut, would make an ascension in his balloon airship on June 20, at **Happyland Park**, South Beach, Staten Island. These types of shows were proving to be a hot ticket for smaller parks as many would come out for the free show, then spend some time in the popular parks and beach resorts. The 19-year-old Beachy had been an act at the **James-town Exposition** in Virginia, but was now traveling to other parks piloting his futuristic airship around the grounds much to the delight of a curious public. Popular at the time, many early aviators visited parks in Boston, Chicago and Los Angeles. In June 1910, another pilot, **E.J. Parker**, almost lost his life at **Pine Island Park**, near Manchester, Massachusetts, after he hit the park's wooden coaster structure in a dirigible balloon. Beachy, who died in 1915 during an aerial display at the **Panama-Pacific International Exposition** in San Francisco, would go on to become one of the most famous stunt pilots in early aviation history.

•**1920:** **Joyland Park**, in Sacramento, California, suffered a major loss with a large fire on June 21 that started in one of the concessions. The blaze destroyed the bathhouse, the Old Mill concession and parts of the Giant Racer, all in less than an hour. The \$100,000 fire was spectacular and the light construction of the amusement devices and concessions allowed the damage to spread rapidly. Only in its eighth season, the popular park would limp along without its major rides until sold in 1927. Today the area is known as **McClatchy Park**.

•**1942:** The first documented woman to operate a scenic railway, **Adele Gruskin**, was highlighted in an article in the *New York Sun* on June 9. With America having entered the war, less men were available to operate and maintain the rides. Believed to be the first female driver in the world, Gruskin, 21, said she had paid to ride the Big Scenic at **Palisades Amusement Park**, Fort Lee, New Jersey up until she was hired as a cashier. Her training took three days and she was delighted to be able to control the electrified ride (by speed control and brake), although she said the thrill had worn off after 30 consecutive trips during her first day. Park owner **Irving Rosenthal** said that a number of women would operate rides in the park during the summer, suggesting that they were "more careful than men."

•**1947:** Featured in the local news, **Philadelphia Toboggan Company's** builder **Frank Hoover** remained busy in mid-June building a new wooden roller coaster for **Jimmy Johnson's Playland Park**, in San Antonio, Texas. The new ride, at 78 feet high, would be the city's first new coaster in 32 years, and would open in mid-August. Named the Rocket, it was designer **Herbert Schmeck's** answer to the new Comet coaster in the **Texas State Fairgrounds** in Dallas. Playland would close at the end of the 1980 season, and the Rocket would be eventually sold and moved to the **Knoebels Amusement Resort**, Elysburg, Pennsylvania, where today it operates as the appropriately named Phoenix.

•**1989:** **Upper Clements Park** in Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia opened for the first time on June 23. The \$23 million park, built by the government of Nova Scotia as an entertainment resort, contains over 40 rides and attractions. Opening with the park, the medium size Tree Topper wooden coaster is the last coaster designed by **William L. Cobb**, before his death in 1990. With a maximum height of 52 feet, riders of all ages have enjoyed the relatively short 1,400 foot long ride, Nova Scotia's only wooden roller coaster since the park opened. The beautifully situated park, in a natural wooded area, has thrilled locals and tourists for over a quarter century with an attendance of about 100,000 visitors a year.



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INTERNATIONAL

► Grona Lund opens Sally walk-through — Page 6 / Dubai Parks, Merlin partner for Lego water park — Page 7

Hansa-Park to debut 240 foot tall Gerstlauer hypercoaster

AT: Andrew Mellor
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SIERKSDORF, Germany — Hansa-Park in northern Germany will open another major attraction during the 2015 season with the park shortly due to debut the hypercoaster The Oath of Kärnan.

Following a construction period of over one-and-a-half years, Kärnan will represent the largest single investment in the park's history and the biggest project it has undertaken to date. And while the ride itself will open this year, theming work will be completed in 2016 at which time guests will be able to appreciate the full story behind the attraction which relates to a time in history many centuries ago and Danish kings who ruled at Kärnan, in Helsingborg. The Kärnan tower is the only remaining structure of a medieval fortress built in Helsingborg, Scania, Sweden, in the 1300s.

The name and the story woven around it fit the overall concept of Hansa-Park and symbolize the park's name. And as a family attraction, the ride will be both a challenge and a fun adventure for families.

Kärnan, planned and designed by Munich-based Werner Stengel and built by German manufacturer Gerstlauer, will feature a distinct custom layout and rather than an inclined lift will incorporate a vertical lift and a vertical first



drop. Riders will pass through a dark section before the lift and again at the end of the ride prior to entering the station area. It will also feature a ride element shaped like a heart, an inversion element in the dark, and will be a terrain coaster running just above the ground on certain sections of the track.

The highest part of the track, the top of the lift hill, will reach to 73 meters (240 feet) and the first drop will be a 67 meter (220 foot) plunge. Kärnan's trains will each hold 16 passengers in four rows with lap bars and they will reach a top speed of approximately 127 kmh (79 mph). Ride time will be around three and a half minutes along the 1,235 meter (4,052 foot) long track. The centerpiece tower structure within the attraction will be approximately 79 meters (259 feet) high.

Hansa-Park in northern Germany will open the Oath of Kärnan during the 2015 season. The 240 foot tall coaster is being supplied by Gerstlauer
COURTESY HANSA-PARK



Austrian-themed bobsled ride opens in Toverland



Maximus' Blitz Bahn bobsled ride made its debut at the start of Toverland's 2015 season.

COURTESY TOVERLAND

SEVENUM, the Netherlands — Toverland in the Netherlands began its 2015 season with the launch of the new Maximus' Blitz Bahn bobsled ride while the park also revealed details of a range of events that will be held during the year.

Supplied by German manufacturer Weigand, the latest ride addition is situated in an Austrian themed area in the Magic Forest section of the park, which in addition to the Blitz Bahn also features Wirbelbaum, the new Biergarten and the Karusell, which has been moved from an outside position to inside.

When guests enter the Magic Forest, the changes made for 2015 are immediately apparent. Next to Villa Fiasko, a large Austrian chalet now serves as the entrance and queue line area for Blitz Bahn, which takes guests on a tour through the house of Maximus Müller, the eccentric inventor of the new ride. Past inventions can also be viewed on the themed tour before passengers board one of 14 vehicles used on the ride.

Maximum speed on Blitz Bahn is 45 kmh (28 mph) and up to two people can ride in each bobsled. The track

length is 512 meters (1,680 feet) and hourly capacity is approximately 700. At the end of the ride, guests can see their track time on a scoreboard and are also able to buy a ride photo, with which they can enter their time on a dedicated website for the chance to win a range of prizes. On-board music and lighting effects add to the experience.

Additionally, Toverland has expanded its evening events for 2015, with the new family oriented Magic Spring Evenings which took place in early May in Magic Land. Extended opening times were

introduced to accommodate the extensive entertainment and show program held on two nights, introduced to offer a special experience during each season. At other times of the year, Toverland will offer further live entertainment and shows with Midsummer Nights in summer, Halloween Nights in the autumn and Magical Winter Weekends during the winter.

With the addition of the Blitz Bahn and the new events, Toverland hopes to increase visitor numbers and break through the 700,000 figure this year.

—Andrew Mellor

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INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS

Tokyo hotel opens Godzilla-themed rooms

TOKYO, Japan — Leading Japanese hotelier Fujita Kanko Inc. opened its new 970-room Hotel Gracery Shinjuku on April 24, in the heart of Tokyo's entertainment district, Kabukicho. The building also offers a 12-screen cinema complex and various dining and amusement facilities.

For months, there has been worldwide buzz about the hotel's one-of-a-kind Godzilla-themed guest rooms that will transport guests into the world of the celebrated monster movies. "We are excited about Hotel Gracery Shinjuku's debut after so much anticipation. Our Godzilla-themed rooms are booked for months. We are ready to demonstrate that our commitment to service is bigger than Godzilla," says Akira Segawa, president and CEO of Fujita Kanko.

There are two types of Godzilla-themed rooms. The Godzilla Room, located on the top floor and the only room of its kind, enjoys a Godzilla-themed interior including wall panels and a trick wall with special effects, a life-size replica of Godzilla's claw looming over the beds, and a Godzilla figure standing in the room. Godzilla Room guests can bring home original Godzilla memorabilia not available anywhere else.

Guests can also choose one of six Godzilla View Rooms, where they can see from their windows a life-size replica of Godzilla's head on the hotel's eighth-floor terrace. The View Rooms have the same interior as the hotel's other guest rooms.

—Business Wire

•<http://shinjuku.gracery.com>**Timberplay's AQuadrat makes waves in the U.K.**

KETTERING, Northamptonshire, U.K. — Waterplay is soaring in popularity across the U.K. as public authorities and leisure companies recognize unbeatable allure waterplay provides. Timberplay and Richter Spielgeräte have a strong reputation for offering exceptional robust waterplay products, all designed to deliver play value to delight children of all ages.

One of Timberplay's newest products is the AQuadrat, a flexible, modular system made from solid oak timber, with mushroom pump and metal gutters. This feature item has just been installed at Wicksteed Park as part of the development of their play area, and is proving a popular attraction for visitors, particularly now that the sun is shining.

Paul Coillings, managing director at Timberplay said, "We have been championing waterplay for many years now — nothing beats the play value that waterplay consistently delivers. It is also one of the most inclusive forms of play you can have, all children can share in the play experience, across all abilities and ages. The AQuadrat is such an attractive and robust piece of equipment and, as it can be installed as a standalone piece, it is a great way of injecting waterplay into any play space."

•www.timberplay.com**Dreamworld hosts Entertainment book launch**

COOMERA, Australia — A successful launch of the newest annual Entertainment Book for the Gold Coast region occurred on April 23 at Dreamworld.

The most iconic entertainment theme park on the Gold Coast was the perfect setting for the release for a book chock full of exciting entertainment options the area has to offer.

"Entertainment Books are all about discovery and encouraging people to try new places. We're often told people find restaurants and experiences they never would have heard about otherwise," says Heidi Halson, general manager Entertainment Publications. "The new Entertainment Digital Membership opens the offers up to a more mobile audience who can be reminded of opportunities while they are on the go."

BPAA welcomes Japanese bowling centers

ARLINGTON, Texas - Nearly 60 bowling centers representing more than 2,000 lanes in Japan have joined the Bowling Proprietors' Association of America (BPAA) through the BPAA International Membership Program.

The centers belong to Brunswick Kai, a group of bowling centers that was founded in 1974 to help unite the bowling industry in Japan. Brunswick Kai initially was established with a focus on research, education, and tournaments. It has since evolved with marketing programs to grow the sport throughout Japan.

New Sally Corp. walk-through attraction opens at Gröna Lund

STOCKHOLM — Sally Corporation's all-new haunted attraction, House of Nightmares, opened April 25, 2015, at Gröna Lund, Stockholm's historic seaside amusement park. Hundreds of visitors lined up outside the evil Dr. Morphio's house to be the first to experience the new attraction.

Public interest had been building for months. "Leading up to the opening, Gröna Lund did a superb job of teasing the public with posters that came alive, creepy pictures from inside the house, a zombie kiss-cam scare prank inside a movie theater, and even a House of Nightmares commercial so frightening that it was banned from airing before 9 p.m.!" said Lauren Weaver, marketing director at Sally Corporation.

As guests approach the exterior of an old Victorian mansion, they see a large, neon sign drawing them closer. Special effects, lighting and sound help set the mood for the terrors that await inside. Scenic elements enhance the back story of Dr. Morphio and his hideous experiments.

"Nothing is as frightening as your imagination suggests it may be. It's the idea of what may be inside which sets the stage for the frights to come. Before guests even step inside we want them to be nervous, anxious and ready for anything," said lead designer, Drew Hunter. "The macabre Dr. Morphio and his obsession with nightmares inspired us as we designed all aspects of the haunted house."

As they enter, visitors are immediately immersed in the story Dr. Morphio, an American scientist who specialized in the nature of human subconscious and the nature of dreams. It was in the late 1940's, the formative years of television, when Dr. Morphio hosted a program entitled "DreamLand" during which he would interpret the dreams of guests on his show. However, at the height of his fame, his TV career came to a sudden halt when it was revealed that his personal research had become highly unethical and thoroughly illegal. The public



Sally Corporation's all new haunted attraction, House of Nightmares, opened April 25 at Gröna Lund, Stockholm's historic seaside amusement park. Hundreds of visitors lined up outside the evil Dr. Morphio's house to be the first to step inside and experience the terrifying new attraction. Shown below inside the ride are Gröna Lund's Peter Osbeck (left) and Sally's Drew Hunter. COURTESY GRONA LUND



was shocked to discover that he was conducting experiments on human subjects in which he attempted to forcibly extract their dreams from their minds and bring their nightmares to life.

"After two years of dreaming, planning and building, I'm thrilled to see the House of Nightmares opening for the public today. I'm extremely pleased with the horrific end-result from the fabulous crew at Sally Corporation. Working with them has been one of the best and most memorable collaborations of my career," said Peter Osbeck, ride manager at Gröna Lund.

John Wood, CEO of Sally Corporation says, "We were thrilled with the opportunity to work with such a fine group of professionals and with such an historic and remarkable park as Gröna Lund. The attraction is a complete redevelopment of a classic walk-thru haunted house...guaranteed to bring out your worst nightmares!"

Specially designed for

Gröna Lund, this one-of-a-kind walk through attraction features animatronic characters and props, CGI video effects, live wire illumination, video projection, Pepper's Ghost illusions, ultraviolet illumination, live performers, and, of course, "element X."

Drew Hunter, Sally's vice president of Creative Design and lead designer of the House of Nightmares attraction adds:

"Element X is the subliminal. You can't see it. You can't hear it. You can only sense it. A superb haunted attraction will always have effective scares, sets, props, performers, sound and all else to make it top notch," added Hunter. "But the best of the best will have that special something extra that is hard to define and even harder to design into a show. That is the undercurrent of dread, suspense, fear and anticipation. That's Element X. Thanks to the cooperation, talents and creativity of Gröna Lund and Sally Corporation — you will experience all of that and more inside the House of Nightmares."

Dubai Parks & Resorts partner with Merlin for Lego water park

AT: Andrew Mellor
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DUBAI, U.A.E. — Dubai Parks and Resorts, which has already announced a range of forthcoming attractions in Dubai, has added further to its plans with the announcement that it has partnered with Merlin Entertainments to build Legoland Waterpark in Dubai.

Due to open in 2016, Legoland Waterpark will be an additional facility at the wider Legoland Dubai theme park currently under development. Aimed at children aged 2-12, the new water park will feature some of Legoland's most popular water attractions including a half-million gallon wave pool; the very popular Build-A-Raft River where guests can design and build their own customized raft; and the interactive Imagination

Station, where children can construct bridges, dams and cities and test their designs against the flow of water.

Commenting on the plans for the Legoland Waterpark, Raed Al Nuaimi, CEO of Dubai Parks and Resorts, said: "We are committed to offering unforgettable experiences for guests of all ages at Dubai Parks and Resorts. We are therefore very pleased to partner with Merlin Entertainments to bring this unique water park concept to the UAE as an exciting new element to the Legoland Dubai theme park. We look forward to welcoming families to this immersive and interactive attraction, where children can create, build and learn while having fun. With the addition of the Legoland Waterpark to our existing offering we will now



The Legoland Waterpark in Dubai will be part of the Legoland Dubai theme park. It will open in 2016.
COURTESY MERLIN ENTERTAINMENTS

have a destination that boasts six major parks which together have over 100 rides and attractions."

On behalf of Merlin En-

tertainments, CEO Nick Varney said: "We already have a strong working partnership with Dubai Parks and Resorts and this Legoland Waterpark

is an exciting and natural extension to our existing park development here in Dubai. In line with Legoland Dubai, the Legoland Waterpark is aimed primarily at families with young children aged 2-12, offering a unique place for them to play and have fun together."

Dubai Parks and Resorts is set to be the region's largest multi-themed leisure and entertainment destination when it opens in October 2016. In addition to Legoland Dubai, Dubai Parks and Resorts will also comprise motiongate Dubai and Bollywood Parks Dubai – all connected by Riverland Dubai, a unique retail, dining and entertainment walkway. The development will also feature Lapita, a Polynesian-themed resort for families. Its first full year of operation will be 2017.



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WATER PARKS & RESORTS

► ProSlide opens Asian office — Page 14 / Aqua Azur, Polin announce partnership in Romania — Page 16

Storied water park resurrects old reputation for daring Action Park eyes first 'legit' vertical looping waterslide for 2016

AT: Dean Lamanna
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VERNON, N.J. — During its first era of operation, from 1978 to 1996, Action Park — a unique seasonal amusement park in this northern New Jersey ski area that featured water-based and alpine slide attractions — became something of a wild rite of passage for its young patrons drawn primarily from Greater New York City.

However, thrillseekers occasionally got more than they bargained for physically from the rides, which were mostly built in-house and often were alleged to have been manned by an undertrained and / or under-aged staff. Rowdy, intoxicated customers also were not uncommon.

It was a volatile stew of operational factors and human conduct that resulted not only in injuries but several deaths — reportedly leading local doctors to dub the place "Traction Park" and "Class Action Park." A former patron even wrote online that ambulances became known as the "Action Park Express" due to the frequency they would be seen speeding to and from the facility. (The park reportedly bought additional emergency vehicles for Vernon Township to keep up with the misadventurous demand.)

Lawsuits finally sealed the park's demise.

If the first Action Park carried the appeal of semi-unregulated pleasure for many, it has evolved — long after the dismantling of its most dangerous attractions and through changes in name and ownership — into a suburban legend among latter-day park

enthusiasts who are awed it ever existed. Personal recollections, photos and film footage shared online, and in 2013, the appearance of a startling and hilarious documentary titled *The Most Insane Amusement Park Ever*, have kept its memory alive.

The typical park operator would prefer to bury deeply anything that might remind customers of any unsavory history. Not so for Mountain Creek, the current owner of Action Park and the surrounding ski resort area. It not only is embracing the property's original name, which it restored (after a few years under the tepid Mountain Creek Waterpark moniker) in 2014, but it is looking to bank — with a bit of tongue-in-cheek boldness — on the nostalgic notoriety of one its original rides: the Cannonball Loop.

Akin to a hellish birth experience, the Cannonball Loop sent riders down a long black tube into a tight vertical loop — a first for a waterslide — and spat them out roughly into a pathetically shallow, tarp-lined pond. During a lifetime that lasted only a few weeks in 1985, it caused a number of injuries — including fiberglass friction burns, fractured digits and concussions — as riders bounced around inside (and sometimes failed to complete) the loop, which didn't attain the necessary water flow or centrifugal force.

Today's Action Park is planning to install a modern, technologically advanced version of the Cannonball Loop engineered for both maximum thrills and safety in time for the 2016 summer season.

The ride, catalogued as



The legendary Action Park, located at Mountain Creek ski resort in Vernon, N.J., is the first park to commission SkyCalibre (above) — the world's first safely engineered vertical looping waterslide. A product of Avalanche Waterslides and Skyturtle Technologies, Ltd., the ride, partly inspired by the Cannonball Loop (below), Action Park's extreme and short-lived 1985 waterslide, is tentatively set to debut next summer.

COURTESY AVALANCHE WATERSLIDES/SKYTURTLE TECHNOLOGIES; ACTION PARK



SkyCalibre by its developers, Avalanche Waterslides of Carthage, Mo., and Skyturtle Technologies, Ltd., based in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, drops a single pas-

senger in a protective, cage-like, aluminum-alloy mesh capsule from atop a 90-foot tower straight down into a 30-foot vertical loop. The capsule briefly pulls a g-force as high

as six and reaches speeds exceeding 50 mph, as shown by tests conducted last fall on a prototype erected at Avalanche's headquarters.

► See ACTION PARK, page 12

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Action Park's rough-and-tumble early incarnation has given way to a modern water and alpine slide park with the kind of thrills and safety features funseekers have come to expect. The facility begins its 2015 operating season on June 13. COURTESY ACTION PARK

► ACTION PARK Continued from page 11

Each capsule is outfitted with replaceable foam runners that hold it snug against the inside of the tube as it plunges. Approximately 1,000 gallons of water per minute coat the inside of the tube via internal sprayers to eliminate friction and ensure a 100 percent loop negotiation rate.

Ten capsules will be in rotation, and a system of loading / unloading (and capsule return to the top of the tower) has been devised that is so efficient as to allow a passenger throughput of up to 180 an hour.

The innovative and imposing SkyCalibre has stirred plenty of interest at recent industry conventions. And though it may not carry the name of its surly forerunner, it doesn't appear that inevitable comparisons between the two very similar, yet very different, attractions will be downplayed by Action Park repre-

sentatives.

"Everybody in every sport wants to do a full 360... and the original Cannonball Loop was a backyard approach to that," related Bill Benneyan, president of Mountain Creek Resort, to N.J. Advance Media (NJ.com) in March. "These guys have figured out how to do it right. It's a heck of a ride."

One of those guys is engineering designer Lance Fisher, president of Skyturtle and formerly a designer with White-Water West Industries. He told *Amusement Today* that a "nightmare" was the origin of his limits-pushing concept for SkyCalibre.

"I had been working long days designing a new drop capsule for Avalanche Waterslides," said Fisher, "and I ended up dreaming about it at night. In one dream I was standing in my newly designed capsule, but for some reason the drop was straight down. Not wanting to perform a cannonball down a tube, I reached for the sides of the

capsule and held on for my life. But being part of a nightmare, the capsule broke off the tower and I plummeted down the drop inside of it."

With SkyCalibre, Fisher and his team are hoping to break waterslide records for tallest vertical freefall, tallest vertical looping element (the loop's comfort-enhancing teardrop shape is a notable improvement over the Cannonball Loop's bone-crunching coil) and speed.

Fisher has admitted that he himself was intimidated when it came time to be the first person to test the contraption last fall. "I won't lie: I was a little nervous," he said of the trip. "It gave me that kind of stomach-rising-up feeling... that you typically only feel on a roller coaster."

Benneyan reportedly is the first individual outside of Skyturtle or Avalanche to try SkyCalibre, which is being marketed with a price tag starting at \$1.4 million. He has described it as a "huge thrill" — and an experience he's clearly excited to be bringing to the otherwise colorfully familiar mix of contemporary waterslides at Action Park, provided that he can obtain all the state and local approvals required. (SkyCalibre had successfully completed more than 100 test runs as of this past spring; 500 must be logged to pave the way for approvals.) Installation is expected to take three months.

"We're just proud because a lot has changed in the past 30 years in terms of safety and design," Benneyan said last March. "It's just good ol' guts and glory, and a lot of fun."

• actionpark.com



A few of Action Park's attractions take advantage of the ski area's hilly terrain and retain a "homemade" feel, and at least one of its raft rides (shown here) utilizes the terrain and natural beauty of the park to further enhance the guest experience. COURTESY ACTION PARK

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ProSlide opens new Asia office

SHANGHAI, China — Signaling a stronger commitment to Asia Pacific, ProSlide has opened a new office based in the Shanghai Mart International Trade Center. The office will serve as the operations hub in Asia Pacific. From there, ProSlide will manage all aspects of project delivery, including project management, engineering, customer care, and more.

"When it comes to the development of water parks, the Asia Pacific region is on fire" says Ron Chisholm, managing director, Asia Pacific Operations. "This Shanghai hub allows us to get even closer to our many customers in this area, respond more quickly to their needs and be more fully immersed in their success."

"ProSlide is the fastest growing water park attractions company in Asia," says Rick Hunter, ProSlide president & CEO. "We're invested in our customers' success on a personal level. Nothing feels better than delivering the world-class attractions they need to become world-class parks."

Since its first Asian project in the early 1990's, ProSlide has become a trusted partner to the region's top water parks. China projects include Beijing Water Cube, Beijing Happy Magic Waterpark, OCT parks (Wuhan Playa Maya Waterpark, Shanghai Maya Waterpark, Spa and Waterpark Yunnan, Tianjin Happy Valley Waterpark) and many more.

Other world-class ProSlide projects in southeast Asia include Ocean Park in Indonesia; Bukit Gambang & Ocean Splash in Malaysia; Adventure Cove Waterpark (Sentosa) & Wild Wild Wet in Singapore; Everland Caribbean Bay & Gyeongju World in South Korea; Santorini Water Fantasy in Thailand; as well as Vinpearl Land Royal City in Vietnam.

SplashGolf creating a new industry splash; smaller size now offered

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. — SplashGolf is attracting water park designers, builders, equipment manufacturers and owners as Adventure Golf Services continues its product upgrade and reveals plans for a smaller model. Dubbed as a "water mini golf on a splash pad" Splash Golf takes players and the game itself into an interactive water environment, thus making an industry debut with a huge splash.

"Companies and potential users from around the world are anticipating the benefits that SplashGolf brings to water parks", says Adventure Golf Services President Scott Lundmark. "It combines two age-old fun attractions (splash pads and mini golf) into one completely new, interactive water-based game attracting all age groups for more family fun. Water parks like it because it's a new water activity but will also help divert long lines on other attractions. We just recently released the sales package to owners of water parks and

other attractions who have expressed interest."

"This new water activity is ideally suited for water parks, amusement parks, tourist attractions, resorts and hotels, campgrounds and city / municipal parks and recreation centers. Adventure Golf is currently working with dealer relationships in Australia, Europe, the United States and China," Lundmark said.

In announcing a new smaller size of SplashGolf Lundmark said: "SplashGolf has evolved, by collaborating with splash pad and spray nozzle specialists to improve engineering, fabrication and installation techniques and at the same time add more fun. During this process we decided to reduce our 5,800 square foot model priced at \$303,000 to create a new smaller 3,000 square foot model. This smaller model called SplashGolf Jr. has a lower price and fits more locations where space is limited such as indoors, on cruise ships or even smaller outdoor sites."

• adventureandfun.com



NEWS SPLASH

COMPILED: Jeffrey L. Seifert
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Indiana Beach, in Monticello, Indiana, will be expanding its water park for the 2015 season. The new section, dubbed Bay Beach, will include a 25,000 square-foot wave pool, racing slides, a bowl slide and cabanas and is located adjacent to the park's north entrance. The centerpiece of the new area, The Breakers, is the 800,000 gallon wave pool capable of producing a variety of waves all day long.

"Indiana Beach is very proud of our historic past and we continue to invest in our future. The addition of Beach Bay, as well as, last seasons' seven new rides adds new wet and dry options for our guests to enjoy", says **John Collins**, Indiana Beach general manager. "With this multi-million dollar addition to Indiana Beach, we feel 2015 will be the best season ever for Indiana Beach. Our guests want exciting new attractions and Beach Bay will provide life long memories for generations of guests who have come to Indiana Beach year after year."

The water park, Ideal Beach, and the expanded Bay Beach area are included with the one-day Funday admission ticket. The park opened for the season on May 22.

Hydro Adventures water park in Poplar Bluff, Missouri, is continuing its quest to become a first-class entertainment destination. Following multiple improvements in 2014, guests can expect more enhancements for 2015, including the addition of flat rides. Five dry rides, ranging from teacups to a Tilt-A-Whirl are being added to the park. Hyrdo Adventures is adding a separate midway with good, old-fashioned, amusement park rides.

Along with the new rides came the announcement of lower ticket prices, with regular single-day admission \$5 lower than last year.

"We could have easily raised our prices because of our new rides, but we have done just the opposite," park operator **Jack Falfas** noted. "We wanted to show our appreciation to the community, and make sure everyone was able to come to Hydro Adventures. That's why we lowered our prices. We're actually giving you more and charging you less. Nobody does that. Only Hydro Adventures."

A proposed \$20 million water park in **Richland County, South Carolina**, suffered a setback when contract negotiations with the front-running company fell apart. Although negotiations might have resumed months from now, county leaders decided that re-bidding the project was the better choice.

The water park, the first major project to take advantage of the county's new hospital-tax fund, will be one of the largest in South Carolina and is expected to become a major tourist destination. County officials are hoping this contract negotiation setback does significantly delay the opening of the water park, which could be completed by next year.

The **Coco Key Water Park Resort** in Sharonville, Ohio, was forced to close in May after its water disinfection system failed. On May 1, 2015, the department of agriculture ordered the park closed until the equipment

is repaired and inspected by the state. An earlier inspection in February showed the system had been partially working. Two months later a second inspection showed the system was not working at all. A public information officer from the Hamilton County Department of Health said CoCo Key had some pool complaints but nothing egregious.

Parrot Island waterpark in Fort Smith, Arkansas celebrated its grand opening on May 23. The \$11 million project, a joint venture between the city of Fort Smith and Sebastian County, was six years in the making. Following three years of planning and proposals, voters approved the use of a local sales tax to finance the project back in 2012. It took another three years to become a reality.

The water park includes four water slides, a lazy river, activity pool and children's aquatic play area along with party pavilions, cabanas, and food and beverage concessions. The water park is located at Ben Geren Park, a recreational area that features a variety of activities including miniature golf, go karts, playground equipment, athletic fields, paved and unpaved bike trails, hiking trails and a 27-hole golf course. The previous water feature at the park, a public swimming pool, closed in 2004.

Mayor **Jamie Mayo** of Monroe, Louisiana, was all smiles on Sunday, May 1, as he cut the ribbon to officially open a new splash pad at the **Louisiana Purchase Gardens & Zoo**. The water attraction was first announced in 2012 but encountered several setbacks and delays. "We've been hoping to bring this to the citizens of Monroe for two years now," said Mayor Mayo, "We've ran into the rain delays that everyone has run into and a couple of other things. But it's open now and it's open for good."

The opening of the splash pad follows the opening of a new playscape at the zoo just a few weeks earlier. The attractions are near the Monroe Garden Club Children's Garden and Children's Greenhouse and aim to enhance the experience of young visitors to the zoo. Both attractions are included with the price of general admission.

On April 30, California-based **Apex Parks Group** acquired **Sahara Sam's Oasis Indoor and Outdoor Water Park**, West Berlin, N.J.

The 70,000 square foot indoor complex boasts a retractable roof over its water park attractions. The indoor facility also offers arcade games as well as food and beverage services including full service bars, an extensive cafeteria menu, dining and a private party room. The park is 20 miles from Philadelphia and less than 90 miles from New York, and will give Apex Parks Group a foothold in the Northeast United States.

"Adding Sahara Sam's Oasis brings a differentiated entertainment concept, a new market and a proven management team to the Apex portfolio," stated **Al Weber**, CEO of Apex Parks Group. "As the only free-standing, year-round, indoor-outdoor water park in the United States, Sahara Sam's Oasis is truly a one-of-a-kind guest experience."

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Aqua Azur, Polin announce official partnership in Romania

TURKEY — Aqua Azur of Romania and Polin Waterparks of Turkey have announced a partnership within the country of Romania as the leading suppliers, designers and installers of aquatic attractions in that country.

As part of this partnership, Aqua Azur is now the official distributor of Polin products in Romania.

Kubilay Alpdogan, director of sales and design for Polin, said that Polin chose to partner with Aqua Azur due to its established expertise in the region. "For more than a decade, Aqua Azur has become recognized as Romania's pool expert thanks to its experience and long list of clients. The firm offers a professional team, and qual-



ity is always its top priority," he says.

Aqua Azur has designed dozens of turnkey pool projects for both indoor and out-

door public and residential installations. Working from a client's simple description of a concept, the company's expert engineers can create a 3D animation that brings the project to life.

Alpdogan adds, "Aqua Azur has grown into a leading company in the construction of aquatic recreation centers and waterparks. Today, it's one of

the Romanian leaders in the installation of waterslides and waterplay attractions and public pool construction. We have done several successful waterpark projects in the region so far. While these projects have been on a smaller scale than most of Polin's traditional installations, they are just the beginning of what we as two firms plan to create together."

Daniela Mariscu, general manager of Aqua Azur, says, "Our clients can fully immerse their imaginations into a project as our skilled team of designers make their dreams come true. They can feel confident that their designs will be completed to their complete satisfaction due to our advanced levels of technical advice, customized design and quality functionality."

To date, Aqua Azur has completed the installation of more than 55 aquatic centers and is the exclusive distributor of important global pool-technology products for the Romanian market.

Small beginnings but infinite possibilities

Aqua Azur and Polin had already forged a strong partnership before the recent official paperwork was completed due to their collaboration on numerous previous projects. Mariscu says, "Both our companies invest in the best people and equipment to provide our clients with uniqueness, excellence and durability. We expect the future to bring great opportunities based on the impressive synergy that our two firms have created by joining together. With our combined forces, we can offer a wide variety of new attractions — even signature, never-yet-seen attractions — to the Romanian market."

She adds, "With Polin as the expert in water parks and in project management in the region, and Aqua Azur as the local expert, we offer a combination of skill and experience that no one else can match!"

Aqua Azur provides professional consultation, as well as budgeting, design and engineering. Its specialty is unique pool designs that are solidly built and guaranteed for life. "We pay attention to the smallest detail and perform flawless execution with ongoing technical support," Mariscu explains.



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PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► Quassy opens with two new rides, train station — Page 20 / Fairs & Attractions News — Pages 38-44

SeaWorld San Antonio plans new dolphin habitat for 2016

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — SeaWorld San Antonio recently announced that the park will begin construction this spring on a significant addition that will open in 2016. This project, one of the largest single capital investments in the park's 27-year history, will include a revolutionary new area for dolphins located in the northern part of the park. These changes will nearly

SeaWorld has rescued more than 25,000 animals

ORLANDO, Fla. — On April 3, the SeaWorld Rescue Team surpassed a sobering milestone: more than 25,000 animals rescued during the past five decades.

2015 is proving to be a challenging year for animals in the wild in need of SeaWorld's help. Just recently, SeaWorld helped rescue 19 manatees stuck in a storm drain, returned dozens of sea turtles to the ocean, and saved hundreds of sea lions that are stranding on the California coast due to lack of food. SeaWorld San Diego's Rescue Team alone has already rescued more than 475 marine mammals this year.

"Our goal for every animal we rescue is to successfully rehabilitate and return it to the wild. And for the small percentage of animals with conditions that would prevent them from surviving in the wild, they are given lifelong care at SeaWorld or another accredited facility," SeaWorld Rescue Team official said.

•SeaWorldCares.com

double the size of the park's dolphin pool and allow guests to experience these amazing mammals in new, more powerful ways.

The habitat will be dramatically transformed into two new ways to experience dolphins. First, SeaWorld guests will finally be able to go beneath the water's surface to see dolphins swimming and playing underwater. Large viewing panes for underwater viewing will allow guests to see how these magnificent creatures swim, interact and play from an entirely new vantage point. But the most dramatic change to this area is the introduction of a new facility that will allow guests to swim with dolphins in a naturalistic environment. The new addition, which will be named Discovery Point, will borrow its look and feel from the company's Discovery Cove park in Orlando, Florida by offering guests a dolphin swim experience in a lush, tropical setting.

Wider waters and deeper connections

On March 23, SeaWorld closed the northern part of the park to guests to make way for the revolutionary updates to its dolphin habitat. Access to Dolphin Cove and the park's Sharks/The Coral Reef attractions will be restricted until the project is completed in May 2016.

This project reflects SeaWorld's ongoing commitment to improve its animal habitats while providing new ways for guests to make connections with the animals in its care. Updates to the park's dolphin pools will nearly double the water volume of the habitat,

enlarging the pool to hold more than 600,000 gallons. The improvements will also benefit SeaWorld guests, allowing them to have access to expansive underwater viewing windows where they see dolphins swimming, playing and interacting from a new vantage point.

The Discovery Point Experience

When completed in May 2016, Discovery Point will become the hub for three of the park's animal interaction programs serving as a starting point for guests as they journey to Beluga Bay, Sea Lion Shallows and Dolphin Lagoon. These programs complement the park's other interaction programs with stingrays and penguins which will remain unchanged.

In the dolphin swim experience, guests will meet bottlenose dolphins during an interactive adventure and learn about dolphin behavior and communication, along with SeaWorld's dolphin research and rescue efforts. After their classroom presentation and discussion on dolphins' natural history and physiology, guests will wade into shallow water and become acquainted with one of these fascinating, intelligent dolphins through close contact during this one-on-one dolphin encounter. Then, taking the adventure one step further, guests can interact with their dolphin in deeper water for an exciting dorsal fin tow ride back to shore. Paid reservations must be made for this program, and participants must be at least 6 years old to swim with dolphins. Children ages 6 to 12 must be accompanied by a



SeaWorld San Antonio has announced major improvements to its dolphin habitat that will nearly double the space for dolphins while adding underwater viewing for guests. COURTESY SEAWORLD SAN ANTONIO



SeaWorld San Antonio began construction on March 23 on one of the single largest capital projects in its 27-year history. The upcoming addition, called Discovery Point, will be a new home for the park's dolphins where guests can swim with these majestic animals. COURTESY SEAWORLD SAN ANTONIO

paying adult who also is participating in the dolphin swim experience.

"Guests have asked repeatedly for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to swim with these fascinating animals," said Dan Decker, park president of SeaWorld & Aquatica San Antonio. "Up until now, we've only offered this experience in Orlando, so this will make it much more

accessible to guests in our region."

"As an accredited Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) facility and world leader in animal care, these future attractions will not only revolutionize the way our guests connect with and learn about our animals, but it will allow us to continue SeaWorld's excellent standard of care," Decker added.

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Quassy opens 107th season with two new rides, train station

MIDDLEBURY, Conn. — It's been anything but quiet at Quassy Amusement & Waterpark after the lakeside property closed out its 2014 season last October.

Park personnel have been



The Quassy Express train ride has a new train station modeled after those found in the early part of the 20th century. COURTESY QUASSY

busy preparing two new rides and other updates for Quassy's April 25 opening, which also marked the 107th year for the family-owned park.

"We're excited to be able to debut two new attractions for 2015," said George Frantzis II, whose grandfather purchased the facility in 1937. "In recent years we have reinvested a great deal into the park, including our Wooden Warrior roller coaster and updates at Splash Away Bay waterpark. This year the emphasis is — again — on the amusement park side of our business."

Making its debut on opening day was kiddie bumper cars and Frantic, a spectacular family thrill ride, both from Visa International of Italy and sold to Quassy through N.J.-based Rides 4-U.

"It's a bit on the wild side," quipped Quassy President Eric Anderson, who took a spin on the high-flying attraction. "We've never had a ride like this — one that flips riders up-

side down."

Frantic accommodates eight riders in a circular configuration with the seats suspended on a huge pendulum. The seats spin as the ride swings higher and higher before doing a series of 360-degree flips. The topsy-turvy attraction is located near the Grand Carousel.

Also new in 2015:

- The Quassy Express train ride now has a covered station over the loading platform. The new structure is reminiscent of Quassy's "trolley park" heritage as the park was owned and operated by an electrified rail line in its early days.

- Cabana and lounge chair rentals will be a new feature at Splash Away Bay water park and Quassy Beach. Online reservations will be available for the added waterfront feature.

- Quassy has also installed a Wi-Fi system, offering free service for guests and a new swipe card system in the redemption arcade.



New at Quassy this year are these two Visa Intl./Rides 4-U rides: Frantic (above) and kiddie bumper cars (right). COURTESY QUASSY



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Premier Rides' new Tempesto delivers for Busch Gardens (Va.)

AT: B. Derek Shaw

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WILLIAMSBURG, VA — Tempesto, the Premier Rides Sky Rocket II model launch coaster opened to rave reviews during a media event April 24 at Busch Gardens Williamsburg, Va.

The 154-foot-tall structure features numerous tight turns and banked inversions. The 18 passenger train uses a double shuttle launch (Linear Synchronous Motor's or LSM's) to get the train up to speed (63 mph) propelling it to the top, going through two high speed inversions before the first drop. The rest of the 53 second ride features a steep drop with tight turns, gravity-defying rolls and a 90-degree swoop turn to the station. Tempesto concludes with the ride's train going through the station, then it is launched backward before it comes to a final stop.

Carl Lum, Busch Gardens Williamsburg park president said during the inaugural run to the public on April 25,



"Tempesto has exceeded my expectations as a thrill attraction. Tempesto packs a lot of punch in every second of the ride and I am thrilled to see our guests enjoying themselves as they experience our newest coaster."

The name Tempesto is based on a fictional Italian stunt motorcycle daredevil. The character, known for death-defying feats such as racing up and over a giant loop, is the inspiration for Tempesto's collection of dives, twists and turns. No one ever wowed the crowds like Tempesto and this ride recreates his most famous stunt. As the sign reads, "Real Thrills — Supreme Stunts."

Tempesto is situated very close to the entrance and lift hill to Apollo's Chariot. The area surrounding the ride is circus themed with acrobatics, aeronautics and tightropes, bicycle stunts and the flying trapeze. A star-stamped plaza, followed by brightly colored strands of lights crisscross the entrance area. Riders go through a large barrel, reminiscent of what Tempesto the daredevil transversed. The bold orange and red colors, graphics and visuals bring a new level of excitement and energy to the Festa Italia village. ThemeWorks, Inc., High Springs, Florida provided the attraction theming.

The ride trains are comfortable; however the "comfort collars" that take the place of the standard "over the shoulder restraint system" will take a bit of getting used to by first time riders. They work well, but can be tricky to put on. The Tempesto crew is on hand to easily assist. Also the front to back space in each car is tight making for slower load-in, load-out of passengers until they get used to the process.

When asked about why Premier Rides was selected and if other manufacturers were in contention, Kevin Crossett, senior communications manager, Busch Gardens/Water Country USA said, "Other companies were considered when we were planning what type of coaster



we wanted to manufacture. Premier's mix of thrill elements and innovative design led us to choose the company to design and manufacture Tempesto."

Jim Seay, president of Premier Rides was on hand at the media event. "The ride fits perfectly in the spot with the topography", he said. "The feedback already is extremely positive. Busch Gardens has shown how to take the ride and make it extreme. Other parks will want to take note. The thematic elements are excellent and creative." When asked about the relationship Premier has with Busch Gardens, he said, "Phenomenal." He continued, "The level of detail that Busch Gardens Williamsburg takes, with great pride, in their project is at the same level as Premier."

Lum talked about their latest coaster. "We worked hard for innovative features. Don't let the small footprint fool you. We have something unique and intense. It's important to be innovative in our business," he said. When asked about Premier Rides, Lum replied, "They make a good product. Very smooth — good design. They were a pleasure to work with."

A well-designed Tem-

pesto, the seventh coaster to open at Busch Gardens Williamsburg was designed and supplied by Baltimore-based Premier Rides. The ride sports a bright orange and red color scheme that creates a circus-like atmosphere. The roller coaster features three LSM launches, a 154 foot high inversion and 63 mph of action packed track, shoehorned into a tight footprint. The coaster opened on April 25, 2015. Below, key folks on hand for the media event are (l to r): Carl Lum, park president, Jim Seay, president, Premier Rides and Larry Giles, vice president of Engineering. AT/B. DEREK SHAW



pesto gift shop is located just around the corner from the ride, outfitted with bicycle wheels on the wall and ceiling, bike handlebar arms to display t-shirts and even a vintage bicycle displayed on a stunt ramp. The whole place has the feel of a vintage bike repair shop. Merchandise is stocked in bins that resemble tool and bike part bins. Vin-

tage daredevil posters align the walls, tying the concept together nicely.

Planning for the ride took nearly two-and-a-half years. In August, 2014 clearing and site prep began. Ride construction started in the fall with final track installation in late January, 2015. David A. Nice Builders, Inc. of Williamsburg, Va. was the general contractor.

FAST FACTS

Name/Park

Tempesto
Busch Gardens,
Williamsburg, Va.

Location

Festa Italia section

Type

Sky Rocket II
LSM launch coaster

Height/Speed/Length

154 feet/63 mph/883 feet
(Train travels approximately
1,945 total feet)

Special Features

Three launch elements;
High-speed station
experience; 154-foot,
high-speed inversion

Cycle time/Capacity/ Ride Duration

2 minutes/700 pph/
55 seconds

Ride Vehicle

One, three-car train;
18 passengers

Height Requirement

54 inches

Design/Engineering

Premier Rides
Baltimore, Md.

Ride Opening

April 25, 2015

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4th generation Knoebels opens new Zierer Impulse coaster

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

ELYSBURG, Pa. — At 1:50 a.m. in the wee hours of the morning of Knoebels Amusement Resort's 2015 opening day, (April 25) Impulse cleared all its' final tests, allowing the ride to open to the public. At 11:48 a.m. — nearly 10 hours later, the first riders took on the new roller coaster, raising over \$7,000 for Give Kids the World. The Zierer (Neuhausen/Offenberg, Bavaria, Germany) extreme custom coaster project was an initiative completely managed by the fourth generation of Knoebels, namely brothers Brian Knoebel and Rick Knoebel along with cousin Trevor Knoebel. The charity chosen for the inaugural ride was selected by the fifth generation of the Knoebels family, ranging in age from 7 to 15.

The 70-second thrill ride has been in the works for the past two seasons. During the 2013 trip to the annual IAAPA trade show in Orlando, the Knoebels Impulse team visited many different coaster manufacturers. The park initially was looking to build a family spinning coaster. That idea changed to what was built after selecting Zierer as the coaster manufacturer.

Park personnel explained what they were looking to do in the space they had available (the former boat tag and bumper boat area). Together they exchanged ideas and came up with a ride that perfectly fit the space that was available and included all the elements Knoebels wanted to incorporate into the design. Original plans called for a launch lift, however the vertical chain lift won out in keeping with Knoebels more traditional park feel. Groundbreaking occurred this past September. On February 3, the steel track and support structure that arrived in 51 containers from Germany and Slovakia began being erected. (The coaster was constructed, assembled to ensure proper fit, primed, and painted in Germany before it was dismantled and shipped to Knoebels.)

This is Knoebels Amusement Resort's first major steel coaster since Whirlwind (Vekoma Corkscrew, MK-1200) that operated 1993 - 2004.

The ride consists of three, eight passenger trains with seating arranged in two rows

of four seats across. The 98-foot-high lift is quickly ascended, followed by the vertical drop. A cobra roll then greets riders, followed by other elements including a vertical loop, in-line twist and a 540-degree helix. The entire ride is glass smooth, making repeat rides quite enjoyable. The loop and cobra roll were firsts for Zierer on this type ride.

After a few quick remarks from Dick Knoebel and a blessing from coaster enthusiast, Reverend Cliff Herring, a brief opening ceremony took place with remarks being made by the fourth generation Knoebels from a podium in the station perched above the midway. "This has been such a monumental project here at Knoebels — the largest in our history. We fell in love with the team from Zierer," said Brian Knoebel. He continued, jokingly, "I started this project with a full head of hair!"

► See IMPULSE, page 25



Knoebels' new Impulse coaster features a 98 foot tall lift hill and four different inversions throughout the 70 second ride.
AT/B. DEREK SHAW



Clockwise from top left: At Knoebels Amusement Resort, riders on the new Impulse enjoy one of the many banked turns; the vertical drop, a cobra roll and a vertical loop on the 1,975-foot-long ride supplied by Germany's Zierer. AT/GARY SLADE

FAST FACTS**Name/Park**

Impulse/
Knoebels Amusement
Resort, Elysburg, Pa.

Location

Just inside the park, right
off the main parking lot

Type

Vertical chain-lift top hat
multi element steel
coaster

Height/Speed/Length

98 feet/55 mph/1,975 feet

Elements

90 foot free fall drop,
cobra roll, vertical loop,
in-line twist, double helix

Ride Time/Capacity/

70 seconds/575 pph

Ride Vehicle

Three, eight passenger
vehicles; two rows of four
seats with individual
lap and shin restraints

Safety Control

Zierer-supplied with
Allen Bradley controls

Color Scheme

Luminous yellow support
structure with Signal blue
track. Luminous green
highlights in station area

Height Minimum

48 inches

Design/Engineering

Zierer Karussell-und
Spezialmaschinenbau GmbH
Offenberg, Germany

Ride Support Team**General Contractor**

Bill Anskis Co., Inc.,
Elysburg, Pa.

Mechanical Erection

C&D Rigging, Jonestown, Pa.

Station Design

Rocky Baer, B3 Architects,
Sunbury, Pa.

Station Fabrication

Skyline Attractions,
Orlando, Fla.

Queue Gates, Station Fence

Ash/Tec, Inc., Hegins, Pa.

Ride Perimeter Fencing

Jerith Manufacturing, Co.
Philadelphia, Pa.

Caisson Drilling

McCossin, Bellefonte, Pa.

Perimeter Road

William Robinson
Concrete, Linden, Pa.

Retaining Wall Block

Dabulis Masonry Const.,
LLC, Coal Township, Pa.

Ride Opening

April 25, 2015

►IMPULSE

Continued from page 24

Trevor Knoebel had this to say: "What a project this has been. What a tremendous effort by everyone involved. Long hours, long days, late nights, cold weather – this winter was brutal, but it did not slow down the efforts that were being made here. We truly appreciate everybody's involvement."

Rick Knoebel completed the remarks by the fourth generation trio, "You heard

from my family how hard we worked on this project. But now it's time for some fun. You get to enjoy the benefits of our labors. It's 98 feet tall, almost 2,000 feet of track, goes upside down four times and you're going to enjoy every second of it." He continued, "I want to thank the families of everybody who worked on this project. Without their love, support and understanding, this project might not have been accomplished as nicely and on time as it did."

Martin Weichselgartner,

CEO of Zierer also was on hand during the festivities. He said, "Thank you to the Knoebels family for giving us the opportunity to supply such a terrific ride, such a beautiful ride. During installation we had some hard times to get the ride up. It was a very cold February, so we had a lot of work to do. We worked in shifts. We wanted to make this happen," said Weichselgartner. He continued, "Thank you to all of you for helping us to get this coaster done." He gave praise to the Knoebels staff and oth-

ers who were great to work with on the Impulse project.

R.J. Crawford was the auctioneer who handled the Give Kids the World pledges for the opportunity to ride the first three trains to leave the station. "Let's bid with our hearts and not our wallets," said Crawford. The first two seats went for \$2,000 each, with all 24 raising a total of \$7,325. Bidders included some of the ride vendors/suppliers, roller coaster enthusiasts and the general public.

► See **IMPULSE**, page 26

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►IMPULSE

Continued from page 25

Next came the official opening of the ride. When testing the ceremonial large, sharp scissors for ribbon cutting festivities, Dick Knoebel quipped, "Who needs a haircut?" After numerous photo ops with key Knoebels family personnel and before the Impulse ribbon was cut, the always whimsical Dick was quick to point out, "We got enough ribbon here to do this a couple of times." Celebratory cake was then offered for visitors to enjoy in a nearby pavilion. The ride opened to the public just after 1:00 p.m., producing many smiles throughout the weekend.

When Dick Knoebel was asked about his role in the Impulse project, he said, "The only part of the project I was involved in was signing the check!"

Enthusiastic comments were flowing from the initial riders from, "What a Ride," "Wonderful. Can't wait to do it again," "I can't believe how good it is," to "Instant Classic."

The non-launch system, presented the challenge of safely removing passengers

from the vertical lift hill should the need ever arise. Jim Martini, Knoebel head electrician and a part of the Impulse project team was instrumental in suggesting various concepts. "What's the safest thing to do with passengers," was Martini's concern. An elevator system was considered, however that would involve releasing passengers from their seats – not the best solution. Putting magnetic brakes on the lift was another idea; however that could raise power consumption. What was developed was a wench with a trolley-type system that will push the car over the hill, via a separate, auxiliary motor, in the event of a complete ride shutdown. This simple system can also be used in PLC failure or motor or gear problems. "I think it is a great solution," said Martini.

There's even a back-up to the back-up in the form of a 130 foot man lift that is stored close to the ride.

Recently retired Knoebels marketing and public relations director Joe Muscato attended the opening ceremonies. "Dick always wanted something impressive at this end of the park – now he got it," he said.

Ash/Tec, Skyline partner on Impulse

ELYSBURG, Pa. — It takes a great deal of contractors, sub-contractors and other vendors to complete a project such as the new Zierer custom roller coaster at Knoebels Amusement Resort.

Skyline's Attractions' design partner, Skyline Design LLC, provided extensive steel detailing and design for the loading station. The project required more than 300 pages of steel shop drawings and over 1000 individual precision steel details. Items included: a custom manufactured train station, queue line railing, premium custom themed perimeter fence system and a custom queue gate system.

Working from those drawings, Ash/Tec, Inc. (Ashland Technologies) of Hegins, Pa. and Orlando, Fl. fabricated the steel and shipped to Knoebels for installation at the coaster site. The work was finished in record time, completing the structural portion of the loading station section in less than six weeks from start to finish.

Bill Wydra, president,



The new Impulse coaster station at Knoebels. AT/GARY SLADE

Ashland Technologies commented on how this part of the roller coaster project came together, "Skyline Design worked around the clock to convert the architectural designs into precision shop drawings that enabled the Ashland Tech team to stay focused on making the parts." He continued, "This incredibly valuable service enabled prints to be quickly converted to machine codes for faster laser and press brake programming, which was essential to keeping this project on schedule. It is surprising that more companies do not

use these type of services for large amusement projects as it turned the process from a possible nightmare to a dream!"

Ashland Technologies, Inc. is a full-service contract manufacturing company serving the global amusement industry. Their "one-stop-shop" equipment capability is accomplished via their factories in Pennsylvania and most recently in Orlando, Florida.

Skyline Design, a division of Skyline Attractions, offers design services to the amusement industry. The company is based in Orlando, Florida.

—B. Derek Shaw



The station and queue served as a backdrop for Impulse's opening day ceremony.



When building the Station and Queue for Impulse at Knoebels...

Ashland Technologies, one of the few full-service contract manufacturers serving the global amusement industry, created a custom manufactured train station, queue line railing, custom themed perimeter fence system, and a custom queue gate system for Knoebel's newest roller-coaster, Impulse. Ash-Tec performed all the work in record time, completing the structural station section in less than six weeks from start to finish.

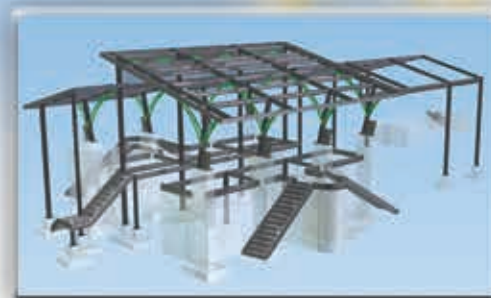
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3923 Forrestal Avenue • Orlando, FL 32806 • 407-612-6293
218 Dell Road • Hegins, PA 17938 • 570-682-0933

AN IMPULSIVE RELATIONSHIP

Skyline Design worked around the clock to convert the architectural designs into precision shop drawings that enabled Ash-Tec to focus on making the parts. This incredibly valuable service enabled the prints to be quickly converted to machine codes for faster laser and press brake programming, which was essential to keeping the Impulse project on schedule. Skyline is one of only a few companies providing this extremely precise and efficient service for large amusement projects.

Skyline Design, LLC, 3923 Forrestal Avenue, Orlando, FL 32806
407-587-0080 • www.skylineattractions.com

Skyline Design and Ashland Technologies proved to be a Perfect Pair.



Skyline's 3D models preceded the creation of precision drawings for fabrication.

SKYLINE
DESIGN, LLC

FlyOver America soaring to Mall of America in 2016

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. —Mall of America announces the first-ever FlyOver America attraction to open in Spring 2016.

FlyOver America is a flight simulation ride that brings guests on a breathtaking, aerial tour of some of the greatest landmarks and regions throughout the United States in virtual flight technology. The attraction will be a fully immersive experience including wind, mist and even scents while soaring across some of America's most spectacular sights.

The destination attraction is designed for locals and tourists alike and is suitable for ages 4 and older. During the feature ride, guests will strap in and be suspended in the air with feet dangling 10 to 25 feet above the ground in specialized ride vehicles before a giant half-spherical dome screen. Guests will truly feel the thrilling sensation of flight as they move in concert with the FlyOver America film and use of special effects.

"The addition of FlyOver America will offer guests a one of a kind experience while add-



Mall of America announces first-ever FlyOver America attraction to open in spring 2016.
COURTESY PR NEWSWIRE/FLYOVER AMERICA

ing to the many lifelong memories we are committed to helping our guests create during each visit to Mall of America," said Jill Renslow, senior vice president for Mall of America. "The innovative technology and talent behind the attraction reinforces Mall of America as a

must-visit tourist destination."

The custom-built attraction is being created by a worldwide team of technicians, manufacturers and consultants, including Los Angeles based former Disney Imagineer Rick Rothchild. Production is currently underway for the FlyOver

America film as the FlyOver film crew visits every region in the country, filming from a helicopter over the course of the year to capture all seasons.

"Building on our success in Canada, we looked at many sites around the world before choosing Mall of America and

the state of Minnesota for our U.S. expansion", said Andrew Strang, co-founder of FlyOver. "We couldn't imagine a better home for our first FlyOver America and are honored to launch at this world-renowned location. The appeal of feeling like you're truly soaring over stunning landscapes in a fun environment is universal."

FlyOver America will be located in the southwest corner of Nickelodeon Universe located in Mall of America, home to more than 520 world-class shops and attractions. Admission will be separate from Nickelodeon Universe attraction passes. Construction on the project is expected to begin April 20, 2015.

FlyOver America is being developed by the same team behind the hugely successful FlyOver Canada in Vancouver, Canada. The principals are tourism entrepreneurs, Stephen Geddes and Andrew Strang, and the Aquilini Investment Group (the owners of the Vancouver Canucks NHL hockey team).

• flyovercanada.com





Kinnaree at Siam Park, Spain

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Willpower brings B&M launched steel coaster to Holiday World

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

SANTA CLAUS, Ind. — America's first launched wing coaster took flight over Holiday World Theme Park on April 23, bringing a major steel coaster to Indiana that was many years in the making.

According to park president Matt Eckert: "A steel coaster has always been the dream. We started having serious conversations with the manufacturers eight years ago."

That was before the untimely death of CEO Will Koch on June 13, 2010. Koch brought national attention to the park with the addition of three wooden coasters from 1995 to 2006. But upon completion of The Voyage in 2006, Koch decided it was time to move onto something bigger: A steel roller coaster — a major one.

Holiday World has had steel coasters in its history. The park's very first roller coaster was an Allan Herschell Little Dipper installed by Will's father, Bill Koch, in the early days of what was originally Santa Claus Land. A Pinfari Zyklon, originally known as Blitzen, operated at the park from 1981 to 1997. When the park expanded with Fourth of July and Halloween sections to become Holiday World, Blitzen was renamed Firecracker. Two years after Firecracker was removed, Howler, a Zamperla family coaster opened in the new Holidog's FunTown section of the park.

However, the new steel coaster that Koch planned was to be much more significant than anything the park had added in the past. By 2008, Koch had pretty much settled on an inverted coaster from the renowned Swiss duo of Bolliger and Mabillard (B&M). His plans were to have the coaster fly through the woods to the east of the park near The Voyage. Large projects like a roller coaster often take years of planning before coming to fruition, but in 2010 everything was put on hold.

In early 2013, Will's wife, Lori Koch and her three children, Lauren, Leah and William decided it was time to resurrect their father's dream. The original plans called for an inverted coaster, but since



Clockwise from top left: In just over 78 seconds, riders aboard Holiday World's Thunderbird fly over the front plaza, rip through an old barn, soar into a 140-foot Immelman dive and encounter a 125-foot vertical loop — the largest loop ever constructed for a wing coaster. The new wing coaster — the first ever with a linear launch, accelerates from 0 to 60 mph in just 3.5 seconds.

COURTESY HOLIDAY WORLD



that time, B&M had introduced a wing coaster, with the first opening in 2011 at Gardaland in Italy. Four more wing coasters opened the following year including two in the United States. The Koch children — now adults, ages 21 to 26 — took a test ride on X Flight at Six Flags Great America and decided that is what they wanted their new coaster to be. But they also felt that it needed something more. They decided the coaster needed to be launched.

B&M had not actually done a launched coaster in the past. The closest thing is The Incredible Hulk Coaster at Universal's Island of Adventure in Orlando. A pinch-wheel-drive launches the coaster uphill into an inversion, but that drive system was designed by Universal Creative exclusively for that coaster.

After a short roll out of the station and slight pause, linear synchronous motors (LSMs) engage to launch the train, accelerating the coaster cars full of thrillseekers from zero to 60 miles per hour in 3.5 seconds. In order to achieve the launch, the wing coaster train was shortened to five cars — a typical B&M wing coaster op-

erates with a seven- or eight-car train. The LSMs require massive amounts of energy and in order to avoid electrical brownouts in the park or elsewhere in Santa Claus, energy is stored in two massive 24,000-pound flywheels. Similar to the system developed for Islands of Adventure, electrical motors spin the flywheels, which are attached to generators. When the generators need to suddenly supply energy, they take that energy from the spinning flywheels, which are then bought back up to speed, between launches, by the attached motors. All of this takes place with the help of computers and nine miles of wiring.

The launch control building that houses the flywheels, generators, and computers has been appropriately named the Will Power building. Naming the building in honor of Will Koch was the suggestion of Holiday World board member Chip Cleary. Cleary, former IAAPA president and CEO, and an experienced amusement park operator, was a good friend of Will Koch and was asked by Lauren Koch to become a board member in 2012.

The 60 mph launch is fol-

lowed by multiple inversions — including a 140-foot Immelman, zero-G roll, barrel roll, and a vertical loop soaring 125 feet in the air. That 125-foot vertical loop is the tallest on a wing coaster. The ride time averages one minute and 18 seconds, so the elements come in quick succession, first soaring into loops high in the air and then hugging the ground, surprising riders with rapid-fire "near misses" such as keyholes, themed elements, other rides, trees, and even the ground. A final, near-to-the-ground, slow, heartline roll precedes the train's return to the station.

"A wing coaster creates a feeling of incredible freedom — you ride beside the coaster track with nothing above or below you," said Eckert. "Thunderbird is the first launched wing coaster in the nation — it's a whole new experience for thrill seekers. We've dreamed of adding a B&M steel coaster for many years and are excited that Thunderbird is B&M's first launched coaster."

Thunderbird's \$22 million price tag is more than twice the amount of any other single-ride investment at Holiday World & Splashin' Safari

in the park's 69-year history. The park's steadily increasing popularity and attendance have helped it achieve the goal of adding a steel coaster of this caliber.

Thunderbird is located in the park's Thanksgiving section, added in 2006 with The Voyage wooden coaster anchoring the section. According to the legend, in 1620, as the Mayflower neared the end of its 66 days at sea, a mighty storm nearly capsized the ship, taking it hundreds of miles off course. As passengers and crew feared all was lost, an immense bird appeared in the sky. The thunderbird, whose wings created the thunder and eyes flashed the lightning of the powerful storm, rescued the ship by launching it through the sky to the New World.

The expanded area also includes a new restaurant, the SmokeHouse, and a shop named Hevron's Mercantile. Also new for the season is George's Gluten-Free Pizza & Snacks, the park's latest effort to provide menus for those with special dietary needs.

Holiday World, opened for its 69th season on April 25; Splashin' Safari water park opened May 13.



Six Flags Fiesta Texas and S&S/Sansei team up for coaster

Batman: The Ride brings 4D coaster to San Antonio

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — A commercial shoot and media preview took place under skies that the Fiesta Texas team appropriately call “Gotham gray.” Bleak weather and rainy conditions didn’t dampen the enthusiasm of those privileged to take in the early access to Six Flags Fiesta Texas’ newest coaster. Batman: The Ride, dubbed a 4D Free Fly coaster by the park, is a project developed and engineered by S&S-Sansei of Logan, Utah (under the product name 4D Free Spin). Three years in the making, this new breed of ride takes previous coaster concepts involving cantilevered cars at the sides of the tracks to a whole new level.

The final product utilizes technologies and talents from multiple S&S partners. Alan Schilke of Ride Centerline contributed to the engineering of the ride including the support structure, and Fred Grubb of Rocky Mountain Construction provided the track — a more substantial, stronger version of the original I-Box track — that is able to span long distances with minimal support.

“We were the only park in the chain without a Batman themed attraction,” says Jeffrey Siebert, Marketing director for Fiesta Texas, “and it is great to bring the next generation of Batman to life with a new innovative 4D coaster.” Of note, this attraction is the first of its genre to be truly based on the comic books and not the movie franchises.

What amps the thrill factor up a notch on this 4D coaster is the aerial maneuvers engineered with magnetic technology. Fins placed on the track, as well as magnetic dampeners attached to the vehicles, initiate the various head-over-heels flips. Preston Perks, project manager with S&S, tells *Amusement Today*, “It was inspired by our X2 ride at Magic Mountain where we control the passengers at all times. On that ride we force you to spin in certain directions. With this new ride, we looked at different options to do a free spin. Magnetics have been part of roller coaster industry for a very long time. We’re implementing them in a

different way to be able to control the spin and also induce spin.”

The car vehicles were unveiled at the IAAPA Expo in Orlando last November and, on the show floor, looked massively intimidating. Positioned on the track, eight riders per vehicle sit four on each side of the ride, facing each other in pairs. This seating makes for great interactivity before and after the ride experience as well as some outrageous moments throughout the ride. Siebert comments, “As they face each other, not only do they face their fears, but riding guests quickly realize that the track can quickly drop out of sight as the ride goes through its acrobatic adventure.” In addition to enhancement of the rider experience, the ease and convenience to the ride operator during the loading process is noticeably convenient and efficient due to the seating configuration.

Once dispatched, vehicles climb straight up elevator style offering thrill-seekers two different views of the park from 12 stories in the sky. Once over the lift, controlled chaos ensues with screams and laughter from passengers who are suddenly flipping and somersaulting through the air. With track stacked vertically there are literally no turns. Three layers of track feature speed bumps and two raven drops, which go beyond vertical. Because there are actually four different positions in which to ride, plus the actual weight of the riders, different ride experiences can take place with each individual ride. Many riders during the previews were making a concentrated effort to take on each different angle available.

The storyline actually begins in the Rockville section of the park. Entrance to the ride takes place at the Monarch Theater. Those familiar with the comic lore know that this is where Bruce Wayne’s parents are murdered and thus the beginning to Batman’s origin. Once inside the theater, guests see the building is condemned by the City of Gotham and it turns out to be a secret workplace for Batman as he builds urban terrain vehicles (the ride’s seating) to whisk city residents away in an emergency. Once back in the daylight, visitors witness the latest incarnation of the Batmobile. This is



Clockwise from above: Bat meters help conserve Texas bat colonies in Austin and San Antonio; the new Batman: The Ride towers over the area of the former Motorama car ride; Marketing Director Jeffrey Siebert (left) and Park President Neal Thurman proudly show off with the park's newest ride.

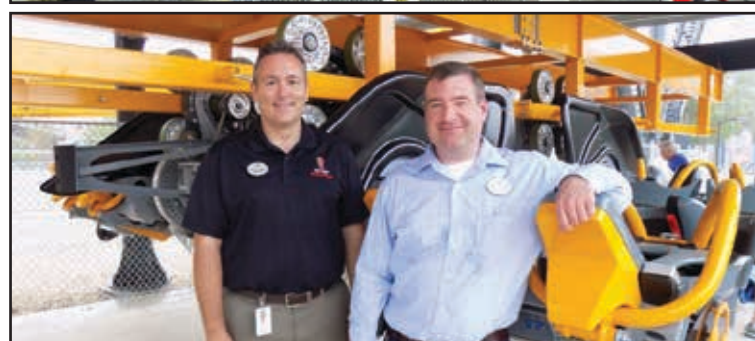
AT/TIM BALDWIN

the first viewing of the “New 52 inch model of the renowned car. Fans of the DC Universe will be excited about the specific attention to detail.

Neal Thurman, president of Six Flags Fiesta Texas, says, “The storyline of Batman and the Monarch Theater fits in nicely with the Rockville area. It really let us go through and transform the Rockville area and give it a key marquee attraction. All the streets have been redone.”

Sydne Purvis, communications manager, adds, “I like the queue area with the bat suit and bat paraphernalia. It’s really well themed and nostalgic in a way.” Illuminated blueprints and various vehicle designs add details to the queue. One wonderful effect upon entering the secret workplace is a “floating” hologram. Guests will invariably want to reach and out try to grab this illusionary visual of a floating coaster vehicle.

In an interesting and whimsical way, Six Flags is lending a hand to two organizations. The largest concentration of bats is just north of San Antonio at Bracken Bat Cave. The city of Austin has the largest urban community of bats at the famous Congress Ave. Bridge. These two organizations will receive donations from the park via Bat Conservation International when guests insert quarters into real parking meters that theme the streets of Rockville. Each quar-



ter gives an appropriate “six” minutes.

The operation process loads and dispatches two vehicles at a time, which keeps the five cars in continuous flow.

Thurman chuckles, “When you look at the ride, you think ‘Ah, I can do that,’ but when you get on the ride, you find it is highly thrilling. It is a fantastic experience. I have never ridden a roller coaster that is mostly upside down.”

Perks says, “Before people are dispatched on the ride, people are already noticing how comfortable the seats are. They are derived from a design we already have on our launched coasters. It encompasses your body very well. Having a bib or a vest is a first for an attraction from S&S. We did a lot of work to figure out how that best contours on the bottom.” He adds, “One thing we are seeing is that it is a very repeatable ride for people.”

Perks explains that the ride flips around the passengers’ center of gravity making for smooth inversion spinning around the axis without throwing the rider’s body. The height requirement for the ride is an accommodating 48 inches.

When asked if there were any challenges to adding the new ride, Maintenance Director Ron Kohl tells AT, “The install went very well. Obviously we had a lot of rain. The challenging thing with this ride is that it is the first roller coaster

we’ve done completely inside the park with no outside access. We were erecting the ride while there were people in the park. We had to work around them on operating days with everyone in the park watching.”

Rocky Mountain Construction, the same firm that provided the track, was contracted to erect the ride.

Painted in specific colors such as daffodil yellow, anthracite grey and traffic black, Batman: The Ride aims to capture the authenticity of the comic character. Whether fans may be new or old, the exit is appropriately located directly through the gift shop with an impressive array of not only superhero merchandise, but quality merchandise that could easily be dubbed “cool.” Just like the ride.

Batman: The Ride isn’t the only thing new at the park this year. A new Soaring Eagle Zipline upcharge attraction was also added in May. With the park’s unique setting of a true rock quarry, riders in pairs can ascend and descend (forward and backward) over 1,500 feet nearly 155 feet in the air. The positioning at Fiesta Texas takes full advantage of its environment allowing riders to soar over Superman Krypton Coaster six times. The coaster incidentally, has been completely repainted by Ky.-based Baynum Painting for its 15th anniversary season.

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FASTTRACK

COMPILED: Scott Rutherford
srutherford@amusementtoday.com

Lake Winnepesaukah Amusement Park is celebrating its 90th anniversary in 2015. As one of North America's most beloved traditional parks, Lake Winnie offers a host of unique rides and attractions. Along with its SoakYa water park, Lake Winnie is home to an antique wooden Carousel, Cannon Ball wooden roller coaster and the one-of-a-kind Boat Chute.

"We're a traditional, family-owned amusement park and family fun is always our number one goal," said **Talley Green** of Lake Winnepesaukah. "We offer thrills, laughter and screams, but also family memories that will last a lifetime!"

The Force returns to **Disney's Hollywood Studios** as Star Wars Weekends 2015 combines the fun and adventure of the Star Wars franchise with the magic of Disney Parks. This year's event welcomes a new show, Star Wars: Rebels, new locations for autograph sessions and merchandise while several Star Wars luminaries making their first hyperspace jump to Star Wars Weekends. During the event, which runs through June 14, more than 60 Star Wars characters will roam the park for meet-and-greet opportunities. Joining the festivities will be a Star Wars motorcade, the Symphony in the Stars nighttime fireworks spectacular saluting iconic sounds of the films, event-exclusive merchandise at Darth's Mall, Star Wars-inspired dining offerings and specialty food and beverages.

Pennsylvania's **Dutch Wonderland: A Kingdom for Kids**, opened its castle gates on May 2 for the 2015. New this year is new family ride, Bon Voyage Balloon Chase, which features eight hot air balloons that fly in a circle while riders in the balloon gondola baskets control their balloon's individual spin. Supplied by **Zamperla**, Bon Voyage Balloon Chase replaces the Crazy Plane ride and is located between the Twister and Fun Slide, behind the Kingdom Coaster.

Kennywood Park's 118th season is underway. While the Pittsburgh-area landmark's popular rides are all up and running, construction crews are still hard at work building a new 4D Theater, supplied by Simworx, set to open later this summer. Replacing the Playdium Arcade Building that sits along the Kennywood Boulevard, the theater will hold 88 guests and promises to offer a shock to all five senses.

SeaWorld Orlando is teasing its 2016 new ride with this release: "Something is stirring beneath the surface at SeaWorld Orlando, preparing to rise from the ocean depths and soar to thrilling new heights. Get ready for the frenzy of SeaWorld's new 200-foot-tall coaster. In 2016, this thriller will take its place atop the food chain as Orlando's tallest, fastest and longest coaster. SeaWorld is an award winning marine life park with a variety of attractions including awe-inspiring animal encounters, thrilling rides and spectacular shows. Follow #nothingfaster as the frenzy starts." *Amusement Today* will continue to follow this development and have updates as they happen.

Canobie Lake Park's opened for its 113th season with a grand opening ticket sale on May 2. In addition to its 85 rides and attractions, Canobie Lake Park's 2015 season will be highlighted by a number of events. Teachers and students can take advantage of the Canobie Institute, designed to provide a genuine educational experience for school groups visiting the park. The Institute provides over 15 educational programs with real-world projects, physics and science experiments, live educational presentations and course work designed to complement what students learn inside the classroom. Canobie's new Summah-Palooza live entertainment program features over 18 varied acts appearing at the park throughout the summer and fall. Shows include the popular tributes to Michael Jackson and One Direction, comedy juggling, Extreme Illusions & Escapes, a Vegas style magic show, and the New Shanghai Circus, presenting astonishing feats of contortion and acrobatics, and Hagerman's Vaudeville Magic Show.

Canada's Wonderland kicked off the 2015 season with the debut of another new thrill ride. This year guests can test their courage on the park's new SlingShot. Like a ride of the same name and design that opened earlier this spring at sister park Carowinds, SlingShot was supplied by **Funtime** of Austria. It features a two-seat capsule that dramatically launches a pair of guests vertically at speeds of 60 mph to height of 300 feet.

Lake Compounce Theme Park opened for its 2015 season on Saturday, May 9, just in time for Mother's Day. During opening weekend, regular admission tickets were buy one, get one free, online. In addition, Moms could enjoy the in-park Relaxation Station for extra attention and special pampering. The Relaxation Station included chaise lounges located in a calm area of the park, where moms could relax and enjoy fresh air, sangria samples and light snacks, and read a book or magazine. There were also craft opportunities for kids to make a special Mother's Day gift, as well as a raffle with prizes including, free season passes, Bear Creek Campground lodging, and Dunkin Donuts gift cards.

"We wanted to come up with a way for moms to squeeze in a little bit of relaxation and still get to spend the day with the rest of the family having fun, too," said **Jerry Brick**, Lake Compounce's general manager. "When I asked my wife what she wanted most for Mother's Day she was torn between wanting to be with the kids and wanting time for herself, so this gives mothers a little bit of both."

Show Your Disney Side, a new photo transformation app, allows Disney fans to transform into their favorite **Disney Parks** characters. Now available for iPhone and iPod touch, the Show Your Disney Side app lets users pick a Disney Parks character, take a selfie and then tap and swipe to watch their Disney Side come to life with special effects.

Have news of interest? Email Scott at:
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Triotech delivers state-of-the art interactive hit

4-D Voyage to the Iron Reef scores big at Knott's Berry Farm

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

BUENA PARK, Calif. — As its Southern California theme park competitors blast their big promotional guns over new attractions ranging from a radically made-over wooden roller coaster to a mega-budget, movie franchise-based ride experience, Knott's Berry Farm is putting its fun firepower firmly in the hands of guests.

Voyage to the Iron Reef, the long-awaited "new tenant" for a historic, two-story building in the park's Boardwalk section that formerly housed Knott's Bear-y Tales (1975-86) and Kingdom of the Dinosaurs (1987-2004), is a spectacular interactive 4-D dark ride comprised of 10 high-definition animated scenes filled with menacing biomechanical sea creatures and hidden surprises.

The storyline finds the Kraken Queen and her aquatic army rising from their deep-ocean lair below the Boardwalk Pier to feed on the metal of the park's coasters and attractions. Guests, wearing 3-D glasses, travel aboard

submarine-inspired vehicles equipped with handheld electronic freeze blasters. Each passenger earns points upon hitting the moving targets, making every trip to the Iron Reef a competitive, highly repeatable adventure energized by elements of a cutting-edge video game — complete with a scoreboard featuring the riders' photos at the end.

Unveiled to the public on May 15, Voyage to the Iron Reef is a creative partnership between Knott's and Montreal, Canada-based Triotech — an interactive attraction company that recently won top industry awards for its work on the similarly dynamic Wonder Mountain's Guardian at Canada's Wonderland. It is the second such collaboration between Triotech and the Cedar Fair Entertainment theme park chain.

"I've seen the park complete some extraordinary projects that have brought new excitement to some of our most beloved attractions," said Raffi Kaprelyan, vice president and general manager of Knott's Berry Farm, during the Iron Reef grand opening ceremony on May 13. "The team at Knott's, alongside our innovation partner, Triotech, have developed a ride unlike anything we have ever created before.... The result is an exciting immersive attraction guests will enjoy time and again."

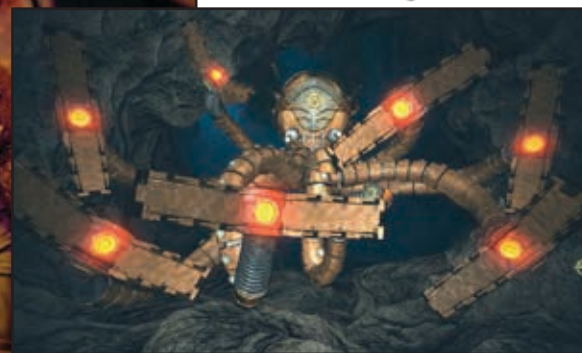
"This type of show is a new level for Knott's," added special guest and Walt Disney Imagineering attractions legend Bob Gurr, who got his start at Disneyland six decades ago and, as co-founder of his own company, Sequoia Creative, worked on Kingdom of the Dinosaurs. "It is mind-blowing in its graphics, the way it's done."

The building housing Iron Reef was gutted to the studs and upgraded for the new family ride, which was a little more than a year in the making. A large section of the old Kingdom of the Dinosaurs space that wasn't needed for the new attraction has been transformed into an enclosed queue area, where a pre-show on video screens establishes the storyline.

More than 40 high-defini-



Knott's Berry Farm's Voyage to the Iron Reef is a spectacular new interactive 4-D family attraction from Triotech. Riders aim freeze rays at menacing biomechanical sea creatures to save the park from a watery doom while competing against each other for the highest score. COURTESY KNOTT'S BERRY FARM/TRIOTECH



FAST FACTS

Name/Park

Voyage to the Iron Reef
Knott's Berry Farm,
Buena Park, Calif.

Type

4-D HD video-based
interactive dark ride

Ride Vehicles

Eight two-car vehicles,
each seating eight riders
four-abreast

Track Length/Duration

600 feet/4 minutes

Capacity

800 pph

Cost

\$10 million plus

Opened

May 15, 2015

Suppliers

Triotech, Montreal,
Canada (overall); ART
Engineering GmbH,
Oberried, Germany
(vehicles)

tion projectors on screens up to 69 feet long and 22 feet high bring Iron Reef's steampunk-influenced underwater world to life through seamless transitioning between screens and practical sets.

"I like designing stuff, and I like to see the reaction of people," said Ernest Yale, the kidlike 43-year-old president and CEO of Triotech, in an on-site chat with *Amusement Today*. "We don't work with the kind of budgets that Disney and Universal have, so we go for the unique — beyond animatronics and traditional dark rides. We incorporate and try to improve upon ideas we get from rides we've experienced around the world."

Those rides include the seven-year-old Toy Story Midway Mania! 4-D attraction at nearby Disney California Adventure, to which Iron Reef already is drawing superior comparisons.

Several Cedar Fair ex-

ecutives attended Iron Reef's grand opening to try out the ride and gauge guest enthusiasm, which was clearly very high.

Robert Decker, vice president of planning and design for Cedar Fair, felt Iron Reef's use of an electronic, encoder-lined track — capable of synchronizing all vehicle movement and media — versus the gravity-powered coaster track of Wonder Mountain's Guardian, which has a drop at the end, is a major improvement.

"Without the drop here, we wanted to create better scenic environments," Decker told AT. "So we incorporated high-definition projectors and larger screens — and placed the screens to develop a sequence and a cadence that takes you deeper and deeper into the storyline, making it more immersive and challenging. The new track system enabled us to fine-tune

the 4-D elements; it unfolds really gracefully and delivers 'gaming overload' at the conclusion."

Richard Zimmerman, Cedar Fair's chief operating officer, gave Iron Reef high marks for its improved technology and narrative, which interweaves various aspects of the park's history. "We learn a lot when we go through different generations of our attractions," he said. "We have a very clear vision of what the Knott's brand is, and how to bring that to life. This ride does that in spades."

Brian Witherow, the company's chief financial officer, agreed: "It's a homerun. The Knott's team and the Triotech team hit it out of the park."

On the ground level of the rethemed Iron Reef building, Knott's has refreshed the 8,186-square-foot Boardwalk Arcade and opened a new retail shop called Nautilus. The park will reopen an updated Laser Tag compound later this summer.

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TRIOTECH

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Triotech congratulates **Knott's Berry Farm**
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IRON REEF

Myers International Midways adds Gosetto fun house

AT: Pam Sherborne

psherborne@amusementtoday.com

GIBSONTON, Fla. — Myers International Midways, which spent its first year last year as an independent ride operation, will take delivery of a new four-level fun house in time to debut it at the Wisconsin State Fair, West Allis, Aug. 6-16.

The fun house, called New York New York, is being built by the Italian manufacturer Gosetto and is represented in North America by Intermark Ride Group. Joey Weaver, who works with his uncle Bob Myers with the ride company, said the new attraction should be finished June 15 and put on a boat for its trip to the U.S. at that time.

"We should have it by the first of July and in time to get it to the Wisconsin State Fair by Aug. 6," Weaver said. "It will have about 26 mechanical tricks on it. We have ordered four 13-foot tall replicas of the Statue of Liberty to set outside.

"It really will be over the top," he said.

Gosetto has already built a similar fun house with the New York New York theme. Weaver said that ride is touring in Europe.

"We wanted that theming," Weaver said. "We chose it and we helped design it, what tricks it will have."

Among those tricks will be a spiral slide that starts at the top of the fourth level and goes all the way to the bottom. There will also be a ro-



Myers International Midways purchased a new four-level fun house for the 2015 season, which is like the one pictured here that is currently touring in Europe. The new attraction is being built by the Italian supplier, Gosetto, represented in North America by Intermark Ride Group. COURTESY IRG



tating barrel.

Weaver said just the number of tricks will make it a unique attraction.

Myers International Midways will carry the fun house with its other rides. Those rides include a Zierer Wave Swinger, a Wisdom Monster Truck, Crazy Dance by Fabri, and a Chance Alpine Bobs.

The company rethemed the Alpine Bobs. The ride has been renamed to Ice Jet.

"And, it is on a boat right now on its way to Hawaii for that state fair," Weaver said.

The 50th State Fair is held at the Aloha Stadium, Honolulu, Hi., on weekends May 22-July 5. It is produced by E.K. Fernandez Shows.

Other than the Wisconsin

fair, Myers' 2015 independent route includes the Minnesota State Fair, St. Paul, Aug. 27-Sept. 7, and the State Fair of Texas, Dallas, Sept. 25-Oct. 18.

"We also have played some dates with Wade Shows and a little with Reithoffer Shows," Weaver said. "We played the Florida State Fair this year with Wade Shows."

FAST FACTS

Name/Location

New York New York / traveling fun house with debut set for the Wisconsin State Fair, Aug. 6-16

Owner

Myers International Midways, Gibsonton, Fla.

Dimensions Set Up

67 feet long by 34 feet wide by 24.6 feet high featuring 4 levels

Tricks

26, including rotating barrel, air blowers, vibrating footboards, rotating carpet, wave footboard, suspended bridges, toboggan, rotating cylinders, rollers, rotating disk, suspended bridge, oscillating footboard and more

Transport

Trailer model, main structure moves on one semi-trailer, 2nd smaller trailer for toboggan slide and Statue of Liberty

Lighting

LED cabochon and RGB LED on signage

Other Features

The facade and each level of the fun house folds telescopically by hydraulics

Supplier

Gosetto (Treviso, Italy)

North American Representative

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2015 Del Mar: A fair to remember

DEL MAR, Calif. — The San Diego County Fair will kick off its centennial year on June 5 and will run for 25 days through July 5.

The theme this year is "A Fair to Remember: a Celebration of World's Fairs and Balboa Park," and commemorates the centennial anniversary of the 1915 Panama — California Exposition held in Balboa Park.

The fair will feature displays of its 100-year history along with other new attractions such as the Fiesta Village, a new cultural attraction.

There will be new food and drink events as well such as the Farm to Table Dinner, a garden affair featuring five courses paired with wine and beer that won awards in The Toast of the Coast wine festival and San Diego International Beer Festival.

The independent midway will feature, in Fun Zone, over 40 rides and attractions as well as about 50 games of skill. In Kids Zone, there will be about 40 rides and attractions and about 20 games of skill.

The San Diego County Fair is closed on Mondays and the first two Tuesdays.

—Pam Sherborne

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After 100 years, Ye Old Mills continue to create memories

Fairs in Kansas, Minnesota celebrate their Mills in 2015

AT: Pam Sherborne

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HUTCHINSON, Kan. — In the mid-1970s, a high school student attending the Kansas State Fair decided it would be fun to pour laundry detergent into the water as he rode along the Ye Old Mill.

It took hours and hours to evacuate the ride, remove the soap and refill the tunnel.

This is just one story, but one can be assured there are many more after surviving 100 years in the rain, snow, and heat, not to mention the mischievous and playful riders. It has been a formidable feat for Kansas' Ye Old Mill ride and that is one reason the Kansas State Fair will feature its ride's 100th birthday this year.

It's also a piece of amusement ride history.

Built by John Keenan, there are only five Ye Old Mills, or Tunnel of Love rides as most were originally known, left operating today in the U.S. Three of those are on fairgrounds. Other than the Kansas State Fair, the Minnesota State Fair, St. Paul, and the Iowa State Fair, Des Moines, still have operating Ye Old Mills.

The two not on fairgrounds are at Playland Park, Rye, N.Y., and Kennywood, West Mifflin, Pa., the latter dating back to between 1899 to 1901. Old Mill's generally only negative the course and do not feature a drop similar to the Mill Chute ride.

The Ye Old Mill entails unaccompanied boats floating on waterways through dark tunnels, propelled by a large paddle wheel. The boats meander through the waterways gently knocking against the sides and sometimes even against other boats.

Most of these rides existing today have seen some changes, but most have changed the theming not necessarily how the ride operates.

The Ye Old Mill at the Kansas State Fair was originally called Ye Old Mill, Tunnel of Love. It is now the Ye Old Mill,



The Ye Old Mill, Kansas State Fair, built by John Keenan, is turning 100 years and will be a featured attraction during the fair this year, set for Sept. 11-20. At left, is a interior loading station area view of the ride from 1953. At right, shows a ride employee scaring riders on the Ye Old Mill in 1966. COURTESY KANSAS STATE FAIR

Tunnel of Terror. There are currently eight boats on that ride and they are still moved like they were moved 100 years ago.

"A paddle wheel pushes the water through the tunnel," said Rachel Groene, Greteman Group, a marketing and communications company representing the Kansas fair. "The conveyer belt where the boats enter and exit the tunnel is the original concept with new materials added as the old parts deteriorated from the water."

It takes three minutes to complete the ride and 87,000 gallons of water to fill the water tunnel. It is owned by the fair and is only open and operated during fair time, set this year for Sept. 11-20.

Yet, even though it operates only 10 days out of the year, it maintains its popularity. It will attract approximately 24,600 riders during that time.

Through the Kansas ride, riders encounter a growling and shaking skeleton character that holds a spear in his hand. He grows from eight feet to 13 feet. They encounter a floating and moaning ghost, and a large dragon that turns its head toward the boats while snorting smoke and making a lot of noise.

"The last scene is an evil clown that shoots water from its nose toward the boats while laughing," Groene said.

The Kansas State Fair is celebrating its Ye Old Mill's 100th anniversary by theming the 2015 Kansas State Fair Museum's exhibit "Year of the Ride." The museum, open to the public during the fair, will

feature vintage photos and an original boat from the Ye Old Mill, as well as other rides that have been on the fairgrounds over the years.

The Minnesota State Fair Ye Old Mill is also 100 years old this year and will be a featured attraction during its 2015 edition set for Aug. 27-Sept. 7. The Iowa State Fair Ye Old Mill is a little younger than the other two. Construction on that ride began 95 years ago. It took four years to complete.

According to Brienna Schuette, Minnesota State Fair marketing and communications manager, the Ye Old Mill on their fairgrounds is still owned and operated by the third, fourth and fifth generations of the Keenan family.

"John H. Keenan is the current patriarch and owner/operator of the ride," Schuette said. "The fair does not maintain or run the ride, as is the case at the other fairs. Here, the Keenan family maintains and cares for the ride year round to operate it just those 12 days annually."

This ride also has kept more to the theme of the original ride. It is quiet and dark, with scenes of gnomes and leprechauns that were updated by local artists in 2011.

The Ye Old Mill at the Iowa State Fair is that fair's oldest permanent amusement ride. Owned by the fair, it has been in continuous use since it was built.

The original waterway was constructed of tarred wood. In 1996, the wheelhouse and 950-foot long canal were completely reconstructed to



Above, The Iowa State Fairground in 1941. Note the Ye Old Mill building in center of photo. Below, Ye Old Mill at the Minnesota State Fair as seen and operated today by members of the Keenan family. Bottom, this 1950s photo shows the Minnesota ride's paddle wheel, used to move the ride's water current. COURTESY IOWA AND MINNESOTA STATE FAIRS



the exact specifications of the prototype. The boats were replaced but were specifically designed to look like the originals. The bright red paddle wheel remains the only vestige of the original Mill.

It has 11 boats and the duration of the ride is approximately three minutes. It also operates just during fair time. Like the Kansas edition of the ride, theming is scarier than the older romantic theme.



Circus history to be sold at World Wide Circus Summit 2015

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. — Gary Payne, president of the Circus Fans of America, announced that The Enquirer Printing Company of Newtown, Ohio, will be offering a large collection of Circus memorabilia for sale during The World Wide Circus Summit 2015, scheduled for The Big E Fairgrounds, July 14-18.

John Anderson, president of The Enquirer Printing Company and one of the fourth generation of the Anderson family to own and operate the company said, "We have been looking for a way to put our warehouse full of circus posters, original art work, wood & metal circus cuts and wood type in the hands of true circus fans. With circus fans from around the world coming to Springfield in July to attend the WCS 2015, we feel it is the perfect place for us to offer a portion of our archives for sale!"

The Enquirer Printing Company, which has been in business and owned by the Anderson family since 1890, was the largest printer of circus posters in United States for many years. When the cir-

cus was the king of local entertainment in America, EPC specialized in creating large circus posters. Their work was plastered throughout towns days before the circus train and its big top and parade of elephants arrived. In recent years, the circus poster business has changed with many communities and utilities banning posters on utility poles, and many circuses don't want the hassle and expense of hiring someone to collect them when they leave town.

However, Enquirer Printing Company still prints for many circuses including Kelly Miller Brothers Circus and Feld Entertainment, Inc., owners of Ringling Brothers. They also provide printing services for several carnivals, fairs, amusement parks and other entertainment venues.

Bill Robinson, of William H. Robinson, Inc., whose company has been retained by EPC to handle the sale says, "Boxes and skids are stacked to the ceiling in a 35,000 square foot building, and every box we open has another surprise. This sale is



These circus posters, a lion above and Carson & Barnes Circus at right, are just a few of the circus

history items for sale at the World Wide Circus Summit 2015, scheduled for July 14-18 at the The Big E Fairgrounds in Springfield, Mass.

COURTESY ENQUIRER PRINTING COMPANY

going to be a huge opportunity for the circus collector, decorators, antiques shops and auctioneers to purchase old/authentic circus advertising and collectables. I don't



believe there has been — or there ever will be — another offering of real circus memorabilia of this magnitude again."

For more information on the sale, contact Bill Robinson

at:

Bill@TheBigIdeaPeople.com

For more information on The World Wide Circus Summit 2015, go to:

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Former Chance Rides President, John Streeter, dies

SARASOTA, Fla. — John Streeter, 90, a longtime industry leader and former president of Chance Rides, passed away April 10 in Sarasota, Fla.



Streeter

Streeter was not born into the outdoor amusement industry, but he worked summers in the industry while teaching speech at the University of Indiana and Wayne State University. He also worked as a scenic designer in several professional productions.

In 1966, John purchased a Sky Diver from Chance Rides.

"He bought the ride from my dad," said Dick Chance, Chance Rides. "He quickly found out how hard it was to be an independent ride operator.

"He liked to tell people, though, that he bought his ride the old-fashioned way... 'I paid for it,' " Chance recalled, laughing.

In 1968, Streeter went to work for Mack Duce and sold rides for Chance and SDC. This relationship lasted for over 15 years before John went to work exclusively for Chance in 1983.

By 1985, John was promoted to president of the company and helped promote sales worldwide. He was influential in the development of the Thunderbolt, Wipeout, Giant Wheel, Century Wheel, and Pharaoh's Fury through the 1990's.

"John must have had millions of frequent flyer miles," Chance said. "He flew all over the world; anywhere he thought someone would buy a ride.

"He was creative and artistic," he said. "He always thought outside the box. Sometimes he would go too far outside the box and I would have to rein him in. But, that was good. I was happy he was like that and not someone that just sat there and was told what to do.

"John is responsible for much of the success and growth of Chance Rides from 1985 until he retired in 1998," Chance said.

Jim Zajia, World Ride, Service and Supply, Cleburne, Texas, said about Streeter: "John was my mentor. He got me started in this business.

In 1977, he got me a position in Africa, building two amusement parks there. Then, when I came back, he got me a job at Mack Duce."

Zajia and Streeter were friends for between 40 and 50 years. He talked to Streeter one week before he died.

"We were always close," he said. "We always stuck together."

Jeff Blomsness, co-CEO with Danny Huston, North American Midway Entertainment said: "John was a good friend of my wife's family. He was a mentor to me. He helped us get started with our show in 1974. We bought just about all our equipment from him. He supported us in every way. I remember one time, it was cold as it could be outside and he was out there on our midway, with gloves on, making popcorn."

Streeter and Blomsness shared a love of World War II and military history. Streeter was in World War II as was the late Bernie Thomas (Thomas Carnival).

"The three of us took three trips together, to battlefields in Europe. John and I took two other trips together — five altogether in five years. I learned so much during those trips, things that you would never read about in a history book. I loved those trips. I have so many good memories," Blomsness said.

Home for Streeter was Sarasota, Fla. Chance said he kept his home there even when he was working for Chance in Wichita, Kan., living in a small place there. But, he always kept his Florida home.

And that is where he died April 10.

He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Marion; his daughter, Linda; and grandson, Jeffry.

He is honored on the Showmen's League of America's Wall of Honor and donations can be made to the Showmen's League of America Scholarship fund in his name.

Services were conducted May 5 with burial in the National Cemetery in Sarasota.



CARNIVAL LIGHTS

COMPILED: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

The board of directors for the **State Fair of Texas**, Dallas, appointed **Richard Knight, Jr.**, as its new chairman of the board and chairman of the executive committee for the organization. Knight will replace **Alan Walne**, who stepped down following his four-year term as chairman. Knight was elected to the State Fair board of directors in April of 1997, and has served on the executive committee since 1999 and finance committee since 2008. By accepting the responsibilities as chairman, Richard Knight, Jr., joins a long line of distinguished community leaders who have provided leadership for the State Fair of Texas since it was originally chartered in 1886.

A proposed new aerial chair lift that would carry **North Carolina State Fair** goers over the heads of the crowds has been a concept under consideration by state fair management for several years.

The state has issued a request for proposals to potential owners and operators for an aerial chair lift system that would be structured under a ground lease agreement with the state for the four proposed pick-up and drop-off stations at the Raleigh fairgrounds. A private firm will bear all the associated costs of building the lift.

The deadline for proposals is June 4.

With the **Utah State Fairpark**, Salt Lake City, still facing a murky future, legislative leaders created a committee at the first of May tasked with pulling the park out of limbo.

The **Legislative Management Committee** voted to authorize a subcommittee to review how the Fairpark is managed and operated, as well as its long-term viability. Task force members will be appointed by Senate and House leadership, in consultation with minority leadership, and will work with the **Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment Committee** over the summer.

Lawmakers want to keep the fair, saying it is an important cultural event. The Legislature struggled with what to do with the fairgrounds all through the 2015 session. While the state fair in September makes money, it is not enough to keep the facility operationally viable, and buildings have fallen into disrepair because of decades of neglected maintenance.

A study by an outside consultant concluded if the state were to move the state fair and replace the buildings, it would cost up to \$160 million. To keep the facility would require a long-term investment of \$47 million.

The work group will present proposals for the Fairpark's development in October.

Fairpark Director **Mike Steele** said more than 100 years of history on the state fairgrounds is at stake, and it's all up to the Legislature and what development proposals they want to bring to fruition.

Patrick Buchen, the new manager at the **Illinois State Fair**, Springfield, last month outlined his plans to strengthen the event's finances and agricultural roots.

Buchen is the new manager of not only the Illinois State Fair, but also the **DuQuoin**

(Ill.) **State Fair**. This is the first time since the state acquired the DuQuoin fair in 1986 that it has had shared the managerial position.

As Buchen settled into his role managing both fairs, he announced his intention to tap into the state's vibrant agriculture industry to boost the fairs' self-sufficiency. Both fairs have lost money in recent years. He believes calling on industry giants could help stabilize the struggling tradition.

Buchen, who most recently served as president and CEO of **Adjuvant Expos Inc. in Texas**, told a local news agency he intends to use his experience from the expos in fostering sponsorships to bolster the fair's income stream.

Losses at the Springfield fair in 2013 totaled \$3.5 million. In that same fiscal year, the DuQuoin fair lost nearly \$595,000, according to a summer 2014 report from the Illinois Auditor General's Office.

The 2015 Illinois State Fair is set for Aug. 13-23. The 2015 DuQuoin State Fair is set for Aug. 28-Sept.

Chris Wiseman began his transition in last month from the general manager of the **Colorado State Fair**, Pueblo, into his new position as the deputy commissioner for the **Colorado Department of Agriculture**. He reported to the state fair board that the transition is going smoothly due to the efforts of several longtime fair employees, specially, **Lea Cassidy** and **Dani Traweek**.

In early May, Wiseman was spending about three days a week in Denver getting acclimated to the deputy commissioner position.

The objective, Wiseman said, is to get through this year's fair and then hire a new general manager. Interest is already high, as more than a few inquiries into the position had been received.

The 2015 fair is set for Aug. 28-Sept. 7.

New York State Fair officials began the master planning process for a new look. Armed with \$50 million of state funds from the recently approved state budget, fair officials can get the ball rolling on proposed fair improvements they hope will transform the aging fairgrounds into a premier, multi-use facility.

Acting Fair Director **Troy Waffner** told a local news agency the first thing is getting experts together, which was to happen last month. Initial ideas for the fair include a new IcePlex, an equestrian park and a New York-themed Main Street with restaurants.

The future of the aging grandstand is sure to get plenty of attention. As an entertainment venue during fair week, it is expected to be replaced by the new amphitheater under construction along the western shore of Onondaga Lake.

Supporters of the very popular Super Dirt Week races at the grandstand are worried about it's future. They are expected to push for funding to go towards renovating the main grandstand and track. They're concerned because initial plans for a revamped fairgrounds showed the grandstand and track being removed.

The 2015 edition of the Great New York State Fair is set for Aug. 27-Sept. 7.

In Memory Of John Streeter Taking the Last Train Home



John Streeter and Dick Chance pictured with C.P. Huntington Train Owners, 1985



John Streeter, second from right and the Chance Rides team at trade show, 1983

John Streeter Passes

It is with sadness to announce the passing of John Streeter. John spent a number of years teaching speech at the University of Indiana and Wayne State University while also working as a scenic designer in several professional productions. In the summer, John worked in the outdoor amusement business.

In 1966, John purchased a Sky Diver from Chance Rides. In 1968, John went to work for Mack Duce and sold rides for Chance and SDC. This relationship lasted for over 15 years before John went to work exclusively for Chance in 1983. By 1985, John was promoted to president of the company and helped promote sales worldwide. He was influential in the development of the Thunderbolt, Wipeout, Giant Wheel, Century Wheel and Pharaoh's Fury through the 1990's. John was responsible for the growth of Chance Rides in the US Carnival market as well as the overseas markets in Asia until his retirement in 1998.

“John sold my mother-in-law her first Popcorn Wagon and shared his secrets on making the best Caramel Corn! All 3 Cammack girls remember how kind he truly was as a gentlemen.”

Guy Leavitt



RCSFUN.COM

“John was a patriot and soldier who fought in WWII. He was instrumental in helping me build my carnival business from the very start, he was a dear friend and I will miss him dearly.”

Jeff Blomsness

“John was my dear friend and mentor, taught me the business and was always there when I needed him, he will be truly missed.”

James Ziaja



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“We are all grateful to John for his efforts and dedication to Chance over the years and will all miss him.”

Dick Chance



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Miami-Dade County Fair exploring relocation sites

MIAMI, Fla. — The future of the Miami-Dade County Fair and Exposition, Miami, is still up in the air, but residents are now getting a closer look at the new sites where it could be relocated.

According to a local news report, 65 percent of Miami-Dade County voted last November to allow Florida International University to build on public land where the fair is now located. But FIU has to pay for the fair's moving costs. And in the standing contract between the fair and the county, the fair must end up in an equal or better location.

Possible locations include a site just west of Dolphin Mall and Florida's Turnpike. It's about 130 acres of land owned by the Florida Department of Transportation. The second site sits on the western end of 836, near 137th Avenue. That is all privately-owned land.

Officials at the fair said an independent report paid for by the county, FIU, and the fair estimated the costs of moving the fair at more than \$200 million.

The 2016 Miami-Dade County Fair and Exposition is set for March 17-April 10.

Indiana fair debates hog wrestling

MUNCIE, Ind. — After a public outcry, Muncie and Delaware County officials are

reconsidering hog wrestling as part of the Delaware County Fair, held in Muncie, Ind., and set this year for July 13-25 (4H competitions run July 13-25, and the midway runs July 20-25).

Those second thoughts come from a variety of residents as well as several county commissioners. And, it also comes from the director of the Muncie Animal Shelter, who participated in hog wrestling at the fair last year but said he never would again.

"It was a big mistake to do it," city shelter director Phil Peckinpaugh told local newspaper *The Star Press* Monday.

A petition passed around by opponents to the event called it "barbaric" and "sadistic," according to *The Star Press*.

Hog wrestling had been set for the Friday night grandstand entertainment during the fair. Fair officials felt it will be a challenge to find alternative entertainment.

Peckinpaugh, who has been Muncie Animal Shelter director since 2012 and was an official at Animal Rescue Fund (ARF) before that, was part of a hog wrestling team in 2014 that supported a local election campaign.

"The pigs are definitely in distress," Phil Peckinpaugh was quoted as saying, although he did add, "I never saw one that I thought would be hurt."

But Peckinpaugh said the event left him in agreement with some who signed the petition.

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BUSINESS, SAFETY, & CLASSIFIED

► MarketWatch — Page 46 / AIMS News & Notes — Pages 52 / CLASSIFIED — Page 55

New SeaWorld advertising campaign highlights killer whale care

ORLANDO, Fla. — SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc. has launched a new advertising campaign highlighting the company's leadership in the care of killer whales and contributions to protect whales both in human care and in the wild. The campaign will emphasize SeaWorld's 50-year commitment to continuous evolution — including its recent announcement of new killer whale habitats — while setting the record straight on false accusations by activists who oppose whales and other animals in zoological settings.

The print advertisements will feature SeaWorld veterinarians, researchers and other members of the company's team of 1,500 animal care experts. In their words and reflecting on their experiences, they will explain how the company cares for its killer whales, while also refuting the claims of animal rights activists. The ads will also highlight SeaWorld's latest initiatives to better understand, care for and protect killer whales now and in the future, including the company's commitment of \$10 million in matching funds to study endangered killer whales in the wild. The print advertisements will

run in publications nationwide beginning today with television advertisements to follow.

The digital component of the campaign seeks to open a conversation with the public to address concerns and questions. New online videos feature SeaWorld employees answering some of the most common questions about SeaWorld today and offering viewers a behind-the-scenes look at animal care in the parks. AskSeaWorld.com provides the public with the opportunity to ask questions directly via Twitter with the company's responses centrally housed in one online location.

PETA and other animal activist groups have long targeted SeaWorld and other zoological institutions as part of a larger agenda to close zoos and aquariums and even limit pet ownership and other forms of human-animal engagement. In the past two years, PETA has issued more than 110 press releases about SeaWorld, filled with inaccuracies about the company's animal care. This campaign will set the record straight and ensure that the public has access to the facts about the company.

For example, the first ad in the campaign titled,

"Fact: Whales live as long at SeaWorld," addresses the misconceptions around killer whale lifespans at SeaWorld parks from the perspective of the company's head veterinarian, Dr. Chris Dold.

The ad reads: "You might have heard attacks from PETA saying our killer whales live only a fraction as long as whales in the wild. They say, 'In captivity, orcas' average life span plummets to just nine years.' There's no other way to say it...PETA is not giving you the facts."

The ad cites an *Associated Press* report that concluded that killer whales born at SeaWorld parks have "an average life expectancy of 46 years," and an independent study from Dr. Douglas DeMaster, of the Alaska Fisheries Science Center, who told the *Wall Street Journal*, "Survival in the wild is comparable to survival in captivity." The ad is complemented by a digital video that takes viewers behind the scenes to learn more about the independent research and the daily care of SeaWorld's killer whales.

• seaworldcares.com
• AskSeaWorld.com

Uremet names Charles Cornman as CEO

SANTA ANA, Calif.

— Uremet Corporation, a manufacturer of high quality, high performance solid polyurethane wheels, has announced that it has named Charles R. Cornman, PhD, as the company's chief executive officer. Cornman joins Uremet with 20 years' experience as a functional leader in market-leading manufacturing companies. The new CEO brings to Uremet a wealth of technical and commercial experience growing businesses through innovative and differentiated products.

Cornman most recently served as the vice president for R&D at Custom Build-



Crain

ing Products. While there he built a new product strategy and research organization to enable market-beating growth. Prior to that Cornman served in several leadership roles in multinational specialty chemical and materials companies.

"Chuck, with his wealth of technical experience and passion for leading high performing teams, will further advance Uremet's wheel performance," says outgoing CEO Steve Zamolo. Uremet's founder and president, Mark Moore, adds, "The experience Chuck brings will continue to strengthen and improve Uremet's quality and service. His chemistry knowledge will provide better performing polyurethane blends for our customers,"

says Moore. Steve Zamolo will continue with Uremet as chairman of the board of directors, while Mark Moore will remain a board member and lead special projects.

"Performance, quality, and service will remain hallmarks of the Uremet brand," explains the incoming CEO Charles Cornman. "Mark and Steve have built an amazing company, with a stellar position in the amusement wheel segment. We're looking forward to further strengthening our product offerings for the amusement industry, as well as entering select new markets where high performance is mission critical."

• uremet.com

Texas aquarium releases investigation results

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas — In mid-April, the Texas State Aquarium experienced one of the most significant losses of marine life in its 25-year history. A total of 389 fish, including a number of our iconic species such as a male sand tiger shark, were lost during a medical treatment in which a low dose of what was thought to be the drug Trichlorfon was administered to the main marine system.

Now, the Corpus Christi, Texas aquarium has received preliminary lab results from chemists at Summit Environmental Technical which indicated that the drug was in fact not Trichlorfon, but instead an isomer of hydroquinone resorcinol.

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) website, hydroquinone is a common chemical that has widespread application in human and industrial activities. It is used in film processing, as a stabilizer in paint and motor fuels, and in cosmetics. It is also a known haematotoxic (blood poison) and carcinogenic agent. The aquarium has not yet released the name of the company from which it acquired the drug, pending further test results.

In a press release statement, Texas State Aquarium officials said: "We have received an outpouring of support; over 30 aquariums and zoos from all over the country, from Canada, and as far away as Singapore have reached out to offer their support and condolences for our aquarium team. Many have also offered to send us animals. In fact, the first shipment of donated fish has already arrived from the SeaLife Center in Grapevine, Texas."

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MARKETWATCH



COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 05/12/15	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
Apollo Global Management (Great Wolf Resorts)	APO	NYSE	21.50	28.93	20.02
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	42.54	43.04	26.56
Merlin Entertainments Group/ Legoland	MERL	LSE	454.50	456.70	3.277
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	57.07	58.94	42.75
Comcast Corp./ NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	57.33	60.85	49.16
	CMCSK	NASDAQ	57.11	60.24	48.63
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	109.24	113.30	78.54
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	9010	TYO	1059.00	1298.00	972.00
Haicahang Holdings Ltd.	2255HK	SEHK	1.71	1.95	1.02
Leofoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	11.65	13.70	10.30
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	19.12	27.64	17.25
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	21.39	31.46	15.11
Shenzhen Overseas Chinese Town Co., Ltd. (OCT)	000069	SZSE	9.77	10.88	4.50
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	47.83	51.09	31.77
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	3800.00	3944.00	2941.00
Village Roadshow	VRL	ASX	5.95	8.44	5.08

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

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

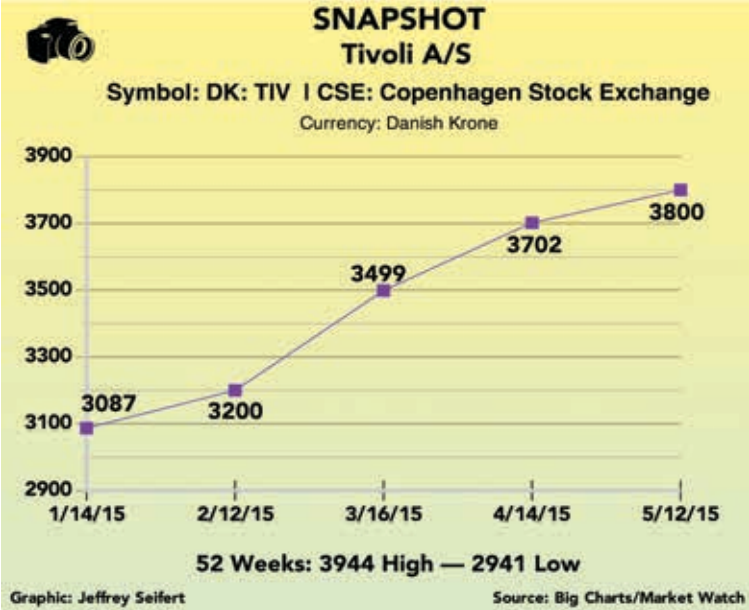
DIESEL PRICES

Region (U.S.)	As of 05/11/15	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$2.997	-\$1.044
Midwest	\$2.748	-\$1.173
Gulf Coast	\$2.771	-\$1.026
Mountain	\$2.772	-\$1.198
West Coast	\$3.002	-\$0.926
California	\$3.250	-\$0.876

CURRENCY

On 05/13/15 \$1 USD =

0.8924	EURO
0.63	GBP (British Pound)
120.03	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9294	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.2583	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.2054	CAD (Canadian Dollar)



BUSINESS WATCH

Record first-quarter performance for Six Flags
GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas — **Six Flags Entertainment Corporation** (NYSE: SIX), announced on April 22 double-digit growth in its first-quarter key performance metrics with a 16 percent growth in revenue and a 13 percent improvement in Adjusted EBITDA. In the quarter the company reported \$85 million of revenue, which represented an \$11 million or 16 percent increase over the same quarter in 2014, and also generated a \$5 million or 13 percent improvement in Adjusted EBITDA. Since most of the parks are not open during the first quarter, Adjusted EBITDA was a loss of \$38 million, which was the company's best ever first-quarter performance.
The strong revenue growth in the quarter was primarily driven by a 13 percent increase in attendance and a 3 percent increase in admissions per capita spending. Attendance in the first quarter grew to 1.6 million guests.
—PR Newswire

Cedar Fair announces record first-quarter
SANDUSKY, Ohio — **Cedar Fair Entertainment Company** (NYSE: FUN), reported on April 29 record revenues for the first quarter ended March 29, 2015. For the first quarter ended March 29, 2015, Cedar Fair's net revenues were \$47 million, an increase of \$6 million, or 16 percent, when compared with the first quarter ended March 30, 2014. Strong revenue trends were driven by the continued solid performance of Knott's Berry Farm, the company's only year-round park, and strong opening weekends at Carowinds, Kings Dominion and Great America. In the quarter, the company generated record attendance, along with increases in all revenue categories, including admissions, food and beverage, merchandise and games, and accommodations.
Operating costs and expenses for the first quarter of 2015 were \$110 million, an increase of \$3 million from the first quarter of 2014.
The net loss for the quarter totaled \$84 million, or \$1.50 per diluted LP unit, comparable with the first quarter a year ago.
—PR Newswire

SeaWorld Ent. announces first-quarter results
ORLANDO, Fla. — **SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.** (NYSE: SEAS), reported on May 7 financial results for the quarter ended March 31, 2015. For the first quarter of 2015, the company generated revenue of \$214.6 million, an increase of \$2.3 million, or 1 percent, versus the first quarter of 2014. Adjusted EBITDA was a loss of \$3.8 million compared to a loss of \$15.0 million in the first quarter of 2014. The company reported a net loss of \$43.6 million, or a loss of \$0.51 per diluted share, in the first quarter of 2015. In the first quarter of 2014, the company generated a net loss of \$49.2 million, or a loss of \$0.56 per diluted share. Net cash provided by operating activities was \$37.7 million in the first quarter of 2015 compared to \$13.0 million in the prior year first quarter. Free Cash Flow was a deficit of \$3.0 million for the first quarter of 2015 compared to a deficit of \$33.8 million in the first quarter of 2014.

At a Glance...
•GLEN, N.H. — NEAAPA officials have announced that due to a conflict with the **PAPA Summer Meeting** (July 20 & 21, 2015 at **Hershey-park**), the annual **NEAAPA Summer Meeting** has been rescheduled to Tuesday, July 28, 2015. The meeting will be at **Story Land** in Glen, N.H.
•VIRGINIA — Virginia's two largest theme parks are celebrating 40 years as the commonwealth's premier family entertainment venues. To mark the occasion, the parks are joining forces this summer to raise awareness of Virginia's Gateway to Family Thrills, the 75-mile corridor connecting **Kings Dominion** and **Busch Gardens Williamsburg**. The partnership is the first between the two theme parks in nearly 15 years. It was made possible in part because of a \$25,000 matching grant from the Virginia Tourism Corporation, and includes a digital advertising component as well as a combined ticket offer so guests can experience both theme parks at a reduced price. The parks developed two ticket deals to support the Gateway to Family Thrills promotion.
•TULSA, Okla. — Dallas-based **Main Event Entertainment**, has opened its first Tulsa location at 7830 South Santa Fe Ave., near the intersection of Highway 75 and West 81st Ave. The new center, the second in Oklahoma, is Main Event's 20th location nationwide and brings more than 175 jobs to the community.

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New book lists everything to know about Disneyland

REVIEW: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

Just when it seems that there could not possibly be a book about Disneyland that hadn't already been done, along comes something new. *The Disneyland Book of Lists* is pretty much what one would expect from the titular name — a book of lists. As mundane as that sounds, the book is actually quite fascinating.

The 247 lists are grouped into 12 categories ranging from lists about Walt Disney himself to lists of guests that have visited the park. The latter includes the oldest guest, a 108-year old woman from New Mexico, to three who weren't born when they entered the park — the first was birthed in 1979 near the Plaza Inn.

Other fun-filled facts include lists of 69 famous people who worked or performed at Disneyland — like Jay Leno, Ryan Seacrest, Kenny Loggins and Jerry Seinfeld. How many Disney aficionados know that there are 24 clocks at Disneyland that deliberately tell the wrong time? The grandfather clock in the haunted mansion only strikes 13 o'clock.

Along with the 247 lists are 175 vintage and contemporary photographs and illustrations. How many readers would know that the park's trash cans are styled to fit the location of the park? Twelve different designs are

pictured on page 98.

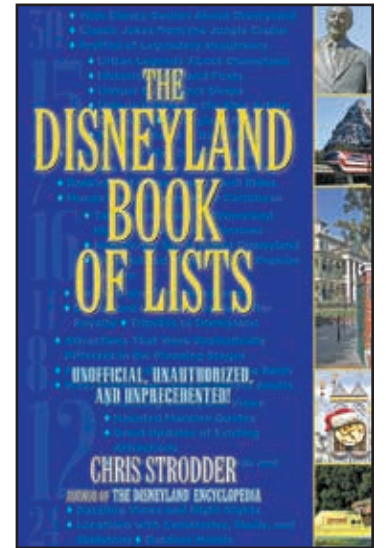
The Disneyland Book of Lists offers a unique opportunity to explore the fascinating history of the theme park that forever changed the amusement industry. The lists seem so comprehensive that is difficult to imagine that anything has been left out — with the exception of other Disney properties. The bulk of the book's 360 fact-filled pages are dedicated to

just Disneyland. There are no lists about Disney California Adventure, Walt Disney World, or any other properties of the globe-spanning Disney empire.

Author Chris Stodder of Mill Valley, California, first visited Disneyland in 1966 and has been collecting souvenirs, ephemera and interesting facts for nearly 50 years. Stodder has authored multiple books including *The*

Disneyland Encyclopedia originally published in 2008 with a second edition released four years later.

The soft-cover, 360-page *Disneyland Book of Lists* is published by Santa Monica Press of Solana Beach, California. Retail price is \$16.95 and the book is available at online retailers such as Amazon.com, Barnes & Noble book stores and other major outlets.



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Rio Syrup Co. celebrates 75th anniversary

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — Rio Syrup company, Inc. was founded in 1940 by Stuart S. Tomber, thus the company is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. The third generation of family members continue their involvement in the company which manufactures beverage flavors for Shaved Ice, Slush Drinks, Sno Cones, Fountain Drinks, Ices, Punch Drinks, Malt and Milk Shakes.

The St. Louis-based company also manufactures a line of liquid food colors as well as several color dyes in more than 300 flavors that are both sugar and sugar-free.

•riosyrup.com

Amusements, alternative fun counter gaming decline

Atlantic City 'rebrands' as a reenergized version of original self

AT: Dean Lamanna

dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — When Superstorm Sandy roared across the New Jersey coast in late 2012, this seaside resort suffered only some tidal flooding — and save for a remote, dilapidated section of its iconic Boardwalk, its attractions emerged unscathed. To dispel erroneous public perceptions that all of the Garden State's beach attractions had been wiped out, the city launched an ad campaign boasting that it was alive, well and fully open for business.

Two and half years later, as storm-bulldozed towns to the north such as Seaside Heights and Keansburg have rebuilt their amusements and regained their footing, Atlantic City finds itself on the flip side of fortune.

Beginning in 2006, during a seven-year period that saw the expansion of online gaming and legalized gambling locations around the northeastern U.S., annual gaming revenue among the city's dozen casinos fell from about \$5.2 billion to below \$3 billion.

The writing was on the seawall by last summer, when the Atlantic Club Casino Hotel had already closed and Caesars Entertainment announced it would soon shutter the sail-shaped Showboat Atlantic City hotel and casino, a fixture on the Boardwalk since 1987. The Revel hotel and casino, a 47-story, glass-clad behemoth that cost a surreal \$2.4 billion to build and was unstable financially since before its 2012 debut, also was on the verge of operational collapse (it closed early last September, just a couple days after the adjacent Showboat).

In late June of 2014, Atlantic City Mayor Don Guardian took an unusual but proactive step in issuing an impassioned press release about the future. Describing a city in "massive economic transition," he suggested that salvation could be found in the sand-and-surf-based popularity of the destination's past.

"We are increasing our efforts to deliver more tourist attractions and special events activities for people to enjoy outside of the gaming industry," Guardian said. "Atlantic City has a long and storied history of reinventing itself...

I believe [its] best days are still ahead of us."

In the intervening year, Atlantic City boosters and businesspersons have turned the mayor's remarks into a rallying cry — mobilizing to attract and increase investment in gambling alternatives, and to court buyers with a vision for the barrier island's bankrupt casino properties. Thanks in large part to the four-year-old Atlantic City Alliance (ACA), a private, non-profit marketing organization for the city, a renewed and vigorous emphasis has been placed on the resort's natural outdoor appeal and historic reputation as the Jersey Shore's top entertainment center.

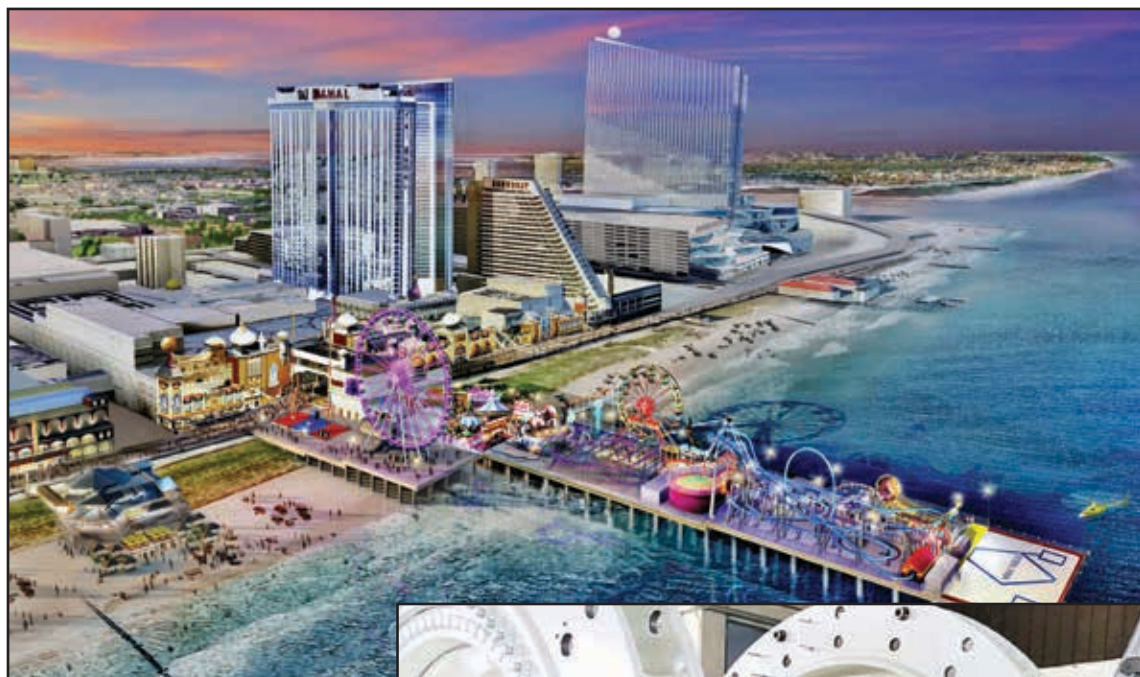
"That's been the push in a big, citywide way, really, since 2012," said Jeff Guaracino, ACA's executive director. "What you're beginning to see now is how the remaining casino properties are transforming by offering more leisure opportunities. And there are new stand-alone attractions that are opening up and will be big draws."

Steel-ing home

One existing stand-alone attraction that has provided traditional seaside fun in Atlantic City for decades is Steel Pier. In the shadow of the Trump Taj Mahal casino-hotel and other nearby gambling properties, it has steadfastly offered a variety of rides, games and familiar diversions.

For Anthony Catanoso, president of Steel Pier, the gaming crisis represents both an opportunity and — for the sake of his own business — a personal obligation to play up the tourist-friendly characteristics that make the city special. Local officials, he told *Amusement Today*, have even asked him in recent months to speak on the city's behalf in places like New York City, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., about its brighter developments both in the works and on the horizon.

"With the emerging, very competitive gaming market in the surrounding states, Atlantic City has taken some hits," Catanoso said. "While the gambling revenue has come down incrementally and will level off, the non-gaming revenue has risen to \$2.7 billion — and there's really no limit to where it can go."



Leading Atlantic City's non-gaming tourism push, Steel Pier is preparing for the installation of a 200-foot observation wheel just south of the pier. Examining the ride's hub at manufacturer Technical Park in Melara, Italy, are Anthony Catanoso, Steel Pier's president, and James Catanoso, pier operations manager. COURTESY STEEL PIER



Catanoso is putting his money where his mouth is: Within a few months, Steel Pier will be taking delivery of a 200-foot-tall observation wheel from Technical Park of Melara, Italy, to be installed on a new, 30,000-square-foot deck just south of the pier. The \$14 million project, for which the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA) has extended a loan of \$8 million, will have 40 climate-controlled gondolas enabling year-round operation. An early 2016 opening is being eyed.

"We expect it to be a really big hit, a game changer for Atlantic City and the Boardwalk," said Catanoso, noting that, while general spruce-up at Steel Pier is ongoing, no new ride acquisitions will be made until the observation wheel is up and running.

There's a larger picture beyond the recent flurry of negative headlines, he added. The city, working in partnership with CRDA and under a five-year deadline set by New Jersey Governor Chris Christie for a turnaround, saw a 40 percent spike in convention business

by the end of last year and is seeing hundreds of millions in non-gaming investment.

"For every bad thing that's happened, there are five things that are positive happening," Catanoso said. "We've got a billion dollars worth of investment going into this city in the next 18 months."

Indeed, a number of major attraction-oriented projects are either already open or in various stages of development in Atlantic City. They include:

- **Bass Pro Shops**, a \$31 million, 84,000-square-foot retail and recreational experience for outdoors enthusiasts featuring a huge indoor aquarium, which opened in April.

- **The Playground**, Philadelphia developer Bart Blatstein and project partner Paul Steelman's forthcoming multimillion-dollar transformation of the 464,000-square-foot Pier Shops at Caesar's into an oceanfront collection of restaurants, music venues and nightclubs, mainly geared toward the over-21 crowd.

- **Tropicana Atlantic City's** \$35 million general property and Boardwalk facade make-

over incorporating 15 giant LED screens and a light show, which was set to debut Memorial Day weekend.

Also along the Boardwalk, \$34 million has been committed to new lighting, advertising video screens, security and WiFi availability. And in the marina district, Caesars Entertainment is building a \$145 million convention center between its Harrah's Resort and the Borgata Hotel, Casino and Spa. (The Borgata itself is lavishing \$15 million on a new nightclub and outdoor concert venue capable of hosting 4,000.)

Meanwhile, Florida-based developer Glenn Straub, who purchased the Revel in April for a bargain-basement \$82 million, has discussed everything from a life-extension therapy center to an elaborate water park and a new amusement pier of some type for the complex.

Promoting diversity

Atlantic City's Do A.C. advertising campaign, launched by ACA three years ago, has produced a substantial non-

► See ATLANTIC CITY, page 49

▶ ATLANTIC CITY

Continued from page 48

gaming-related payoff for what remains the second-biggest gambling market in the country.

"We've gotten more leisure visitors to come," said ACA's Jeff Guaracino. "Occupancies are up, and we know that people are paying a little bit more for their hotel rooms — about five percent. There are more non-gaming hotels opening. And the [eight] casinos that are left are doing much better because there are fewer competitors."

This year, CRDA has approved \$1.3 million in funding for two major beach concerts and live entertainment on the Boardwalk. Last summer, a free concert with country music acts Blake Shelton and Lady Antebellum drew 120,000 people and created a huge eco-

nomie boost — with an estimated \$24 million spent locally in association with the event.

"The growth in festivals and outdoor music, and people looking to participate more than just sitting in a seat, is a shift across almost every generation," Guaracino said. "The pool parties and the young nightlife and the rise in electronic dance music are things we're getting our fair share of; in addition to the major concerts, we're having four dance events on our beach this summer, which is new."

Along with highlighting air shows, beach volleyball contests, fireworks displays, fishing tournaments and triathlons, ACA is reaching out to the gay and lesbian travel market with a series of special events.

"These are all ways to attract new tourists," Guaracino said. "Our real push this sum-



Bart Bowl, a high-tech bowling alley, is just one of many entertainment options offered by The Playground, a proposed multimillion-dollar reimagining of the current Pier Shops at Caesars retail complex over the beach in Atlantic City. It is named after developer Bart Blatstein, CEO of Tower Investments, who is partnering with architect Paul Steelman on the project. COURTESY STEELMAN PARTNERS

mer is Atlantic City as 'The Entertainment Capital of the Jersey Shore.' Because this is what it is all the time, during all four seasons. If you're going

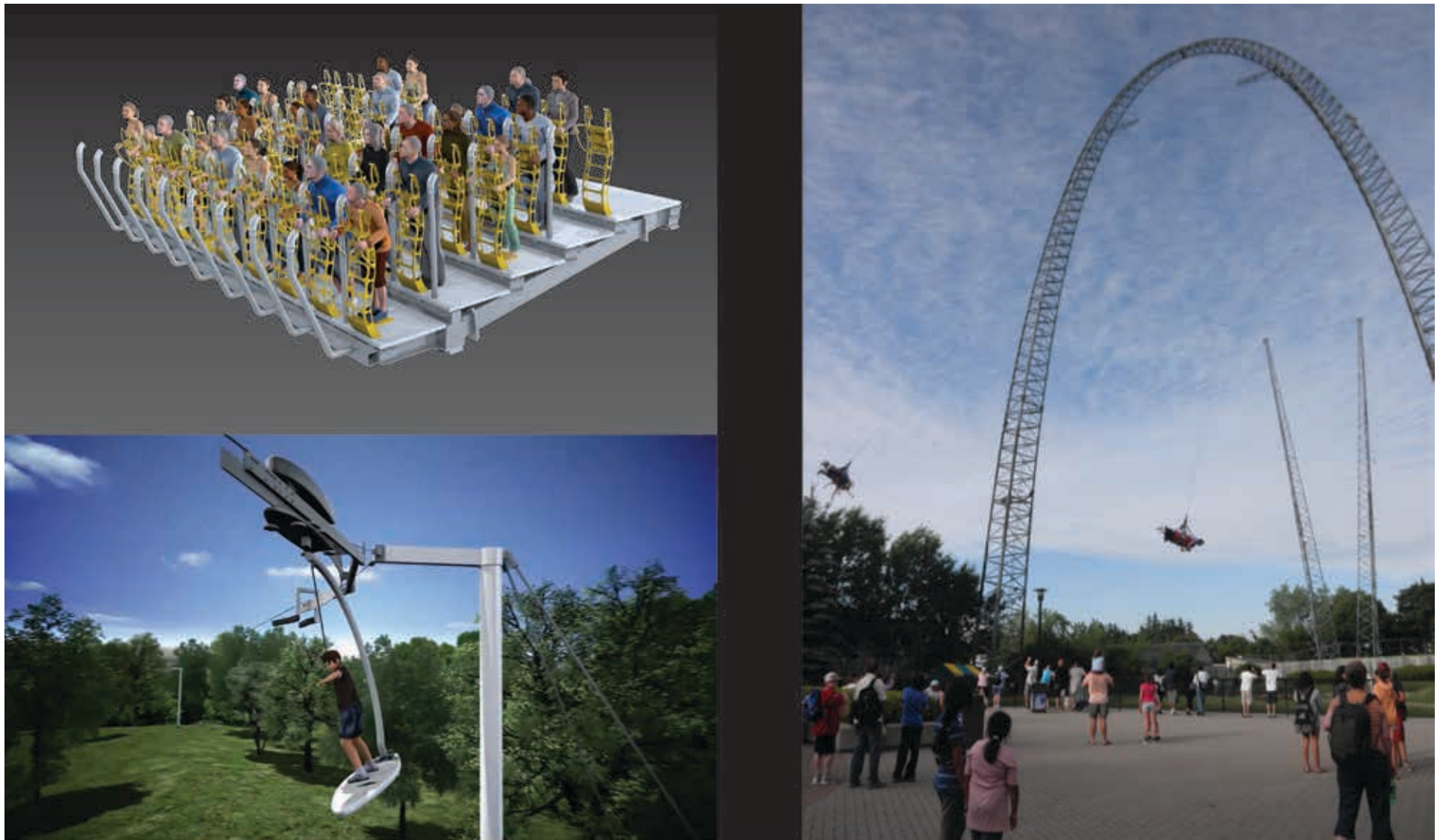
to come to New Jersey for any reason — whether for headliner acts, food and wine festivals, or big-name deejays — we feel that we can own it."

Another thing Atlantic City needs to own is its fiscal responsibility. This year, the city is about \$100 million short in revenue to meet expenses, and taxes have already been raised to the max. Cuts, Guaracino acknowledged, could result in the demise of ACA itself.

"What you do need is a city that can serve its residents and visitors, and a business community that can provide an extraordinary visitor experience — and to do that, you need stability in your finances," he said. "Turning the ship and getting new types of visitors to come and see you take a little time."

"We're going through some changes," echoed Steel Pier's Anthony Catanoso. "But Atlantic City is still on the move. It is absolutely on the right track."

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RIDE

Intamin Giant Wheel anchors Orlando's new I-Drive 360

AT: Scott Rutherford

srutherford@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO, Fla. — While all the area theme parks continue to roll out plenty of new rides and attractions, developers over on International Drive are diligently working to provide central Florida tourists with something equally unique.

The latest I-Drive offerings come from U.K.-based Merlin Entertainments PLC in the form of three new high-profile attractions — The Orlando Eye, Madame Tussauds and Sea Life Aquarium — that work together to serve as the centerpiece of I-Drive 360, a new dining and entertainment destination just south of Sand Lake Road near the Lockheed Martin facility.

The Orlando Eye

Easily the most visible component of the development is the massive Orlando Eye. Like its namesake, the London Eye on the River Thames in the U.K., these rides are a far cry from traditional Ferris Wheels. Their developers instead use the moniker of Observation Wheels to describe the lofty attractions. Marketed by its builder, Intamin, as a Giant Wheel, the Orlando Eye tops out an impressive 400 feet, earning it the record of being the tallest Wheel on the U.S. East Coast (only the Las Vegas High Roller is taller by 43 feet) and the fifth tallest Wheel in the



The 400-foot-tall Orlando Eye features 30 ski lift-style gondolas that each accommodate 15 guests. One revolution lasts 20 minutes and offers stunning views of Orlando area attractions.

AT/SCOTT RUTHERFORD

world.

The Orlando Eye experience begins with an entertaining pre-show that takes place in a multi-tiered 4D theater. Orlando-based AO&A created the four-and-a-half minute film that was written, produced and shot in Central Florida at multiple locations that capture the spirit of the area. To bring the final images to life, the team also programmed the audio, water, wind, and scent effects into the theater to create an enhanced, immersive experience.

Adam Raboy, COO of Circle Entertainment which owns the project, knew that he had to find a highly specialized team to deliver both the technical and creative aspects of the interactive theatre experience. "The project had a fixed budget and timetable. AO&A took that as a chance to demonstrate how well they can deliver a first class show within any box they're given. I believe they've proven their value and resourcefulness and am eager to work with them in the future."

At the conclusion of the film, guests then proceed to the Orlando Eye's boarding platform where they're directed to queue for one of 30 sleek ski lift-style gondolas, each with a capacity of 15. These climate-controlled capsules are fashioned mostly of tinted glass, which offer unparalleled views of the Orlando landscape and area attractions.

Using a variable speed tire drive, the wheel moves continually with one full rotation lasting 20 minutes. To maintain a smooth ride, the Orlando Eye uses a stabilized-driven system to keep the gondolas level at all times, even during windy conditions or when the wheel is stopped to accommodate guests in wheel chairs or with other mobility issues. According to Merlin, the Orlando Eye is the first big wheel ever to use such a system in combination with a suspended ski lift capsule design.

Just prior to the grand opening on May 4, 2015, daredevil performer Nik Wallenda successfully completed an untethered walk across the rim of the wheel forty stories



U.K.-based Merlin Entertainments PLC has debuted three new high-profile attractions — The Orlando Eye (above), Madame Tussauds wax museum (left) and Sea Life Aquarium (below) — as the centerpiece of I-Drive 360, a new dining and entertainment destination in Orlando.

AT/SCOTT RUTHERFORD



above the ground.

The Orlando Eye is currently the tallest attraction in the area and can be seen for miles but it really manages to stand out at night thanks to a fully programmable LED lighting package supplied by Maxtron. After sunset, the Wheel explodes in vibrant and ever-changing patterns of colorful light.

Views from the Orlando Eye are obviously impressive with guests able to see as far away as Cape Canaveral on a clear day. Increasingly popular are sunset flights, which offer stunning views as well as the night flights that allow guests to enjoy the many theme park fireworks presentations from an entirely new perspective.

Madame Tussauds and Sea Life Aquarium

Once riders return to the ground and disembark from

the Orlando Eye, guests re-enter the main terminal area that is home to a large food court with various counter service dining options along with both Madame Tussauds and Sea Life Aquarium.

Madame Tussauds showcases lifelike wax figures that pay tribute to the most influential celebrity and historical figures of our time including Jimmy Fallon, actor Jim Parsons, pop stars Taylor Swift and Selena Gomez and Ricky Martin. Unique to this installation are prominent Florida icons such as early explorer Ponce de Leon and Miami Dolphins quarterback Dan Marino.

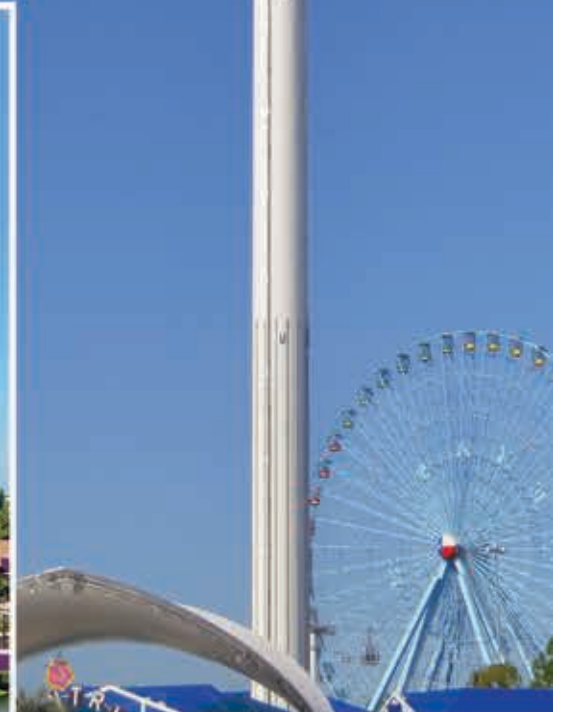
Sea Life Orlando offers a new wave of underwater adventures with displays of colorful fish, sharks, jellies, sea horses, rays, sea turtles and more. Winding tunnels, floor-to-ceiling and bubble aquariums and cold water rock

pools provide a unique experience for all guests as they are introduced to more than 5,000 sea animals in habitats representing the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans. Specific to the Orlando aquarium, visitors can also explore Florida's freshwater lakes and ponds, extending to the Everglades.

"Merlin has more than 100 attractions, 11 hotels and three holiday villages in 23 countries across four continents, but today all eyes are on Orlando!" said James Paulding, Southeast Regional Manager, Midway Attractions, Merlin Entertainments. "From exploring the oceans of the world, to taking selfies with your favorite celebrities, or seeing 360-degree panoramic views of Orlando, we're excited about the impact each of these new additions will have on the region from an entertainment, tourism and economic standpoint."



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What is an AIMS Certification and How Does it Work?

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Oertley

The AIMS Certification Program is internationally recognized for accreditation of knowledge and experience in the field of amusement ride inspection. AIMS offers certification in four areas within the amusement industry: Ride Inspection (Levels I - III), Maintenance Technician (Levels I - III), Operations Technician (Levels I - III), and Aquatics Operations (Level I).

To qualify for Level I Certification testing, a person must have 12 months of current employment in the field in which he or she will test as well as a High School diploma or GED equivalent. Those testing for Ride Inspection Certification must also present proof of passing an eye examination with-

in six months prior to testing. Upon passing the test, a person is awarded certification.

Individuals holding AIMS certification can either renew their certification every two years or they can test up to the next level. Both require a minimum number of CEU (Continuing Education Units) to ensure the person has continued to improve their knowledge of the latest trends and developments in amusement safety in their respective field. Certificate renewal requires 40 hours (4 CEU) of continuing educational training each two years. As the certification levels progress, so do the qualification requirements. Level II testing requires three years (36 months) of current employment in the selected field along with 80 hours (8 CEU). Level III certificate holders are the most accomplished certifications in the industry and require 10 years of experience (120 months) along with 120 hours of con-

tinuing education (12 CEU).

Reaching AIMS Level III certification is the highest achievement in amusement industry safety training and education. A Level III certified person is an extremely valuable asset to the amusement industry. With years of experience and education, he or she unselfishly gives back to the industry from which he or she has benefited through service as a volunteer, educator and contributor to AIMS curriculum improvement.

Names of all AIMS International certified individuals are published on the AIMS website at www.aimsintl.org.

The AIMS Safety Seminar is recognized by major parks and attractions as the worldwide leader for safety training and education. Each year more than 300 students participate in active classroom and hands on learning resulting in 40 hours of continuing education credits and AIMS certifica-

tion testing. With more than 400 class hours taught by industry experts, students are encouraged to build a tailored course schedule to best suit their needs and the requirements of their employers. In addition to onsite learning, continuing education and certification testing, students return home with valuable safety information to share with colleagues and co-workers.

The **2016 AIMS Safety Seminar** will be held **January 10-15** at the Doubletree by Hilton at SeaWorld Orlando, Florida. Registration for the seminar is \$595 and includes tuition for 40 hours of classes, class materials, an opening reception, daily morning and afternoon breaks, and lunch every day. AIMS has secured a discounted rate of \$99 per night at the Doubletree. Registration opens in early September. For more information and to view a list of classes from the 2015 seminar, visit www.aimsintl.org.

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Carowinds' 2015 continues with SlingShot, dining and festival

AT: Scott Rutherford
srutherford@amusementtoday.com

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — The 2015 season at Carowinds has gotten off to a massively impressive start this spring thanks to the first phase of a more-than-\$50 million improvement and expansion plan. The introduction of the phenomenal B&M-supplied mega coaster, Fury 325, along with a new guest arrival experience and its 8.2-acre entrance plaza have been drawing visitors to the Carolina themer in record numbers.

But along with the above, there's plenty more for guests to enjoy in the form of another new attraction — SlingShot — as well as a host of unique regional dining options.

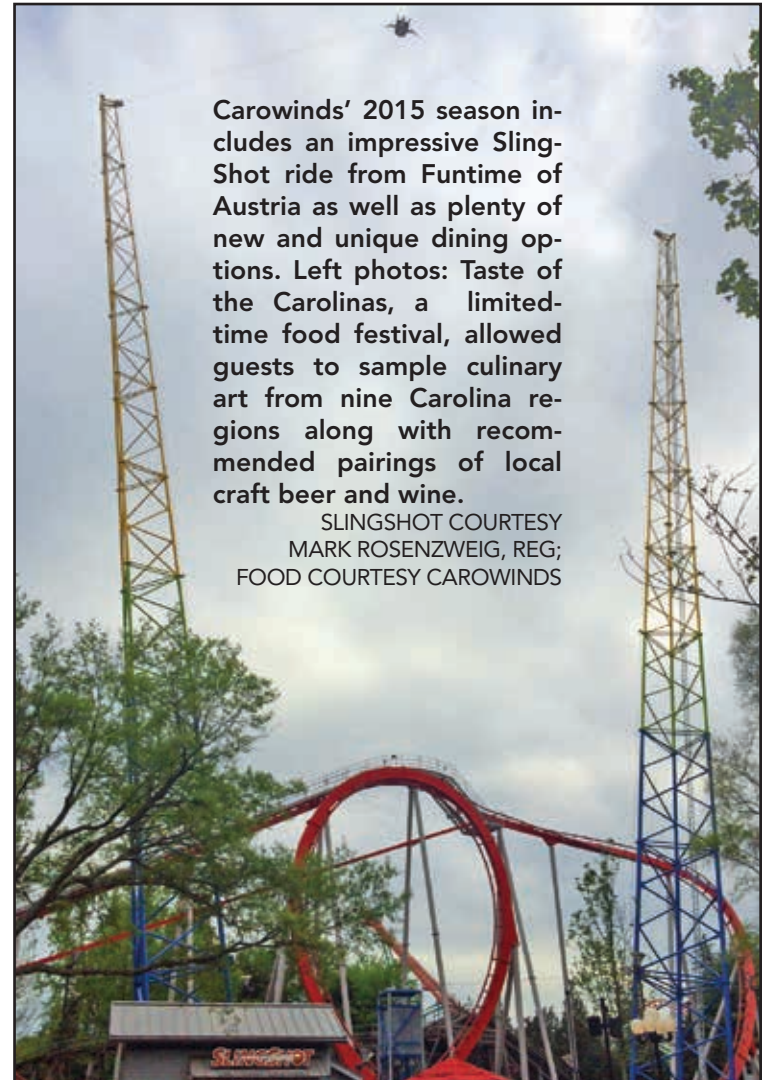
SlingShot launches

Located next door to Vortex, the park's popular B&M stand-up roller coaster, SlingShot is an up-charge attraction that utilizes a two-person capsule that is abruptly launched 300-feet into the air at speeds up to 60 mph. SlingShot was

Supplied by Funtime of Austria, which is represented here by Maryland-based Ride Entertainment Group (REG).

AT spoke with REG's Adam Sandy about the company's involvement with SlingShot. "This was an exciting project for Ride Entertainment and Funtime to be involved with. Cedar Fair is a great partner for us," said Sandy. "We appreciate the opportunity for the SlingShot

► See **CAROWINDS**, page 54



Carowinds' 2015 season includes an impressive SlingShot ride from Funtime of Austria as well as plenty of new and unique dining options. Left photos: Taste of the Carolinas, a limited-time food festival, allowed guests to sample culinary art from nine Carolina regions along with recommended pairings of local craft beer and wine.

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Carowinds' GM Mike Fehnel talks food, future

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — AT recently spoke with Mike Fehnel, Carowinds vice president and general manager, about the opening of Fury 325 and the ongoing park expansion.



Fehnel

Cedar Fair is known for amazing and influential roller coasters. Now that Fury 325 has been introduced to the public, can you comment on guest reactions? Has the ride measured up to Cedar Fair's/Carowinds' expectations?

We have been extremely pleased with the response to Fury 325 so far. It opened to very positive guest reviews. In my opinion, this ride offers the greatest combination of speed, quick transitions and airtime that I've ever seen on a coaster. And it's incredibly fast and smooth.

My first account [with Fury 325] was when I was with my son at Cub Scouts and my phone rang. It was the words I have been waiting to hear for eight months... "It's ready!!!" I ushered my son to the car and we headed straight to Carowinds. It was roughly 8:00 p.m. when I was buckled into the seat. During the 63-second ascent to the top of Fury 325, I had many thoughts racing through my head. The first drop delivered a few seconds of weightlessness prior to pulling and ascending to the top of the second hill. The next few hills were a

blur because at 95 miles per hour, all the hills and over-banked turns fly by in an instant. The turnaround at the main entrance

was a unique experience, offering another punch of airtime before plunging into the Hive Dive under the bridge. We raced back towards the Paladium and over the intense airtime hill before spinning through the helix. Two more airtime hills and we were into the brakes. I couldn't believe just how fast and smooth Fury 325 was! The ride delivered an incredible experience with some great surprises. Once back in the station the feeling was unstoppable, LET'S GO AGAIN!!!

Comment on Carowinds' new entrance plaza.

Our focus for 2015 has been centered on improving the guest arrival experience, and you can see that through both the new parking toll entrance and new main entrance facility. While the new main entrance provides the latest in guest amenities, we were also very particular in playing up the uniqueness of our park and the fact that it straddles the North Carolina/South Carolina state line, and guests will most definitely notice this as they arrive. The centerpiece though

was creating an experience that allowed our guests to interact with Fury 325 as they entered the park. The larger footprint of the new entrance allowed us to not only better accommodate traffic flow into the park, but it also gave us room to expand our ticketing and Guest Service areas.

Comment on new dining options and the importance of these new offerings.

Again, this year is focused on the guest experience and food is a major cornerstone to this. Our new executive chef and culinary team have really outdone themselves with introducing more than 45 new menu items this season. Our emphasis was really on trying to bring in new foods that are staples from the Carolinas — from BBQ ribs to biscuits with sausage gravy to beer-battered shrimp, park guests will definitely notice a difference.

We are also incredibly excited about our new food festival, Taste of the Carolinas, which ran on Saturdays and Sundays from April 18 to May 17. This new signature event allowed guests to eat, drink and experience the best of what the Carolinas have to offer. Guests were able to purchase nearly 40 sample-sized tastes from nine different regions of the Carolinas — from Smoked Trout Rillette Flatbread from the Mountain region to Calabash Seafood

of the Coast. Taste of the Carolinas is yet another component to enhancing the guest experience over the coming years.

Fury 325, SlingShot and the new entrance plaza were all part of a more than \$50 million improvement package for Carowinds. How does this expenditure compare to spending at the other Cedar Fair parks? And is so much being poured into Carowinds because of the continued massive growth of the Charlotte market?

During the the next several years, Cedar Fair will be investing more than \$50 million in Carowinds to better serve the market and provide guests with a "Best Day of Summer" experience each and every time they visit our park. The continued growth in the Charlotte market presents a unique opportunity for the company to continue to grow Carowinds through a series of meaningful investments, and we think our guests will be very excited of the changes to come.

We are committed to enhancing the guest experience over the coming years and building a world-class facility that this region can be truly proud of. As we introduce new rides and attractions we will be grounded by trying to create experiences that embrace the culture of the Carolinas.

—Scott Rutherford

►CAROWINDS Continued from page 53

to be installed alongside the park's beautiful new front gate and largest investment to date, Fury 325."

Foodies rejoice

In addition to everything else new for 2015, Carowinds' executive chef and culinary team have completely revamped dining throughout the park with regional favorites that add over 45 new menu items. Furthermore, this spring featured Taste of the Carolinas, a limited-time food festival that allowed guests to experience some of the best of what the Carolinas have to offer.

"We're proud that our food is another part of the enhanced park experience here," said Kris Suita, Carowinds executive chef. "Taste of the Carolinas affords us the opportunity to showcase traditional Carolina staples in a new and unique way."

On weekends during April and May, guests could stroll around the park and sample culinary art from nine Carolina regions along with recommended pairings of local craft beer and wine from strategically-placed kiosks. The first year of the event offered foods from various regions of the Carolinas including Asheville/Mountain Region, Upstate South Carolina, Lowcountry, South Carolina Barbecue Region, Calabash Region, Outer Banks, Lexington Barbecue Region, Charleston Region and the Piedmont along with Funnel Cakes of the Carolinas.

"We have been pleased with the response our guests have had to our new Taste of the Carolinas event", said John Taylor, Carowinds director of marketing. "Our goal in developing this new signature spring event was to create something that celebrates the renowned food culture of the Carolinas and plays on our heritage of being the place where the Carolinas come together. Taste of the Carolinas also helps to complement our increased efforts to bring new and unique experiences to our guests and build awareness for the new food programs we are introducing into the park this season."

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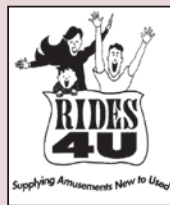
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THUNDERBOLT



THIS SIZE CAN FIT ANY PARK

-  Total track length
681 m (2234')
-  Maximum track height
35 m (115')
-  Maximum Speed
25 m/s - 90 km/h - 56 mph
-  Max Vertical
+4.3 G's
-  Passengers per vehicle
9
-  Number of inversions
5



First 9 seats vehicle and new patent pending lap bar restraint.

