

► Q&A WITH SEAWORLD'S JIM ATCHISON — PAGES 40-41

► AIMS NEWS & NOTES — PAGE 42

# AMUSEMENT TODAY <sup>©</sup> TM

*Your Amusement Industry NEWS Leader!*

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JUNE 2013



**Knoebels StratosFear...Page 13**  
COURTESY KNOEBELS

**Towers to roller coasters,  
parks roll out record setters in  
first wave of new ride openings**



**Cedar Point's GateKeeper...Page 16**  
AT/DAN FEICHT



**Six Flags Fiesta Texas Iron Rattler...Page 22**  
AT/TIM BALDWIN



**Summer Adventures at Fair Park  
Top o' Texas Tower...Page 27**  
COURTESY SUMMER ADVENTURES

NEWSPAPER

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**CONTINUING COVERAGE:  
SUPERSTORM SANDY  
SEE PAGES 44-45**





# NEWTALK

OPINIONS

CARTOON

LETTERS

AT CONTACTS

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

## USA Today founder remembered



Slade

The nation's newspaper industry lost a great visionary on April 19 when Al Neuharth died at the age of 89. Neuharth will best be remembered for his launch of *USA Today* in 1982, a move that would forever change the way American newspapers would look and present daily content to readers. Under his direction he would guide parent company Gannett from revenues of \$200 million to more than \$3 billion, making it the nation's largest newspaper company.

*USA Today* was cutting edge with breezy, easy-to-comprehend articles, attention-grabbing graphics and stories that often didn't require readers to turn the page. Sections were denoted by colors. The entire section of the back page of the news section had a weather map of the United States. The news section contained a state-by-state roundup of headlines from across the nation.

Since our beginning in 1997, *Amusement Today* continues to use some of these established trends in the look and news format we present to our readers.

It was the late Bruce Neal, (Mr. Six Flags as he is remembered) who strongly encouraged us to use the "Today" in our name. As *AT* grew to have more color options at our printer (every page is now in color) we also now use colors to highlight our different sections. Most recently, *AT* has our reporter team presenting our version of important industry headline briefs: FastTrack by Scott Rutherford, NewsSplash by Jeffrey Seifert and Midway Lights by Pam Sherborne. *Amusement Today* continues to be the only amusement industry publication to feature a monthly opinion page with multiple columns and editorial cartoon from the talented Bubba Flint, longtime cartoonist for the local DFW newspaper market.

Neuharth changed the world of newspapers in so many ways. Those of us that have the "ink" in our blood are thankful for all he did for this great news medium.

—Gary Slade

*Gary Slade is the founder and publisher of Amusement Today. During his vast newspaper career, he spent three-years in the quality control department at the North Texas-area printer for USA Today.*

**CARTOON:** Bubba Flint



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

## Destined for the history books



Mellor

In all walks of life things "come and go" and this is certainly true of the amusement and theme park industry where attractions and facilities are often replaced once they've been in a park for a certain amount of time and something new is required.

Of course some rides are in situ a lot longer than others; indeed there are many examples to be found that have been operating for several decades, one or two for even longer, and it is always sad to see a long-serving attraction removed from a park.

I was reminded of just such a situation recently when attending the opening of the new Thrill-O-Matic ride at Blackpool Pleasure Beach (BPB) here in the U.K. The new attraction, themed on the adventures of the hugely popular Wallace and Gromit characters, has replaced the Gold Mine ride which closed in 2011 after serving the park for 40 years. Indeed, during my time as a ride attendant at

the Pleasure Beach when I was starting out in the industry, I remember doing a few days on the Gold Mine and it had been something of a landmark attraction in the center of the park for all that time.

But naturally times change and things move on and having entertained millions of visitors over the years it was time for something new, although the same building has been used for the new ride, as has the original Gold Mine track. Some key elements remain, therefore, albeit totally unrecognizable in their new guise.

And what a great job the Pleasure Beach and all those involved in the creation of the attraction have done. The Wallace and Gromit stories are hugely popular with both adults and children and the detail that has gone into the attraction is there for all to see, right down to the smallest of themed props. It's something of a coup for BPB to have created the world's first Wallace and Gromit themed ride and it's a great addition to the park which is sure to hit the spot with visitors young and old.

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# 2 MINUTE DRILL



COMPILED: Janice Witherow

## Mary Niven, Disney California Adventure Park

As Vice President of Disney California Adventure Park and Guest Services at the Disneyland Resort in Anaheim, Calif., Mary Niven literally feels the magic every day she steps foot in her "work" place. In her role, Mary oversees the daily operation and overall guest satisfaction at the park ... something she does with astute observation and an obvious passion. Most recently, she led the park's major expansion with the addition of Buena Vista Street and the ultra-popular Cars Land; plus the renovation of the park's main entrance. Mary serves on several boards and is often noted for being a keen innovator with a generous spirit.



Mary Niven, Disneyland Resort, has spent 13 years with the company, and most recently she led the park's major expansion with the addition of Buena Vista Street and the ultra-popular Cars Land; plus the renovation of the park's main entrance. COURTESY DISNEYLAND RESORT

### Title

Vice President of Disney California Adventure Park and Guest Services at the Disneyland Resort.

**Number of years in the industry**  
13.

### Best thing about the industry

Amazing talented people with equally amazing hearts.

### Favorite amusement ride

Radiator Springs Racers not just because it is in my park. It combines great storytelling with thrills that the whole family can enjoy.

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

### Biggest challenge facing our industry

Our ability to leverage technology to enhance our experiences while not losing our ability to personally connect with our guests.

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

The joy and excitement on children's faces upon their arrival at the park. Their anticipation of the day reminds me why we do what we do.

### All-time favorite meal

My grandmother's enchiladas.

### The first thing I do in the morning is ...

Walk my Bichon Frise Jean Paul.

**What is more important ... knowledge or imagination?**

Imagination.

**The last movie I saw in the theater was ...**  
Iron Man 3.

**I always need help with ...**  
Patience.

**If I could invite one famous person to dinner, it would be ...**  
Oprah Winfrey.

### My favorite time of day is ...

Walking through the park just after sunrise when it is pristine and ready for our guests.

**The time period I would most like to go back and live in is ...**

I wouldn't; I like to learn from the past but no need to go back there.

**The Disney character that best describes my personality is ...**  
Tinker Bell.

**The household chore I really don't mind doing is ...**  
Washing dishes.

**My favorite store for shopping is ...**  
Any store that allows you to shop online!

**It's summer! My favorite thing to take on a picnic is ...**  
A great bottle of wine.

**The sport I enjoy watching the most is ...**  
Hockey.

**To me, the ideal vacation is ...**  
Anywhere and anytime I can get my kids and their families all together.

**Growing up, my favorite TV show was ...**  
I Dream of Jeannie.

**The website I find myself on most often is ...**  
Facebook.

**Three things on my "bucket list" are ...**  
1. Visit Africa. 2. Learn how to play the piano. 3. Take a painting class.

**Choose one: steak or seafood**  
Seafood.



Niven

## THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

Presented by



www.RollerCoasterMuseum.org

•**1904:** On June 29, **George Kessler** purchased a large area of land in **Coney Island**, Brooklyn, New York, paying over \$1 million for property that included **Luna Park**, which had opened the year before. While he denied that the deal was a move against the park, he did purchase the entire stock of the **Sea Beach Land Company**, including the **Luna Park** site. He suggested that he had closed the deal as an investment, as Luna Park's lease ran through 1915. Many also believe that **Dreamland's William Reynolds** was also involved, to possibly take over the park, but that was never proven.

•**1908:** On opening day in early June, a man was nearly killed when riding **Lagoon Park's** popular **Scenic Railway** in Farmington, Utah. The *Ogden* newspaper recounted how **Logan Balderston** was seated in one of the cars which had begun its downward descent. When the car started making a turn Balderston was thrown from the car to the ground about 40 feet below. His leg was broken, a rib was also fractured and his heart displaced about two inches. No one was sure exactly how he had fallen out, but it is likely that it happened so suddenly that no one knows just how it occurred. He was taken to a hospital in Salt Lake City where the doctors thought he might not recover. Within days, he was actually improving, based on follow-up reports.

•**1908:** Due to the result of two separate accidents on the **Royal Gorge** roller coaster at **White City** in Chicago, Illinois, Building Commissioner **Joseph Downey** requested a full investigation into both incidents on June 20. Both accidents had resulted in the deaths of the riders, and Downey was seeking an opinion from the administration's counsel's office as to the city's power to control all such devices in the many Chicago amusement parks. It is considered the first time local authorities began to concentrate on the safety of park rides, particularly the roller coasters.

•**1922:** A monument to the late **Frederic Thompson** was erected in the unlikely location of **Woodlawn Cemetery**, in Brooklyn, New York, in early June. Thompson was the creator of **Luna Park** in Coney Island (with **Elmer Dundy**), and Manhattan's **Hippodrome**. The monument, intended to perpetuate the spirit and creative genius of Thompson, was dedicated to his memory June 6. Other Coney Island greats are also buried locally, including **William Mangels** and **George Tilyou**.

•**1932:** A devastating fire caused nearly \$150,000 in damage to the **Liberty Pier** in Savin Rock, West Haven, Connecticut. The June 11 fire virtually wiped out the entire pier, its rides and concessions. Marathon dancers had to run from the ballroom as the flames consumed buildings and other structures. The **Red Devil Coaster**, one of a handful of coasters built over water, went up in flames, and was never rebuilt. It is still considered the most destructive fire in the history of Savin Rock, the Coney Island of Connecticut.

•**1963:** On June 18 **Six Flags Over Texas** opened the first modern-day log flume. Built by **Arrow Development** at a cost of \$300,000, **El Aserradero** features eight-foot hollowed out logs holding up to six passengers. Once aboard the fiberglass log, guests float around a curving flume. The finale consists of a plunge down a 44 foot incline culminating with a tremendous splash that splatters the riders with water. The ride was an immediate success and log flumes have since become staples at amusement and theme parks throughout the world.

—Compiled by Richard Munch, NRCMA and Jeffrey Seifert, AT

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# INTERNATIONAL

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## 2013 Asian Attractions Expo heads to Singapore

**STORY:** Andrew Mellor  
 amellor@amusementtoday.com

MARINA BAY SANDS, Singapore — The 2013 Asian Attractions Expo (AAE), the Asia-Pacific region's premier international attractions industry event, moves to Singapore this year and will be held from June 4-7.

Organized by IAAPA, the event will be held at the Sands Expo and Convention Centre at Marina Bay Sands Resort and the trade show (June 5-7) will once again showcase products and services from more than 250 companies from 30 countries. Together they will utilize a floor space of over 6,000 square meters and in total, more than 5,000 industry professionals, both visitors and exhibitors, are expected to attend.

"This year, nearly 10 percent of the companies on the trade show floor are exhibiting for the first time — an indication of the continued growth of the show and the industry in Asia," said Paul Noland, president and CEO of IAAPA.

For the first time in the history of the AAE, the Opening Ceremony and Leadership Breakfast will take place within the IAAPA Theatre inside the exhibition hall, allowing event participants easy and immediate access to the show floor.

The event will also feature a significant education conference from June 4-7, which will incorporate presentations from industry leaders such as Tom Mehrmann, chief executive of Ocean Park Corp., the multi-day IAAPA Institute for Attractions Managers and a day-long IAAPA Safety Institute. Sessions will cover subjects including making a



This year's Asian Attractions Expo event will take place at the spectacular Sands Expo and Convention Center (shown above) at Marina Bay Sands Resort in Singapore. Below, the show floor at the AAE will once again accommodate suppliers and manufacturers of products and services from around the world. COURTESY IAAPA / SHOW FLOOR COURTESY MIKE TSANG



► Exhibitor Listing  
 Page 6

facility appealing to families, maximizing travelling exhibits, building long-term supplier partnerships, what's new in Asia for 2013 and more.

New facility tours and networking opportunities will also be on offer to attendees. The event will kick-off with an Opening Night at the new,



multi-attraction Marine Life Park at Resorts World Sentosa, while other event destinations will include Legoland Malaysia, Sanrio Hello Kitty Town, the Little Big Club and Lat's Place, owned by Puteri Har-

bour Family Theme Parks. Universal Studios Singapore will also open exclusively for AAE participants. A post event tour to Bali Safari and Marine Park from June 8-10 is also available.

And prior to this year's event, IAAPA announced that next year's AAE will take place at the China National Convention Center (CNCC) in Beijing, from June 17-20, 2014.



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# Asian Attractions Expo

## Singapore • June 4-7, 2013 • Exhibitor Listing

3DME Photo Solutions.....	1935	Guangzhou Shunhong Entertainment Equipments Co. Ltd.....	1733	Prime Play by Whitewater.....	1125
ABC Rides Switzerland.....	1137	Guzzi Eugenio.....	108	Pro Forma Advisors LLC.....	1713
Action Horizons Inc.....	457	HAFEMA Water Rides GmbH.....	547	Prominent Technology Enterprise Ltd, Funovation.....	1818
AECOM.....	2027	Hangzhou Trains Equipment Co. Ltd.....	2032	ProSlide Technology, Inc.....	1518
Aerodium Ltd.....	1239	Hankook Leisure.....	810	PT. Rejo Megah Makmur.....	435
Aerophile S.A.S.....	610	Haystack Dryers Limited.....	830	Ptarmigan Integration.....	116
AET/Amusement & Edutainment Technologies.....	942	Heinen Import & Export (Heinimex) Corp.....	133	QubicaAMF Bowling Products.....	2130
Alterface S.A.....	1012	Henan Hengtaihua Amusement Equipment Co., Ltd.....	337	RDC/Ride Development Co.....	1717
American Locker Security Systems, Inc.....	1238	Herborner Pumps.....	410	Reka Setia Playground Sdn Bhd.....	1111
<b>Amusement Today.....IAAPA Central</b>		Hopkins Rides.....	1123	Rides and Fun Srl.....	511
Antonio Zamperla SPA.....	607	Hot Games.....	1846	Rodeo Ride Amusement Co. Ltd.....	1920
Aoqi Inflatables Limited.....	1807	Huaxia Amusement Co. Ltd.....	2131	S&S ~ Sansei.....	407
Aquakita.....	510	Huss Park Attractions GmbH.....	318	Sacoa Playcard System.....	1711
Arihant Industrial Corp. Ltd.....	1214	Hytechnology Inc.....	219	Sally Corporation.....	630
Art Attack.....	1820	I.E. Park S.r.l./Amusement Rides & SOLI Bumper Cars.....	1223	Sanderson Group International Pty Ltd.....	621
Asia Amusement Machine Co. Ltd.....	1833	IAAPA Bookstore.....	107	Sartori Int'l Group.....	150
atlantics GmbH.....	438	IAAPA Central.....	119	SBF Srl.....	922
Attractions Audio Visual Ltd.....	411	IAAPA Exhibit Sales Office.....	113	Sela Cars s.r.l.....	106
Attraktion!GmbH.....	1626	Ice Magic International Ltd.....	557	Semnox Debit Card System.....	1141
AUXEL SRL.....	514	IdeAttack, Inc.....	926	Severn Lamb.....	1210
B&B Exporting Ltd.....	211	Indian Association of Amusement Parks and Industr.....	240	Shanghai Leaders Investment Management Company Limited.....	147
Barco.....	1747	Industrial Frigo SRL.....	543	Shengjing Chuangzhu.....	236
Beijing Jiuhua Amusement Rides Manufacturing Co.....	939	Intamin Amusement Rides Int. Corp. Est.....	527	Shenyang Chuangqi Amusement Equipment Co., Ltd.....	931
Beijing Shibaolai Amusement Equipment Co. Ltd.....	815	InterCard Inc.....	646	Shenzhen Red Style Tourism Design & Construction Ltd.....	319
BERG Toys.....	550	Interlink LG Ltd.....	242	Showdoh Inc.....	747
Bertazzon 3B Srl.....	126	International Play Company, Inc.....	1215	Showtime Entertainment Productions.....	921
Billings Productions, Inc.....	751	InterPark Magazine.....	1338	SimEx - Iwerks Entertainment.....	1727
Birket Engineering, Inc.....	916	IREC Beijing Co., Ltd.....	537	Simtec Systems GmbH.....	223
Bob's Space Racers, Inc.....	834	irTactical Asia.....	1731	Simulator Makine Produksiyon Ltd.....	615
Bolliger & Mabillard Consulting Engineers, Inc.....	215	Ist Co. Ltd.....	2132	Simuline Inc.....	1026
Bombay Amusement Ride (P) Limited.....	335	Ital International, LLC.....	1316	Simworx Limited.....	247
Brown Entertainment.....	756	J & J Amusements, Inc.....	534	Skafos International Limited.....	515
Brunswick Bowling & Billiards Corporation.....	1817	Jack Rouse Associates.....	913	SkyZip Engineering.....	1932
Bumper Boats, Inc.....	1707	Jacobs Engineering UK Ltd.....	938	Subway International B.V.....	919
Buzzpark Oyun Parklari Ekipmanlari Ins. Tur.San.ve Tic. Sti.....	447	Jeff Ellis & Associates, Inc.....	130	Suzhou Fwu-Long Amusement Equipment Co., Ltd.....	1314
Centaman, Inc.....	446	Jora Vision bv.....	930	Swiss Rides AG.....	346
Centennial Woods LLC.....	914	Joymax Technology Inc.....	1931	Syndicate Graphic Technologies (Div. of Syndicate Group).....	1340
ChairkiD GmbH.....	835	KB Creative Advisors, Inc.....	1330	Tank Mobile Kiosks Limited.....	551
Chance Rides.....	415	KCC Entertainment Design.....	634	Technical Park S.N.C.....	142
Cheer Amusement Equipment Corporation.....	1719	KGCIA.....	1036	Tecway - Mecpower.....	822
Chengdu Tailong Amusement Industry Co., Ltd.....	1510	Kingsmen Exhibits Pte Ltd.....	1006	Tejix.....	1240
China Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (CAAPA).....	757	Kodak (Hong Kong) Limited.....	439	The Juice Films.....	826
CL Corporation.....	237	Lagotronics Projects B.V.....	614	The Producers Group.....	334
Cloward H2O.....	1219	LAI Games Sales, Inc.....	1811	Theme Builders Philippines, Inc.....	618
Cogan S.R.L.....	1218	Laserforce International.....	419	Themed Entertainment Association (TEA).....	317
Comfy Edutainment Centers.....	1236	Laservision Mega-Media PTE LTD.....	347	Themetech Culture and Creative.....	1835
Concept International Design Ltd.....	935	LCI Productions LTD.....	136	Theming and Animatronics Industries S.A.....	818
Cosmic Animation Entertainment Sdn Bhd.....	1335	Leading Animation & Visual Effects Design Co. Ltd.....	2030	Thinkwell.....	127
Delta Strike Laser Tag.....	451	LEC Worldwide.....	1723	Tianjin Brother Tourist Train Co. Ltd.....	910
DigiPhoto Entertainment Imaging.....	443	Leisure Activities Co., LTD.....	315	Tippmann Sports LLC.....	1830
Dippin' Dots International, LLC.....	940	Lockers.Com Pty Ltd.....	131	Trans-Force Ltd.....	1334
Dominic Fun Rides PVT LTD.....	1234	Lo-Q plc.....	649	Triotech.....	519
Dotto S.r.l.....	507	Mack Rides GmbH & Co. KG.....	1526	Triotech.....	421
Dreampark International.....	351	Magic Memories.....	251	Trublue Auto Belays / ZipStop Zip Line Brake.....	532
Dynamic Attractions Ltd.....	1506	Martin & Vlemincx Rides LLC.....	911	UK Trade and Investment.....	1927
Dynamic Motion Rides GmbH.....	842	Maurer Rides GmbH.....	838	Universal Space Amusement (HK) Ltd.....	806
ECA2.....	814	MediaMation, Inc.....	2035	Uremet Corp.....	230
eibe Produktion + Vertrieb GmbH & Co.....	140	Merooj Trampoline Park.....	1912	Van Egdom B.V.....	538
Electrosonic Audio-Visual Technology (Shanghai) Co. Ltd.....	1231	Mich Playground Co., Ltd.....	746	Vekoma Rides Manufacturing B.V.....	1227
Elephant Sculpture Art Company Ltd.....	1543	Mirage Entertainment, Inc.....	1314	VEQTOR.....	531
Embed International Pty. Ltd.....	1815	Modern Masters, Inc.....	1715	VGS.....	839
Emotion Media Factory Laserland GmbH.....	1530	Mondial World of Rides.....	811	VIM Co., Ltd.....	1612
Empex Watertoys.....	110	Moser's Rides S.r.l.....	627	Virobuild.....	1310
Entertainment Resource GmbH.....	650	MP Group.....	207	Vlocker Pty Ltd.....	433
EOS Rides.....	1823	MSKY CO., LTD.....	1735	Vortex Aquatic Structures International Inc.....	906
ETF Ride Systems.....	536	Murphy's Waves Ltd.....	1318	Walltopia.....	1342
Exponent Challenge Technology Asia Pte Ltd.....	338	Namco Bandai Games Inc.....	1426	Water Decor Indonesia (WDI).....	556
Extreme Engineering Australasia.....	1546	Namco Bandai Games Inc.....	635	Water Technology, Inc.....	418
Fabbri Group.....	1207	Neptune-Benson.....	430	Waterplay Solutions Corp.....	307
Facto Edizioni S.r.l.....	1746	Niceberg Studios.....	647	Waterworks International.....	1910
Falcon's Treehouse, LLC.....	1618	nWave Pictures S.A.....	427	Wave Loch, Inc.....	1020
Forrec Ltd.....	1115	Ocean Amusement Machine Co., Ltd.....	516	Wavesurfer - AFP Technology.....	819
Foto Master Ltd.....	1542	OCT Vision Inc.....	546	WhiteWater West Industries Ltd.....	1021
Fotosmile Australia Pty Ltd.....	1217	Okamoto Mfg. Co., Ltd.....	132	World Waterpark Association.....	343
FullDome.Pro.....	1606	OmniTicket Network (Singapore) Pte Ltd.....	1211	Wow World Of Watersports.....	1415
FUNA.....	120	Ontario Science Centre-Science North.....	235	Xtraice.....	1235
Funovation, Inc.....	1816	OpenAire, Inc.....	1133	Xtrem Aventures.....	1918
Game Art (Hong Kong) Limited.....	918	OY C.E. Lindgren AB.....	341	Yuehua Token Company.....	336
Game Plus Ltd.....	314	Pacific Surf Designs, Inc.....	2031	Zebec, Inc.....	1127
Game Time International (GTI).....	2033	Park World Magazine.....	640	Zhengzhou Wanle Amusement Equipment Co. Ltd.....	139
Gary Goddard Entertainment.....	1307	Park World Recreation Sdn Bhd.....	1819	Zhengzhou Wolong Amusement Equipment Co. Ltd.....	310
Gateway Ticketing Systems, Inc.....	831	Pax Company Ltd.....	234	Zhongshan Guang Yang Amusement Equipment Co., Ltd.....	934
Gerstlauer Amusement Rides GmbH.....	350	Pharos Controls.....	1547	Zhongshan Junye Amusement Facility Supply Co. Ltd.....	137
GHESA Ingenieria y Tecnologia, S.A ( BR Of Dubai).....	311	Picsolve Inc.....	1827	Zhongshan Kingbarth Animation and Amusement Equipment Co. Ltd.....	533
Global Attractions Ltd.....	651	Pictureworks Pte Ltd.....	1143	Zhongshan Luck Amusement Co. Ltd.....	330
G-Look Amusement Machine Co., Ltd.....	227	Playfun Culture & Technology Co. Ltd.....	243	ZhuZhou CSR Special Equipment Technology Co. Ltd.....	2127
Golden Horse Amusement Equipment Co. Ltd.....	331	Playtime LLC.....	1832	Zierer GmbH.....	323
Golden Manhong Electronic.....	1646	Polin.....	643	Zigong Sanhe Robot Technology Co. Ltd.....	1812
Gosetto S.r.l.....	141	Polysoft Surfaces.....	1814	Zodd Design USA.....	1042
Great Coasters International, Inc.....	1531	Precision Dynamics Corp.....	1535	Zone Laser Tag, Inc.....	837
Guangzhou Dalang Water Amusement Park Equipment Co. Ltd.....	231	Premier Rides, Inc.....	1107	zoOceanarium Group.....	2129
Guangzhou Haisan Entertainment Technology Co. Ltd.....	246	Premierworld Technology Limited.....	541		
Guangzhou Sealy Electronic Technology Co. Ltd.....	1319	Preston & Barbieri S.r.l.....	327		

# Goddard Group, S&S/Sansei team up for new Lotte World attraction

SEOUL, Korea — Lotte World's aggressive expansion continues as the park announced its newest addition, a family drop ride called "Brother Moon & Sister Sun's Tall Tale," to be designed by Hollywood entertainment design firm the Goddard Group. Hardware for the new attraction is being provided by Utah-based S&S/Sansei. The ride was slated to take its first riders in early May.

Based upon a popular Korean fairy tale in which a brother and sister are chased into the sky by a ferocious tiger, riders will experience firsthand the story's climactic moments as they are dangled and dropped just inches away from the tiger's reach.

"Tall Tale gives us the chance to let guests step into the world of a beloved local fairy tale, much in the same way we were able to bring the world of the friendly Korean ogres to life in our Underland project," said Taylor Jeffs, director of design for the Goddard Group. He adds "In an age where the whole world is



The Goddard Group and S&S/Sansei combined forces to produce the new family drop ride — Brother Moon & Sister Sun's Tall Tale — for Korea's Lotte World. Based upon a popular Korean fairy tale in which a brother and sister are chased into the sky by a ferocious tiger, riders will experience firsthand the story's climactic moments as they are dangled and dropped just inches away from the tiger's reach.

COURTESY THE GODDARD GROUP

online, immersing guests in fully-realized fantasy worlds and stories is the one thing the

theme park medium can do better than any other."

To create the unique world

of "Tall Tale," the Goddard Group relied on the talents of longtime collaborators Chris-

topher Smith and Phil Mendez, both former designers at Walt Disney Imagineering. There, the two men helped to create some of the most beloved attractions and characters found at Disney's theme parks.

Sang Han, attraction producer for Lotte World, says of the new ride "Like our other recent attractions, Brother Moon and Sister Sun's Tall Tale will take immersive storytelling to levels never before seen in Korea. As guests return to Lotte World for our 25th Anniversary in 2014, we know they'll be thrilled with the incredible arsenal of new top-quality experiences we've created for them."

The popular South Korean theme park has recently enjoyed some of its highest attendance since it opened in 1989, and in turn has been rolling out a number of new attractions in the last few months including the Jumping Fish family ride, "Do You Speak Beluga?" interactive theater, as well as an entirely-new themed zone called "Underland."



  
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# Zamperla enjoying many worldwide projects in 2013

**STORY:** Andrew Mellor  
amellor@amusementtoday.com

VICENZA, Italy — Italian ride manufacturer Zamperla has revealed a raft of new ride installations for 2013 which encompass deliveries to customers throughout the world.

In addition to a wide range of projects in the U.S., Zamperla's 2013 ride openings will include many others in countries around Europe, the Middle East, Asia and Australia, confirming the company once again as one of the worldwide industry's most prolific suppliers of rides and attractions.

Among this year's ride projects are a number of roller coasters, including a 710 meter (2,329 feet) Mine Train coaster for the Walk Water Park in India and a 530 meter (1,739 feet) Gravity Moto Coaster for Window of the World in China. A Volare coaster and Junior Twister coaster will also make their debuts at Flamingoland in the U.K., where a Magic Bikes ride will also be among the park's new attractions.

Another roller coaster, this time a Speedy Coaster, will be one of several Zamperla rides opening at Etnaland in Italy this year. This will be joined by six other attractions from the company in the shape of a Mega Disk'O 40, Demolition Derby, Samba Tower, Mini Jet, Rio Grande train and Jumping

Star.

Zamperla's spectacular Air Race attraction continues to prove a popular choice among park owners around the world and 2013 will see several new examples installed. At Dreamworld in Australia the Pandamonium-Kung Fu Panda themed Air Race 6.4 has opened, while another Air Race 6.4 will also make its debut at the Al Zawraa Park in Iraq. This will be accompanied at the same venue by a selection of other rides from the Italian company, namely a Vertical Swing, Z Force tower ride, Happy Swing, Galleon, Jump Around and Fire Brigade.

An eagle-themed Air Race will also be one of the new attractions this year at Tivoli Copenhagen in Denmark, accompanied by a Jumping Tower, while at Plopsaland in Belgium, a Disk'O Coaster will be new to visitors. Finally, Liseberg in Sweden has installed a Magic Bikes, Jump Around and Flying Tigers from Zamperla for the 2013 season.

**Dreamworld in Australia has opened the Pandamonium - Kung Fu Panda themed Air Race 6.4 (shown above) from Italy's Zamperla. At right, the new Gravity Moto Coaster at Window of the World in China features this unique and thrilling layout.**

COURTESY DREAMWORLD AND ZAMPERLA



## U.K.'s Pleasurewood Hills introduces four new rides

**STORY:** Andrew Mellor  
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LOWESTOFT, England — Pleasurewood Hills theme park in the south east of England has introduced four new rides in 2013 as part of a £3.5 million (U.S. \$5.4 million) investment pledge by owners Looping Holding Group (LHG).

The new rides for this year include the mine-themed Hobs Pit, a scare inducing experience in an old mine setting which has been developed in-house, the Pleasurewood Hills Paddlers, marking a return of pedalos to the park, and two second-hand attractions, Woodie's Tea Party, a traditional family tea cup ride made by SBF, and Moby Dick, a themed children's ride built



**Hobs Pit will provide a scare experience in an old mine themed setting.**

COURTESY PLEASUREWOOD HILLS

by Vekoma.

The new additions join a number of other attractions that have been added to the park since LHG, which owns a total of seven attractions

across Europe, took over in 2011. Last year, five new additions were opened, including the Jolly Roger, a 40 meter (131 foot) drop tower, The Light-house, a children's shoot-up-

tower, the Pleasurewood Pony Rail, a family fun ride, the Laser Labyrinth, an indoor laser game, and the Illusionist Magic Show in the Castle Theatre.

Commenting on the de-

velopments at the park, general manager Alexis Camelin, said: "It's been my goal since being appointed here two/three years ago, to return Pleasurewood Hills to a theme park that's as good as it was in its heyday. With the investment into new rides and lots of tins of paint, I believe we've achieved just that and more for 2013." And he added: "We look forward to seeing lots of new faces and old faces returning to experience Pleasurewood Hills, just like it used to be and even better."

The new rides join established favourites such as the Wipeout roller coaster (a Vekoma Boomerang), the Timber Falls log flume, the Sky Hooks Chairplanes and many others in the park's growing selection of attractions.

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# Polin-supplied Gorizont Aquapark opens in Russia

Ten waterslides, spa pools, and three-level spa complex featured



ROSTOV-ON-DON, Russia — A new waterpark designed and installed by Polin Waterslides & Pool Systems opened in May at the Horizon Megacenter, a mall in Rostov-on-Don, a port city on the Don River.

Polin, headquartered in Turkey, operates an office in Krasnodar, Russia. That regional location made it easy for Polin to be on-site and oversee the complex's construction. Polin installed some of its most popular rides at the new facility. Each of these waterslides were constructed using Polin's exclusive Resin Transfer Molding (RTM) technology — giving the company's products a shiny, appealing interior and exterior that is especially attractive when combined with Polin's Natural Light and Special Pattern Effects.

The Megacenter Gorizont Aquapark joins a variety of other entertainment amenities already offered at the giant Horizon mall complex (also known as the Gorizont), the largest mall in Southern Russia. Current offerings include a multiplex cinema, a family entertainment complex, a bowling alley and a fitness center with a 25-meter swimming pool.

The new waterpark addi-

tion, which began construction in December, covers more than 27,000 square meters (290,625 square feet), with more than 6,000 square meters (64,583 square feet) devoted to the aquatic attractions. Owner NGO Gorizont LLC is investing 1.393 billion rubles (U.S. \$45 million) into the all-season complex, which will be able to accommodate up to 1,800 people.

Among the facilities that Polin incorporated into the facility are 10 waterslides, spa pools, a three-level spa complex and a swimming pool for training, water aerobics and games.

Guests eager for an adrenalin rush during their visit can indulge in some of Polin's most popular thrill rides.

—Jeffrey Seifert

**Construction on the Horizon Megacenter indoor Gorizont Aquapark was in full swing as seen with these slide towers supplied by Polin Waterslides & Pool Systems. Work on one of the smaller pool areas can also be seen. The new waterpark in Russia opened just as AT was going to press.**

COURTESY POLIN



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## INTERNATIONAL BRIEFS

**Thorpe Park now offers free Wi-Fi**

SURREY, England — Thorpe Park introduced free Wi-Fi for all its visitors on May 13, 2013. The internet service is provided by The Cloud.

The deal between Merlin Entertainment and The Cloud allows park guests to use wireless on their mobile devices. The Cloud has also provided free wireless to Merlin's other attractions, the London Eye and Alton Towers.

"We know that when visitors come to Thorpe Park, they want to get online and share their experiences — whether that's uploading photos, checking in or simply using our app to plan their visit. Mobile is now key to making the most of a trip to the Park and therefore so is mobile internet," said Jason Wills, marketing director at Thorpe Park. "The free Wi-Fi service is available across the park and we hope this will encourage people to make the most of their trip and ultimately have a great day out at Thorpe Park."

**Tejix opens new Tokyo office**

MARNE-LA-VALLEE, France — Tejix, a theme park design and consultant, recently opened a new office in Tokyo, Japan. This new base will enable Tejix to better support clients in South East Asia with a local

team of experts committed to quality and service.

Henry Corrado founded Tejix in 2011 to provide technology-centered consultancy complemented by in-depth artistic and operational knowledge to the leading theme park operators. Corrado has more than two decades of experience developing and installing some of the most visited attractions in European theme parks. With a transcultural team including specialists in the fields of storytelling, technical design, operations, and quality, Tejix offers full design, consulting and construction services for the theme park industry as well as turnkey attraction products.

"Tejix is about craftsmanship and attention to detail, so Japan is a very natural choice for us," said Corrado. "We'll assemble systems for the Asian market from our base near Tokyo, while strengthening our ties with Japanese parks."

Tejix's goal is to help theme park owners maintain the upward spiral of uncompromising quality and true showmanship with ideas that are both creative and practical.

**Abba museum to open in Stockholm**

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — The first permanent museum dedicated to Swedish pop group Abba is

about to open in Stockholm.

Backed by former member Bjorn Ulvaeus, the museum features some of the band's glitzy stage costumes, instruments and other mementos. Visitors will also be able to sing Abba songs alongside life-size holograms of the group.

Many of the museum's exhibits were previously on display as part of the Abbaworld exhibition that toured Europe and Australia between 2009 and 2011, including a stint at London's Earl's Court. There will also be new items that the former members have donated from their personal collections.

The Stockholm museum also features a 1970s disco dance floor for visitors to practice their moves; a space where they can audition to be the "fifth" member of the band; and offers the opportunity to sit inside the helicopter that was featured on the Arrival album cover. Among the other exhibits are a room documenting how the band met in the 1960s and a recreation of a cottage on the island of Viggso that they used for writing songs.

The museum will also house a Swedish Music Hall of Fame and an exhibition chronicling the history of Swedish popular music.



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# Maurer Söhne roller coasters awarded TÜV certification

Stefan Kasper (right), Manager of the TÜV Süd certifying authority, presents the TÜV Certificate to Ralf Reifferscheidt, business unit director of the Munich-based company.

COURTESY MAURER RIDES

MUNICH, Germany — Maurer Rides reached a major milestone on March 15, 2013 when its roller coaster division was awarded TÜV certification. The manager of the TÜV Süd certifying authority, Stefan Kasper, presented

the coveted TÜV Certificate to Ralf Reifferscheidt, the business unit director of Munich-based Maurer Rides.

This award distinguishes one of the few roller coaster manufacturers that conducts development, calculation, design, production, assembly and commissioning completely in-house — a fundamental advantage for the safety of roller coasters and 100 percent compliance with the standards and customer requirements as well as ensures the highest quality demands worldwide.



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Maurer has made significant advances thanks to investments in production as well as in quality and the supply chain. One objective was to improve process safety throughout the supply chain as well as the customer service sectors. Maurer has further improved the quality management system that has been verified through audits of the complete amusement rides business sector.

Details of the audits included:

- Description of the processes and the interfaces throughout the supply chain.
- Optimization of all relevant procedural and operating instructions.
- Training of all employees.
- Regular internal audits in accordance with DIN EN ISO 9001.
- Permanent further external monitoring of the processes by TÜV Süd.

Maurer is already preparing for the next major audit, which will take place in April 2014 and will focus on project management, assembly and commissioning.

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# PARKS & ATTRACTIONS

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## Knoebels opens new StratosFear drop tower

*Ride is tallest ever produced by ARM and Larson Intl.*

**STORY:** Scott Rutherford  
srutherford@amusementtoday.com

ELYSBURG, Pa. — Knoebels Amusement Resort recently welcomed the first guests aboard the park's newest thrill ride, StratosFear. The new drop tower ride debuted on April 27, opening day of Knoebels' 2013 season.

Standing 148 feet above the midway, StratosFear is the tallest attraction at Knoebels as well as the tallest Super Shot ride of its kind in the state of Pennsylvania. StratosFear accommodates 12 guests in a circular gondola. After being secured by individual over-the-shoulder restraints, the gondola begins a slow, nerve-wracking ascent. On the way up, guests are treated to impressive views of the surrounding countryside as well as Knoebels' Twister and Flying Turns roller coasters, which are situated adjacent to the new attraction. Once at the top 14 stories above the ground, the gondola is suddenly released. Riders are treated to several moments of weightlessness during the 47-mph plunge. As the gondola nears the bottom, the braking system engages, smoothly bringing everyone to a stop.

StratosFear is known in industry terms as a Super Shot. The ride was manufactured by Ohio-based ARM and Texas-based Larson International. Knoebels requested a number of custom features for its newest ride including relocating crucial electrical components well above the ground so as



First day riders enjoy the thrilling new StratosFear, a Super Shot drop tower from ARM and Larson Intl., during opening weekend at Knoebels Resort.

COURTESY KNOEBELS

to protect them from periodic flooding the park sometimes experiences.

AT spoke with Dick Knoebel about how guests were reacting to his park's newest thrill ride. "StratosFear has been quite well received. Brian (Knoebel) did a great job in landscaping the area. I selected ARM as they are an American firm and have a good track record with this ride. At my request they also were able to add an additional eight feet to the tower to make it the tallest one they have built in Pennsylvania. We're quite pleased with it. The expressions on the faces of riders tells us our visitors are as well. The LED light package is also spectacular!"

The LED lights were provided by Denny's Electronics of Nokomis, Fla.

"The main control panel

was placed on a raised pedestal above flood levels," said Knoebel. "We also opted to spend the extra money to install and waterproof the main motor."

Brian Knoebel explains the park's unique ride selection process. "Our family was on a business/vacation trip and several members of the fifth generation of the Knoebel family (ages 13 and younger) rode an ARM tower over and over. They told their parents 'We need one of these!' What better focus group could you have? For the safety of our guests, we were also pleased to be able to purchase an auxiliary winch to bring them down safely in the event of a stoppage.

"Mike Gill and his staff at ARM were great to work with," added Knoebel.



StratosFear, the new Super Shot tower at Knoebels, is outfitted with thousands of LED lights from Denny's Electronics that light up the park like never before. The ride's 148-foot height was custom for Knoebels and is the tallest tower to date from ARM and Larson, suppliers of the ride.

COURTESY KNOEBELS

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# Kings Dominion begins PTC carousel restoration

**STORY:** Scott Rutherford  
srutherford@amusementtoday.com

DOSWELL, Va. — During the recent winter, workers at Kings Dominion were busy with more than just erecting new rides; they were also lavishing plenty of TLC on some of the park's existing attractions. One such recipient of this attention was Kings Dominion's historic antique Carousel.

This ornate four-row machine, built by the Philadelphia Toboggan Co. in 1917, features 66 horses and two chariots. The focus for the first part of the multi-phase restoration was the 15 stationary horses that line the platform's outermost perimeter. The remaining horses, all jumpers as well as the two chariots, will be restored during subsequent phases of the project.

AT toured the ride this spring as KD's Public Relations Manager Gene Petriello detailed the carousel's restoration. "We were busy during the off-season outside of the bigger, better Planet Snoopy, as we began a multi-year project to restore the horses on our historic Carousel," explained Petriello. "Kings Dominion



**Sonny Naylor of Richmond-based Naylor Finishes details one of the original hand-carved steeds from Kings Dominion's historic Carousel (PTC #44). The focus for the first part of this multi-phase restoration was on the 15 stationary horses that line the platform's outermost perimeter. COURTESY STACY A. SACRA**

partnered with another local business owner, Sonny Naylor of Naylor Finishes in Richmond, to repaint and refurbish 15 of the Carousel's 66 horses this year. I watched in awe as Sonny used such fine attention to detail while repainting and refurbishing the horses. The horses restored for this season line the outside row on the Carousel."

Originally, the Carousel was sold by the Philadelphia Toboggan Company to Jo-

seph Aroldi and installed at Riverside Park in Agawam, Mass where it operated until 1936. From there it was sold to Roger Williams Park in Providence, R.I. where it ran until 1973.

According to a recent report in *The Carousel News & Trader*, the Carousel was purchased by Taft Broadcasting and arrived at Kings Dominion in December of 1973. Though it arrived in good working order, including the



original Auchy friction drive, the horses were in need of restoration. Park employees first stripped years of paint from the horses and found that they were being held together by as many as 16-20 layers of paint. The first job was to stabilize the integrity of the horses with new dowels and glue, followed by the typical restorer's art, including sanding, painting, etc. Work continued for fourteen months to restore and prepare the carou-

sel for its 1975 reintroduction. The total cost to bring the Carousel to Kings Dominion, including the restoration, was \$483,667.

This latest restoration project will ensure that Kings Dominion's beautiful Carousel will be around for many generations to come. Kudos to Cedar Fair for working to keep this shining example of amusement industry history alive and well.

## Harold Chance Award presented to the Saint Louis Zoo, Emerson Zooline Railroad

SAINT LOUIS, Mo. — The Saint Louis Zoo is celebrating the 50th year of the Zooline Railroad. On April 27th, Larry Breitenstein, from Chance Rides was on hand for their celebration. At the event Larry presented the inaugural Har-

old Chance Award for Excellence in Train Operation to the St. Louis Zoo president, Dr. Jeffrey Bonner.

Harold Chance founded Chance Rides in 1961 and started producing the C.P. Huntington trains. In 1963,

the Saint Louis Zoo purchased the 27th locomotive ever produced at Chance Rides. By the following year they had also purchased numbers 28 and 29 for the operation of their railroad. Fifty years later the Saint Louis Zoo is still operating

Chance Rides, C.P. Huntington trains. And the trains are still built to the quality standards instilled in the company by Harold more than 50 years ago.

Chance Rides chose to honor the Saint Louis Zoo for

their dedication to the Chance products and the example they set for all other train operators in the market. Thus, the Harold Chance Award for Excellence was created.

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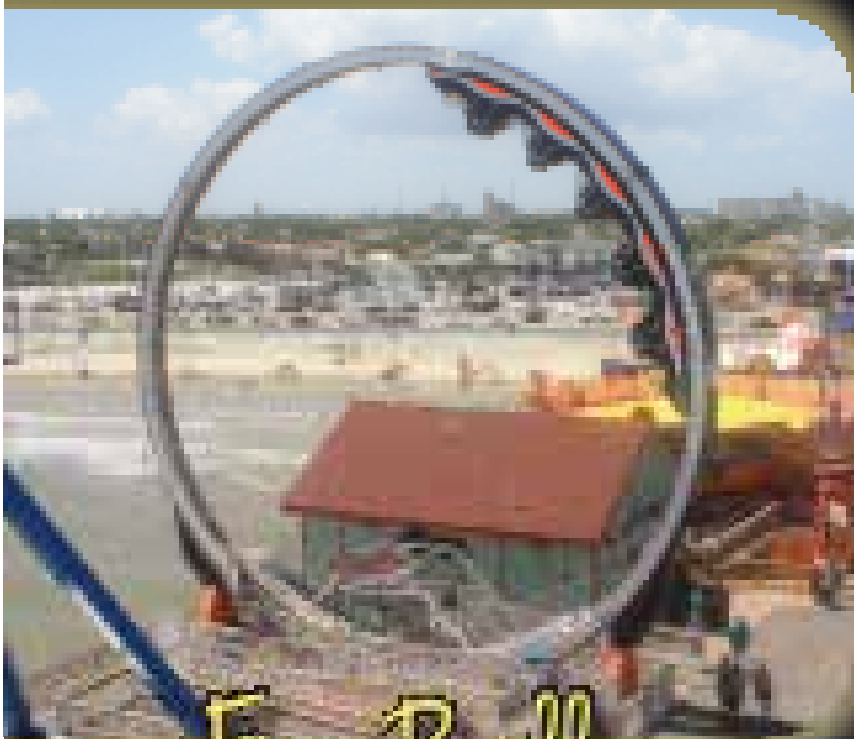
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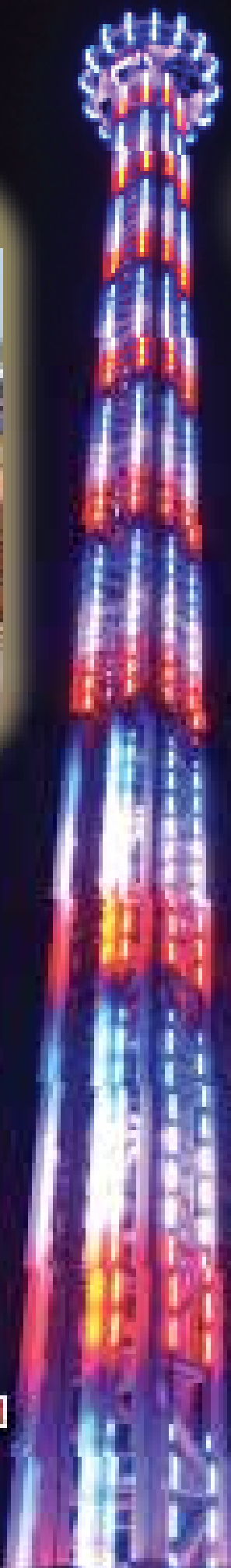
The inaugural Harold Chance Award for Excellence in Train Operation was presented to The Saint Louis Zoo's Zooline Railroad. The Zooline Railroad is celebrating its 50th year of operation with C.P. Huntington engines no. 27, 28 and 29. COURTESY CHANCE RIDES



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# Cedar Point's new GateKeeper gives entrance a complete makeover

**STORY:** Tim Baldwin

timbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

SANDUSKY, Ohio — Blockbuster roller coasters are nothing new to Cedar Point. The famed amusement park has built up a reputation of introducing record-breaking coasters over the past few decades, expanding one of the largest amusement parks in the world into a virtual land of giants. Visitors to Cedar Point experience one of the globe's greatest theme park experiences as they arrive at the Lake Erie peninsula upon which the park resides. Crossing the causeway out into the waters, guests are confronted with perhaps the most spectacular roller coaster skyline in existence. This season, it changes once again.

GateKeeper, the newest wing coaster from Switzerland's Bolliger and Mabillard (B&M), opened on May 11 and soars over the park's new entrance. The wing coaster is B&M's latest genre of roller coaster in which riders are cantilevered beyond the sides of the track with nothing above their heads and nothing below their feet. To date, B&M has manufactured just six such creations. Cedar Point's installation is the tallest, longest and fastest of this new breed of ride, and the fifth to open worldwide.

Bob Mampe, of B&M's North America office, says, "Cedar Fair wanted something that would be an icon at the front of the park, so that brought its own set of challenges. It caused us to think a little outside the box."



**Mampe**

Rob Decker, corporate vice president of planning and design for Cedar Fair and chief architect for the ride, says, "GateKeeper is the next in the line of scream machines and was created to dial up the fear factor by placing seats out onto an outrigger support. This is a liberating moment for the hard core rider to not have the track in the way of your view, but a frightening and vulnerable appearing position for many."



**Decker**



This panorama view gives a look at the entire layout of the new GateKeeper coaster at Cedar Point.  
AT/GARY SLADE



Cedar Point's new GateKeeper is another scream machine from B&M as seen above. At left, the keyhole elements stand high above the park's new entrance plaza. Below, coaster fans are sure to find plenty of ride merchandise to choose from, following their rides.

AT/GARY SLADE



Decker adds, "Many guests come to our park to ride attractions as a form of escapism by challenging their fears."

The queue entrance stands beautifully decorated with a series of blue curves and a dramatic logo. From the ride's opening, many guests remark at how well GateKeeper has opened up the beach. Previously, the park's bobsled ride — Disaster Transport — had operated where the new coaster's station stands. It's large enclosed structure blocked the view of the Lake Erie beach, which has roots as one of the original draws to Cedar Point well over a century ago.

Matt Ouimet, CEO for Cedar Fair, explains, "What's great about GateKeeper is it adds not only a new attraction, particularly a great coaster to a line-up of already great coasters, but it allows us to revisit the front gate. There were two ideas behind GateKeeper. One was to take more advantage of Lake Erie. I thought there was an opportunity for people to come here and appreciate the Lake and the beach here. They clearly did that with this design." Disaster Transport and the iconic Space Spiral were closed following the summer season and demolished to make way for the new project to begin last fall.

The true genius of GateKeeper is its placement. Situated at the front of the park soaring over a totally new redesigned entrance, the coaster makes a statement to all who have come to the park for a day of thrills. John Hildebrandt, vice president and general manager at Cedar Point, remarks, "The combination of

what we've done at the front gate, opening up the plaza, the new buildings and the signs, combined with the keyholes and a great roller coaster flying through — it's a great one-two combination. I think our guests are going to be bowled over. They are not expecting to see this revolutionized front gate."

Mampe adds his commendations to the Point as well, saying, "The front gate was a real collaborative effort. They came to B&M and this is the solution we came up with. When you arrive, you know you've come to the premier coaster park."

Had GateKeeper been placed anywhere in the gargantuan facility, it surely would have been a crowd pleaser, but as the park's new signature piece to engage arriving guests, it is orchestrated quite wonderfully. Mampe notes the consideration taken for nearby homes that neighbor Cedar Point. "We have a method of sound dampening in the track." Home owners are sure to note the eerie quietness of the coaster in operation. Of course, that doesn't account for the screams.

The stats and layout of the ride boast some hefty numbers. Standing at 170 feet tall with a drop of 164 feet, it is B&M's tallest wing coaster to date. The ride incorporates six inversions, with the first being right off the lift with a huge dive drop, which is becoming somewhat of a signature move for this style of ride.

Riders disengage the lift chain and immediately enter a rotation maneuver flipping

► See GATEKEEPER, page 17



**Hildebrandt**



**Ouimet**

## ►GATEKEEPER

Continued from page 16  
them upside down as they enter the first plunge. A large Immelmann maneuver follows, and riders then climb into a nicely placed straight drop giving GateKeeper what many coaster enthusiasts described as “good pacing” and not just one inversion after the other. After a corkscrew flip, Gate-

Keeper earns its namesake title by flipping right over the park entrance, slicing through two keyhole structures built specifically by B&M for this ride. It's a wow for every spectator. A dive loop sends the train into the return and home stretch, this time letting the coaster's final inversion gracefully interact with the two keyhole structures, but here utilizing their

outer perimeter rather than the interior negative spaces. A block brake placed here allows GateKeeper to be the first wing coaster to operate with three trains. A tight spiral close to the ground and last dip bring each train up onto the brake run. Total track length is 4,164 feet.

Another cool feature of the new coaster is lighting on the train for those special night rides. Lights are placed on each “wing,” as well as the “eyes” on the front car of each train.

To keep everything running smoothly and the hourly capacity in check, B&M once again contracted with Maryland-based Consign, LLC to produce the ride's complex safety system. Consign technicians were still on site during the ride's opening weekend making sure the ride ran as designed.

“The price tag for GateKeeper and the front gate is somewhere between 25 to 30 million dollars,” says Brian Witherow, Cedar Fair's chief financial officer. He goes on to praise the

park's investment: “Installation with B&M is always smooth. They build fantastic coasters that are reliable, they're always running — they're just great rides.”

Long time fans of Cedar Point will be immediately struck by the new entrance, not just with GateKeeper's presence, but with bright LED signage, new buildings and updated facilities. Improved Guest Services and Season Pass buildings are major improvements as well as all new ticket booths, entrance points, and aesthetically updated restrooms. Landscaping and new signage also complete the area. According to Hildebrandt, “We wanted to give our guests at the front gate a whole new experience with new landscaping, including a lot of grass. It adds a lot to it.” He smiles, “We tried to make a statement — this is the world's best amusement park. This is a park that celebrates roller coasters. What better way to do that than walk under a coaster?” Ouimet concurs, “I think the arrival statement to the greatest amusement park in the world needs to be the greatest arrival, and I think we've got that.”



	Train 1	Train 2	Train 3	Total
Dispatches per hour	8	7	7	22
Previous hour	0	0	0	0
Dispatches per day	98	98	97	293
Total dispatches	1202	933	978	3113

Consign, LLC provided the control system for GateKeeper, a system so complex it can keep up with locked lapbars, dispatches and even the weather conditions.  
AT/GARY SLADE



**Witherow**

## FAST FACTS

### Name/Park

GateKeeper/Cedar Point  
Sandusky, Ohio

### What

Wing coaster, placing riders on the sides of the track with nothing above or below; coaster is incorporated into park's new entrance plaza

### Height/Length/Inversions

170 feet tall/4,164 feet  
long/six inversions

### Drop/Speed

164 feet/ 67 mph

### Ride Time/Capacity

2:40/1,710 pph

### Trains

3 trains, 32 riders per train

### Cost

\$25-30 million, including  
new entrance

### Safety Control System

Consign, LLC  
Millersville, Maryland

### Designer & Manufacturer

Bolliger & Mabillard  
Monthey, Switzerland

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## Destination theme park resorts keeping new attractions in public's eye

### Disney parks kicking off 'Monstrous Summer' with 24 hours of magic on both coasts

ANAHEIM, Calif. and LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Walt Disney World Resort and Disneyland Resort will launch a Monstrous Summer by keeping three theme parks open for 24 hours nonstop on Memorial Day Weekend, the traditional start of the family travel season.

The Magic Kingdom Park in Florida and Disneyland Park and Disney California Adventure Park in California will stay open from 6 a.m., May 24 to 6 a.m., May 25, 2013, marking the beginning of a summer of fun inspired by the upcoming Disney/Pixar comedy adventure Monsters University.

The fun of a 24-hour Disney park "All-Nighter" called for an equally epic announcement, and the huge sphere of Spaceship Earth was transformed from Disney Parks icon to Disney/Pixar "Eye-con," becoming a 180-foot-tall,

fully animated Mike Wazowski, the loveable green-bodied, one-eyed monster who joins best pal James P. Sullivan (Sulley) in the prequel to Monsters, Inc., this summer as college students with hopes of becoming Scarers.

Walt Disney World President George Kalogridis joined Mike to share the news of the first-ever, three-park All-Nighter. "This summer, Disney Parks are bursting with a monstrous lineup of new thrills, shows and happenings," said Kalogridis. "Guests can start Memorial Day Weekend with a 24-hour-marathon of memory-making as three parks stay open all day and all night to celebrate the bi-coastal kick-off of a Monstrous Summer at Disney Parks."

In Florida, the Magic Kingdom will feature a Monsters University theme where Mike and Sulley will be the Grand Marshals of the "Celebrate a



Walt Disney World Resort and Disneyland Resort will launch a Monstrous Summer by keeping three theme parks open for 24 hours nonstop on Memorial Day Weekend. Heralding the launch is the projection of a 180-foot-tall, fully animated Mike Wazowski, the loveable green-bodied, one-eyed monster, onto Epcot's iconic Spaceship Earth. COURTESY EPCOT

Dream Come True" day parade — complete with pomp and circumstance — and make appearances in Tomorrowland. Guests also will find extra entertainment throughout the day and night, including characters in their pajamas in Town Square during the late night and early morning, and late-night dance parties in and around the courtyard of Cinderella Castle.

In California, guests can

party the night away at both parks with special entertainment, including a Monsters University "TLT Monstrous" Dance Club and Star Wars characters in Tomorrowland, and late-night Character Pajama Party in Mickey's Toontown at Disneyland. The new Fantasy Faire Royal Theatre at Disneyland will become a Royal Dance Hall late at night with a live band and dancing, and guests of Disney Califor-

nia Adventure will find Monstrous photo opportunities with new Monsters University "Dorms" in Hollywood Land and a new Monsters University float leading the Pixar Play Parade.

All three parks will feature limited-edition specialty merchandise and food and beverage offerings plus other surprises throughout the entire day.

► See DISNEY, page 19

## Harry Potter's Diagon Alley will come to life at Universal Studios Orlando in 2014



The Wizarding World of Harry Potter — Diagon Alley will come to life at Universal Orlando Resort in 2014. Diagon Alley and "London" will be located within Universal Studios Florida. Guests will travel between "London" and the existing Hogsmeade at Universal's Islands of Adventure aboard the Hogwarts Express railroad. Diagon Alley and "London" will feature shops, a restaurant and a marquee roller coaster-like attraction based on Gringotts bank.

COURTESY UNIVERSAL ORLANDO RESORT

ORLANDO, Fla. — Building on the global phenomenon that is The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, Universal Orlando Resort and Warner Bros. Entertainment announced an expansion of historic proportion with the entirely new themed environment, The Wizarding World of Harry Potter — Diagon Alley.

Slated to debut in 2014, the world's first centrally themed, multi-park experience expands The Wizarding World of Harry Potter across both Universal Orlando theme parks and allows Universal's creative team to bring an unparalleled vision to this unique project. The new area will bring to life some of the experiences and places found in and around London in the Harry Potter books and films, offering brand-new adventures for fans and theme park guests from around the world.

Diagon Alley and "London" will be located within the Universal Studios Florida theme park, which is adjacent to Universal's Islands of Adventure, where guests now experience Hogsmeade and Hogsmeade. The new area within Universal Studios will be just as expansive, immersive and authentic as the existing themed environment.

And — just like in the books and films — guests will be able to travel between "London" and Hogsmeade aboard the Hogwarts Express steam train, which will travel on an elevated track connecting the two Potter areas within USO.

Work on the new area is already underway. When complete, it will feature shops, a restaurant and an innovative, marquee attraction based on Gringotts bank (a steel roller coaster experience) — all directly inspired by the fiction and films.

More details on The Wizarding World of Harry Potter — Diagon Alley will be released over time.

To bring Diagon Alley and "London" to

life, Universal's creative team is working closely with Warner Bros. and the production design team from the Harry Potter films — just as it did for Hogwarts and Hogsmeade.

"I'm so pleased that The Wizarding World of Harry Potter has proved so popular to date, and I'm sure that the attention to detail in creating the new Diagon Alley area will make this an even better experience," said Harry Potter creator J.K. Rowling.

"We are continuing the journey and adding an entirely new level of adventure," said Tom Williams, chairman of Universal Parks & Resorts. "And we are bringing the same drive, commitment, enthusiasm and innovation to this project as we did to the first."

"We are thrilled to offer the legions of fans the opportunity to embark on this new journey and experience Diagon Alley as it was brought to life in the books and films," said Brad Globe, president, Warner Bros. Consumer Products.

"Our vision is to create two amazing theme park experiences that combine into one, complete, magical journey," said Alice Norsworthy, executive vice president, marketing and sales for Universal Orlando Resort.

The Wizarding World of Harry Potter — Hogsmeade opened at Universal's Islands of Adventure in June 2010 as a fully immersive Harry Potter themed environment — bringing to life the bestselling books by J.K. Rowling and the blockbuster feature films from Warner Bros. Since that time, it has become a global phenomenon, entertaining millions of people from around the world. Visitors to The Wizarding World of Harry Potter are swept into the adventures of Harry Potter. They can tour Hogwarts castle, shop in Hogsmeade and dine at the Three Broomsticks. They can soar above Hogwarts with Harry, be chosen by a wand at Ollivanders, sample Butterbeer and much more.

# New roller coaster, renovations greet visitors to The Funplex

*Spinning coaster supplied by Visa/Rides 4U*

MOUNT LAUREL, N.J. — The Funplex, located in Mount Laurel, New Jersey is thrilled to kick off the summer season with numerous must-see renovations, revamped attractions and new rides that its more than 500,000 annual guests are sure to enjoy. Guests that visit the center will be greeted by many updates and changes including a bolder, bigger and more brazen Lazer Runner Battlefield, state-of-the-art XD Theatre and a brand new twisting turning roller coaster.

A new 4D simulator ride from Trio-Tech allows guests to enter a world where 3-D stereoscopic graphics take them on an incredible, multi-sensory adventure unlike any other. Guests can choose from multi-level and multi-player interactive adventures. The 4D ride experience also features winner/loser scoring so players can keep track of their wins. The theatre allows players to conquer their opponents with the world's fastest targeting system complete with a totally convex screen that delivers 360 degrees of pure gaming reality.

Also recently opened, is the bolder, bigger Lazer Runner Battlefield, from Art Fx Studios. Already one of the center's most popular attractions, the new Lazer Runner Battlefield allows players to experience the challenge and excitement of a futuristic space lazer tag arena with more room, higher ramps, bigger platforms and extreme backlights to light their way



Above, The Funplex added this steel coaster from Visa Group/Rides 4U. Below, an interactive 4D simular ride from Trio-Tech gives guests a thrilling challenge.

COURTESY THE FUNPLEX



around every darkened curve, twist and corner. Players can zap their opponents during a five minute battle in space that challenges both their wit and their will.

The biggest excitement for 2013 is a new spinning mouse-like roller coaster, named FunCoaster that is supplied by

the Visa Group and Rides 4U. Featuring five stories of roaring, soaring dips, twists and turns, the new FunCoaster takes guests on a thrilling minute and a half ride. Riders of the new coaster climb 50 feet into the air and then twist and turn their way into a maze of breath-taking maneuvers.

## ►DISNEY

Continued from page 18

The All-Nighter is just the beginning of the fun. In California, vacationers at The Happiest Place on Earth will see how Disneyland Resort "Just Got Happier" with great new attractions such as the "Mickey and the Magical Map" stage show. It is also the first summer for guests to experience the new Fantasy Faire with Disney Princesses at Disneyland, and they con-

tinue to enjoy the exciting new offerings of Cars Land and Buena Vista Street at Disney California Adventure.

Walt Disney World Monstrous Summer includes new offerings and popular favorites in all four parks. This is the first summer for New Fantasyland, which has received rave reviews from guests since its December grand opening as the largest expansion in Magic Kingdom history. Guests also will find new, engaging offerings for the entire family

throughout the Walt Disney World Resort this summer such as an interactive "Pirates Adventure" game at Magic Kingdom, the newly re-imagined Test Track at Epcot, the new Disney Junior show, featuring Sofia The First and Doc McStuffins, as new additions at Disney's Hollywood Studios, plus Wilderness Explorers at Disney's Animal Kingdom that will bring families together in exciting new ways.

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# Wisconsin Dells rolls out new attractions for summer season

*First of a kind attractions make evolutionary leap*

**STORY:** Eva A. Neterowicz  
Special to Amusement Today

WISCONSIN DELLS, Wis. — When tourists come to the Dells this year, they need to think big. Amusement rides and attractions in the Wisconsin Dells open with a blast this Memorial Day as a world class portfolio of entertainment is launched. Unprecedented expansion and a strong schedule of new thrills are setting a high standard for amazement and gripping excitement in the Dells. A furious new upside down roller coaster, a jet propulsion water ski show, first of its kind swim-up bars and ropes courses, an enormous wildlife park, mystery boats and top shelf amusements await Dells fans in 2013.

Here is a sampling of what's new at the Dells for the 2013 summer season.

## Tommy Bartlett Show: The Flyboard

The iconic Tommy Bartlett Show enters its 61st year with a new mix of extreme water skiing, flaming ski ramps, roaring speed boats, three-level human pyramids, champion water skiers, stunt aerials and sensational live stage entertainment. This year's spectacular new entry is the Flyboard, a revolutionary new extreme sport which turns a jet ski into a pair of high-powered rocket jet boots that lets the show performer fly 30 ft in the air or plunge head first through the waves! Invented in 2011, the Flyboard bolts onto the powerful motor of a jet ski, then routes the resulting water jet through a Kevlar hose that connects to a pair of hydro force jet boots and hand-held stabilizers. At full throttle the performer propels up to 30 feet in the air demonstrating flips, spins and somersaults, then dives straight down head first into the water thrusting and breaching up and down through the waves like a human dolphin. Simply put, this is an exploding hydro teched, dive bombing Iron Man on steroids!

Tommy Bartlett President Tom Diehl says, "We are ex-



**At the famed Tommy Bartlett Show, The Flyboard thrusts the show performer 30 feet into the air. During this high-powered rocket ride, the performer demonstrates flips, spins and somersaults before diving straight down into the water to perform dolphin-like moves.**

COURTESY TOMMY BARTLETT SHOW

cited to be able to have the Flyboard as part of our 2013 show. This will be something that the visitors to the Dells have never seen before. It has never been featured in any professional water ski show in the state of Wisconsin."

## Kalahari Resorts: Wisconsin's first Swim-Up Bar and Children's Rope Course

The authentically African-themed Kalahari Resorts, home to one of America's largest indoor waterparks and the largest resort-based convention center in Wisconsin has now added sensational amenities to its indoor waterpark and indoor theme park.

Owner Todd Nelson has built Wisconsin's first and only indoor/ outdoor swim-up bar and hot water whirlpool. Called the Mud Hut, it features a dynamic audio system and state-of-the-art video technology, a first-class LED lighting display and a full-service bar with 12 in-water stools all set in a 1,000 square foot hot water whirlpool that can accommodate 110 guests. Specialty drinks are served in enormous grogs. For kids and families, Kalahari has added an adjacent hot tub that starts inside and makes its way out-

doors and can accommodate 83 guests. These attractions are in addition to the new three high impact waterslides (ProSlide) that load guests in capsules above roof level propelling them into high speed drops and loops at speeds up to 25 mph. Together they have set a new standard for the creation of an all immersive experience.

The Kalahari Indoor Theme Park, which features 100,000 square feet of indoor amusements, has now added high-tech Lazer Maze (Creative Works, Inc.); a pen-

dulum swinging Dance 360 (Visa); XD Dark Ride Interactive Theatre (TrioTech); 5-D Interactive Shooting Game (Amazing Interactives, LTD); an all new NASCAR Simulator (Bill Donaldson); Kiddie Bumper Boats (Bumper Boats, Inc.); a Vortex Spinning Tunnel GEP Productions); Atomic Rush (Creative Works, Inc.) and another first of its kind in the state of Wisconsin: the Sky Tykes children's rope course (Ropes Courses, Inc.).

"As the Dells' largest indoor water and theme park, we're constantly striving to provide our guests with new and unique attractions to deliver a beyond expectations experience," says Travis Nelson, spokesperson for Kalahari Resorts. "Our hope is that they come back again soon to see the latest new attraction we'll have in store for them as we're always looking for ways to make their next stay even better."

## Mt. Olympus Water and Theme Park: Hades 360

Nick Laskaris, owner of Mt. Olympus, has built his reputation on launching "firsts": the first in the world to develop elevated wooden go-kart tracks, the world's longest underground tunnel roller coaster, the first 90-degree banking on a wooden coaster, and now reinforces his legacy with the roll out of Hades 360 from its original design team, The Gravity Group.

Climbing up a 162 foot incline to the top drop point at a staggering height of 134 feet,

Hades 360 hurls down into 700 feet of underground darkness whipping on a 90 degree turn, then resurfaces into the daylight and immediately into a corkscrew inversion. Next, riders are subjected to a 135-degree overbanked U-turn and a quick bunny hop before plunging once again into the underworld. Hades 360 travels 4,746 feet, nearly one-third of that in a black sub-terror and is a gargantuan hell vortex of force.

It dominates the list of the best theme park rides and hammers down a physically and psychologically thrilling experience. To accomplish this, Laskaris installed \$500,000 in the new Timberliner train (also from Gravity Group) which delivers deft articulation, rotation and precise pivoting to allow for the extreme pitching and gravity pulls the coaster endures.

Says Laskaris, "The park has been receiving a number of noise complaints lately. I investigated what was causing the problem and the best I could come up with was that Hades himself was starting to awaken."

## Timbavati Wildlife Park: Grand Re-Opening

More than a 2-year building effort is crowned this year as Timbavati Wildlife Park re-opens on a grand scale with the largest and widest combination of wild animal experiences in the state of Wisconsin.

Timbavati has undergone a magical transformation from its previous five-acre loca-

► **See DELLS, page 21**



**Kalahari Resort has added a multiple selection of new resort additions, waterslides and other attractions for the 2013 season. Adults will find this new swim-up bar (above) a popular resting place, while the kids now have their own children's rope course (right) shown here from Ropes Courses, Inc.**

COURTESY KALAHARI RESORT



## ►DELLS

Continued from page 20

tion into a new 55-acre property and has morphed into a unique blend of Jurassic Park and Out of Africa with plenty of fascinating adventures thrown in.

Featuring a breathless diversity of wild animal adventures, the look of the park bears a striking resemblance to many parts of Africa even as the landscaping, stone work, multiple waterfalls and open woods is reminiscent of the Jurassic age. The new setting is home to a bonanza of exotic animals and is a virtual jungle nirvana of interactive adventures unique to Wisconsin. Every section of the park is designed to give visitors a chance to see astonishing wildlife and their natural behavior up-close. Timbavati offers the full wildlife experience with wildlife shows, animal nursery, zoo, camel rides, pig racing, personalized photos, gift shop, and go kart tracks with animals surrounding riders on every lap — all on the same property!

No need for a trip to the sub-Sahara, exotic animals are now in the Dells. Enormous white and orange-striped tigers and cubs, lions, lemurs, cougars, camels, kangaroos,



**Mt. Olympus Water and Theme Park has turned to The Gravity Group to make its Hades coaster more thrilling. Now featuring a 360-degree upside down roll and a 110-degree overbanked curve, the coaster is now dubbed: Hades 360.**  
COURTESY MT. OLYMPUS

zebras, giraffes, antelopes, ostriches, pygmy zebras and other genetically important and unusual species live together comfortably. Lions and tigers can be observed through floor-to-ceiling glass windows. Visitors may take a self-guided walking tour through the park or board an original vintage train purchased from the Old Fort Dells which now functions on a new track and makes frequent stops at open savannas where animals come up to the train to be hand fed.

Hand feeding and petting the animals is not only allowed but encouraged. Feeding giraffes is the signature attraction and animal feed is available for purchase throughout the park. An exceptional petting zoo and separate petting station feature rare collections of hand-raised animals. As master expansion plans are fully completed the facility will be open year round.

Owner and park creator Mark Schoebel says, "My wife Alice and I are construct-



**After a two-year building effort, Timbavati Wildlife Park has opened on 55 acres that features a blend of both Jurassic Park and Africa. At Timbavati, hand feeding and petting of the animals is not only allowed but is encouraged, as seen here, at the giraffe area.**

COURTESY TIMBAVATI WILDLIFE PARK

ing a quality operation which has taken two years to build. For us Timbavati is a lifetime commitment and an accumulation of our life's work and is unique to any other wildlife experience in Wisconsin."

### **Dells Boat Tours: Lost Voyage Chapter 2**

Ever been on an after-dark river boat ride going to a forgotten gorge and once there, disembarking and walking on foot into a pitch black forbidden canyon?

Do you like uncoiling a labyrinth of mysterious riddles, cryptic messages, strange disappearances, mayhem, ancient codes, and scientific excavation?

Do you fear tight caverns at night?

Will you follow the lure of black water and night exploration?

Those are the questions asked as visitors board the newest Lost Voyage nighttime boat adventure by Dells Boat Tours. New for 2013 is the latest chapter in the intrigue of what happened to the lost boat Badger.

According to legend, in the summer of 1943 the Badger disappeared on the dark rushing waters of the Wisconsin River during a lightning storm and vanished in a green mist near Cold Water Canyon, a location that according to Native American lore is haunted and visitors are prohibited. This ancient gorge is home to paranormal forces and Native American spirits that may be the cause of the eerie unex-

plained mystery. This year new clues are unearthed in a second expedition to the site to solve the deepest secret of the Dells. Led by a team of scientists, the visitor is invited to walk the dark cavernous gulch in search of "Buried Secrets", this year's enigmatic theme. Bring your own flashlight as the unexpected may occur.

Lost Voyage Chapter 2 is a production of Dells Boat Tours, one of Wisconsin Dells most historic and long running attractions with more than 150 years of operation. Explains owner and general manager Dan Gavinski, "It is the next chapter in our deepening mystery to solve the clues as to why the boat disappeared back in 1943 and why it has reappeared in Cold Water Canyon. There will be more artifacts discovered to solve the mystery."

With its long history and its incredible portfolio of new and expanded attractions, it's easy to see why Wisconsin Dells is a premier year-round travel destination.

*Editor's note: Eva M. Neterowicz is the author of the books, "The Tragedy of Tibet", and "Tibet: The Endurance of a National Ideal" and has been a member of the nationally recognized Washington Independent Writers organization and a contributing editor to Hispanic Magazine. She has written numerous articles on the Wisconsin Dells and is the owner of her own public relations/ government affairs business.*



**One of the most unique attractions in the Dells is the Dells Boat Tours and their newly launched Lost Voyage Chapter 2. Here guests embark on a boat journey that takes them past a team of scientists (above), along unspoiled waterways (above right) and through rock formations giving a feel of a ghostly cavern.**

COURTESY DELLS BOAT TOURS



# Fiesta Texas unveils Iron Rattler transformation

Six Flags teams up with Rocky Mountain for coaster makeover

**STORY:** Tim Baldwin  
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — A good idea bears repeating. The amusement industry certainly is a believer in this philosophy. Proven ideas are often improved upon and made bigger and better and more creative.

Six Flags Over Texas had such a spectacular home run with New Texas Giant in 2011 that it proved logical to capitalize upon that success. In that case, Rocky Mountain Construction (RMC), aided by Alan Schilke of Ride Centerline, transformed the original aging (and aggressive) wooden Texas Giant into a completely re-imagined steel track sleek machine. Not long



afterward, the expected — and brilliant — move to perform the same treatment on The Rattler at sister park Six Flags Fiesta Texas was quick in coming.

Larry Chickola, chief engineer for Six Flags, says, “Iron Rattler goes back a long ways to the original Rattler that opened in 1992. Over



**Chickola**

time it showed its age and the track became harder to maintain to keep it safe. So, we wanted to do something to make it better, to make it a new ride experience, put in some elements that didn’t exist before. After our success on the New Texas Giant, we knew we could do it here on The Rattler and even do it better.” Chickola feels not only that the project is a true hit, but also a great fit for the park. “The thing that surprised me the most about Iron Rattler is how fantastic it molds itself into the cliff and quarry at Fiesta Texas.”

Renamed Iron Rattler, the new makeover at the San Antonio theme park utilizes much of the original record-setting coaster’s structure and footings, but added some new wood before adorning the layout with the I-box track for which Rocky Mountain Construction is making quite a name for itself.

Jake Kilcup, COO of RMC comments, “The most exciting thing about Iron Rattler was the topography we had to work with. When we did the Texas Giant, we proved



**Kilcup**



our track development. Iron Rattler was our opportunity to go further and really push the envelope. On Texas Giant, you see the overbanked corners, but on Iron Rattler, you see the 81-degree first drop and the barrel roll and dives off the cliff. It really allowed us to use the track to do things we knew it could do.”

Once again, Six Flags turned to Gerstlauer to supply new trains for the project. If the longhorns on New Texas Giant were considered nifty, that doesn’t come close to the snaky incarnation of Iron Rattler’s new trains, complete with a venomous snake head on the front car and distinctive “rattle” trailing the back car.

Adam Sandy of Ride Entertainment Group, which represents Gerstlauer in the United States, comments, “The train theming was a chal-



**Sandy**



Clockwise from top left: thanks to Rocky Mountain’s design and engineering, the Iron Rattler’s curving double down into the quarry floor is better than its original wooden design; the highly themed trains were provided by Gerstlauer; while over banked turns are sure to generate a few screams, as is the coaster’s massive first drop of 171 feet at 81 degrees.

AT/GARY SLADE



lenge. Our major concern here was an engineering standpoint where we had to work with some loading on some significant pieces of fiberglass; we couldn’t just have something hanging out there. We worked with Les Hudson who is in charge of theming for Six Flags to come up with something that was proportionate to the train, looked really cool, but also fit and worked. We went through several designs to find that happy marriage of good theming, a good look, but also was structurally sound that would work well under years of use.” Sandy explained that the restraints and seating design only underwent some minor changes in their contour, but does make an improvement in comfort. “Even though the trains go upside down,” adds Sandy, “we didn’t have to change the restraint. We had that designed in from Day One.” In addition to the comfort to the rider, the cool factor extends all along the train with scales

from front to back.

Fiesta Texas is quick to boast stats of the ride — 180 feet tall, 171 foot first drop, first hybrid coaster to do a barrel roll, and four overbanked turns. None of these will be remembered by the rider. All the elements of Iron Rattler work together to make an amazingly smooth, but incredibly wild roller coaster experience that is leaving the public breathless. Experienced enthusiasts were commenting on how perfectly several moments are executed. Justin Garvanovic, co-founder of the European Coaster Club, remarked “It works perfectly!” after floating through the barrel roll on his first ride. “It’s brilliant. It works flawlessly.” Other members of American Coaster Enthusiasts were celebrating the numerous moments of weightlessness throughout the layout.

Anyone familiar with a ride aboard the original Rattler will remember the climb well above the cliff walls that

► See RATTLER, page 24

## FAST FACTS

### Name/Park

Iron Rattler/  
Six Flags Fiesta Texas  
San Antonio, Texas

### What

Wooden/steel hybrid  
coaster

### Height/Length/ Inversions

180 feet tall/3,266 feet  
long/one barrel roll

### Special Features

Zero-g barrel roll,  
four overbanked turns  
water cannons, audio,  
LED lights and fog

### Drop/ Speed

171 feet at 81 degrees/  
70 mph

### Trains/Supplier

Two, 24 passenger  
themed trains,  
Gerstlauer Amusement  
Rides GmbH

### Designer/Manufacturer

Alan Schilke,  
Ride Centerline, LLC/  
Rocky Mountain  
Construction

### Opened

May 25, 2013

—Source: SF Fiesta Texas



PHOTOS COURTESY JEFFREY SEIFERT AND TIM BALDWIN

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Riders enjoy the barrel roll element as the Iron Rattler train climbs its way back on top of the rock quarry where a series of air time hills and over banked turns await.

AT/GARY SLADE

## ► RATTLER

Continued from page 22

surround Fiesta Texas. Over the two decades of operation, the record-breaking woodie underwent several tweaks and alterations. Iron Rattler brings back the entire plunge once famous from the original opening in 1992. A sudden twist at the top of the drop can be startling as riders dive toward the quarry floor. Snaking along the bottom, the trains smoothly wriggle into a double-up climb above the cliff a second time, complete with a great moment of air-time. The double-down was always a notable moment on all incarnations of The Rattler, but Iron Rattler takes it further down than ever before, and now incorporates two beyond 90-degree over-banked turns on the descent.

While the first half of the ride follows a similar footprint of the coaster's past, Iron Rattler begins the second half with a whole new experience starting with an innovative barrel roll that pops riders back on top of the cliff for a third time. Here, where once stood a lumbering helix that lacked any major thrills, two airtime hops and two more overbanked turns make the journey up on the cliff much more exciting, even though shorter than the original. The ride finishes with a dramatic dive over the cliff for a third time, sending riders sizzling through a tunnel carved through the cliff, now filled with LED lighting and fog effects. Side forces make for a sensation lateral thrill climax as the trains smoothly descend upon the magnetic brakes. While the coaster has lost some of its length, it undeniably has gained much more bite.

"What's not to love on the entire ride," says Martin Bozer, park president for Fiesta Texas. "From the first drop, the views, to the zero-g barrel

roll and the overbanked turns — this is one unique ride. What a spectacular addition to the line-up here. We cannot be happier with the way this ride turned out."

Queuing for the ride experience has also undergone a transformation. Jeffrey Siebert, director of marketing for Fiesta Texas, explains,

"Not only does the ride have great physical features, but [the queue] is also filled with fun special effects such as pretend 'live' snakes that you may encounter, you may never know when you might hear some snake rattles or all-of-a-sudden feel the vibrations." As the storyline to the project goes, snake wranglers have been called in to remove the rattlers. This is told via signage and video monitors in the queue. Of course, the largest of all the snakes remains as guests get ready to ride. Once aboard, Siebert adds, "The water blasts, fog effects, specialty lighting and really neat audio enhance the overall ride experience."

If Six Flags Over Texas has proven anything to Fiesta Texas, the challenge to market the ride as a whole new experience is worth the effort and pays off in the long run with crowd-pleasing results. In cases like these, it is worth noting the commendable efforts put forth in not taking the easy path to simply tear down a noteworthy ride, but to preserve the essence of the legends that stood before, all in a vastly improved transformation. Iron Rattler stands as a testament to that.



Bozer



Siebert



# FAST TRACK

COMPILED: Scott Rutherford,  
srutherford@amusementtoday.com

• **Tokyo Disneyland** recently celebrated the opening of **Star Tours: The Adventures Continue**. The attraction had been closed for more than a year while Imagineers were busy adding new stories and adventures. Like the attractions at **Disneyland** park and **Disney's Hollywood Studios**, guests now have the opportunity to experience more than 50 different story combinations and experience these adventures in dazzling 3D.

• The **National Aquarium** has announced that it will close its Washington, D.C. branch in the fall. Officials say renovations at the Department of Commerce building that the aquarium has called home since 1932 make the move necessary. They must leave by March 2014, but the aquarium will close Sept. 30 and begin moving the 1,500 animals housed there to the National Aquarium in Baltimore and other facilities.

• **NASA's Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex** is putting the finishing touches on the \$100 million **Space Shuttle Atlantis** attraction, which is set to open June 29. Atlantis is raised 30 feet off the ground and rotated at a 43.21 angle as if orbiting Earth. When the attraction opens, guests will have an up-close, 360-degree view of Atlantis from several different levels.

• Five new **Disney** children's shows are now available on **Netflix**. Netflix signed a deal with Disney in December to be the exclusive streaming service for their films; now the Disney Junior and Disney XD channels have joined in as well. Jake and the Never Land, Pirates Tron: Uprising, Handy Manny, Special Agent Oso and JoJo's Circus joined the service in May.

• **Hersheypark** entertainers proudly offer 13 different live shows including six new offerings. Guests can rock day and night with their favorite acts, from dueling piano performers to an array of high-energy entertainers who strut their stuff in the theaters and midways. These musical medleys provide the perfect complement to the park's collection of more than 65 attractions.

• The **Chippewa Falls** City Council has agreed to allow the **Northern Wisconsin State Fair** to use city-owned equipment and personnel to improve the fairground site, under a condition that the city has zero liability and any work performed must be voluntary service at no cost to the city.

• The **Aquarium of the Pacific** in Long Beach, Calif. has opened its newest exhibit, **The Wonders of the Deep**. The exhibit introduces visitors to a world beyond the reach of sunshine: the bottom of the ocean, a seascape of crushing pressure, volcanic fissures and an abundance of cryptic creatures. The Wonders of the Deep is one of the few places where visitors can marvel over bioluminescent fish and opportunistic scavengers that inhabit the biological oases created by dead marine mammals that sink to the bottom.

• **Rhythm & Hues**, the Oscar-winning visual effects house that recently emerged from bankruptcy protection, is now looking for a new home. The company's 200,000-square-foot El Segundo, Calif. headquarters has been sold for \$25 million. The studio will remain at the site for the next several months until a new location can be selected.

• The **Disneyland Hotel** recently underwent a major renovation that brought new magic and significant upgrades to the AAA Four Diamond property. A new restaurant, bar, pools, waterplay area and themed suites add immersive experiences, making the landmark property one more reason for families to enjoy a multiday vacation at the **Disneyland Resort**.

• Australia's **Peddle Thorp Architects** and **Ellik & Partners Architects** have been selected to design a \$35 million new aquarium for Cairns. The estimated opening is slated for July 2016. Peddle Thorp has experience as designers of aquariums in Shanghai, Melbourne, Manila and Doha.

• **Shark Reef Aquarium** at **Mandalay Bay** in Las Vegas, Nev. has welcomed two juvenile Komodo dragons from Prague. The two latest additions to Shark Reef join a fellow adult male Komodo that was first displayed in 2008. The trio will rotate on exhibit individually as they may prove deadly to one another if kept in the same exhibit.

• The **National Amusement Park** of Mongolia, located at the **Children's Park** in Ulaanbaatar, has announced that it will begin charging an all-inclusive entry fee from late June this year. Currently, visitors to the park pay an admission fee of 1,000 MNT, then pay for each attraction or ride separately. The attractions and rides cost 5,000 MNT, on average. With the all-inclusive fee, visitors will pay only the admission fee, and can then enjoy all the attractions in the park as many times as desired all day. The all-inclusive fee will be 20,000 MNT per adult and 15,000 MNT per child.

• More than 5,000 leaders from the global theme park and attractions industry will travel to the Sands Expo and Convention Centre at Marina Bay Sands in Singapore for Asian Attractions Expo 2013 (AAE 2013) in early June. Industry professionals will see new ride concepts and innovative new products, learn about industry trends, discuss hot topics, and share best practices with other industry professionals. The event is only open to attractions industry professionals and credentialed press. Asian Attractions Expo is owned and produced by IAAPA.

• **Disney** has announced that they have signed a new multi-year agreement to have **Electronic Arts Inc. (EA)** develop and produce several new **Star Wars** games. These games will be available for all gaming platforms, though Disney may still develop some games for social media or mobile applications.

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Shoot the Chute

# On State Fair of Texas grounds Summer Adventures at Fair Park becomes a reality in May

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

DALLAS, Texas — After four years of planning, designing, saving and negotiating, Summer Adventures at Fair Park opened to the public on May 4.

And, with the exception of the park's focal attraction not quite ready to take riders 500 feet into the sky over Fair Park, park officials were very pleased with the kick-off. And, really, they were pleased anyway.

"As a 35-year veteran of the amusement industry, I am extremely proud of this park," said Rusty Fitzgerald, Summer Adventures general manager as well as the senior vice president of operations for the State Fair of Texas. "Our goal was to bring a new entertainment destination to Dallas and



**Free sunscreen stations are available for guests at Summer Adventures.**  
AT/GARY SLADE

we are very proud of Summer Adventures in Fair Park. We are over-delivering on fun, food, and education. It is a family destination that offers something for everyone with easy access to mass transit—at an incredible value."

Summer Adventures opened for a special reception Friday evening, May 3. Spokesperson Sally Wamre said there were an estimated 2,000 invited guests, media, and local officials attending. The response from attendees was very positive, she said, and the fireworks display seemed to be a hit.

The next day the park opened to the public. Signs were posted on the outside of the gates letting everyone know that the tower was not yet opened.

"We received no complaints about it," she said. "The park has a wide assortment of entertainment options and, in addition to the Top 'o Texas Tower, there are plenty of amenities to enjoy and keep folks happy."

The park touts 50 rides, games and attractions. There are 32 rides, with the fair owning nine of them, the Intamin Ltd. manufactured observation tower, a Dopplemayr Texas Skyway, Denzel carousel, Arrow log ride, a Huss Pirate Ship, Mack Love Bug, an Air Show and Kiddie Swing, both from SBF Visa Group and brokered by Rides 4U, and the Surfrider by Flowrider.

Officials were still conducting required weight-bearing tests of the Top 'o Texas observation tower and were very optimistic that the tower would be open to the public

## Fireworks, tower light up sky



AT / GARY SLADE

### FAST FACTS

**Summer Adventures at Fair Park**  
Dallas, Texas

**Operational Hours**  
Open 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.  
Saturdays and Sundays  
through June 2  
10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

June 7 to Aug. 18  
Monday through Thursday  
10 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
Friday and Saturday  
10 a.m. to 10 p.m.  
Sunday  
10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

**Admission**  
\$29.95;  
\$24.95/ages 65 and older  
and children from 3 years  
of age until they are  
48 inches tall; children age  
two and under are free

Admission includes all  
rides, shows and entrance  
to the Children's  
Aquarium at Fair Park,  
Texas Discovery Gardens  
and the Swan Boats on  
the Lagoon (Skycoaster is  
not included)

**Information**  
(214) 421-8715  
www.fairparkfun.com

—Summer Adventures

### FAST FACTS

**Top o' Texas  
Observation Tower  
Summer Adventures  
at Fair Park**

**Total Height**  
500 feet  
(New world record for  
tallest amusement ride)

**Ride Duration**  
4 minutes, 30 seconds;  
including a five-second  
stop at the top

**Cabin/Capacity**  
55 feet in diameter;  
100 passenger seating/  
13 rides per hour

**LED Lights**  
1.4 million programmable  
LED lights that can be  
synchronized with the  
Midway light show

**Manufacturer**  
Intamin Ltd,  
Glen Burnie, Md.

**Ride Installer**  
I.L.C. Construction,  
Seattle, Wash.

**LED Lights Supplier**  
Rides 4U/Maxtron  
Somerville, N.J.

**Cost**  
\$12 million  
—Summer Adventures

by the second weekend.

Being billed as the tallest amusement ride in the world, the \$12 million attraction was installed by I.L.C. Construction and is donned with 1.4 million LED programmable lights. The lighting package, which came from Rides 4U and its supplier Maxtron. Len Soled told AT this is the largest package he has ever sold at Rides 4U, and the lights can be synced with a fair produced light show on the midway.

The new attraction has a 55-foot diameter cabin able to hold 100 passengers as it rises vertically at a speed of 6.5 feet per second while rotating one foot per second. The shaft of the enormous structure is 10

feet and six inches in diameter.

Fitzgerald said he has been up on the tower and it is quite a ride.

"You can see for 50 miles on a clear day," he said.

Other rides on the midway are individually owned by carnival owners and independent ride operators. Fitzgerald said he negotiated deals with each ride owner, saying, "I basically bought their rides out for the season."

He selected them individually, wanting to make sure the ride package on the grounds complimented each other and offered an entire family experience. All rides that are there now will stay for the State Fair of Texas in Sep-

tember after which all those not owned by the fair will be dismantled and taken back to where they are parked for the off-season.

Alan Putter, Amusement Management International, who brought in the Sky Coaster and the Turbo Bungy and who also operates the Surfrider (Flow Rider) for the fair, said he was impressed with the level of experience and knowledge in the outdoor amusement business the ride owners at Summer Adventures represents.

"They brought in a great array of rides and ride owners," he said. "Everything we heard over the weekend was  
▶ See ADVENTURES, page 28

## ►ADVENTURES

Continued from page 27

that all the guests were very pleased with the value they got from the park. They have really built a beautiful park."

Putter said attendances for the Saturday and Sunday opening were a little thin, but he got the feeling that was by design.

"It really seemed like a soft opening to me," he said. "It just seemed that officials really wanted to make sure everything was operating as it should."

Aside from the rides, the park offers other attractions and entertainment. These include:

- Wings of Wonder, Steve Martin's avian experience;
- Reef Riders BMX Bike Show by Big Time Action-sports;
- Island of Dogs and Cats by Lou McCammon;
- Giant Sing Along, an area with 16 mics for guests to put their own twist on Karaoke;
- Tropical Trains, a miniature village created around a miniature train track;
- Caribana Carnival, a talented performance troupe;
- Captain Kids Theater with Master Puppeteer John Hardman;
- Calypso Steel, a musical group providing tropical tunes;
- Beach Bums, a 60s musical group;

cal group;

- Reel McKoy's musical group;

- Ollie the Tree Man, 12-foot tall mystical tree.

Summer Adventures has also provided a putting green, a large sand area for those to try their hands in building sandcastles, and another large play area to build structures from plastic blocks.

Admission into Summer Adventures also gives attendees free admission into the museums on the grounds. They include the African American Museum, the Children's Aquarium at Fair Park; Texas Discovery Gardens; the planetarium; and the Natural Science Museum.

There are ample food and drink concessions as well as a sit-down restaurant. There are plenty of shade areas for families to relax.

Officials have also made available to guests the rental of Airstream trailers and Cabanas for special get-togethers and parties.

"We have three Airstreams and 18 cabanas available," Rusty said. "They are right there on the midway inside the gates."

Fitzgerald said the fair purchased the Airstreams and cabanas for Summer Adventures. They will be dismantled and moved before the fair.

The Fair Park Esplanade fountains offer visitors shows set to music. In all, 272 water jets spray some 100 feet into the air at times. More than 170 white lights lining the jets, pool and surrounding buildings, will create special effects to the musical numbers.

Bob Minick, Minick and Associates, a local design firm, did design work for Summer Adventures. His wife, local artist Lottie Minick was commissioned to do massive Pin Wheel art. Lottie Minick is in charge of the State Fair of Texas' sculpture exhibit during fair time.

Summer Adventures in Fair Park operated weekends during May, beginning full time operations June 7.

Dallas Area Rapid transit light rail service drops off riders at the Fair Park Station where trams provide a short ride to all of the museums and the entrance to Summer Adventures.

Fitzgerald said no season passes were offered this year. Whether that will happen for 2014 hasn't been decided.

### Summer Adventures in Fair Park Ride List

The first 9 rides are owned by the State Fair of Texas

1. **Top o' Texas**, manufactured by Intamin, being operated by Mike Demas, Demas Enterprises
2. **Texas Skyway**, Dopplemayr, operated by Mike Demas, Demas Enterprises
3. **Carousel**, Denzel, operated by Kary Barnett
4. **Log Flume**, Arrow Dev., operated by Kary Barnett
5. **Pirate Ship**, Huss, operated by Steve Eden, Lone Star Entertainment
6. **Love Bug**, Mack Rides, operated by Maury Haworth, Haworth Family Shows
7. **Air Show**, SBF Visa Group/Rides 4U, operated by Mike Demas, Demas Enterprises
8. **Kiddie Swing**, SBF Visa Group/Rides 4U, operated by Patrick Sheridan, Alamo Amusements
9. **Surfrider**, Flow Rider, operated by Alan Putter, AMI
10. **Bubble House**, produced in-house, Doug Mortenson, 2010 Amusements Inc.
11. **Bumper Cars**, Reverchon, Patrick Sheridan, Alamo Amusements
12. **Samba Balloons**, Zamperla, Patrick Sheridan, Alamo Amusements
13. **Sky Coaster**, Skycoaster Alan Putter, AMI
14. **Turbo Bungy**, Euro Bungy, Alan Putter, AMI
15. **Rock It**, KMG, Mike Demas, Demas Enterprises
16. **Scary Park**, Pretzel Amusement Ride Company, Kary Barnett
17. **Star Ship**, Wisdom Industries, Kyle Wisdom
18. **Tornado**, Wisdom Industries, Kyle Wisdom
19. **Western Mouse**, Desjume, Maury Haworth, Prime Pacific
20. **Baja Buggies**, Zamperla, Mike Neighbors, Ride Time LLC
21. **Windstorm**, SDC, Steve Vander Vorste, SJ Entertainment
22. **Jumping Jumbos**, Larson Intl., Steve Vander Vorste, SJ Entertainment
23. **Flipper**, Huss, Steve Vander Vorste, SJ Entertainment
24. **Viper**, Wisdom, Nick Pelino, Showtime Rides
25. **Beatle Bobs**, Wisdom, Nick Pelino, Showtime Rides
26. **Jungle Twist**, Wisdom, Nick Pelino, Showtime Rides
27. **Texas Star**, SDC, Tom and Mary Talley, Talley Amusements
28. **Wave Swinger**, Barbieri, Tom and Mary Talley, Talley Amusements
29. **Wet Boat**, Allan Herschell, Tom and Mary Talley, Talley Amusements
30. **Dragons**, Amtech, Tom and Mary Talley, Talley Amusements
31. **Farm Tractors**, Dalton, Tom and Mary Talley, Talley Amusements
32. **Kiddie Bumper Cars**, Barbieri, Tom and Mary Talley, Talley Amusements
33. **Jump Cycle**, Hampton, Tom and Mary Talley, Talley Amusements
34. **Swan Boats**, manufactured in-house, Tim Thibodeaux

Source: Summer Adventures in Fair Park



Above two photos: Guests at Summer Adventures in Fair Park enjoy rides on the old favorite bumper cars and the new favorite Surfrider. In bottom two photos the Windstorm coaster is always a thrill before taking time to cool off on the shaded midway.

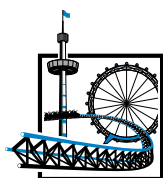
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# WATERPARKS & RESORTS

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## MAILBAG

### Readers reply to May issue editorial

Hi Gary,

Thanks for remembering George Millay and mentioning the Wet 'n Wild team in your editorial (AT May page 2). It was and still is a great group of people. Countless great times and memories. The only one I am still not in contact with is Walt [Hawrylak].

Best regards,

Ron Sutula,  
General Manager,  
Schlitterbahn Galveston  
Island Waterpark  
rsutula@schlitterbahn.com

*Editor's note: If anyone has a working email address or phone for Walt Hawrylak, please pass it onto Ron at the email address listed above.*

Hi Gary!

I finally had a chance to stay still and read through this month's *Amusement Today*. Thanks so much for the nice editorial on Hurricane Harbor. This park has needed some aesthetic and maintenance love for quite some time and we're all so happy that it's getting done.

Our maintenance director for that park is phenomenal and really has a "can do" attitude that is contagious and appreciated. As you said in your write up, this should be a banner year for the park. They deserve it and the recognition.

Thanks again!

Sharon Parker  
Communications Manager  
Six Flags Over Texas &  
Hurricane Harbor  
sparker@sftp.com

## Sahara Sam's expansion ready to open

WEST BERLIN, N.J. — Sahara Sam's Oasis is expanding again. The opening of Sahara Sam's latest expansion project, a two-acre outdoor waterpark, was set for its Memorial Day weekend debut.

The \$6.5 million dollar outdoor expansion features the Blue Lagoon, a 25 meter leisure pool from Mainline Pools; Splish-Splash, a



children's play zone from Emerald Fix; the Wipeout Tiki Bar; sand volleyball courts and the Rip & Roll, a

12,000-square foot wave pool from Aquatic Development Group.

The project also includes an 8,000-square foot building addition featuring new kitchen facilities, restrooms, expanded party facilities, and a recently opened 350 foot long bodyslide from ProSlide called The Nile Mile.

Company Chairman Sam Girlya notes: "Despite a slow

economy and concerns for families making tough economic decisions, we will continue to deliver a good value to our loyal guests. As a family run business we believe in the strong resilience of the South Jersey economy."

Sahara Sam's Oasis Indoor and Outdoor Water Park of West Berlin, New Jersey was founded in March of 2009.

## Great Wolf Resorts announces largest resort-wide expansion in history

MADISON, Wis. — Just in time for summer vacation planning, Great Wolf Resorts, Inc., is adding more new attractions and guest experiences to its indoor waterpark resorts than ever before. With this multimillion dollar investment, guests visiting any of the 11 Great Wolf Lodge properties this year will discover something new, from waterslides and dining, to shopping and interactive attractions.

"We are focused on providing fun-filled experiences for the entire family in the waterpark and throughout the entire resort," said Tim Black, chief operating officer, Great Wolf Resorts. "This year our guests will find something new at each of our properties. Our goal is to create memorable vacations for guests of all ages and these brand-wide additions are great examples of how we do just that."

Traverse City, Mich. will offer a brand new way to get wet. The River Canyon Run takes parties of three to four people at a time sliding and winding down a long indoor



tunnel that stretches outside the resort and then back in, culminating in a final splash.

Ten Paw Alley bowling is coming to Traverse City, complete with balls that are perfect for little hands. The six-lane alley, with a "no rental shoes allowed" policy will soon debut at the resort. The resort is also expanding Scoops Kid Spa, where young girls can enjoy even more ice cream-themed manicure and pedicure services in the sweet place that is all their own.

The Howl at the Moon Glow Golf experience, is expanding to Grand Mound, Wash. and Mason, Ohio in May. Families will putt their

way through a forest filled with woodland creatures, glowing golf balls and howls of delight.

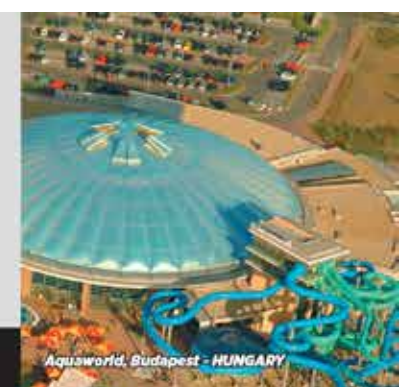
The Great Wolf Kids Store opened at the resorts in Grand Mound, Wash.; Mason, Ohio; Williamsburg, Va.; Concord, N.C.; and the Pocono Mountains, Pa. in May. The shopping experience will feature "Creation Stations" so children can stuff their own Great Wolf Kids character to take home. Guests will also be able to decorate "like me" shirts — one to wear and one to share with their new stuffed friend.

A new "Hungry as a Wolf" family-style dining option allows guests to pick up

and go with a meal that's as focused on value as it is on taste at the resorts in Grand Mound, Wash., Grapevine, Texas and Concord, N.C. The Great Wolf Lodge in Grapevine, Texas, features a brand new outdoor grill that offers an All-American bar and grill dining experience, overlooking the outdoor pool — but comfortably in the shade.

Breakfast from Dunkin' Donuts will soon join the Lodges in Concord, N.C., Williamsburg, Va. and Traverse City, Mich. The Lodge in Grand Mound, Wash. will debut the Wake up with Wiley (and Friends) character breakfast buffet.

The resorts in the Pocono Mountains, Pa., Williamsburg, Va., and Traverse City, Mich., will receive the exclusive new Great Wolf Lodge Cabin Comfort Collection mattresses, new sleeper sofas and carpet in all of the guest suites. There are 3,000 new televisions that will be added across the brand along with energy-saving automatic thermostats in guest suites.





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Wet 'n Wild, USA



Six Flags, USA



Holiday World, USA



SeaWorld, USA



Great Wolf Lodge, USA

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## NEWS SPLASH

COMPILED: Jeffrey L. Seifert, jseifert@amusementtoday.com

**Aquapark Holdings LLC**, the company that acquired **Wild River County** in North Little Rock, Ark., in January, has invested \$1 million dollars in renovations. With just a few months to open, no new attractions were added to the park, but a number of improvements were made including a new handicap accessible bridge near the wave pool, resurfacing and refurbishing all the slides with bright new colors and new landscaping. The company does plan to add new attractions for the upcoming seasons.

An old pool in east Bakersfield, Calif., will be making a big splash this summer. In March, the city council unanimously approved \$200,000 in tax revenue to fund a new spray park at **Siemon Park**. The spray park will replace a swimming pool that was drained and shut down years ago. If construction goes on as planned, the spray park could be opened to the public as soon as August.

The developers of **Cowabunga Bay**, under construction in Henderson, Nevada, just outside of Las Vegas have pushed back the park's opening until 2014. The park has had a few setbacks such as the late delivery of construction materials and the unexpected discovery of a layer of caliche under the surface of the soil. Co-developer **Shane Huish** said the park could be fully operational mid-August, but the park would probably not turn a profit if it were to open at the end of the season. "I'd liken it to opening a Christmas tree lot Dec. 24," said Huish. He did his best to assure the residents of Las Vegas that the project will continue. This is a dynamite project, and there's no way we're walking away from it," said Huish.

**Malibu Grand Prix**, an FEC in Norcross, Ga., is adding a waterpark. **Buccaneer Cove**, which will be completed in three phases, expects to have phase one ready for Memorial Day weekend. That first phase will consist of seven slides, wet tunnels, spray loop, an interactive aqua dome and spray cannons, along with cabanas and an eating area. The second and third phases have yet to be determined.

The new **Huron Aquatic Center** in Huron, S.D., has faced some delays owing to a late spring, but fortunately, construction crews were ahead of schedule before work stopped for winter. The park is still expected to open the end of May although some areas may still be fenced off as crews work on landscaping. The center was paid for with city funds, grants and donations. **WhiteWater West** of Canada is supplying a number of slides including a **Master Blaster**.

New York's **Darien Lake Waterpark** received the **2012 Platinum International Aquatic Safety Award** from **Jeff Ellis & Associates**, an aquatic safety and risk management consultant. The awards are based on multiple random audits throughout the year including hidden video surveillance of lifeguards. The Aquatic Safety Award recognizes facilities that consistently exceed industry standards in risk management and exemplify aquatic safety excellence.

In April, the voters of **Owensville, Mo.**, approved, by a nearly two-thirds majority, a \$1.65

million bond to construct a waterpark. Work on the project will begin following the 2013 season and the park is expected to open for the summer 2014 season. The waterpark will replace the city's 48-year-old pool. Plans for the new facility call for a traditional lap swimming pool along with a slide tower, lazy river, and children's play area along with shade structures, tables and lounge chairs.

With the largest and newest waterparks concentrated in the eastern half of the continent, Western Australia doesn't want to get left behind. A new AUS \$70 million (U.S. \$71.7 million) waterpark, to be known as **Outback Splash**, will be built in stages over the next 10 years just outside the city of Perth, Western Australia. The waterpark will be added to the 34-year-old **Maze Fun Park** in Bullsbrook, a northeastern suburb. The AUS \$1.5 million first stage will include a three-story waterslide complex with tube and flume slides; a waterplay structure with tipping bucket and interactive water play features; and a toddler's area with shallow pools and toddler slides. The first phase is being constructed with the help of an AUS \$250,000 grant from the Federal Government.

**Wet 'n' Wild Sydney** has had to deal with some wet and wild weather that has put the project behind schedule, but the developer, **Village Roadshow**, is determined to get the park open by December. Currently, about 200 workers and 20 machines are working dusk to dawn, six days a week. If there are any more delays, the contractors will seek permission from local authorities to work on Sundays in order to get caught up. The AUS \$115 million park will feature 42 slides and attractions, and is expected to attract 900,000 visitors a year.

Washtenaw County residents can look forward to \$8.5 million in improvements to **Independence Lake County Park** including a new **Blue Heron Bay** splashpark in Webster Township, Mich. and an improved **Rolling Hills Waterpark** in Ypsilanti. The new Blue Heron splashpark has three separate areas for toddlers, families and tweens, as well as a new two-story waterslide with two flumes. The splashpark's attractions are built on a porous surface so there will not be any standing water. As a result the park's attendants will not have to be trained as lifeguards. Rolling Hills Waterpark received a new three-story waterslide with three different flumes, as well as a new entry and rebuilt bathhouse. The county invested \$8.5 million to build the new spraypark and improve the existing waterpark. Washtenaw County planners hope the improvements change the way the people use the park system.

In April, a bankruptcy judge approved the sale of **Snö Mountain** and **Snö Cove Waterpark** in Scranton, Pa., to an investment group for \$5.12 million. A Philadelphia-based investment firm purchased what was originally **Montage Mountain** in 2006 for \$5.1 million, then invested another \$15 million into the resort. The resort earned enough money for day-to-day operations but was never able pay down its debt. The new owners feel that the potential is there for the ski area and waterpark to make money now that the resort is no longer saddled with debt.

**Buccaneer Bay Waterpark** in Waveland, Miss., will reopen for the 2013 season — after having been closed for seven seasons. Buccaneer State Park's structures, waterpark and all the support facilities were destroyed in 2005 by Hurricane Katrina. The State Park has been reopened in phases over the past three years, with the third phase including a wave pool, waterslide, wading pool and concession area. Prior to the destruction, it was the Mississippi's most popular day-use park, attracting more than 500,000 visitors each year. Rebuilding Buccaneer State Park cost \$20 million with most of the money coming from FEMA.

The *Huffington Post* travel blog named its choice for America's top seven theme parks and only one waterpark was on the list — perennial Golden Ticket Award winner **Schlitterbahn Waterpark Resort** in New Braunfels, Texas.

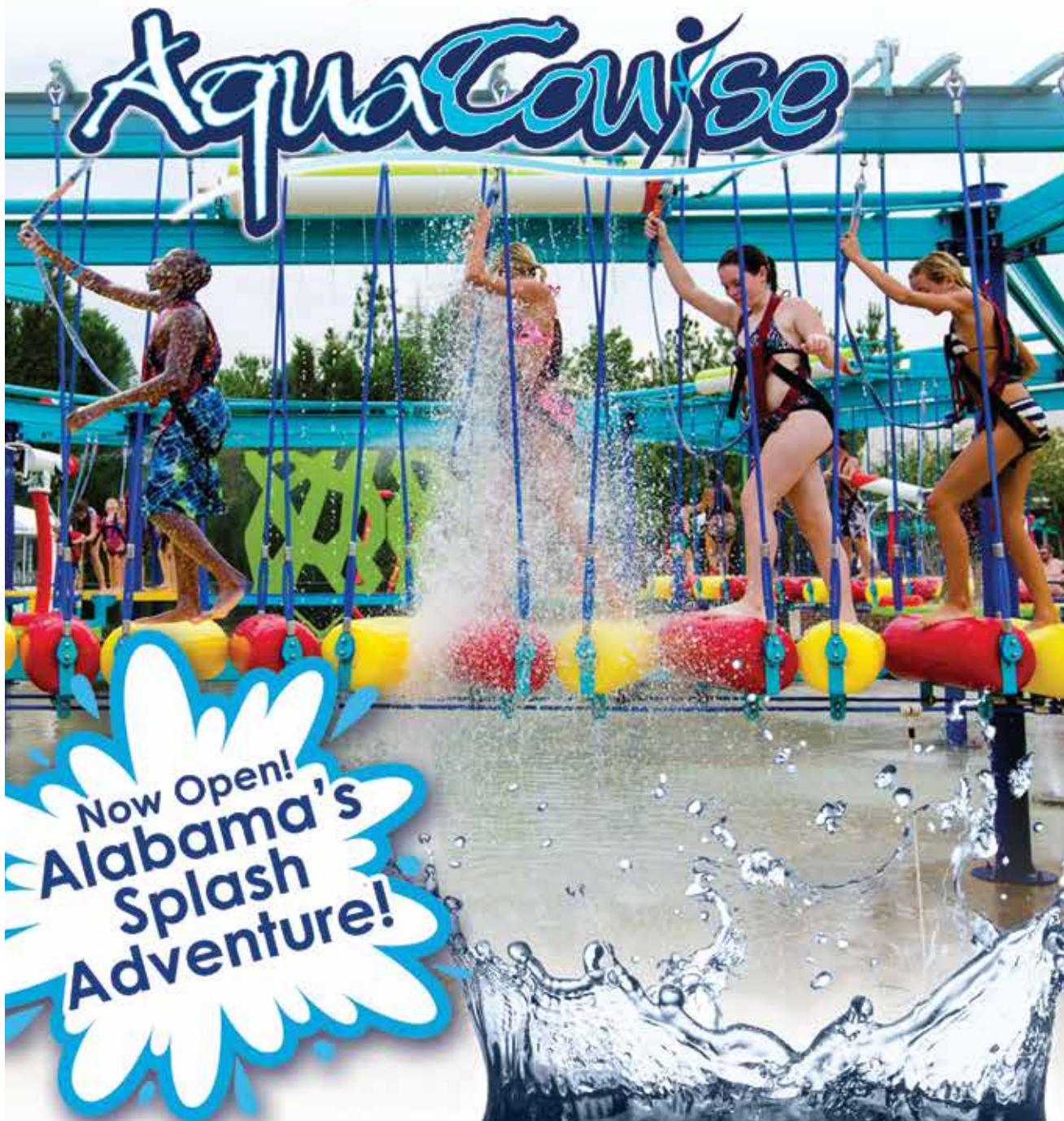
Although open for less than four months, Abu Dhabi's **Yas WaterWorld** won the Middle East Attraction of the Year award from the *World Travel Times*. The newly-opened waterpark was up against a number of popular attractions such as **Ferrari World**, **Wild Wadi Waterpark** and **Ski Dubai**.

**Splash Adventure Waterpark** in Birmingham, Ala., will add a Sea Lion show to its list of attractions. Trained Sea Lions will put on a display of singing, dancing, acrobatics and other fun hijinks. Operated by **Squalus, Inc.**, an organization that provides homes for beached sea lions unable to return to the wild, the troop features animals from both California and the Patagonia region of South America. Entertaining as well as educational, the show will teach guests about the plight of the sea lions and what we, as humans, can do to live in harmony with and ensure the survival of these majestic creatures. The new saltwater show will run daily from May 24 to July 21.

It's been over a year and a half since **Wild Rivers Waterpark** was forced to closed when the landowners decided to build apartments. Not wanting to lose the park, in July 2012 the Orange County Board of Commissioners approved a 25-year, \$30 million lease on a parcel of county-owned land in the city of Temecula, with the expectation that construction would begin in October and the park would open in May of 2014. It's been almost a year and construction has still not started. The developer told the city financing is still not secure and no date has been set for the start of construction. Temecula Mayor Mike Naggar says he is not concerned about the delay and feels Wild Rivers Temecula can still open in 2014 provided construction begins by the fall. He said he understands that financing for projects is difficult to come by, and setbacks are not uncommon.

**Waterparks** in Wildwood, N.J., could be allowed to provide alcoholic beverages. If a new ordinance is approved a waterpark area management plan must be submitted to the city's **Alcohol Beverage Control Board**, and the plan must demonstrate "that alcoholic beverages shall be served in a controlled, dignified, and upscale manner. This plan shall emphasize the culture of family fun, and shall mandate strict supervision by management."

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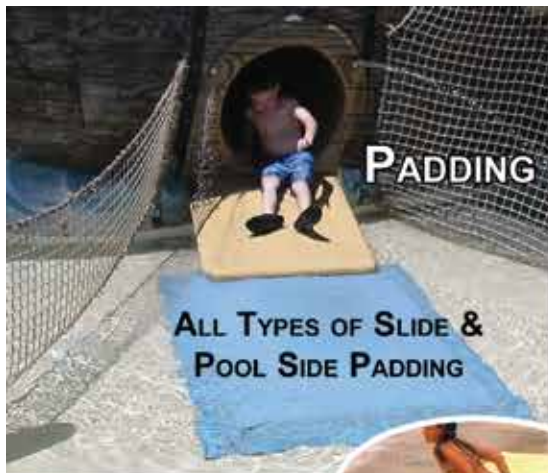


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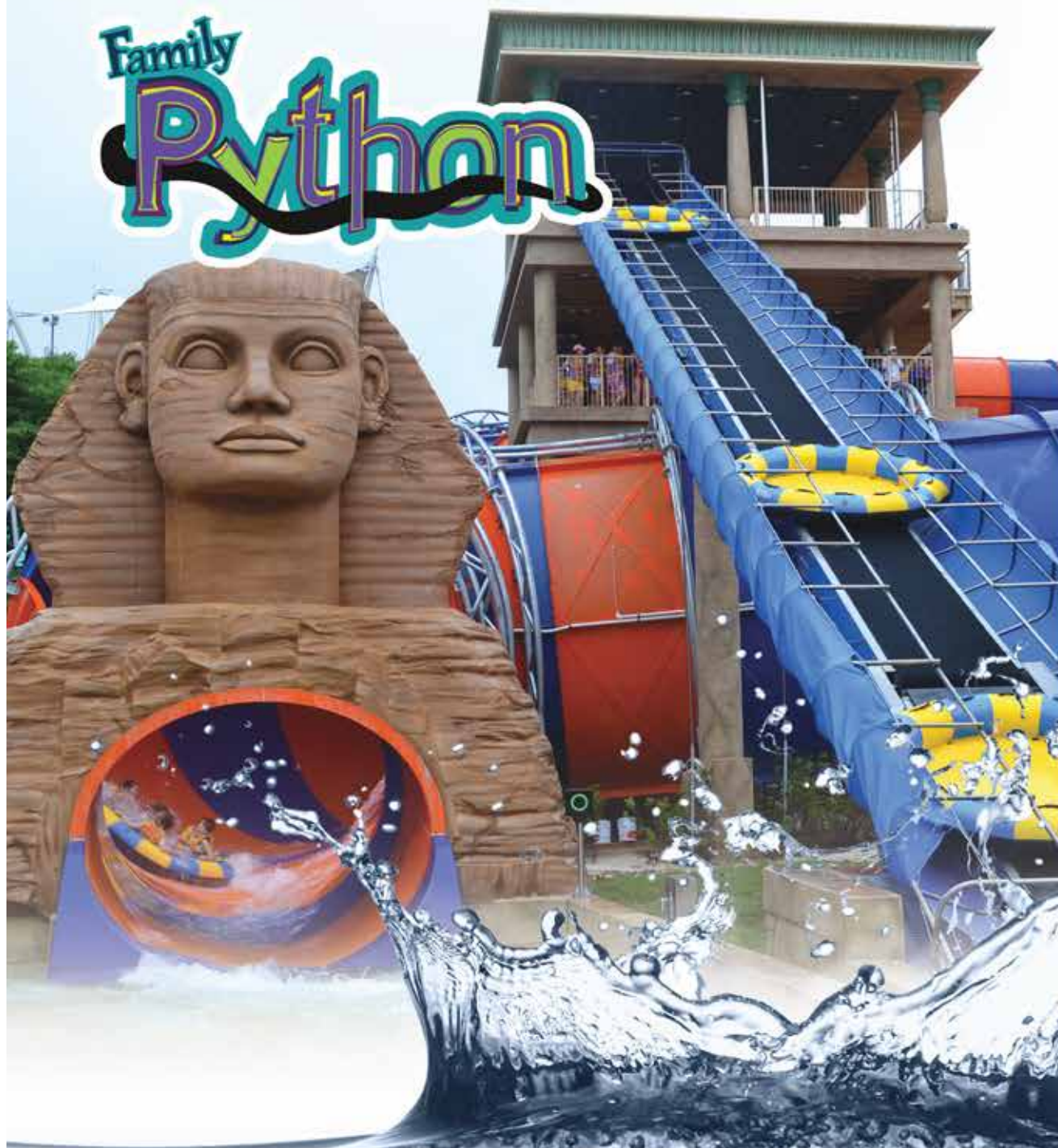
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# BUSINESS

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Themed entertainment company's IPO raises \$702 million

## SeaWorld's march of the penguins makes waves on Wall Street

**STORY:** Dean Lamanna  
Special to Amusement Today

ORLANDO, Fla. — April proved exceptionally spring-like for SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc., when its penguins marched on Wall Street.

The theme park and themed entertainment company, headquartered in Orlando and controlled by New York City-based Blackstone Group L.P., raised \$702 million in a very successful initial public offering (IPO) on April 18.

Prior to this windfall, SeaWorld reportedly had expected IPO results of \$500-600 million.

On April 24, SeaWorld (trading on the New York Stock Exchange under the ticker SEAS) announced the closing of its IPO of 29.9 million shares of common stock at a price to the public of \$27 per share — valuing the company at above \$2.5 billion. Shares had gained over 20 percent since the IPO by the time of this official announcement.

SeaWorld issued and sold 10 million shares of common stock and selling stockholders affiliated with The Blackstone

▶ **SEE RELATED STORY  
PAGES 40 & 41**

Group L.P. offered and sold 19.9 million shares of common stock, including 3.9 million shares that were offered and sold by the selling stockholders pursuant to the full exercise of the underwriters' over-allotment option.

The offering raised proceeds to SeaWorld of \$253.8 million after deductions were made for underwriting discounts and commissions. SeaWorld will not receive any of the proceeds from the sale of the shares sold by the selling stockholders.

SeaWorld used a portion of the net proceeds to the company from the IPO to redeem \$140 million in aggregate principal amount of the 11 percent senior notes due in 2016 and issued by its subsidiary, SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment, Inc., at a redemption price of 111 percent, plus accrued and unpaid interest thereof. The company will use a portion of the net proceeds from the offering to repay \$37 million of

its senior secured term loan B facility.

SeaWorld also used approximately \$46.3 million of the IPO's net proceeds to make a one-time payment to an affiliate of Blackstone in connection with the termination of a management advisory agreement.

In choosing an IPO for SeaWorld, Blackstone rejected takeover bids from Apollo Global Management, LLC, and Onex Corporation. Blackstone acquired SeaWorld from beer giant Anheuser-Busch In-Bev SA for \$2.3 billion in December 2009.

Goldman, Sachs & Co. and J.P. Morgan acted as joint bookrunning managers and as representatives of the underwriters in the IPO. Citigroup, BofA Merrill Lynch, Barclays and Wells Fargo Securities were also bookrunners in the offering, while Blackstone Capital Markets, Lazard Capital Markets, Macquarie Capital, KeyBanc Capital Markets, Nomura, Drexel Hamilton, LLC and Ramirez & Co. Inc. acted as co-managers.

SeaWorld Entertainment



One of SeaWorld's wild, winged charges waddled royally and reigned supreme at the New York Stock Exchange in April. COURTESY SEAWORLD ENTERTAINMENT

Inc. is best known for its 11 U.S. theme parks and attractions and includes the Busch Gardens and Sesame Place brands.

## SeaWorld designs new conservation-minded cup to interact with Coca-Cola

ORLANDO, Fla. — In conjunction with SeaWorld Orlando's epic new attraction Antarctica: Empire of the Penguin that opened Memorial Day weekend, SeaWorld has created the Cup That Cares — a new reusable cup program with a twist of technology. The innovative, interactive cup was designed specifically to connect with Coca-Cola Freestyle beverage dispensers in the new realm.

The new Cup That Cares engages guests in a personalized manner to reuse materials and reduce their carbon footprint. An RFID chip embedded in each Cup That Cares interacts with software at Coca-Cola Freestyle dispensers to calculate and tell guests how they are being more environmentally re-

sponsible by choosing to reuse.

Technology embedded in the Cup That Cares calculates the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> each guest saves from entering the atmosphere when they choose to reuse the cup for refills at Coca-Cola Freestyle machines in Antarctica: Empire of the Penguin. Each refill with a reusable cup prevents the emission of approximately 27 grams of CO<sub>2</sub>.

Plus, SeaWorld will donate \$1.00 from each Cup That Cares purchase to the SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund, a not-for-profit foundation that helps protect wildlife around the world.

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Stirring excitement with new attractions, impressive IPO

# SeaWorld Entertainment CEO Jim Atchison rides tide of success

**STORY:** Dean Lamanna  
Special to Amusement Today

ORLANDO, Fla. — These are agreeably wild times for SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.

Following a boffo initial public offering in April (see story on page 39), the now-publicly traded, nature-themed company has introduced Antarctica: Empire of the Penguin, a revolutionary ride/show attraction that marks the largest expansion in its Orlando flagship park's history, and in June will open Aquatica San Diego waterpark, the 11th park in its chain. These are just two of the many major new 2013 offerings across the company's properties, which include Busch Gardens parks in Tampa and Williamsburg, Va., and Sesame Place in Langhorne, Pa.

Leading the charge is Jim Atchison, SeaWorld's president and CEO. The 47-year-old executive rose within the company ranks in the most traditional of ways — working his way up from a car-parker, grounds maintenance worker and ride operator at Busch Gardens Tampa in 1985 to his 2003-07 management of SeaWorld Orlando and finally to his current berth as SeaWorld Entertainment's top executive.

Since the company's acquisition by the private equity firm Blackstone Group L.P. from Anheuser-Busch In-Bev SA in late 2009, Atchison, who holds an M.B.A. from the University of South Florida, has bolstered and expanded SeaWorld's brand offerings and has even branched it into television production and licensed merchandising. The Jersey City, N.J., native, the son of a police officer and himself a married father of three young children, is also a member of the board of directors of the SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund and Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute.

Still somewhat constrained by the IPO-mandated "quiet period" that remained in effect in the days immediately following SeaWorld's debut on the New York Stock Exchange, Atchison nonetheless availed himself to *AT* for a wide-ranging update.

## SEAWORLD ENTERTAINMENT™



In addition to many thousands of animals under his care, SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc., President and CEO Jim Atchison is responsible for the 22,000-plus employees who welcomed 24 million guests to the company's properties across the U.S. last year.  
COURTESY SEAWORLD ENTERTAINMENT



**Congratulations on your successful IPO. Have you had a chance to catch your breath?**

It's been quite an endurance test. We filed our first version of our prospectus back in late December and worked on it for weeks before that. So if you back up the clock to last November through April 19th, it's been a long haul, for sure. But it's exciting and we're delighted with the outcome. I have gotten back to my desk and found my wife and kids again. (laughs)

**What were your expectations heading into the IPO in April?**

In my decades of experience with our company, I've gained an understanding of the power of our brands and how loved they are. I've always known we had a great story to tell and I was excited to share it along the way, so I'm not surprised by the interest in it. It's not a well-kept secret: After more than 50 years, people know us. Everybody I've met has a story of visiting one of our parks. I've had a good handle on how we're differentiated in what we do.

**In the wake of the IPO, what is SeaWorld Entertainment's first priority?**

It remains the same as it was before. And that's really an intense, unrelenting focus on the guest experience. There's nothing more important to us than that, along with the safety and welfare of our guests, animals and employees. Delivering on that promise every day is what has made us, and our IPO, successful.

**Are there any new or renewed corporate goals you'll be pursuing?**

I've always felt that telling our story outside of our parks was a great opportunity. As with the wonderfully successful Saturday morning television show we produce, *Sea Rescue*, now in its third season on ABC, and our downloadable game app called *Turtle Trek* that's based on new turtle attractions in our parks, we continue to build our brand and develop new lines of business. This has been an ambition of ours; we've done some good work and have still got more to do.

**How might the overseas**

**market fit into your big picture?**

It's an intriguing opportunity — and one we're perhaps very well-positioned to pursue. We have big-format parks like SeaWorld and Busch Gardens, and medium-format parks like Aquatica, our waterpark with animals in it. We even have a boutique park format, Discovery Cove, which is a little like the Rolex of the theme park business, with a several hundred-dollar-a-day admission. So we have a number of different-sized concepts to work with for opportunities internationally, especially where branded Western assets like SeaWorld may be attractive as anchor tenants in key developments.

We also have an advantage in that the SeaWorld premise is nature-based and animal-related at its core. As such, our brands don't require a lot of on-ramp in terms of explaining our storyline or who a character is, or why a character should be relevant to a foreign market. We could put our Shamu show in a foreign market almost anywhere in

the world, and it would be just as exciting to that locale as it is here.

**What sets SeaWorld's corporate culture apart?**

We have a strong ethic around animal welfare and conservation that has endured for decades. We've attended to over 20,000 ill, orphaned or injured animals in our company's history, and I can't think of another entity on this planet that has that kind of a stat sheet. I'm proud of the brave men and women on our team who work to care for those animals with the sole objective of getting them back out into the wild.

We've also done an enormous amount of pioneering work in the science of artificial insemination. We have terrific breeding programs that have given us enormous genetic diversity in our animal collection. This work has allowed us to help others who are conservation-minded with their species survival projects.

Internally, we have a culture that remains connected to the very essence of the guest experience — and that's partly because the vast majority of our corporate team has backgrounds involving years in the parks. I myself wore a uniform and a nametag, carried a pan and broom and picked up trash for many years every day in our parks. We have a very active, engaged style, and I do my best to know by name every employee I can meet.

**Mainstream media have noted that the animal rights group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has bought a stake in SeaWorld Entertainment and may try to influence company decision-making. Will you reach out to PETA in any way?**

What we will do is the same thing we do for every shareholder who buys a share in this company, and that is do our best to provide a unique, compelling experience in the highest quality fashion and in a way that delivers the best returns for our shareholders. So whether it's PETA or anyone else, we don't distinguish and we're really just focused on the business itself — not the pub-

► See ATCHISON, page 41

## ▶ATCHISON

Continued from page 40

licity around an organization like that and what their objectives are.

**What new and upcoming attractions and developments at SeaWorld's parks excite you the most this year?**

I'm most excited about Antarctica: Empire of the Penguin, which is opening May 24 here at SeaWorld Orlando. This new realm within the park encompasses 56,000 square feet of buildings and almost four acres, with culinary and merchandising components. The ride moves you through a series of rooms, media and special effects on a one-of-a-kind, trackless, non-sequential vehicle that can take dozens of different paths. Using media and special effects, it follows the story of a penguin character named Puck from a hatchling to an adolescent to a grownup. You then exit the vehicle inside our 30-degree live penguin habitat. No pun intended, but it's just the coolest attraction ever.

I'm also delighted with



SeaWorld's Jim Atchison is particularly enthused about two new attractions debuting this season at the company's parks: "Madagascar Live! Operation: Vacation," a stage show based on the popular animated DreamWorks SKG films, at Busch Gardens Tampa and SeaWorld San Diego; and Antarctica: Empire of the Penguin, a multimedia ride spectacular at SeaWorld Orlando. COURTESY SEAWORLD ENTERTAINMENT, MARLON SCOTT

our new "Madagascar Live! Operation: Vacation" stage show at our Tampa and San Diego parks. The film characters are a great fit for us, and it's all original content. DreamWorks Animation SKG Studios has been a great partner and we couldn't be happier to have that equity in our parks right now.

**What has moved you to introduce menu items for visitors with food allergies in your parks?**

We feel this is an important initiative. When you look at the proliferation of serious allergies throughout the U.S., it's daunting, and if you're the parents of a child with significant allergy challenges, it's awfully scary — and you've got to be vigilant. So we've partnered with the Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network to develop best-in-class menu items, signage and communications. I'm a real stickler for reading guest comments from

all of our parks, and I see appreciation reflected over and over again that we've set a new standard for allergy-friendly environments. Our culinary teams have done a terrific job and we're very proud of that.

**Aside from the fact that SeaWorld celebrates animals in a unique way, how else do you feel connected with them?**

We have 67,000 animals under our care, and it's a big and humbling responsibility.

Within our company, we have the same kind of regard and reverence for the animals as we do for our employees. I celebrate great milestones, such the thousandth sea turtle we released last year. That we would could rescue, rehabilitate and release so many of this endangered species was a huge milestone — an emotional day in our company.

It's certainly not just a job; it's in our blood.





# NEWS & NOTES

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## Getting to know your newest AIMS president

### Roger Berry

AIMS president and  
Ralph S. Alberts Co.  
technical sales representative  
[rwb.com@att.net](mailto:rwb.com@att.net)



Berry

As a member of AIMS for 16 years, it is with great pleasure that I now serve as the AIMS president.

Along with a very esteemed board of industry professionals, our renewed vision for the AIMS organization is one of quality and growth. With two new board members joining us, we will also look to them for new ideas to assist us with this vision. AIMS is, and always has been, about servicing our members and the future will focus on the value we bring to them, in turn achieving our ultimate goal of a safe experience at our parks and facilities for everyone.

My 20-year history in the amusement industry includes 16 of the most recent years with the **Ralph S. Alberts Company** as a technical sales representative in the United States and Europe.

Alberts is housed in an 80,000-square-foot facility with departments and capabilities including injection molding, foam molding, hand casting, liquid resin casting, rigid/high-density flexible foam molding, roto casting & thermal plastic rubber casting. Established in 1963, their first products

included tooling and fixtures for aircraft and tank helmets for the armed services. In 1967, a corporation was formed, and so began the supply of non-metallic fixtures and pallets for conveyor lines. In 1978, a new aspect of the operation developed with the manufacture of replacement foam parts for amusement rides. The Ryde Hyde X3 ride padding system was developed and trademarked by Ralph S. Alberts is just one example.

I am also a member of **IAAPA**, participating in both the Safety and the Manufacturers & Suppliers Committees in addition to being a member of **ASTM International**, Chairman of F24.10, and on the ASTM F24 Executive Committee. Being involved with these organizations is a great compliment to my role with AIMS.

Like so many others in our industry, volunteerism is something I am deeply committed to. It is truly the hallmark of the AIMS organization and I hope that if you are not involved, you will consider it. As a completely self-funded, not for profit organization, everyone can make a difference by simply encouraging colleagues, vendors and partners to support AIMS through membership and sponsorship. There are so many opportunities at AIMS. Please contact **Kelly Bernish** at [kellyb@aimsintl.org](mailto:kellyb@aimsintl.org) for more details on how you can volunteer.

The other hallmark of AIMS is our annual Safety

Seminar, this year held at the DoubleTree by Hilton Orlando at SeaWorld, January 12-17, 2014.

With so many new sessions and tracks, including various design sessions, an entire carnival track and new sessions on observation wheels, a growing segment of our industry, along with many returning favorite sessions from our member manufacturers, this will surely be our best event yet. Discounted preregistration has already begun at [aimsintl.org](http://aimsintl.org). You won't want to miss it!

As AIMS continues to move forward, we will also take advantage of some unique partnering opportunities, including a newly formed partnership with ASTM to develop the next generation of amusement industry professionals. Our AIMS certification has traditionally, and will continue to, focus on those that are already in the industry. Now in conjunction with ASTM, we will also offer opportunities for students to learn not only in the classroom at our safety seminar, but through mentoring relationships, to become the future leaders of our industry. This is a great opportunity for our seasoned professionals to "give back."

Lastly, I would love to hear from you as to how we can continue to make AIMS the best that it can be. Please drop me an email at [rwb.com@att.net](mailto:rwb.com@att.net). I would love to hear from you!



### AIMS Education Committee meets

The AIMS Education Committee members (left) recently met in Orlando to discuss various topics and the 2014 AIMS Safety Seminar, set for January 12-17 in Orlando. At right, committee members are front row, l to r: Scooter Mangold, Holly Coston, Patty Beazley, Michael Vartorella, Ed Zakar and Victor Danau. Back row, l to r: Roger Berry, C.W. Craven, Barry Schiabile, John Riggelman, and Randy Wilke. Not pictured are Kelly Bernish and Heather Earl.

COURTESY AIMS



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## Coney Island's would-be savior Horace Bullard dies at 75

CONEY ISLAND, N.Y. — Horace Bullard, a New York City businessman who dreamed of returning Coney Island to the magical place it was during his youth, died April 9, 2013 after losing his battle with Lou Gehrig's Disease. He was 75.



**Bullard**

Born in Harlem, Bullard spent many years of his childhood sneaking off to enjoy Coney Island. He was saddened by the eventual decline of the area and after amassing a fortune with his Kansas Fried Chicken fast food chain locations, he began to purchase various Coney Island properties in the late 1970s in hopes of spurring a revitalization of the amusement zone.

Along with the iconic Shore Theater on Surf and Stillwell avenues, he acquired the plot that was home to the 1925-built Thunderbolt roller coaster. His grand dream was to bring to Coney Island an Atlantic City-style hotel and casino and rebuild legendary Steeplechase Park, which had closed in 1964.

According to reports, NYC Mayor Ed Koch granted the necessary permits but Bullard's backers pulled out of the deal because of the economic downturn in the late 80s. Bullard worked to secure new financing but eventually lost out to Mayor Rudy Giuliani who wanted to bring minor league baseball to the property at West 16th Street and Surf Avenue. To make this happen, Giuliani ordered the pre-dawn demolition of the Thunderbolt, a move a federal court later declared il-

legal. Bullard received just \$1 in damages and his dreams to rebuild Coney Island began to fade.

"Horace Bullard gambled with everything he had on bringing Coney Island back, but he kept running into roadblocks, and we just didn't have enough force to overcome the opposition," said Ralph Peretto, a Coney Island native, Democratic district leader, and ally to Bullard. "It was

very sad."

Ironically, Coney Island's celebrated rebirth did not include Bullard. In 2010, he was diagnosed with the disease that eventually ended his life. Still, he should be remembered for his passion to restore one of America's most beloved playgrounds.

Bullard was buried on April 12 next to his parents in Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx.

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## NEW JERSEY AMUSEMENT ASSOCIATION

**SUPERSTORM SANDY**

### *Restore, Rebuild and Reopen*

## NJAA's 54th Annual Dinner Dance another success

*More than 250 turn out to hear Lt. Governor Kim Guadagno give keynote speech*

**POINT PLEASANT BEACH, N.J.** — On Monday, May 13, the NJAA held its 54th Annual Dinner Dance at the beautiful Clark's Landing Yacht Club in Point Pleasant beach, N.J.

The NJAA chose New Jersey State Governor, Chris Christie, to be the honoree this year for his outstanding commitment to the tourism industry and for his unwavering dedication and constant efforts during our recovery operations after Superstorm Sandy.

Although the Governor had a last minute conflict in his schedule, he sent the Lt. Governor, Kim Guadagno, in his place. Although NJAA attendees may have felt a tinge of disappointment that the Governor couldn't be there, Lt. Guadagno can brighten a room with her spirit and presence.

"She is a huge cheerleader for our industry and delivered a wonderful keynote speech. Those in attendance were pumped and excited to hear that a new marketing campaign is in the works — 'NJ Stronger than the Storm'." said NJAA

Executive Director Kim Samarelli.

As the association does each year at the annual dinner dance, NJAA members celebrated each other achievements, celebrated the amusement industry and celebrated with all the leaders from the state and amusement industry.

The NJAA also honored the men and women who serve as First Responders and the association was able to give back to the communities by awarding more than \$25,000 from the NJAA 1st Responders Volunteer Relief Fund.

"The NJAA member facilities damaged or destroyed by Superstorm Sandy have moved well into the rebuilding stage, and look to the future with an even brighter outlook than 180 days ago," said Samarelli. "The resilience by the amusement industry builds on the generational memories this industry creates every summer season, and our future lies in our hands as we move quickly toward the summer season of 2013. A great evening was enjoyed by all!"



Seen at the NJAA dinner Dance, from left to right, are: NJAA's Kimberle and James Samarelli; Pier Pressure's Amanda Kacperowski and Sara Brilliant; First Responder recipient, Richard Dziadosz, Ocean Beach Volunteer Fire Department and NJAA President John Maurer. PHOTOS COURTESY NJAA



Above left, New Jersey Lt. Governor and Secretary of State Kim Guadagno visits with Jack Morey, Morey's Piers during the NJAA Dinner Dance. Above right, Robert Sinnott, Silverton Fire Department, accepts an award from the NJAA First Responders Relief Fund. PHOTOS COURTESY NJAA



## Weeks Marine removes Casino Pier's Star Jet roller coaster from Atlantic Ocean



**Seven months after being pushed into the ocean by Superstorm Sandy, the Star Jet is being removed from the ocean.**  
AT FILE

**SEASIDE HEIGHTS, N.J.** — Casino Pier, the popular oceanfront amusement park whose boardwalk and pier was heavily damaged by October 2012's Hurricane Sandy, hired Weeks Marine to remove the Star Jet roller coaster from the Atlantic Ocean.

The compact family coaster, designed and built by E&F Miler Industries, opened on Casino Pier in 2002. On the evening of October 29, 2012, the massive storm ripped a 50-foot section of the pier apart, sending it and the coaster into the crashing surf. Since then,

the twisted and broken ride has served as a constant reminder of the storm's fury. The haunting, iconic image appeared on countless news programs and other media sources around the world.

On Tuesday, May 14, 2013, the first phase of the project — removal of the Star Jet and the other related debris in the water began. Weeks Marine worked around the clock on the removal until it was complete. The entire project took several days.

## CONTINUING COVERAGE | SUPERSTORM SANDY

## NJAA's Kim Samarelli leads storm recovery, weathers challenges

**Executive director rallies industry support in N.J.**

**STORY:** Dean Lamanna  
Special to Amusement Today

SEASIDE HEIGHTS, N.J. — Fueled by the Atlantic Ocean, Superstorm Sandy roared ashore last October and created a monumental mess for residents and amusement operators along much of the New Jersey coast. It would take a recovery effort led by Garden State natives with salt-water running through their veins, and a resolve founded on summertime tradition, to meet the ensuing challenges.



One of those intrepid natives is Kimberle Rolle Samarelli, executive director of New Jersey Amusement Association (NJAA). Born and raised in Seaside Heights, where NJAA is based and which took a direct hit from the hurricane, the married mother of two has been tasked with tending the post-storm needs of the 200-member organization while dealing with the loss of her own home and coordinating relief with the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), as well as various state and local agencies.

Samarelli, who earned B.S. and M.B.A. degrees from Georgian Court University in nearby Lakewood, N.J., hails from a family steeped in Jersey shore amusements. As a little girl with blond pigtails, she helped her grandmother with a beach umbrella and chair rental business while running errands on the boardwalk for her grandfather and dad, who operated Skil-O and other games. As an adult, she opened her own local business, Seashore Delights, a sweets shop in Lavallette, and joined the NJAA staff in 2007.

In addition to assisting NJAA members and keeping them informed post-Sandy, Samarelli jumped into action in her devastated community.

Together with her husband James, who was director of the Office of Emergency Management for Seaside Heights and the town's fire chief until he left those posts in January, she helped open a commissary that served 300 meals a day to first responders, utility workers and neighbors in need.

AT caught up with Samarelli for a pre-season progress report.

**What is your measure of the Jersey shore's post-storm recovery?**

When you look at where we were six months ago, there's been moderate progress made. Businesses are working diligently every day to get things operational. Some towns are in a superior position because they had a little less damage; some are lagging because they had more damage. Central and northern New Jersey are struggling the most.

Memorial Day weekend is our traditional kick-off target, and some amusement operators opened as early as Easter weekend, but it seems that the beginning of this year's summer season will be July 4th almost across the board.

**Which park operator's handling of this situation has impressed you the most?**

Keansburg Amusement Park, which has a rich, 100-plus-year tradition and was heavily damaged, really moved to the forefront in recovery. It cleaned up quickly and bought new rides, and it really has turned lemons into lemonade.

Of course, some operators, such as Casino Pier in Seaside Heights, haven't had the benefit of starting over on a solid, flat surface like Keansburg. Casino Pier has had to rip everything down and rebuild from new pilings on up. Still, the pier has made amazing leaps.

**How important was NJAA's annual East Coast Expo in Atlantic City last February, and what was accomplished?**

Most important was that we still had an industry to come back to after the storm. But it wasn't just about buying; it was an emotional event for everybody to see each other — and to be inspired by stories of rebuilding and how to prepare



**NJAA Executive Director Kim Samarelli (right) welcomed New Jersey Lt. Governor and Secretary of State Kim Guadagno, one of the organization's supporters, to NJAA's 54th Annual Dinner Dance in Point Pleasant Beach, N.J., on May 13. COURTESY NJAA**

for the 2013 season. Because it's definitely a "new Jersey shore," as I've heard people describe it. That's not a new slogan in the making, as far as I know, but it has become the marketing approach for our new normal.

The Expo is also a financial engine for NJAA and promotes our organization's growth, so it was important to our viability to be able to have it.

**Where does the most work remain to be done?**

While businesses are moving forward, there are still issues with homes. We need beds for heads: residences must be rebuilt and repaired so tourists can come back and stay — whether it's a relative's house or a rental. Homeowners need help, and I'm not sure how quickly it's coming.

**Have there been any environmental or regulatory hurdles in the course of rebuilding piers, boardwalks and other amusement infrastructure?**

Not in the localities where NJAA has member parks, fortunately. Point Pleasant's boardwalk and railings are done. And Seaside Heights is coming right along, but they have a bigger boardwalk to redo.

We're lucky to have worked with all of our state officials and department heads to move processes through. Agreements were made early to help our members rebuild quickly while keeping safety in the forefront. Efficient procedures for engineering and electrical reviews were arranged beforehand. The state also staffed up after the storm because it could foresee that there would be issues with all

of New Jersey's industries.

**In May, NJAA honored Gov. Chris Christie for facilitating tourism recovery efforts in the state. How would you characterize his contributions?**

Gov. Christie is one of our strongest cheerleaders — a natural and heartfelt advocate for shore amusements. We've had a lot of cooperation from his cabinet and a very good working relationship with all of his teams. Gov. Christie sees the value that we add to the New Jersey economy.

**How helpful has IAAPA been — especially with Wildwood, N.J.-based amusement operator Will Morey in place as the organization's chair?**

We've been blessed to have Will Morey as IAAPA chair during this time. IAAPA was on the phone with me the day after the storm and has been 100 percent supportive with everything. They sent a ground team here in December, just a couple weeks after the convention (in Orlando), and we all toured the hardest-hit areas we were allowed to enter. IAAPA is sending another team in late June to document our progress and see where further help may be needed.

**How have you felt about media coverage?**

We have come to terms with the fact that we're in a long-term recovery; the media have not. They constantly focus on the roller coaster in the water at Casino Pier, damaged buildings... they don't show a lot of the rebuilding. I get calls from our partners in the southern part of the state complaining, "The media aren't saying that we're open." There's been

too much focus on the negative because it sells. I and others can't wait until the roller coaster is out of the water so we can focus on the future. (Editor's note: dismantling of the partly submerged Star Jet roller coaster began in mid-May; see page 44.)

**From what surprising places have you received offers of assistance?**

The New England Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions has generously done fundraising for us. Merlin Entertainments Group, the Madame Tussauds people, has offered volunteers and help with cleanup. We also have a gentleman in Point Pleasant Beach who is building the world's tallest sandcastle for completion in June, and he's seeking donations for Home-town Heroes, an organization that helps families severely impacted by the storm.

**As a resident of Seaside Heights, how has your own family managed?**

My house is a total loss — wrecked inside from floor to ceiling. I've been fighting as much as anybody the insurance company battles; they only want to pay a fraction of the cost to rebuild. It forces people into legal action. It could take another 18 months to resolve my own situation, if the flood maps that are currently being redrawn will even make rebuilding a reasonable option.

We ended up living in Toms River with friends who were generous enough to take in my husband, two children and nanny for four months. We finally found a rental in Toms River and moved into it in March.

**How did you balance your personal situation and your duties for NJAA?**

You take it hour by hour, day by day — and expect nothing. And nothing can surprise you. (laughs) That's the best approach to have. They say time heals all wounds, but there are big wounds to heal. There have been days where I just wanted to throw the bedcover over my head, or just say, "I want to go home." It's about adjusting to a new reality, a new world.

I grew up in the business of fun. And I think that's what's given me my resilience to get through this storm.

# MARKETWATCH

## RIDING THE MARKET



Company	Prices One Month Ago	Prices 05/17/13	52 Weeks High	Low
<b>Cedar Fair L.P.</b>	<b>\$40.72</b>	<b>\$43.97</b>	<b>\$40.81</b>	<b>\$25.00</b>
<b>MGM Mirage</b>	<b>\$12.86</b>	<b>\$15.34</b>	<b>\$15.95</b>	<b>\$8.83</b>
<b>Six Flags Ent. Corp.</b>	<b>\$72.21</b>	<b>\$79.09</b>	<b>\$79.65</b>	<b>\$43.13</b>
<b>CBS Corp.</b>	<b>\$46.30</b>	<b>\$51.53</b>	<b>\$51.54</b>	<b>\$29.85</b>
<b>Walt Disney Co.</b>	<b>\$60.55</b>	<b>\$66.58</b>	<b>\$67.89</b>	<b>\$43.51</b>
<b>Apollo Global Mgt. LLC</b>	<b>\$25.44</b>	<b>\$27.34</b>	<b>\$28.14</b>	<b>\$10.42</b>
<b>Blackstone Group</b>	<b>\$21.10</b>	<b>\$23.45</b>	<b>\$23.65</b>	<b>\$11.35</b>
<b>Village Roadshow</b>	<b>\$4.97</b>	<b>\$5.25</b>	<b>\$5.46</b>	<b>\$2.85</b>
<b>NBC Universal</b>	<b>\$23.59</b>	<b>\$23.46</b>	<b>\$23.90</b>	<b>\$18.02</b>
<b>SeaWorld Entertainment Inc.</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>\$38.88</b>	<b>\$39.33</b>	<b>\$30.26</b>

## CURRENCY DIESEL PRICES



Region (U.S.)	As of 05/13/13	Change from year ago
<b>East Coast</b>	<b>\$3.866</b>	<b>-\$0.189</b>
<b>Midwest</b>	<b>\$3.909</b>	<b>\$0.012</b>
<b>Gulf Coast</b>	<b>\$3.739</b>	<b>-\$0.176</b>
<b>Mountain</b>	<b>\$3.822</b>	<b>-\$0.182</b>
<b>West Coast</b>	<b>\$3.883</b>	<b>-\$0.309</b>
<b>California</b>	<b>\$4.042</b>	<b>-\$0.307</b>

## TOP 7 MOST TRADED CURRENCIES



On 05/20/13 \$1 USD =
<b>0.7787 EURO</b>
<b>0.6591 GBP (British Pound)</b>
<b>103.19 JPY (Japanese Yen)</b>
<b>0.97.18 CHF (Swiss Franc)</b>
<b>1.0265 AUD (Australian Dollar)</b>
<b>1.0278 CAD (Canadian Dollar)</b>

## PEOPLE WATCH

### Walt Bowser joins Millennium Elastomers

Millennium Elastomers (ME) has announced that **Walter Bowser** has joined the Gardena, Calif.-based company as vice president of Amusement Products. Bowser has a long history in the amusement industry working for Six Flags in various capacities for 21 years.

Millennium Elastomers is one of the largest urethane processors in North America with facilities strategically located across the United States. Bowser can be reached at walter.bowser@melastomers.com, or at (800) 421-1180



**Bowser**

Airlines Center for the Levy Restaurants operation, retail supervisor at Six Flags Great America in Gurnee, Ill., near Chicago, and guest arrival area manager at Hard Rock Park in Myrtle Beach.

At Wet 'n' Wild Las Vegas, he will develop and implement a food and beverage program that will feature both premium selections and traditional theme park fare, including specialized treats. In addition, Watts will manage retail operations for the property with a focus on beach attire and souvenir merchandise.



**Watts**

commercial design and construction opportunities for OTL, which creates one-of-a-kind water features, rock-work and themed environments.

Before joining OTL, Olson oversaw teams and individuals responsible for the construction of more than 1,000 projects, including well-known exhibits at the Louisville Zoo, San Diego Zoo and National Aquarium. Many of those projects received "Best New Exhibit" and "Exhibit of the Year" honors from the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

"We're extremely pleased to welcome Brian to our team," said Hugh Hughes, OTL president. "His experience and knowledge in themed entertainment venues makes him an excellent fit for OTL. He also has a proven track record of achieving high client satisfaction while executing numerous high profile, award-winning projects."

### Wet 'n' Wild Las Vegas expands team

Wet 'n' Wild Las Vegas has solidified its management team with the additions of **Chris Hicks** as revenue manager and **Matthew Watts** as resale manager. Both bring extensive operations, ticketing, concessions, retail and systems experience in the water park and amusement industry and large-scale operations to the \$50 million Las Vegas waterpark with more than 25 slides and attractions.

Hicks' success as admissions manager at sister park Wet 'n' Wild Phoenix led to his promotion and position at Wet 'n' Wild Las Vegas. He previously served as operations supervisor at two Cedar Fair Entertainment Co. parks, California's Great America in Santa Clara and Cedar Point in Sandusky, Ohio; and attractions operations area manager for Hard Rock Park (also called Freestyle Music Park) in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

At Wet 'n' Wild Las Vegas, Hicks will oversee ticket sales and the front gate, including guest services, season pass processing, and rentals for cabanas, tubes and lockers. He also will configure, set up and maintain ticketing software systems, serve as the IT liaison to Wet 'n' Wild Las Vegas parent, Village Roadshow Limited/Village Roadshow Theme Parks, and supervise office staff and group sales ticket sales, fulfillment and accounts receivables.

Watts was concessions manager at Dallas' American



**Hicks**

### Sally Corp. names new Technical Services Dir.

**John Stegall**, 11-year veteran at Sally Corporation, has been promoted to the position of technical services director for the dark ride and animatronics design/build company. In his new position, he will play a greater role in the design and specification of Sally projects, assuming responsibility for laying out ride infrastructure requirements, and procurement of all control, audio, lighting, special effects and interactive devices, in addition to managing the in-house electronics production team.

Stegall has an extensive technical and supervisory background. Prior to joining Sally Corp., he served in the U.S. Navy as a technical manager and supervisor in support of aircraft carrier USS Roosevelt and air wing electronics operations, retiring as a chief petty officer.

"John has done a fine job leading the department over the years," says Sally CEO John Wood. "With the departure of our previous technical director, he and his team have absorbed new responsibilities, handling the tasks with outstanding professionalism."



**Stegall**

### Brian Olson joins Outside The Lines team

California-based Outside the Lines, a worldwide design and construction company of themed environments, announced that **Brian Olson** has joined its business development team. Olson will be responsible for securing

### Hersheypark employee wins safety award

**Laura Woodburn**, Director of Ride Operations at Hersheypark, was awarded "Person of the Year" by the National Association of Amusement Ride Safety Officials (NAARSO) at the 26th annual seminar held in Pigeon Forge, Tenn.

Woodburn was recognized for her work in helping to develop the NAARSO operations certification syllabus, classes and testing procedures.

Woodburn began her career with Hersheypark in 1988 as a seasonal rides employee. Her full-time career began in 1996 and, over the years, she has been director of Guest Services & Ticketing and Entertainment.

### Wyatt Design adds staff, more planned

Wyatt Design Group a multi-disciplinary design studio that specializes in entertainment, exhibitions, attractions and leisure destinations is in expansion mode. Fresh on the heels of recent staff additions earlier this year, Wyatt Design Group is actively recruiting for two new permanent positions to join the expert team of designers, architects and project managers. The studio is also seeking project-based temporary staff as well to meet the sudden demand.

Recently, new hires **Nancy Emerson** as project director and **Mark Spencer** as area development and planning, joined the company in February 2013.

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# MIDWAY

CARNIVALS

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## Washington State Fair mixing old and new with arrival of new looping coaster

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

PUYALLUP, Washington — The Washington State Fair, Puyallup, is mixing the old with the new this year — a new

### FAST FACTS

#### Fair / Location

Washington State Fair  
Puyallup, Washington

#### Coaster

Unnamed steel looping  
roller coaster to be  
introduced during  
September 2013 fair

#### Size and Stats

Dimensions:  
180.4 feet by 66 feet  
Height: 62.3 feet  
Track length: 1,772 feet  
Maximum speed: 50 mph  
Maximum G-Force: +5.8 G

#### Trains

Three trains with three  
cars per train, 12 riders  
per train

#### Previous Locations

Santa's Village,  
Dundee, Ill.  
(1998- 2005)

•  
L.A. County Fair  
Pomona, Calif.  
(2011)

#### Supplier

Top Fun  
Castelnovo Bariano,  
Veneto, Italy

—Washington State Fair

### Washington STATE FAIR PUYALLUP

name, the revival of an old coaster and the installation of a brand new coaster.

A new looping inversion roller coaster arrived on the fairgrounds in April and was still sitting in crates the first of May. But, according to fair spokesperson Karen LaFlamme, the new coaster is expected to be up by July with August being the month for test runs.

The new coaster as well as the newly renovated classic wooden coaster will debut at the 2013 edition of the fair set for Sept. 6-22.

The new ride, made by Italian manufacturer Top Fun, is about 62 feet high and reaches a maximum speed of 50 mph. Its maximum G-force is plus-5.8, comparable to the force felt in a Formula One race car during heavy braking, according to a fair news release. It seats 12 riders per train and runs two trains simultaneously.

The fair will spend more than \$1 million on the coaster. Exact construction and installation costs have yet to be determined.

A naming contest is underway for the new coaster. LaFlamme said they were expected to cut off entries May 8 and then announce the new name at the first of June.

The looping coaster was originally installed at Santa's Village Amusement Park, Dundee, Ill., in 1998. The



Fairgoers at this year's Washington State Fair, Puyallup, will be greeted to a newly renovated wooden roller coaster classic and a new looping inversion coaster. The fair is set for Sept. 6-22. COURTESY WASHINGTON STATE FAIR

amusement park refurbished the ride in 2005.

Then, in 2011, it was sold to the L.A. County Fair, Pomona, Calif.

"As it turned out, it really didn't fit into their footprint so they only used it for one year," LaFlamme said. "It fits right into our footprint of 180 feet by about 70 feet. And, it was just the right time to add a more modern coaster."

The fair's wooden coaster was built in 1935. It has cost

about \$250,000 over the last four years to restore. (See AT, May 2013, pages 34 and 35.) The old coaster continued to run during the annual 17-day fall fair; sections of deteriorated wood were replaced during the offseason months.

LaFlamme said both rides will offer fun for different breeds of thrill seekers.

LaFlamme said the fair board for years has discussed having a more modern coaster.

The wooden coaster had a maximum speed of 38 mph before its renovation. It will be speed-tested this summer after the final work is finished, LaFlamme said.

One of the most notable features of the new ride is an inclined loop, tilted at about an 80-degree angle. The new coaster will add depth to one of the most popular aspects of the fair.

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## Fair foodies will find 31 new foods at 2013 Calgary Stampede

CALGARY, Alta. — This July 5-14, the Calgary Stampede takes its regular midway food offering and double deep fries it, wraps it in bacon and puts it on a stick.

With 31 tasty new treats there is something for everyone no matter how many calories you want to consume.

Deep fried delicacies like double bacon wrapped corndogs, deep fried bubblegum and even deep fried butter will have you craving something on a stick; perhaps banana bacon ears, chip dogs, chocolate bacon apples, or even an egg roll.

International culinary cuisine includes India inspired Naaco TNT and cochinita pibil from Mexico along with a Ukrainian favorite with a Stampede flair, double smoked bacon wrapped cheese pierogie skewers.

There are also such treats like chocolate dipped jalapenos, chocolate cinnamon bear fudge and B52 fudge which takes Baileys, tops it with Grand Marnier and then smothers it with Kahlua (all in fudge form).

"There is something new for every Stampede foodie, from delightful international flavors like flautas de pollo to downright daring offerings like pickle shooters," said James Radke, operations manager, midway programming. "After nearly doubling our Centennial list of new foods, this year's spread is not for the faint of heart."

Also new this year, 18 amazing food trucks will cruise onto Stampede Park for the inaugural Calgary Stampede Food Truck Rally July 11-13. On each of these three nights, six unique food trucks will roll into the agriculture zone from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. where guests can purchase a nibble from each of these mobile favorites.

—Pam Sherborne



Among the 31 new foods at this year's Calgary (Alta.) Stampede, July 5-14, are the Deep Fried Bubble Gum, B52 Fudge, and Chocolate Dipped Jalapenos. The Deep Fried Bubble Gum is made from a puffy marshmallow infused with bubble gum, dipped in pastry batter and deep fried.

COURTESY CALGARY STAMPEDE

## Playworld Unlimited hoping for the best after crazy spring weather

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

WARREN, Mich. — Springtime weather for Playworld Unlimited has been tumultuous.

The show started its season at the first of May primarily doing fundraising events close to home, which is Alma, Mich.



"In one week we experienced four seasons," said Joyce Brady, who along with her husband, Jeff, owns the show. "It was 80 degrees when it started and by the end of the week, it was 30 degrees. We had rain, storms, and hail and then it turned cold. We didn't have the snowfall like they did further north so that was good."

She said the events they play in the spring rely heavily on the funds raised.

"For the most part, these organizations are desperate for these funds," she said. "It breaks my heart when the weather is bad and people can't come out. Sometimes these weekends are the only shot they have to raise money."

Playworld's first event for the 2013 season was in Wyoming, Mich. It was a fundraiser for senior citizen shut-ins. They were playing a Warren Woods Tower Booster Club date when interviewed by *Amusement Today*.

The show's larger events normally start up after Memorial Day when the fair dates begin.

For the 2013 season, the



Here is a nighttime midway aerial of Playworld Unlimited. The show added several new rides for the 2013 season including a second Mulligan wheel, a second Dartron Cliff Hanger, and two brand new SBF Visa Group rides through Rides 4-U, the Flying Puppy and Little Ship.

COURTESY PLAYWORLD UNLIMITED

Brady's added to their 38-40-ride arsenal. They purchased two brand new SBF/Visa Group rides from Rides 4U. Those two rides are the Flying Puppy and a little ship ride.

They also purchased a second Mulligan Wheel and a second Dartron Cliffhanger. These rides were purchased through private sales.

The show plays about 37 dates in a 28-week season. Some dates were moved around but none added for the 2013 season.

Joyce Brady is a third generation in the industry. She met Jeff Brady on the midway. He was working summers with concessions.

"Basically, he had a summer job on the midway," she said.

After they married, they worked for a time on her father's show, but ended up

splitting with him to form their own carnival.

There is a church fundraiser they have been working for over 25 years.

"My daughter, Amanda, is 26 years old and she was with us at nine months when we played that date for the first time," she said.

Joyce and Jeff Brady have two children who both work on the show. Amanda is the assistant manager. Their son, Kyle, 23, works mostly with the state fairs they do such as Minnesota, Wisconsin, Texas, and Florida.

Brady said they are a ride company. Most of the food is owned by her brother-in-law, Scott Bradd. Paul Gagne also books food with them.

The games are owned by her brother, Bob Cook, and Clarence Taylor and Mike Curry.

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## MIDWAYLIGHTS

COMPILED: Pam Sherborne, psherborne@amusementtoday.com

The **North Dakota State Fair**, Minot, will be getting more than \$3.4 million in state funds to help with expenses related to the 2011 flood.

Two legislative bills signed by North Dakota Gov. **Jack Dalrymple** last month provide \$2.75 million for repairs to asphalt and a gravel parking lot and \$674,361 to pay expenses not covered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency for the flood fight and recovery.

Between the floodwaters and dike-related truck traffic on the fairgrounds, the asphalt on the fairgrounds took a beating, Fair Manager Renae Korslien said. The state appropriation was somewhat less than the \$3.5 million requested to fully fund the estimated repair cost.

"But this is wonderful. We are very, very grateful," Korslien said.

She is hopeful to get most of the repair done by the start of the 2013 North Dakota State Fair on July 19. It runs through July 27.

The board of directors of the **Alameda County Fair Association** has selected **Jerome Hoban** as the fair's new chief executive officer. He replaces **Rick Pickering**, who left the Alameda County Fair in December 2012 to accept the general manager position at the **California State Fair**.

Hoban has been the chief executive officer for the **Orange County Fair** and earlier served as its vice president, operations. He has worked at the Orange County Fair for over 20 years in the areas of fair management and facility operations. His experience includes master planning, facility maintenance, marketing, sales, community relations, sponsorships and competitive exhibits.

"It is a great privilege to be asked to lead the Alameda County Fair team," Hoban was quoted as saying last month. "The organization has a great reputation in the fair industry and in its community. I'm looking forward to being part of the fair's long history and tradition."

Planning is currently underway for the 101st Alameda County Fair.

An early morning fire on April 29 at the **Washington County Fairgrounds**, Marietta, Ohio, engulfed the fair's Poultry Building.

The Marietta Fire Department, Warren Volunteer Fire Department and Devola Volunteer Fire Company responded to the fire around 6:20 a.m. Most of the building, which housed the weekly River City Farmers Market on Saturdays, was aflame by the time Marietta firefighters arrived on scene, said Chief C.W. Durham.

No one was injured in the blaze.

Fairgoers at the **Webster County Fair**, Fort Dodge, Iowa, will notice some significant changes to both the fairgrounds and events during the fair this year.

A new fair board has taken over operations of the grounds and members are planning a number of activities for the Webster County Fair, July 10-14.

In recent years, the fair was limited to mostly 4-H and FFA activities, but the board is planning to host events that will bring the community back to the Webster County Fair.

On the schedule for this year's fair are a BMX stunt show, trailer races, figure eight races, a presentation by the Pella Wildlife Co. and attractions such as a climbing wall, giant slide and mechanical bull.

**Fairfield County Fair** manager **Dave Benson** is sitting back at a familiar desk in the manager's office at the fairgrounds in Lancaster, Ohio.

"It was something they asked me to resume after my wife passed away," Benson said. "I loved being the fair manager, and I don't think they wanted me just sitting around after she passed away. After talking to my children, we all agreed that it something I should do."

Benson retired as fair manager in March 2012 after serving in the position for 18 years. Stepping in as fair manager for the 2012 season was fair treasurer **Jim Marcinko**. Marcinko had been in that position for eight years before being named manager. He will now assume his old position.

The annual **Spring Fair** in Puyallup, Wash., April 18-21, greeted 102,090 guests, in spite of typical spring weather in the Pacific Northwest. Crowds ignored the intermittent rain at the state's seventh largest fair.

"It is extremely satisfying to see that the variety we offer our guests at the Spring Fair by far outweighs the weather," said **Kent Hojem**, fair CEO. "We developed this event as a celebration to spring, and it has become a tradition in the Pacific Northwest."

The Spring Fair started in 1900, and is part of the **Washington State Fair**. This was the 8th largest attendance in the Spring Fair's 24-year history.

The **Federal Trade Commission** (FTC) has announced it is seeking to permanently halt a Slovakia-based operation from scamming small businesses and nonprofit organizations into collectively paying millions of dollars to be listed in an online exhibitors' directory called **FAIR Guide**.

After reviewing complaints filed by organizations, the FTC secured a temporary restraining order and asset freeze on the defendants, **Construct Data Publishers**, which allegedly sent mailings to retailers, associations, and other businesses who typically attend tradeshow. The mailings mention a specific tradeshow or exhibition and ask the recipient to check the accuracy of information for the exhibitors' directory for the show.

The American Society of Association Executives charged in its complaint to the FTC that the publishers' form suggests that the parties have a preexisting business relationship with the named tradeshow and that the directory listing is related to the recipient's participation in it. Buried in the fine print on the form is a statement that by signing and returning the form, the recipient agrees to pay Construct Data/FAIR Guide \$1,717 per year for three years.

According to the FTC's investigation, after the form is signed and returned to the defendants, Construct Data/FAIR Guide sends an invoice demanding payment to a Slovakian bank account. "Those who challenge the invoice are told the order cannot be canceled," the FTC said. "Late payments follow, with late fees added, and some organizations pay just to end the harassment."

The FTC said Construct Data/FAIR Guide moved from Austria to Slovakia in 2008 after being sued by Austrian authorities for deceptive practices. To settle the Austrian case, the defendants agreed to stop soliciting businesses in the European Union. The FTC is now seeking to permanently stop the defendants from soliciting tradeshow exhibitors in the United States and require Construct Data/FAIR

Guide to refund all fees collected.

Nearly 80,000 people attended the **Clark County Fair and Rodeo** in Logandale, Utah, last month, a 25 percent increase over the attendance in 2012, said **Kevin Willard**, fair manager.

There were no major problems at this year's event and Willard attributed the substantial increase in attendance to the "outstanding weather we had compared to the cold and rain last year."

"This wasn't our best year attendance-wise but it was right up there at the top," Willard said.

With a still struggling economy, fair deals are finding their way onto fairgrounds in big ways. Officials at the **Wisconsin State Fair**, West Allis, set for Aug. 1-11, announced several including a half-price fair admission deal that began May 1 and will run through June 30.

This new promotion offers a \$5 fair admission ticket that can be purchased at Wisconsin Bank Mutual bank offices. There are 70 locations statewide. Discounted vouchers may be purchased from participating Wisconsin SENTRY, Trig's and Festival Food stores, and may be obtained online.

Ride and game ticket sheets are also on sale, with \$25 paying a voucher for a 50-ticket sheet, another 50 percent savings. This savings is also being offered through June 30.

The \$15 "Fair Play" three-day pass is back, that is three admission tickets for \$5 each, and a new \$12 Fast Track Bargain Bundle has been added to the list of savings.

The Bargain Bundle includes two fair admission tickets and one Fair Deals Bargain Book, which features deals and discounts from 62 Fair partners and offers hundreds of dollars in savings.

There are several deals scheduled to end July 31 as well as those that will go throughout the fair.

A proposal to move the **Canyon County Fair** from its current location in Caldwell, Idaho, to an area near north Nampa is being scrutinized by a coalition of agricultural groups because of its potential impact on farmland.

The fair board purchased an 80-acre site in the northeast corner of Canyon County in 2009 and plans to build a new \$40 million fair site there.

The proposed site is in the middle of about 95 square miles of farmland, said **George Crookham**, chairman of the Coalition for Agriculture's Future, which includes 25 of the area's largest agribusinesses and ag-related associations and companies.

Crookham said he's more concerned about the commercial development that he believes would inevitably occur around the site.

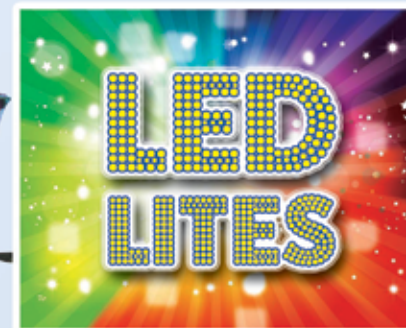
"Just think about the loss of farmland that would result from doing that," said Crookham, CEO of Crookham Co., a major vegetable seed producer.

CAF Executive Director **Roger Batt** said the group will carefully scrutinize details of the proposal and satellite imagery of the site before determining whether to support or oppose the fairgrounds move.

Canyon County Fair Board Chairman **Tim Lowber** said the main reason for the proposal is a lack of room for growth at the current location. He also said that he and other board members also would be opposed to the area around the new site being commercialized.

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## OC Fair board announces interim CEO

COSTA MESA, Calif. — After meeting for nearly two hours in closed session last month, the Orange County Fair board announced that Doug Lofstrom has taken over as interim chief executive.

Lofstrom replaces interim CEO Jerome Hoban, who announced that he was leaving for a new job as head of the Alameda County Fair (see Midway Lights, page 52) in Pleasanton.

Lofstrom, 63, of Newport Beach, worked for the O.C. Fair & Event Center in Costa Mesa for nearly 10 years, last serving as vice president of events. In that capacity, he oversaw planning and project management, marketing, event sales and public safety.

He retired in 2011.



**Lofstrom**

According to information provided by the O.C. Fairgrounds, Lofstrom also worked for the L.A. County Fair and the National Orange Show in San Bernardino. He is a former president of the Western Fairs Assn. and was recognized in 2007 in that organization's Hall of Fame.

Board Chairman Doug La Belle said the board is pleased that Lofstrom will return until a permanent CEO is chosen.

"He brings with him years of experience, with not only this organization but with the fair industry in general," La Belle was quoted as saying. "This is a great opportunity to move forward. Doug's going to come in and he'll provide for a very smooth transition in that process."

Lofstrom will serve the fairgrounds "as much as needed," La Belle said.

## Tennessee Fair to salute the honeybee

LEBANON, Tenn. — Officials at the Wilson County Fair announced in May that the honeybee would be the agricultural commodity for its 2013 event set for Aug. 16-24.

"We're working to spread that knowledge on how important bees are to our agricultural base," said Wilson County Beekeepers' President Carey Mitchell when making the announcement.

The fair attracts thousands of visitors. In 2012, even with several days of rain and cold, the fair drew over 525,000 people. Bee enthusiasts see this as an opportunity to get the message to a lot of people.

The Wilson County Beekeepers Association of Middle Tennessee has been a fixture at the Wilson County Fair with displays and programs each year. Live beehives are on display as well,

and information is provided on the dangers of insecticides.

But the Wilson County Beekeepers are active all year, as the largest chapter in the Tennessee Beekeepers Association with 238 members.

The association schedules periodic beginner training sessions for new beekeepers. The next one will be Oct. 15-17 and much of the growth has come from those sessions.

This will be the third year the fair has designated an agricultural commodity.

"Part of the fair's mission is to promote agriculture and that goes beyond the show ring, but to give a better understanding of where food comes from," Wilson County Fair President Hale Moss said. "The honeybee was a natural when we started thinking about it. With the production of honey that's



an amazing part of nature and that expanded to the role they play in pollination."

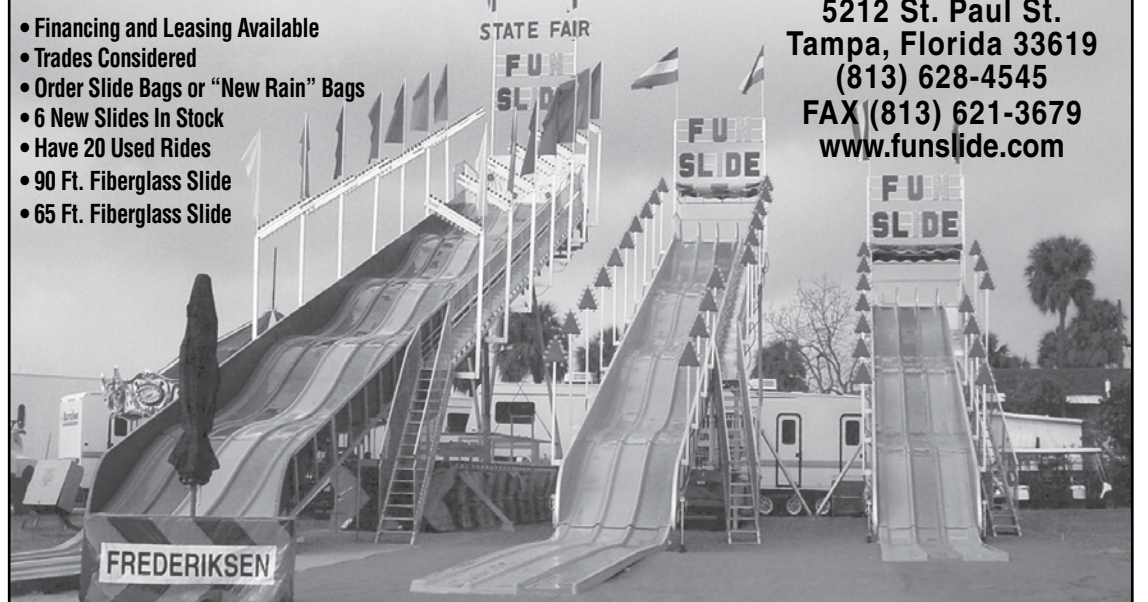
Amusements of America provides the midway for the Wilson County Fair with about 50 rides.

The fair, with its agricultural competitions, musical entertainment, pageants, grounds entertainment such as racing pigs, sheep dog demonstrations, and rooster crowing contest, is the largest fair in the state of Tennessee.

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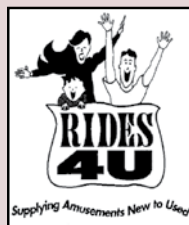
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