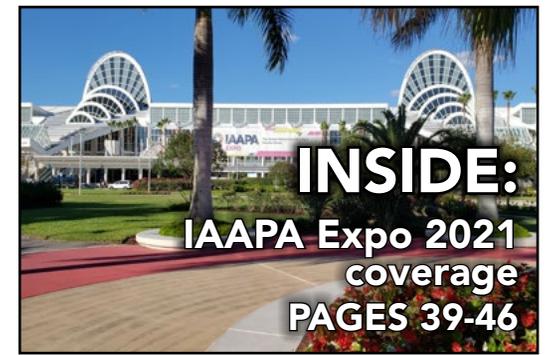


# Amusement TODAY CELEBRATING 25 YEARS!

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Digital Edition

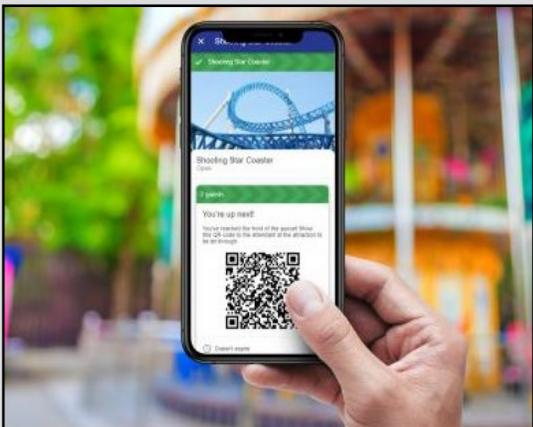
## Accesso, Village Roadshow partnership creates model for pandemic reemergence

AT: David Fake  
Special to Amusement Today

ORLANDO — The COVID-19 pandemic forced almost all service industry companies to take a good, hard look at their operations as well as reevaluate and strategize almost every aspect of their business models. In some way, Spring/Summer 2020 can be likened to the Dark Ages for many industries, especially the amusement and attractions industry. At this same time, however, **Accesso Technology Group plc**, had already been preparing the way for a renaissance of their own.

In November 2018, Accesso and **Village Roadshow Theme Parks**, Australia's largest theme park operator, announced a partnership that marked the first holistic integration of Accesso solutions: ticketing, eCommerce, point of sale, virtual queuing, distribution and guest experience.

At the time the deal was announced, it was questionable if either company could have predicted that this partnership would become a benchmark for the industry in 2020/2021. It is probable that both companies had foreseen the success of the collaboration, since the two companies had solid business models and proven products/services. Yet, this was to



Accesso's line of products include the award-winning Accesso Passport ticketing suite and Accesso LoQueue — a patented suite of virtual queuing solutions.  
COURTESY ACCESSO

be only a portion of the success that was to come post-pandemic shutdown. After all, at the time of the announcement no one had heard of COVID-19 and the word "pandemic" was still mostly relegated to science fiction and horror movies.

However, when COVID-19 did reach Australia in 2020, Accesso's technology had exceeded its original purpose. That original intent was to power revenue performance, service, and customer engagement, but this was only a portion of the reason the partnership became integral to the reopening of Village Roadshow Theme Parks' attractions.

The best way to paint the full picture of how Accesso's solutions made a smooth reopening possible for Village Roadshow Theme Parks is to examine Accesso through three different, but equally important lenses: product, leadership and service/delivery.

Accesso's award-winning solutions are currently used by more than 1,000 venues in 30 countries around the globe to streamline operations, generate increased revenues, improve guest satisfaction, and harness the power of data to educate business and marketing decisions.

These products include the award-winning Accesso Passport ticketing suite, Accesso LoQueue — a patented suite of virtual queuing solutions — Accesso Siriusware point-of-sale ticketing, the Accesso ShoWare box office ticketing suite, the Ingresso global distribution system and The Experience Engine (TE2), a guest experience management platform, acquired by Accesso in 2017, that empowers attraction and venue operators to deliver personalization at scale. Each of these products has had a particular application during — and after — the current global crisis.

Contactless technology itself is certainly not new. For years, Accesso has delivered this technology and theme parks and attractions operators have "dipped their toes in the water" as the company rolled

► See ACCESSO, page 8



The AIMS International Safety Seminar returns to its in-person format in 2022 after taking the event virtual in 2021. Classroom settings — such as this one from 2019's seminar — will engage attendees. AT/GARY SLADE

## National safety seminars return to in-person format

AT: Pam Sherborne  
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

GALVESTON, Texas, and ORLANDO — After a year with virtual events, both AIMS International and NAARSO are presenting their safety seminars live this month.

First up is the **AIMS International Safety Seminar**. Planners are expecting big things for the upcoming event set for Jan. 9-14 at the **Galveston Island Convention Center**.

AIMS Executive Director **Mary Jane Brewer** said there will be 325 hours of content presented at this year's event.

"That is bigger than we have ever had," Brewer said. "We will have between 100 and 110 instructors where we usually have between 75 and 80."

Brewer said in early December there were 385 people registered for the 2022 seminar.

"That is 50 more than at the same time two years ago in 2019," she said. "It looks like we are on track to set a record."

A new program will debut this year. Called the Academy of Amusement Risk Management, Safety and Security, with the acronym AARMSS, the new two-year program was created in response to a recognized need in the amusement industry for specific and in-depth safety education and certification.

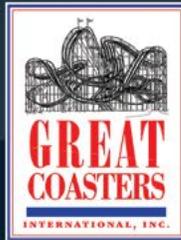
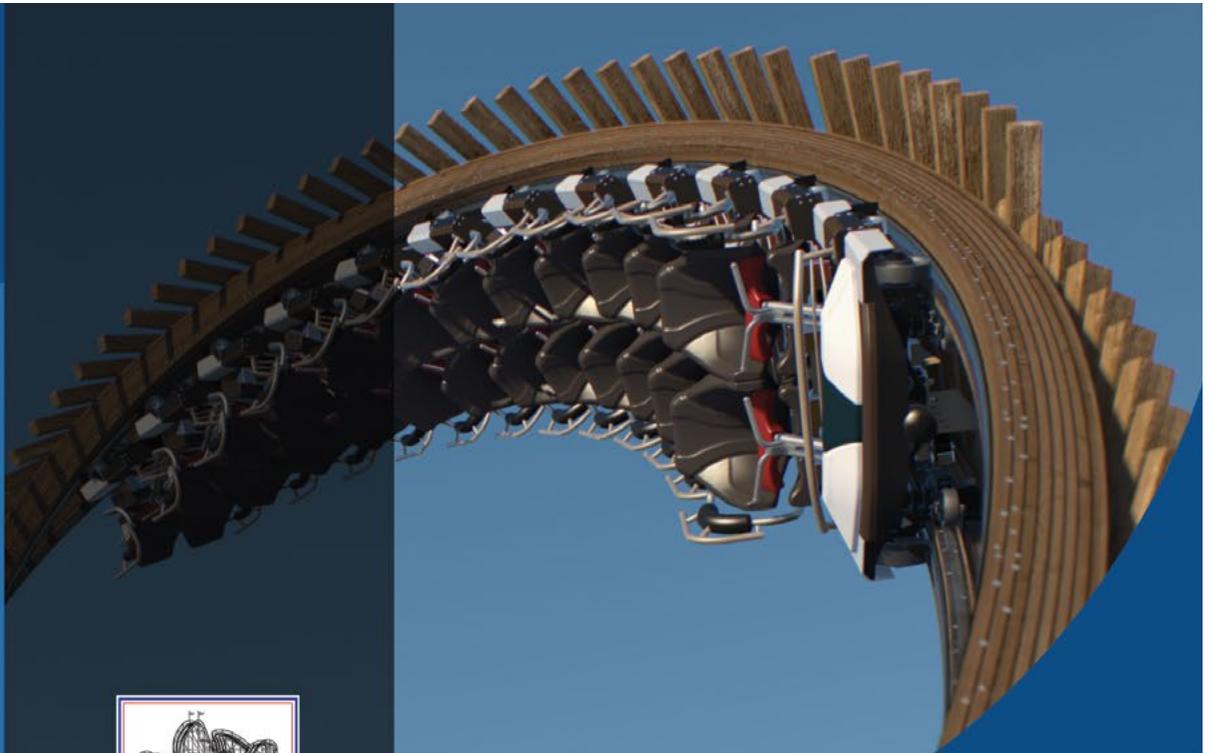
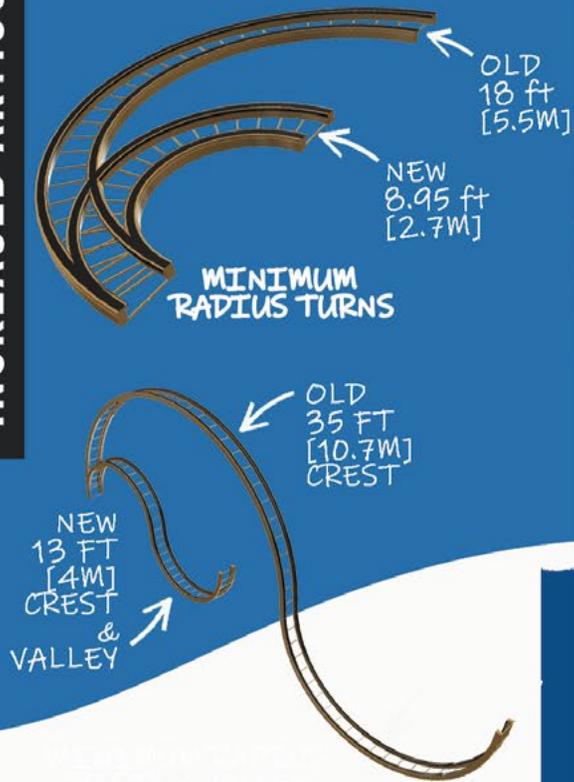
"Risk management and loss control are key to the success of any business and the skills necessary for optimal performance should be fundamental in all managers' growth for a specific industry," Brewer said. "There is really nowhere else to get this education at this level of detail."

Brewer said AIMS board members had been looking to

► See SEMINARS, page 6

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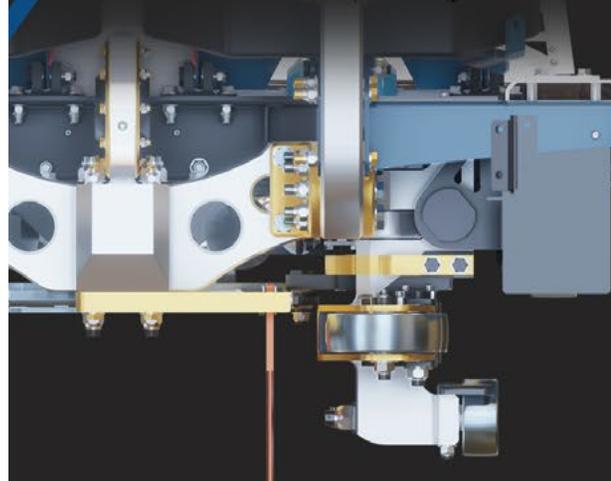
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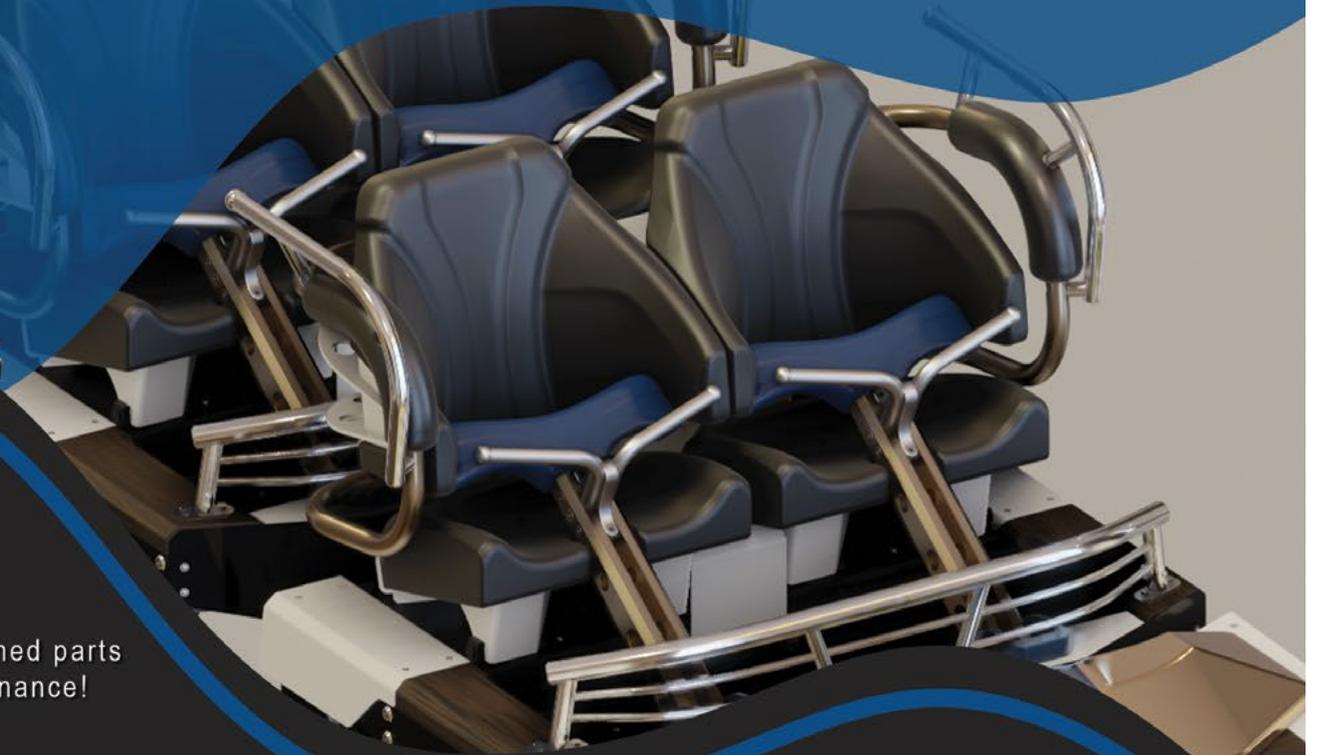
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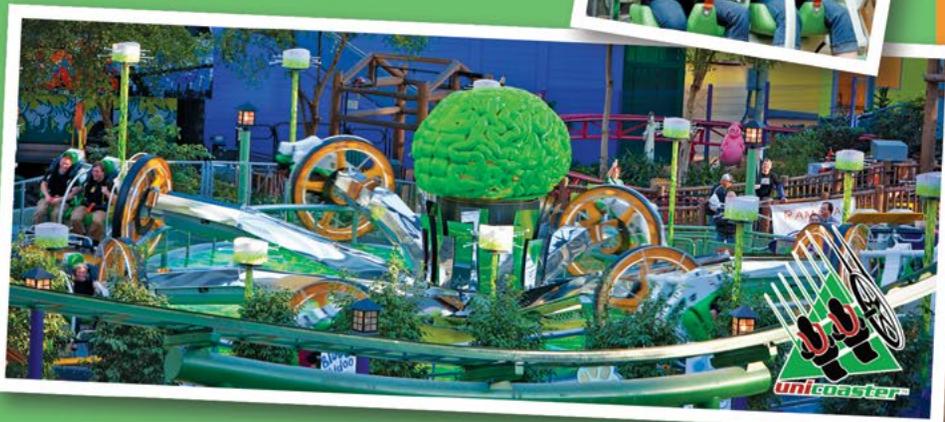
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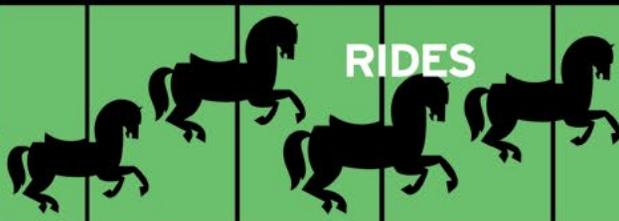


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# AMUSEMENT VIEWS

**AT NOTEBOOK:** John W.C. Robinson, [jrobinson@amusementtoday.com](mailto:jrobinson@amusementtoday.com)

## New year, new challenges



Robinson

Let's be honest, can any of us really recall what life was like when things were "normal?" Between the COVID-19 pandemic, virus variants, shutdowns, political turmoil, social unrest, travel bans and so much more, day-to-day life has not been what any of us would've defined as "normal" in the past few years.

That does not mean life has been bad, for us or for our industry. Sure, it's been presented with multiple tough challenges and hurdles we have had to overcome, but there's been positives pouring out of every corner of the globe and every corner of our industry.

We found new ways of working together, solutions to hiring obstacles, ways to make our business structure more inclusive and even evolved the way we communicate across the country (and across international borders). We found ways to generate new revenue streams when traditional methods were prevented from operating. We took our technology to the next level to ensure our guests were as safe as possible.

The past three years have seen a peak in the industry followed by a shutdown from the COVID pandemic then, a new President moved into the White House — all accompanied by changes in business policies and regulations from local to federal levels. The years 2019, 2020 and 2021 were unique, to say the least.

Now, we are in the beginning days of 2022. While the hurdles of the past couple years have been overcome or are slowly being removed, the new year is certain to be filled with its own set of obstacles.

What lies ahead is truly anybody's guess. There is no way of knowing what effect changes in policy or newly discovered variants may have on our industry. However, we know — without hesitation — that every hurdle and challenge that may lie ahead is one we can not only overcome as an industry but find a way of pivoting for our future success.

Recent challenges have definitively shown that we can weather any storm, rise to any challenge ... and have nothing to fear because we can adapt and overcome.

**FLINT'S VIEW:** Bubba Flint



**INDUSTRY VOICE:** Mary J. Brewer, AIMS International

## Safety as a core value

As the amusement industry recovers from the effects of the global pandemic, safety remains not only our number one priority, but also a core value. What's the difference you ask?

Priorities shift. Depending on the current environment, priorities shift to fit the most pressing issues of the moment. Priorities are meant to address the short-term needs of the organization. On the other hand, core values do not change. They stay constant no matter the current business climate. Core values are the cornerstone of the organization. They are the foundation on which the company's work is performed. For this reason, it is extremely important that safety be seen as a core value, as well as a top priority, for your company.

Safety has always been (and will continue to be) a core value of the amusement industry, as a whole. In our ever-changing world, where technological innovations are



Brewer

continuously being made that push the boundaries to make amusement attractions more exciting, our industry has taken on the responsibility of holding itself accountable for the safety of its guests and employees. For decades we have banded together, putting aside differences between business competitors to make it possible for our best and brightest to collaborate and develop standards and best practices that put safety as the cornerstone of our industry.

With all the hard work we've collectively contributed to ensure the safety of amusement rides and attractions; we must keep our guard up and maintain the highest standards of safety despite outside pressures that put a strain on our commitment to safety. It is our duty, as stewards of our core values, to keep safety top of mind and not cut corners, even when times are tough. There's too much at stake.

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

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Your Amusement Industry NEWS Leader

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# 2 MINUTE DRILL



AT: Janice Witherow

## Len Soled, Rides 4 U

**Len Soled** is all about the customer and getting the deal done. As president of **Rides 4 U**, a New Jersey-based company that specializes in supplying both new and used rides and equipment to carnivals, parks and FECs, Len is right at home in the amusement industry. He started in the business with **Zamperla, Inc.**, and is known for his love of networking, financing and placing a focus on customer service. When he is not working, Len enjoys family time and connecting with friends.

**Title:** President.

**Number of years in the industry:**  
36 years and counting.

**Best thing about the industry:** The people, the ones we call our extended family.

**Favorite amusement ride:** Merry-Go-Round. It doesn't go fast and upside down, which is a thriller for me!

**If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be ...** Selling used cars. Don't you think I would be a great used car salesman? I get that a lot!

**Biggest challenge facing our industry:** The financing of the equipment. COVID has pushed a lot of the financing tools out the window causing less competition, and in turn causing less opportunities for financing.

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

Visiting customers and seeing all of the smiles on the customers faces while I am still dressed in a tie and jacket.

**My New Year's Resolution is ...**

To try and slow down.

**I typically celebrate my birthday by ...**

My wife usually gathers my immediate family, and we celebrate with a cake and candles and make a wish for the future. On birthdays that end with a 0, it is usually followed with a trip to some exotic country where I can shut off my phone just for a short period of time and just enjoy the day. Unfortunately this year my birthday ended in a 0 and COVID squashed my plans! So I am planning to forget about the 0 and continue the tradition for the following years.

**My screensaver right now:** Nothing! I don't know how to work my computer.

**My first job was ...** Working for Zamperla, Inc., in Parsippany, New Jersey.



Since starting with Zamperla to founding Rides 4 U, Len Soled has spent his entire professional career supplying amusement rides to the attractions industry.  
COURTESY RIDES 4 U

**My favorite place to dine out is ...**

I never go back to the same restaurant twice. Always experiencing new restaurant settings so that one day when I retire I can write a book on the world's best eating experiences.

**It's January! My favorite winter activity is ...** One trip down the ski slope and plan for Gibtown.

**I never miss this show on TV:** *Shark Tank*.

**Best dessert:** Key Lime Pie.

**Pick one: beach or mountains?** Beach.

**The most interesting thing I have heard lately is ...** That people who work from home are far more productive than people working from their office ... it's not possible.

**Twenty years ago, I was ...** Just starting to build Rides 4 U and hoping that I could be part of this industry for the next 20 years.

**Twenty years from now, I hope to be ...** Still working and enjoying working with all of our good friends in the industry.

**Favorite holiday:** Thanksgiving, gathering with the family and my wife and I usually have our anniversary around that time.

**The first thing I do when getting home from work is ...** Give my wife a kiss and then exercise to destress.

**In one word, my job is:** Awesome.

## THE INDUSTRY SEEN

### Tongues out tailgate



CINCINNATI, Ohio — With the NFL season winding down, fans are still out enjoying tailgating with family and friends. *Amusement Today's* John Robinson (left) and Baynum Painting's Walt Bowser (middle) were ecstatic while celebrating with Bengals superfan Shawn "WhoDeyBaby" Moore (right) outside of Paul Brown Stadium in Cincinnati, Ohio. The trio enjoyed unique local flavors with a crowd of nearly 200 guests attending the Bengal Bomb Squad tailgate party, an parking lot tradition for more than 14 seasons in the Queen City.  
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## SEMINARS

Continued from page 1

create a program like this for several years. They found that most of the current seminar content was geared toward technicians, operations and maintenance.

"We saw that there was this whole group of people working in safety, but not being reached by safety seminar content," Brewer said. "These are people that are risk managers, people who manage claims, people who deal in codes and regulations, people in security."

Based on the following foundational pillars: Safety, Security, Emergency Management and Risk Management, the AARMSS curriculum is specifically designed to educate and equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively manage an amusement industry safety, security, and risk management program.

AARMSS courses are unique to the Academy and cannot be found anywhere else in the AIMS Interna-



tional educational network nor at any other amusement industry educational seminar, Brewer said. The courses will be taught by subject matter experts from both within the industry as well as professionals from outside agencies, which specialize in the course topics.

Those wanting to participate in future Academy courses will need to go through a special selection process.

This new program doesn't affect the AIMS Safety Seminar Attendees, just adds to the offerings. Attendees will have a lot to choose from this year as they build their own schedule to best suit their needs and desired outcome. AIMS offers certifications levels in main-



tenance, operations, inspector and aquatics.

Following up on last year, **Ellis and Associates** will present the aquatics portion live in January. The company presented the aquatics portion during last year's virtual seminar.

"We also have partnered with **International Ride Training** for the first time to present the ride operations training," Brewer said. "We are working with the **Outdoor Amusement Business Association (OABA)** to help us with our carnival track. We are very excited about all three of these agencies coming together to enhance our content."

There also will be more than 20 hours of inspection and maintenance education delivered entirely in Spanish. **Hugo Loyola** will produce

the Spanish track.

Loyola was awarded the 2021 AIMS International Safety Award.

Second up is the NAARSO 35th Annual Safety Seminar being presented in a hybrid format. The live seminar is set for Jan. 17-21 at the **Doubletree**, Orlando, Florida, with some additional educational offerings on Jan. 15 and 16. The hands-on portion of the live seminar will take place at **SeaWorld Orlando**.

NAARSO also has put together a virtual alternative for those individuals who may still not be traveling due to the COVID-19 pandemic or for those who don't have the time during their off-season to attend. That virtual seminar runs Jan. 15-21, 2022, with access to classes until Feb. 28, 2022. The virtual seminar includes 40 hours of online instruction.

NAARSO, dedicated to industry safety, administers three industry certifications, the Inspector Certification, Operations Certification and Aquatic Certification. There are specific levels that can be

achieved in each category.

Additional training offered on select days include Train the Trainer and Specialty Education.

Topic examples for classes during a NAARSO Annual Safety Seminar include basic generators, wire ropes inspections, hydraulic/pneumatics, basic inspection techniques, steel coaster inspections, miniature train inspections points, rigging inspections, dark rides and walk-through inspections, electrical and control systems troubleshooting, braking systems and non-destructive testing.

Others include FEC facility inspections, understanding accelerometer data, developing an inspection program, water slide and feature inspections, midway inspections, best practices for incident response and investigations, aerial adventure inspections, passenger restraints, rock wall and Euro bungies and responding to emergencies.

- [aimsintl.org](http://aimsintl.org)
- [naarso.com](http://naarso.com)

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# CALENDAR

## 2022 AIMS International Safety Seminar

January 9 – 14, 2022  
Galveston, Texas

[aimsintl.org/aims-international-safety-seminar](https://aimsintl.org/aims-international-safety-seminar)

## NAARSO Annual Safety Seminar

January 17 – 21, 2022  
Orlando, Florida  
[naarso.com](https://naarso.com)

## IAAPA FEC Summit

January 23 – 25, 2022  
Scottsdale, Arizona  
[iaapa.org](https://iaapa.org)

## International Independant Showman's Association Super Extravaganza and Trade Show

February 15 – 18, 2022  
Gibson, Florida  
[gibtownshowmensclub.com](https://gibtownshowmensclub.com)

## Pennsylvania Amusement Ride Safety Seminar

March 1 – 3, 2022  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania  
[paridesafety.com](https://paridesafety.com)

## NJAA Annual Trade Show and NAARSO

March 9 – 10, 2022  
Atlantic City, New Jersey  
[njamusements.com/expo.php](https://njamusements.com/expo.php)

## Amusement Expo International

March 15 – 17, 2022  
Las Vegas, Nevada  
[amusementexpo.org](https://amusementexpo.org)

## BPAA International Bowl Expo

June 26 – 30, 2022  
Las Vegas, Nevada  
[bpaa.com/bowlexpo](https://bpaa.com/bowlexpo)

## 2022 Golden Ticket Awards

September 9 – 10, 2022  
Morgan's Wonderland  
and Six Flags Fiesta Texas  
San Antonio, Texas  
[goldenticketawards.com](https://goldenticketawards.com)

## IAAPA Expo Europe

September 12 – 15, 2022  
London, U.K.  
[iaapa.org](https://iaapa.org)

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## ▶ACCESSO

Continued from page 1

out new functionalities and advanced the design of its products to align with and improve the individual guest experience and further drive revenue — on and off-site.

However, when COVID-19 took hold, the timeline for what Accesso refers to as the “smart park of the future” accelerated exponentially. Venues had to prepare for safe reopening, while navigating changes to guests’ activities in ways that no one could have predicted.

Accesso’s adaptable and scalable technologies are helping the theme park group manage change at an incredibly challenging time. The company’s solutions have always leveraged emerging technology designed to enhance the guest experience, and at the same time these technologies have also unearthed new and unique ways to drive revenue. This remained true throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Operators have needed to rethink the ways technology could be used to facilitate safe operations. Without compromising the quality and convenience of their guests’ experiences.

As COVID-19 shuttered venues around the world, Accesso worked quickly to adapt its technologies to help operators adjust to and overcome new and emerging challenges. They found that much of that legwork was already done, in progress, or charted as future development. These adaptations and evolution required by the pandemic and the role Accesso’s products play in that evolution are outlined in the company’s white paper, “Re-Imagining the Guest Journey in the Age of COVID-19,” from which portions of this article have been sourced and is available for download from the company’s website.

The TE2 guest experience management platform has evolved significantly under Accesso’s ownership; today, the solution serves to bridge the physical and digital aspects of a guest’s journey, giving operators insight-driven access to every step



of a guest’s journey — pre-, during and post-visit. The solution empowers operators to deliver personalization at scale by enabling them to leverage existing customer data along with real-time location and behavior, which they can use to deliver personalized, contextual messaging, recommendations and offers to guests at just the right time and place.

The use of technology solutions like Accesso’s guest experience platform can empower operators to offer contactless payment options and establish unique guest profiles through a centralized guest identity and stored wallet feature. This links mobile F&B purchases and restaurant arrival bookings to develop a robust guest profile.

“Our guest experience management platform allows operators to take personalization to new heights and maximize the value of each and every guest visit,” said Accesso’s CEO, **Steve Brown**. “The modern guest expects the power to navigate every element of their experience from the palm of their hand, and our mobile-first solution makes that expectation a reality.”

Virtual queuing technology itself is far from new. Accesso has been partnering with clients for years, leveraging its Accesso LoQueue solution to help guests step out of physical queues, wait less and enjoy more.

“Our virtual queuing team has over 20 years of experience helping clients install, launch and optimize their virtual queuing operations,” said **Andrew Jacobs**, CCO. “Over the past two decades, our patented suite of solutions has evolved and grown as we’ve worked closely with our partners around the globe to uncover new ways to free guests from long lines.”

This same technology also interprets into a contactless experience, the demand for which both hit a new high and took a giant leap forward while much of the



Andrew Jacobs

world was figuratively — and literally — standing still.

While the core benefits of virtual queuing technology hold true, the pandemic revealed new potential use cases. Operators have harnessed the power of virtual queuing in new ways which are unlikely to disappear once the pandemic is in the rear-view. For instance, implementing virtual queues for retail or dining locations.

Accesso adapted its 100% Virtual Queuing model in response to the pandemic to support venues in safe and successful reopening. Now operators can make the formerly premium add-on available to all guests at an operator-selected list of popular, in-venue rides and attractions.

By integrating Accesso Passport, Accesso LoQueue and Accesso’s guest experience platform technologies across the three Village Roadshow properties, Accesso set a new operational standard for the attractions industry, engaging with guests at every potential touchpoint and gathering critical data each step of the way — from the moment they decide to purchase a ticket, through their time onsite and once they’ve returned home.

Ultimately, Accesso is providing operators the same advanced technology as before the COVID-19 pandemic, but they have advanced its offerings in a way that meets multiple needs. Operators now have the chance to become true architects of the future. They can leverage technology that helps keep guests safe, while further enhancing the experiences they came to know and love prior to the pandemic, all while driving revenue and operational success.



Steve Brown

The Accesso story began almost 20 years prior to the pandemic when the ticketing solutions company was founded in late 2000. The company’s success was not instantaneous, and it entered bankruptcy protection almost immediately, only reemerging in 2007 under the leadership of then-Principal and CEO, Steve Brown. The invaluable ticketing strategy, sales, revenue management and product development experience Brown had amassed during his years at such large industry players as **Walt Disney World, Walt Disney Company** and **Six Flags** proved itself quickly, as he immediately landed such key clients as **Six Flags Entertainment, Cedar Fair Entertainment, Palace Entertainment** and **Herschend Family Entertainment**.

In 2012 British company Lo-Q PLC and Accesso merged via a \$22 million deal. While Lo-Q’s **Tom Burnet** retained the title CEO under the merger, Brown stayed on and became a board member and COO of North American operations. After landing a long-term agreement with **Merlin Entertainments Group**, several title changes and overseeing the acquisition and product integration of multiple additional ticket services and guest experience management companies, Brown departed Accesso in 2018. However, he again reemerged as CEO just prior to the pandemic in early 2020 and has successfully guided the company through the past two years.

Brown’s leadership returning to Accesso has been so strong that by the end of Q3 2021, the company had returned to form and was positioned again at pre-pandemic performance levels, projecting it would close

the year with revenue at “no less than \$124 million.”

“Since the company’s founding, our goal at Accesso has remained the same: to deliver best-in-class technology solutions that enhance the guest experience and drive operational revenue,” said Brown. “Today, we’re proud to serve as the solutions provider to forward-thinking operators from around the globe, working hand-in-hand with each partner to meet and exceed the expectations of their valued guests.”

But superior products and strong leadership alone could not produce the kind of success Accesso has seen without an exceptional team continually striving to reach the next level of success by adapting and enhancing their products and solutions, doing their best to anticipate the next challenge around the corner.

It is the combinations of product, leadership, and a dedicated team that have produced the third, final, and most important factor of Accesso’s success.

Village Roadshow Theme Parks’ improved operating performance, high-yield ticketing strategy, continued focus on customer experience, and careful cost management are supported by “everything that Steve and his team have done for us,” says **Bikash Randhawa**, chief operating officer at Village Roadshow Theme Parks, which includes **Warner Bros. Movie World, Sea World, and Wet’n’Wild**, along with seven other venues. “We are where we are today because Accesso has delivered above and beyond everything they had promised.”

While the pandemic forced attraction operators like Village Roadshow Theme Parks to take a hiatus, it also gave them time to reevaluate everything. “The biggest thing I’ve taken away from this difficult year is the importance of a good team and terrific partners.

“When technology delivers the right outcomes, we are happy to spread the word,” added Randhawa. “If service, quality, and consistency flow throughout the theme parks industry, that’s good for all of us.”

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# PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► [Energylandia's Sweet Valley family section](#) — page 14 / [New offerings in 2022 for Wild Adventures](#) — page 18

## Fun Spot America Atlanta reveals details for major RMC coaster

AT: Tim Baldwin  
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

FAYETTEVILLE, Ga. — There had been some devious teases over the summer. In May 2021, Fun Spot America Atlanta had announced it was partnering with Rocky Mountain Construction for an upcoming new-for-2022 coaster. Following that, an innocent reveal of the coaster's colors was made available with the promise of remaining details to come.

But they didn't come fast. Coaster fans were left hanging, much into autumn. The full reveal took place at the IAAPA Expo in Orlando. Standing at 155 feet tall, the biggest single ride investment for the company is called ArieForce One.

Currently, Fun Spot America walks the edge of family entertainment center and small amusement park. With the new coaster, the property enters the big leagues.

"This project is HUGE for myself and Fun Spot America," said CEO John Arie, Jr. "I have always loved every single IBox design coaster from RMC, and I have always dreamed of having one. I wanted to make an impact to everyone in that region that Fun Spot America is serious about our investments and we want all of our guests to



ArieForce One is the largest single ride investment in the history of Fun Spot America parks. The coaster's raven truss dive (inset) is a new diving, inverting element. COURTESY FUN SPOT AMERICA

know that we don't settle for anything but the best!" Fans immediately noticed the play on words with the family name. The moniker is actually a tribute to Arie's father, John Arie Sr., and his passion for flying.

"Dad didn't want us to name the coaster after him for several reasons. He is a very humble person and doesn't want to receive all of the credit. He has also said that you can't do it alone and it takes a great team to make something like Fun Spot America so special," said John Arie, Jr. "I really wanted to name it ArieForce One because my dad has done so much for us and has built such a great foundation for us to build on."

John Arie, Sr. was the founder of the Fun Spot America chain of parks.

The project is significant enough to make the

whole state take notice, as well as draw in enthusiasts from around the country.

The statistics and elements speak for themselves.

The first drop of 145 feet is taken at an 83-degree angle. The first of four inversions is an element termed a raven truss dive, which sends riders the other direction while flipping upside down. This rockets passengers into a monstrous zero-G stall. An airtime hill with outward banking will startle riders as trains chain direction. A double-up followed by an airtime drop sends riders into a barrel roll that soars over an arcade building. If riders aren't breathless by this point, there are still many maneuvers to come. Whimsical terms such as "fakey airtime hill," "3.75 G ground hugger turn," "corked roll" and chili dip" set up the finale, a quad down into the brake run.



As coasters go, it would be hard-pressed to make a ride more action-packed.

The length of the ride is 3,400 feet long and reaches a top speed of 64 mph. Two swing-axle trains will each seat 20 riders.

"The chili dip is a little bit of a move from dirt biking and snowboarding," said Jake Kilcup, COO, RMC. "You kind of jump up onto this box, but the box isn't flat on top. It's got a little dish out of it. You jump onto it, dish through it and jump off at the same elevation."

The designer is Joe Draves. ArieForce One is the first full project from this designer for RMC.

The massive new coaster will tower over the property. A recent addition of the Samson go-kart track helped propel Fun Spot America Atlanta into its win as Breakout FEC in the 2021 Golden Ticket Awards. While the go-karts, miniature golf, arcade games, bumper boats, batting cages and laser tag are staples of the FEC industry, the

► See RMC, page 12

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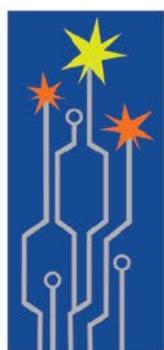
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The run toward the ride's conclusion features a finale that includes a quad-down. COURTESY FUN SPOT AMERICA

## ►RMC

Continued from page 10

installation of a massive new roller coaster will join more than a dozen other children's and family rides to bring the property more into a substantial amusement park.

The FEC originally opened in 1990 as Dixieland Fun Park. A name change to Fun Junction USA occurred in 2012. The park became part of the Fun Spot America chain in 2017, with an official name change taking place in 2018.

The new coaster will join two others by E&F Miler — a family and a children's model — already on the property.

The investment is \$13 million.

"Atlanta needed a shot in the arm, something special," John Arie, Jr., said when approached by this significant investment in Georgia over the two Florida properties. "We have 116 acres, and we are probably using about 20.

The reveal of the coaster's sleek trains garnered huge attention at the IAAPA Expo. AT/TIM BALDWIN



So our master plan includes things like a water park and a hotel and more roller coasters. It's a natural fit. I'm in love with [RMC's] IBox. That was my dream."

RMC introduced the IBox track on New Texas Giant at Six Flags Over Texas in 2011. Since that time, the ride supplier has taken the Golden Ticket Award for Best New Attraction twice with an IBox coaster. Among its other awards and accolades, five IBox coasters have appeared in the Top Ten in the past decade on the Golden Ticket Awards' Best Steel Coasters charts.

Over time, the installation of IBox coasters have taken place in various environments and topography. While not hilly, the terrain to work with at Fun Spot America isn't exactly flat.

"There is actually a 40-foot elevation change," Kilcup told *Amusement Today*. "It's kind of more than you would expect, but it isn't really a challenge. We do have to jump over an arcade building — and we're going to barrel roll through a truss over the building — so I think it's going to be kind of a cool thing."

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Ten new attractions being added for new section in 2022

## Energylandia creates four-hectare Sweet Valley family section

AT: Tim Baldwin  
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

ZATOR, Poland — With the debut of the park in 2014, **Energylandia** has become a monumental giant, if nothing else in the number of roller coasters. Already, the park claims more roller coasters than any other park in Europe. When the 2022 season gets under way, the park will have 18 gravity-driven roller coasters, an incredibly impressive feat in less than a decade.

With areas of the park such as Extreme Zone, Aqualantis, Dragon Zone and Family Zone, the sheer amount of rides should provide entertainment to those of any height or thrill-level preference. The park continues another growth spurt in 2022 with the addition of Sweet Valley. Geared toward younger children, this four-hectare (almost 10 acres) addition will be a big draw for kids of all sizes.

Picturing a land of chocolate bars, lollipops and cotton candy, visionaries at Energylandia are playing into childhood dreams with a land dedicated to those with a sweet tooth — not that adults won't feel its lure as well. Called Sweet Valley, the area will bring 10 new attractions to the park.

Two roller coasters, both from **Vekoma**, will have families smiling and giggling. Choco Chip Creek, the larger of the two, is a mine train-style coaster with three lifts, two of which are side-by-side. With a length of 3,937 feet and a height of 54 feet, the coaster fills a nice gap between the park's powerhouse thrillers

and smaller children's coasters. The front of the train is designed to resemble a steam locomotive. Trains will seat 32 passengers, two in the front car and six each in the other train cars. The smaller coaster is called Honey Harbour and will stand 38 feet tall. With a single train seating 20 passengers, the junior coaster will reach speeds over 28 mph, making it fun for the younger thrill seekers. It is the third junior coaster from Vekoma for the park and tenth overall.

"Since our first contact in 2014 with Energylandia, we both had an immediate click and knew this could be the start of a long-lasting relationship," said **Stefan Holtman**, sales manager, Vekoma. "In the seven years to follow we have worked together on a record breaking 11 roller coasters, including Zadra, the partnership between Vekoma and **Rocky Mountain Construction**. We believe that this list will not be finished since Energylandia is constantly developing the park and we are together always looking at novelties for the future."

**Zamperla** also has been a strong partner with the Polish theme park. In the 2021 addition, Aqualantis, the manufacturer provided multiple rides for the park. Likewise, with the new-for-2022 addition, many Zamperla rides will be installed in Sweet Valley.

Among the rides from Zamperla are a Barnyard, a Tea Cups and a swing ride. The Barnyard will be called Crazy Barn and whimsically stand on a crow's feet. Tea



Sweet Valley is a four-hectare expansion to Energylandia. COURTESY ENERGYLANDIA

and Treats is a rotating ride in which 12 teacups can seat up to 60 people. Choco Valley Mini Tour is a floating water rafting ride. The logs can accommodate three children or an adult and child. Lollipop Farm sports four-passenger tractors that drive through scenic props fashioned to lollipops and other candy.

**Gosetto** is supplying a Magic Tree ride. At Energylandia, it will be called Tree Grove. The rotating platform allows children seated in 12 pods to take aim at targets that cause props to react when activated. As riders encircle the central structure, aiming a wand at the interactive targets is rewarded by sounds, lights and movement. A steering wheel is located in the nut-shaped carriage, which can be controlled by another passenger, even an adult.

Candy Carousel is being provided by **SBF**. As an icon of candy land, the two-level,

Viennese-styled carousel adds a symbolic touch of famed amusement parks in a fanciful way.

Annual Sweet Market is being installed in house by Energylandia. This area will be an open playground to help children work off the unavoidable sugar rush.

Following the pattern of other areas in the park as well as the needs of guests, catering facilities and shops will meet those sudden urges for snacks and desserts, along with toys and gadgets.

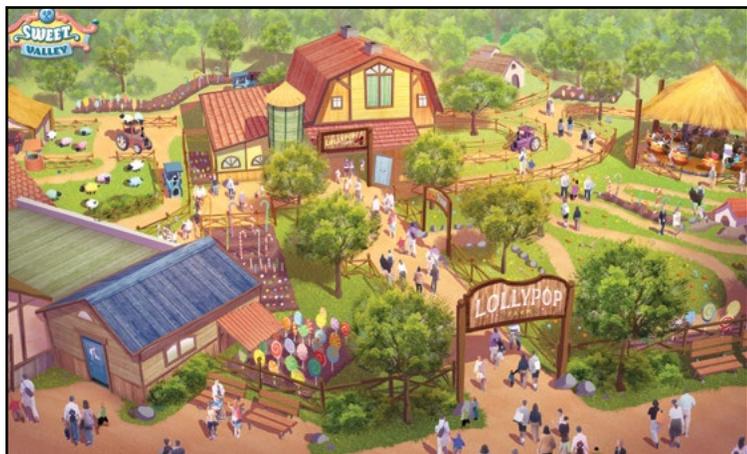
The theming and architecture of the park have a fanciful and village atmosphere washed in colorful pastels. Lollipop Farm has oversized candy, a countrified ranch atmosphere and thatched roofs. Candy-colored roofs, spires and cupolas give us a sense of playful fantasy and special touches such as lighthouses, Holland-inspired windmills and a welcoming archway

entrance into Sweet Valley.

The opening of Sweet Valley is planned in two phases. The rides will come first, allowing guests to ride all the attractions. Following this is the construction of a multi-purpose facility called Sweet Valley Town Hall. It will include a major restaurant, a 1,000-person theater, as well as business and conference meeting rooms. Spectacular dinner shows are also planned within the venue.

In recent years, the park's major expansions have had a marketable push toward thrill seekers with towering roller coasters. Sweet Valley appears to be aimed at the kid inside everyone.

The owner of Energylandia is businessman **Marek Goczał**. Among other businesses, he owns the energy drink Energy 2000. Among his enterprises, the names of some of them have the word energy included, Energylandia being one of them.



Lollipop Farm adopts a ranch look, complete with families driving the roadways in tractors (above left). Choco Chip Creek is a mine train-style coaster from Vekoma. When Sweet Valley opens next summer, Vekoma will have supplied 10 roller coasters to the park since it opened in 2014 (above middle). Fanciful architecture and pastel colors make for an immediate connection with younger ones (above right). COURTESY ENERGYLANDIA

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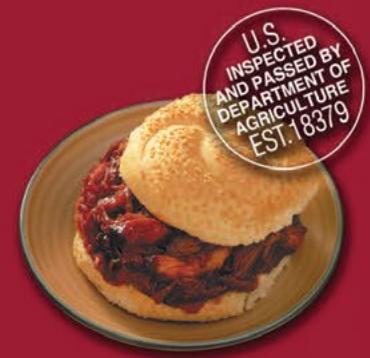


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# Numerous ride suppliers fill Quest indoor theme park in Qatar

AT: Tim Baldwin  
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

DOHA, Qatar — After a soft opening last summer, Quest theme park is dazzling visitors with its futuristic look, fun storyline and exhilarating rides.

Located in an indoor portion of Doha Oasis, a mixed development property, the climate-controlled facility has a lot to offer. There are three sections to the park: Oryxville, City of Imagination and Gravity, each of which represents either the past, present or future. Within these lands, Quest has its own set of characters. One of the characters is Flap, a bird that plays a part in the **Extreme Engineering** coaster, Fly With Flap.

“I love that layout,” said **Phil Wilson**, executive vice president of sales and marketing, Extreme Engineering. “We partnered with their IP of Flap, a bird and iconic character of that region. They wanted a soar-like-a-bird experience. We are able to fly kids around other rides and attractions and get a bird’s eye view of the park. Then they get to fly around **Planet Hollywood** and smell the burgers and fries below. It’s really fun and you are up high. It’s beautiful.”

Fly With Flap is a single rider experience that trav-



The futuristic theming of Quest makes it quite the draw. Oryx Express from Vekoma delivers a fun ride to children and bigger kids (below left). Fly With Flap soars individuals 60 feet above onlookers below (below right). COURTESY QUEST



els above onlookers below from a height of 60 feet. The length of the attraction is 656 feet.

“You’re really immersed. The theming is off the charts,” said Wilson. “It’s not just ‘Oh, I’m in a glider.’ It’s a glider going into a world you’ve never seen.”

Among the rides in the park’s lineup is a sizable



selection from **Zamperla**.

“Doha Oasis is certainly one of the most interesting entertainment locations in the Middle East region,” said **Giorgia De Luca**, marketing, Zamperla. “The Quest park embraces Qatar’s past, present and future, focusing on high-quality construction and immersive theming. Zamperla has been able to fit perfectly into this concept, providing innovative and themed attractions to better integrate into the park.”

In phase one of the park, Zamperla provided a Midi Discovery, Surf’s Up and bumper cars. Phase two brought a bigger package: NebulaZ, Jumpin’ Star, Magic Bikes, Jump Around and a mini Ferris wheel.

The Arabian theming of Oryxville, a nod to the past, accents a roller coaster from **Vekoma Rides**. Oryx Express is a junior coaster that still charms most members of the family. The length is 679 feet. The oryx is the national animal and

symbol of Qatar.

“This is a project that was started in 2014, and it got extended and extended. They changed the theming, and it is a very beautiful park,” said **Charlotte van Etten**, Vekoma. “The project has changed management several times, but they are extremely happy with the coaster, and the guests just love it, children love it and we have received great comments from the park.”

One of the big thrill rides is Magma Blast. The park bills it as the world’s tallest indoor drop tower. To accomplish this, thematic structures emerge from the roof of the building. Supplied by **S&S – Sansei**, the experience is also enhanced with media and a storyline of tapping into the potent geothermal energies beneath the surface.

“The S&S combo tower combines the best elements of the S&S Space Shot and Turbo Drop into a single tower ride experience,”

said **Paul Lattin**, engineering director, S&S. “The riders experience the thrill of a high G-force launch, followed by a sudden freefall toward the ground. After a couple of bungee-like bounces, the passengers are lifted to the top of the tower, giving them a view of the surrounding area. As it reaches the top, the cart is locked into the brakes and held for a short time before the sudden negative G-force acceleration toward the ground. A couple of bungee-like bounces soften the descent and a gentle settling of the cart back to the ground ends the ride cycle.”

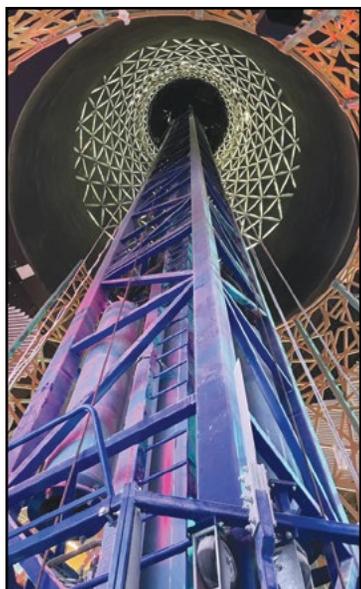
As noted in the 2021 NOV II issue of *Amusement Today*, the signature ride at the park is EpiQ Coaster. Since that coverage, the thriller from **Premier Rides** has received a notable distinction.

“Premier Rides is extremely honored by the formal Guinness World Record recognition of the EpiQ launch coaster being the tallest indoor coaster in the world, said **Jim Seay**, president, Premier Rides. “We congratulate Doha’s Quest theme park team on the award and are grateful for being part of their formula for success. The guest feedback on their signature attraction has been fantastic, which is a testament to all the creativity and technical innovation that went into building the one-of-a-kind thrill ride.”

Like the S&S tower, EpiQ achieves its record-breaking status by futuristic architecture that juts from the roof of the building.

Other rides in the mix have been supplied by **SBF Visa** and **Chance Rides**. In all, Quest offers 25 rides and attractions, in addition to other activities. Climbing walls, virtual reality attractions, skill games and play areas round out the entertainment offerings.

The Doha Oasis development also includes residences, stores, a five-star hotel and a modern theater.



An S&S tower extends into a column jutting skyward (above left). Visually stunning architecture from the roof allow the S&S tower and Premier coaster to have record-breaking height (above right). COURTESY S&S

# Triotech prepares to debut new Hyper Ride in North America

AT: Tim Baldwin  
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO — At the IAAPA Expo, Montreal-based **Triotech** announced a significant new dark ride for **Clifton Hill** in Niagara Falls, Canada. Set to debut next summer, the new ride system will be called **Carnival Chaos** at the entertainment district.

"We have worked with the team at Clifton Hill for many years on several successful attractions," said **Ernest Yale**, president and CEO of Triotech. "For us, it is only fitting to deploy this Hyper Ride, with its unique motion technology, working alongside a solid partner in one of the world's most iconic sites."

Prior to the announcement, the new Hyper Ride dark ride system snagged a Brass Ring Award for Best New Product/Rides and Attractions.

Carnival Chaos will feature seven fully interactive scenes. Five vehicles will journey through the attraction, each seating four passengers.



The exterior of the ride will be heavily themed, and passersby will be able to see ride vehicles moving in and out of the attraction (above left). A section of track at the IAAPA Expo allowed attendees to experience the rotation and motion (above right). Triotech partnered with **Gosetto** on the attraction. COURTESY TRIOTECH; AT/TIM BALDWIN

The dark ride will occupy approximately 6,000 square feet, and the exterior will feature extensive theming.

Inside the attraction, ride vehicles rotate and spin to face riders at interactive screens as well as to add thrill. New targeting devices and state-of-the-art projection engage each set of riders. Seats also offer a range of motion. Triotech is working with **Gosetto** on the vehicles.

On the IAAPA Expo show floor, attendees had an opportunity to ride the vehicle and see models showing the modular plans.

"The secret of our success is we've developed technology that has run for our customers for 10, 15, 20 years, and we've developed a library of content — whether immersive or interactive — and we've kept our promises of developing at least one new content each



year," Yale told the press on the IAAPA Expo floor. "With that approach, we've sold more than 4,000 simulators. Now with everything we've learned with major dark rides like 'Ghost Busters,' **Legoland** and **Knott's Berry Farm**, we bring it to the family entertainment center and location-based destination with a library of content."

Yale has two locations of the Hyper Ride underway.

Triotech's approach is that with the addition of more installations going in, the cost of creation of new content continues to go down.

"Basically, we sell you a turnkey attraction — the vehicle, the motion, the theming," said Yale.

LED arches and high definition screens add to the immersion of the attraction. Each vehicle has its own sound injections. While some dark rides are all contained, Triotech believes placing theming in front and letting the ride vehicles emerge from the indoor space helps attract passersby to purchase tickets.

"As a long-standing partner with Triotech, Clifton Hill has introduced many new attraction technologies to the visitors of Niagara Falls over the years," stated **Harry Oakes**, president of **HOCO**, Clifton Hill's parent company. "I am personally very excited to be deploying this new attraction that will complement our wide offering."

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# Wild Adventures offering variety of new adventures for 2022

AT: Pam Sherborne

psherborne@amusementtoday.com

VALDOSTA, Ga. – Officials at **Wild Adventures Theme Park**, Valdosta, Georgia, have wasted no time in getting the word out that guests in 2022 will have plenty of brand new offerings.

Announcing the additions at the first of December, the most noticeable one for guests will likely be the new restaurant called **Water's Edge Brews and Bites**.

But that isn't all guests will find. Officials are also planning a new live music venue, new and expanded festivals and special events and a new animal attraction.

In addition, a partnership with **Georgia Beer Company** will bring special beers brewed just for the park.

Park officials and staff are excited about the new offerings for 2022.

"These additions reflect our desire to create new and exciting experiences for our guests and our commitment to growth as we continue to establish Wild Adventures as the premiere entertainment destination for families in our region," said **Jon Vigue**, vice president and general manager.

Wild Adventures is already more than just a theme park. There is a water park, **Splash Island**, and its zoo. Spread out over its 170 acres are over 40 rides and attractions at Wild Adventures, an abundance of water slides, raft rides, wave pool, and children's water play area at Splash Island, along with hundreds of native and exotic animals in the zoo habitat.



Above are artist renderings of **Water's Edge Brews and Bites**. The new restaurant at Wild Adventures will serve beer, wine, gourmet pretzels and offer shade and live entertainment to guests. COURTESY WILD ADVENTURES

Water's Edge Brews and Bites will serve beer and wine in a relaxed and controlled atmosphere. Guests will not be able to take their drinks outside of the designated area of the restaurant.

It will offer locally brewed beers, wine, gourmet pretzels and shaded spaces, as well as live entertainment.

"Our guests have been asking for a space like this for a long time," Vigue said. "It's important to us that we bring this area to life in a way that is family-friendly and

provides an enjoyable atmosphere for everyone."

Wild Adventures and Georgia Beer Company representatives are looking forward to their new partnership. **Chris Jones**, Georgia Beer Company, feels Wild Adventures' great reputation in the area puts his beer front and center.

"Georgia Beer Company strives to be a good representative of South Georgia," Jones said. "Without a doubt, Wild Adventures represents and embodies the best of both South Georgia and the Southeast United States.

"As such, all of us at Georgia's southernmost brewery are extremely excited about the forthcoming partnership; what it means for Valdosta-Lowndes County and what it means for the future of tourism and quality of life in our community," he said. "This is one adventure we can't wait to embark upon."

The new attraction in the animal area of the park is being called **Wanyama Overlook**. Translated from Swahili, "wanyama" means

"animals," and guests will find some amazing ones. This is the largest new animal habitat Wild Adventures has introduced in over decade.

It will feature a variety of exotic animals native to Africa and Asia, including giraffes, zebras, water buffalo, wildebeests and more. The unique exhibit also will serve as a fun and immersive catering space with a view for private events and a shaded area for families to enjoy.

"Wanyama Overlook will be a place for our guests to relax in the shade and learn about these majestic creatures when we open in 2022," Vigue said.

Guests already are able to view such animals as meerkats, alligators, different types of snakes, black bears, water buffalos, black bucks, foxes, feral hogs, turtles of all kinds and an array of exotic birds.

The expanded festival lineup in 2022 is including a special event called **Shamrock the Park**. This new spring festival will debut March 19 to April 3, 2022.

Planners working on this festival are making sure there will be something for all ages as they bring an Irish charm to the park. The festival will feature a shamrock scavenger hunt for kids, live music, a festival parade and authentic Irish menu items at park restaurants.

The annual Easter celebration is being expanded. **Pounce & Crunch's Easter Eggstravaganza** will be held over two weekends. It will feature a new Easter Parade, new activities and the hunt for more than 100,000 candy-filled eggs.

Wild Adventure's **All-Star Summer Concert Series** will return with performances from over 12 big-name artists.

"We've been hard at work building our 2022 concert lineup with can't-miss performers," Vigue said. "We are looking forward to announcing the full lineup in late February."

The 2022 **All-Star Summer Concert Series** will kick off with the annual **Passholder Appreciation Concert** on April 30.

Other activities next year include the **Friday nights** in the park. Every Friday night in June and July, Wild Adventures will stay open late with live music around the lake and a family-friendly dance party in **Splash Island**.

A new lighting package installed in 2021 will illuminate the park and allow for guest interaction with the park's nocturnal animals.

Every Friday night in July also will feature a **fireworks display**.

So that guests can partake in everything Wild Adventures has to offer in 2022, officials have decided to be open for more days. It will open in mid-March for weekends until the first of April for full time operations. **Splash Island** is set to open April 2.

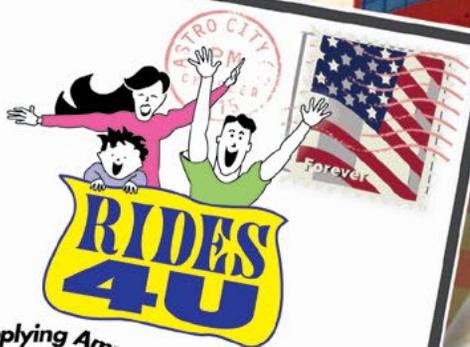
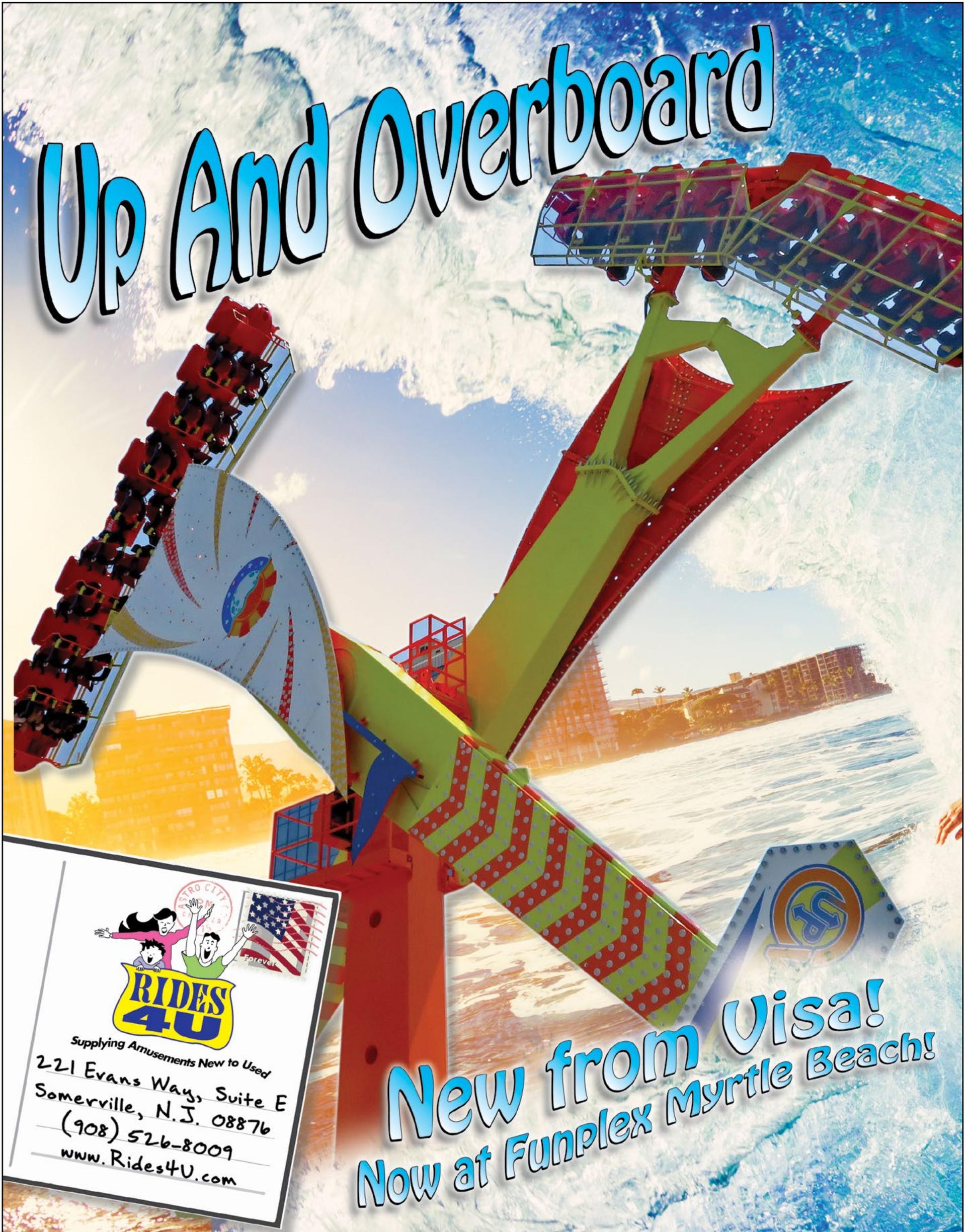
The new three-tiered season pass program has been added. It includes a **Gold Pass**, which offers free soda all year. Families will be able to finance their pass purchases over three, six or 11 months.

•wildadventures.com



Officials at Wild Adventures, Valdosta, Georgia, are gearing up for 2022 season. The park announced there would be a new restaurant, new live entertainment venue as well as a brand new animal habitat. COURTESY WILD ADVENTURES

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## Kennywood's Kangaroo set to bounce back to life in 2022



WEST MIFFLIN, Pa. — A Kennywood classic will rejoin the park's collection of rides. In partnership with Premier Rides, Kennywood has begun a total refurbishment of the Kangaroo, which will return to operation in 2022. The work will enhance the experience with an all-new LED lighting package, vibrant new colors and state-of-the-art operating systems while still providing the classic Flying Coaster feel. The Kangaroo will be the last ride of its kind in operation. COURTESY KENNYWOOD

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**IDEAS** has been selected to redesign the historic **Jungle Island** animal park in Miami, Florida. The firm is guiding the overhaul of the iconic, 84-year-old destination with a dynamic new guest experience that includes adventurous family attractions, show-stopping entertainment and wild animal encounters.

Originally opened as **Parrot Jungle** in 1936 in Pinecrest, Florida, the current Jungle Island park is situated between Downtown Miami and South Beach on Watson Island, adjacent to Port Miami's cruise terminals.

As the lead experience design consultant, **IDEAS** will collaborate with **HKS Architects, ProParks Attractions Group, Martin Aquatic** and **EDSA**.

Additional plans for the property include a new water park and upscale resort that integrates into Jungle Island's private bayside club at Joia Beach.

Jungle Island is expected to unveil this initial phase of new offerings in 2023.

The Ocean City Planning Board, Ocean City, New Jersey, approved an application in November from **Playland's Castaway Cove** owner, moving forward plans to rebuild the former arcade and office building that was destroyed by a fire in January 2021.

The park was able to open in time for summer but the building wasn't completed. According to owner **Brian Hartley**, who was quoted as saying by a local Ocean City news agency, the pilings for a new building are in place and a concrete floor has been built, but more work will have to wait for approvals.

No one was injured in the January fire that was ruled accidental and caused by an electrical issue.

The submitted plans call for an arcade and food service on the ground floor.

Officials at **Brevard Zoo**, Melbourne, Florida, announced last month the kick-off of a \$100 million campaign to build a second campus, the **Aquarium and Conservation Center**, on an undeveloped, 14-acre site on the shore of the Banana River at Port Canaveral.

Port commissioners approved a development agreement and terms of a ground lease for the project in September. With that agreement in hand and \$34 million already committed by donors, zoo officials felt it was a good time to kick off the main

phase of its fund-raising efforts.

Plans for the new campus include indoor and outdoor exhibits, with an Indian River Lagoon theme and an abundance of interactive activities.

Zoo officials hope to break ground by 2024 and open to the public in late 2026 or early 2027.

**Brian Morrow**, owner of Orlando, Florida-based **B Morrow Productions**, came out as a standout contestant on **HGTV's "Table Wars"** design competition series after he won the week three challenge with his '80s-inspired table design.

Morrow has 20 years' experience in the theme park and entertainment industry and completed projects for **SeaWorld Orlando; Disney's Animal Kingdom** and **ZooTampa at Lowry Park**, Florida.

**Hopi Hari** amusement park in Sao Paulo, Brazil, has undergone consistent maintenance and revitalization since 2019.

Construction crews are updating the Montezum wooden roller coaster, the park's premier attraction, with a renovated train and improvements to the HVAC system in the queue line. Additionally, crews have updated the ziplines, park restaurants and retail locations.

The **Kennedy Space Center** in Cape Canaveral, Florida, previewed plans last month for its new attraction focusing on the latest innovations in space exploration.

According to a story by the area's local ABC affiliate, the attraction is already under construction and is scheduled to open in March 2022.

Entitled Gateway: The Deep Space Launch Complex, the attraction will offer an immersive experience featuring a collection of modern-day spacecraft and a 4D theater.

In addition to showcasing actual space flown artifacts and full-scale models, the 50,000-square-foot attraction also will offer visitors interactive experiences simulating a journey through space.

**Warner Bros. Themed Entertainment** has announced that its highly-anticipated **Game of Thrones Studio Tour** at **Linen Mill Studios** in Banbridge, Northern Ireland, will open February 4, 2022.

In a release, **Niall Gibbons**, chief executive of tourism for Ireland, said: "Over the past decade, Northern Ireland has welcomed fans from around the globe to the 'real-world Westeros,' home to the stunning landscapes, coastlines, and mountains that have featured in some of the show's most memorable scenes. The new **Game of Thrones Studio Tour** will give fans a fantastic opportunity to go behind the scenes and be immersed in the sets, props and costumes used in the series."

Many of the fantasy show's beautiful rural locations were filmed in Northern Ireland, including the Kings Road, the Iron Islands and Winterfell.



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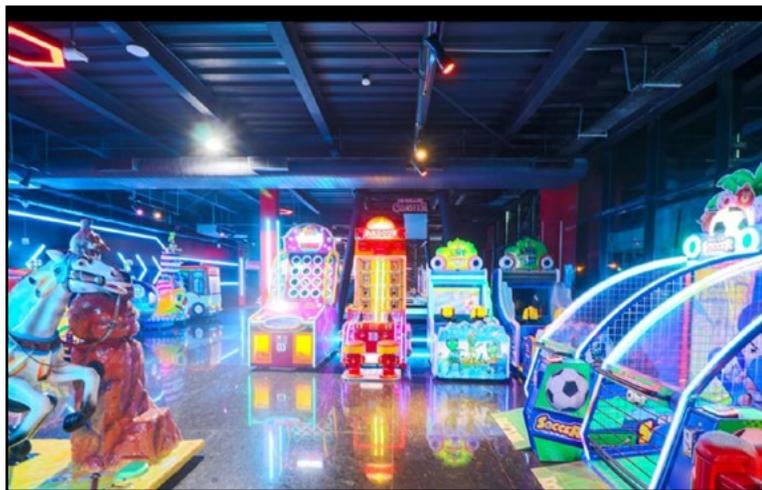


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## Semnox's Tixera implemented at futuristic theme park Thrill City



September 2021 saw Thrill City debut in Hyderabad, India, with a futuristic theme throughout the facility. Semnox provided its Tixera Parks solution — featuring RFID-enabled wristbands as well as Smart Loyalty cards — to control gates and point-of-sale at all locations within the park, both indoor and outside. COURTESY SEMNOX



HYDERABAD, India — **Thrill City** opened its gates to visitors on September 10, 2021, and went live using the Tixera Parks solution from **Semnox**. The implementation included access control gates, readers and POS for the park's more than 50 experiences and games spread across more than 86,000 square feet.

"Thrill city is the only amusement park in India located in the heart of Hyderabad with a bundle of fun, thrill and larger-than-life experiences to the visitors," said **Rajnikanth**, the facility's director. "We did not want to compromise on the experience for the customers and Semnox made it possible for us to provide the best-in-class technology to power our systems and provide a smooth experience for our staff and visitors. We are happy to have made this decision."

Semnox's Tixera Parks solution in the location involves Lumin readers for arcade games, simulators and 3D games at indoor locations and Xcess readers for ride validation at the outdoor attractions. The access to the location is enabled with flap barriers and turnstiles. Visitors to the park utilize reusable RFID-enabled silicon wristbands or Smart Loyalty cards for entry to the various rides and games.

"We are glad to partner with Thrill City in a major city like Hyderabad to provide the cutting-edge technology demand for the park," commented **Ashish KS**, group client manager for Semnox Solutions. "The venue is designed as a futuristic amusement park, and Semnox has been able to help them live up to the expectation of the park. With the cashless solution implementation, the guests have a great and worry-free experience. Thrill city benefits from this. We look forward to more projects with Thrill City to enhance the customer experience in days to come."

•tixera.com



## FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL

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

**Launch Entertainment**, an operator and franchisor of year-round family entertainment centers, announced the reopening of its third corporate location. Launch is transforming what was once an **AirTime Trampoline & Game Park** into its newest 30,000-square-foot, fun-filled experience in Novi, Michigan.

Founded in 2012 by Rob and Erin Arnold, Launch offers a differentiated family entertainment experience with a wide variety of attractions and amenities for all ages including XP Arena, ninja courses, laser tag, bowling, trampolines, premium food and beverage service and more.

The Novi Launch Entertainment location will provide the latest features for all to enjoy. Launch has already made changes and will continue to transform the facility. Aside from its signature trampoline courts, dodge ball and Launch's XP Arena, the company is installing a massive arcade, ninja course, laser tag, a full bar and its Krave Restaurant.

"Acquiring an additional AirTime not only enhances our portfolio, but it also provides tactical advantages to our franchise as a whole," said Launch co-founder and CEO **Rob Arnold**.

Described as a mix between laser tag, fencing and *Game of Thrones*, **MagneTag** debuted at Wisconsin FEC **Bounce Milwaukee**.

"It's impossible to frown while you're playing this game. Absolutely impossible," said **Adam Cohen**, the inventor of the game.

A Wisconsin native, Cohen came up with the idea as a way to keep his friends honest. They played lots of paintball, but were having trouble keeping track of who was and who wasn't hit. The honor system wasn't working. So Cohen came up with MagneTag and has been working on it for about 10 years.

Guests participating in MagneTag put on their armor and grab a sword. The goal is to hit the opposing players armor with the rigid but NERF-like sword. Both the sword and armor are magnetized, and guests are alerted to when the armor is hit. An electronic score keeping system tracks the number of lives players have left.

The installation at Bounce Milwaukee hopes to serve as a way to advertise to other FECs which might want to add the MagneTag interactive attraction.

• **Pixar Putt** debuted in mid-December

in Houston, Texas. The pop-up minigolf experience is made up of 18 interactive holes inspired by the stories, characters, and icons from some of **Disney** and **Pixar**'s most beloved films. The holes feature themes from *Toy Story*, *The Incredibles*, *Monsters, Inc.*, *Finding Nemo*, *Coco*, *A Bug's Life*, *Wall-E*, and *Inside Out*.

The pop-up came to Houston after a four-month run in New York City. It will remain in the Texas location through mid-March of 2022.

With COVID safety still a concern, the golf facility's measures include capped player numbers on the course, physical distancing measures in queues and on course, sanitizer stations onsite, and daily sanitizing of all golfing equipment between users for every session.

• **Southern Lanes Owensboro** owner Don Litten wants the public to know that Kentucky's recently-renovated, former **Bowlodrome** location is no longer their father's bowling alley.

"Back in the day it used to be called a bowling alley, then it was the bowling center, and now it is family entertainment center," said Litten. "Bowling lanes by themselves will not survive today. You have to have the extras to take care of the family, instead of just the dad coming here and bowling."

Litten, who also owns bowling centers in Bowling Green and Hopkinsville, Kentucky, opened Southern Lanes Owensboro in mid-December.

"We have done a lot," added Litten. "We have just about gutted everything out. We put in new bumpers, new gutters, we resurfaced the lanes, put in new chairs, new scoring, laser tag, bumper cars, arcade, [redid] the bar and [remodeled] the snack bar."

• A former **Macy's** location in downtown Santa Barbara at the **Paseo Nuevo Mall** has reopened this December as a hybrid roller rink, laser tag, arcade and more called **Aloha Fun Center**.

**Mary Lynn Harms-Romo**, senior marketing director and local leasing manager at Paseo Nuevo said the plan is for a one-year term on the ground floor of the space while the second and third floors are being marketed to other potential tenants.

The Aloha Fun Center is the third location of the Bay Area-based Aloha roller rinks, and Harms-Romo said the company is looking to keep the location as long as it is available.

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# The 166th edition of Bloomsburg Fair attendance near 2019 levels

AT: B. Derek Shaw  
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

BLOOMSBURG, Pa. – Nearly 375,000 people attended the 2021 **Bloomsburg Fair**, down 25,000 from the last one held in 2019.

“Yes, we believe as though COVID-19 did impact the fair as a whole, workers for both vendors and the fair itself were hard to come by and the COVID-19 numbers began rising weeks before the fair and continued to do so as the fair was in full swing,” said **Hayley Davenport**, concession clerk, Bloomsburg Fair.

“[We] caught a great run of weather,” said **Morris Vivona Jr.**, president, **Amusements of America** (A of A), the carnival provider. The midway consisted of 45 rides with help from **SwikaS Amusements** and **Bartlebaugh Amusements**, who A of A booked in.

The most popular rides included **Chaos (Technical Park)**, **Elephant Ride (Kolmax)** and **Pharoah’s Fury (Chance Rides)**. The permanent 100-car **Sky Ride (Ride Tek)** that resides on the grounds and is owned by **Reithoffer Shows** is continually a favorite as well. The cars are taken down each season and used at the 11-day **Georgia National Fair**, Perry, during that mid-October event.

Vivona talked about the ride midway revenue: “Although attendance was reported to be on par or slightly less than average, the midway had a record year. The fair reported its best year ever, financially.”

When it came to COVID-



**Amusements of America had 45 rides spread among two locations: the main midway and the kiddie midway. An additional attraction on the main midway was the Wall of Death Motorcycle Stunt Show. Held in the Wild Wheels Thrill Arena (right), it featured motorcycle and go-kart professional stunt drivers. The 15-minute show was brought in by Amusements of America. AT/SUE NICHOLS**

19 protocols, the fair recommended that all those who attended wear masks in buildings per the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** guidelines. They supplied numerous masks throughout the grounds along with multiple hand sanitation stations. The **Pennsylvania Department of Health** provided free COVID testing and vaccines for those who were interested.

The carnival also did its part. “We were sure to have plenty of signage throughout the midway advising the public to practice safe COVID behavior. In addition, there were sanitizing stations at every ride and throughout the midway,” said Vivona.

Both the fair and carnival are satisfied in their relationship with each other. “Excellent; we are very pleased with Amusements of America,” said Davenport.

“It’s always a pleasure to go to Bloomsburg. They’re great people to work with. They do a fantastic job. They put on a great fair and they couldn’t treat us any better,” said Vivona.

Special promotions included free admission to the grounds with a purchase of a grandstand show ticket, numerous discounts throughout the week and bundle deals on admission tickets (8 for \$48 and weekly passes at \$35.) On Tuesday, a percentage of all admissions went to **Ronald McDonald House**, Danville.

“We have a large target when it comes to advertising at the fair, such as our TV commercials, radio commercials, banners, billboards and brochures,” said Davenport regarding the fair’s media mix.

What sets the Bloomsburg Fair apart from others was a question posed. “The time of the year, agricultural experience, a large number of food stands and acreage that the fair is held on is spacious, [and the] sky ride that gives visitors a bird’s eye view of the grounds from one side of the fair to the other,” Davenport responded.

New this year was a race track that was put in service. This required removing the permanent grandstand stage.

“Even though we did not get to run on the dirt this year, we are planning to have the first fair week race next year. [The] track was used to house



the demolition derby, tractor pulls and monster trucks,” said Davenport. Plans are to do the same in the future.

The 2021 fair hosted entertainment acts on a sizeable portable grandstand stage, placed on top of the new race track. Acts included **Darci Lynn**, **Crowder**, **Jon Pardi**, **Chicago**, **Starship** featuring **Mickey Thomas** and **Championship Demolition Derby** by **Joey Young**. In addition, the fair also had frequent performances with numerous acts on the free stage starting at 9 a.m. each morning and continuing throughout the day and evening. Strolling entertainment throughout the grounds, including **Chris Yerling** aka ‘Sir Mimealot,’ provided many surprises throughout the fair.

Merchants seemed to be upbeat about their experience. “The vendors seemed to give back positive feedback. Even though through the troubling times, and with attendance being below normal, the income for the vendors seemed to hold steady from years past,” said Davenport.

“With the unprecedented circumstances of 2020 in our rearview mirror, we were thrilled to open our gates to our Bloomsburg Fair

family once again,” said Fair President **Dennis Karschner**. “The Bloomsburg Fair hosted more than 800 vendors this year. There were many new offerings along with the traditional staples that continue to bring folks back year after year.

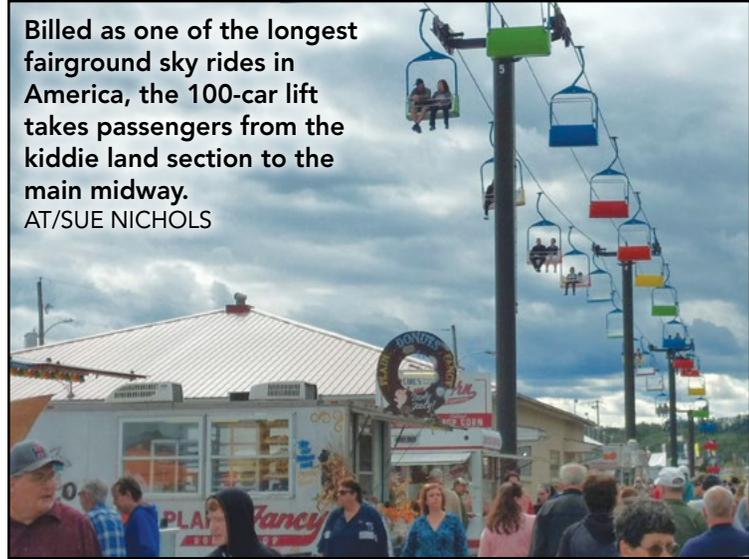
“The fair’s historic area continues to grow and attract more visitors. Newly constructed restrooms were a welcome addition for the visitors. Our popular Barton House, Rupert School House, and historic barn again showcased antique farm implements, quilters, sewing demonstrations, and much more. Some antique farm implements were set up inside of the Keystone Agricultural Center where wine tasting for adults and grape juice for kids was showcased.

As always, we wish to thank all of the staff, volunteers, vendors, neighbors and all community members who contribute to the success of the fair year after year, and more importantly, all of the guests that visit the fair.”

The next Bloomsburg Fair takes place from September 24 to October 1, 2022.

•bloomsburgfair.com

**Billed as one of the longest fairground sky rides in America, the 100-car lift takes passengers from the kiddie land section to the main midway.**  
AT/SUE NICHOLS





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# IAFE convention returns to in-person event, deemed a success

AT: B. Derek Shaw  
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

SAN ANTONIO — After a one-year respite due to the ongoing pandemic, the **International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE)** held its 139th convention in San Antonio, again at the **Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center**. This was the third and final year in the Texas city.

The IAFE budgeted for and far exceeded a 50% convention, according to IAFE President and CEO **Marla Calico**: "As was said many times throughout the past 22 months, any event that was completed was 'unlike any other,' and the IAFE Convention was no exception. Attendance exceeded expectations, as did trade show booth space sales and sponsorships. We were thrilled all the way across."

Calico felt quality was more important than quantity. The IAFE does not release actual attendance numbers for the annual event. "People that were there were qualified to buy," she said.

IAFE Director of Sales **Steve Siever** considered



Above, Ben Pfeffer of Tons of Fun Shows (middle) as well as Wendy Delano (left) and Carey Harveycutter (right) of the Salem Virginia Fair were happy to enjoy the IAFE trade show floor in person once again. At right, Stephanie Ann performed on the trade show floor in the Beyond the Booth showcases. Her performance was presented by Liz Gregory Talent Agency and Gregory Productions.  
AT/SUE NICHOLS, GARY SLADE

the shorter two-day trade show format a success, according to exhibitors and attendees alike. "The 2021 IAFE Trade Show was the family reunion we all needed," Siever said. "Nearly 200 exhibitors gathered to reconnect with our fairs as our events move forward into 2022. The 2021 IAFE Trade Show was well attended on both days; the Beyond the Booth showcasing stage acts were well received and the first-ever

Verified Buyers/Exhibitors Breakfast was a big hit with all those who participated. Exhibitors left this year's show feeling more connected and united as an industry."

Carnivals that had a booth on the trade show floor included **Powers Great American Midways, Reithoffer Shows, Inc., and Talley Amusements, Inc.**

Workshops were on course with current topics and trends. The Fair of the Future series explored what a fair might look like in five years as it relates to agriculture, facilities, competitive exhibits and more. Other topics covered included sponsorship pitching, perimeter and internal security and ag education on a grand scale. There were six different session topic tracks: marketing and sponsorship, agriculture, commercial exhibits and concessions, facilities/operations, entertainment and ticketing and professional development.

**Jeremy Parsons** of the **Clay County Fair**, Spencer, Iowa, was named 2022 chair of the IAFE during the business meeting. Parsons has nearly 30 years of fair experience and has served in numerous leadership



roles within the IAFE. He is a past president of the **Mid-West Fairs Association**.

Several awards and recognitions were presented during the convention.

The annual Hall of Fame Award is presented to individuals for distinguished achievement in exposition management. **Jim Sinclair**, **Minnesota State Fair**, St. Paul, and **Gary Slater**, **Iowa State Fair**, Des Moines, were both inducted into the hall. This is the first time in the association's history, that two people received the award in the same year.

Winning Heritage awards were **Randy Brown**, **Iowa State Fair**; **John Keeney**, **Warren County Agricultural Association/Warren County Fair**, Indianola, Iowa; **Tom Kisse**, **Ozark Empire Fair**, Springfield, Missouri; **Dawn Rowe**, **Kissimmee Valley Livestock Show and Osceola County Fair**, Kissimmee, Florida; and **Marla Stello**, **La Crosse County Agricultural Society/La Crosse Interstate Fair**, West

Salem, Wisconsin. **Stello** was also awarded the Certified Volunteer Fair Manager designation during the convention. **Jayne Buttke** of the **Wisconsin Association of Fairs** was presented the Executive Director of the Year award, and **Jennifer Dunn** of the **Linn County Fair Association** in Central City, Iowa, received the Rising Star award.

At the nearby **Marriott River Center**, the **Showman's League of America (SLA)** held its annual convention and SLA Exhibitor's Lounge tabletop trade show, November 28–29. While not as large as the nearby fair convention show, the SLA trade show gave carnival owners, manufacturers and other ancillary businesses the opportunity to speak with each other in a less fast-paced environment.

Other activities included the SLA memorial service that pays respect to those who have passed in



Nashville recording artist Jenny Tolman was the headlining artist on the main stage at the Tuesday, November 30 IAFE Happy Hour. Tolman is represented by the Kinkead Entertainment Agency. The event was sponsored by McGowan Allied Specialty Insurance and Populous. Above, AT Publisher Gary Slade is seen with Jenny Tolman after her performance. AT/SUE NICHOLS



Above left, Norb Bartosik (left) of the Midwest Fairs Association and Nancy Smith (right) of the South Carolina State Fair were among several visitors to the *Amusement Today* booth on the show floor. Above right, (l to r) Jessica Ciecwic and Bev Gruber of the Allentown Fair, *Amusement Today's* Sue Nichols and Heidi Svonavec of the Pennsylvania Farm Show enjoyed socializing during the trade show. AT/GARY SLADE, SUE NICHOLS

► **IAFE**

Continued from page 26

the industry during the last year. The board of governors met, presenting the new officer slate for 2022: President **Patrick Jamieson**, (*World's Finest Shows*, Ontario, Canada), 1st Vice President, **Marc Janas**, (*B. Original Foods* who books with *Powers Great American Midways*), 2nd Vice President **Bob Johnson**, retired OABA president and 3rd Vice President, **Nate Janousek**, (*Fun Biz Concessions*).

Rounding out the activities was the annual President's banquet. With the theme of the *Great Gatsby*, complete with dueling pianos, the night honored outgoing SLA President, **Robert Thorson**, *Lucky Ducky Concessions*.

As the IAFE convention moves to the Hoosier State, so does the SLA. "We're looking to see what improvements we can make for next year. It's a brand-new spot for us. We will survey our exhibitors in the spring to get their valuable input on what type of trade show format they want," said **Cindy Henning**, secretary/executive director.

The 2022 IAFE convention and trade show takes place at the **Indiana Convention Center**, Indianapolis, Indiana, November 27-30. Calico indicated the next convention will be unlike any the IAFE has ever done. "Glad we got it done [2021 convention], and we are looking forward to 2022."

- [fairsandexpos.com](http://fairsandexpos.com)
- [showmensleague.org](http://showmensleague.org)

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## Northwestern Showmen's Safety Seminar returns in February 2022



Hands on training experiences such as welding certification (above) and forklift certification (below) will be offered at the Northwestern Showmen's Safety Seminar. The five-day event offers up to 49 educational classes (bottom). COURTESY NORTHWESTERN SHOWMEN'S CLUB



PORTLAND, Oregon — **The Northwestern Showmen's Safety Seminar** will be taking place February 21 through 25, 2022, at the **Funtastic Shows** campus in Portland, Oregon.

The event offers a five-day seminar with up to 49 educational classes and lots of hands-on training experiences such as welding and forklift certification.

All instructors are from the outdoor amusement business and lead their seminars on a voluntary basis because of their belief in the value of the Northwestern Showmen's Safety Seminar.

The classes begin early in the morning at 8 a.m. and end approximately at 5 p.m. Breakfast, lunch and dinner are all included in the low price of the seminar.

Because the seminar is operated as a nonprofit, the registration fee of the event can be kept lower than comparable events, which organizers hope will allow even more participants to attend.

The cost of the seminar is \$200 for the full five days and attendees can register at [nwshowmensclub.com](http://nwshowmensclub.com).



## MIDWAYSCENE

AT: B. Derek Shaw

[bdshaw@amusementtoday.com](mailto:bdshaw@amusementtoday.com)

Last fall, **Pam Shelmidine** moved from Watertown, New York, to Sydney, Montana, to manage the **Richland County Fair**. In upstate New York, Shelmidine directed the **Jefferson County Fair** for a few years. That fair has been operating continuously for 204 straight years.

"We took a leap of faith for my dream job," Shelmidine told the *Sydney Herald*, as she and two of her sons made the move in September. "Technically, I'm in the administrative field but I'm all about building relationships and getting involved with the community,"

One of her goals is to increase growth and connection between small businesses, the community and the fair and rodeo.

Even with her previous experience, this is Shelmidine's first time to manage a rodeo. "Rodeos are much more extravagant on this side of the country. I am really excited to get to be a part of my first real rodeo," she said.

The staff of the **Calgary Stampede**, Alberta, recently voted to unionize for the building and tear-down of the Stampede and other events held on the grounds. **The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE)**, Local 212, won a certification vote to unionize workers with an 80% "yes" vote.

Both parties will now work toward signing a first collective agreement.

"IATSE 212 and the **Calgary Exhibition and Stampede** have a working relationship that spans almost 100 years," said **Damian Petti**, president on the IATSE website. "When the 2021 Stampede went ahead, they called us to supply much of the labor for the event. That's what triggered the application for certification. They continued to want and need the skills of IATSE members."

The union represents over 150,000 technicians, artisans and crafts persons in the entertainment industry, including live theatre, motion picture and television production, broadcast and trade shows in the United States and Canada.

In mid-December, **Tom Eshelman**, general manager of the **Shenandoah County Fair Association**, Woodstock, Virginia, resigned to take a position outside the fair industry. Eshelman

managed the fair for the past 11 years, the longest-tenured manager in the fair's history.

During his time, Eshelman raised funds to replace the old horse stables that was damaged in a fire in 2013, acquired a long-term lease with the **Virginia Equine Alliance** to host pari-mutuel harness races, managed over \$1.1 million in infrastructure improvements and launched Christmas in the Valley, a drive-through park that began in November 2020.

Eshelman will miss working with area residents and businesses. "I've got some lifelong friendships here," he said. "It's been a good run," he told **The Northern Virginia Daily**.

As of press time, the association has not named a successor. For now, the board will assume operations.

The **Marin County Fair**, San Rafael, California, will make its comeback this summer as an outdoor-only event, after being shut down the past two years because of the pandemic.

"We are excited to return to our first in-person fair since 2019, and we know our community is eager for this as well," **Gabriella Calicchio**, the county's director of cultural services told the *Marin Independent Journal*.

In 2023, the county plans to return to a full indoor and outdoor fair.

"Even though it's seven months away, with all the uncertainties before us, making the decision now for an outdoor fair [only] allows them to move forward with the planning," said **Dr. Matt Willis**, the county public health officer.

The fair is scheduled for June 30 through July 4. The theme is "So Happy Together." In the past, the fair has typically attracted 30,000 people or more a day. **Butler Amusements** will be the ride provider.

The **International Association of Fairs and Expositions** post-convention surveys have gone out, using the Net Promoter Score (NPS) system as a way to measure feedback. This customer loyalty and satisfaction measurement is taken by asking buyers and vendors how likely they are to recommend the convention. At the time of publication with only early returns, measurements were in the 70% plus range. The association has been using this measurement tool since 2017.

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# WATER PARKS & RECREATION

► ProParks to manage SunSplash Waterpark — page 31 / News Splash — page 31

## WhiteWater West dual slide package heading to Raging Waters

AT: Jeffrey Seifert  
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

SAN DIMAS, California — **Raging Waters Los Angeles**, one of the largest water parks in California, is adding a dual-drop thriller of a waterslide, Bombs Away, for the 2022 season. First announced for the 2020 season, the global pandemic delayed those expansion plans.

Following a successful reopening and bounce-back in 2021, the park is now ready to proceed with those original plans. Bombs Away is actually two waterslides supplied by **WhiteWater West**— a Flatline Loop and straight drop slide that will both feature AquaLaunch capsules. Sliders will step into enclosed capsules and then, without notice, the floor beneath their feet abruptly vanishes and drops them down into two different experiences — a straight-speed six-story, open-chute, 70-degree AquaDrop where sliders will reach speeds of up to 26 feet per second or a drop into a high-speed turning flat-line loop through an enclosed 325-foot translucent tube.

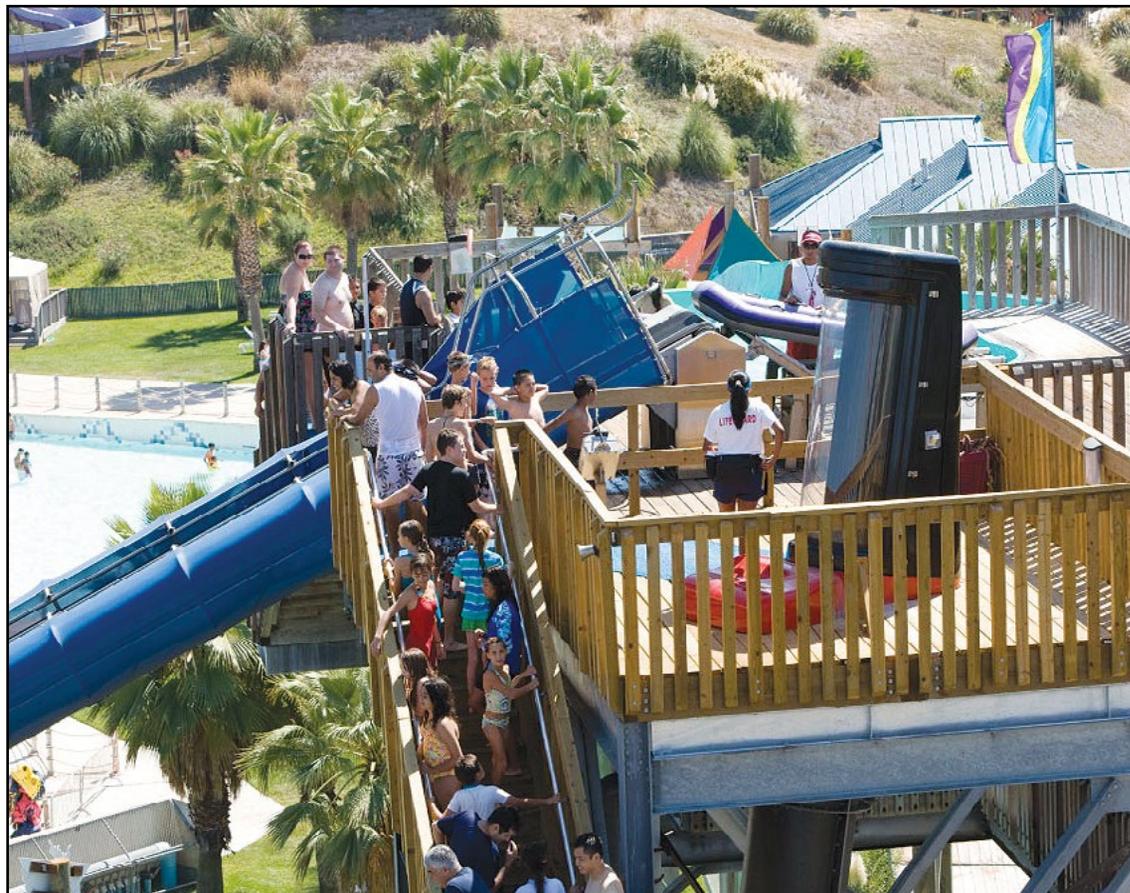
In order to make room for Bombs Away, the park retired Drop Out. Thrill seekers were given an opportunity to take one

more final plunge at the end of the 2019 season. Drop Out closed permanently on September 21, 2019.

“We know our guests have been waiting to blast off in Bombs Away since it was first announced in 2019,” says General Manager **Roland Reyes**. “These drops are over the top, and we are so excited for sliders to step in and see the Bombs Away experience was worth the wait.”

“The new Bombs Away attraction at Raging Waters Los Angeles is one of several we have supplied to **Palace Entertainment** parks this past year. It’s a thrilling slide that uses a countdown AquaLauncher. They’ve been extremely popular with the guests at the water park,” said **Andrew Mowatt**, executive vice president global key accounts, WhiteWater.

In addition to the new attraction for 2022, Raging Waters, which operates seasonally, will begin the 2022 season on May 21, one of the earliest opening days in the park’s nearly 40-year history. Raging Waters Los Angeles will also add a new open-air retail location at the park’s main gate so guests can stock up on sunscreen, swim trunks and other essentials before soaking up all the extra fun



Thrillseekers will start by boarding a drop capsule similar to the one seen here at another Palace Entertainment property. COURTESY PALACE ENTERTAINMENT

the expanded season will offer. The Raging Waters team is also hard at work in the kitchen developing new food items to satisfy hungry guests in between splashes on the new Bombs Away and other favorites.

Raging Waters opened in the city of San Dimas in Los Angeles County in 1983. As the brand expanded with two additional locations in Sacramento and San Jose, the original park adopted the moniker

Raging Waters San Dimas. In the late 1990s the water park was purchased by **Alfa Smart Parks** then subsequently sold in 2002 to Palace Entertainment, the U.S. division of parent company **Parques Reunidos**, which is based in Madrid, Spain. In 2016 the park began marketing itself as Raging Waters Los Angeles.

Regulations kept the park closed for 18 months during the COVID-19 pandemic. After closing for the

season in 2019, the park kept pushing back its opening day in 2020 until July 27 when it was announced that as a result of the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic, Raging Waters would not open at all in 2020. The park was finally able to reopen on May 29, 2021, following the longest shutdown in the park’s history. Season passes and season dining plans were extended through 2021.

The 60-acre waterpark has been recognized by *USA Today* as a “Top 10 Water Park” and features more than 50 world-class rides, body and tube slides and water-based activities from a variety of manufacturers. Notable attractions include a FlowRider surf simulator, million-gallon wave pool, tropical-themed lazy river, interactive waterplay structure, headfirst mat racers and Aqua Rocket — the only hydromagnetic water coaster in the state.

•ragingwaters.com



After the floor releases, riders emerge from the tube a few seconds later after having dropped nearly six stories (above left) Inside the tube, guests can reach speeds up to 26 feet per second (above right). COURTESY PALACE ENTERTAINMENT



## NEWS SPLASH

AT: Jeffrey L. Seifert  
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

Plans for an extreme water sports park in New York State are well under way, and recent financial support will help it progress even further. **Island Water Park** in Calverton, New York, has received approval for financial assistance, which includes property tax abatements and sales tax exemptions from the **Riverhead Industrial Development Agency**.

The proposed recreational facility is expected to cost \$25 million and will feature a 20-acre manmade lake with a floating inflatable aqua park, bumper boats, kayaks, paddle boards, cable tow water skiing (or wakeboarding) and beach-side volleyball courts.

A 75,000-square-foot building will house a full-service cafe, surf pool, rock climbing walls, Formula One race car simulators, ninja warrior course, indoor volleyball courts, waterslides, fitness center, spa and a pro-shop.

The park is expected to attract 900,000 visitors annually, according to an economic impact analysis. Owner **Eric Scott** acquired the property in 2003. His son **Cody Scott**, is now involved with the project.

The lake was approved years ago for use by a water ski club, but the owners ran into trouble when excavation revealed groundwater. Environmental agencies allowed the lake construction to continue with the stipulation that no motor craft be allowed on the lake. A cable tow system, which uses electricity, is permitted.

The proposal has obtained full approval from the state Department of Environmental Conservation for reclamation, approval from the Pine Barrens Commission and approval for the restaurant from the state health department.

In November, **Lakewood Ranch**, a planned community outside of Sarasota, Florida, moved a step closer to realizing some long-awaited amenities for its Premier Park site. Plans include an aquatic complex with a 25-yard, 10-lane lap pool along with a shallow area for swim lessons. In addition to providing recreational use for homeowners, the lap pools will provide a venue for local swim teams to practice. The facility may also be able to host tournaments as the proposal includes deck seating, shade structures and deck lightning. The cost of the aquatic center is estimated at \$13.6 million and could open by summer 2024.

Plans for the park site also include multiple pickleball courts, an amphitheater, gymnasium, baseball/softball complex, dog park, playground, BMX bike track, basketball courts, volleyball courts, clay tennis courts, additional green space and an expansion of the parking lot by 500 parking spaces. Future plans include

the construction of a Manatee County Sheriff district office and fleet facility, as well as a Manatee County service center that will house broadband and IT services for the complex.

The **Therme Group**, headquartered in Austria, has signed terms with the U.K.'s **Peel Land & Property** (L&P) for the development of a spa retreat in Glasgow, Scotland, adjacent to the Riverside Museum. **Therme Scotland** is expected to include an indoor water park, thermal pools, spa, health and wellness center, and a vertical farm. The vertical farm which would likely use some form of soilless farming technique supplied by Scottish agritech business **Intelligent Growth Solutions**, would fresh produce for guests.

The 320,000-square-foot facility is expected to cost around £100 (\$132) million to build. The group is looking into the possibility of using renewable heat sources and is considering both geothermal energy and water source heat pumps.

Therme Scotland will be the group's second spa destination in the U.K. after the **Therme Manchester** project, which is also based on a site owned by Peel L&P.

The water park at New Jersey's **Diggerland USA, The Water Main**, is planning a \$4 million upgrade for the 2022 season. Expansion plans include the addition of a wave pool and two parallel water cross courses. The wave pool will be capable of generating waves nearly four feet high in a variety of patterns. The entrance will be zero-depth providing guests the choice to simply walk in and relax with the gentle waves or continue forward to brave the wave surge. Guests of all ages will enjoy the misting stations and water play elements that span the wave pool entrance.

The water cross course involves the use of floating pads and horizontal handholds. In keeping with the Diggerland theme of construction equipment, an overhead crane will periodically deluge guests.

The expansion will also double the number of poolside cabanas and expand food offerings within the water park.

Plans for a 52-foot tower with three waterslides are already in the works for 2023.

At the end of the season, work began to expand the aquatic center at **Moseley Park** in DeSoto, Texas. A new 2,500-square-foot water area with an oval-shaped lazy river will be built next to the existing pool.

Plans also include demolition and new construction of the rest room and concession buildings. The expansion project will also feature a play structure, a climbing wall, a jumping platform and an indoor party/multi-purpose room.



The city-owned SunSplash Waterpark has entered into a public/private partnership with ProParks for the operation and maintenance of the park.

COURTESY SUNSPASH WATERPARKS

## ProParks set to manage SunSplash Waterpark

AT: Jeffrey Seifert  
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO — In November, **ProParks Attractions Group** was named the new operator for **Sun Splash Family Waterpark** in Cape Coral, Florida. Sun Splash had been operated by the Cape Coral Parks and Recreation Department since it opened in 1992 as a recreational amenity for the community. For more than a year, the city had been looking for alternatives for the operation of the park. ProParks, which operates multiple venues across the country, including several in Texas, submitted a bid last February.

After meeting with the city's section advisory committee, the recommendation to the city council was to enter into a public/private partnership for the operation and maintenance of the city-owned water park.

The city of Cape Coral executed a long-term lease agreement with ProParks Attractions Group. The new agreement allows both parties to collectively meet the growing recreational needs of the citizens of Cape Coral, as well as Fort Myers and the surrounding communities.

**Curt Caffey**, president of ProParks Attractions Group said, "The addition of Sun Splash Waterpark confirms our commitment to developing properties where families can experience safe and fun attractions while they make lasting memories together."

"This is a no-brainer," said Mayor **John Gunter**. "We still have an amenity that's been around since 1993, and having someone who does this for a living will be an attribute in the future. It's a great partnership and will result in a better amenity and save taxpayers money."

ProParks, has already proposed a new logo, website and adding the ability to purchase passes online. ProParks also wants to keep the park open longer than its current season, which runs from March to the end of September. Although locals may not be attracted to water parks in the off-season, tourists are, and ProParks is hoping to tap into that market.

ProParks is a diversified hospitality company seeking to create fun and safe experiences for families. Through its global platform, it seeks to invest and serve in the local communities in which it operates. The group owns and operates various projects as well as provides third-party management and advisory services with a focus on regional theme parks, water parks, family entertainment centers, hotel and resorts, cruise ships and similar assets.

The partners and managers who comprise ProParks come from a diverse background that includes experience with several well-known companies including **Schlitterbahn Waterparks & Resorts**, **Wet'n'Wild**, **Universal Resorts**, **Walt Disney Parks and Resorts**, **CNL** and **Palace Entertainment**. Two years ago Pro Parks Management Company merged with **Innovative Attraction Management** to become ProParks Attractions Group.

# BUSINESS & NEWSMAKERS

▶ **Woman of Influence: Mary Jane Brewer** — page 34 / IAAPA Expo 2021 coverage — pages 38-45

## Parks Plus Underwriting unveils property insurance program

**AT:** Patrick Hoffman  
Special to Amusement Today

BROOKSVILLE, Ill. — Business owners continually look for methods of reducing expense, increasing profitability and minimizing the amount of risk involved.

However, owners who stay abreast of the changing nature of the business environment with current information should be able to eliminate much of the "gamble."



There is a new simplified property insurance program designed for the amusement and water park industry that is affordable and can take the worries and complexity out of the renewal process.

This new product, offered by **Parks Plus Underwriting Agency, LLC**, is accessible by a local insurance agent or broker. The program only offers property insurance.

The Parks Plus program was designed by experienced tenured property insurance underwriters insuring amusement risk for the past 20-plus years.

It offers all risk, earthquake, flood and named windstorm coverage. The Parks Plus Property Insurance policy is a customized manuscript form focused on the amusement parks, water parks, and other amusement industry related risk.

Analysis revealed the policy is comprehensive but simplified.

An agent or broker can assist in gathering information for a submission. It should include a list of rides and attractions and overview photos. A list of buildings with photos, construction type and fire protection systems is also beneficial.

Underwriters will want to review losses for the past five years and receive diagrams or a map of the park. Those who do regular facility inspections will have that information. Third party inspection reports can be valuable during the underwriting process. Business owners should remember to inform their agent of any preventative measures used in the business.

Park Plus has a single comprehensive policy designed for the amusement industry. It offers limits up to \$100 million within the primary policy to cover each exposures.

•parksplusinsure.com



JRA was involved in the master planning and design of Sochi Park, Sochi Russia. COURTESY JRA-RWS ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

## RWS acquires JRA, combined efforts able to provide full-service creativity

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

NEW YORK, N.Y. — It could be said that this story began more than 20 years ago with then University of Cincinnati College of Conservatory of Music (CCM) student **Ryan Stana** enjoying the many kitchen table chats with **Keith James**, president of JRA, and his wife, **Patti James**, one of Stana's teachers.

It could also be said that this story is nowhere near an ending.

And the story is what RWS and JRA can now do.

It was announced in November at the **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions Expo** in Orlando, Florida, that the company Stana formed in 2003, **RWS Entertainment Group**, had acquired JRA, creating a company capable of providing a client a full-service company for the de-



Ryan Stana



Keith James

sign and creation of visitor attractions and experiences.

JRA was formed as **Jack Rouse Associates** in 1992. Headquartered in Cincinnati, JRA is an award-winning creative studio that plans, designs and delivers visitor experiences for theme parks, museums, brand experiences, children's experiences, attractions, theater venues, visitor centers, cruise ships and port of call destinations.

JRAs services include

master planning, writing and content development, attraction/exhibit planning and design, graphic design, executive media production, art direction and project management.

Stana formed RWS in 2003. RWS is a global, Emmy Award-winning entertainment company with headquarters in New York City, London and Cincinnati.

It operates the largest

▶ See JRA, page 33

## BUILDING ON OUR HISTORY!

### EXPANSION IS UNDERWAY!

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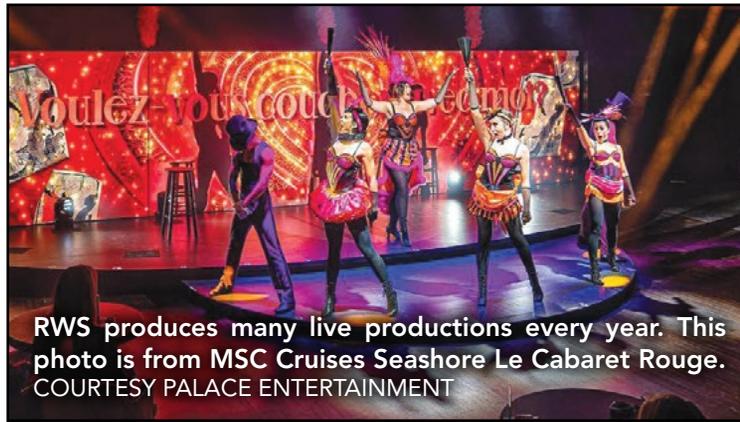
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► **JRA**  
Continued from page 32

live production facility in New York City, which includes 56,000 square feet of office space, a rehearsal studio complex and performer housing. The company's properties include a Theatrical and Ticketed Experiences division; Binder Casting serving the stage, film and commercial markets; the innovative RWS Fun Crew: Staffing Reimagined; RWS Décor Products and RWS Leased Experiences.

"I started the RWS Entertainment Group because I wanted to do things better," Stana said. "To address client needs in a better way, provide better career opportunities for performers and technicians to fulfill my passion for teaching. Noticing needs in our industry and pivoting to meet them is how the company has grown."

Although the two companies haven't worked together, they do have some common clients, common visions and common values.



RWS produces many live productions every year. This photo is from MSC Cruises Seashore Le Cabaret Rouge. COURTESY PALACE ENTERTAINMENT

In 2020, Stana said the RWS team decided it wanted to continue the company's growth trajectory through the acquisition of a master planning and design firm. RWS acquisition lawyers met with several firms over the ensuing months, but when JRA was presented, Stana immediately remembered his personal connection with James.

He said he knew that the acquisition of JRA would be a beautiful way of bringing his career full circle.

Both company executives are excited about what the union could bring.

"Selling JRA to RWS Entertainment Group is a natural evolution for the com-

pany, staff and clients I love so much," James said. "With Ryan's support, enthusiasm and energy, I can continue to do the work that excites me, lead our amazing team in Cincinnati, and stay engaged with the University of Cincinnati's School of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning (UC DAAP). I could not be more thrilled that Ryan has invited our team to join with his as we embark on a shared, expanded vision for themed entertainment."

Stana delivered glowing remarks and statements of excitement as well.

"I have admired Keith James for as long as I can remember," Stana said. "To

have the opportunity to work side-by-side with him, expanding his team's creative vision to theater and cruise ships and bringing live entertainment to even more venues throughout the world, is truly the realization of a dream."

With the acquisition of JRA, RWS Entertainment Group now delivers a complete array of design, production, performance and operation services to theme parks, attractions, cruise ships, zoos, aquariums, museums, theater venues, casinos, hotels and resorts, botanical gardens, visitor centers, port of call destinations, retail, real estate, municipalities, airports and corporate branded experiences.

In addition to all the expanded services that bringing the two companies together produced, the acquisition also has come at a time when both firms are busy preparing for record growth in all sectors in 2022.

James said JRA is launching into one of the most prolific years in its history. Over

a dozen JRA-designed attractions will open in 2022, with still more in development through 2025.

JRA will open over a dozen traveling and permanent attractions in 2022 as well. The company also has planned and scheduled the design in live performances.

RWS Entertainment Group has experienced unprecedented growth as well. They expect to produce over 400 live shows and provide over 4,500 career opportunities in 2022.

Stana said RWS has tripled its cruise ship activations, added a new Leased Experiences Division, a new RWS Décor Products line and launched the RWS Fun Crew: Staffing Reimagined.

"Adding the design, project management and media production experience of the JRA team to the RWS portfolio allows our clients to dream even bigger and achieve even more in terms of guest satisfaction and return on investment," Stana said.

•jackrouse.com  
•experierws.com

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# Women INFLUENCE

## A view from the top...

**AIMS International** is an organization which has a mission of promoting safety in the amusement industry. Its annual Safety Seminar is just one of the avenues the organization uses to achieve its goal.

**Mary Jane Brewer** is the executive director of AIMS. She came on board in 2019.

## Accomplishments and affiliations...

- **International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions (IAAPA), member, has served on a variety of IAAPA committees**
- **World Waterpark Association (WWA), member, served on committees, a member of the Advisory Board and Secretary, 2008-2011**
- **Ellis & Associates National Aquatics Safety School Kansas Recreation and Parks Association, Aquatics Branch Faculty Member, 1999-2003, Board member and secretary, 1994-1998**
- **Certifications, Certified Pool Operator, NAARSO Levels 1 and 2 Amusement Ride Inspector, AIMS Level 1 Certified Aquatics and Operations Technician, Qualified Safety Inspector – State of California**

## Long road has prepared Brewer

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — At the time, it may have seemed like a circuitous route from her early days working at parks and recreation departments to now being the executive director of AIMS International.

She may not have connected the dots then, but looking back now Mary Jane Brewer can see it. She can see that everything she has done in her career before 2019, and it is a lot, provided her with the knowledge and experience to lead AIMS forward.

"This is where I belong," Brewer said. "This is the culmination of all my years experience."

From her early working years in aquatics for cities' parks and recreation departments to finding a love for the amusement industry to working as a water park manager, supervisor, safety manager, to working for a company doing safety inspections and audits, she felt she has always been involved in safety and education.

"I love this industry and I feel like where I am now, I can really make a difference. It is so rewarding. And it is so heart-warming to have all the volunteers AIMS has at every safety seminar."

Brewer was raised in Pittsburg, Kansas. Her father, Jerry Stockard, was an exercise philosophy professor at Pittsburg State University. He also was her swimming coach. She started swimming when she was eight years old and became a lifeguard and swim instructor when she turned 14.

She also was a very competitive swimmer. In 1985 Brewer was the Kansas State Champion in the 100-yard butterfly and placed second in the 100-

yard breast stroke.

Her swimming talent led to her receiving a swimming scholarship to the University of Kansas, Lawrence. She became a Division 1 Collegiate Swimmer.

Swimming wasn't the only thing she did while at the University of Kansas. She received a Bachelor of Science: Recreation Management in 1989 and a Master of Science: Exercise Science in 1992.

For years, she thought she wanted to work in aquatics for public parks and recreations. In fact, her first jobs were just that.

She became a certified instructor with Ellis and Associates. It was through Ellis and Associates that she got her first look into the amusement industry and she loved it. Once she crossed over into that arena, that was what began to drive her forward.

Her first job in that sector was at Six Flags Fiesta Texas in San Antonio, Texas. At that park she learned the dynamics of water park attractions. She saw the importance of safety and crowd control. She had to learn quickly to pivot from a public park to the privately-owned tourist attraction.

It did not deter her.

Brewer's resume is extensive. But every step of the way she leaned toward safety and education. For example, one of her jobs was with Alfa SmartParks, Inc./Palace Entertainment. There she was the corporate director of safety and compliance. She developed and maintained corporate standard operating procedures and ensured compliance with government (OSHA) and industry standards and requirements. She conducted on-site training, safety

## Mary Jane Brewer

Executive Director  
AIMS International  
Jacksonville, Florida



inspections and audits for all company-owned and operated theme parks and water parks.

At Adventure Island Busch Gardens, Tampa, Florida, she managed the safe operation and maintenance of the large water park facility.

She even left the amusement industry briefly and worked at Publix Supermarkets, where she was corporate safety specialist for Jacksonville, Florida, area stores.

In 2013, she began working with Recreation Engineering, Inc. She worked from home in Jacksonville and did a lot of traveling. She was the inspection specialist and vice president of operations. She performed safety inspections and audits of amusement rides and devices, prepared reports for clients containing results of safety inspections and audits and prepared year-end data analysis reports for clients with multiple properties.

In that position, she became involved in and volunteered for AIMS International.

"So when Karen Oertley announced she would retire in 2019 as executive director, I decided I would apply," Brewer said. "I feel I came into AIMS at

a very safe time. Karen had stabilized AIMS financially so I was able to focus on moving forward."

In that regard, she aided AIMS in creating its online education platform, AIMS connected. When the pandemic hit and AIMS Safety Seminar had to go virtual, she felt because they had already had some experience with online content, the challenge would be easier.

AIMS' purpose is to establish communications and foster working relationships to promote safety.

"And that is what we are doing," Brewer said.

Brewer is grateful to be where she is, the place she was meant to be.

She has had mentors along the way. She mentioned industry veterans like Rusty Keene, Brian King, Jeff Abendshien and Tim Viox, all of whom supported her along the way.

She attributes the support of her father and mother, Cathy Stockard, as a key to her success as well. Her husband and son also have been a great support.

Brewer doesn't rule out a return to working in a park again, but she said, "Everything that I have done has prepared me for this time."

—Pam Sherborne

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## MARKET WATCH

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 12/15/21	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	127.83	149.78	61.27
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	48.36	52.50	36.74
Comcast Corp./NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	48.20	61.80	46.29
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	150.42	203.02	142.04
*Dubai Parks & Resorts	DXBE:UH	DFM	N/A	N/A	N/A
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	45.44	56.07	29.79
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	JP:9010	TYO	4295.00	6500.00	3910.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	2.50	2.95	0.40
Lefoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	17.40	22.80	14.50
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	41.37	51.17	27.81
Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd.	RCL	NYSE	70.66	99.24	64.20
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	JP:6357	TYO	760.00	922.00	569.00
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	60.96	70.48	27.06
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	38.57	51.75	30.88
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	816.00	944.00	688.00

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

\*Dubai Parks and Resorts halted trading on the Dubai Financial Market due to an acquisition by Meraas Leisure and Entertainment LLC earlier this year.

**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



Galaxy's Edge at Walt Disney World's Hollywood Studios hosted IAAPA Celebrates during IAAPA Expo 2021. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

## BUSINESS WATCH

### Six Flags announces new CEO

ARLINGTON, Texas — **Six Flags Entertainment Corporation** announced that **Selim Bassoul**, formerly the non-executive chairman of the board, has been appointed chief executive officer and president of Six Flags. Bassoul replaced **Michael Spanos**, who has stepped down after two years of service, as CEO, president and a member of the board. Bassoul will continue to serve as a member of the board, and **Ben Baldanza**, an independent director of Six Flags, and former CEO of **Spirit Airlines**, has been elected as the new non-executive chairman of the board.

"We are thrilled that Selim has agreed to help lead Six Flags into a new era of growth. His long and exceptional track record as a public company CEO, his experience, entrepreneurial spirit, and inspiring personality make Selim the perfect CEO for Six Flags at this moment in time," said Baldanza. "In addition, the Board would like to thank Mike Spanos for his tireless efforts as he successfully shepherded Six Flags through an exceptionally challenging time through the COVID crisis, including the safe reopening of all our parks. As we indicated on our earnings call on October 27th, our fourth quarter attendance trends have accelerated compared to the third quarter, and we look forward to building on that momentum into 2022 and beyond."

"I am honored to serve as the next CEO of Six Flags, and I am excited to bring the magic back to our parks. We are a company led by a purpose — to make a positive and meaningful impact on everyone Six Flags touches," said Bassoul. "I will do my best to enable our people to fulfill their passion to make a difference, and to harness their creativity to build on a shared vision for guest satisfaction and financial growth."

### Cedar Fair note redemption, officer change

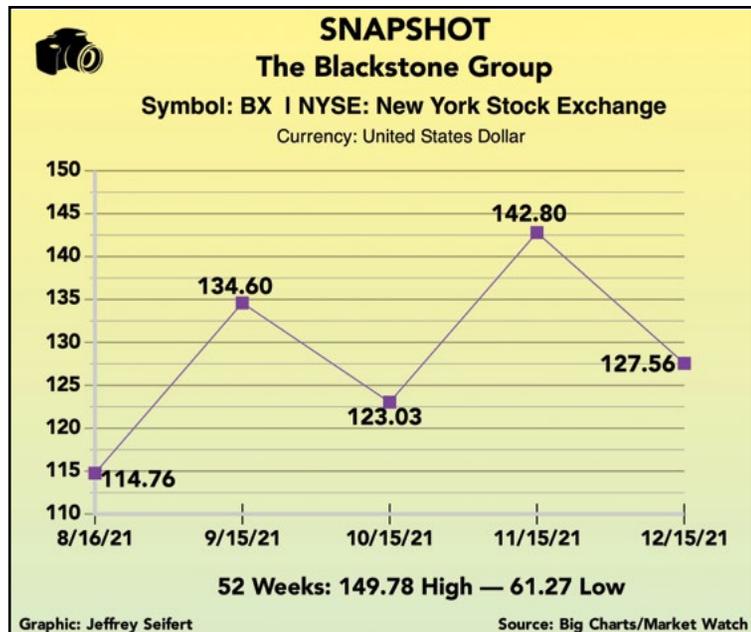
SANDUSKY, Ohio — **Cedar Fair Entertainment Company** announced today a full redemption of its 5.375% notes due June 2024 issued pursuant to an indenture dated as of June 3, 2014. The notes were scheduled to be redeemed on Dec. 17, 2021. As of the date of issuance of the redemption notice, there was \$450,000,000 aggregate principal amount of such notes outstanding.

"The early redemption of our 2024 notes aligns with one of our top capital allocation priorities of paying down debt until we reach our total debt target of \$2 billion or less," said Cedar Fair President and CEO **Richard A. Zimmerman**. "Our rapid recovery from the pandemic and bright outlook going forward underscore our confidence in the business model and support our decision to redeem the notes at this time using cash on hand. We will continue to evaluate opportunities to further enhance the strength and flexibility of our balance sheet as we work towards reinstating a quarterly cash distribution to unitholders no later than the first quarter of 2023."

Zimmerman added that upon completion of the notes redemption, Cedar Fair's annual interest expense will total approximately \$150 million.

The company also announced that **Brian Nurse** has joined the company as executive vice president, chief legal officer and secretary. He will be based at the company's office in Charlotte, North Carolina, and will report to President and Chief Executive Officer Richard A. Zimmerman.

"Brian is an experienced general counsel who has held significant leadership and corporate governance roles with some of the best-known entertainment and food and beverage companies in the world, and we are excited to welcome him to the Cedar Fair team," said Zimmerman. "His insights, counsel and perspective — as well as his experience in advising boards of directors, senior leaders and other key stakeholders — will be highly valued as we continue to execute on our long-range strategic plan."



## DIESEL PRICES

Region (U.S)	As of 12/13/21	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$3.633	\$1.030
Midwest	\$3.512	\$1.034
Gulf Coast	\$3.372	\$1.065
Mountain	\$3.758	\$1.202
West Coast	\$3.970	\$1.219
California	\$4.775	\$1.433

## CURRENCY

On 12/15/21 \$1 USD =

0.8864	EURO
0.7562	GBP (British Pound)
113.64	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9224	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.4056	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.2829	CAD (Canadian Dollar)

## ON THE MOVE

**Philadelphia Toboggan Coasters, Inc.** (PTCI) welcomed **Joe James** as PTCI's senior sales executive.

"I feel Joe will be a great asset joining the PTCI Team given his extensive experience within the amusement industry," said **Tom Rebbie**, president/CEO of PTCI.

As he started his new position, James offered the following: "There is a saying when one door closes, another one opens. On Dec. 4, 2020, I was advised by my employer they no longer required my services. While the news was disappointing, I always try to look at the positive in all things. After some reflection and prayer, my wife Julie and I made the difficult decision to sell our home in Hawaii and relocated to Florida to be closer to family and enjoy retirement."

After working and servicing the amusement industry for more than 30 years, James decided to start his own sales and service business dubbed **Jamusement Sales**. "I will be representing Philadelphia Toboggan Coasters, Inc. and look forward to continuing some of my long-term relationships with many of you. In addition to my years of sales experience, I will bring a new prospective to PTCI and will be working to enhance services to their valued clients."

**Chase Mory** has been promoted to director of operations at **Gateway Ticketing Systems**. Formerly the senior manager, delivery services, Mory brings his 15 years of attractions and technology industry experience to the executive team at Gateway. Mory will manage the customer service, managed services, hardware and payment, and CRM, donor and Galaxy principals teams.

"I am excited about joining the executive team and consider myself fortunate to have the opportunity to enhance Operations and support the growth of our employees and company," said Mory.

Mory joined Gateway Ticketing Systems in 2011 as a project manager after five years working in IT at **Hersheypark**. For three years he project-managed and supported new customer Galaxy implementations including the museum implementation phase at the **National September 11 Memorial and Museum**.

In 2014, he was promoted to manager, delivery services, and then to senior manager in 2017.

"I am excited to have Chase as a member of our executive team, bringing his leadership expertise and continued superb focus on efficiency and alignment of our operating business units with him," stated **Michael Andre**, president and CEO at Gateway Ticketing Systems. "Chase's ability to organize and lead our projects through from initiation to completion is one of his greatest contributions to Gateway."

Andre continued: "Along the way, Chase always finds efficiencies that drive more revenue and reduce expenses, all while increasing our customer and employee satisfaction. He has driven efficiencies in our hardware delivery, implemented project management tools, revamped our internal services billing processes, and pushed company-level strategic initiatives forward in the areas of process and systems. We look forward to his even broader contribution in the future."



James



Mory

## OBITUARY

## Daniel "Dan The Ride Man" Glosser — amusement ride salesman — passes

Daniel I. Glosser, 84, known in the amusement industry as one of the most prolific ride salesmen, passed away on Dec. 3, 2021, in Newport Beach, California.

Born and raised in the North American carnival business, Glosser spent every summer growing up working on the midway with his parents, Kitty and Ep Glosser.

He worked a brief stint with two insurance agencies specializing in the amusement industry upon college graduation, but his passion for ride sales took over.

Traveling in more than 70 countries around the world as well as every state in the U.S. for over half a century, he sold more than a thousand rides from German, Italian, American, Swiss, French, Dutch, Belgian, Danish, and Spanish ride manufacturers to parks and carnivals as well as stand-alone attraction venues.

Glosser was known as a fierce competitor and was respected by ride manufacturers, their representatives and buyers. He enjoyed working with designers of new amusement projects because it enabled him to contribute creatively. He was highly regarded within the industry.

He also was known for his integrity, perseverance and attention to details. He focused on helping his clients buy, not selling them rides.

Howard Lander, former reporter, then publisher of the trade newspaper *Amusement Business* (AB), said he had heard about Glosser's savvy long before meeting him. When Lander became the AB publisher, he was asked by AB Editor Tom Powell and Sales Director Ray Pilszak to help them



Daniel Glosser

mend some fences with Glosser that had been broken between Glosser and the publication.

"After a bit of a rocky start, we were able to mend fences, which I viewed as positive for both him and our magazine. The relationship grew stronger, forged by many business deals and trips including numerous Super Bowls with Tom and Ray.

"We stayed in constant touch over the years even as I moved deeper into my corporate role," Lander said. "Besides our friendship, my admiration for his business acumen continued to grow, which I know was shared by many and helped make him one of the most successful ride brokers in the industry, selling to both amusement parks and carnivals. While new generations have emerged to take prominence, Dan will be remembered and missed. Dan Glosser certainly was an industry leader who was the best known American ride sales person worldwide."

Lander and Glosser were friends for over 35 years.

Bill Alter, a long-time amusement industry veteran with National Tickets, knew Glosser well.

"Every year, for over 40 years, Dan would visit the Oktoberfest in Munich, Germany. Year after

year, he looked over what new rides were being offered by the European manufacturers and would take that knowledge and turn it into a sale. He was quite a sales person. He had friends and customers on every continent. He will be missed by many."

Karen Oertley, who followed Lander as publisher of AB and who also was the executive director of AIMS International, remembers Glosser well.

"For many years at IAAPA, lively nights at the Glosser-orchestrated Zierer suite were legendary. It was there he brought people together from around the world who would go on to become lifelong friends. Dan loved a good party, luxury, travel, beers (German for beers) and wine, and was extremely proud of his consecutive attendance record (about 45 years) at Oktoberfest in Munich, Germany.

"Dan also was the founder of the FSBYOB-WC (Five Star Bring Your Own Bottle Wine Club). Charter members included Wieland Schwartzkopf, Reinhold Spieldiener, Roland and Renata Koch, Bill and Jane Ann Alter, Wolfgang Freymouth and me. We enjoyed many memorable wine dinners together during industry events," Oertley remembered.

He is survived by three children and two grandchildren plus two sisters. Dan led a very full life, which anyone who knew him will attest to, his email address says it all: DanTheRideMan.

Donations may be made to the Dana Farber Cancer Institute/The Jimmy Fund, 450 Brookline Avenue Boston, MA. 02215, Dana-Farber.org; JimmyFund.org 800-52-JIMMY

—Pam Sherborne

IAAPA Expo reconvenes after absence, sees growth and resilience

## More than 28,000 attendees and exhibitors return to Orlando

AT: Tim Baldwin  
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO, Fla. — Throughout 2021, the attractions industry continued to grapple with questions and uncertainties. Attendance (and spending) among parks and facilities was strong, but management and operators took a step back to access ever-changing conditions.

Over the summer, the speculation of will it/won't it happen surrounded the annual IAAPA Expo. Once the decision was made, forward momentum was felt. The industry longed to return to networking, seeking out new solutions and buying new products. It was easy to assume that exhibitors would bring their proven portfolios, ready to do business, but the expectation of new products and innovations might have been on the lighter side.

Nothing could have been further from the truth. New ideas, new ride concepts and helpful educational opportunities were seen throughout the Expo.

"The IAAPA show was a pivotal turning point for my suppliers, post-COVID crisis," **Gina Guglielmi**, **Intermark Ride Group**, told *Amusement Today*. "It was important to be in Orlando. The North American market is a large part of financial recovery, and our meetings at the 2021 show confirmed this. Meetings of quality, not quantity."

More than 875 companies exhibited from the various industry sectors. While noticeably smaller than in years prior to the pandemic, the condensed show floor still



More than 875 companies exhibited on the expo floor (above). Educational sessions (below left) are always a vital component of the expo. A new press area (below right) made announcements from the floor spacious and efficient. AT/TIM BALDWIN



offered more than 375,000 net square feet. Attendees found the floor layout manageable and convenient.

"We've been incredibly happy with the meetings and conversations we've had this week," said **Sascha Czibulka**, executive vice president, **Intamin Amusement Rides**. "The difference of this year's IAAPA Expo compared to 2019 and the previous years is obviously it is a more regional show — but a really large region. We didn't

have the foot traffic from the European, Asian and Australian clients, which we used to have in the past. But the development we've seen in the past years are that the European and Asian shows started to grow and gain in relevance. So there could have been a fear that there would be a decrease [in Orlando] but it didn't."

New rides showcased original ways to splash, spin and drop riders. Coaster concepts introduced fun and entertaining elements such

as chili dip, fakey airtime, disappearing track drop, axis kickout and water-in-a-bucket. Animatronics, show sets, scenery and immersive environments touched all the bases (and seasons).

Education is always a vital component. Sessions began a day early and over the course of five days (Nov. 15-19), more than 90 educational experiences were offered either in class settings or behind-the-scenes tours of Orlando attractions.

During the tradition-

al Kickoff Event, two new inductees were announced for the IAAPA Hall of Fame. **Marie Tussaud** (of **Madame Tussauds Wax Museum** fame) and industry pioneer **Marcelo Gutglas**, founder of **Playcenter Group** in Brazil, were officially recognized before an audience of more than 2,000 observers.

New for 2021 was a large press conference area set aside for industry announcements. The successful effort allowed press and interested industry members to attend in a better socially distanced environment as well as improved sightlines and sound than when announcements were made at individual booths in the past.

Even with many strained budgets and ongoing travel restrictions globally, there was a feeling of strength among attendees and exhibitors. Preliminary figures put attendance at 28,229, of which 21,026 were buyers.

"Traffic in our booth has been as great as it has been in 10 years," said **Dick Chance**, **Chance Rides**. "People came who had real projects going."

"The successful turnout for IAAPA Expo 2021 is a testament to the resilience and continued growth and strength of the global attractions industry," said **Hal McEvoy**, president and CEO, IAAPA, at the close of the show. "It's been a phenomenal week, bringing together the innovators who are moving our industry forward and building the future of attractions."

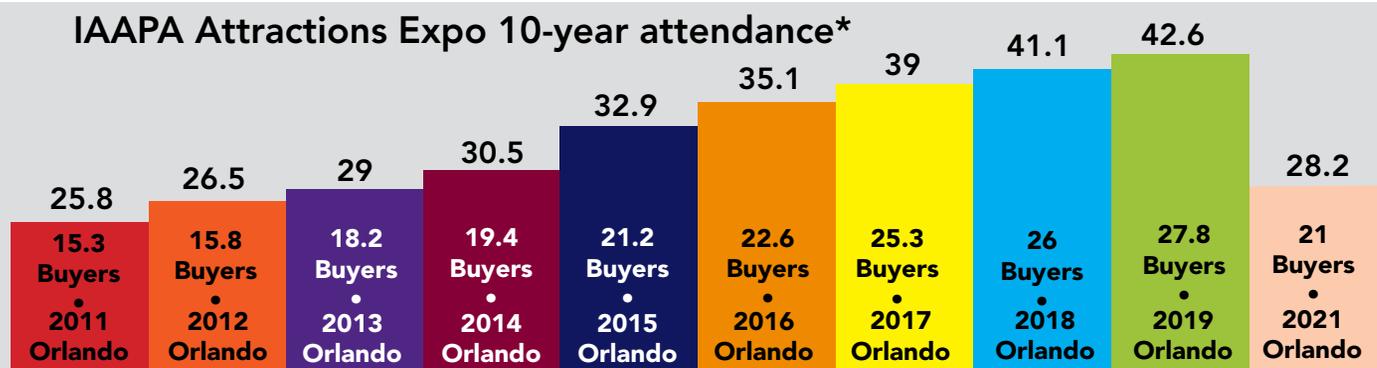
The 2022 IAAPA Expo is scheduled for Nov. 14-18.

iaapa.org

FASTFACTS



### IAAPA Attractions Expo 10-year attendance\*



\*in thousands (AT Research)/No IAAPA Expo held in 2020

# Manufacturers have solid IAAPA Expo, outlook supremely positive

AT: Tim Baldwin  
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO — Following a prior wave of optimism from IAAPA Expo Asia and IAAPA Expo Europe, the Orlando trade show and expo followed suit. The vibe was tangible, and with a lot of uncertainty and a handful of hope leading into the show, suppliers and manufacturers ended IAAPA Expo with enthusiastic spirits.

"I think for us as ride manufacturers, our expectations could have been a little low," said **Jason Mons**, executive vice president, **S&S Sansei**. "Looking at the aisles [attendance] could have seemed a little down, but we still had all the buyers. We have had a busy week."

Captivating passersby was a ride vehicle from S&S' new coaster concept, **Axis**. Two vehicles allowed attendees a chance to sit and experience the comfort of the vehicle, while a motorized second car demonstrated what the seats were capable of.

"There was a lot of interest in **Axis**. Everyone that came through wanted to hear about it," said **Josh Hays**, marketing. "But we're still the 'tower guys.' People who want towers come to us. That's our bread and butter."

S&S is introducing the **Spin Shot**, a modification to its tower rides that flip riders upside down to reinvent their existing towers.

S&S is wrapping up the installation of the world's tallest **Screamin' Swing** at **SeaWorld San Antonio**.

**Larson International** had a very strong week. "We've had a lot of attendees come by. There seems to be a lot of interest in multiple rides," said **Hunter Novotny**. "We've had a lot more hard interest rather than walking through and chatting. It's been all over the boards — kiddie rides to big thrill rides."

Larson continued building during the pandemic. "It was a large risk, but our priority is our people. We've had employees for 10, 20, 25 years. To allow that experience to walk out the door would be incredibly hard for us. Where it put us coming out of the pan-



The **Axis** vehicle (above left) captured the attention of most people walking by the S&S booth. **Skyline Attractions'** new **P'Sghetti Bowl** garnered big interest (above right). AT/TIM BALDWIN



dem has been very beneficial," Novotny told *Amusement Today*. "Having rides on the shelf has been great, and having the availability to build new product for the coming seasons has really opened a lot of doors for us. We've had a lot of interest in 2022 for spring as well as 2023 and 2024."

"I tempered my expectations compared to 2019," said **Jim Seay**, president, **Premier Rides**, "but there is more activity than I thought there would be. We've been busy. Not only conversations, we were able to book meetings virtually solid for the four days. I'm pleased by the show."

**Premier Rides'** new **Ice Breaker** coaster is set to open at **SeaWorld Orlando** next month.

"We're known for building iconic rides. This is a ride that's going to be experienced by generations. It's going to be grandparents going with the father and son," said Seay.

During the show, the announcement was made that **Kennywood's** **Kangaroo** ride is being refurbished and restored. **Premier Rides** was called upon to do the project.

There was consistent activity at the **Skyline Attractions** booth. "This is my 23rd show. The first two days were the best I've ever seen at a show," said **Chris Gray**, vice president. "Coming into the show, I thought it would be a super light crowd. It has by far exceeded anyone's expectations on what we were going to see here."

**Skyline Attractions** is known for adding something new to its portfolio every year. The **P'Sghetti Bowl** children's coaster garnered a lot

of attention.

"As difficult as the last year and a half has been and as unpredictable as it has been, the fact that we were able to weather that storm, now at the end of the show, it looks to be a record year for **Skyline Attractions**," said **Jeff Pike**, president.

"We've put out around 75 legit proposals for **P'Sghetti Bowl**," said Pike. "We're very close to at least six."

In addition to the company's products, companies are also turning to **Skyline Attractions** for engineering services and partnering with them in fabrication.

**Zamperla** enjoyed a fantastic show, celebrating with champagne as *AT* sat down to talk with **Michael Coleman** and **Adam Sandy**. **Zamperla** put pen and paper to a 12-ride package out of the initial 15 that will open at **Biloxi, Mississippi**, at the new **Paradise Pier**.

"This project has been ongoing for a few years, obviously, with the pandemic hitting," said Coleman. "It was on the back burner, but we kept conversations active. We were able to work out the agreement with the ownership group, and I'm happy to announce it."

The company brought multiple new ride concepts to the show with names like **Pump 'n Jumpz**, **Gryphon**, **Blendez** and **ChronoZ**.

"**Gryphon** is a combination of traditional ride vehicle and body movements from historic attractions," said Coleman. "It's brought into a more modern operational concept. It harkens back to those classic movements that have been enjoyed for decades."

The 24-passenger circu-

lar ride undulates in dynamic wave patterns and criss-cross motions.

One of the big new rides introduced was the **Zetta Swing**. **Zamperla** boasts that it is the world's tallest pendulum ride at 200 feet. The iconic thriller comes in 16- and 32-passenger versions.

Iowa has two parks with **Zamperla** packages going in, **Waterloo** and **Adventureland**.

"People have really responded to what we have done over the past five years," said Sandy regarding the evolution of **Zamperla's** coaster arsenal. "I've been pleasantly surprised that all the traveling we've done educating our customers on the investment in talent we have made in recent years with people coming to the table this week and having serious conversations about coasters that five years ago we wouldn't have been having."

The company's postponed coaster/flume ride at **Luna Park** in **New York** is now on track for a 2022 debut and another heavily themed installation is to follow at a **North American** park in 2023.

"I think it will be a great example of what you can do when you take one piece of land and want two different experiences of a dry roller coaster and a log flume and have them meet together," said Coleman.

**Zierer** enjoyed a healthy show. "It was unknown how much traffic there would be," said **Bill Ossim**, **North American** sales. "There seems to be strong interest."

"We had meetings set up beforehand and this was very positive for us that potential customers were showing up," said **Marina Ernst-Weidner**,

marketing. "We're satisfied."

Projects the company could speak toward were **Lost Island** and **SeaWorld San Diego** in the United States, which have had a **Flying Fish** and **Force 190** coaster delivered, respectively.

Abroad, **Legoland Korea** will open with a coaster, **Duplo Planes** and a double unit **Jet Skis**. **Zierer** is about to close contracts on ongoing projects, but a **Family Tower** is headed to **Germany** and a **Custom Force Coaster** to **England** for next season.

**Lars Hartmann**, international sales manager for **Huss**, said, "We brought out the fifth version of the **Breakdance**. There was a demand for a bigger and faster version than those in our portfolio. This one can be a white-knuckle thrill ride."

The new version has an operator in the middle of the ride, much like a DJ.

"We call it the operator center stage," said Hartmann. "It is part of the ride and part of the show. He's a show master. Since we have speakers in the gondolas, you can synchronize movements to the music."

Hartman explained the ride comes with six different ride programs, so a queue can be divided between families and thrill seekers. The capacity is 40 passengers in pairs within 20 gondolas. He told *AT* that there is 25 percent more room in the gondolas.

"We were surprised in **Barcelona** how many showmen were interested in a mobile version," he said. "Because of the great interest, we are building it as a mobile version and a park version."

► See EXHIBITS, page 40

## ► EXHIBITS

Continued from page 39

The Condor is still a sought-after ride in the U.S.

**Sally Dark Rides** gave two press announcements from the show floor. One was for Lost Island in Iowa, the other was in partnership with **Daniels Wood Land** for Treasure Hunt: The Ride, which will be located on historic Cannery Row in Monterey Bay, California.

"We've never done two on a show floor," said **Lauren Weaver**, marketing. "Both were very different."

The Monterey Bay attraction is intended to extend the length of stay to visitors in the area, offering families more to do. The stand-alone dark ride embraces the region's local lore. This is the first time that both Sally Dark Rides and themed fabrication experts Daniels Wood Land have partnered on both ownership and production of an attraction.

The ride will feature six, four-passenger vehicles and riders travel through six ride zones. The ride area is 8,145 square feet. The tale is that visitors board cavern cars and use interactive "treasure collector" devices on their quest for treasure in the subterranean tunnels, which, of course, will include danger around every corner.

"When the location for the ride became available, I discussed it with my team. It took about 30 seconds to arrive at the conclusion that we need to build a world-class dark ride down there," said Daniels Wood Land President **Ron Daniels**. "It's an honor and privilege to partner with Sally Dark Rides and make it happen."

**Alterface** was pleased to receive the Brass Ring Award for Best New Product Concept for Action League: The Interactive Revolution. Including the queue line, the attraction footprint is 21 meters by 23 meters.

Product Manager **Etienne Sainton** said, "Up to now, Alterface has concentrated on interactive dark rides with storytelling. We wanted to add something different in our offer that was game-based. This [ride] is really a tournament. Six

teams of six people compete on screens, and then the ride rotates, and you compete with another team."

In addition to that new concept, Alterface announced working with Sally Dark Rides on two upcoming projects.

"It is always great working with Sally. It is a great partnership," Sainton said.

**Philadelphia Toboggan Coasters, Inc.** is the longest-running IAAPA member. In this past year, they have provided services to **Clementon Park**, which was recently rescued by owner **Gene Staples**.

"We've been busy," said **Tom Rebbie**, PTCI president. "We brought on **Joe James** as senior sales executive. He came on board a couple of months ago. He has 30 years of experience in the amusement industry working for **Haas & Wilkerson Insurance**. He will be representing us going around to parks and seeing what they need and what we can do to help them. We can assist with training or anything at all."

Rebbie was pleased with the show traffic, commenting as if 2020 never happened. "And next year, it's only going to get better."

**Ride Entertainment**, which represents **Gerstlauer**, announced a second Infinity Coaster going into the U.S. for next year, **Palindrome** at **COTALand** in Austin. [See December 2021 issue of *Amusement Today*].

"We're thrilled to not only bring these rides to the United States but to be able to install them," said **Kris Rowberry**, communications manager. "It's great to show off the skill and talent of the entire Ride Entertainment team."

"We represent **Funtime**, which produces **Slingshots** and the **Star Flyers**. Now they are about to open the world's largest drop tower at **Icon Park** here in Orlando," said **Ed Hiller**, CEO.

The tower stands at 430 feet, and riders plunge at 75 mph. During the IAAPA Expo, the tower was illuminated for the first time, as it was approaching its official debut.

Although prohibited by NDAs from talking about future projects, Hiller said, "We are exceptionally busy. I think it was part luck and part

skill that we got to the point of getting those two coasters and installation. We think we have the No. 1 installation team in the whole industry. In the U.S. we do everything. Our operations division had a historic 2021. We had a very good 2019. We were shuttered in New York in 2020, but 2021 was twice what 2019 was."

ETF was promoting the **Aqua Mover** trackless dark vehicle.

"We regularly get the question whether our people movers are also available for water applications, and from now on we can wholeheartedly say 'yes,' thanks to our new ETF Aqua Mover," said CEO **Ruud Koppens**.

**Tiki Splash Roulette** is a new concept launched at the show in which riders aboard boats are equipped with water guns that help build scores. The gaming aspect of it determines whether passengers stay dry or get soaked. While suitable for theme parks, ETF feels it is an ideal fit for water parks as well. The trackless vehicles can move randomly, and a storyline involving a tiki god in the center of the ride creates an additional interactive element. As riders score, they collect more water.

**Rocky Mountain Construction** enjoyed heavy traffic at its booth during the show. With a giant announcement of **ArieForce One** going to **Fun Spot America Atlanta** [see page 10], the vehicle was a real eye-catcher. **Wonder Woman** going to **Six Flags Magic Mountain** is another major installation for 2022.

"We're seeing interest in both the **Raptor** and **IBox** track," said **Jake Kilcup**, COO. "Different customers have different needs, so it is nice we have different products to meet that. It's great that we have different product to keep working with these great partners."

Also in the mix of offerings for RMC was a junior-sized **IBox** coaster. "We haven't pushed it really hard," said Kilcup, "but we've gotten some requests on that. We're looking to get down to a 42-inch height category. I've got young kids who are starting to ride now, and there isn't a great step



Daniels Wood Land is partnering with Sally Dark Rides on Treasure Hunt: The Ride. Part of the theming was seen at the Daniels Wood Land booth. AT/TIM BALDWIN

up from the **Wacky Worm**. It tends to go straight to the bigger stuff in most parks. We thought we could give them the nostalgia of a wooden coaster with a 70-foot height but still be something the family can ride together."

The Gravity Group booth sported a vehicle from **Tonnerre 2 Zeus**, a redesign of a 1990s wooden coaster at **Parc Astérix** in France.

Engineer **Brian Kosmac** told AT, "They had a couple sections of track that their third-party inspectors wanted them to upgrade some stuff. It was about a three- or four-year project. We've retracked the first drop into the tunnel and we rebanked the first turns, and it went off really, really well. The following year they were tinkering on redoing the helix or just going in another direction. They went with the option to rebrand it and go crazy."

The second phase lowered and rebanked a couple of turns and placed more airtime in them. The final turn "needed some love" said Kosmac.

"It's a fantastic ride. For the final phase, they are going all out and doing fun and different things," he said. "It's going to be a lot faster and feel completely different."

The Gravity Group is supplying two new trains that seat 26 passengers, with the last car facing backward.

Of the companies in the **Intermark Ride Group**, **Fabbri** has several major projects in the works in the U.S. market. **Giant Wheels** are in demand in addition to major/spectacular rides for the park

and carnival markets.

**Gosetto** had good meetings with both new and existing customers at the show. Its walk-through funhouse attractions continue to be success stories around the world. Currently, Gosetto is also working with **TrioTech**.

**Ride Engineers Switzerland** closed the sale of a **Roller Ball** vertical coaster to **Adventureland** Long Island. This will be the first **Roller Ball** coaster in North America.

"The show is exceeding my expectations. I think the important clients are here," said **Mark Rosenzweig, 3dx**. "I truly feel like the industry is seeing a rebirth from what we saw in 2020. All of our meetings have had meaningful conversations."

3dx creates scenic experiences. "I wanted the message to be very high quality, deliverable and the full capabilities of what our talented staff can do," said VP of Scenic Experiences **Nate Thieme**. "I think we've done that well with the video and the pieces we have here."

"It has been a mix of intellectual property and generic projects," added Rosenzweig. "We're very pleased with the reception to our presence at the show."

**MVR** is preparing to open its newest big project in Australia in 2022. "We had some transportation delays," said **Chuck Bingham**. "Thankfully, we had all materials ordered before the pandemic."

**Leviathan** will open at **Sea World** in Australia,

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standing at 105 feet tall.

**US Thrill Rides** has sold a Sky Blazer to COTALand and is partnering with Skyline Attractions on the engineering. This first-of-its-kind ride is the brainchild of inventor **Bill Kitchen**.

"Sky Blazer is something I've been working on for a couple of years," said Kitchen. "It is the natural evolution of the Skycoaster. We wanted to overcome some disadvantages. One was the flight harness which required two extra people. The loading platform and the loop you had to grab to slow down were also disadvantages. With Sky Blazer, we are able to increase capacity."

A pendulum dampener is designed to slow the ride down, and a mechanism at the top raises and lowers the ride platform. The Sky Blazer seats 18 flyers at a time. It will stand 220 feet.

"It puts groups and families on the ride at the same time," said Kitchen. "Architecturally, we wanted something to be the centerpiece of the park and truly be beautiful."

One of the most active locations at IAAPA Expo is the **Rides 4 U** complex of booths that allow for attendees to enjoy riding attractions. Several options from **SBF Visa** were available, including an operating roller coaster that featured spinning cars and a so-called "hamster wheel" car. **Rides 4 U** brought in six rides.

"The show has surpassed our expectations," said **Len Soled**, owner, **Rides 4 U**. "We've seen so many great folks. We're thrilled to be back after COVID. I put my neck on the line to bring in all this equipment. We've sold triplicates of everything here and the opportunity to sell a prototype road model of an existing ride. This is the first time we've exhibited the Reverse Time — here we called it the Wipeout — and we've had interest from the park, carnival and FEC markets. That was phenomenal. The week has been unbelievable. We've never seen such great traffic coming through."

Soled was thrilled that



New lighting features on rolling stock by Great Coasters International added a sleek look.  
AT/TIM BALDWIN

sales from the show floor were through the roof. He estimated 20 contracts generated by the show. All the rides on the floor were pre-sold prior to the Expo.

North America is the market for **Rides 4 U**, so the decrease in international attendees didn't affect the company's traffic. **Rob Agostino** was brought on to work with the Mexico and South American markets.

**Chance Rides** was enthusiastic with the trade show's response. "Things that were on the back burner were put on the front burner," said **Dick Chance**, founder. "Our leading sales were the electric CP Hunting. We sold 11 this year. I don't think we've ever done 11 in one year. I think it's because [many places] are going green. We got the **St. Louis Zoo** at the show."

Carousels have been strong sellers too for Chance. In addition, two roller coasters are going into a new **Mattel Adventure Park** in Arizona.

**Mack Rides** was still developing its Brass Ring-winning Rocking Boat ride concept. Booked solid with coaster projects through 2023, the company is still developing new ideas.

"A new project I'm able to talk about is a new restaurant at Europa-Park, opening next June," said **Christian von Elverfeldt**, CEO, Mack Rides. "It's a restaurant where you sit on stools and then the restaurant moves trackless. You go from one room to the other for different courses of the meal. Everything is themed — you go from Asia into space."

The new restaurant will be located between hotels and the **Rulantica** water park.

"The industry is absolutely strong. During the

pandemic we were happy that Mack Rides didn't have to close anything," he said. "We have some challenges with projects in China, but restrictions in bringing people over require five weeks of quarantine. We are glad that America is open again."

**Vekoma Rides** is always busy, and bookings continue to demonstrate that. In addition to two coasters going into Energylandia [see page 14], the company has what it terms a Wildcat Looping Coaster at **Fårup Sommerland** in Denmark. In total, Vekoma has no less than 14 coasters opening in 2022, 11 of which are landing in **Fantawild** parks across China. Those range from Family Boomerang Rebound coasters to launched Space Warp and Top Gun coasters.

"This was my first time to the Expo in America. This show is different than Europe," said **Bramm Geerlings**, marketing, Vekoma. "The market is wanting custom-designed coasters and the quality that we offer."

"We have expanded our portfolio, so we can now proudly say we have 50 different models," said **Peter van Bilsen**, executive vice president. "We are strong with our own local factory and local warehouse. We were able to retain all our employees."

**Extreme Engineering** announced a new direction for its company with its Parkour Around. The recreational activity uses a patent-pending assist device to allow participants of any age or ability to engage with the attraction and test their abilities on the fun course.

"We've actually been working on this for about a decade," said **Phil Wilson**, vice president. "The market wasn't ready. We've been watching parkour, which the sport is

basically free-running play, and there is risk in that. What we've done is make that sport inclusive and, most importantly, safe. It's like being in the middle of video game. The technology we've designed is lifting the weight off the users. There is this weightlessness to where you can jump 15 feet, you can soar 20 feet over obstacles. It's like that Peter Pan moment. There's a lot of interactivity to it."

The footprint is a 20-foot radius. Extreme Engineering says four in a 40 by 40 space can still be in a condensed space.

Although unable to disclose the location, Extreme Engineering's Surfing Tsunami is opening in 2022. The stand-up suspended coaster concept will debut in North American and garnered Extreme Engineering its 16th Brass Ring Award, this time for Best Product Concept. "The restraint system is very breakthrough," Wilson said.

**Altitude Rides and Attractions** brought its new product to join Soaring Eagle to the expo. Called Hammered, the ride has 10 modes that can be interactive or fully programmable. In interactive play, the weight of the player adjusts the level of force needed to strike the game, so smaller kids can still send friends up to 30 feet.

"It can be thrilling with a negative G ride, which goes faster than a regular drop ride. The very next rider may want to go more slowly," said President **Logan Checketts**. "The person can select their ride mode from a menu."

Checketts had high interest as people rode the model on the show floor, with two contracts being signed at IAAPA Expo.

**Intamin Amusement Rides**, fresh off its Golden Ticket win for Best New Roller Coaster with **Universal's** **VelociCoaster**, reintroduced its Dome Ride. As an alternative to the standard flying theater, the domed theater offers 80 seats in a circular configuration, 30 degrees of tilt in each direction, a 16-channel audio behind the screen, stereo and vibration in the seating and images in a full sphere 360 degrees of observation.

"The first unit will

be pleasing guests in the Middle East late next year," said **Sascha Czibulka**, executive vice president. "A major change is the video portion. The original concept had projection. When in the development phase, we realized LED has more advantages."

The company's Hot Racer launched single-rail coaster prepares to open at **Luna Park** in Australia very soon. The highly anticipated Pantheon at Busch Gardens Williamsburg will also debut in 2022.

Another new concept for Intamin is a launched flume, which Czibulka says is in the execution phase.

**Clair Hain, Jr. of Great Coasters International Inc.** was clearly enthusiastic about the show. "Awesome," was his first reply to AT. "I had already gone through two shows, and they were absolutely fantastic."

Even though the pandemic made it more difficult to get workers out of the country, Hain said his team was already in place working on two projects.

"One is finished, and one is about finished," he said at the show. "We also have refurbishing, and we developed new ideas."

Ongoing projects are in Dubai, Vietnam and two in China.

**Tobo Zoo** in Japan will receive new trains, new lift hill mechanisms and new brake system. Retracking in multiple areas and other structural work will make the ride smoother.

"Right now we are going to be very busy with the Titan Track," Hain said. "I'll be installing a good portion this year."

He was expecting a finalized contract in early 2022 with a complete overhaul of a ride with Titan Track. Others are in the works.

On display at the show, GCII had lights within the vehicles exhibited. "This is what the customer wants," Hain said. "They will be installed on a project in China. I'm working with a company called **Lagotronics**."

Summarizing the feel of the show, Hain said, "Keep your eyes open and your ears open because a lot of things are going to be happening."

# Water park industry rebounds in 2021, looks forward to 2022

AT: Jeffrey Seifert  
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO — The water attractions industry didn't seem to be as badly affected by the 2020 global situation as some other industries. Still, projects were put on hold and a few may have been outright canceled. Some brand new indoor and outdoor water parks managed to open and then quickly had to close. Others were delayed until the situation improved. Although not back to pre-pandemic levels, the water attractions industry as a whole is improving. The chlorination, filtration, sanitation and attention to cleanliness that most water parks employ likely make guests feel safer than they might at other types of group gatherings or attractions.

Although water industry suppliers had to take a step back in 2020, the creativity continued and expanded attractions offerings still keep the industry new and fresh. AT takes a look at some of the highlights of what the industry is doing to create new experiences that will draw guests to aquatic facilities and keep them coming back for more.

**WhiteWater West** had several projects open in 2021, including the tallest Master Blaster water coaster at **Six Flags Great America** in Gurnee, Ill. The **Ocean Park Water World** expansion in Hong Kong primarily featured WhiteWater product including some unique attractions that took advantage of the multi-level complex situated on a spectacular hillside location on the waterfront. In Europe, WhiteWater worked with **Merlin Entertainments** to develop the **Lego IP** into the **Legoland Water Park Gardaland**, which included one of the largest AquaPlay structures in Italy.

At the 2019 IAAPA Europe show, WhiteWater struck a licensing deal with **Wiegand Waterrides** to manufacture and market the **SlideWheel**, a unique rotating water slide. The two SlideWheels that were announced for 2020 — one



**ProSlide Technologies (above)** had models of its more popular slide complexes on display. This year all the models were designed with the same scale to give a better appreciation of their size relative to each other. The half tube (below), now available from multiple suppliers, makes it easier for guests to climb on when in a lazy river. CPI is currently working on a more durable seat attachment. AT/JEFFREY SEIFERT

at **Mt. Olympus Water & Theme Park** in Wisconsin and the other at **Qetaifan Island North** in Qatar — were put on hold, but both are now under construction and expected to open in 2022. The park in Qatar, said to be the largest single contract in history, will feature 36 slides, including 12 on a single iconic tower. With a height of 80 meters (260 feet), it will be the tallest tower WhiteWater has ever built and requires a feat of engineering to suspend 12 slides from a single tower. To avoid having to climb stairs a dozen times just to experience each attraction, two pedestrian elevators will transport guests to the top. Among the 36 slides at the park will be a **WhiteWater Abyss** that starts 132 feet in the air and is three times longer than a standard Abyss. That water park is scheduled to be completed in time for the World Cup Championship in 2022.

Looking back over last year's projects, WhiteWater took home a second-place Brass Ring Award in the Best New Product — Water Park Ride/Attraction category for its Parallel Pursuit competition dual waterslide. That same product also received the Leading Edge Award from the **World Waterpark Association**. The interactive slide has been designed with low separation walls so dueling riders can see and hear each other, on both straightaways and turns, in



open and enclosed sections, through intense side-by-side competition.

Other high-profile slides that were scheduled to open soon after the show include Australia's tallest waterslide tower at **Wet'n'Wild Gold Coast**. The tower includes a body Parallel Pursuit and Master Blaster + Tailspin fusion slides. The slides opened in 2021 in time for the start of the Australian summer season.

Opening in 2022 will be a dueling Blasterango at **Soaky Mountain Waterpark** in Sevierville, Tennessee, which is a fusion of two Master Blaster water coasters with a Boomerango.

**ProSlide Technology Inc.** took home a first place Brass Ring Award in the Best New Product — Water Park Ride/Attraction category for its launched dueling water coaster, the first of which was installed as **Cheetah Chase** at **Holiday World & Splashin' Safari**.

Using the same technology on a much larger

scale, ProSlide installed a **MammothBlast** at **Aquashow Park** in Quarteira, Portugal. Combining all the bells and whistles, the MammothBlast features five-person rafts, water blast technology, FlyingSaucer45 sections and open tubes and enclosed dark mammoth tubes, to provide a high-capacity adventure that the whole family can enjoy together.

Water coasters of all types continue to be popular with guests. The new **Alpine Springs** area at Colorado's **Water World** in Federal Heights, included **Roaring Forks**, a dueling **RocketBlast** coaster with **FlyingSaucer** features. Also new was **Centennial Basin**, a state-flag-themed **CannonBowl**.

Another dueling water coaster debuted as the first for the country of Columbia at **Cafalandia Water Park** in Bogota. **Evergrande Ocean Flower Water Park** in Danzhou, China, decided to dispense with the dueling and instead concentrate on

length. The 359-meter (1,178-foot) long **RocketBlast** features eight uphill water blast sections and is one of the longest **RocketBlast** water coasters in the world. **Evergrande** was already home to 15 major **ProSlide** attractions.

Also new in 2021 was the highly-themed **Svalgurok RideHouse** water play structure and multi-slide complex. Designed to complement the indoor portion of **Rulantica**, **Europa-Park's** water park, the outdoor section has exceeded guest expectations with its immersive theming and variety of activities.

Looking to the future, **Quassy's** **RocketBlast** coaster is well underway. The first-of-its-kind for the state of Connecticut is the largest single investment ever for the park, and should yield a significant increase in attendance.

The **Park at OWA** in Foley, Alabama, is set to open a state-of-the-art water complex in 2022. The indoor/outdoor water park will include a 65,000-square-foot glass-enclosed structure supplied by **OpenAire, Inc.** of Ontario. The building is equipped with a retractable roof — the largest of its kind on the Gulf Coast. An additional innovative feature is a 128-foot wide by 26-foot tall retractable wall that opens to the adjacent outdoor water park, allowing guests to move seamlessly between the sections of the park.

All of the slides will be in the indoor section including a **ProSlide SkyBox** body slide that rises into a large cupola-like extension of the main roof. Other ProSlide products include a **WaterKingdom** play structure with five slides, **Tornado 18**, multi-bowl **CannonBowl**, mat racer and body slides.

The outdoor water park features a massive wave pool, gigantic entertainment screen, cabanas, lounge chairs and a surf simulator.

**Polin Waterparks** managed to keep busy in 2020 and 2021 by working with the campground/RV Park/Caravan sector particularly

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in Europe, where the outdoor hospitality market has really taken off.

On display for the first time were samples of slides made with the Utexture VARTM (Vacuum Assisted Resin Transfer Molding) process which produces a beautiful aesthetic finish with dazzling patterns that resemble works of art.

Polin also had a model of its latest Stingray slide. The colorful, high-tech racing slide features four different tube slides with open and enclosed flumes and a gigantic bowl. Although the default theme is that of a giant stingray, the attraction can be themed to fit the client's needs. Utilizing Utexture, the slide can feature extraordinary color variations and patterns.

Polin's booth was awarded a Brass Ring Award in the exhibit category for booth sizes 1,201 square feet and larger.

**Aquatic Development Group** was very excited about its EpicSurf product. EpicSurf produces a real wave of water with a depth that can be adjusted from three to six feet for a more authentic surfing experience. The deep-water wave allows the rider to use an assortment of boards while surfing, including a full-size surfboard with fins (or skegs) instead of a modified flowboard.

One long-awaited project that will finally see the light of day is the rebirth of **Wild Rivers Water Park**. The Irvine, California, water park which had thrilled guests for 25 years lost its lease and was forced to close in 2011. The decade-long struggle to relocate the park has finally yielded results and construction on the new park began on July 1, 2021, with ADG providing the design and overseeing construction.

ADG's latest surf wave project is taking shape in Australia. The purpose-built boogie-boarding and "learn-to-surf" pool is the first of its kind in the southern hemisphere delivering breaking interchangeable waves of 1.2 meters in a 55-meter compact pool.



The tower at Qetaifan Island North (above left) in Qatar will be WhiteWater's tallest tower and will support 20 tons of fiberglass that comprise the 12 high-profile tube and body slides. The Vortex Aquatic Structures International booth was popular throughout the show with lines of guests all day long wanting to experience the Dream Tunnel (above right). COURTESY WHITEWATER WEST; AT/JEFFREY SEIFERT

ADG has a couple more projects in the works in Vietnam and Taiwan and is working with cruise ship lines that may be interested in developing private island getaways like **Royal Caribbean** did with its Coco Cay island.

**Vortex Aquatic Structures International** continues to supply splashpads, aquatic play structures and architectural displays for city parks, hotels, resorts, shopping centers and commercial spaces. Generating a lot of buzz at the show — as well as long lines — was a fully functional Dream Tunnel, an immersive aquatic attraction that uses water screens, mists, lasers, lights and audio to create a dream-like world. The tunnel can be experienced as a walk-through or float-through attraction and interchangeable dreamscape experiences will keep guests coming back for more.

The creative minds at **Wiegand.Waterrides**, who announced the Slide Coaster at the 2019 show, have already come up with improvements for the attraction which is still in the prototype phase. Slide Coaster uses a pair of track-mounted pusher arms to accelerate a two-person raft uphill from 0 to 30 mph in mere seconds. The arms are mounted to a central coaster track placed between two waterslide channels. The coaster track contains a set of LIMs designed to provide a maximum acceleration of 0.8 Gs. A cart mounted to the track has two arms that extend to each side to engage rafts in the waterslide channel. The two rafts are launched simultaneously up the water chan-

nel and once reaching the top, will take off to the left or right and proceed down waterslides that can either be mirrored or have a unique layout. Once at the top, the arms lift up, the catch cart returns to the home position and the arms are lowered to engage another pair of rafts. The actual length and inclination of the launch track can be customized to meet the needs of each client. The layouts of the slides can be custom designed of molded fiberglass or stainless steel. Theoretical capacity of the Slide Coaster is 720 people per hour. The launch track can be outfitted with custom lighting and sound systems.

In 2020 **Royal Caribbean's Oasis of the Seas** was retrofitted with an Ultimate Abyss slide. The pair of side-by-side, Wiegand dry slides run 10 decks, from the Sports Zone on deck 16 to the Boardwalk zone on deck 6 at the back of the ship. The Abyss slides first appeared on Oasis-class ships *Harmony* and *Symphony of the Seas*. Now the original Oasis has a pair of the tallest slides at sea.

**SplashTacular** has a hit in its hands with its FlyTyme slide. The simple-looking slide has an upward curve at the end, which then launches the rider into the air before splashing down in a pool. In addition to providing the thrill of flying through the air, the FlyTyme slide has the added advantage of not requiring a runout or any contact with the landing pool. The slides can be placed at the side of an existing diving pool or deep water section of a lap pool. When not in use, the slides



do not interfere with the existing pool. When competition or lap swimming is not taking place, operation of the slide can resume by simply turning the flow back on.

Splashtacular is offering a Traxx racing slide that is available in two, four, six or eight lanes, and operate as a body slide or a head-first mat racer. Although the location could not be disclosed, SplashTacular will be installing the longest-to-date version of its Slipstream standing slides.

**Empex Watertoys** continues to offer an impressive collection of unique, colorful and creative water play devices. Empex can accommodate pretty much any idea. Empex Watertoys has been doing watertoys for 30 years and has developed its own special fiberglass and plastic formulations that are designed specifically to last in aquatic environments.

Raft and tube suppliers, **CPI, Zebec** and **ZPro** continue to supply the water park industry with the inflatable products and mats needed to partake in many of the new and exciting attractions the slide manufacturers continue to churn out. All three have also branched out to the amusement industry providing flotation collars for river raft rides as well as bumper car collars.

One of the newer developments is a half circle tube with a seating area across the middle that is designed to be used in a lazy river. The half-circle layout makes it easier for guests to get into than a full-circle raft. CPI is already working on a stronger design for the seating portion of the tube.

**Wibit Sports** was on hand again with its line of inflatable floating obstacle/play courses. Wibit has made a name for itself with **WibitTag**, an obstacle course that spells out the name of a city, country or attraction, in letters floating on the water. Its most recent installation was another record-breaker spelling out Saudi Arabia. That course can accommodate up to 700 people at a time.

Scotland-based **Murphy's Waves** known throughout the world for its high-quality wave generation equipment, had several high-profile projects the last few years including the Water World expansion at Ocean Park in Hong Kong, the new OCT Playa Maya Xi'an park in China. Future projects include Surf Air 180 surfing simulators and Waves 360 pools for the **Evergrande Water World** water parks in development in Jilin, Qingdao and Ürümqi, China.

Although Orlando-based **Martin Aquatic** has been providing engineering and design since 1987, this was the company's first time to exhibit at the IAAPA Expo. The firm was looking forward to interacting with its client base in person. **Josh Martin**, president and creative director was one of the panel of speakers for an IAAPA webinar held prior to the start of the Expo.

Fortunately, the water attractions industry has been resilient, and despite the global slowdown, there is encouraging new development and a clear path to recovery. The industry as a whole should be able to find its way back to the phenomenal success it was seeing prior to 2020.

# Exhibitors recount journey back to a (new) normal pandemic onset

**AT: David Fake**  
Special to Amusement Today

ORLANDO, Fla. — *Amusement Today* spoke with four different companies from various aspects of the industry on the IAAPA 2021 Expo floor to compare and contrast the impact the COVID-19 pandemic and the more recent supply chain delays and labor shortages have had on their businesses over the past 19 months. AT asked how these have affected their orders and shipments/deliveries, and how they have adapted, pivoted, and evolved their business in response. Here is what we learned from these manufacturers and suppliers:

**S&S – Sansei's** Vice President and Chief Operating Officer **Jason Mons** said, "Assuming COVID is over, we have survived." He went on to explain they were sitting pretty good, and overall "happy" with their experience

at the IAAPA Expo this year.

"It surpassed our expectation, but the expectations were set lower than normal," Mons explained. "Ride manufacturers seemed to have had all the right buyers [at the show]. Attendance was down a bit, so spontaneous purchases were also down."

Mons pointed out that the supply chain issues seemed to hit the ride manufacturing industry later than many others, but even so, it has not had "too bad of an impact on us."

A greater impact has been felt in the area of other resources availability, such as people resources have been harder to come by than pieces and parts for the Logan, Utah-based ride manufacturer.

"Our customers have had a very difficult time staffing up; that trickles down to us," Mons said. "We had planned out how we were going to exit from COVID; how we were

going to come out of it. We had it all structured out when we would order supplies, and then it seemed like everyone turned on the faucet, and it suddenly became a mad rush [of customers]. From what we have heard, that hasn't been different than anybody else. Our partners in the industry have had the same experience. It was a 'ready. set. go.' thing."

**Accesso, Technology Group plc**, a Lake Mary, Florida-based queuing, ticketing and guest experience management solution provider said the first half of 2020 was particularly difficult and challenging, due to the pandemic.

"Every corner of the global economy was touched by the COVID-19 pandemic, including the industries accesso traditionally serves. Theme parks and venues around the world closed their doors completely and abruptly, and Accesso shared the impact of those events. In

the height of the crisis, our team took steps to remain financially resilient through the pandemic's toughest days, including navigation of a short-term furlough process and shortened work weeks for employees," said **Andrew Jacobs**, Accesso CCO.

However, at the time of the 2021 IAAPA Expo, Accesso was already back on track to close out a successful and profitable year. The company's revenue growth has been very strong. Jacobs states that a large part of its rebound is due to the great demand for the company's contactless solutions, because operators have a new, greater need to implement technologies to drive revenue and enhance the overall guest experience.

Accesso's guest experience management platform is the ideal solution for operators looking to stay ahead of the curve in the age of mobile dominance.

Operators can leverage platform to create an all-in-one mobile app that facilitates pre-visit planning and ticket purchasing, powers contactless entry and virtual queuing, provides access to venue information and post-visit engagement, and more.

The current supply chain challenges have lengthened the production time of Accesso's PrismSM bands. The delay is temporary, but Jacobs is thankful it has not caused issues for our operations as clients either have buffer stock or, in many cases, they (and their guests) have been gravitating towards mobile-first solutions.

As for the expo, "The Accesso team was thrilled to be back at IAAPA Expo 2021 and to see so many new and familiar faces! Our team had some great conversations with current clients and potential new partners,

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## Carnival and Showmen's Reception; OABA Members at IAAPA

ORLANDO — Each year, mid-week of the IAAPA Expo, attending carnivals and showmen get together for a social mixer. This 90-minute event, with many OABA members, provides a much-needed time to relax, connect with friends and network with new contacts. The event was sponsored by McGowan Allied Specialty Insurance. Here's a sampling of some of those in attendance.



**Lisa Cummings, Glenn Harris and Annie Shugart, McGowan Allied Specialty Insurance, the host of the reception.**  
AT/SUE NICHOLS



**Jeff Swartz, Hitch-Hiker Manufacturing; Lisa Cummings and Annie Shugart, McGowan Allied Specialty Insurance; Holly Swartz, Hitch-Hiker and Jake Allen, McGowan Allied Specialty Insurance.**  
AT/SUE NICHOLS



**Roxanne Pope, assistant to the President, IAAPA and David Mandt, chief engagement officer and EVP IAAPA.**  
AT/SUE NICHOLS



**Tom Gaylin, Rosedale Attractions and Joyce Hutchins, Joyrides, Inc.** AT/SUE NICHOLS



**John Hallenbeck, vice president and executive director IAAPA North America; Ben Pickett, Ray Cammack Shows; Greg Chiecko, OABA president; Debbie Powers, Powers Great American Midways; Andy Deggeller, Deggeller Attractions. Pickett is the 3rd vice chair, Powers is the OABA chair. Deggeller is the 1st vice chair.** AT/SUE NICHOLS

## Seen at IAAPA Expo 2021



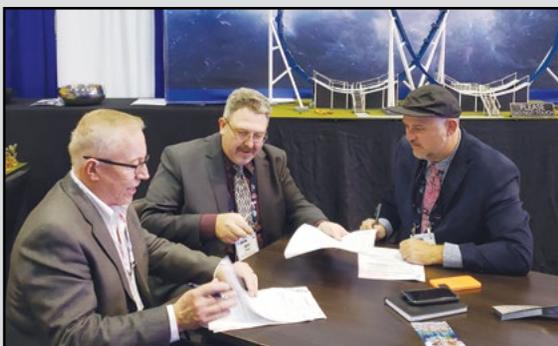
Jim Pattison Jr., president of Ripley's Believe it or Not!, shaved his beard in a whimsical promotion to raise money for Give Kids The World Village. COURTESY IAAPA



Meagan Wallace of Maclan Wheels and RMC founder Fred Grubb hop in the lead car of ArieForce One, the new mega coaster going into Fun Spot America outside Atlanta. AT/GARY SLADE



Peppa Pig steps into a wheelchair accessible ride vehicle at the Technical Park booth. The ride is headed to the new Peppa Pig Theme Park in Winter Haven, Florida. AT/TIM BALDWIN



Bill Kitchen (left) of U.S. Thrill Rides signs contracts with Skyline Attractions' Jeff Pike and Chris Gray to partner in producing the Sky Blazer attraction going in at COTALand in Austin. AT/TIM BALDWIN



Robert Ulrich (center), president of American Coaster Enthusiasts, announced a commitment of \$150,000 to the National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives. Ulrich is flanked by members of the NRCMA board. AT/TIM BALDWIN



Brogent had a stunningly beautiful booth at the show. Guests queued to watch the high definition film from a standing position in the heart of an air balloon that swayed with the movie. Other guests selected a VR version offering 360-degree views. AT/TIM BALDWIN

### ► PANDEMIC Continued from page 44

and we're excited to build upon those conversations through the remainder of 2021 and into the new year," said Jacobs.

"This year's Expo theme, opportunity is here, could not have been more appropriate. The energy at this year's show was vibrant, and that energy was sparked by opportunity — to take what we've learned, apply that to where we'd like to go and redefine the guest experience of tomorrow," he concluded.

**Dale Polley**, general manager/vice president at **CPI Amusements**, a manufacturer of water ride and waterslide tubes, river rapid collars, as well as a variety of flags and banners in Kyle, Texas, said they were lucky to be able to keep every employee working through the pandemic. He explained that because orders had

already been placed and CPI does its own manufacturing, they "just kept going."

There were changes to how CPI operated in that it spaced its workers out and cleaned all areas twice a day to maintain a safe work environment.

Polley explained that CPI always has always bought in bulk, but they have needed to increase their bulk supply purchases due to supply chain issues. Still, at the time of the IAAPA Expo, they had only received 170 lbs. of a 3000 lb. rubber order and were going into their 13th week of waiting for the balance of the order.

"It is all because of the shipping freeze along the Gulf Coast," said Polley. "We are also having trouble with our flags and banners, because fabrics manufacturers cut their staff down 25% here due to COVID, and a now there's a backlog and I can't catch up at it. A lot of

our suppliers are saying we cut back our staff and now we either can't get them back, or we can't get the material to make the product."

Another challenge CPI faces is rising costs. Polley explained that fabric for flags have seen a price increases of anywhere from five to nine percent so far in 2021, and that number is continuing to rise. Because of this, it was necessary to add a clause to their cost estimates stating that the final price is subject to the price of materials at the time of order.

When asked if they have fully bounced back to pre-pandemic sales, Polley answered, "Yes and no. I mean, the problem we've got is you know you can't sell something when you miss one little part. You know you might have an order for \$50,000 sitting there and you need 10 pieces to finish it and you can't send it off. That's what's killing us.

We've got probably 10 orders of waiting on little things."

**Bill Frederiksen**, the namesake of **Frederiksen Industries**, has had his biggest year ever, both in overall revenue and new sales of the company's Fun Slides at IAAPA Expo 2021.

By the end of the expo, Frederiksen had already made up for the losses of 2020 with sales in 2021, and had made more sales at this year's expo than at any single expo before. "Attendance is down, but the people who are here are serious. They came ready to talk making an investment," he explained.

Frederiksen attributes this success to his lean approach to staffing (there are only a total of three on the Frederiksen team) and his foresight to keep supplies and parts stocked ahead of the pandemic. Frederiksen even loaned the company money to keep everyone going during the early days

of COVID-19. "I got it all back and then some this year," he said.

His biggest challenges are the risings costs and wait for new supplies; six months is the current wait time. So he has budgeted and planned the new orders for delivery accordingly. He has been transparent with the new customers by explaining that the cost quotes he had provided are based on the current cost of materials, and are subject to change, depending on the prices when he finally takes delivery of those materials.

He concluded with this: "Park business was real good to me this year and those 'pumpkin patches,' they're the hottest thing going, but I didn't make a sale to one yet, but [this year] I did sell two new [slides] to one pumpkin patch. That's the first time pumpkin patches have ever bought. They always talked for years.

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# SAFETY, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

► UCargo benefits from patience — page 50 / Skycoaster adds Kool Replay system — page 56

## Self-service Kiosk+ technology from Embed is compact, modular

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

SINGAPORE — After launching its award-winning Mobile Wallet at the IAAPA Expo 2019 — the only non-banking, finance payment or loyalty card business and brand card that sits in the consumers' Google Pay or Apple Wallet — Embed unveiled its latest technological evolution during IAAPA Expo 2021.

The company spent two years developing the self-service Kiosk+. Not unlike the Mobile Wallet, Kiosk+ delivers unique and beneficial technology that is unparalleled in the FEC industry.

"Embed aims to enable, empower and ease the business of fun, transforming it with our technology innovation. We have a clear vision of the FEC of the future, and Kiosk+ is a product that will transform what FECs are willing to accept from their business so-

lutions providers; no more space consuming bulky kiosks," said Renee Welsh, CEO of Embed.

With one of the largest touchscreen displays in the available in the amusement industry, a sleeker design as well as an expandable modularity, Embed's Kiosk+ enables operators to maximize their game room floor revenue per square foot.

The Kiosk+ offers a leaner footprint than any other redemption card kiosks in the industry, allowing operators to dedicate a game room floor to what matters most — revenue-generating games — instead of outdated balance check machines and other large space-consuming hardware systems. The system enables operators to maximize their game room floor revenue per square foot.

The new system reimagines modularity with its removable screen and base, making it the only

kiosk that an operator can set up 100% as required by the facility, no limitations. It's upgradable and modifiable with additional game card dispensers and other hardware modules of choice, becoming a kiosk solution that grows as a business grows.

The monitor can be used as a wall-mounted top-up/reload station or mounted on a pillar in the middle of a game room floor, whatever and wherever it needs to be without occupying any additional floor space.

The user experience gets a viewable increase with the large 27-inch responsive touchscreen display — one of the largest screens in the industry. The screen can also double as a means to communicate promotions at the facility to customers. Responsive software ensures Kiosk+ will deliver seamless guest experience.

Kiosk+ is available in various configuration options that are geared for any business, from entry-level to an expanding operator, or an unmanned game room floor. For example, the emONE+ is a supercharged version of Embed's emONE, a fully unmanned self-installing and service kiosk (with a built-in server) with credit card, cash and coin transaction modes, an 800-game card dispenser capacity, and is now available in the Kiosk+ skinny design. Op-



Embed's Kiosk+ offers the slimmest kiosk footprint currently available to FECs. In addition, the technology's modular design allows FEC owners to setup the kiosk as freestanding option on the game room floor (right) or as a wall-mounted option, free from impeding revenue generating space.  
COURTESY EMBED



erators now have the opportunity for an unmanned game room floor dedicated to generating revenue

On the other end of the Kiosk+ spectrum, the single card dispenser configuration carries 400 game cards while the dual card dispenser can handle 800. Both of which can have either credit card or cash and coin options.

In addition to Kiosk+, Embed introduced the Breakaway Game Card during IAAPA Expo 2021. This innovation is a combination of the traditional game card and wearable media. Guests can snap off the removable section of the traditional game card, wear it with a

band and reusable toggle and be carefree as they play throughout their visit.

"Business solutions should enable operators to optimize the consumer experience while driving greater revenue and profit per square foot, which is the design purpose of Kiosk+," summarized Welsh. "We are excited to help operators maximize their game room floor with revenue-generating games, lower their costs and achieve their business goals through this innovation."

•embedcard.com



The Breakaway Game Card from Embed allows guests to wear their redemption cards while visiting FECs. It provides a fun and secure way to keep cards available for playing.  
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## Mall of America adds options for more accessibility

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — Since the Mall of America (MOA) and Nickelodeon Universe earned the Certified Autism Center (CAC) designation in 2019, the team has implemented a variety of additional options to enhance the guest experience and recently renewed their commitment to the CAC program.

“The certification has been well received and it has allowed the team to not only share personal breakthrough stories but also to be more comfortable talking about them. We think the biggest takeaway from the IBCCES certification is that employees are excited about being able to add the credentials to their resume and utilizing the insights and information beyond the walls of MOA and Nickelodeon Universe,” said Mayra Ferraro, attractions manager for MOA.

As part of the continued commitment to the CAC designation, MOA and Nickelodeon Universe staff have completed updated renewal training to help better understand and communicate with visitors who are autistic or have sensory needs. Nickelodeon Universe also offers sensory guides, created by IBCCES, as well as quiet areas and other options.

“We’re excited to continue working with the team at Mall of America and Nickelodeon Universe to create a great experience for all visitors and help empower the teams that engage with those visitors every day,” stated Myron Pincomb, IBCCES board chairman. “Our goal is to provide ongoing support to our CAC partners to ensure they continue to grow their accessibility options.”

IBCCES created the CAC designation to help provide training and other support to attractions and destinations that want to provide better experiences for visitors.

•[moa.net](http://moa.net)

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# Communication, patience have benefitted growth of Ucargo

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

GRAVESEND, U.K. — Whether it's air freight from Los Angeles to Osaka, Japan, road freight from Heathrow, England, to Edinburgh, Scotland, or shipping 24 tons of heavy machinery from Shanghai, China, to Genoa, Italy, **Ucargo** is setting a pace and continuing to grow even in the face of many global challenges.

"The past few years have involved a bit of creative thinking to navigate the changes going on in the world with both Brexit and a pandemic but has seen us fortunately grow our business," said **Tony Kennedy**, a Ucargo founder. "While the entertainment industry took a pause, we were able to grow other aspects of the business using our large scale freight forwarding project knowhow, which have included projects in industrial machinery and defense."

The award-winning Ucargo, founded in 2013, is a freight forwarding and logistics company. It began with just one office outside of London and then established offices in Hong Kong, China, Brazil, Italy, and Manchester. This global presence has been both beneficial to Ucargo and its clients.

The company specializes in focusing on several different industries requiring niche cargo movements around the world. The company has built a team around working on the entertainment and amusement industry.

Kennedy said the company has worked on its personal service and trying to keep grounded. He feels this is what has set them apart from other similar companies.

Kennedy said that often a representative will be either on site or port to personally oversee the projects.



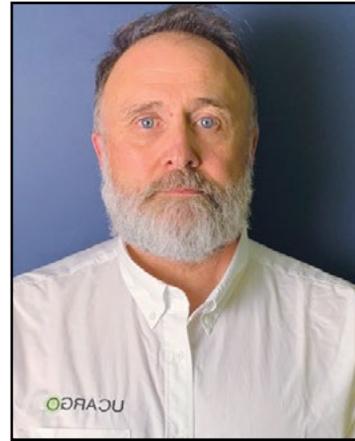
**Tony Kennedy**

Being able to troubleshoot first-hand is instrumental to the service we offer.

The company prizes itself with its 24/7 availability for help and information.

The company has worked on finding a way through the current difficult times by honing their skills in communication and patience.

"Communication is key," Kennedy said. "We have great contact at all the United Kingdom ports that has been vital for some of our



**Paul Martin**

large projects coming in and out of the United Kingdom.

"Also patience," he said. "With the supply chain's price [increases] across shipping, particularly from the far east, it's been important to act with patience as well as keeping clients and suppliers informed the whole way, being as transparent as possible. It goes back to the personal approach that we take to our business."

Even though Ucargo is a fairly new company, the people that have come

together to make it thrive are established and experienced, bringing a wealth of industry knowledge and history to the company.

Kennedy has worked in shipping and logistics for 43 years.

Kennedy's partner, **Paul Martin**, is a former group treasurer for a corporate finance company and has a professional and business-minded attitude.

The two have known each other for many years in a personal capacity and their idea of forging together their experience, strengths and combined knowledge of business culminated in Ucargo.

The company has merged together experienced freight forwarders who have the knowledge to move cargo from a simple shipment to being able to problem solve any complex cargo projects.

•ucargo.co.uk



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### Best wishes for a happy and safe 2022 from AIMS International

The 2022 **AIMS International** Safety Seminar kicks off the New Year on January 9 in Galveston, Texas, when more than 400 students and 100 instructors come together for five days of classes, networking and certification testing.

As a non-profit organization, AIMS is dedicated to improving safety in the amusement industry through leadership in education. Our reputation for the excellent quality of our seminar program is due to our volunteer instructors — more than 100 industry professionals who share their expertise with our students in over 300 class hours during the week. This commitment to safety education and training in the amusement industry is priceless. We cannot begin to thank our instructors enough for the hours spent in preparation to bring students the most current information on safety issues and standards today.

We are also grateful to those who volunteer their time and expertise in assembling this group of instructors and shape our seminar curriculum. A big thanks to **Rick Achard, Kevin Garrison** and **Harold Hudson** who reviewed every course proposal received through the call for presentations platform. We also truly appreciate the members of the safety and security certification committee, which was headed by **Rich Powers**, along with committee members **Nick Buffa, Ed Zakar** and **Rick Achard**, who worked diligently to create the new Academy of Amusement Risk Management, Safety & Security (AARMSS), which will debut at the 2022 seminar. Additionally, a debt of gratitude is owed to the members of the new AIMS Young Professionals Council: **Samantha Bercik, Robert Anderson, Diego Valenzuela** and **Garrett Monteiro**, who coordinated

the team of student volunteers for the seminar and who acted as liaisons for the seminar instructors.

#### Thank you to our 2022 safety seminar sponsors!

On behalf of the AIMS board of directors and the entire amusement industry, we are especially grateful for those companies who support the work and mission of AIMS International as sponsors of the Safety Seminar.

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# Podnology introduces its cubes, domes to amusement industry

AT: Pam Sherborne  
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — **Mara Lowenstein**, CEO and one of three founders of **Podnology Cubes and Domes**, was on a mission when she visited the **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions Expo** last November in Orlando. She was introducing herself and her company to the industry as well as introducing the industry to her company's products.

"I went on a learning expedition," Lowenstein said.

What she learned is that she believes Podnology's cubes would fit in many locations within the industry.

"Our food and beverage kiosks would work great in water parks, amusement parks and at special events," she said. "We are even talking to cities who are looking at using them on their plazas."

Podnology Cubes and Domes is one of many com-



Above are food and beverage cubes made by Podnology Cubes and Domes. The company sprang up during the pandemic with its Eat in Cube design as a COVID solution. However, the design's unique energy system allows the cubes to have many other possible functions. COURTESY PODNOLOGY

panies that sprang up during the pandemic trying to help keep businesses in business. Focusing first on the hospitality industry, the company's first product was the Eat in Cube, which launched in the summer of 2020 in Poland. They expanded to manufacture food and beverage cubes, office cubes and even medical exam clinics.

The first Eat in Cube product hit the U.S. market in November of 2021. It can be seen in front of Empanada Mama's Hell's Kitchen location at 765 Ninth Avenue (51st Street) in New York City.

"We did extensive research and work on this product," Lowenstein said.

The company was following its own set of stan-

dards. They didn't want to make anything temporary. And they wanted a product that is environmentally friendly, producing a small environment footprint. They also wanted it to be easy to transport so size was important. And they wanted it to be easily relocated from one site to another.

They reached their

goals. Lowenstein said with the combination of materials they use, their cubes can last 25 years. And with the patent-pending energy system that can power with the sun and wind, the cubes can run completely off-grid or with a hybrid system, depending on the energy needs.

"You can serve coffee brewed by the sun," Lowenstein said. "You can put food and beverage kiosks in the middle of a parking lot. You can put one of our medical clinics at a special event and move it with the event."

Along with Lowenstein, an attorney who has worked in New York City for 30 years, the company's two other founders are **Glenn Lepore**, a veteran designer in hospitality architecture, and **Tomasz Sadowski**, a Polish inventor, researcher and investor in technological solutions and innovations including envi-

► See PODNOLOGY, page 54

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## ►PODNOLOGY

Continued from page 52

ronmental impacts and cost effectiveness.

"We launched in Poland because that is where Tomasz lives and we are manufacturing there as well," Lowenstein said.

Lowenstein said both Lepore and Sadowski were working on other projects before the pandemic hit but came together on this project afterward.

"Glenn reached out to me, because he knew my father and because I could provide the legality part of the business," Lowenstein said.

Her father, **Marc Lowenstein**, was an architect who became interested in



Podnology's cubes be lifted with a forklift, LHS or hook lift truck. COURTESY PODNOLOGY

renewable energy back before people really knew exactly what that meant.

"He had a stroke when he was 45 years old, but before that he had won awards for his solar designs and built 18 homes in two and half years," Lowenstein said. "I was excited about Podnology and I truly be-

lieve in this project."

The patent-pending energy system is called the Podnology Smart Box. The cube's total available power ranges from 12 kWh to 64 kWh, depending on individual needs and the number and type of devices installed. There is a back-up generator that can be used if the batter-

ies become low in charge.

"You tell us what your energy needs are, what type of equipment you need, and we will give you that power," she said.

The standard size of the cube is 11.5 feet wide by 7.5 feet deep by 8.7 feet high. They can be moved on the back of a semi, have built-in forklift channels and be lifted with a forklift, LHS and hook lift truck.

They can come fully assembled or can be delivered by multiple palletized crates requiring only a quick set-up. They also come fully furnished.

"Once placed in a location, it takes about 30 minutes to be up and running," Lowenstein said.

The cube includes exterior walls made of high pressure laminate sandwich panels and high performance glass. The thickness of exterior walls and paint colors are customizable.

The interior is equipped with a hot and cold water pump, clean and dirty water system, LED lights, WiFi, full HVAC, ventilation, depending on customer's requirements. Interior walls also can be built to a customer's specifications especially when being used as a dine-in or office cube.

The company's Eat in Cube won the *Hospitality Design Magazine's* 2021 HD's Award for COVID-19 solutions.

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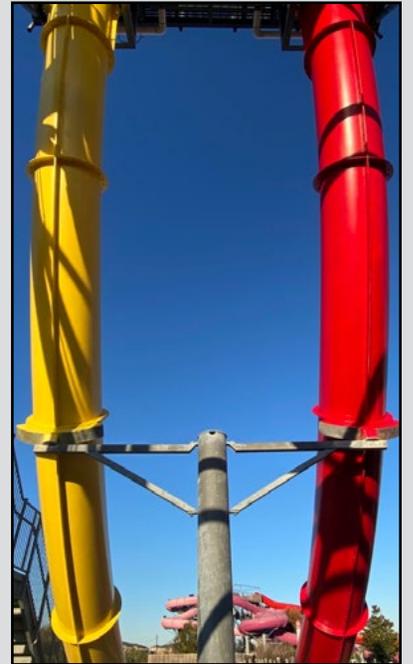
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## Hawaiian Falls team repainting all of park's water slides



MANSFIELD, Texas — A successful 2021 season has advanced the park maintenance funding for Hawaiian Falls Mansfield, managed by Pro Parks Attractions Group. As a result, the in-house team at the park is repainting all of the waterpark's slides during the offseason. Having done smaller projects like this previously, repainting the nearly 20 slides contained at the facility will be the team's largest project to date. COURTESY PRO PARKS

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# Skycoaster adding thrills with new Kool Replay video system

STEVENSVILLE, Md. — Ride Entertainment announced a new upgrade available for Skycoaster operators: **Kool Replay's** fully-automated, self-editing, cloud-based video and photo recording system.

Once a ride cycle begins, the video system automatically captures the ride experience from several different angles. When finished, guests can download their footage, which has already been edited, and instantly share it with their friends and family via social media.

"Gone are the days of handheld camcorders or riders attempting to record their own flights," said **Lance Beatty**, managing director of Skycoaster and financial partnerships. "The Kool Replay system gives facilities a new revenue stream along with shareable, social media content for their guests."

Each system can be cus-



Skycoaster riders (above) can now instantly download video of their experience to their phone with the addition of the fully-automated Kool Replay video system (right).

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tomized, from the number of cameras used to the graphics seen in the final product. The first installations, found on the Super Swing at **The Track** in Branson, Missouri, and the world's tallest Skycoaster at **Fun Spot America Kissimmee**, have already proven extremely popular with both guests and park

ownership.

Operators can learn more about the Kool Replay video and photo system as well as many more exciting developments at the annual Skycoaster Safety Seminar being held at Fun Spot Orlando and Fun Spot Kissimmee from January 26-27.

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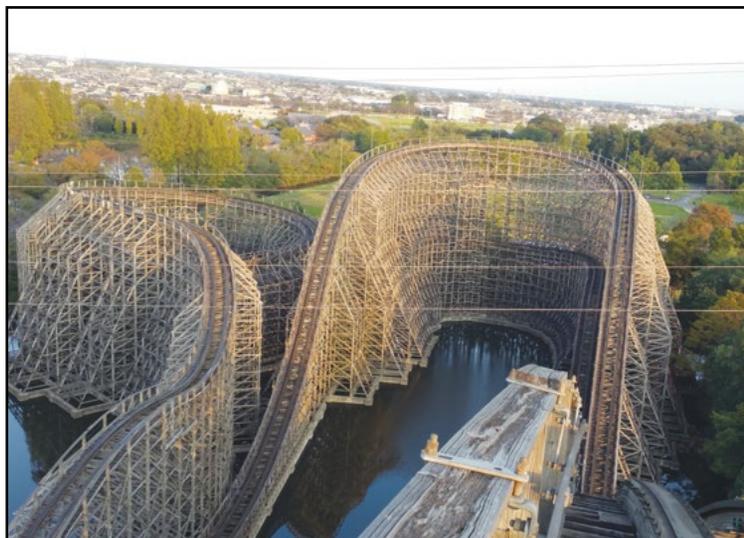
# Tobu Park's Regina wooden coaster to be renovated by GCII

AT: Pam Sherborne  
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SARASOTA, Fla. — Clair Hain, president and owner of Great Coasters International, Inc., (GCII) and Tim Viox, co-owner of Leisure Labs, LLC, announced in late November that they have entered a partnership with Sanoyas Rides Corporation to bring Japan's Tobu Zoo's legendary Regina wooden roller coaster back to its original glory.

Tobu Zoo, which originally opened in 1981, is located in Miyashiro, Saitama Prefecture, about 35 miles north of Tokyo. It is a combination zoo park and amusement park.

The 120-foot-tall Regina coaster was originally built by Intamin. It opened in 2000. It was built over water with 50-degree first drop and



Great Coasters International Inc. will soon begin the renovations to the Regina wooden roller coaster — originally built in 2000 by Intamin — at Tobu Zoo in Japan. It will take on a Steampunk theme. The target date for completion is early 2023. The coaster was built over water and has a track length of 4,377 feet. COURTESY LEISURE LABS LLC

4,377 feet of track.

Tobu park officials closed the ride in 2019 in anticipation of renovating it. Viox, whose company represents several ride manufacturers in sales, said August 2019 was GCII's first visit to the park. After that

trip, GCII began discussions and negotiations with Sanoyas Ride Corp. to do the renovations.

"We are very excited to finally be working in Japan," said Hain. "We have been working on this partnership for multiple years

and countless miles. As a lifelong builder of wooden roller coasters, I have been familiar with Regina since it was originally constructed. It is an honor to have the opportunity to make this wonderful ride a Great Coasters ride."

Yoshio Nagamatsu, president, Sanoyas Rides Corp., said they are very pleased and excited to work with Great Coasters.

"Great Coasters is the only company who can execute this challenging project, and we are excited to have Great Coasters as our partner in bringing the legendary Regina wooden coaster back to its full glory," Nagamatsu said.

Masakazu Matsumoto, manager of Tobu Zoo, also is very excited. When the park closed the ride in 2019, it was to the dismay of many visitors.

"Regina is a well known and long-loved ride by many people for a long time," Matsumoto said. "We are very pleased to be able to reopen the Regina with Great Coaster's new trains."

Viox said he feels they have developed a good relationship with the teams at both Sanoyas and Tobu Zoo. He said in mid-December that the engineering portion of the project is well underway.

"GCII will be on site in Japan soon," he said.

Great Coasters International, Inc., is known for its work and manufacturing of wooden roller coasters. It has been in business for 25 years and has worked across multiple continents and many countries.

•leisurelabsllc.com  
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## Pennsylvania's ride approval process evolves during the COVID-19 pandemic

AT: B. Derek Shaw  
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HARRISBURG, Pa. — The ride approval process in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is the same except, with some flexibility these days, in how and when it is getting done. “We are reviewing what needs to be done as we can get to it. We’re doing a few [at a time]. Once in a while, there’s a conference call, sometimes we will e-mail and share the information with the advisory board and get input from them and give a tentative approval,” said **Joe Filoramo**, amusement ride safety supervisor, **Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture**, Bureau of Ride and Measurements Standards. It’s been a year and a half since the last in-person meeting.

“People had to adjust to the situation this year. Some adjusted well, some did not. Some thought a perfectly good excuse for not doing things well was because they couldn’t get their H2B peo-



Joe Filoramo

ple. You either do it right or you don’t do it. A lot of people were able to cut back and the public understood. They were able to cut their overhead in the process and do it well. That’s what a lot of people did,” said Filoramo.

The head of the state inspection program commented on the approval workload: “There’s always a pile of them to do. We’re spread pretty thin here.”

Zoom has been useful, allowing staff to do more tasks at once. Filoramo explained, “During the pandemic, we started doing virtual inspections. We have thousands of certified inspectors out there [across Pennsylvania], to draw from. In a lot of cases, that person held the phone. We initiated a Zoom call. He was able to move that phone as we directed. I was able to look at our big screen and we’d go over the equipment with him, just as if I was standing with him. It worked very well. We did

that a lot between ourselves. We’ve just done a lot of different things virtually. It’s really been working well.”

The bureau has been more dependent on technology. “I think it was the timing. This is a situation where something good came out of this [pandemic]. A lot of people were becoming familiar with using social media platforms and they were more open to the idea. It is becoming a more permanent part [of our ride inspection process],” said Filoramo. “It will never take the place of in-person inspections, but if I have an issue in Erie and I’m say 600-700 miles away in Philadelphia - two different problems I can take care of the Erie problem, almost like I am there and take care of the Philadelphia problem, minutes later, without a day travel in between. It’s saving a lot of money to the Commonwealth, plus we’re getting a lot more done that way, and we’re able to assist — support our certified ride inspectors better. In other words, if a certified inspector has a question about something and wants to show me, he can do it, it’s just like me being there. He’s got us working as much as a consultant, as we work as a quality insurance inspector. It’s an improvement; something positive is coming out of this.”



Pictured here are some of the staff of the Amusement Ride Safety Division. Seated: Joe Filoramo, director; Yvonne Brown, administrative assistant and Leonard Adams, Jr. Standing: Randall Arndt and John Jardine. Adams, Arndt and Jardine are all quality assurance inspectors for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

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# Command Center signs with Legoland Windsor, extends reach to North America

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HAMPSHIRE, England — **Command Center** (often seen as **CmdCtr**) is a software system that replaces paper-based training records and daily operations sheets. The system automates workflow and provides management with large quantities of information and insight into current operations.

"We've come to IAAPA [Expo] to properly launch Command Center," said Product Manager **Owen Jones**, at the recent trade show. "We've now been running in parks for two years."

Command Center is a division of **First Option Software**, a private company that creates services to meet customers' individual needs. According to the company, it is passionate about delivering excellent technical solutions to solve business problems.

"What we've created is a niche system for park operations. Operations are made that much more efficient for each key team member," said Owens. "We've been in **Paultons Park** in the U.K., and they were really forward-thinking in their approach from day one."

Paultons Park found eliminating the tedium of paperwork and streamlining the daily checklists through software apps offered more efficiency. Even more so, reacting immediately to data helped reduce problems within the park and improved the guest experience.

A training app eliminates the paper trail of signoffs and putting paperwork before multiple managers. An administration portal aids management in planning, predicting and adapting to trends and customer reactions. The ride app assists management in getting a higher capacity from its rides, how to redistribute staff and opportunities to quickly address problems. The monitoring app gives a bird's eye view of crucial operations data such as staff requests, operation glitches and ride efficiency — at the

touch of a button.

"Rather than supervisors collating paper at the end of the day, that data is being fed straight into our system from the dedicated app at each ride," said Owens. "We're capturing key figures, downtime, throughput and queue times, and we are able to integrate that and show it to the right people."

No onsite storage is required. The program is cloud-based. As a supervisor, each man or woman carries an app on their shoulder in a tablet case. Team members receive notifications as to what's happening. At the beginning of the day's shift, they subscribe to certain rides, and they receive information on operations, issues and requests.

"Basically, what we are doing is connecting people," said Owens. "Rather than getting information after the fact, they are getting it in the moment so that when they do their rounds, they can divert and go and solve problems."

The speed of receiving operational information is one of the system's greatest strengths.

**Legoland Windsor** has recently signed on for the software.

"Within four months, they reported a 95 percent reduction in downtime," Owens told *Amusement Today*. "What they have been able to do is instead of the last hour or two of the day being dedicated to paperwork, they are now starting earlier and helping reduce downtime that way. They have reported 1.4 more rides per visit. They are attributing this to seeing that data faster and reacting more quickly."

As First Option Software makes its mark on the industry with Command Center, as developers of software, they have explored what makes the operations of a park more efficient.

"Software is our expertise. What we're really trying to do is get into the mindset of operators and really understand what they need," said Owens. "Because we do mobile visitor apps for amusement parks, we began speaking with Paultons Park because of our location, and they were wanting us to create something very specific."

These needs are commonly shared by most park operators. The program can even track cleaning instructions and record data such as the weather of the day. It also records ride performance and the operators on staff.

"It's so easy to focus on getting the stats at a high level, but by making life better for the operators, we have everyone pulling in the same direction. They always mention that radio traffic is always so high, you have to prioritize the radio noise," explained Owens. "When they see the notifications, we prioritize them based on the settings admin puts in place. Operators feel like they are being heard and can see the progress of it. Walkie talkies will always have their place, but if you can reduce that traffic and structure it, that's made a huge difference to parks using it."

Command Center prides itself on cost savings.

"You can take a room full of filing cabinets and reduce that to a digital format," said **Bill Ossim**, North American representative, Command Center. "Tracking the training, plus having ride operators log in and knowing they are trained to operate that ride — that efficiency came to fruition because of those off-season meetings. We began to understand the operations and their challenges."

Command Center offered free trials at the IAAPA Expo and began its first one the following week (in an undisclosed park in North America). The system is designed to be rolled out quickly.

"It's designed to be scalable," said Owens.

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## AccessAbilities Expo 2022 coming in fall to Dubai

DUBAI — Under the patronage of Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, president of the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority, chairman of Dubai Airports and chairman and chief executive of Emirates Airline and Group, Dubai will host the fourth edition of AccessAbilities Expo, as part of the efforts by the government and private organizations to empower People of Determination and enable them to contribute to shaping the future of the UAE during the next 50 years.

The Expo will be held at the **Dubai World Trade Center** from November 15–17, 2022. This edition comes after the resounding success it achieved in the previous editions, and organizers expect the number of companies and centers participating in the exhibition to exceed 250 from 60 countries. It will attract more than 10,000 specialized visitors from across the world and several events and activities specializing in rehabilitation, sports, arts and health are being organized alongside the exhibition.

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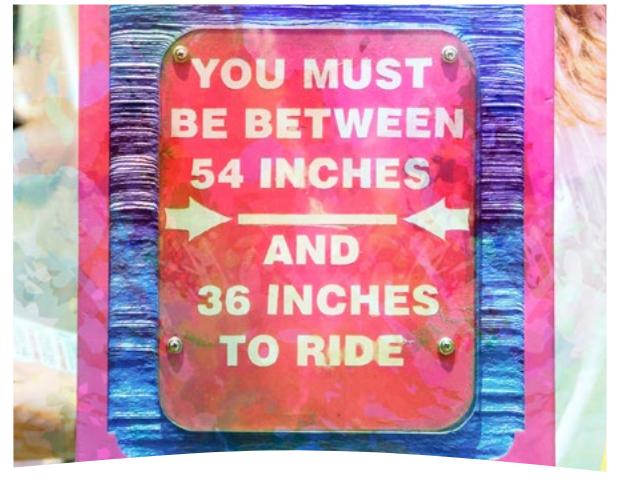


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