

# Amusement TODAY CELEBRATING 25 YEARS!

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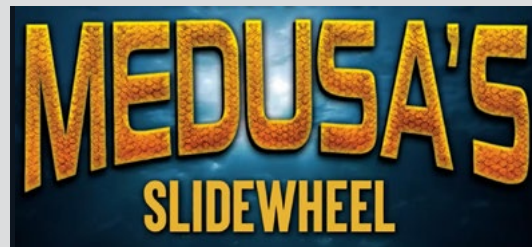
Situated right along Wisconsin Dells Parkway, the massive Medusa SlideWheel beckons guests with its unique rotating action. COURTESY MT. OLYMPUS WATER & THEME PARK

## Mt. Olympus debuts first SlideWheel in North America

AT: Jeffrey Seifert  
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

WISCONSIN DELLS, WISCONSIN — Following years of planning, an indoor water park expansion at **Mt. Olympus Water & Theme Park Resort** finally made its debut at the end of May. The \$23 million expansion increased the indoor water park space by an additional 22,500 square feet and includes the first rotating water slide in North America.

CEO and owner **Nick Laskaris**, along with his wife, **Eva Laskaris**, learned of the SlideWheel back in 2018 during the IAAPA Expo in Florida and decided it was just what the new expansion needed. A few months prior to the show, **WhiteWater West** had



struck a licensing deal with **Wiegand Waterrides** at the IAAPA Euro show to become the exclusive manufacturer and distributor of the German water slide supplier's award-winning SlideWheel attraction.

**Andrew Mowatt**, WhiteWater's executive vice president, global key accounts, said, "Nick Laskaris and

► See OLYMPUS, page 6

## DelGrosso's Park enjoys its diamond anniversary

AT: Pam Sherborne  
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

TIPTON, Pa. — **DelGrosso's Park** and **Laguna Splash** is celebrating its 75th anniversary this season with special events being presented, treasured memories being shared, and, of course, many squeals of laughter from guests riding rides and splashing in water.

And a multitude of "yums" is a given from visitors partaking in the park's famous food offerings. DelGrosso Food Company also turns 75 this year.

The DelGrosso family feels humbled about their success. They feel it is a direct result of sticking to the original mission of the venue they created. That mission has always been to provide high-quality food and family

entertainment in a clean, safe and friendly environment.

"While many things have changed through our 75 years, our commitment to our mission has not," said **Carl Crider Jr.**, park president and general manager.

"We never want to compromise our quality," he said.

Crider said throughout the years, his family has had a plan for the steady growth of the park and they stuck with that plan.

Special events for the 75th birthday began even before the 2022 opening day. To kick off the year, management decided to offer its tier-one season pass for \$75 all year long. That pass is normally priced at \$79.95.

"We also held a cer-

► See DELGROSSO, page 8



DelGrosso's Park, Tipton, Pennsylvania, is celebrating its 75th anniversary. Still family-owned and operated, the park will present special events commemorating that milestone. COURTESY DELGROSSO'S PARK



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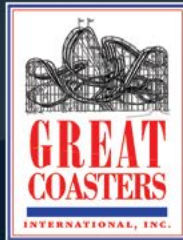
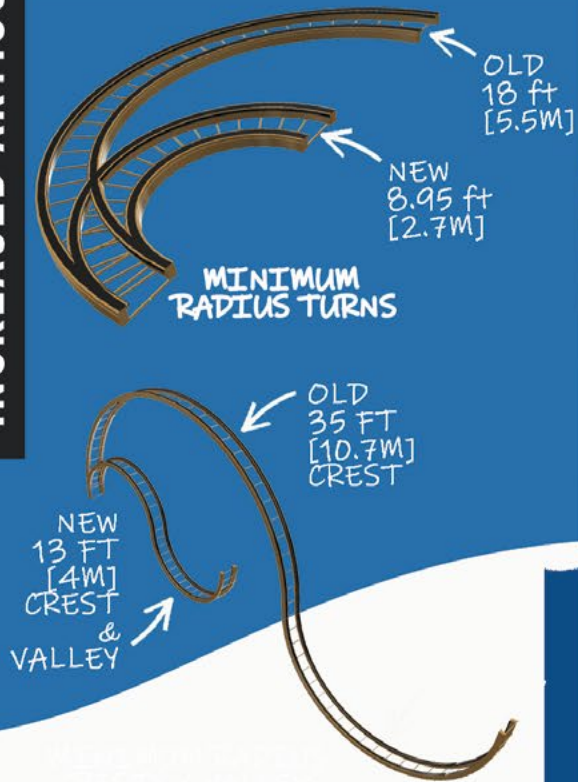


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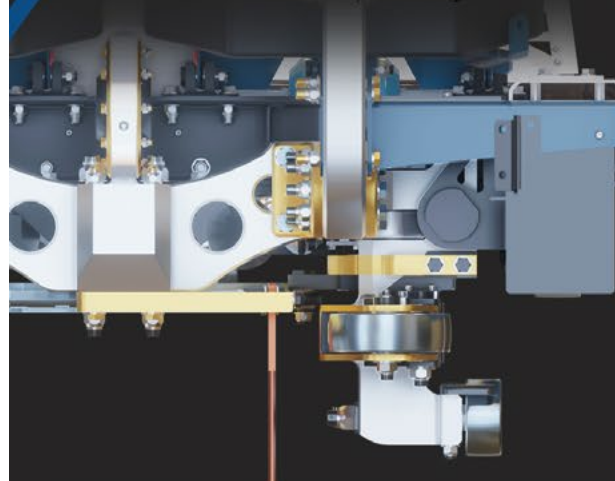
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# Passion is what makes the difference

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



Robinson

I was a teenager visiting a local amusement park and had just picked up an order of french fries when the owner of the park immediately stopped me. He took one look at my container of fries, quickly asked if I had just gotten those and then politely walked me back to the food stand. There, I overheard as he politely — but firmly — explained to the employees the importance that every order of fries or similar food items should be "heaping full, nearly overflowing" when a guest picks it up. Even then, I understood what he was saying, detailing how the pennies it costs for extra fries were nothing compared to ensuring the guest was happy at his park.

Very recently, I visited a small resort in Tennessee called Dragon City. Located among the Smoky Mountains, it's remote and simple and is working to attract a dedicated crowd. Traffic along my journey led to me checking in hours after I'd intended, and the resort's restaurant was closed. I was a solid 20-30 minutes along dark mountain roads from any other restaurant and I was not envying the task of finding dinner after a day-long ride, especially with the hour getting later. Low and behold, the manager of the resort reached out to me to ensure I had arrived and checked-in safely and, upon explaining my current dinner dilemma, immediately said she and her husband would reopen the kitchen to prepare a dinner for me. It might have been nearing 9:30 p.m. in a quiet mountain area, but I was enjoying pulled pork BBQ with a moonlit view.

Passion and caring about our guests, our customers, our brand and our facilities is what makes the difference between a getaway and an unforgettable experience. It is what makes the difference between a local attraction that people remember from yesterday, and a brand whose legend grows over time, drawing more and more people to visit, enjoy, return visit and share with family and friends. Through the pandemic, we saw this consistently as companies and attractions worked to keep customers happy and employees on staff, because they honestly cared.

This is an industry built on people who stay late to work because it makes the difference, who painstakingly hand-carved multiple immaculate wooden carousel horses and who worked out innovative thrill-inducing calculations by hand before the age of computers. It is an industry of fun and thrill built on the strength of our passions.

This issue of *Amusement Today* features two parks celebrating huge anniversaries this season. It features advertisements from multiple companies celebrating their own milestones, innovations, accomplishments and partnerships. Cover to cover, a passion for this business, its people and our guests is continuing to make the difference as we emerge as an industry from the pandemic and take on its latest battles of inflation and ever-increasing fuel prices.

As an industry, it is essential that our passion for delivering smiles and thrills to generations continues to be unflinching. Remaining grounded in that will let today's innovations pave the way for tomorrow's celebrations and successes.

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## THE INDUSTRY SEEN

### Celebrating a 90th birthday



EASTLAND, Texas — *Amusement Today* publisher Gary Slade made a recent stop to visit his dear friend and newspaper publisher H.V. O'Brien who celebrated his 90th birthday. O'Brien publishes *Eastland County Today* where Slade worked as sports editor during the Eastland Mavericks football team's 1982 Class AA Texas State Football Championship. Along with being a longtime publisher, O'Brien's claim to fame was being a member of the White House Press Staff for President Dwight D. Eisenhower, where his speed and accuracy on the typewriter landed him the job of typing the carbon copies of White House press releases that would be distributed to the media. COURTESY STEVE HAFLEY

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## ►SLIDEWHEEL

Continued from page 1

his family are true visionaries. From the moment we showed them the SlideWheel concept they were laser focused on bringing it to the Dells. At the risk of sounding corny, it will be a 'revolutionary' new attraction for Mt. Olympus and the water park capital of the world."

Laskaris was on hand the following year at the 2019 IAAPA Expo in Orlando to reveal the plans in person at a WhiteWater West press announcement. The first SlideWheel in North America was originally to be installed at Mt. Olympus in 2020.

A second SlideWheel was to be installed at the massive **Qetaifan Island North Waterpark** in Doha, Qatar. However, a global pandemic altered plans across the entire planet, and both projects were put on hold.

Construction is continuing at Qetaifan Island, and that water park is still on track to be open in time for the FIFA World Cup soccer competition beginning in November. The first two rotating waterslides opened in 2018 at **Chimelong Water Park** in Guangzhou, China; and in 2019 at **Aquapark Reda** in Reda, Poland.

The SlideWheel is a unique perpetually rotating enclosed waterslide. According to **Wiegend Maelzer**, the ride was inspired by a six-year-old boy from Switzerland back in 2012. He had a vision of a rotating waterslide. Wiegend patented that idea and developed a number of concepts before coming up with the final design. A marvel of contemporary engineering, the SlideWheel accommodates riders in a circular four-person raft as it moves through the slide propelled by the rotation of the wheel and the propulsion of the water moving through the



At night, the slidewheel's dazzling light display is sure to draw attention. COURTESY MT. OLYMPUS WATER & THEME PARK

wheel. The entire wheel, some 100-feet in diameter, rotates three times per minute. After boarding the raft, an automatic conveyor moves the raft into the wheel, where guests will experience zero gravity, back-and-forth oscillations and a loss of orientation as the raft moves through the various colorful sections of the slide, augmented with translucent stripes and patterns. The ride can accommodate one raft every 30 seconds and the total ride length inside the wheel lasts approximately 90 to 95 seconds. Mt. Olympus has added an exciting tail section to return rafts to the building. Theoretical capacity of the ride is 480 per hour.

Laskaris told *AT*, "The most exciting thing for me is imagining parents driving down the road, and when their children in the back seat see Medusa's Slidewheel for the first time, being wide-eyed and in awe. That's what it's all about. This ride is super cool — everybody's



got to try it."

Laskaris' daughter, **Fofo Backhaus**, added, "The best thing about my dad is that he's able to recognize the greatest rides in the industry and bring them to Mt. Olympus. We love bringing on innovative attractions to keep our guests coming back for more!"

The new expansion was added onto the existing 40,000-square-foot indoor water park and increased the total indoor, climate-controlled space to just over 60,000 square feet. The previous Bay of Dreams indoor water

park was remodeled with updated theming and general improvements, and the entire indoor portion is now known as Medusa's Indoor Waterpark. The existing slides were recoated, and thematic elements were added to complete the "Medusa" atmosphere. The new area also includes a large swimming pool. Renovation of the existing space was completed last year, and that area was open while the additional water park space and the SlideWheel were under construction. The engineering firm of

Wisconsin-based **Ramaker & Associates** provided architectural and engineering services for the project. Ramaker has been involved with every aquatic feature installed at the park since 2005.

Laskaris said this is the largest investment Mt. Olympus has made in its nearly five-decade history. The original slide that opened to the public in China in 2018, garnered the IAAPA Impact Award, **Themed Entertainment Association** Thea Award and the **World Waterpark Association** Leading Edge Award.



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## ► DELGROSSO

Continued from page 1

emonial ribbon-cutting the day before opening," said **Amy Mearkle**, park publicist. "We had a number of local officials that wanted to give citations."

During the opening weekend, May 21 and 22, guests enjoyed 75 minutes of free rides each day from noon to 1:15 p.m. Then, the park offered a special deal of buy one all-day Fun Pass and get one for only \$10 from 1:15 p.m. until close.

The July 4 Summer Thunder fireworks show has been themed to DelGrosso's diamond jubilee. Named Diamonds in the Sky, the 4th preshow will start at 9:30 p.m. and the fireworks will begin at 10 p.m. All rides, attractions and food stands will be closed during the fireworks show. A select number will reopen after the show.

DelGrosso's traditionally plans special events for its guests all summer long, some are annual events and some first-timers. A sampling of some of those include: the Dog Days of Summer promotion benefitting local humane shelters held in August this year; 22nd Annual Frontline Youthfest Last Blast of Summer in September; the 32nd Annual Italian Food & Heritage Festival, also in September and the DelGrosso's Annual



Harvestfest Season Finale set for Sept. 24-25.

Park management is expecting a good year this season just like many years before this one. Generations of families from across Pennsylvania have special memories of DelGrosso's Amusement Park.

Since its beginnings around the turn of the century, even before it was purchased by the DelGrosso family, it had been a source of family entertainment.

The land was originally owned by the **Bland** family. That family was the first to have entertainment on the property when they would let the **Rinard** brothers bring their carnival to the farm in the early 1900s.

In 1919, **Fred Bland** decided to create **Bland's Park**. It kept this name until 2000. When it first opened, it consisted of a small dance floor and a picnic grove.

In 1946 **Ferdinand (Fred) DelGrosso** and his wife, **Mafalda (Murf) Pulcina DelGrosso** purchased Bland's Park. They felt they could give it new life and, at

the same time, they wanted to expand a business they had opened called **DelGrosso Cafe**, where they had been serving Murf DelGrosso's family pasta sauce recipe. It had quickly outgrown its small building.

The family recipe was brought over from Italy by Murf DelGrosso's mother, **Marianne Pulcina**, when she immigrated to America in 1911.

Almost immediately after the DelGrossos purchased Bland's Park, improvements began. It had grown some since Bland opened it, but its offerings were limited.

"When they first bought the park, it had a skating rink, a bowling alley, a picnic area, and a few rides," Mearkle said.

Under Fred DelGrosso's guidance, the amusement park grew to include adult and kiddie rides, new concession stands and new restrooms.

While the park grew so did the DelGrosso Food Company, which was utilizing a production building on site.

The DelGrosso family also was growing. They had seven sons and daughters. All of them and their spouses took part in the park's operation.

Even though there were annual additions and improvements made over the years, there were periods



A young Mafalda (Murf) Pulcina DelGrosso and Ferdinand (Fred) DelGrosso, founders of DelGrosso Food Company and early owners of DelGrosso's Park and Laguna Splash water park. COURTESY DELGROSSO'S PARK

when the park experienced a great growth. In the 1980s, a multimillion-dollar improvement plan was put into place. New rides were added and an elaborate concession stand and gift shop were built.

In the 1990s, it was again expanded and enhanced by the addition of Championship Miniature Golf and the Altoona-Tipton Speedway. These two attractions existed at the park until 2015 when an expansion of the water park resulted in them being removed.

The first water attractions were installed in 1997 with the Tipton Waterworks, featuring two slides, directional sprays, fountains, and water-spouting mushrooms. This was the first phase of the water inclusions.

Laguna Splash Water

Park now consists of a lazy river, wave pool and many interactive features. There also is a replica of the Leaning Tower of Pisa, tipping wine barrels and more.

DelGrosso Food Company, in its continued growth, expanded to begin packing store brand sauces for grocery chains. Currently, DelGrosso Foods packs more than 300 recipes for roughly half of the 20 largest grocery chains in the U.S., along with its own brands and several international ones.

DelGrosso's Park now has over 30 rides and attractions and is still family-owned and operated. The 75th anniversary is a milestone which has made all the DelGrosso family proud, and guests this year are reaping the benefits.

•mydelgrossopark.com



The pride and joy of DelGrosso's Amusement Park is the antique Carouselle (above left). Manufactured in the 1920s by the Herschell-Spillman Company of North Tonawanda, N.Y., the 36 hand-carved carousel horses are considered true antiques. The park's machine is one of only 26 carousels left in Pennsylvania and one of only 23 Herschell-Spillman models left worldwide. Above right is a look at some of the very early years at DelGrosso's Park in Tipton, Pennsylvania. The cars visiting the park date this antique image. COURTESY DELGROSSO'S PARK



# PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► Six Flags St. Louis adds attractions — page 14 / The Track locations expand in Branson — page 20

## Hersheypark opens reimagined Vekoma Boomerang; Zamperla ride

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

HERSHEY, Pa. — Worldwide, there are 54 Vekoma boomerang shuttle roller coasters delighting young and old, since 1985. However, there is only one that provides the ride along with lighting, sights, sounds and smells themed to the Jolly Rancher brand of candy.

The ride opened at Hersheypark on May 5, 1991. For 30 years it was known as Sidewinder. On Memorial Day weekend 2022, it reopened as Jolly Rancher Remix, promoting one of the candy brands manufactured by The Hershey Company. Many other attractions throughout the park also have candy themes. Over the winter, the transformation took place.

“We wanted to make it a fully immersive experience. We partnered with our friends, the Hershey Company,” said Jeremy Underkoffler, director of attractions for Hersheypark. “We felt that it really fit the Jolly Rancher theme, as far as adding vibrant colors, with a new paint scheme. We added a flavor tunnel which has scent inside of it with fog, lighting and, of course, audio. We added additional lighting within the station to offer a unique experience that only Hersheypark is able to do. Each ride is a unique experience, with five different flavors: blue raspberry, green apple, water-



The two rides complement each other in the ride area. The 33-foot tall, 41-foot diameter Mix'd (foreground) is located where a large planter and clock tower previously existed. COURTESY HERSHEY PARK

melon, cherry and grape. We have a different soundtrack that plays for each of those unique flavors — and a different scent that shoots off in the flavor tunnel. [There are] lights and speakers up the lift hill, as well, which of course provides a very unique experience. We are very excited for guests to experience this attraction as an only-in-Hershey sensory experience.”

Jolly Rancher Remix is open to anyone 48” and taller.

“We think this area deserved a refresh. We always enjoyed working with Vekoma and wanted to make sure we brought

new life to that attraction,” said Underkoffler.

Also in the same vicinity, that previously housed a big planter and clock tower in the small 41-foot diameter footprint, is now home to a Zamperla NebulaZ dubbed Mix'd. “Of course, relocating the entrance to Jolly Rancher Remix opened this space up and allowed us to do this,” explained Underkoffler.

The 33-foot tall (in operation) ride has four arms attached to a central tower that travel in a fast rotation with intermeshing orbits. The eight gondolas (32-person capacity) at

the end of the arms always remain upright, and riders catch air time as they fly over the top of their orbit. The ride is reminiscent of Jimmy Neutron's Atomic Collider, (originally called Tumbler) (Zierer Hexentanz) at Mall of America, Bloomington, Minnesota. The motion gives an over-the-top sensation similar to a Sky Wheel (Allen Herschell; Chance), only not nearly as tall. The central tower runs at 1½ rpm while the arm speed is 14 rpm. The attraction can move up to 350 people per hour.

“The whole area was looked into,” said Underkoffler. “We wanted

to make sure we had a ride that fit this footprint, specifically, that also had the right amount of height that interacted with the Vekoma boomerang, or Jolly Rancher Remix. We wanted to make sure that it fit and that it was family-friendly, offers the height category of a Reese's (42”). It supplies those smaller riders with a little bit more of an intense thrill, family attraction.”

Ramon Rosario, sales director the Americas, Zamperla Group, spent time in the park gaining a better understanding of their

► See HERSHEY, page 10

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Passengers waiting for Mix'd to be dispatched (above left) can eye the colored candy above indicating which flavor scent will be in the newly constructed flavor tunnel (above right). AT/B. DEREK SHAW; COURTESY HERSHEY PARK

► **HERSHEY**  
Continued from page 9

operation. "That was the beauty of Zamperla and Hersheypark's relationship. They brainstormed with a collaborative, organic effort. "Hersheypark was very open – we worked well together," said Rosario. **Jim Jacoby**, prototype engineer with Zamperla, invented the ride. "He is always pushing the envelope for uniqueness," said Rosario. "The goal was to create a bigger experience, visually. The ride is part of a grander scheme."

Underkoffler was asked why the park chose Zamperla. "We've always had a very good relationship with Zamperla from Cocoa Cruiser, Teacups and Sweet Swing. We actually rode this attraction when we visited IAAPA in 2019. We were impressed with the overall look and feel of the ride and just the overall dynamics of it. We are very happy with our partnership with them. They were very responsive and helpful along the way, assisting us with any challenge that came up with the install as well as just overall operation and feedback that we gave to them."

Rosario had a great experience with the park. "They're a class act. It's always a pleasure to work with them. I'm excited about the new area – visually it looks great! This is a broad appeal attraction."

There are more than 30 NebulaZ worldwide, with at least four in North America. The first one was installed at Zamperla-run **Luna Park**, Coney Island, New York. Another early install was at **The Adventuredome** in **Circus Circus**, Las Vegas, Nevada, in 2020. Two more are planned for North America in 2023.

Roller coaster aficionado **John Natale** summed it up best: "I was really impressed with the rides, especially Zamperla's Mixed. The sights, sounds and aroma of Remix took an ordinary boomerang and made it special."

• [hersheypark.com](http://hersheypark.com)

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# Wade Shows adds thrills, KMG XXL to join midway ride lineup



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LIVONIA, Mich. — Marina Zaitshik-Small and her husband, Johan, have purchased a new KMG XXL ride from the Netherlands manufacturer. Marina Small's father, Frank Zaitshik, is the owner of Michigan-based Wade Shows. According to Small, the new thrill attraction will make its debut at the 2024 Florida State Fair, Tampa, where Wade Shows is the midway provider.

"Our XXL ride will be the first portable model and the tallest traveling swinging pendulum/frisbee style ride in North America," Small said of the attraction. "It swings to [130 feet], twice as high as the other commonly traveling swinging pendulum rides."

The massive ride will move on three integrated semi-trailers and will be set up without the use of a crane. Small added that this XXL will also have an automatic greasing system for the bearings and additional decorations and artwork on the main masts. The attraction will have a podium, stainless steel fences and LED lights on the swing-arm and gondolas/seats.

"We're planning to duplicate the success of our biggest wheel (a Wade and Wood Entertainment co-owned 45-meter wheel) and have a hybrid business model bringing the XXL to both Wade Shows events and the best independent fairs available."

wadeshows.com

## La Restitution de la Grotte Cosquer using record number of ETF vehicles

MARSEILLE, France — Experience museum La Restitution de la Grotte Cosquer opened June 2 and included a ride for which ETF Ride Systems supplied 44 trackless Multi Mover vehicles — a record number for one ride for the company.

"Our customer asked for a very low speed of [less than two inches] per second. We had never made such a low speed before," said Ruud Koppers, president of ETF. "This project asked for different engines and engine settings which we carefully tested and successfully implemented."

The experience museum focuses on a prehistoric underwater cave that was discovered by diver Henri Cosquer. The entrance to the cave is more than 120 feet below the current sea level and could only be reached through a narrow, dark tunnel about 575 feet in length. Inside, it is richly decorated with drawings from around 18,500 B.C., which are estimated to be about 80% underwater. While the real destination is difficult to visit, La Restitution de la Grotte Cosquer — and the new ride by ETF — brings the cave to life for a larger audience.

Just as in the real cave, visitors appear to descend below sea level and board the ETF vehicles with an audio guide. To help maintain the ambiance of the experience, the vehicles all have a black matte finish. Reflections of water immerse the riders into the sunken cave as they proceed along the attraction, viewing the discoveries in the cave as they pass by. The ride's 40-minute duration allows for the increased number of 44 ride vehicles to help maximize capacity for the attraction.

"In this ride, our vehicles move exactly 20 inches apart from each other in the slow sections," detailed Koppers. "As soon as a vehicle slows down or speeds up, this has an effect on the programming. Especially on a track with many curves and tight corners. Our vehicles are therefore equipped with smart technology. As soon as the ride changes speed, the vehicles will adjust themselves adaptively to each other. The visitor doesn't notice this and can enjoy the ride to the fullest."

•etf.nl



The 40-minute dark ride experience at the newly opened La Restitution de la Grotte Cosquer features a record number of 44 passenger vehicles from supplier ETF. The attraction immerses guests in a recreation legendary underwater cave discovered by Henri Cosquer.  
COURTESY ETF

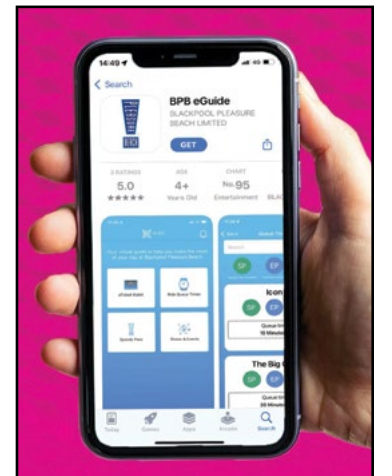
## Blackpool Pleasure Beach launches new eGuide app

BLACKPOOL, U.K. — Blackpool Pleasure Beach has launched a new app which guests can download and use to enhance their visit to the park. The Blackpool Pleasure Beach eGuide is a companion for a visit to the amusement park, with guests being encouraged to download it before a visit.

A key aim of the app is to improve guest satisfaction by creating a constant communication with them so that they can get the best out of their day.

The app provides park guests with useful information including up-to-the-minute queue times as well as information for shows, events and in-park entertainment. It can also be used to store and access eTickets as well as be used to book rides on Enso, the spinning seat upgrade on roller coaster Icon in addition to the park's one-time fast passes, Speedy Ones.

The Blackpool Pleasure Beach's eGuide is an evolution of the park's previous web app which was created to work with the its new eTicket entrance system. Both the web and native apps have been planned, developed and implemented by Blackpool Pleasure Beach's in-house team. The native app has expanded the capabilities of the web app and means that guests



COURTESY BLACKPOOL PLEASURE BEACH

can use it as a place to keep their eTickets as well as book add ons and find out what is happening on the day of their visit.

"Following the development of the park's new eTicket park entrance and ride access system, it was clear that we needed to develop a new app which could work with and support this system," said James Cox, head of marketing at Blackpool Pleasure Beach. "We initially created a web app which could be used to claim and store tickets and also provide guests with basic information, but it was always our intention to follow this up with a native app which much more functionality. This is a constantly evolving project and we are continually looking at new ways to use our eGuide app to enhance our guest's experience."

# New Vikings area expands Drayton Manor, multiple rides installed

AT: Tim Baldwin  
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

STAFFORDSHIRE, England — New rides are always a plus, but when new attractions look like the ones Drayton Manor has installed, then it is far more imaginative.

The park has opened a new land called Vikings. Within it, Drayton Manor has gone mythic with Norse-themed rides and ambiance. Previously, the area had been home to a high ropes course, which had been inactive.

Loki, the first NebulaZ ride from Zamperla in the U.K., garnered social media buzz prior to opening. The hypnotic rotation of the rides' arms are engaging from both the ground and onboard. Loki's nemesis, Thor, is the name of a Disk'O Coaster, also from Zamperla. Inside the rotating disk is a giant horned helmet to really sell the themed pitch. Thor seats 40 passengers each ride cycle.

"We have gone through a massive change in recent months, with a rebrand and



Loki (above left) generated social media buzz as the U.K.'s first Zamperla NebulaZ. The horned centerpiece of Thor, a Zamperla Disk'O Coaster, helps sell the Vikings theme (above middle). Small children enjoy the new Sleipnir ride (above right). COURTESY DRAYTON MANOR

a new managing director, and this area has played an important role in how we intend to move forward," said Nicole Daybell, PR and content manager. "Our owners, Looping Group, played an instrumental part in defining the vision we had for Vikings. We wanted the new area to be an unforgettable immersive experience for guests of all ages."

Children have something new just for them too. Sleipnir spins the tale of explorers journeying through a training school on a Viking mythical horse in

order to learn how to be a god. One adult can accompany the child if desired.

To accentuate the area, a custom Zamperla powered coaster that was installed in 1988 received a makeover. What was once Buffalo Roller Coaster is now Jormungandr. With rethemed bodies and a foreboding lead car, the family ride has a whole new look.

"In the early stages of the transformation process, we worked closely with concept designers to reimagine Buffalo as the new ride, Jormungandr, which is

inspired by an ancient serpent in Norse mythology," Daybell told AT. "We worked with an external supplier to create a new fiberglass installment to mirror the head and tail of the serpent, and the existing carriages were removed, repaired and rethemed by our inhouse graphic artist."

Bringing food and beverage to the area is Walhalla. Inspired by the heaven-like realm warriors would be transported to following battle, Walhalla features items from a barbecue pit, chicken wings and hearty jacket potatoes.

Ten rooms at the Drayton Manor Resort have undergone a Vikings treatment as well. Nordic-inspired furnishings and paneling embellished with shields and paintings immerse the overnight guests with a themed storyline.

"We're so thankful to our amazing team, who have been working hard behind the scenes to get Vikings ready for fun seekers all over the U.K.," said Managing Director Victoria Lynn. "We're pleased to see thrill-seekers of all ages enjoying Vikings as much as we are!"

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# Six Flags St. Louis adds rides to both theme park and water park

AT: Tim Baldwin  
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

EUREKA, Mo. — There is much to bring a sense of “new” to Six Flags St. Louis for the 2022 season.

Announced for 2020, Catwoman Whip, a Vomatron from **Funtime**, finally opened Memorial Day weekend.

“We had a long time to build up for it,” said **Elizabeth Gotway**, public relations manager for Six Flags St. Louis. “It was supposed to open in 2020, but then COVID stopped the world. When we opened in 2021, we were still under a lot of those COVID restrictions. We thought it was more responsible to hold off until this year. We have been building up to this for two years now.”

The ride seats 16 passengers with eight each positioned at the two ends of a 164-foot arm. As it rotates, Catwoman Whip flies riders at 52 mph with the seating pods also flipping as well.

“Guests are very surprised by this ride,” said Gotway. “We weren’t sure what to expect from people. Without fail, everyone who came off was shocked. They were telling people in line, ‘You’re going to love this ride.’ It really is difficult to know which way you are going.”

In essence, passengers get two rides. After boarding, the high-speed thriller spins in one direction. When it stops to unload and load

the other end, the second half of the ride spins in the opposite direction.

“It’s a stunning view,” Gotway says of being at the top.

The installation is situated at the top of the park’s sloping hillside adjacent to Six Flags’ iconic Screamin’ Eagle roller coaster. That area of the park has been completely remodeled to offer a more aesthetically pleasing appearance as well as relaxing shade for nonriders.

“It looks so different. Each time I go up there, I stop and look,” said Gotway. “We’ve gotten a lot of compliments on it.” She noted such amenities have been placed in other locations within the park.

Gotway places the new attraction among the park’s biggest thrills. “This is not your typical spinning ride. It’s absolutely a top-tier ride. It’s pretty intense,” she told *Amusement Today*.

On the more family-friendly side is Adventure Cove, a new water play structure within the park’s Hurricane Harbor water park. This new multi-level centerpiece replaced the park’s previous Hook’s Lagoon structure. The new addition was provided by **Wizard Works Design**, a company that has installed more than 200 projects worldwide.

“I think we have taken interactive play to the next



Catwoman Whip flies passengers at 52 mph to a height of 164 feet (above). The new Adventure Cove play structure by Wizard Works spills water 360 degrees (below). COURTESY SIX FLAGS

level,” said **Mark Aragona**, president of Wizard Works.

Adventure Cove features 71 electronic ignition activities that include water cannons, jets, blasters, geysers and more. Wizard Works prides itself on its SmartWorks Control Technology that allows the interactive features to move more water over greater distances than traditional manual features, making them easier for kids to operate. Six Flags looked at their previous attraction and had to decide to either update it or replace it, and the park opted for something new.

“Six Flags is in a luxurious position to be very demanding and to expect the best,” said Aragona. “They know what they want. We feel good at the end of the day to meet those expectations.”

The focal point of the new structure is the 30-foot-tall Hydro Storm bucket. In St. Louis, this feature holds 750 gallons. In comparison, Aragona points out that even the largest tipping buckets in the industry only dump 300 gallons.

“The very play structure they tore down is the technology [still being offered] out there. Wizard Works is the only company to advance the technology. It was a very high standard Six Flags put us to,” he told AT.



“There are 11 tiers to it. With 71 gadgets, there’s a lot to this one,” noted Gotway. “They are all over this attraction; it’s so cool.”

“My favorite aspect of the Wizard Works brand [is all the elements] are all controlled by a computer,” said Aragona. “With that, we can make the Hydro Storm bucket do different things. We can make it dump very slowly, or we can make it dump very fast. It has a bunch of functionality.”

“When they first explained this to me, I didn’t think it was going to be as fun as a tipping bucket. I didn’t think it would be as cool,” said Gotway. “It’s much cooler! It’s water from everywhere.”

The park retained a pirate ship and refurbished four slides that were there. The park is pleased with the

greater capacity for the area.

With these two new additions in place, visitors know there is still more on the horizon. The park has displayed its ongoing efforts on the multiyear restoration of the park’s carousel.

“The horses are so unique and individual,” beamed Gotway. “People are going to be blown away by the craftsmanship. They are just stunning.”

The Grand Ole Carousel was manufactured more than a century ago by **Philadelphia Toboggan Co.** It features 68 horses.

“It’s going to be fun for people to pick their favorite,” said Gotway. “I’ve been at the park long enough to see the carousel go through a couple of refurbishments, but this one is by far the most intriguing and the most in-depth.”

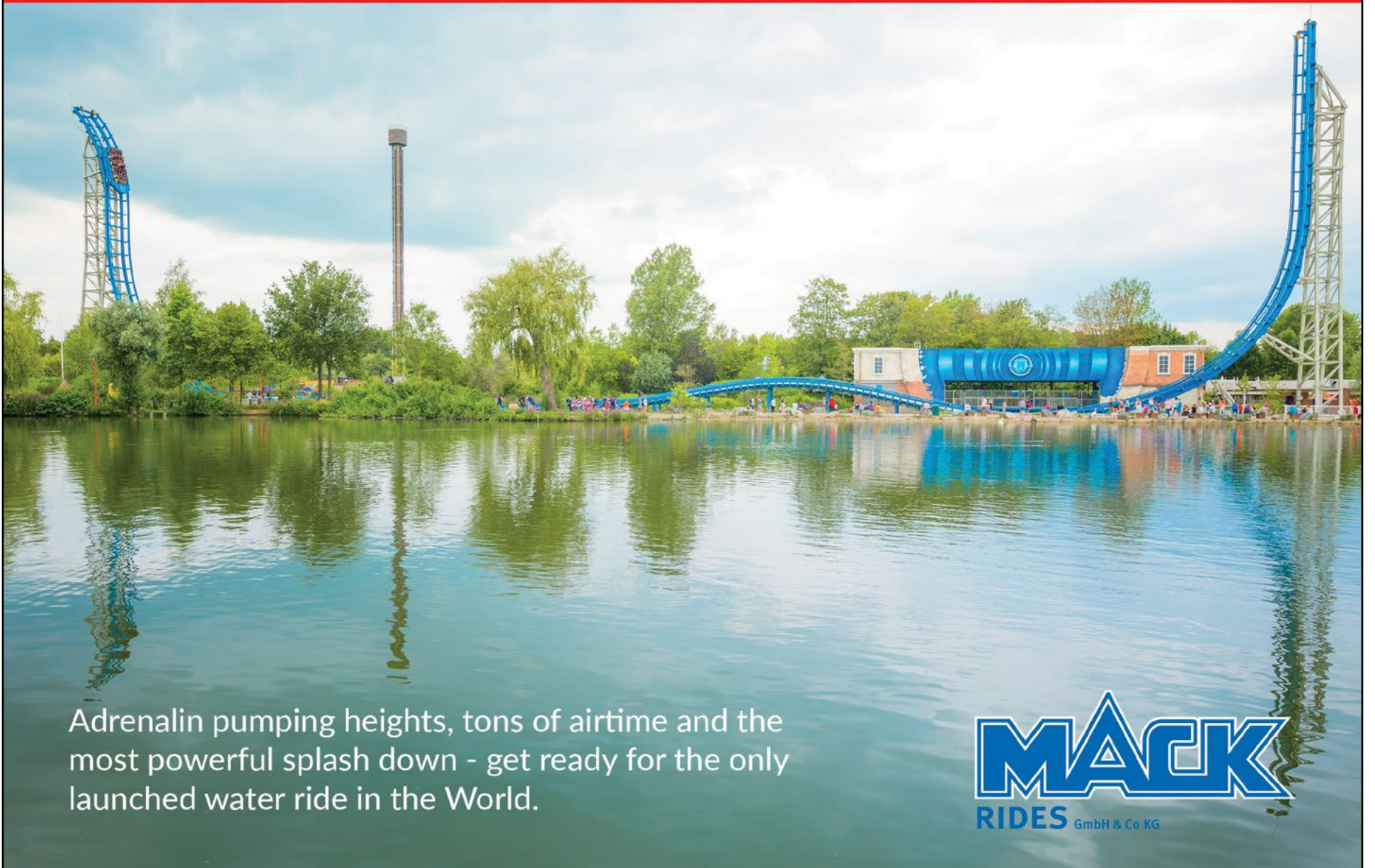


The ongoing restoration of the park’s 1905 carousel is the most extensive refurbishment of the ride to date.

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# Zamperla further refines coaster lineup; Canal Peak latest offering

AT: Tim Baldwin  
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

YANGZHOU, China — A brand new park opened last November. Called **Yangzhou Fancy City**, the park is the latest from operator **OCT Group**. The park's signature ride is a new roller coaster from Zamperla called Canal Peak.

With a fall opening, why is Zamperla just now talking about it?

"Like so many things right now ... COVID. It opened in November, but it was sort of stop/start. The way China is with park openings and protocols, we weren't able to get our team there and to have collateral to share the news," said **Adam Sandy**, roller coaster sales and marketing director, Zamperla.

The smoothness of the ride is a result of a nearly decade-long investment Zamperla has made in its roller coaster division. The company added engineers so that it has one of the largest



internal calculations teams in the country and improved its track fabrication capabilities.

"With my time here, I've really learned how Zamperla has grown as a company over the past decade, especially the last five years," said Sandy. "We have improved the ride quality on our coasters. If you looked at the Coney Island Thunderbolt, for example, and what the engineered expectations for the accelerometer and what the ride actually

was — they were very different. It was rougher than what we wanted it to be. I was really amazed by the accelerometer data for this [new] ride because the theoretical and the actual are almost identical."

The smoothness of the coaster is a big plus as riders navigate multiple elements.

"We've been able to improve so much in a short amount of time that we are really hitting what I call the engineering-to-production

pipeline so that what we create in the computer to the pipe we bend is turning out exactly as they should," Sandy told *Amusement Today*.

"We wanted something that I call an 'approachable thrill ride.' It has some pretty marketable features what with the vertical lift and the loop. That combination is always photogenic. But the ride itself ... the pacing is really good. The elements flow. Once you leave the chain, it's

sort of nonstop action until you hit the brakes."

The layout loads a lot into a compact footprint. Following the vertical lift and near-vertical drop, a loop, cobra roll and corkscrew make for a quartet of fast inversions. Two overbanked turns are at the opposite ends of the ride's dimensions and are separated by an airtime hill, all while intertwining with the structure and track. It is impressive that all these elements smoothly navigate the journey of less than 2,000 feet.

"The experience this installation delivers lays the groundwork for the next generation of Zamperla coasters," said **Alberto Ferri**, roller coaster division director.

The ride operates with three vehicles, each seating nine passengers in three rows of three.

Sandy indicated that moving forward, the company's newest Lightning vehicle, which features four-across seating, will be the direction the company will take.

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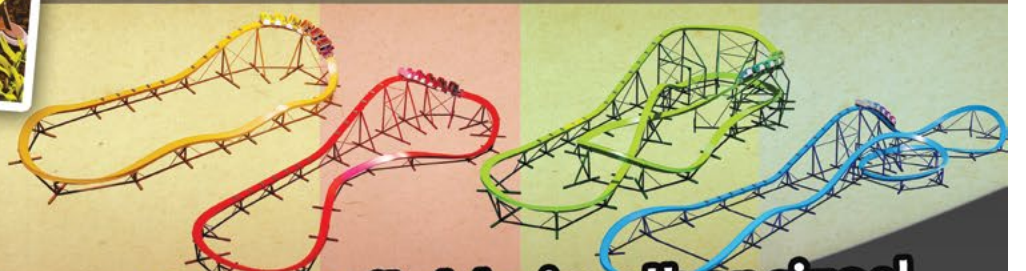
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#### Ride Stats

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Length	550' [167.7 m] 560' [170.7 m]
Footprint	162' x 79' [49.5 m x 24.1 m]
Capacity	1,200 pph
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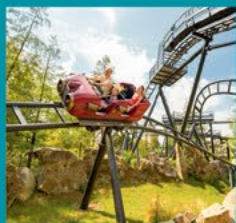
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## Legacy Entertainment designs high-tech, giant aquarium in Vietnam



Featuring an extensively themed exterior, The Sea Shell opened in April 2022 as the largest aquarium in the country of Vietnam. COURTESY LEGACY ENTERTAINMENT

PHU QUOC, Vietnam — **The Sea Shell**, the largest and most technologically-advanced aquarium in the country of Vietnam, officially celebrated its grand opening on April 26, 2022. Located within the **VinWonders** theme park on Phu Quoc Island, the facility attempts to raise the bar for all zoological attractions in the region both for the quality of the visitor experience as well as for that of animal husbandry practices. Boasting nearly 300,000 square feet of enclosed area, the facility's dramatic domed design is a tribute to the significance of turtles in Vietnamese culture.

Operator **Vinpearl** collaborated with design studio **Legacy Entertainment** from Hollywood, California, for the Sea Shell. Legacy Entertainment has designed an extensive list of aquariums and zoological attractions.

"The opening of The Sea Shell signifies a new era for aquarium attractions in southeast Asia," said **Eric Carnagey**, Legacy's managing director and one of the firm's owners. "With richly-immersive environments, oversized habitats, and cutting-edge life support systems, every element of this new facility has been realized at a world-class level.

"Vietnam is emerging as one of the most exciting markets for location-based entertainment in the entire world, and we at Legacy currently have several active projects within that country," Carnagey continued. "Developers like Vinpearl are giving our dreamers and designers bold opportunities the likes of which don't come along very often. Where else in the world could you build a stadium-sized turtle?"

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism contributed nearly \$12 billion to the economy in 2019 alone. As borders throughout Asia begin to reopen following the pandemic and international travel resumes, the addition of attractions such as The Sea Shell aquarium hope to be a key component to the rebuilding of the Vietnam's tourism sector.

VinWonders is the most prominent theme park chain in Vietnam and has become a pioneer for entertainment, culture experiences, nature discoveries and festivals in Asia. Debuting in June 2020, VinWonders Phu Quoc was among the first in the region to feature rides and attractions from industry suppliers such as **Intamin**, **Vekoma**, **WhiteWater** and **Zamperla**.

# Brogent shows Red Raion movie in flying theaters

AT: Pam Sherborne  
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

ACIREALE, Italy — **Red Raion**, an Italian CGI studio that specializes in media-based attractions, was favored with a good response in early spring from the CGI content it supplied to two **Brogent Technologies Inc.** i-Ride flying theaters, one in Taipei and the other in Kaohsiung, both locations in Taiwan.

Brogent Technologies, based in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, is a leading manufacturer of media-based attractions and offers a number of motion-based ride systems.

Red Raion partnered with Brogent so that company could display Red Raion's *Aladdin* movie in the two i-Ride locations through the end of May of this year.

The i-Ride flying theater features an electrical motion base with suspended seating that is pushed towards a giant dome screen. The positioning of the seating very close to the screen and the smooth motion system allow the simulation of highly realistic flight experiences with different degrees of thrill.

"Brogent Technologies is a forward-thinking company that constantly looks for new ways to amaze their audiences by finding the CGI content that pairs best with their hardware, so we're happy that they chose our *Aladdin* movie and that it's being so well received," said **Valeria Rizzo**, business development director at Red Raion.

Red Raion has been answering to the increasing demand for CGI content for flying theaters in recent years and now has a large portfolio of licensed films available in the popular amusement



attraction format.

"We are expanding our offer for flying theaters as well as for the other formats we produce, because we want to give operators a wide choice of CGI content to offer to their guests," Rizzo said.

Brogent offers not only the i-Ride but also rides such as Rise Up VR Airship ride, the V-Ride 360 that takes riders on a balloon ride around the world, the T-Ride that takes riders back to the time of the dinosaurs and the Q-Ride which takes guests along on an underwater safari.

"Our flying theater systems are designed for maximum content flexibility," said **Stefan Rothaug**, the director of sales and marketing at Brogent. "We are always looking for new and innovative media content that can profit from the agility that is an integral part of technology and the main reason why riders around the world love our flying theaters. The *Aladdin* movie is a good example of this kind of flying theater content."

Earlier this year, Red Raion announced a new partnership with **Amusement Services International (ASI)** to expand its content expertise within the Middle East market.

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# Branson's Track Family Fun Parks get new rides, games, and food

AT: Pam Sherborne  
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

BRANSON, Mo. — The Track Family Fun Parks, which operates three locations, has launched the 2022 season with an array of additions and changes that mark a new era for a brand that has long been a favorite among residents and visitors alike.

The Track has invested millions of dollars in new rides, updating the arcades, adding new games and adding new food and beverage offerings across all three of its venues.

All these changes are part of an overarching strategy supported by the Track's new parent company, Five Star Parks and Attractions. The changes have been very well received so far this season.

Five Star Parks entered into a partnership with the Branson businesses in June 2021 and immediately set about finding ways to make the guest experience at each park even more memorable.

In addition, Five Star feels they have established an incredibly strong presence in Branson, adding



Branson, Missouri's Track 3 is now offering a new family spinning coaster from SBF Visa (above left). The ride opened March 18. Branson's Track 4 welcomed an SBF Visa 360-degree Mini Dance Party ride named Thunder Struck (above right), as part of the extensive renovations at the Track Family Fun Parks for this season. COURTESY FIVE STAR PARKS



key players from the Track, including Craig Wescott, who is now the senior vice president of Five Star Parks and Attractions, along with several other managers to its core leadership team. The group's CEO is John Dunlap, who most recently served as president of SeaWorld and Aquatica in San Diego.

"It's gratifying to see so many incredible changes taking place in such a short time," Wescott said. "We built our company on the

belief that families deserve to create unforgettable moments together in a safe, fun and relaxing environment.

"Five Star Parks and Attractions has ensured that our biggest dreams are becoming realities," he said.

Branson's Track 3 received the biggest financial investment for this season. The bumper boat pond was removed and replaced with a family-style spinning coaster, which opened on March 18. The new coaster, manu-

factured by SBF Visa and acquired in a deal brokered by New Jersey's Rides 4 U, is designed for guests who measure from 36 to 77 inches tall. It features a figure-eight-shaped track and free-spinning vehicles.

A new food truck plaza has opened at the front of the park. The star of the show is The Taco Co. truck, which serves everything from nachos to burrito bowls to churros. It opened Memorial Day weekend and even has mar-

garitas and beer on its menu.

The food truck plaza also features the addition of plenty of shaded tables and chairs.

Also over the Memorial Day weekend, a new truck, Mini Melts, opened at the Kids Kountry section.

And there's one more new food truck in the mix, located next to the Wild Woody go-kart track. That one will feature Mini Melts as well and Snowie shaved-ice treats.

Not to be forgotten is the arcade at Track 3. The layout has been completely modified. The revamped arcade opened on March 18 and has added popular new games as well as new, upscale prizes.

At Track 4, a new ride, an SBF Visa 360-degree Dance Party ride the park named Thunder Struck, opened April 11.

This thrill ride seats 12 guests at a time and treats them to a 360-degree "dance party."

A new concession at Track 4 called Fuel opened on March 15 and can seat up to 120 guests. It was designed to not only encourage guests to stay for lunch and/or dinner, it also was designed to draw visitors.

With its wrap-around, double-decker patio, Fuel serves craft beers and premixed drinks, plus plenty of take-out options. The menu also features an array of appetizers, burgers, sandwiches, mac and cheese, smoked wings, entrée salads and desserts.

A food truck at Track 4 was revamped and called Refuel. It opened Memorial Day weekend and offers high-end concession-style food like soft pretzels and funnel cakes. It is located in an area with plenty of tables and chairs for resting.

The layout of the arcade at this facility also was completely modified. Popular new games such as Axe Master, King Kong of Skull Island VR and Marvel Avengers Coin Pusher joined perennial favorites. This project was completed March 14.

At Track 5, a new Mini Melts food truck opened Memorial Day weekend.

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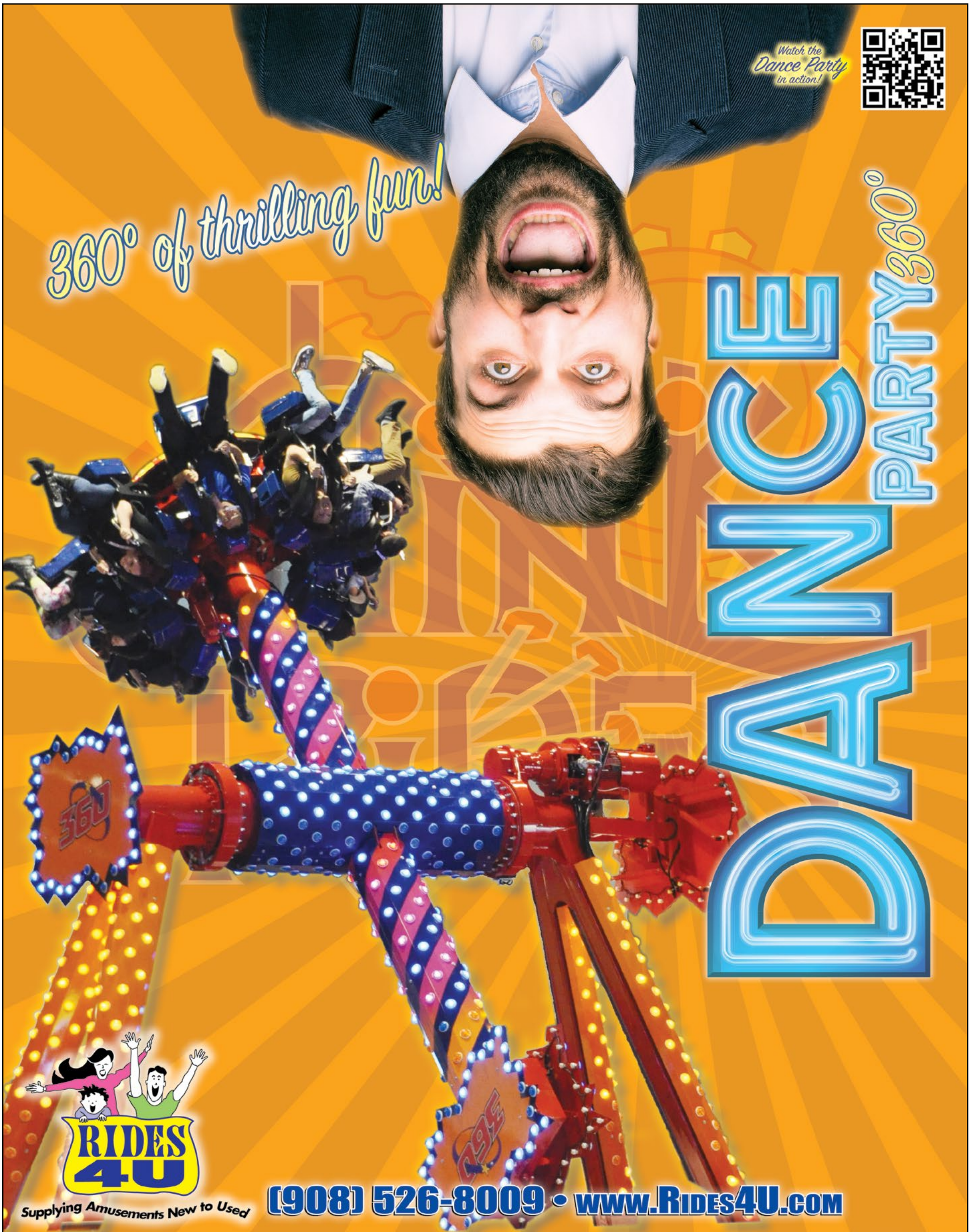
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## Swingers Nomad mini-golf complex opens in New York



NOMAD, N.Y. — The new Swingers mini-golf in Nomad debuted in June as an adults-only entertainment wonderland. Located beneath a soon-to-open Virgin Hotel, the facility offers three nine-hole courses across the 23,000-square-foot venue. The courses feature spinning neon windmills, waterwheels and tall clock towers in addition to projected murals of a phantasmic 1920s countryside which changes as the day blends to night. Targeting the over-21 crowd, Swingers offers an array of craft cocktails served on-site and hosts live DJ sets for patrons to enjoy. The attractions started with friends Matt Grech-Smith and Jeremy Simmonds creating it as a pop-up in London. The chain has now grown to two locations in the U.K., another in Washington, D.C., the newly opened one in Nomad and the promise of even more Swingers venues on tap. COURTESY SWINGERS NOMAD

## Embed's publishing-to-payment events marketing platform debuts

SINGAPORE — Cashless solution provider Embed launched an industry-first innovation at the **International Bowl Expo** in Las Vegas, Nevada. Dubbed Events and part of the Embed's software solutions Toolkit, the program is an end-to-end events marketing platform that delivers FECs and guests in-sync in-venue events and continues connecting all business touchpoints into one integrated solution.

With Events, FEC guests will never miss out on an event or promotion when they sync in the fun. The software automatically syncs to customers' calendars — driving more revenue, foot traffic, traction and conversion to events.

"Seventy percent of adults rely on mobile and desktop calendars to manage their daily schedule. Imagine your events and promotions mapped on your customer's day-to-day, keeping your business top-of-head," offered Embed CEO **Renee Welsh**. "We're excited to have our customers experience the Events difference and see a dramatic increase in their events awareness, a doubled ticket purchase or booking rate, and more engagement in their marketing efforts with this new channel."

Embed has partnered with events and calendar marketing platform **ECAL** to create Events. The partnership allows for the software to communicate events better, setting a new standard for effective events content management, publishing, marketing and smart, dynamic communications to calendar.

"We at ECAL are thrilled to collaborate with Embed to share our beautiful event displays and smart 'Sync to Calendar' technology with its customers," added **Patrick Barrett**, founder & CEO of ECAL.

FEC operators that subscribe to the service receive a free Events Creative Toolkit from Embed which is specifically designed to drive uptake and adoption of Events with end-users.

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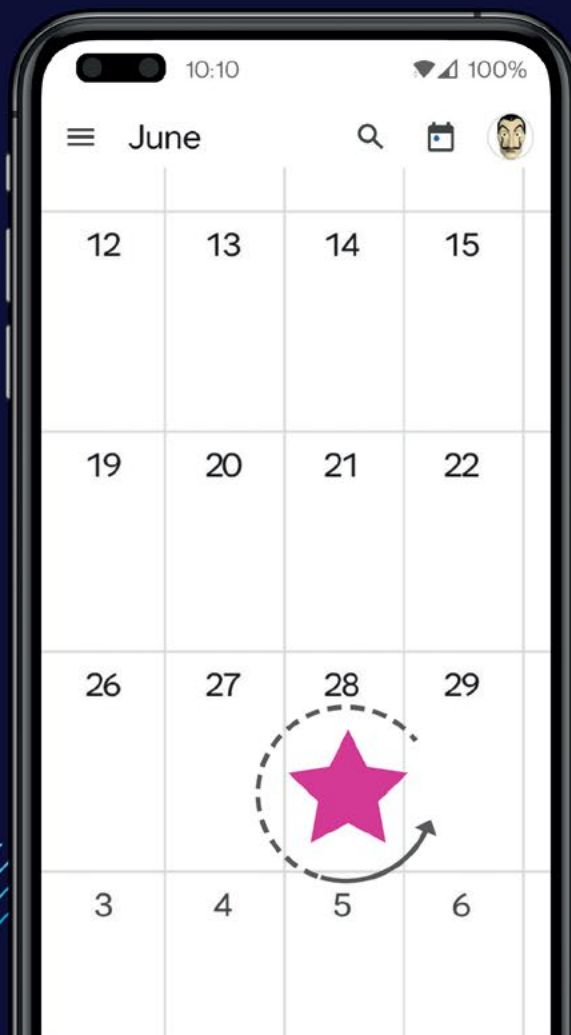


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# Portland Rose Festival/CityFair weekends filled with soggy weather

AT: B. Derek Shaw  
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

PORTLAND, Ore. — “The weather was just about as bad as COVID. We received rain on all three weekends with over 1.3 inches of rainfall on the last Friday,” said **Ronald E. Burback, Jr.**, president, **Funtastic Traveling Shows, LLC**. “Portlanders are used to rain, but 1.3 inches was too much. Even the seven United States and Canadian Navy ships docked at the seawall could not entice people to face the torrent of rain that weekend.”

**Rich Jarvis**, public relations manager for the **Portland Rose Festival/CityFair** said, “Weather was hard rain each of three weekends of [the] event.”

Jarvis talked about the three-weekend (ten-day total) event, an integral part of the 115-year running Rose Festival. The site is one city block wide and a half mile long, right beside the Willamette River. “We call it CityFair because it is located at downtown Portland’s **Tom McCall Waterfront Park**. It is sometimes referred to as the front lawn of Portland. This allows for the **United States Navy** fleet to dock right at the park next to the carnival setting. This also allows for a great fireworks show over the river.” In addition to carnival rides, fair food, interactive exhibits and constant entertainment are all part of CityFair. Morrison Bridge

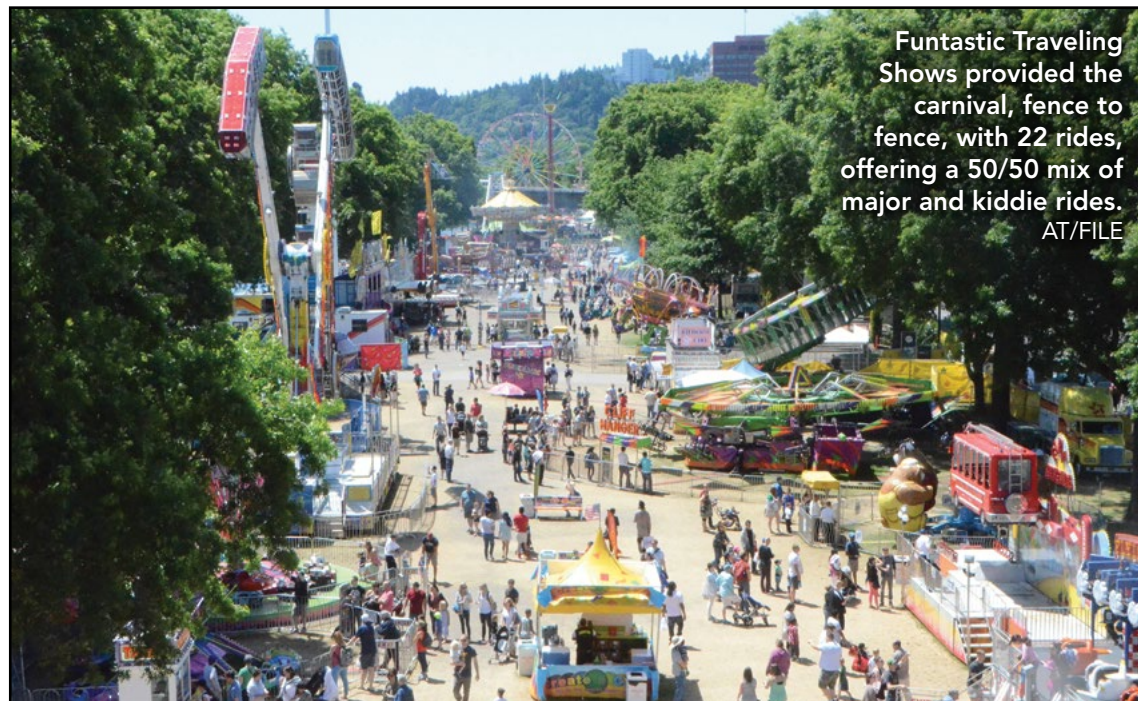


separates the ride midway from the food area.

The theme, Rose City Reunion, was appropriate as it was a comeback year after a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic. Organizers focused on restarting time-honored traditions and getting back to the basics of what they do best — entertain and delight attendees to Portland’s official city festival, earning that designation in 2010.

Funtastic Traveling Shows provided the carnival, fence to fence with 22 rides, offering a 50/50 mix of majors and kiddie rides. They provided seven food concessions and 15 games. The top rides were the Grand Wheel (**Chance Rides**), Vertigo and Rockstar (both from **ARM Rides**).

“We never disclose our gross revenues, but I will say we are very pleased to



Funtastic Traveling Shows provided the carnival, fence to fence, with 22 rides, offering a 50/50 mix of major and kiddie rides. AT/FILE

say we were up from 2020, 100%,” said Burback.

Burback enjoys the company’s relationship with the event. “**Jeff Curtis**, the retiring director that hired our company 18 years ago, was absolutely a pleasure to work with. He leaves a team in place that we’ve worked with over those 18 years: that’s going to make a very smooth transition. [They are] just a great civic minded bunch of Portlanders putting on the greatest event in the city. As for the venue, we love the Portland Rose Festival — it’s as Portland as it gets, with two great parades, the navy ships, and many more events held throughout the city.”

“It always great to work with Funtastic. They are great at setting up in this park and

work with the festival for free ride promotions during opening day,” said Jarvis.

Some of the admission promotions included the sale of a 2022 Rose Festival Souvenir Pin for unlimited admission to CityFair for \$15, while kids aged six and under were admitted free with an adult. Free admission was offered for veterans, reservists and active military with valid military ID.

The **Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI Day)** was offered on Memorial Day, May 30, with proof of OMSI membership at entry gates. A few other special admission offers were also available.

To promote the event, organizers used light pole banners throughout Portland and along park access streets, billboard advertising, 40,000 event guide brochures to welcome centers around the state, along with hotels and business groups, as well as individuals around North America including Canada. We have TV and radio partners and use trade to advance print ads with local newspapers,” said Jarvis.

CityFair organizers reminded the public to use safe health practices in regard to COVID and advocated following the latest guidelines as directed by local and national health authorities. There was no enforcement of any requirements of masks or shot verifications.

The **African Spice** booth served Ethiopian and Kenyan tacos, while artistic

designed cotton candy and Turkey drumsticks fresh off an open barbecue pit were some of the new and unusual food items.

“We have an entertainment venue we call RoZone, which is a large concert stage that featured **The Bull 98.7 CountryFest**, plus hosting opening night fireworks concert and show,” said Jarvis. “The festival opened with a special concert by the **Oregon Symphony** that was the first in 30 years. We also had two smaller stages that featured local performance groups and buskers (street performers) doing juggling and aerobatics as well as magic shows.”

Portland is known as the “City of Roses” because the weather is ideal for growing them. The first official Rose Festival was held in 1907. The festival is world famous for its award-winning events, as well as serving as a community leader for celebrating values like volunteerism, patriotism and environmentalism. The **Portland Rose Festival Foundation** is a non-profit organization serving families and individuals with programs and events that promote the arts, education and volunteerism. They value environmental responsibility, diversity and patriotism, along with Portland’s historic and floral heritage.

The 2023 Portland Rose Festival/CityFair is set for three weekends, starting May 27.

• [rosefestival.org](http://rosefestival.org)

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# EVERY RIDE SHOULD BE A



# Silver Dollar Fair enjoys good weather, ride revenue increase

AT: B. Derek Shaw  
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

CHICO, Calif. — “Western Nights and Carnival Lights” was the theme of the 2022 Silver Dollar Fair held for five days, ending on Memorial Day. Over 4,000 people went through the turnstiles. This was the first, full Silver Dollar Fair since 2019.

“The weather was great for [the] fair, it stayed in the 80s,” said Nick DiGrazia, fair CEO.

“The 2022 Silver Dollar Fair experienced near perfect weather!” said Andrea Stillwell, director, business development & marketing for Butler Amusements. “Historically this fair can experience triple-digit heat or the opposite extreme, heavy rain which turns the lawn into a muddy mess. However, this year, we experienced clear blue skies with temperatures in the 70s and 80s.”

The Fairfield, California-based midway provider brought in 30 rides of which eight were super spectaculars/spectacular, nine majors and 13 kiddie rides. They also supplied 30 carnival games and six food concessions. Butler is the sole provider with no other operator booked in.

The most popular rides were the Giant Wheel (**Chance Rides**) and



Butler Amusements brought in 30 rides of which eight were super spectaculars/spectacular, nine majors and 13 kiddie rides. COURTESY CHICO ENTERPRISE-RECORD/KIMBERLY MORALES, SILVER DOLLAR FAIR

Ex-scream Machine roller coaster, a **Pinfari** coaster new to that spot.

Ride revenue increased 15% compared to the modified 2021 event, “Carnival & Food Festival 2021.” This amounted to over \$710,000 ride gross this year, not including food or games.

Stillwell spoke highly of the Silver Dollar Fair organization. “We are fortunate to have a long-standing, excellent relationship with fair management, its board of directors and agents. They’ve created a strong community event

that is very well attended, annually. It is clear they know what their customers want and they provide it. We appreciate being a piece of their successful puzzle.”

DiGrazia was equally complimentary toward the carnival. “They are great! They have been here for over 30 years.”

DiGrazia talked about what sets their fair apart from others. “Quality, our facilities are better than any other fair in our area.”

Special promotions included kids got in free on Thursday while Monday,



Memorial Day, kids, 12 and under, senior citizen and veterans or currently serving military with valid identification were free, while adults paid \$5.00.

The media mix included all the typical outlets: television, radio, Facebook and other digital platforms.

Unusual food such as lobster fries from **Extreme Food and Beverage** was available.

Entertainment consisted of a two-day Silver

Dollar Bull and Bronc chute out, fireworks, a tractor pull and a performance by **Kameron Marlowe**.

The Silver Dollar Fair is part of the **Third District Agricultural Association**. The **California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA)** is the state agency responsible for the oversight of the network of fairs.

The 2023 fair is scheduled for May 25-29.

•silverdollarfair.org

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Ride revenue increased 15% compared to the modified 2021 event, “Carnival & Food Festival 2021.” This amounted to over \$710,000 ride gross this year, not including food or games. COURTESY CHICO ENTERPRISE-RECORD/KIMBERLY MORALES

# On the Midway: Helm and Sons

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — The 2022 San Diego County Fair in Del Mar, California, was anchored by two main providers: **Talley Amusements** and **Ray Cammack Shows** (RCS). However there were other operators booked in, including **Bishop Rides**, **Kastl Amusements**, **Caprice Enterprise**, **Alamo Amusements**, **Pinnacle Management**, **Wood Entertainment**, **Prime Pacific** and **Helm and Sons**. They brought in 12 rides to the month-long, 21-day fair that ended July 4. **Bruce Perelman** is the new midway coordinator, a position previously held by **Tony Guadagno**.



Drone Training is the name Helm and Sons call their Tornado (Wisdom) ride. This is the first time at this spot. COURTESY STEFAN HINZ



Sleigh Ride (Mack), a 38-year-old ride, was recently restored, complete with polar bears standing guard. This also was a first-time piece to Del Mar. COURTESY STEFAN HINZ



Owner of the carnival company and CEO Davey Helm is standing in front of the Wave Swinger (Zierer) once owned by Michael Jackson on his Neverland Ranch. COURTESY HELM AND SONS



The Colton, California-based carnival company touted on their Facebook page the opportunity to win a \$25,000 Birthday Bash, which included rides, food, games and more. Entrants were asked to take a photo in front of any of its rides on several posts they made, using the hashtag #helmbash to be entered into the competition. The winner was announced the final day, July 4, on top of their Dreamland (Owen Trailers) fun house. COURTESY STEFAN HINZ

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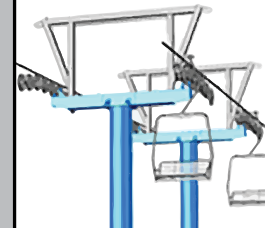
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**Brian Knoebel**  
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# WATER PARKS & RECREATION

▶ Falcon's Beyond brings water fun to the Saudi Arabian desert — page 30

## Python Plunge highlights Six Flags White Waters' improvements

AT: Jeffrey Seifert  
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

MARIETTA, Ga. — When Georgia's **Six Flags White Water** water park opened for the season on May 7, 2022, park-goers were excited to see a wild new waterslide gracing the hillside.

The five-story slide, Python Plunge, a Flying Saucer 30 from **ProSlide Technology** of Ottawa, Canada, is more than 500 feet long, and features four steep-angled saucer sections and five tunnels.

Guests board two-person inline rafts for an exciting ride down a naturally occurring slope. As they travel along the course, riders pick up speed in the first tunnel section, then burst into daylight as they circle the edge of the saucer bowl. The saucer sections are paired and traversed in opposite directions, so riders encounter quick left-right-left directional changes similar to the path snow skiers take when they slalom down a mountain slope. Tunneled sections of translucent fiberglass between each saucer are colored bright green and aqua to add visual pizzazz to the ride experience.

The slide was originally announced on August 29, 2019, but was unfortunately delayed as a result



These photos show how well the new Python Plunge slide is integrated into the water park's existing hillside. COURTESY SIX FLAGS WHITE WATER

of COVID-19 risks and restrictions. On March 25, 2021, it was announced that installation of the new ride would again be delayed until 2022.

In addition to the new slide, the park has made some cosmetic changes including new paint and coatings. All 24 of the park structures have been repainted with a new, vibrant color scheme. Multiple pools were recoated, requiring nearly 450 gallons of material. Updates to the landscape include new flowers and greenery to

enhance the park's natural forested environment.

Restaurants within the park have made improvements to the food options and have added digital menu boards to make it easy for customers to see what food is offered at each venue. The park added a new ice cream and apparel shop, called Treasure & Treats, located next to Granny's Funnel Cakes. It is being touted as the one-stop shop for novelty ice cream, bottled drinks, themed apparel and water park toys.

"Six Flags White Water is consistently named one of the best water parks in the country," said Park Director **Greg Fuller**. "Python Plunge is the first of its kind in the region and will be the perfect addition to our impressive lineup of innovative water attractions, solidifying White Water's reputation as the premier destination in the Southeast for summertime thrills."

**Phil Hayles**, ProSlide's vice president, business development & strategic



accounts, told AT: "ProSlide and Six Flags have a deep history that goes back decades. We've been their trusted partner across 21 of their parks in North America and have seen hundreds of high-performance ProSlide water rides installed. We're incredibly excited about our latest collaboration, Six Flags White Water's Python Plunge. This ProSlide-exclusive FlyingSaucer 30 gives riders the sensation of racing through a giant slalom ski turn and will treat the guests of Six Flags White Water to a one-of-a-kind experience!"

Six Flags White Water,

now in its 39th season, was originally constructed by **Silver Dollar City** as a sister park to its White Water park in Branson, Missouri. The park was sold in 1999 to a group of investors who own the nearby **Six Flags Over Georgia** theme park, and, as with that park, **Six Flags Theme Parks Inc.** was contracted to run it. Although it is typically marketed along with Six Flags Over Georgia, it is one of only five standalone properties not located adjacent to a Six Flags Theme Park and the only standalone not branded as "Hurricane Harbor."



Riders rocket into the splashdown pool after careening through more than 500 feet of open and enclosed chutes. COURTESY SIX FLAGS WHITE WATER

# Falcon's Beyond helps bring water to the Saudi Arabian desert

AT: Pam Sherborne  
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO, Fla. — **Falcon's Creative Group**, a sector of **Falcon's Beyond**, announced in May that it is behind the master planning of what soon will be Saudi Arabia's first and the region's largest water theme park in **Qiddiya**, situated on the outskirts of the Saudi capital of Riyadh.

As part of the Qiddiya development, the water park will join the newly announced **Six Flags Qiddiya** theme park. **Qiddiya Investment Company (QIC)**, the entity driving the development of Qiddiya, made the Six Flags announcement in February 2022. Other projects for that area have been planned as well.

"Qiddiya water theme park will be unlike any oth-

er existing water park, with environments that take guests to amazing locations and an atmosphere that enables them to truly escape," said **Cecil D. Magpuri**, CEO of Falcon's Beyond. "We are honored to bring not only deep development experience, including past projects in Dubai, but also industry-leading technology prowess to create an entertainment experience that is truly game-changing."

Magpuri added that it is an exciting and unique opportunity for Falcon's to participate in the ongoing transformation in Saudi Arabia and to set a new benchmark in water theme parks and family entertainment for others to follow.

The water park will span more than 62 acres and feature 22 rides and attractions. The park will fea-



An artist rendering shows the planned new water theme park in Qiddiya, which is located on the outskirts of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia's capital. COURTESY FALCON'S BEYOND

ture a mix of dry and wet rides as well as state-of-the-art, competition-level

facilities for water sports enthusiasts including surfing and white-water rafting experiences.

It also is expected to feature 17 food and beverage and retail outlets.

Falcon's Creative Group developed the park's master plan in conjunction with QIC.

Visitors will experience nine designed zones: the Entry Gate, Camel Rock, Dub Grotto, Wave Wadi, the Den, Viper Canyon, Arabian Peak, the Herding Grounds and Surf Lagoon.

The themed zones were inspired by the native animals that inhabit the area around Qiddiya. The experience of each ride will reflect the attributes of the creature for which each is named. For example, based on the aggressive snake, Viper Canyon will feature some of the most thrilling rides, while Dub Grotto, branded for the curious, playful dub lizard, will be home to an energetic water playground for children.

Falcon's has master planned the park in compliance with QIC's sustainability practices, including technology that interconnects the structure of certain rides, enabling the transfer

of water from one body to another, prioritizing recycling over waste.

Other integrated technologies will reduce water pressure for select rides, reducing the amount of water used significantly. Additional elements of the park will be built to use 75% less water compared to other water park rides, where even rainwater will be captured, treated and reused.

"By delivering an entirely new type of immersive entertainment experience, the Qiddiya water park will change the way we think about water parks," said **Scott Demerau**, executive chairman of Falcon's Beyond. "Moreover, we believe our sustainability approach to its development will set a new standard for future parks, benefitting the world around us."

QIC awarded a \$750 million construction contract to **ALEC Saudi Arabia Engineering & Contracting** and **El Seif Engineering Contracting** in a joint venture between the two companies to build the Qiddiya water park.

A completion date of the water park has not been set.

• [falconsbeyondglobal.com](http://falconsbeyondglobal.com)  
• [qiddiya.com](http://qiddiya.com)

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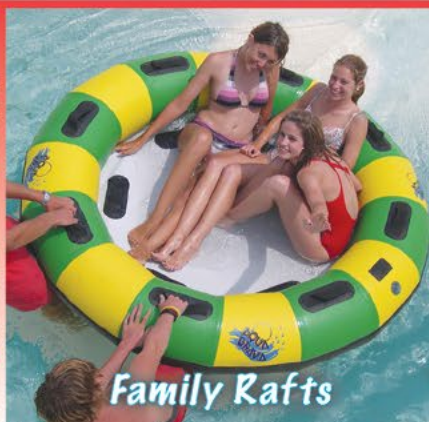
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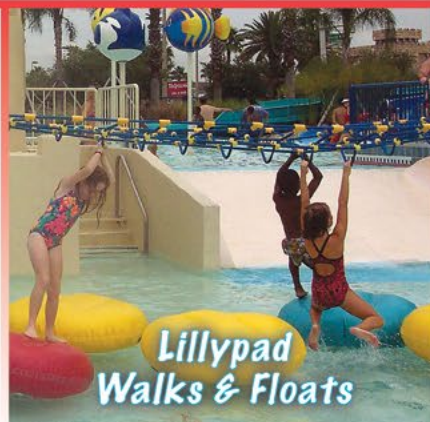
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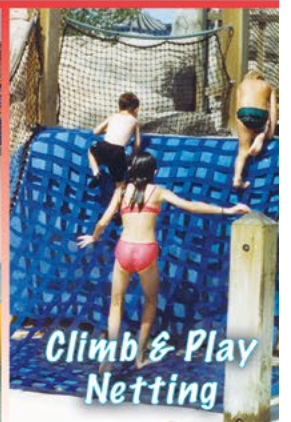
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► Kings Island celebrates 50 years with enhancements, shows, décor and nostalgia — page 37

## Vacations impacted by high prices, Americans want to travel

AT: Pam Sherborne  
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

UNITED STATES — Operators of the nation's tourism destinations were cautiously optimistic on how the 2022 season would roll out. After two years of pandemic lock-downs, shut-downs and restrictions, they are definitely hoping for the best.

Early indicators, including surveys and polls by national travel organizations, show Americans want to travel, but there are definitely some sticky wickets out there for most. Those include the high prices of gasoline, airfare, hotels/lodging and even food.

Whether or not there will be any relief this summer is up in the air.

The **U.S. Travel Association**, an industry trade group, reported it expects money spent on travel, excluding business travel, in the U.S. to total \$726 billion in 2022, up three percent from 2021 and slightly above pre-pandemic levels.

According to a poll conducted by *The*

*Washington Post* and **George Mason University's Schar School of Policy and Government**, about 72% of Americans said they will "definitely" or "probably" go on a summer trip this year. The poll also found that of that 72%, more than three-quarters expected at least some of their summer travel to be by car.

**Jack Morey, Morey Piers**, Wildwood, New Jersey, said in an AP news report before Memorial Day, that the last two years with COVID restrictions were pretty much devastating for his business.

But now that the pandemic restrictions have been dropped, he had been able to fully staff up. That, however, added another caveat business owners have to consider, the labor shortage. He said he has increased wages, but that led to having to increase prices for his guests.

Morey said in that report he is hoping for the best.

After Memorial Day week, **Cedar Fair Entertainment** reported that the overall de-

mand and guest spending levels remained strong across the company's parks. Through the Memorial Day weekend, general demand and season pass attendance remained ahead of 2019 levels.

Cedar Fair's long-lead indicators, including sales of all-season products and advanced bookings at its resort properties, were strong.

Unfortunately, though, the 2022 season is still an uncertainty. A recent study by **AAA** found some summer travelers are adjusting their vacation plans to compensate for rising gas prices.

A survey by **Napa Auto Parts** found the same. That survey found the many Americans who want to take a summer vacation and still plan to do so also plan to pivot and take shorter trips, staying within about three hours from home.

But, fortunately for the amusement industry, Napa's survey also found that about one-third (32%) of Americans plan to visit a theme park within the next 12 months.

## Boldmove Nation, Triotech to deliver first Smash & Reload attraction

LYON, France — **BoldMove Nation** and **Triotech** announced that French theme park **Le Pal** has selected **Smash & Reload** as the park's first interactive media-based dark ride.

With more than 1,000 animals and 31 attractions, Le Pal is the only park in the country to combine a theme park with a zoo. Every year the park invests a large portion of its turnover to secure its position as most visited leisure site in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. With the installation of Triotech and BoldMove's media-based dark ride, the park is extending and diversifying its offering with a weatherproof indoor attraction for all ages.

**BOLD  
MOVE  
NATION**

"It was time to replace our aging 4D-cinema with an attraction to position us for the future and offer something totally different to our guests," explained **Arnaud Bennet**, president of Le Pal. "It became rapidly clear that the solution offered by BoldMove and Triotech is the most suitable for an all-family immersive experience. It blends advanced technologies and a gameplay



A deciding factor for Le Pal's choosing the new attraction was the very high throughput of over 400 persons per hour across its five vehicles. COURTESY TRIOTECH

into an enjoyable attraction for young and old, making it very inclusive."

Smash & Reload is based on a global industry cooperation, bringing industry

expertise together in a unique media-based attraction. The concept design by BoldMove CEO **Benoit Cornet** is a synthesis of 20 years dark ride development and visitor ex-

perience analysis. It brings the dark ride to its very essence with a strong focus on family fun through a well-balanced mix of interactivity and storytelling. The IP license **TooMush** — produced by the French graphic studio **Polymorph** — will be adapted to the concept of **Smash & Reload**. The ride system and interactivity are produced by Triotech, market leader in interactive attractions.

"A deciding factor for our choice was the very high throughput of over 400 persons per hour across five vehicles, which allows us to spread visitors and reduce waiting times during busy days," added **Bruno Cambon**, Le Pal's operations director.

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## MARKET WATCH

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 6/22/22	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	91.26	149.78	87.39
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	39.33	62.56	37.78
Comcast Corp./NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	38.90	61.80	37.56
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	93.50	187.58	92.01
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	45.43	56.38	41.14
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	JP:9010	TYO	4135.00	5620.00	3650.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	7.94	8.29	0.50
Lefoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	16.75	21.15	16.15
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	27.33	51.17	26.41
Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd.	RCL	NYSE	36.69	98.27	34.10
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	JP:6357	TYO	819.00	926.00	702.00
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	43.90	76.57	40.76
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	21.56	47.24	19.91
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	810.00	944.00	766.00

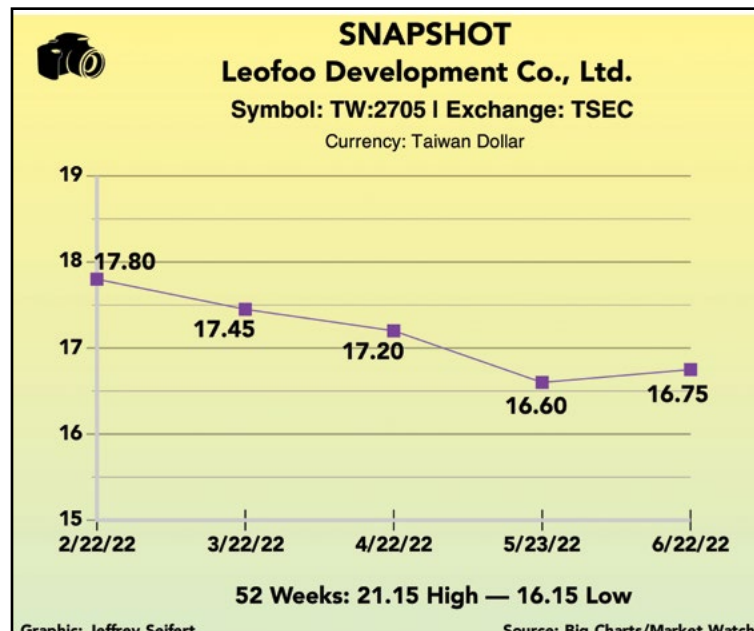
STOCK PRICES ABOVE ARE GENERALLY QUOTED IN THE FOREIGN CURRENCY IN WHICH THE COMPANY IS LOCATED  
 \*Dubai Parks and Resorts halted trading on the Dubai Financial Market due to an acquisition by Meraas Leisure and Entertainment LLC earlier this year.

**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



In June, Merlin Entertainment officially opened the first of its new generation Lego Discovery Centers in Brussels. COURTESY MERLIN ENTERTAINMENT



## DIESEL PRICES

Region (U.S)	As of 6/13/22	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$5.852	\$2.577
Midwest	\$5.631	\$2.398
Gulf Coast	\$5.370	\$2.330
Mountain	\$5.692	\$2.310
West Coast	\$6.022	\$2.557
California	\$6.887	\$2.803

## CURRENCY

On 6/23/22 \$1 USD =

0.9489	EURO
0.8161	GBP (British Pound)
136.15	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9641	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.4445	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.2955	CAD (Canadian Dollar)

## BUSINESS WATCH

## Six Flags reveals first quarter performance

ARLINGTON, Texas — **Six Flags Entertainment Corporation** reported first quarter 2022 financial results.

Total revenue for first quarter 2022 increased \$56 million, or 68%, compared to first quarter 2021, driven by higher attendance and guest spending per capita. The increase in attendance was driven by increased operating days in the quarter compared to the prior year period, which was negatively impacted by pandemic-related closures and operating restrictions. The increase in operating days was offset by a visitation shift of approximately 200 thousand guests from the first quarter to the second quarter 2022 due to the later timing of the Easter holiday, which caused some schools to schedule spring-break vacations in the second quarter of 2022 versus the first quarter in 2021.

"Six Flags has been quickly executing to improve the guest experience, improving ride throughput by increasing ride uptime and implementing single rider lanes on busy days; improving staffing and training of our team members; upgrading our park appearance, including our front gates, restrooms and restaurants; providing better food quality; and offering more guest amenities such as benches, shade structures and children's areas," said **Selim Bassoul**, president and CEO. "We have reoriented our culture to prioritize the guest in everything we do, and we fundamentally believe this will drive significant and sustainable long-term earnings growth."

The \$19.30 increase in guest spending per capita compared to first quarter 2021 was driven by a \$10.33 increase in admissions spending per capita and a \$8.97 increase in in-park spending per capita. The increase in admissions spending per capita was primarily driven by higher realized ticket pricing and revenue from memberships beyond the initial 12-month commitment period — in first quarter 2021, the company did not recognize membership revenue from members whose home park was closed due to the pandemic. The higher in-park spending reflects the company's in-park pricing initiatives and positive consumer spending trends.

## Walt Disney Company reports second quarter

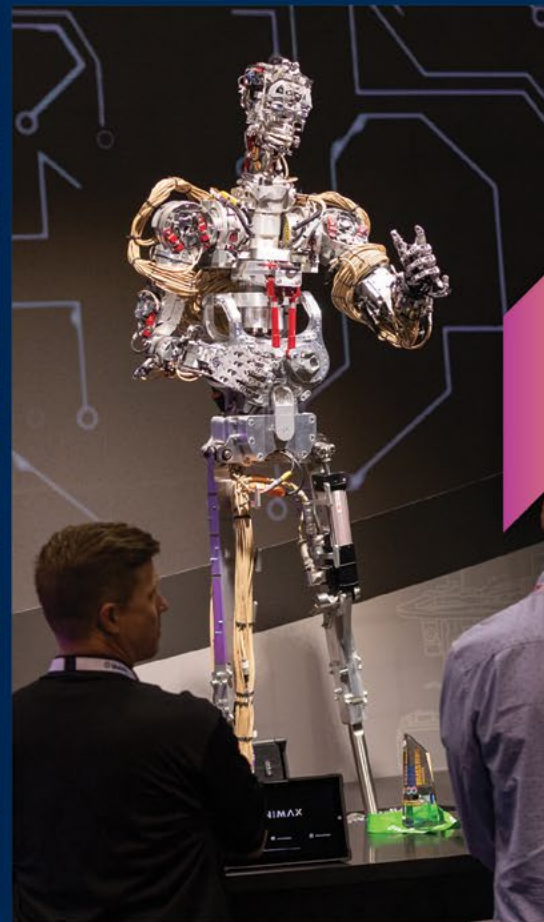
BURBANK, Calif. — The **Walt Disney Company** reported earnings for its second fiscal quarter ending April 2, 2022. Revenues for the quarter and six months grew 23% and 29%, respectively, despite a \$1.0 billion reduction for the amount due to a customer to early terminate license agreements for film and television content delivered in previous years in order for the company to use the content primarily on its direct-to-consumer services.

In fiscal 2022, the company's domestic parks and resorts are generally operating without significant COVID-19-related capacity restrictions, such as those that were in place in the prior year. Some of its international parks and resorts as well as cruise ship operations continue to be impacted by COVID-19-related closures and capacity and travel restrictions.

"Our strong results in the second quarter, including fantastic performance at our domestic parks and continued growth of our streaming services — with 7.9 million **Disney+** subscribers added in the quarter and total subscriptions across all our DTC offerings exceeding 205 million — once again proved that we are in a league of our own," said **Bob Chapek**, CEO. "As we look ahead to Disney's second century, I am confident we will continue to transform entertainment by combining extraordinary storytelling with innovative technology to create an even larger, more connected, and magical Disney universe for families and fans around the world."



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## OBITUARIES

## Published author, park historian Charles John Jacques Jr. passes

ASHTABULA, Ohio — Charles John Jacques Jr., 82, passed away peacefully on May 10, 2022, at Lantern of Saybrook in Ashtabula, Ohio.

Jacques was born on April 23, 1940, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the son of Charles and Honora (Delaney) Jacques, Sr. He graduated from Har-Brack High School in Natrona Heights, Pennsylvania in 1958 and went on to study at Penn State University at State College, Pennsylvania, where he received his bachelor's degree in science. Jacques continued with his education at the University of Pittsburgh where he received his Doctor of Law degree. On September 8, 1995, he married Betty Krcal VanPelt. Together they shared 26 wonderful years of marriage.

Jacques was the author of five books and the co-author of another, all of which were about amusement parks. He was the past president and an early member of the National Carousel Association and the 11th member of American Coaster Enthusiasts. Jacques generously donated his entire amusement park collection to the Penn State Pattee and Paterno library.

He was a member of Jefferson United Methodist Church and served on the board of directors for the Henderson Library. He was a President of Tarentum Rotary Club and a board President of the New Kensington Library.

Jacques enjoyed anything and everything about amusement parks. His favorite park was Kennywood in West Mifflin, Pennsylvania and his favorite vacation spot was Wildwood New Jersey, where he had vacationed since he was a boy and later celebrated wedding anniversaries there every September. Holding hands with Betty, Jacques visited all 50 states and five continents and enjoyed many cruises. He was an avid photographer and a loyal fan of all the Cleveland sports teams.

## Jerry D. Wooldridge, director of Reedy Creek Improvement, dies

ORLANDO — Jerry Don Wooldridge, 69, passed away on June 6, 2022.

Wooldridge had been a resident of Orlando, Florida, since 1998 when he began his more-than-20-year career as director of building and safety for Reedy Creek Improvement District, the special governing jurisdiction and taxing district for the land of the Walt Disney World Resort.

He is survived by his wife, Jonna, and daughters Erin and Karla, as well as his sister Sheila Parker, her husband Richard and daughter Katie. He is also survived by numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.



Charles John Jacques Jr.



Jerry Don Wooldridge

## ON THE MOVE

**SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.** announced that **Michelle "Chelle" F. Adams** will assume the role of chief financial officer (CFO) and treasurer effective immediately.

"We are thrilled to have Chelle join our leadership team," said **Marc Swanson**, chief executive officer of SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc. "Chelle brings strong finance experience and a long and successful track record as a leader in the leisure and hospitality industries."



Adams

Adams previously served as the chief financial officer of **The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas** where she was responsible for oversight of the company's day-to-day external and internal accounting and reporting functions, driving business transformation and process improvement across the organization, and playing a key role in the successful sale of The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas last month. Prior to joining The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas, Adams was the partner-in-charge of the Hospitality and Gaming Industry Group at **RubinBrown LLP** and a manager at **Deloitte & Touche LLP**.

"I am excited to join Marc, the senior leadership team, and the SeaWorld ambassadors in this executive role," said Adams. "I've been a fan and guest of the SeaWorld family of parks and an admirer of the business for many years."

With the retirement of long time Service Manager **Scott Holliday, S&S Worldwide** has named **James Tibbitts** as the company's new service manager.

Tibbitts has been a member of the organization for nearly two decades starting in 2003 in the weld shop fabricating rides. After five years, he moved to a role of working with customers by supplying them with parts for their rides. This position morphed into a role where Tibbitts was managing, building and servicing the company's small rides.



Tibbitts

S&S President and CEO **Tim Timco** commented: "James is very deserving of this promotion, and I am extremely confident that our technical service department is in very good hands with James as the department manager. I not only congratulate James but look forward to what he adds to our management team."

**Six Flags Entertainment Corporation** has announced that it has appointed **Gary Mick** as chief financial officer. In his new role, Mick will have responsibility for the company's financial strategy, budgeting, accounting, financial reporting, audit, tax and capital planning functions. **Steve Purtell**, who had filled the CFO position on an interim basis since March 2022, continues to serve as



Mick

senior vice president, corporate communications, investor relations and treasurer, reporting to **Selim Bassoul**, president and CEO.

"I am delighted to join the Six Flags team," said Mick. "With the company's iconic brand and visionary leaders focused on elevating the entire guest experience, having the opportunity to make a contribution is very exciting."

Mick, 61, brings 40 years of business and strategy experience, primarily in the food service industry. Most recently, he was president and CFO of **Ice-O-Matic**, an **Ali Group Company** based in Denver, Colorado. Prior to that, he was group president for **Middleby Corporation**, where he managed multiple food service divisions in the U.S. and Denmark.

"Gary is an experienced, results-oriented business leader with strong operational and M&A experience, and an impressive track record of value creation," said Bassoul. "I am thrilled to welcome him to Six Flags, where he will make an immediate impact as we elevate the guest experience and launch our next phase of profitable growth."

**Dorney Park and Wildwater Kingdom** announced that **Jessica Naderman** has been named vice president and general manager of the park. She succeeds **Michael Fehnel**, who will assume the role of corporate director of business intelligence strategic initiatives at Dorney Park's parent company, **Cedar Fair Entertainment Company**.

"Jess is a talented leader with an impressive track record in operations and management within the entertainment and leisure industry," said **Tim Fisher**, chief operating officer of Cedar Fair.

Naderman previously served as assistant general manager of **Schlitterbahn Waterpark Galveston** in Texas, one of 13 properties in the United States and Canada owned by Cedar Fair. She brings more than 20 years of experience in theme and water parks to her new position. Naderman began her career in 1998 in ride operations at what was then called **Paramount Kings Island** in Cincinnati. She later spent nearly seven years as manager of operations at **California's Great America**. She also spent time working at **Herschend Family Entertainment** and **Palace Entertainment**. She is the first female general manager of Dorney Park in its 138 years of operation.

Fehnel has been a member of the Cedar Fair team since 1992. He began his career as a member of the games department, and held positions of increasing responsibility in merchandise, admissions and food & Beverage. He was named general manager of Dorney Park in 2013, then moved to North Carolina a year later to become general manager of Carowinds. Fehnel returned to Dorney Park in 2016 and has led the park since then.



Naderman



Fehnel

# Kings Island celebrates 50 years with enhancements, nostalgia

AT: Tim Baldwin  
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

MASON, Ohio — It is not uncommon to see a theme park have a collection of fans. **Kings Island**, however, boasts a loyalty to make most parks jealous.

Those who have been around long enough may recall seeing *The Partridge Family* air an episode in 1972 filmed at the park during its first season. Eager eyes watched these beloved television characters explore this amazing new theme park. A year later, *The Brady Bunch* furthered that international enthusiasm with an episode filmed there. Thus was the advantage of being owned by the **Taft Broadcasting Company**.

Ownerships have changed over five decades, but one thing remains the same — everybody still loves Kings Island.

"When guests walk through the front gate at Kings Island, they see a view that's remained virtually unchanged since the park opened in 1972," said **Chad Showalter**, director of communications. "The park's Eiffel Tower, the Royal Fountain and the buildings on International Street are magical and set the stage for a day of fun and memory making."

As the park — and industry — were coping with the pandemic two years ago, Kings Island still opened Orion. While it is easy to market a **Bolliger & Mabillard** roller coaster with a 300-foot first drop, for its 50th anniversary, the park has provided a different kind of magic in numerous small ways that add up to a big year.

*Amusement Today* has already covered the extensive track and structure work to the legendary **Beast** roller



The Golden Celebration has many components that help acknowledge 50 years of history at Kings Island. Several teams of craftsmen have performed a beautiful restoration on the park's oldest ride, The Grand Carousel (below left). The nightly finale combines drones, fireworks, lighting and visual effects to accent the park's history (below right). AT/TIM BALDWIN



coaster, but **The Racer** has also received a glorious repainting to its original colors from 1972. Also, **Baynum Painting** painted the iconic Eiffel Tower. Furthermore, **The Grand Carousel** has undergone a beautiful refurbishment.

"The Grand Carousel is our oldest ride, opening in 1926 at Cincinnati's **Coney Island**. It was one of the first

rides brought to Kings Island for its 1972 opening," said **Don Helbig**, area manager, digital marketing. "We're fortunate that it's still together in one piece with Coney Island being prone to spring floods. In fact, during a 1937 flood, some of the horses broke off and were swept down the river. A reward was offered for them, or pic-



es of them, and parts were returned from as far away as Memphis, Tennessee. To prepare for our 50th anniversary season, our maintenance team worked with three groups that had different connections to the ride for the restoration project. **All Around Carousels, LTD** was on site restoring the horses and chariots, touching every

piece from head to tail. As an original park attraction, one that is beloved by our guests, the 50th anniversary was the right time for this project."

Shows have also become prominent this season. A 70s-themed show takes place in the Festhaus giving a nod to the park's early years.

► See **KINGS**, page 38

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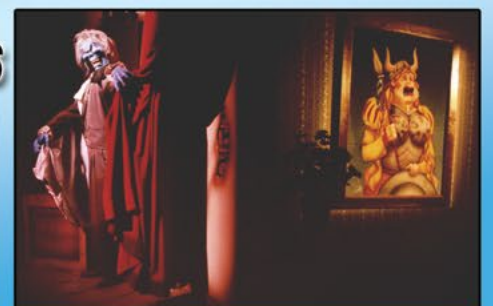
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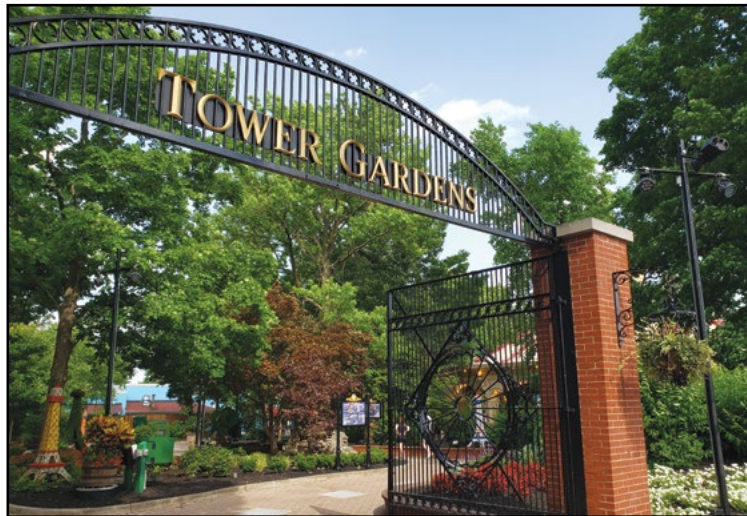
► **KINGS**

Continued from page 37

Among other offerings is a production based on a retired dark ride, Phantom Theater. This sorely missed ride was envisioned by **R&R Creative**, which also did the theming for the park's mine train, Adventure Express.

"We were the designers of the entire Phantom Theater dark ride. I created the story and all the characters and scripts and art directed the ride through opening day," said **Rick Bastrop**, R&R. "The story is of an old vaudevillian theater which was boarded up and abandoned at the turn of the century. The entertainers however refused to leave and ended up as phantoms roaming the theater and performing their acts. It was replaced years ago but is still remembered and loved 20 years later."

Bastrop has assisted Kings Island with the musical production by bringing the vaudeville characters back to life with voiceover recordings, original photos and more. Kings Island also



Vistors can stroll through Tower Gardens for a history of Kings Island (above left) with historical info displayed (above right) throughout the stroll. AT/TIM BALDWIN



created a complete display in the theater lobby of how the ride was designed and built using photos, artifacts and the original scale model built of the ride.

"We were honored to have been selected as the designers of the Phantom Theater and happy that Kings Island has brought the story and the characters back to life in such a fantastic manner to entertain existing fans and a new generation of theater guests," Bastrop told AT.

Another big show is

the closing production each night. With fountain, lighting and fire effects on International Street, the skies are also illuminated with fireworks and lighted drones.

"Fun, Fireworks and Fifty — a Kings Island Nighttime Spectacular' has been the star of our 50th anniversary celebration," said Helbig. "It's the best nighttime spectacular that we've ever done and designed to preserve and build upon the special relationship between Kings Island and its guests.

The 14-minute show sends guests home with a memory they'll never forget."

"Seeing our nighttime finale take shape, and seeing the response our guests have had, has been the highlight of the season for me so far," added Showalter. "I've watched the show bring tears to guests' eyes. I've seen grandparents explain who **Evel Knievel** was and even heard parents debate which Hannah Barbera character was the best. Those conversations were all inspired by

the fireworks show. To know that it's not a one-time show, that it happens every night through the summer, that's something special that you aren't going to find at any other amusement park."

"The show brings back so many memories starting with the closing of Coney Island and the opening of Kings Island, and it tells the story of a place that has been a wonderful world of fun," noted Helbig. "There's a line

► See **KINGS**, page 40

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Many shows capitalize on KI's history, such as "The 70's On Demand" (above). Images and ride vehicles from the beloved Phantom Theater are placed outside a show venue (right); the park has based a musical production on the former attraction. AT/TIM BALDWIN



► **KINGS**

Continued from page 38

in the show's song lyrics that says, 'Time and again we keep coming back here, and it feels like returning home.' I literally tear up every time I watch the show. It takes me full circle from my first visit in 1972 to today."

Capitalizing even more on nostalgia, the park has created special food items in honor of current and past attractions. Tower Gardens also contains mini Eiffel

Towers decorated to the park's coasters, as well as a timeline through the 50 years.

Helbig said, "A stroll through Tower Gardens rekindles memories while offering our guests an opportunity to learn about the park's record-breaking and industry-first innovations and iconic moments from the past 50 years. The Tower Gardens History Walk has been the hidden gem of the 50th anniversary season — the icing on the cake for our guests. We'll be able to

add to it in the years ahead."

Showalter has enjoyed leaning in to the park's history this season.

"There are many here at the park who had Opening Day 2022 circled on the calendar for a long time. I can't say enough about the team who put together our 50th anniversary and the many ways we've honored the park's history," he said. "Something that always inspires me is seeing how generations of families visit the park. Now that Kings

Island is 50 years old, we are hearing more stories from guests who first came to the park with their parents or grandparents. Today, they are visiting with the people who matter most to them. You know you're part of something special when families have been visiting you for 50 years. If anyone wants

to know how committed we are to the park's future, just look at we've done in the past. With 50 years of capital investments, we've been able to create a park experience that our guests find special and memorable — a place they want to visit again and again. That doesn't happen overnight."

# Congratulations Kings Island!

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The late 60s and early 70s were the pioneering period of the theme park industry. Kings Island was the flagship for the Taft Broadcasting Company that brought to fruition Kings Dominion, Canada's Wonderland, and indirectly, Carowinds. These parks operate today under the Cedar Fair flag, who has continued to allow these parks to grow and prosper, ranking themselves among the top theme parks in North America.

Happy anniversary Kings Island! Thank you for helping chart my career path in this wonderful industry!

Dennis Speigel  
Founder & CEO, ITPS



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# SAFETY, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

► Morey's reduces carbon footprint — page 44 / Dollywood partners with NAPA Auto Parts — page 47

## Six Flags Hurricane Harbor Arlington reduces heated pavement

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

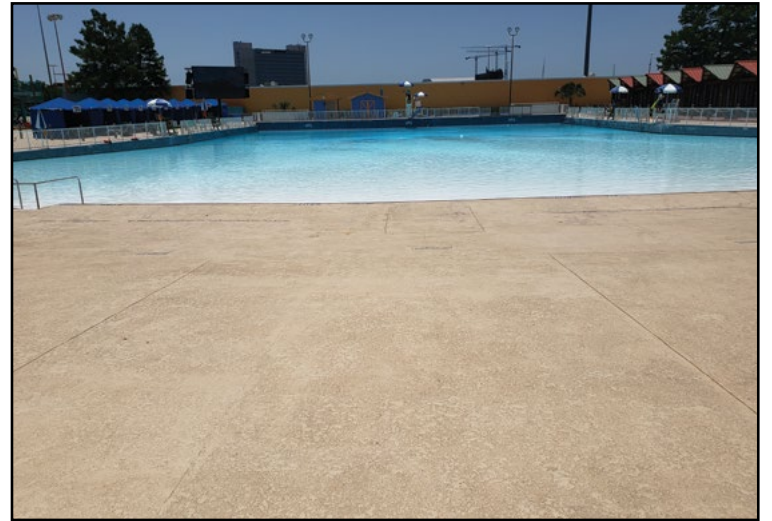
ARLINGTON, Texas — When a water park opens for its 40th season, local visitors assume they know what to expect. While big new slide towers are marketable, it is often the improvements to non-attractions that can make a bigger impact.

Six Flags Hurricane Harbor opened in 1983 as George Millay's second Wet 'n' Wild water park. Over the years, the water park industry has grown and innovated. With four decades under its belt, the Arlington property has made some upgrades to bring the property into a more modern experience.

When the park was built, it was long before online ticketing was the norm. Previously, multiple obsolete ticket booths were just a barrier for people getting into the park. Hurricane Harbor has completely redone its entrance to allow for much more efficient entry, even with security screening.



New signage welcomes visitors to a more streamlined front gate. The removal of outdated ticket booths creates a more open and efficient entrance (above left). The new decking around the wave pool reduces heat by 25 to 35 percent (above right). AT/TIM BALDWIN



"The biggest complaint we had received from 2021 was basically getting in," said General Manager **Chris Thomas**. "We took a look at it and decided to take it all down. Now it's a very smooth process. We still have Guest Services out there for those with ticket issues and needs. It's all about getting people in and meeting those guest expectations."

New park signage greets

guests before entering, and once inside, a fun hanging shark photo op helps bring the feel of Hurricane Harbor to the forefront, making for great family pictures upon arrival.

Throughout the day, guests enjoy improvements to a large amount of park surface that has had decking redone with Cool Crete.

"We did the entire wave pool deck as well as all entrances to the lazy river and the staircases and bridges over the river," said Thomas.

Although it can be done in-house, Thomas said because of the large amount of surface the park had done, they brought in a team that had the resources to get the job done.

In addition to the wave pool area, heavy traffic pathways at the front of the park and in front of eateries received the upgrade. The pavement in front of the main food outlet was particularly important to Thomas.

"It was a red surface, and

it had to be painted every year. Because people stand here to get their food, we try to make them as comfortable as possible as they stand in line," he said. "This material has a 25 to 35 percent heat reduction."

The new coating has a twofold purpose in addition to heat reduction. The texture provides safety, and the look has a sandy vibe.

"The lighter the color the cooler the decks will be," said Thomas. "And we wanted to go with that Hurricane Harbor feel and this gave it that sandy look. The texture gives it a non-slick surface; that's where the traction comes from."

Throughout the park, new footwear holders from **Water Safety Products** have been positioned to help alleviate shoes and sandals strewn in the pathways. With these holders in place near the wave pool, lazy river entrances and in lounging areas, the pathways are

much freer of trip hazards.

While far from exciting to guests, the park did undertake a major investment in the parking lot.

"We completely redid the parking lot this year," Thomas told *Amusement Today*. "We addressed complaints we had about potholes and striping. We took the entire thing down to dirt and redid the entire parking lot."

A companion park called **FunSphere** opened adjacent to the water park in the 1990s. It focused on dry attractions. Once it closed in 1995, the miniature golf course and go-kart track remained dormant outside the water park boundaries.

"We removed those and increased our parking to 300 to 400 spots so guests can park closer to the entrance and make it a better day for them."

Throughout the park, new paint and new chairs have also enhanced the look and comfort of Hurricane Harbor.



A new photo op (left) welcomes incoming visitors. Footwear holders in various locations reduce trip hazards within the park (above). AT/TIM BALDWIN

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LIFT SYSTEM REHABS

# Morey's Piers cuts carbon footprint, adds solar parking lot canopy

AT: Pam Sherborne  
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

WILDWOODS, N.J. — Officials at **Morey's Piers and Water Parks** celebrated with fans and media on June 2 the park's newest expansion of their solar footprint with an event dubbed Cutting the Cord.

The project included installing 1,050 SunPower 435-watt panels on a canopy over the roof space of the park's newest parking lot. The canopy, installed by **Geoscape Solar**, is to provide renewable energy for Morey's Surfside Pier.

"Along with our six solar projects going now, we also are exploring opportunities to conserve energy and use less," said **Joe Cleary**, vice president, treasurer, chief financial officer at **Morey's Piers, Beachfront Waterparks and Resorts**,

Management at Morey's attractions began investing in solar energy in 2018.



Morey's Piers and Water Parks, Wildwood, New Jersey, celebrated this year by reducing the park's total carbon footprint. The park began its solar program in 2018. This newest project was the installation of solar panels on the canopy on the park's newest parking lot. COURTESY MOREY'S PIERS

This recent investment continues to signify how Morey's has continued its commitment to improve sustainability and conservation on and off its piers.

Make no mistake, the company is reaping quick returns on its investments by saving in energy costs.

The company's first solar project was encouraged by an uncle of **Jack and Will Morey**, Morey's Piers owner, as well as his own daughter.

"Their uncle installed some solar panels and came to them and told them how it was working," Cleary said. "My daughter would tell me

we needed to look at it, too, but we really weren't sure.

"We started with operations and said let's try that first," he said.

So in 2018, they installed 901, P17, 345-watt solar panels on the roof of several maintenance buildings.

It worked and they saw

how they could save.

"It just made sense for us because solar runs off the sun and we only operate during the summer when the sun is the brightest," Cleary said.

Next, Morey's installed

► See SOLAR, page 46

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### Five reasons to be an instructor at the AIMS International Safety Seminar

Planning for the 2023 **AIMS International** Safety Seminar is now in full swing and we recently sent out the call for presentations for the next slate of seminar instructors. Whether you are a veteran presenter or just starting out, we welcome your proposal. Here are some compelling reasons to be an AIMS instructor:

#### 1. Advance your career

Public speaking skills can help with career advancement. These skills require creativity, critical thinking, and professionalism; all of which are qualities that most employers desire in their workers. Volunteering to be an instructor for the world leader in safety education's flagship safety seminar will give you an advantage over other candidates vying for the same position.

#### 2. Build your credibility

Participating as an instructor at a technical symposium or conference, such as the AIMS International Safety Seminar, is a good way to build credibility, both within the amusement industry, as well as within your own workplace. Because the AIMS Safety Seminar is regarded in the amusement industry as the premier event for safety education and certification, you can add this achievement to your resume with confidence, knowing that potential employers will recognize and appreciate this accomplishment, as well as look to you as a thought leader in your field. In addition, you'll learn to be more engaged during meetings, to express your ideas more fully and to present yourself as an experienced professional.

#### 3. Boost your confidence

Becoming an instructor and honing your public speaking skills at the AIMS International Safety Seminar is a great way to significantly boost your confidence. Overcoming the fears and insecurities that accompany public speaking is empowering. Connecting with AIMS Safety Seminar attendees and fellow faculty members can be a strong reminder that you have valuable insights and opinions to share with the industry.

#### 4. Allow you to pay it forward

There comes a time in the career of every professional when they become an expert at some aspect of their job. If you have reached that point, it's time to give back to your industry and share that expertise with others. This is especially true of amuse-

ment industry safety professionals. Passing along your knowledge of a particular safety concept, process or procedure to other professionals in our industry can literally translate into saving lives.

#### 5. Drive change

As an instructor at the AIMS International Safety Seminar, you have the ability to present current, relevant and factual information and to reach technicians as well as decision-makers, who can, in turn, drive much-needed change in the amusement industry at a grassroots level.

If any or all of the reasons listed above are convincing to you, please visit [aimsintl.org/get-involved/be-an-instructor](http://aimsintl.org/get-involved/be-an-instructor) to submit your session proposal. The deadline for submissions is July 31, 2022.

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



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Geoscape Solar has designed all of Morey's Piers' solar power projects and installed the parking lot canopy panels. COURTESY MOREY'S PIERS

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### ► SOLAR Continued from page 44

solar panel systems on the Pan-American and Port Royal Hotels.

Then, in December 2019, the Runaway Tramcar ride received a solar treatment, with the addition of a set of panels on its loading station. This was followed by the cabanas at PigDog Beach Bar during the summer of 2020.

"These have been big investments and ones that have paid off, both in energy saved and on electric bills," Cleary said. "We've been pleasantly surprised at the results of our investment in solar. Combining our savings on electricity with incentives New Jersey provides businesses that use solar, we expect to [recoup] the upfront investment within four years."

Geoscape Solar has designed all of Morey's solar power projects and installed the panels.

"Morey's Piers has always been a New Jersey name synonymous with family," said Lee Watson, chief operating officer, and partner at Geoscape. "We are thrilled that Morey's continues to choose Geoscape Solar to partner with to achieve their long-term financial and environmental goals."

Cleary expects the canopy parking lot to be a popular place for their guests.

"Parking under the canopy will keep our guests' cars cooler under the hot sun," he said.

Overall, Morey's solar powers all of Hunt's Piers, the Boardwalk Tram Cars, and 55% of Morey's Surfside Pier.

• [moreyspiers.com](http://moreyspiers.com)

# NAPA Auto Parts sponsors Dollywood's parking lot assistance

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

PIGEON FORGE, Tenn. — **NAPA Auto Parts** is lending a helping hand to **Dollywood** guests this season by sponsoring the theme park's parking lot assistance program.

NAPA Auto Parts is now the official sponsor of the program, which aids Dollywood guests with minor car inconveniences such as flat tires, dead batteries and lost keys.

Dollywood Publicists **Amber Davis** said the theme park in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, has had a parking lot assistance program for a number of years. It is operated by their own safety and security team for a number of years.

The program will still be operated by Dollywood, but now NAPA is the sponsor. Davis said Dollywood is excited to have NAPA on board and that NAPA officials are excited to be at Dollywood.

NAPA has a long history of sports sponsorships. However, this is NAPA's debut into the theme park industry thanks to the brand alliance with Dollywood and its operating partner, **Herschend Family Entertainment**.

Davis said of the program: "The vehicle assistance program is the main guest-facing portion of the partnership. There is no cost to Dollywood."

The sponsorship also includes activations at additional Herschend properties including **Silver Dollar City** in Branson, Missouri; **Wild Adventures** in Valdosta, Georgia; **Callaway Gardens** in Pine Mountain, Georgia, and **Pink Jeep Adventure Tours**, with locations across the U.S.

"The NAPA Auto Parts partnership will include activations at other properties, but they are still in the planning stages for those opportunities," Davis said. "Details will be announced once the programs are finalized."

The partnership comes at an opportune time as inflation and rising gas prices begin to affect summer travel.

"As our first foray into the theme parks and entertainment space, NAPA Auto Parts could not be more excited to bring the parking lot vehicle assistance program to

life at Dollywood," said **Marti Walsh**, vice president, marketing, NAPA Auto Parts. "In a year when families need more help than ever on the road, we're thrilled to make their summer vacations easier and more enjoyable."

In the recent NAPA Auto Parts Road Trip survey commissioned by NAPA Auto Parts, 45% of Americans who

said their summer plans have been impacted by rising gas prices plan to stay closer to home. Sixty-five percent of Americans planning to visit a theme or amusement park in the next 12 months anticipate their travel plans will keep them closer to home, with trips of three hours or less.

Additionally, the survey found that about one-third

of Americans plan to visit a theme park within the next 12 months and 72% of those expect to travel by automobile.

With automobiles serving as the primary mode of travel for guests, the NAPA Auto Parts parking lot service at Dollywood is certainly a plus for guests facing a minor auto issue when they return from a day of fun in the park.

"After a day full of making memories with family, the most frustrating thing is returning to the parking lot to find your car won't start or that you have a flat tire," said **Carol Agee**, Dollywood senior manager for marketing partnerships.

Now, NAPA Auto Parts will help the team at Dollywood solve those problems.



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## IRT announces IROC Program growth, appoints Director of Strategic Engagement

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — **International Ride Training** has added several new parks to its International Ride Operator Certification (iROC) Program.

"Over the last few months, we have increased the number of iROC facilities by nearly 40%," said **Erik Beard**, owner/managing member and legal counsel of the company. "During the 2021 operating season, there were 24 iROC facilities in the United States and Canada. In 2022, there are 33. This increase is a testament to the safety culture of not only these new iROC facilities, but of all iROC facilities that have shown for many years that iROC certification results in the safest, most professional, and efficient ride operators in the world."

The iROC program is the world's only third-party certification of ride operators' safety, efficiency and professionalism. It is based on standards of performance developed by IRT in consultation with leading attractions industry owners and operators around the globe.

In 2022, the iROC Program welcomed: **Adventureland Park** (Altoona, Iowa), **Austin's Park** (Pflugerville, Texas), **Fun Spot America Atlanta** (Fayetteville, Georgia), **Fun Spot America Kissimmee** (Kissimmee, Florida), **Fun Spot America Orlando** (Orlando, Florida), **Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park** (Glenwood Springs, Colorado), **Lost Island Theme Park** (Waterloo, Iowa), **Magic Springs Theme and Water Park** (Hot Springs, Arkansas) and **Pacific Park on the Santa Monica Pier** (Santa Monica, California).

"The tenure, experience and passion of the entire IRT Team is second to none in our industry, and their training and auditing programs are keenly focused on the challenges we all face with our boots-on-the-ground front line operations," stated **Dana Wyatt**, director of operations for Pacific Park on the Santa Monica Pier.

Because of this recent growth, IRT is continuing its partnership with **Hospitality Intelligence USA LLC**, an international hospitality and attractions industry consultancy headed by **Anna Danau**, who will be IRT's new director of strategic engagement. As part of the continuation, Danau will continue to offer the iROC Certification program and IRT auditing services to clients in the Asia-Pacific region and around the globe.

## OABA relaunches Circle of Excellence program

WEST SPRINGFIELD, Mass. — **The Outdoor Amusement Business Association** (OABA) announced the relaunch of the popular Circle of Excellence (COE) program. The COE program has allowed members to stand out from the competition by offering the results of an onsite visit that confirms an operator's adherence to a checklist of issues that are important to guests. The program had been on a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic.

"Members who earn this three-year COE designation have the opportunity to demonstrate — through an independent onsite visit by an OABA consultant — that they are operating in accordance with OABA standards," said **Greg Chiecko**, OABA president and CEO.

"We believe as it be-

comes better known, this program will be part of the selection process for some venues and will give operators a real advantage when it comes to competing for business opportunities in the future," added Chiecko.

The checklist covers issues such as operations including training, food and ride safety, staff sleeping accommodations, drug testing, labor, professional appearance of employees and crisis management planning.

"Customer service and safety have always been our top priority and the hallmark of **Eastern States Exposition – The Big E**. The OABA's Circle of Excellence program demonstrates our midway provider shares these values," said **Gene Cassidy**, president and CEO of Eastern States Exposition. "We take pride in doing business with like-minded partners and we will require the designation in all future contracts."

Operators must meet these prerequisites prior to the audit: Comply with OABA's 2021 Portable Workforce Housing Policy, perform pre-employment drug testing for 100% of employees and perform annual national background checks on all employees.

"This new program provides OABA standards that help improve our entire industry," said industry veteran and Chair of the OABA **Andy Deggeller**, president of **Deggeller Attractions**.

"Any operator that meets the OABA requirements for designation poses less of a risk for loss and gives us more confidence in providing coverage," said **Drew Tewksbury**, director of sales and marketing for **McGowan Allied Specialty Insurance**. "As an insurance company that specializes in this industry, a COE designation will make a difference in our underwriting."

"Because we respect this strategic choice, we have long discounted our legal fees for Circle of Excellence members, and we look forward to validating this improved program," said **R. Wayne Pierce** of **Pierce Adventure Law**.

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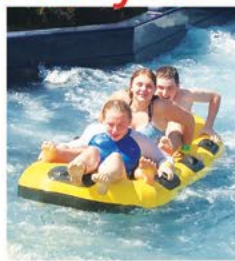
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- Represent Chance Rides with a positive and professional manner at all times.
- Team player with co-workers and customers in creating and implementing successful installations and solutions while troubleshooting.
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  - Utilize experience and a wide degree of independent judgment & decision making to plan and accomplish goals.
  - Work to improve systems, practices, expenses in regard to customer and field service.

### Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree in an engineering or technical field preferred.
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