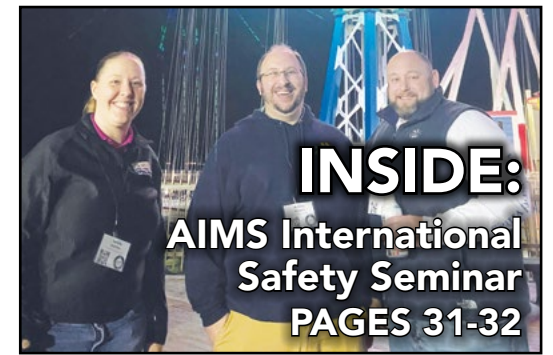


Amusement TODAY CELEBRATING 25 YEARS!

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February 2022 | Vol. 25 • Issue 11

Digital Edition



Slingshot Group, ICON Park change Orlando's skyline

AT: David Fake
Special to Amusement Today

ORLANDO — “There are giants in the sky,” is an exclamation of the title character of Jack and the Beanstalk in many versions of the fairy tale of old. Today, it could be the exclamation of just about any visitor to **ICON Park** on Orlando’s International Drive, where the record-breaking Orlando Slingshot and the Orlando FreeFall have just opened. The two new behemoth attractions join the Orlando StarFlyer (2018) and the Wheel at ICON Park (2015), both of which also hold record-breaking titles of their own.

Ritchie Armstrong, owner/CEO of the **Slingshot Group**, the company behind and operator of the Orlando StarFlyer, has again partnered with ICON Park and Austrian manufacturer **Funtime Group** to build and operate the two new attractions.

The Orlando Slingshot, which stands at 300 feet, but launches two riders to a height of up to 450 feet, garnered the attraction a world’s tallest title for its category. Riders are slung upward at a speed of up to 100 mph, with the assistance of a proprietary mechanism that utilizes cables and over 800 springs. Riders can watch the springs being stretched before their thrilling, yet remarkably smooth, launch skyward.

Armstrong explained that with the Orlando Slingshot, a lighter passenger weight load creates a

► See ORLANDO, page 6

2022 IISF Trade Show prepares for attendees, Florida Week on target

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

GIBSONTON, Fla. — The 54th annual **International Independent Showmen’s Foundation (IISF) Super Trade Show & Extravaganza** takes place February 15-18. Part of the many “Florida Week” activities, this four-day buying opportunity for rides, games, trailers, plush, food supplies, insurance and related products and services will feature a diminished trade show and number of attendees as the coronavirus pandemic rages on. Organizers expect it to be on par with the 2021 vendor and attendee numbers.

“Florida Week,” as participants refer to the vari-

ous scheduled events and activities, is put on by four different organizations. The biggest event is the trade show produced by the IISF, the fundraising arm of the **International Independent Showmen’s Association (IISA)**. Adding to that, the 12-day **Florida State Fair**, always a popular option for attendees, will be in full operation during that time.

“There will be a show,” said **Teresa Rimes**, trade show secretary for the IISA. However, complete details were not available as of press time. It seems all the moving parts are changing daily, making it hard to nail down some of the specifics. Rimes indicated between the inside and outside ven-

dors, there are approximately 100 companies that will be participating.

At least two manufacturers from outside the United States will be setting up at the IISF show. They include **Fabbri Group** from Calto, Italy, and **Luna Park-Rides** from Zakopane, Poland, staffed by **Isabela Smith**. “Perhaps in a couple of weeks, we will hear from the other ones,” said Rimes. “I still think we will have more vendors. I hope nothing changes from here [on in.]”

There is one first-time company, **Shelter Event Equipment**, Palos Verdes Estates, California. It will

► See IISF, page 8



The 54th annual International Independent Showmen’s Foundation (IISF) Super Trade Show & Extravaganza takes place February 15-18. Above is part of the midway from a previous edition of the trade show. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

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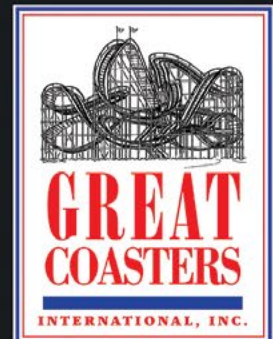
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AMUSEMENT VIEWS

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

Bringing back the midway



Robinson

It was a strange thing for me in 2021. I spent an evening at a local county fair. The people were there, the blue ribbons and animals were on display, the smell of high-calorie food filled the air ... all with a full parking lot and the sounds of grandstand events in the background.

However, as my girlfriend and I walked around, we felt that something was off, something was genuinely missing from the fair. And, then it hit us both. There was not one ride and not one midway game. The sky was not filled with the hypnotic patterns of LED lights, and screams of fun and fright were nowhere to be heard. It struck me as even more odd, knowing full well a local midway supplier stored its attractions in a warehouse not five miles from the fairgrounds.

And, well, that's the world of COVID for the outdoor industry in the past year or so. Random rules and regulations vary by region, and many fairs and carnivals welcomed guests without an active midway to entertain them. What it created was a festival, of sorts, that was missing key elements of entertainment and — more importantly — atmosphere that the public has grown to love so dearly.

While not everyone rides the midway attractions or takes a shot in a game of chance to win the giant teddy bear, everyone is familiar with those sights and sounds. Our eyes are drawn to them as we pass by from a nearby road. They create the melody of happiness and fun that envelop a normal carnival or fair.

As the Omicron variant wave appears to be peaking (and then subsiding) and with vaccinations readily available, the midways of our local fairs should be poised to return and bring back the sensory delights of light packages, victory bells and excited guests eager for the spinning, thrilling fun of the touring rides and attractions.

FLINT'S VIEW: Bubba Flint



INDUSTRY VOICE: James K. Judkins, JKJ Workforce Agency, Inc.

The need to increase H-2B visas

The mobile entertainment industry could not exist without access to temporary seasonal foreign workers to augment the available U.S. workforce via the H-2B program.

The number of available visas in each fiscal year was established four decades ago, was not indexed in any way for expansion or regression in economic conditions, demographic shifts in the available workforce, or any other logical and reasonable factor. The only way that the number of available visas can be adjusted each year is literally through an Act of Congress.

The current news cycle, with increasing irregular immigration at the southern border, insufficient workforce across the nation causing supply chain issues, and an understanding that "something must be done" has created a unique political opportunity to permanently increase the



Judkins

number of available H-2B visas. This would ease the labor crisis plaguing the mobile entertainment industry.

But an Act of Congress does not happen without a tsunami of grassroots activism. The entire mobile entertainment industry, suppliers and affiliated organizations need to be part of that tsunami.

Our best chance of getting the number of visas issued each year increased is the inclusion of HR 3897 H-2B Returning Worker Exception Act in the Appropriations Bill that must pass on February 18, 2022.

We have the coming weeks to build support for that bipartisan legislation. We need more members of congress to co-sponsor this bill now.

For instructions, visit sealabor.com/sea-all-hands-on-deck-campaign or email gdelany@sealabor.com.

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

AmusementTODAY
Your Amusement Industry NEWS Leader

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2 MINUTE DRILL



AT: Janice Witherow

Tim Viox, Leisure Labs, LLC

Before joining **Leisure Labs, LLC**, **Tim Viox** spent time at **PARC Management, LLC** and **Busch Entertainment Company**, where he used his expertise in design, engineering, maintenance and project management to contribute to the success of both companies. Tim's leadership in the amusement industry is highly respected as he oversees the **ASTM** subcommittee responsible for developing standards related to the maintenance and inspection of amusement rides and devices, serves on the Board of Directors for **AIMS International** and volunteers his knowledge in several different facets of the business. His efficiency, sense of humor and priority on family and friends is well known and make Tim a stand-out guy.



Tim Viox of Leisure Labs, LLC (right) enjoys a day at Six Flags New England with his daughter, Eva Viox. COURTESY TIM VIOX

Title: None – going on 11 years.

Number of years in the industry: 25.

Best thing about the industry: Besides the people? The global collaboration related to safety and best practices. No other industry does so with such a spirit of cooperation.

Favorite amusement ride:

Demon Drop at Dorney Park – I let out a true “belly-laugh” every time I ride it!

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

Still working for Anheuser-Busch helping beer bottles find their way from the production line to your fridge.

Biggest challenge facing our industry:

Labor shortage. I hate seeing a funnel cake shop closed!

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

Did I mention I like funnel cakes? Actually, seeing families enjoy attractions I've had a hand in developing is food for the soul — it makes all the hard work worthwhile.

The last song I downloaded was ...

“Fill My Cup” by Thad Cockrell.

My secret celebrity crush is ...

Kate Beckinsale.

Favorite place to chill out: Our hot tub!

The best moment of my career so far would have to be ...

Actually “moments” — all the trips with my family around the world getting to share with them the wonderful experiences our industry has to offer.

All-time favorite TV character: Ted Lasso.

Finish this sentence in one word: The year 2022 will be ... Unpredictable.

You just won the lottery! The first person you call is ... Shari (my wife) to give her a heads up on reconsidering her current employment (I'll keep working, of course!)

The sport I wish I was really good at is ...

Olympic Curling – who am I kidding? Golf.

If I could vacation anywhere, it would be ... New Zealand (for something new) or La Casa del Mundo on Lake Atitlan in Guatemala (for repeat).

The one thing I did lately that I wish I could take back is ... Having that dessert that I really didn't need. It wasn't that good, which only magnified the regret.

The person from my past I would most like to reconnect with is ... My Dad.

Pick one: steak or lobster

For a Midwest farm boy? STEAK!

When I look out my office window, I see ...

My goofy black lab mix running in the woods.

Best news story of 2021: “Parks Bounce Back from COVID Closures.”

My perfect day off is spent ... With family. Doesn't really matter what the activity is, it's just nice to be with family.

The coolest thing about winter is ...

Spring (and more! mushroom hunting) are just around the corner.

THE INDUSTRY SEEN

Never grow up



MASON, Ohio — A love of wooden roller coasters does not go away just because you've made a career out of it. Michael Graham of Cincinnati, Ohio's The Gravity Group was caught being a kid again and enjoying a ride on the Woodstock Express at Kings Island of Mason, Ohio. Located in the park's Planet Snoopy area, the small, family wooden coaster is the first roller coaster for many children as they progress onto more adult rides. But, for Graham, just because he's now an adult does not appear to be a reason to stop riding and enjoying. Even if it's a tight fit in the cars. COURTESY MICHAEL GRAHAM

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►ORLANDO

Continued from page 1

faster, higher initial launch.”

Armstrong explained that the utilization of springs as opposed to elastic bands or bungees as the source for propulsion, as well as regular and thorough inspections of the equipment, creates a safer, more consistent ride experience while reducing costly, regular parts replacement.

The Orlando FreeFall, at 430 feet in height, is the world’s tallest free-standing drop tower. The ride which, all in, lasts around three minutes, begins with a slow, spiraling ascent up the tower. Once at the ride’s highest point, the 30-passenger gondola makes at least one more full rotation, then tilts each of the passenger’s seats forward 30 degrees before the attraction’s operator manually releases the gondola from the carrier car, dropping the gondola back to earth at speeds of up to 100 mph.

Once the gondola is released by the carrier car, there are no mechanical or electrical brakes that bring the gondola to a stop at the bottom of the tower. That is done safely and smoothly through the attraction’s use of exceptionally strong magnets located on both the gondola and the tower, of which there are fewer

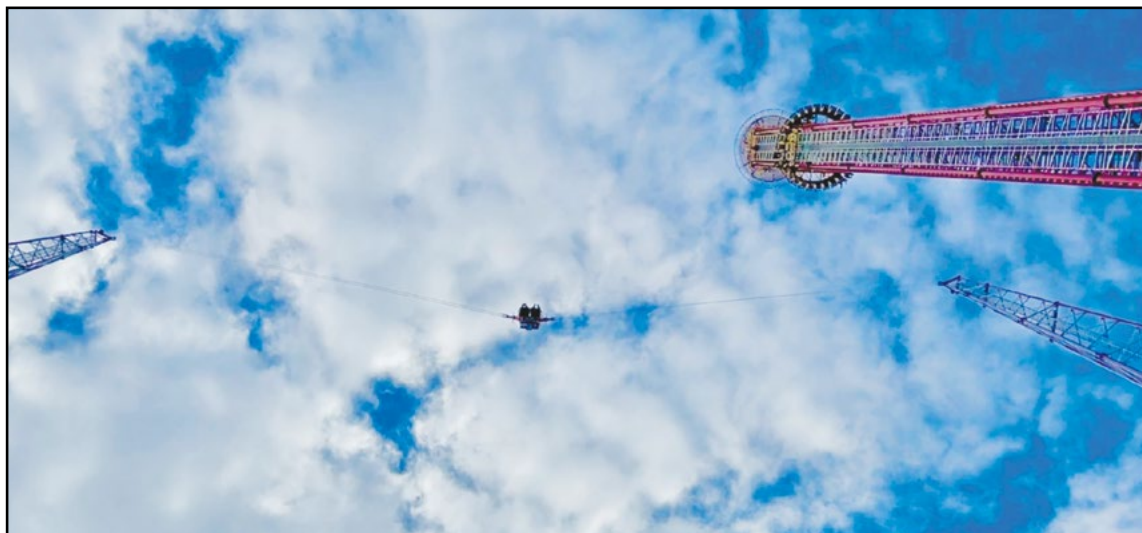
toward the top, but an increase in number down the tower.

The non-electrical magnetic braking system is a fail-safe feature that removes any concern of complications due to power failure.

“The way the magnetic braking system works is that the magnets at the very top are very weak, and as [the carrier car] comes down the magnetic rail, the magnets get stronger [...] it gives a super smooth, slow finish,” said Armstrong. “Because of the magnetic braking system on the Orlando FreeFall, the heavier the load of passengers, the faster the speed of the drop, but also the smoother slow to stop at the bottom of the tower, which is just the opposite of the Orlando SlingShot,” he said.

Amusement Today was given an exclusive peek at the four-ton motor and cable spool that pulls the close-to-800-foot, 30mm cable that hoists the carrier car and passenger gondola to top of the Orlando FreeFall’s tower. The motor is so large that a super reinforced foundation was required before the gargantuan piece of machinery was lowered into the building in which it is housed.

The mechanics behind



The Orlando SlingShot utilizes a propulsion mechanism that consists of more than 800 springs (below left) to launch riders to heights of up to 450 feet, which is 30 feet higher than the neighboring Orlando FreeFall tower and 50 feet higher than the Wheel at ICON Park.

AT/DAVID FAKE



the scenes of the Orlando FreeFall are so impressive that Armstrong said he regrets not including a large observation window in the plans for the building so guests could watch the machine in action. “I still may try to find a way to do that,” he said.

An added bonus to the thrill of the attraction is that on a clear day, guests may not be able to see “forever,” but they can take in magnificent views of each of the eight major theme parks, including the currently-being-developed Epic Universe, that make

Orlando the “Theme Park Capital of the World.”

By night the Orlando FreeFall, like the Orlando StarFlyer, is illuminated with a lighting package that has the tower decked out, top to bottom, with LED lights that are capable of being programmed into unlimited patterns and 64,000 different colors, making it visible for miles.

“The SlingShot Group has created the ‘Land of the Giants,’” Armstrong said in an address to the media outlets present at the official opening of the attractions. “We now have three world record-setting attractions at Icon Park: The Orlando StarFlyer, SlingShot and FreeFall. We’re excited to welcome guests from all over the world and give them the thrill of a lifetime!”

One could say that Armstrong is the “Jack” in this extreme thrills fairy tale; it will be exciting to see what “magic beans” he and the SlingShot Group plant next.



Ritchie Armstrong, owner/CEO of the Slingshot Group, gave *Amusement Today* an exclusive peek at the gargantuan four-ton motor and cable spool (above) that pulls the close-to-800-foot, 30mm cable that hoists the carrier car and passenger gondola to the top of the Orlando FreeFall’s tower (left).

AT/DAVID FAKE

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► IISF

Continued from page 1

be displaying tents, generators, cable, cleaners and supplies and will be located on the outside. There are no new vendors inside.

In regard to workshops, the **JKJ Workforce Agency, Inc.** will be conducting an "H2B Update" session on Wednesday from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Also, the **Safe SERV** training will take place for four days, Tuesday through Friday, from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. At this time there is no **National Association of Amusement Ride Safety Officials (NAARSO)** training scheduled. It had been available the past two years at the Gibtown trade show.

Masks are optional and nothing in regard to COVID-19 protocols is mandatory in the state of Florida per Governor **Ron DeSantis**.

The week of activities for the IISA begins Monday, February 14 with the 12th annual Big Hearted Jerry's Memorial Golf tournament at **Summerfield Crossings Golf Club**. During the next four days, the trade show is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The first evening, February 15, is a trade show kick-off party with snacks, finger foods and a band. Wednesday evening is the annual Jamboree fundraiser steak dinner and auction benefiting the **International Independent Showmen's Museum** building fund. During the trade show on



Thursday will be another live band. Rounding out the activities on Friday will be the **IISA Cemetery Association** memorial service at 12 noon at the carousel pavilion with mass to follow. Also, the Showmen's Shrine annual meeting takes place that day as well.

Many more activities will be conducted by other organizations that week.

The **Fare Foods** food show and **National Independent Concessionaires Association (NICA)** business expo will take place on Monday, February 14th and Tuesday, February 15th at the **Sheraton Tampa East Hotel**.

"We have a variety of events taking place beginning Monday at 1 p.m. with NICA's educational seminars followed by the Fare Foods food show beginning at 5:00 p.m. to 9 p.m.," said **Audrey Poole**, vice president of business development for Fare Foods. "NICA will be hosting additional educational seminars beginning on Tuesday morning that will continue throughout the day and lead into the Fare Foods food show that opens at 3 p.m. and concludes at 9 p.m."



Some of the rides set up behind the IISA clubhouse at a previous show were on view from the top of a Frederiksen slide. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

The theme this year is Thriving While Surviving.

"We once again are asking attendees to pre-register and pick a time slot that works better for them," said Poole. "We are asking attendees to do this for both days. This was very successful last year and gave the attendees and vendors more opportunities to spend time on a more one-on-one basis. The vendor could learn more about the attendees and their products they use. This also assisted us in complying with the **CDC (Centers for Disease Control)** guidelines and social distancing. Even though some of the restrictions are more relaxed than last year, it does allow a better traffic flow and we will be doing the same again this year."

There are 40 vendors participating in the food show.

All attendees are asked to pre-register to avoid the \$10.00 onsite registration fee that was implemented this year. People can register at www.farefoods.com/events. All proceeds from the onsite registration will be donated to the NICA scholarship foundation.

The event will conclude with the NICA annual general membership meeting on Wednesday evening, February 16, when the incoming board of directors will be installed and the introduction of the hall of fame winner, past president **Tom Hodson**.

The **Outdoor Amusement Business Association (OABA)** has a full schedule as President and CEO **Greg Chiecko** explained: "This year at the annual membership meeting of the OABA, we will be relaunching Circle of Excellence (COE) with our revamped Accredited Operator Program (AOP). We also look forward to recognizing our Hall of Fame and Pioneer Award recipients. **Andy Deggeller (Deggeller Attractions)** will become our new chair after **Debbie Powers' (Powers Great American Midways)** two years at the helm. We will also be voting in new directors and look forward to an update from **HB Strategies**, our

advocacy firm from Washington, D.C."

Other OABA activities include the government relations committee meeting, a reception honoring the 2022 Hall of Fame and Pioneer Award recipients at the International Independent Showmen's Museum, the annual board meeting, a scholarship meeting and 6th annual **Top Golf H-2B** advocacy fundraiser. Rounding out their activities will be the 57th annual member meeting and chair's reception at the **Sheraton Tampa East Hotel**.

The **Showmen's League of America (SLA)** is also having activities during the week.

"The Showmen's League will hold a scholarship meeting and board meeting during Gibtown week," said **Cindy Henning**, secretary/executive director. "The advantage of Zoom meetings allows us to decrease the number of in-person meetings this year to better accommodate everyone's busy event schedule. We are also excited to unveil our new Mobile Club to our members and friends. More information to follow on that."

•gibtownshowmensclub.com
•niacin.org
•farefoods.com
•oaba.org
•showmensleague.org



Drivers in the 6900 block of Riverview Drive will see the massive entranceway to the IISA club headquarters and four-day trade show site. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

IISF 54th annual Gibtown Extravaganza

February 15-18, 2022

Exhibitor Listing

5CentRide.com	602	IGPM Distribution LLC.	426-428
Action Lighting Inc.	509-510	Indiana Ticket Company	722-723
Aeria/JKJ	727-728	Ital International, LLC	405
Amusement Devices & Mfg. Llc	Outside Space	JKJ Workforce Agency, Inc.	830/930
Amusement Today	601	K & K Insurance Group, Inc.	Non-Exhibiting Supplier
Audio Innovators, Inc.	725-726	Knight Equipment Company.	Slab D
Bj Toy Company, Inc.	816	Lamberink Reuzenrad Rouw BV.	Outside Space
B. Barton & Sons Intl Jewelry	301	Lifetime Products Group Inc.	Bunkhouses
Backyard Canvas And Signs, Inc.	Outside Space	LKQ/ Keystone Automotive	820-821
Battech Ent. Llc	Outside Space	Luna-Park Sp. Z.O.O.	Outside Space
Berk Concession Supply	411-413	Magic Money LLC	Outside Space
Best Toy Mfg. Ltd.	1018-1020	Matt's Web Design	Breezeway Space
Bob's Space Racers, Inc.	Outside Space	Mcgowan Allied Specialty Insurance.	403/503
Burton & Company, P.A.	Non-Exhibiting Supplier	Midway Tents.	Outside Space
Caravan Softoys / Big T	318-325	Moore Industrial Hardware	Non-Exhibiting Supplier
Carnivalwarehouse.Com	Breezeway Space	OA Finance, LLC	718
Carolina ATM Services Llc	712	Peek-A-Boo Toys	326-331
Cavallaro Concessions.	Outside Space	Pol-Rides	Outside Space
Custom Change Aprons	525-527	Powersource Transportation, Inc.	Non-Exhibiting Supplier
Chester Built Trailers Ltd.	Outside Space	Price Chopper Inc. /Tap N Go.	515-5166
Chestnut Identity Apparel Inc.	614-616	R2M2 Energy Solutions	Non-Exhibiting Supplier
Classic Toy Co., Inc.	703-710	Rapsure Concession Trailers	Outside Space
Circus And Traveling Shows Retirement	Non-Exhibiting Supplier	Recreation By Design	Outside Space
Cmd Enterprises Llc	625-626	Rhode Island Novelty	504-507/603-607
Concession Mall.Com	823	Rides 4 U, Inc.	Outside Space
Dalton Kid Rides Rebuilders Inc.	Outside Space	Rocken Graphics	30x50
Designs In Motion	407	Safe Strap Company	Outside Space
Dills Enterprises LLC bba Uniglide Co.	Outside Space	Schantz Manufacturing	Outside Space
Eli Bridge Co.	418/518	Shelter Event Equipment.	Outside Space
Fabbri Group.	702	Showmen Supplies Inc.	Outside Space
Fare Foods Corporation	818	Soda Parts Express Inc.	827-828
Fiesta	Non-Exhibiting Supplier	Space Craft Mfg.. Inc.	Outside Space
Firestone Financial Llc.	806-808	Specialty Insurance Ltd	415-416
Food Concession Signs.	918-921	Sterling Jewelers	1001-1002
Forever Bunkhouses	Outside Space	Tent And Table.com	Outside Space
Frederiksen Industries, Inc.	Outside Space	Tig Artistics, LLC	Outside Space
Fun & Fun Toys, Inc.	622-625	Toy Factory, LLC	924-928/1024-1030
Fun Tagg	420	Trailex Trailers	Outside Space
Funlight Amusements SRO	Outside Space	Triangle Poster & Printing Co.	630/730
Galaxy Amusement Sales	Outside Space	Tribune Showprint	409
Gautier Fabrication Inc.	Outside Space	Used Rides.Com Llc	1102-1104
Gloworks Imports, Inc.	915-916/1015-1016	Wadkins Expo Wheel	Outside Space
Goffa International Corp	719-721	Waterloo Tent & Tarp Co., Inc.	803-804/903-904/1003-1004
Gold Medal Products Co.	422-424/522-524	Waymatic, Inc.	Outside Space
Gosetto S.R.L.	701	Whirley Drinkworks!	Non-Exhibiting Supplier
Haas & Wilkerson Insurance	618-620, Outside Space	Wisdom Rides Of America	Outside Space
Hayes Specialties Corp.	303-306	Worldride Service & Supply Inc.	Outside Space
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San Antonio, Texas
Details coming soon to GoldenTicketAwards.com

PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► San Antonio Zoo enhances train ride — page 16 / Milwaukee FEC adds first installation of Magnetag — page 20

Zamperla to supply eight new rides to Iowa park

Multiple ride package to bolster Adventureland's 2022 season



The placement of the new Flying Carousel will make a visual statement in the park. COURTESY ZAMPERLA

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

ALTOONA, Iowa — It's not uncommon to look forward to a new ride when an amusement park or theme park reopens for the season. For visitors to Adventureland, they will enjoy an unusually large influx of new attractions.

"Now under the umbrella of Palace Entertainment, Adventureland is adding nine new attractions," said Nick Paradise, Palace director of corporate communications. "Adventureland is a park for all ages. The most recent rides added to the park, such as The Monster and Dragon Slayer, were larger attractions meant primarily for thrill-seekers. That meant the time was right to add more children's and family-friendly rides, and we are excited to make such a significant upgrade to the lineup with nine new attractions opening this season that we think will be a big hit across the board, and especially with younger children."



Parents can ride with children on the new Zamperla rides. COURTESY ZAMPERLA

Zamperla is providing eight of the new rides. Guests should not expect them to be contained within one spot. Bright new color will be spread throughout the park.

"It is no secret that Adventureland has retired some attractions based on their announcement of the new additions for the 2022 season," said Michael Coleman, North American Sales, Zamperla. "If you look at their marketing video, you will see that some rides are going to be utilizing footprints

of these retired attractions and others are being added to areas of the park which will help inject some new life to certain underutilized spaces."

"Determining where to place each ride came down to a few things," added Paradise. "First, logistically, where was the greatest need to fill empty spaces? This was especially important with three rides being retired after the 2021 season. Another key was fitting these rides into the present and future expansion plans for

Palace Entertainment acquires Adventureland Resort

ALTOONA, Iowa — Palace Entertainment, a subsidiary of Parques Reunidos, announced the acquisition of Adventureland Park and Resort in Altoona, Iowa. Adventureland has more than 100 rides, shows and attractions for all ages, from mild to wet-and-wild and features shows throughout the park for a variety of family fun and entertainment. The acquisition and Palace's expansion of the venue will introduce Adventureland into a portfolio of some of the best-known and operated parks in the world. Similar to Adventureland, many of these venues hold and maintain a unique and timeless heritage where they operate.

Adventureland was founded in 1974 by Jack Krantz. It has been run as a family business ever since. The park has become a regional magnet for tourism.

"We are excited about adding Adventureland into our portfolio," said John Reilly, chief operating officer of Palace Entertainment. "We specialize in parks and venues that create experiences to be enjoyed over a lifetime, from childhood to young adulthood to parenting and grandparenting. We are investing in Adventureland to expand its current lineup to include nine new family rides in 2022, plus two all-new attractions for the 2023 season."

The company also announced that beginning this year, Adventureland platinum season passholders will be able to visit all Palace Entertainment sister parks free of charge, including Noah's Ark Waterpark in the Wisconsin Dells and Kennywood near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Similarly, platinum passholders at other Palace owned and operated parks will also be able to visit Adventureland this summer as one of the many Platinum Pass perks.

"We look forward to our Palace Entertainment team combining their operational excellence with Adventureland's family-run legacy of entertainment," said Pascal Ferracci, chief executive officer of Parques Reunidos. "This will continue to be a growth lever for the group, keeping local brands and historical positioning of acquired parks while benefiting from state-of-the-art tools and capabilities to further develop the business."

•palaceentertainment.com

Adventureland, such as the two new attractions set to open in 2023. Finally, we tried to place the new attractions while keeping as many trees

as possible within the park, as that natural shade and greenery is so important."

► See ZAMPERLA, page 12

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Dynamic Entertainment Group acquires stake in SkyFly Soar America

TORONTO — **Dynamic Entertainment Group Ltd.** exercised its option to acquire a 50% ownership interest in the **SkyFly: Soar America** flying theater attraction for a purchase price of \$3,995,822.

On the day of the announcement, the attraction won the “Best New Attraction in the Country for 2021” award from *USA Today*. The honor came as a result of nominations from travel experts and the top 10 being selected by readers through an annual online poll.

“I am absolutely ecstatic to announce that Dynamic gave its formal notice to exercise its option to buy and own 50% of SkyFly: Soar America on the very same day that we were informed by USA Today Readers’ Choice Award that this attraction won the very prestigious honor of being selected as the ‘Best New Attraction’ in America,” said **Guy Nelson**, CEO of Dynamic. “The acquisition and the development of the attraction are the culmination of months of hard work by the company, its partner and its suppliers. Dynamic Entertainment Group made a strategic decision to pivot towards leveraging its attraction intellectual property through ownership.”



► ZAMPERLA Continued from page 11

“The Flying Carousel is going to be front and center when it comes to visibility, and its placement in the park will help create an iconic visual for all park-goers,” noted Coleman.

The ride package includes the aforementioned Flying Carousel, Rockin’ Tug, Speedway, Flying Tigers, Super Happy Swing, Jump Around, Samba Balloon and the first ever Pump & JumpZ. Visitors to the IAAPA Expo last November were able to experience this new attraction.

“The first Pump & JumpZ — seen at IAAPA Expo 2021 and themed as a lighthouse — will reside on an elevated piece of land, giving even more height to the 40-foot-tall attraction, where it will overlook a body of water for a truly spectacular presentation both on and off-ride,” Coleman told *Amusement Today*. “The family-friendly attraction is designed with a combo adult/kid seat to create a truly shared experience.”

Guests will have the opportunity to control their height, views and subsequent drop through the intuitive handlebar attached to each seat. According to Zamperla, the attraction is six unique experiences on one rotating tower. If a guest does not interact with the handlebar in front of them, an automatic cycle for that seat will provide a series of bounces and drops while the

ride is in motion.

Industry professionals that enjoyed that ride experience at the November show didn’t see the ride’s full height as the top of the lighthouse would not fit inside the Orlando hall. Adventureland accepted delivery of the Pump & JumpZ immediately following IAAPA Expo 2021, and the remaining seven rides will be on site during quarter one, prior to the 2022 season opening.

The Zamperla package of incoming rides allow adults to ride with their children.

“When you look at the investments made at Adventureland throughout the last decade, you will find plenty of thrill through three coasters (Monster, Dragon Slayer, and Phoenix), other attractions and water park offerings. One of Zamperla’s strengths in the market has been our ability to provide a traditional kiddie ride action while providing adult capacity with the majority of height restrictions being 42 inches unaccompanied and 36 inches with an adult,” said Coleman. “You never know which type of ride is going to be a child’s first or favorite, and we believe that experience is best shared. It’s about creating memories and experiences for parents and children together that they will hopefully carry with them throughout their lives and bring them back through the gates many times over.”

The Flying Carousel will



Attendees at IAAPA Expo enjoyed riding Zamperla’s first Pump & JumpZ.
AT/TIM BALDWIN

have the highest height restriction out of the 2022 additions to the park at 48 inches, and it also provides an opportunity to fill a gap between children’s rides and thrill attractions while being a beautiful centerpiece for guests of nearly all age groups.

“Overall, the ride mix was made with a long-term vision in mind,” said Coleman.

The park will also be installing a ninth ride, an **SBF Mini Pirate Ship**.

Adventureland opened in 1974 and in the decades since has grown into a full resort with a large water park and the **Adventureland Inn** as well.

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Mack Rides supplies Steel Taipan

Dreamworld ends 2021 opening Australia's first triple launch coaster

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

GOLDCOAST, Australia — It was announced in 2019, but with global circumstances being what they are, Steel Taipan, an impressive new launched coaster, opened at Dreamworld at the close of 2021. Although the road to the ride's debut has been long, park officials are confident the journey has been worth the wait.

Provided by Mack Rides, Steel Taipan adds a fourth coaster to the Australian park. Additionally, the significant investment is an ideal way to usher in the park's 40th anniversary.

"We're incredibly excited to offer not only the country's best roller coaster but also an incredible lineup of entertainment this summer at Dreamworld," said CEO Greg Yong. "This is a fantastic opportunity



Steel Taipan includes four inversions, the first of which is a gigantic loop. One of the trains is a new HybridTrain from Mack Rides (above). Guests in the back seat spin throughout the ride. COURTESY DREAMWORLD

to thank our locals for their ongoing support, as well as an unbeatable experience for our long-awaited interstate tourists to enjoy during their Gold Coast travels. As our biggest ever investment, we're confident that we'll help all our guests make unforgettable memories on

Steel Taipan this summer." Hardcore coaster fans will recognize much of the layout is a replication of Mack's immensely popular Blue Fire model. However, Dreamworld's installation comes with significant differences to take the creativity factor up a level.



Instead of a single launch, the ride experience sends passengers forward before they roll back into a second pass over linear synchronous motors to send them soaring and spiraling up a twisted reverse point. The third pass creates a speed of

65 mph, which sends trains into the complete circuit.

"Steel Taipan is an adaptation of the Blue Fire layout with a completely redesigned launch area," said Maximilian Roeser, market-

► See TAIKAN, page 15

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►TAIPAN

Continued from page 14

ing, Mack Rides. “After leaving the station, riders pass a track switch that allows us to use the launch track three times: for an initial forward launch up the horseshoe element, rolling and launching back to a twisted spike and then the final launch to the maximum speed. And to top it all off, we proposed our HybridTrain to Dreamworld as a world’s first, and we are very happy with the feedback we received from the guests. We tested the spinning cars at **Europa-Park** and the ride experience was a lot more intense and thrilling: a wonderful addition for our launch coasters in the future!”

“The triple-launch system is my favorite feature of the ride,” said Yong. “Steel Taipan is the first triple-launch coaster in the Southern Hemisphere.”

The layout has numerous elements praised for their smoothness. A large



A snakeskin motif helps maintain the ride’s theming. COURTESY DREAMWORLD

loop looms over the coaster; however, riders are inverted three other times through exhilarating rolls that are navigated with a lap bar. The train’s design has been praised by coaster fans since the original Blue Fire was introduced at Europa-Park in 2009.

Another notable difference is the addition of spinning seats on the final carriage on one of the trains. Dubbed “Tailwhip,” this innovation adds an

entirely new dimension to the ride as a pair of riders rotate in different directions throughout the experience, stipulated by the weight of the passengers. In this seat, each ride experience is extremely different. Because of the limited nature of this specific car, bookings are required. According to the park, this is a “pay per play” experience, and visitors pay AUD 25 for the opportunity to experience it. Guests can

make arrangements online before their visit or at the park if availability remains.

“The spinning car was part of the initial proposal,” noted Roeser. “We thought of a hybrid version a lot after the introduction of the Xtreme Spinning Coaster. We wanted to combine both seat arrangements onto the launch coaster base and create this also for a retrofit of existing Mack launch coasters. That’s why we are more than happy to also bring the HybridTrain to Icon at **Blackpool Pleasure Beach.**”

Track length is 3,937 feet, and the use of a section of switch track allows for two-train operation with one being loaded and unloaded in the station.

Many coasters use an angled reverse point with a straight piece of track. The spiraling reverse point on Steel Taipan provides an additional element of artistry for spectators.

“We wanted to create a feature that would add to the ride experience

even more than a straight track element,” Roeser told *Amusement Today*. “With the twisted spike, the people in the back of the train not only reach the highest point of this element, but also the spinning seats will get an additional force here. It’s super spectacular to ride this element in those seats.”

A taipan is a highly venomous snake native to Australia. Overhanging shade structures sport a snakeskin motif to help carry out the theme. The lead car on each train features snake eyes as well.

Construction was led by project managers **RLB** and **Condev Construction**.

“Visionary projects like this accelerate our COVID economic recovery and create more jobs for Queenslanders,” said Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment **Cameron Dick**.

Construction supported 200 Gold Coast jobs.

The ride opened on December 14, 2021.

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San Antonio Zoo enhances train ride, plans for new entrance

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

SAN ANTONIO — What's old is new again. In 1956, the longest miniature railroad in the world made its debut. When it turned 65, it was far from retiring. Last fall, The C.W.T. Express train was the star of a rein-troduction of this beloved city favorite to the residents of San Antonio and the city's zoo in Brackenridge Park.

The railroad boasts a length of almost two miles. A ride aboard the train is an enjoyable, 20-minute journey through Brackenridge Park, one of San Antonio's city parks. In its six-decades-plus career, the train ride has seen some of its engines and cars come and go. New trains are replacing the older rolling stock, the first of which took its first passengers in September of 2021. Three trains can operate on the track. While a new one has come onboard, two of the former trains are still being used,



The two-mile journey through Brackenridge park allows guests to get on and off at multiple stops. The new train features a more powerful engine (above right). COURTESY SAN ANTONIO ZOO

eventually to be replaced by the newer modern ones.

Originally called the Brackenridge Eagle Miniature Railroad, it is now known as the San Antonio Zoo train. The San Antonio Zoo is one of the train's stops during the ride.

"Over the years, we've had different models," said San Antonio Zoo President Tim Morrow. "A couple of

our trains were built in the 1980s. They were not built to accommodate ADA. So we had some logistical problems, if not just the maintenance and wear and tear on something that is 40 years old. It was time for us to start changing out that fleet."

The new train was supplied by Swannee River Railroad of Lufkin, Texas. It was completely funded

through donations. The train sports a diesel-styled engine and runs on fuel donated by the Valero Energy Corporation. Fundraising efforts are underway to procure two more trains.

Passengers who purchase tickets can hop on and off as the train makes its usual stops, which include the Witte Museum, Japanese Tea Garden and Sunken Garden.

"The new trains are more powerful than the old trains and will allow for a smoother and more consistent ride," said Hope Roth, San Antonio Zoo spokesperson.

"In addition, we wanted more space for our guests," noted Morrow. "We have train cars that are wider and have more legroom. We

► See ZOO, page 17

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ZOO**Continued from page 16**

have an ADA ramp on the back car for wheelchairs. We've really improved our throughput and the comfort level for our guests."

The new train has an outdoor **Bose** speaker system to offer more clarity when passengers hear spiels during their rides. Special scripts are used during the Halloween and Christmas events as well.

"There is so much history here," said Morrow. "We tell the history of the park on an automated spiel."

When the zoo does acquire three new trains, the goal is to make each one distinct in their appearance.

"There is a real love for this train," Morrow said. "The park has been here since 1914 and the train since 1956. Every San Antonian has been on this train — generations, as a child and as an adult."

The San Antonio Zoo operates the train, although the locomotive doesn't travel through the zoo. The umbrella of the operation includes the



The new entrance to the San Antonio Zoo (above left) will capture the flavor of the city's culture. One of the temporary entrances during construction will be near the beautiful new parking garage (above right). COURTESY SAN ANTONIO ZOO



zoo, the train, **Kiddie Park**, the **Will Smith Zoo School** (the largest nature-based preschool in the country) and a stand-alone gift shop and **Starbucks** within Brackenridge Park.

The trains aren't the only thing new. A large project of a reimagined entrance for the zoo will begin later this year following the summer season.

"I would describe the current entrance as outdated," said Morrow. "It's uninspired and operationally challenging. We are looking to create an experience at our

entrance that better represents our city and our zoo."

Once begun, the construction process is expected to take 14 months. The zoo is very cognizant of the challenges involved in such a major development. While the current entrance will be unavailable, temporary entrances will be put in place through Kiddie Park near the train parking lot and near the new parking garage recently constructed.

"It will be an interesting challenge for us," Morrow

told *Amusement Today*. "Right now as you enter there are bathrooms, sundries, strollers ... so we will have to figure out not just how to get them in but to provide them what they need."

The 1950s-era entrance is right on the street, so the new entrance will be more welcoming and eliminate the times when guests have to be standing in the street. The zoo realizes the current entrance is functionally out of date and made the area a prime focus as the zoo has

made impressive improvements and enhancements in the past decade.

"The big thing for me is that it is going to feel like San Antonio. There are going to be thematic elements. It is going to feel like Fiesta time in San Antonio and El Mercado in downtown," said Morrow. "There will be a sense of arrival, and it will set the tone. It makes a statement: This is San Antonio."

The San Antonio Zoo is a nonprofit, city-owned facility.

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Knott's Berry Farm, Buena Park, California, kicked off its Knott's Peanuts Celebration January 22. Guests will be able to celebrate the Peanuts comic strip characters, created by Charles M. Shultz, and special activities through March 6. COURTESY KNOTT'S BERRY FARM

Peanuts comic strip characters, fans take over Knott's Berry Farm

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

BUENA PARK, Calif. — Peanuts characters and those who love them are taking over Knott's Berry Farm, Buena Park, California, during The Knott's Peanuts Celebration. The special event began January 22 and runs through March 6.

Park officials are inviting guests to enter the world of the Peanuts comic strip created by Charles M. Shultz. Visitors are getting a unique experience to interact and play with the Peanuts characters and take part in special family-friendly activities.

The special event features a new stage show, a new Charles Schulz exhibit and plenty of new Peanuts-inspired whimsical food items not to be forgotten.

Some of the special fun includes two different musical performances taking place daily at the Calico Mine Stage. During the day is a brand-new musical for guests with "It's Your Life, Charlie Brown." At night, the stage is transformed into a musical extravaganza called "Woodstock's Musical Festival."

The Peanuts-inspired festivities continue at the Bird Cage Theatre as the park offers an experience that gives both the young and the young at heart a lesson on how to draw their favorite Peanuts characters.

A Western escapade is being offered featuring Franklin and Linus as they transform into cowboys in the "Peanuts Cowboy Jamboree" at Calico Park.

In Ghost Town at Pigpen's Pig Pen, Pigpen is hosting a special meet-up at the Livery Stables with some of his favorite animal friends.

In Camp Snoopy, the Camp Snoopy Theater is featuring "Music Goes 'Round and Around" during daily performances. Afterwards, Sally and Schroeder are hosting a retrospect of melodies sure to make the audience dance in the aisles.

Visitors also are hopping aboard the Grand Sierra Railroad to experience a one-of-a-kind adventure as riders travel with the Peanuts Gang to the Beagle Bonanza.

And the fun goes on and on including at the Boardwalk BBQ where visitors are grabbing a seat and a plate, too, to enjoy the sounds of the James Street Trio.

•knotts.com

Park Post-its



AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

U.K.'s **Blackpool Pleasure Beach** is introducing a new Walk the Big One XL experience to the theme park this summer. Thrill seekers will be "taken to places the public have never been before" as the original Walk the Big One attraction is extended.

Participants will ascend 72 meters (236.22 feet) above sea level to the top of the roller coaster and will be taken to two new exciting and different locations on the ride's course to enjoy unique access and spectacular views of the ride, the park and the sea.

The experience is described as an "in depth extended version of Walk the Big One."

In total, the full experience lasts 90 minutes and harnesses and protective clothing will be provided. The walk is a physically demanding activity including steep climbs, drops, heights and the surface can be uneven, dirty and slippery.

Limited dates have been set and, of course, it is weather dependent.

The cost of the experience is £150 (US\$203) per person.

As parks gear up for the 2022 season, many have already announced recruiting efforts. For example, **Kings Island**, Mason, Ohio, announced it is looking to fill 5,000 jobs for its 50th Anniversary season in 2022, which starts in April.

Park officials said a diverse range of job opportunities are available and associates are needed in all areas of park operation. The areas include admissions, entertainment, food and beverage, fire and safety, guest services, lifeguards, merchandise, ride operations, security, sweeps and warehouse.

All positions start at a minimum of \$15 for associates who are 16 years of age and older, minus tipped positions, park officials said.

A limited number of jobs require a minimum age of 14 years.

Six Flags Over Georgia, Austell, announced dates for multiple job fairs in January. Park officials there are looking for workers in a variety of departments.

Dollywood, Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, began entertainment auditions mid-January. The 2022 season kicks off there March 12.

While many attractions found 2021 another challenging year because of the

coronavirus pandemic, **ZooTampa at Lowry Park**, Tampa, Florida, announced it set a record for attendance in 2021.

ZooTampa welcomed more than 1.2 million visitors last year. The zoo's previous attendance record was 991,351 in 2016.

In the last few years, the zoo has added new exhibits and made the news for its efforts in the fight to save manatees, a species facing an unprecedented year marked by record mortality rates.

The zoo has been featured on Nat-Geo's Secrets of the Zoo: Tampa for three seasons. It has rescued a total of 500 manatees since the opening of its manatee critical care center. It also has overseen a significant number of births of vulnerable animals, including endangered African penguins, a Siamang, a threatened Inca tern, a white rhino and a bongo.

One of its new exhibits, called Expedition Wild Africa, takes vehicles out to offer up-close encounters with majestic species like the one-horned rhinoceros.

Zoo officials also added enhanced seasonal Halloween and Christmas events in the last few years.

Firefighters were called to **Conneaut Lake Park**, Conneaut Lake, Pennsylvania, on January 4 to put out a fire while crews demolished the iconic Blue Streak roller coaster.

A report from *Erie News Now*, stated that the fire "happened after a controlled burn near the carousel got out of hand." Buildings and structures next to the Blue Streak, as well as part of the roller coaster, caught fire.

A number of fire departments responded to the scene including Conneaut Lake, Summit, Linesville and Vernon Central.

The report also stated that the general manager, in a Facebook post, said "heavy equipment had been demolishing the roller coaster and small, controlled fires were being used to burn the wood. The heavy equipment, which was being used to control the burns, reportedly suffered a mechanical issue and the fire spread to the front part of the loading dock."

The park has demolition and burn permits, according to the general manager.

About half of the roller coaster, built in 1937, had already been demolished when the fire took place.

For several years, the park's future has been in limbo. It was recently sold in a bankruptcy auction to **Keldon Holdings**, which is owned by Philadelphia-area businessman **Todd Joseph**.

Hairstylist **Steve Warden's** 225-pound ball of human hair dubbed "Hoss" has received a certification from **Guinness World Records** for being the largest human hairball in the world. The "Shave the Beard and Make it Weird!" campaign launched by **Ripley's Believe It or Not!** at IAAPA Expo 2021 in Orlando, Florida, in November, made significant contributions to the weight of Warden's creation.

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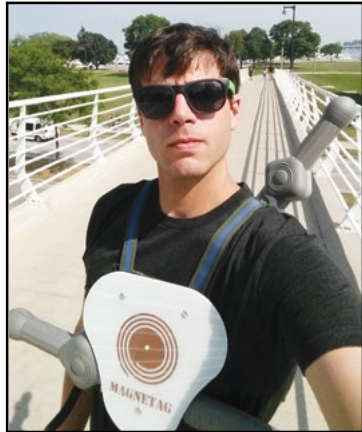
Magnetag creator gets game's first install at Bounce Milwaukee

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

WAUWATOSA, Wis. — After 10 years in and out of his garage, **Adam Cohen** has his first install of the new game he created called **Magnetag**.

At the first of January, Cohen set up the game in **Bounce Milwaukee**, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. So far, so good, he said. It is still so new there, however, he feels it will take a little time to get the word out. Plus, the resurgence of the COVID Omicron variant hasn't helped either.

But he is encouraged and, right now, he said he plans to follow the market.



Adam Cohen

Cohen began working on Magnetag as a hobby.

"I started out to create a game to solve a problem of 'the younger me,'" Cohen said.

Cohen used to play a lot of paintball with friends. A



Magnetag is fitting into its home in Bounce Milwaukee located in Wisconsin. This is the first installation of the new game. COURTESY MAGNETAG

game he really loved, but, apparently, it was a little hard for them to tell who had gotten hit.

An engineer by trade, he decided to create some type of game to solve this problem. This endeavor began as a hobby in his garage and grew. Over the years, he continued tweaking it and perfecting it.

The end product is Magnetag, which he describes as "laser tag meets Game of Thrones."

"It is really more physical," he said. "It takes more effort. I think it is really cool."

The new install allows up to four players at a time, two versus two. But, Cohen said the number of players is only limited by the space

it is in. The space at Bounce Milwaukee has about 150 square feet.

Players don their armor, get their swords and begin to battle, sword fighting to get their points. The swords are magnetized. When there is a strike on the armor, which is the goal, the armor registers the hit. The hit then registers on the electronic tracking system.

The swords are stiff yet soft enough so that no one gets hurt. The same technology can be installed using a soft ball or a similar product.

Cohen tried to bring his product to market before — as in right before — the pandemic. That put a pretty quick stop to his efforts and

he went back to the garage to tweak it some more.

During this time, however, he did license the patent to a toy company that is selling the technology under the brand **Dojo Battle** at **Target** and **Amazon**.

Then, came IAAPA Expo 2021 last November in Orlando, Florida. That gave him another chance to get the game and the word out.

"We had a lot of interest at the show," he said.

Cohen is excited about getting the install at Bounce Milwaukee. He feels it will be a good place to show and advertise Magnetag, which has become his full time commitment.

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Elev8 Fun adds Intercard to its premier FEC location



Elev8 Fun opened a new family entertainment center in Sanford, Florida (above). The FEC's consulting partner David Goldfarb (inset) checks out the basketball action in the new arcade. COURTESY ELEV8 FUN



SANFORD, Fla. — **Elev8 Fun** is a new FEC concept that offers more than 125,000 square feet of entertainment. Attractions include hundreds of state-of-the-art and retro arcade games, full-sized bowling, a multi-level go-kart track, an interactive mini-golf experience, ropes courses, laser tag, and food and beverages. The location opened in December 2021 in Sanford, Florida, and the company plans to open two more locations of the FECs in 2022.

Arcade veteran **David Goldfarb**, CEO of **PrimeTime Amusements** and consulting partner of Elev8 Fun, chose **Intercard** for its cashless technology.

"We needed a vendor that can deliver the overall cashless technology package and Intercard checks all the boxes. Furthermore, we need a live support team that will always be there 24/7," said Goldfarb, who has used Intercard in other FEC projects.

"Intercard's technology gives Elev8 enhanced capabilities now and in the future," said **Bill Allen**, Intercard North America sales manager. "It allows Elev8 Fun to go completely cashless if they choose."

Altitude Trampoline Park opens in Sugar Land, Texas

SUGAR LAND, Texas — Parents and guardians looking for a place to host kids' birthday parties or schools wanting to hold student events can now take advantage of the fun offered at **Altitude Trampoline Park** in Sugar Land, Texas.

Altitude Trampoline Park's new location offers a mix of fun, excitement and safety for children and adults alike, and plans to entertain residents in nearby Stafford and Richmond, Texas.

Altitude Trampoline Park delivers a mix of attractions such as a rock-climbing wall, trapeze bar, battle beams, extreme dodgeball, performance trampolines, reaction walls and more. The facility boasts that it can handle any size group.

•altitudesugarland.com



FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL

AT: John W.C. Robinson

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Cinergy Entertainment Group, announced a new location, **Cinergy Dine-in Cinemas** in Charlotte, North Carolina. Charlotte will be the 8th Cinergy Entertainment location. Cinergy Charlotte will feature in-theater dining, luxury recliner chairs and a full bar. This new location is scheduled to open in spring of 2022 in the **Prosperity Village Shopping Center**.

"We couldn't be more excited to expand to Charlotte this year," said **Traci Hoey**, vice president of marketing. "With so many businesses being closed due to COVID, it is special to be able to restore a wonderful entertainment venue for friends and families to come back together."

Cinergy Charlotte guests will be served in the auditorium by waitstaff with online ordering for ease of service. Cinergy offers a premium chef-inspired dining menu which includes an extensive bar menu featuring draft beer and craft cocktails.

Play Arcade is the newest tenant in a formerly abandoned floor of a building in New Bedford, Connecticut. This expansion alone is a total game-changer for Play Arcade and its owners **Adam and Lauren Katz**.

"It was a partial necessity and partial chance," Adam Katz said. "An opportunity derived after jokingly asking my landlord **Brian Marder** if he ever wanted to rent out the first floor, and it turns out that the space was available as well."

Marder, who owns **Marder Trawling Inc.** in New Bedford, had other bids and people eyeballing the vacant location. Katz put in their offer, hands were shaken and coming soon this year, the doors to the new Play room will be open to the public.

This will be the third room added to the nostalgic '80s- and '90s-themed arcade that also features the work of local artists. **Mark Carvalho** and **Fitzcarmel LaMarre** are both local art teachers who created the existing art in the men's and women's restrooms at Play Arcade and will also play a key role in bringing back those heyday memories with more personalized paintings of video games, movie icons, and fictional characters.

Strikers, a family entertainment center, will soon open in Jefferson City, Missouri.

Scot Drinkard, one of the establishment's owners, said along with bowling, as the name suggests, the center will offer several different attractions.

"We've got two pool tables, shuffle boarding, as well as two sports simulators," he said. "You can play golf, soccer, lacrosse, hockey, anything you can imagine."

The FEC will have an arcade, a restaurant and bar, and a special room with a few

bowling lanes that can be rented for parties.

"We actually have a total of 16 lanes in here, 12 of which are regular traditional bowling, and then there's four in a VIP room that [is] actually white in color, and the reason for the whiteness is so you can play video games on the lanes as you bowl," Drinkard explained.

Brent Brown, the former owner of the **Latitude 360** FEC chain, has been indicted on federal charges for failure to remit the IRS money withheld from his employees' paychecks for taxes, according to the **Department of Justice (DOJ)**.

Brown began Latitude 360 in Jacksonville in 2014 with subsidiaries in Indianapolis, Pittsburgh, Albany and Jacksonville. Latitude 360 locations featured a game room, bowling, a theater and a restaurant.

According to the DOJ, Brown had exclusive authority over the company's business funds. All of his subsidiaries withheld taxes from employee wages, including federal income taxes, which the company would be required to remit to the **Internal Revenue Service (IRS)**. According to prosecutors, while Brown's quarterly tax filings reflected the payroll taxes due for each of the subsidiaries under his control, he did not remit the full amount to the IRS.

A northeast Nebraska bowling alley is taking out some of its bowling lanes to expand the arcade to transform from a bowling alley into a family entertainment center.

Carter Olson, the general manager at **Cec King's Treasure Zone** said that moving their prize redemption counter into a store will help streamline the prize process when they are busy.

Olson said that they have had some delays with supply chains. However, all the new attractions should still be open by summer.

Eight bowling alley lanes will be removed and replaced with two six-hole glow mini-golf courses, 17 more arcade games, and a prize store to go with the new arcade additions. The mini-golf courses will both glow with fluorescent lights and will be two separate themes.

Owners are most excited about the new Vex Virtual Reality (VR) Arena attraction to be added. The way that the arena is designed and set up, it will be the only virtual reality arena of that kind in Nebraska. The arena includes headsets and vests to make the experience more realistic.

Olson stated that the vest "will make you feel things, maybe behind you, touching you."

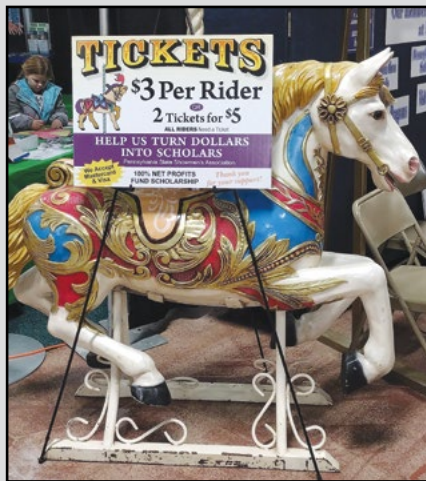
Pair of rides at Pennsylvania Farm Show turn dollars for scholars

HARRISBURG, Pa. — **The Pennsylvania Farm Show** is billed as the nation's largest indoor agricultural event, featuring 6,000 animals, 12,000 competitive exhibits, and 300 commercial exhibitors within one million square feet of space on 23 acres with 11 halls and 3 arenas. Estimated attendance is over a half million people during the eight-day run which takes place early each January. There are no amusement rides except for the two that run strictly to raise scholarship funds for deserving students.



A 1946 Allen Herschel art-deco styled 36-foot carousel, complete with a pair of roosters was provided by SwikaS Amusements. It spent eight days in the family living section of the main hall of the 106th Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg. More than 80 volunteers from the Pennsylvania State Showmen's Association (PSSA), sold ride tickets and operated the equipment. AT/SUE NICHOLS

Some members of the PSSA were on hand to operate the carousel and sell tickets. From left: Marcia Huey, Huey's Amusements, Cathy Pavlik, independent concessionaire and Lisa Bartlebaugh, Bartlebaugh Amusements. Standing is PSSA's Donna Kramer. AT/SUE NICHOLS



The \$3.00 ride donations were split equally between the PSSA and Pennsylvania Farm Show Foundation scholarship programs. AT/SUE NICHOLS

Allen Bartlebaugh staffed the operation at the Hampton tractor flat ride that was donated by Penn Valley Shows. AT/SUE NICHOLS



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GOSA retains consultant

PATASKALA, Ohio — The Greater Ohio Showmen's Association (GOSA) announced the two-year contract extension for **Eric German**, executive board liaison and communications director, a role he began in January 2021.

"Eric did an outstanding job helping the executive board work through many difficult pandemic-related issues effectively communicating policy in connection with the shutdown and subsequent reopening of the industry," said **David Drake**, outgoing GOSA president.

German's role with GOSA focuses on membership recruitment and retention, PR and communications, revenue development and an advisory role to the president and executive board.

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MIDWAYSCENE

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

Guy McEndaffer has been named the new fair manager of **Logan County Fair and Rodeo**, Sterling, Colorado fair. **Byron Pelton, Logan County Board of County Commissioners**, said McEndaffer was appointed based primarily on his extensive experience with one of the largest stock shows in the country. McEndaffer serves on the board of directors for the **National Western Stock Show and Rodeo Association** as the liaison for the vice president of rodeo, livestock and horse operations.

McEndaffer, owner/operator of **M and M Farms** has a long history with the fair, which includes serving as a junior livestock sale volunteer, livestock ethics consultant and lamb superintendent. He also served as a 4-H club leader and previously served on the **Colorado FFA Foundation** board of directors.

Starting this year, the **IAFE Convention & Trade Show** will move to a different city each year. In May 2019, after extensive research and nearly two dozen proposals reviewed, the board of directors voted to host the event in a different city through 2025. The sites selected offered the best approach to meet the needs of the members: accessibility, affordability, unique opportunities and great after-hours activity.

This year's convention and trade show will be held November 27-30 in Indianapolis, Indiana. All activities will take place at the **Indiana Convention Center** in downtown Indianapolis. There are seven official hotels located near the center and connected via heated skywalks.

Those in the amusement industry for any amount of time are aware that certain words and phrases are sometimes used in conversation that to the uninitiated may not make sense. The **Outdoor Amusement Business Association (OABA)** is preserving and making available a publication called "The Secret Language of the Midway." This 62-page, "slice of Americana" collection of historical carnival and circus words, phrases and descriptions is now available for those who may want a copy.

Recently the **Los Angeles County Fair Association**, Pomona, California, selected the **Fairplex's** interim CEO, **Walter Marquez**, as its new president and CEO. He is the sixth president to serve in the nearly 100-year-old organization.

Marquez joined the organization in 2018 as vice president and chief financial officer. "Walter's experience in finance, land management and planning is perfect for leading Fairplex out of the pandemic," Board Chair **Heidi Hanson** said in a

statement. "The last two years have been incredibly challenging for the organization as an events space. Walter has helped lead Fairplex through extensive layoffs, a reimagining of the campus as a true community benefit organization and has already developed a vision for the future. We could not have found a better choice."

Marquez received a bachelor's degree from **Cal State San Bernardino**, an MBA from **Cal Poly Pomona**, and a doctorate of education from the University of La Verne.

The Fairplex includes the **Los Angeles County Fair**, hotel and exposition complex.

Earlier this year, **Kandi Pendleton** was named new executive director of the **Sweetwater Events Complex**, Rock Springs, Wyoming, following the retirement of **Larry Lloyd** at the end last year.

Pendleton worked as the part-time events coordinator each summer when she was teaching. In 2002, she became the full-time livestock and event coordinator, becoming the marketing and events manager in 2014. Pendleton has served as president of the **Wyoming Association of Fairs**. She serves as a trustee for the **Memorial Hospital of Sweetwater County** and previously served on the **Sweetwater Travel & Tourism** board and Rock Springs Board of Adjustments.

The **Sweetwater Events Complex** handles 800+ events each year with several multi-purpose buildings, an indoor arena and a campground with 1,200 RV hook-ups. Pendleton plans to continue improvements to the facility by upgrading existing infrastructure, increasing accessibility, and improving the grounds. Pendleton told **SweetwaterNOW**, "By continuing to invest in building and grounds improvements, the Sweetwater Events Complex will continue to be a great gathering place for national events and local celebrations alike."

The **Illinois Department of Agriculture** recently hired **Rebecca Clark** as the next manager of the **Illinois State Fair**, Springfield. Clark most recently served as the public information officer for the **Illinois Emergency Management Agency**. Prior to that she was the public information officer for the Illinois Department of Agriculture. Clark started her new position on January 1.

"Rebecca's leadership at IEMA has helped guide our state through this pandemic, and I'm glad she will continue to serve our state as the next manager of the State Fair," said Governor **JB Pritzker** in a prepared release. "Her dedication to keeping Illinois families safe and healthy will be such an asset to bringing together residents and visitors each summer, to explore the joys that Illinois has to offer."



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WATER PARKS & RECREATION

▶ Shoreless Switzerland holds surf championship — page 30 / News Splash — page 30

El Dorado water park resort under construction in the Caribbean

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

CAP CANA, Dominican Republic — One of the largest water parks in the Caribbean is currently in the works and scheduled to open in 2023 in the small island nation of the Dominican Republic. Revealed at a ceremony held in December, President of the Republic **Louis Abinader**, along with **David Collado**, the minister of tourism, revealed the plans and announced that construction had formally started on what the parties involved are boasting will be the largest and most advanced water park in the entire Caribbean.

Under the direction of chief architect **Andrés Piñero**, the conceptualization team includes leaders in the entertainment and leisure industry who have experience working on projects for both **Disney** and **Universal**. Funding is provided by **GAM Capital**, located in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. **Carlos Cobiella**, a park developer investor with GAM, thanked the officials in Cap Cana for trusting and opening the doors to this idea. He stressed that the country has a first-rate tourist offering and that projects like this will allow it to remain the “Pearl of the Caribbean” for many years.

El Dorado Park’s water attractions will be themed to the famous mythical city of gold, hidden in the tropical jungles of America. For centuries, finding it has been the objective of treasure seekers from Spain and other parts of Europe. The legend, dating back to the late 1500s, has changed over time, once referring to a man, then a city, kingdom,



Groundbreaking for the new El Dorado Park complex took place at a ceremony in December with government dignitaries — including the country’s president, as well as principals from the architectural firm and the developer. COURTESY EL DORADO PARK

and finally an empire. Spanish conquerors were convinced that El Dorado existed somewhere in the Americas, leading to multiple failed expeditions in the 16th and 17th centuries. Gold was eventually discovered — but not as lavish cities adorned in gold — instead, it was in the ground. Currently, the Pueblo Viejo gold mine is the largest in the Americas and the third-largest in the world.

The water park, to be called **The Water Temple**, carries the gold adventurer’s theme and encourages visitors to discover different areas of the park, with attractions revealing clues

to guide visitors to the next attraction. The idea is to maintain the curiosity and intrigue of park visitors during their adventure until they reach the great chamber of treasure.

The El Dorado park project will open in three phases starting in 2023. The first phase, with an investment of US\$150 million, will be the Water Temple water park designed to accommodate up to 3,000 guests. Also included in the first phase is a 4,000 to 6,000-seat theater/arena, as well as restaurants, bars and shops. Details of the remaining two phases have yet to be

released but it is expected the project will become a sizeable recreation-leisure complex with hotels and golf courses covering more than 115,000 square meters (28 acres).

The Caribbean has long been a tourist destination, attracting 25 million visitors each year. The area has more than 700 islands, islets, reefs and cays and is considered the most tourism-dependent region in the world. The Dominican Republic occupies five-eighths of the island of Hispaniola, which it shares with Haiti. It is the second-largest nation in the Caribbean and is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the region attracting more than 6 million visitors annually. The country is known for its friendly people and diverse tourist offerings ranging from mountains to white-

sand beaches, historical attractions, museums and cultural institutions. Cap Cana is less than seven miles from Punta Cana and the international airport. The city is known for its high-end resorts state-of-the-art marina, award-winning golf courses, premier equestrian center and white-sand beaches.

President Abinader said that travelers seek new experiences and are more demanding with their travels, so investments like this strengthen the country’s offerings and place it as a leader in the region.

“Our tourism model is a world reference, and it will continue to be for investment offers and bets like this one. It is the way to distinguish yourself, to stand out and lead the market; employment, investment, leadership and innovation,” he added.



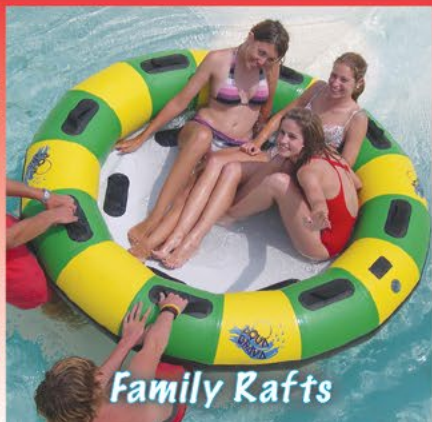
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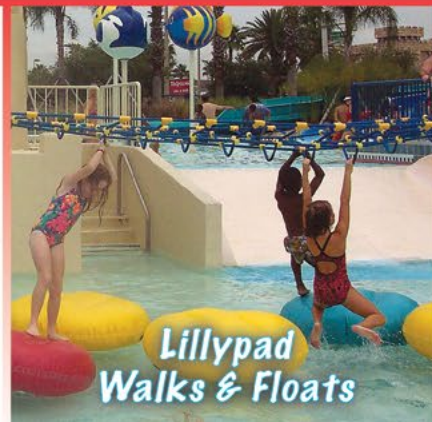
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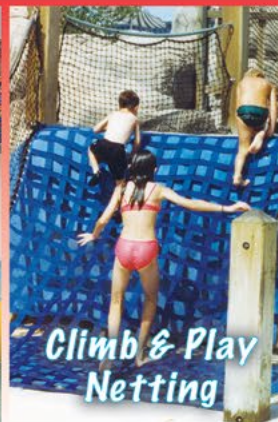
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COURTESY
WAVEGARDEN

Shoreless Switzerland holds successful surf championship

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

SION, Switzerland — Despite the cold weather and fact that Switzerland has no coastline, the inaugural Alaïa Open Winter Cup surf championship was considered a success.

More than 125 surfers from across the globe braved the near-freezing water temperature of 3.5C/38.3F. Donning wetsuits and other cold weather gear, participants were quick to forget about the icy waters and focused on their techniques as they navigated the perfect waves generated by Wavegarden Cove technology. Although snow covered the ground, precipitation stayed away for most of the competition, and it turned out to be a beautiful — albeit chilly — day. It was quite possibly, the coldest surf competition ever held and likely the first in a snow-covered venue.

This was one of the first major international competitions staged in this Wavegarden Cove, and the success was evident not only from the smiling surfers, but also from the cheering crowds. Adam Bonvin, Alaïa Bay's founder, was equally content with the outcome, promising competitors a bigger and better event next year. "I am happy that you all managed to challenge the weather, the cold, and experience what it is like to surf in Switzerland. The goal is to make it happen every year now," said Bonvin.

Brazilian former World Tour surfer Pedro Henrique claimed victory in the men's open. Professional surfer Maud Le Car from French Polynesia dominated the women's division, taking in almost €10,000 in cash and prizes.

"I am so happy to win. I am not used to surfing in the cold, but I got used to it very fast," expressed Le Car. "This contest is great for surfers and will be the first of many in Europe."

Meanwhile Nadia Erostarbe, a surfer from the Basque Country of Northern Spain, was pleased to compete despite not winning. "The wave is excellent for training. The system is perfect for contests, competitors receive the same number of waves and opportunities, the person who surfs the best, wins. This is different from the luck factor of the ocean," she said.

The success of Alaïa Bay's first surf contest demonstrated the remarkable potential of Wavegarden's technology. Set to the backdrop of the Swiss Alps, miles away from any ocean, the cove can guarantee an endless supply of perfect waves. First-time visitors to Alaïa Bay and those surfers who had never experienced a wave pool before were impressed by the wave's power and perfection. It was also a first to be surfing in the snow for many competitors.

During the championship, there was also a sky diving exhibition, performers from the Cirque au Sommet and dance parties with several DJs from the Spanish island, Ibiza. TwinFin, the venue's restaurant, cooked up some Swiss specialties such as Swiss croissants, and Swiss fondue, along with Asian and Italian dishes.



NEWS SPLASH

AT: Jeffrey L. Seifert
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Big Rivers Waterpark & Adventures in New Caney, Texas, is adding 11 dry rides to the park by March 2022. Rides at the new section, called **Big Rivers Fairgrounds**, will open as they are installed, with some already up and running last December in time for Christmas. Among the attractions is Rolling Thunder, an **SBF/Visa** spinning coaster with the hamster wheel option that was operating as the display coaster at the 2021 IAAPA Expo in Orlando.

Great Wolf Resorts signed an agreement with the city of Webster, Texas, to build a new indoor water park and lodge in the city. Located southeast of metropolitan Houston, near the **Kemah Boardwalk** entertainment district, plans indicate the resort will encompass a minimum of 400,000 square feet of lodging and entertainment space with at least 75,000 square feet dedicated to the indoor water park.

The resort may still be several years away as the agreement stipulates that construction must begin no later than April 30, 2025, allowing Great Wolf a couple of years to finalize design plans and negotiate construction contracts. This would be the second Great Wolf Resort in Texas, following the **Great Wolf Lodge Grapevine** which opened in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex in 2008.

That region southeast of Houston is known for its mix of tourist destinations and high-tech industries such as **NASA's Johnson Space Center**, **Boeing** and **Lockheed-Martin**. With multiple inland lakes connecting to Galveston Bay and the Gulf of Mexico, it is noted for having one of the largest concentrations of recreational boats and marinas in the nation.

Walt Disney World's Typhoon Lagoon water park finally reopened to the public after having been closed for almost two years. The water park has been shuttered since March 2020, when the resort closed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. During most of that time, the water park sat drained and abandoned. In August of last year, Disney watch groups began to notice construction equipment moving into place. The resort's other water park, **Blizzard Beach** has been open since March of last year. It closed in January for its annual refurbishment, which is likely one of the reasons Typhoon Lagoon opened that same month.

Ironically, just one day after Typhoon Lagoon opened, Florida was hit with a cold snap, and the water park closed on January 3 because of the cold weather. It

closed again a week later when temperatures again dropped. Although Disney uses a number of factors to determine whether or not the park will open, the water parks typically will remain closed or will close early, if the temperature is in the mid-sixties or below.

Construction is underway on the new **Sunburst Bay Aquatic Center at Grove Park** in Cary, Illinois. Scheduled to open in late May or early June, the facility will include a zero-depth-entry leisure pool, waterslides — including a drop slide, water play features, a water walk and current channel. In addition to the leisure pool is an eight-lane pool, diving boards and a climbing wall. Also included at the center are a concession stand, party room and locker rooms, as well as offices for lifeguards and administrative staff.

After more than five years of planning, **Murphy's Aquatic Park** in Avon, Indiana, is finally in the development stage. In 2019 the Township Board purchased nearly 40 acres of land and the staff at Washington Township Avon Parks and Recreation have been working to bring a water park to the community.

The park will feature an all-inclusive playground, trails, a connection to the Avon Junior Athletic Association sports fields, an aquatics facility, large recreational hill, recreation pond and native plantings.

The aquatic facility will include a wave pool, open recreational swimming, water slides, toddler zone, cabana rentals, bathhouse and large play feature in the center of the pool. The central water playground area is designed to be completely ADA accessible. Surrounding the pool will be plenty of lounge chairs placed in both shady and sunny areas.

"Every body of water is zero depth entry and everything is wheelchair accessible. We had an anonymous donor fund water wheelchairs for us so you can actually get right in the water and play in the activities," said Director **Lora Helmick**. "We have a lot of features that spray on the inside of the water playground including water cannons at different levels so all children can access them and play together."

The central water play structure has 48 water features. The structure is designed to be accommodating with extra wide ramps, gentle slopes and large turn radius areas connecting different levels. A ramp from the edge of the pool allows access to the play structure without having to enter the water.

BUSINESS & NEWSMAKERS

▶ Sawmill Creek, Castaway Bay upgrades — page 36 / Women of Influence: Teresa Rimes — page 38

AIMS Safety Seminar hosts record number of attendees in 2022

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

GALVESTON, Texas — Gina Claassen, corporate safety director, Herschend Family Entertainment (HFE), presented the 2022 keynote address at the 2022 AIMS International Safety Seminar, which occurred January 9-14, at the Galveston Convention Center, Galveston, Texas.

She presented her talk to a packed record-setting attended house. She talked about the importance of safety to the amusement industry. She spoke about the importance of delivering a safety promise to guests and employees.

"Gina really hit it on the mark," said AIMS Executive Director Mary Jane Brewer. "She was so inspiring. I just felt it set the tone for the entire week."

And that tone, said Brewer, was amazing.

"I was just amazed how everything turned out," Brewer said. "There were things that weren't perfect, but it all laid out really well."

There were more than 500 attendees at this year's seminar. That is a new attendance record. There were more than 30 exhibitors on site, another new record.

The projected revenue goal was reached and exceeded. And more successes.

There were some hiccups along the way, but Brewer said they were able to pivot and smoothly transition. For example, there were some instructors, particularly those



Above are Young Professionals at the 2022 AIMS International Safety Seminar (l to r): Charlie Wickham, Iowa State University; Diego Valenzuela, California State University, Northridge; Sean Maurer, University of Minnesota; Samantha Bercik, Georgia Institute of Technology; Morgan Wade, Arizona State University; Garrett Monteiro, Smart Monkeys, Inc., and Robert Anderson, Ohio State University. AT/GARY SLADE



Seen at the 2022 AIMS Celebration event (above left) at Pleasure Pier during the record-setting AIMS Safety Seminar are (l to r): Cody Clements, Typhoon Texas; Logan Bowlby, Mobar; Marah Rodriguez, Mobar; Eric Fluet, Get It Done Marketing; Clay Barnes, EverSports and Entertainment Insurance; Evan Barnett Typhoon Texas and Jesse Benavidez, Typhoon Texas. Mary Jane Brewer, left, AIMS executive director, and Eric Fluet, Get It Done Marketing, show off the Amusement Today/AIMS coozies at the Pleasure Pier social event during the 2022 AIMS Safety Seminar (above right). COURTESY AIMS INTERNATIONAL; AT/GARY SLADE

from Canada, who weren't able to come due to existing travel restrictions or anticipated restrictions.

"But we knew about it in advance so they pre-recorded their sessions and they were able to come in through live zoom for the question and answer periods," Brewer said.

In addition, there were

some registered attendees who let Brewer know ahead of time that they wouldn't be able to make it.

"So we just gave them an even swap with the online programming even though the online was more expensive," she said. "But we gave them a promo code and they were happy they

could still participate.

"We were pretty much able to transition from in-person to virtual on the fly," she said.

Brewer also mentioned the help of the seven Young Professionals who attended and helped with the technology.

"They are so technologi-

FAST FACTS

Total Attendance:
More than 500
(new record)

•
More than 30 exhibitors
onsite (new record)

•
Projected revenue
goal reached and
exceeded by 20%

•
More than 300 hours
of educational content
presented

•
More than 100
qualified instructors

•
Projected sponsor
revenue goal reached
and exceeded by 30%

•
Seven young
professional volunteers
on hand

•
Hotel food
and beverage
minimums met

•
Silent auction raised
\$3,000 toward
equipment for
the 2023 seminar

cally savvy," she said. "They were able to come up with quick solutions."

The AIMS new program that debuted during the 2022 Safety Seminar also went very well. Called the Academy of Amusement

▶ See AIMS, page 32

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Above left are old friends catching up at the 2022 AIMS Safety Seminar (l to r): Timo Klaus, Kumbak Amusement Engineers; Dick Chance, Chance Rides; Jim Seay, Premier Rides; Tim Viox, Leisure Labs LLC and Great Coasters International; Roger Berry, Ralph S. Alberts Company; and C.W. Craven, Skyride Enterprises. Pleasure Pier's icon Funtime tower rides was a hit with attendees (above middle). AIMS Safety Seminar attendees were ready for the shrimp boil as they strolled past the attractions at Pleasure Pier (above right). AT/GARY SLADE



Hugo Loyola posed with a poster honoring him for winning the 2021 AIMS International Safety Award (above left). The annual AIMS Silent Auction (above right) once again paid tribute to the late John Hinde, a legend in the AIMS family. The effort took in more than \$3,000. AT/GARY SLADE

AIMS Board of Directors changes

Terms ending were:

Linda Freeman, Rockwell Automation; Rick Achard, Coulter Assoc. and George Tso, Ocean Park Hong Kong

New board terms in 2022 are:

Hugo Loyola, Fantasilandia-Happyland (Chile); Pat Hoffman, The Hoffman Consulting Group and Michelle Faulk, State of Florida

AIMS Continued from page 31

Risk Management, Safety and Security, with the acronym AARMSS, there were 22 participants this year. The program is limited to 25.

Brewer said she felt the program went well even when not all of the security instructors were able to make it.

"But, again, we were able to do about 10 hours of live virtual stream for that portion. We got a lot of good feedback on that program. We may do some tweaking for next year."

New this year were Happy Hours right after the final sessions each day. Attendees were able to socialize right afterward as well as visit with the exhibitors.

The Wednesday night

social event was held at Pleasure Pier, a Landry's property, not far from the Galveston Convention Center. It was well attended and the shrimp boil was a success.

The 300 hours of educational content contained the broad topic offerings for which AIMS is known. Attendees build their own schedule, choosing those that best suit their needs and desired outcomes.

AIMS offers certifications levels in maintenance, operations, inspector and aquatics.

"I just feel very grateful to everyone in helping make this a success," Brewer said. "I appreciate every single one that pitched in."

The next AIMS Safety Seminar is set for January 8-13, 2023, Galveston, Texas.

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The Wednesday social event was full of friendly faces. From left: Cindee Huddy, IRT; Eric Beard, IRT; Jessica Naderman, Schit; Patty Beazley, IRT and Timo Klaus, Kumbak. COURTESY AIMS INTERNATIONAL



The annual AIMS International Safety Seminar would not be possible without the support of these amazing sponsors and our generous volunteers.

Thank you

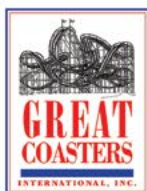


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2022 Bronze Sponsors



MARKET WATCH

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 1/19/22	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	112.26	149.78	63.71
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	47.19	52.50	37.79
Comcast Corp./NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	50.33	61.80	46.29
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	150.11	203.02	142.04
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	46.59	56.07	34.25
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	JP:9010	TYO	3935.00	6500.00	3800.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	3.20	3.25	0.44
Lefoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	17.15	22.30	14.50
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	42.21	51.17	27.81
Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd.	RCL	NYSE	81.63	99.24	64.20
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	JP:6357	TYO	715.00	922.00	598.00
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	60.44	70.48	27.06
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	40.05	51.75	30.88
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	826.00	944.00	694.00

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

BUSINESS WATCH

Dollywood initiative honors Parton

PIGEON FORGE, Tenn. — **Dollywood** officials announced the creation of the Care More initiative to honor **Dolly Parton's** lifelong philanthropy.

As part of the initiative, Dollywood Parks & Resorts employees and hosts are encouraged to serve at the non-profit of their choice to thank Parton for the many ways she contributes to others daily.

The day of service will become an annual tradition for Dollywood hosts. The announcement arrived on Parton's birthday.

Hosts at Dollywood theme park, Dollywood's Splash Country, Dollywood's DreamMore Resort and Spa, and Dollywood's Smoky Mountain Cabins who take part in the Initiative will receive a paid day off to fulfill their non-profit service.

"Dolly is a dreamer and because of that she is an amazing person to work with," said **Eugene Naughton**, Dollywood president. "It's virtually impossible to describe her in one word, but I think if you asked people around the world, one of the most frequent answers you would hear is 'giving.' You would hear hundreds of different answers — talented, inspiring, loving, creative, caring — but I think giving is the one of which I think she would be most proud."

Parks! America Inc. selects Accesso

ORLANDO — **Accesso Technology Group PLC** has signed a three-year agreement with **Parks! America Inc.** to implement its award-winning Accesso Passport ticketing solution across the organization's portfolio of drive-thru and walkabout adventure zoo animal safari parks, supporting both online sales and on-site operations. Implementation is set to begin in February 2022 at Parks! America Inc.'s locations in Pine Mountain, Georgia; Strafford, Missouri; and, Bryan-College Station, Texas.

Using the Accesso Passport eCommerce ticketing suite, guests to each Wild Animal Safari location will be able to select from among the parks' multiple admission, pass and group reservation options with ease, and enjoy an easy-to-navigate shopping experience on any device. The accesso Passport eCommerce suite is fully hosted, with secure payment processing available through CyberSource integration, reducing operational burdens while allowing for seamless delivery of intuitive up-sell and cross-sell opportunities to park guests.

"With Accesso's ticketing system in place, we know that our guests will enjoy a top-quality online experience, no matter how or where they make their digital purchase," stated Parks! America Executive Vice President **Mark Whitfield**. "By partnering with Accesso, our team can place even more focus on what we do best — providing exceptional animal safari experiences to our guests during a time of growth for our company."

Six Flags tests simplified season pass plan

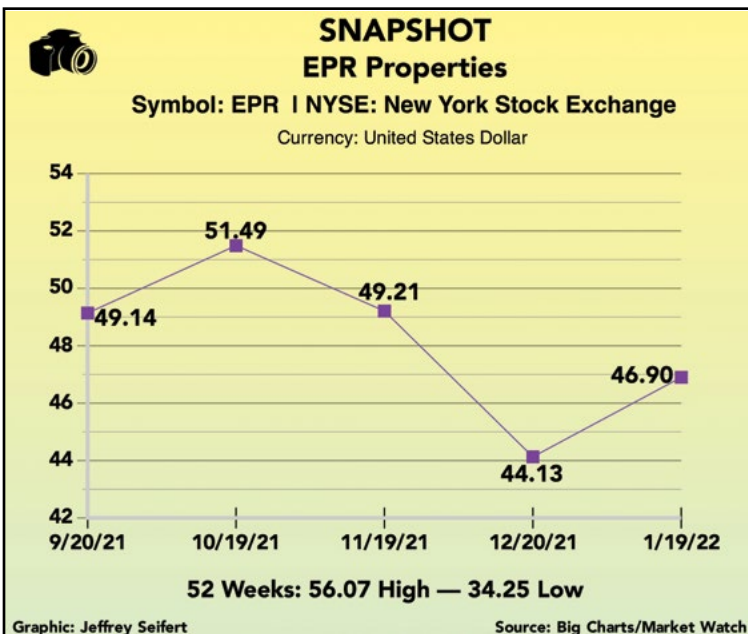
VALENCIA, Calif. — **Six Flags** is testing a simplified passholder program at **Six Flags Magic Mountain** and its Texas parks that is designed to streamline the complex season pass and membership plans into an updated system that could be rolled out to other parks later in 2022.

Six Flags stopped selling memberships at select parks on Friday, Jan. 14.

"We continuously look at ways to improve our product offerings with the goal of elevating the guest experience," according to a Six Flags spokesperson. "Based on guest feedback, we are testing a simplified product architecture at select parks that better aligns with our guest-centric goals. As a result of the test, we will decide which changes to implement company-wide."



SeaWorld Orlando announced its long-awaited Premier Rides launch coaster, Ice Breaker, will hold its grand opening on February 18, 2022. COURTESY SEAWORLD ORLANDO



DIESEL PRICES

Region (U.S)	As of 1/17/22	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$3.719	\$0.972
Midwest	\$3.603	\$0.971
Gulf Coast	\$3.463	\$1.002
Mountain	\$3.678	\$1.075
West Coast	\$4.067	\$1.263
California	\$4.789	\$1.341

CURRENCY

On 1/20/22 \$1 USD =

0.8818	EURO
0.7343	GBP (British Pound)
114.41	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9159	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.3874	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.2495	CAD (Canadian Dollar)



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Above is an artist rendering of the new entrance at Sawmill Creek Resort which is being renovated by Cedar Fair. The company has been renovating the property, which sits on 235 acres and includes a 239-room hotel, golf course, lakefront, marina, pools, restaurants and meeting space. COURTESY CEDAR POINT

Upgrades at Sandusky's Sawmill Creek, Castaway Bay coming online in 2022

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

SANDUSKY, Ohio — Cedar Point's renovations to Sawmill Creek Resort and Castaway Bay hotel and indoor water park are expected to be completed this year after delays due to the coronavirus pandemic kept the reopenings of both properties from happening in 2021 as was originally expected.

According to Tony Clark, Cedar Point's director of communications, park officials, at the first of 2022, were expecting that visitors would be able to start booking reservations sometime soon. These two destination properties are located off the peninsula and offer two completely different experiences for travelers.

Staying at either property will also provide guests with some special discounts to the Cedar Point amusement park.

Cedar Fair, the parent company for Cedar Point, purchased Sawmill Creek in 2019 for \$13.5 million. Cedar Fair was expected to spend another \$25 million to modernize the property.

The resort, built in 1974, is located about seven miles east of the amusement park and offers a nature-inspired, modern lodge-style atmosphere.

The 239-room hotel sits on 235 acres, which features an 18-hole golf course, 28 acres of lakefront land, a marina, restaurants, pools and 50,000 square feet of meeting space.

When opened, Sawmill Creek will feature indoor and outdoor pools, a new restaurant called Miller's Table and renovated event space.

Like Sawmill Creek, Castaway Bay also is undergoing a full renovation and will feature a new nau-

tical theme. The hotel, at the southern end of the Cedar Point causeway, is attached to a 38,000-square-foot indoor water park, which is not being renovated.

The hotel features 237 rooms, several dining options and a waterfront location on Sandusky Bay.

Cedar Point amusement park has been around for more than 150 years. The park has about 70 rides, including exhilarating roller coasters like Steel Vengeance and Millennium Force.

There is also the Cedar Point Shores water park, an array of signature events and festivals, live shows, three large kids' areas and diverse overnight accommodations.

The park opens week-ends in May and begins daily operations Memorial Day weekend.

•cedarpoint.com



An artist rendering showcases the renovations at Castaway Bay, scheduled to reopen in 2022. COURTESY CEDAR POINT

ON THE MOVE

SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc. announced that Chris Finazzo has joined the company as chief commercial officer effective January 1, 2022. Finazzo is responsible for all commercial aspects of the business including revenue and marketing. SeaWorld's Board of Directors unanimously approved the appointment.



Finazzo

"We are excited to have Chris join the leadership team," said Marc Swanson, chief executive officer of SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc. "Chris brings 17 years of consumer experience through a variety of leadership roles with major retail and food brands, consulting and financial services firms. His experience and commercial skillset will be a great asset for us as we continue to execute our business plan and growth strategies."

"I am excited to join such a high-quality business with a portfolio of irreplaceable assets and globally recognized brands," said Finazzo. "I look forward to working with the team to continue to execute on their proven business plan and fully realize the significant upside potential of the business. I'm also proud to be part of an organization that is committed to protecting animals and their habitats and inspiring the next generation of conservationists."

Magic Springs Theme & Water Park announced changes to park leadership with the retirement of General Manager Jack Bateman set for March. Jessyka Hanna, assistant general manager and director of operations has been tapped for the general manager role.

Hanna took on the new role effective January 3, 2022, and Bateman will continue at the park in an advisory capacity during this transition. Kyle Taylor, general manager at Parrot Island Water Park in Fort Smith, will take on the assistant general manager and director of operations role.



Hanna

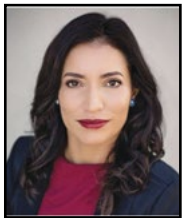
"After 40 years in this industry, I am proud of the success I've created both here at Magic Springs and throughout my career," said Bateman. "This park is something special and Jessyka has dedicated herself to helping it thrive for more than 20 years. She will be integral to its continued success as a place for families to create magic memories that last a lifetime."

Hanna began working as a seasonal employee at Magic Springs in 2001 and entered a full-time role after attending the University of Central Arkansas.

With several years of experience in aquatic safety, Marah Rodriguez will take on the role of supporting Mobar's growing presence in the U.S.

Rodriguez is a key associate in a larger mission to help local attractions digitize and optimize their safety, maintenance and operations.

"I wanted to join Mobar to be part of a team who is leading our industry with innovative solutions that improve safety digitally in our market. There is nothing more important than safety and therefore I am honored to be a part of a team that supports such a mission," offered Rodriguez.



Rodriguez

"We truly look forward to having Marah on board to further develop our commercial activities in the U.S. We are confident that her dedication to the industry and extensive experience in our market will greatly benefit our colleagues and customers in the U.S.," said Christoffer W. Borup, COO and co-founder at Mobar.

OBITUARIES

Charles Salemi, Six Flags park president dies at 57

LIBERTYVILLE, Ill. — Charles "Hank" Salemi, the park president at Six Flags Great America, died unexpectedly in January at the age of 57.

Salemi's family remembered him as funny, warm and clever. Salemi worked for Six Flags Great America for 24 years, serving as a chief marketing officer for 40 parks worldwide before becoming park president of Six Flags Great America in Gurnee, Illinois.



Charles "Hank" Salemi

According to his obituary, Salemi "...had the rare ability to make everyone around him feel valued, and his wit and wisdom made us all better people. Hank taught us to treasure family, genuinely 'see' the people around us, listen to all perspectives before making a decision, live with integrity, lead with kindness."

"No words can adequately describe Hank's passion and commitment to the park and his team during his time as park president," offered John Krajnak, Six Flags Great America's marketing and sales director, in a statement. "Hank was a mentor, leader and friend whose impact on Six Flags Great America, the theme park industry and the community will have a lasting legacy," he said.

As marketing director for Great America from 1997 to 2000, Salemi introduced Raging Bull, the world's first hyper-twister roller coaster and the park's longest, tallest and fastest at the time. While Salemi was at the helm as president, Six Flags Great America introduced several other signature attractions including Goliath, which broke world records for wooden coasters after its launch in 2014. The newest roller coaster, Maxx Force, opened in 2019 and set the record for fastest accelerating launch. It also boasts the fastest inversion in the world at 60 miles per hour and the tallest double inversion in the world at 175 feet.

He was well-respected among leaders in his industry. Hal McEvoy, president and CEO for the Global Association for the Attractions Industry, said he was shocked when he first learned of Salemi's death.

"Hank was an excellent leader in our industry who brought passion and care to his team at Six Flags Great America and their guests," McEvoy said in a statement. "He could always be counted on to be there, whenever he was needed. As we go forward, I'll always have his voice in my head and heart ... and I will smile, knowing he left his mark on me and many others in making this world a better place."

Former Gurnee Mayor Kristina Kovarik took office in 2005 and worked with Salemi for 16 years until she opted not to run for reelection. In many ways, Gurnee was synonymous with Great America.

"Hank was a wonderful community partner," she said. "... He was always someone who was just nice to work with. You can't say that about a lot of people."

Salemi is survived by his wife of 21 years, Kathleen, and his daughter Claire, as well as his mother, Barbara Salemi, sister, Debra Salemi, and several nieces and nephews.

Founder of S&S-Sansei Technologies, Stan Checketts passes away at 80

PROVIDENCE, Utah — Stan J. Checketts, 80, passed away peacefully at his home in Providence, Utah, surrounded by his loved ones on Sunday, January 2, 2022.

The founder of S&S-Sansei Technologies (S&S), Checketts began his career in the amusement industry by manufacturing bungee equipment. He opened the Big Shot on top of the Stratosphere Tower in Las Vegas and followed this success to open rides in 28 countries around the globe.

He is listed in the Guinness Book of World Records for his high-speed coaster, Do-Dodonpa.

Checketts was born February 6, 1941, in Logan, Utah, to Dora Wood and Floyd Reading Checketts. He grew up in Cache Valley and graduated from South Cache High School. Taking classes at night, he became a journey wireman and traveled across the country doing jobs for the Electrical Union.

He served in the United States Army Reserve, with an honorable discharge. He was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and cherished the friendships that were forged from the callings he held throughout those years.

He has been described as a pillar of kindness and honesty.

Checketts married Jolene Peterson with whom he shared many adventures while raising their children.

The two later divorced but remained friends.

He married Sandy Barber in 1982.

Checketts also has been described as an entrepreneur. He started Custom Manufacturing, building beautiful cabinets for residential and commercial businesses.

Afterward, he started making bungee equipment and towers, installing them around the world. He loved to thrill people. As the first tower rides were installed at various amusement parks, he made it a practice to stand on top of the towers at the



Stan Checketts

grand openings.

Whoever worked for Checketts in his various businesses knew they were considered family. He truly cared about those who worked for him.

A statement from S&S read: "It is with sadness and heavy hearts that S&S-Sansei Technologies (S&S) joins the family of Stan Checketts in mourning the loss of our company's founder.

"Stan Checketts passed away on Sunday, January 2, 2022, following a life well lived as an entrepreneur and thrill seeker.

"Stan's passion for high-thrill amusement rides led to the founding of S&S in 1994, bringing his air-launched vertical tower rides to the amusement industry.

"Stan's energy and zest for life were unquenchable and his positive energy inspired the creation of roller coasters and amusement rides that are still bringing excitement to millions of people around the world.

"S&S expresses our deepest condolences to Stan's family, and we are also sorrowful for the loss of Stan's creative leadership in the amusement industry."

Stan was an adventurer and enjoyed climbing the highest peaks he could while snowmobiling. He loved spending time with family and friends at his

cabin in the mountains. He was excited this past summer to build a yurt for his family to enjoy as well.

Checketts and his wife did everything together, whether it was working or playing. They enjoyed traveling around the world and close to home, as long as they were together.

Checketts is survived by his wife and children: Chris (deceased) (Sandra) Checketts, Ray (Colette) Checketts, Jed Checketts, Quin (Miwako) Checketts, Mindy (Mike) Threet, Cody (Emily) Davis, Dusty (Tonya) Davis, Cami (Mike) Boehme, Kevin (Jessica) Checketts, Javier (Ann) Romero, and Mariana Woods, along with 33 grandchildren and their five spouses, and nine great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his four siblings.

The family would like to express their gratitude for Dr. Brian Vernon, to the staff at Logan Regional Hospital and McKay Dee Hospital, and the Rocky Mountain Hospice Team for the professional care they gave.

A graveside service will be held for immediate family only at the Providence Cemetery, Providence, Utah.

A Celebration of Life was held on January 6 in Providence.

—Pam Sherborne

Women INFLUENCE

A view from the top...

Teresa Rimes has been working at the **International Independent Showmen's Association** (IISA) on the club grounds in Gibsonton, Florida, for 22 years.

Her official title is trade show secretary as she is in charge of the **International Independent Showmen's Foundation** (IISF) Trade Show Extravaganza, the IISF being the fund raising arm of the IISA. But she also wears many different hats. She coordinates many of the events on the grounds during the off season of the outdoor amusement business industry.

A lifetime spent as part of the outdoor amusement business

RIVERVIEW, Fla. — Some of **Teresa Rimes'** earliest memories were being on a midway.

"My dad (**Forrest Mathews**) was a brick layer and my mom (**Nancy Mathews**) was a registered nurse," Rimes said.

But during the operating season for outdoor amusement businesses, her parents worked for **Jerry Bohlander**, who owned a variety of joints (game booths). Her parents would take some of these on the road during the season such as pitches, goldfish and basketball.

During the season, Rimes would go with them, as would her siblings. Rimes was the oldest child. Then came Carla 11 months later. Jeff was 13 months younger than Carla.

The family played on several shows with **Bohlander Games**. They played on **Otterbacher Shows**, **Mighty Blue Grass Shows** and **Farrow Amusements**.

Rimes, her sister and brother all began working as they became older. When her father purchased a cook house, they worked that.

"We did everything," she said. "I liked working the cook house the best, but I never minded working anything."

"We never missed any school, either," Rimes said.

If the season would run into the fall, Rimes and her siblings would leave the midway with Bohlander's wife, **Connie Bohlander**, and their daughter. They would stay with her and go to school until their parents were off the road.

"It was never very long, but

that made sure we were in school on time," she said. "It was just the way it was."

Born in New Castle, Indiana, Rimes has many memories of those early days on the midway. She remembers the older joints, the ones with no tops.

"If it started to rain, we would just pull the tarps up over the joint," she said. "It was just a different time then."

She also remembers a time when her father was arrested. She and her siblings sat and watched while the police handcuffed him and "put them in the paddy wagon."

"A bunch of men were arrested that day," she said. "My dad was charged with the delinquency of minors. The minors were us."

The men arrested, including her father, were brought back later that day with charges dropped.

"The whole thing, really, was a set up," Rimes said. "I think they were just waiting."

Rimes said her family was with Bohlander for many years even after her family moved south to Ruskin, Florida, located about 12 miles south of Gibsonton, Florida, when she was in the sixth grade.

After graduating from high school, she went right back on the road in a more full time capacity. She certainly knew the ropes and how things worked.

Rimes married **William Ham**, who also worked in the industry. They went on the road with poppers. And they had a son, **Dustin Ham**, who is now 35 years old.

Rimes and her husband even-



Teresa Rimes

Tradeshow Secretary
International Independent Showmen's Assoc.
Riverview, Florida

tually parted ways.

"It was more difficult being on the road with a young son," she said.

She took her poppers out on the road with **Reithoffer Shows**.

Rimes began working for the IISA 22 years ago. She also married **Al Rimes**.

She still can be seen from time to time on a midway.

"If someone needs some extra help, I'll go," she said.

Rimes still loves the industry. She loves the people and traveling.

Rimes said her son still lives in the Ruskin area, but he is not in the outdoor amusement business.

"I think many of the young people today that grew up in this business do decide to go down different paths," she said.

Rimes has seen many changes in the industry over the years and particularly to the IISF trade show, which has decreased in size.

"Technology is such that peo-

ple don't need to come here anymore," she said. "It is cheaper to do business another way. Prices of everything have gotten so high."

"But we do have many supporters that don't need to come, but do just to support us," she said. "Some people really do still feel they need a presence."

Rimes said the IISF trade show took a hit from the pandemic.

"But, we all said business would come back and it did," she said. "Many carnival operators and supplier companies had one of the best years in 2021 they ever had."

She also loves the water. She and her husband live on the waterfront. They have a boat that they take out on the waterways and sometimes out into Tampa Bay.

Rimes also loves working in her yard as long as it is before the end of June.

"By that time, it is really hot here," she said.

—Pam Sherborne

SAFETY, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

► Fiesta Texas upgrades steam engine — page 42 / Gravity Group takes on Kings Island's The Beast —page 44

IRT's Ride Camp, NWSC's Safety Seminar on schedule for 2022

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

CHARLOTTE, N.C. and PORTLAND, Ore. — **International Ride Training (IRT)** is holding its **2022 Ride Camp**, Feb. 8-11, at **Carowinds**, Charlotte, North Carolina. Ride Camp is the training school for IRT's **International Ride Operator Certification (iROC)**.

Ride Camp organizers are excited about the upcoming event. And students seem to feel the same.

"Students are geared up and excited to all be together again in 2022 to learn techniques to teach ride operator safety," said **Cindee Huddy**, owner, managing member of IRT.

Huddy works closely alongside the company's two other owners, managing members, **Patty Beazley** and **Erik Beard**. Beard is also the company's legal counsel.

Huddy said they are expecting a record number of students this year, between 125 and 135.

"We are back to a full, four-day Ride Operator Safety curriculum," Huddy said. "Students earn 4.0 CEUs from **Tunxis College**."

There will be 135 sessions over the four-day period. There are five classroom breakout sessions offering eight classes each to choose from.

The 2022 theme is based off the popular tele-

vision series, *Friends*, with a slogan: "I will be there for you."

"We chose this theme for 2022, because 2020 and 2021 certainly dealt its challenges to our industry," Huddy said. "This year is all about support and resources to best take care of yourself and your team to have the best season ever."

"We want ride operators to have all they need to be their best so they will be encouraged to stay a part of the best industry in the world," she said.

One of the goals at Ride Camp is to reenergize operations leadership and help them focus on their goals for 2022.

Classes include: train the trainer tips and techniques, ADA training, ASTM compliance, leadership classes, hands-on at the rides, enhancing efficiency, building a strong relationship with your maintenance team, normalization of deviance course and many more learning sessions.

A huge hit is always the **Park Best Practice Presentations** sharing the newest in technology, gate systems, training tools and many other proven effective ideas that the parks actually use.

IRT Ride Camp organizers have a way of combining work and training sessions with fun.

"We like to have some



The in-person portion of the 2021 Ride Camp (above) was held at Carowinds, Charlotte, North Carolina. Hands-on training (below) is always a part of IRT's Ride Camp. COURTESY INTERNATIONAL RIDE TRAINING

fun along the way, because we are in the 'amusement' industry," Huddy said.

This year students will be divided into "cabins" (groups), each with a different theme from the *Friends* episodes. Each theme also will relate to ride operations. For example, in ride operations, one has to be prepared and ready to change directions quickly.

Thus one theme is "The one with the couch, PIVOT, PIVOT."

Another theme is "The one where no one is ready," not a good idea for training.

"To be a great trainer, you have to be prepared and have a plan," Huddy said.

"The one with the lob-



ster" is another theme.

"Lobsters actually hold hands, well claws, and in operations we need each other to lean on," Huddy said.

"We took Ride Camp on the road in 2021 due to the pandemic and it was successful, but nothing

compares to all being together to share and learn at our annual Ride Camp," Huddy said.

The **Northwestern Showmen's Club (NWSC) 41st Safety Seminar** is set

► See SEMINAR, page 40

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►SEMINARS

Continued from page 39

for February 21 - 25 in Portland, Oregon.

According to **Tracy Munoz**, everything with the NWSC, is right on schedule. They were expecting at least 17 instructors who had already volunteered by mid-January. Also, by that same time period, 28 students had registered.

"We normally have anywhere from 180 to 250 students," Munoz said. "But this year we know our numbers will be low due to the new COVID strain racing around the United States. We really don't know what's going to happen."

Classes, which are specific to ride inspections and safety, are split between the **Funtastic Shows'** campus in Portland and the **Oaks Amusement Park**, also in Portland.

Last year, with all the restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic, NWSC seminar organizers decided



The Northwestern Showmen's Club was started in 1967 to provide safety training to the mobile amusement industry. The above image is a group shot from the 1987 seminar. 2019 Northwestern Showmen's Club President Rick Spromberg, was on hand and decked out in safety gear, during the 2021 Northwestern Showmen's Club Safety Seminar (right). COURTESY NORTHWESTERN SHOWMEN'S CLUB

to offer the safety seminar to its instructors only.

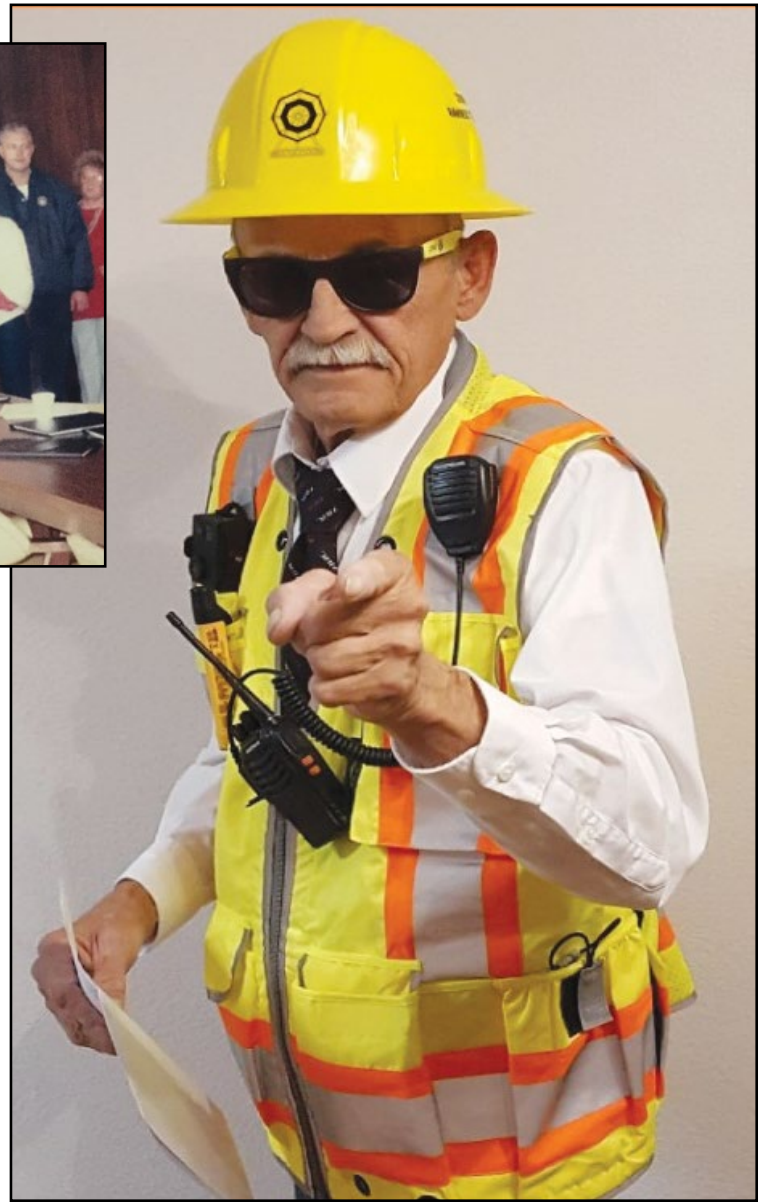
"We decided to do it this way last year so our instructors could stay current," Munoz said. "They said it was excellent. They had a lot of time to talk about things and not just teach."

The NWSC Safety Seminar is aligned with Port-

land Community College for accreditation in their Continuing Education Program providing two CEU's for participation and completion of the seminar.

NARRSO or AIMS testing is offered on Friday at the end of the seminar.

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Fiesta Texas upgrades the park's steam engine with new wheels

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

SAN ANTONIO — Six Flags Fiesta Texas opened in 1992. Plans for the 30th anniversary celebration have already begun. One of the attractions that have survived over three decades is the park's train ride. A journey on Fiesta Texas Railroad takes passengers on a loop through the park, as well as through a tunnel in Fiesta Texas' signature cliff walls.

The engine, Miss Kitty, a 36-inch gauge, 2-4-0 steam engine (now dieselized) built by Baldwin Locomotive Works, was taken out of service on Sunday, June 6, 2021, and was brought back in service on Saturday, December 11, 2021. This project spanned a period of six months. The cause? The park made the decision to have new wheels created for Miss Kitty. The

determining factor for wheel replacement was the drive wheel bearings were worn.

"Since our wheels were showing wear, and our gauge was reaching maximum allowable tolerance, we decided it would be best to combine the wheels and bearing replacement into one project," said Chris Ozimek, director of marketing. "Although we knew this project would have a considerable amount of downtime, it would save us from having to hold Miss Kitty down again the following year for a long period of time if we did the wheel replacement as a separate project from the bearing replacement."

To accomplish this goal, Six Flags turned to Birmingham Rail & Locomotive and Western Train Co.

"Stucki Locomotive Services [under parent company Birmingham Rail &

Locomotive] is grateful for the opportunity to work with Six Flags Fiesta Texas," said Jimmy May, general manager. "Prior to this project, we had performed inspections and provided repair services for Six Flags Fiesta Texas. In July of 2021, we visited with Maintenance Manager Victor DeLeon to inspect Miss Kitty regarding the wheel renewal project. There were challenges along the way, as with many projects in today's world. However, in the end, SLS was able to work with Victor and his team to return Miss Kitty to service for the holiday season. SLS is very appreciative of Fiesta Texas for the opportunity, and we're hopeful there are additional projects we can assist with in the future."

Western Train Co. is a family-run business that manufactures train rides and carousels for parks, zoos and collectors all over the world. In addition to sales, the company provides restoration to carousels and trains. If a carousel needs custom parts, Western Train Co. can remanufacture or restore any part of the machine. The



Miss Kitty (above) returned to service for the holidays and the park's 30th anniversary in 2022. Replacing wheels and bearings (inset) were essential parts of the project. COURTESY SIX FLAGS



company recently did restoration work on the carousel at Castle Park in California. The park's locomotives by Bud Hurlbut are the original train rides in the park.

"Fiesta Texas Railroad is one of the park's original rides and continues to be one of the

most popular rides in the park today," said Ozimek. "Guests of all ages are attracted to the charm of this beautiful machine. This allows all members of the family to enjoy this ageless experience and create special moments together."

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Kings Island, The Gravity Group bring longevity to The Beast in off-season



The entrance into the tunneled sections of the ride's signature helix will be made stronger with the refurbishment. COURTESY KINGS ISLAND

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

MASON, Ohio — In the world of thrill rides and roller coasters, records can be fleeting. Marketing spin embraces promoting such statistics to lure in as many guests per season as possible. Holding on to records for long periods of time is the real trick, which makes it all the more impressive that **Kings Island** has kept one for more than four decades. When *The Beast* opened in 1979, it was the longest roller coaster in the world. Now more than 40 years later, the legendary monster still holds the bragging rights for the longest wooden roller coaster in the world. It is among the most famous coasters in the United States, if not the globe.

"You look at the length of the ride and just the massiveness of *The Beast* and part of that is we had the land and space to build the ride in 1979. Just having the room to build something that is 35 acres, plus you look at the cost of what it would be to build something like *The Beast* today, it would just be cost-prohibitive for a park to build something like that now," said **Don Helbig**, area manager, digital marketing, Kings Island.

The *Beast* has a staggering 7,539 feet of track. The park has confirmed that during the offseason, 2,000 feet of track will be replaced.

In 2022, Kings Island will be celebrating its 50th anniversary. Was this the reason to do the refurbish-

ment now?

"I think it is where it fell in terms of the age of the ride," Helbig told *Amusement Today*. "We did the work on *The Racer* last year, and you just want the ride to be around for the long term. It just happened to fall within the 50th anniversary."

The park has partnered with **The Gravity Group** to do the significant work. This is the same firm that replaced the track on *The Racer* last season. The vertical-stacked track pieces replacement technique was awarded the 2021 Golden Ticket Award for Best Innovation.

"With *The Racer* project, the positive feedback from both park guests and Kings Island staff was phenomenal!" said **Brian Kosmac**, engineer, The Gravity Group. "As a result, Kings Island and

The Gravity Group both see the potential improvement our engineered pre-cut track can provide for *The Beast*. The increased strength delivered by the engineered pre-cut track, as well as modernizing the ride's profile, will help better maintain the ride's trains and structure. We are confident that this year's project will enhance *The Beast* and provide an exciting ride for future generations."

Two major areas are seeing significant work. The entire first drop is being completely replaced, and large sections of structure and track are being redone as the trains enter the ride's famous helix. Reports are that the work on this, the ride's finale, will bring the attraction up to more modern building standards.

► See **BEAST**, page 44



The entire first drop is being retracked at a steeper angle. COURTESY KINGS ISLAND

SAFETY MARKET PLACE

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SAFETY MARKET PLACE

► BEAST Continued from page 43

"The forces will be more evenly distributed," noted Helbig.

The first drop is changing from 45 degrees to 53 degrees. According to Helbig, this wasn't intended to be a more thrilling element but instead will create a more fluid transition into the underground tunnel at the foot of the first plunge. He wasn't sure if loyal fans would necessarily be aware of the change.

"I think they are going to notice more of a 'butter smooth' ride experience in select sections of the ride," he said. "It's similar to what we did with The Racer last year, with some slight profile changes and incorporating new technology that will make the ride better. A keen eye might have noticed, but the majority of the guests just found it more fun and more enjoyable."

"We are thrilled to be able to revitalize such a legendary roller coaster," said Kosmac. "With many of our team members growing up riding the Beast, it is special for all of us to be a part of Kings Island's team to restore this iconic ride!"

In addition to The Gravity Group's work, park carpenters will be working on more than a thousand feet of track in other spots on the ride.

The 2022 season opens on April 16. Officials expect the refurbishment to be completed by the end of March.

"It's our signature attraction since it opened in 1979. People came from all over the world just to ride The Beast," said Helbig. "It's withstood the test of time. It's identifiable with the park. When you think of Kings Island, the two things you think of are the Eiffel Tower and The Beast. We're doing what we can to keep it around for the long term. It will be 43 years old, but we want to keep it around for future generations to enjoy."

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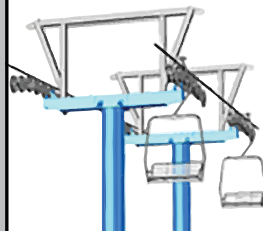


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West View Park book also tells the story of the T.M. Harton Company

AT: B. Derek Shaw
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WEST VIEW, Pa. – Vito and Mary Alioto may not be familiar names to most people; however, those two individuals were responsible for creating the amusement park spark in book author Mike Funyak's mind. The Aliotos were his maternal grandparents. They met in the Danceland pavilion at West View Park, fell in love and later got married as a result. It was this endearing romance that gave Funyak the inspiration, at a young age, to become employed in the amusement industry the past decade. His interest and passion lead to extensive research and ultimately writing "West View Park — The Story of the T.M. Harton Company." The book was released in December.

Starting in the late 1890s, Pittsburgh was a hotbed of amusement industry activity with many roller coaster builders and designers, ride manufacturers, park owners and countless others. One such operation was the T.M. Harton Company, which owned and operated three parks, including West View Park. It opened in 1906. By 1910, the company built (or in conjunction with other companies) 40 roller coasters in the United States and 43 in Europe. Between the 1920s and 1940s, it also operated ride concessions at 45 parks in the Mid-Atlantic and Canada.

The book chronicles the company and its operation along with West View Park in amazing detail with a wealth of pictures packed into the 286 pages. Many of the photos (some in color) have never been published before. Funyak made it a point to reach



out to many individuals, including former West View Park employees and visitors, amusement industry professionals and Harton family descendants, providing some of the commentary. Readers will get a more comprehensive understanding of the T.M. Harton company and its influence on the amusement industry as well as West View Park and its impact in western Pennsylvania. The park ceased operation in 1977.

Amusement park historians will especially find the 20-page appendices useful and very complete. They include

company presidents, company subsidiaries, concessions at other parks and a list of the 94 roller coasters, built in whole or in part, by the T.M. Harton Company. The appendices also include an exhaustive amount of West View Park data including all 78 rides along with 13 roller coasters that were there, advertising slogans, management personnel, promotion and picnic days, along with listings of bands and acts who played there.

Funyak is no stranger to the industry, having worked over 10 years at various amusement parks which included Kennywood, Fun Fore All Family Fun Park and Idlewild and Soak Zone in western Pennsylvania. He also worked at Morey's Pier's & Beachfront Water Parks, Wildwood, New Jersey. Currently Funyak is assistant director of operations for DelGrosso's Park & Laguna Splash, Tipton, Pennsylvania.

The book is available in two options: black and white or limited color.

•wordassociation.com



Late last year, Mike Funyak (above) released a book on West View Park and the T.M. Harton Company. Funyak is no stranger to the amusement industry, spending over ten years at various parks in western Pennsylvania and Wildwood, New Jersey. COURTESY MIKE FUNYAK

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