



Eli Bridge supplies icon to sporting goods store



The 65-foot Eli Bridge Ferris wheel is an iconic centerpiece for Scheels. AT/TIM BALDWIN

AT: Tim Baldwin
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THE COLONY, Texas — It is often said in whimsical exaggeration and false bravado that things are bigger in Texas. That boast stands true when it comes to the opening of the latest **Scheels** store.

"This store is 331,000 square feet, which makes it the largest sporting goods store in the world," said Events Coordinator **Alex Koob**.

The new store hoped to open in early April. As the coronavirus reared its ugly head in a nationwide shutdown, Scheels was not able to open until May 1.

Amusement Today asked why a Ferris wheel was a good fit for a sporting goods store.

"All Scheels stores are dedicated to that customer experience. As you walk in you see our 16,000-gallon aquarium," said Koob. "A Ferris wheel is fun, but it is also nostalgic. The flashing lights kind of draw you in. For those people who have ridden a Ferris wheel before and know it as a fun centerpiece, that's why it is in the middle of our stores. It kind of brings you back to a simple way to have fun."

"It's very family oriented," said **Bill Peterson**, one the supervising operators of the wheel. "It's how they want this company to be."

Scheels's new Ferris wheel is the latest top-of-the-line model from **Eli Bridge**. It stands 65 feet tall.

"It has a touch-screen operation. It's pretty cool," said **Patty Sullivan**, president and CEO, Eli Bridge. "The biggest difference [at the new Scheels location] is that it is handicap accessible."

"If you use the computer system, I can tell it to automatically load the next car," said Peterson. "It will go to the next car [on

► See **SCHEELS**, page 4

Candymonium opens at Hersheypark

AT: B. Derek Shaw
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HERSHEY, Pa. — It has been a two-year, \$150-million-dollar project that finally opened to the general public in early July. Chocolatetown is a 23-acre addition to Hersheypark that includes a brand new entrance, a hyper roller coaster, relocated carousel, and numerous retail shops, restaurant and bar, ice cream parlor along with the first Starbucks inside the park.

"One is only happy in proportion as he makes others feel happy," **Milton Hershey** once said. That philosophy is engrained in the plaza entrance. The area between Tram Circle and the front gate, named **Compass Rose**, features a series

► See **HERSHEY**, page 6

Candymonium operates with three candy-themed trains. The ride features seven hills and travels up to 76 mph over 4,636 feet of track on a seven-acre tract. COURTESY BRAD DUTTERER



Kings Island welcomes arrival of Orion



With a 300 foot first drop, Orion arrives as Kings Island's first giga coaster. The B&M attraction anchors the rethemed Area 72 at the Ohio theme park.

AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

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KINGS MILLS, Ohio — With an opening delayed by nearly three months, **Kings Island** debuted its newest addition on July 2 when Orion roared to life for the park's passholder preview period. The B&M giga coaster, had been tantalizing riders since even before it was announced in 2019. The sight of its intimidating lift hill waiting above the park's horizon — alongside the iconic Eiffel Tower — only served to whet the appetites of park guests waiting for Ohio to once again allow theme parks to open after the COVID-19 stay-at-home order was lifted.

Now the tallest and fastest roller coaster at Kings Island, Orion plunges riders down a 300-foot first drop at an 85-degree

► See **ORION**, page 5



AMUSEMENT VIEWS

AT NOTEBOOK: John W.C. Robinson, jrobinson@amusementtoday.com

Distance done right



Robinson

When state and local governments began loosening the stay-at-home restrictions, I was one of the first to embrace the moment and get out in society. I enjoyed a dinner out at a downtown restaurant, and sat there in awe as only about two dozen parties were seated in a restaurant that could easily hold three times that. Management was keeping the distance rules in place. However, two days later, another

dinner out nearby proved a different story. The restaurant was crowded, all tables were full and there were so many people that one would've thought it was just a normal evening, not one that was still under the shadow of COVID-19.

In recent weeks, we've all seen this same effect. Bars, restaurants, stores and more had theoretical rules in place to maintain social distance and keep up the fight against the pandemic, only to relax them a few days after reopening or just flat out ignore them. There was no consistency, minimal reassurance and, honestly, no reason to feel as though businesses were taking the current threat seriously by embracing a new normal.

Then, at long last, our beloved amusement industry began to reopen. With plans in place which many had been organizing and preparing for months, theme parks, amusement parks, water parks and family entertainment centers began to welcome guests again.

And they welcomed guests back with safety, reassurance and promoting good health at the forefront.

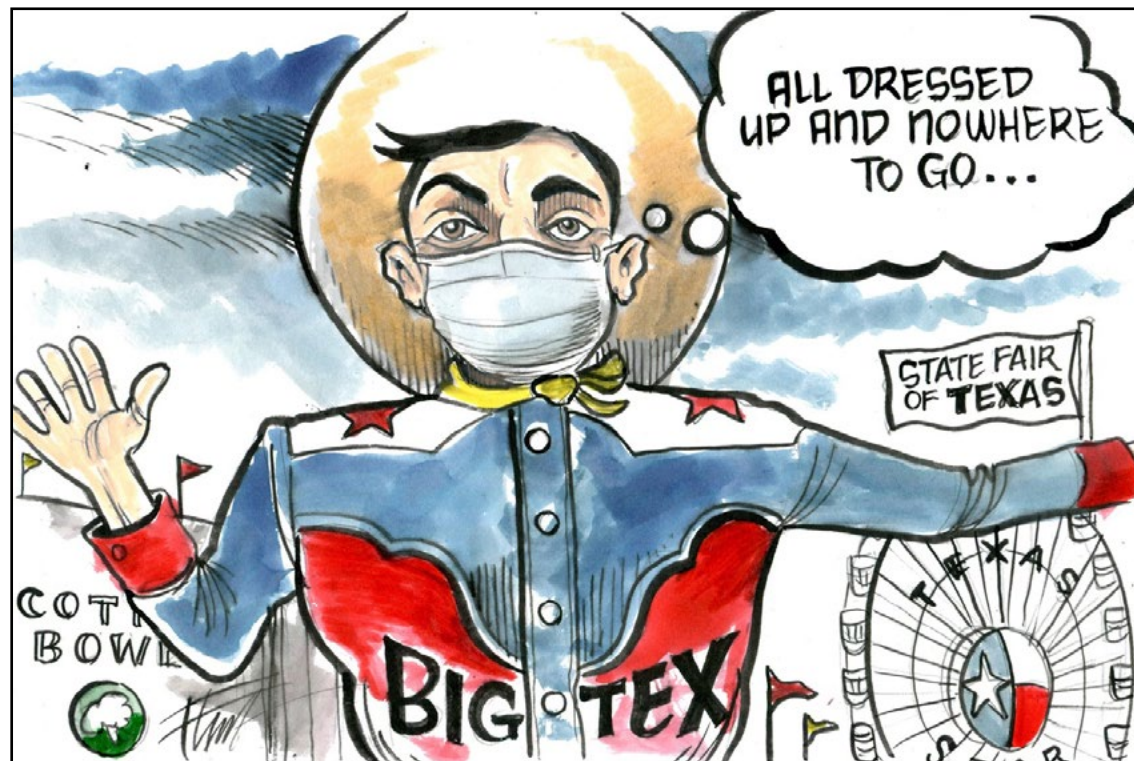
I've been fortunate enough to attend multiple facilities in recent weeks as just a guest and a customer looking to enjoy some fun. At every facility, I've seen masks actively encouraged, if not enforced. I've witnessed staff members take a participatory role in ensuring guests were socially distanced in lines. I've seen plans for temperature checks not only implemented, but immediately ready with a backup in case technology went awry.

Our various industry associations assured information was disseminated to all properly. Competitors became compatriots and shared information and insight so that all would be ready for the day our turnstiles would be active again. It seemed, from the very beginning, our industry knew that we were all in this together.

The industry waited for months to be able to just get open once again. Now that our guests are returning, it's uplifting to see our facilities set the standard for welcoming guests while still ensuring their safety in the age of COVID-19.

Opinions expressed on this page are those of the columnist(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.

FLINT'S VIEW: Bubba Flint



INDUSTRY VOICE: Ed Hodgdon, Secretary, NEAAPA

Being united helps through industry challenges

Looking back to the beginning of the year, I thought the biggest challenge the industry would face might be rising advertising rates given the elections occurring around the country. I am the marketing manager at Funtown Splashtown USA in Saco, Maine, so it is something that I know can stymie plans and ideas when working within a budget.

As I write this, it's a beautiful weekend day in Maine with temperatures in the 80s, perfect for the ride park and water park. However, I am at my home, thinking about 2021 and what that might hold in store as the park is not opening this summer because of challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Being in a small state in terms of population, there is just a handful of attraction businesses in Maine. Most are members of the New England Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (NEAAPA), keeping everyone in the loop of what is happening both in New England and around the world. When the pandemic started forcing businesses to change plans in mid-March, NEAAPA jumped into action with weekly Zoom



Hodgdon

meetings, which are still scheduled every Monday at 11 a.m. Emails were sent out to all members multiple times per week, and information was being shared. At that moment, competitors became allies looking for ways to stay afloat in the storm.

NEAAPA started working on reopening guidelines, knowing this would be needed by members to plan a safe opening. We worked with other associations, like the New Jersey Attractions Association, Pennsylvania Amusement Parks and Attractions Association, and IAAPA. NEAAPA added COVID-19 information to our website, making it available to anyone, even non-members. We also worked with members in each of the states that we represent, helping to get meetings and information to the state's reopening committees or task forces. We helped members draft letters and prepped them for meetings.

Without a strong state or regional association, it can be challenging to reach the people making decisions that can affect your business. Regional and state associations help get the industry's message to them, and in turn, get you vital information.

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2 MINUTE DRILL



AT: Janice Witherow

Phil Bender, Cedar Fair Entertainment Company (retired)

Witty, passionate, loyal, collaborative and a sounding board. That is how people who know **Phil Bender** describe him. Phil began working in the amusement industry during summers at **Cedar Point** in high school and wound up wrapping up his tenure as executive vice president of operations for **Cedar Fair**, a company he worked for his entire career. He is now enjoying recent retirement in Colorado with his wife, **Kandie**, where they like to hike and savor a good bottle of wine. Phil is a World War II and Civil War historian and an avid hockey fan. Best wishes, Phil, in retirement!

Title:

Executive Vice President of Operations (retired).

Number of years in the industry:

40 full time and five seasonal.

Best thing about the industry:

Giving our guests memories that will last a lifetime.

Favorite amusement ride:

Fury 325 at Carowinds.

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

A fishing guide somewhere.

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

The parks are alive when they are open!

Biggest challenge facing the industry:

Reacting to the "new normal" — whatever that is.

One word that described my hair during shutdown would be ...

Shemp (the fourth stooge from the "Three Stooges").

I found myself watching this TV show most often during quarantine:

Naked and Afraid. I tell my wife that 20 years ago I would have rocked it!

While under "shelter in place", I found out this about myself ...

That I get bored easily.

If we have to go under another shutdown ever again, I will ...

Be happy that we are now in Colorado where there is so much to do outside.

My favorite Cedar Fair memory is ...

The integration of Cedar Fair and Paramount Parks.

In retirement, I now have more time to ...

Spend more time with my wife and fly fish.



Phil Bender, pictured with his wife, Kandie, began his Cedar Fair career as a teenager working summers at Cedar Point. Working his way up the ladder, he retired as the company's executive vice president of operations. COURTESY PHIL BENDER

The thing I miss most about my daily Cedar Fair activity is ...

My co-workers, no doubt.

In one word, I hope my Cedar Fair legacy is ...

Integrity.

If I could change places with anyone for a day, it would be ...

My favorite author, David McCullough.

The best wine I have ever had is ...

Chateau Latour.

My favorite place to visit is ...

Napa Valley.

For total relaxation, I enjoy ...

Fly fishing.

The nicest thing anyone has ever told me is ...

That I always do the right thing.

If I had to move to a different country, it would be ...

France.

When I am away from home, I miss this the most ...

First, my wife, Kandie, and then my dog, Hunter.

My ideal dinner is ...

Great Mexican food.

Favorite summertime activity:

Sitting on our deck with a good bottle of wine looking at the Rocky Mountains.

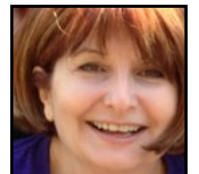
THE INDUSTRY SEEN

Window of the industry



CHICAGO — In June, the Showman's League of America (SLA) debuted its new window mural at its headquarters. The artwork proudly showcases to SLA's neighbors the group's love of its industry. COURTESY SHOWMEN'S LEAGUE OF AMERICA

Reflections ON FUN



AT: Lottie Minick

The accidentally critical tourists

This issue's story comes courtesy of my friend Hardy Haberman, a longtime showman, producer, director, inventor and puppeteer. Enjoy!

It's no secret that Florida in the summer is hot. But the heat had some unexpected consequences for a show I directed at **Marco Polo Park**, a theme park that operated during the years 1970 to 1974 in Bunnell, northwest of Daytona Beach. It was a comedic puppet presentation and musical journey that found the Italian merchant and explorer Marco Polo meeting with **Kublai Kahn**, the grandson of **Genghis Khan** and the founder of the Yuan Dynasty in 13th century China, and it was quite spectacular as such shows go.

The puppet theater was next to a spinning teacup ride that was fully exposed to the sun. After whirling in the steaming teacups, patrons usually sought refuge in the air-conditioned theater. The ride's dizzying nature, combined with the extreme temperature difference indoors, often led to nausea followed by a return appearance of the park food the guest had enjoyed for lunch. That made the theater subject to frequent cleanings, which left an aroma of strawberry-scented deodorizer and, well, you know.

People loved the show and its production values. Alas, audiences sometimes wound up stampeding from the auditorium as one child after another would deliver an inadvertent "critique" of the experience in an urgently physical and wordless, yet colorfully vocal, way.

The moral of the story: flat ride + corn dogs + cold theater = disastrous dramaturgy.

Lottie Minick is a 46-year attractions industry veteran and co-owner of Dallas-based Minick Associates, a design firm founded by her late husband, Bob. Her monthly column features behind-the-scenes anecdotes of her own and from those who have worked in the business. Got a fun industry story? Email lottie@minickassociates.com.

►SCHEELS

Continued from page 1

its own] to keep it in balance.”

Peterson noted that if operators observe that a heavier load is followed by smaller children, for instance, the capability of manual loading is always available.

“The computer speeds up loading and is an added level of safety,” said Sullivan.

“This lift chair is for people who can’t get up the stairs on their own,” said Peterson. “There is a [computer] mode for handicap, and it will come down and space automatically.”

One of the 16 baskets on the ride is handicap accessible loading from the left side. The chair will lift the passenger up the ramp, and a sliding board on the platform allows the visitor to transfer.

Sullivan feels this is a more efficient solution than trying to make a car that is wheelchair accessible, as a wheelchair would be required to lock into place, regardless of its size and model, which would be challenging on a Ferris wheel vehicle.

“This way anyone can get on and off on their own and be able to ride, and no [physical] training on the ride operator is necessary,” said Sullivan, noting liability of staff members if they



Operator Bill Peterson (above left) shows the touch-screen system that boasts operational and safety features. A lift chair and transfer system (above right) allows physically challenged riders to easily board the wheel from the loading platform. At right, Scheels showcases their business partners, both nationally and locally, by placing different logos on each basket. AT/TIM BALDWIN



had to transfer riders.

During recent surges in COVID-19 cases in Texas, operation of the wheel is suspended as are other entertainment attractions within the store.

“When that time comes to offer operations, cleaning procedures will be very standard. Sanitizing to all of the baskets, line spacing — it will be similar to our other shops,” said Koob.

International Ride Training (IRT) partnered with Eli Bridge once again for guidance. “We have trained every Ferris wheel for new stores for the past 16 years,” said **Patty**

Beazley, owner, IRT. “They are a great group. Scheels is an awesome company, and we couldn’t be prouder to be associated with them.”

One of the safety features at Scheels is that the gate to the barrier surrounding the ride must have a magnetic key fob held by a ride operator to open. If the gate were to open during a time the wheel is in motion, the computer would automatically stop the ride.

Sullivan points out another safety feature of the computer program. “If you see someone misbehaving, you simply press

that seat number, and the wheel will bring them down and you can invite them to ride something else,” she said with a smile.

Vehicle baskets are decorated in branding, both national and local. Koob points out it is a way to recognize their partners in the sporting goods business.

Rides on the Ferris wheel cost only \$1, which correlates to both the family-friendly atmosphere and a value-oriented guest experience.

Riders that are 36 inches can ride with a companion. Those 48 inches and taller have



no restrictions.

The wheel is one of a handful of attractions within the store, which also include a shooting gallery and a mini bowling alley.

•scheels.com

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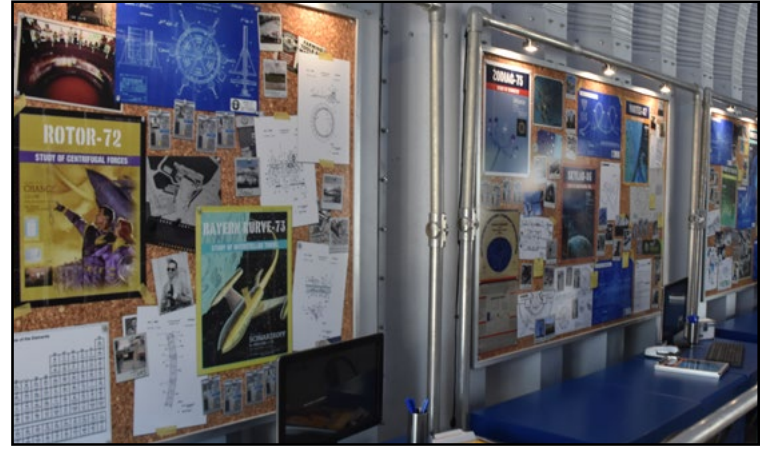
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In order to maintain social distancing while riding Orion, Kings Island alternates passengers between the two inside seats and the two outside seats along each row (above left). The coaster's trains, like all rides currently at the park, are sanitized regularly throughout the day by park staff (above middle). The queue area for Orion features easter eggs throughout referencing classic rides from Kings Island's past (above right). The coaster and its queue are contained in the former X-Base area which has been rethemed to Area 72, a name which references the year the theme park was founded. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

►ORION Continued from page 1

angle, sending them on a high-speed journey over seven more hills and 5,321 feet of track at speeds up to 91 mph.

"It is fast, smooth and provides plenty of air time," said **Mike Koontz**, the park's vice president and general manager. "I can tell you from experience, I've ridden it four times now, the views from the top of the lift hill are nothing but spectacular."

The park has added soundtrack by **IMAscore** and added extensive theming elements to transform the former X-Base area around the ride to resemble a top secret government compound dubbed Area 72. The name references the year the park was founded, and the queue area for Orion features easter eggs from many of the park's former attractions.

Two years in the making, the \$31 million project is almost equal in cost to what it took to build the entire park in 1972, making it the biggest single investment in Kings Island's history. Its massive layout sees the coaster extend nearly the entire length of the park's Coney Mall midway area. After that initial drop, guests experience five air-time hills, a giant rolling wave turn and 360-degree helix near the end of the 5,321-foot track.

It is the third time the park has partnered with B&M, after the success of Diamondback in 2009 and Banshee in 2014.

The ride proved popular with guests immediately, with opening day wait times exceeding four hours at points, even with all three trains operating continuously (at 50% capacity in order to comply with social distancing protocols). On day two of operation, the park introduced an access pass requirement for the new coaster's line.

"With the reduced capacity of Orion to 50%, we created the Orion Access Pass to assign guests a one-hour window to ride the coaster," said **Chad**

Showalter, director of communications at Kings Island. "They are distributed on a first come, first served basis when the park opens each day. This gives our guests the opportunity to enjoy the rest of their day at Kings Island, and come back to the ride at their assigned ride time."

Access passes and social distancing are not the only changes present at Kings Island with the shadow of COVID-19 still present. The park has installed over 600 additional hand sanitizing stations throughout the grounds. All shops and restaurants have been assigned an official entrance and exit, and social distancing reminders are prevalent throughout the walkways and lines.

"Face coverings are required at the park for anyone that's over the age of two," added Showalter. "We will have ambassadors walking around to help remind our guests and also to tell them where the closest relax zone is." Relax zones are semi-secluded, often shaded areas within the park where guests can safely social distance and remove their masks for comfort.

"Our guests and associates have been very supportive regard-

ing our face covering policy."

As is becoming common practice in 2020 for all major theme parks, the park has implemented an online reservation system for all guests who plan to attend each day. In addition, upon arrival all guests have their temperatures checked.

In order to reduce high-contact areas, Kings Island has removed all of its park map stands which were a common area for congregation of large groups of visitors. Instead, the park is actively encouraging guests to use the Kings Island App for information and directions within the facility. In addition, several large, billboard-style maps have been installed on the park grounds.

"Our guests have appreciated the extensive measures that Kings Island has put into place to reduce the spread of germs and COVID-19. We're all in this together, and our guests know that safety is Kings Island's top priority," said Showalter. "We've found that when we focus on safety, they can focus on fun and making memories with the people who matter most to them—their family and friends."

Not all of the COVID-19-



Having fun in an age of increased sanitation and hygiene practices, **Scrub Club** is an unannounced, pop-up show that happens throughout the day at Kings Island. They perform in various spaces throughout Kings Island. Since the shows are not promoted, guests do not congregate in advance. COURTESY KINGS ISLAND

related changes are restrictive. Kings Island has remembered that it's a place for family fun and entertainment. With that, in 2020, the park introduced the pop-up show **Scrub Club**.

"Scrub Club is an unannounced, pop-up show that happens throughout the day," explained Showalter. "They perform in various spaces throughout Kings Island. The performances are in large midway areas

where there's plenty of room to maintain social distancing. Since the shows are not promoted, our guests do not gather or congregate in advance to watch it."

After a week of passholder-only previews, Kings Island opened to the general public on July 10. The park is maintaining shorter operating hours thus far in the summer, with the gates closing at 7 p.m. on most nights.

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Above right, an aerial view shows the entrance plaza with Compass Rose, gate, Hersheypark Supply Company gift shop, guest services and ticketing. Above middle, Candymonium's Reese's train navigates the panoramic banked curve around the still-under-construction Kisses fountain. Above right, a train ascends the 210-foot lift just beyond Candymonium's entrance. COURTESY HERSHEY PARK, BRAD DUTTERER; AT/B. DEREK SHAW

►HERSHEY Continued from page 1

of large round medallions. First there are the directional ones (north, south, east and west.) The others highlight significant areas in Milton Hershey's life that offer a piece of historical information to visitors. Each marker covers something from four broad topics: Sweet Beginnings, The Greatest Gifts, Monuments For the Ages and The Legacy Lives On. Depending on where the item being highlighted is located in Hershey, the marker points in that direction.

Laura Krolczyk, assistant general manager of Hersheypark is glad they are open. "We started planning Chocolatetown about four years ago. It's been a wonderful project — a very large project in scale with a lot of fun things for our guests. We have a very wide sweeping gate for our guests to enter quickly into the park."

The new entrance area is the first major redesign since Randall Duell & Associates created the Tudor Square area that led to the main gate in 1973, when the park was beginning to transition from a traditional non-gated venue to a hybrid theme park. Homage is paid to those days with a plaque and three bricks within the brick work on the southeast corner

(left side) of the Starbucks building. On that spot, 12 feet below, is where the entrance gate once stood. A picture, as part of the marker, helps guests visualize the past. The bricks are from that former entrance area.

Architecturally, the new area pays tribute to styles that Mr. Hershey liked and used in construction of his plant and attractions. Some of these features include four-sided pitched roof towers; Dutch gables; five different colors of clay bricks, including beige; arched windows and blue porch ceilings. Painting a porch ceiling blue is a tradition rooted in the South dating back to the early nineteenth century. This was a way to deter insects and gave the impression of a blue sky and longer days. This can be found on the ceilings of the Ticketing and Guest Services buildings. In addition, there are plenty of chocolate accents throughout the entrance area promoting the Hershey's brand.

Immediately after passing through the gate, visitors will see the massive Candymonium roller coaster on the right where a portion of the track circles the Hershey Kisses fountain. On the left is the recently relocated 101-year old Philadelphia Toboggan Company (PTC #47), 66-horse carrousel. Since 1972, the carrousel had been located further into the park in an area known

as Carrousel Circle. A new pavilion-style roof was made, complete with clerestory windows, (a small band of upper windows that let natural light into the covered space,) paying tribute to carrousel buildings of the past. The old metal red, white and blue canopy still sits on its original site with picnic tables and skill games this season, perhaps becoming home to another attraction in the future. It is not known if the carrousel will operate year-round as had been rumored throughout the construction.

Standing 210 feet tall, Bolliger & Mabillard's (B&M) latest creation, Candymonium, dominates the right side of the entrance area experience. Of the 23-acre addition to the park, the 4,636-foot-long coaster (or 10,279 bars long in Hershey's Milk Chocolate bars) occupies seven acres. Candymonium is billed as the tallest, fastest, longest and sweetest coaster at Hersheypark and its 15th one.

Part of the queue traverses back and forth underneath the station that is made of traditional brick. Once ascending to the second level, the waiting rider is greeted by neon lighting. This B&M hyper coaster has a secondary restraint system: ratcheting seat belts. The coaster uprights are light blue while the track is a Hershey milk chocolate color. Three

trains navigate the track with their own candy-product paint schemes: Hershey's Kisses, Reese's Peanut Butter Cups and Twizzler twists.

Candymonium begins with a quick 210-foot ascent up the tallest coaster hill in the park. The train then plummets quickly heading toward Spring Creek before it proceeds into an airtime hill, followed by a 123-degree hammerhead curve. Next comes another airtime hill, a speed hill and an upward climb into the first helix, a Stengel dive element (over-banked turn with a camelback hill,) another floater hill, and a final airtime hill. In all, there are seven hills, most over 100 feet in height. The ending features a panoramic banked curve around the Kisses-designed fountain. The two-minute and 26-second ride reaches speeds up to 76 miles per hour.

Sophie Bolliger, vice president and head of sales and marketing at B&M, talked about design considerations. "Candymonium's track crosses Spring Creek on ten distinct locations. At each of these locations, the design of the track and columns has been specifically adapted with long spans between columns to avoid foundations in the creek bed. Part of the layout consists of two tracks running parallel to each other. To reduce the number of foundations and make the ride more aerial, single columns have been used to support both tracks."

The coaster has a pair of short trim brakes along the layout. "It is a standard policy from B&M to provide, for long and fast coasters, one or two trim brakes along the ride to adjust the train's speed. This is especially important for Candymonium which is long and fast with multiple camelbacks. An accurate speed is necessary to create airtime and weightlessness — the most of any of the coasters at Hersheypark," said Bolliger.

Hersheypark previously worked with B&M when Great Bear was introduced in 1998.

"They are an absolute stellar company. It was very evident when you work with a project going through something so serious as COVID-19, just how committed they are to their product; the safety of their employees, the safety of our employees, about making sure the ride is on time. It was just a joy!" said Krolczyk.

The assistant GM talked about commissioning of the coaster. "In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, during our COVID-19 lockdown, construction was not permitted. Everything paused. We were able to come back and finish the construction of Chocolatetown and Candymonium," said Krolczyk. "In six weeks we finished the commissioning of the ride. It is a multi-part commissioning. The manufacturer does portions of it. Our maintenance assists in a portion of it and then there's a separate section for just the operations piece of it as well. You're going through your programming, then going through your maintenance to get laps on your trains and then you're going through the entire safety systems checks with the operations portion of it." Finally there was at least 40 hours of operational run time with opening and closing every restraint during every ride cycle. Thousands of laps were made with each of the three trains before they were ready for the public to enjoy.

The park opened three months later than originally scheduled due to the pandemic. "We're just so happy to have our guests back. Our guests seem to be really happy to be back, and have a little bit more of normal, which includes some fun on a roller coaster in the sweetest place on earth," said Krolczyk.

The current pandemic situation forced a few pieces of Chocolatetown to not open until next year. This includes the Chocolatier Restaurant, Bar and Patio, Milton's Ice Cream Parlor and The Sweeterie Confectionery Kitchen.

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PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► Efteling opens Max & Moritz coasters — page 14 / Talley Amusements attempts to recoup season — page 22

Guests return to Walt Disney World, changes abound throughout the resort

AT: David Fake
Special to Amusement Today

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — After nearly four months of closure due to COVID-19, **Walt Disney World Resort** reopened the gates to its parks with major changes to operations that are possibly the most comprehensive and stringent in the industry. The international destination began welcoming guests back to the **Magic Kingdom** and **Animal Kingdom** parks first, officially opening to the public on July 11 after cast member and passholder previews. Then, **Disney's Hollywood Studios** and **Epcot** opened the following week on July 15 following the same cast member and passholder previews. The resort's shopping and dining complex, **Disney Springs**, had already opened several of its venues almost a month earlier.

Disney says its "responsible approach" to reopening draws on its experience from the recent reopenings of **Shanghai Disney Resort**, **Hong Kong Disneyland** and **Disney Springs**. Disney has re-examined all aspects of a day at their theme parks in light of the new global environment. The new policies follow guidance from health experts and government agencies. In addition to limits on attendance and controlled guest density, new procedures will be in place for park entry, attractions, dining, retail, and transportation, with the well-being of guests and Disney cast members at the forefront of planning.

"Our deliberate and phased approach at Walt Disney World Resort emphasizes multiple layers of health and safety measures," said Dr. **Pamela Hymel**, chief medical officer, Disney Parks, Experiences and Products. "We're taking a multi-pronged approach to our reopening, after considering the guidance of various governmental authorities and health agencies, and recommendations from our team of health and safety experts. We're also actively working with industry groups and research universities to discuss best practices."

To accomplish this goal, cast members have gone through extensive training to prepare

for the theme parks' reopening in this unprecedented environment. Cast members in the newly formed "Incredi-Crew" are awareness ambassadors who wear brightly colored, easily identifiable attire and walk through the parks to explain the new procedures and answer any guest questions, while encouraging everyone to follow these new health and safety measures. In conjunction with the Incredi-Crew, the theme parks have incorporated health and safety awareness signage throughout the parks that is themed to the company's Incredibles IP.

In addition to the common social distancing, limited capacity, mask requirements and temperature checks, the most obvious of the additional changes Disney has implemented include the elimination of the ability to park hop within a single day and the cancellation of the resort's popular FastPass+ reservations that granted guests priority boarding/entrance to rides and attractions through the My Disney experience app and special queues.

Changes to dining and food and beverage service at the resorts include enhanced cleaning procedures in seating, dining and common areas, as well as changes to self-serve options. In addition, mobile technology via the My Disney Experience app is being used in convenient ways to minimize contact, such as Mobile Order at select quick-service theme park locations and Mobile Dine Check-in at select theme park table-service locations, as well as reduced-contact menus

at select theme park restaurants. Additionally, many of the resorts famous buffet restaurants, such as the Biergarten Restaurant at Epcot's Germany pavilion, have been converted to family-style table service and offer a majority of the options that were available on the buffets.

Disney character meet and greets are one of the most treasured aspects of the Disney park experience. Traditional character greetings and parades have been put on hiatus during the initial reopening, but Disney characters will appear in a variety of new and different ways throughout all four theme parks, bringing the characters to the guests while maintaining proper physical distancing. At Magic Kingdom, characters cavalcade along the traditional parade route throughout the day. Others will pop up in new locations, such as Captain Jack Sparrow appearing in Adventureland. At Epcot, guests may see Queen Anna and Elsa venture "into the unknown" on a journey around World Showcase, or Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, Pluto and Goofy out for their own world tour. **Pixar Animation Studios** characters will appear on Hollywood Boulevard at Disney's Hollywood Studios. And over in Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge, guests should be sure to "move along" if they spot any First Order Stormtroopers. Finally, guests at Disney's Animal Kingdom may see Disney characters setting sail down Discovery River on special boats.

While the majority of the parks' nightly fireworks dis-

► See **DISNEY**, page 8



Cast members welcome guests back to the Magic Kingdom park, where Cinderella's Castle has undergone a renovation in celebration of the animated movie's 70th anniversary and ahead of the park's 50th anniversary celebration which begins next year. COURTESY WALT DISNEY WORLD



Social distancing at Kentucky Kingdom includes requiring riders to skip every other row on all roller coasters. AT/ JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

Kentucky Kingdom, Cedar Point open for season

AT: John W.C. Robinson
jrobinson@amusementtoday.com

LOUISVILLE, Ky. and SANDUSKY, Ohio — Thrills and family fun continued their return to the Midwest as stay-at-home orders were lifted, allowing Louisville's **Kentucky Kingdom** and Ohio's **Cedar Point** to open their gates and welcome guests at last for the 2020 season.

"Kentucky Kingdom is an outdoor attraction covering 63 acres. We've always had strict guidelines in place regarding acceptable behavior in the park and on all of our attractions, and our more than 1,400 team members diligently enforce these rules," said **Ed Hart**, president and CEO of Kentucky Kingdom. "On average, we have one team member for every ten guests, which means we have the personnel to see that guests in the park abide by our rules. Proper social distancing is just another rule that we expect our guests to observe."

As is becoming standard practice in the attractions industry, Kentucky Kingdom staff politely took the temperatures of all guests before allowing them entrance into the park as it opened on June 29 at the lowered admission price of \$29.99 per person for the 2020 season. In addition, hand sanitizer as well as signs and markers encouraging social distance were plentiful.

All Kentucky Kingdom staff were required to wear masks, but guests were simply encouraged to. However, after Kentucky Gov. **Andy Beshear** initiated a statewide mandate requiring masks for all Kentuckians while indoors, Kentucky Kingdom followed suit and required them of guests while inside restaurants and gift shops in the park. Adapting the plan has been necessary from the beginning for Kentucky Kingdom.

"The main challenge we faced was the amount of [updated] information that was released after our plan was already submitted to our state government," said **Jessi O'Daniel**, Kentucky Kingdom's vice president of guest experience. "We worked furiously with our team of experienced theme park operators to come up with a plan that we felt confident in."

Kentucky Kingdom also implemented Smile Zone for its staff members, allowing for times and areas that they can remove their masks and safely smile to guests visiting the park. "Smile Zones are areas where our ride operators can take their masks off," O'Daniel added. "These areas are typically behind control panels and occur when the train is out on the track or when a ride is in motion more than six feet away from the operator."

Cedar Point implemented a similar policy, but this time for its guests, when it opened to passholders on July 9 (Cedar Point Resort guests could attend the park beginning July 11). Dubbed "Relax Zones," these areas offered socially distanced seating and often shade for guests who want to step off the main midway and safely remove their masks for a bit.

"The safety of all of our guests and associates has always

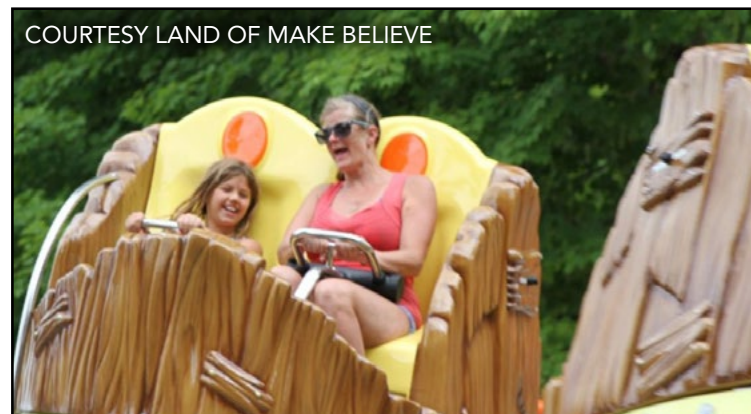
► See **OPENING**, page 8

Walibi Holland has fun with social distancing



BIDDINGHUIZEN, The Netherlands — While the entire world is finding ways to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, Walibi Holland has opted to take a light-hearted approach as it encourages its guest to social distance and practice good hygiene. While implementing its Safe Together Out protocol throughout the park, bright and colorful signage abounds and reminds those in attendance with clear information on practicing extra hygiene measures. COURTESY TOBIAS NIEPEL

Twister Timbers delivers spins at the Land Of Make Believe



HOPE, N.J. — With capacity set at 50% of its normal levels, New Jersey's **Land Of Make Believe** reopened on July 2. The park was built on the dream of providing affordable family fun. Not wanting parents to be merely passive spectators, the park has held to its identity by letting the adults be kids again in a clean, safe and wholesome environment. That idea hasn't changed in a pandemic for the park, developed on property that was once a dairy farm.

New at the park in 2020 is the Twisted Timbers Spinning Roller Coaster. Brought to the park in a deal brokered by New Jersey-based **Rides 4 U**, Twisted Timbers is the latest installation of **Visa's** popular compact spinning coaster.

"The compact spinning coaster has proven to be one of the most popular rides we've ever presented," said **Len Soled**, president of Rides 4 U. "It's a proven winner delivering fun for families and a few thrills. We're ecstatic to bring this latest installation to our own home state of New Jersey at the Land of Make Believe."

It is the third recent addition brought to the park by Rides 4 U, with 2015 welcoming an **SBF Drop N Twist** and 2018 seeing the debut of **Scream Machine 360** (Visa Mini Dance Party).

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► OPENING Continued from page 7

been, and will always be our top priority," said **Jason McClure**, vice president and general manager of Cedar Point. "We've implemented new safety protocols throughout the property that align with the recommendations of health and safety experts."

First and foremost of the new protocols is the required reservation by guests for attending the park. All guests are required to visit the park's website and pick a date and time to visit. They're allowed to arrive after their chosen time, but not before. This system keeps the front gate from becoming too crowded while staff members take the



Masks are mandatory for all guests on all non-water attractions at Cedar Fair parks. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

entry temperature of every guest who is attending on a given day.

With masks mandatory for guests at all **Cedar Fair** parks, the Cedar Point staff were polite but adamant about reminding guests to have their masks properly placed on their face at all times.

Like many other parks, Cedar Point's roller coasters upheld social distancing for rides by skipping every other row. Uniquely, the **B&M** winged coaster *Gatekeeper's* seats are designed with adequate social distance in place, so that particular attraction could be dispatched with riders in every row.

With daily attendance set at about 25% of park capacity, several attractions are scheduled to be closed throughout the season. In addition, more popular attractions such as *Millennium Force* (**Intamin**), *Steel Vengeance* (**Rocky Mountain Construction**) and *Maverick* (**Intamin**) require guests to pick up an "access pass" before queuing. Each access pass gives visitors a one-hour window to return to the attraction and join the queue, which allows park staff to help ensure proper distancing between parties within each line.

Cedar Point's neighboring water park, **Cedar Point Shores**, will remain closed throughout the 2020 season.

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► DISNEY Continued from page 7

plays, parades and indoor shows, are also on hiatus in this first phase of reopening, most of the parks' rides and attractions have returned with social distancing measures in place. However, it has been made official that some rides and attractions will not be returning. Animal Kingdom's *Primeval Whirl* roller coaster has closed permanently, and the park's *Rivers of Light* nighttime show has officially ended. Magic Kingdom's *Stitch's Great Escape* attraction has been listed as "temporarily closed" since 2018, but it officially will not reopen. And while it was recently announced that *Splash Mountain* would soon be rethemed to *The Princess and the Frog* IP, it did reopen along with Magic Kingdom, and there is no official permanent closing



While parades are on hiatus at Magic Kingdom, characters cavalcade along the traditional parade route throughout the day. COURTESY WALT DISNEY WORLD

date announced. The attraction's merchandise has been selling out on a daily basis to collectors and fans of the attraction.

In regard to future rides and attractions at Walt Disney World Resort, most of those previously announced are still a go, but their openings have been delayed. These include rides and attractions such as *TRON Lightcycle Run* and *Guardians of the Galaxy Cosmic Rewind* roller coasters at Magic Kingdom and Epcot, respectively, and *Remy's Ratatouille Adventure*, which was scheduled to open earlier this year, also at Epcot. However, some of the resort's previously announced attractions have been put on indefinite hold or cancelled altogether, such as the *Mary Poppins* attraction and the complete reimagining of *Spaceship Earth*.

Overall, the Walt Disney Resort has done an excellent job

bringing back the best aspects of the Disney experience to guests, even with the changes of "the new normal." **Josh D'Amaro**, the chairman of Disney Parks, Experiences and Products is certain Walt Disney World Resort has done the right things in the best ways possible with reopening the resort even amid reports of Florida's largest spike yet of COVID-19 cases. "We are in a new normal right now, so what's happening outside of the gates of Walt Disney World is our new world. I think you know we were one of the first theme parks to close, and we'll be about the last to open. And we spent every minute of every day thinking about how to operate in this new normal that we're in," said D'Amaro in a recent interview. "I'm exceptionally proud of this group in terms of what they've put together from a protocol perspective and being able to open in a phased and really responsible way. It feels really good in the park. So yeah, the world is a different place, but we feel really prepared to operate in this new environment that we're in. We built our operation, so we can flex. And so, we'll flex with what's happening on the outside from, again, controlled attendance to training our cast members to kind of watch the motions inside of the park."

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Park Post-its



AT: Pam Sherborne

psherborne@amusementtoday.com

Empire Adventures, a company formed with the express goal of reopening **Fantasy Island** amusement park, Grand Island, New York, announced last month plans to restart the attraction next spring to coincide with the 60th anniversary of the original park's debut. **Bill Baldwin**, who worked in the park as a character in the park's wild west show, is the chief executive officer of the new company, which is now actively negotiating with banks to secure financing for the project. The price to buy the land and its remaining assets is estimated at a minimum \$5 million.

Although too early to know for sure, there has been some talk by city officials and officials with the **Erie County Industrial Development Agency** that there could be a tax break for Empire Adventures if it is necessary to help get the park up and operating.

Even before the COVID pandemic forced many businesses to close for several weeks, the town stood to take a significant hit to its sales tax revenue with Fantasy Island not opening this summer.

Fantasy Island's previous owners, **Apex Parks Group**, closed Fantasy Island in February and sold off some of its rides. Some remain and one of Empire Adventures' partners has rides available. That partner is **Marena Amusements**, which has offered to sell 14 classic rides, including a vintage carousel. **Flying Bison Brewing Company**, Buffalo, New York, has offered its support as a potential sponsor, perhaps within a restaurant or beer garden on the grounds.

Employees at **Funland**, Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, spent the first days of July putting finishing touches on the park's rides in anticipation of opening for the 59th season on July 10. Employees had been sanitizing every surface, and they plan to keep up with strict cleaning procedures throughout the summer.

Funland has been working on a plan with the state since May. The games had reopened two weeks prior.

Ian Curry, a fourth-generation family member, said in a news article about the reopening they had worked hard not only on the safety aspect, but also wanted to make sure the park felt and looked the same for their guests to enjoy.

The **Neon Museum** in Las Vegas, Nevada, announced last month it is offering a 360 Virtual Tour, allowing visitors to "move" freely throughout the Neon Boneyard's sign collection, exploring more than 130 informational hotspots.

The 360 Virtual Tour launched with an Evening Glow experience as guests virtually toured the museum at night while the signage was illuminated.

In the virtual tour, once guests enter the

museum, a welcome video provides details and instructions on how to navigate the Neon Boneyard. By clicking the white circles along the museum's pathways, or by using the arrow keys, guests may freely explore the Boneyard, navigating from sign to sign while enjoying 360-degree vantage points at every stop.

The red, blue and yellow hotspots on the museum signs denote opportunities to learn more, either via pop-up text, photographs or video. By hovering on a red hotspot, guests open a YouTube video with audio featuring a short Neon Museum Gallery Talk or documentary. Hovering over a blue hotspot allows guests to open a written description that includes either historical information or fun facts. Meanwhile, yellow hotspots allow guests to view historical photos from the museum's archival collection.

The popular playground at **Fairytale Farm's Enchanted Walk and Animal Area** in Oxfordshire, U.K., reopened on July 4. Called the Huff & Puff Adventure Playground, it includes its very own Storybook Castle, Snakes and Ladders Slide, Combine Harvester and Bird's Nest Swing. And, of course, with that opening came new measures to ensure that all visitors have space to play while adhering to social distancing guidelines due to COVID-19.

Fairytale Farm's Enchanted Walk and Animal Area reopened to the public on June 20 and officials have been eagerly awaiting the announcement from the government on when playgrounds across the country could reopen.

"We have been working hard to put our reopening plans into action, ensuring new rules keep our visitors safe, but also allow them to have plenty of fun," said **Nick Laister**, owner of Fairytale Farm. "We are delighted to be welcoming back visitors."

All visitors are required to pre-book tickets online via the Fairytale Farm website for capacity management purposes and will then have contactless entry to the farm.

Indoor seating in the Beanstalk Cafe also reopened on July 4 as did the animal petting and animal feed sales.

July surges in COVID-19 cases in some U.S. states were impacting openings of some U.S. zoos and aquariums.

Arizona's **Phoenix Zoo**, which had already reopened on June 15, once again closed to foot traffic for visitors in the first week of July due to health concerns amid the coronavirus.

A statement from the zoo said: "While the safety measures and precautions we have had in place are outstanding, we have been listening to the health experts and concerns of the community and want to do our best to help mitigate the rise of this terrible disease affecting so many."

While foot traffic won't be allowed, the Cruise the Zoo drive-through options will continue. The next Cruise the Zoo opportunity was set for Aug. 6-10.

Meanwhile, California's **Monterey Bay Aquarium**, just days away from re-opening, had to end up postponing opening its doors following a new state mandate that required certain sectors to remain closed.

It had been scheduled to reopen on July 9, but on July 2, the state added Monterey County to its watch list, which eventually triggered a return to tighter restrictions.

An opening has not been rescheduled for either facility.

RCI supplies Natural Bridge Caverns world's largest ropes course

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — **Natural Bridge Caverns** knows how to recognize success — and expand on it. The unique destination knows the cave tours remains the core of the attraction, but the length of stay for its guests has grown over the years with its above-ground offerings. Its largest retail item is the gem-mining sluice, which the park has rebuilt three times because of its popularity.

In a similar move, the facility's ropes course has also evolved. While the previous course had entertained guests for several years, a newer course that opened this year has taken it to a new level, literally. Twisted Trails is the largest ropes course of its kind in the world, according to Natural Bridge Caverns. Supplied by **RCI Adventure Products**, the course stands 60 feet tall and boasts four levels of challenges and thrills. Fun activities termed weave walk, squid steps and twisted rope are some of the engaging activities for participants. There are 50 elements featured on the structure.

The combined attraction covers an astounding 12,500 square feet. One of the big features is 685 feet of combined track of Zip Rail. There are seven segments of suspended tubular rail. Riders fly along at speeds from eight to 12 mph.

"We became aware of this product RCI had developed, which they call Sky Rail. We have chosen to use the term Zip Rail since people are very familiar with what a zipline is," said **Travis Wuest**, vice president. "It can take turns and curves, but you ride in the exact same harness and the same type of tether. The thing that really sold us on this system is that it is much more user participant driven."



Twisted Trails is the largest structure of its type in the world. COURTESY NATURAL BRIDGE CAVERNS

A big advantage of the giant addition is the significant reduction in the number of staff needed to service the structure. All activities connect.

"Your traditional ziplines are heavy on the operator side. Operators have to insert the guest into the system and make sure of safety transitions," Wuest told *Amusement Today*. "We had to have an operator at the sending and receiving ends. Our old four ziplines required eight employees just for those lines. It was intensive on labor. The Sky Rail has introduced a safety system with an automated brake where they come into the landing platform."

The Sky Rail works similar to a blocking system on a roller coaster.

"We have operators on every level, but we have reduced our staffing by half even though it is a much larger course," said **Terri Adams**, general manager.

"It was a real savings with

staffing," said Wuest. "Less staff but more capacity."

On the former setup, guests — particularly lighter ones — would occasionally lose momentum on the ziplines and require assistance. With the new rail, that situation is almost completely eliminated.

Participants must safely fit into a harness and be 48 inches tall. Younger guests 42 inches in height can participate with a paid chaperone. A maximum weight of 300 pounds applies. The cost to play is \$24.99 per 45-minute session. A total of 95 people can participate at one time.

Each morning, safety procedures require a "take down" of a guest from the course. This training keeps operators prepared in such cases of a guest passing out. The safety protocols are instilled into operator training.

For smaller children, the complex offers Tykes Zip Rail & Ropes Course. At the lower level, youngsters can engage

in activities at a scaled-down size but still mimic the skills on the larger course. Parents can accompany them alongside from the ground. This section also features Zip Rail. The cost for the little ones is \$7.99.

For a \$5 charge, a climbing course can be added to a Twisted Trails ticket. To do it alone is \$9.99. Strategy and agility can be challenged on four different climbing activities.

Natural Bridge Caverns started developing the attraction in early 2019. Construction started in October. A partial preview was offered during the holidays. The final setup was completed in January. With the pandemic situation happening in 2020, management feels the timing was good with the significant savings in staffing this season.

The facility was able to sell part of the former equipment back to RCI for them to repurpose and one tower was reused

in the new design.

"Natural Bridge Caverns has been a favorite of my family my entire life," said Adams. "There's a lot of history here. Watching the facility the last 30 years, the [most recent decade] specifically, it's gone from a regional attraction to a world-class, best-in-class cave operation, including the above-ground attractions. They keep expanding — food operations, the things that they love. Rocks and fun and adventure are what they offer to our visitors. The extended length of stay is important to us. The caves and the natural resources will always be our No. 1 attraction. It's what we want to preserve and highlight forever. But getting people to come to the caves, we sometimes have to offer other things."

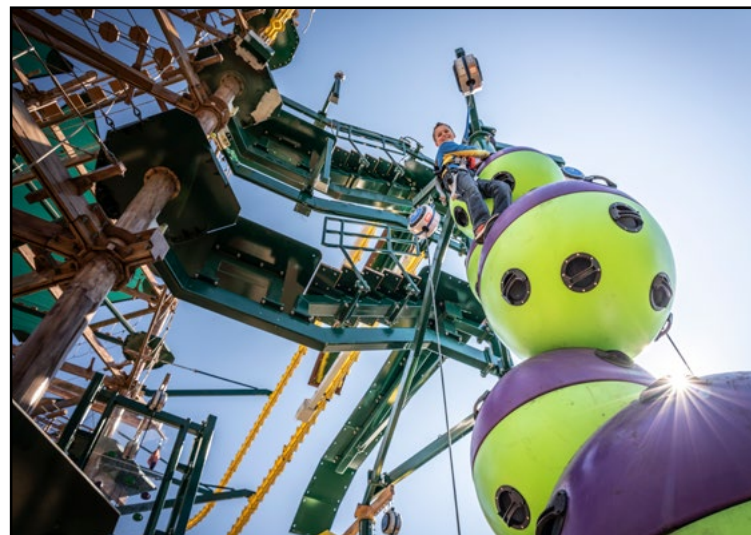
Adams spent more than four decades as COO of **Schlitterbahn**, so having worked on the banks of the Comal River, she carries a great respect for making sure natural resources are around to be enjoyed by future generations.

"I like their commitment to the community," she said. "It's been a very easy transition."

Natural Bridge Caverns were discovered 60 years ago. Owned and operated by the Wuest family, the park feels the multi-million-dollar addition is the perfect celebration.

"These courses offer our guests the opportunity to do something physical, to challenge themselves, and in some cases, overcome their fears. It's an adventure," said Wuest.

•naturalbridgecaverns.com



The 685-foot-long Sky Rail lets guests sail through the sky (above left). The new addition also offers an optional climbing feature (above right). COURTESY NATURAL BRIDGE CAVERNS

US Thrill Rides unveils new attraction which is both ride and game

AT: Pam Sherborne
 psherborne@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO — US Thrill Rides has created a new model of its tried-and-true Unicoaster. Called the Unicoaster Roulette, the new version is designed to look like a giant roulette wheel.

Fittingly, it has the tag line of "The Game You Can Ride," since a lucky rider can hit a winning number. A rider can be thrilled and win a prize all at the same time.

The ride has all the design and technology as the existing US Thrill Rides Unicoaster in that the rider has control of their experience. They can spin their vehicles forward and backward or not spin it at all.

"This version is literally under development right now in Italy," said company founder **Bill Kitchen**. "We have several interested parties, but are working out certain details for their unique situations before pulling the trigger. It's brand new, and the game aspect puts a totally new spin on it while the theming gives it additional options outside of a theme



US Thrill Rides, headquartered in Orlando, is taking its popular Unicoaster concept one step further. Called Unicoaster Roulette, this new version is designed to look like a giant roulette wheel. It uses the same technology as the company's Unicoaster, which allows riders to control their own ride experience. COURTESY US THRILL RIDES

park, especially but not limited to gaming establishments."

Visa International SRL is the Italian manufacturer. **Mike Gutknecht** is the sales representative for the Roulette Unicoaster.

In this new concept, riders can win a prize or prizes depending on where the ride stops. There are two variables that can determine a winner. One is that the giant rolling wheel stops on the track on a

certain number, like Red 24. The other is where the top of wheel, that also is shaped as a roulette wheel, hits a number.

Repeat riders are anticipated with the added appeal of winning prizes. Venues can tai-

lor the prize to fit their needs. Casinos can even offer cash jackpots, making Unicoaster Roulette a centerpiece ride.

The Unicoaster is 60 feet in diameter with eight arms and 16 seats. The cars are spaced 12 feet apart. It measures 18 feet tall. The ride capacity is 196 people per hour, which generates a two-minute ride cycle.

The US Thrill Rides Unicoaster, manufactured by **Chance Rides** and operating in six U.S. locations, has a track record of success. Locations of these rides include **Nickelodeon Universe** at the **Mall of America**, **Bloomington, Minnesota** (**Brain Surge**), **Nickelodeon Universe** at **American Dream**, **East Rutherford, New Jersey** (**Jimmy Neutron's Atom Smasher**) and **Belmont Park**, **San Diego, California** (**Octotron**).

Kitchen said the Unicoaster can be configured a number of ways and with various theming to suit the customer, including shields to help deflect aerosols, in addition to following distancing guidelines. There is a beach ball themed Unicoaster already on the drawing boards.

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Specifications

SEATING

Number of seats	16
Minimum passenger height	48 inches
Maximum passenger weight (individ.)	275 lbs
Ride Duration	120 seconds
Capacity	196 riders/hour

CLEARANCE DIMENSIONS

Diameter (incl. platform)	52 feet
Height	18 feet

POWER REQUIREMENTS

Total	145 kva
Motor	95 kva
Lights	50 kva
Line voltage	3 phase - 480 volt



Michael Gutknecht • michael@niccodesigngroup.com • 801.879.1219
View ride animation at youtu.be/OYFRZmTyEfg

Mack Rides supplies double coaster

Efteling opens Max & Moritz coasters targeted for younger riders

AT: Tim Baldwin

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K A A T S C H U E V E L , Netherlands — On June 20, the fairy tale land of Efteling debuted its newest attraction. Like many offerings in the whimsical theme park, it is aimed at the younger set. Max & Moritz is a powered coaster built by Germany's Mack Rides. In fact, it's two.

The attraction is themed to the well-known German poem by Wilhelm Busch from 1865, "Max und Moritz," about two naughty schoolboys. In Efteling, they live in a village with their mother Frau Schmetterling, who makes special cuckoo clocks. Her sons drive the villagers to despair with their tricks. When Frau Schmetterling locks up Max and Moritz for punishment in her cuckoo clock workshop, they try to escape with self-built soap boxes. Guests are along for the ride.

The ride is positioned on a site formerly occupied by an Intamin bobsled ride that opened in 1985. It was retired on September 1, 2019 to make way for the new coasters.

Efteling's CEO Fons Jurgens said, "After saying goodbye to the iconic Bobsleigh ride last year, young visitors to Max & Moritz will be able to share their first roller coaster experience with the whole family. It is a very contemporary and real Efteling ride. During the ride and in the surrounding area, visitors will find out about Max and Moritz' tricks and mischief."

Much of that is conveyed through theming. Like numerous attractions at the park, the thematic craftsmanship is impressive. Efteling opened in 1952 with its Fairy Tale Forest. It has never lost sight of its core audience and now welcomes more than five million guests a year.

Mack Rides is known for its powered coaster rides throughout Europe and beyond.

"The ride is unique as the trains depart the station in opposite directions," said Christian von Elverfeldt, chief executive office, Mack Rides. "Therefore, they will pass each other on the mid-course of the track. As the trains pass each other several times, the riders can interact. This is especially fun for families."

Max & Moritz is geared towards children aged between four and 10 years old but is also suitable for the whole family. The height requirement to ride is one meter.

A seven-year-old disembarking the ride excitedly said, "After



Two separate tracks twist and intertwine with each other. COURTESY EFTELING

the first round I thought it was a pity that it was already over. But because Max jumped on the giant whoopee cushion, all of a sudden, we went again, real fast! And the music went faster too!"

When *Amusement Today* inquired why the decision to remove the Bob ride, Jurgens replied, "Roller coasters like the Bob are increasingly difficult to keep in good condition. In the next few years, investments and adjustments would be needed for the maintenance and operation of the roller coaster. Unfortunately, this made replacement inevitable. A lot of fans were sad about the decision, because for many of them, the Bob was their first roller coaster experience. Our new double family roller coaster is a very good replacement. A powered coaster is new for Efteling, and now our attractions offer has become even more diverse."

Max & Moritz uses the same station as the former Bob ride. Both tracks are in place within and depart in opposite directions.

"Doing two tracks and using the former station didn't

present any challenges," said von Elverfeldt. "Our track design and manufacturing are so precise, and we have to deal with buildings, theming elements and plants anyway."

The ride stands just shy of 20 feet tall and reaches speeds of more than 22 mph. While each track has a length of 984.3 feet, that is essentially doubled as the ride experience involves traveling the circuit twice. In addition to thematic props, the track curves and twists to place riders in visual proximity to the other train. With no need for a lift hill, the track is all action.

"The powered coaster is a product we have had in our portfolio for quite some time and we see it regaining strength in the market," von Elverfeldt told AT. "The advantages are phenomenal — you can position the train at any point on the track and determine the speed and travel direction. It's great if you want families to enjoy the ride, as you are able to fine tune the speed and ride experience during commissioning."

Visitors get to choose which track to ride: Max (blue) or

Moritz (green). Each track has its own exciting experience with sharp curves and accelerations. With two themed storylines, it further entices guests to ride both sides to see it all.

Because the ride is based on a German tale, Elverfeldt found a personal connection to the project. "Efteling is a very special customer for us as their target audience is the whole family just like ours. With the heritage of De Bob, we knew that this coaster had to be not just a replacement but an extraordinary highlight

for the 2020 season. The cars of Max & Moritz represent our home and heritage very well and many details on the cars can be found in our neighborhood, so there are many emotions attached to this design."

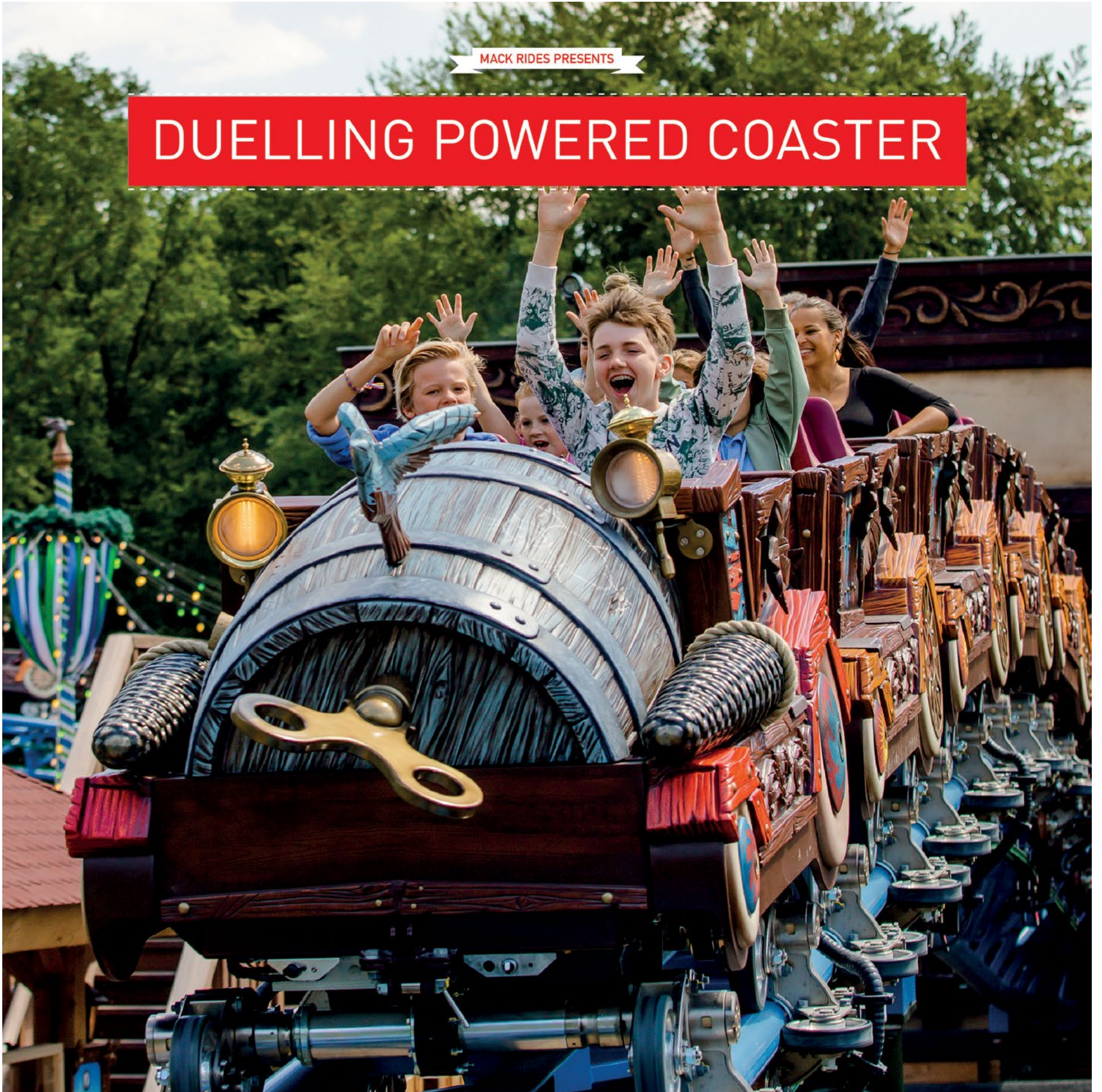
The whole area has been redesigned and themed in less than a year. Joining the coasters in the area is a new eating establishment at the Max & Moritz Square. Frau Boltes Küche serves French fries, snacks and chicken bites with a thematic flair that ties into the new attraction.



The powered aspect of the new ride allows for speed without the need of a lift hill. Thematic props such as Max jumping on a whoopee cushion (above right) help convey the tale. COURTESY EFTELING

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'Call of the wild' returns as California animal attractions reopen

With enhanced safety, several zoos are back to educate, entertain

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

PALM DESERT, Calif. — Triple-digit temperatures are nothing new to **The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens**, where the arid environment, accented by ruggedly beautiful foothills, gets the full brunt of Southern California's summer sun.

Midday on a Friday in early July, as thermometers onsite nudged 109 degrees, wildlife sounds comingled with the enthusiastic reactions of strolling, face-masked families. The park's desert-acclimated animal denizens basked or grazed lazily in shaded areas or retreated to their shelters to nap.

What is new at the 80-acre facility and three other Golden State animal attractions that have resumed operation amid the novel coronavirus pandemic — the **San Diego Zoo**, **San Diego Zoo Safari Park** and **Six Flags Discovery Kingdom** — is a redoubled commitment by operators and staff to educate and entertain guests. They are not taking for granted that their sprawling grounds and mostly outdoor exhibits have, in this new realm of physical distancing and enhanced safety measures, made it possible for them to return.

"Prior to reopening to the general public June 15, we did a big media push highlighting our COVID-19 precautions designed to keep the guests, staff and animals safe," said **Allen Monroe**, president and CEO of The Living Desert, sharing with *Amusement Today* his surprise at how quickly members and visitors have adapted to the online reservation system the park implemented with its new protocols. "I think guests actually like knowing there's a slot reserved for them."

The zoo is following all local and state mandates. California required residents to wear face coverings outside the home starting June 19. On July 13, Gov. **Gavin Newsom**, in a rollback of the state's phased reopening, ordered a halt to inside dining, entertainment and several other types of indoor businesses.

"We have to remind a few guests to keep their face coverings on, especially as the day gets warmer, but when we explain that it helps keep the staff and volunteers healthy, they comply," said Monroe,



New at The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens in Palm Desert is Australian Adventures, an outdoor exhibit highlighting flora and fauna — including yellow-footed rock wallabies and bright-feathered budgerigars — from Down Under. The park's 2.5 miles of walkways have been marked for physical distancing. AT/DEAN LAMANNA

noting that about 90-95% of the park, which is limiting its admissions to 200 guests per hour (about 25% of capacity), is available for exploration. "We have closed a couple buildings as well as some high-touch outdoor areas, such as the carousel, kids' play area and petting zoo."

For added safety, park staff was disinfecting counters, doors, restrooms and drinking fountains hourly.

The Living Desert recently unveiled a nearly one-acre, \$3 million exhibit called Australian Adventures. In keeping with the zoo's mission to support and promote desert conservation in the southwestern U.S., Africa and elsewhere in the world, it comprises a net-canopied, largely free-roaming habitat housing two wallaby species, colorful birds, reptiles and other creatures from Down Under.

"There is something magical about having a wallaby hop across the sidewalk in front of you," Monroe said. "Australia has quite the cast of animal characters from desert habitats with compelling stories to tell, so it seemed natural to add the continent to our guest experience. One of this habitat's main messages revolves around climate change and how the impacts we are feeling here in Southern California with increased temperatures, drought and fires are also occurring on the other side

of the world, and our need to share the responsibility for taking better care of our planet."

Although it reportedly lost \$3.5 million and had to reduce its staff by two thirds during the state-mandated spring shutdown, The Living Desert is in a celebratory mood as it marks its fifth decade this year.

"When you have a non-profit still going strong after 50 years, it indicates that the mission resonates with the community you are serving," Monroe said. "It's great when I meet someone in the park who visited as a child and is now bringing their grandchildren to discover the wonder of wildlife and spark that passion to care for the natural world. When you get a multigenerational reach, you know you are doing something right."

A couple hours to the southwest, the San Diego Zoo and San Diego Zoo Safari Park, both administered by the nonprofit conservation organization **San Diego Zoo Global**, reopened to the general public June 20. They kept their members and followers engaged largely through social media activities and more than a dozen animal cams during the three-month shutdown.

Now, fans once again can experience the San Diego parks' wildlife and visit with some of the newest residents — an Andean bear cub, a pigmy hippopotamus calf and a newborn

giraffe among them.

To ensure a safe and healthy guest experience, the parks have enacted a range of temporary changes complying with guidelines outlined by local and state health authorities. Initial protocols included reducing the number of guests on the grounds, increasing the number of hand-sanitizing locations, maintaining robust cleaning routines, adding one-way path modifications and providing signage for physical distancing.

During the reopening phase, the zoo's Guided Bus Tour, Kangaroo Bus and Skyfari Aerial Tram, and the Safari Park's Africa Tram, were unavailable, as were shows and experiences that traditionally draw larger attendance.

"Through both our wildlife sanctuaries, we offer an important service to the community by providing a safe outdoor experience... where [visitors] can learn about wildlife, connect with nature and find ways to join us on our mission to save species," said **Shawn Dixon**, COO of San Diego Zoo Global. "Although the next visit by our guests may feel a bit different, I'm confident our first-time guests, members, donors, volunteers and staff will help us make 'different' great."

About 500 miles north, in Vallejo, outside San Francisco, **Six Flags Discovery Kingdom** (SFDK) resumed partial opera-

tion July 2 as an animals-only experience in accordance with state, local and **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** guidelines. (The park's rides and other attractions remained closed at AT's press time pending a broader amusement park reopening green light from the state.)

For now, the park has turned the clock back to its pre-Six Flags days in 1986, when it first opened as Marine World, a premier zoological park and aquarium — rolling out what it is calling the Marine World Experience. Guests can visit SFDK's current famous resident, a year-old lion cub named Cain, and other wildlife through daily educational sessions. Additional offerings include scheduled talks with animal care specialists throughout the day along with animal demonstrations in outdoor venues that are sanitized and marked for social distancing.

"We are very excited to be able to open and welcome our guests back," said **Don McCoy**, park president, emphasizing that the health and safety of SFDK's patrons and team are paramount. The park's numerous coronavirus mitigation protocols "are designed to create an environment where our guests can have fun... and feel safe while doing so."

SFDK has established an online reservation system to limit capacity and minimize proximity exposure among guests. New technologies being deployed include state-of-the-art thermal imaging for temperature checks, advanced security screening for touchless bag checks and expanded mobile food ordering.

For more on their limited operating schedules, admission registration requirements and COVID-19 safety measures, visit the parks' respective websites.

• livingdesert.org
• sandiegozoo.org
• sixflags.com



Welcoming guests under their respective parks' new pandemic-modified operating procedures are Akobi, a pigmy hippo calf at the San Diego Zoo, and Cain, a year-old lion cub at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom in Vallejo. COURTESY SAN DIEGO ZOO, SIX FLAGS DISCOVERY KINGDOM



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Interlink LG, Simworx and Falcon's Creative partner for a world's first

Jurassic Island combines multiple experiences on Trans Studio ride

AT: Tim Baldwin

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JAKARTA, Indonesia — Rides and attractions in indoor malls are not necessarily something new, but not common either. Multiple suppliers partnered to bring forth a first-of-its-kind water ride at **Trans Studio Cibubur**. For the first time, Jurassic Island combines a water flume, 3D simulator and splashwater drop into a dramatic crowd-pleasing marquee ride.

Trans Studio's first theme park was **Trans Studio Makassar**, which opened in 2006. From that initial success, the template has been repeated in Bandung, Bali and Cibubur.

With the Cibubur property, innovations took place to make that particular location have a signature ride. Jurassic Island demonstrated a successful partnership between **Interlink LG Ltd.**, **Simworx** and **Falcon's Creative Group**.

"The idea for an Immersive SuperFlume ride came about four years ago when I was sitting on a boat in the Irish Sea having a beer with the then sales director of Simworx, **Edward Pawley**," said **John Davies**, commercial director for Interlink. "I asked him whether it would be possible to place a Simworx Immersive Tunnel onto one of our SuperFlume rides, and his answer was 'of course, it is possible.' The idea was born and history subsequently made."

The pair further surmised the boat could be placed on a motion base and, along with 3D glasses, create an immersive virtual experience during a flume ride.

Trans Studio wanted something unique for the new installation near Jakarta. Interlink had previously built a standard SuperFlume for the company, so the relationship and confidence in the company had been established.

"The hard bit was to get our design team to turn the



The flume portion take riders into themed dinosaur habitats (above). The exhilarating final plunge (inset) launches from one of the mall's upper floors. COURTESY JUSTIN GARVANOVIC

idea into reality," said Davies. "Challenges like how to lock the boat securely to the motion base, synchronize the flow of the boats around the circuit with the Simworx Immersive Tunnel zone and how to maximize throughput due to it being stopped for the duration of the tunnel experience [were new]."

"The project was in development for around a year and a half, with the contract initially being signed at IAAPA [Expo] in Orlando in 2017," said **Terry Monkton**, CEO, Simworx. "We designed, manufactured and tested everything in the U.K. before shipping it all over to Jakarta to be installed over there."

Placing attractions in a mall comes with inherent challenges, but the signed contract added a few more to the drawing board.

"Typically, our Immersive Tunnels are usually in an indoor setting anyway so that wasn't so much of an issue compared to having water indoors and

around technology that is usually in a dry environment," said Monkton. "It was things we usually don't have to worry about such as making our 3D glasses waterproof as well as how the water would be drained away from the motion base to allow it to work. We had to come up with a boat locking solution to ensure that the boat could be secured to the motion base allowing for movement but again released to allow it to complete the ride. Even small things such as finding a paint finish for the screens that would be waterproof in case of any splashes [were addressed]."

Further challenges then began to emerge over and above the initial Immersive SuperFlume design, because this one was to be installed inside a building on one of the upper floors.

"A standard SuperFlume ride would exert enormous loadings on the floor, mainly due to the volume of water in the channel, so we had to rethink several aspects. Our design team is extremely talented, but inventing lightweight water was pushing them a little too far!" Davies joked. "We

completely redesigned the water flow system to reduce the overall volume of water required. The vertical lift then had to be constructed in a lighter way than normal. The general lack of space available also meant various other redesigns were required — including how to get the ride components and boats inside the building and up to the relevant floors.

"Once these challenges had all been overcome and the ride was commissioned and opened to the public, we had a world's-first ride — the first time that a flume ride had been combined with a 3D motion base and Immersive Tunnel. The ride instantly became a big hit with all family age groups and is their most popular ride," said Davies.

"It's always exciting to be able to work on a world's-first attraction, and the Jurassic Island Immersive Superflume was certainly that, said **Jason Ambler**, VP of digital media, Falcon's Creative Group. "The visceral thrills you get from a water-based flume ride combined with the rich storytelling and simulator ride capabilities of an immersive tunnel produc-

es a totally unique and unexpected experience. As you are boarding the boat for the first time, you would never think you are about to attach to a motion base and engage with a 3D movie that wraps all around you. The seamless transition into the reveal of the 3D media is definitely our favorite part of the ride."

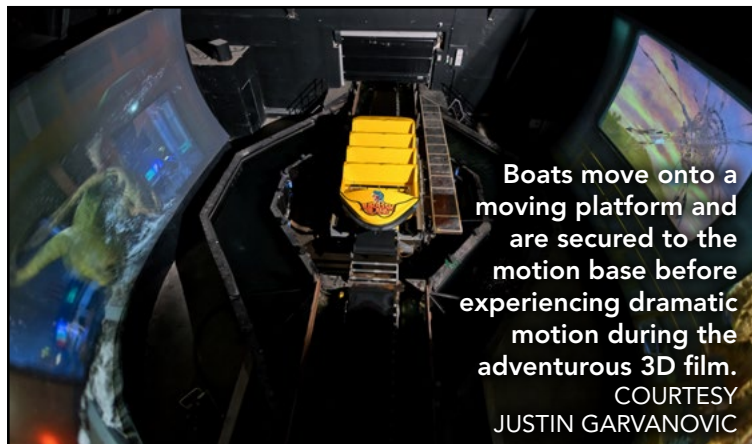
Trans Studio bases their attractions on Hollywood movie themes. While no official licensed IP is used, the familiar dinosaur genre follows the obvious, popular formula. Guests board one of five 16-passenger boats. The flume portion takes riders through themed dinosaur environments, before "something goes wrong" and screaming in the distance commences. Lifted from the water via a conveyor, the boat is positioned in the tunnel portion. Boats are firmly locked in place on the motion base platform and feel all the action during the 90-second film provided by Falcon's Creative. Exiting the theatrical portion, the boats float through more themed passages before entering the vertical lift. Lights go out and sirens flash as riders are raised more than 40 feet. Mall patrons can watch as boats emerge and plunge below them in the stacked indoor entertainment facility.

Original specs planned for the ride to be more than six minutes. The end result offers guests a longer experience clocking in around eight minutes. Hourly capacity is 480, which is limited because of the experience in the motion base and immersive film.

"We also have aroma's installed, to trigger another one of your senses, so you can even smell the dinosaurs breath when he roars," said Monkton. "We also have integrated 4D effects like wind and water spritz that complement the immersive movie."

The footprint to the ride is 377 feet by 180 feet (115 x 55 meters). The length is almost 1,000 feet long at 300 meters.

"Thanks to the existing facility's skilled leadership and easily navigable infrastructure, we experienced a comfortable and easy installation while working on the final programming onsite," said Ambler. "Through careful planning and simply masterful execution, the ride and show experience is jam-packed with intense dinosaur action and fully leverages the attraction system and special effects in the theater."



Boats move onto a moving platform and are secured to the motion base before experiencing dramatic motion during the adventurous 3D film. COURTESY JUSTIN GARVANOVIC

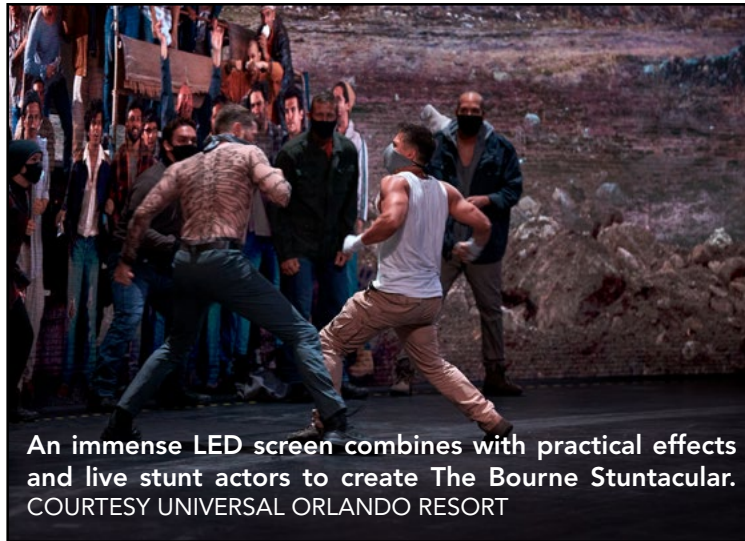


Universal Studios Florida premieres high-tech Bourne Stuntacular

AT: David Fake
Special to Amusement Today

ORLANDO — The Bourne Stuntacular, Universal Studios Florida's new stage show officially opened to guests on June 30 after a brief technical rehearsal period. The show, which has replaced The Terminator 2: 3-D Battle Across Time on the park's Hollywood Boulevard, is based on the wildly successful Bourne film franchise starring **Matt Damon**, which has grossed more than \$1 billion since the release of the original motion picture, *The Bourne Identity*, in 2002. Within the attraction, guests enter the world of Jason Bourne, the ultimate spy assassin and rogue agent of the Black Ops division of the CIA, in an all-new adventure outside, but parallel to, the existing films.

The Bourne Stuntacular's preshow consists of a surveillance briefing given on overhead screens by Nicky Parsons, the franchise's character played by actress **Julia Stiles**. In the briefing, Parsons explains that the guests will be part of a mission made possible through new proprietary technology by stating, "This prototype observation and evaluation



An immense LED screen combines with practical effects and live stunt actors to create The Bourne Stuntacular. COURTESY UNIVERSAL ORLANDO RESORT

mode uses a new protocol for enhanced virtual surveillance. For all intents and purposes you will be right there live following Jason Bourne wherever he goes as he encounters danger, traverses various locations, even advances through time zones. Your mission: find Bourne, then observe, but do not engage."

Once inside the theater, guests are transported into the world of Bourne, where they experience an exciting and impressive mix of storytelling, stunts and technology — just like in the films. However, this time, the audience is watching the action play out live on stage.

Guests actually feel the action through practical effects, such as: wind, water, flames, and deep bass audio combined with the awe-inspiring visuals of the stunts, projection mapping, LED wall, lifts, and robotic, moving set pieces — including three full-size vehicles. Details are not overlooked in and even after The Bourne Stuntacular. One such detail is the theater's exit doors that open into the Bourne gift shop. These doors give the appearance of being blown off their hinges during the show's climactic finale, a detail only visible from the gift shop at the end of each show prior to the doors

opening for audience egress.

"At **Universal Orlando Resort** we are known for our ability to immerse our guests in incredible environments. In this case, the world of Jason Bourne. We took those intense storylines, combined them with extreme stunts, groundbreaking technology, and practical effects, so we could create the excitement that is the Bourne franchise, right in front of the audience. It takes a really talented team to pull this off, and we got the best in the business to come together to do just that," said **Deb Buynak**, the resort's vice president of entertainment.

The talented team has successfully blurred the lines of cinema and stage show in The Bourne Stuntacular. Its magic was made possible by Universal's Creative and Entertainment teams working in concert with **Renaissance Entertainment** (story), **Cinesite Studios** (supplier of the immense HD LED screen measuring 3,640-square feet at 130-feet wide and 28-feet tall), **Tait** (staging design and manufacturer of moving parts, lifts, and scenic), and **Action Horizons** (Hollywood stunt design and choreography).

Frank Marshall, the fran-

chise's award-winning producer, worked with Renaissance Entertainment to create the show's story, and then on site with the Universal Orlando team during the show's final run-throughs to help tweak the show to create an authentic experience for fans of the franchise. Marshall said of the show, "I can truly say that The Bourne Stuntacular not only stays true to the essence of the movies, but also delivers next-level action that will make you feel like you are right there by Jason Bourne's side in the middle of a crazy action sequence."

Universal Orlando Resort's decision to open The Bourne Stuntacular stage show amid the resort's own reopening after its three-month COVID-19 closure, bucks the trend set by other Central Florida Parks regarding previously scheduled openings of new attractions. **Busch Gardens Tampa's** Iron Gwazi and **SeaWorld Orlando's** Icebreaker roller coasters, as well as **Epcot's** Remy's Ratatouille Adventure, had all been scheduled to open earlier this year, but their openings have been indefinitely postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak, the subsequent park closures, and the limited-capacity reopenings.



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Scene75 works together, keeps guests safe together

AT: John W.C. Robinson
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COLUMBUS, Ohio — Scene75 actually closed its FECs voluntarily early in the beginning of the COVID pandemic.

"To uphold our core value of putting people first, I announced our decision on March 12 to temporarily close all **Scene75 Entertainment Center** locations in advance of two of our busiest weeks of the year," said CEO **Jonah Sandler**.

One of the largest family entertainment centers in the country was also one of the very first to reopen after the recent pandemic shutdowns. Scene75 Entertainment Centers reopened the doors to its Columbus, Ohio, location on June 19 with new operating hours. The Cincinnati and Cleveland locations followed soon after, both opening their doors once again on June 10.

"We opened Columbus first because it was the biggest location and offered us the most opportunity to test the waters," said Sandler. "We're all in this together. I know everyone's been saying this from the beginning, but what I see is our guests truly appreciate all the steps and measures we've taken to keep people safe."

During the shutdown, Sandler had to cut the company's total staff from 750 people to 35. But during the closure, Sandler and his remaining team members developed what they call a "Stay Safe Playbook" with unique instructions for each attraction. "We've scooted things out, we've painted, we did extra cleaning," he said. "We've redone our employee handbooks. We used all that time to prepare to be bigger, better, stronger when we [opened]."

With that plan in mind, the theme of the recent reopenings has been "Stay Safe Together."

The basics of the plan were similar to others that have been adapted within the industry. "We limited capacity to 50%, added sanitation staff, created one-way entrances and exits, required masks for all, encourage social distancing as well as have hand sanitizer in abundance," explained Sandler. Bowling alleys were open every other lane, using the empty ones in between as a social-distancing buffer between players. Bowling balls are wiped down and sanitized between rounds. Every trip on the go-karts and other ride attractions ends with a sanitation crew wiping down the seats, restraints and other equipment.

Scene75 built its name originally via a significant following on social media. The opening of its original Dayton location pioneered many techniques for engaging its social media audience. Playing into this openness with their clientele, Sandler and his team made the *Stay Safe Playbook* available to all guests and potential visitors online via their website ahead of the openings.

"By doing so, our guests continue to have a better idea of what to expect upon arrival," said Sandler. "For some, it's what ultimately makes them comfortable enough to visit."

The entertainment center chain continued to play to its social media strengths throughout the shutdown. Creating the themed posts "QuaranScene," Scene75 team members engaged guests with trivia, online fun as well as activities that parents and kids could do together at home.

As an incentive to encourage the return of guests, Scene75 began offering a special Gold Member deal. For just \$29 per year, a guest can become a gold member where they'll get \$10 to use on games or attractions every day (up to a \$2,700 value).

Sandler plans to reopen Scene75's Pittsburgh location soon, pending state approval. The original Dayton, Ohio, location is still undergoing repair work from the damaging 2019 tornadoes that struck the area. Currently, Sandler and his team plan to hold a grand reopening of that location in Fall 2020.

•scene75.com

Attractions such as Scene75's go-karts are completely wiped down and sanitized after every ride cycle, helping to ensure a healthy experience for all guests.

AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON



FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL

AT: John W.C. Robinson
jrobinson@amusementtoday.com

SK8 House Entertainment Center finally opened its doors on July 13. The family entertainment center, located in a vacated Marshalls store at the Lynnhaven North shopping area in Virginia Beach, was meant to open to the public earlier but the coronavirus pandemic caused a delay.

"I am excited, more than you can see behind this mask," said Operations Manager **Robert Barnuevo**. The center is intentionally set up to "have something for everybody," according to Barnuevo.

The entertainment center's biggest attraction: two roller skating rinks. During limited operation due to COVID, the business has reduced the skating rink capacity from 300 to 125.

The next step for SK8 House will be opening the food and drink stands inside the building. In the meantime, a food truck outside provides an option for visitors.

Boomers! of Boca Raton, Florida, temporarily suspended operations on March 19 out of an abundance of caution, and in accordance with the recommendations of the Governor of Florida.

However, after a nearly three month shutdown, the amusement center reopened on June 29 with new health and safety measures to protect both guests and employees.

"Right away guests will notice signage reminding everyone to maintain six feet of physical distance between groups and to wash or sanitize their hands frequently. There are sanitizing stations around the park and for some attractions, guests are required to use hand sanitizer prior to participating," said General Manager **Andrew Marciante**. "Team members are, of course, sanitizing all high-touch surfaces throughout the day, and the restrooms are temporarily closed several times a day for deep cleaning."

A new paintball facility and axe throwing attraction opened on July 4 at **Gator Mike's** in Cape Coral, Florida. The local park offers a variety of attractions, like arcade games, zip-lining, go-karts and mini golf.

While following CDC guidelines, the 10-acre park allows for a safe social distance while having fun.

Virtuix, creator of the Omni Arena virtual reality esports attraction, has unveiled "Blackbeard: The Trials of Skull Island," its latest game for Omni Arena. In Blackbeard, up to four players work together as pirates to loot treasure, fight villainous foes, and achieve high scores on the leaderboard.

Each game has four distinct rounds, including a cooperative puzzle challenge and a final boss fight, providing players with lots of variety and reasons to play again and again.

"Blackbeard is Omni Arena's most kid-friendly game to date," said **Jan Goetgeluk**,

founder and CEO of Virtuix. "It's also a blast for adults and esports players. We designed the game for high repeat play. It's easy for everyone to play, but thanks to its variety and depth, it's hard to master. No two rounds are ever the same."

Air Zoo Aerospace & Science Museum officially reopened to the public on July 13. The Portage, Michigan, location enforced social distancing and new safety guidelines to ensure all guests stay safe and healthy while visiting.

The Air Zoo's indoor amusement park rides, flight simulators, Missions Theater and several of the hands-on Flexibits and KEVA stations are temporarily closed for guest safety. The Air Zoo plans to reintroduce these experiences when they are deemed safe to do so.

In the meantime, new exhibitions and enhancements to current exhibits are being deployed throughout the remainder of the year. Due to state-mandated limited capacity, visitors must choose from either a morning or an afternoon visit.

Waukesha, Wisconsin, opened its first **Urban Air Adventure Park** on July 17. The grand opening of the 72,000-square-foot Urban Air was limited to 100 guests per time slot, due to COVID restrictions.

"Pre-COVID we had some of the strictest cleaning procedures out of all of the adventure parks," said Special Events and Marketing Coordinator **Michelle Faretta**. "Post-COVID there isn't much we can do additional other than following the CDC guidelines — PPE gear for our employees and increased cleaning procedures as well as some hand sanitizing stations."

Attractions for the indoor adventure park include: go-karts, an adventure hub, spin zone bumper cars, flip zone bumper cars, a sky rider, ropes course, climbing walls, battle beam, a wipe out-warrior course, a tubes playground, a 7-and-under zone, **Apex** trampolines, dodgeball, rumble track, slam-dunk drop zone and a cafe and patio area.

The first ever open-air, single-level golf-themed entertainment center has been opened in August, Georgia, by **Topgolf**.

The venue opened on July 3 with outdoor hitting bays fitted with the Toptracer technology to provide innovative games and offer simulated play at some of the world's most famous courses such as Pebble Beach and St Andrews. There is also a nine-hole miniature golf course and a recreation area with backyard-style lawns with fire pits.

Topgolf has 60 locations across the U.S. and internationally, providing golf-emphasis facilities with games, climate-controlled hitting bays as well as food and beverage including bars, event space and other facilities that entertain more than 20 million people annually.

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AT: B. Derek Shaw
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FORT WORTH, Texas — Losing two of its biggest fairs, the **Ohio State Fair** and the **State Fair of Texas**, due to COVID-19, **Talley Amusements, Inc.** had to pull together a season playing at spots normally not on the schedule. The restart came about only after a concerted effort to educate Governor **Greg Abbott** about the need for the amusement industry to get back to business in the Lone Star State.

Mary Talley, co-owner of Talley Amusements, wrote a comprehensive statement on why the amusement industry is essential along with the hundreds of other businesses relying on that partnership. The article landed on the governor's desk. "After some back-and-forth emails from one of his policy advisors, he announced that carnivals and amusement parks were allowed to operate at 50% capacity (at the owner's discretion) in any county that currently has more than 1,000 positive Covid cases," said Talley.

The carnival company opened June 19, utilizing malls and privately owned properties to rebuild its season. Some of the cancelled spring events are having the carnival come in to help generate some revenue. It has not been easy during these times.

Talley said, "It has definitely been a daily struggle. Each city has interpreted the executive order differently and I have had to defend this order and fight for our rights to work. Not all cities have been an issue. We have had several that chose to ignore the rule of law so to speak. Our hometown, Fort Worth, has been our champion on following the [Executive Order] GA 27/28. I am grateful for our Mayor **Betsy Price** and her staff support along with Governor Abbott. Without them, we would

have had a very difficult time navigating through this."

The amusement operator has a very comprehensive COVID-19 plan in place. "We have handwashing stations, social distancing signage and marks on the ground, and signage all over our carnival park. All employees and guests are required to wear a mask while on the grounds. If they are not riders, we allow face shields. If our guests forgot to bring theirs, we have them available for purchase at our cost. We also are diligent in keeping our rides sanitized after each cycle. We [practice] social distancing on the rides, [by] loading every other seat. We also temperature check our employees daily," said Talley.

These days Talley Amusements operates with 25 rides, 10 games and seven food stands, playing up to 200 miles outside the Dallas/Fort Worth metro area. "I would say we are getting about half of what we normally gross," said Talley. "Each time a new [executive] order is released, it creates some pause for some [cities and towns] but for the most part, we are grateful to have some revenue coming in. I do wish the federal government would allow a second round of the Payroll Protection Program being that we can only operate at 50%."

Reception to the operation has been positive. "We have had very little negative pushback from the public," said Talley. "Honestly, people are glad to have a place to go and have some fun. We are offering arm-bands daily because of the 50% capacity issue and we open at 6 p.m. because of the Texas summer heat."

"We truly missed going to the Ohio State Fair this year. And of course, the State Fair of Texas is always a fair we enjoy working. We are very sad that our beautiful Texas Star Ferris Wheel will not operate," said Talley.

•talleyamusements.com



These are some of the rides that Talley Amusements has been taking out since June 19. The Fort Worth-based carnival has 25 rides, 10 games and seven food stands operating in malls and privately owned properties to rebuild its season. All photos were taken at a two-week stop in Grand Prairie, Texas, soon after the carnival reopened. AT/TIM BALDWIN

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2020 State Fair of Texas canceled due to COVID-19 concerns

DALLAS — After extensive consideration of the current landscape related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the health and safety of all fairgoers, staff, business partners, and overall community, the **State Fair of Texas** Board of Directors voted to cancel the 2020 State Fair of Texas.

“This was an extremely tough decision. The health and safety of all involved has remained our top priority throughout the decision-making process,” said **Gina Norris**, board chair for the State Fair of Texas. “One of the greatest aspects of the Fair is welcoming each and every person who passes through our gates with smiles and open arms. In the current climate of COVID-19, there is no feasible way for the Fair to put proper precautions in place while maintaining the Fair environment you know and love.”

“While we cannot predict what the COVID-19 pandemic will look like in September, the recent surge in positive cases is troubling for all of North Texas. The safest and most responsible decision we could make for all involved at this point in our 134-year history is to take a hiatus for the 2020 season.”



Iconic Big Tex (above left) overlooked attendees during the 24-day 2019 State Fair of Texas. A total of 2,514,637 people made their way to the fair throughout its 2019 run. The independent Super Midway (above right) featured 80 rides from 28 different carnivals. COURTESY STATE FAIR OF TEXAS; AT/SAMMY PICCOLA



The Fair’s commitment to its nonprofit mission of promoting agriculture, education, and community involvement will continue. The Big Tex Youth Livestock Auction and livestock shows, Big Tex Scholarship Program, Big Tex Urban Farms, and the community outreach initiatives will continue to have funding and the fair committed to maintaining as many participation opportunities as possible as it relates to livestock and creative arts.

The decision-making process has been thoughtful and

extensive. The fair gathered input from fairgoers, concessionaires, commercial exhibitors, Midway operators, auto manufacturers, business partners, staff, medical experts, and government officials to consider while coming to this conclusion.

With health and safety as the top priority, the management team and the board of directors have been discussing all potential scenarios since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The team has brainstormed many ways to make

this year’s event occur, creating various contingency plans and approaches, but knew that all these plans fail if the annual celebration of Texas contributes to any further spread of the virus through our community.

“While we are heartbroken at the notion of not welcoming more than 2.5 million of our closest friends for this annual celebration of the Lone Star State, the excitement we feel in moving forward with planning the 2021 State Fair of Texas and keeping this 134-year tradition alive will keep us motivated until we

can greet our fairgoers, seasonal staff, and business partners again in a safe environment,” said **Mitchell Glieber**, president of the State Fair of Texas.

This will be the first time since World War II that the State Fair of Texas has not opened. The State Fair of Texas has previously canceled fairs because of World War I (1918), planning for the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition and 1937 Pan American Exposition at Fair Park (1935-1937), and World War II (1942-1945).

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MIDWAYSCENE

AT: B. Derek Shaw

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North American Midway Entertainment (NAME) came up with a plan to hold a Fairgrounds Fun Park at the **Indiana State Fairgrounds**, a six-week event. However, what started as a good idea, did not come to fruition. The 50-ride midway was going to run July 31 – September 7. It was canceled after NAME organizers consulted with state health officials on the latest COVID-19 data for the state. There has been an increase in positive cases as well as hospitalizations in Indiana. “The carnival provider and state fairgrounds had a thorough and very thoughtful plan on how to conduct the event safely but have concluded that it’s best not to move forward with the Fun Park,” said **Dr. Kristina Box**, Indiana State Health Commissioner to **WTWO-TV**.

“While we are saddened that our event cannot take place, we understand the current situation and will always put public health and safety as our number one priority,” said **Danny Huston**, NAME CEO, in an emailed statement. A small 4-H livestock show will take place on the grounds in the absence of other events.

EJ Dean, owner of **Fiesta Shows** recently set up six drive-thru stands at his off-season quarters in Salisbury, Massachusetts. Dubbed Fair Food Express, the carnival food operation is along Route 1. Since June 4 and running through Labor Day, September 7, the stands are operating seven days a week starting at 11:30 a.m. each day. Offerings include fried dough, fried Oreos, fried peanut butter cups, sausages, hotdogs, cotton candy and caramel apples, among other carnival favorites.

“The menu certainly isn’t normal fare and we are certainly not attempting to do that. But it is a unique experience and it is something that people can experience at different events throughout the summer. But, where so many have been canceled, they won’t be able to have those experiences without this,” said Dean when he spoke with the **Newbury Port News**.

As a result of this creative arrangement, 14 people are working who would otherwise be out of a job during the pandemic. Dean also indicated that due to the response of Fair Food Express so far, the company may consider making this location the site of a full-time restaurant in the future.

The fairgrounds of the **Alaska State Fair**, Palmer, are the new home for drive-in movies these days. In participation with **Showboss AV and Event Management** and the **United Way**, the **Pop-Up Drive In Movies at The Fair** has quickly become a popular event, since its mid-May start. Two different movies are shown each Friday and Saturday evening on a 23-foot-wide by 13-foot-tall LED screen. Admission is \$25 per carload. Reservations must be made online. Check-in is done by vehicle license plate, make and model. A carload equals as many people in a car that is legally allowed by law.

Like many other fairgrounds across North America, they too offer food sales with the moniker, Food Truck Fare at the Fairgrounds. Each Wednesday and Saturday, up to a dozen vendors are participating.

In mid-May, the late August fair cancelled for this year — the first time since World War II. The fair will be back August 26 - September 6, 2021, with **Golden Wheel Amusements** providing the midway.

Bill Ogg was recently named the new Executive Director of the beleaguered **Nebraska State Fair**, Grand Island. In fair management since 1980, Ogg managed state fairs in Montana, Colorado and Kansas. Most recently he was general manager of the **Walla Walla Fair** and **Frontier Days** in Washington state since 2017. He was able to grow carnival receipts by 11%. In March, the position came open when the previous director **Lori Cox** stepped down, citing health reasons. She is expected to act as a consultant to the fair. Previously the two worked together at the **Montana State Fair**.

“Of the candidates we interviewed, Bill is the most seasoned, experienced Fair person,” said **Beth Smith**, board chair for the Nebraska State Fair to **KRVN** radio. “His management skills have proven to successfully execute fairs and large nationally sanctioned events.”

As of press time, a scaled-down Nebraska State Fair is still on for August 28 to September 7. A carnival midway would only happen if Hall County is in Phase 4 of Governor **Pete Ricketts’** reopening plan. In 2019 **Wade Shows** operated the ride midway.

While the 2020 **Calgary Stampede** is cancelled, resourceful Calgarians are finding ways to enjoy some of the flavor from their vehicles and backyards. To fill the closure gap, organizers and local groups are putting on fireworks, drive-through pancake breakfasts and other events that people can enjoy at a safe distance.

“You can’t cancel Stampede spirit, so we’re trying to keep that alive even though we can’t celebrate in the traditional way,” said **Dana Peers**, president and chairman of the Calgary Stampede Board in **The Globe and Mail** interview.

Scotsman’s Hill, is a popular spot to watch nightly fireworks that are always part of the Stampede. This year residents were able to enjoy two different nights of fireworks from their homes that included a view of the city skyline. The daily pancake breakfasts, a long-tradition of Stampede are taking place this year via drive-through lanes of cars and trucks.

“For lots of people, it’s synonymous with the Calgary Stampede that they’re going to have a free pancake breakfast,” Peers said. “We wanted to keep that tradition alive and the new rules have brought us to this drive-through method.” The **Calgary Chamber of Commerce** held a series of virtual events that brought the business community together over drinks and food from home, replacing numerous networking events and parties in local restaurants, bars and temporary tents in the past during the Stampede. To keep the Stampede spirit going this summer, some crowd-drawing attractions were held with physical distancing in mind.

Typically the 10-day event that starts in early July infuses \$540-million into the local economy.

National Independent Concessionaires Association (NICA) created a vendor-generated database of locations that can connect with people who are trying to find fair food in their local area. Sponsor **Carnival Eats** has interest in the one-off locations, trying to collect photos and descriptions of the dishes they are featuring. A strong group of submissions may lead to them producing a NICA-themed **Carnival Eats Food Fights** TV episode.

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WATER PARKS & RECREATION

▶ Soaky Mountain Waterpark opens — page 29 / Schlitterbahn benefits from Cedar Fair ownership — page 30

Splashin' Safari adds another jewel to its water coaster crown

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
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SANTA CLAUS, Ind. — In July, **Holiday World & Splashin' Safari**, the Southern Indiana theme park, debuted its third water coaster, giving it the rights to assume the title of “water coaster capital of the world.” **Cheetah Chase**, a unique racing, dueling water coaster, opened to the public on July 4.

Provided by **ProSlide** of Ottawa, Canada, the attraction uses the company's RocketBlast technology to power the rafts with jet streams of water. **Cheetah Chase** is a double slide that features both racing and dueling portions along its combined 1,700-foot course. The ride also combines ProSlide's popular **FlyingSaucer** elements to produce high-speed turns with strong G-forces. The ride takes the ProSlide RocketBlast racing concept to another level by offering a complete circuit course starting with a launch right out of the station and adding a first-ever for a water coaster — a head-to-head dueling zone. The ride represents an investment of approximately \$7 million.

Cheetah Chase travels at 30 feet per second and has the tallest RocketBlast section in the world, blasting riders to a height of 27 feet. In all, each side features five RocketBlast sections — one flat and four uphill sections — as well as two saucers, two side-by-side rally points and one head-to-head rally point.

As with all three **Holiday World** water coasters, thrill seekers queue at the base of the ride and board a raft in the station. Nothing needs to be hauled up a flight of stairs or an inclined walkway. The three-person boat conveniently rolls in on a moving conveyor for guests to



The second launch takes each pair of rafts to the highest point of the ride. COURTESY SPLASHIN SAFARI

quickly board. Riders are first weighed as a group to make certain they do not exceed the 480-pound limit. If a group of three is over the limit, one rider may wait on the sidelines until the raft returns, then exchange positions with one of two who just finished their ride — which person has to wait and who gets to ride twice is left up to the group to decide (rock, paper, scissors, perhaps?). Once riders are safely seated and checked, a pair of rafts, side-by-side, are rolled forward down a small incline and the fun starts immediately. The rafts are propelled by water jets along a flat section of chute, then blasted upward to one of the tallest points of the slide. From there the chutes diverge for an exciting saucer section, another uphill blast, then a 270-degree curve. That positions the riders for the head-to-head dueling zone where guests get to see their family or friends — or strangers — whizzing by in the opposite direction. Another blast takes riders into the second

saucer section before plunging into a long tunnel, which brings the rafts back together side-by-side for one more drop and blast into the finish line.

“The feedback for **Cheetah Chase** has been overwhelmingly positive,” said **Leah Koch**, director of communications and 4th generation owner. “I personally thought the most exciting part would be the flat, powered-launch section — since there's nothing like it in the world. What we're hearing is that the guests love being able to race their friends and family and the real thrill is hitting those rally points throughout the track. Of course, the most important feedback we're getting are the screams and laughter coming from the riders in the moment,” Koch told *Amusement Today*.

“In a year like 2020, we're just thrilled to be able to open **Cheetah Chase**, and to make families' days just a little bit brighter. That's what our industry stands for and that's why we'll be able to weather this storm. It's what

we do,” added Koch.

Cheetah Chase joins the highly-regarded **Mammoth** and **Wildebeest** water coasters — both recipients of the AT's Golden Ticket Award. **Wildebeest** and **Mammoth** have been voted the No. 1 and No. 2 water park attractions, respectively. **Wildebeest** has won the No. 1 spot for nine consecutive years and **Mammoth** has been certified by **Guinness World Records** as the world's longest water coaster.

Splashin' Safari is included with admission to **Holiday World**. It opened in 1993 with just four attractions. At the turn of the millennium, the water park started adding many high-profile and cutting-edge attractions — most often new products from ProSlide. This latest addition brings the total number of attractions to 16, including two wave pools.

To aid in social distancing efforts, the three water coasters: **Cheetah Chase**, **Wildebeest** and **Mammoth**; along with **Zinga** (ProSlide **Tornado**),

and **Zoombabwe** (ProSlide **Mammoth**), will operate on the park's inLine reservation system. Using a combination of wristbands and phones, guests are able to wait in a virtual line and then check in at the entrance when it is time to ride. Guests will only be allowed to enter these lines by waiting virtually. Those not wanting to carry a phone with them can make a reservation at the ride entrance and will be given a time to return. However, should there be any changes or delays that time could be pushed back. Those using a phone will receive updates. Both wave pools, **Bahari River**, and any kids' play areas will be accessible without use of the virtual line system.

In addition, the park will be changing hours and removing its **Happy Halloween Weekends** event for the 2020 season. However, two more weekends have been added to **Splashin' Safari** operations.

•holidayworld.com



A small dip out of the station leads into the horizontal blast section (above left). Riders face off in a head-to-head duel (above middle). At the finish (above right), the rafts meet up again to see which team came in first. COURTESY SPLASHIN SAFARI

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American Resort Management to oversee Showboat project



These renderings show a large glass structure similar in style to the highly successful Pump House at Jay Peak and Grand Prairie's Epic Waters Indoor Waterpark. COURTESY ARM



ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — American Resort Management (ARM) has been selected as the owner's representative for the **Showboat Hotel's** indoor water park. The \$100 million project, which was announced last month, will be located adjacent to the Showboat Hotel and the **Ocean Casino Resort** at the north end of the **Atlantic City Boardwalk**. It will provide a much-needed venue for the family market. The Showboat currently operates as a non-gambling destination in Atlantic City.

"We intend on building a cruise ship on land, and we searched nationwide for an expert to lead the effort," said **Bart Blatstein**, owner of the Showboat Hotel. "The search was a lengthy one, but one name was consistently brought up as the best of the best, **Rick Coleman** and his team from American Resort Management."

As owner's representative, ARM will oversee all aspects of project development. ARM has extensive experience in the hospitality, destination resort and attractions industries, and the team has found success in tackling the most complex projects and bringing them to fruition on time and within budget.

"This is a significant development for Atlantic City and the Showboat property, and we are beyond thrilled to play a role in helping to transform it into a world-class destination," said **Richard Coleman**, ARM CEO. "Our goal is to create the most unique indoor water park in the world."

ARM has previously consulted on a number of water park projects including **Splash Universe** in Indiana; **Castle Rock** in Branson, Missouri; **Fun World** in Atlanta, Georgia; and **Fort Rapids** in Columbus, Ohio. ARM is currently the operator of the **Pump House at Jay Peak**, Vermont; **Parrot Island** in Fort Smith, Arkansas and **Epic Waters Indoor Waterpark** in Grand Prairie, Texas. ARM helped Epic Waters earn recognitions such as the 2018 Leading Edge Award from the **World Waterpark Association** for its creativity in the development of new themes, facilities, programs, services and operational concepts in the water attractions industry.

—Jeffrey Seifert



NEWS SPLASH

AT: Jeffrey L. Seifert

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Kountry Resort Campgrounds in Racine, Ohio, opened a new Aqua Park inflatable obstacle course on July 3. The course, provided by **Aquaglide** is set up on the campground's swimming lake. Three other lakes on the property are used for boating and fishing. Unlike most obstacle courses which charge for a timed session, the Aqua Park is open daily from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and guests may enjoy the course for as long as they like for a single \$7 per person admission charge. The rate is reduced to \$5 after 4 p.m.

The park has no age requirement, but guests must be at least 36 inches tall. Life jackets are available but not required.

The campground, located in Meigs County near the Ohio River and West Virginia border, dates back to the late 1800s. The current owners purchased the property five years ago. In addition to tent camping, the resort offers a variety of cabins and a large reception hall for events. Although the attractions at the park primarily serve guests staying at the resort, day visitors are permitted to use the Aqua Park.

Cincinnati's Coney Island reopened more of its attractions in time for the Fourth of July weekend.

The park had already reopened the Sunlite Pool and Cannonball Cove on June 12. On July 3, the Twister waterslides, Typhoon Tower Splashground and the Storybook Paddleboats reopened as well.

It was decided, however, that the new Challenge Zone water obstacle course won't open until next year. The **Aquaglide** course which will occupy a portion of the Sunlite Pool, is said to be the largest Aquaglide course in the U.S.

In order to align with social distancing best practices, Coney Island is limiting its daily attendance. Daily tickets are sold online and must be purchased in advance. There are no ticket sales at the park gate. Guests are encouraged to wear masks while walking around, but masks are prohibited in the water.

In addition, visitors are not allowed to move chairs and tables from their locations to keep them distanced from other groups. They can bring their own chairs and beach towels for the grass area, but they must leave space between parties.

Six Flags Great America in Gurnee, Illinois, has opened its **Hurricane Harbor Water Park**, but the amusement park itself is remaining closed.

The water park held a preview event for members and pass holders from July 20 to July 26. All attendees were required to make a reservation online, with Diamond and Diamond elite members getting an early start with the reservation system.

Six Flags Hurricane Harbor in Rockford, Illinois, did a similar preopening for members and pass holders on July 20 and July 21, opening to the general public on July 22.

Both parks require advance reservations which can be made on the **Six Flags Reser-**

vation website which services all of the Six Flags properties.

As of press time the Six Flags Hurricane Harbor water parks in California, New Jersey, Arizona, New York and Massachusetts, remained closed. **Hurricane Harbor Splashtown** near Houston is also closed, although the other Six Flags water parks in Texas, Hurricane Harbor in Arlington and **White Water Bay** in San Antonio are open.

Noah's Ark water park in Wisconsin Dells announced across-the-board raises for seasonal staff hoping to attract local workers to fill out the park staff.

Noah's Ark lifeguards will see their pay increase from \$10 per hour to \$12, while housekeepers at the affiliated **Flamingo Motel** will make \$11.

Like many other Dells businesses, Noah's Ark employs J-1 students as seasonal workers, with much of the park's staff living abroad during the offseason. However, due to travel restrictions from COVID-19, the park's ability to bring in J-1 workers has been severely impacted.

Currently, the park is only able to operate nine of its attractions. Even with the push to bring in local staff, General Manager **Mark Whitfield**, said that some attractions will remain closed for the duration of 2020.

"We're anticipating being able to open most of the other rides," Whitfield said. "We will not open the second, smaller wave pool area, and we will not open the smaller lazy river. There may be one or two other rides where we have copies of those rides in the park that we don't open," said Whitfield.

Germany's **Europabad Karlsruhe** water park, sauna and spa has kept workers busy during the time the park has had to remain closed. The resort is taking the opportunity to update and refresh the facilities. Painting and tile work is being done in the bathrooms and the showers and toilet area have been redesigned. New plantings were added to the spa area to make it a more pleasant experience. All of the boards in the Finnish sauna have been completely replaced, including the wooden benches, and the heating system has been upgraded.

The Ice Lounge has been given a new "iceberg-look" so guests will immediately recognize it as a cold area.

The European bathing area is being given new artistic paintings with beach and sea scenes and palm trees providing a holiday feeling. A mural has been added to the swimming pool to make that area brighter and friendlier.

Several of the waterslides have been re-coated, and the queueing area of the Aqua-Rocket slide has a new surface along with better signage to help guide guests to the proper slide tower.

The new-for-2020 attraction has been put on hold and will likely not open until next year.

Currently the indoor and outdoor spas, saunas and solarium have reopened with restrictions in place, but the swimming pools and waterslides remain closed.

ADG-designed Soaky Mountain Waterpark now open in Tennessee

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SEVIERVILLE, Tenn. — The highly anticipated **Soaky Mountain Waterpark** officially opened for business on Saturday, June 27. The new, 50-acre waterpark is operated by **Wilderness Resorts** which also owns **Wilderness at the Smokies Waterpark** located across the street. That multi-lodge resort includes the **Wild Waterdome Indoor Waterpark** and the **Lake Wilderness Outdoor Waterpark**. Guests of the Smokies resort who purchased tickets and season pass holders were able to enjoy a sneak preview of the park on Thursday and Friday, June 25 and 26, prior to the grand opening weekend.

The water park is operated separately from the resort and requires a season pass or admission ticket. Guests staying at the Smokies Resort can purchase a special Stay & Soaky room package that includes admission to the brand-new Soaky Mountain Waterpark.

The new state-of-the-art water park was designed and built by **Aquatic Development Group (ADG)** which also provided the landscaping, filtration



equipment, pumps and Double FlowRider. ADG's WaveTek technology powers the wave pool and a winding, action-filled Tidal River.

ProSlide installed six custom waterslides including the first-of-its-kind Avalaunch, which combines a RocketBlast water coaster with four FlyingSaucer sections and ends with a TornadoWave. Also included in the attractions is a **Wibit Sports** water obstacle course. Younger kids will find an activity pool with small slides while older kids

The 35,000-square-foot wave pool (above left) is capable of producing surfable waves up to six feet high. A Wibit Sports floating obstacle course (above right) is open to all guests without the usual upcharge. COURTESY ADG

and adults can play on a busy-bee-themed waterplay structure known as The Hive. Adults looking to relax will appreciate the flat-water cabana pool.

ADG used a specific design aesthetic, which Soaky Mountain referred to as "Mountain-Modern," as a way to showcase the design and architecture of the region. The modern flare combined with a mountain/natural feel was the perfect showcase for a water park situated just a few miles from the Smoky Mountains.

ADG had to overcome a number of challenges with this particular project. True to its name, the site had a 100-foot elevation change and was com-



posed primarily of shale rock. ADG blasted and moved 750,000 cubic yards of earth and rock to flatten the site prior to construction. Throughout construction there were 60 rain wash-out days that brought construction to a halt. Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic presented its own set of obstacles, however construction was allowed to continue. The park was originally scheduled to open in May, and for the most part, the park was ready, however, government mandates kept the park closed until late June.

Because of current situation with COVID-19, water park officials are strongly encouraging guests to purchase their daily admission tickets in advance

due to restricted capacity levels. At opening, masks were optional in the park and not allowed in or on any water attractions. That changed on July 10 as a result of a county mandate that requires everyone to wear a face covering in all public indoor places. Guests are expected to wear a mask when not on a water attraction. All employees have been issued a face mask which is required when social distancing is not possible. Social distancing markers have been added to all queuing areas.

Once fully operational, the water park hopes to draw 400,000 in annual attendance including 100,000 visitors to Sevier County.

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- Tim Gantz, Soaky Mountain



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Schlitterbahn reaping the rewards from Cedar Fair leadership

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

NEW BRAUNFELS, Texas — For 40 years, Schlitterbahn has carved a pioneering trail in the water park industry. Having introduced numerous innovations and taken creative concepts off the charts, the purchase of the park by Cedar Fair last summer, along with the sister facility in Galveston, caused some loyal followers to watch for changes with some anxiety. The Schlitterbahn team has found that the company has allowed the individuality of each acquired property to remain intact.

Following a brief spring break opening prior to the coronavirus shutdown, the park was able to reopen again in June. Guests were quick to see multiple upgrades.

“As for the guest experience, I think the flashiest thing they notice is the new color on the slides,” said Angela Lackey Flournoy, area manager of marketing. “There are a lot of new pops of color in our Blastenhoff section in terms of new furniture and shade structures. It really adds to that atmosphere and the guest experience.”

Blastenhoff is a large area, one of many within the Schlitterbahn Resort, that features numerous groundbreaking attractions such as Master Blaster and the original Torrent River. Enhancing this area is a makeover of the beaches that emanate from the Torrent river. Now coated with a faux sandy appearance, the visual impact is both natural and striking.

“It feels better on the feet and it looks more cohesive,” said Flournoy. “It’s like we have started from scratch to make them look really pretty, really professional. Cedar Fair has a reputation of being very high quality. This is one of the areas



that really comes through.”

Schlitterbahn encompasses 70 acres and boasts 51 attractions, making it one of the largest water parks in the nation. Having celebrated its 40th anniversary last season, the park has introduced numerous innovative attractions and garnered countless awards over the decades, included an unbeaten 22-year streak of Golden Tickets for World’s Best Water Park. Management feels the Cedar Fair team is enhancing the strengths of the park and evolving its reputation.

“It’s not really sexy to talk about bathrooms, but our bathrooms have been completely redone,” said Flournoy. “Any of our guests who have been coming for a long time will notice it. I do! It’s a really cool change to have these beautiful ‘Chip and Joanna Gaines’ re-dos.”

Bathroom makeovers have taken place at both the New Braunfels and Galveston properties.

“Cedar Fair has invested millions of dollars into attractions aesthetics and maintenance,” added Aaron

Martinez, marketing manager, Schlitterbahn. “But we still have what people have loved. We have shaded picnic areas that are new or have been upgraded. New lounge chairs have been added, and our food and beverage locations have been enhanced as well.”

An addition of Refresh Stations has found favor with guests who are just looking for a refill and don’t need to wait in a food line. Schlitterbahn has introduced some new menu items also.

Management also notes upgrades and repairs have taken place behind the scenes that guests won’t necessarily notice.

Security features have been added at the various entrances to the park.

“We wanted to know who was coming into the park and what they were bringing in with them,” he said. “We’ve increased our security measures, even pre-COVID.”

The resort has been upgraded at the front offices as well as some of the individual rooms.

“Our gift shops have been through a complete remodel,”



New colors on the slides, new lounge furniture and a new sandy-styled surface along the beach of Blastenhoff are two visual upgrades guests will notice. COURTESY SCHLITTERBAHN

said Martinez. “This is one of the biggest differences. We gutted them and completely redid them.”

Those renovations included new ceilings, new paint, new floorings, new racks and fresh merchandise. “It takes a more modern look,” said Martinez.

More enhancements are being finetuned for the original sections of the park, which were slightly delayed but still ongoing

during the shutdown. Most planned goals have been met. However, the main projects for the Blastenhoff section and Surfenburg section were completed on time. Overall, guests are finding an abundance of modern and fresh looks.

“Things that people love about Schlitterbahn are still intact. We still have free parking; coolers are still welcome. That feel of Schlitterbahn and originality of the park being nestled up against the [Comal] River are still the same,” said Martinez. “One thing we have appreciated about Cedar Fair is that when they’ve taken on parks to be a part of the Cedar Fair family, they have allowed the individuality of those parks to remain intact. One of the things they fell in love with was the feel of Schlitterbahn. That’s what made them want it to be a part of their ‘house of brands.’”

“Some people were a little worried we were going to lose that Schlitterbahn feel. Not at all,” said Flournoy. “This is the best version of Schlitterbahn.”



New Refresh Stations (above left) allow guests to refill drink bottles without waiting in food lines. Beautiful makeovers to park restrooms are among enhancements that improve the guest experience (above right). COURTESY SCHLITTERBAHN



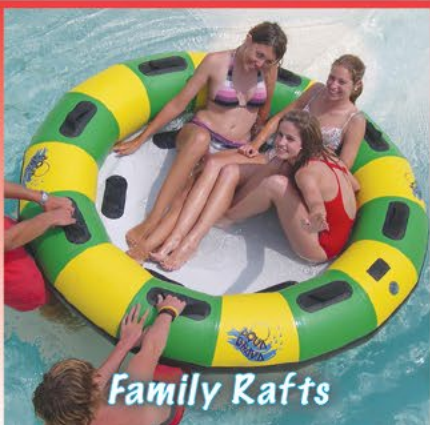
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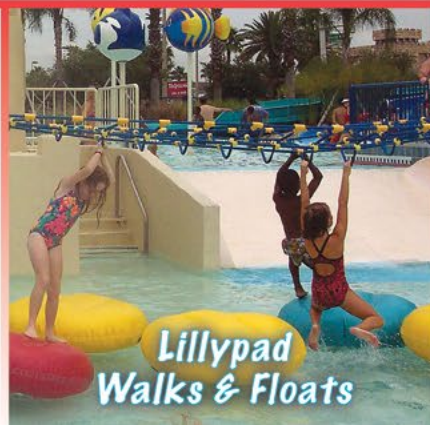
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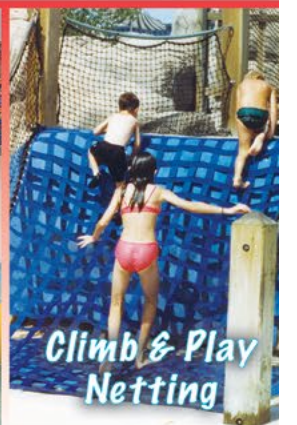
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Sidewinder Tubes & Rafts



Lilypad Walks & Floats



Climb & Play Netting



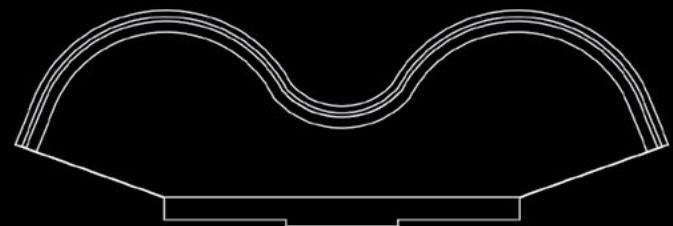
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BUSINESS & NEWSMAKERS

▶ Disney, labor unions skirmish — page 34 / Firestone Financial celebrates 55 years — page 38

Uncertainty created by government ban on labor visa programs

AT: Pam Sherborne

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UNITED STATES — As states begin to open for business after months of shutdowns caused by the coronavirus pandemic, some businesses, especially those in the amusement and hospitality sectors, have realized another level of uncertainty all due to an extension of the federal government's visa ban on temporary workers.

The ban was first implemented in June due to the pandemic. In mid-July, it was extended until the end of 2020. In addition to the extension, several visa programs were added to the ban including the J-1 and H-2B programs, both used heavily for seasonal employees in the amusement industry.

The J-1 visa is a non-immigrant visa issued to students and exchange visitors participating in programs that promote cultural exchange. Amusement parks, especially those located in the eastern part of the U.S. have used this program extensively.

The H-2B nonimmigrant program permits employers to temporarily hire nonimmigrants to perform nonagricultural labor or services in the U.S. The employment must be of a temporary nature for a limited period of time such as a one-time occurrence, seasonal need, peak load need or intermittent need. Many carnivals and other mobile businesses rely on many of these workers for seasonal employment. There are some permanent seasonal attractions that also use this program.

The Trump administration's original reason to limit immigration during the pan-



Attractions such as South Carolina's Broadway At The Beach (above left) and Noah's Ark Waterpark (above right) struggle to fulfill their staffing needs without access to J-1 students and H-2B workers.

COURTESY BROADWAY AT THE BEACH, NOAH'S ARK WATERPARK

demic was due to health concerns with an influx of individuals from outside the U.S. But, since the start of the pandemic and resulting shutdowns, unemployment rates have risen sharply in the U.S. Limiting the number of foreign workers, proponents said, would help put Americans back to work.

For some that is working. For others, it is not, at least not yet.

Ed Hodgdon, secretary, New England Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (NEAAPA), said what he is hearing is that attractions that have begun reopening are having to reduce their hours and offerings because they simply don't have the numbers of employees they need.

"It is not like we are picking foreign workers over Americans," Hodgdon said. "But it is a challenge. Some workers in the J-1 visa program who already had their visas in place were able to come over and work."

NEAAPA has been conducting weekly phone meetings to stay in touch with their members.

"During our last meeting,"

Hodgdon said, "Pat Finnegan who is stationed in Wisconsin Dells with **Whitewater West Industries**, expressed quite a bit of concern over the lack of available employees in that area."

The State of Wisconsin has fully reopened. According to a news story appearing in mid-July on a local ABC affiliate site, **WKOW**, Wisconsin Dells business leaders said that traditionally the area fills 16,000 seasonal jobs in a community where the workforce living there adds up to just a few thousand. The Wisconsin Dells area has grown to employ the second highest number of J-1 students in the nation.

But, according to the story, these business leaders feel they will be about 4,000 workers short this year.

The general manager of **Noah's Ark Waterpark**, Wisconsin Dells, **Mark Whitefield**, was quoted as saying: "We hire every single American that walks through the door." But, added the J-1 students are great to bring over.

Whitefield told the news agency that Noah's Ark opened a brand new dorm to house 450

workers this year. There were only 20 living there in mid-July.

Hodgdon said one of the reasons the program is so popular is the cultural aspect.

"Sometimes this is the only way some young people can get over here and experience what it is like to live here," he said. "And it goes both ways."

Officials at the Wisconsin Dell's **Wilderness Resort** spent their two-month shutdown hiring domestically. By offering some incentives, they were able to double their staff of local and U.S. workers, according to the **WKOW** story.

Yet, as far down as South Carolina, many employers were feeling the pinch of fewer workers. According to **Stephen Greene**, president and CEO of the **Myrtle Beach Area Hospitality Association**, businesses in his area only got a fraction of the 3,000 J-1 and H-2B workers they were expecting this year.

However, because some attractions had yet to reopen in mid-July in that state, shortages weren't as pronounced.

Greg Cheicko, president, **Outdoor Amusement Business Association (OABA)**,

said that so far there really had not been a lot happening in the carnival segment of the amusement industry due to the pandemic. Cancellations among festivals and fairs had kept many carnivals home.

"Some have set up in parking lots and such, but, in reality, there is really not much going on," he said. "No one is running at full capacity. We have plenty of labor available."

He said some operators received their H-2B employees and were able to keep them employed while others had to send them back. Some operators that had to send them home have now actually brought them back.

"There is really no commonality right now," Cheicko said. "We really need a couple of fairs to see how this is going to all work out."

Two upcoming fairs that have not canceled are the **Delaware State Fair**, Harrington, July 23-Aug. 1, and the **Kentucky State Fair**, Louisville, Aug. 20-30. **Wade Shows** provides the midway at Delaware and, for the first time this year, **Kissel Entertainment** will provide the midway in Kentucky.

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Modified themed retail/dining resurfaces in Southern California

AT: Dean Lamanna

dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

ANAHEIM, Calif. — As the coronavirus-caused moratorium on theme and amusement park operations in the Golden State drags on, a degree of normalcy has come back to several theme park properties in Southern California with the resumption of retail and dining just outside and, in one case, inside the park gates.

Disneyland Resort's Downtown Disney District, Universal Studios Hollywood's Universal CityWalk and Knott's Berry Farm's food and retail have at least partly returned to business.

Downtown Disney District began its phased reopening July 9. While most stores and dining spots were open with expanded outdoor seating, several major tenants, including **Ralph Brennan's Jazz Kitchen** and **Splitsville Luxury Lanes**, remained closed. Among the safety protocols initially implemented were contactless temperature screenings prior to entry, added hand-sanitizing stations, mandatory face coverings and physical distancing.

"We are following guidelines from health authorities and government agencies, as well as applying learnings from the [May 20] phased reopening at **Disney Springs** in Florida," said **Michael Ramirez**, resort public relations director.

Patrick Finnegan, vice president of **Disney California Adventure** and Downtown Disney District, admitted to being "very emotional" as the first guests streamed into the reopened promenade. "They were thanking us as they came in," he said. "They were all wearing face coverings and doing a great job of physically distancing, and they were smiling with their eyes."

In Universal City, Universal CityWalk began its phased reopening June 10. Among the first available returning businesses were **Voodoo Doughnut**, **Johnny Rockets**, **Starbucks**, **Buca di Beppo**, **Skechers** and **Guest Accessories**. Free self-parking and a single point of entry now welcome guests, who are required to undergo temperature checks and wear face coverings.

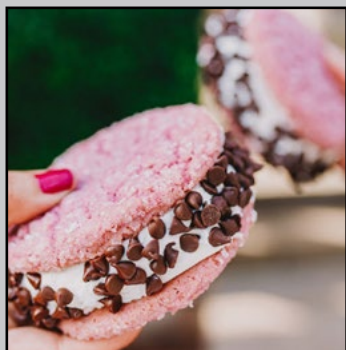
On July 10, the promenade announced that it had expanded outdoor dining adjacent to several restaurants. Capacity was limited at all venues, and all high-touch points, including chairs and tables, were undergoing rigorous cleaning between patrons.

In Buena Park, curbside and carryout service and patio dining have been in place for several weeks at **Knott's Berry Farm's** gate-adjacent dining and retail spots on Grand Avenue, most notably **Mrs. Knott's Chicken Dinner Restaurant**.

The park has made a clever move to allow guests back inside its gates with **Knott's Taste of Calico**, a safety-enhanced outdoor food-and-retail event that started July 17 and was set to run two consecutive three-day weekends. Guests purchasing a date-specific tasting card in advance can stroll the streets of the park's Ghost Town section, sampling unique boysenberry-flavored culinary creations and visiting gift shops and local crafters.

For more on these locations' safety protocols and limited operations, including the status of specific businesses, visit their respective websites.

- disneyland.com/dtd
- universalstudioshollywood.com
- knotts.com



A safety-enhanced Downtown Disney District, with expanded outdoor restaurant seating areas, and Knott's Taste of Calico event, featuring the Boysenberry Jam Sugar Cookiewich, are appealing to the appetites of theme park-deprived fans.

COURTESY DISNEYLAND RESORT, KNOTT'S BERRY FARM

Disney, labor unions skirmish over the terms for return of theme parks

California's COVID-19 caseload surge also hinders plans

AT: Dean Lamanna

dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

BURBANK, Calif. — While theme park operations at **Walt Disney World (WDW)** were making a jubilant, if cautious, phased return in Central Florida in early July, the outlook was not as cheerful at **Disneyland Resort** on the opposite coast.

Delays in the State of California's own phased reopening scuttled **The Walt Disney Co.'s** proposed plan to restart its Anaheim theme parks on July 17 — Disneyland's 65th anniversary. Coronavirus-related concerns raised by the more than two dozen labor unions serving Disneyland Resort, coupled with spiking COVID-19 numbers in the state and the resulting re-shutdown of indoor businesses and attractions, further impeded the company's push to reopen.

Disney park fans shared the unions' concerns. In early June, shortly after the company announced its proposal for welcoming guests back to Disneyland Resort, an anonymous group launched an online petition against reopening the parks too soon. It amassed more than 10,000 signatures in less than a day.

The hurdles faced by Disney's Southern California parks have not extended to **Downtown Disney District**, the resort's dining and retail promenade, which began its own phased reopening on July 9 as previously announced. (See story, this page.)

The unions' initial inability to achieve a resolution with Disney over safety conditions for its workers reached a head on June 17, when the **Coalition of Resort Labor Unions (CRLU)**, representing 12 of the unions (totaling about 17,000 workers) serving the resort, sent a letter to California Gov. **Gavin Newsom** outlining its concerns about the state possibly clearing Disney to reopen the parks on a too-rapid timetable.

"We are not yet satisfied that it is safe to reopen the Resort," said CRLU in the letter, while also applauding Disney for taking a leadership role in paying employees during the first month of the parks' closure and continuing to pay health benefits after placing workers on furlough in mid-April.



"Although Disney has... accommodated some of our concerns, such as the need for the company to take temperatures of all cast members as they enter the worksite, there are numerous questions about safety which Disney has not yet answered, including any serious discussion of 'testing.'"

The letter further stated that Disney rejected or had not responded to safety proposals made by CRLU member unions.

On June 24, a few days after the resort began recalling some employees in advance of its proposed reopening, union members announced that they would stage a protest outside the property on June 27. The same day, Disney issued a press release stating that, while it had reached signed agreements with 20 out of a total of 26 union affiliates and negotiations continued with the rest, that it was scrapping its July 17 target date, which had not yet received government approvals.

"We developed enhanced health and safety protocols for both cast and guests at **Shanghai Disney Resort**, **Hong Kong Disneyland Resort** and **Walt Disney World Resort** that have been approved, allowing us to reopen in a responsible manner and bring our cast members back to work," Disney stated in the release. "The State of California has now indicated that it will not issue theme park reopening guidelines until sometime after July 4."

"Given the time required for us to bring thousands of cast members back to work and restart our business, we have no choice but to delay the reopening of our theme parks and resort hotels until we receive approval from government officials."

The agreements between Disney and the 20 union affiliates, representing 11,000-plus

cast members, included employee health and safety measures such as additional sick pay, reduced park capacity, temperature checks, and face coverings for cast members and guests. The company also was planning to limit capacity and enforce physical distancing in the parks.

Although COVID-19 cases were also surging back east in the Sunshine State, and there was some pushback over the lack of plans for regular employee testing from **The Actors Equity Assn.**, a union representing just 600 members of Disney's Central Florida workforce of 77,000, WDW had the support of — or at least a lack of interference from — local and state government in reopening. An online petition called "Protect Our Magic Makers," started by an employee concerned about the safety of the parks' return amid the state's COVID-19 spike, had no apparent impact despite having gathered more than 16,000 signatures by the end of June.

In Anaheim, the June 27 union protest took place as planned in the form of a caravan in the streets around Disneyland Resort, with about 100 vehicles participating, according to local news reports. In a statement, the resort described the decision to proceed with the protest as "incredibly unfortunate" and contrary to its efforts "to get people back to work."

As *Amusement Today* went to press, discussions between Disney and several of the unions over safety protocols reportedly were ongoing, while California had not yet issued guidance regarding the reopening of theme and amusement parks — categorized under the third stage of the state's currently rolled-back four-stage reopening plan.

•disneyland.com

Women INFLUENCE

A view from the top...

CLM Entertainment Group LLC operates as a consultant to the amusement industry specializing in on-site risk management surveys. Founded in the late 1990s by **Alan Ramsay**, the company passed to **Melissa Plante** in 2011 after Ramsay's death.

Plante spends many hours on the road conducting and consulting on the myriad of safety services her company offers to many different types of amusement venues.

She has one full time employee, **Donald Fleck**, but will rev up others as needed.

Accomplishments and affiliations...

- Member, International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA)
- Member and Safety Committee Chair, New England Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (NEAAPA)
- Twice awarded NEAAPA's Meritorious Service Award
- Member, Pennsylvania Amusement Parks and Attractions
- Member, New Jersey Amusement Association
- Member, NAARSO

A chance meeting leads Plante to the happiest places on earth

WOONSOCKET, R.I. — Melissa Plante was just one of those kids who seemed to be more interested in taking things apart and putting them back together than actually playing with them.

"When I was 11 years old, I took my bike apart," Plante said. "I completely stripped it and then put it all back together."

No, she said, it didn't need to be fixed. She just wanted to see how it worked.

"I was 12 years old when I used my first riveter gun," she said. "It was so fun. You would have thought I was Rosie the Riveter (referring to the World War II cultural icon)."

Plante grew up in Woonsocket and lives there today. Her childhood was not unlike other children in the New England area.

Every summer her parents, Marcel and Simone Plante, took her and her two sisters on one trip to the beach and to two amusement and/or water parks. They visited places like Santa's Village in Jefferson, New Hampshire; Story Land, Glen, New Hampshire and Whales Tale Waterpark, Lincoln, New Hampshire. They also went to Rocky Point, Warwick, Rhode Island, a park that shuttered in 1996.

The one thing she did in which her mother and sisters had little interest, however, was hang out with her dad who was an automotive mechanic.

"I was always so interested in how things worked," Plante said, now looking at those times. "I guess that is where I got that love. I was his little shadow."

But that love of how things worked and of going to parks during the summers really didn't transfer in her mind as something she could make into a career.

After high school, Plante attended Rhode Island College in Providence, Rhode Island. She earned a bachelor's degree in psychology. Then, because she still hadn't found her direction in life, she applied and became an American Airlines flight attendant.

The job wasn't bad, albeit it was certainly a long way away from the things she really liked to do. And, as it turned out, Plante was stationed in Chicago, Illinois, a long way from her home. She wanted to remain living in Woonsocket. She ended up spending many hours commuting on the weekends and holidays. Sometimes her flights would change. Sometimes they were canceled.

"It became unbearable," she said.

She wanted to go home and she finally did, leaving her airlines job behind. As it turned out, it was one of the best things she ever did.

After her return, through a mutual friend, she met Alan Ramsay during a chance meeting that ended up changing her life. Ramsay, also from Woonsocket, had opened up his own business specializing in on-site risk management surveys of amusement facilities. Called CLM Entertainment Group, Plante ended up joining him in 2001.

She didn't really know the industry, but, as Ramsay's apprentice, she began to pick it quickly.

"I loved it," she said. "Alan was a great mentor. I went with him on the road. He taught me so much."

Ramsay encouraged her to become a certified risk evaluator (CRE). She ended up attending the same training as Ramsay, Glynn Barclay & Associates, Inc., in San Antonio, Texas.

She also started attending NAARSO's safety management courses and, over the



years, has reached a Level II. She said she is now one of only about 15 women that have reached this level in NAARSO.

"This is a male dominated area of the industry," Plante said. "And I wish I could say that I am seeing more young women get into the safety and engineering side, but I really don't."

She does feel that, because she is a woman, some people have doubted her abilities over the years, but that happens less and less.

"Although I did recently have an electrician come to my house for a repair," Plante said, with a laugh. "He spent about 30 minutes explaining to me the differences between grounding and bonding. I kept telling him I knew what he was talking about, but he just kept on."

In 2011, Ramsay, Plante's mentor and colleague, passed away suddenly. With his family's blessing, she took over the company.

She hasn't regretted it once even though it hasn't always been easy balancing the business side with her family. Her father passed away several years ago, but she is thankful for her mother who has been there for her and her son, Jordan, 10.

She has seen quite a few changes over the years. Rides have transformed from primarily mechanical operations to electrical with new technology. Societal changes have led to changes in industry protocols.

"Twenty years ago we weren't training in active shooting," Plante said. "Twenty years ago, not everyone had cell phones. Now, they have become extensions of some people."

People are so attached to their phones, she said, they will jump into a roller coaster enclosure to retrieve them.

The current coronavirus pandemic has changed many safety protocols. It is hard to know what will become the new norm.

But she is ready for whatever comes. She is ready for the IAAPA Expo 2020 in Orlando, Florida, where her company is the official show safety inspection company. She is ready for amusements to get up and running full throttle.

"I still feel like a little kid when I walk onto a midway, all the sounds, the lights, the laughter. Those places may not be Disney, but they are the happiest places on earth. I still just get that rush."

—Pam Sherborne

MARKET WATCH

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 07/16/20	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	55.35	64.97	33.00
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	27.10	64.86	13.00
Comcast Corp./NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	42.14	47.74	31.70
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	119.43	153.41	79.07
Dubai Parks & Resorts	DXBE:UH	DFM	0.12	0.24	0.09
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	31.62	79.80	12.55
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	9010	TYO	3265.00	4830.00	2080.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	0.42	1.34	0.41
Leofoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	17.10	17.95	9.08
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	17.60	34.63	5.90
Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd.	RCL	NYSE	53.94	135.31	19.25
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	JP:6357	TYO	606.00	1212.00	490.00
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	16.94	36.96	6.75
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	21.17	59.52	8.75
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	694.00	788.00	550.00
Village Roadshow	AU:VRL	ASX	2.05	4.10	0.77

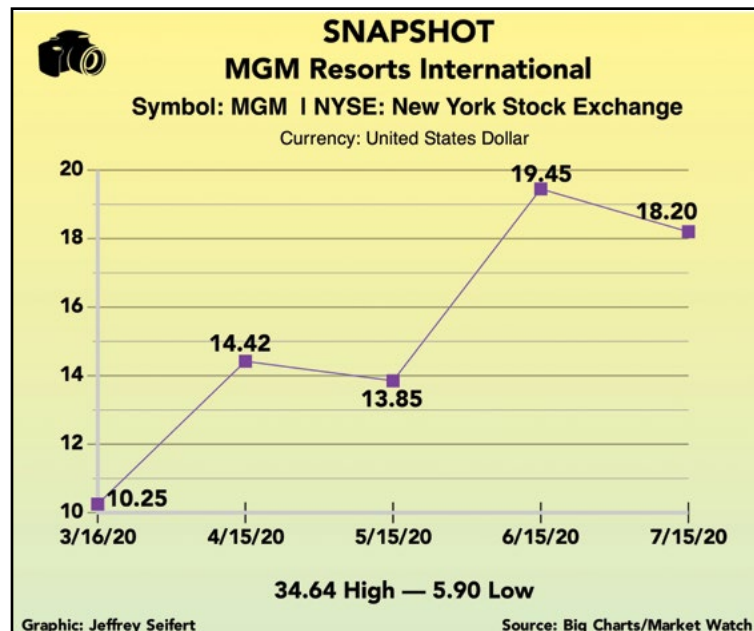
STOCK PRICES ABOVE ARE GENERALLY QUOTED IN THE FOREIGN CURRENCY IN WHICH THE COMPANY IS LOCATED

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

—SOURCES: Bloomberg.com; Wall Street Journal



A diver at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom lets guests know he has missed their visits. The park reopened its animal attractions in June. All rides remain closed at this time.
COURTESY SIX FLAGS DISCOVERY KINGDOM



DIESEL PRICES

Region (U.S.)	As of 07/13/20	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$2.531	-\$0.549
Midwest	\$2.313	-\$0.643
Gulf Coast	\$2.198	-\$0.607
Mountain	\$2.345	-\$0.630
West Coast	\$2.594	-\$0.615
California	\$3.251	-\$0.788

CURRENCY

On 07/16/20 \$1 USD =

0.8758	EURO
0.7939	GBP (British Pound)
107.01	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9418	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.4273	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.3557	CAD (Canadian Dollar)

BUSINESS WATCH

Cedar Fair extends exchange offer

SANDUSKY, Ohio — Cedar Fair, L.P., Canada's Wonderland Company, Magnum Management Corporation and Millennium Operations LLC announced that they extended the expiration date of their offer to exchange up to \$500,000,000 in aggregate principal amount of its registered 5.250% senior notes due 2029 for their \$500,000,000 in aggregate principal amount of outstanding unregistered 5.250% senior notes due 2029 that were issued in a private offering in June 2019.

The exchange offer was originally scheduled to expire at 5:00 p.m. (EST) on July 6, 2020, but was extended to 5:00 p.m. (EST) on July 8, 2020. As of the close of business on July 6, 2020, \$480,582,000 in aggregate principal amount of outstanding unregistered 5.250% senior notes due 2029 had been validly tendered to the exchange agent by the holders thereof.

Picsolve merges with Pomvom

LONDON — Picsolve, a digital content capture partner for world-class visitor destinations, and Pomvom, the Tel Aviv-based AI tech company, announce they have merged. The merger, which was completed on June 19.

Picsolve CEO David Hockley commented, "This merger will create a very powerful global player in the entertainment technology sector. We will combine our market knowledge and expertise, our innovative products and solutions and global footprint, with Pomvom's industry leading technology, proven track record in new market development and dynamic, start-up culture. Together we will create a clear market leader that is capable of supporting our customers as they start to reopen and take advantage of the green shoots of recovery in the market."

Malahat Sky Walk selects Gateway Ticketing

GILBERTSVILLE, Pa. — Malahat Sky Walk, a new attraction on Southern Vancouver Island set to open in Spring 2021, has chosen Gateway Ticketing Systems and the Galaxy Ticketing and Admission Control software.

Malahat Sky Walk will provide views of Southern Vancouver Island from its 2,133-foot-long treetop journey, which leads guests to a gently sloping spiral 131 feet above the forest floor. Malahat Sky Walk aims to bring interactive activities for guests to immerse themselves in local Malahat Nation culture, all within an adventurous venue that is comfortably accessible to all guests, including those in wheelchairs or with strollers. The Sky Walk will also boast a shop, café, kids' playground and picnic area.

The attraction initially plans to launch with Galaxy Ticketing Point-of-Sale, as well as Membership, Order Entry and Upsell modules. Since they are opening with a café and gift shop, they will also be utilizing Galaxy's Food & Beverage and Retail modules, unifying their other profit centers with their Ticketing POS to drive increased revenue and gain a more comprehensive view of per-cap spending.

Walltopia Headquarters suffers attack

SOFIA, Bulgaria — On July 5, at about 3 a.m., an attempt to set fire in the headquarters of Walltopia — world climbing wall and active entertainment attractions manufacturer, located in Sofia, Bulgaria — was made. The culprits used incendiary liquid to set fire to a temporary rainbow-colored flag installation on the facade of Walltopia's building.

The crime recorded by the security cameras can undoubtedly be defined as arson. The motive of the four attackers is clear — hatred of the Pride movement, the members of the LGBTQ community and their supporters in the face of Walltopia.

The rainbow flag is a symbol of the LGBTQ society, and with its annual installation on the facade of the Walltopia building, the company expresses its solidarity with people of different sexual orientations and gender identities who live with limitations to their rights.

ON THE MOVE

Burbank, California-based **Walt Disney Imagineering** (WDI) has named **Barbara Bouza** president of business operations, design and delivery. She will oversee an interdisciplinary team of creative and technical experts and work collaboratively with stakeholders across the business to design, develop and execute projects for Disney theme parks, attractions, resort hotels, cruise ships, retail, dining and entertainment centers. With over 25 years of management experience, Bouza most recently served as co-managing director, principal, of **Gensler Los Angeles**, where she brought strategic design management to clients including **Netflix**, **Jet Propulsion Laboratory/NASA** and **City of Hope** medical center. A fellow and former Los Angeles president of the **American Institute of Architects**, she also served on the board of the Southern California chapter of the **International Interior Design Assn.**

**Bouza**

Betson Enterprises of Carlstadt, New Jersey, has promoted **Bob Dipipi** to vice president of purchasing and sales. He is responsible for all amusement and vending equipment purchasing, factory relationships and inventory management. Additionally, he continues to help manage the sales organization and work with key accounts. Dipipi, a 28-year amusement industry veteran, joined Betson in 1995 and rose through the company's sales ranks, most recently serving as director of sales.

**Dippi**

The Neon Museum in Las Vegas has selected **Victor Ehikhamenor** as its 2020 National Artist in Residence. Ehikhamenor, a Nigerian-American abstract artist, photographer and writer, will join The Neon Museum for eight weeks this fall to create works inspired by the museum's collection of iconic Las Vegas signs. Collaborating with members of the Las Vegas community, he will collect poems, statements, and short stories that will be interpreted through large-scale drawings and interwoven into neon-accented sculpture and installation work. A 2016 **Rockefeller Foundation** Bellagio Fellow, Ehikhamenor was one of three artists to represent Nigeria at the first Nigerian Pavilion in the 57th **Venice Biennale** in Italy in 2017. He received his M.F.A. from the **University of Maryland**, College Park, and maintains studios in Lagos, Nigeria, and Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

**Ehikhamenor**

Mallorie Levent has joined the team at Ringsted, Denmark-based **MK Themed Attractions** to support and grow the design company's French-speaking client market. She previously worked for the amusement equipment manufacturer **Concepts 1900**, a supplier of French-produced carousels in the northeast of Paris, which became for her a source of valuable insight and understanding of the attractions industry's French-speaking market sector. MK Themed Attractions has several French theme park projects in its expanding portfolio.

**Levent**

Ocean Park in Hong Kong has tapped **Chinese Estates Holdings** property group tycoon **Lau Ming-wai** as its new chairman, replacing **Leo Kung Lin-cheng**. Lau has served on the park's board since 2008 and, at 39, becomes the youngest chairman in its history following his promotion from deputy. The move comes during a turbulent time for the resort, which reopened June 13 after being closed for months because of the coronavirus and received a HK\$5.4 billion bailout from the legislature to keep it going. **Matthias Li Sing-chung**, chief executive of Ocean Park, was set to retire, having served the theme park since 1994 in various roles, including CFO.

**Ming-Wai**

U.K.-based **7thSense Design** has hired **Eric Nolfo** as project manager, expanding its North America operations to Greater Los Angeles and the western U.S. Nolfo's 20-year career in the entertainment industry has found him in a wide range of project management and technical direction positions — including, most recently, with **The Producers Group** as technical coordinator for **Bollywood Park's** **Dabangg Stunt Show** and **Motiongate Dubai's** "Step Up Dubai, All In!" show. In Indonesia, he served as technical director for **Trans Studio Cibubur's** Pacific Rim dark ride and production manager for the **Trans Studio Cibubur Stunt Show**; he also provided technical support for both the **Road Rage** dark ride and **Temple Raiders Stunt Show** at **Trans Studio Bali**.

**Nolfo****Cedar Fair re-elects board members**

SANDUSKY, Ohio — **Cedar Fair Entertainment Co.** has announced that its unit-holders re-elected **Gina D. France**, **Matthew A. Ouimet** and **Richard A. Zimmerman** to the board of directors of its general partner, **Cedar Fair Management, Inc.**, for three-year terms expiring in 2023.

"We are pleased to retain on our board Gina France, serving as chair of the Audit Committee and a member of the Nominating and Corporate Governance Committee, and Matt Ouimet, having formerly served as executive chairman of the board and Cedar Fair CEO," said Zimmerman, Cedar Fair president and CEO. "Our board's collective knowledge and expertise is particularly invaluable during unique and disruptive periods of our business like we are addressing currently, and is important in maintaining our team's long-term focus squarely upon our primary objective of consistently building unitholder value."

The limited partners also confirmed the appointment of **Deloitte & Touche, LLP**, as the company's public accounting firm.

**France****Ouimet****Zimmerman****OBITUARIES****Rudolf Barth, German fairground showman**

BONN, Germany — Rudolf Barth, recognized in Germany as the elder statesman of the country's fairground industry, died June 2. He was 80.

Born in 1939 in Wittlich and raised around the amusement business, Barth dropped out of school to head up his family's carnival company. A leading midway supplier for more than three decades, he became part of a long line of showmen who shaped the German folk festival scene.

His company, Rudolf Barth und Sohn KG, is based in Munich and Euskirchen. Its star attraction is the world's largest portable roller coaster, **Olympia Looping**, an Oktoberfest favorite designed by Anton Schwarzkopf and Werner Stengel in 1989 and featuring five loops. It earned its owner the nickname "Lord of the Rings."

Barth was active in the business until 2018 and was married to his wife, Elisabeth, for more than 60 years. The couple had three sons, Peter, Otto and Rolf, who represent the family's sixth generation of showmen. Six of Barth's nine grandchildren also are in the business.

**Barth****Raymond Hoffman, The Great Allentown Fair**

SLATINGTON, Pa.— Raymond L. Hoffman, executive chairman and CEO of The Great Allentown Fair, passed away June 1. He was 69.

Hoffman was involved with the Lehigh County Agricultural Society (LCAS), owner-operator of The Great Allentown Fair and AgriPlex, for 40 years. In 1980, he was elected to the board of directors and subsequently held several officer positions within LCAS — including treasurer, secretary, librarian, archivist and environmentalist.

In 1989, Hoffman was voted onto the executive committee, becoming the youngest elected member in LCAS history. He was elected executive chairman and CEO in 2011 and held the position until his death.

In 2015, Hoffman was honored with the Friend of the Fair Award, presented by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

Hoffman is survived by his wife, Veronica; children, Lori J. Grischott, Debora L. Chabak and Brian R. Hoffman; stepdaughters, Pamela A. Stettler and Amy E. Price; and six grandchildren.

**Hoffman****Luigi Rabaiotti, carpenter, Canobie Lake Park**

SALEM, N.H. — Luigi Rabaiotti, a longtime employee of Canobie Lake Park, died June 16 of complications from Parkinson's disease. He was 78.

Rabaiotti was born in Bardi, Italy, in the Apennine Mountains, on Dec. 21 1941, to the late Gabrielle Rabaiotti and Virginia Rabaiotti. At the age of 32, his talent as a master woodworker and craftsman was noticed by one of the owners of Canobie Lake Park, who convinced him to immigrate to the U.S. to work as a carpenter at the park. There, Rabaiotti earned the respect of the staff for using his skills to help to beautify the property.

Rabaiotti is survived by his wife; Ana Barbosa; sister; Maria Rabaiotti Butti; brother; Maurício Rabaiotti; and many nieces and nephews.

**Rabaiotti****Janie Murrell Snyder, carnival concessionaire**

NASHVILLE — Janie Murrell Snyder, a carnival operator and concessionaire who most recently worked with Big Rock Amusements, Inc., passed away May 19. She was 68.

Snyder was born in 1952 in Maryville, Tennessee, to the late Robert Eugene Murrell and Gracie Irene Arwood. Her childhood was spent in Rockford on a chicken farm surrounded by family, including four siblings.

In 1973, a friend invited Snyder to go to a carnival. There, she met the carnival owner's son, Hillman Snyder, Jr., whom she married the following year. The Snyders worked with the carnival before owning and operating their own show, Snyder and Metts Amusements, until 2006.

More recently, Snyder was known for serving fresh mini-doughnuts and frozen lemonade through her Donut Factory concession on the Big Rock Amusements midway.

Snyder is survived by her husband of 46 years, Hillman; daughter, Jill; two granddaughters and a great-grandson.

**Snyder**

Bill introduced protecting cash as a payment choice

WASHINGTON D.C. — U.S. Senators **Kevin Cramer** (R-ND) and **Bob Menendez** (D-NJ), Senate Banking Committee members, introduced the Payment Choice Act, a bipartisan bill to provide customers the freedom to choose how to pay for goods or services by prohibiting businesses from refusing to accept cash, posting signs that cash is not accepted, or charging a higher price for using cash.

"Businesses who prohibit cash payments discriminate against the millions of Americans who do not have

bank accounts while forcing customers to exclusively use a less secure form of payment," said Senator Cramer. "Our legislation protects people's right to choose their preferred currency and ensures the money we print remains usable as legal tender for all debts, just as it says."

"While I fully understand that businesses have expanded their contactless payment options during the pandemic, refusing cash discriminates against certain populations and denies people equal access to the same goods or ser-

vices. The truth is: not everyone carries a credit card or uses cashless apps, and customers paying with cash — legal tender printed and backed by the U.S. Treasury — should not be denied goods or services," said Senator Menendez.

"Not only is consumer choice in payment crucial to millions of unbanked Americans, ensuring cash remains a viable payment option is critical to small businesses throughout the country," said **Amusement and Music Operators Association** President **Greg Trent**.

Firestone Financial celebrates 55th anniversary in 2020

NEEDHAM, Mass. — **Firestone Financial**, a subsidiary of **Berkshire Bank**, celebrates its 55th anniversary this year. Firestone Financial is a top lender in the amusement, attractions, fitness franchise, and vending industries.



"Firestone has achieved this milestone through the dedication of all our employees and the continued support of our customers, channel partners, and industry associations across all of our lines of business," said Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer **Michael Smith**.

"Over the years we've stayed true to our roots in amusement and carnival financing while expanding our offerings and building relationships with innovative manufacturers who are constantly working to evolve our core industries."



Smith

"The celebration comes at a unique time," continued Smith. "Now more than ever, we're dedicated to supporting our customers and guiding them through the current economic crisis as they look to thrive in the new post-pandemic environment."

Founded in 1965, Firestone Financial was acquired by Berkshire Bank in 2015. The company is active in numerous industry associations, including **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA)**, **American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA)**, and **National Independent Concessionaires Association (NICA)**, and are a 3-Star Game Master Sponsor of **Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA)**.

Firestone attends industry events throughout the year, including the **2020 IAAPA Expo** in Orlando, Florida, scheduled for Nov. 17-20, where the company will be located on the show-floor at booth #1615.

firestonefinancial.com



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SAFETY, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

▶ Zamperla provides safety additions — page 42 / Wibit unveils inflatable Beach Cocoon — page 48

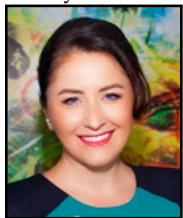
Embed launches new Hygiene Defence non-toxic product line

AT: John W.C. Robinson
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SINGAPORE — Embed, known for its cashless business management systems and solutions for the amusement, entertainment and leisure industries, has stepped forward to help businesses reopen safely in a world with COVID-19 by announcing its Hygiene Defence line of products.

Embed promotes that the products are stronger than harsh industrial cleaners without the toxic health risks, killing 99.9% of a broad spectrum of pathogens — including COVID-19 — on contact. In addition to cleaning all surfaces, Hygiene Defence can help keep your operation free of airborne pathogens.

“Embed has always been about innovation (albeit, in technology, but one of the values of our company is innovation and it’s a cultural thread that drives and informs every operating decision) and it’s why we work with the most apt partners who share the same commitment to the evolution of our industry.



Welsh

Evolution can’t happen without a spirit of innovation,” said **Renee Welsh**, CEO of Embed. “It made perfect sense for us to develop products that are stronger than harsh industrial cleaners without the toxicity. Embed Hygiene Defence protection is what our industry most needs now, helping our industry partners to address the new-normal way of life and going the ‘social-distance’ with them to get through this together.”

Embed partnered with



The Hygiene Defence product line is the latest salvo from Embed in the ongoing industry battle to exist in a world dealing with COVID-19. The safe, non-toxic line disinfects surfaces and offers airborne Defence.
COURTESY EMBED

DZSA and Australia-based **San-Air** to develop products that are stronger than harsh industrial cleaners without the toxicity.

Independently tested by **Eurofins**, a TGA-licensed laboratory, **UNSW** and **Chemsil Pty Ltd.**, every Embed Hygiene Defence product is formulated with a proprietary mix of 100% Australian natural active ingredients consisting of organic-certified, biodegradable, steam-distilled essential oils. Lasting for four hours on surface areas, and airborne Defence 24/7 protection over 30 days, the Embed Hygiene Defence product line-up provides enhanced protection to the industry’s employees and guests.

“Studies have shown that a new type of customer is emerging from this pandemic. After a long lockdown period, the surge of consumers are emerging and only taking their families to businesses they perceive as safe. They will be more conscious of hygiene, price and social distancing than ever before,” added Welsh. “We’ve seen this



around the world with our customers, as businesses reopen and close as a second wave hits, etc. Consumers are incredibly savvy and they avoid exposing their families to toxic cleaning products, so they won’t take their families to an operation they perceive as unsafe.

“It’s unequivocal that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the industry, with the ongoing closure of venues and the new operating models that operators [are adopting] as it pertains to cleaning protocols and stricter cleaning schedules, which results in more cleaning than ever before and equals a higher level of toxic exposure to families than ever before. Embed Hygiene Defence is an alternative sustainable solution to an ongoing problem.”

Embed has continually stepped forward to assist the

industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. The company launched a free, online COVID-19 Resource Center early in the pandemic. In addition, Embed began offering its premier product, Mobile Wallet, for free to the industry so all attractions would have an easier time embracing contactless payment options.

“At Embed, we want to do our part to support our customers and industry. We thought long and hard on what would be the most powerful demonstration of our commitment to our customers and our industry’s recovery, and we came up with new initiatives every single month since this was declared a pandemic: free Mobile Wallet for all (giving away our latest award-winning innovation simply because contactless payments is what the

industry most needs now), a resource center with free professional creative toolkits for operators to use when reopening, free downloadable white papers and ongoing education via blogs and EmbedLIVE,” stated Welsh.

“The aim of all these initiatives is to bring the light of hope to the industry so we can weather this storm collectively and see the rare opportunity to reinvent, redesign and rewrite the future of our exciting industry. We will go the social distance with our industry and emerge with a better, stronger business for the consumer who awaits. We’ll get through this together, and not only survive, but thrive.”

Customers, both existing and new to Embed, can order the Hygiene Defence product line from Embed’s webstore.

•embedcard.com



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Rocken Graphics recently began helping carnivals, concessionaires and amusement parks with an inexpensive solution to social distance signage. The stencils come in four different designs that can be used over and over again, versus a one-time decal or sticker. COURTESY ROCKEN GRAPHICS

Rocken Graphics steps forward, creates social distancing stencils

AT: B. Derek Shaw
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GIBSONTON, Fla. – “Necessity is the mother of invention,” is how Kenny Smith, owner, **Rocken Graphics**, describes the latest product his company introduced to help during the pandemic. Carnivals and food concessionaires travel every week. In this era of social distancing, it becomes a costly proposition to apply distancing decals to concrete or other hard outdoor surfaces at each location. Smith thought, “What can I do to help these guys out?”

Using CAD software and his computer numerical control machine, Smith created four different template designs that were made into social distancing stencils that can be easily spray painted at six foot distances. The stencils can be used on various hard surfaces, although it is not recommended for use on gravel or tall grass. “Any paint will work,” said Smith. “There is a chalk paint certain stores sell that is removable.” Smith says his product utilized collaboration with others. “We looked at what everybody wanted.”

Numerous carnivals around the country are already using the stencils including **Luehrs’ Ideal Rides, Evans-United Shows, Reithoffer Shows, and Brown’s Amusements** among others. One of the first uses was at the **Pickaway County Fair**, Circleville, Ohio, during its eight-day fair in late June. Rocken Graphics is also approaching a few amusement parks as well for potential use. Brown points out that the stencils are a one-time investment. His company has recently provided hand sanitizer stations as well. “Whatever they need,” said Smith.

The 20-year-old company manufactures printed and solid canvas for the carnival and amusement industry, along with custom-designed tents, ride canvas, ballys, game and food tents.

•amusementcanvas.com

Rain boosts attendance for Funspot reopening

LACONIA, N.H. — After three months of a coronavirus shutdown, **Funspot**, which is touted as the “largest arcade in the world,” reopened its doors on a rainy June 29. It was one of the factors that helped make the reopening a huge success.

Three months was a long break for a venue that rarely misses a day of business. However, **Bob Lawton**, who founded the business with his late brother, John Lawton, in 1952, wasn’t complaining. Although certainly glad to be reopened, he looks at safety as always being first.

He said in an interview for a local news agency, *Laconia Daily Sun*, prior to the June 29 opening: “I’m not really complaining. It’s just one of those things that you never faced before and you never may face again.”

“I never worry about anything. I know once we open again, things are going to be great. It’s one of those things you have to go through. You hate it, but what are you going to do? If something comes up [that] I don’t have control over, I don’t care about it.”

Funspot offers over 600 games including arcade and video games, pinball, bowling and **Skee-Ball**. It also is home to the **American Classic Arcade Museum**, a nonprofit organization that preserves classic video games and pinball machines from 1970s and ‘80s. The museum houses about 300 of the classic games and cost only a quarter to play.

In addition, there is an 18-hole indoor miniature golf course, a free party room that can be used with reservations, a restaurant called **Braggin’ Dragon** and a pub called **D.J. Long Tavern**.

Even though the shutdown lasted for three months, there was little time wasted. It gave Funspot employees extra time for maintenance, cleaning and reorganizing. The Skee-Ball alleys were taken outside for a deep clean. A new sign at the Skee-Ball concession encourages customers to “please respect one another’s personal space while in this line and elsewhere.”

Every area of the bingo hall was scrubbed and the **Braggin’ Dragon** was given a deep cleaning. Barriers were set up in the redemption areas to keep guests further back from the counter.

Seating in the bowling area was reconfigured to allow more social distancing.

There was even time to paint a new pirate-themed mural on the walls in the kiddie room.

The plan for social distancing at the bowling alley includes assigning a party of five or less to one lane. The adjoining lane is being kept vacant. If the party consists of more than five guests, they may use two adjoining lanes and then the third lane remains vacant.

Now that it is open, employees are on hand to do continuous cleaning and sanitizing of the games between uses, wiping down hundreds of game control panels.

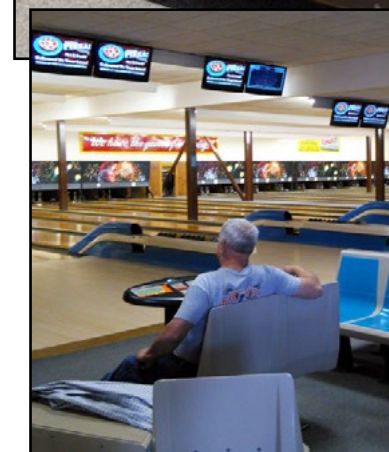
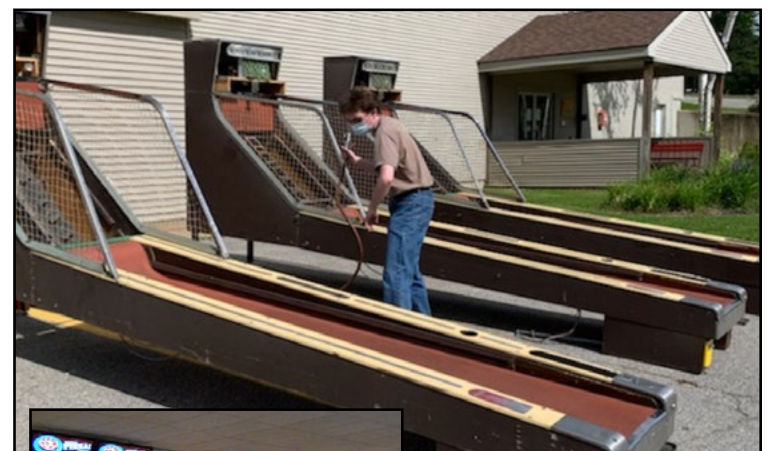
—Pam Sherborne

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Funspot employees took advantage of the time from the facility's recent COVID-19 shutdown for maintenance, cleaning and reorganizing (above). Seating in the bowling area (left) was reconfigured for social distancing. COURTESY FUNSPOT



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Non-irritant. Gentle on skin. Essential oils soften skin.	Skin Irritant. Hazardous for skin. Chemical gloves required.
Non-flammable. Water-based.	Highly Flammable. Ethanol-based.
Long-lasting Protection by leaving a protective coating (active for 4 hours on surface areas).	High Flash Rate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethanol-based products evaporates in 3-5 minutes. No continued protection, rendering it ineffective. Any exposure to sun increases flash rate, evaporating in as little as 30-seconds, rendering it ineffective.
Non-toxic. Safe for families and society's most vulnerable: children and the elderly.	Major Health Hazards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Endocrine Disrupter (impacting everything from development to reproduction, metabolism, DNA sequencing). Asthma and other respiratory problems. Release of cancer-causing chemicals (like formaldehyde). Elevated risk of birth defects. Chemical burns and allergic reactions. Poisoning. Hormone disruption.
Non-Corrosive and Non-Abrasive.	Corrosive and damages surface areas (damaging expensive games via discoloration, plastic resin, and any leakage into mechanical/electrical hardware via buttons or handles will destroy game and becomes highly flammable).
Airborne Hygiene Defence purifies air while killing 99.9% of a broad spectrum of pathogens, including COVID-19, airborne bacteria, viruses, fungi spores and mold.	Air purifiers do not kill pathogens. Air fresheners do not kill airborne pathogens, including bacteria fungi spores or mold.
Safe for use on all food prep and eating surfaces.	Unsafe for use on all food prep and eating surfaces and too flammable for kitchen use.
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Zamperla offers new ride safety additions to increase capacity

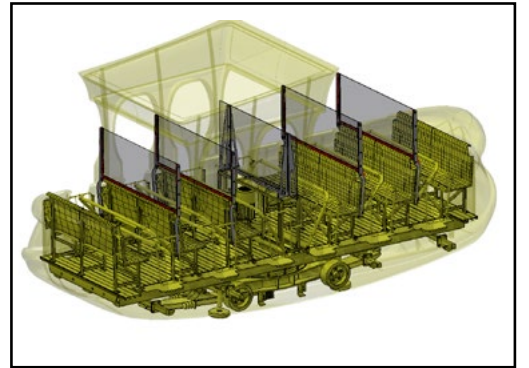
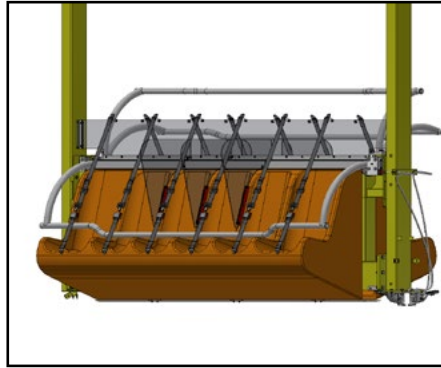
AT: Tim Baldwin
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BOONTON, N.J. — The coronavirus pandemic has park operators thinking outside the box. With newer, more stringent safety protocols, social spacing has reduced capacity on many rides. Zamperla has innovated solutions to many of its rides to assist operators with both: safety and capacity.

As seen in numerous grocery stores nowadays, plexiglass partitions are being utilized to separate people, helping all parties remain safe.

“Right now, we’ve looked at the data, and we’ve [started with] the most popular rides from the last few years,” said **Michael Coleman**, North American Sales Manager. “We’ve let our parks and clients from around the world fill out a form to let us know what their needs are, and we are also compiling that data.”

Zamperla’s Prototype Team is designing plexiglass barriers for most of the company’s classics: Crazy Bus, Disk’O, Jump Around, Rockin’ Tug, Magic Bikes, Jumping Tower, Happy Swing and more. Because of the clear partitions, park guests are enabled to enjoy attractions to



For safety and to maintain capacity, Zamperla provides plexiglass barriers for rides such as Happy Swing and Rockin’ Tug to customers for free. Partitions separate riders, with the exception of parents riding outer seats with children. COURTESY ZAMPERLA

the fullest.

The intention is to let a full complement of riders enjoy the ride while the barriers keep different parties separated and safe.

“Our portfolio is about 60 different rides and attractions. We are trying to meet our customer demands one by one,” said Coleman.

Zamperla has put a little mindfulness in its efforts. For instance, the Happy Swing and Jumping Star rides have end seats that accommodate adults riding with children. The company felt it was important to keep those paired seats barrier free, but still separate other groups.

“Our intention is to provide the plexiglass barriers and instructions to the customer free of

charge,” Coleman told *Amusement Today*. “The hope is that each park has the means to handle the back end locally, but if they don’t, we will be able to satisfy that need.”

The barriers are being designed for ease of installation. No major changes to the ride are required, and park technicians can generally install the new attachments on their own.

In addition to the flat rides, Zamperla is designing appropriate barriers for its line of roller coaster models as well.

Coleman noted that businesses of all types are adopting plexiglass barriers. Whether such additions become permanent following the pandemic remains to be seen. Having options is a good thing. “This can really

help with consumer confidence and keep people comfortable,” he said. “We’re looking at new rides being shipped with this added option going forward.”

Zamperla notified clients in mid-June of these potential solutions. Coleman reported that as soon as the communications went out, he started receiving phone call, emails and texts. The response was overwhelming.

“It has been a positive response from everyone,” he said.

Zamperla has demonstrated an element of heart within its leadership, whether it be its donations to Give Kids the World or designing ride vehicles that are inclusive.

“Ultimately we are our own client as well at three dif-

ferent facilities,” said Coleman. “We know what it’s like firsthand when we can’t open. The first of our properties to open is Luna Farm in Italy. Our goal is to reopen with the barriers in place.”

In addition to the indoor park in Italy, Zamperla manages two properties in New York, Luna Park and Victoria Gardens.

“We’re operators as well. From a manufacturer’s perspective, we’re all in this together. If parks don’t do well, manufacturers don’t do well. There’s causality in all of our relationships. This is not us trying to generate another revenue stream. This is us saying, ‘Hey, we understand your challenges. This may help.’ And that’s what it comes down to.”

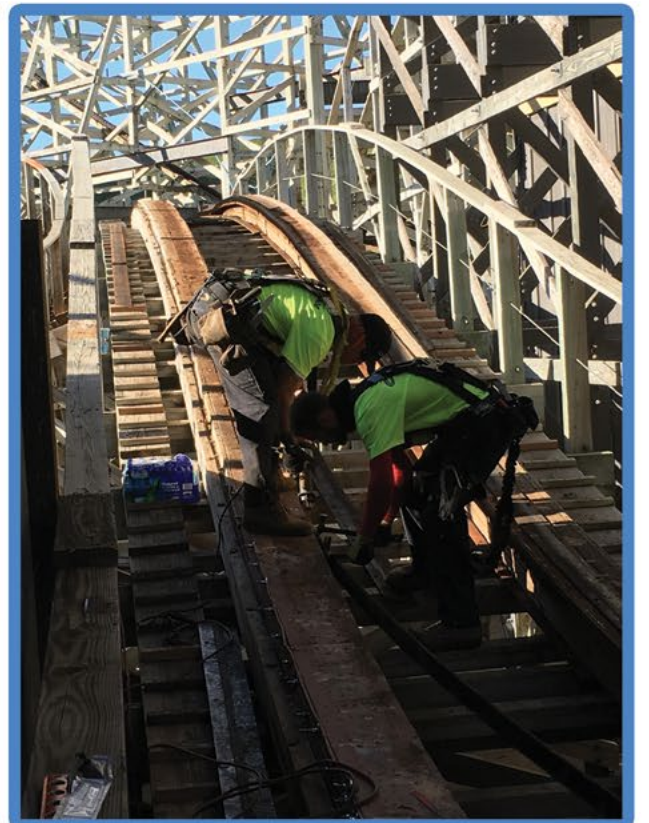
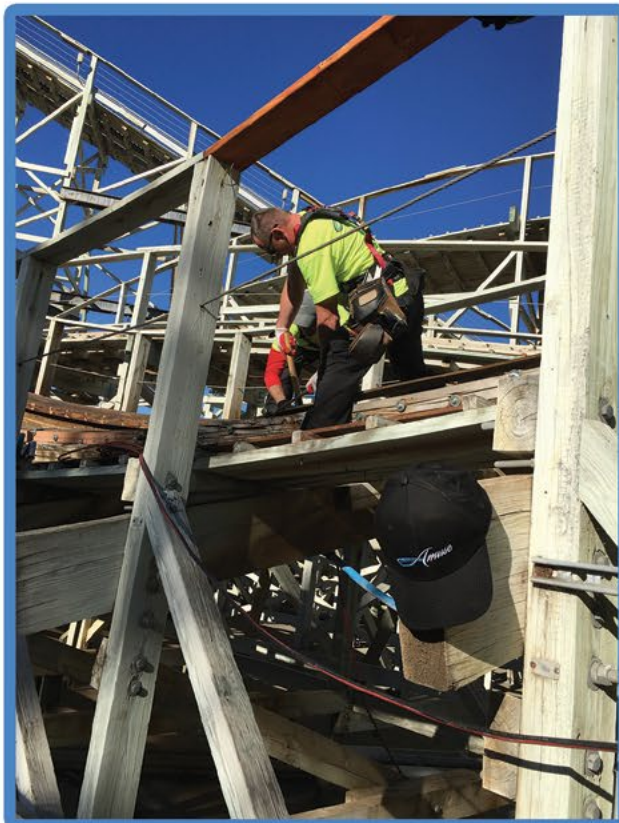
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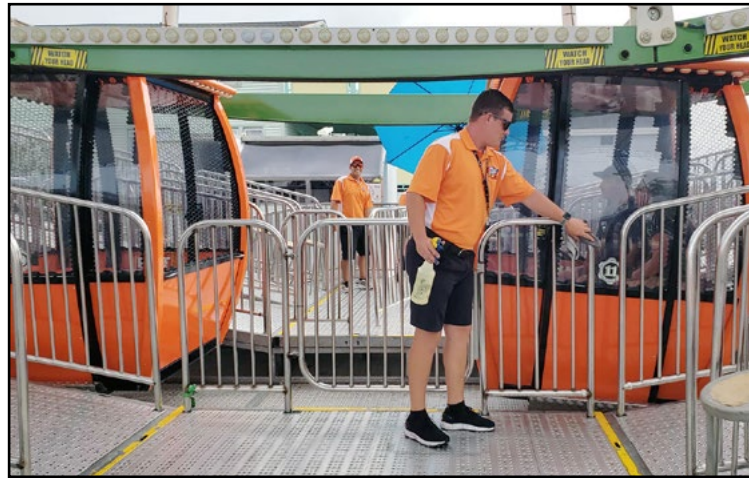
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Cleaning program keeps wheel turning



A crew member cleans one of the high-touch spots on the Midway Sky Eye with Prime Time Plus. COURTESY BIGGEST WHEEL LLC, RCP AMERICA

AT: B. Derek Shaw
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OCEAN CITY, Md. — Cleaning and safety standards have never been more important than they are today to protect staff and customers from spreading the COVID-19 virus. Since late June, the Midway Sky Eye (Biggest Wheel LLC) a mammoth Lamberink observation wheel has made Trimpers' Rides home through the first weekend of October. The 155-foot wheel, billed as one of the largest traveling wheels in North America, also has a sizeable job when it comes to sanitation in the age of disease-spreading viruses.

"A safe environment is a prosperous environment," said Michael Wood, co-owner of the Sky Eye.

The cleaning objectives for the wheel is to clean, disinfect, sanitize and monitor long-term. There are three separate cleaning processes. First a soap and water scrubbing is done to prep the surface, returning it to a clean state.

The second step is cleaning with an alcohol-based sanitizer called Prime Time Plus (similar to Lysol in regard to alcohol content). After this fast drying product is applied, an ATP test is performed, using a luminometer that rapidly measures actively growing microorganisms through detection of adenosine triphosphate, or

ATP. A reading of 35 or below is acceptable, 25 or below ideal and 10 or below sterile. The crew typically is looking for a 25-30 degree reading or less.

Depending on rider volume, high touch spots are cleaned every day — shaded areas are cleaned every four to six hours. High touch areas include the tops of entrance and exit hand rails, fence rails and grab handles.

The final phase is the application of KOC-86, a self-sanitizing, spray-on coating using an electrostatic fogger evenly covering hard-to-reach areas. The product kills viruses, bacteria, mold, fungi and other microorganisms 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Once applied, this titanium-dioxide (TiO₂) water-based solution acts as a catalyst with ultraviolet electromagnetic radiation found in the sun, to protect and block the surfaces cleaned. It has been used in hospitals, schools, salons, playgrounds and other settings.

The manufacturer states one application can last up to six months. "I elected not to test that [claim]," said Wood. The Sky Eye gets a KOC-86 application every two weeks which is the amount of time between spots if the wheel was on the road this season.

Wood did extensive research by reading SDS (Safety Data Sheets) that show active ingredients of each of the products he was considering, prior to final

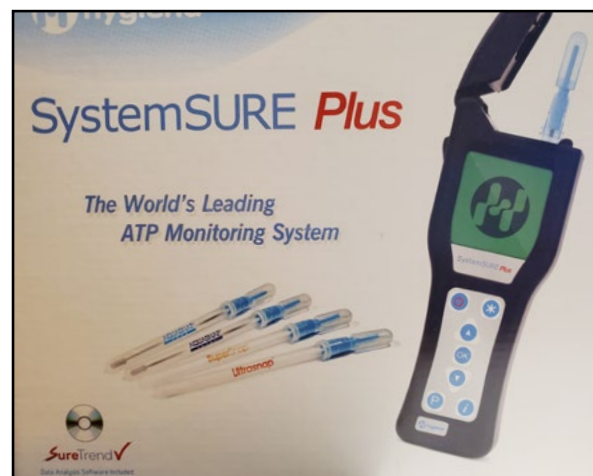
selection. Prime Time Plus and KOC-86 were developed and produced by RCP America, an EPA registered chemical manufacturer based in Tampa, Florida. "They are affordable and bridge the gap. The long-term process (KOC-86) compliments the short term process (Prime Time Plus). We sought to find a solution to be the best of all worlds," said Wood. "Together, they work perfect," said Rick Estrada, new business development with RCP America.

In light of the recent pandemic, KOC-86 is now entering the amusement industry sector. "We developed a good relationship with OABA," said Estrada. Because the amusement industry is mostly outdoors, the product is a perfect fit, "using the power of the sun to activate the chemicals," said Estrada. He notes that Woods is one of the first amusement operators to be using their products. Others include Wade Shows and Reithoffer Shows, along with a few amusement parks.

By the end of the summer stint at Trimpers, Wood estimates he will use 20 to 25 gallons of KOC-86, 55 to 60 gallons of Prime Time Plus and 55 gallons of hand sanitizer.

The Sky Eye is the only attraction that Biggest Wheel LLC has at the seaside park. There are nine additional rides brought in by Deggeller Attractions as well.

•rcpamerica.com



An ATP test is done frequently on the Sky Eye. At far left is the monitor Biggest Wheel, LLC, uses. Two hand sanitizer stations are located at the wheel's entrance. COURTESY BIGGEST WHEEL LLC



NEWS & NOTES

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Making a case for safety

Even as COVID-19 continues to hamper the operations of many amusement industry businesses; even as parks and attractions are still either unable to open or struggling to open at a fraction of their operating capacity; even as hundreds of employees, contractors and third party inspectors are furloughed and out of work due to the pandemic; and even as significant financial burdens continue to plague amusement attraction owners/operators/traveling shows/manufacturers, suppliers/inspectors and government agencies — even as all of this is currently happening, safety remains our number-one priority.

Safety has always been, and will continue to be, a core value of the amusement industry. In our ever-changing world, where technological innovations are continuously being made that push the boundaries beyond what has been done in the past to make amusement attractions more and more exciting, the amusement industry has taken

on the responsibility of holding itself accountable for the safety of its guests and employees. For decades we have banded together and put aside differences with our business competitors to make it possible for our best and brightest minds, no matter who they are employed by, to work together to develop standards and to create best practices that demand that safety be the cornerstone of our industry. There are many organizations that assist in this effort.

We have inspection agencies, both public and private, that exist to help attraction operators, suppliers and manufacturers ensure that their attractions comply with current safety standards and best practices that together we have created. Governmental agencies that adopt those standards into law and enforce compliance with those regulations are significantly impacted by our own self-regulation.

Non-profit organizations such as **AIMS International**, **NAARSO**,

OABA, **TEA**, **ASTM**, **WWA**, **PHTA**, **Northwest Showman's Club** and **IAAPA**; state and regional organizations including **PAPA**, **NJAA**, **CAPA** and **NEAAPA**; international organizations such as **ACOLAP**, **CAAPA**, **AALARA**, **IAAPI** and **PhilAAPA**; and privately-owned training organizations such as **E&A**, **SST** and **IRT** exist to support the attractions industry by developing and administering certification, licensure, training and/or educational programs. They provide professional development opportunities, and in some cases, help by offering guidance with interpreting and adopting government safety regulations.

With all of these resources at our disposal, and with all of the hard work that we've already collectively contributed to ensure the safety of amusement rides and attractions, we must keep our guard up; we must not let our internal company standards slip, even at a time when we're struggling to keep our industry afloat and

save expense. It is our duty, as stewards of our mission and core values, to keep safety top of mind and to not cut corners even when times are tough — there's too much at stake.

AIMS International stands ready to assist where we can; to provide education and certification opportunities, even if we have to do so at a financial loss to our organization. We pledge to work with amusement industry companies and individuals to provide opportunities for continuing education and certification at a fair price, and will support manufacturers and suppliers by creating a platform to educate their current and future customers about the safe maintenance, inspection and operation of their products. Our mission is to improve safety in the amusement industry through leadership in education. Please allow us to fulfill our mission by helping you fulfill yours. To learn more about what AIMS has to offer, please visit aimsintl.org.

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



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Gold Medal expands safety product line in time for reopenings

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

CINCINNATI, Ohio — **Gold Medal Products Co.** is doing its part in helping keep people safe from exposure to COVID-19 as businesses and schools are finding a myriad of challenges as they reopen. The company, well-known for its role in manufacturing and supplying concessions equipment, has expanded its line of safety products.

The Polycarbonate Portable Barrier is one of the new products Gold Medal is now offering. The company's standard barriers are lightweight and easily movable with swivel casters to accommodate any space's needs. It stands 72 inches tall and 32 inches wide.

There are two versions. One is a solid clear barrier. The other, also clear, has a cutout for ticket takers or other interactive applications. The cutout is 12 inches by six inches. When assembled, it weighs 39 pounds.

Gold Medal will offer a counter top barrier stand with cutout shortly. The shelf



Lightweight portable barriers — available as a solid wall (above left) or with a cutout for ticket takers (above right) — are among Gold Medal's new offerings. The company is also offering a variety of hand sanitizer sizes (middle). COURTESY GOLD MEDAL PRODUCTS CO.

dimensions on the standard version will be 9x10x30. When assembled, it will weigh 41 pounds.

Some barrier features include a durable stainless-steel frame, a lightweight aluminum base, four swivel casters, two wheel locks and easy-to-assemble bolt-through construction.

In addition to the new barriers, Gold Medal has added two new sizes to its FDA-approved and WHO-recommended Gold Medal Liquid Hand Sanitizer. The sanitizer

is made with 80 percent ethyl alcohol, glycerin, and hydrogen peroxide. It has no scent, perfume, or fragrance added.

The new sizes are a four-ounce bottle and a 1.89-ounce bottle for on-the-go usage.

Gold Medal already offers a touchless commercial hand sanitizing station, a mobile hand sanitizing station and a variety of hand sanitizer sizes and packages including eight-ounce spray bottles, 16-ounce pump bottles and quart-sized and gallon-sized with pumps.

Gold Medal launched its line of COVID-19 safety products in May with the announcement of the touchless system, which is an automated, high-speed, large capacity hand sanitizer dispenser. It is constructed in stainless steel and can operate by auto-detecting the presence of a hand or manually using a push button.

It has the capacity to hold up to four gallons of hand sanitizer and was built for theaters, grocery stores, amusement parks, office buildings

and other large outdoor and indoor venues in mind.

At the time of the announcement of the touchless sanitizer, **Adam Browning**, Gold Medal president, said: "We are proud to be a part of the effort in meeting the urgent need for hand sanitizers and help ease the shortage. Our dedicated team has been working tirelessly to make sure we got it right, including getting the approved formula and registering through the FDA."

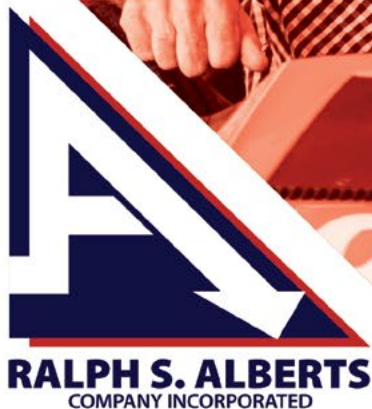
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Health, safety priorities at Urban Air



BEDFORD, Texas — The doors of Urban Air Adventure Parks nationwide are opening to welcome back guests. Based on local state and governmental regulations, as well as the feedback the company received from its guests, new safety procedures are being implemented. They include a dedicated sanitation team member on all shifts to wipe down frequently touched areas and limiting the number of guests in the park (in two-hour increments). All guests are screened as they enter the facility. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

RWS Entertainment Group partners with CrowdRX, create health protocols

NEW YORK, N.Y. — RWS Entertainment Group, a New York-based full-service production company that creates branded experiences worldwide, announced key protocols which will govern both the reopening of its New York City rehearsal complex and return to live experience production. The initiative is in partnership with CrowdRX, a team of emergency physicians and public safety experts who specialize in mitigating health risks during mass gatherings.

With direct input from CrowdRX's national medical director Dr. Matt Friedman, who has served as the medical director for Madison Square Garden, the U.S. Open, and Burning Man, RWS has developed the Health and Hygiene Protocol for Performing Artists to standardize the safety and protection of performers in the live entertainment industry worldwide.

"When RWS came to me

with this challenge, we started with the CDC public health safety guidelines — but we didn't stop there," said Friedman. "Live production calls for additional measures that we tailored specifically for the safety of both the performers and the audience in the experiential entertainment industry."

"We rely on our partners like RWS, to help our entertainment team in the production of our live experiences," said Thomas Mack, managing director at theme park and resort Europa-Park. "RWS is effectively helping us to bring these experiences to our consumers in a timely, fun and safe way."

The Health and Hygiene Protocol for Performing Artists is a practical guide for talent and entertainment operators and sets the bar for safe rehearsals and performances. These health and sanitation procedures have been explicitly catered to the needs

of the entertainment industry and include recommendations for unique situations including costume character sanitation, performer PPE requirements, performer and musician physical distancing, backstage crew sanitation guidelines as well as protocol for immersive activations and experiences.

RWS Studios will follow these guidelines, requiring all who enter to pass through a non-invasive temperature check and mask verification screening, as well as carrying out electrostatic disinfection in all its rehearsal rooms multiple times daily.

"I'm excited to get back to creating art," said choreographer Lorin Latarro (*Waitress*, *Mrs. Doubtfire*). "RWS always exemplifies an organized and conscientious company, and its safety precautions will surely be a top priority carried out with integrity."

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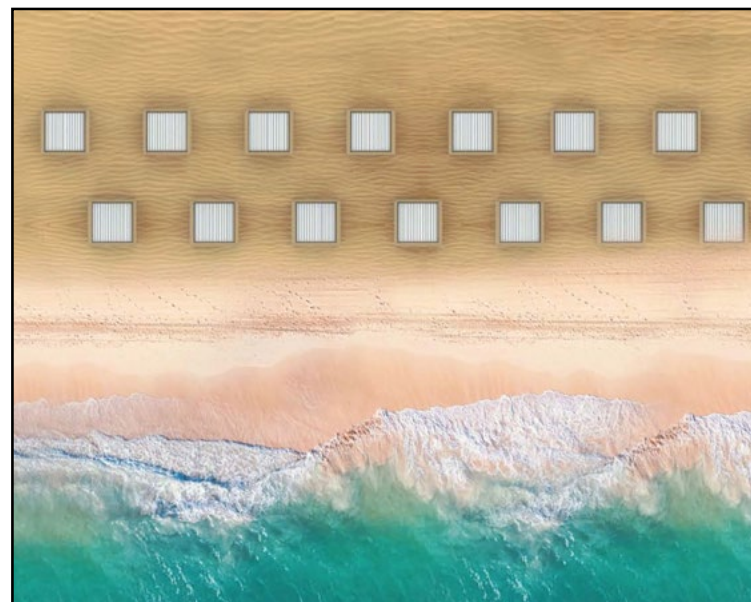
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Inflatable Wibit BeachCocoon provides social distancing at beach

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

BOCHOLT, Germany — **Wibit Sports**, known for its floating obstacle courses, is offering an inflatable product that can help with social distancing and increased safety at beaches. Once inflated, the Wibit BeachCocoon provides a private sanctuary that measures a little more than 9.8 feet square, with an eight-foot-tall front opening and slanted roof that tapers to about six feet in the back. The strong vinyl tubes inflate to form the structure, and five vinyl sidewalls form the sides and roof — all of which can be securely fastened or rolled up as needed.

The easily stowable beach cabin offers space for two sun loungers and a small table. Two or more units can be combined to form larger spaces for families or groups of friends to spend time together on the beach. Strategically located anchor rings at the base will help keep the cocoons from moving around in a moderate breeze. Anchor rings at the top



The vinyl sidewalls and roof of the BeachCocoon can be secured to form a privacy wall or rolled up to allow for breezes and/or sunshine. Multiple units can be fastened together to form custom-sized spaces for larger families or groups of friends. Proper spacing along the beach (right) can help assure social distancing takes place. COURTESY WIBIT

can accommodate guide wires to provide an even stronger anchor should windy conditions prevail. If the ground is soft or sandy, pegs can be pounded into the ground. On solid surfaces an anchor sack filled with sand or water can easily be fastened to the rings. Those same rings are also used to connect the cabins

together forming spaces as large as desired. High quality, abrasion-resistant material lines the bottom of the lower tubes.

As with all Wibit products, inflation is quick and easy with either a hand or electric pump specifically designed to inflate all Wibit products to the proper pressure of 10 psi.

When its time for removal, the products are easily deflated and folded up for storage. The vinyl used for construction is designed to withstand saltwater and chlorinated water.

Along with its PVC cleaning and protection liquids, Wibit is also offering spray bottles of disinfectant to quickly clean the cocoon and

accessories between uses.

When used in combination with common sense along with the Wibit water mask, the Wibit BeachCocoon can help keep beaches operating safely while at the same time generating additional revenue and enhancing the beach experience.

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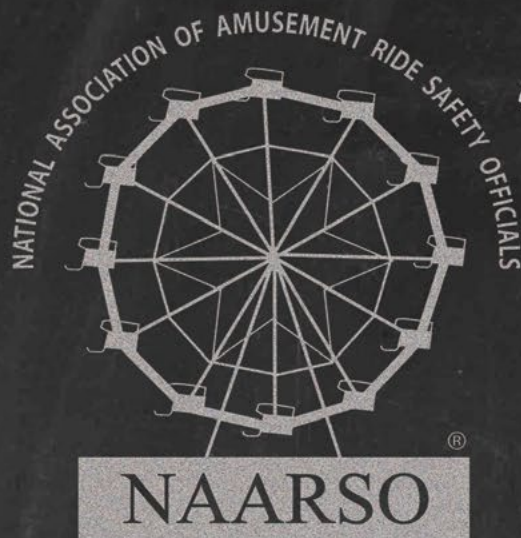
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BREAKING NEWS

IAAPA seeks financial aid from Congress, releases new edition of *Reopening Guidance*

ORLANDO — IAAPA sent a letter to the U.S. Congress on behalf of its members. The letter urges Congress to consider key issues facing the industry during the next phase of COVID-19-related legislation.

IAAPA estimates nationally the COVID-19 pandemic will cause \$23 billion in economic losses for attractions in 2020. With more than 50% of attractions having to make staffing adjustments and many facilities not reopening in 2020, more than 235,000 jobs have been lost across the U.S.

"As our industry looks to reopen, locations are doing so at a substantially reduced capacity and with additional costs due to new COVID-19 safety proto-

cols," said Hal McEvoy, president and CEO, IAAPA. "This has been devastating for our industry, particularly for seasonal businesses. These businesses rely on making enough revenue during the few short summer months they are open to maintain employment year-round. In addition, year-round businesses that experience peak attendance from spring break through the summer months have been substantially hurt by the pandemic."

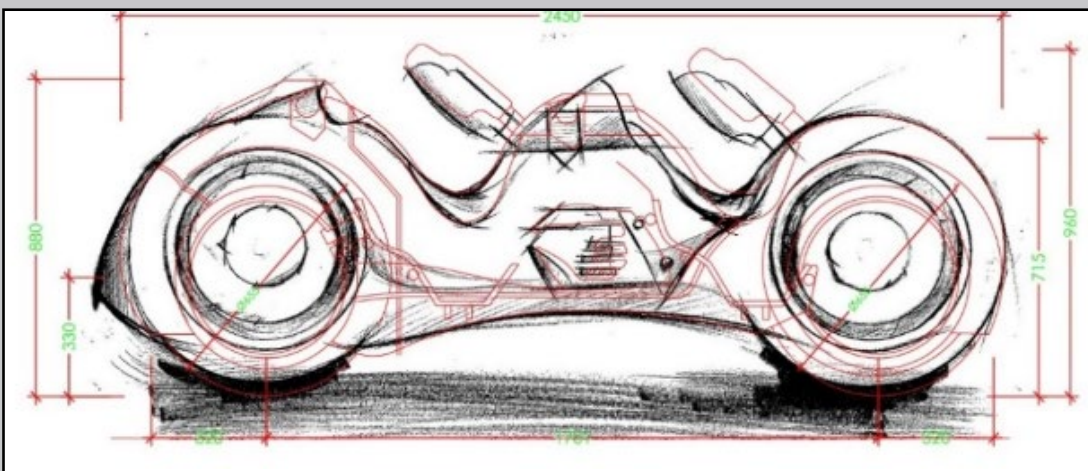
At the same time, IAAPA released the second edition of its free member resource, *COVID-19 Reopening Guidance: Considerations for the Global Attractions Industry*. This latest edition has brand-new content

and updated, refined language for guidelines and safety protocols. New content is identified throughout the document as "New" and includes guidance for: team COVID-19 training outline, ziplines and aerial courses, miniature golf facilities, bowling centers and birthday parties.

"As our communities reopen, we must continue to remain vigilant and remind our teams and guests to follow the important guidelines for mask use, physical distancing, enhanced sanitation protocols, and frequent handwashing. All eyes are on our industry to demonstrate how to safely welcome guests," added McEvoy.

•iaapa.org

Lagotronics Projects announces Kaisa Golden Bay Resort project



VENLO, The Netherlands — Lagotronics Projects has been commissioned to develop, design and realize a brand-new attraction concept for Kaisa Group Holdings, Ltd. The development of this first-of-its-kind attraction is conducted in close cooperation with the Kaisa creative team. Kaisa International Resorts Group, under the umbrella of the Kaisa Group, is currently building a large-scale coastal resort complex combining properties, tourism, residences, business and culture in one place which is suitable for all seasons: Kaisa Golden Bay Resort. Lagotronics Projects will create a unique interactive experience on three levels at the resort. The attraction's storyline concerns an important mission that needs to be executed in three phases. All phases are connected and everyone is playing a different part in the same game, so teamwork is key to complete the mission. When guests enter the final part of the attraction, they will be surprised by several futuristic themed VR "Speeders" on motion base platforms. COURTESY LAGOTRONICS

Barto joins the Extreme Engineering team

ATHENS, Texas — Pete Barto, a seasoned veteran in the amusement industry, joins **Extreme Engineering** as Vice President of Sales and Strategic Partnerships.

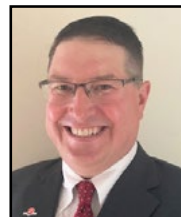
Barto has served in the industry for more than 15 years, previously working at IAAPA, several roller coaster manufacturers and Hersheypark. His executive role with Extreme Engineering will be helping the company grow their wide range of services. Barto will be responsible for growing the family coaster and engineering design division of the company, including working close with industry partners.

"It's an honor to work beside Pete. We've

always seen him as an industry leader. Pete knows everyone, and everyone knows Pete. We are excited for the next direction in pivoting forward," stated Phil Wilson, executive vice president of Extreme Engineering.

"We are proud to have Pete as part of our growth strategy. Pete has the skill set to move the company forward and grow our services in a positive way," states Jeff Wilson, CEO of Extreme Engineering.

•extremeengineering.com



Barto



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