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Digital Edition

Fireball coaster debuts at Adventureland

AT: Tim Baldwin
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FARMINGDALE, New York — For its 2022 season, **Adventureland** turned to **Ride Engineers of Switzerland (RES)** for the park's newest roller coaster. Dubbed **Fireball**, the vertically stacked coaster is the park's tallest, towering over the family park at 78 feet tall with the sign. During the park's history, a retired Hurricane coaster stood at 59 feet tall.

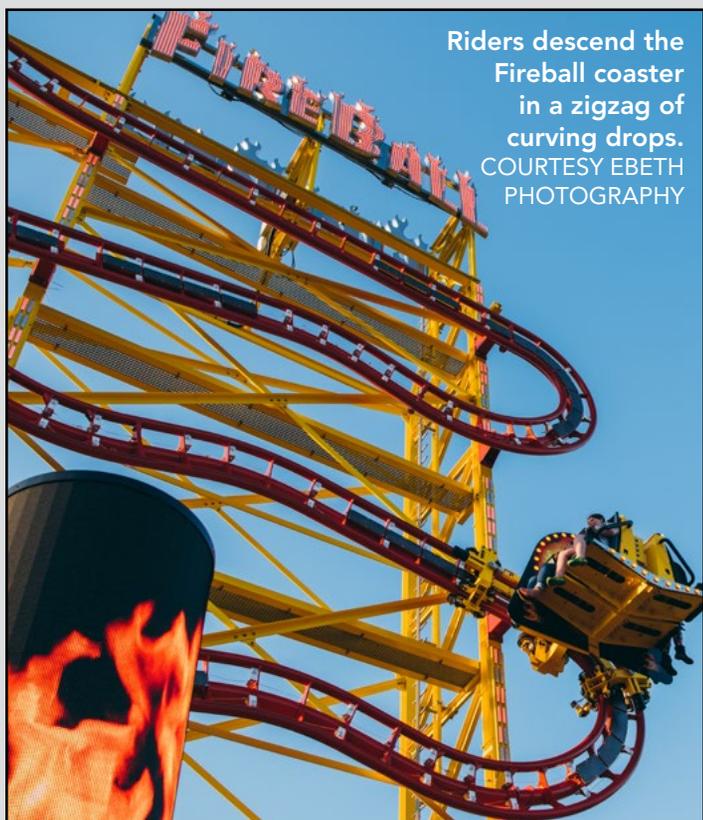
"We're getting rave reviews," said **Steven Gentile**, president and co-owner, Adventureland. "Not only from the children, but from the 20-, 30- and 40-year-olds."

RES offers the ride by the name of **Roller Ball**, and the attraction is available in three sizes, depending upon a facility's budget and available space.

"We've been friends with the guys from RES; we have a couple of rides of theirs in the park," said Gentile. "[Fireball] gave us more height than we anticipated on that footprint. It's just something different for the kids, it's different for the adults."

One of the roller coaster's advantages — in addition to

► See **FIREBALL**, page 6



Riders descend the Fireball coaster in a zigzag of curving drops. COURTESY EBETH PHOTOGRAPHY

Rocket Rapids launches into summer at Quassy's Splash Away Bay water park

AT: Ron Gustafson
Special to Amusement Today

MIDDLEBURY, Conn. — In 2002 family-owned **Quassy Amusement Park** decided to dive into the water park business, and two decades later there seems to be no sign of the enthusiasm drying up.

On June 24, Quassy officially opened the latest attraction in its **Splash Away Bay** water park: a water coaster named **Rocket Rapids** from Canadian supplier **ProSlide Technology**.

"It's an incredible addition to our venerable water park," Quassy President **Eric Anderson** said of the new

► See **ROCKET**, page 8



Rocket Rapids, a ProSlide water coaster debuted at Quassy's Splash Away Bay water park on June 24. COURTESY RON GUSTAFSON

Six Flags Fiesta Texas, B&M partner to unleash Dr. Diabolical's Cliffhanger

AT: Tim Baldwin
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SAN ANTONIO, Texas — More than 30 years ago, **Six Flags Theme Parks** (now **Six Flags Entertainment**) stepped up to be the first to contract with **Bolliger & Mabillard**. The original installations of the renowned manufacturer's stand-up and inverted roller coasters were purchased by Six Flags. In the decade that followed, the partnership saw the first hyper twister and first floorless coasters arrive by the end of the previous millen-

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Dr. Diabolical's Cliffhanger's first plunge is taken at 95 degrees. COURTESY SIX FLAGS



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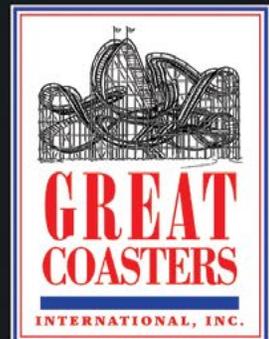
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It all starts with a dream and an idea

EDITORIAL: John W.C. Robinson, jrobinson@amusementtoday.com



Robinson

Several years ago, a friend who knew I was in the park industry reached out with a curious question. Her young son was dreaming about designing roller coasters as a career. She wondered if there was a camp or retreat that she could send him to that might further foster this dream for him.

Ironically, when I reached out to a few friends who were actual coaster designers, we discovered that there was nothing being offered at the time along these lines. Some universities had programs for college and graduate students, and a few high school science classes had units that dealt with the topic, but there was nothing for younger generations to dig a little deeper into the design and construction of roller coasters. So, at the time, I recommended a couple of behind-the-scenes tours at local parks, but that was the best I could offer.

Fast forward more than a decade, and I got an email from one of those aforementioned designers. He and his wife, a teacher, were creating a weeklong summer course for elementary students that would take them inside the world of coaster design. From the engineering behind the curves and drops to the unique specifics of construction, even branching out to the ideas of theming the ride and the marketing of a new coaster, the course would be exactly what that mother was looking for several years ago.

Last summer, that course debuted at a local school as the inaugural Coaster Camp at Mars Hill Academy (near Cincinnati, Ohio). Using Coaster Dynamix kits, the students designed their own coasters after learning about the ins and outs of coaster design from the gang at The Gravity Group. Using construction paper, styrofoam and other craft supplies, they improved their coasters with unique theming after learning some of the possibilities from the skilled hands at 3dx Scenic. And, with a little imagination and some inspired ride naming, the groups created ways to market their innovative coasters to potential guests. From coasters designed to create the illusion of an adventure through an ancient temple to high-speed thrill machines surrounded by fire and ice effects, the only limits were within the students' imaginations.

In late July 2022, the second Coaster Camp is being held, expanding the possibilities of imagination, career possibilities and even coaster design of with another group of young minds. Their imaginations may be the cornerstone of tomorrow's attractions.

If you have any doubt, think back to our own childhoods. How many of us dreamed of a chance to ride on TRON's lightcycle? In just a short while, park guests will have their chance to do that at the Magic Kingdom ... aboard the TRON: Lightcycle/Run roller coaster that was once just a dream in a child's imagination.

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THE INDUSTRY SEEN

Maestro of the Phantom Theater



MASON, Ohio — As part of its 50th anniversary celebration, Kings Island honored a popular past attraction — the Phantom Theater dark ride which operated from 1992 through 2002 — by raising the curtain on "Phantom Theater Encore." The new show incorporates characters and plotlines from the original dark ride into an entertaining theatrical presentation. Rick Bastrup, president of R&R Creative Design was largely responsible for the story and design of the dark ride attraction. In mid-July, Bastrup attended a performance of the new "Phantom Theater Encore" and took time to participate in a Q&A session about the origins of the classic attraction with guests after the performance. COURTESY RICK BASTRUP

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► FIREBALL

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its unique look — is that it can be enjoyed by all age groups.

The ride begins with a vertical climb. From there, the track (at a length just shy of 300 feet) zigzags its way down to ground level with 180-degree curving drops, which add to the thrill and initiate a swing motion for the riders. Passengers are seated back to back in groups of four.

“The RES Vertical (Roller Ball) Coaster delivers a dynamic visual impact with a track height of 68.7 feet contained on a very small footprint,” said **Gina Guglielmi**, owner of **Intermark Ride Group**, which represents RES. “It is ideal for parks or attractions with limited space, enabling these operations to offer their guests a unique and exciting family-friendly ride versus a traditional coaster layout.”

Operations have all the vehicles in motion. As one car climbs the tower, another is descending, while a third is loaded. A bogie construction creates a wheel carriage equipped with springs, deliv-



With seating cantilevered from the track structure, riders get unique views of Adventureland. COURTESY EBETH PHOTOGRAPHY

ering a smooth experience.

This is the fourth installation of the Roller Ball design globally, and the first of its kind in the North America.

“We were looking for our first installation of the Roller Ball in the USA, and we are happy that we found Adventureland Long Island as our partner,” said **Roman Rothe**, RES technical director. “They have been a delight to work with.”

A fifth is currently being manufactured. The product was introduced at the EAS 2016 in Barcelona.

A big selling point is the ride’s compact footprint.

“Our park is 15 acres,

but it’s very tight,” Gentile told *Amusement Today*. “We’ve become very good at manipulating and figuring out how to get rides into our park. This particular ride was just what the doctor ordered for us.”

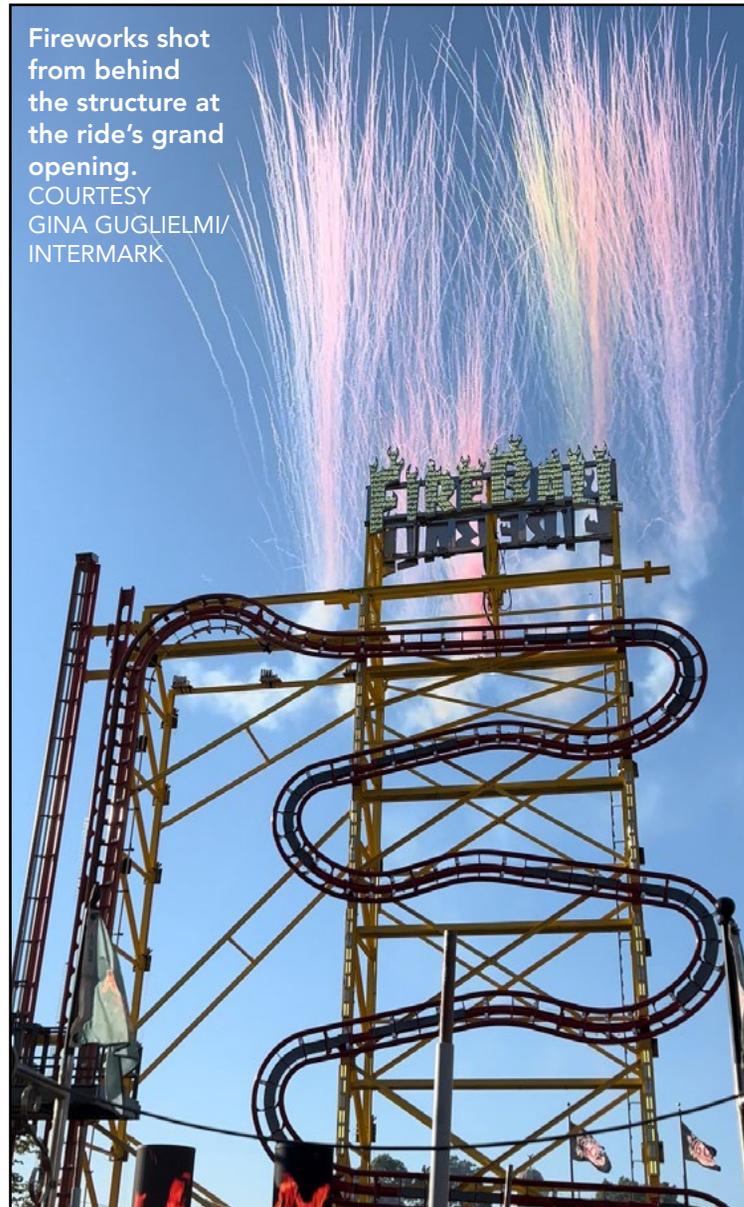
By retiring a kinder carousel and relocating a teacup ride, Fireball found an ideal location within the property. The park used a **Gosetto** structure to make a new shade cover for the teacup ride.

The ride is also praised for its quiet operation.

The Roller Ball line comes with an integrated lift system built into the ride for routine

► See FIREBALL, page 7

Fireworks shot from behind the structure at the ride’s grand opening. COURTESY GINA GUGLIELMI/INTERMARK



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► FIREBALL

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maintenance. “The system is twofold,” said Guglielmi. “It can be used for maintenance to conduct checks on the lift sections, in addition to being used for emergency evacuation in the event of a power failure. It’s also equipped with a power outlet.”

Fireball has decorative features that give it additional flare (pun intended).

“For us, it’s really high. When you’re driving up Route 110, it’s overpowering,” smiled Gentile. “The kids and guests pulling up on our main road — they’re dumbfounded. It drives up their excitement so much.”

The lighting was supplied by **Shenzhen Aglare Lighting Co., Ltd.** out of China. The park networked with the company at the IAAPA Expo.

“At night, when you see the lighting and the flames, it adds another dimension to our kiddieland area. We are nothing short of happy with it,” said Gentile. “It’s so realistic, believe it or not, that in

the middle of the night, someone called the fire department thinking something at Adventureland was on fire.”

Since then, the park has put the lighting on a timer, and it shuts off before midnight.

Gentile credits commu-

nication as the real success to the project. “We’re dealing with America going to Switzerland, Switzerland going to China, and China going to America. But the guys in Switzerland ... if I was sending them an

email on New York time, Roman was right on it. Communication was spot on with these guys,” he said.

“It’s a perfect fit for our park, we have such a diverse age of kids coming,” said Gentile. “It’s been able to

expand the age of our kids. It’s one of the better attractions we’ve put in since Turbulence roller coaster (**Mack Rides**, 2015) and Mystery Mansion from Gosetto.”

2022 is the park’s 60th anniversary season.



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▶ROCKET

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raft ride. “Rocket Rapids takes the guest experience to the next level as it is the first attraction of its genre in Connecticut.”

The innovative attraction also marks the single largest investment in Quassy’s 114-year history and is the fifth major expansion in the water park since it was introduced in 2003.

“It integrates some of the latest technology in waterslides,” Anderson, who is also a park owner, noted. “Water jets actually push the two-person rafts uphill, and riders experience some exhilarating drops and high-banked turns.”

As for the cost of the project, the park official would only say that it eclipses Category 5 Rapids — Extreme Waterslides (2018) and Wooden Warrior roller coaster (2011) — both record investments at the time for Quassy.

Rocket Rapids incorporates ProSlide’s patented RocketBLAST water jet propulsion system. The high-pressure jets thrust rafts up three separate inclines along the fast-paced ride. According to ProSlide, the RocketBLAST technology allows water to stay at the same elevation as it pushes the tubes up the flume with most of the water going over the top of the rise.

In addition, the water coaster features four ProSlide FlyingSAUCER elements for high-speed, accelerating banked turns. The attraction is more than 600 feet in



length and has a capacity of 340 persons per hour.

“The first drop on the ride is nothing short of exhilarating,” Anderson asserted. “And swooping around the turns packs more punch into this marquee attraction. Our guests really love it!”

Anderson’s comments were supported by the fact that a long queue had formed at Rocket Rapids shortly after its opening, complemented by good weather.

“Parents were riding with their children and getting right back in line for more rides!” he observed. “We heard nothing but great comments as they exited the splash pool — exactly what we had hoped for and anticipated with this fabulous addition.”

“Quassy is a small park that can — they have the greatest stuff in the world,” said **Rick Hunter**, chairman and chief executive officer of ProSlide.

Speaking from his office in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, Hunter added, “The Quassy owners understand guest appeal and what real entertainment is.”

An enthusiastic Hunter went on to explain, “There is more happening on this water coaster than any other water ride on the planet. Every split-second some-



The massive Rocket Rapids is the sixteenth waterslide attraction in Splash Away Bay water park. All were provided by ProSlide. COURTESY RON GUSTAFSON

thing changes — it’s the wettest water ride you’ve ever been on. Once you go over the top of each rise the water dumps on you like a surfer’s curl. This is truly as close to a roller coaster as you are going to get on a water ride!”

The installation brings to 16 the number of waterslides in Splash Away Bay water park, all provided by ProSlide. The new raft ride is in an area where the park’s Lakeside Pavilion was situated. The steel pavilion was removed to make way for the project, which will also incorporate additional cabana rentals this summer season.

Rocket Rapids was the name selected for the raft ride in a contest among local and area elementary and middle schools. Park

management made the decision after sorting through the submissions with Mrs. Jessica Papp’s fourth grade homeroom class at Canton Intermediate School, Canton, Conn., declared the winner.

Those students received commemorative T-shirts and park passes from Quassy’s **George Frantzis II**, a park owner, during a ceremony at the school in April.

Quassy dove into the water park business in 2003 when it opened Saturation Station, an interactive family water play area with cascading fountains, two waterslides, water cannons and a huge tipping bucket.

In 2006 two large Tunnel Twister waterslides were installed at the attraction, creating broader guest appeal.

The waterpark was offi-

cially branded Splash Away Bay in 2013 with the addition of three large waterslides and a splash pad for younger children. The park also became known as Quassy Amusement & Waterpark that same year.

Two other additions followed, including Slide City in 2016 with five elements for younger children and Category 5 Rapids — Extreme Waterslides in 2018, which are three huge raft rides launching from one tower.

Splash Away Bay is adjacent to Quassy Beach on Lake Quassapaug and is included in the park’s all-day combo (rides and water park) wristband. Quassy also offers a separate water wristband for those who want to take in just the slides and beach.



Rocket Rapids features four of ProSlides Flying SAUCER elements (above left). The innovative attraction marks the single largest investment in Quassy’s 114-year history. COURTESY RON GUSTAFSON

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► DIABOLICAL

Continued from page 6

nium. In time, Six Flags and B&M built dozens of crowd-pleasing rides.

After a lull of 10 years, the two are back at it again. Dr. Diabolical's Cliffhanger at Six Flags Fiesta Texas is the first collaboration between Six Flags and B&M since 2012, and it's a creative gem.

"The designing of the ride was a very fun and engaging process," said Six Flags Fiesta Texas Park President Jeffrey Siebert. "It was fun to hear everyone's collective ideas contributing to the final ride design, from our Chief Engineer Larry Chickola to fellow fans and enthusiasts to Sophie Bolliger and her team at B&M ... just everyone coming up with ideas to make the ride even more exciting and in some ways to make the ride feel different and perform differently than other dive coasters that are out there."

Siebert is an enthusiast at heart, and he knew he wanted something really remarkable on the project. Goals to take the dive coaster to new levels were carefully crafted. Those pushed boundaries weren't accomplished with record-breaking height or length but with magnifying the forces felt on this genre of ride.

"Just to hear the enthusiasm from their side, along with the excitement we had seen, it was a really fun aspect in designing the ride," said Siebert. "Being the enthusiast that I am, it was fun to geek out for our first ride."

The ride's presence in the park is iconic. It anchors a new plaza area in Crackaxle Canyon Screampunk District,



This airtime hill (above) is one of the dramatic changes in forces on the ride. Animatronics from LifeFormations (inset) in the multiroom preshow tell the story of Dr. Diabolical's maniacal plans. COURTESY SIX FLAGS

and its purposeful placement towers over the midway.

"Crackaxle Canyon has been a hopping place really since the Iron Rattler renovation in 2013," said Siebert. "We wanted a new iconic and signature attraction to welcome guests, knowing we needed additional ride capacity in that area. We also wanted to create something really cool and a different entrance experience to Dr. Diabolical's Cliffhanger."

The project allowed a reimagining of the surrounding area. In honor of the park's 30th anniversary, devoted fans were able to purchase anniversary bricks which are placed front and center in the new plaza. More shade and more seating was put in place. As guests approach, they now are greeted with Dr. Butterscotch's beer truck and a Canyon Smokehouse facility specializing in turkey legs.

Before riding, guests meander through a themed queue. A shaded outdoor portion offers thrill seekers a view of the coaster's

two steep drops. Then riders enter an indoor queue that helps the story of Dr. Diabolical to unfold. The five-room indoor portion repurposes the backstage areas of a former theater that was previously on the site.

"We all love air-conditioning," laughed Siebert. "Just keeping our guests cool is step one, a check mark to create a fun experience. But not only did we want the ride to be a fun physical experience, but we wanted a story to enhance it and make it unique. Dr. Diabolical is her own character, and adding her personality to this fun, multi-room themed experience really sets up the story."

Five animatronics featuring three unique characters were provided by LifeFormations. Despite Dr. Diabolical's claims of offering eternal youth through her elixir, willing participants are warned during the pre-show that her plans are much more sinister. The end-game results in her fiendish machine harnessing the

riders' fears to give life to her monstrous creations. It's all in good, tongue-in-cheek fun, and the added story and theming enhance the ride experience to a higher level.

Siebert noted that even after leaving the show aspects of the indoor queue, Dr. Diabolical continues to taunt guests even through the ride experience and tells passengers her expectations at the end of the thriller's finale.

Once dispatched, riders climb to a height of 150 feet, and a slow U-turn places riders at one of the coaster's signature moments — the hold break. Perched at the precipice, passengers scream as they await the beyond-vertical drop. Two inversions follow turning riders upside down with fluidic grace. A near-vertical drop puts visitors into the second act, which Siebert finds to be the strongest elements.

"The cliffhanger hold really is phenomenal," Siebert told *Amusement Today*. "The way it just pulls out from underneath you and you really don't see the track at 95 degrees — visually, that's just stunning. As for the physical aspects of the ride, by far my favorite is the back half. We really wanted to create it to where the pacing increased and was more dynamic. The 'whoas' going over the airtime hill and the 'ooohs' in the helix — it's forceful. I think the helix is my favorite element; it's just how tight you hug to the ground."

The coaster has some interesting aspects not found on any other B&M ride. The 95-degree first drop is the



company's steepest to date and sets a record for this genre in their portfolio. Also, it is the first coaster to feature seven-across carriages. The park purchased four vehicles but will operate with three. This was intentional as to always be able to run at full capacity when one vehicle is undergoing maintenance.

The erection of the ride was done by Northwest Coasters. The gold supports have a patina finish, with the accents helping it blend into the steampunk aesthetic.

"The park shoehorned it in; it's a tight, tight location in the middle of the park," said Kevin Messick, president, Northwest Coasters. "The park really thought it through. Security guards were out there helping us when the park was open. Honestly, the guests were really good. There were never any complaints. Everyone worked together on it."

His son, Allen Messick, was project manager. "Figuring out crane placement for 65,000 pound and 85,000 pound picks over 100 feet in the air while simultaneously transporting pieces on site and still keeping the site moving forward for all construction fields was a unique challenge that was only achieved through lots of forethought and coordination amongst contractors and the park. It made for a mentally stimulating project that never lacked for new challenges."

Dr. Diabolical's Cliffhanger offered previews in late July and officially opened to the public on July 30.

Six Flags Fiesta Texas is cohost of the 2022 Golden Ticket Awards and attendees will enjoy exclusive ride time on this dynamic new installation.



Fiesta Texas' installation is the only seven-across B&M vehicle. The coaster's helix skims close to the ground (above right) accentuating the speed. COURTESY SIX FLAGS

PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► Glenwood Caverns opens Defiance — page 14 / Birmingham Zoo adds Chance CP Huntington — page 19

Beech Bend Park's season brings new ride, new improvements

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — Beech Bend Park and Splash Lagoon has been showing off its brighter side to guests this season with brand new paving and an abundance of brightly filled flowerpots.

But that is not all that the park is showing off this year. There is a new ride, a new beverage menu item and a new co-general manager, **Sandie Greiner**.

Charlotte Gonzalez, whose family owns and operates the park as well as the adjacent raceway and campground, brought in a **Chance Rides** Thunder Bolt/Alpine Bobs ride this season. It is replacing a popular similar ride, an **Allan Herschell** Flying Bobs, which closed in 2019.

She purchased the ride from **Rye Playland**, Rye, New York.

Guests had missed the former ride and expressed this to Gonzalez. She was happy to be able to supply a favorite.

Along with the new ride, Gonzalez decided during the off-season that it was time to freshen up the park's walkways by repaving. She ended up having all the walkways in the dry ride part of the park repaved.

Along with the new pavement, flower planters were placed at every ride. Flowers were planted during the early part of the season and by mid-July were



For the 2022 season, owners of Beech Bend Park and Splash Lagoon, Bowling Green, Kentucky, decided to repave the entire dry park. Planters were placed by all the rides.

It took a week to plant all the pots but the results have been spectacular.
AT/GARY SLADE



in full bloom.

"We planted flowers for a week," Greiner said. "I am not kidding. They are now spectacular."

Ride operators of each ride where the planters

were located are responsible for watering the flowers.

Also, this year, management at Beech Bend decided to start offering beer on the

► See BEECH BEND, page 12

Beech Bend welcomes Greiner as new co-general manager



Sandy Greiner came on board as the co-general manager at Beech Bend Park and Splash Lagoon in April 2022.
AT/GARY SLADE

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — **Sandie Greiner** is now on board as co-general manager at Beech Bend Park and Splash Lagoon.

Greiner is sharing duties with **Charlotte Gonzalez**, whose family owns and operates the amusement park, the water park as well as the raceway and adjacent campground.

"I came in for this season to help Charlotte with literally everything she does," Greiner said.

She said they would evaluate this year and plan for next year after the 2022 summer season is over.

Greiner comes to Beech Bend from **Sun Splash Family Water Park** in Cape Coral, Florida, where she was manager for 12 years.

She was in the banking business before that.

"But in 2009 and 2010 when the banking business was so crazy, I just wanted to get out."

She ended up being recruited by the city of Cape Coral for the job at the city-owned Sun Splash.

"They wanted a financial person there to turn things around," Greiner said.

She met Gonzalez in 2015 at an industry event. She ran into her again during another industry event, the **World Waterpark Association (WWA) Symposium**, last fall.

"I told her I was leaving Sun Splash," Greiner said.

One thing led to another.

Greiner has helped streamline the cash office, helped create policies and procedures, and is helping with anything involved in running the park.

—Pam Sherborne

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Thunderbolt, a Chance Alpine ride, replaced an Allan Herschell model Flying Bobs that had been removed.
COURTESY BEECH BEND PARK

► **BEECH BEND**
Continued from page 11

menu. A concession in the dry part of the park and a concession in Splash Lagoon were revamped in order to serve these beverages. The racetrack also is serving beer.

“Beer sales have been going a little better at the racetrack,” said Greiner, “but we are seeing that it is catching on in other parts of the park.”

Greiner began working as the co-general manager with Gonzalez in April. She came to Beech Bend from **Fun Splash Family Water Park**, Cape Coral, Florida, where she had been working as general manager for 12 years. She is helping Gonzalez in all aspects of the operations.

With her financial background, she said she has helped streamline the cash office.

“I feel like it is much more efficient now,” Greiner said.

She has helped with policies and procedures for employees.

She also said they were fully staffed in mid-July thanks to the marketing department's efforts in recruitment.

“Our marketing team posted on Facebook that we were still hiring,” Greiner said. “We did boost that post, so we had a little money into it. But we ended up hiring 26 people just from that post.”

Guests at Beech Bend like the new and they like the tried and true, such as some of the live entertainment at the park. This year that includes the Beech Bend Blitz, the park's game show; Wild Bill Hiccup's Wild West Show and **Dinky Gowen**, Master of Illusion. Another popular attraction is the 18-hole miniature golf course.

The Friday Night Lights events have continued this year. The park stays open until 8:30 p.m. on Friday nights during the season so guests can experience the park when all the lights are aglow.

There also are special promotional days that run throughout the season.

Located on 379 acres, Beech Bend has been providing family entertainment since 1898 beginning with a place to picnic among the Beech trees by the Barren River. It was originally owned by the Garvin family. In 1984, Dallas Jones and his wife, **Alfreda Jones**, Gonzalez's parents, purchased the racetrack. Three years later, they purchased the rest of the park.

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Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park puts roller coaster on mountain

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

GLENWOOD SPRINGS, Colorado — **Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park** has an advantage — and challenge! — of working with the mountainous terrain. Since opening in 1999, the park has grown and frequent additions have made use of its location. Some attractions offer magnificent views from a gentle ride or pulse-pounding adrenaline from a thrill ride positioned close to the edge of a cliff.

Enter **Defiance**, the park's newest roller coaster. Not only is it a great name for a coaster, but it pays tribute to the original name of the town of Glenwood Springs. Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park boasted the first **Wiegand** alpine coaster in North America in 2005. A small **Zierer** Tivoli coaster and a relocated **S&MC** Hurricane coaster were placed on relatively flat spots. Supplied by **Gerstlauer**, **Defiance** is a custom Euro-Fighter that pushes the park into a higher bracket.

"Defiance is the largest investment in the history of the park," said Steve Beckley, co-owner. "This installation is even more expensive than the Gondola."

Gerstlauer is represented in North America by **Ride Entertainment**. That company was also called upon to erect the ride.

"Building on the mountain was definitely a challenge," said **Amanda Mercado**, COO, installations and business development, Ride Entertainment. "The site was quite raw, completely undeveloped mountainside with an elevation change of 100 feet across the site. An



Defiance is a custom Euro-Fighter supplied by Gerstlauer. The ride begins with a vertical lift skyward (inset).
COURTESY GLENWOOD CAVERNS ADVENTURE PARK

average coaster site we work with might have 10 to 20 feet of overall elevation change throughout the entire site!"

"All mountaintop installations are difficult due to the extra requirements on the design and installation," added Beckley.

"That was just the challenging conditions of the ride site. We still had to get all of the steel up a 1,700 foot elevation change from the storage and staging location to the ride site," Mercado told *Amusement Today*. "It was just as challenging to get all that steel up to the site as it was placing the steel from the truck to the final position. Every detail

of how the pieces were transported, where the equipment was placed and sequence of assembly had to be considered and planned in advance. Even with all of that pre-planning, we were still at the mercy of the mountain weather, which included snow, ice and gale-force winds."

"The 77-plus foundation footers were excavated during the heart of the winter months," said **Nancy Heard**, general manager, Glenwood Caverns. "We had to do extra road work to keep the access road passable for concrete trucks. Concrete trucks could only be partially loaded due to the steep grades. We had to flatten spots for crane pads. Semi-trucks bringing large columns were not able to turn around once they got to the top, so we had to lift their trailers with cranes in order to turn them around. The spring brought the windiest spring in 40 years, which impacted our ability to operate cranes to assemble the ride. Crews were coming in as early as 5 a.m. in order to get the most out of the day before the winds picked up."

Transporting the ride up

the mountain was part of the challenge, but staging it also required a solution.

"Pre-planning was an important part of the success of the installation," said Mercado. "Because there was extremely limited access on the site, the crane could only be placed in three different positions. All of the lifts and sequencing was thoroughly thought out to ensure we could still access what we needed without building ourselves into a corner. Unfortunately, there are no solutions for poor weather. This was one of the windiest spring seasons on record."

"It is a proud moment for me and certainly one that will be a highlight of my career," said Heard. "It has been an absolute pleasure to work with Gerstlauer and Ride Entertainment, [both are] truly professional and competent organizations."

Defiance began operating for guests on July 1.

Regarding his first ride, Beckley said his reactions were mixed: "I was amazed at the views down the valley and at the same time filled with fear waiting on the first drop!"

"My favorite moment is the top of the lift hill when you become upright, after having ascended the lift hill on your back looking into the blue sky, anticipating the moment when you reach the top," said Heard. "The views, although brief, are spectacular. Across the valley you see the Colorado River and Roaring Fork River valleys and the town of Glenwood Springs."

The steel coaster features a vertical lift rising 75 feet above the ground, but by taking advantage of the terrain, the drop is longer at 110 feet. To make it even more thrilling, the drop is taken at an exceptionally steep 102.3 degrees. The top speed is 56 mph.

"The guests have been nothing but thrilled!" said Heard. "It is fun to watch them in the queue area as they wait to board the ride. The guests watch as the train climbs the lift hill and then disappears to the delighted squeals of riders and then returns into the brake run directly in front of the queue with the riders faces telling the whole story. It is a testament to a good ride when riders jump right back into the queue!"



Passengers are flipped upside down while high in the mountains of Colorado.

COURTESY GLENWOOD CAVERNS ADVENTURE PARK



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Fun Spot America tackles huge expansions, additions for 2022

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO — All three Fun Spot America theme parks had a record 2021.

So, with that in mind, John Arie Jr., owner and CEO of the family-owned company, along with his executive team made some decisions.

"We were blessed with such a strong year last year, we decided to reinvest," Arie said.

The reinvestment has been as strong as the record 2021 season. All three parks, Atlanta, Georgia; Kissimmee, Florida; and Orlando, Florida, received or will soon receive new attractions and other improvements.

The largest amount of money was spent in the Atlanta park. That is where the \$13 million Rocky Mountain Construction ArieForce One roller coaster is being constructed. Arie expects the coaster to be completed sometime this fall.

"That project has been delayed by about eight months," Arie said. "We have had to invest \$5 million more in property changes to satisfy the county."

Fayette County officials required Arie to build a new parking lot and install new storm draining.

"We had to remove a miniature golf course for the storm drainage," he



Fun Spot owner and CEO John Arie Jr. purchased a Tilt-a-Whirl (above) from Larson International for Fun Spot America Atlanta this year. Fun Spot America Orlando guests are enjoying the new Moser spring ride called the Firecracker (right). COURTESY FUN SPOT AMERICA

said. "Basically, we had to remove one income source to build another."

Yet, excitement is in the air for ArieForce One. Fun Spot officials have said this coaster will have the largest zero-G stall in America when completed.

The coaster will feature 16 airtime moments, four inversions and a dive loop that has been dubbed the raven-truss dive. It will also feature two zero-G rolls, one over the park's arcade. The ride is 100 seconds long with a 146-foot-tall first drop at an angle of 83 degrees. The top speed is 64 m.p.h. Other stats include 3,400 feet of track and a 154-foot-tall lift hill.

"We named the coaster ArieForce One in honor of

my father," Arie said.

His father, John Arie, is the founder of Fun Spot America but now is retired.

"We expect this coaster to be among the top five in the nation," Arie said.

Along with the coming of the coaster, Arie said they have added a new Tilt-A-Whirl from Larson International at the Atlanta park. He expected to receive a new Larson Flying Scooters as well.

Other additions to the Atlanta park included two new food trucks, one selling funnel cakes, the other fried chicken. Both are from Tecstar Mobile Kitchens.

Arie was anticipating the arrival of a brand new Bertazzon Rock and Roll ride at the Kissimmee Fun



Spot in late July. Hopes were to have it up and operational by the end of the month.

The Kissimmee location also received new Shaller Go-Karts and a Tecstar fried chicken food truck.

Guests visiting the Orlando Fun Spot recently were able to experience that location's new Moser spring ride called the Firecracker.

Arie was very impressed with the Firecracker's lighting package. The lighting package of the new ARM Vertigo ride, which was installed for this season, was just as impressive.

The Orlando park was to receive new Shaller Go-Karts

sometime in August or September.

Also in Orlando, a new \$400,000 office building was completed and now houses the sales and marketing team.

"All three parks received new shade structures," Arie said. "We spent between \$300,000 and \$400,000 for these."

The shade structures came from Creative Shade Solutions.

It has been a busy year at Fun Spot, so much so Arie humorously said, "I think I'll take next year off, no expansions, nothing new."

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All three Fun Spot America Theme Parks had new shade structures installed for the 2022 season. The shade structures were supplied by Creative Shade Solutions. COURTESY FUN SPOT AMERICA

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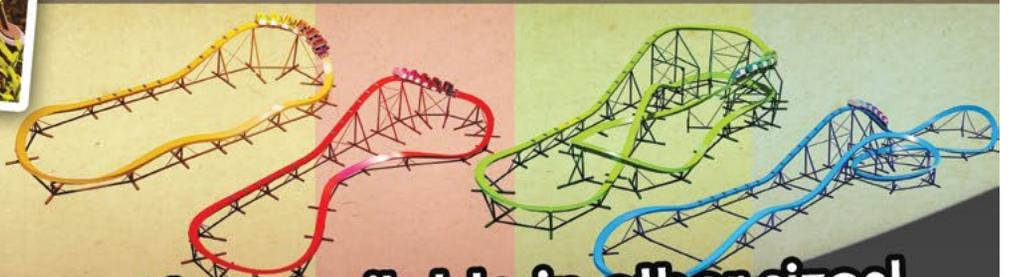
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Power	100 kW
Height Req.	36" [91 cm]

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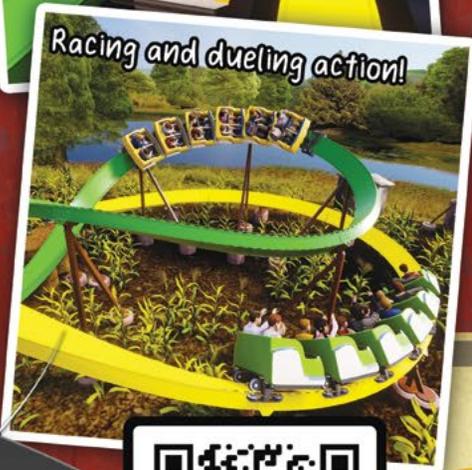
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Kennedy Space Center opens a future gateway of space travel

AT: Pam Sherborne
 psherborne@amusementtoday.com

MERRIT ISLAND, Fla. — The **Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex** has brought to life the future of space travel with the launching of its new attraction, Gateway: The Deep Space Launch Complex.

Designers and planners of the new 55,000-square-foot, multi-level complex wanted the focus to be on the present and future of collaborative space exploration. It features artifacts, exhibits, special effect displays and a motion theater to give guests the feeling of traveling through space.

"Gateway: The Deep Space Launch Complex is a bold new attraction where guests will personally experience NASA's next giant leap and beyond, highlighting all the excitement within the space industry," said **Therrin Protze**, chief operating officer, Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex, during the opening ceremony on June 15.

The facade of the new building, located adjacent to

the Rocket Garden, is designed to capture attention with the outside walls accented with iridescent panels of bright turquoise that alternate with shades of purple, replicating the constant motion and brilliant colors of the universe.

Upon entering Gateway, visitors are greeted with a futuristic design setting with actual flight-flown artifacts and full-scale models surrounding them on the floor and suspended from the ceiling.

Some of those exhibits include Orion Exploration Flight Test-1 Capsule (flight flown); Orion Heatshield Tiles; **SpaceX** Cargo Dragon COTS-2 (flight flown); L10 Upper-stage Rocket Engine; **Sierra Space** Dream Chaser (full-scale model); **Lockheed Martin** Space Habitat (full-scale mockup); **Boeing** Spacesuit and a Boeing Starliner Simulator (full-scale model) and NASA Space Launch System (SLS) rocket (scale model).

Gateway's second floor



Gateway: The Deep Space Launch Complex features actual flight flown artifacts and full-scale models as well as four motion theaters that take visitors on an adventure in space. COURTESY KENNEDY SPACE CENTER VISITOR COMPLEX

features a 30-foot-tall Robotic Space Explorers Interactive Wall with interactive, touchscreen displays, where guests can learn about 40 different satellites and probes in space. Guests also can visit the HoloTube presentation station to learn about the high-powered James Webb Space Telescope.

At Spaceport KSC, guests are transported to an airport of the future. They are immersed

in the sounds and sights of a future space airport. They can board one of four "spaceships," which are two-story motion theaters, for one of four journeys: Cosmic Wonders, Daring Explorers, Red Planet or Uncharted Worlds. Each distinct destination allows for the possibility of a different experience with each visit.

The motion theaters seat up to 20 people on two rows at different levels, so

all seats allow unobstructed views of the screen. The experiences last about four and one-half minutes.

Spaceport KSC was created by **MediaMation** and the films for the rides were created by **MouseTrappe**.

According to Spokesperson **Lauren Eisele Walbert**, there is an observation bay in the Spaceport KSC that allows guests who are unable to transfer to the ride seats or have restrictions or sensitivity to motion to experience the full ride without the movement.

Last but not least is the Space Bowl Bistro, a new restaurant featuring bistro bowls, including refreshing acai bowls and choose-your-protein savory bowls.

BRPH, a nationally ranked architecture, engineering and construction firm, worked alongside NASA and **Delaware North Parks and Resorts**, the company which operates the complex, to develop the project since its 2017 inception. .

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Birmingham Zoo adds new electric Chance CP Huntington train

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — The **Birmingham Zoo** launched a brand-new **Chance CP Huntington** train this season and, in keeping with the zoo's conservation efforts, the new train is totally electric.

This is the now the second CP Huntington train on the 122-acre zoo site. The first was installed in 2008. **Red Diamond Coffee and Tea** company, a sponsor of the park, donated both trains. The 2008 train is called the Red Diamond Coffee. The new train is called the Red Diamond Tea.

The zoo opened in 1955 and has grown steadily since. It is home to approximately 550 animals of 180 different specials from from six continents.

In describing the new Tea train, officials said it is definitely one of a kind. Its locomotive weighs 6,100



The new CP Huntington train — named **Red Diamond Tea** — is completely electric with zero emissions. COURTESY BIRMINGHAM ZOO

pounds and coaches 3,300 pounds empty. It seats between 52 and 104 visitors depending on the number of children and adults. It also is ADA accessible.

It took 32 weeks to build. The lithium-ion battery powered model produces no emissions, has no fuel costs, thereby reducing its carbon footprint.

An integrated audiovi-

sual program presents educational messages, conservation information and animal facts during the ride. The 2008 train was retrofitted to match the same audiovisual features of the the newer one.

Because the electric train does not make any detectable noise, an audio system mimics the sounds of a steam engine train.

The ultimate speed for

the greatest satisfaction of its passengers is between five and six miles per hour.

"Red Diamond has been a proud partner to the Birmingham Zoo for nearly 15 years," said **Emily Wood Bowron**, Red Diamond's vice president of strategic marketing, during the announcement of the new train.

Birmingham Zoo president and CEO **Chris**

FAST FACTS

Produces zero emissions and has no fuel costs, reducing carbon footprint

Integrated AV delivers conservation information and animal facts

Audio system mimics the sounds of a steam engine train.

Capacity up to 104 passengers depending on mix of adults and children.

Pfefferkorn said: "We couldn't do what we do without partners like Red Diamond Coffee & Tea. As a nonprofit, we count on investments like this from our community to ensure our guests have the most enjoyable and impactful experiences possible relating to wild animals and wild places."



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Wilderness at the Smokies adding Extreme Engineering Cloud Coaster



ATHENS, Texas — Extreme Engineering announced the installation of its Cloud Coaster model — an indoor suspended roller coaster — for Wilderness at the Smokies in Sevierville, Tennessee. The Cloud Coaster is designed to interact with other attractions throughout the adventure park. Situated within the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains, Cloud Coaster riders will be suspended above various attractions such as a themed mini golf, laser-tag and a ropes course. The new attractions will be completed for 2023. Extreme Engineering's three-time award-winning family coaster will be mostly suspended in the adventure facility's ceiling, reducing the amount of necessary structure needed for operation. The ride vehicle will allow children as small as 40 inches in height with a maximum weight of 250 pounds per seat. COURTESY EXTREME ENGINEERING

Activate Games coming to American Dream

BERGEN COUNTY, N.J. — Expanding its lineup of attractions, **American Dream** announced that **Activate Games** will open a 5,000-square-foot east coast flagship location at the expansive mall.

Activate Games takes entertainment into the future by fusing technology and full-body activity together to create live-action gaming experiences. Teams — made

up of two to five players — are challenged as they choose from over 500 different games and difficulty levels. An RFID wristband tracks participants' scores and progress throughout the experience making it perfect for a casual night out with friends, corporate team-building activities, or intense competition.

"We're thrilled to add Activate Games to the growing list of unique experienc-

es at American Dream," said **Don Ghermezian**, American Dream's CEO. "American Dream is constantly evolving its entertainment lineup to delight our multi-generational audience."

"[American Dream] is the perfect place for us to open our East Coast flagship," added **Bryce Anderson**, owner of Activate Games.

•americandream.com



COURTESY FIVE STAR PARKS

Kentucky's Malibu Jack's acquired by Five Star Parks

LEXINGTON, Ky. — **Five Star Parks & Attractions** has completed the acquisition of three locations of **Malibu Jack's Indoor Theme Parks** in the cities of Lexington, Louisville, and Ashland, Kentucky. This brings Five Star's holdings to 16 family entertainment centers in eight states.

Since June 2021, Five Star has sought out FEC partners that are already employing creative practices within the industry but have a desire to grow or improve and can therefore benefit from the expertise and financial backing offered by Five Star and its leadership team. The new arrangement ensures a continued relationship with the original Malibu Jack's leadership team, which will build and open additional parks under the Five Star brand.

Five Star was drawn to Malibu Jack's because of the company's innovative approach to creating indoor theme parks by transforming vacant buildings into entertainment spaces rather than building new venues from the ground up. The **Hatton** family — brothers **Steve, Terry** and **Jeff** — opened the first Malibu Jack's location in Lexington nine years ago, then expanded into Louisville. Both sites quickly gained popularity and were relocated to the two larger facilities that exist today. The third site opened in December 2021 in Ashland.

"Our goal has always been to find a way that we, as entrepreneurs, could also make a positive impact on our communities, turning what had been an eyesore or empty store into a place that brings joy to residents and visitors alike," said Terry Hatton. "We love that challenge, and what appeals to us about this partnership with Five Star is that we'll be able to expand our reach, bringing our original vision to families across the country."

Though attractions vary by site, the Malibu Jack's indoor theme parks feature bowling alleys, go-kart tracks, miniature golf, laser tag, a variety of rides, arcades and a signature kids' play area known as Bounce Beach. Each new site creates about 100 jobs for its local community and prides itself on offering a clean, safe and fun environment for family entertainment.

"This is an exciting time for the brand," said **David Hasler**, the CEO of Malibu Jack's. "In the last six months we'd been preparing our team for growth — realigning roles, optimizing systems and enhancing existing processes. We are energized about working alongside the Five Star team to realize Malibu Jack's brand potential."

"With Malibu Jack's, the Hatton family found a way to not only deliver on a promise of year-round family fun but also to repurpose existing buildings and make a positive impact on their communities," said **John Dunlap**, Five Star's CEO. "We look forward to collaborating with them to see what we can do to make Malibu Jack's a household name from coast to coast."

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California's Alameda County Fair enjoys successful run in 110th year

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

PLEASANTON, Calif. — Great weather helped the Alameda County Fair enjoy a successful 19-day run, returning to its original summer dates for the first time since 2019.

"We experienced excellent California weather, days were sunny and clear and evenings cooled down to around 70 degrees," said **Andrea Stillwell**, director, business development and marketing with **Butler Amusements, Inc.**

The theme of the 2022 fair that ran from June 17 to July 10 was "Road to Summer." Attendance was 418,553.

The Fairfield, California, operator brought in 47 total rides with 31 for what the fair designates "Majorland" and 16 rides for the "Kidland" area. There were 35 games and nine food stands. The top three rides were Zillerator (**Pinfari Zyklon**) coaster, White Water Flume and the Giant Wheel. The Hawaiian Express Himalaya was new to that spot this year.

"Alameda is always wonderful to work with. We enjoy excellent communication with their management team and look forward to serving as their carnival for many years to come," said Stillwell.

"Positive," said **Tiffany Cadrette**, marketing and communications manager regarding the carnival operator. "It's a great relationship we have with them. They are great to



Since 1999, Butler Amusements, Inc., has had the Alameda County Fair contract. This year they brought in 47 rides or which 16 were situated in the Kidland area. The top rides were the Zillerator coaster, White Water Flume and the Giant Wheel. The Hawaiian Express Himalaya was new to that spot this year. COURTESY ALAMEDA COUNTY FAIR

work with." Butler has had the contract since 1999.

Promotions and special days included a pet food drive on June 22 that benefitted the **Valley Humane Society**. Depending on what fairgoers brought, they could receive free general admission and \$1 rides until 5 p.m. There was a Senior Day June 24 for those 62+ gaining free general admission until 5 p.m. A Feed the Need food drive on June 29 yielded free general admission and \$1 rides until 5 p.m. with the donation of four non-perishable food items per person that benefitted **Alameda County Community Food Bank**. July 4 was First Responder's Day, offering free general admis-



sion with ID until 3 p.m. July 6 was Dollar Ride Day, while every Thursday was \$2 fair food bites on select fun-sized fair treats. Both were until 5 p.m. Finally, military appreciation was all day, every day, providing free general fair admission

with valid military ID.

A mix of traditional and online media promotion was utilized in 2022.

The fair increased sanitization stations throughout the fairgrounds, monitoring all county guidelines. Butler encouraged social distanc-

ing on the midway. On the fairs' Know Before You Go web page was a section containing its health and safety entry policy.

A few highlights included a new nightly drone show, the return of horse racing with 13 days of live racing, along with special events including a brew fest, the LGBTQ celebration Out at the Fair, a Junior Livestock Auction and a Blues Fest and Fiesta at the Fair.

New foods offered by some of the 80 food purveyors included hot **Cheetos** pizza, oysters on a stick, bao buns, Hawaiian bowls and bubble waffles.

Fairgoers brought their appetites, consuming lots of classic fair food above 2019 figures, including corn dogs – 61,247 (up 73%), BBQ turkey legs – 13,115 (up 2%), burgers – 11,937 (up 103%), funnel cakes – 25,067, cotton candy – 13,356 (up 175%), candy apples – 973 (up 20%) and deep-fried **Twinkies** – 803 (up 2%).

On the grandstand were **38 Special, Ginuwine, Clay Walker, Blue Oyster Cult, Sheila E, Great White** and **Con Funk Shun**. There were also numerous tribute band acts along with free entertainment on other stages and strolling acts throughout the grounds.

"The Road to Summer was a fun ride, packed with summer traditions and memories made," said **Jerome Hoban**, CEO of the **Alameda County Fairgrounds**. "We are thankful to all our amazing guests and community members who came out to enjoy the fair and we can't wait to make more memories next year."

The Alameda County Fair is operated by the nonprofit **Alameda County Agricultural Fair Association**, without any tax funding from the government. It is ranked one of the Top 50 North American fairs and the 7th largest fair in California. The fairgrounds are home to the oldest one-mile racetrack in America.

As of press time, the 2023 fair dates had not been announced.

•annual.alamedacountyfair.com



Great weather during the 19-day run of the Alameda County Fair resulted in over 418,000 attendees to the northern California venue, located in the Amador Valley, in the East Bay region of the San Francisco Bay Area. COURTESY ALAMEDA COUNTY FAIR



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New attendance record achieved at 2022 Red River Valley Fair

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

WEST FARGO, N.D. — When all was said and done, 139,097 people attended the 10-day **Red River Valley Fair**. “This was up from last year and a new record was set,” said **Elizabeth Birkemeyer**, director of marketing and events for the July 8 -17 event. The new record was about 2,000 more folks on the grounds.

“It was hot (80-90 degrees) for most of the fair, with some rain on two of the ten days. The fair remained open during operating hours as normal for all 10 days,” said Birkemeyer regarding the weather.

Crabtree Amusements, based out of Austin, Texas, brought in 38 rides, with 15 of those kiddie ones. The show had a few games and four food stands.

“Some of the rides with the longest lines were the Giant Wheel (**Chance Rides**), Ring of Fire (Fire Ball, **Larson**), and Genesis (**Wisdom Rides of America**),” said Birkemeyer.

“Revenue was down from the record set last year, but not much. The weather was off and on,” said **Pat Crabtree**, owner.

“We enjoy having Crabtree at our fair. [They are] great to work with and provide great experiences for our customers!” said Birkemeyer.

Crabtree had an equally positive experience. “It’s great to work with them.



There were no problems at all. We enjoy it there,” said **Sarah Bertozzi**, manager.

Special promotions included half-off gate admission and carnival wristbands; \$2 Tuesday with \$2 per ride and \$2 gate admission and \$20 Day — gate admission and ride wristband for \$20 per person. The fair was open daily starting at 11:00 am.

A first for the fair this year was one of the beer variety. “We collaborated with a local brewery, **Fargo**

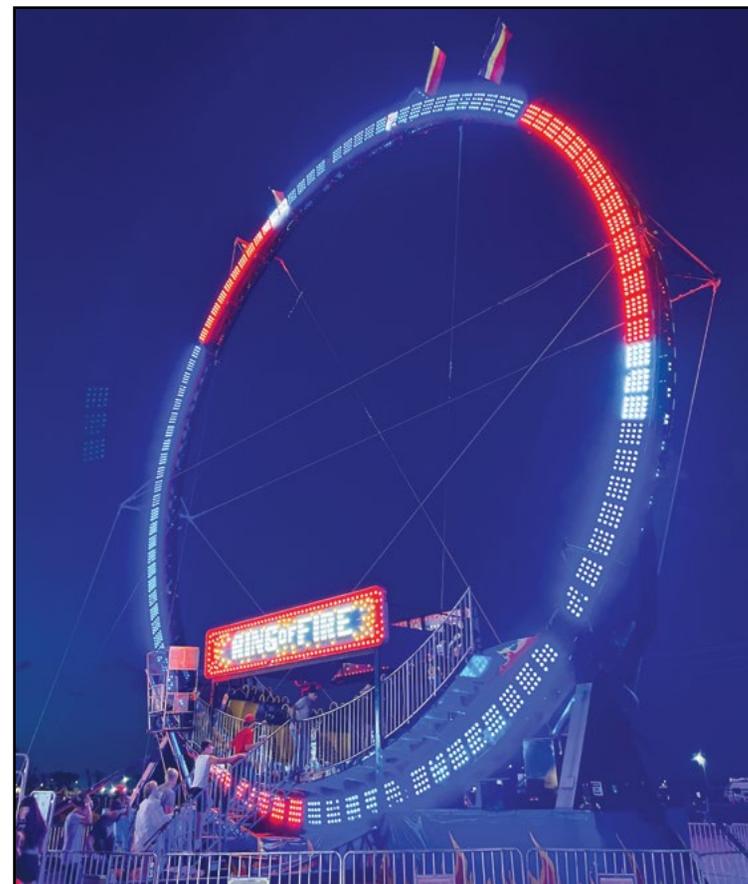
A new attendance record was set with 2,000 more fairgoers this year than in previous editions. Over 139,000 attended during the 10-day run. Ring of Fire is the name Crabtree calls their **Larson Fire Ball** (above right), one of the more popular rides at the event.
COURTESY RED RIVER VALLEY FAIR

Brewing Company, to make Fair Beer, a blueberry blonde ale that is exclusive to the fairgrounds,” said Birkemeyer.

Regarding the media mix and advertising budget for the fair, she said, “Half of our budget goes to digital advertising (social media, Google, etc.) and the other half goes to more traditional advertising like radio, billboards, newspaper, etc.”

Some of the more unusual food items were steak tacos, specialty big donuts and apple pie egg rolls.

Free entertainment throughout the grounds



included Goat Mountain, Swifty Swine pig races, glassblowing, STEM center, mobile dairy classroom, Tiger Encounter and Dangerous Feats of Comedy. Entertainment on the grandstand included **Tim McGraw**, **Neal McCoy**, **Jason Derulo**, **Walker Hayes** and the **Dokken Lynch Reunion Tour**, with **Winger**, **Lita Ford**, **Sweet** and **Steelheart**.

Cody Cashman, CEO of the **Red River Valley Fair Association**, spoke to *InForum* about how they are planning the 2023 edition right now, during the current fair. His goals

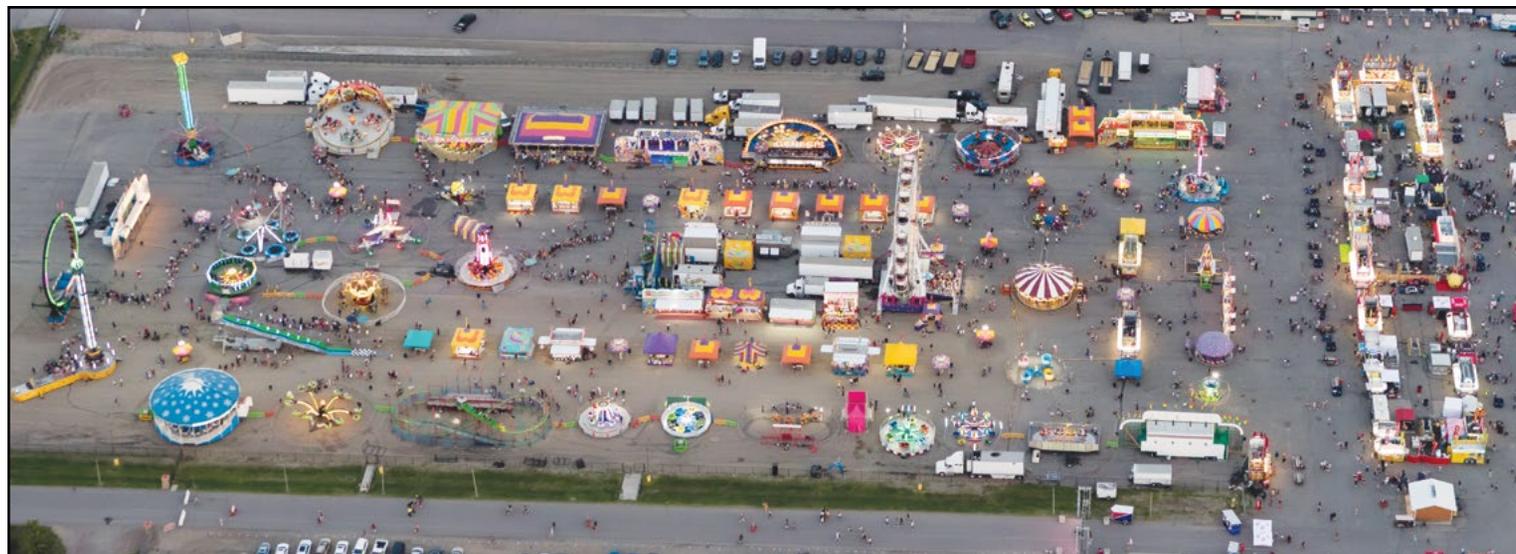
include securing a stand-up comedian, which the fair has never had and offering a kids show as well.

“I want this place to be North Dakota **Disneyland**,” Cashman said. “I want people to want to come here, bring their families — this is their fair. I want them to be proud of it, and so we’re not done. We got a lot of improvements to make.”

Home to the Red River Valley Fair, Big Iron Farm Show, Lost in the Valley Corn Maze & Pumpkin Patch, and the Red River Valley Speedway, The Red River Valley Fair Association is dedicated to providing a safe, multi-use complex that is entertaining, educational and sets the standards for excellence in enriching lives.

Dates for 2023 are set for July 7 – 16.

• redrivervalleyfair.com



The aerial image at left shows the neatly arranged Crabtree midway. The Texas company brought in 38 rides, 15 of which were kiddie offerings.

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Rachel Beckerman
Marketing & Brand Manager
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On the Midway: Hebron Fire Department

HEBRON, Md. — Most fire department carnivals are run by a contracted ride provider to bring them on property for the duration of the event. However, there are a small amount of fire departments that own, maintain, store and operate their own collection of amusement rides.

Such is the case of the Hebron Fireman's Carnival, Hebron, Maryland, that started in 1926. Early on there were no rides. The oldest ride is a 1965 **Herschell** three-abreast carousel. The newest attraction is a **Moonwalk USA** Moon Bounce, installed in 2020. The carnival has continued to grow with all proceeds used to improve fire fighting activities and community projects.

The 96-year-old carnival is on the site of campgrounds where for decades hundreds of people attended revival services each summer, some living there during the two-week event.

The 10 rides in addition to the carousel, include a **Schiff** coaster, **Eli Bridge** #5 Ferris Wheel, **Eli Scrambler**, **Sellner** Tilt a Whirl, **Hampton** combo flat ride (motorcycle, car, dune buggy, etc), **Clown** swing (**Smith & Smith Manufacturing**), **Herschell** car ride, **Mangels** pony cart and **Duce** bumper cars that are in a permanent building.

The 50-member fire department, with a carnival committee, also operates nine games and five food joints. The carnival typically runs three or four weekends each year, starting in mid-June, Thursday through Saturday. Of course, Bingo is a long-standing tradition where players pack into the bench seats to play the game. Three lively and entertaining Bingo callers help keep the crowd coming back for more. Weekdays, up to 800 people attend the carnival. On weekends, it can reach near 2,000.

Kippy Taylor, whose family once ran a traveling operation, puts up the rides and does maintenance on them. "This is great for the community. It's more of a community service for the town. It's sweet that people put all the money [raised] back in. We don't want to be commercialized. We want to keep it local."

Other fire companies in the mid-Atlantic with their own carnival ride equipment include **Sharptown** (Maryland) **Fire Department** that has 14 rides in a 160,000-square-foot building. There are at least two known operating in Pennsylvania: **Millville Fire Department** and **Orangeville Fire Department**. They each own a few rides.

—B. Derek Shaw



PHOTOS AT/SUE NICHOLS

WATER PARKS & RECREATION

▶ World's Largest Swimming Lesson more successful than ever — pages 47-48

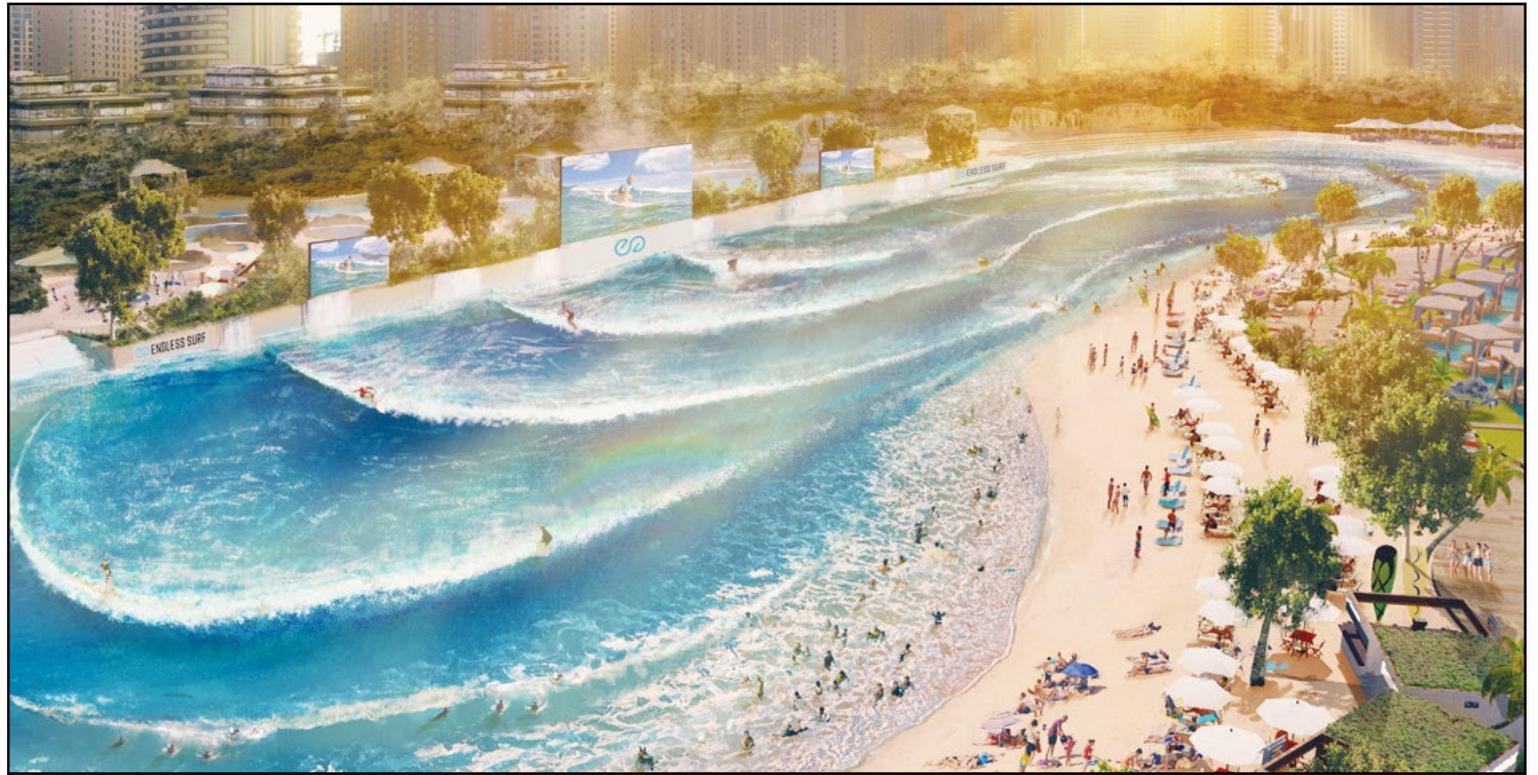
WhiteWater West's Endless Surf teams with Italy's Myrtha Pools

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

RICHMOND, B.C., Canada — Endless Surf, WhiteWater West's next generation of surf pools, has partnered with Myrtha Pools of Italy to offer stainless steel pool technology for use in the construction of surf lagoons.

Myrtha brings with it nearly 60 years of pool-building experience at world-renowned resorts and leisure developments. The company has an international portfolio that includes a range of gold-medal competition venues and is known for its work on Olympic swimming pools in Atlanta, Beijing, London and Rio. Myrtha Pools can be found in community centers, water parks, university campuses, cruise ships, medical centers, camping grounds and sports clubs in more than 70 countries all around the world. The company uses stainless steel and laminated PVC instead of concrete which offers a cost-effective, long-lasting and more sustainable solution. The Myrtha option for Endless Surf comes with a 25-year warranty.

Paul Chutter, Endless Surf president, highlighted the natural fit for the partnership by saying, "As many of our Endless Surf projects are starting to enter construction phases, we are



The heart-shaped Endless Surf pool can send waves in both directions (above). Myrtha Pools utilizes stainless steel walls with laminated PVC (below) to avoid the problems sometimes associated with concrete pools such as cracking and splitting. COURTESY ENDLESS SURF, MYRTHA POOLS

thrilled about our new partnership with Myrtha Pools and all the benefits it brings to our clients and their developments. At Endless Surf, we are focused on offering a product that delivers and lasts a lifetime without having to address maintenance issues down the line. Having a pool-building partner with the same relentless commitment to innovation is a must. Plus, with Myrtha's history in competitive sports at the highest level, this partnership in surf is a no-brainer."

Traditional surf lagoon pools sometimes face issues

with liners splitting or cracking of concrete resulting in leaks. These issues can cause lengthy downtime and pool closures. Pairing the Endless Surf system with Myrtha's more durable pool construction can offer increased reliability, ensuring continued smooth operations with minimal downtime.

Roberto Colletto, CEO of Myrtha Pools said: "We're so proud to provide our products and solutions to Endless Surf projects as we enter the surf park space with them. With our Myrtha Pools technology — and more than 60 years of history and innovation — the Endless Surf lagoon is guaranteed to be waterproof, sustainable and long-lasting. This partnership brings to the surf park the most advanced solutions for reducing the impact on the environment while delivering natural and aesthetic traits, and to outperform other technologies over the long run."

In addition to providing the shapes and contours for the surf lagoon, Myrtha's engineers are also con-

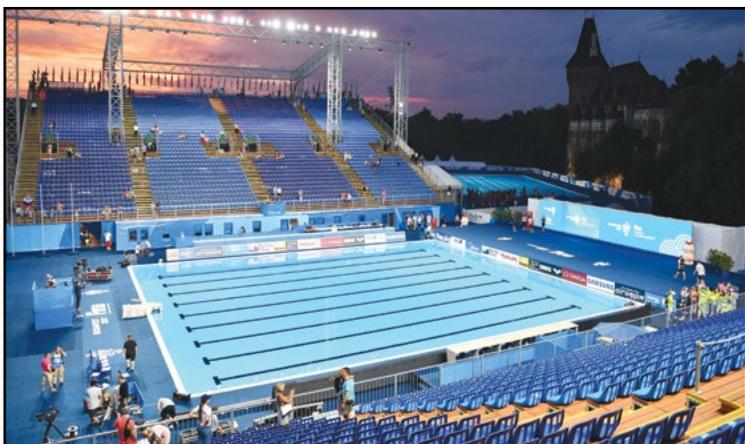


tributing design solutions to the pneumatic caisson framework, the chambers responsible for generating waves. This idea only adds to the efficiency and unity of Myrtha's contribution to the Endless Surf concept.

Myrtha Pools made its first splash in the aquatics market back in 1961 with a project near Garda Lake, Italy. Since that time, Myrtha has transformed the aquatics industry worldwide, with innovative pool design, breakthrough technology and game-changing efficiency.

Endless Surf was introduced in early 2020 as the latest in continuous wave generation technology. It

capitalized on WhiteWater's four decades of expertise in aquatic engineering and design experience. The wave generating machine can provide an endless supply of different types of waves with instructions from a computer. Its heart-shaped pool design is scalable in size, with a maximum width of 1,000 feet in a five-acre pool. The machine can provide waves in both directions from the center of the pool, with a wave lasting up to 26 seconds from the beginning to the end of the ride. The pool can accommodate 75 surfers at a time, with waves potentially getting pumped out every eight seconds.



Myrtha Pools has nearly 60 years of pool-building experience and is known for its state-of-the-art pools at competition venues. COURTESY MYRTHA POOLS

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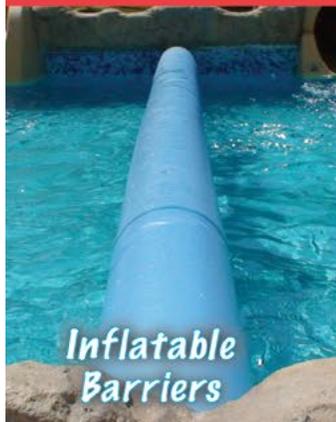
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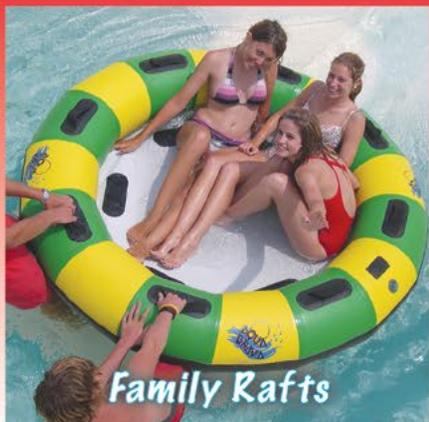
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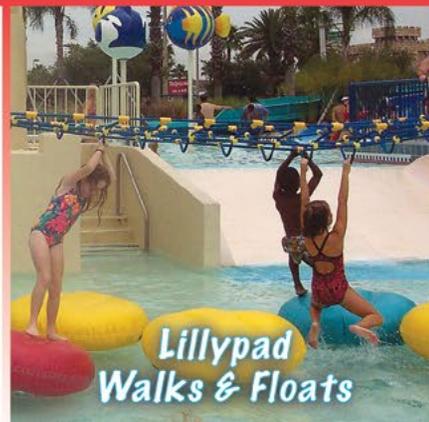
Inflatable Barriers



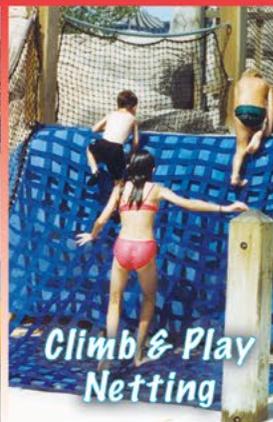
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BUSINESS & NEWSMAKERS

▶ Market Watch — page 32 / Highly-themed Lost Island Theme Park opens in Iowa — page 34

Cedar Fair sells Great America land, will operate under new lease

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

SANDUSKY, Ohio — On June 27, Cedar Fair announced it had sold the land at its California's Great America amusement park and plans to close the park. Cedar Fair elected to sell the land to Prologis, Inc. (NYSE: PLD), a Bay Area-based logistics real estate company, for approximately \$310 million with a lease agreement. Cedar Fair will continue to operate the park for a period of up to 11 years and then will close existing park operations at the end of the lease term.

"We acquired the land back in July of 2019 for roughly \$150 million," said Brian Witherow, chief financial officer, Cedar Fair. "The market values have accelerated and grown pretty dramatically."

Witherow said there were a number of contributing factors as to why this was the right time to sell. "Things had been disruptive back in 2020 with the pandemic, and we had to borrow a lot of money to withstand almost two years of disrupted operations," he said. "From a standpoint of resetting the balance sheet, if you will, we took an opportunity to monetize a high-value asset in the heart of Silicon Valley at a very attractive multiple. Those proceeds are going to help us achieve strategic goals, including investing in the growth of the company more broadly."

According to a release: Cedar Fair intends to use pro-



The Columbia Carousel has been an iconic centerpiece to Great America since the park opened in 1976.

AT/JEFFREY SEIFERT

ceeds from the land sale transaction to accelerate progress on its strategic priorities of reducing debt to achieve its \$2 billion target, investing in high-return projects within its portfolio such as upgrading resort properties, and reinstating a sustainable unitholder distribution. Based on the strength and pace of the recovery since reopening its parks in 2021, and due to the additional capital raised through the Great America transaction, Cedar Fair expects to reinstate quarterly unitholder distributions by the third quarter of 2022, subject to review and approval by the Cedar Fair Board of Directors.

The land sale, which was marketed by CBRE, was the outcome of a strategic review

initiated by Cedar Fair in 2021 to explore potential avenues to maximize the value of the company's extensive asset portfolio. Prior to that, park owners had always leased the property from the City of Santa Clara for more than 40 years.

"We chose Prologis as our partner because of their deep ties in the Bay Area and their reputation for working closely with local communities on large developments," said Cedar Fair President and CEO Richard A. Zimmerman.

California's Great America opened during the 1976 Bicentennial. It was first owned and operated by the Marriott Corporation, and eventually was operated by the city. It became part of the Kings Entertainment

Cedar Fair partnership with Gilroy Gardens ends

SANDUSKY, Ohio — For numerous years, Cedar Fair operated Gilroy Gardens. Season pass benefits that allowed passholders to enter both Gilroy Gardens and California's Great America was a strong selling point. Cedar Fair opted to end the management contract with the park at the end of 2021, and the city of Gilroy assumed the role of operator.

Curiously, the season pass benefits continue with both parks.

"That was a negotiation with the city of Gilroy," said Brian Witherow, CFO, Cedar Fair. "It's no doubt Gilroy Gardens benefits from the passes to Great America, and vice versa. We continue to honor that benefit."

Whether that perk continues beyond 2022 is unknown. Witherow feels it will come down to negotiations with the city of Gilroy and their plans to move forward with Gilroy Gardens.

—Tim Baldwin

Corp., and from that was once owned by Paramount Communications. Cedar Fair acquired the Paramount Parks in the summer of 2006.

When Marriott's Great America was built, Silicon Valley was a much quieter suburbia in a time that preceded the eventual tech boom. Now it is in the heart of a tech hub on a piece of prime real estate near several modes of public transit.

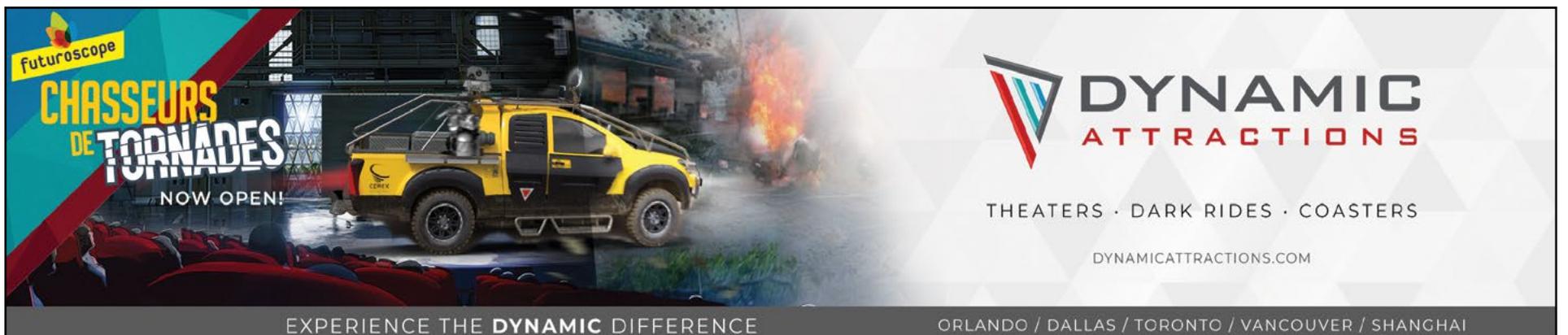
"Silicon Valley isn't what it once was 40-plus years ago," noted Witherow. "With the broader development of that area, the property was probably going to go down the path of being used for something else. The best use for that land long term was not going to be

an amusement park."

During the pandemic, Witherow said experiential investments were more attainable compared to the traditional purchase of rides, particularly with the uncertainty of global events. He said the return to ride purchases should return to normal in the next few years. Upgrading and enhancing resort properties and food and beverage has been a strong focus in recent years.

Under the terms of the rental agreement, Prologis has agreed to lease the land back to Cedar Fair for the next six years, with the option to renew the lease for five addi-

▶ See LAND, page 31



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California's Great America will continue to operate under the lease agreement from between six and 11 years. RailBlazer (above middle) was the most recent coaster added to the park in 2018. Visitors to California's Great America are treated to a theme park and water park (above right) in the same day. AT/TIM BALDWIN; COURTESY ALEX RIGSBY

► **LAND**
Continued from page 30

tional years. This provides a window of six to 11 years for families and fans to enjoy the park to its fullest.

"We are excited to continue to operate Great America. We are going to continue to invest in the property," Witherow told *Amusement Today*. "We can potentially add more attractions. We're not going away."

Prologis must supply two-year's notice to any alterations of the lease.

"[Prologis] is going to be going through a process of how to develop that land going forward. It may still have an entertainment component to it; we don't know," said Witherow.

Currently, California's Great America is a full theme park that features nine roller coasters, numerous flat rides and water rides and an included water park. When the eventual closure of the park does happen, a portion of the rides could be relocated to other Cedar Fair prop-

erties, but several attractions are quite site specific.

"The team is already taking a look at the attractions to see what can be physically moved and warrants being moved to another property," said Witherow. "There are a number of great attractions that could find a home somewhere down the road. But that's a bit premature. Our intent is still to continue to operate and actually grow that park. We have a chance to operate it for the next six to 10 years,

we certainly don't want to see it going backwards. It's a great market."

Hopes are that attendance will remain strong in the park's final years. For families who will miss the park, Witherow said, "I don't know what ultimately the Prologis development will look like. An entertainment component is a part of the conversation. We'll have to wait and see. It's always sad to see things like Great America come to an end, but certainly that area when the

park was built looks a lot different than it does today."

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the amusement industry more than any other global situation. Recovery varies from park to park, but emerging from the crisis is ongoing.

"Our five-year plan today looks pretty similar to what it did in 2019 before the pandemic," said Witherow. "We continue to expand and invest in the guest experience and deliver a better level of guest service."

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MARKET WATCH

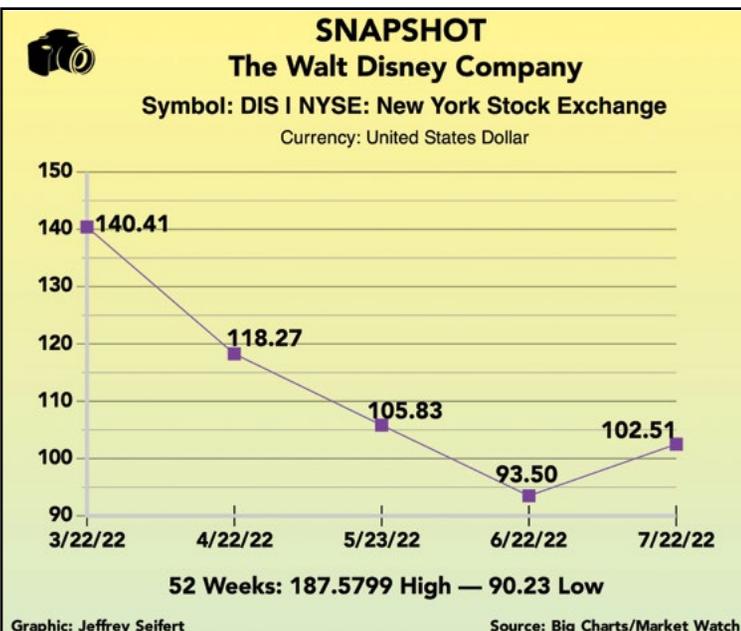
COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 7/21/22	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	97.88	149.78	86.97
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	40.51	62.56	37.78
Comcast Corp./NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	42.27	61.80	37.56
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	104.18	187.58	90.23
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	51.55	56.38	41.14
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	JP:9010	TYO	3985.00	5170.00	3650.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	8.50	8.57	0.63
Lefoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	16.60	20.00	15.65
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	31.44	51.17	26.41
Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd.	RCL	NYSE	35.75	98.27	31.09
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	JP:6357	TYO	839.00	926.00	702.00
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	46.08	76.57	40.01
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	23.11	47.24	19.87
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	800.00	900.00	766.00

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 *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



Disneyland Paris celebrated the official opening of Avengers Campus on July 20. COURTESY DISNEYLAND PARIS



DIESEL PRICES

Region (U.S)	As of 7/18/22	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$5.467	\$2.155
Midwest	\$5.409	\$2.145
Gulf Coast	\$5.083	\$2.000
Mountain	\$5.546	\$1.912
West Coast	\$5.768	\$2.170
California	\$6.516	\$2.311

CURRENCY

On 7/22/22 \$1 USD =

0.9800	EURO
0.8355	GBP (British Pound)
138.12	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9699	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.4498	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.2886	CAD (Canadian Dollar)

BUSINESS WATCH

H.I.G. Capital completes acquisition of FEG

MIAMI, Fla. — Investment firm **H.I.G. Capital** announced that one of its affiliates has completed the acquisition of **Family Entertainment Group Holdings, LLC (FEG)**.

Headquartered in Itasca, Illinois, FEG is an industry leading designer, developer, and operator of amusement facilities. The company provides turnkey outsourced facility management services of arcade operations on behalf of resorts, hotels, casinos, and amusement parks. Additionally, the company owns and operates nearly 60 standalone family entertainment centers throughout the U.S. under the **In The Game, Max Action** and **Bonkers** brands.

H.I.G. is partnering with **George Smith**, FEG's founder and chief executive officer, as well as the current management team, to provide support and resources to take advantage of the company's significant strategic growth initiatives across a large and rapidly growing end market.

"This partnership will allow us to continue investing in the technology and equipment required to deliver unique experiences for our customers," stated Smith. "The Company has tremendous opportunities to expand with new and existing partners and H.I.G.'s resources will help us continue our long track record of growth."

"The acquisition of Family Entertainment Group represents an ideal opportunity to partner with the market leading provider of outsourced arcade operations," added **Ryan Kaplan**, managing director at H.I.G.

Falcon's Beyond will be publicly traded

ORLANDO — **Falcon's Beyond**, a fully integrated global entertainment development company specializing in intellectual property (IP) creation and expansion, and **FAST II**, a special purpose acquisition company founded by **Doug Jacob** and headed by **Sandy Beall**, announced that the two entities have entered into a definitive merger agreement that is expected to result in Falcon's Beyond becoming a publicly listed company on **Nasdaq**.

Upon the closing of the transaction, the new combined company will be named **Falcon's Beyond Global** and is expected to be listed on Nasdaq under the ticker symbol "FBYD."

"Falcon's Beyond provides a comprehensive entertainment experience rooted in our profound IP creation and expansion capabilities," commented Falcon's Beyond Executive Chairman **Scott Demerau**. "We will help deliver immersive entertainment experiences to audiences around the world and plan to continue to expand as a publicly traded company."

Falcon's Beyond is led by Demerau and CEO **Cecil D. Magpuri**. The company has collaborated with accomplished entertainment IP holders across the globe and has established multiple joint ventures with **Meliá Hotels International** to co-own and co-operate multiple beachside resorts and parks. The company has been involved in the master planning of more than \$100 billion worth of development projects. Falcon's Beyond's business segments' list of client and IP collaborators includes **Walt Disney World, Universal Studios, SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment, Atlantis, Marvel, National Geographic, NASA, AT&T, Lego, Hard Rock, Formula 1, Lionsgate, Cartoon Network** and **Microsoft**.

"The extraordinary and wide-reaching breadth of Falcon Beyond's IP and brick-and-mortar opportunities, ideal unit economics and significant opportunity for expansion offers an exciting platform for growth in the entertainment category," added FAST II's Doug Jacob.

ON THE MOVE

The **Eastern States Exposition** announced that **Nicole Acevedo**, of West Springfield, Mass., is the newest addition to the organization's marketing department as communications and social media manager.

Acevedo graduated **Western New England University** in May 2022 with a Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing. Over the course of her collegiate career, Acevedo served as the assistant editor of *The Westerner*, the university's newspaper and was a two-time winner of the BOLD Media Festival's written category for her prose poems. Although she is not a New England native, Acevedo has grown fond of the Greater Springfield community.



Acevedo

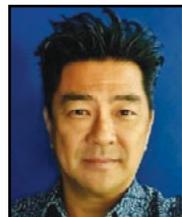
"Whenever someone learns that I'm from California, they always ask me the same thing – 'Why would you come here?'" said Acevedo. "It makes me laugh because I understand how people would think I'm crazy for leaving the West Coast, but really I've found my home here. ESE is such an important pillar of the community, and I couldn't be more grateful or excited to be working as part of such a beloved organization."

Malaysian theme park developer **Sim Leisure Group** (SLG) has announced **Phil Whittaker** as its new chief executive officer. As part of the announcement, **Sim Choo Kheng** has been appointed as the new executive chairman.

Whittaker, who prior to this appointment served as strategic advisor and more recently as commercial director to the group, carries with him more than 25 years of knowledge and expertise in developing, launching, managing and restructuring sales, marketing, commercial and operations to deliver growth in several notable travel, leisure and entertainment-related organizations in Australia, Malaysia and Singapore.



Whittaker



Kheng

Speaking on his appointment, he said, "I am truly honored to take on this appointment as CEO at Sim Leisure. I would like to thank Sim and the team for their faith and trust in me as I continue to leverage on my skills and experience to support and help to realise the ongoing expansion plans of the Sim Leisure Group."

Meanwhile, Kheng will also oversee the company's strategic direction and the expansion of Sim Leisure's brands, including the design and development of new projects locally and internationally, while liaising with key stakeholders.

"Those who know me can attest to the fact that I like to accomplish the impossible. So, we set out to make the impossible a reality, with our unique products where fun is measured in 'smiles per hour,'" stated Kheng.

LAI Games has announced the promotion of **Shannon Perell** to chief product officer from his previously held position of vice president of product development for the company.

As CPO, Perell is responsible for LAI's strategic product direction. From concept to launch, he leads the R&D team in product innovation, design, and development to build great games and attractions that deliver value to customers.



Perell

"With an exceptional track record for success and innovation in game design and development, Mr. Perell's appointment to CPO reflects a growing depth in the

leadership group within LAI Games," said CEO **Mark Easte**. "We look forward to delivering ways to drive our industry forward with exciting new products and entertainment choices."

Cedar Point Sports Center promoted **Justin Kijowski** as the new general manager after **Wes Hall**, the previous general manager, was recently promoted to the level of account executive for **Sports Facilities Companies** (SFC). Both Kijowski and Hall began their new roles in June.

Kijowski brings over 15 years of experience in the sports and entertainment industry having previously worked at **Kalahari Resorts** and **Sports Force Parks**. He has held roles in finance, sales, tournament management and venue operations.

Kijowski most recently was the director of operations for the sports center. He was instrumental in bringing tournaments and new events into the venue to include Best of the Bay and Jingle Bell Jam.

"I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to lead the team here at the Cedar Point Sports Center," said Kijowski. "What we have been able to accomplish with our group has been nothing short of incredible, and I look forward to continuing to serve the team and the community in my new role."

Industry veteran **George Walker** has joined immersive experiential design firm **Holovis** as vice president of creative development.

Walker joins the company with more than 20 years experience in the attractions industry having held senior creative roles with several high-profile companies including **Universal Creative** and **Dynamic Attractions** and master-minded attractions such as **Flying Aces** and **Ferrari World Abu Dhabi**.

Working out of the Orlando office, Walker will be responsible for leading and expanding the company's creative services, engaging with clients all over the world and working alongside its existing team of designers and architects to create next-generation attractions and interactive in-park experiences.

"Holovis has always managed to innovate and problem solve," commented Walker "I have been constantly impressed with their ability to get things done and push the limits, whilst always championing the guest experience and the client's master plan in a way that is truly rare to see in our industry. I see this as the perfect opportunity to build on that momentum together and take Holovis to a whole new level."

RWS Entertainment Group has tapped former **Royal Caribbean Cruises** executive **Ryan Saab** as its new senior vice president, talent casting and recruitment. Saab serves in this role for RWS and its subsidiary, **Binder Casting**.

As former head of Casting Operations for Royal Caribbean's Entertainment division, Saab now leads casting and recruitment for one of the largest entertainment talent providers in the industry.

Saab has nearly 20 years of experience as an entertainment production executive, responsible for product development, casting and strategic management. He oversaw the recruitment of all talent for the entire Royal Caribbean fleet.



Hall



Walker

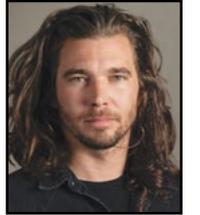


Saab

OBITUARY

Matt King, Meow Wolf co-founder, passes suddenly

SANTA FE, N.M. — Meow Wolf co-founder Matt King passed away unexpectedly on July 9. At just 37, he left a legacy of immersive arts installations that he created with a collective of punk, eccentric, creative friends starting more than a decade ago in Santa Fe.



King

Originally from Arlington, Texas, King was either a lead or participating artist in more than two-dozen Meow Wolf projects at least, including the popular Wiggy's Plasma Plex video arcade and Fancy Town, also known as the live concert space, within Santa Fe's House of Eternal Return.

King was also pivotal in the 2016 opening of Meow Wolf's flagship Santa Fe location, House of Eternal Return, as well as Las Vegas, Nevada's Omega Mart and Denver's Convergence Station. At the latter, King's vision led to the much-ballyhooed Cathedral room, another room-sized piece dubbed Gremlin Symphony and other projects.

"Matt was driven like a pure force, and he was also willing to do any task that would allow for creative expression to happen — his own and others," said Meow Wolf co-founder Sean Di Ianni. "He was also a true artist, and I connected with him, really, at first, as an artist, though that grew to be a super-deep friendship."

"We will honor Matt's spirit by carrying his brilliance forward in our work and in our everyday lives, building upon the monumental legacy that he leaves behind," added Jose Tolosa, CEO of Meow Wolf. "Thousands have been deeply touched by the artistic genius of his work, and nothing speaks to Matt's influence more than the Meow Wolf community who is coming together in his honor."

Rich with colorful detail, Lost Island is America's newest theme park

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

WATERLOO, Iowa — More than a decade in development, **Lost Island Theme Park** opened its gates on June 18. The new park joins **Lost Island Waterpark** next door as an ever-growing entertainment complex that also includes **Golf & Go-Karts**, which was the first venue to open in 2000.

The water park opened in 2001. Owned by **Gary and Becky Bertch**, Lost Island became very popular with Iowans, boasting substantial water park attractions themed to the South Pacific. Today, **Eric Bertch**, son of Gary and Becky, is at the helm of the parks as general manager.

The new theme park is centered around five mysterious realms. Eric Bertch was quick to relay the history of the park's development.

"It was a long process," he told *Amusement Today*. "We started the discussion back in 2011 that we might consider a theme park. Because of the success of our tropically themed water park, we'll just do different islands from the South Pacific. We quickly discarded that idea. To an outsider, the islands are very similar — it's all palm trees and similar artwork. Cultural appropriation was a real concern; having a white family from Iowa bringing these rich cultures into a theme park setting could be a little bit carica-



The impact of theming is evident from the moment the guests approach the park's entrance (above). The Gerstlauer Sky Fly is indicative of flight in the air realm (below). COURTESY LOST ISLAND, TOM NICKERSON

turized, so we investigated 'lost islands,' like Atlantis."

After some research of that concept, some of the legends surrounding such locations had connotations the family didn't want associated with a theme park. From there, the Bertches started over with their own original themes.

"We wanted to give it a history of its own," said Bertch. "We thought it would encourage repeat visitors. What brings people back is a connection to characters and a story. We doubled down on the idea of really ramping up the theming."

Visitors start with the Tamariki realm, which is geared toward children, and then stroll the 159-acre

property through lands themed to air (Udara), water (Awa), the earth (Yuta) and fire (Mura).

"The guest reaction to the attention to detail is overwhelmingly positive," said Bertch. "We were anxious making this all up and wondering what the response would be. We've done a lot of little things like making impressions in the concrete from different elements just to have a little Easter egg for people to see if they are looking down. Each realm has their own secret bits in the walkways."

Palm leaves, feathers, gears, etc. are stamped into the walkways. It's just one signature touch that Lost Island boasts for its returning guests.

"We did this ourselves in the winter, and after two months we thought, 'God, nobody is even going to notice these are here,'" smiled Bertch. "It has been very satisfying with the number of guests that have come up and said, 'Oh my gosh, I found this in the concrete! I saw this on the building. And I love the music!' There are people actively noticing the components that we were trying



to insert to make it a fully immersive experience."

Bertch explained that from the beginning, the park was supposed to appeal to everyone. In so doing, the mix of 25 rides has a broad range, from youngsters to thrill-seekers. **BDR Design Group** out of Cincinnati was a partner in the project. **Weber Group** was the general contractor.

"We have several rides from **Zamperla** in Tamariki, our children's realm," said Bertch. "They are perfect for people under 42 inches. There's a Big Apple kiddie coaster there, too."

"When the rides were selected by the Bertch Family,

they had a good idea of how each ride would tell the greater story of Lost Island," said **Michael Coleman**, North American sales manager, Zamperla. "The ride action and theming all tie into the area in which they are located."

Overall, Zamperla provided five rides to the project.

"When I first met Gary and Eric Bertch almost 10 years ago, they had already worked out their concept and were in the due diligence phase of investigating different ride actions and systems which would



Two new trains upgrade the suspended looping coaster from **Vekoma**. COURTESY LOST ISLAND

► **ISLAND**

Continued from page 34

provide a variety of movements for their guests. After a few years of meeting, they had selected a great ride mix and theming had begun," Coleman told *AT*. "Working with the Bertch Family and BDR, we collaborated on each ride, even on some of the rides in the park that ended up going to other manufacturers. One of the most impactful meetings was at BDR's office in Cincinnati where we worked on how the creative aspects of the theming would marry with the mechanical designs of each attraction. After receiving the creative direction from the Bertches via BDR, our internal art department did their own feasibility studies to ensure that the vision could become a reality."

Incorporated into the park's themes, the rides from Zamperla are Magic Bikes, Midi Family Swinger, Samba Tower, Jump Around



Zamperla provided five rides for the park, including this Magic Bikes. COURTESY LOST ISLAND

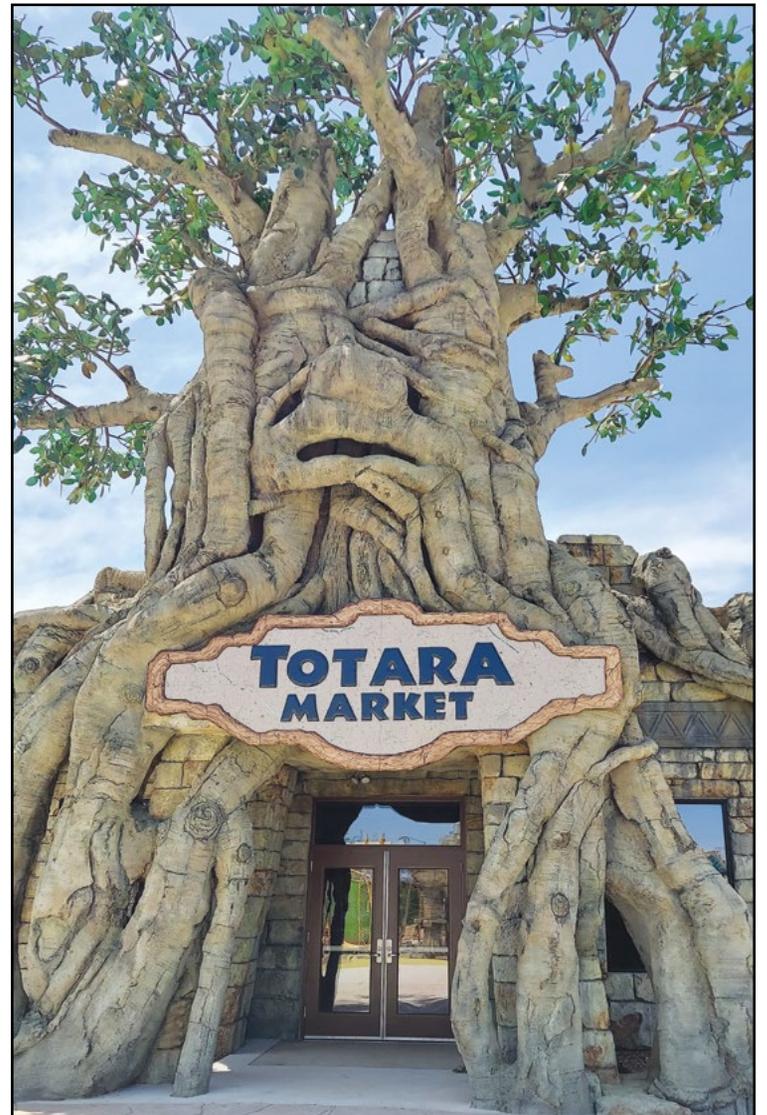
and a Disk'O Coaster 24.

"Ultimately, the mix of attractions at the park is a group of proven winners," said Coleman. "The attention to detail paid by the Bertch family is something to be applauded, and their guests will really come to appreciate the movements, more specifically, the difference in movements created by the attractions. Specifically, from Zamperla, we have two rides which accommodate guests 36 inches,

two 42-inch rides, and the Disk'O Coaster at 48 inches for a true family-thrill experience."

In the air realm, the color palette is awash in blues, purples and pastels. Interestingly, all the rides feature seating to where riders legs dangle free. An S&S Shot and Drop and a rare Gerstlauer Sky Fly are in place here, along with storylines and preshow ele-

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Cost of Wisconsin provided the heavy theming to one of the park's restaurants. COURTESY TOM NICKERSON

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The park's wheel (Visa) and Music Express (Bertazzon) were brokered by Rides 4 U. COURTESY TOM NICKERSON

► ISLAND

Continued from page 35

ments to help set the stage. A Vekoma suspended looping coaster relocated from South Africa now sports two new M3 trains from Vekoma with soft restraints, improving the smoothness for the park's guests.

The water realm has several rides on the water or themed to water. An Interlink splash battle ride and a Visa swinging ship sails out over the water. A Zierer Flying Fish has water within the ride.

"Zierer was excited to be part of the Lost Island project," said Bill Ossim, North American sales, Zierer. "During a site visit during construction last summer, I was very impressed by the magnitude of the project."

Colors throughout the water realm are naturally in blue.

"Zierer's Flying Gondolas has the additional appeal to the guest since it is interactive, where the rider controls the raising and lowering of the gondola," noted Ossim. "Our art/fiberglass department once again delivered an excellent product having a special request from the Lost Island team. This ride has always delivered more than the parks expect due to the interactive feature where the guest is in control."

On the island area, a Visa teacups ride and Ferris wheel, as well as a Bertazzon Music Express are in operation. A ride yet to come online is a carousel undergoing restoration, which Bertch hopes to be a crown jewel in that area. It is currently being refurbished by Western Train Co. of California.

SBF-Visa and Bertazzon are represented by Rides 4 U.

"Being a part of a brand new theme park really gets my blood flowing," said Len Soled, owner, Rides 4 U. "We were up against all the manufacturers. We were able to fulfill the theming needs of their designers. I flew out and walked the site. We talked about SBF-Visa and Bertazzon."

Rides 4 U brokered several rides: Ferris Wheel, teacups, swinging ship, Music Express, drop tower, some children's rides and kiddie coaster.

"The challenge of the pirate ship was that they wanted it to look like it was floating in the water, so we had to position it so it was at ground level — it was zero-grade entry," said Soled. "We had to cut the legs down to the right proportion. It looks like it is literally floating in the water."

Spread throughout the park, these rides were blended to match the themes.

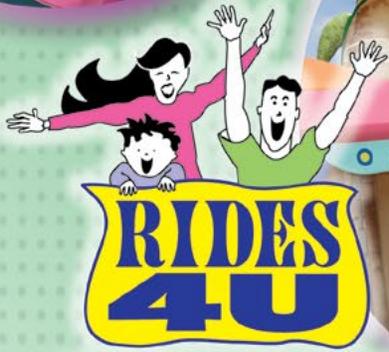
"The teacup ride had a

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► ISLAND

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fish theme. It almost looked animated like the fish were cutting through the waves. It is really unique,” complimented Soled. “When you get the opportunity to build a park from the ground up with a combination of their creativity and our creativity ... everything was done to the nines.”

The earth realm of the park will feature one of the park’s signature rides. As *AT* went to press, Lost Island was still awaiting parts — the infamous anthem of 2022 — on its **Intamin** launched coaster. Coaster enthusiasts have championed the preservation of this ride, as it is relocated from its former home of **Liseberg** in Sweden.

Bumper cars from **Amusement Products** is also in this realm. Bertch said the extreme popularity of the Spin Zone bumper cars came as a big surprise. “They’re a fan favorite,” he said. “Our operators thought, ‘No one rides bumper cars anymore,’ but they’ve had to eat their words. A joystick spins the cars. It’s the most popular ride in the park.”

A flume from Interlink is being completed as a new-for-2023 attraction. A



Bright color and details in the walkways make Lost Island visually stunning. COURTESY TOM NICKERSON

fire during construction in March delayed that attraction but will make for something fresh next season.

The fire realm pops with warm colors and offers much for both thrill-seekers and families. Two rides from **Moser**, a Sidewinder and Maverick, join Zamperla’s Disk’O coaster to offer lots of thrills for fans of going upside down or spinning.

What is being championed as the park’s most iconic ride is Volkanu: Quest for the Golden Idol. Provided by **Sally Dark Rides**, the project has been in the works for close to a decade as both the park owners and Sally were creating concepts that clearly aligned. In the years since, the artistic vision for the

attraction has been defined, and the ride has received nothing but rave reviews.

“The ride is completely unique to Lost Island. You won’t be able to find it anywhere else,” said Bertch.

“We developed this quest for an idol and the whole island is being threatened by this god Valkanu,” said **Drew Hunter**, VP of creative design, Sally. “It took a number of years to come together. It was one of the best creative relationships I’ve ever been through.”

Attention was given to making each realm distinct. Music plays a factor in distinguishing each land different from the other. Flutes might make the air realm more ethereal, while drums



“Without sounding like a hipster, we were using them before they got brought on by **Disney** to do Pandora or **Universal** to do **Volcano Bay**,” joked Bertch. “We were some of their first jobs back when they were doing zoo enclosures and miniature golf. They’ve been with us since the beginning, and that tree is one of their signature pieces at the theme park. The carving on it is phenomenal.”

Whalebone Grill is another artistic venue offering favorites like garlic chicken rice bowls, coconut shrimp or Hawaiian ambrosia salad.

Bertch said his team had numerous surprise challenges during construction, and, admittedly, the pandemic with its supply-chain issues have compounded frustrations. The park notes that messaging was perhaps too transparent when they were upfront with a handful of attractions yet to be online for the opening. By the end of June, the carousel and launched coaster were the only ones remaining to open. Hopes are the soft crowds from initial weeks will grow.

Visitors and industry fans who have enjoyed Lost Island have praised the thought and detail that have gone into it.



Lost Island’s signature attraction is Vokanu by Sally Dark Rides (above left). The interactive nature of Eeki Eeki by Zierer makes it fun for kids to control (above right). COURTESY LOST ISLAND, TOM NICKERSON

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SAFETY, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

► Kennywood gets a refresh from Palace — page 44 / WWA continues World's Largest Swim Lesson — page 47

Closed system makes Schlitterbahn's lagoon safer, more efficient

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

NEW BRAUNFELS, Texas — For more than 40 years, Schlitterbahn has enjoyed the luxury of its location along the banks of the Comal River, America's shortest river. The spring-fed waters of this tributary to the Guadalupe River are a clear, refreshing 72 degrees year-round. Since Schlitterbahn opened in 1979, it has used the brisk water to entertain guests on the park's attractions. Visitors have come to expect the chilly waters and relish the cooler liquid during the hot summer. But the Comal River proves to be a double-edged sword.

In cases of a weather event, when runoff and storms can churn the bottom of the river, water clarity becomes an issue, and the water park can no longer operate many attractions in such conditions. Over the decades, Schlitterbahn has grown, expanded and innovated. Within that growth has come new sections that do not utilize the Comal River. Like most water parks, the treated and filtered water does not have such atypical issues.

With only the original section of the resort taking advantage of the Comal's wonderful waters, there had been talk for some



Schlitterbahn's Lagoon area has become a closed system, no longer relying on the spring-fed waters of the Comal River (above). The Hillside Tube Chute is one of three attractions on the closed system (right). COURTESY SCHLITTERBAHN

years of creating a closed system on adjacent attractions to improve the number of offerings in the park in the rare cases of river events. Schlitterbahn made it a reality in 2022.

"The Lagoon Pool has historically always been part of the spring-fed Comal River-operated rides — the Lagoon, Hillside Tube Chute and Soda Straws," said General Manager Darren Hill. "For many years we have been working on technology and ways to close that system, essentially to provide more resiliency

in park operations. This limits our dependency on the river when we have inclement weather and things that impact the river, which potentially impact operations."

In so doing, no matter what Mother Nature throws at the resort, that's a complete section of the park that can continue to operate normally.

"The river is subject to runoff from the rain, which can cause turbidity," said Hill. "When you have turbidity in the

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► **SYSTEM**

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river, when you use it in rides and attractions, there are certain criteria from a safety perspective [that have to be met]. Lifeguards need to be able to see through the water.”

The park disconnected the system that pulled from the river and turned it over to a locally-fed municipality water source.

“We added state-of-the-art filtration and made it one big swimming pool,” Hill told *Amusement Today*. “All the infrastructure for the Hillside Tube Chute and Soda Straws remain the same. To operate those rides, they had always pulled from the Lagoon Pool.”

The Lagoon Pool was completely resurfaced during the project. **Newman Pools** was the contractor.

“That was an entirely turnkey project for us,” said Hill. “They really did

a fantastic job.”

The walls of the pool had to be brought in approximately four feet to create space for the plumbing infrastructure around the perimeter of the pool, allowing for the filtration system to be in place.

This development has the advantage of reliability but sacrifices the brisk refreshment of the cooler waters.

When asked by *AT* if this process could be applied to other attractions in the original section of the park, Hill responded, “Other tube chutes create somewhat of a logistical challenge. They begin at one end of the park and end at the opposite end. It’s a gravity-fed system, and the ride is continuously flowing. Trying to find a way to get the water back to the source and create a loop is something we haven’t figured out. But I will tell you the original tube chutes are part of the heart of this park



With the new renovation, water clarity following a weather/river event is no longer an issue. COURTESY SCHLITTERBAHN

and what it is known for. With the way we interact with the river and nature in general here, I don’t see a need to do that any-time soon. It provides a

lot of unique character to the park.”

Since the establishment of the Golden Ticket Awards in 1998, Schlitterbahn has been

one of the extremely rare undefeated winners. The water park resort has remained champ as Best Water Park 23 years in a row.

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Dog days of summer require safety vigilance remain top of mind

A recent European study shows that more than half of amusement ride accidents can be attributed in some way to guest behavior. Therefore, park leadership must redouble their efforts in rule enforcement to ensure proactive correction of unsafe guest behaviors before they result in injury or even death. What follows are tips to keep safety top of mind as the summer season comes to an end:

•**Avoid distraction** — Help your team members keep their eyes on the task. Remove any distractions from the work area, such as electronic devices and social interactions. Cell phones, e-readers and gaming devices have no place in the hands of an operator while working a ride, but often make their way into the workplace if no one is checking and enforcing the rules. Casual, nonwork-related

conversations among team members can also create a distraction. Ensure team members are stationed in their appropriate safety positions and discourage unnecessary social chats. Stress the importance of staying attentive to the work at hand and hold employees accountable to the safety standards set early on by management.

•**Don't become complacent** — Falling into a false sense of security and letting your guard down can result in disastrous consequences. Drills and audits during slow periods at the park can keep your team members on their toes and help them stay vigilant, even if there are fewer guests than normal on property. If team members know there could be an audit at any moment, they will be more apt to promptly recognize and more prepared to handle (or prevent) a potential emergency.

•**If you're a supervisor, be extra (everything)** — Those in supervisory roles, both key-seasonal and full-time, have an important job this time of year. They must pay extra attention and they must be extra quick to intervene when they notice bad habits or distracted behavior. If workers know they're not being supervised, they are more likely to disengage.

•**Training, training, training** — Preparing your team members to perform their jobs correctly and efficiently is important not only during the pre-season, it can be a useful tool to reinforce expected work behaviors all season long. At the end of the season, training can be a strong motivator to stay on task. Reviewing SOPs, participating in emergency drills, practicing skills learned early in the season or even learning new skills can reinvigorate and energize an otherwise lack-

daisical team member. Remember, training doesn't have to be boring, a little creativity goes a long way!

If you're looking for more ideas on how to educate, train and keep your work force engaged all year long, **AIMS International** has you covered. The 2023 AIMS International Safety Seminar is right around the corner and is chock-full of training tips and creative ways to educate and motivate your team, even in during the dog-days of summer.

Remember, if you're a certificate holder of either an AIMS or **NAARSO** certification, you can renew that certification by earning continuing education units (CEUs) at either the AIMS or NAARSO safety seminars, or by taking online continuing education courses and earning CEUs through AIMSconnectED.

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Kennywood gets a refresh from Palace, new signage and décor

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

WEST MIFFLIN, Pa. — **Kennywood** is a park that has an incredibly loyal fan base. With more than 120 years of history, the love for the park is multigenerational. Returning families have a lot to notice in 2022.

“It has been a big effort,” said **Nick Paradise**, director of corporate communications, **Palace Entertainment**. “Just to take a little step back. It’s been a focal point, this approach for Palace. We did it last year with a pilot at **Lake Compounce**. Year two, step two has been **Kennywood**, as well as **Sandcastle** here in town. We’ve used some of the learnings from the first go round.”

Those who love the park will appreciate the new aesthetics. There is a new vibrancy to **Kennywood**.

“A big part of it was [that] the park was in need of some TLC. We had added some big, major attractions in the last several years, but there were some areas of the park that showed their age,” noted **Paradise**.

Although the park did bring back the **Kangaroo** ride, it was the atmosphere that took center stage in capital investments for 2022 more than rides.

“It starts with the entrance and creating that sense of arrival,” **Paradise** told *Amusement Today*. “We’re creating atmosphere from the moment you pull



Photo ops such as these new visuals help convey the reinvigorated park atmosphere. The new entrance upon arrival is brightly colored with a new iconic carousel horse from 3dx Scenic (above right). AT/TIM BALDWIN

into the parking lot — bright signage, painting and better paving. We wanted to convey that this is a park that is very well cared for.”

As with **Connecticut’s Lake Compounce**, a brightly colored carousel horse serves as a festive icon for arriving guests. The statue was created by **3dx Scenic**, which also provided two iconic photo op pieces at **Sandcastle**, including a buoy water feature.

Once guests pass the entrance, the refresh continues down the ramps and into the tunnels into the park, as well as the immediate midway stretching all the way to the lagoon. Sometimes bright new colors made a difference, other

times it was three-dimensional signage. The **Kandy Kaleidoscope** is an immediate eye-grabber, particularly at night. Floor-to-ceiling glass windows allow guests to see inside.

The **Jack Rabbit** roller coaster also received a new entrance portal.

“For longtime team members and our locals, we come to the park and it’s so engrained that we don’t need signage for **Jack Rabbit** because everyone knows where it is,” laughed **Paradise**. “When you pull back and have a fresh set of eyes, it’s ‘Hey, not everyone knows where it is.’ We’ve created dedicated signage that says what the ride is, and this is where you get in

line. The queue used to be up against the arcade building that was just painted mustard yellow. Now there is a big collage with pictures of the park’s history. We even had guest involvement on what pictures there should be and be part of the conversation. Our guests really feel a sense of ownership to this park.”

Kennywood’s coasters also look sharp. **Baynum Painting** supplied fresh color to **The Phantom’s Revenge**, **Jack Rabbit** and **Thunderbolt** for this season. On tap for the fall is a refresh of **The Racer**.

The return of the **Kangaroo** has also seen a great reception. [See the 2022 June issue of *AT*.]

“People were very heart-broken with the news that it was going to be retired,” said **Paradise**. “The voice of the people played a big role in it coming back. It was definitely a big factor. It has been encouraging to see the response and know we have made the right decision.”

The enhancements and upgrades even continued into the restrooms. “It’s one of those things that sends a message,” said **Paradise**.

The refresh represents a love for the park from its owners, a move that would be a great thing to see throughout the industry. As one of the new photo ops conveys, **Kennywood** is “Always a Good Time.”

•kennywood.com



Kandy Kaleidoscope looks new and fresh, with floor-to-ceiling glass windows and a new open layout. **Jack Rabbit**, one of three coasters to receive fresh paint from **Baynum Painting**, has received a new entrance portal. AT/TIM BALDWIN

New Farmhouse restaurant elevates Cedar Point's F&B operations

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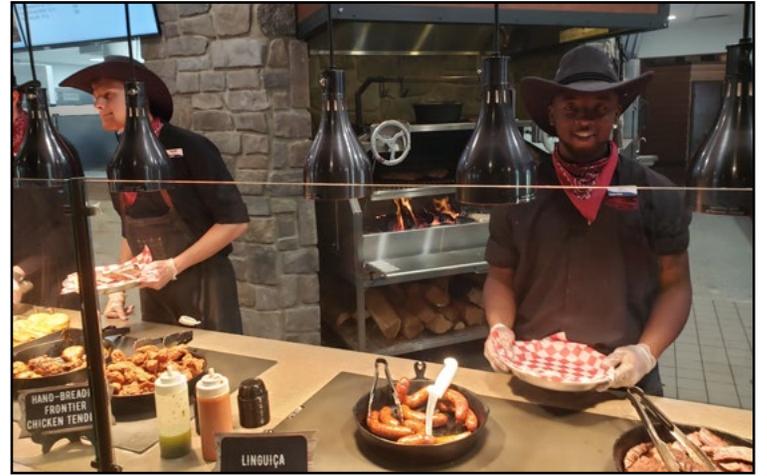
SANDUSKY, Ohio — Home cooking takes up roots at Cedar Point. As one of the largest amusement parks in the world boasting a renowned lineup of monstrous coasters, the Ohio destination is known for drawing big crowds. Because of the large attendance and enormous real estate upon which visitors are spread, food locations are vital at the park.

For 2022, Cedar Point introduced Farmhouse Kitchen & Grill. Located in Frontier Town, the massive venue offers abundant seating in a themed environment. The ranch feel nestles into Frontier Town with ease.

"The purpose of upgrading our dining experience is twofold," said Tony Clark, director of marketing, Cedar Point. "One is to showcase the elevated experience our culinary team has and to showcase menu items that weren't previously served before (like pizza and chick-



The large space occupied by Farmhouse Kitchen & Grill (above left) was previously the site of Antique Cars. The costuming of the staff helps sell the "ranch" experience (above right). AT/TIM BALDWIN



en fingers and fries). Plus, the benefit of having that vision is to be able to introduce new locations that can serve our guests faster. We're trying to reduce the time our guests wait in line for food. They've been waiting in lines for rides, so we want them to be served faster. One of the ways we've been able to do that is with this new restaurant model. You see this at BackBeat Que, Hugo's Italian Kitchen and Crystal Rock Café. It's proven time

and time again that we can serve handmade quality food in a speedy manner."

Guests enter the facility and once indoors have two food lines to obtain their meal selections. The décor inside is rustic — from wooden surfaces to antler chandeliers. Once dinners are in hand, outdoor seating offers both covered and uncovered seating.

"Everything that goes around it is theming, it tells a story," Clark told *Amusement Today*. "We have a menu that

can be changed or customized based on the theme."

A countrified feel with fencing, barrels and "horse benches" adds to the flavor. The staff are dressed as ranch hands and the costuming sells the experience.

"We are setting the standard of what true 'amusement park' cuisine can truly be," said Executive Chef RJ Sinwald. "While we will never forget what got us here (pizza, chicken tenders, etc.), we're always trying to push the culi-

nary envelope. This includes 100% from-scratch cooking, live cooking on show grills and having incredibly gifted chefs manage and run these locations. The days of simple and boring food are gone; it's a new era of incredible flavor and a diverse set of dining options for everyone to enjoy."

Located at the back of the park near two of Cedar Point's most popular roller coasters, the size of the venue

► See FARMHOUSE, page 46

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Seating for up to 450 is accommodated under a covered porch or in sunshine or shaded settings. AT/TIM BALDWIN

► FARMHOUSE Continued from page 45

needed to be worthy of a new investment. Seating capacity is approximately 450.

"My favorite recipe coming out of Farmhouse Kitchen & Grill is the porchetta that we run on a limited-time basis," said Sinwald. "It's a cured pork belly, butterflied open, then rubbed with olive oil, fresh herbs, lemon, salt and pepper. It's rolled and

trussed, then cooked low and slow for 12 hours until it's incredibly tender and delicious. We slice it to order and finish it with our red pepper romesco sauce...it's perfection on a plate."

"It's an eclectic mix. There's a flank steak with a chimichurri sauce; the porchetta is the most amazing thing in the world," noted Clark. "The beauty of the location is the culinary team can create a different entrée — a meat or fea-

tured item of a different sort — they can swap that out."

Sides are also above the typical fare. Campfire steak chili, garlic smashed fried red potatoes, sweet potato wedges and cowboy caviar are among the offerings. Skillet-style desserts add to the fun.

"We installed very specific equipment to handle the large volume, including a beautiful, custom-made show grill, multiple 'combi ovens,' large tilt skillets, mega fryers and more," Sinwald told AT.

To construct such a massive facility, Cedar Point retired an antique auto ride.

"At one point, we had three car rides that were similar," said Clark. "The Cadillac Cars and the Antique Cars were pretty much the same ride experience. In the back of the park, we didn't have a location that could serve guests in large quantities. It was a great time to evaluate and to build this location that could serve guests faster. But it's not just about the restaurant; it's about the surrounding area, the atmosphere. You can easily sit back and relax and listen to a live band. You can see Maverick, Wave Swinger and Skyhawk. The atmosphere of Frontier Town is something that is very special, and this is a new way to take that in. A house band plays music every day."

Sinwald feels the new venue has other advantages. "Definitely — it has a great home-cookin' ambiance as soon as you enter, has a large amount of comfortable outdoor seating (including right on the porch), great spots to relax, a stage for live music, plus it adds more great savory smells to Frontier Town that transition all the way up the Frontier Trail."

Farmhouse Kitchen & Grill was the major investment to Cedar Point for this season.

"Flexibility is key at these locations, and it gives our culinary team and Executive Chef RJ an opportunity to bring recipes in," said Clark. "Some of these talented chefs are bringing in family recipes. And it's not just about eating there. It's a place to just chill if you want to. After walking around this giant amusement park, that's a relaxing thing to do."

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WWA continues the World's Largest Swim Lesson for 13 years

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psherborne@amusementtoday.com

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. — Regional, national and international media coverage helped to kick up awareness of this year's World's Largest Swim Lesson (WLSL), held June 23. That is exactly what is wanted because, by extension, it increases awareness of the importance of teaching water safety.

NOW In its 13th year, the WLSL event has become one of the largest global public relations events to get the word out about water safety. Launched and coordinated by **World Waterpark Association (WWA)**, the event brings together leading water safety and training organizations with water parks, aquatic centers, YMCAs and swim schools around the world to send the focused message that swimming lessons save lives.

Official numbers of participants from the 2022 event were still being counted in late July, but **Aleatha Ezra**, WWA, said 14 countries



Pro Football Hall of Famer and NFL legend Randy Moss helped kick off the 2022 WLSL event at Disney's Typhoon Lagoon Water Park in Buena Vista, Florida, for 350-plus participants (above left). The Desert Falls Water and Adventure Park in Qatar (above right) had a great turnout for the 2022 WLSL event. COURTESY WORLD WATERPARK ASSOCIATION

on five continents participated. Participating countries included Argentina, Australia, Bahamas, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, India, Jordan, Mexico, Qatar, U.A.E, U.K., U.S.A. and Uruguay.

"Our average number of participants per host location

is 26 percent higher than 2021 and 2019 numbers," Ezra said. "This number might change slightly as we finalize our official count numbers."

Host venues sign up to give the free lessons. The lessons are about 30 minutes in length, and they teach basic skills such as how to float, how to make one's way to a safe exit and how to rest and breathe. All venues, whether they are city recreational pools or water parks, give the same lesson on the same day.

"As temperatures rise, kids and families spend more time in and around water," said **Rick Root**, president, WWA. "Whether they're taking a dip in the pool or spending time at a water park, on the beach or at the lake, we want everyone to know how to be water aware."

"Ensuring every child learns to swim is one of the most crucial layers of protection a parent can provide to keep their kids safer in and around the water," Root said.

Seven out of seven of the locations that have participated for 12 years were host locations again this year. Ten out of 10 of the host locations that have participated for 11 years were back on board in 2022 as well.

Cities such as Wilmington, North Carolina, because of its proximity to the ocean, pushes water safety. There were 300-plus students in several different

▶ See **LESSON**, page 48

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Sandcastle Waterpark of Blackpool, England, was one location of many participating in the 2022 World's Largest Swim Lesson event. COURTESY WORLD WATERPARK ASSOCIATION

► **LESSON**
Continued from page 47

pools scattered across the city this year.

In Tennessee, **Dollywood Splash Country Water Park**, Pigeon Forge, celebrated its 12th year of its Water Safety Day event. This event included the WLSL event.

With **The Walt Disney Company's** wide-spread visibility, its participation as a host venue for the WLSL

shouts the importance of learning how to swim. This year at **Disney's Typhoon Lagoon Water Park** in Buena Vista, Pro Football Hall of Famer and NFL legend **Randy Moss** helped kick off the WLSL swim lesson where there were more than 350 children from the **Boys and Girls Club of Central Florida** and **Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida**.

Castaway Cove, Wichita Falls, Texas, was a host venue

and there were three locations in the tri-state area of Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana. Those locations were **Sunlite Water Adventure at Coney Island** in Cincinnati, Ohio; **Soak City at King's Island**, Mason, Ohio; and **Silverlake The Family Place** in Erlanger, Kentucky.

In Ohio alone there were nine registered locations.

At locations such as **Desert Falls Water and Adventure Park** in Qatar and the **Sandcastle Waterpark**, Blackpool, United Kingdom, lifeguards and water park staff brought hundreds of WLSL participants together.

But the work, however, is never done and the WWA realizes that.

"We want all parents to understand that when it comes to protecting kids, swimming lessons and undistracted adult supervision are as important as car seats and bike helmets," Root said.

Taking a look at the research proves the importance. Research released by the **American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)** in 2021 shows drowning has become the leading cause of death for children ages one through four years. Drowning remains the second leading cause of unintended injury related death for kids four years to 14 and the third for adolescents 15-17 in the U.S. and worldwide.

According to the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, every year (from 2010-2019) in the United States there are an estimated 3,960 fatal accidental drownings, including boating-related drownings. That is an average of 11 drowning deaths per day.

Drowning is an even greater threat in other countries around the world, according to the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, which estimated that 236,000 people died from drowning in 2019, making drowning a major public health problem worldwide.

Past research by the AAP has also shown that the risk of drowning can be reduced as much as 88% if children participate in formal swimming lessons between ages one to four years.

The date for the 2023 WLSL has been set for June 22.

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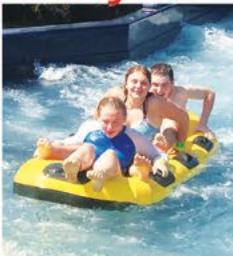


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Industry gathers in Pennsylvania for IAAPA Presents: Hersheypark



More than 100 IAAPA members from the United States and Canada attended IAAPA Presents: Hersheypark on June 26 and 27, 2022. The event allowed owners, operators, suppliers and young professionals a chance to connect over decadent desserts, as well as drinks. COURTESY HERSHEY PARK

HERSHEY, Pa. — In late June, IAAPA North America, hosted more than 100 members at Pennsylvania's Hersheypark for IAAPA Presents: Hersheypark. Sunday evening began with a welcome reception at The Hershey Story museum, allowing owners, operators, suppliers and young professionals, a chance to connect over decadent desserts and Hershey's signature drink, a chocolate Martini.

Hershey characters welcomed attendees during Monday morning's breakfast at The Chocolatier, located at the front entrance to Hersheypark. Attendees then had the option to go behind the scenes at either the new Chocolate Town area of the park or The Boardwalk at Hersheypark water park area. After the morning tours and lunch concluded, IAAPA members then experienced the park on their own for a few hours.

Next, attendees received exclusive behind-the-scenes access of ZooAmerica, the 11-acre wildlife and habitat zoo, home to more than 200 animals and plants native to the North American continent.

Finally, the day wrapped up with a closing reception in the Great Bear catering area. Attendees were from the United States and Canada. This was IAAPA's second time offering IAAPA Presents. They held the first one last season at **Six Flags Fiesta Texas**. No date has been set for the next IAAPA Presents.

—B. Derek Shaw



Laura Woodburn Krolczyk, assistant general manager of Hersheypark, welcomed the 100+ IAAPA members inside The Hershey Story museum, providing an overview of what is contained in the 10,000-square-foot facility. She also went on to outline events during the two-day visit. COURTESY HERSHEY PARK



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