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Digital Edition

2022 WWA Symposium, Trade Show expected to show the industry is back

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — The World Waterpark Association's (WWA) Symposium and Trade Show will be back in Las Vegas this year, and event planners are looking forward to a packed house with plenty of new ideas coming from the educational sessions and those industry experts speaking as well as new innovations being shared on the trade show floor.

The 2022 event, being held Oct. 4-7 at Caesars Forum and Harrah's Las Vegas, is the WWA's largest annual show that provides hundreds of water park professionals with an opportunity to come together to share ideas, address challenges and prepare for what's new and next in the upcoming year.

Event educational sessions, keynote addresses and other activities run the entire four days. The trade show runs two days, Oct. 5-6.

"This annual gathering is where many of the industry's most popular innovations have been unveiled by leading designers and suppliers," said Aleatha Ezra, WWA director of park member development. "And, it's where many of our industry's most important and foundational best practices have been created, vetted and sometimes reimaged in order to provide our guests with the safest, most enjoyable experiences possible."

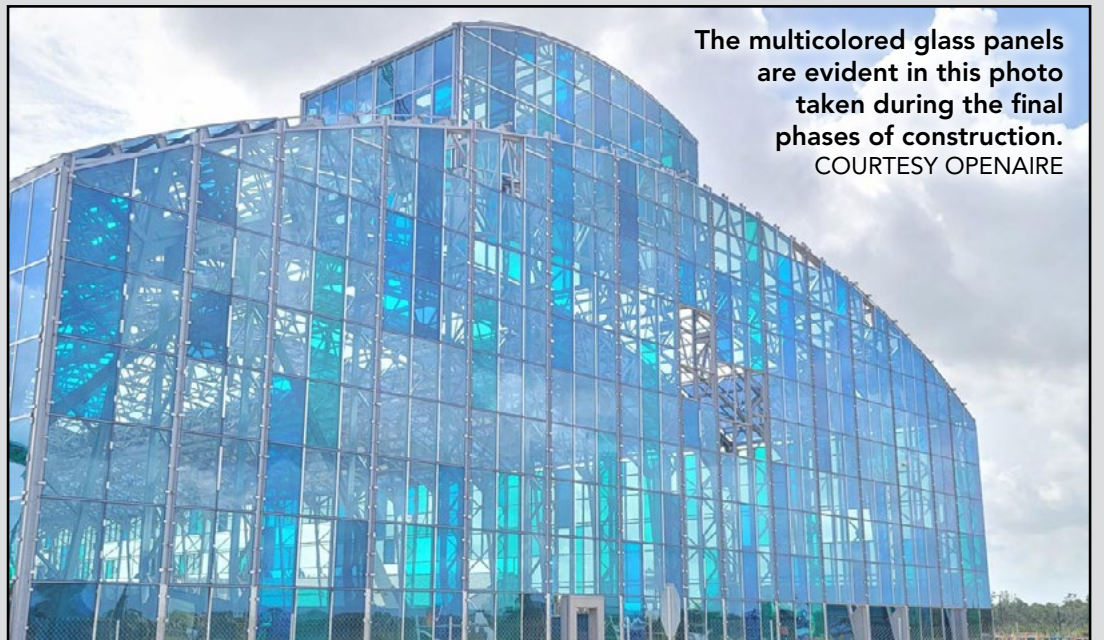
Ezra added, "No host venue provides the same level of excitement and energy as Las Vegas. It's called the

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This year's WWA Annual Reunion Party will be held at Cowabunga Bay Water Park, located right outside Las Vegas in Henderson, Nevada. COURTESY COWABUNGA BAY

The OWA Resort debuts gulf coast's largest indoor water park



The multicolored glass panels are evident in this photo taken during the final phases of construction. COURTESY OPENAIRE

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

FOLEY, Ala. — Over the summer, **The Park at OWA**, an amusement park and part of an entertainment district in southern Alabama, was remade into **Tropic Falls**. The transformation included a new indoor water park, the makeover of the front gate and expansion of the tropical theming into the theme park. The Park at OWA opened in 2017 as part of **OWA Parks & Resorts**, which includes a sports tourism complex and a hotel. The amusement park, indoor water park, and shopping and entertainment district will be collectively known as **Tropic Falls at OWA**.

The new \$70+ million indoor water park is housed within a glass structure under a 100,000-square-foot roof, with 65,000 square feet dedicated to water-based attractions. Similar to other recent glass-enclosed indoor water parks, the roof covering the structure of the indoor water park is retractable. A new feature is a retractable wall that opens directly to the adjacent outdoor wave pool and its accompanying amenities.

Manufactured by **Open Aire** of Oakville, Ontario, the impressive structure is the largest of its kind on the Gulf Coast. The retractable wall is 128 feet wide and 26 feet tall and slides open to fully allow guests to flow from indoors to out in a seamless experience.

"We are so excited to share...that Tropic Falls [is] the only indoor water park in the United States with a retractable wall and retractable roof, allowing for the ultimate experience in Coastal Alabama climate control," said **Kristin Hellmich**, the director of strategy and media communications for OWA Parks & Resort.

"We know that guests who come to the coastal market like to be outside, so

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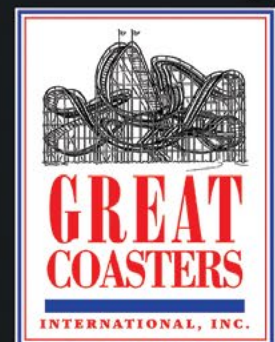
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AMUSEMENT VIEWS

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

Expos bring us together



Robinson

Having just attended the Golden Ticket Awards event in San Antonio, Texas, knowing much of the industry was about to head from there to IAAPA Expo Europe 2022 ... and, now, sitting on the threshold of the WWA Symposium and Trade Show opening in Las Vegas, there's little doubt that

we're knee deep in industry expo season. Parks and suppliers have spent months welcoming guests and catering to their needs for 2022, but now begins the networking and planning for those same needs to be met in the seasons to come.

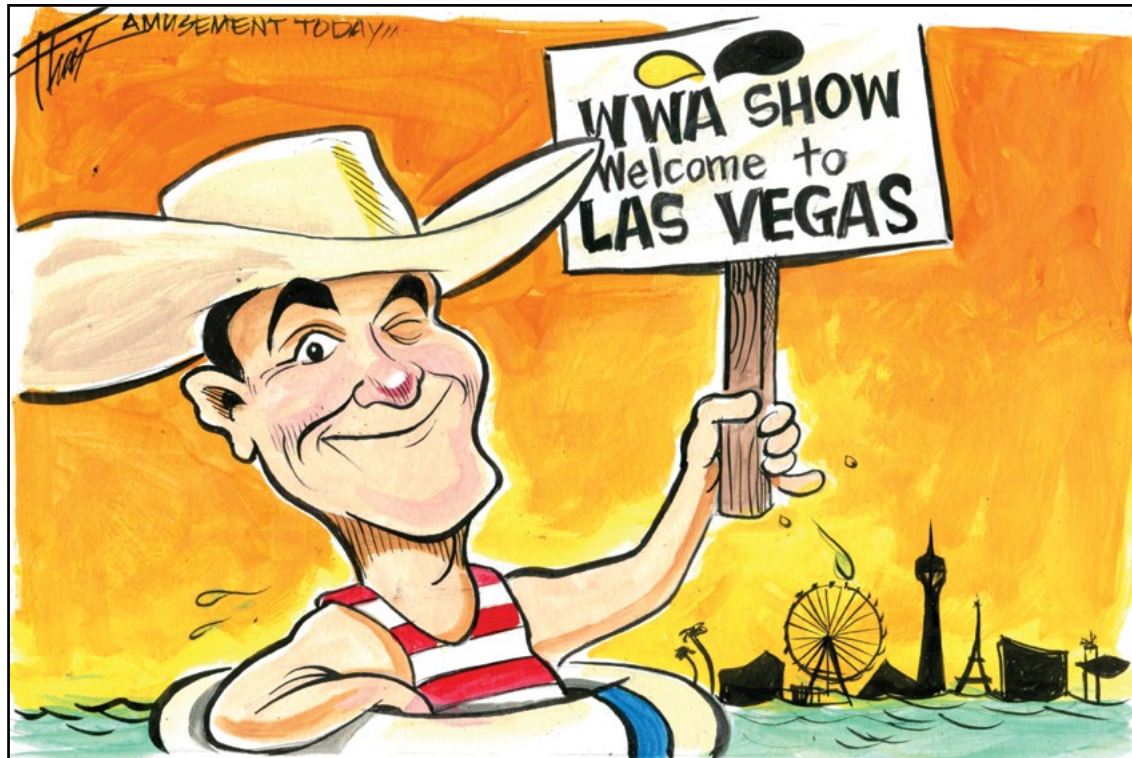
Our industry is a little unique. Management and employees spend months working side-by-side as family, welcoming guests through their gates. But there's a broader family within this industry. The people we see at expos and trade shows during the slower months (or off-season) have become our family too. Even if we're not doing business with them directly this trip, many of us make a point to reach out and see them all — even for just a few minutes — while we are all in the same city and buildings. It's an extended family like none other.

And the new people we meet each and every expo are welcomed into it, like they have always belonged there.

Once the WWA Show closes, IAAPA Expo 2022 is right around the corner and the IAFE Trade Show and AIMS International Safety Seminar are just moments away. While attending all of these events, shake hands with old friends, share recent lessons with industry cohorts and, definitely, meet new people. These new connections may not be a direct link to the upcoming season's plans, but they may be the family member we need to reach out to in the seasons to come as plans evolve and objectives change a little.

There's always room for more family as we celebrate coming together once again at our industry expos.

FLINT'S VIEW: Bubba Flint



INDUSTRY VOICE: Rick Root, World Waterpark Association

Education remains imperative

Coming out of the 2022 summer season, our industry has demonstrated its resilience, our commitment to safety and our ability to innovate on every level to keep our guests coming back for more. Parks have streamlined operations and restructured the way they staff their facilities. They've learned to better leverage digital communications to hire and train their employees and to engage with their communities and customers. Our vendors have worked around supply chain issues and labor shortages to meet challenging construction deadlines and bring exciting new attractions to life. A lot has changed, and we've learned a great deal.

One issue facing the communities we serve has remained a constant. Drowning remains the second leading cause of unintended injury related death for kids 4-14 and the third for adolescents 15-17 in the U.S. and 3rd leading cause worldwide. Research released by the



Root

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) in 2021 shows drowning has become the single leading cause of death for children ages 1-4. The pandemic has exacerbated this issue.

The water leisure industry must work to make up for time and lessons missed in the pool. The AAP's recent report encourages early participation in lessons as a vital layer of protection as research shows participation in formal swimming lessons can reduce the risk of drowning up to 88% among children aged 1-4.

Since the inception of the World's Largest Swimming Lesson (WLSL), more than 354,000 children and adults have participated in WLSL lessons in 49 countries, generating more than 2.5 billion media impressions about the importance of learning to swim. Heading in to 2023, we encourage you to get involved and make a difference in your community by participating in the World's Largest Swimming Lesson.

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



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2 MINUTE DRILL



AT: Janice Witherow

Darren Hill, Schlitterbahn Waterparks and Resort

Darren Hill began his career in the amusement business as a lifeguard at Schlitterbahn's New Braunfels, Texas, waterpark in 1990, and today, he serves as vice-president general manager of Schlitterbahn Waterparks and Resort, which also includes its Galveston property. Hill has successfully led multiple projects including lodging and waterpark expansions and is proud of the hard work and dedication of his team which has resulted in the long-running distinction of "Best Waterpark" (New Braunfels) in *Amusement Today's* Golden Ticket Awards. Hill is known for his laid-back style and ability to get things done.



Darren Hill has led multiple projects during his time serving with Schlitterbahn Waterparks and Resort. COURTESY DARREN HILL

Title: Vice-President General Manager.

Number of years in the industry: 28.

Best thing about the industry: The opportunity to help create fun and memorable experiences for our guest and associates.

Favorite amusement ride:
The Falls, Schlitterbahn New Braunfels.

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

The biggest challenge facing our industry is ...
The attendance and staffing impacts of school calendars expanding into the traditional summer season.

The thing I like most about amusement/water park season is ...
Operating — it's great to have the parks open and entertaining guests!

I am really looking forward to this at the WWA Expo ... Walking the trade show floor and seeing what's new.

When I want to really relax, I ...
Like to travel with my wife

The celebrity I would most like to hang out with would have to be ... If I could go back in time, Anthony Bourdain.

My Mom always told me ... "Remember the golden rule and be nice."

The first thing I do when I get home from work is ... Let the dog out.

When I was 10 years old, I wanted to be ... Having fun! I lived for the day, didn't give much thought yet to the future.

It's October! My favorite Halloween candy is ... Oktoberfest!

I am most comfortable wearing ...
Flip-flops.

Dream vacation:
Touring the countryside of Italy.

You are going camping in the woods. The three things you would take with you are ...
My wife, my dog and an RV.

The thing I most dread is ...
Public speaking.

Favorite dinnertime meal ...
Homemade lasagna.

When friends come to visit me, I always take them here ...
Gruene, Texas.

Take your pick: an afternoon at a winery or an evening at a brewery
An afternoon at a winery that serves good beer.

The professional athlete I most admire is ... David Robinson.

Favorite rainy day activity ... Cooking.

Do you like to drink water with or without ice?
Without, but cool.

I always wish I learned how to ...
Drive a race car!

THE INDUSTRY SEEN

Showing off Las Vegas



LAS VEGAS — YESCO installed two brand-new, 50-foot-tall showgirls on the corner of Main Street and Las Vegas Boulevard. These new showgirl signs are double the height of the prior showgirl icons installed in 2018. The retro-style showgirls create a lasting legacy for the city, joining the previously installed dice sculptures and sidewalk roulette table to welcome visitors to Las Vegas. COURTESY YESCO

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► WWA Continued from page 1

entertainment capital of the world for a reason and our group loves to spend time together in Vegas where the glitz and glamour just adds another layer to the fun.”

“We’re so pleased to be able to bring our group to the Caesars Forum, the space where we were scheduled to be in 2020,” said **Rick Root**, WWA president. “We’re thrilled to have the opportunity to build on the positive momentum of bringing our in-person event back last year by celebrating all that our industry has been able to accomplish over the past 12 months in such a memorable city as Vegas.”

Some of this year’s seminar highlights include the two keynote presentations. First up, on Oct. 6, is **Merit Kahn**, a certified emotional intelligence expert. Her session, called “Open Minds Open Doors: What To Do If Opportunity Doesn’t Knock Loud

Enough,” will share the secrets of people who are crushing life on all levels simply because they learned how to cultivate the actions and attitudes consistent with those who are truly open for business.

Then, on Oct. 7, noted speaker **Punam Mathur** will share ways to move from a pandemic to an endemic and beyond by asking, “What did we learn that will make us better and stronger, professionally and personally?”

“We think her keynote address called ‘Recover? Recover? [Wreck]-over? Where Do We Go From Here?’ will be the perfect way to kick off the last day of the WWA show,” Ezra said.

Some of the educational highlights anticipated this year are the sheer numbers. The WWA is hosting close to 110 speakers who will discuss a variety of core and advanced topics in 40-plus educational sessions, panels and round tables.

“WWA’s educational



The WWA Show will take place at Caesars Forum Conference Center, Oct. 4-7. The 550,000-square-foot venue is the newest addition to the Caesars Entertainment family, all located right in the middle of the Las Vegas strip. There are 300,000 square feet of flexible meeting space in the new building, as well as two large pillarless ballrooms. COURTESY WWA

program features the most comprehensive, water park-specific content available in the world today,” Root said. “Attendees can expect to take home the latest ideas on safety, operational trends, hiring, revenue generation, employee development and marketing.”

Some of the sessions set to be presented are Building Your Full-Time Leaders Into Future GMs; How To Creatively Mix Up Your Group Sales Practices And Increase Revenue; Food & Beverage Roundtable 2022; Waterpark Development Through The Eyes Of Design And Operations; Teaching Your Staff To Deal With Upset Guests; How To Target, Market And Hire Staff In 2023 and Profiling Your Attractions For Better Operations.

Root said building connections is one of the top motivators for people who come to the WWA Show each year.

“They want to have personal, face-to-face conversations with people who are on the ground every day,” he said. “They are seeking solutions to the problems that slowed them down in 2022, including the ongoing challenges with recruitment and hiring, as well as supply chain issues.”

This year, the WWA is hosting more than 350 booths on the trade show floor, many of which will be showcasing new products, solutions and services that can help water park owners and operators achieve their goals more effectively and efficiently in 2023.

“WWA exhibitors are always motivated to spend quality time with those who walk the show floor,” Ezra said. “They are ready to craft real-world solutions to problems an operator might

be facing. We also anticipate new ride innovations to make their debut at the WWA Show, just as they have for the last four decades.”

Although officially the WWA runs Oct. 4-7, related events and certification courses begin starting Oct. 1 with the first of the two-day Starguard Elite Instructor Development Course. It concludes the next day, Oct. 2.

Also on Oct. 2 is the first day of the two-day Aquatic Factory Operator Certification Course, which will conclude Oct. 3.

The first day of the Certified Pool Operator Certification Course begins on Oct. 2, and like the aquatic course, concludes on Oct. 3.

The first of three courses of the **Ellis and Associates** Lifeguard Instructor Licensing Program begins Oct. 2 and concludes Oct. 4.

Also on Oct. 4 is a series of WWA University offerings. They are Water Park Design, Development Workshop; Ready, Set, Go: A Guide to Getting Started Workshop and Water Park Maintenance School.

The WWA University workshop participants on Oct. 4 are invited to a reception that afternoon.

The same day, Oct. 4, offers a WWA Advanced Waste Quality Certification Course and a Public Sector Meeting, which is for active committee members only.

The popular WWA Annual Golf Tournament is set for Oct. 4 at the **Legacy Golf Club**, located right outside Las Vegas in Henderson, Nevada.

The next day, Oct. 5, is just as busy as the previous day. Committee meetings continue in the morning as do many

of the educational sessions, roundtables and panels.

The WWA opening session is held that morning, preceding the opening of the trade show.

A welcome reception is planned for that afternoon and the annual reunion party at **Cowabunga Bay Water Park** will be held that evening. Cowabunga Bay is located in Henderson, Nevada.

The WWA seminar continues the morning of Oct. 6, with the first keynote address and educational sessions.

The annual event will conclude about noon on Oct. 7 and the planning of the 2023 event will begin.

But first will be the 2023 season. WWA show planners anticipate members and suppliers gaining significant knowledge at this year’s seminar to help them with their season next year.

However, from what the water park industry has shown and reported for the 2022 season, WWA officials feel it is safe to say that the season has confirmed that leisure entertainment is back.

The association representatives heard from members that guests were returning in record numbers. They not only came through the gates more often but they spent money on things like food, cabana rentals, private parties and other in-park spending.

“Plus, for many regions in the U.S. and beyond, the hot, dry weather pushed many families to seek a break from the heat by visiting local pools, splash pads, water parks and water park resorts,” Ezra said. “This just goes to show that our industry has a product that people want and they are willing to pay for it.”

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World Waterpark Association 2022 Symposium and Trade Show

EXHIBITOR LISTING

accesso	543			The Incredible Sunvisor, Inc.	509
Admit One Products	1113			Tiburon Lockers Inc.	1125 - 1127
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This artist conception shows what the outdoor wave pool area (above) will look like when it opens later this year. The three-lane Rally Racer (right) descends into a cave-like basement area beneath the main floor. COURTESY OWA PARKS & RESORTS, OPENAIRE

►OWA Continued from page 1

we wanted to create that outdoor activity area with the wave pool. We also wanted to create a natural air-conditioner by opening up the roof and the wall to allow the coastal breezes to regulate the temperatures," added Hellmich.

The glass walls comprising the structure have been augmented with colored glass panels in shades of blue and aqua to increase the visual appeal of the building. As with most indoor waterparks, a few of the larger, high-profile slides protrude through the walls with large portions of the slides placed outside of the building to help free up precious indoor space. Some of the larger slides also rise higher than the glass roof and are contained in a specially designed glass-enclosed

cupola that extends above the main roof structure.

Another clever feature, which may be unique to this water park, is that some of the large slide runouts are located beneath the floor in a basement-like area of the building. Not only does this save floor space, and allow for longer slides, the visual effect is surprising as thrill seekers blast through bright colorful sections of the slides, then drop below the floor into a mysterious darker area with specially designed lighting. To keep it from looking like a basement, large boulders and rock-like textures were added to the walls to give the illusion that sliders have descended into a cave.

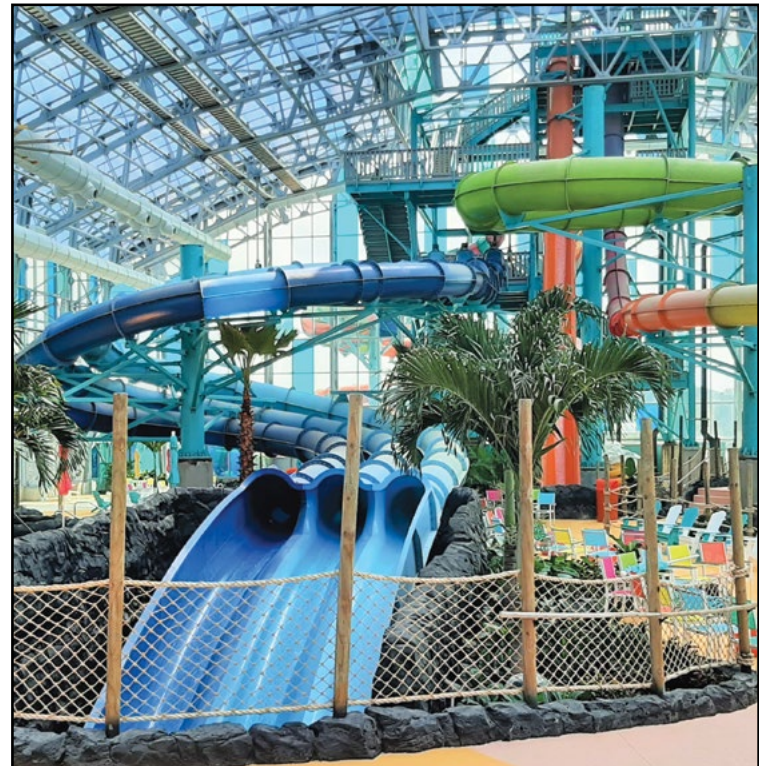
Yet to be installed is a \$700,000 state-of-the-art lighting system that was delayed due to supply issues. "That will change the entire look of the water park from day to night as

well as the basement area. There will be LED lights than can be controlled and synchronized with music and sound," said Hellmich.

Contained within the controlled environment are 11 waterslides, an interactive waterplay structure, lazy river, private cabanas, private party rooms, Grub (a quick service restaurant) and Libations (a tropical-themed cocktail bar). Seating, tables and colorful umbrellas are located throughout the facility. All of the slides were manufactured by **ProSlide Technology** of Ottawa, Ontario. Of the 11 slides, six are specifically designed for thrill seekers and are located on the main slide tower. Five are considered family friendly and are attached to the kid's waterplay entertainment center.

Located outside the indoor park and accessible through the retractable glass wall is Big Water Bay, a 30,000-square-foot wave pool. A surfing simulator is strategically placed at the edge of the wave pool dividing it in two. At the front of the pool is a large stage with a 48-foot-wide LED screen that can be used for live performances or to showcase water-themed movies. The Smuggler's Café restaurant overlooks the surf simulator. The pool is surrounded by a beach area with ample seating, additional outdoor cabanas, restrooms and a locker area.

Of the six major water-



slides, Tangerine Scream and Piranha Plunge are two extreme body slides. The latter begins with ProSlide's SkyBox drop-launch system which starts with thrill seekers standing on a transparent floor. The floor drops out from under them and sends them screaming into a high-speed lateral loop. Citrus Cyclone is a ProSlide Flying Saucer 30 slide which has two-person rafts negotiating three enclosed flying saucer sections. Located outside, the three saucer sections are completely enclosed, but each has a double row of windows on the far side of the saucer adding visual pizzazz. Aqua Chaser is a three-lane rally racer in which sliders ride head-first on mats. A Tornado 24 called Forbidden Falls also utilizes two-person rafts and includes a specially designed open-top funnel. Serpentine Swirl is a Twister body slide through an enclosed tube with pitch-black dark sections, translucent sections and colorful light rings.

Currently guests have two options. Those who want just the rides, can purchase a ticket to the amusement park for \$29.99, but if guests want both parks, they can buy the complete package at \$69.99. Because the entrance to the indoor water park lies within the amusement park, the

option to just enjoy the water park by itself does not exist. However, the park has a unique protocol to do just that when the inclement weather causes rides to shut down. It offers a \$49.99 rainy day ticket any time the dry-ride park is not operating.

Ramaker & Associates with headquarters in Sauk City, Wis., provided the architecture and engineering design. **Rabren General Contractors** based out of Auburn, Alabama, did the general construction, and **Cox Pools** of Dothan Alabama provided pool construction both indoors and outdoors.

The resort is owned and operated by the **Poarch Band of Creek Indians**. They are descendants of a segment of the original **Creek Nation**, which once covered almost all of Alabama and Georgia. The Tribe currently owns three hotel and casino resorts in Alabama, one in Pennsylvania, and two in the Caribbean. Its success in the hospitality industry has allowed it to become a benevolent leader in the world of philanthropy, contributing to many charitable organizations in the community. The tribe helps to fund the arts as well as activities such as youth sports, senior care and emergency support services.



The interactive waterplay structure features multiple levels, a tipping bucket, and five family friendly waterslides. COURTESY OWA PARKS & RESORTS

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PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► Cedar Point reimagines area as The Boardwalk — page 12 / First Zamperla Big WaveZ debuts — page 20

Throwback GCII coaster headlines Worlds of Fun anniversary plans

AT: Tim Baldwin
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KANSAS CITY, Mo. — When **Worlds of Fun** opened its gates in 1973, it was among the flurry of theme parks that began to populate the U.S. landscape. The park had three roller coasters at its debut, typical for the times. The largest one was a **Schwarzkopf** speed racer called **Zambezi Zinger**. It was a family favorite before being removed from operation at the close of the 1997 season.

In 2023, visitors will see all sorts of throwbacks to the park's history for the 50th anniversary season. At the top of the list is a newly imagined **Zambezi Zinger**. It will be supplied by **Great Coasters International, Inc.**

"It came down to manufacturers," said **Worlds of Fun** General Manager **Tony Carovillano**. "Our COO and corporate team looked at what direction we were going in for our 50th anniversary. We knew we wanted to highlight **Zambezi Zinger**. We looked at pitches from manufacturers, and it came down to **GCII's** proposal. We've had great success with **GCII** with **Prowler** in 2009. We could have gone steel, but this made the most sense for where we were going."

GCII partnered with **Skyline Attractions** for the track layout.

"We took advantage of **Worlds of Fun's** hilly terrain to create a really exciting ride with ground-hugging twists and turns, zippy transitions and thrilling airtime moments," said **Skyline Design Engineer**



The spiral lift of the original ride is being recreated in the new version — a first for a wooden coaster. The new version will stand 17 feet taller than the original. COURTESY WORLDS OF FUN

Tyler Mullins. "It was custom-built for this location and was designed to enhance **Worlds of Fun's** existing roller coaster lineup. It will be a thrilling roller coaster ride that will be accessible to riders of all ages."

This will be the park's third wooden coaster, with **Prowler** (2009) and **Timber Wolf** (1989) offering different types of layouts.

"**Zambezi Zinger** has a smaller layout like the original," said **Olivia Hain**, **GCII**. "It is packed with several moments of airtime, banked turns and quick transitions like low-to-the-ground track that races through the trees and terrain of the African Serengeti. But for this newly designed **Zambezi Zinger** we are using the **Infinity Flyer** trains because they can artic-



ulate faster and can handle extreme coaster elements, like low-to-the-ground tight twists and turns."

This is the first installation to use the **Infinity Flyer** trains. **GCII** and **Skyline** champion the rolling stock for its ability to navigate tighter radii and allow for great articulation in all directions.

The **Schwarzkopf** coaster's most iconic feature was its spiral lift. This new proj-

ect will be a first-of-its-kind feature for a wooden coaster.

"The **Titan Track** allows us to control the placement of the drive tire systems to the millimeter," said **Chris Gray**, vice president, **Skyline Attractions**. "Also we wanted to keep the look of open structure on the lift like the original, and the **Titan Track** allows us to have larger gaps between the vertical structure. That's also the case with the turn around the outside of the structure."

Titan Track is a weld-free steel roller coaster track system designed by **Skyline** and manufactured by **GCII**. The lift hill and turn around the lift will feature this style of track, but the majority of the ride will be constructed with **Southern Yellow Pine**.

The new layout will

not duplicate the original ride; however, it will speed through the trees as **Zambezi Zinger** did years ago. The new version will stand 74 feet tall, 17 feet taller than its former namesake. It will have a track length of 2,428 feet and reach 45 mph.

"The **Prowler** uses a more out-and-back style by using more land/space for the layout," said **Hain**. "The **Zinger** will have a much smaller layout that fits the low-to-the-ground track and tighter twists and turns."

"It will be fun, fast, twisted and low to the ground," said **Gray**. "The track is twisting and turning everywhere but the brakes and the station. I loved the layout the

► See **GCII**, page 11

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► **GCII**
Continued from page 10

first time I saw it. I remember watching the video of the design and messaging the team, 'This is an amazing layout!' It really gives you a sense of what the original ride did with new modern technical twists. We are very excited to see this vision come to life."

A tunnel is reported to be included in the layout as well. GCII and the park have the opportunity to design new pieces of Titan Track into the ride if maneuvers make it logical to do so.

Zambezi Zinger is just one component of the 2023 plans. The park's themes were based on *Around the World in Eighty Days* by Jules Verne. For the 50th anniversary, the Worlds of Fun team intends to bring these themes to reimagined life.

A tagline for the anniversary will be Passport to Adventure.

"We want everyone to come back and take that journey around the world," Carovillano told *Amusement Today*. "We are retheming the park and going through a total facelift. If we're going back to our roots, we really want people to engage that for our 50th."

Enhancements are planned for each of the park's lands. The park created a new entrance experience in 2017. Now the makeover will spread throughout the park. The section known as the Orient will be renamed East Asia.

"It's taking a big leap forward," said Carovillano. "What is East Asia? What is the Wild West? What is Europa? Africa will have three parts. We're going big there. It's scenic, it's paint, it's props, ID signage, directional signage — no area will be untouched."

The park is looking to do a "portal experience" in each land.

Plans are for 50 Days of Celebration culminating with "50 Nights of Fire," an evening stage show that will feature pop music hits from five decades. The entertainment will be capped off with a pyrotechnics finale.

"It's an end-of-night show," said Carovillano. "Kings Island did it this

year, and it blew me away. The 50 Days will be filled with a live entertainment program. We're bringing in a bird show, a walk-around puppet, drummers, an indoor Moulin Rouge show and a historical walkthrough in our Tivoli Theater lobby."

The park's popular Grand Carnivale will be incorporated into the 50 Days of Celebration as well.

Cedar Fair acquired Worlds of Fun in 1995.

Zambezi Zinger will be the first coaster to feature Infinity Flyer rolling stock. The layout of the new coaster will scream through the woods with low-to-the-ground maneuvers. COURTESY WORLDS OF FUN



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Knott's Berry Farm to transform, revitalize Fiesta Village in 2023

AT: Tim Baldwin
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BUENA PARK, Calif. — Cedar Fair has enjoyed a crowd-pleasing formula for taking areas in its parks and giving them transformative makeovers. Knott's Berry Farm will be among the newest recipients in 2023.

In 1969, Fiesta Village was the first land to be added to the park since its famous Ghost Town premiered to success. Guests responded to the area and its themed cultural imprint, which debuted just one month before the park's renowned log flume.

The reimagining will feature three zones which will contain brand-new food locations, an updated stage and a redesigned open-air marketplace. Color and décor will be found everywhere. One of the zones will feature alebrijes, brightly colored mythical creatures from Mexican folklore. New hues will be found strung over the midways as well as on the streets themselves. Fiesta



Three different zones of Fiesta Village will receive a colorful makeover. New décor will transport guests into the color of Hispanic culture. COURTESY KNOTT'S BERRY FARM

Village will tempt guests with not only brand-new food outlets but also cantinas.

Montezuma's Revenge was the first flywheel-launched roller coaster in the world when it opened in 1978 and was the last of its kind in North America. It was taken offline last winter. The attraction will be reimagined as MonteZOOMa: The Forbidden Fortress. Among the biggest chang-

es will be a storyline in the queue. That journey will be fraught with booby traps, a macabre setting and a quest for gold. While detailed specifics on what the new ride experience will be like have not been released, the park has made a statement that guests will be surprised by the randomized direction the train will take upon launch.

"We do not want to give away too many of the surpris-

es our guests will experience in the revitalized Fiesta Village," said Kristan Salvidar, public relations. "However, The Forbidden Fortress refers to an extensive storyline that will be present throughout the queue line. Many have tried to find Montezuma's gold unsuccessfully, and our guests have made it closer to the treasure than anyone before."

Adjacent to the park, the Knott's Berry Farm Hotel

will undergo a complete renovation in a multimillion-dollar investment that will focus on the park's founders, Walter and Cordelia Knott. All 322 guest rooms will see a complete renovation, as well as the lobbies and restaurant. The love story of the park's founders and their roots in the community will find its place within the hotel. The hotel transformation will commence later this year.

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Cedar Point reimagines area as The Boardwalk, adding coaster

AT: Tim Baldwin
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SANDUSKY, Ohio — Over the past decade, Cedar Point has reinvigorated numerous areas of the park. Starting in 2013, the addition of the GateKeeper wing coaster redefined the park entrance. Following that, several sections of the park have received makeovers. In 2023, Cedar Point will turn its attention to its midway near the beach.

Dubbed The Boardwalk, a ride midway will receive a fresh take with the addition of a new roller coaster, an elaborate new dining facility and an updated ride lineup.

The Grand Pavilion will be placed right at the beach. In addition to being a food venue, the facility will have an upstairs bar area that will offer fantastic views of the beach and Cedar Point.

"The mile-long beach made us famous," said Tony Clark, director of communications. "There really isn't an elevated space higher off the ground to take in those views and just relax. It's actually three separate balconies. You can have a drink and a cocktail and take in the



The Boardwalk reimagines a midway close to the beach (above). The new Wild Mouse will be the first spinning coaster at the park — and the first from Zamperla (inset). COURTESY CEDAR POINT

views, the sights, the sounds. It's a gathering space. It's not just a dining location. Our team has always wanted that — just a space for guests to relax. We kind of did that with the Hotel Breakers patio that faces the beach, and that's kind of the same feel this is going to have."

Previously, a roller coaster that has since been retired stood in the way of beach views. This renovation exposes the beach to guests in the park.

"I'm excited about honoring our past but doing it in a very, very modern way,"

said Clark. "The Grand Pavilion in 1888 was the event space that was here for guests to come in and see. Today, we are using that same inspiration to create an entertainment space, but now we have added faster guest service with our dining options, which we've been looking at over the past few years. We're introducing a bar with beautiful views of the lake, which is something we've always wanted to do."

Bringing new life to The Boardwalk will be Wild Mouse, a spinning roller

coaster from Zamperla.

"The park wanted more than a traditional switchback Wild Mouse or Spinning Coaster," said Adam Sandy, roller coaster sales and marketing director, Zamperla. "They gave us a footprint and let our engineers run wild. Cedar Point wanted an experience that felt familiar but delivered a modern experience and amenities."

Cedar Point offered a Schiff Wild Mouse from 1959 to 1963.

"It isn't the same Wild Mouse we had back in the

day," said Clark. "This is a modern version of what a Wild Mouse coaster can do. We used the names again, but the experiences are going to be very modern and up to date."

"Obviously with a four-passenger vehicle, there are some ceilings to capacity," said Sandy. "We are utilizing a moving station on this coaster. In addition, the seats in our new vehicle design were modified to be more in-line than angled like our traditional Twister Coaster, which will allow for a faster unload/load process. We have also designed a control system that works toward minimal downtime, which can have a significant impact on how the ride operates and a direct effect on the practical throughput each day."

"Not everything can just be big, tall thrill rides," said Clark. "It's important to have rides that families can ride together. This really is a solid addition to our lineup in our legacy of roller coasters."

The Boardwalk is located adjacent to Kiddie Kingdom. By relocating the Scrambler and Matterhorn to the location, the park feels it is a central area where a young child can start small and graduate all the way up to something as thrilling as Windseeker and GateKeeper, which are positioned at both ends.

"The architecture all ties in with that area," added Clark. "It's not just a one-and-done where we build one thing and just move on. The team took the opportunity to refresh that whole midway because it needed a little of that. For the food venue, you could just put in a regular ol' building or you could choose to make it grand and match it to the architecture around it, and that's what they did. It's got a classic look to it, but it's also going to feel modern and a place that it is inviting."

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WDW gives update, Journey of Water: Inspired by Moana first look

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — Familiar characters and shapes have been rising from the grounds at **Walt Disney World Resort's EPCOT**, as the new exhibit, *Journey of Water: Inspired by Moana*, begins to come to life.

This is the first Walt Disney World attraction based on the **Walt Disney Animation Studios** hit film *Moana*. Instead of being a ride, the new attraction will be an exploration trail. It is created for all ages.

Even though opening is not expected until late 2023, **Walt Disney Imagineering**, which has partnered with artists and cultural consultants from Walt Disney Animation, is forming familiar shapes and characters into the rocks and waterways throughout the exhibit. A sculpture of Moana will be positioned proudly cel-



Walt Disney World's EPCOT's *Journey of Water: Inspired by Moana*, is coming to life in Buena Vista, Florida. The sculptures are beginning to take shape with Disney artists. COURTESY WALT DISNEY WORLD

brating water's arrival to the exhibit's ocean.

The water maze will be an experience where guests will be able to interact with magical, living water in an inspiring setting. The lush walk-through will educate guests about the water cycle and how it sustains the world.

Moana's *Journey of Water* is part of the new World Nature neighborhood. World Nature is dedicated to understanding and preserv-

ing the balance of the natural world, as well as showing its beauty and awe. In addition to *Journey of Water*, it will include the Land and The Seas with Nemo and Friends pavilions.

Disney officials revealed in 2019 the historic transformation of EPCOT. Aside from World Nature, the other neighborhoods coming online are World Showcase, World Discovery and World Celebration.

In August, Walt Disney

World released new concept art showing a closer and updated view of *Journey of Water: Inspired by Moana*. Seen are water fountains and water arches that rise above guests' heads along the trail.

In choosing this character to educate visitors on water, Disney officials felt *Moana* was the best one to tell the story. In the movie *Moana*, the lead character was devoted to protecting the water and the nature

surrounding it.

Disney Imagineers are taking care to make sure paint colors are correct, as well as full scale models created to test the final materials and carving techniques.

This process ensures the production and creative vision for the experience align.

Disney officials anticipate that guests will be engaged with the majestic cycle of water and discover the playful nature of it just as Moana did.

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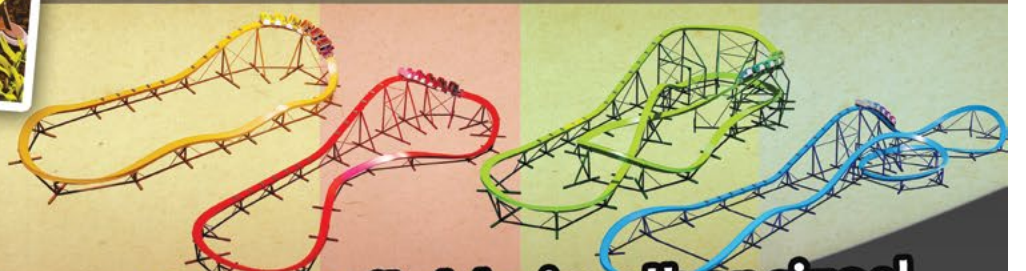
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Bay Beach Amusement Park preparing to add new attractions

AT: Pam Sherborne
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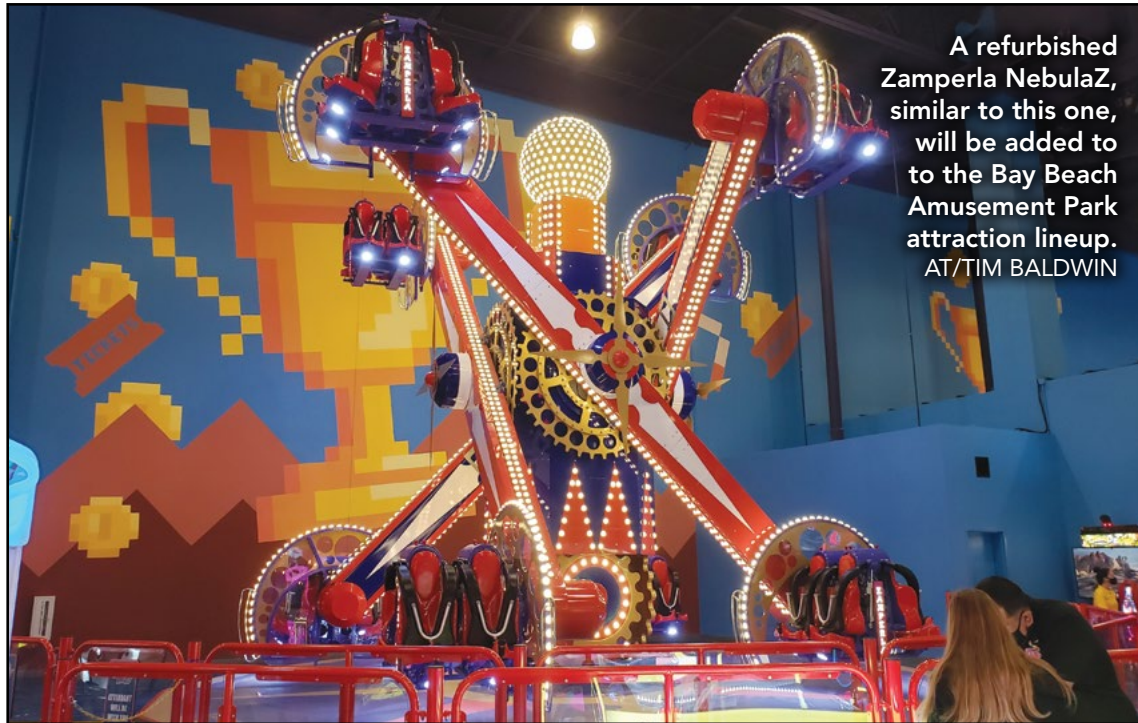
GREEN BAY, Wis. — After being approved by both the Green Bay (Wisconsin) Parks Committee and the full Green Bay city council, Bay Beach Amusement Park will get two additional rides to add to its arsenal of others.

And that is a good thing for officials and guests alike since the park made the decision earlier in 2022 to close and remove two rides.

The forthcoming rides are a used NebulaZ manufactured by Zamperla and the Screamer junior drop tower, manufactured by Moser Rides and purchased from Fun Spot America, Orlando, Florida.

The two rides that closed and were removed prior to the 2022 season were the Bay Beast, another junior drop tower also by Moser, and the Falling Star, manufactured by Chance Rides.

Dan Ditschet, the city's parks director, said the Bay Beast, a ride very similar to



A refurbished Zamperla NebulaZ, similar to this one, will be added to the Bay Beach Amusement Park attraction lineup. AT/TIM BALDWIN

the Screamer, would have cost upwards of \$300,000 or more to renovate. And, he said, the Falling Star was being decommissioned countrywide by its manufacturer.

The purchase of the Screamer is being funded by the non-profit group Friends of Bay Beach Amusement Park.

In announcing the addition of the new drop tower, Jason Arnoldi, park manager, said this ride should bring smiles to those guests who had been upset about the Bay Beast's demise.

In fact, guests may be even happier with its arrival since it is a little taller than the Bay Beast, stand-

ing at 50 feet tall, and it will be a little faster with a little more drop time. The Bay Beast was 40 feet high.

"We're really looking forward to getting it up here," Arnoldi said.

Parts of the Screamer had arrived in Bay Beach by mid-July but an opening date has not been set. The

ride will also be renamed but a new name had not yet been announced.

Park officials said not having the Bay Beast operating had been costly. It averaged about 200,000 riders a year, according to Ditschet. At 50 cents per ride, that is \$100,000 each year in revenue lost.

The NebulaZ ride was purchased from Zamperla for \$775,000. The five-year projected revenue from this ride is \$762,816, so the ride should pay for itself in that amount of time.

The NebulaZ holds 32 riders, featuring four rotating beams with four passengers on the end of each arm. The ride lasts about 90 seconds. Three tickets or 75 cents total, is required to ride, with a minimum rider height of 42 inches.

It was constructed in 2019 and recently refurbished. The NebulaZ's installation is expected next spring.

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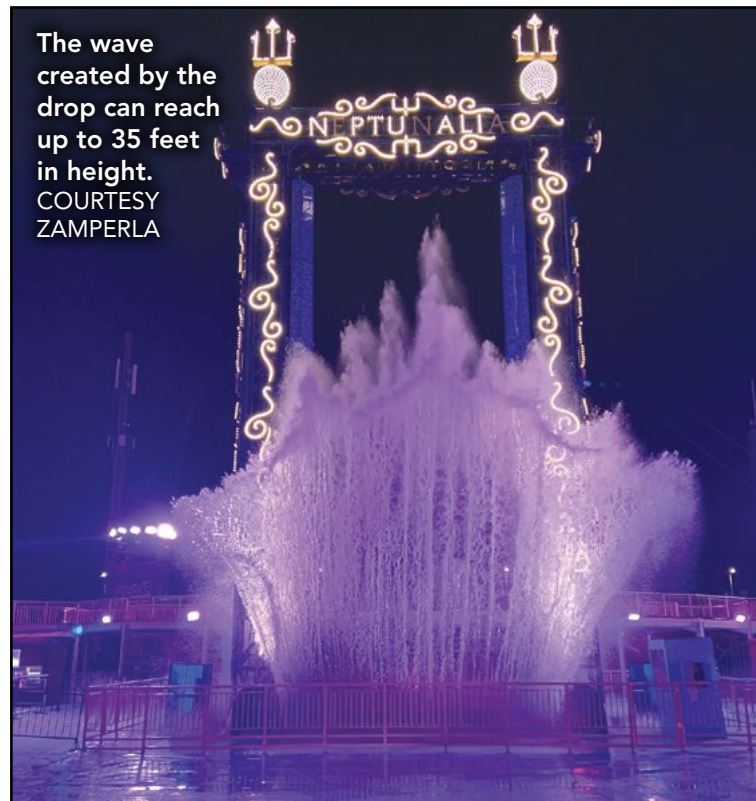
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First Zamperla Big WaveZ a huge splash at Jeddah City Walk



The wave created by the drop can reach up to 35 feet in height. COURTESY ZAMPERLA

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia — A port city on the Red Sea, Jeddah is one of Saudi Arabia's primary resort cities and its second largest city. **Jeddah City Walk** is a recreational zone aimed at families. It features shops, restaurants, entertainment and rides.

Neptunalia is the original installation of Zamperla's Big WaveZ — a world's first family thrill ride that drops a vessel vertically into a special pool of water to create an enormous wave of water, thus the name of the production model. This wave flies into the air to splash

an area in front of the ride, which is open to all park guests.

The vessel carries 20 riders (42 inches or taller) to a drop height of 50 feet (15 m), while the structure is over 70 feet tall (21 m). The real capacity of the ride is not just the riders, but also spectators. Many guests are engaged to "catch the wave" in front of the ride, so the experience capacity is enormous.

"At Jeddah City Walk, Neptunalia anchors an entire area with splash fountains, viewing platforms, kiosks and squirting sculptures," said **Anna Dall'Igna**, marketing, Zamperla. "Children love it, and adults do too!"

Once seated, the vehicle rises to the top of the tower. A bounce function can take place, but the big thrill is the final drop where riders plunge into the splash pool sending a wall of water up to 35 feet. The vessel then passively fills with water bringing it to ground level for easy loading.

One of the big selling points of this attraction is that it combines the fun of a drop tower with that of a shoot-the-chutes. The light package at night makes it a spectacular draw.

"Big WaveZ has been a passion project of over a decade. We wanted to do something completely new and different than anything out there," said Prototyping Engineer **Timothy Jacobi**, Zamperla. "The riders have the view, the drop, and the awesome visual of the wave exploding in front of you. But from the outside, the park also has a big and unexpected spectacle. The reaction of kids seeing the wave for the first time is really satisfying. They freeze whatever they're doing, and their eyes get big in total surprise."

Big WaveZ comes with a range of customization. The wave direction can be changed from cycle to

cycle to be directed mainly away from the ride or over the top of riders to drench everyone. With Saudi Arabia's warm climate, the refreshment is sought from both riders and spectators. This also creates flexibility for operation on both hot and cold days. The park can also choose to create one wave or two each cycle.

"The install has proven our theory that while the on-ride experience is amazing, the off-ride experience captures far more than the 20 riders plunging into the pool at any given moment," noted **Michael Coleman**, North American sales. "Drawn in by the spectacle, gathering crowds in and around the splash zone create an area full of life and excitement. This opens an opportunity for increased sales for F&B and retail in the immediate area. From what I hear, poncho sales are through the roof and guest satisfaction is right there with it!"

"The capacity of the ride is like a wave pool. It's not just the riders, it's everyone in front of the ride getting wet or just watching," added Jacobi.

Zamperla can work with customers in reaching their needs on the nature of the splash.

"For wave control, we have an adjustable wave-blocker system, which is programmed to control the splash," Coleman told *Amusement Today*. "It can be set to keep riders as dry as possible while throwing the maximum splash out over the crowd or return the majority of the wave back onto the riders. During the installation, our technicians will work with a park to dial in the wave of water for optimal guest experience."

With a ride cycle of just over two minutes, the hourly capacity is more than 500 people per hour.

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Park seasonal Halloween events offer spooky, fun entertainment

AT: Pam Sherborne
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Amusement and theme parks across the U.S. and the world know how to cater to their park guests when providing Halloween and/or autumn festivities.

Most parks have already launched their special events with some starting in early September.

After several years of pandemic unknowns, it does seem park officials brought their events back with new and/or expanded attractions.

Following is a sampling of just a small fraction of their events.

Some of the biggest Halloween and fall festivities happen in Orlando, Florida, with **Universal Florida Orlando's** Halloween Horror Nights, which began Sept. 2 and runs through Oct. 31.

Among an assortment of activities, Universal Florida Orlando's event is offering 10 haunted houses, five scare zones and two live shows.

The food and beverage offerings at the theme park were created by Universal Orlando's award-winning executive chefs and culinary team and deliver the most expansive selection in Halloween Horror Nights history. As guests navigate the event, they can satiate their appetite for fright with elevated, Halloween-inspired cuisine along with specialty items themed after the terrifying experiences invading this year's event.

Highlights include the Save Your Tears signature



Busch Gardens Tampa Bay added an all-new whimsical world of enchantment full of not-so-spooky family fun called "Spooktacular" (above). **Dollywood** began its Harvest Festival, featuring **Great Pumpkin LumiNights** on Sept. 24 (below).

COURTESY BUSCH GARDENS TAMPA BAY, DOLLYWOOD

cocktail, the Maggot-Covered Cheese Dog and staples like Pizza Fries, Twisted Taters and more.

At **Walt Disney World**, the Not-So-Scary Halloween Party began Aug. 13 and runs through Oct. 31. Attractions include a wickedly wild fireworks display featuring some of the favorite Disney characters and hosted by Jack Skellington from *Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas*.

The Disney Junior Jam at Storybook Circus is a popular attraction as is Mickey's Boo-to-You Halloween Parade. Trick or treating trails abound.

Of course, there is an abundance of Disney attractions and activities added to this Halloween and



fall celebration at Disney.

Hersheypark, Hershey, Pennsylvania, decided to expand its Halloween event. Debuting this year is **Dark Nights**, an immersive haunt experience. The event, running from Sept. 17 to Oct. 30, sees an increase in operating days.

Hersheypark used the skills of **RWS Entertainment Group**, as well as **Adirondack Studios, Zeitgeist Design and Production** and **Illuminated Integration** to help create, design, fabricate and integrate technology for the event. Other companies partnering with Hersheypark this year for the Halloween event are **Brainstorm Design Group**, **EPIC Entertainment Group**

and **TAA Group**.

SeaWorld San Antonio, Texas, brought its **Howl-O-Scream** to life on Sept. 16. It runs through Oct. 31.

This park also expanded its haunt this year with new scares, new party zones and two new haunted houses, which will bring the number of houses to six.

Live performances also have become creepier with **Monster Stomp**, a song-and-dance show featuring a live band, singers and dancers.

Seaworld San Antonio is one of the 13 recreational facilities owned by **Seaworld Parks and Entertainment**. **Seaworld Orlando** holds one of the largest Halloween events among

the Seaworld brand.

Busch Gardens is another of the company's parks under that brand that puts on quite a Halloween show.

Busch Gardens Tampa Bay, Florida, added an all-new whimsical world of enchantment full of not-so-spooky family fun.

Called **Spooktacular**, this playful world created by Kandy, a friendly witch-in-training, includes a costume parade, story time and trick-or-treating.

Spooktacular is running from 12-4 p.m., select days, Sept. 10 through Oct. 30.

At night, **Busch Gardens Howl-O-Scream** has returned, taking over the entire park. It includes haunted houses, scare zones, sinister shows and more. It runs from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m., select nights, Sept. 9-Oct. 31.

Six Flags' Fright Fest is back, and at **Six Flags Over Georgia**, Austell, Georgia, park officials have been warning that this year it is scarier than ever. The event at this Six Flags park began Sept. 17 and will run select dates through Oct. 31.

At night, the park is offering numerous scare zones, including the new **Trolls** scare zone, ghoulish haunted houses such as the **Zombie Zoo**, a variety of spooky live performances, thrilling rides and more.

For the more family-friendly Halloween activities, guests are finding those types of activities during the daytime hours with **Six Flags Boo Fest**.

Valleyfair, Shakopee, Minnesota, owned by **Cedar Fair Entertainment Co.**, debuted an all-new, family-friendly Halloween attraction this fall that's designed to celebrate the autumnal season without big scares.

The new attraction, called **Tricks and Treats**, is running Fridays through Sundays from Sept. 30-Oct. 30.

The immersive experience allows guests to visit



New food items give guests even more of a Halloween feel at **Hersheypark** with the **Dark Moon Orange Sorbet** (left) and the **Halloween King Size Donut** (above).
COURTESY HERSHEY PARK

▶HALLOWEEN

Continued from page 22

four themed lands spread across the park. These lands include candy land, an autumnal land that is cozy and spicy, a food land and an oozy and gooey land. A giant pumpkin adorns the Midway Stage, creating a picturesque backdrop for fall festivities in the daytime.

The **San Diego Zoo** and the **San Diego Safari Park**, San Diego, California, are celebrating the fall season with a month full of fun for the whole family. Throughout the entire month of October, youths ages 11 and younger will receive free admission to both wildlife parks and can take part in special weekend activities, including unique entertainment, culinary treats and one-of-a-kind encounters with amazing wildlife.

The San Diego Zoo is presenting Halgloween, a popular event for families. It is running each weekend Oct. 1–29. It features a light-up-the-night spectacular with remarkable wildlife encounters.

As the sun sets, guests enjoy a multitude of experiences, including live music, performances and interactive fun.

The San Diego Zoo Safari Park's Autumn Festival is back, following a very successful debut last year. Safari Park guests are invited each weekend, Oct. 8–30, to celebrate the season by enjoying special fall-themed entertainment and culinary comforts.

This year, guests will have the opportunity to experience the antics of the Safari Park's Not-so-Scary Scarecrows. These happy-go-lucky characters will amaze and amuse guests by showing off their skills at juggling and stilt jumping.

Silver Dollar City's Harvest Festival returned this year, running from Sept. 21–Oct. 29. The park, a **Herschend Entertainment Co.** property located in Branson, Missouri, is

Traumatica at Europa-Park, Rust, Germany, is back — running Sept. 30–Nov. 12 — and with it comes all the monsters and dark shapes, the source of terrible nightmares. COURTESY EUROPA-PARK



featuring more than 15,000 pumpkins, larger-than-life sculptures and a new addition, the Foggy Hollow lighted pathway.

The carved pumpkins are spread throughout and include such designs as the 14-foot Lucky Dog, which is the Dalmatian mascot of the park's kids' area, friendly bats with five-foot wingspans perched atop lighted areas, a massive cat, pumpkin craftspeople (patterned after the park's own craftspeople) and an icon scarecrow more than two-stories tall.

There are 40 rides and attractions throughout the park, many giving scenic views of pumpkin illumination.



Another Herschend Family Entertainment park is **Dollywood**, Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. The park began its Harvest Festival on Sept. 24. It will run until Oct. 30.

Along with the changing colors of trees from summer to fall, Dollywood adds to the color with its more than 12,000 pumpkins. Guests can have a hoot in Craftsman's Valley as the all-new Hoot Owl Hollow takes over with owl-themed pumpkin displays on the ground and suspended from the trees.

The smells of apple and pumpkin treats waft through the streets and the sounds of thrilling rides fill

the air with adventure.

After sundown, the award-winning **Great Pumpkin LumiNights** lights the night. The pumpkins carved in many whimsical characters along with some pumpkin icons keep the park aglow.

Dollywood is even offering more performances than ever before from new and returning artists

Fairytale Farm, Southcombe, United Kingdom, has announced its 2022 Halloween event, which is running Oct. 22–30. Called **Scarily Ever After**, the event will feature fairytale baddies.

Park owner **Nick Laister** said the event is a story. "Once upon this Hal-

loween," he said, "the Sea Witch has changed her ways, or so she tells us. So, instead of stealing the voices of little mermaids, this ogreish octopus is giving away mermaid singing tips to Fairytale Farm visitors during her mer-sing-along sessions."

But, apparently, the Sea Witch can't resist a bit of mischief.

The park is full of other activities as well as a pumpkin patch, where every child can pick a free pumpkin for Halloween and help carve it.

Indoor spooky craft activities also are offered.

Traumatica at **Europa-Park**, Rust, Germany, is back, running Sept. 30–Nov. 12. And with it comes all the monsters and dark shapes, the source of terrible nightmares. In a post-apocalyptic world, evil takes over again. This year, a group of traveling people has begun to mingle with the horrible creatures that are once again spreading fear and terror as Traumatica is transformed into a Festival of Fear.

They have haphazardly thrown their tarpaulins over shipping containers, wildly painted the buildings and streets, and used scrap metal to "decorate" the site to their own taste. Blood will run cold in veins at the multi-award-winning horror event at Europa-Park.



The San Diego Zoo is presenting Halgloween, which this year features a light-up-the-night spectacular with remarkable wildlife encounters (above left). Fright Fest at Six Flags Over Georgia is being touted as "scariest ever" (above right). COURTESY SAN DIEGO ZOO, SIX FLAGS

A Wichita, Kansas, appeals court ruled in August in favor of the former owner of the shuttered **Joyland Amusement Park** that was located in Wichita, Kansas, after she sought to cancel a handwritten contract with a long-time employee for him to purchase the park's **Wurlitzer organ**.

Margaret Nelson Spear owned and operated the park with her husband **Stanley Nelson** for more than 30 years until they permanently closed it in 2004. During the years that followed, numerous thefts, fires and vandals combined caused much damage to the site. Louie, the animatronic clown that played the Wurlitzer organ, had been stolen and its whereabouts weren't known until 2015.

That year, Wichita police searched the home of long-time park worker **Damian Mayes** after a tip they received indicated that he had Louie. He did, and Louie was retrieved. Mayes was convicted six years ago of the theft.

Spears then set out to rescind that contract because she said Mayes didn't pay the full price and because of his other charges. She claimed, "Mayes had unclean hands and had made fraudulent misrepresentations" about his role in stealing Louie the Clown.

After working her way through the courts, Spears won her case and Mayes will not be able to purchase the organ.

Mayes had pleaded no contest to stealing Louie and he remains in prison. His earliest possible release date is Nov. 25, 2028.



Anakeesta, a theme park located in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, has announced plans to double the size of its guest spaces to incorporate a second mountain coaster, a European-style village, a birdhouse-themed play area and an immersive night walk.

The mountaintop expansion will begin later this year with more phases coming in 2024.

Anakeesta originally opened in 2017 and already includes a treetop skywalk, a mountain coaster, zip lines and views of the **Great Smoky Mountains**. Guests take chair lifts, gondolas or trucks to the mountaintop from the ticket station along Gatlinburg's Parkway.

Now, the theme park is undergoing its

biggest expansion since its opening by investing \$34 million over the next three years.

Cameron Park Zoo, Waco, Texas, received an early Christmas gift last month when the **McLennan County Commissioners** decided to pay off a 30-year obligation to the city of Waco in a lump sum to help cover the 50% budget overrun for the expansion of the zoo.

The Cameron Park Zoo is a 52-acre natural habitat zoo. It was established in 1993 and has lush native vegetation that surrounds splashing waterfalls, a lake and pond.

The expansion project, now estimated to cost between \$22 million and \$25 million, includes a veterinary and education complex, a penguin habitat and a hoofstock barn.

The owner of **Conneaut Lake Park** in Conneaut Lake, Pennsylvania, is proposing to add more than 460 recreational vehicle sites to the property.

In order to expand the sites, **Keldon Holdings LLC**, the current owner, has to get approval to the **Summit Township Zoning Board**. He has filed a request for a set-back variance to the board.

Keldon bought the amusement park, including grounds, amusement rides, water park and other assets, from **Trustees of Conneaut Lake Park** for \$1.2 million from U.S. Bankruptcy Court in March 2021.

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Launch Entertainment will open a new corporate entertainment center at **The Shops at CenterPoint** in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The center originally was opened in early 2020 by a franchisee but has since closed due to the shutdown from the pandemic.

Launch Entertainment centers offer activities and attractions for entire families, including trampoline courts, bowling, laser tag, rock climbing, ropes courses, arcade games, pizza, a bar and more.

According to **Jeff Todd**, senior vice president of business development at Launch, the company's success in the overall Michigan market prompted the corporate team to re-open the Grand Rapids location.

"With the growing number of families in the Grand Rapids area, Launch saw the need for a full-family entertainment center," Todd said. "Now more than ever, families are looking toward experiences together and Launch is the perfect venue for those awesome experiences."

Flight, a multi-experience family entertainment venue with 13 locations across the United States and Canada, celebrated the opening of its newly retrofitted, 26,000-square-foot park located in Springfield, Virginia, on August 26, 2022.

The Springfield location is the first Flight park to receive a complete overhaul, which includes the construction of new attractions and experiences inspired by human flight across air and space.



FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL

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"This is an incredibly exciting time for Flight — this retrofit is more than just about a facelift, it's a completely new strategy which we're finally seeing come to fruition after years of hard work and planning," said **Steven L. Yeffa**, CEO of Flight and chairman of the **International Adventure and Trampoline Parks Association (IATP)**. "Springfield is a first for us and will serve as a blueprint for how Flight will be deploying retrofit operations across our entire network of parks."

Among the many new attractions offered in Springfield are ziplining through the cargo bay of a space shuttle, riding a rocket through takeoff, bailing out of an aircraft into a giant airbag and descending the evacuation slide of an aircraft. Birthday party rooms have also been reimagined with aircraft, spacecraft, helicopters, and hot air balloons."

Central Ohio's **Columbus Square Bowling Palace** announced it has upgraded its facility to include HyperBowling, bowling's newest attraction from **QubicaAMF**. HyperBowling is a set of revolutionary new bowling games that combine a high-tech blend of software, futuristic user interfaces, lights and sensors to

deliver an experience that plays like a physical video game on a bowling lane.

"HyperBowling is bowling as you've never experienced it before," commented **Julie Wells**, manager, Columbus Square Bowling Palace. "When redeveloping the Bowling Palace, our focus was to add more diverse and engaging entertainment options for our guests, and we think HyperBowling definitely accomplishes that goal."

HyperBowling provides an interactive and immersive experience for consumers, leveling the playing field so guests don't have to be experienced bowlers to play and win. Guests can select their favorite experience directly from the tablets on the lane.

VRstudios announced the upcoming availability of Football Frenzy, the second installment in the company's growing catalog of groundbreaking Real Sport VR Experiences for the Fury, the arcade-easy unattended VR attraction. Football Frenzy follows Hoops Madness, the inaugural title for the Fury, and will be launched in time for Football Season. Operators can license both Hoops Madness and Football Frenzy titles making the Fury the industry's first multi-sport VR attraction.

"Half of all Americans are football fans but most arcades have no football games — VRstudios has developed an innovative experience to capitalize on that unanswered demand," noted **Kevin Vitale**, CEO of VRstudios.

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Wisconsin State Fair endured, enjoying a successful 2022 run

AT: B. Derek Shaw

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WEST ALLIS, Wis. — “Something for Everyone” was the theme of the 11-day Wisconsin State Fair, held the first half of August. That also rang true with the weather that was expected.

“As a primarily outdoor event, weather plays an impactful role on our overall attendance,” said Shari Black, CEO, Wisconsin State Fair Park. “This year, we faced flood warnings and high temperatures in the beginning of the state fair run. However, the anticipation for this event was very high and fairgoers came to enjoy great music, food, agriculture and more in record numbers on weekdays. This impressive turnout shows fairs are still very much a priority to experience and offer a great value for all ages.”

Final attendance came in at 1,003,450, which is a 19% increase from 2021, when 841,074 walked through the turnstiles. No fair was held in 2020 due to the pandemic.

There was a total of 39 rides on the SpinCity independent carnival midway, with 21 of them of the kiddie variety, brought in by 14 carnival operators. Alamo Amusements and FairRide Entertainment, LLC both offered five rides; Prime Pacific Entertainment, LLC had four; Arnold Amusements, Inc., Rainbow Valley Rides, Inc., Sunny Hill Attractions,



**WISCONSIN
STATE FAIR**

Brought in by 14 carnival operators, there were a total of 39 rides on the SpinCity independent carnival midway, with 21 of them of the kiddie variety. COURTESY WISCONSIN STATE FAIR

Thomas Lauther LLC and Wood Entertainment all brought three rides; B-Thrilled Attractions, LLC, D&K Amusements, Fun Attractions, LLC and Wanderlust brought two and A&P Enterprise Shows and Reithoffer Shows, Inc, both had one ride on site.

New to the spot was a Zamperla Safari Train from Wood Entertainment, while a Wisdom Rides Tornado, previously provided by Laser Fair Inc. in 2019, was brought in by Sunny Hill Attractions. The top rides included a Galaxy Coaster (Interpark), Reithoffer Shows, Inc.; Wave Swinger, (Zierer), FairRide Entertainment LLC; and Techno Power (Tivoli), Wood Entertainment. The ride redemption revenue was \$3,272,156.

New to the SpinCity area of rides, games and attractions this year was a sensory-friendly morning. Those who may have special sensory needs were invited to come play games and experience thrills from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Monday, August 8, when lights, sounds and non-safety related announcements were reduced on the carnival midway

“Year over year, we continue to work with many of the same midway providers, which should speak volumes about our experience with each of them,” said Black. “While we can and do make changes to our midway each year, we choose to work with many of the same providers as a result of their dedication to safety [and] overall professionalism.”

What sets the Wisconsin

State Fair apart from other fairs around the country is the amount of permanent stand vendors they have at Fair Park, with each providing a unique atmosphere. From Tropics which encapsulates a beach day to Camp Bar which captures the charm of your favorite up north bar, the Wisconsin State Fair strives to offer something for everyone.

The fair works with its partners to offer discounted admission and more. Opening day at the Wisconsin State Fair offered an admission discount for those donating food items to the Hunger Task Force in the Milwaukee area. The last day of the fair included free admission for military, veterans and their families, culminating with a resource expo that day.

Tess Kerksen, director

of public relations, commented on the media mix: “For years now, we have been leaning into social media more and more. This year was no exception with the investment in TikTok. The state fair team created videos throughout the fair that we were able to not only garner attention organically from, but also put some money behind them to reach new audiences in a fun, personable, creative way.”

Black was pleased with the fair’s ongoing COVID-19 practices. “In 2022, we were re-accredited as a GBAC Star facility. This accreditation by the Global Biorisk Advisory Council is an incredible achievement that holds Wisconsin State Fair Park to the highest standards in terms of cleanliness and sanitization,” she said.

Some of the more unusual food items included Peño Pretzel Popper Brat, Gertrude’s Pretzels; Gummy Bear Brat, Leadfoots Race Bar & Grill; Bug Apple on-a-stick, All Things Jerky and Brandy Old Fashioned S’more On-a-Stick, Freese’s Candy Shoppe. Many were Sporkie award winners.

Grandstand entertainment included Jeff Dunham, Charlie Berens and Nelly with Ginuwine, while free entertainment offerings had the BMX PROS trick team, The Cleverlys and Liliac.

“Like many organizations and companies, we had challenges in hiring,” said Black. “We implemented many strategies to mitigate this, including the use of kiosks for admission and our [ride] midway, SpinCity.”

Summing it up, she feels: “The highlight of this fair and every fair is seeing the team come together to create something wonderful and impactful.”

The 2023 fair takes place August 3 – 13.

•wistatefair.com



The top rides included a Galaxy Coaster, Reithoffer Shows, Inc.; Wave Swinger (above left), FairRide Entertainment LLC; and Techno Power, Wood Entertainment. The ride redemption revenue was \$3,272,156. The Wonderfair Wheel (above right) brought in by Wood Entertainment has 36 fully enclosed gondolas, each with a capacity of six people. COURTESY WISCONSIN STATE FAIR



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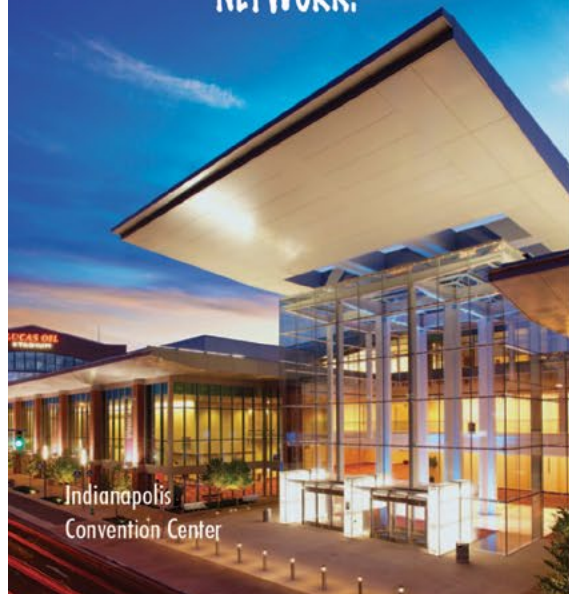
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Delaware State Fair breaks single day record despite high heat

AT: B. Derek Shaw

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HARRINGTON, Del. — “This year’s fair will certainly go down as a fair to remember as the weather, both good and bad, played a crucial role in our success this year,” said **Ron Draper**, president of the **Delaware State Fair Board**. The weather proved to be a challenge with intense hot weather days in the front half of the fair giving way to a cooler second half of the week with occasional reports of scattered showers and lower temperatures.

Attendance at the 103rd annual event, clocked in at 299,511 fairgoers, making it the 4th best attended in the fair’s history. The last day of the fair combined with incredible weather generated record-breaking crowds, with more than 58,600 fairgoers enjoying that final piece of summertime tradition. That day broke the single-day record.

Even with five days of high temperatures, crowds strategically planned their fair visits, utilizing seven air-conditioned buildings. Another newly added cooling feature to most livestock buildings were large, industrial-grade, high-velocity, low-speed ceiling fans to ensure comfort for animals, exhibitors, and livestock visitors.

“I went into the **Delaware State Fair** with reasonable expectations. The goal was to equal last year,” said **Frank Zaitshik**, owner of **Wade Shows**, the midway provider. “We had some terrible heat and rain; how-



ever, we met or exceeded my expectations.”

Forty-two rides were provided, with nearly half kiddie ones. The show operated 28 games and 10 food stands. **Jimmy Danton** runs the East coast unit. He had a 1963 haunted dark ride there, named *The Haunted*. It was his father’s, continuing a time-honored tradition. Danton’s father passed when he was 25.

With a digital ticketing system and wristbands, it is difficult to determine the most popular rides, however, Zaitshik said, “Typically the bigger thrill and spectacular rides have the longest lines.” The company has found that using a large central ticketing area is the most efficient way to move the massive crowds who want to ride. Wade will soon be adding eight more credit card-only kiosks, eliminating live sellers.

Even the entrance into the midway was controlled by a long stretch of independent vendors with food and crafts. One hundred yards in, fairgoers came to an intersection — to the left were rides, to the right were agricultural buildings and exhibits. The ride area was wrapped, so shortcuts were not possible, controlling ingress and egress.

Wade Shows continues



Wade Shows brought 42 rides, with nearly half kiddie ones. The show operated 28 games and 10 food stands. The Wade Shows marquee greets attendees after they go through a long food and game midway.

COURTESY
DELAWARE STATE FAIR;
AT/B. DEREK SHAW



to have a long-standing relationship with the Delaware State Fair. “We are very fortunate. They are on the same wavelength,” said Zaitshik. “The best events we play are the most comfortable ones. Delaware State Fair is a very, very well organized one. They have all the right tools to put on a great event. **Bill (DiMondi)** and **Danny (Aguilar)** have a very strong group of officers and well-rounded staff. We’ve grown to have a mutual admiration society.”

Wade has been on the grounds since the grass was first turned into a concrete midway. “This year was my 24th Delaware State Fair. It seems like my first. I’m very proud of our presentation in Delaware. I feel good where we are as a company,” said Zaitshik.

Looking at the broader prospective, Zaitshik talked about COVID-19 issues and challenges this season: “In 2021, carnivals were putting up less rides than pre-pandemic times. Look, we don’t need all this equipment to gross the same amount of money. This is how we can cut down with inflation.”

Zaitshik is puzzled about this season. “In 2022, noth-

ing seems to correlate (with last season). Some people (other providers) are seeing results of pent-up demand. Our Michigan spots were off the charts,” he said.

Special discount admission days included **Pepsi** day with \$2.00 off coupons at selected locations; **Food Lion** Hunger Relief Day/Seniors Day, free to those 60 and over and free with five cans of Food Lion brand product; on Kids Day, kids 12 and under entered for free; on Armed Forces Day, free admission was given with valid military ID and **Highmark Blue Cross Shield** Delaware Day/Senior’s Day.

The marketing mix relied heavily on a multi-platform social media campaign as a high percentage of attendees these days rely on messages they can get on their phones, all tying in with their 2022 theme, “Summer Nights, Carnival Lights.”

Grandstand entertainment included **Sam Hunt** with **Roman Alexander**; **Nelly** and **Hank Williams Jr.** — all near sellouts. Other shows included **Halestorm**, **Trace Adkins**, **TobyMac** and

ZZ Top. There was also an inaugural Latin music night and a demolition derby.

“The blend of great entertainment offered in and outside of the **M&T Bank Grandstand** continued to show why the Delaware State Fair, after 103 years, is consistently considered to be one of the best summer destinations for great entertainment on [the] Delmarva,” said assistant general manager and director of marketing **Danny Aguilar**. “We continue to offer unique diverse entertainment opportunities with great experiences for our patrons like VIP packages, beer gardens, live entertainment throughout the grounds, amazing food, shopping and entertainment for kids of all ages. In all, over the 10 days of [the] fair, patrons were treated to over 1,100 hours of programmed entertainment, which was provided at no additional cost beyond gate admission, not to mention all of the competition (competitive exhibits and livestock).”

The 2023 fair takes place July 20 – 29.

•delawarestatefair.com



The main entrance to the 10-day Delaware State Fair in Harrington is seen here. Just under 300,000 people attended this year. AT/B. DEREK SHAW



MIDWAYSCENE

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Visitors to the **Orange County Fair**, Costa Mesa, California, know how to eat a lot of fair food. Here are some of the consumption numbers: 70,600 fresh-baked chocolate chip cookies; 20,000 deep-fried Oreos; 16,682 hot dogs; 9,000 Canadian lobster tails; 5,000 bacon-wrapped pickles and 3,000 fried avocados.

Ticket sales for this year's fair were 1,055,173, roughly 600 shy of 2021 visits; however, there were approximately 338,000 less attendees than in 2019, the year before the fair was canceled due to COVID-19. This year for the second time, daily admission was restricted to 45,000 tickets each day of the 40-day-long event. In the past, upwards of 80,000 fairgoers visited each day, leading to overcrowding with long lines, along with parking and traffic issues affecting adjacent neighborhoods.

Guests took a total of 2.5 million carnival rides and games. The midway was provided by **Ray Cammack Shows**.

The **Wilson County Fair – Tennessee State Fair**, Lebanon, had a record-breaking year for its fair. 776,195 people made it to the 10-day fair. This represents 295,568 more fairgoers than in 2021. The theme this year was "95 Reasons to Celebrate Tennessee," where all 95 counties were showcased. There were 1800+ volunteers who helped make the August 18 – 27 fair possible.

Reithoffer Shows — Blue Unit had the midway, bringing a total of 60 rides and attractions. **Rick Reithoffer**, said in a release, prior to the mid-August event, "We've added nine new attractions to the midway which riders will find adding more fun to their trip to the fair." The Wilson County Fair—Tennessee State Fair is Tennessee's largest single event.

SJ Entertainment, Inc., New Braunfels, Texas, recently closed down its operation. **Steve Vandervorste**, founder of the company, retired and sold off his rides, including a **Reverchon Crazy Mouse**, purchased by **Michael Wood**, principal, **Wood Entertainment**. **Ray Cammack Shows**, purchased the **SDC Windstorm** roller coaster, while **Davey Helm, Helm and Sons Amusements** bought and took possession of the **Huss Rides Flipper**. Vandervorste was the first showman to bring a portable Crazy Mouse to the American carnival midway.

COVID-19 and all the challenges the pandemic presented was one of the factors that sped up Vandervorste's decision. Labor issues and the rising cost of diesel fuel in 2022 didn't help either. The 67-year-old wants to spend quality time with his wife, **Pat**, and their seven grandchildren.

Last century, Vandervorste worked alongside his father **Dick**, an independent contractor who ran **Van Equipment Company** that specialized in kiddie rides. SJ Entertainment was in operation for more than 20 years.

For 70 years in a row, **Lilly Lee** has been visiting the **Pacific National Exhibition (PNE)**, Vancouver, B.C. The journey started when Lee was 17. That was where she had her first date with the man who would become her husband. They attended every year until **Bob** passed away in 2020. She has continued the annual pilgrimage ever since.

"The last picture I have with Bob at the PNE (in 2019), he was in a wheelchair, but he still wanted to go," Lee told the *Vancouver Sun*. "I miss him not being there with me, but having the kids there makes it still enjoyable." The couple has four kids.

There have been changes at the fair the past seven decades, however some things have not changed. "It was always enjoyable, folksy," said Lee. "It's still very family oriented; there are always things that are interesting. There's a lot of charm and fun."

While the Lees weren't much for the rides, they preferred people watching, tasting the various food and snacks and enjoying the shows. "We'd wander around, we'd go through the buildings, when the kids were little, they did all the rides, it was just a real fun day," Lee said. "Bob would try the fun things, like trying to knock the bottles over with a ball."

The 182nd **Erie County Fair**, Hamburg, New York, had a rewarding one dozen days. Some of the notable figures derived from the fair:

\$462,212 Combined gross sales of youth livestock market animal auctions, a 45% increase over 2021

\$136,945 Total prize money paid, a 49% increase over 2021

96,555 Total pounds of canned food donated in one day for **FeedMore WNY**, equivalent to 80,000 meals

\$19,200 Money donated by food vendors, indoor vendors, **Strates Shows** and various others to purchase animals in the Youth Livestock Market Auction with all meat donated to FeedMore WNY

7,761 Number of competitive exhibits entries including 4-H entries

4,335 Number of scheduled volunteer hours covered by Friends of the Fair

1,747 Number of livestock at the Fair; a 24% increase over 2021

562 Menu items available at fair food concessionaires

483 Number of free performances

The final attendance was 1,148,079, a 17% increase over 2021.

On the Midway: Deggeller Attractions

The 2022 **Maryland State Fair**, Timonium, operated on a new and different schedule: three long weekends, for a total of 13 days that included Labor Day Monday. In the past it was held during the last week of August, with the final day on Labor Day.

Andy Cashman, general manager, told *WFMD-AM*: "The weather's been beautiful, and we've had great crowds," he said. "Our numbers are ahead of last year's."



Deggeller Attractions, based in Palm City, Florida, has long been the fair midway provider. The company brought in 42 rides for the 141st edition. Among the rides was a **Chance Giant Wheel**, always popular with fair guests. AT/B. DEREK SHAW



Riptide, one of a few roller coasters on the midway, was among the more popular attractions. It was manufactured by **Pinfari**. AT/B. DEREK SHAW



Two of the rides on the main midway were an **Owen Trailer Haunted Mansion** dark ride and a **Majestic Manufacturing Musik Express**. AT/B. DEREK SHAW



James Ingram, Jr. oversees the ride midways for **Deggeller Attractions**. In Timonium, the carnival operated both a main midway and a **Kiddieland** area. When asked about the 2022 **Maryland State Fair**, Ingram said, "It will probably be our best year ever." AT/B. DEREK SHAW

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WATER PARKS & RECREATION

► ProSlide Switchback slide opens in Texas — page 36 / Polin debuts 'looping' waterslide in turkey — page 38

Castaway Bay receives a complete makeover from Cedar Fair

AT: Tim Baldwin

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SANDUSKY, Ohio — Located right at the beginning of the entrance road to Cedar Point, Castaway Bay has been one of the Cedar Fair properties since 1996. The hotel was built as a Radisson Harbor Inn in 1989, but the decision in 2003 to transform the property into an indoor water park resort changed the hotel's direction. It officially reopened as Castaway Bay in November of 2004.

Light, airy and fun. That was the focus that designers were looking for when the entire property received a new transformation in 2022.

"Even upon entering the hotel, we have had guests that have returned and said it was 'unexpected.' They didn't expect it to be like *this*," said General Manager Melissa McClure. "The openness of it, being able to see straight through to the bay, the ship [in the lobby] playing a part of the story of the hotel — for them it was so unexpected that we tied it all together."

Cedar Point's entertainment department came up with a storyline for the hotel.

"The story goes along with Gordy, our sea turtle, who is not able to make it back out to sea with his hatching brothers and sisters," tells McClure. "He lived on Castaway Isle with the other



Guests at Castaway Bay will see a transformed resort..

AT/TIM BALDWIN

creatures: Hank the monkey, Rocket the sloth, Ophelia the octopus and Flo the flamingo. They came to know and love him, and they tried to build a ship from a shipwreck to take Gordy out to sea to see all these things he thought he was missing. The ship also wrecks, and they decide 'Why try to go out there, when we can bring people here to Castaway Bay.'

Hotel staff are considered "deckhands" that work for Gordy and his friends. All the characters are original and created for the resort.

"You see bright colors. You walk in and immediately realize you are not in a boring, drab place," said Tony Clark, director of com-

munications, Cedar Point. "Some of the color combinations are unexpected, but it does feel tropical. It did before, but we didn't really have a fully cohesive feel to the resort. Now we have a story that threads the whole thing together."

The décor, the theming and the interactive activities make an impression, particularly on the imaginations of the younger guests.

"We didn't have a lot of things for people to discover before. Now the whole property is something to discover," Clark told *Amusement Today*. "Everywhere you turn, there is something to see."

Scheduled throughout the day, live programs



include guests into the story. Meet-and-greet opportunities set the tone for families' visits.

"My favorite things are the murals on the walls in the guest rooms," said McClure. "Once they check in and get to the room, as soon as they see the mural, it's 'Wow!' They don't expect to see the characters they saw in the lobby on the walls of their rooms."

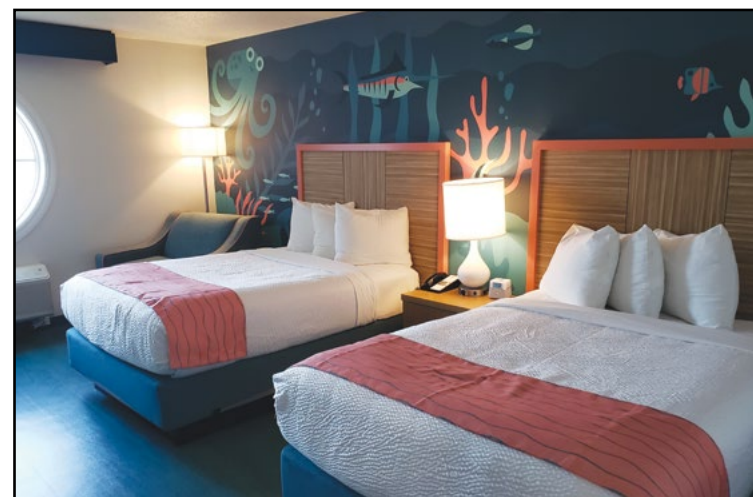
Upon check-in, young children receive a packet of goodies. An activity book

retells the story of Gordy. Kids learn about the flags that tell different messages on the flagpoles on the ships. "It sends them to different places to figure things out," said McClure.

Castaway Bay features 237 rooms and suites, and all of them underwent refurbishment.

In the new makeover, black light miniature golf has been added. There is an escape

► See BAY, page 35



In the remodel, walls came down to open up areas and bring in views of the water. Brighter colors are also more visually appealing (above left). Staff members are referred to as "deckhands" (above middle). Murals in the guest rooms bring the storyline of the new experience closer to families (above right). AT/TIM BALDWIN



Seen from the water, the makeover has created a more colorful resort (above left). A themed shipwreck in the lobby, along with character appearances, engage guests from the moment they check in (above right). AT/TIM BALDWIN

► **BAY**
Continued from page 34

room and duckpin bowling in the remodel as well.

“They are tied into the storyline,” notes McClure. “In the escape room, you are challenged to escape from Castaway Isle.”

Deckhands in the lobby have a dance party in the evening and a bon voyage party in the morning. Limbo and yoga mats are ingredients of the farewell. “There are a lot of things to

keep kids active and captivated while in the hotel,” said McClure. “It’s not just a pass-through lobby, it’s an immersive lobby for them.”

One of the primary features of the hotel is the indoor water park. A 100,000-gallon wave pool, 10 waterslides and multiple pools and play areas are contained in a 38,000-square-foot area. While no new capital was added during the renovation, the walls and décor did receive enhancements in the look and feel of the water

park experience. The water park is included with each guest’s stay.

Clark observed that the water park was always considered the centerpiece of the hotel, but now with so many engaging activities, the water park seems like an addition to everything. “When you add it all together, it is like, ‘Oh, they have a water park too!’ It’s not like it used to be,” he said. “It’s still got great attractions. It’s just another highlight.”

The redesign of the inte-

rior opened up the dining areas to bring in more light. Removing walls made the spaces seem open and welcoming with views of the water. Five dining options range from snack eateries to buffets to the attached **Quaker Steak & Lube** restaurant that features both indoor and outdoor dining.

While Castaway Bay is its own story and own experience, hotel guests do receive benefits to Cedar Point such as discounted ticket packages and early entry.

“The whole experience is entertainment driven,” said Clark. “Whether that is physical entertainment of a character interacting with you or the entertainment of just walking through and exploring as a family or doing interactive experiences, it is significantly deeper and more of an exploratory experience that Castaway Bay offers.”

The rebrand to the hotel began in May, and Castaway Bay is scheduled to be open 365 days a year.

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ProSlide Switchback slide opens at Texas' Splashway Waterpark

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SHERIDAN, Texas — This summer, **Splashway Waterpark & Campground** debuted a waterslide that utilizes the latest evolution in ProSlide's patented TornadoWave technology to create a dynamic interactive ride called Switchback.

Known here as **The Patriot**, the ride opened this past July and, in keeping with the name, is colored red, white and blue. Translucent stars and stripes highlight the enclosed sections of the tube chute, and one of the wave sections features a field of white stars on a dark blue background, reminiscent of the American flag.

The waterslide uses a newly developed face-to-face tube. Although one rider starts out riding backward, a small tornado and tornado-wave sections have riders reversing direction, hence the name — Switchback.

After boarding, riders are dispatched into a short, enclosed section before traversing an open river chute. Following the open section is an enclosed tube lit with translucent stars on red, white and blue sections of the tube. Emerging from the tube, riders rock back and forth as they encounter the partially enclosed mini-tor-



The Patriot (above) is true to its name with a red, white and blue motif, as well as stars and stripes. The Patriot makes use of a newly developed slide raft (right) that features face-to-face seating.

COURTESY SPLASHWAY WATERPARK & CAMPGROUND

nado where it's possible that the riders will switch directions. The exit from the tornado drops into another short, enclosed section and riders quickly emerge into the first tornado wave. Another open tube section and then the second tornado wave follow in quick succession, keeping riders on their toes with sudden directional changes and ensuring that no two rides are the same. After experiencing fast up-and-down oscillations

riders enter an enclosed red, white and blue spiral augmented with white translucent stripes. The chute then opens up and straightens out for one final drop into the splash pool finale.

As exciting as the new Patriot is, it wasn't the only new attraction this summer at Splashway. Thrill seekers were pleased to find three more waterslides at the continuously growing water park. Texas Twist is an enclosed body slide Turbo Twister with back-to-back turns and high-banking curves. Summit Plummet is a ProSlide SuperLoop. It starts with a SkyBox drop capsule, sending riders into a near-vertical plunge before making a sharp, high-speed, G-force-loaded horizontal loop. Blueper Looper is a single- or double-tube enclosed flume with a mix of curves and helices. The slide, colored in multi-shades of blue, has two sections that feature white stripes that get progressively narrower as riders whiz past, giving the illusion of increasing speed.



Although the family-owned Splashway Waterpark & Campground is located in the rural community of Sheridan, it isn't very far from the cities of Houston, San Antonio and Austin, making for an easy one-day trip or a perfect staycation or getaway. Those who choose to stay overnight can choose from a multitude of accommodations including an RV park, tent camping, cabins, cottages and a fully equipped bunkhouse with private showers, restrooms and a kitchenette. The facility focuses on providing its guests with wholesome activities, family events and fun, and prides itself on its cleanliness and

southern hospitality. In addition to the water park, Splashway has outdoor laser tag, miniature golf, basketball and volleyball courts, tetherball, a fully stocked fishing pond, kayaking, paddle boats, playgrounds and outdoor games. On the weekends, live music is played at The Hideaway restaurant and bar.

Splashway has been going strong since it opened in 1998 and has recently invested in a number of high-profile attractions from ProSlide, including a dueling uphill RocketBlast water coaster that garnered the 2019 World Waterpark Association Leading Edge Award and an IAAPA Brass Ring Award.



All three of the major elements: mini-tornado, and two tornado wave sections can be seen in this photo along with the enclosed spiral with translucent stripes.

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Unique 'looping' waterslide from Polin Waterparks debuts in Turkey

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ANTALYA, Turkey — This past summer the first Rift waterslide from Polin Waterparks opened at the Titanic Deluxe Golf Belek hotel resort in Antalya. Introduced at the IAAPA Expo 2021, the visually stunning waterslide features what appears to be a 360-degree vertical loop standing nearly 10.8 meters (35.5 feet) tall.

Upon closer examination, however, thrill seekers within the tube chute, do not, of course, negotiate a vertical loop. Instead, riders aboard a single-person tube enter the loop from the side, then rock back and forth like they would in a halfpipe. After enough momentum is lost, the tube is redirected via a water jet to a side channel exit. Even though the rafts never complete the loop, the visual effect from the riders' perspective, as well as onlookers, is phenomenal.

Riders begin their journey from an 11-meter platform where they are dispatched into an enclosed, winding tube slide highlighted with natural light effects. As the tube winds through the slide, it begins to pick up speed, then suddenly plummets into a surprisingly steep drop that leads into Rift's loop.



The Rift waterslide features a visually stunning 360-degree vertical loop. Colorful RTM and UTexture technology can create waterslides adaptable to any theme. COURTESY POLIN WATERPARKS

Riders then slide nearly up the other side of the loop almost to the 90-degree point where they experience a moment of weightlessness before sliding back down the same chute backward. After a few pendulum-type movements, a surge of water directs the raft to the side runout and into a shallow exit. As with most new Polin waterslides, Rift takes advantage of Polin's state-of-the-art UTexture technology to create an aesthetically appealing ride from the perspective of both riders and observers.

"Rift waterslide completely differentiates itself with its compact and eye-catching design," said a Polin spokesperson. "Polin Waterparks is proud of the completion of the world's first Rift waterslide at Titanic Deluxe Golf Belek in Antalya, which was launched at IAAPA Expo 2021 in Orlando, Florida. Rift exemplifies Polin Waterparks' expertise in design, engineering and R&D in its signature rides."

The Rift waterslide is part of the resort's new 15,000-square-meter (3.7-acre) water park which fea-



tures nine adult slides from three towers, a 210-square-meter (2,300-square-foot) swimming pool and a children's pool with a water play structure with seven slides and interactive features.

Other Polin attractions featured in the addition include a Rafting and Turbulance combination, Black Hole Rafting and Flying Boats combination, Multislide, Frefall, Space Hole, Looping Rocket, Kamikaze and Windigo. All the water slides were designed and positioned to provide strong spectator appeal, with most of these taking advantage of the latest UTexture technology.

The 594-room Titanic Deluxe Golf Belek resort has been a magnet for golf and sports tourists from all over the world. The resort has

direct access to the largest golf course in the Antalya region, a 36-hole premium course used exclusively by the four Titanic hotels operated by the Aygun Group. The resort offers more than just golf, however. A covered and air-conditioned city walk includes multiple restaurants, cafes, bars and boutique shops. An outdoor stage offers live entertainment.

The resort includes nine outdoor pools and multiple indoor pools including spa pools, Turkish baths, relaxation chambers and access to a sandy beach. The largest outdoor pool is 10 lanes, 50 meters in length and is suitable for competition. With the addition of a water park, the resort hopes to become more appealing to a family audience.



After rocking back and forth halfpipe-style, riders exit via a channel off to the side. COURTESY POLIN WATERPARKS

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RIFT

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In August, the Fergus Falls City Council (Minnesota) approved a resolution calling for a proposal on a sales and use tax for a city aquatic center to be placed on the ballot.

The proposed aquatic center would be located in Roosevelt Park adjacent to an ice arena and secondary school. Plans call for a leisure pool with a zero-depth entry, various play features and depth of four feet. Also included are a four-lane, 25-yard lap pool, diving deck at the deep end of the lap pool, climbing wall and a waterslide.

In addition to the aquatic areas, a check-in station, support area, men's and women's changing areas and rest rooms, as well as family changing rooms, a lifeguard room and a concessions area would also be included.

The 0.5% increase in sales tax is scheduled to appear on the November's city ballot. The sales tax will also be used to fund improvements to DeLagoon Park. The two projects will be listed individually on the ballot, and voters can elect to approve either one or both. The tax increase is set at 0.5% and approving both will not double the increase, but instead determine how long the tax will remain in effect. If both projects are approved, the sales tax will remain until the year 2037.

Three city pools in Lubbock, Texas, may be



NEWSPLASH

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replaced with splash pads. The pools are in need of replacement or repair but since they are older pools constructed before updated codes, any major repair work would trigger modern compliance codes. The city does not have the budget to bring the pools into compliance or to replace them.

Instead, the city council has proposed using funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to fill in the pools and create splash pads.

"I think that we would provide an amenity that would have even greater use than our pools," said City Manager **Jarrett Atkinson**. "It reduces our staffing cost, our chemical cost, our liability cost and it's just more accessible. They'll work longer throughout the year than the swimming pools will."

A pier and boardwalk proposal for **Bay Beach Amusement Park** in Wisconsin has hit a roadblock. A 450-foot pier overlooking the bay was supposed to kick off the first of two phases of bringing swimming back to Bay Beach Amusement Park for the first time in more than seven decades. The city of Green Bay had budgeted \$2.1 million for the pier,

however, bids to complete the project came in at \$3.1 to \$3.8 million. The pier design had been scaled back from what was proposed four years ago. Then, the entire beach project was estimated to cost \$7 million and included storm water management, sandy beach, bath house and a concession stand. Lack of funds pushed the beach, bath house and concession stand into a second phase.

City officials say they'll look at potentially rebidding another, more affordable design and make another plea for donations. The plan has been to issue bonds, then pay them off using revenue from the park.

The site of an old **Sears** at **River Oaks Mall** in Calumet City, Illinois, is set to become a water park. The proposed attraction will feature a rooftop pool, lazy river, multiple slides, an entertainment venue with arcade games and a climbing wall.

Jackson Nuckolls Group, a privately owned real estate property and development company based in Chicago, will lead the development on the property, which is expected to debut in late 2023 or early 2024.

Specific details have not been released but renderings show a full complement of slides, including a bowl slide, body slide and a play structure with tipping bucket.

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WildWater Cullman expands with multiple ProSlide attractions

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CULLMAN, Ala. — Texas wasn't the only state to debut a new ProSlide Switchback slide. This past summer, Cullman Wellness and Aquatic Center opened a new 12-acre outdoor water park expansion at WildWater Cullman designed by Aquatics Development Group (ADG).

"For years, members of our community and business leaders have discussed the need for more outdoor and indoor recreational attractions within our community," said Nathan Anderson, executive director, Cullman Parks, Recreation & Sports Tourism. "Historically our families have had to travel outside the area to find attractions like WildWater. As a result of this need, we have prioritized updating many of our current parks and indoor facilities to better accommodate the needs of our community. Then we turned our focus on expanding WildWater into a regional water park destination."

The Alabama park's version of SwitchBack is called Blue Hurricane. The massive slide features three tornado-wave sections and two mini-tornadoes. The slide is painted in varying shades of blue and features dark enclosed sections, translucent sections and open channels. As with the other ProSlide installation, Blue Hurricane uses newly designed tubes with face-to-face seating.

Along with Blue Hurricane, the park added several other installations including a four-lane RallyRacer, TurboTwister, CannonBowl 30 and a Kidz Complex with pint-sized versions of the adult slides like a Kidz ProRacer, Kidz MiniRiver and Kidz Twister. The new section also includes a 22,000-square-foot wave pool, 14 waterslides, a dedicated water play zone for toddlers, cabanas, party pavilions and umbrella-covered lounge chair areas.

ADG operated as construction manager for the new WildWater Cullman water park which opened on June 17, 2022, in Cullman, Alabama. COURTESY AQUATIC DEVELOPMENT GROUP



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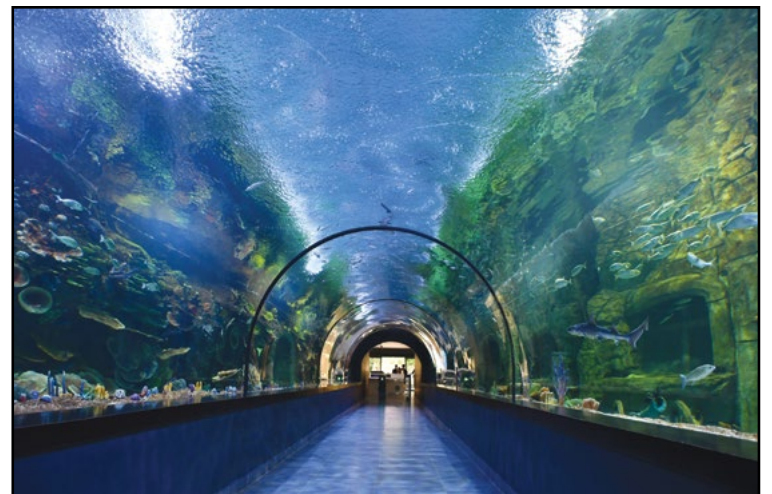
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Polin Aquariums opens a unique tunnel venue in Turkey



The most spectacular section of the facility is a 21-meter (69-foot) long glass tunnel. COURTESY POLIN AQUARIUMS

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

TRABZON, Turkey — This past summer a unique tunnel aquarium opened in the Black Sea region. The tunnel, between two valleys, Zağnos and Tabakhane, was designed to boost the tourism potential in the area and to promote the rich and diverse marine life of the Black Sea. Designed and built by **Polin Aquariums**, it is the only aquarium exhibit of its type in the world.

Trabzon Aquarium houses more than 5,000 marine organisms and includes 80 different species. The aquarium floor area covers 3,500 square meters (37,700 square feet) with eight different zones. From the entrance, guests take in the world's lakes and rivers which display different species from the Amazon River, Lake Tanganyika and Lake Malawi. Following lakes and rivers, the terrarium zone displays reptiles from different areas. The experience zone of the aquarium shows guests the daily routine of the aquarists and biologists. Other zones include different fish from various seas, including a shark hall. The highlight of the facility is a 21-meter (69-foot) long glass tunnel through an aquarium which houses a variety of aquatic species sourced mainly from Turkish seas.

Within its first three months of operation, more than 148,000 people visited the Trabzon Aquarium. Mayor **Ahmet Metin Genc** said, "Although Trabzon is a coastal city, many locals are not fully aware of the marine life and sea species. The tunnel aquarium is where we can showcase a variety of fish in the same place."

Announced as Turkey's most business-friendly and livable city by *Forbes Turkey* last year, Trabzon has been attracting thousands of tourists recently with its lush environment, lively atmosphere and cultural and historical heritage. The Zağnos Valley houses a national park with Byzantine-era aqueducts and mansions reflecting traditional architecture.



Multiple aquariums highlight different species from around the world. COURTESY POLIN AQUARIUMS



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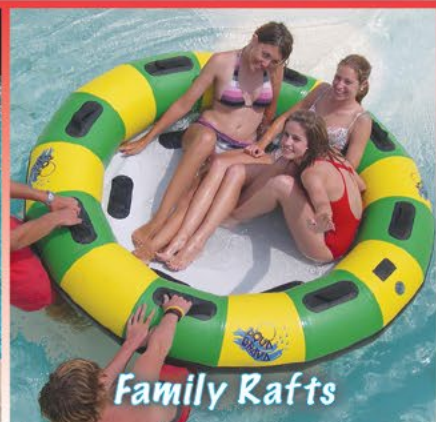
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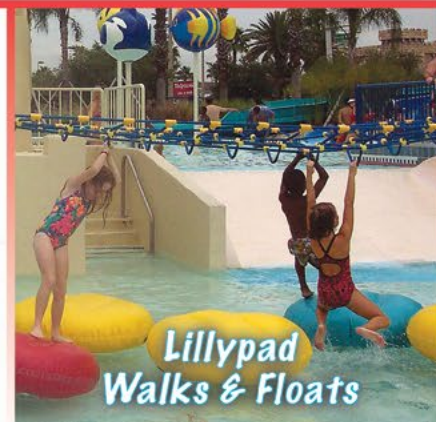
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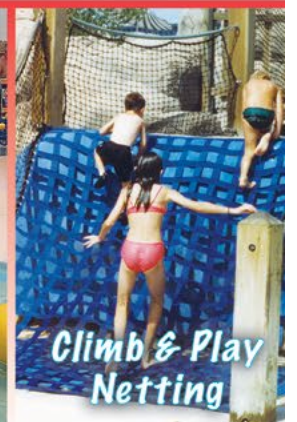
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▶ MarketWatch — page 48 / Woman of Influence: Natalie Livingston — page 50

Cedar Fair's Grand Carnivale remains popular, tours chain's parks

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

UNITED STATES — North America. What started as a calculated experiment has turned into a highly successful, park visitor-supported, annual immersive spectacular in selected Cedar Fair Entertainment Company properties across the USA. Grand Carnivale featured all the sights, sounds, aromas and theatrics of an amply choreographed and well-produced day-to-night, larger-than-life, global celebration that entertained and engaged park patrons.

"Our consumer research led to the creation of Grand Carnivale, a summertime celebration informed by our guests sharing their desire for immersive entertainment dressed up with a unique décor and festive ambiance, unique food and beverage choices, and music and lights that provide fun for the entire family," said **Scott Clemons**, corporate director of marketing and brand management – special events for Cedar Fair.

The inaugural year, 2019, Grand Carnivale was offered at **Kings Dominion, Kings Island, Dorney Park** and **Worlds of Fun**. In 2021, **Carowinds** and **Valleyfair** were added to the mix. This year, a slight variation, Carnivale at Orleans Place was added to **California's Great America**. There was no event at **Kings Island** this season, due to its 50th anniversary celebration, however, the event returns in 2023.



In 2022, Grand Carnivale was offered at Kings Dominion, Dorney Park, Worlds of Fun, Carowinds and Valleyfair. A slight variation, Carnivale at Orleans Place was offered at California's Great America. COURTESY CEDAR FAIR, DORNEY PARK

The traveling troupe, with hundreds of performers, has two separate units that set up shop in their respective park for a two-week stretch.

"Grand Carnivale has been a guest favorite since we introduced it in 2019, and its popularity continues to grow each year," said Clemons. "There's something for everyone in the family to enjoy. Kids love the Spectacle of Color parade, with participating parks featuring a half-dozen floats, scores of performers dancing to an eclectic soundtrack, and plenty of beads. Adults love the delicious theme-specific menus and beverage selections."

The special event comprised numerous components, with international foods, themed characters, live shows, unique crafts, interactive street performers, a nightly parade along with games and activities for the younger crowd.

These included a dazzling crown that kids decorated and kept. Coloring sheets, in the form of postcards, were available for each of the six countries. The story line goes that Alligator King, Mardi P. Gras, needs to deliver Grand Carnivale invitations to his friends around the world. In this international scavenger hunt, kids traveled to each country, met new friends and snapped QR codes that revealed fun facts and clues, while earning rewards for every country visited.

The Spectacle of Color Parade offered from five to eight lavish floats per park with one rider float, where a limited number of guests had the opportunity to ride. There's a unique, custom soundtrack score to accompany the dozens of live performers and, of course, lots of beads. The high-spirited parade went through key midways in each park, which



culminated on a large stage where a grand-size nightly street party ensued.

The six countries and their food menus included Germany: curry wurst, potato pancakes, pretzel bites and apfelkuchen; Spain: calamari, olive medley, paella and lemon sponge cake; Italy: bruschetta, tortellini, lasagna frita and crostoli; India: chicken tiki masala, vada pav, rice kheer and paneer pakora; China: kung pao cauliflower, pork belly buns and shrimp udon; banana fritters and France: pear brie croissant, spinach crepe, peach galatte and raclette. (France was not offered at **Valleyfair**).

Carnivale at Orleans Place was Mardi Gras themed for the California property. Its menu included chicken and sausage gumbo,

jambalaya, petite shrimp po boy, alligator chowder, crawfish hushpuppies, beignets and praline funnel cake.

"We are so much more than our record-breaking coasters. Thousands of ride operators, chefs, groundskeepers and performers serve important roles in their own special way — all working to deliver the 'best day' experience our guests have come to expect with each visit," said Clemons. "Cedar Fair's 'Seasons of FUN' strategy creates a sense of urgency among our guests to visit our parks multiple times throughout the season. Major seasonal events such as Grand Carnivale, Haunt and WinterFest, offer a compelling guest experience and help attract thousands of new guests to our parks each year."

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MARKET WATCH

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 9/19/22	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	95.15	149.78	86.97
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	44.32	62.56	37.78
Comcast Corp./NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	34.46	57.95	33.41
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	109.17	182.23	90.23
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	42.06	56.38	40.67
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	JP:9010	TYO	4520.00	5110.00	3650.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	7.95	8.57	1.30
Lefoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	16.25	19.95	15.40
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	34.36	51.17	26.41
Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd.	RCL	NYSE	50.73	98.27	31.09
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	JP:6357	TYO	783.00	926.00	702.00
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	54.78	76.57	40.01
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	22.52	47.24	19.8
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	754.00	900.00	712.00

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

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

BUSINESS WATCH

Joyland closes, Norton to auction equipment

LUBBOCK, Texas— For 50 years, the **Dean** family has entertained families from the Lubbock area and beyond. After **Jimmy** and **Katie Dean** purchased the park in 1973, many improvements were made and under the current ownership of **David** and **Katie Dean** the park has grown to more than 30 rides and attractions.

It was a difficult decision, but with the history of COVID restrictions, labor shortages and potential flooding, David and Katie Dean have decided not to reopen for the 2023 season. They have contacted **Norton of Michigan** auctioneers to liquidate the rides, food and equipment at Joyland Park. The auction will be held Thursday, October 27, 2022 at the park in Lubbock, Texas.

"We have been blessed with 50 years of wonderful memories, fabulous employees and amazing guests who have all touched our lives," said the Deans in a social media post.

Cedar Fair revenue up through Labor Day

SANDUSKY, Ohio — **Cedar Fair Entertainment Company** reported that year-to-date preliminary net revenues through Monday, Sept. 5, 2022, totaled a record \$1.37 billion, driven by record levels of in-park per capita spending (\$61.11) and out-of-park revenues (\$163 million). Through Labor Day 2022, the company's 15 parks have entertained a total of 20.5 million guests.

For the five-week period ending Sept. 5, 2022, the company entertained 5.1 million guests and generated preliminary net revenues of \$343 million, representing an increase of \$74 million, or 27%, when compared to the five-week period ending Sept. 9, 2019. Compared to the five-week period ending Sept. 6, 2021, net revenues in the recently ended five-week period were up 13%, or \$40 million, driven in large part by an increase of 15%, or 660,000 visits, in attendance. Over this same period, in-park per capita spending totaled \$62.17, down 2% from comparable 2021 levels, and out-of-park revenues totaled \$39 million, up \$7 million, or 21%, from the same five-week period in 2021.

"We are very pleased with our record results and expect continued outperformance driven by our extremely popular Halloween celebrations, which are set to debut in just a few short weeks," said President and Chief Executive Officer **Richard A. Zimmerman**. "Despite weather challenges in several key markets, particularly over this past weekend, our operating trends have been consistently strong throughout the peak summer months, with performance during the critically important period between the Fourth of July and Labor Day in line with our expectations. As attendance channels recover to pre-pandemic levels, record in-park per capita spending and out-of-park revenues are driving double-digit top-line growth as planned."

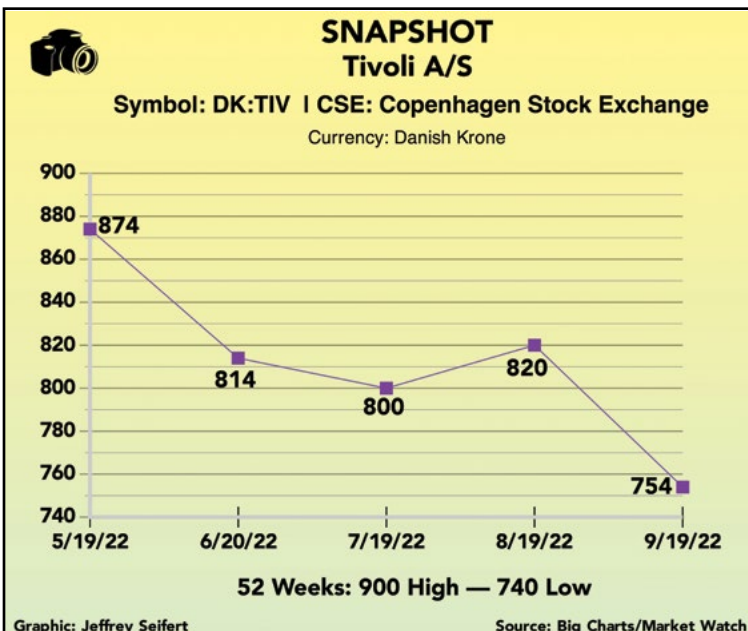
SeaWorld shares second quarter financials

ORLANDO— **SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.** reported its financial results for the second quarter and first six months of fiscal year 2022 and announced that its Board of Directors approved a new \$250.0 million share repurchase program.

Attendance was 6.3 million guests, an increase of 0.5 million guests or 7.8% from the second quarter of 2021. Compared to the second quarter of 2019, attendance decreased by 0.2 million guests or 3.1%. Total revenue was a record of \$504.8 million, an increase of \$65.0 million or 14.8% from the second quarter of 2021. Compared to the second quarter of 2019, total revenues increased by \$98.8 million or 24.3%.



TRON Lightcycle / Run at the Magic Kingdom has been seen regularly testing during the park's operating hours. The new attraction is scheduled to open spring of 2023.
 COURTESY WALT DISNEY WORLD



DIESEL PRICES

Region (U.S)	As of 9/19/22	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$4.964	\$1.579
Midwest	\$4.995	\$1.705
Gulf Coast	\$4.690	\$1.571
Mountain	\$4.932	\$1.303
West Coast	\$5.144	\$1.481
California	\$6.149	\$1.820

CURRENCY

On 9/20/22 \$1 USD =

0.9998	EURO
0.8767	GBP (British Pound)
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1.3282	CAD (Canadian Dollar)



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OBITUARY

Amusement games icon Alexander Kress passes

JUPITER, Fla. — U.S. amusement games industry icon Alexander Kress passed at the age of 80 from complications following a fall at his home in Florida.

Alexander "Al" Kress was born on December 8, 1941, in Peekskill, New York. He attended Peekskill High School and continued onto Rider College where he graduated in 1963. In June of 1963, Kress married Donna Mae Pipshay and they were blessed with four children, AJ, Katherine, Melissa, and Denise.



Kress

Kress started his career in the amusement business while in college and operated 12 jukeboxes and other games. He continued to grow his business and went on to become the largest Rowe jukebox distributor in the Northeast. Kress expanded his interest by opening Indoor Entertainment Centers. He sold his businesses in New York and retired with Donna to Florida in 1989. Kress then started Benchmark Games in 1998, which went on to manufacture redemption games and employed over 100 people, making smiles with all they developed. Kress retired once again in 2017, but was still involved in designing and developing new games for the amusement industry.

Kress was an icon in the industry and was involved in several boards and committees throughout his career. He was also a lifetime member of the Peekskill Yacht Club.

UniGlide Trailer founder Dills gone at 78 years old

VENICE, Fla. — Bob Dills, formerly of Pugh Amusement Company and founder of UniGlide Trailer, passed on August 7, 2022.

Born in Clyde, Ohio, Dills graduated from Defiance College. He then married his college sweetheart, Martha Merrell and he would work summer breaks on the carnival circuit with his uncle, Arbus Arbogast, making cotton candy and candy apples. Dills hung up his teaching degree and went on the road full time, starting out with Gooding's Amusement Company, which later became Pugh Amusement Company. Dills would travel the winter route in Florida with Jim Murphy's Blue Grass Shows.



Dills

After purchasing and rebuilding a used french fry trailer with friend Tom Pugh, Dills was inspired to start the UniGlide Trailer Company. He left the traveling operation part of his business to his two sons, Doug and Jeff, and started to manufacture trailers full-time (food, game, bunkhouses, and specialty trailers).

Dills was a true innovator and pioneer in the amusement industry and passed his passion on to his sons. His legacy and innovation continues on through his oldest son Doug, along with Doug's wife Lori, and their two children. Doug and Lori travel full time with their own equipment as well as continuing to build new trailers under the Uniglide name and Dills's vision.

Bob is survived by a daughter, Michelle Dills Wojcik, and son, Doug Dills, along with eight grandchildren.

ON THE MOVE

XR Immersive Tech Inc. announced it has appointed VR industry leader **A Shabeer Sinnalebbe** as the company's new CEO effective September 1, 2022.



Sinnalebbe

Sinnalebbe served as the company's head of XR Networks. Prior to this role, Sinnalebbe served as the CEO of **SynthesisVR** which XR Immersive Tech acquired at the beginning of 2022.

XR Immersive thanked outgoing CEO **Tim Bieber** for his contributions at the company and wish him well in his future endeavors. Bieber stepped off the XR Immersive board effective September 1, 2022.

ProParks Attraction Group has announced that **Ron McKenzie** has joined them as marketing director for its diverse portfolio of water parks, attractions, management clients, and service companies.

"We are thrilled to have recruited Ron to partner with our team," said **Curt Caffey**, president of ProParks Attractions Group. "Ron brings a diverse set of marketing and operational skills that will improve our efforts to successfully manage and grow our existing line up of first-class family attractions and services. His unique connection to attractions, leaders and trade associations will also help us identify and develop future growth opportunities."



McKenzie

McKenzie previously served as park president for **Six Flags Over Texas and Hurricane Harbor** water park in Arlington, Texas. Prior to that, he served as marketing director at **Six Flags Fiesta Texas, Six Flags St. Louis** and **Six Flags Astroworld**. During his time with Six Flags, he helped lead, develop and market innovative attractions that enhanced the guest experience.

"I am thrilled and excited to join a company that combines the passion for our industry with expertise from a skilled set of experienced professionals," said McKenzie. "ProParks Attractions Group partners include the best of the best in the leisure and hospitality space, and I look forward to working with these industry leaders in continuing to grow and innovate."

Massimiliano Freddi, the founder and chief executive officer of **Wonderwood on Lake Maggiore**, Italy, was named the second vice chair of **IAAPA's** Board of Directors for 2023. He will serve as the first vice chair of IAAPA in 2024 and lead the global association for the attractions industry as the chair of the board in 2025.

The selection was made during a board of directors meeting on Sept. 11 in London, United Kingdom, just before

IAAPA Expo Europe opened its doors at **ExCeL London**.

"Massi is a dreamer and doer, and his 20 years of experience and success confirms he's well suited to be IAAPA's second vice chair," said **Andreas Andersen**, the chair of IAAPA's Governance Committee. "His combination of attractions management and development, with career highlights and passion in education and inspiring others, result in future board leadership that is as much about honoring tradition as it is about supporting and sustaining growth for IAAPA and for IAAPA members around the world."



Freddi

Connect&GO announced the arrival of **Megan Fulbright** as senior business development director. Fulbright brings more than 25 years of experience in the water park and theme park industry, including her most recent role as director of park operations for **Six Flags Hurricane Harbor** in Arlington, Texas.



Fulbright

Fulbright's career has spanned leadership roles in guest services, park operations, security and admissions, as well as instructing aquatics teams in her role as instructor and instructor trainer with **Jeff Ellis and Associates**. Her work has helped lead teams to top ratings in safety excellence for nearly two decades.

"I'm thrilled to be joining a team who is so passionate about revolutionizing the amusement industry!" said Fulbright. "Connect&GO's management platform is changing the operator and guest experience from beginning to end."

Severn Lamb has appointed **Newton Montano** as director of business development for mobility solutions within the Americas, Hawaii and Caribbean.

With more than 30 years of industry experience, Montano brings with him a wealth of knowledge from both the electric vehicle and passenger mobility sectors. His role will primarily focus on client and strategic partnerships development to expand Severn Lamb's reach within the Americas, Hawaii and the Caribbean.



Montano

His unique background and understanding of automotive IoT solutions and electric vehicle technologies, aligns perfectly with Severn Lamb's current product development, focusing on sustainability and delivering greener visitor transportation systems and rides.

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Women INFLUENCE

A view from the top...

Solutions Alive is a consulting company providing services to all types of aquatics, including water parks, **YMCA**s, pool management companies, etc. Founded in 2019 by **Natalie Livingston** and **Ashley Wolfe**, the company provides training, aquatics leadership, personal and professional wellness, post-event debriefs, crisis management, water safety and drowning education and more.

From the love of water comes a true labor of love for Livingston

PEYTON, Colo. — Natalie Livingston said she didn't actually seek out the water park industry, but growing up around water, she certainly didn't ignore the opportunity when it knocked.

From spending summers at the pool, family time at the lake, lifeguard training by a family friend to becoming a general manager of a water park to consulting for another company, Livingston said she feels her whole life has led her to where she is today.

Livingston was born and raised in California, spending the first 40 years of her life in various parts of Southern California, never far from the water.

As she grew up, she spent a lot of time around a pool. She and her family loved their lake adventures and boating.

A friend of her mom's was a Red Cross Backyard swim instructor.

"She taught me how to swim and how to be an instructor and eventually encouraged me to get my lifeguard certification," Livingston said. "I got my first lifeguard job at Six Flags Hurricane Harbor in Los Angeles."

She worked at Hurricane Harbor during the summers while she attended Biola University in La Mirada, California, where she was a Liberal Arts Studies major and studied to be an elementary school teacher.

"Although that never happened, I still use my educator skills and knowledge regularly," Livingston said.

She worked at Hurricane Harbor for several summers.

"Eventually I met Raul Rehnberg from Cedar Fair, and he recruited me to help open the new water park, Knott's Berry Farms' Soak City in Buena Park, California," Livingston

said. "From there, I was completely sucked into the water park and theme park world. I did corporate training for Knott's theme park and water park, operated Knott's Soak City in Palm Springs and eventually spent over 10 years as the general manager of The Wave Waterpark."

The Wave Waterpark is a city-owned water park in Vista, California. She was recruited to that water park as the assistant general manager and was promoted to the general manager within a few months of joining the operation.

Also, during this time, she became scuba certified and learned to wake board and wake skate.

In 2016, she left the water park and was hired as the vice president for the consulting firm Oostman Aquatic Safety Consulting, where she was first introduced to the world of accident investigations and litigation support.

This began her transition into the consulting side of the industry.

"From this opportunity, Ashley Wolfe and I founded ALIVE Solutions where our goal is to keep people and businesses alive and well.

"We are focused on truly supporting operators in ways we wish we were supported when we operated," she said.

Livingston has known Wolfe for about 20 years, having met her at an International Aquatic Safety School. Wolfe has a background in water park operations and also is a licensed professional counselor.

The two decided to launch their business in October 2019. In March 2020, the COVID pandemic shutdowns began.

"I'm not going to lie and say starting a business during a pandemic



Natalie Livingston

Co-founder/Owner
Solutions Alive Inc.
Peyton, Colorado

was the easiest thing, but I can say we worked hard and are in a great place," Livingston said. "Three years in now and we have great clients and partnerships and are continuing to grow steadily every year."

So far, her favorite part of what she does is being able to give operators an added layer of support and guidance.

"To give them tools, education and resources to be better operators, to be able to see their progress, to improve communication, to increase efficiencies, to better protect themselves as operators and to give people the personal support and guidance when they need it the most.

"When they have that moment where you can tell 'this makes so much sense and I don't feel alone,' is life-giving to me," she said. "We approach things holistically and really try to bridge the gap between training and reality."

Livingston said her favorite parts of the industry are the people and the opportunity to continue to

make a difference for others.

"It is such an amazing industry filled with people who really care about what they do and getting to find creative ways to support moving our industry forward is refreshing to me."

She and her partner have big plans for their young company. She said they are actively working on expanding their online educational offerings as well as continuing to expand their client base.

Livingston is very positive and upbeat about what is happening in the industry and her life.

She relocated to Peyton, Colorado, just outside of Colorado Springs a few years ago with her family.

"I have an amazing husband and two awesome kids," she said.

In the end, it is all about water and making sure people have fun in the water.

"I have always loved the water," she said. "It has always been a part of my life in some capacity or another."

—Pam Sherborne



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► MLBM's Brand Intimacy study — page 54 / Cedar Fair begins new bag policy during Haunt — page 56

Schlitterbahn builds Bahn Haus, benefits employees and guests

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

NEW BRAUNFELS, Texas — For the 2022 season, employees at Schlitterbahn got a big boost. Often, investments in parks are guest forward facing. And while to a certain degree, that could be said of the park's new Bahn Haus, the staff is enjoying a big, new, beautiful facility.

The Bahn Haus was built across the street from the park's original entrance. Employees check in there. But the big benefit to the associates is the modern and spacious break area.

"When Cedar Fair acquired our park, they toured our facilities," said General Manager **Darren Hill**. "They felt there is an opportunity here and they wanted to do something nice for the associates — and it benefits the park's overall food and beverage



Bahn Haus serves dual purposes: a break area for employees and a kitchen facility for catering. AT/TIM BALDWIN

efficiency and operation. It's a win-win."

The project began prior to COVID, but it was completed this May.

"The old facility had been online since the early 1990s. It is decommissioned at this point. We had a chance to open an almost-

5,000-square-foot facility," said Hill. "It is both a new catering building as well as where all the barbeque is produced on a daily basis, and it is also an employee café. We now not only have a very nice facility for our associates to break at, but the quality of food that we can serve them now is head and shoulders above our old capabilities from an equipment standpoint."

The fresh look inside Bahn Haus offers places to relax, watch television and socialize, as well as get reasonably priced meals.

Leadership chose the new facility as the meeting location for the park's daily operational and leadership meetings to be held. It's centralized location provides not only a convenient place to meet, but its high elevation has proved

a good spot to monitor pre-opening guest traffic flows.

"It has been fantastically received by our associates," said Hill.

Chris Peitersen, director of food and beverage for both the New Braunfels and Galveston locations, is delighted with what the new facility can offer for catering reasons.

"It's a resource we've never had before," he said. "We've always prided ourselves on our food quality and the variety we have in the park. It really enables us with the opportunity to enhance our catering offerings and expand our menu. We've had barbeque, but now we have Italian dishes such as alfredo and lasagna."

On certain days, the New Braunfels park can do seven or eight catered

events. The property has multiple venues, so the park has done up to five catered events at one time.

"We have an incredible food and beverage team here. They hustle; they're passionate. Most of my full-time team grew up here," said Peitersen.

The new facility has more high-powered, high-tech equipment. The previous facility consisted of fryers and ovens. Two high-powered smokers are installed, as well as a high-powered combi oven.

"That oven can do convection or steam as well. That's technology we've never had," said Peitersen.

While the cost of the facility was not disclosed, it was reported to *Amusement Today* that the investment

► See HAUS, page 53



Employees are provided lunch at reasonable prices while relaxing and socializing. AT/TIM BALDWIN

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More than \$300,000 in kitchen equipment was invested into Bahn Haus (above). At right, Chris Peitersen shows a visiting group one of the park's new smokers. AT/TIM BALDWIN



► **HAUS**

Continued from page 52

included \$300,000 in equipment alone. Those working in the kitchens enjoy the aromas of slow-smoked meats that are served in catered barbeque events.

"It's an investment in our food," Peitersen said of Cedar Fair's commitment.

Although the kitchen works toward catered outings, the employees enjoy

the Bahn Haus as their own space. It serves employees as a dining area for staff.

"It's way more efficient, and it's a much nicer building," said Peitersen. "They can recharge for the rest of the day. We only charge them cost for their meals."

Bahn Haus offers daily specials for the employees.

"It's a broader menu for our staff," said Hill.

"It keeps it exciting for

our employees," added Peitersen.

Employees working in food and beverage, admissions and retail all begin their day at Bahn Haus. Because Schlitterbahn has the unusual — and defining — characteristics of having several sections in a few city blocks, team members working in operations at the Blastenhoff and Surfenburg areas check in closer to their suitable posi-

tions in those areas.

"Upon completion of our first season operating the Bahn Haus, it's hard to remember a time without it," said Hill. "Having a centralized check-in location for our associates proved to be a great oper-

ational enhancement and their response to having a nice and relaxing place to take a break from the park has been better than we anticipated. So much so that we are in the process of adding more shade to the exterior seating areas."

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Brand Intimacy study shows parks ranking 16 out of 19 industries

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

NEW YORK — Hospitality and theme parks ranked 16 out of 19 industries studied in MBLM's **Brand Intimacy 2022 Study**, a large study of brands based on emotions.

In this 12th year of existence, MBLM's Brand Intimacy 2022 Study uses artificial intelligence (AI) to assess how the world's leading brands perform based on the emotional connections they form with consumers. The new approach with AI being used is providing richer and more dynamic inputs, resulting in more brands, more industries, more data and more insights into how people connect and feel about their favorite brands.

MBLM analyzed over 1.4 billion words, compared more than 600 brands to assess the 19 industries.

"It's not surprising that hospitality and theme parks did not perform well in our study due to COVID's negative impact on brands in



Disney Parks were at the top of MBLM's Hospitality and Theme Parks category during its 2022 Brand Intimacy study.
AT/TIM BALDWIN

the industry, which is undeniable given the strict restrictions they faced," said **Mario Natarelli**, managing partner, MBLM.

"However, we feel that the consumer keywords associated with the industry focused on enjoyment and fun and the industry's Brand Intimacy archetype

strengths indicate that brands can do a better job at creating and maintaining strong emotional connections with customers, which would also help them



Natarelli

weather future challenges."

Although the category of Hospitality and Theme Parks came in at 16, the Disney brand ranked at the top of the overall 600 brands studied. Of course, that also put Disney at the top of the Hospitality and Theme Parks category, followed by **Warner Bros. World** and **Marriott**.

MBLM found that the top keyword for Disney Parks was "love." Warner Bros. World's top keyword was "fun" and Marriott's was "endorse."

The remaining brands in the top 10 in the Hospitality and Theme Parks category, in order, are: **Hilton**, **Four**

Seasons, **Norwegian Cruise Line**, **Hyatt**, **Universal**, **Jumeirah Hotels and Resorts** and **Celebrity Cruises**.

Because of the pandemic, MBLM didn't include the category of Hospitality and Theme Parks in 2020 and 2021. Both industries were hard hit, and information obtained by MBLM was that many businesses are not back to capacity.

Between theme parks, hotels and cruises, the cruise industry was perhaps most affected by the pandemic, with cruising suspended in 2020.

▶ See **BRAND**, page 55

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MLBM's Methodology used to determine Brand Intimacy Quotient

During 2021, MBLM, with **Relative Insight** and **Allen Advanced Analytics**, conducted a comprehensive examination of over 600 brands and over 1.4 billion words used across select social media platforms.

Using artificial intelligence, text analytics, natural language processing, sentiment and the company's Brand Intimacy measures of intensity, archetypes, and stages, the brands were scored on the Brand Intimacy Quotient.

The quotient is a composite measure that combines the intensity, prevalence, and character of the relationship between consumers and brands. The higher the quotient score (from 0 to 100), the more intense the emotional relationship with a brand.

► BRAND
Continued from page 54

In an article by and about the MBLM's Brand Intimacy 2022 Study, it was stated that forecasts for the hospitality and theme parks industry is positive. The article is titled "Hospitality & Theme Park Brands Today: Deconstructing Today's Associations with Hotels, Theme Parks, and

Cruise Brands." The article can be found at mblm.com.

The article stated that theme parks' loss due to the pandemic resulted, so far, in about \$23 billion in 2020 due to closures in North America.

"In North America, attendance at the top 20 theme parks, including Disney's theme parks in California and Florida, **Universal Studios, Six Flags, Cedar Fair,** and others, dropped 72%

from 159.3 million in 2019 to 44.1 million in 2020," the article stated. "In 2019, the hotel and resort sector's worldwide market size reached \$1.52 trillion. In 2020 and 2021, the market size dropped below \$1 trillion."

The article drew the conclusion that since the two top brands in the Hospitality and Theme Parks category were theme parks, that suggested that theme

parks currently have the strongest emotional connection with consumers in the hospitality space.

"In fact, intimacy rates (meaning the percent of users in an emotional relationship) for the two top theme parks are at 35%, more than double the industry average of 15%," the article stated.

However, the article also drew the conclusion that those in the Hospi-

tality and Theme Parks brands needed to "do a better job at focusing on relationship building and establishing a dialogue with customers. Hospitality brands must find new ways to leverage consumers' emotional attachments to travel and vacations in ways that strengthen their bonds and build stronger connections."

•mblm.com

MLBM's 2022 Hospitality and Theme Park rankings

Hospitality and Theme Park industry ranked 16 out of 19 industries. This is the ranking among those ranking in only that industry. Scores listed in parenthesis.

1. **Disney Parks** (49.4)
-
2. **Warner Brothers** (44.8)
-
3. **Marriott** 31.9
-
4. **Hilton** (31.9)
-
5. **Four Seasons** (31.6)
-
6. **Norwegian** (31.0)
-
7. **Hyatt** (30.1)
-
8. **Universal Theme Parks** (29.3)
-
9. **Jumeriah Hotel and Resorts** (28.8)
-
10. **Celebrity X Cruises** (26.7)
-
11. **Holiday Inn** (25.5)
-
12. **Hotels** (25.5)
-
13. **Royal Caribbean** (24.7)
-
14. **Ritz Carlton** (24.4)
-
15. **Best Western** (21.8)
-
16. **Carnival Cruise Lines** (19.0)

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Kings Island Haunt event run safety drills, introduces bag policy

As Kings Island prepared to open for its seasonal Haunt event — featuring six haunted mazes, four scare zones and three live shows — a preopening dress rehearsal gave actors a chance to stretch their screams as well as practice essential fire drills. With the 2022 events, Cedar Fair is introducing a new chainwide bag policy, allowing no bags larger than 6.5" x 4.5" x 2" into the parks after 6 p.m. "The bag policy is intended to increase safety and provide efficient entry into the park," explained Cedar Fair's Gary Rhodes. "Bag policies are becoming pretty commonplace at a wide range of venues and large events." AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON



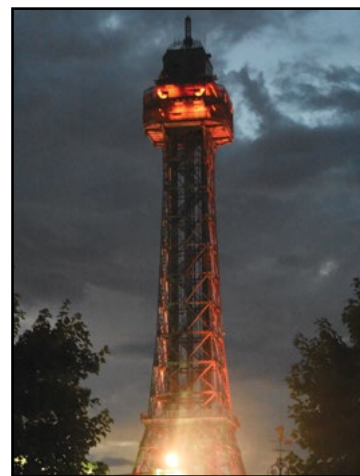
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Registration open for the leader in safety education's annual seminar

With more than 450 students expected, it is time to sign up for the 2023 **AIMS International** Safety Seminar and select from over 300 hours of course offerings that best fit your needs. Discounted Early Bird registration pricing is available for a limited time only. Tuition prices are currently at their lowest, so don't delay, prices go up October 16.

New this year, a week-long Adventure Attractions Track. This new track will focus on the unique needs of family entertainment center, trampoline, aerial adventure, and other non-traditional amusement operations. This track will include a full day hands-on experience at an **Urban Air Adventure Park**. A limited number of seats are available for this track, so register to reserve yours.

Back by popular demand this year, **Ellis & Associates** (E&A) will

deliver the seminar's aquatics curriculum, ensuring a comprehensive and innovative program providing the most current industry information and global trends. Also returning in 2023 will be **International Ride Training** (IRT), which has designed an all-new curriculum and has thoughtfully recruited the best instructors for the expanded Operations Track. Additionally, this year's seminar will again include more than 20 hours of operations, inspection and maintenance education delivered entirely in Spanish.

The in-person seminar will take place January 8-13, 2023 in Galveston, Texas. Tuition is \$595 for a limited time through October 15, and the CEU certificate is *included* in the price. Visit aimsintl.org for more information or to register.

Applications for AARMSS are being accepted.

In response to a recognized need in the amusement industry for specific and in-depth safety education and certification, AIMS International has created the Academy of Amusement Risk Management, Safety and Security (AARMSS). This structured certification program is designed to develop the safety, security and risk managers of today and tomorrow. Based on the following foundational pillars: Safety, Security, Emergency Management and Risk Management, the AARMSS curriculum is specifically designed to educate and equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively manage an amusement industry safety, security, and risk management program. For more information, and to apply for the program, please visit: aimsintl.org/education/aarmss

Safety Seminar scholarships are available

Several scholarships to the AIMS International Safety Seminar are now available. To apply for an AIMS International scholarship, please send an email to info@aimsintl.org with the scholarship you are applying for in the subject line, and in 1,000 words or less, describe why you believe you are deserving. Scholarship applications are due by December 31, 2022.

Become a sponsor

AIMS International is a non-profit association and industry support of this important annual Safety Seminar is vital to the health and prosperity of the entire amusement industry. The move to a virtual event has created new opportunities to keep you front and center as an AIMS International Safety Seminar sponsor.

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



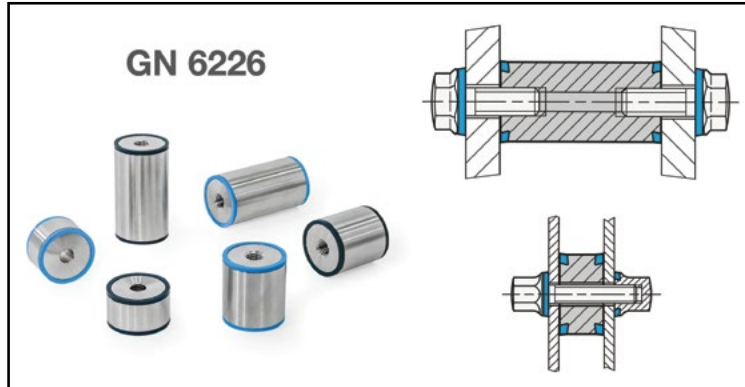
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Redefining clean, JW Winco launches parts for hygienic designs



JW Winco has launched a line of new sealed standard parts to accommodate high hygienic requirements. COURTESY JW WINCO

NEW BERLIN, Wisc. — JW Winco has added a line of new sealed standard parts made of stainless steel for very high hygienic requirements.

Maximum cleanliness is one of the essential prerequisites wherever food is produced. However, hygienic requirements also play a significant role in other industries, from medical technology and the pharmaceutical industry to the production of dispersion coatings. Almost everywhere today, the aim is to make products without preservative additives — this requires production environments with a high level of cleanliness.

At first glance, most standard parts seem far away from the actual critical work areas, but airborne spores of microorganisms can spread quickly and far. Since even the slightest weak points can lead to contamination of entire production lines, JW Winco has developed a complete product family of special standard parts. These parts combine minimal contamination tendency with optimum cleaning ability and thus meet the high requirements of the 3-A sanitary standard, the EHEDG, and the DGUV test.

As the latest addition to the Hygienic Design (HD) product family, JW Winco now offers the spacers GN 6226. These standard parts easily avoid duplicate mounting surfaces, which are problematic and time-consuming in terms of cleaning and sealing. The HD product range, therefore, continues to grow, with new parts joining the existing range of knobs, U-handles, hand levers, indexing plungers, latches, cover sleeves, leveling feet and screws.

In all cases, stainless steel with vibratory finished or polished surfaces is used as the material.

• jwwinco.com

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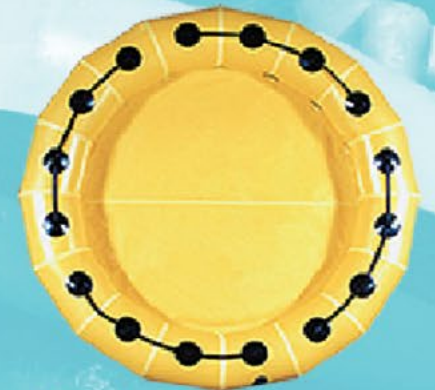
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