



## Fun Spot, Rocky Mountain Construction debut ArieForce One



The upside-down zero-G stall is the largest ever built by RMC.  
AT/TIM BALDWIN

AT: Tim Baldwin  
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

FAYETTEVILLE, Ga. — Prior to **Fun Spot America Atlanta** becoming the third property in the family-owned park chain, the facility had roots as more of a family entertainment center. The batting cages, arcade, go-karts and miniature golf were staples of the FEC market, but there were some carnival rides to make the mix of offerings somewhat of a small amusement park.

The Arie family purchased the park in 2017 and rebranded it as the first Fun Spot property outside of Central Florida the following year. Since then, more has been added. In fact, the park became the recipient of Breakout FEC of 2021 in AT's Golden Ticket Awards.

Things have changed. In using the park's slogan capi-

talized by CEO **John Arie, Jr.**, "It's HUGE."

The new ArieForce One roller coaster is the largest attraction investment to date, which includes both parks in Orlando and Kissimmee. It was supplied by **Rocky Mountain Construction**.

"The reviews on this have been absolutely phenomenal," said Arie. "I have to say, RMC exceeded my expectations. It was a \$13 million investment. We did have to do an additional \$6 million property investment that the county made us do, which was unexpected, but the \$13 million we spent with RMC is very, very worth it. We're very happy with their workmanship, their quality and their staff."

"We pour our heart into every ride we build," said **Darren Torr**, president, RMC. "John Arie, Jr. and his team

and his family have been wonderful to work with. I hope this a cornerstone for this park that will help it continue to grow and evolve."

"When Fun Spot approached us, we weren't sure what size of ride they were looking for," said **Jake Kilcup**, COO, RMC. "John Jr. came out and said, 'I'm looking for a banger. Give me something big.' We went for it on the design. We had several iterations afterward, but we kind of came back to the original layout. John loved it so much. I think it was the right move. It ties the whole park together and kind of sprawls through the whole park."

The park has 120 acres on which to expand. Hopes are that the world-class roller coaster puts the park on the map.

► See **ARIEFORCE**, page 8

## TRON Lightcycle / Run enters the Grid at Magic Kingdom

AT: David Fake  
Special to Amusement Today

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — The latest **Walt Disney Imagineering (WDI)** and **Vekoma Rides** collaboration, TRON Lightcycle / Run, welcomed guests to the Grid when the attraction officially opened on April 4 at **Magic Kingdom Park** in the **Walt Disney World Resort**, after a several years-long delay due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new attraction is inspired by the groundbreaking **Walt Disney Pictures** film *TRON* (1982) and its sequel *TRON: Legacy* (2010) and is the second installation of the ride, an exact reproduction of TRON Lightcycle Power Run, which opened at **Shanghai Disneyland** in 2016.

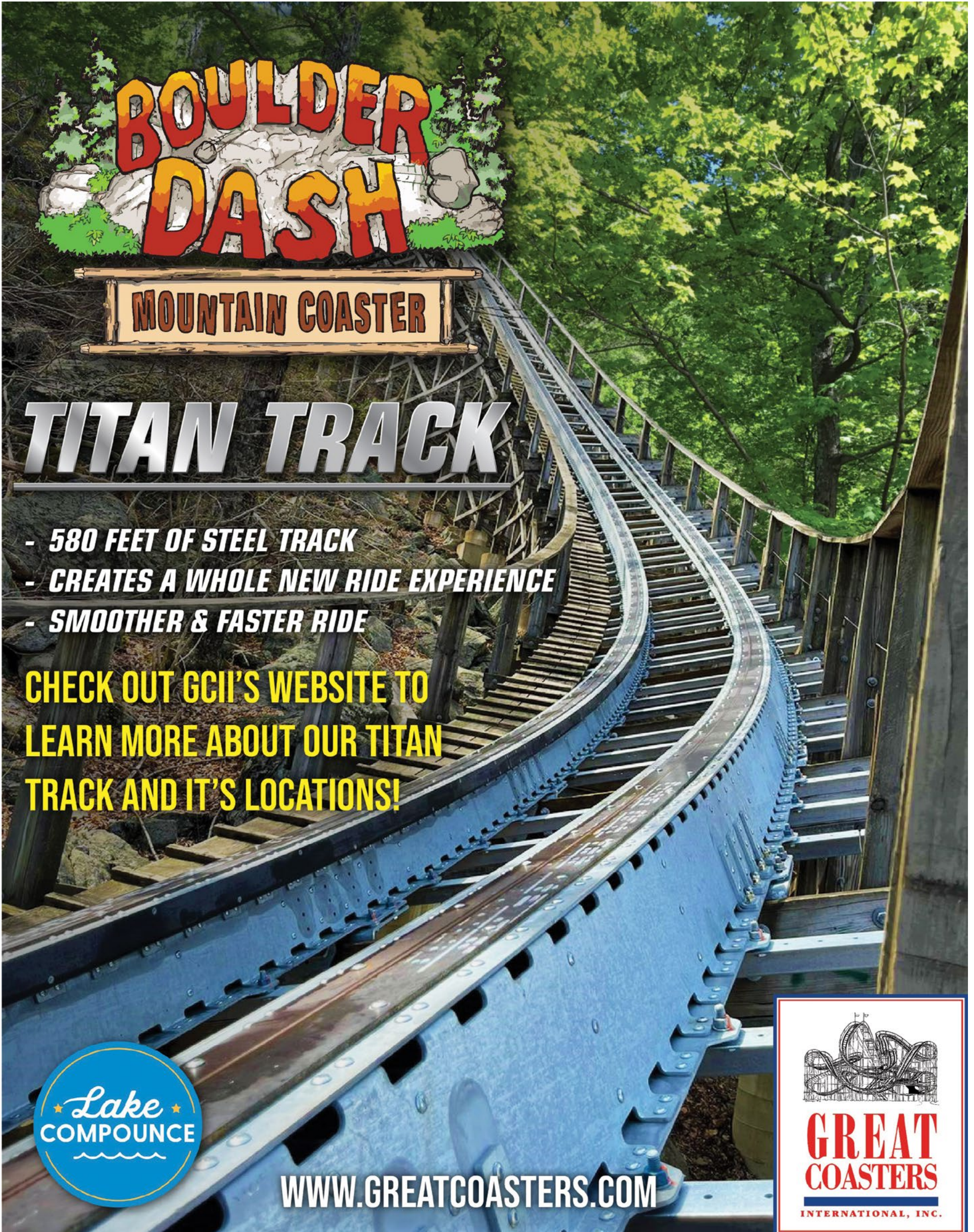
The experience begins upon passing beneath the dazzling attraction canopy. Guests then enter a Digitizer where they witness a powerful preview of what's in store when they join the games. It is here that TRON: Lightcycle



The ride utilizes a custom Vekoma Rides' Motorbike model roller coaster on which the 14 motorbikes of the coaster's seven trains have been transformed into Lightcycles.. AT/DAVID FAKE

► See **TRON**, page 9





# BOULDER DASH

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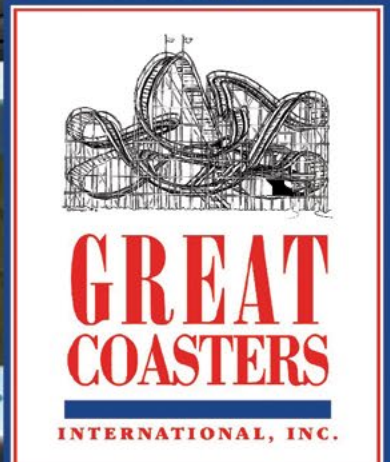
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The gigantic arm of the Revolution swings 20 riders 60 feet in the air as they spiral in a thrilling motion. The swinging arm and revolving passenger car together with the inward-facing seating creates the ultimate ride experience.

REVOLUTION 20



The Yo-Yo spins riders through the air like the fantastic flight of a whirlwind, giving them a thrilling sense of freedom. Riders are suspended in 32 self-loading swings on this entertaining attraction for high-flying and tilting action. Both children and adults are drawn in by its high visibility.

YO-YO





# AMUSEMENT VIEWS

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

## They are asking about you



Robinson

I was at a local high school track meet the other day, and multiple parents took a moment to ask me a similar question: "What's the word in the amusement industry?" The question was often followed by "What's new?" and/or "What's different?"

Many were talking about area parks raising or lowering their gate admission. Security and chaperone policies were a hot topic. However, despite all the other concerns, the top interests were thoughts about new and upcoming attractions and how the industry is doing now a couple seasons removed from the shadow of COVID.

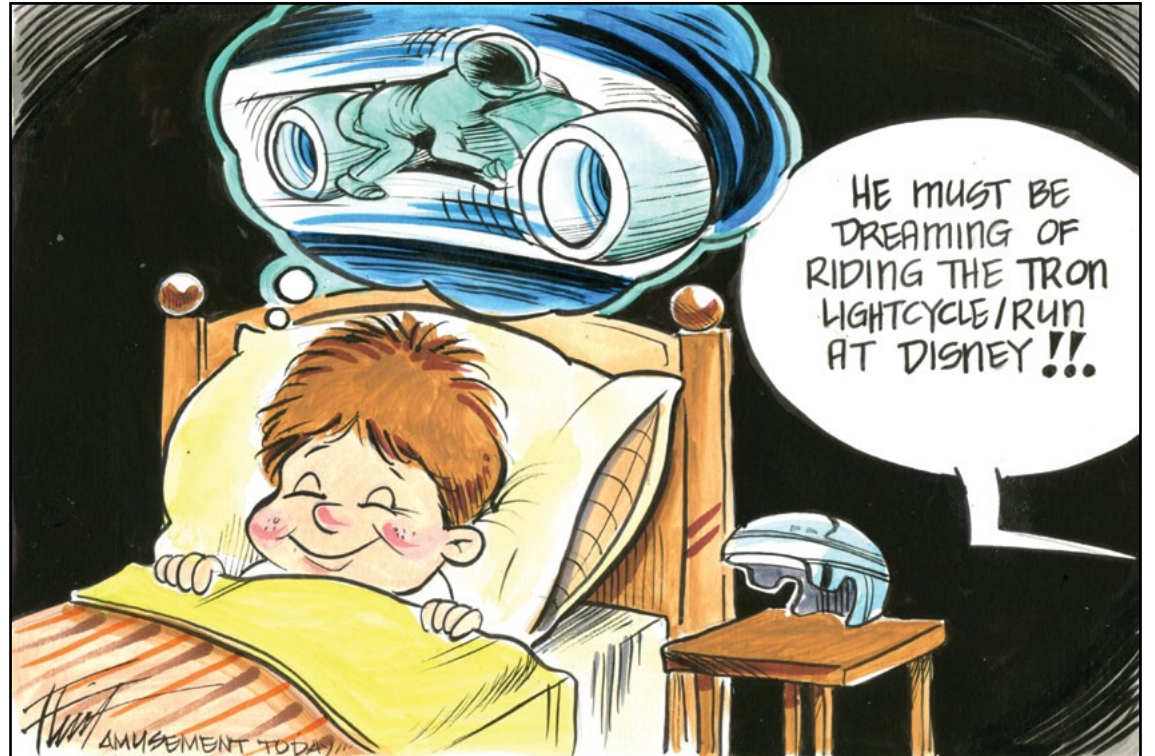
While attending the Amusement Expo held recently in Las Vegas, Nevada, and covering Universal Studios Hollywood's recent expansion with Super Nintendo World, I took two weeks to ride across the country. As I made new acquaintances along the way, they'd ask what I did for a living that allowed this kind of travel. Upon learning I was part of the amusement industry, many were full of similar questions as the ones noted above.

It did not matter the state or the city, the population or their proximity to the nearest roller coaster. What was new in the industry and how the parks weighing the upcoming season were topics on the minds of people everywhere.

We're at a time in America where political topics and social issues are in over-abundance, filling our ears and media on a near 24/7 basis. Maybe it's because of this — or in spite of it — that people are more curious than ever about the forthcoming season of smiles and chances for new fun and thrills lie ahead.

Whatever the reason for the inquiries, the people are curious and on the edge of their seats. Our guests are showing their interest in walking through the industry's turnstiles and taking a plunge into fun. As we open our gates, let's make sure we don't just give them something to talk about ... let's help them make some lasting memories.

**FLINT'S VIEW:** Bubba Flint



**INDUSTRY VOICE:** David VanderWier, VLocker

## Security helps ensure guest trust, enjoyment

Electronic storage lockers are becoming an increasingly popular feature in amusement parks, water parks, trampoline parks and more in 2023. Lockers allow guests to focus on the fun and not the worry. They provide a secure place for guests to store their belongings while enjoying the attractions and amenities offered. Lockers are the first and last amenity a guest may touch.

One of the biggest reasons is for convenience. Guests can store their belongings, such as wallets, phones and bags in the lockers and not have to worry about carrying them around the park or losing them while enjoying the attractions. Another big reason is for the security they provide. If a guest is interested in storing their valuable items, knowing it will be secure is of the utmost importance.

The industry became well acquainted with the old-fashioned, coin-and-key lockers over the years. The newer electronic storage



VanderWier

lockers get rid of the need for staff and fears of a lost key. The biggest benefit of all might be the additional revenue parks will add to their balance sheets by purchasing the lockers and renting them.

One thing is certain though, electronic storage lockers have become an integral part of the amusement park industry. As the industry continues to grow and evolve, electronic storage lockers are continuing to grow as well. VLocker's new VRental software allows for mobile payment and works to help parks increase revenue by providing them real time analytical reporting that's even accessible from a mobile device. In the company's pipeline is the ability to integrate variable and dynamic pricing structures.

Companies like VLocker are excited for the future of electronic locker systems. They are providing an in-demand amenity that guests are asking for.

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



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Give Kids the World Village, Morgan's Wonderland, National Roller Coaster Museum & Archives





# 2 MINUTE DRILL



AT: Janice Witherow

## Mike Whincup, Galaxy Multi Rides

**Mike Whincup** works for a company who produces the world's best-selling mechanical bull – how cool is that? A family business, **Galaxy Multi Rides** is also acclaimed for its commercial inflatable parks, surf simulators, trampoline park equipment and innovative commercial-grade action rides. Mike grew up with the company and serves as vice president and head of design and has been involved with several **IAAPA** committees over the years, most recently sitting on the North America Manufacturers and Suppliers Committee. He is known for his sense of adventure, enjoying a challenge and easy-going personality.



Mike Whincup serves as Galaxy Multi Rides' vice president and head of design. COURTESY MIKE WHINCUP

**Title:** Vice President/Head of Design.

**Number of years in the industry:** 31 years (I grew up in the family business); 19 years as an adult.

**Best thing about the industry:** Being a small part of a guest's lifetime happy memory.

**Favorite amusement ride:** Hagrid's Magical Creatures Motorbike Adventure at Islands of Adventure.

**If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be ...** Either in the fashion industry (my educational background) or video production.

**Biggest challenge facing our industry:** Certainly on our side of the industry it is the ever-increasing insurance premiums for operators and overall operating costs.

**The thing I like most about amusement/water park season is ...** Getting outside and sharing great experiences with friends and family.

**Most bizarre favorite fashion statement at the moment:** For guys, the no socks and loafers.

**My biggest fear is ...** Not having a creative outlet and/or creative freedom.

**The three words that best describe my car are ...** Whole Lotta Sexy or Classy, Handsome, Powerful.

**When I say reality TV, you say ...** Like fast food ... should only be enjoyed in small portions.

**When ordering ice cream, I typically get ...** Brambleberry Crisp from Jenis.

**Favorite sport to play:** Racing XC Mountain Bikes.

**My friends all call me ...** Winks or Winkie

**My life motto is ...** There are plenty of people who will try to discourage you, pull you down or divert you off your path. So ... "F 'em" and believe in yourself.

**If I had to eat one thing every single day, it would be ...** Without consequences, a proper Italian pizza with prosciutto.

**I usually call it a night at ...** Before it gets to 2 a.m., because nothing good (healthy) happens after 2 a.m.

**The song that always makes me want to dance is ...** "Show Me Love" by Robin S.

**If money were no object, my next vacation would be ...** Australia and New Zealand.

**At lunch time, you can usually find me ...** Sadly, at my desk.

**The outdoor activity I enjoy doing the most is ...** A sunny day on the water stand-up paddleboarding.

**This summer, I am really looking forward to ...** Heading back to the U.K. to visit some friends and family I haven't seen since pre-COVID.

**I feel most comfortable wearing ...** Some Lululemon Surge Hybrid Joggers and a Galaxy Multi Rides hoodie.

**Favorite professional athlete:** Marcelo Bielsa (now a coach). He has given me more than I can put into words.

**The one book I would recommend everyone to read is ...** *The Yes Man* by Danny Wallace.

## THE INDUSTRY SEEN

### Raise a toast to remembering fun



LUBBOCK, Texas — Two Docs Brewing Co. of Lubbock, Texas, just launched a brand new pilsner, named after the recently shuttered Joyland Amusement Park. The company started selling the beer on April 8, 2023, and has high hopes it will become a new favorite among patrons. "We grew up around here and have so many fond memories of going to Joyland Amusement Park as kids and taking our kids as well," commented Two Docs Brewing on the company's Facebook page. "We hope this beer can be an homage to what an awesome place Joyland was for so many Lubbockites." Brewery representatives are pictured above with former Joyland owners David and Kristi Dean. COURTESY TWO DOCS BREWING, DAVID AND KRISTI DEAN

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**RMC**

Photography by Jack Lathrop

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The outward-banked airtime hill is one of the coaster's most popular moments (above left). This barrel roll (above middle) spirals over the park's arcade building. Below, the coaster exits one of its four inversions. AT/TIM BALDWIN, DAVID FAKE

## ►ARIEFORCE Continued from page 1

"In my vision, I want to have a water park, more roller coasters, and a hotel and villa in the back of the property," Arie said. "I want to turn this into a regional theme park. It's the same size as your average Six Flags."

Six Flags Over Georgia is located 20 miles from Fun Spot America.

"We are in a great community," added Arie. "Fayetteville is a small town, but there is a lot of heart here. There's a lot of small businesses — and that's what we are. We're a part of that."

Standing at 154 feet, the coaster is not only iconic, it's monumental. For the RMC team, ArieForce One is almost a first in design type as it is more of an out-and-back-style coaster. The layout was created by designer **Joe Draves**.

"A lot of times we work with a reprofile and work with existing foundations," Torr told *Amusement Today*. "It forces creativity on us.

"Originally, where we do the barrel roll over the arcade building, we were going to go *through* the building. Complications made us go over it. But my personal favorite moment is the outer-banked turn."

"It's right along the highway, so we hope it pulls people into the park," added Kilcup. "We have some tricks we reuse — because they are good tricks! — but we always want to give them something special, something different. The raven truss dive was a really unique element. Using trusses for more than just the lift hill just makes it aesthetically more beautiful. Anytime we can bring our geeky aesthetic engineering side into it, we love that."

The ride features an 83-degree first drop, an outward-banked airtime hill, double up, wildly banked turnaround and four inversions.

Like Torr, Arie feels his favorite moment is the outward-banked turn. "It gets everybody. It's amazing and smooth. It puts a smile on my face every single time."

"The barrel roll over the building. I think it is so snappy and tight," said Kilcup. "The catch out of it is just so perfect. Joe did an amazing job."

Named after John Arie, Jr.'s father, **John Arie, Sr.**, it was inspired by the elder Arie's love of flying and exploration.

"I rode it, and it's the most intense but smoothest roller coaster I've ever been on," said John Arie, Sr. "I'd go again in a heartbeat. It's absolutely a signature ride not only for Fun Spot but RMC and the state of Georgia. It's absolutely unbelievable."

RMC has frequently worked with **Irvine Ondrey Engineering (IOE)** for control systems.

"While working on AF1, John Arie, Jr. and the entire Fun Spot America Atlanta staff really went above and beyond to make sure everything was ready on time, and it was clear that this project was a true labor of love for them," said **Brian Ondrey**, president, IOE. "We have a great relationship with RMC, too, and are always honored to work with their team. This ride is non-stop thrills and it's going to make Fun Spot America Atlanta a hot spot for years to come!"

"The biggest challenge on AF1 — which also has been impacting all of our other projects, as well as those of the greater industry community — was the supply chain shortage and the current volatile, ever-changing nature of component availability," noted **Bill Buckley**, parts procurement, RMC. "We've had to be aggressive and vigilant to obtain what's needed for our work."

The ride sports a space theme. Patriotic insignia,



flags and exploration signage help convey the idea. The trains have a futuristic look, as if they are ready to launch into space.

"We worked very close with the marketing department of the park," said Torr. "We know what the envelope is that we have to work with. They develop a concept of what the theming is going to look like and we'll go back and look at the feasibility of it and work with the artists we have on staff."

**Maclan Wheels** have long partnered with RMC on their trains.

"We have worked with both RMC and Fun Spot for a number of years. It is so fun to see them come together," said **Maegan Wallace**, sales and marketing, Maclan Wheels. "This ride is so fun and intense; we are thrilled to have a part in it."

First-rider opportunities were auctioned off, and the proceeds (\$5,000) were donated to the **National**

**Roller Coaster Museum and Archives.**

"In 2018, we were close to 140/150 employees," said Torr. "When the pandemic hit and all the parks shut down, construction projects shut down and nobody was ordering any new coasters. For us, we don't have a revenue stream when that happens. We, unfortunately, had to reduce our labor force to stay in business. We're a family-owned company, and we were able to collaborate with John Jr. in early 2021. It was a great time — it was good for them and good for us. It let us retain our key people and keep the core of RMC together. It allowed us to live to fight another day and hopefully continue to bring these engineering masterpieces to the world."

At the ride's opening, John Arie Jr. told *AT*: "Everyone who had shown up today has just given me goosebumps and warmed my heart."



Chris Gray of the National Roller Coaster Museum accepts a check for \$5,000 from Fun Spot's John Arie, Jr. AT/TIM BALDWIN



## ▶ TRON

Continued from page 1

/ Run guests are challenged to enter the digital world of the films, the Grid, via a gateway that Grid creator Kevin Flynn's son, Sam Flynn, has opened for them.

As members of Team Blue, guests board high-speed lightcycles in the Sync Chamber and prepare for upload into a thrilling race through a dark, computerized world, facing off against a fierce group of Programs known as Team Orange.

The ride utilizes a custom Vekoma Rides' Motorbike model roller coaster on which the 14 motorbikes of the coaster's seven trains have been transformed into lightcycles. Traversing a track length of 3,169 feet, the coaster reaches a speed of 59 miles per hour during the launch sequence which ties the new coaster with its sister attraction in Shanghai as the fastest roller coasters in any Disney theme park.

Calculating all the factors reveals that the attraction has a maximum hourly capacity in the vicinity of 1,700 guests per hour (Disney does not release expected hourly capacity numbers for its attractions).

In TRON: Lightcycle / Run, the Dutch ride manufacturer has again delivered a thrilling, high-capacity roller coaster attraction. The two TRON installations follow other Disney collaborations with Vekoma, such as Rock 'n' Roller Coaster, Seven Dwarfs Mine Train, and the upcoming Wandering Oaken's Sliding Sleighs, a *Frozen*-themed coaster at Hong Kong Disneyland.

"Disney has partnered with Vekoma to create several of our guest-favorite attractions," said WDI Executive Ride Engineer Jerold Kaplan. "We have an extensive history with them across the world and they're a great partner to us.

"We previously collaborated with Vekoma on Seven Dwarfs Mine Train, which was part of the 2012 Fantasyland redesign. It was a clean sheet of paper design, taking creative intent from the *Snow White* film. The original concept sketch for the project was literally one frame out of the movie — a deer pulling a min-



After dark, a new dimension of the attraction comes to life when the canopy lights sync to the passing coaster trains in addition to the thematic musical score. AT/DAVID FAKE

cart. Chris Beatty, who was our creative lead for TRON, said to Vekoma, 'I want to build a roller coaster experience based on this frame.' So, that is what they did. It was quite interesting," said Kaplan, who added that his very first project with Vekoma was Magic Kingdom's Barnstormer in 1996. "That was the first roller coaster I ever did, both for Disney and in partnership with Vekoma."

Another challenge and opportunity for Vekoma to come through for Disney with TRON: Lightcycle / Run was in response to the request that the attraction be as accessible to guests with disabilities as safely possible. The solution came in the form of two modified Lightcycles that were added to the final car of one of the trains. These modified Lightcycles utilize a traditional seated position, which permits disabled guests who can transfer from a wheelchair to the seat to experience the attraction without needing to straddle a lightcycle, as with the other lightcycles/motorbikes on the train.

"With all our attractions, WDI attempts to provide some level of accommodation for all guests to the best of our ability," Kaplan said. "A roller coaster is a bit different than a dark ride. So, you must think about things differently. Disney wants to create family friendly attractions. We want to hit as much of the family demographic as possible from little kids to adults, but it doesn't end there. Families are not limited due to a disability, so we think about everything in the context of it being a family experience. It makes for some interesting challenges sometimes when trying to accommodate for that broader demographic, but that's part of the fun about being a great ride designer — figuring out how to make that work."

TRON Lightcycle / Run is nestled behind Tomorrowland Speedway beside Space Mountain in Magic Kingdom's Tomorrowland. Its massive 10-acre footprint incorporates a 105-foot-tall canopy that shelters the outside portion of the ride and covers more

than 50,000 square feet. The canopy features more than 1,200 lights and adds dramatic visuals to the attraction.

After dark, a completely new dimension of the attraction comes to life when the canopy lights sync to the passing coaster trains in addition to the ever-present thematic musical score. The canopy, lights and musical score combined create a mesmerizing treat for the eyes and ears of all guests, even nonriders as they sit under the canopy awaiting riders from their group to exit the attraction.

The score was written by composer, arranger and producer of film scores, Joseph Trapanese, who collaborated with the electronic music group Daft Punk on the soundtrack for TRON: Legacy. Trapanese's arrangements have been described as "resolutely grand" and "stirring... ominous, hypnotic." With the BBC describing his work as "a sophisticated integration of acoustic and electronic instrumentation... majestic... rich, solemn tones... saturnine orchestra-

tion and a muscular rhythm."

For some, including WDI Principal Show Lighting Designer Randy Fox, the canopy has become a favorite part of the attraction.

"The Shanghai TRON was based largely on the TRON: Legacy film. For the lighting design, we took a lot of influence from the film and incorporated it into the attraction. We did that again here with the U.S. version [of the attraction]. So, that's why it looks so much like you are there on the Grid of the film," said Fox.

"It truly is my favorite part of the attraction and definitely one of the projects that I'm very proud to have worked very hard on. It's the same canopy footprint from Shanghai and incorporating it into the architecture here at Walt Disney World was a lot of work thinking through how we were going to take this giant thing and make it work for us here," he continued.

Fox concluded by saying, "I think that it is going to change the area and become a huge part of the visual aspect of the park. There are beautiful areas that are not even up under the canopy, but also down and away from the canopy. There's going to be a lot of places to experience the visual aesthetics of the attraction. It is its own show, and one that I think guests are really going to enjoy. It's a spectacular, emotional kind of experience that is really cool. I think TRON: Lightcycle / Run is something our guests are going to come back again and again for, because every time you experience the visuals, and every time you ride, you're going to see and feel something a little different."



Two modified Lightcycles make up the final car of one of the seven trains. These Lightcycles utilize a traditional seated position, which permits disabled guests to transfer from a wheelchair to the seat and experience the attraction without needing to straddle a lightcycle (above left). Traversing a track length of 3,169 feet, the coaster reaches a top speed of 59 miles per hour during the launch sequence. COURTESY WALT DISNEY WORLD; AT/DAVID FAKE



# PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

▶ Carowinds celebrates 50 years — page 16 / Animal care remains a core mission for SeaWorld — page 24

## Universal Studios Hollywood powers up Super Nintendo World

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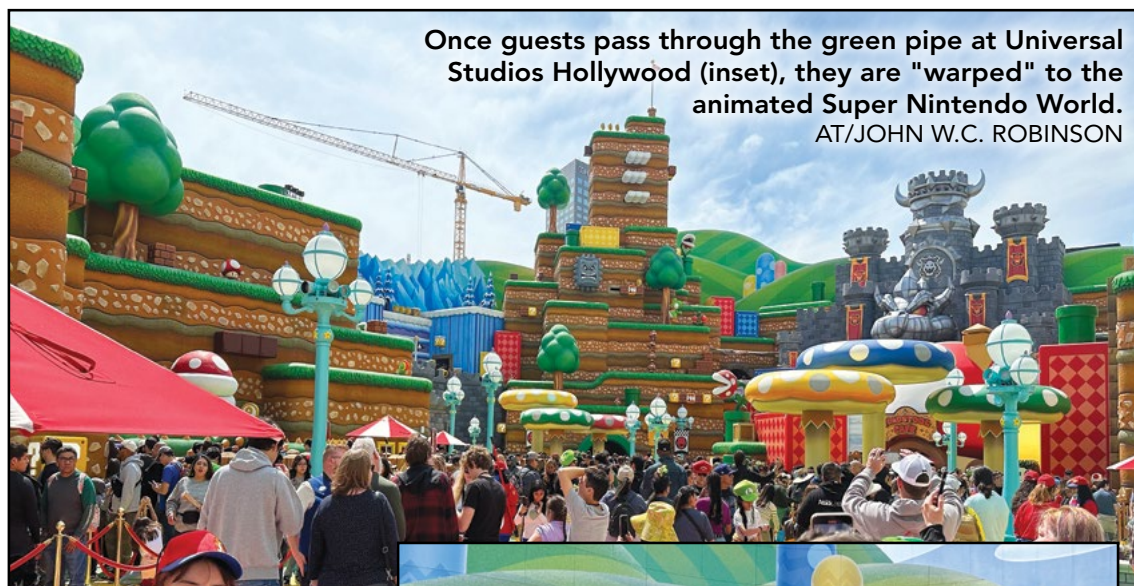
UNIVERSAL CITY, Calif. — Universal Studios Hollywood declared "game on" when it opened the gates of its Super Nintendo World expansion on February 17, 2023.

The park literally has guests step into the world of Mario, Luigi and friends from Nintendo Co. Ltd.'s line of *Mario Bros.* video games, with guests entering a giant green pipe — an image lifted directly from the game series — to "warp" themselves into the Mushroom Kingdom and experience the highly immersive and interactive land. Once they've passed through the pipe, guests' imaginations are empowered to become an integral part of Mario, Luigi and Princess Peach's universe.

Super Nintendo World is an all-new, visually spectacular land, located within an expanded area of Universal Studios Hollywood. Within the vibrancy of colors and architectural ingenuity, the land features the groundbreaking Mario Kart: Bowser's Challenge ride, as well as many interactive activities to engage the entire family within the captivating Mushroom Kingdom.

On hand to help officiate the expansion's opening were **Shigeru Miyamoto**, representative director and fellow for Nintendo and **Scott Strobl**, executive vice president & general manager of Universal Studios Hollywood. The duo were joined by Mario, Luigi and Princess Peach and as well as throngs of very exuberant fans.

"This is truly one of the



Once guests pass through the green pipe at Universal Studios Hollywood (inset), they are "warped" to the animated Super Nintendo World.  
AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

most dynamic moments in the history of Universal Studios Hollywood, and we are very proud of our partnership with Nintendo to bring to life a new genre of highly immersive, next level interactive theme park entertainment," said Strobl.

"It has been such an honor to work closely with Universal Parks & Resorts and Universal Creative to help bring the Mushroom Kingdom — where Mario and friends live — to life here at Super Nintendo World," said Miyamoto. "We hope people of all ages will enjoy visiting the Mushroom Kingdom in real life and experiencing all the interactive surprises this land has to offer. As Mario would say, 'Let's-a go!'"

From the moment guests pass through the iconic green pipe, a journey filled with exploration, discovery and play awaits that is unlike anything they've ever experienced. Their journey begins as they enter Peach's Castle before venturing further into the colorful Mushroom Kingdom.

The highly themed area



is tucked away within the park, in a tight area near the Jurassic World: The Ride and Transformers: The Ride 3D attractions.

"What we were able to do was actually have the [small] size work for us," **Jon Corfino**, vice president of **Universal Creative**, told *CNBC*. "If you take a look around, I think we were successful at creating this very immersive, enclosed and yet intimate environment where you really feel like you've stepped into the game. Because you don't really see anything else around you and you're totally contained."

The area boasts an array of animated themed characters. Because of the repetitive nature of the traditional video games

the area takes inspiration from, the sight of a pacing Goomba or the repetitive snapping of a Piranha Plant are perfect animatronics to remain in plain sight for all guests to see while they're in the land. The encompassing motion of many of the games supporting characters helps guests feel as though they have literally stepped through the screen and into the Mushroom Kingdom they've been familiar with after decades of game play.

Even the signage is heavily themed in the new area. "Wet Floor" warnings have been designed to reference the infamous slippery banana peels from the Mario Kart game series.  
AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

Much of the area's interactive nature comes with the use of Power-Up Bands. These wearable wristbands sync with the park's free downloadable app to level-up the guest experience within the land and enhance its many interactive elements. These include keeping individual and team scores, collecting digital coins and obtaining keys after winning Key Challenges throughout the land. They are available in six design options and can be purchased for \$40 both within the land — at the 1-UP Factory retail store — as well as at Super Nintendo World retail shops in the park and on **Universal CityWalk Hollywood**.

The centerpiece attraction of the new area is Mario Kart: Bowser's Challenge. The ride's premise is simple but challenging and appealing to guests of all ages regardless of gaming experience. The attraction combines a traditional dark ride with interactive augmented reality (AR) goggles worn by all riders. As part of Team Mario, guests steer through underwater courses and courses

▶ See NINTENDO, page 12



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## ► NINTENDO Continued from page 10

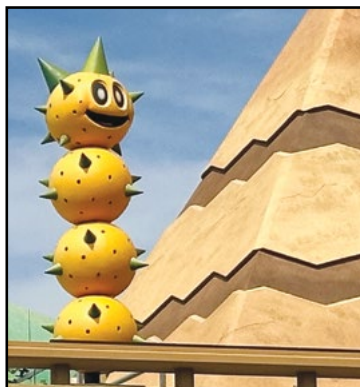
es in the clouds to compete for the Golden Cup while collecting digital coins to defeat Team Bowser and win. Mario Kart: Bowser's Challenge raises the stakes for guests as an intriguing and repeatable ride with a variety of outcomes.

Set against a multi-sensory backdrop of color, sound and movement, guests are seated in stadium-style, four-seat vehicles as they navigate courses — inspired directly from Nintendo's Mario Kart game series — through the creative use and integration of head mounted AR goggles. This unique feature is a key point of differentiation that distinguishes this ride from other theme park attractions.

"The Universal Creative team was able to explore new usages for how to integrate game engine technology into the experience," detailed Corfino to *Amusement Today*. "For Mario Kart: Bowser's Challenge, we created our own augmented reality technology which is custom-designed to enhance the guest experience. The layering of augmented reality, video projection mapping and lighting effects in a seamless way was really interesting. Overall, it was about making multi-level game engine and interactive technology that brings the land together into one complete experience.

When riding Mario Kart: Bowser's Challenge, guests are encouraged to tap their Power-Up Band on the ride vehicle's steering wheel. This way, they can track digital coins collected and gauge their ranking against other riders, when synced to the app. The band enables guests to enjoy "Mario Kart: Bowser's Challenge" over and over again in an attempt to beat their best scores.

The attraction is housed within the facade of Bowser's Castle. Adorned with a sculp-



Power Up bands allow playful guests to interact with "?" Blocks and themed structures to collect coins and keys.  
AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

ture of the game series' large and powerful villain Bowser, this structure serves as a key centerpiece of the land. As guests navigate the corridors and pass through the hall of medallions and trophies of the ominous castle towards the ride, they learn more about Bowser's calculated plans to defeat Team Mario for the coveted Golden Cup in the upcoming ride.

While Mario Kart: Bowser's Challenge is the only true ride in the section, it's far from the only attraction.

"We have seen a completely new level of immersion that is quite different from what is normally done in theme park attractions," Corfino stated. "The guest experience is non-linear. There are no rules about where to go first — you can do in any sequence and it's still one continuous experience."

Within the land, guests can enjoy many interactive areas, including punching "?" blocks to collect digital coins. Guests can discover a new dimension of Super Nintendo World via interactive binoculars positioned within the land which also employ AR technology.

Guests can also enjoy various Key Challenges — located in the heavily themed play areas known as Goomba Crazy Crank, Koopa Troopa POWER Punch, Piranha Plant Nap Mishap and Thwomp Panel Panic — and collect keys after completing the challenges. In a unique twist, after collecting at least three keys guests are allowed access to the "final boss battle" with Bowser Jr. In this experience, guests interact within a lifesize video game,

**Animatronic versions of Mario's friends and villains from the game series — such as Pokey (left) — populate the highly-themed area, aiding in immersing guests into the Mushroom Kingdom.**

AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

with motion detection allowing them to punch, dodge, jump and even throw fireballs just like Mario in the traditional video game. The animated action is projected within the themed castle and each guest's shadow acts as their avatar within the gameplay.

The area features themed dining at Toadstool Cafe, the land's signature restaurant. Mario's popular supporting character Toad is the chef at the eatery and greets guests upon entry. Menu items include Toadstool Cheesy Garlic Knots, Super Mushroom Soup and Piranha Plant Caprese.

The Super Nintendo World themed area was conceived in partnership with Nintendo and the visionaries at Universal Creative to deliver entertainment with innovative technological achievements inspired by characters and video games that have appealed to Nintendo fans for generations.

"The reaction to Super Nintendo World has been very positive," offered the park's Senior Director of Publicity **Anastasia Lee**.

"We announced that Super Nintendo World would be coming to Japan, Hollywood and Orlando in 2016," said Corfino. "The lands at **Universal Studios Japan** and **Universal Studios Hollywood** are very similar but the footprint at each park is different."

In February 2023, Universal formally announced that Orlando will be getting its own Super Nintendo World with the opening of Universal Orlando's **Epic Universe** theme park (slated for 2025).

With the success of Super Nintendo World at Universal Studios Hollywood and the animated *Super Mario Bros.* film currently atop the domestic box office, it's safe to say that the popular plumber and friends will continue collecting coins — and delighting fans — for the foreseeable future.



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# Diggers big and small planned for new theme park Dig'N Zone

AT: Pam Sherborne  
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

SEVIERVILLE, Tenn. — Excavators, skid-steers, rollers, forklifts, dump trucks and more are all part of a new theme park expected to open in the next few months in this area of Tennessee where attraction venues continue to grow.

But this venue called **Dig'N Zone** has stepped apart from the traditional rides and attractions. It will be full of rides and attractions all themed to construction.

The park, which sits on 28 acres, had an estimated opening date this spring.

"But ride inspections and weather have caused delays," said **Weston O'Dell**, one of the owners. "Supply issues also have been a challenge as well."

But O'Dell said they are getting close.

"Things are moving now," he said.

And moving is what it is all about. O'Dell said he was one of those kids who grew up enjoying playing in the

dirt with a variety of diggers. Creating this park has been a dream of his and his friend and partner, **Grant Hensley**. They grew up on farms and loved being around all of the equipment.

O'Dell said they partnered with **Caterpillar** and **John Deere** for the attractions at the park. Visitors will be able to spend a full day operating various construction equipment.

Older visitors will actually be able to move some sand around. Younger ones will be able to excavate balls from a ball pit.

There will be a full-sized excavator that will have a modified front bucket on it and have roller coaster seats in it. A ride operator picks the bucket up with the riders and swings it around on the excavator arm.

Another retrofit involves a dump truck. The bed of the dump truck will be fitted with seats. When the bed rises, riders will rise with dump truck sounds and vibrations.



Dig 'N Zone will include about 25 attractions, as well as construction-themed games. COURTESY DIG'N ZONE

All of the construction equipment will be modified to make it safe for kids of all ages, O'Dell said. This includes limited speed, mobility and seat belts on all of the rides.

"We have been working with an engineer who is designing all the operations and safety panels of the attractions," he said.

Other attractions include a sand pit full of miniature diggers just for play. There will be a game zone with construction-themed games. For example, visitors will be able to use a toy excavator to

pluck a duck from a pond.

"We will have tracks like a go-kart track, but visitors will be in small-sized Caterpillar and John Deere trucks and tractors. We will have pavement rollers where visitors can ride over a car model and crush it. They will be able to take their crushed cars and an uncrushed car home with them."

There also will be electric excavators as well.

"These are being supplied by **Mega Toys** out of Oregon," O'Dell said. "We plan to have regular tractor rides, a barrel

train for the young children and electric tractors."

O'Dell said the big question everyone has been asking is when the park will open.

"With the delays, we really haven't been able to commit to a date," he said. "It actually took longer for us to get the grounds ready last year than we thought. We had to spend about four or five months just moving dirt."

He hopes they will be open by early summer.

O'Dell said they plan to include a grassy area with a stage for entertainment and events such as school group performances and corporate gatherings. In addition, seasonal events are planned such as Dig'n Halloween and Dig'n Lights of Christmas.

There will be a maze made from construction tubing and food will be provided by food trucks.

"We will have a pay-one-price so once you are inside, you can do it all at the one price," he said.

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# Carowinds celebrates 50 years in 2023, opens new themed area

AT: Pam Sherborne  
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — On March 31, 1973, **Carowinds** in Charlotte, North Carolina, officially opened its gates to 6,000 guests amid great fanfare. That opening marked the culmination of years of planning and development by founder **E. Pat Hall**, a Charlotte businessman.

As the park launches into its 50-year celebrations, its growth over the years is apparent. Sitting on approximately 400 acres, the park is home to top-rated roller coasters, as well as more than 60 rides, attractions and live stage shows. **Carolina Harbor**, the 26-acre water park on the grounds, features a variety of water slides, wave pools, large play structures and a three-acre children's play area.

"I am proud to be celebrating the golden anniversary of Carowinds, as well as the amazing associates who have delivered on our goal to make our guests happy," said **Manny Gonzalez**, Carowinds vice president and general manager. "I look forward to the next exciting 50 years as we continue to bring happiness to our community."

In looking at the park as it is today, it seems appropriate to look at its past.

Named for a combination of the surrounding Carolinas and the winds that blow across the two states,



Manufactured by Bolliger & Mabillard, **Vortex** (above) opened in 1992 at Carowinds and still operates today. The **Carolina Skytower** (right) was among the first rides at the park when it opened in 1973. COURTESY CAROWINDS

Carowinds has gone through several acquisitions, with each change adding to the fun, not taking away.

Ground was broken on Carowinds on May 1, 1970, with a planned opening date in spring, 1972. But after numerous construction delays due to weather, it eventually opened in 1973 with a price tag of about \$70 million. It was originally under the ownership of the **Carowinds Corporation**, a consortium of local investors headed by Hall.

Among some of the original attractions were the **Carolina Skytower**, manufactured by **Intamin**; **Snoopy's Junction**, a **Crown Metal Products** miniature train ride; and **Carolina Goldrusher**, by

**Arrow Dynamics**. All three of these rides are still operating.

Carowinds' first season was deemed a success, bringing in over 1.2 million visitors. But a late season oil crisis curtailed what could have been even greater. The oil crisis created sagging attendance for the park for its first couple of years, so much so that Carowinds Corporation ended up merging with **Taft Broadcasting** in early 1975.

Taft ran the park under **Family Leisure Centers**, a joint venture with **Top Value Enterprises**. It was later transferred to a wholly owned Taft subsidiary, **Kings Entertainment Company**.

Under Taft Broadcasting, new life surged into the park. The **Hanna-Barbera** characters came on board, along with more rides aimed to appeal to younger guests.

In 1992, **Kings Entertainment Company** was acquired by **Paramount Communications**, and **Paramount Parks** was formed, with the corporate headquarters a few miles away from the park in Charlotte.

Carowinds was owned by Paramount Parks until June 30, 2006, when **Cedar Fair L.P.** acquired the

triple out-and-back coaster called the **Hurler**, by **International Coasters Inc.**

The **Ripcord**, by **Skycoaster Inc.**, was installed in 1995, and the **Afterburner** inverted roller coaster, by **Bolliger & Mabillard**, arrived in 1999.

The **Kiddy Hawk** suspended family coaster (**Vekoma**) opened in 2003, and **Vekoma's Nighthawk Flying Dutchman** coaster opened in 2004. In 2009, another **Vekoma** ride, the **Flying Cobra** boomerang model opened.

The **Intimidator** hyper coaster by **Bolliger and Mabillard** opened in 2010 and a **Mondial Windseeker** in 2012.

In 2013, Cedar Fair announced a three-year, \$50 million renovation plan at Carowinds. This project included a \$30 million roller coaster as well as other updates. This led to the opening of **Fury 325** in 2015, a hyper coaster by **Bolliger & Mabillard**. Standing 325 feet high and traveling at a speed up to 95 mph, the iconic coaster is a seven-time winner as **Best Steel Coaster** in *Amusement Today's* Golden Ticket Awards.

In 2019 the park opened **Copperhead Strike**, a multilaunched coaster by **Mack Rides**.

All along, while these thrilling rides were being installed, other parts of Carowinds grew

► See CAROWINDS, page 18



Paramount Parks. Cedar Fair remains the owner of Carowinds.

Installing big, thrilling rides has been a tradition at Carowinds. Some examples include such attractions as the **Carolina Cyclone**, a looping coaster manufactured by **Arrow Huss**, which opened in 1980. In 1992, the **Vortex** stand-up coaster, by **Bolliger & Mabillard**, opened and in 1994, the park installed a wooden



It was an eventful celebration when Carowinds first opened on March 31, 1973, in Charlotte, North Carolina. COURTESY CAROWINDS

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## ►CAROWINDS

Continued from page 16

and expanded. In 1987, Carowinds purchased a water park that had been built adjacent to the amusement park called **Ocean Island**. In 1989, Ocean Island was renamed **RipTide Reef** and expanded to over six acres on land where a previous ride had been.

Paramount Parks would later expand this area even more and rename it to **Water Works**.

WaterWorks was further expanded, and the name was changed to **Boomerang Bay** in 2006. In 2016, Boomerang Bay expanded yet again and was re-themed into **Carolina Harbor**.

In 2000, Carowinds held its first Halloween event and introduced WinterFest for the 2017 season. Carowinds had held a winter event off and on through its existence.

In addition, the changes to the Snoopy area of the park over the years have continued



The Arrow Huss looping coaster Carolina Cyclone opened in 1980 at Carowinds and will continue to thrill guests throughout 2023. COURTESY CAROWINDS

to create a magical and fun family area. The area changed from Nickelodeon Central to Planet Snoopy in 2010 and then to Camp Snoopy in 2018.

Now, with the 2023 season, Carowinds officials have planned a limited-time special event that is bringing plenty of new rides and attractions, exciting entertainment, enhanced food and beverage offerings, nighttime spectaculars and

other immersive experiences.

At the center of the celebration is the debut of the new Aeronautica Landing area, a tribute to the Carolinas' spirit of invention, exploration and aviation, where guests can immerse themselves in the history and future of flight.

This new area has taken over the Crossroads areas of the park with five new themed attractions as well as a retheming of an existing

## AERONAUTICA LANDING ATTRACTIONS

*Air Racer (Zamperla)*, a plane-themed ride with six arms which invert while the ride spins around an axis.

*Air Walker (Zamperla)*, a Disk'O-Skater attraction which spins as it navigates a half-pipe-shaped track.

*Gear Spin (Zamperla)*, consisting of four pendulums attached to the sides of a central rotating tower.

*Gyro Spin (Chance Rides)*, a ride that consists of a giant wheel which tilts at a steep angle and spins at various speeds.

*Hover and Dodge (Majestic)*, a classic 1979 bumper car attraction

*Windstar (Zamperla)* an interactive attraction where riders control the sail of their own hang glider

ride, for a total of six rides.

Aeronautica Landing is now the fourth rethemed area to be introduced at Carowinds since County Fair in 2017, and most recently, Blue Ridge Junction in 2019.

In addition, Aeronautica

Landing is offering two new dining venues and one that has been upgraded.

Carowinds is now open year-round with full time operations beginning this season over Memorial Day weekend.

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

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# North America's second Peppa Pig Theme Park coming to Texas

NORTH RICHLAND HILLS, Texas — Starting in 2024, families will be able to enter the playful world of Peppa Pig for an unforgettable day of adventure at North America's second **Peppa Pig Theme Park** set to open in Texas's Dallas-Fort Worth area.

Designed to be the ultimate theme park experience for little ones, this all-new standalone theme park located in North Richland Hills will feature multiple rides, interactive attractions, themed play-scapes and shows, all based on instantly recognizable locations from the globally popular brand. Families will meet Peppa and her friends as they snort, giggle and play to build their first theme park memories together.

**Merlin Entertainments** has a licensing agreement with global branded entertainment leader **Hasbro**, owner of the Peppa Pig brand, to build and operate Peppa Pig attractions, targeted at the preschool market, as part of its broader strate-



North America's second Peppa Pig Theme Park is coming to North Texas. The park will be similar to the Florida location (above) which opened in 2022. COURTESY MERLIN ENTERTAINMENTS

gy to engage in partnerships with some of the world's most popular brands.

"Merlin's platform and reach continues to grow in the U.S. as we build on the success of the world's first standalone Peppa Pig Theme Park in Florida," said Chief Executive Officer of Merlin Entertainments **Scott O'Neil**. "Given the incredible success of our

**Legoland Discovery Center** and **Sea Life Aquarium** in Grapevine, Texas, the North Richland Hills community was a natural next step in our expansion and rollout.

"Merlin is the definitive partner of choice for brands engaging children, holding the research, care, experience and interest in bringing iconic brands to life through location-based attractions.

Thank you to our friends at **Hasbro** for partnering with us to bring the playful world of Peppa Pig to this vibrant community."

"The success of the Peppa Pig Theme Park has been phenomenal, and we are excited to embark on the journey again with our friends at Merlin to bring another park to the city of North Richland Hills, Texas," said

**Matt Proulx**, vice president location based entertainment at Hasbro. "Adding another Peppa Pig Theme Park for fans to experience continues our Blueprint 2.0 strategy of offering more meaningful ways for families to engage with our brands. We cannot wait for more guests to create lifelong memories with Peppa and her friends."

"North Richland Hills is known for its family-friendly amenities and activities and we could not be more thrilled to add Peppa Pig Theme Park to the mix," said North Richland Hills Mayor **Oscar Trevino**. "This will be a great addition to our community. Conveniently located next door to **NRH2O Family Water Park**, Peppa Pig Theme Park will bring more energy to an area already known as a destination for family fun. I'm certain it will provide unforgettable entertainment that keeps families coming back again and again."

•[merlinentertainments.biz](http://merlinentertainments.biz)



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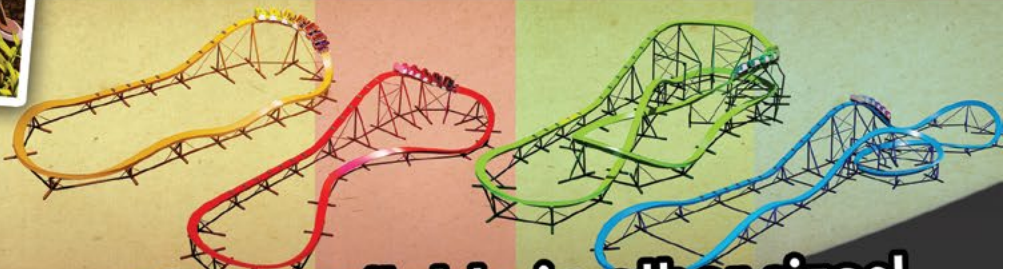
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## Park Post-its



AT: Pam Sherborne  
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The first log ride at **Adventureland**, Altoona, Iowa, opened back in 1974. Nearly 50 years later and eight years after that ride closed, the park is preparing to open a new log ride. It's among several other new rides and attractions slated to make their debut this year.

The new log ride, Draken Falls, and a new roller coaster, The Flying Viking, will be open in time for the 2023 season.

Park workers also spent the offseason cleaning, painting and adding signage.

"We will be adding tables and chairs on Main Street. So, this will be an area that you can come in and get your candy, get your fudge, if you want ice cream, something from Doc and Leone's — we'll have tables and chairs along here so it's kind of that outdoor café-type experience," **Alex Payne**, regional public relations manager for the park's parent company, **Palace Entertainment**, said in the second week of April.

Adventureland will open for the season on weekends starting May 6th. **Adventure Bay Waterpark** will open on May 27th.

The "World of Birds" exhibit at the **Cape May County Park & Zoo** in Cape May Court House, New Jersey, will permanently close this spring because of its high maintenance costs.

Some of the birds will stay in the zoo, while others will be relocated to zoos across the U.S. Zoo officials said the aviary's closure will make way for an expanded parking lot and new exhibits.

Business leaders gathered in Sevier County on Tuesday to announce plans for a new entertainment district at **The 407: Gateway to the Adventure** tourism development.

Leaders held a ground-breaking ceremony for "Smoky Gap," an entertainment district set in the early 1900s with Americana-themed storefronts and a large clock tower.

It will feature restaurants, retail options and entertainment attractions including the previously announced Cherokee history-inspired attraction from international theme park company **Puy Du Fou**.

**Icon Park**, an entertainment complex on Orlando's International Drive, has introduced a combo ticket called "Play Pass" that includes admission to key attractions, including The Wheel, Madame Tussauds, Sea Life aquarium, Museum of Illusions and others.

The ticket, valid for 30 days after purchase, also includes discounts to select Icon Park restaurants and stores.





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# Animal care hits major milestone, still a core mission for SeaWorld

AT: Tim Baldwin  
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO — For six decades, **SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment** have created engaging and thrilling guest experiences among its portfolio of parks. In recent years, the parks have emphasized award-winning and record-breaking rides, but still at its core is a mission of conservation and animal care. Recently, the SeaWorld and Busch Gardens rescue teams hit a milestone. Since 1965, SeaWorld has rescued more than 40,000 animals in need, including aquatic birds, seals, walruses, penguins, sea lions, turtles, reptiles, manatees, whales, dolphins, sea otters and a wide range of other mammals and fish.

When asked about the procedure of not only taking care of an animal but also the steps to its release, **Joseph Gaspard**, vice president of zoological operations at **SeaWorld Orlando** told *Amusement Today*: "Sick and injured animals come to SeaWorld presenting a wide array of conditions. Some need short-term supportive care while others require months of intensive treatment and rehabilita-



Patchouli is one of the 40,000 animals that have received health care from SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment (above left). SeaWorld San Diego is home to Freeway, since wildlife authorities said it was too dangerous to release him into his natural habitat (above right). COURTESY SEA WORLD



tion. SeaWorld staff work tirelessly to ensure the best possible care is provided to each and every animal, with the goal of returning healthy animals safely back into their natural environments. Our veterinary team and animal care specialists are invested in each animal that comes through our rescue and rehabilitation centers. Returning these animals to their native waters is always a rewarding and humbling experience."

"Rescue, rehabilitation and return of marine animals are at the forefront of everything we do at SeaWorld," said **Eric Otjen**, vice president of zoological operations

at **SeaWorld San Diego**. "Therefore, a portion of proceeds from tickets and in-park purchases goes toward funding rescue and rehabilitation operations. It truly takes a concerted effort on everyone's part to conserve and protect wild populations of marine animals, and we're proud to partner with our guests in the ongoing effort to protect our marine species."

SeaWorld Orlando, **SeaWorld San Antonio**, **SeaWorld San Diego**, **Busch Gardens Tampa Bay** and **Busch Gardens Williamsburg** are accredited zoological facilities with expert animal care specialists and veterinar-

ians. In addition to having the staff and facilities to care for resident animals at the parks, each of the three SeaWorld parks house world-class animal rescue and rehabilitation centers. SeaWorld Orlando is the largest manatee rescue operation in the U.S. and one of only five critical care centers in the world.

Each rescue team member undergoes training at SeaWorld and in the field alongside its stranding network partners. They must also have a strong working knowledge of nets, boats, animal safety, transporting animals, oil spills, first aid, CPR, water rescues and much

more. Rescue supervisors average 10-plus years of animal care experience. Rescue curators and park rescue leaders average more than 20 years. The cumulative experience enables SeaWorld to cultivate and train the next generation of animal care experts.

In some cases, the situation doesn't allow for a return to the natural habitat. In the case of Freeway, a sea lion who got his nickname by continuing to wander from the shoreline into dangerous places, including a California freeway, after several rescues, rehabs and returns, Freeway was deemed nonreleasable by wildlife authorities and now lives at SeaWorld San Diego.

So much of this care takes place behind the scenes, but many guests are unaware that they can see this in action at Busch Gardens Tampa Bay. Along one of the main pathways, a somewhat undiscovered gem is the Animal Care Center in which guests can closely observe the animal care experience, which could include nutrition and treatments and x-rays to surgeries. Visitors can watch animal care first-hand in the state-of-the-art facility. While the facility had been on property for many years, the availability to engage guests helps bring the company's core mission to the forefront.

"We feel it's important to give guests a look behind the scenes into our rescue and rehabilitation efforts to hopefully mitigate the need for

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► See SEAWORLD, page 25



► **SEAWORLD**

Continued from page 24

rescue altogether,” said **Lorri Braso**, supervisor of animal rescues. “We hope that by showing people how littering, unsafe boating and fishing practices, and pollution can severely harm animals in the wild, it will encourage them to be more conscious of their impact on the environment. In addition to a regular cadence of rescue-focused social content, we offer guided tours of the Rescue & Rehabilitation Centers, integrate rescue stories throughout animal exhibits within the parks and educate children on these practices through camps, events and partnerships with local schools.”

The Tampa theme park cares for more than 200 species of animals. The Animal



Guests at Busch Gardens Tampa Bay can enter the state-of-the-art Animal Care Center and see animals treated. COURTESY SEA WORLD; AT/TIM BALDWIN

Care Center is also home to the Emmy-nominated television series, *The Wildlife Docs*. The animals at Busch Gardens eat about 4,000 pounds of food daily, and the veterinarians and nutrition team modify 60 percent of the animal diets every month to meet each animal’s individual needs.



SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment care for more than 60,000 animals in total.

Rescuing and rehabilitating is certainly its own reward, but **Dr. Stacy DiRocco**, senior veterinarian at SeaWorld Orlando, found a particular case personally rewarding.

“Reckless, a manatee who

suffered catastrophic boat strike injuries, has been with us at SeaWorld Orlando’s Rescue & Rehabilitation Center for nearly a year,” she told *AT*. “When we rescued her last spring, she was in one of the worst conditions the team had ever seen, and we feared that her injuries would

be fatal. After spending time with her, it was evident she was a fighter who demonstrated a will to live. We knew we had to do everything in our power to save her life. After nine surgeries, physical therapy, cold laser therapy and a complete pectoral flipper amputation, it became clear that Reckless would survive. We’re excited for Reckless’ future as we hope to return her to her natural habitat in the coming months.”

In addition to its rescue and rehabilitation efforts, the SeaWorld & Busch Gardens Conservation Fund has donated more than \$16.5 million, supporting more than 1,200 animal conservation projects on all seven continents. These include coral reef restoration, preventing coastal erosion, habitat protection and keeping oceans clean.

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# Wild Adventures opens season with multi-million dollar expansions

VALDOSTA, Ga. — Wild Adventures Theme Park in Valdosta, Georgia, officially opened its latest addition and announced even more projects as part of the park's multi-million dollar expansions in 2023.

Wild Adventures opened for its 2023 Season on Saturday, March 18 with the all-new Oasis Outpost, a nearly three-acre addition to the park.

"Oasis Outpost provides families with new ways to escape, have adventures and get close to our very special and intriguing animals," said **Jon Vigue**, vice president and general manager. "The whole area is designed to create an unforgettable experience."

Among Oasis Outpost's many attractions is the Trail Trackers adventure ride, where kids can get behind the wheel and drive into a leopard and sulcata tortoise habitat to observe their behaviors. The new Misty Springs Soak Station offers a refreshing play area with towering misting posts and splash pads, and the area also features two Stay



Oasis Outpost at Wild Adventures includes play areas, splash pads, a restaurant and shaded seating. COURTESY WILD ADVENTURES

and Play Zones for children to explore while parents relax.

Oasis Outpost is also the home of a brand new Wild Adventures restaurant, Paradise Pizza. The new location will serve personal-sized pizzas, salads and boba lemonades.

"Of course, my favorite part of Oasis Outpost is the additions we made to our animal family," said Vigue. "Inside this area you will meet caracals, African crested porcupines, prairie dogs, tamanduas and spider monkeys."

Oasis Outpost is just one part of the multi-million dollar investments Wild Adventures is making in 2023. On March

14, Vigue announced the construction of a new campground experience.

"In 2024, the adventure will get bigger when Wild Adventures provides families with a one-of-a-kind way to sleep under the stars and next to the animals at a brand-new, seven-acre campground adjacent to the theme park," said Vigue. "The full-facility camp-

ground, including a camp store and bathhouse, offers a mixture of RV and tent camping with special amenities like a fishing pond and walking trails, as well as close-up experiences to interact with and learn about some amazing animals."

Wild Adventures will break ground on the new campground in early summer with plans to open in

2024. In addition to announcing the campground, Vigue also announced an expansion of the park's Wild Adventures Christmas event.

"We are taking our Christmas spirit to the next level with a new floating lake spectacular featuring thousands of sparkling lights, an immersive walk-through illuminated tunnel that rhythmically dances to your favorite Christmas songs, and the addition of beloved Christmas characters and experiences, including a Gingerbread Village created to capture one-of-a-kind photo memories," said Vigue. "This expansion will transform Wild Adventures Christmas into a must-experience event for all of South Georgia, North Florida and beyond."

The new Oasis Outpost, the construction of a campground and the expansion of Wild Adventures Christmas represents a multi-million dollar investment over the next year.

•wildadventures.com



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## Lagotronics Projects delivers GameCabin to Fun Arena in Hamburg, Germany



HAMBURG, Germany — Lagotronics Projects delivered a GameCabin to the two Fun Arena locations close to Hamburg, Germany. In the game experience, visitors are immersed in a customized underwater world. Fun Arena is an FEC for both adults and children, with two locations at Norderstedt and Kiel in Germany. The FECs are known for their XXL attractions, including a 450-square-meter inflatable adventure park, mini golf experiences, a laser arena and various arcade games. The GameCabin is a standalone gaming experience that can be produced in 2D, 3D and even 4D. The GameCabin can be installed on a very small footprint and is therefore suitable for almost all indoor leisure and entertainment locations. A two-person version was delivered to Fun Arena, however several configurations are possible, such as four, six or eight-player versions. Visitors play a 2D game using durable and very accurate interactive shooters. The seats and shooters can be painted in any color so that they tie in with the theme. COURTESY LAGOTRONICS PROJECTS

## Castle Park unveils park-wide transformation as season opens

RIVERSIDE, Calif. — Castle Park takes family fun to new heights in 2023 with the unveiling of a new main gate and the reimagining of a classic water ride with the launch of Saw Mill Plunge.

Guests are welcomed this spring with a beautiful new main entrance. From the moment guests arrive at the Riverside, California, theme park, they are transported to a family fun destination. The park's new main gate features a stunning new Castle Park sign, new ticket booths, a fully repainted entrance area and was completed with royal signage throughout that offer several unique photo opportunities for park-goers.

"We have made several enhancements in the park so our guests can have a splash-ing good time all summer long," said Ken Withers, general manager. "Nothing beats a great water ride on a hot summer day. From

Merlin's Revenge and Fire Ball to Buccaneer Cove and mini-golf, Castle Park is loaded with great attractions for guests of all ages."

Originally introduced in 1989 and designed by Castle Park founder Bud Hurlbut, the new ride experience, Saw Mill Plunge will open on June 10, with an iconic new look, state-of-the-art operating system and five new four-person logs from WhiteWater West.

The classic flume ride's exterior will float guests through a retro sawmill experience, leading them through twists, turns and rushing rapids as they splash their way down a towering plunge. The transformed ride will include a beautiful new paint job featuring shades of blue throughout.

Castle Park will reopen its popular water playground, Buccaneer Cove, on May 13.

•castlepark.com

An advertisement for Lagotronics Projects. The top half shows two young girls smiling and playing an interactive shooter game. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a wooden building and a zebra-striped vehicle. The Lagotronics Projects logo is in the top right, with the tagline 'Creating Unforgettable Memories'. A call-to-action box in the bottom right says 'Interactive Systems' and lists 'Outdoor Rides' and 'Family Attractions'.

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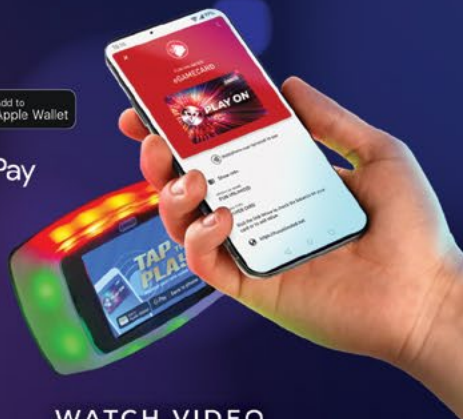
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# FEC Insurance Agency distributes app free to entertainment centers

AT: Pam Sherborne  
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CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. — Ryan Gillenwater, agency principal, FEC Insurance Agency, has added a new service to his already successful venture, a venture that began years ago and led him to where he is today.

That place is having his own insurance company that focuses on providing sound insurance advice and writing insurance policies for family entertainment centers (FECs).

He introduced his new service at the end of 2022 and, so far, he said it has been very well received.

The new service involves an app, which his agency created in-house and which he is giving free to all his clients. With training provided, the app can be used by staff at his clients' FECs in case of guests' injuries. Among other features, the app walks staff through filling out an incident report, provides the staff with the correct documents, records the interaction and saves the file onto the cloud.

"It is available to any client that wants to use it and has the use of a cell phone and/or a tablet on site," Gillenwater said. "We are offering this app as a tool to make their lives easier.

Gillenwater has found that FEC owners like the new app because they are getting more information. The staff like it because it is easier than filling out paper documents.

By creating the app in-house, along with a supportive after-action checklist on a password-protected, PC-based system, Gillenwater said he continues to try to keep costs as low as he can for the FEC owners.

## Using the app

The process of using the app to fill out an incident report has put technology to work for his FEC clients.

Say, for example, there



is an injury on a skating rink inside a FEC. A staff person is notified. That staff person with a cell phone or a tablet goes to the injured person and opens the app to begin taking that person's information.

All accounts are recorded in audio in real time, as the staff person is taking the information. Knowing that laws on recording conversations differ from state to state, Gillenwater said they made sure to work with attorneys in getting whatever permission that may be needed to record the interaction.

"If a client is in a state that needs a permission to record, a pop-up will come up on the app reminding that person there needs to be permission."

The staff person begins with the name, address and other pertinent information, including age. There are different questions for someone under 18 years of age than those 18 years or older. As soon as the age is entered in the app, it will automatically display those questions.

The staff person will ask the injured guests to state, in their own words, what happened. Going back to the skating rink example, an injured person may say something like they were just skating too fast and couldn't make the turn.

Gillenwater said most of the times when there has been an injury, the quicker the facility can get a statement, the more accurate it is. Being able to take the information immediately, record the information immediately, take photos and save



Ryan Gillenwater is the agency principal for FEC Insurance Agency. The company introduced a helpful app service at the end of 2022. COURTESY FEC INSURANCE

them immediately and save everything to the cloud immediately, the more factual the information tends to be.

Once the incident report is completed, it is uploaded to the cloud and it disappears from the device, but all can be accessed at any time if needed.

"You are able to capture crucial information almost right as it is happening," Gillenwater said.

The app is just one tool that is part of the total package. Gillenwater said it goes further.

"It is more than just an incident report," he said.

## Step two of the process

The next part of this system is to make sure there is an after-action checklist completed. This is done through a password-protected, PC-based system. The FEC owner/operator can upload updated maintenance records to this system. The FEC owner/operator also can upload security video footage.

All these files are normally large ones but can be saved in the cloud under a single file name that has been generated.

"We want the staff to have stored five minutes of

security video footage before the incident and five minutes afterwards," Gillenwater said.

In addition, staff should store security video footage after the completion of the incident report.

"We want to see what the injured person and their party is doing right after that interaction," Gillenwater said.

It is a lot, Gillenwater agreed, but, in this day and time, having an immediate and accurate accounting of the incident could be invaluable in case of any type of lawsuit. Being able to save this information for as long as needed is imperative.

"Like the security video," Gillenwater said. "Most FECs have a security video system which will re-circulate the video every 30 days. It usually takes longer than that for a lawsuit to come back. This way you have the video saved."

Gillenwater said that he could never promise that any insurance policy will be lower, because of the accurate information the app can provide.

"It is able to leverage a more favorable outcome for our clients," he said.

## Gillenwater's FEC beginning

Gillenwater has been in the insurance industry for more than 15 years but didn't write his first policy until 11 years ago.

He said it all started with a **Putt Putt** fun center in Lynchburg, Virginia, and the center's owner, **Joe Aboid**.

While driving home from an event where he had been speaking to summer camp directors, he noticed a sign for Bumper Boats at Putt Putt. He decided to stop by the center. And that was it. That Putt Putt and Aboid became the first FEC he insured.

"Joe introduced me to other Putt Putt owners and trade shows like IAAPA Expo," Gillenwater said.

Since that first visit to Putt Putt, Gillenwater said he has been hooked on this industry.

In 2012, he made the decision to learn all he could about the FEC industry and the insurance and risk management they needed.

Two years ago, a group of FEC owners went to Gillenwater and asked if he would insure them. Through their funding, he opened FEC Insurance Agency.

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# Dallas becomes second location for unique Two Bit Circus FEC

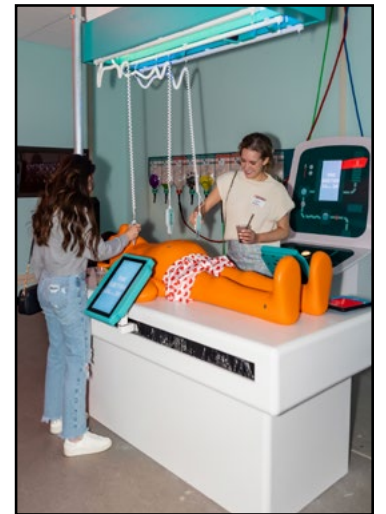
AT: Tim Baldwin  
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

DALLAS — Since late 2018, **Two Bit Circus** has called L.A. home. The first location created an environment so fresh that calling it a family entertainment center (FEC) was somewhat of a disservice. Sure, there were arcade and midway games, but things were done on such an innovative and creative scale that it pushed boundaries. Its founders, **Brent Bushnell** and **Eric Gradman**, were technology whiz kids who wanted to take entertainment in directions not seen before.

And they did. It was a hit. Their expertise in robotics and love for the circus crafted a concept that was immediately original. Entertainment once created for temporary specialized events now had a permanent location to inspire socialization.

Then a pandemic blew up shortly thereafter, and the brains at work had to pivot, particularly in the highly regulated state of California. Two Bit Circus emerged triumphant — and learned some things along the way — and has now opened a second location, this time in Texas.

When *Amusement Today* asked what differentiates Two Bit Circus from other FECs, Chief Marketing Officer **Andy Levey** said, “That’s one of the questions we always get asked. Whether investors



The bar demonstrates the modern take on a circus motif (above left), and the robot bartender sports a Texas motif (above middle). Guests get to play doctor in one of the larger-than-life games (above right).  
COURTESY NORTHWOOD RETAIL, TWO BIT CIRCUS, THE NIX COMPANY

or journalists or consumers, they say, ‘I can go to **Dave & Busters** or **Main Event**.’ You can, but you’re not going to have as much fun or see these types of games there. That’s really our secret sauce.”

Sixty percent of the games were created in-house by Two Bit Circus, and they pride themselves on innovative originality. Another 25 percent are unique activations to which developers have not had the reach to test them out. Two Bit Circus has first access to new content for **Hologate** as well.

“You might see something first at Two Bit, and it goes on to get bigger,” said Levey. “Or it could only exist at our two locations.”

“I think the other thing that makes Two Bit Circus extremely special is that I don’t stand in front of a machine and someone watch-

es me play. What we’ve done is make everything multiplayer. We can do things together,” said **Kim Schaefer**, CEO. “We’re all there playing together, whether it’s accomplishing things in our story rooms or midway games. Everything is meant to be a social experience. Whether it is team building with a group or if you’re there with family.”

“We’re all about the art of playing together,” added Levey. “We’re not driven by prizes. You don’t come here to win a prize. It’s not about winning a stuffed animal or the little trinkets. It’s about a shared experience.”

One thing that has changed over the years is that customers must purchase a package to enter. That package converts into what the park terms “bits.” (Of note, the verbiage on Two Bit

Circus’ website is delightfully written.) Those who purchase online in advance receive additional value compared to those who simply walk up.

Most games are designed for four people. Couples are often paired to make the experience reach its potential.

“My favorite part of my job is to walk into the park and watch people laughing and screaming (funny) things at each other,” said Levey.

To help potential customers understand what the concept is, they rely on video content, which is typically spread through social media and working with local influencers.

Is there a difference between the Dallas and

L.A. location?

“They’re both amazing experiences,” said **Derrek Kinzel**, COO. “Both parks have great staff and tremendous leadership teams. That speaks to the experience we provide. The employees have as much fun as the guests. Dallas does have a couple of new attractions we are trying out. Jelly Attack takes place in a room where it feels like you’re moving but you’re not. And you shoot jellies.”

“Mission X is also brand new,” noted Schaefer. “There’s more of a group dynamic. This one allows up to eight players.”

Schaefer said that things

► See **TWO BIT**, page 33

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Two Bit Circus received advanced access to new content from **Hologate** (above). The founders’ love for the circus inspired the theme.  
COURTESY THE NIX COMPANY







## FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL

AT: John W.C. Robinson  
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In 2023, **Club 24**, a sports bar and grill in Caro, Michigan, opened an 18-hole miniature golf course behind their facility and adjacent to a portion of their outdoor patio. The course was designed and installed by **Adventure Golf & Sports** (AGS).

"I thought it would attract more people from town and increase business by maybe 10%," said **Ross Downing** who, with his wife **Linda**, own Club 24. "I was wrong. 90% of the people who came to golf came in to eat. It increased our food and beverage sales around 30 percent!"

"Once the golf course opened, we had to put extra bar and grill staff on every day. I like to be busy from opening to close, and that's the way it was when the mini golf course was running."

The 18-hole miniature golf course at Club 24 was built in the fall of 2021 using the AGS Modular Advantage Mini Golf system. The company says the Modular Advantage system provides the look and feel of a permanent concrete course but has less costly installation compared to concrete and can be designed not to interfere with the natural landscape of trees, flora and fauna.

A successful Tag 4 A Cause event was held on March 29, 2023, at **Battle Blast Laser Tag** in Las Vegas, Nevada, to promote fun, fitness and fundraising through laser tag. The event resulted in more than \$2,200 in donations for **The Longest Day** in support of the **Alzheimer's Association**.

Coordinated by laser tag blogger and podcaster **Laurie Jean Britton** of TiviachickLovesLaserTag.com, participants were invited to donate to the cause and receive a laser tag 5K medal as thanks, which also gave them an opportunity to compete for the coveted golden phaser high score trophy during the laser tag games played during the event.

Britton (known as "Tivia" in the laser tag community) has been coordinating Tag 4 A Cause events quarterly since the end of 2020 by using her laser tag blog as a way to spotlight different charitable causes. Originally started as a virtual fundraiser on the heels of the pandemic, it has evolved into an opportunity to raise awareness for a different cause each quarter, which she now ties in with personal visits to laser tag arenas throughout the country to host Tag 4 A Cause fundraiser nights like the one held at Battle Blast.

**Intercard** has installed a cashless technology system in the arcade at **HyperActive**, a new FEC in the **Prishtina Mall** in Prishtina, the capital of the Republic of Kosovo. Prishtina Mall is the largest retail and entertainment center in South East Europe.

Intercard's **Craig Cooke** did the installation on-site in March 2023. In addition to the arcade of 79 games, HyperActive has multiple attractions including AR bowling, axe throwing, go-karts, laser tag arena, escape rooms, kids playground, sports bar, virtual reality and AR darts.

**Virtuix**, creator of the Omni Arena virtual reality esports attraction, announced that its very first Omni Arena attraction, installed at **Pinballz** in Austin, Texas, recently celebrated its four-year anniversary. Four years after installation, the attraction still regularly generates revenues of more than \$10,000 a month.

"Omni Arena has been a top attraction for us," said **Darren Spohn**, Pinballz's owner. "Even after four years, revenues are still strong, and we still see lots of repeat play. Some of our guests come to Pinballz regularly to play in the monthly Omni Arena contests, which is a nice benefit."

Virtuix credits Omni Arena's staying power to its repeat play rate. At Pinballz, 30% of all plays are by repeat players, meaning customers who've played the attraction at least twice. Ten players have already played Omni Arena over 50 times, paying \$15 each time.

**Betson Enterprises** recently finished an upgrade to the 40-piece game room at **Lakepoint Station** in Cartersville, Georgia.

"Working with Betson has more than exceeded my expectations," said **Seth Curlee**, general manager of Lakepoint Station. "Everyone we worked with was extremely helpful and aided us in accomplishing our vision. We were able to get some of the best games on the market. I highly recommend Betson for all of your future arcade needs."

**Brandon Horton**, Betson game sales consultant, gave recommendations to Lakepoint Station on game selection and layout to make the most of the space available, enhance customer experience and generate maximum revenue. The Betson Enterprises team installed various games, including: Fast & Furious Arcade, Break The Plate, Dodgeball Deluxe and Carnival Wheel.

## ▶ TWO BIT

Continued from page 32

are always evolving. In L.A. the facility opened with just one story room (their own stylized take on escape rooms), which quickly grew to four owing to their popularity.

"We're curators of all of this content," she said. "We learned a lot from L.A. The physical layout of the space [in Dallas] is improved. We've laid this out with more intention."

When the California facility was shut down for 14 months, Two Bit Circus innovated with Remote. This platform allows people to interact with friends and others from around the world.

"Our team had developed an interactive trivia show in our theater we call Club 01," said Levey. "We took that software and started iterating that online. When it became clear that we weren't opening any time soon, we reached out to our corporate clients. They were very interested; they were stuck at home. It's great

team building with coworkers who may have never met. And it's still going on."

Many entertainment venues offer upscale food offerings. Two Bit Circus has its own twist.

"Our food is really, really fun," said Levey. "It's based [on] high-quality fair food, but it's delicious food."

Although there is a specific area designed to relax and eat, Box Car Café, as the website phrases it, "is stocked full of portable nosh you can take with you around the park." Naturally, there's a bar, this one complete with a robot bartender.

Many games have built-in drink holders.

There are lounges, cabanas, birthday party rooms and event areas for people to rent out. On Fridays and Saturday, minors must be accompanied by an adult after 9 p.m.

Admission is reservation based. Monday - Wednesday tends to be private events, with Thursday - Sunday being open to the public.

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ALTITUDE RIDES AND ATTRACTIONS



# Even with five rain days, Miami-Dade County Fair has good run

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

MIAMI, Fla. – With the travel theme, “World of Fun,” the 21-day **Miami-Dade County Fair**, held in **Tamiami Park**, saw visits from 516,416 fairgoers. This was up from 483,312 in 2022, however still down from the pre-COVID attendance of 552,404 in 2019. Five days of rain did not help with those figures this year.

**North American Midway Entertainment** (NAME) brought 85 rides to the 71st edition of the fair, with 41 in Kiddieland. The company did not book in any other carnivals, making the lineup 100% from their ride stable. The new year launched a new roller coaster (**Pinfari**) to this spot and the NAME lineup. Another new ride to the fair was **Sky Screamer (KMG)**. The most popular rides were **Observation Wheel (Bussink)**, **Skyride (in-house)**, **Double Decker Carousel** and **Euroslide (SBF/Visa Group)**.

Its **Owen Trailers Inc.** fun house was rethemed for 2023, now named, **Psycho Park**.

“The Miami-Dade County Fair has enjoyed a very close relationship with NAME since their inception [2004],” said **Michelle Pretto**, director, marketing and entertainment. “The entire company — from the owners, to management, to the ride operators — have helped us build a guest-centered event. Each year we discuss how to improve the guest experience through rides, guest interaction and presentation.”

The Farmland, Indiana-based carnival enjoys its relationship with the fair.



The midway of the 2023 Miami Dade County Fair featured a newly themed Owen Trailers fun house now known as **Psycho Park**. COURTESY NAME/SCOOTER KOREK

“We had a blast at the Miami-Dade County Fair once again!” said **Lynda Franc**, corporate marketing director, NAME. “For us, it’s the real kickoff of the season where we get to see familiar faces we haven’t seen in a few months and meet new ones who are joining the team for the year. Spirits are always high, and it’s definitely echoed by the team at the Miami-Dade Fair who are always so great to work with. It was a great start to the season, and we’re looking forward to a great year!”

Pretto enjoys the distinctions between this fair and others throughout the country: “The Miami-Dade County Fair is laid out so that all the components are mixed. There is no independent side, no carnival side. Every ride, food location, game operation, etc, is dependent on the others

around them for its success. It was the philosophy of **Darwin Fuchs** [34-year president and CEO] that we needed everyone pulling in the same direction to provide the guest with the best possible experience. That philosophy is still at the heart of our fair today. We are one fair and one midway, all here to serve our guest.”

Special Promotions included five-dollar days (\$5 admission, \$5 off unlimited rides tickets, \$5 food deals); half off admission before 6pm (Monday – Friday with coupon); St. Patrick’s Day – Half off admission with green shirt on Friday, March 17 and free admission every Thursday for military and first responders.

Some of the 16 new food items included watermelon and also chili lime candied apples, deep-fried milkshakes, sirloin tips on

a stick, Mexican street corn pizza, pickle lemonade and Miami Cuban sandwich funnel cakes.

This year was the first time the fair introduced the theme to guests both in its pre-fair advertising campaign and onsite during the 21 days. It was also the first time the Miami-Dade County Fair hosted a 5K run.

The media mix included heavy digital, social, television and radio advertising.

Daily shows and strolling entertainment included **Blake Guyre** (Billy Joel/Elton John songs), dueling pianos, an ice-skating show, Survey Says game show, living statues and **Danny Grant** (cowboy circus). There were also cultural performances as part of the World of Fun theme.

“We have all experienced a tightening labor market over the past few years,”

Franc said of employment strategies. “2023 brought the same challenges. This year more than ever, we relied on [an] outside agency to fill the gaps in hiring. Turning to professionals whose employees work events year-round, allow[ed] us to maintain our standards in guest experience and provide a first-class event.”

“We’d like to thank the community for their support of the 2023 Youth Fair,” said **Eddie Cora**, president of **The Miami-Dade County Fair & Exposition**. “The annual event is the largest fundraiser of our organization, a private nonprofit, and the funds raised stay in our community, allowing us to award scholarships to students and fund various youth educational and agricultural programs throughout the year. Every person that enters through those gates helps us achieve our goal of giving back to this community. Over the years, the fair has given back more than \$40 million dollars in improvements in our parks, educational and agricultural programs, as well as scholarships and awards to the students who participate in our programs each year.”

The fair comes around again, March 14 to April 7, 2024 (except March 18-19 and April 1-2)

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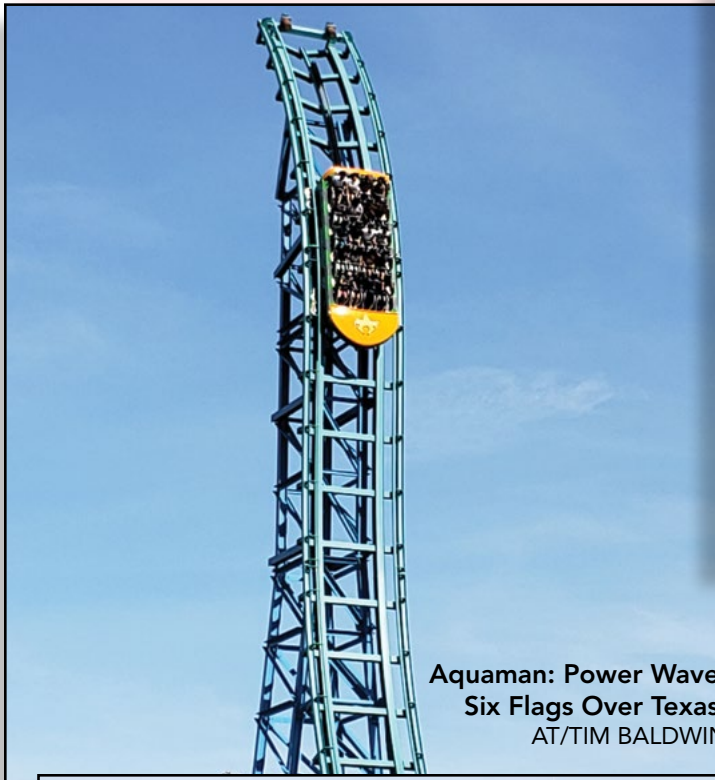




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Digital Edition

## Amusement Today's 2023 What's New Guide



**Aquaman: Power Wave,**  
Six Flags Over Texas.  
AT/TIM BALDWIN



**Gozimba,**  
Serengeti-Park.  
COURTESY  
SERENGETI-PARK



**Area 412,**  
Kennywood.  
COURTESY KENNYWOOD



**Vikingløp RallyRacer,**  
Rulantica.  
AT/JEFFREY SEIFERT



**Wonder of the Seas,**  
Royal Caribbean.  
COURTESY RCI



**Big Water Bay,**  
Tropic Falls.  
COURTESY THE PARK AT OWA



## 2023 WHAT'S NEW GUIDE | NORTH AMERICA

Compiled by Jeffrey Seifert

*This is a list of announced and confirmed projects for 2023 as of press time. Some manufacturers may have more projects for this year that have yet to be announced. Given current supply chain issues, some of these projects may be delayed.*

### CANADA

#### British Columbia

**Eileen Daily Leisure Pool & Fitness Center**, Burnaby....WhiteWater open and enclosed slides

**Playland**, Vancouver....Zamperla/Intamin Steel Coaster (relocated from Miragica; hydraulic

**Prince George Downtown Pool**, Prince George....WhiteWater open and enclosed body slides

#### Alberta

**World Waterpark**, Edmonton....(2) ProSlide PipeLines

#### Nova Scotia

**Atlantic Splash Adventure**, Hammonds Plains....Runaway Mine Train — L&T Systems compact coaster relocated from Gillian's Wonderland Pier

#### Ontario

**Canada's Wonderland**, Vaughan....Snoopy's Racing Railway ART Engineering family launch coaster

#### Saskatchewan

**Wascana Pool**, Regina....WhiteWater Kids two-Lane Multi-Lane, AquaSpray toys

### DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

**Wonder Island**, Punta Cana....Chang Long roller coaster

### MEXICO

#### México

**Aztlán Parque Urbano**, Mexico City....Mistral — Vekoma suspended family coaster; Zamperla rides package: Jump Around 6, Jumping Star 6, Happy Swing, Mini Jet 6, Midi Tea Cup 6, Samba Tower 6, Midi Discovery 360, Air Race 6.4

**Chedraui FEC**, Mexico City....Zamperla rides package: Pump & Jumpz, Speedway, Mini Bumper Cars, ChronoZ, Magic Bikes

**Vidanta World**, Las Jerreyaderas....Vekoma junior coaster

#### Veracruz

**Ecoparque Cerro de Escamela**, Orizaba....Tobogán de la Montaña — Wiegand Alpine Coaster

### UNITED STATES

#### Alabama

**Tropic Falls**, Foley....Big Water Bay — 30,000 square-foot outdoor wave pool; Coastal Curl — surf simulator

**Wild Water**, Cullman....Two-acre expansion designed by ADG with wave pool; raft slide, body slides, mat racer

#### California

**Adventure City**, Stanton...R&R Creative theme and facade design for new attractions

**North Natomas Recreation Center**, Natomas....WhiteWater AquaSplash, AquaTube, Pool Sider, AquaPlay 300

**Pacific Park**, Santa Monica....Sea Dragon — Chance Rides (replaces existing Sea Dragon)

**Raging Water Los Angeles**, San Dimas....WhiteWater AquaDrop, Flatline Loop

**SeaWorld San Diego**, San Diego....Arctic Rescue — Intamin family launch coaster

**Sesame Place**, Chula Vista....WhiteWater Redesign and engineering of slide paths



ArieForce One, Fun Spot America Atlanta. AT/TIM BALDWIN

**Treasure Hunt: The Ride**, Monterey....Treasure Hunt: The Ride — Sally Rides interactive dark ride

**Wild Adventure**, Clovis....WhiteWater AquaDrop, Flatline Loop

**Wild Rivers**, Irvine....WhiteWater 6-Lane Whizzard, RainFortress 4, Constrictor + AquaSphere Fusion, Python, AquaTube, Pool Sider, Kids' Slides, AquaTube, AquaTube Drop Slide, Master Blaster + Rattler Fusion, Slideboarding, Constrictor, Super Bowl, Boomerango

#### Colorado

**Elitch Gardens**, Denver....Twister III — refurbishment and retheming of existing Twister II roller coaster

#### Connecticut

**Lake Compounce**, Bristol....New floating stage with summer concert series; Titan Track addition to Boulder Dash roller coaster

#### Florida

**Aquatica Orlando**, Orlando....Reef Plunge — WhiteWater AquaTube

**Boca Raton Resort and Club**, Boca Raton....WhiteWater FlowRider double

**Busch Gardens Tampa Bay**, Tampa....Serengeti Flyer — S&S Sansei Screamin' Swing

**Estates at Aqualina**, Miami....WhiteWater FlowRider Single, Pool Sider

**JW Marriott Orlando, Grande Lakes**, Orlando....WhiteWater AquaTube (2), Tailspin + Constrictor Fusion

**Orlando World Center Marriott**, Orlando....WhiteWater AquaSphere, Boomerango, Tailspin

**Rapids Water Park**, Riviera Beach....ProSlide Dueling PipeLine Blast / FlyingSaucer 20

**SeaWorld Orlando**, Orlando....Pipeline the Surf Coaster — B&M Surf Coaster

**Walt Disney World Magic Kingdom**, Lake Buena Vista....TRON Lightcycle Run — Vekoma launched motorbike coaster

**Westgate Lakes Resort & Spa**, Orlando....WhiteWater AquaSpray, AquaPlay 1050, Pool Sider, AquaTube

#### Georgia

**Fun Spot America Atlanta**, Atlanta....ArieForce One — RMC IBox coaster; Screaming Eagles — Larson Flying Scooters; Larson Tilt-A-Whirl

**Six Flags Over Georgia**, Austell....Kid Flash Cosmic Coaster — Skyline Attraction P'Sghetti Bowl

**Wild Adventures Theme Park**, Valdosta...Oasis Outpost — play areas, adventure ride, splash pads, a restaurant and shaded seating.

#### Idaho

**Roaring Springs Water Park**, Meridian....Camp IdaH2O — ProSlide RideHouse

#### Illinois

**Malibu Jack's**, Springfield....SBF-Visa Group spinning cars roller coaster; SBF-Visa Group Drop Tower; SBF-Visa Group Mini Reverse Time



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## 2023 WHAT'S NEW GUIDE | NORTH AMERICA

**People's Choice Family Fun Center**, Waukegan....Indoor roller coaster  
**Santa's Village Azosment Park**, Dundee....Farmers Fling — SBF-Visa Group spinning car coaster; SBF-Visa Group 32-meter Pirate Ship

### Indiana

**Indiana Beach**, Monticello....American Dreier Looping — Schwarzkopf steel coaster relocated from La Feria Chapultepec Magico

**Fort Wayne Children's Zoo**, Fort Wayne....Bamboo Forest Adventure Play Area — ropes course and adventure course; Red Panda Ridge — Himalayan Red Panda habitat

**Lake Rudolph Campground and RV Resort**, Santa Claus....WhiteWater AquaTube, Pool Sider

### Iowa

**Adventureland**, Altoona....Flying Viking — Zamperla junior coaster; Draken Falls — Zamperla Super Log FlumeZ

**Lost Island Theme Park**, Waterloo....Matugani — Intamin Accelerator Coaster relocated from Liseberg; Yuta Falls, Interlink flume

**Malibu Jack's**, Bettendorf....Indoor roller coaster

### Kentucky

**Kentucky Splash Waterpark & Campground**, Williamsburg....Caribbean-themed waterplay structure

### Maine

**Palace Playland**, Old Orchard Beach....Technical Park Street Fighter Revolution 360; R&R Creative graphics and new park map designs

**York's Wild Kingdom**, York....Balloon Wheel — Sartori Rides Balloon Wheel 8

### Michigan

**Holland Community Aquatic Center**, Holland....WhiteWater Pool Sider

**Michigan's Adventure**, Muskegon....Shoot-the-Chute upgrade — WhiteWater two new boats with hydraulic lap bars

### Mississippi

**Paradise Pier Fun Park**, Biloxi....Rolling Thunder — SBF-Visa Group spinning cars/hamster wheel coaster; Zamperla ride package: Air Race, Mega Disk'O, Galleon, Discovery 360, Sky Tower, Family Swinger, Double Decker Carousel, Samba Balloon, Pump & Jump, Super Happy Swing, Speedway; Tide Turner — Technical Park 180-foot observation wheel; Aerophile Aerobar

### Missouri

**Six Flags St. Louis**, Eureka....Rookie Racer — Vekoma junior coaster

**Worlds of Fun**, Kansas City....Zambezi Zinger — GCI wooden coaster with spiral lift hill



Air Racers, Carowinds. COURTESY CAROWINDS



Cliff Carver, Camp Fimfo. AT/TIM BALDWIN

### Montana

**Flathead Lake**, Lakeside....Flathead Lake Mountain Coaster — Wiegand Alpine Coaster

### Nebraska

**Fun-Plex Waterpark & Rides**, Omaha....WhiteWater Flatline Loop x 2

### Nevada

**Whitney Park Aquatic Center**, Las Vegas....WhiteWater AquaPlay 150, AquaTube Speed Slide, Pool Sider

### New Hampshire

**Canobie Lake Oark**, Salem....Zamperla NebulaZ

**Water Country**, Portsmouth....Hyperlight — iSlide technology light and sound added to existing waterslides

### New Jersey

**Land of Make Believe**, Hope....SBF-Visa Group Pirate Ship

**Showboat**, Atlantic City....New indoor water park; Extreme Engineering Cloud Coaster

**Steel Pier**, Atlantic City....Balloon Wheel — Sartori Rides Balloon Wheel 5

**Storybook Land**, Egg Harbor Township....Cinder Roller Coaster — SBF-Visa Group spinning cars coaster

**The Water Main at Diggerland**, West Berlin....WhiteWater wave pool

### New Mexico

**Ruidoso Winter Park**, Ruidoso....Screaming Eagle — mountain coaster

### New York

**Legoland**, Goshen...Zamperla Galleon

**Lego City Water Playground**, Goshen....WhiteWater AquaPlay 1050a, AquaSplash

**Luna Park Coney Island**, Brooklyn....Zamperla Super FlumeZ; Zamperla Junior Coaster

**Niagara Amusement Park & Splash World**, Grand Island....Serpent — S.D.C. Galaxi relocated from Kokomo's Family Fun Center

### North Carolina

**Carowinds**, Charlotte....Aeronautica Landing — new themed area with new and rethemed attractions; Gear Spin — Zamperla NebulaZ; Air Racers — Zamperla Air Race; Air Walker — Zamperla Disk'O-Skater; Windstar — Zamperla WindstarZ; Gyro Force — Chance Rides Trabant/Satellite

**Tweetsie Railroad**, Blowing Rock....Barrels of Fun — SBF-Visa Group spinning cars coaster

**Wet 'n' Wild Emerald Pointe**, Greensboro....Bermuda Triangle — iSlide technology light and sound added to existing body slides; WhiteWater AquaDrop, Flatline Loop

**Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park Camp-Resort**, Bostic....Wiegand Alpine Coaster

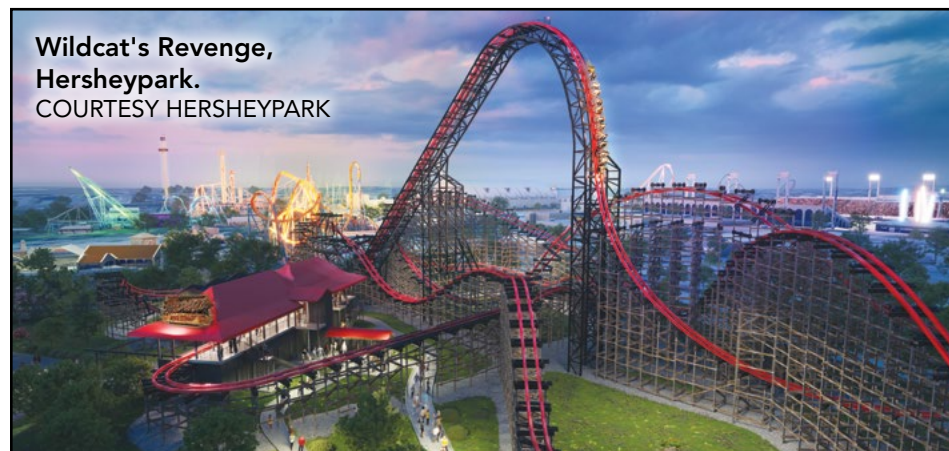
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CASE STUDIES



## 2023 WHAT'S NEW GUIDE | NORTH AMERICA



Wildcat's Revenge,  
Hersheypark.  
COURTESY HERSHEY PARK

### Ohio

**Cedar Point**, Sandusky....Wild Mouse — Zamperla twister coaster; Grand Pavilion restaurant

**Kings Island**, Kings Mills....Sol Spin — Zamperla Endeavour 24; Cargo Loco — Zamperla Tea Cup (Spinning Barrels)

### Pennsylvania

**Hersheypark**, Hershey....Wildcat's Revenge — RMC IBox reconstruction of former Wildcat wooden coaster

**Kennywood**, West Mifflin....Area 412 — alien inspired section; Spinvasion — Zamperla Gryphon ride

**Sandcastle Waterpark**, West Homestead....WhiteWater Aqua Drop, Flatline Loop

**Waldameer Park & Water World**, Erie....RocketBlast Water Coaster — ProSlide Rocket Blast with FlyingSaucer 30

### Puerto Rico

**Residence Inn San Juan Isla Verde**, San Juan....WhiteWater AquaPlay 150, Life Floor, AquaSplash

### South Carolina

**Family Kingdom Amusement Park**, Myrtle Beach....Jung-Max Rides steel coaster

**Kingston Embassy Suites Myrtle Beach**, Myrtle Beach....WhiteWater AquaSpray, AquaTube, Pool Sider, AquaPlay 750

### Tennessee

**Anakeesta**, Gatlinburg....Hellbender — Wiegand Mountain Coaster  
**Dig'n Zone Theme Park**, Sevierville....New theme park with construction-equipment-themed rides from Caterpillar and John Deere.

**Dollywood**, Pigeon Forge....Big Bear Mountain — Vekoma LIM-launched coaster

**Nashville Shores**, Nashville....Riptide Racer — ProSlide 4-lane RallyRacer

**Soaky Mountain Waterpark**, Sevierville....WhiteWater Dueling Blasterango

**Wilderness at the Smokies**, Sevierville....Rocky Top Glider — Extreme Engineering Cloud Coaster

### Texas

**Camp Fimfo**, Canyon Lake....Cliff Carver — Wiegand Alpine Coaster

**Kalahari Resort**, Round Rock....SBF-Visa Group Midi Dance Party 360

**Epic Waters Park**, Grand Prairie....¡Locura! — WhiteWater flatline loop

**National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives**, Plainview....R&R Creative Conceptual theme designs for exhibits and interiors

**Six Flags Fiesta Texas**, San Antonio....Kid Flash Cosmic Coaster — Skyline Attraction P'Sghetti Bowl; new esports facility

**Six Flags Over Texas**, Arlington....Aquaman: Power Wave — Mack Rides PowerSplash

**Typhoon Texas**, Katy....ProSlide Kidz ProRacer, Kidz OctopusRacer, Kidz Tornado 18, Kidz TornadoWave, and Kidz Bowl

### Utah

**Lagoon**, Farmington....Primordial — In-house partially enclosed roller coaster

### Virginia

**Busch Gardens Williamsburg**, Williamsburg....DarKoaster — Indoor Intamin multi-launch coaster

**Funland of Fredericksburg**, Fredericksburg....SBF-Visa Group 40-foot drop tower; SBF-Visa Group Mini Dance Party 360 Flip Side

### Washington

**Leavenworth Adventure Park**, Leavenworth....Tumwater Twister — Wiegand Alpine Coaster

**Sport Wenatchee**, Wenatchee....Extreme Engineering Cloud Coaster

### Wisconsin

**Bay Beach**, Green Bay....Zamperla NebulaZ

**Noah's Ark Waterpark**, Wisconsin Dells....Chameleon — iSlide technology light and sound added to existing enclosed mammoth waterslide

## 2023 WHAT'S NEW GUIDE | TRAVELING SHOWS AND CRUISE SHIPS

Compiled by B. Derek Shaw

**Amusement Midway Providers Inc.**....Preston and Barbieri six-lane Giant Slide (State-fair-type)

**Amusements of America**....Technical Park Street Fighter Revolution 360

**Blue Star Amusements**....KMG Freak Out

**Butler Amusements**....KMG Afterburner

**Cole Shows Amusements, Inc.**....A.R.M. Rides Vertigo 300; Gosetto New York, New York two-story Funhouse

**Deggeller Attractions**....Preston and Barbieri Family Wave Swinger 48-seat; Gosetto (new dark ride)

**Dreamland Amusements**....Dalton four-pack kiddie rides; Lamberink Giant Wheel, 33 meters; Wisdom Himalaya, Monster Trucks, Sizzler

**Drew Amusements**....KMG X-Drive

**Fiesta Shows**....Gosetto New York, New York two-story Funhouse

**Funtastic**....Technical Park Street Fighter Revolution 360

**Helm & Sons**....KMG Speed; KMG Inversion

**Jolly Shows**....Fabbri Group Corsair (40 foot Pirate ship-type ride)

**Iconic Attractions**....Larson International Ring of Fire (Infinity model); Bertazon Wave Swinger

**Kissel Entertainment**....SBF/Visa Group Kiddie Pirate; Zamperla Baja Buggy; Wisdom Rides of America Himalaya (custom theme); Lamberink Giant Wheel, 33 meters; Dark Ride; Mondial Super Spectacular

**NAME**....KMG X-Drive; Preston and Barbieri Family Wave Swinger 48-seat

**Penn Valley Shows, LLC**....Technical Park Street Fighter Revolution 360

**Powers & Thomas Midway Entertainment**....Gosetto New York, New York Funhouse; KMG Freak Out

**Powers Great American Midway**....SBF/Visa Group Mini Reverse Time; SBF/Visa Group Kiddie Wipeout; Sartori Rides Techno Jump

**Southern Cross Rides**....Technical Park Loop Fighter

**Talley Amusements**....Fabbri Group Booster (40 meter) eight-seat

**Wade Shows**....Sartori Techno Jump; Larson Infinity Loop

### CRUISE SHIPS

**Royal Caribbean Wonder of the Seas**....WhiteWater FlowRider Wave-in-a-Box Double

**Carnival Celebration**....WhiteWater AquaSpray, AquaTube, Flatline Loop, Head Rush, AquaPlay 250

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**2023 WHAT'S NEW GUIDE | INTERNATIONAL**

Compiled by Jeffrey Seifert

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**Armenia****Yerevan Park**, Yerevan....Sartori Rides Roto Techno**Australia****Dreamworld**, Coomera....Big Red Boat — Zamperla powered coaster**Austria**

**Böhmischer Prater**, Vienna....Zierer Flitzer from Showman Rudolph Robran  
**Eis Greissler Manufaktur**, Krumbach....Bucklbahn — Gerstlauer bob coaster  
**Steirarodl Modriach**, Edelschrott....Wiegand Sport Coaster  
**Wiener Prater**, Vienna....Olympia Looping — Schwarzkopf five loop coaster  
**Atlantis Paradise Island**, Nassau.... Poseidon's Playzone — water play structure

**Bangladesh****Splash Works Water Park**, Dhaka....WhiteWater AquaSplash, Kids' Slides, RainFortress 5, 30-meter Wave Pool, FlowRider Double, Open Flume, Rattler, Super Bowl, Flatline Loop, AquaDrop, Whizzard, Boomerango**Belgium**

**Aqualibi**, Wavre....New expansion with ProSlide DuelingPipeLine Blast, TornadoWave 60/FlyingSaucer 30, CannonBowl 40 and RallyRacer  
**Bellewaerde**, Ypes....Hampi — Zamperla NebulaZ; Crazy Barn — Zamperla Barnyard  
**Bobbejaanland**, Lichtaart....Terra Magama — refurbishment and retheming of Indiana River Intamin Flume  
**Plopsa De Planne**, Adinkerke-De Panne....Op de Reis met Bumba — Mettallbau Emmeln dark ride; Zamperla Crazy Bus; Zamperla Samba Balloon  
**Walibi Belgium**, Wavre....Technical Park Sidecar XL

**Brazil**

**Animalia**, Cotia....Bear Mountain — Shangang Rides Dinosaur Roller Coaster; Space Moon — Chance Rides Toboggan from traveling show; SBF-Visa Group Cyclon Coaster; SBF-Visa Group spinning cars/hamster wheel coaster  
**Cidade da Criança**, São Bernardo....Formula 1 Coaster — SBF-Visa Group racing coaster; Magic Bee — family inverted coaster; Spinning Coaster — Zhengzhou Shangdian Machinery spinning cars coaster  
**Hopi Hari**, São Paulo....Zamperla Rockin' Tug; Zamperla Kite Flyer  
**Playone Playcenter**, São Paulo....Zamperla rides package: Compact Spinning Coaster, ChronoZ, Magic Bikes, Lolly Swing  
**Mabu Thermas Grand Resort**, Foz do Iguaçu ....WhiteWater Rainfortress  
**Mirabilandia**, Paulista....Vekoma Giant Inverted Boomerang; Intamin 8-inversion coaster relocated from Terra Encantada

**Cayman Islands****Kimpton Seafire Resort + Spa**, Grand Cayman....WhiteWater AquaForms 400, AquaSplash, Life Floor**Chile****Fantisilandia**, Santiago....Zamperla Polyp**China**

**Cihu River Sports Park**, Huashan....New park with Jungle Mouse roller coaster  
**Colorful Happy Valley**, Wolong....Zhipao roller coaster  
**Dinosaur Dreamworks**, Daye....Lightning Coaster — Zamperla Lightning Coaster; inverted coaster; Super Spinning Coaster; Jinma Rides spinning cars coaster  
**Fantasy Valley**, Ziangzhou....Mad Racers — Great Coasters International wooden coaster  
**Fantawild**, Liangyuan....Vekoma Family Boomerang  
**Fantawild**, Mudan....Vekoma family coaster  
**Fantawild**, Rencheng....Vekoma Top Gun Launch Coaster; Vekoma family boomerang  
**Fantawild**, Tongshan....Vekoma Hyper Space Warp; Vekoma junior coaster; Vekoma super boomerang; Beijing Shibaolai wacky worm

**Fruit Man Rice Dream Space**, Jinnan....Jinma Rides family coaster  
**Fuji Ocean Happy World**, Lingshui....Twister — Intamin spinning cars coaster; Whale Breaking the Sky Roller Coaster — Intamin multi-element coaster  
**Happy Valley Shaanxi**, Xi'An....Jinma Rides mine coaster; Jinma Rides suspended looping coaster; Mack Rides water coaster; Great Coasters International wooden coaster  
**Happy Valley Shenzhen**, Nanshan....Gold Mine Train — Jinma Rides mine coaster  
**Hengyang Maya Playa Water Park**, Hengyang....New water park with WhiteWater AquaLoop, Flatline Loop, Whizzard, Kids' Boomerango, Kids' Rattler, AquaTube, Multi-Lane, Ramp Slide, Master Blaster + Rattler Fusion, AquaPlay Custom, Wave River, AquaCourse 240  
**Hong Kong Disneyland**, Hong Kong....Wandering Oaken's Sliding Sleighs — Vekoma junior coaster  
**Hubei Huangshi Garden Expo Park**, Huangshi....Zamperla Lightning  
**Joy Ocean Park**, Yuelu....Beijing Shibaolai mine coaster; Beijing Shibaolai suspended loop coaster  
**Mexin Village of Wine**, Fuling....Steel shuttle coaster  
**Nandaihe International Amusement Center**, Qinhuangdao....Beijing Shibaolai Sky Loop coaster  
**Ocean Flower Island Fairyland**, Danzhou....Vekoma Firestorm roller coaster; S&S Sansei 4D Free Spin coaster; Jinma Rides family coaster; Jinma Rides mine coaster  
**Oriental Heritage**, Yuehu....Vekoma family boomerang  
**Pushui Amusement Park**, Puyang....Jungle Mouse roller coaster  
**Rudong Yurun Plaza**, Rudong....Indoor steel coaster  
**Sanya Silk Road Happy World**, Tianya....Jinma Rides Catapult Coaster  
**Silk Road Paradise**, Qindu....Aurora Flying Coater — Jinma Rides flying coaster; Jinma Rides Super Spinning Coaster; Jinma Rides mine coaster; Intamin Zac Spin;  
**Taihu Lake Longemont Paradise**, Changxing....New park with Beijing Jiuhua motor coaster; Beijing Jiuhua spinning cars coaster; Beijing Jiuhua suspended looping coaster; Beijing Jiuhua Crazy Skateboard coaster; three additional coasters;  
**Taoqimao**, Wancheng....Phantom F22 — Xi'An Huobo loop corkscrew coaster; Jinma Rides spinning cars coaster; Jungle Mouse  
**Wushangmeng Times Square**, Wuchang....Jinma Rides suspended roller coaster  
**Yueqing Happy Park**, Yueqing....Steel family roller coaster  
**Zhengzhou Haichang Ocean Park**, Zhongmu....Zamperla rides package: Demolition Derby 2, WindstarZ, Samba Tower, Watermania, Magic Bikes  
**Xiangshan Movie & TV Town Scenic Spot**, Xinqiaozhen....Zamperla NebulaZ; Zamperla Thunderbolt

**Columbia**

**Hotel Lagomar El Penon Compensar**, Girardot....WhiteWater Aquatube, Pool Sider  
**Looping Park**, Medellín....Sartori Rides Techno Jump 10  
**Mundo Aventura**, Sur, Bogotá....Zamperla Z-Force

**Denmark**

**Djurs Sommerland**, Nimtofte....Motorbike Derby — Technical Park Sidecar XL; SpinOsaurus — Zamperla Disk'O Coaster  
**Fårup Sommerland**, Blokhus....Rundrejsen — two-story carousel  
**Sommerland Sjælland**, Nykøbing....Human-powered oval coaster; Human-powered kiddie coaster

**Egypt**

**Marassi Waterpark**, Marasi....WhiteWater Abyss, Constrictor, FlowRider Double, Wave River, AquaSplash, AquaPlay 1050, Kids' Slides, AquaLoop, Flatline Loop, Freefall, 4-lane Whizzard, AquaSphere, Boomerango, Tailspin  
**Neverland Amusement Park**, Cairo....New park with Jinma Rides suspended looping coaster

**England**

**Alton Towers Theme Park**, Alton....The Curse of Alton Manor — retheming of existing dark ride from interactive to traditional dark ride  
**Black Gang Chine**, Isle of Wight....Zamperla Discovery 16 Revolution  
**Blackpool Pleasure Beach**, Blackpool....Valhalla — reopening of intamin indoor flume dark ride after extensive refurbishment

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## 2023 WHAT'S NEW GUIDE | INTERNATIONAL

**Brean Theme Park**, Somerset....Bulldog Coaster — Pinfari Looping Zyklon relocated from Pleasure Island  
**Butlin's Skegness**, Lincolnshire....Zamperla rides package: Sky Tower, Happy Swing, ChronoZ  
**Chessington World of Adventures**, Chessington....Mandrill Mayhem — B&M Wing Coaster shuttle  
**Drayton Manor Theme Park**, Drayton Bassett....Thomas Land flume ride  
**Dreamland**, Margate....Rock 'n' Roller — I.E. Park coaster relocated from Blackgang Chine  
**Gulliver's Valley Resort**, Sheffield....Wiggler — Big Apple / Wacky Worm coaster; Zamperla Rockin' Tug  
**Gulliver's Warrington**, Warrington....Grand Prix Racers — SBF-Visa Group Race Coaster  
**Great Yarmouth Marina Center**, Great Yarmouth....AquaSpray, AquaTube, Giant AquaTube, AquaForms 200  
**Oakwood Theme Park**, Narberth....Megafobia — Extensive retracking by The Gravity Group  
**Ocean Beach Pleasure Park**, South Shields....Huss Break Dance (Relocated from Toshimaen)  
**Pleasurelands**, Newcastle....Runaway Train — Güven Amusement Rides Factory runaway train  
**Roarr!**, Norfolk....Zamperla Magic Bikes; Zamperla Happy Swing  
**Wicksteed Park**, Kettering....25-meter observation wheel

**Finland**

**Linnanmäki**, Helsinki....Intamin Gyro Swing  
**Särkänniemi Amusement Park**, Tampere....Kärsänniemi — New kiddie land

**France**

**Kingoland**, Plumelin....EOS Rides Crazy Twister coaster  
**Center Parcs – Domaine des Landes de Gascogne**, Lot et Garonne.... WhiteWater AquaSplash, AquaTube, Constrictor + Rattler Fusion, Head Rush Mat Racer, Parallel Pursuit, AquaPlay 750  
**Dennlys Parc**, Dennebroueucq....Alcyon — Fabbri swinging boat  
**Disneyland Paris**, Marne la Vallée....Avengers Assemble: Flight Force — retheming of Rock 'N' Roller Coaster; renovation of It's a Small World  
**Family Park**, Monts....Tiki Wakuh — Technical Park Jumping Star  
**Festyland**, Bretteville-Sur-Odon....Kraken: The Village of Six Monsters — six level playground climbing structure  
**Fraispertuis City**, Jeanménil....Wild Spark — Technical Park El Molcajete  
**Futuroscope**, Chasseneuil-du-Poitou....Okahina Wave — outdoor wave pool; indoor water park (opening later in year)  
**Kingoland**, Plumelin....Maranello Twist — EOS Rides spinning cars coaster; Les Caravelles — Mack Rides Sea Storm  
**Le Pal**, Dompierre Sur Besbre....Champi'folies — interactive dark ride from Bold Move Nation and Triotech  
**Loos Parc**, Loos-en-Gohelle....Train de la Mine — Kiliç Lunapark runaway train  
**Nigloland**, Dolancourt....Les Rivières des Fees — retheming of existing river boat ride  
**Papéa Parc**, Yvré-l'Évêque....Speedy Nuts — Maurer Rides Wild Maus coaster  
**Parc Ange Michel**, Saint Martin de Landelles....Tour de Contrôle — SBF-Visa Group Drop 'N' Twist; SBF-Visa Group Drift  
**Parc Astérix**, Plailly....Toutatis — Intamin LSM launch coaster; Chez Gyrofolix — Zamperla NebulaZ; Le Sanglier d'Or — children's playground  
**Parc la Fontaine Enchantée**, Le Havre....Eurogame Bumper Boats; Flying Fish flight ride  
**Parc des Combes**, Le Creusot....Technical Park Flying Dutchman  
**Parc du Bocasse**, Le Bocasse....Technical Park Sidecars XL  
**Puy du Fou**, Les Epesses....Le Mime et L'Etoile — new show for 2023  
**Walygator Sud-Ouest**, Roquefort....Boomerang repainting and train upgrades

**Germany**

**Bayern-Park**, Reisbach....FirleFranz — Gerstlauer family coaster  
**Charles Knie's Circus-Land**, Einbeck....Achterbahn — SBF-Visa Group extended double mine train  
**Churpfalzpark**, Loiflinig....SBF-Visa Group family launch coaster  
**Erlebnispark Steinau**, Steinau an der Straße....Fort Carly — climbing tower; Pleasure Equipment Heinz Suspended Swing



**Mandrill Mayhem,**  
**Chessington World of Adventures.**  
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**Europa-Park**, Rust....Nikola Tesla's Beautiful Croatia — new movie in the Dreamtime Dome; New Liechtenstein themed area with Liechtenstein Balloon Ride (relocated Flight of Icarus); Josefina's Magical Imperial Journey — rethemed towboat ride; Fina & The Yomis — new film in Enchanted Forest Cinema; Galaxia — New ice show

**EuroPark Milano Idroscalo**, Segrate....Interpark Wild Wind  
**Flipped Fun Park**, Singen....Robot Fighter — Robotic Arm attraction  
**Freizeit-Land Geiselwind**, Geiselwind....Mack Meida Yullbe VR attraction; Yggdrasil — Gosetto Magictree  
**Fort Fun Abenteuerland**, Wasserfall....Little Thunder's Wild Ride — Metallbua Emmeln ponytrekking ride; Yakari's Slippery Waterfalls — Metallbua Emmeln three-lane boat slide  
**Heide Park**, Soltau....Toxic Garden — retheming and track correction of Limit Vekoma suspended looping coaster  
**Holiday Park**, Hassloch....Super Wings — waterplay structure  
**Irreland**, Kevelaer....Aquadukt — Kinderland play structure with waterslide  
**Karls Erlebnis-Dorf Elstal**, Wustermark....Wolken-Express — SBF-Visa Group Monorail Coaster; Knollis Mini-K2 — (2) Human-powered kiddie coasters  
**Karls Erlebnis-Dorf Koserow**, Koserow....Knollis Mini-K2 — Human-powered kiddie coaster  
**Karls Erlebnis-Dorf Rövershagen**, Rövershagen....(2) Knollis Mini-K2 — Human-powered kiddie coasters  
**Karls Erlebnis-Dorf Warnsdorf**, Warnsdorf....Knollis Mini-K2 — Human-powered kiddie coaster  
**Karls Erlebnis-Dorf Zirkow**, Zirkow....Knollis Mini-K2 — Human-powered kiddie coaster  
**LandErlebnis Janßen**, Westerstede....Sunkid Butterfly coaster  
**Legoland Deutschland**, Günzburg....Maximus - Der Flug des Wächters — B&M Wing Coaster  
**Pipers Funfair**, Crosshaven....Pipers Funfair — Pinfari Big Apple coaster  
**Potts Park**, Minden....Klippenschleuder — ART Engineering Swing Ride  
**Rasti-Land**, Salzhemmendorf....Verrücktwärts — SBF-Visa Group Shift Gear Coaster  
**Rulantica**, Rust....Vikingløp RallyRacer — ProSlide eight-lane RallyRacer; Nordiskturn — expansion tower with private luxury cabanas, lounge area, eateries  
**Schwaben Park**, Kaisersbach....Hubseilturm Hubertus — Sunkid aerial rope tower  
**Serengeti-Park**, Hodenhagen....Gozimba — Ride Engineers Switzerland powered Air Loop coaster  
**Skyline Park**, Bad Wörishofen....Flotter Otto — SBF-Visa Group Double Mine Train Extended  
**Taurus Wunderland**, Schlangenbad....Mack Rides powered coaster  
**Therme Erding**, Erding....Big Bang — Wiegand Waterrides Big Bang

**Ireland**

**Emerald Park**, Ashbourne....Rename of former Tayto Park; Zamperla Crazy Bus; Zamperla Samba Balloon

**Italy**

**Cavallino Matto**, Castagneto Carducci....Pirate-themed raft ride  
**EuroPark Milano Idroscalo**, Segrate....Interpark Wild Wind (relocated from Allou Fun Park)

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**Gardaland**, Castelnuovo del Garda....Jumanji - The Labyrinth — jungle-themed mirror maze and walk-through maze

**Zoosafari Fasano**, Fasano....Zamperla Rockin' Tug

**Indonesia**

**Banyuwangi Night Amazing**, Banyuwangi....Spinning Coaster — Jinma Rides spinning coaster; Family roller coaster

**Benyland**, Sendai....Mini Cyclone — steel family coaster using trains from Toshibaen

**Japan**

**Fuji-Q Highland**, Fujiyoshida....Large steel motorbike coaster

**Gamuda Cove**, Banting....ProSlide BehemothBowl 40+TornadoWave 60, FlyingSaucer 45, Dueling PipeLine, CannonBowl 30, FlyingSaucer30, FreeFall, SuperLoop with SkyBox, 4-lane RallyRacer, Twister and Kidz Zone

**Genting SkyWorlds**, Genting Highlands....Mad Ramp Peak — Dynamic Attractions duel power coaster; Dynamic Attractions SFX coaster

**Skytropolis Indoor Theme Park**, Genting Highlands....Bolt — Beijing Shibaolai indoor powered coaster

**Malaysia**

**SplashMania Water Park**, Petaling....ProSlide FlyingSaucer 45, BehemothBowl 40, TornadoWave 60; Proslide Kidz Twister, Kidz Twister; Kidz Racer; Kidz Tornado; Polin Waterparks VR, body slides

**Morocco**

**Coco Park**, Douar Alaoui....New park with two steel roller coasters

**Netherlands**

**Avonturenpark Hellendoorn**, Hellendoorn....Ridderstrijd — Reverchon spinning cars coaster

**Netherlands**

**BillyBird Park Drakenrijk**, Reuver....Drakenrijk — play castle

**BillyBird Park Hemelrijk**, Volkel....Laquana — waterplay area

**De Waarbeek**, Hengelo....Raptor Adventure — SBF-Visa Group mine train coaster

**Efteling**, Kaatsheuvel....Joris en de Draak renovation with GCII Titan Track

**Toverland**, Sevenum....Pixarus Gerstlauer SkyFly; Dragonwatch — Intamin Parachute Tower; Jumping Juna — Zamperla Gogo Bounce; Garden Tour — Mettalbau Emmeln ponytrekking ride; Sparky's Splash Dock — water playground

**Walibi Holland**, Biddinghuizen....Eat My Dust — Zamperla junior coaster; Zamperla Magic Bikes

**Norway**

**SkiStar Trysil**, Trysil....Sunkid mountain coaster

**TusenFryd**, Vinterbro....Storm - The Dragon Legend — Gerstlauer LSM launch coaster

**Peru**

**Play Land Park**, Lima....Sartori Rides Roto Techno 12



**Poland**

**Energylandia**, Zator....Choco Chip Creek — Vekoma mine train coaster; Honey Harbour — Vekoma junior coaster

**Mandoria**, Rzgów....Zamperla Wave Blazter

**Qatar**

**Lusail Winter Wonderland**, Doha....Fabbri Group Magic Dance, Booster Maxxx, Scary Drop 50, Giant Wheel 53, Telecombat

**Meryal**, Lusail....Meryal Water Park — new water park with 36 water slides including record-breaking WhiteWater West Icon Slide tower; AquaLoop, Flatline Loop, Giant AquaTubes, Rattler, AquaSphere, Tailspin, Whizzard 6-Lane Mat Racer, Speed Slide, Walhalla, Abyss 71, Master Blaster, Fusion Master Blaster + Boomerango, Open & Enclosed Inner Tube Slide, Colorado Drop Slide, Rattler, Abyss 55, Fusion AquaSphere; Oil Strike log flume — Interlink Super Flume; Alghazal — Intamin Spinning Cars coaster

**Waldorf Astoria Lusail Doha**, Doha....WhiteWater AquaPlay Custom, AquaSpray, Life Floor, Adventure Trail

**Saudi Arabia**

**Al Wadi Park**, Samtah....Spinning cars coaster

**Jeddah Pier**, Jeddah....Energizer — Sartori Rides Nova Coaster

**Singapore**

**HometeamsNS Clubhouse Bedok**, Singapore....WhiteWater AquaTube, Giant AquaTube, AquaCourse 8

**Slovakia**

**Fantázia Liptov Park**, Liptovsky....Vesmír — Intertech indoor spinning cars coaster

**Spain**

**Babylon Park**, Madrid....Family roller coaster

**Parque Warner Madrid**, Madrid....Batman Gotham City Escape — Intamin LSM launch coaster

**PortAventura World**, Salou....Uncharted — Intamin enclosed multi-dimension roller coaster

**Villanueva de la Cañada**, Madrid....WhiteWater AquaTwist Mat Racer

**Sweden**

**Furuvik**, Gävle....Lightning — Vekoma launched coaster

**Lindvallen**, Sälen....Mountain Coaster - Sunkid mountain coaster

**Liseberg**, Gothenburg....Luna — Vekoma Family Boomerang

**Switzerland**

**Conny-Land**, Lipperswil....Crazy Professor — Ride Engineers Switzerland themed, enclosed free fall tower

**Kid'zland**, Bougy-Villars....Aero Kid'z — SBF-Visa Group family coaster

**Taiwan**

**Leofoo Village**, Guanxi....22m Giant Larson Loop

**Thailand**

**Pongyang Adventure Park**, Mae Rim....Butterfly — Sunkid Butterfly coaster

**Turkey**

**Land of Legends Kingdom Hotel**, Antalya....ProSlide RocketBlast with FlyingSaucer

**United Arab Emirates**

**Aquaventure**, Dubai....WhiteWater Vantage Platform

**Ferrari World Abu Dhabi**, Abu Dhabi....Mission Ferrari — Dynamic Attractions SFX Coaster

**National Aquarium**, Abu Dhabi....Zamperla Sky Tower

**Festival Land**, Ajman....Rolly Fantasy — I.E. Park family coaster; Roller Coaster — powered coaster

**SeaWorld Abu Dhabi**, Abu Dhabi....new park with multiple attractions including Manta — Intamin launched coaster; Eel Racing Coaster — Zamperla junior coaster; Zamperla rides package: WindstarZ, Rockin' Tug, Jumpin' Tower

**Vietnam**

**Sun World Bà Nà Hills**, Hòa Vang....Zierer custom Force coaster; Mack Rides Big Dipper

**Sun World Sam Son**, Quang Tien....Zamperla rides package: Demolition Derby, U-Drive, Crazy Crab

**Wales**

**Getaway Resort**, Bynea....Mini-Coaster — DAL Amusement Rides kiddie coaster

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# MIDWAYSCENE

AT: B. Derek Shaw  
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

Eighteen-year fair veteran, **Kimberly Williams**, is the new CEO at the **Stanislaus County Fair**, Turlock, California. Williams, who most recently served as the operations manager, succeeds **Matt Cranford**, who left earlier this year to manage facility operations at the **California Exposition and State Fair** in Sacramento.

Williams is the first woman to run the 10-day fair, along with numerous rented events throughout the year.

"Kim is one of the most talented fair executives I've known," Board President **Ray Souza** said in a news release, "and our board is so excited to have her lead our fairgrounds and build it into one of the most dynamic venues in California. We know she will inspire all of us."

Williams earned a bachelor's in psychology from the **University of the Pacific**. Her first job in the industry was at the **Chowchilla-Madera County Fair**, handling commercial vendors and rodeo entries.

The Stanislaus fair drew 270,447 people last year. The next edition is slated for July 7-16 with **Butler Amusements** handling all the fun.

In mid-April, the **Clay County Fair**, Spencer, Iowa, welcomed **Jerome Hertel** who most recently served as the CEO of the **Alaska State Fair** since 2014. He replaced **Jeremy Parsons**, who has moved on to manage the **Iowa State Fair**.

"We are excited to announce Jerome Hertel's selection as the next CEO/Manager of the Fair," said **Steve Waller**, chairman of the Clay County Fair Board of Directors to KCAU-TV. "He brings with him years of fair experience, a solid management reputation, and a strong financial background."

Hertel became passionate about fairs at a young age, growing up across the street from the county fair in South Dakota. Some of his greatest memories include setting up carnival rides and working his church's booth.

In 1999, Hertel started work in the fair industry after working in the food and beverage industry in both Houston, Texas, and Sioux Falls. He also served as the executive director of the South Dakota State Fair from 2008 to 2014.

"I have always found joy in bringing people together to be educated, to be entertained, to connect with one another and to celebrate as a community," Hertel said.

The fair runs September 9-17 with **Gold Star Amusements** providing the midway.

Also last month, **Nicolas Hall** became the **Midland County Fair** (Michigan) manager, succeeding **Trish Steele**, who

retired after 10 years in the position.

Hall has served as one of the directors of the Midland County Fairgrounds Board for more than 10 years. As a youth, he showed horses, lambs, rabbits and had multiple stall exhibits at the fair. He served on the Junior Fair Board for nine years and has continued his work with the youth board for the past 15 years as an advisor. He also has held multiple leadership roles in 4H, including in volunteerism.

"Some of my most cherished memories are from the Midland County Fair," Hall told the *Midland Daily News*. "When I was young, my family and I spent almost every weekend at the fairgrounds here and across the country," Hall said. "The fair has been an important part of my family's life, and has taught me so much. My focus will be to continue to deliver the services that customers expect and to manage the facility for the long-term goals of the fair society."

Hall will be responsible for managing the annual week-long county fair, the fairgrounds property and all of the events and festivals held at the 118-acre facility.

"Nic knows and understands 4H and agriculture. He's as excited and committed to the Midland Fair each year as we are," Fairgrounds Board President Margaret Wegner said.

The next Midland County Fair runs Aug. 14-19, with **North American Midway Entertainment** providing the rides.

After three years of success at the **Iowa State Fair**, the **Iowa Pork Producers Association** (IPPA) is encouraging an inclusive pig program to become local.

Bacon Buddies is offered in cooperation with **Special Olympics Iowa** and gives individuals with disabilities the opportunity to take a pig into the show ring. The individuals work with **4-H** and **FFA** mentors, talk with livestock judges and snag blue ribbons.

**John Kliegl**, president and CEO of Special Olympics Iowa, said the Bacon Buddies program is an opportunity for athletes to get exposed to something new.

Kliegl told *KOEL AM 950*, "Our athletes want to do what their peers are doing, and it's a great opportunity to work with the 4-H and FFA youth who see them as their equals. It's all about equality and a great partnership with the Iowa Pork Producers Association."

The IPPA is creating county-level Bacon Buddies programs throughout the state. IPPA President **Trish Cook** said that there is more to the program than in the ring: "What happens in the show ring isn't the main event. Rather, it's the connections, friendships and memories built as participants prepare for the show. Those of us in the pork industry know that when you work with pigs together, you develop relationships."

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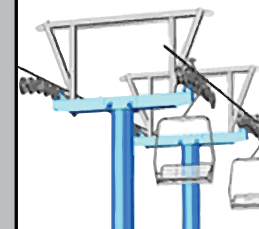
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# Kiwi showman C.J. Mahons plays majority of north island's carnivals

AT: B. Derek Shaw  
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Mahons Amusements, Ltd. has a busy schedule during its main season covering most of the spots requiring a carnival on the north island, with as many as three locations in one weekend. *Amusement Today* spoke with third-generation owner C.J. Mahons while the carnival was playing in the parking lot of the Sylvia Park Mall in the Mount Wellington suburb of the largest city in the country.

"My grandfather started it in 1946," stated Mahons. "My father and his brother carried it on. Now, me, my cousin and my father continue to run it. Dad has taken a slight back seat, but that's all right."



Mahons

The 77-year-old operation plays from Wellington in the south of the north island to Panguru in the far north and everywhere in between. "There's a couple of operators in the South Island as well, but we stick to the north, they stick to the south. It's worked for 'donkeys years' and it carries on."

When playing larger places, Mahons Amusements can offer up to 28 attractions, along with numerous games and six food canteens.

"Our typical season begins in late September/early October for spring school holidays then we do some big agricultural shows (called Agricultural and Pastoral, A&P), then



Hastings and Hawke's Bay, two very big traditional country shows," said Mahons. "We take a lot of our gear over there."

The operation then splits into two units with Mahons taking the northern run toward Auckland, while cousin, Paul Mahons does more A&P shows in a southerly direction.

"We kind of finish on Easter, if not school holidays and kind of get through until about May," he said.

Other functions they play include festivals, concerts, corporate events and rides for film productions.

"We're probably the only operator that takes gear to music concerts and festivals. They're good, good returns for a short thing. For us, it's all about high capacity in a short window," Mahons said.

Mahons Amusements has even participated in grand openings and Christmas parades. Both units also have their own free entry midway (still dates).

"Our brand is a Mega-Fun Carnival. We do that when we don't have an A&P show," said Mahons. "We find sites and run it. People really appreciate the free entry; they don't have to pay to come to the carnival. They just buy the coupons and ride to their leisure."

Some of the rides are American manufactured. These includes a **Wisdom Sizzler** built in Australia,



The very large ticket box above also serves to house supplies and an office on the second floor.  
AT/B. DEREK SHAW

along with a **Hrubetz** round up, **Eli Bridge** Scrambler, **Wisdom Dragon Wagon** coaster, **Chance Zipper**, **Zamperla** Rockin' Tug and **Wisdom Gravitron**. Recent rides include **Kolmax** Teacups and a **KMG Turbo Boost**. The show also has three bumper car tracks (two **Majestic**, one in-house), three carousels and two **Dartron** Hurricanes.

In-house built rides include a few kiddie ones, a haunted walk-through and one of the bumper cars. Some of the rides were built, under license, in Australia in the 1980s. The operation also has an **Eagle Miami Flyer** ride (Nottingham, U.K.) called **Scream Machine**. The company recently purchased a used **Ali Baba (A.R.M.)**, from an Australian show, which will be the first in New Zealand, once in operation. "That will add a bit more height and color to our midway," said Mahons.

The operation is based near Hamilton in the town of Ngaruawahia, where maintenance, track

inspections and other operations take place.

"In New Zealand, we have very tedious vehicle inspections, so every trailer, every ride we got, has to have a road inspection every six months," said Mahons "Our fleet's broken up four times a year (March, June, September, November) so we have to take them to inspectors and get [checked for] road worthiness. It's probably not that regulated in other parts of the world, but it's very regulated here in New Zealand."

"Pre-COVID was really good. So, when the rest of the world was locked down and New Zealand didn't have any restrictions, [revenue was] fantastic," he said. "We had a great season. Last year during COVID, it was hard. We had a lot of tight restrictions and were limited to 100-person crowds, no matter where we went [even with] all the extra sanitizing and vaccine passes. This year we were hoping for a boomer, but the weather hasn't played its part. When the sun came out, people wanted to get out. The big concerts are just starting to come back in, so that must be playing an effect. We had some good A&P shows in the spring. Come this summer, when the sun does shine, we hope the people will still come out as well. I haven't seen great shows yet. We're hoping they'll come."

Mahons added, "The wheels will keep turning. We're starting to get internationals back in the country, which means, for us, we get a bit more of our casual staff back.

New Zealand's got a massive shortage in staff at the moment. Any industry you talk to says they can't get people. We can't get truck drivers. We're not out of the woods. There's still a few challenges. We'll adjust to suit."

When asked about his thoughts on the industry moving forward, Mahons answered, "The agricultural shows are becoming harder, based on volunteer committees. The next generation is not so keen on voluntary work, sometimes. I think the mega fun carnival (still dates) [will survive] as long as we continue to do our part in offering a good event, with council in (local authority approval), although that's hard to find as well with all the red tape (rules and regulations) you have to jump through."

"It's not bigger, it's kind of more concentrated on smaller gear. In New Zealand it's a weekend event. We don't get to sit places for a long period of time," he said. "I'm here in Auckland for two weeks, which is unheard of. Our Easter show, which is a big show, is five days. That's pretty long now. It used to be 10 days, back in the nineties."

"Family entertainment [it] seems is becoming a big part [of leisure time], so whether we walk down that track as well at some point and make kind of an indoor amusement park or something, we have to keep thinking and evolving as time goes on and be a bit smarter on how we put events on," said Mahons.



The Scream Machine is an Eagle Miami trip ride manufactured by Eagle Miami Rides in Nottingham, England. The Ngaruawahia, New Zealand-based carnival has 28 attractions, along with numerous games and six food canteens. COURTESY MAHONS AMUSEMENTS, TARANAKI DAILY NEWS



# Eric Bates: carnival operator finds success building spectacular rides

AT: Ron Gustafson  
Special to Amusement Today

WINTERSVILLE, Ohio — Perhaps no one knows the amusement ride business better than **Eric Bates**.

A veteran of the carnival industry of more than 50 years, he is owner and CEO of **A.R.M. (USA) Inc.**, which supplies an arsenal of popular spectacular rides to traveling shows as well as amusement parks.

"I bought my first ride when I was a freshman in high school — a **Hampton Tubs-O-Fun**," Bates, 75, recalled during an interview with *Amusement Today* from his Ohio office. "In 1964, we ordered a **Rock-O-Plane (Eyerly Aircraft)**. It was semi-portable as they didn't make the totally-portable version at that time."

The **Rock-O-Plane** was delivered from the Oregon manufacturer on the flat-bed trailer.

"We had to unload it and put it on one of our own trailers," he recalled. "We grew up here next to the old farm where the **Gambills (Quinn, Ken and Lola)** lived, and my brother (**Geary**) and I fed their ponies three times a day when we were kids."

The **Gambills** took the ponies to regional festivals and eventually added mechanical rides to their operation. The **Gambill** family operated not only a carnival in Ohio, but another unit in West Virginia, which is still in business today.

"We took our two rides out with them and also worked with **Gooding Amusement Co.** (Columbus, Ohio). **Gooding** had 14 units on the road at the time," Bates said of those early days in the carnival business.

"When the two brothers retired, they basically gave the (Ohio) show to us. The following year, **Gooding** went out of business and **Geary** and I decided to field two units, each featuring 12 to 14 rides. We essentially had two of everything, so **Geary** had his route and I had mine. We probably had a total of 35 rides at the time," he added.

Today, **Bates Brothers Amusement Co.** is down to



Eric Bates

one unit and operates only in Ohio. Bates's two daughters, **Amy Bates** and **Michelle Bates-Dallman**, and son-in-law, **Brad Dallman**, are instrumental in running the show. Bates also mentions, he is fortunate to have his granddaughters, **Erica, Delaney, and Emerson** involved in the carnival's day-to-day operations.

The carnival's 34 rides are housed in Wintersville during the offseason at the same location. A.R.M. also uses to manufacture rides.

"Now with the show, I only go out and make two or three runs when moving the show. I no longer set up or tear down," Bates said of his current involvement with the family's carnival.

As for the first major ride purchased by the Bates brothers, it is still in the family.

Bates pointed out, "We haven't used it for two years, but we are reconditioning it, and the **Rock-O-Plane** will look like brand new when we're finished."

## Rides from across the pond

Getting involved in the manufacturing of amusement rides has a storied history of its own, one which Bates enthusiastically shared.

After being introduced to **Martin Steffens** of **A.R.M. UK Ltd.** at an industry trade show more than 40 years ago, Bates imported a **Paratrooper** and **Quasar (Bobs)** from the British company.

The **Quasar** was not only a great ride for the **Bates Brothers'** operation, but also caught the eye of other show owners. Bates sold his **Quasar** to another



A.R.M. found success retheming the **Ali Baba** magic carpet ride as "**Rock Star**," complete with giant guitar theming. AT/RON GUSTAFSON

carnival and had **Steffens** build another one for him.

It was then that Bates and **Steffens** struck a deal for the American showman to represent **A.R.M. UK Ltd.** in the U.S. offering not only the **Quasar**, but also **A.R.M.'s Skymaster, Ali Baba, High Flyer** and **Paratrooper**.

"We imported 15 or 16 **Quasars** to this country and shipping alone from the UK was around \$30,000 in those days," Bates said of the venture. "And they would send a few things over to finish in our backyard, so to speak."

As **Eric Bates** continued to do "a little bit more and more" stateside, the currency exchange skyrocketed in the 1990s, making it extremely difficult to import the large rides.

"The financial crisis really hurt **Martin** and we decided to move the entire operation over here," Bates said of the agreement. "He sent some of his guys here to coach us and we got the company operating."

In 1997 the U.S. company completed its first **Ali Baba** (magic carpet ride) and **A.R.M. (USA)** was officially born. **Steffens** dissolved his company in Great Britain and worked at the Ohio facility for a time before retiring to Arizona.

## Need to expand

With the family's carnival wintering at the same complex, there was a need

to expand the shop facilities to accommodate the ride manufacturing business.

"With England's operations closed down, I built another large building and the next thing you know, we added more," Bates noted.

The company now has 95,000 square feet of indoor space and employs more than 40 persons in producing spectacular one-trailer portable and permanent park-model rides for the industry.

While the **Ali Baba** was a foundation for the U.S. operations launch, it received a welcomed rebirth in recent years thanks to some re-theming.

Bates recalled, "**Martin** sold one to an Australian operator and it was the highest grossing ride there. That fellow said we should theme it as **Rock Star** with a giant guitar. We did and it really drew interest in the ride again."

**Rock Stars** have made their way into the lineup with numerous carnivals in recent years with the most recent sold to **Matt McDonagh's Big Rock Amusements**, Chesaning, Mich.

Another new theme to the 22-passenger ride is **Steam Punk**.

► See **BATES**, page 38



The **A.R.M. Typhoon** ride is popular at **Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, Santa Cruz, Calif.** COURTESY A.R.M. USA



► **BATES**

Continued from page 37

**New heights**

In 2001 the company reached new heights with the introduction of its line of Super Shot drop towers. It quickly became the second-best-selling ride for the company behind the Ali Baba series.

"I worked closely with **Dominic Marzano** of **Velocity Magnetics** to develop a magnetic braking system for our drop towers," Bates said of the venture. "Dominic built the first set in his garage."

Operating in nearby New Castle, Pa., Velocity Magnetics has become known internationally for its braking and electromagnetic launching systems. Today the company has more than 45,000 square feet of manufacturing space with several full-scale test tracks onsite.

A.R.M. produces 70-, 90- and 105-foot versions of the tower ride with more than 50 portable units on the road and 30 park installations worldwide. Park models are co-built with



ARM's Vertigo tower swing ride is proving to be another success for the company, with a high capacity and high visibility along midways. AT/RON GUSTAFSON

**Larson International, Inc.**, Plainview, Texas.

"Every coaster **Disney** owns around the world has Velocity's brakes on it," Bates noted.

**Dollywood's** (Pigeon Forge, Tenn.) **Lightning Rod** wooden roller coaster is also powered by a Velocity launch system.

Bates also speaks highly of A.R.M.'s Vertigo tower swing ride.

"It is stronger than our **Rock Star** as it rides a lot of people and is a high ride," he

noted. Portable versions are 80 and 100 feet with an available park model at 130 feet.

According to him, "The best ride in the industry is **Freak Out** (KMG of the Netherlands), with Vertigo just behind it. Vertigo is the second-best grossing ride out there."

He continued, saying, "I believe KMG is one of the best portable ride manufacturers in the world. They have a different mode of building as they have sub-contractors do most of their work and they

sell the completed rides."

A.R.M. continues to work on new projects as well with its 24-passenger **Sky Hawk**, the latest addition to the arsenal. Based on the **Vertigo** platform, instead of standard seats the ride incorporates 12 two-person carriages in which riders lie face down as they soar 90 feet above the midway.

**Les "Corky" Powers** of **Powers Great American Midways** (PGAM) purchased one of the first portable unit, while **Fun Spot**, Orlando, Fla., also installed a portable model. Additional **Sky Hawks** are in the works.

**May the**

**G-Force be with you**

Other A.R.M. rides include **Frenzy**, **Mega Bounce**, **Full Tilt**, **Typhoon**, **Screamer** and **G-Force**.

**G-Force** is a one-of-a-kind at this point and featured on the **Bates Brothers** midway.

The half-pipe track configuration has a 16-person train which is towed up to the top of the track before being released for a thrilling back-and-forth action before coming to a halt.

"It's an excellent ride and people love it. We're getting more interest in it now," Bates said of the unique attraction. "Our **Mega Bounce** is a hell of a ride, too. We work with **Larson** on it."

As for service, A.R.M. rides have remote capability so the factory can help troubleshoot issues with operators regardless of their location. Operators and maintenance personnel can also pull up ride manuals, schematics and troubleshooting guides stored within a touch panel on A.R.M. rides.

The company also does ride refurbishing and sales of rebuilt pieces it has completed.

"We have a base building where we are currently rebuilding an **Allan Herschell** helicopter. It will have folding sweeps and new electronics. Also, we have a **Twister** from Europe that we are working on," Bates said of that branch of the business.

He concluded, saying: "I consider myself fortunate in that I have a large carnival and we have never built a bad ride."

- [armrides.com](http://armrides.com)
- [batesbros.com](http://batesbros.com)



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# WATER PARKS & RECREATION

▶ New Hampshire's Water Country is transformed — page 44 / Aqualibi opens expansion — page 45

## Eight-lane ProSlide RallyRacer Vikingløp debuts at Rulantica

AT: Jeffrey Seifert  
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RUST, Baden-Württemberg, Germany — Rulantica, Europa-Park's water park, recently celebrated the grand opening of a massive new section featuring an eight-lane ProSlide RallyRacer. While nearly all of the structure of the slide stands outdoors, the ride begins and ends inside a new brick-clad tower adjacent to the existing water park. The new addition called Nordiskturn — tower of the gods serves as more than just a ride tower. The entire structure is enclosed and is themed to look like it had been built on top of sparkling gemstone mine.

The new area is accessible from two levels within the main section of Rulantica. On the ground floor of Nordiskturn, families can take advantage of the new family lounging area with Lågerhus sofas located in niches and separated by airy curtains. Water park guests can treat themselves to their own private spot for a bit of relaxation between all the slide fun. One level up, the first floor (second floor to most Americans) provides a much-needed, quiet, adults-only section. Similar to the loungers on the ground floor, Stillhet sofas offer plenty of privacy on plush cushions. Both sofa-suite types are available for an additional



The Nordiskturn tower, given the same Nordic look as the hotel and water park, is more than just a slide tower; it houses multiple luxury cabanas, additional lounge areas, eateries, a themed staircase and an elevator (above). Translucent sections of multiple hues of the same color comprise each of the eight slides of the Vikingløp addition (right).

AT/TIM BALDWIN;  
COURTESY RULANTICA

fee. Stillhet loft, also on the first floor, adds additional lounge chairs in a designated quiet area for adults only. While only steps away from the excitement of the water park, walking into the new first floor loft and cabana



suites allows guests to transcend into a dreamy, tranquil environment. The expanded area can accommodate an additional 400 loungers. Two eateries were added as well, Viking Snäck has freshly prepared bowls and fresh sal-

ads, as well as flatbreads, wraps and more. Viking Kaffi is a small coffee bar with everything from specialty coffees and pastries to ice lollies (frozen confections) and cold drinks. A Coca-Cola freestyle station is also located there.

Vikingløp RallyRacer was added to help increase overall capacity in the water park. According to Director Michael Kreft von Byern, management was looking for something with capacity and something different. "We had body slides, we had tube slides, and when we talked to ProSlide, we determined a mat racer would be a great addition. In the beginning we discussed a six-lane mat racer, and then we thought 'why not take it to another level?' so we decided on an

eight-lane mat racer."

ProSlide's theoretical capacity of the ride is 600 riders per hour, but with typical German efficiency, Kreft von Byern indicated they are doing even more than that. Part of that may be the result of the queuing. Oncoming riders are lined up in a row directly behind the start of the slide giving them a chance to observe exactly how riders line up and dispatch prior to their turn. A multi-step process ensures the lanes are clear. The operator at the top of the slide has a video monitor of the slide exit. An operator at the bottom signals both verbally and with an electronic switch that gives a green light to the dispatch operator. Once the button is pushed, a three, two, one countdown — in English — as well as a light at each slide that changes from a red X to a green arrow, lets riders know when to depart.

On most RallyRacer slides, the rally points — where riders are lined up next to each other with just a low-wall separation — are open to the sky. However, since this slide is meant to be used all year, the rally points are covered so the entire slide is enclosed and protected from the elements. To allow guests to see each other, the covering is translucent to filter in natural light. At night, special lighting illuminates the slide. This particular rally racer features three rally points, including one shortly after dispatch, before the slides begin their first twist and riders dash off in different directions. Standing 24 meters (79 feet) tall and with a length of 187 meters (614 feet), this eight-lane racer is the longest ProSlide RallyRacer ever built, the first with three rally points, and one of the largest indoor slides in the world. Translucent sections of multiple hues of the same color

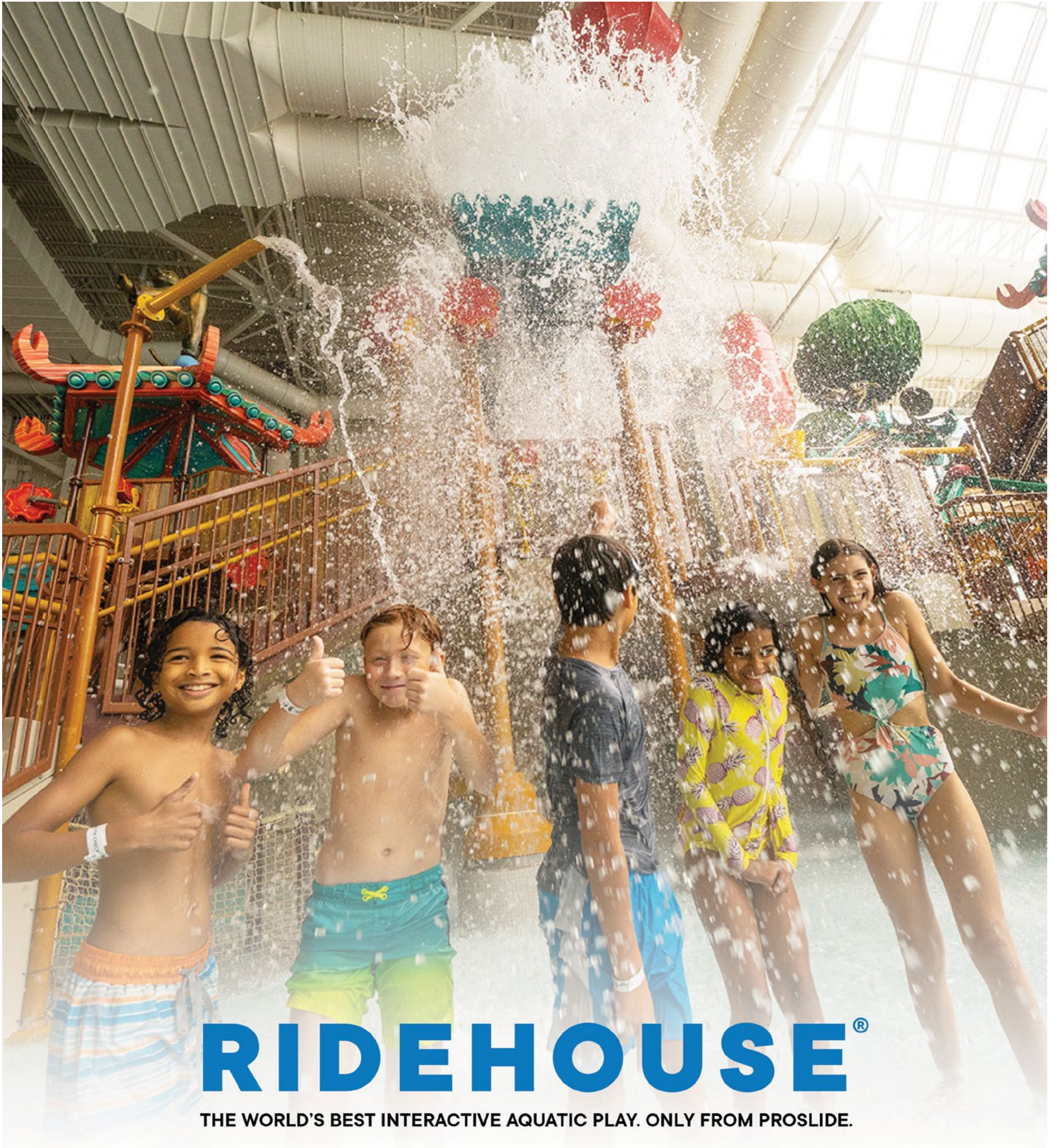


	AMETHYST	EMERALD	SMARAGD	SAPHIR
PLATZ Place Rank	1.	3.	2.	4.
ZEIT Time Time	16.35 s	18.71 s	18.30 s	23.09 s
VORHERIGE Previous Previous	18.58 s	17.81 s	18.17 s	15.82 s
	26.57 s	26.56 s	21.95 s	15.31 s
	24.07 s	17.32 s	20.78 s	19.77 s

The slide entrance is extraordinarily themed. Note the color jewel above each slide (above left). A scoreboard shows each rider their place and time as well as the times of the previous sliders (above right). AT/TIM BALDWIN

▶ See VIKINGLØP, page 42





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## ▶VIKINGLØP

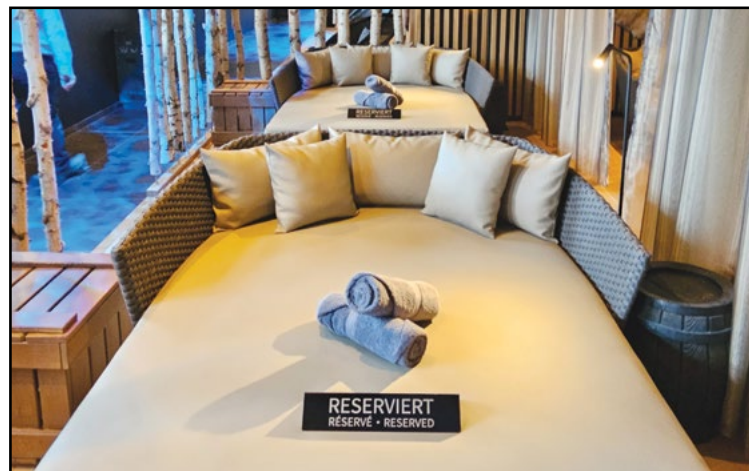
Continued from page 40

comprise each of the slides, with each color corresponding to a sparkling gem such as amethyst, emerald or sapphire — eight different jewels in all. A glowing gemstone is displayed at the start of the slide, and a display board at the end shows the name of the slide and each rider's time. Another advantage of the eight-lane slide is that on less busy days, the pumps can be turned off on half the attraction so it can run with just four slides.

The upper floors of the Nordiskturn tower are being outfitted with luxurious state-of-the-art cabanas. Although still under construction when the new slide opened, the cabanas are expected to be ready for guests by May. Each of the cabanas above the Stillhet loft is equipped with a private sauna. One more level up, larger suite cabanas span two floors and are also equipped with personal saunas. Guests move between the levels via a spiral staircase in each indi-



In keeping with the theme, the attraction culminates with sliders entering a mine-like room (above left). The adults-only Stillhet loft offers reserved sofa beds and lounge chairs in a quiet, peaceful environment (above right). AT/TIM BALDWIN



vidual suite. These two-floor cabanas include access to outdoor balconies that overlook **Krønasår - The Museum-Hotel** and its adjacent waterway and fountain show. The upper floor luxury cabanas are accessible via an elevator. That same elevator can be used exclusively by the cabana guests to go to the top floor of the tower for special access to the Vikingløp slide.

As with everything else in Rulantica, the new tower is heavily themed with a mythical Nordic motif. The staircase that visitors climb to get to the

top of the slide is decorated with wood-look siding, textured floors and wrought-iron light fixtures. Senior consultant **Chip Cleary** likes to refer to the project as "the worlds most complicated and certainly not cheap slide tower." Once the upper floor cabanas are open to the public, the tower will still not be complete. There is room for an additional attraction next to the Vikingløp slide. The tower was configured with knock-out walls, stair access and an area that can be easily reconfigured as an additional run-

out or splash pool. Rulantica officials have not indicated when something might be added or what it could be, but the tower was designed with future expansion in mind.

Elsewhere at the aquatic theme park, the new Tønnevirvel, Twist'n'Splash from **Mack Rides**, that made its debut last summer was enclosed with a temporary heated tent structure over the winter allowing it to continue to operate. The tent was removed for the summer, but plans are in the works to enclose the ride with a more

permanent building that can be closed to the outdoors during the cooler months, then opened to the fresh air in the summer.

Another expansion took place near Komfort Hydda cabanas, located on the upper floor within the water world, close to all the action. Guests of those cabanas will now have exclusive access to a quiet retreat to escape the hustle and bustle. Behind the cabanas, a door leads to a private quiet area with lounge chairs, a sauna and a bucket shower.

•europapark.de/rulantica

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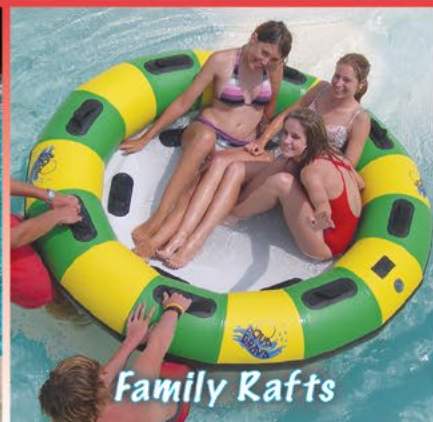
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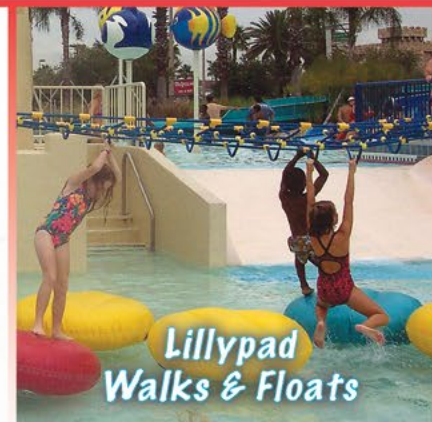
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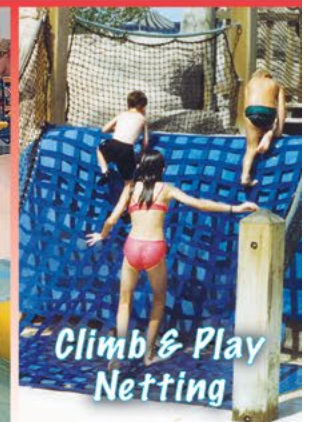
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# New Hampshire's Water Country is transformed in its 40th year

AT: Pam Sherborne  
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

PORTSMOUTH, N.H. — With Opening Day slated for June 3, guests visiting **Water Country** will be greeted with a park transformation beginning with a redesigned main gate, a brand-new Water Country sign, refreshed parking booths and more.

And that "more" is a big deal. Five water slides will have been repainted with two of them reimagined when the park opens.

"Two of these attractions are the newly reimagined Hyperlight water slides, which will be painted a shocking green with a white gel coat inside and blue and black stripe with a black gel coat inside," said **Jerry Brick**, director of construction and maintenance, **Palace Entertainment**, owner and operator of the water park.

The two attractions making up Hyperlight are the former Black Hole and Warp Eight. Both tube slides will be fitted with iSlide technology, sending riders on an immersive journey through vivid lights and pulsating sounds.

"We worked directly with iSlide to add the company's new technology to these two water slides," Brick said. "The slides will now feature 36 color-changing lights, fiber



Slide colors will be updated via painting by Baynum Solutions and new signage will be prevalent as part of Water Country's transformation (above). Two slides will be revitalized into the new Hyperlight (below left) sending riders on an immersive journey (below right). COURTESY WATER COUNTRY



optics throughout and eight speakers. One slide will send riders through a colorful journey, while the other will feature a galaxy and stars throughout the slide's tube.

"Dragon's Den, Plunge and Racing Rapids will be repainted," Brick said.

**Baynum Solutions** is doing the repainting and will be installing the new iSlide

technology. Baynum was to be on site to begin the project on May 1 with an expected completion of May 29.

This transformation for Water Country comes as the park enters its 40th season.

"Our entrance has been redesigned and elevated with a full new paint job on our main gate location," Brick said.

Brick noted that the new photo opportunity features an anchor in the middle of the midway.

New wayfinding

signage has been added and, as Brick said, "new murals added next to the queue lines, upgraded ticket booths and new pavement and fencing around the main gate area."

**Hampton Creative** designed the main gate area and **Outdoor Factory** created the new anchor photo opportunity.

"Our food and beverage locations are operated by a third party and won't be updated this season," Brick said.

Water Country has been a New Hampshire staple since 1984, offering more than 18 attractions that are for all ages on 26 acres of family-filled, summer fun.

Owner and operator **Palace Entertainment** is a leading leisure park operator in the United States and is owned by **Parques Reunidos**. **Palace Entertainment** owns and operates 21 major entertainment and educational venues across 10 different states, offering a wide range of family-friendly rides, attractions, and educational experiences.

Baynum's reputation was built on painting and coating some of the world's biggest amusement park rides and slides. However, the company is involved in a variety of other projects such as refurbishing commercial and industrial spaces, while providing construction and maintenance services.

•watercountry.com  
•baynum.com

## TRANSFORMATION FEATURES

Redesigned main gate



New Water Country sign



Refurbished restrooms near the front gate



New wayfinding signage



New photo opportunity



Refreshed parking booths



Repainting of Dragon's Den, Plunge and Racing Rapids



Repainting and reimagining of Black Hole and Warp Eight slides into the Hyperlight



Visitors to Water Country will be greeted with a redesigned main gate. COURTESY WATER COUNTRY





## NEWS SPLASH

AT: Jeffrey L. Seifert  
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**Therme Erding** near Munich, Germany, recently opened a new slide — The Big Bang. Supplied by **Wiegand Waterrides** of Starnberg, Germany, the slide took nearly two years of planning and installation in order to squeeze such a large, high-profile slide into the existing dome. While most of the slide did fit into the existing space, one corner of the roof had to be cut and raised a few feet in order to accommodate a turn.

Big Bang is 130 meters (426 feet) long and stands nearly 12 meters (39 feet) in height. As the name implies, it is a Wiegand Big Bang model which features a wide slide channel that tubes drop into from the side. Riders in tubes swing high up one side then continue side to side in a pendulum movement as they progress down the channel. Therme Erding has a similar but smaller slide in its outdoor section called Big Wave.

**Noah's Ark WaterPark** in Wisconsin Dells has opened an interactive waterslide called Chameleon. The new 520-foot-long ride features 74 color-changing lights and eight speakers to provide "an immersive ride for guests," according to a statement from the park. The special-effects slide, said to be the first of its kind in the Dells area, was transformed by **iSlide** of the Netherlands. The slide, a **ProSlide** enclosed Mammoth River was originally installed in the late 1990s as Dark Voyage. It was renamed Flying Gecko when the park started converting all slide names to fit an all-animal theme. Since its installation, it has remained a four-person raft ride in near-total darkness. Now with a colorful light show and a mashup of songs, riders will get a new experience every time they ride.

In addition to adding lights and sound to the interior of the slide, the outer shell will receive a brand-new paint job to represent the changing colors of a chameleon.

**Glenwood Hot Springs Resort** in western Colorado announced expansion plans for the 2024 season. Known as the East End Expansion Project, it includes the addition of five new pools.

When the expansion is finished in 2024, the new swimming area will feature a hot plunge pool, a cold plunge pool, one pool with an infinity edge and two with waterfalls, including one that will be "grotto-like in nature," according to a statement issued by the resort. There will also be shaded seating areas for guests.

The expansion marks the third phase

of a multiyear plan to renovate and update Glenwood Hot Springs Resort. In the second phase, which was completed in May, the resort redesigned what's known as the therapy pool with new jet chairs, lighting, a new ADA-approved ramp and showers. The locker rooms in the historic bathhouse were also remodeled.

All the pools, including those in the expansion, are fed by the Yampah Spring, otherwise known as "the mother spring," which boasts 15 natural minerals.

"As we carry on the traditions of this historic property for generations ahead of us to enjoy the ancient waters of the Yampah Spring, we are also innovating and pushing to provide the newest and most up-to-date experience in balneotherapy," said **Kevin Flohr**, the resort's chief operating officer.

The natural hot springs of Glenwood Springs have been attracting tourists for thousands of years. America's indigenous people tell stories of early hunter-gatherers who used to congregate at the springs and use the water for medicinal purposes. The current resort was established in 1888, and the last major renovation was completed four years ago when the Sopris Splash Zone and Shoshone Chutes were added, giving the resort somewhat of a water park feel.

Pelham City Park outside of Birmingham, Alabama, will be getting a new splash pad as part of its goal to expand city amenities for residents. The city council entered into an agreement with **Playcore Wisconsin** for the manufacturing and installation of the park. The total amount of the contract is \$345,675.

The splash pad was approved as a part of the Fiscal Year 2023 capital projects budget. Council members approved a purchase and installation agreement between the City and local supplier **Struthers Recreation, LLC**, which is an exclusive representative of Fort Payne-based **GameTime**, a Playcore company.

The lead time on the splash pad is three months. Council members are hopeful the pad will be open by early summer.

Water features planned include Baby Long Legs, with outward-arching streams of water; the Lotus Petal which will create a weave pattern; and the Mushroom Maze which creates a dome of water.

Other features are geared toward smaller children, like the Water Flower that will have a 360-degree sheet of water that is especially appealing to toddlers. The splash pad will also be accessible to those with disabilities.



COURTESY AQUALIBI

## Aqualibi opens expansion

AT: Jeffrey Seifert  
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

WAVRE, Belgium — **Walibi** theme park's indoor water park, **Aqualibi**, added a massive four-slide complex for the 2023 season. Provided by **ProSlide Technologies** of Ottawa, Canada, the addition nearly doubles the amount of the water park's thrill slide offerings. The four high-profile attractions include a Tornado Wave, Dueling RocketBlast, Canon Bowl and Rally Racer. To accommodate the attractions, a new slide tower almost 25 meters (82 feet) in height was built adding nearly 1,000 square meters (10,000 square feet) to the park.

All of the slides are enclosed except the Tornado Wave. Although freezing temperatures are rare, they do occur. It is not yet clear at what temperature point the Tornado Wave will be closed. The remaining slides will operate all year long. As the names imply, the Dueling RocketBlast and Rally Racer feature side-by-side tubes. Riders on the Rally Racer will slide headfirst on individual mats and encounter four covered rally points where the enclosed slide tubes line up next to each other with a low separation wall between the channels allowing riders to see and hear each other. Thrill seekers on the dueling RocketBlast will be seated in two-person inline rafts and will meet up at several points — including multiple windowed uphill sections — as each pair of rafts races through the course. The Canon Bowl and Tornado Wave will also feature two-person rafts. The Tornado Wave includes an enclosed saucer section that will provide a high-speed banked turn along the course which will culminate with a steep drop into the wave wall where guests will get to experience a moment of weightlessness as they reach the peak.

Aqualibi's general manager, **Jean-Christophe Parent**, said: "These four state-of-the-art slides all have unique elements in the Benelux — and even in Europe. For example, a slide will allow duels of slides in rafts with high-speed lifts thanks to water jet propulsion technology. This new project is perfectly in line with our ambition to strengthen our position as the [premier] water park in Belgium, offering experiences for an audience of all ages."

In addition to the new expansion, Aqualibi is taking steps to reduce its energy consumption. The entire roof structure will be upgraded. The current transparent roof will be increased from two layers to five layers and the building's regular roof sections will have another 20 cm (nearly 8 inches) of insulation added to decrease energy loss. The building's façade will also be upgraded with more insulation, and the current swing doors will be replaced with revolving doors to create thermal blocks. The current heating and ventilation system will be replaced with high-performance systems, and solar thermal panels on the roof will help to pre-heat water to supply the park's hot water needs.

The park will increase the number of photovoltaic panels over several buildings and its car parking lot with the eventual goal of being able to supply 100% of the park's electrical needs. In addition to generating more electricity, needs will be reduced by installing energy-efficient pumps on timers and converting all lights to LED with motion sensors and timers where appropriate.

• [aqualibi.be/en](http://aqualibi.be/en)



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# **BUSINESS & NEWSMAKERS**

▶ 2023 Amusement Expo breaks records — page 48 / *Woman of Influence: Lauren Lowery* — page 50

## Mack Rides, Europa-Park unveil innovative Eatrenalin experience

**AT:** Tim Baldwin  
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

RUST, Germany — How does one describe the indescribable?

The **Europa-Park Resort** has introduced something so ingenious and innovative; it has become a continuously sold-out dining experience — Eatrenalin. It is called “new dimensions in dining.”

Eatrenalin’s origins date back five years when the concept was envisioned by Europa-Park managing partner **Thomas Mack** and **Oliver Altherr**, CEO of **Movenpick Marche**, a company of fresh-dining restaurants with 150 locations on two continents.

“Oliver and I were part of a food and beverage jury,” said Mack. “We did a lot of travels, almost on every continent. We realized it was more about experience, using all your senses. We asked, ‘How can we attract all the senses and increase the experience of the food.’ Then we asked how we could move people, and as a ride manu-

facturer, we wanted to integrate a ride system.”

From the immersive dining experiences the two had traveled to other countries to visit, they found they were seated at one big table in the same room for the entire evening. It was then that they got the creative inspiration to do something really one of a kind.

A working name was “Restaurant of the Future: 2030.”

“Because he is working so fast,” Altherr said of Mack, “We were already ready in 2022. We realized there should be something different.”

Eatrenalin opened in November of last year.

So, what is it? To help keep the mystique about the experience under wraps, photos are extremely restricted — even for *Amusement Today*. The reception area, a bar following the dining experience and two of the nine rooms are the only places guests are allowed to take pictures. *AT* isn’t about to give away too many spoilers, but the entire experience is draped in cre-



**Eatrenalin is a stand-alone dining experience at the Europa-Park resort. Sixteen guests at each seating move through an eight-course dinner via “floating chairs” created by Mack Rides (right).**

AT/TIM BALDWIN;  
COURTESY EUROPA-PARK



ativity and orchestrated with a sense of wonder.

Part food tasting, part show experience, part fine dining, part dark ride — Eatrenalin is like nothing else that exists on earth. The vehicles in which patrons ride were created by **Mack Rides**.

“The design process was done in-house with a dedicated group focusing on the chairs themselves. We brought in experts for animation, robotics, mechanical engineering to work on these for quite a while,” said **Maximilian Roeser**, marketing, Mack Rides. “We also spoke to many vendors of parts for the vehicles in order to find suppliers

we could use. With several components, we found stronger in-house solutions so that we did not only gain expertise in the ride system itself but also the components of the floating chairs.”

Once guests board their personal chairs in one of the earlier rooms, they remain seated for 90 minutes and drift from one scenario — and course — to another. Many surprises await each individual.

Mack explained that one

of the first concepts was to build it inside the theme park within the rotating pyramid. However, with Eatrenalin’s stand-alone location at the resort, people have the flexibility to drive in from out of town just for the dining experience.

The “floating chair” was the seventh concept in the ride’s evolution.

“We create wholistic experiences that are com-

▶ See **EUROPA**, page 48



The seating arrangement in each room is different as chairs position diners in place. AT/TIM BALDWIN



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# Amusement Expo 2023 welcomes unprecedented attendance, showcases innovations in Las Vegas

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — The Amusement Expo International (AEI) announced the 2023 event shattered attendance records for its 2023 event while showcasing the latest innovations for the coin-op industry and virtual reality technology, as well as professional services and suppliers for amusement, music and game operators and family entertainment centers.

Hosted by the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) alongside the American and Music Operators Association (AMOA), the convention far exceeded expected attendance numbers, drawing close to 5,000 operators, industry leaders, entrepreneurs and developers to the Las Vegas Convention Center during the event dates of March 27-30, 2023, strengthening its title as one of the most informational conference and tradeshow in North America for the industry.

The trade show is managed by WT Glasgow. Brian Glasgow, representing the company, expounded on the event's successful numbers: "We had 195 exhibiting companies compared to 165 in 2022, 576 booths sold compared to 513 in 2022 and we attracted 46 new exhibitors this year compared to 32 (final) in 2022.

"Expo registration statistics included 2,267 buyers to date, compared to 1,698 in 2022, 1,984 non-buyers and exhibitors to date, compared to 1,603 in 2022," summarized Glasgow. Overall, the event drew 4,600 registered attendees.

Based on the quantity and quality of registered attendees, this year played a strong role in helping the out-of-home entertainment industry drive meaningful and sustainable growth.

During the event, the AAMA announced the inaugural class of inductees to the Amusement Industry Hall of Fame. The inaugural class is comprised of 31 individuals and six legendary products that have contributed to forming the thriving and expanding industry as it exists today. Each has made a positive and lasting difference to our business of fun. The individuals inducted were made up of two categories: 21 Legacy Inductees who are no longer with us and 10 living inductees.

"Amusement Expo exceeded our expectations," said LAI Games Senior Marketing Manager Allison Timberlake. The company showcased its latest product at the expo, Rick and Morty Blips and Chitz, and was honored with the AMOA Operator's Choice Award for the hit redemption game. The company received further recognition from the industry with the induction of founder and LAI Group Chairman Malcolm Steinberg into the U.S. Industry Hall of Fame.

"It was a hugely successful show for our sales team, and of course we are very honored to receive the Operators Choice Award and the acknowledgement of Malcom's lifetime of service to the industry," added Timberlake.

Throughout the show floor, arcade and FEC innova-



Ghostbusters VR Academy from Hologate offered continuous popular demonstrations on the showfloor (above). The Toy Factory's giant Pikachu was a photogenic highlight of the company's redemption prizes on display (right). AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON



tions and new products abounded. Hologate showcased its immersive Ghostbusters VR Academy. Stern Pinball's ever-popular Pinball Alley exhibit booth was highlighted by the appearance of the company's new Foo Fighter pinball game. Combining two arcade legends — Pac-Man and a Skee-ball style game — Bandai Namco unveiled Pac-Man Roller to the delight of many on their exhibit floor.

Cashless solutions provider Embed showcased its new data visualization dashboard STATS, which is designed to change the way FEC operators analyze reports.

"STATS is on a roll — we had such a fantastic uptake of this breakthrough innovation at AEI," said Embed's Chief Management Consultant Kash Ahmad. "We have loyal customers who are thrilled to apply this cloud-based solution in their venue that has [Amazon Web Services] in the backend — we had sign-ups from both single and multi-location customers since STATS is designed for operators of all business sizes."

Industry products on display along the showfloor varied from the simple but innovative with Brand Vending Products was proudly showcasing the company's new trading card packet vending machine to the high tech and immersive with Triotech actively giving demos of its powerful Qube game station.

Arcade and amusements distributor Betson Enterprises was awarded the title of Distributor of the Year for 2023. This is the seventh time the company has received the award. "We are honored to receive this recognition," offered Bob Geschine, president of Betson Enterprises. "We thank our partner suppliers, loyal customers and dedicated team at Betson for making 2022 a great year for us."

The AEI 2023 also included extensive educational offerings for attendees. "The program this year was kicked off with a half day on Monday and full education day on Tuesday, beginning with a Keynote Opening Session, Lessons Learned from my Father, presented by Jarrett Walter Payton," stated Glasgow. "Our AEI Education Day had a rate of \$129.00 per person, with 403 registrants, which included the AEI Sessions, the VR Summit, the luncheon and the Industry Gala. We had a total of 1,400 in attendance compared to 1,286 in 2022; including the 488 in attendance of the VR Arcade Game Summit."

The 2024 Amusement Expo International will be held at the Westgate Las Vegas and Las Vegas Convention Center, South Hall. Education will be on March 18-19, 2024 and the tradeshow on March 20-21, 2024.

—John W.C. Robinson

## ►EUROPA

Continued from page 47

pletely different from room to room," said Altherr.

"It's really unique. You are floating through the restaurant," said Mack. "There's no track."

"Fitting all the technology in a rather small space was one of the challenges," Roeser told AT. "Of course, we wanted to have the chair as small as possible to navigate tight spaces, therefore it was created very compact. From the perspective of show and entertainment, we had to come up with solutions to have one part of the dinner already on board while you board, and that displays itself during the ride. Together with Mack Animation we had to create a system to configure and train the chairs to follow from one position to another without any guidance in the floor."

Guests travel through the experience in a sensory ballet, sometimes as individuals, sometimes in a counter setting and sometimes floating through the room in groups. Each environment is different, which makes the entire production infused with the wow factor.

Two types of menus allow vegetarians and vegans to be immersed into the experience, just as those who enjoy meat and fish. Each room presents each course with its unique theatrical flair.

"At Eatrenalin, it is more magical. You never know what is coming next," said Mack.

With the investment into this new technology, Mack Rides sees potential for it in the future.

"The floating chairs open up a new technology of trackless rides for us," Roeser said. "We currently are investigating the possibility that comes with this development and whether we want to actively work on a trackless ride system from us. We know that we do have a strong position with the floating chairs and are certain to see more use cases for the technology."

Sixteen ticketed guests begin their journey every 20 minutes. The cost of the experience is €195 per person. The menu will change every few months.



The popular '90s kids game Bop It received the stand-alone video game treatment and was on display at AEI 2023 (above left). Scott Jochim of Brand Vending Products was happy to showcase the company's new innovative trading card vending machine (above right). AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON



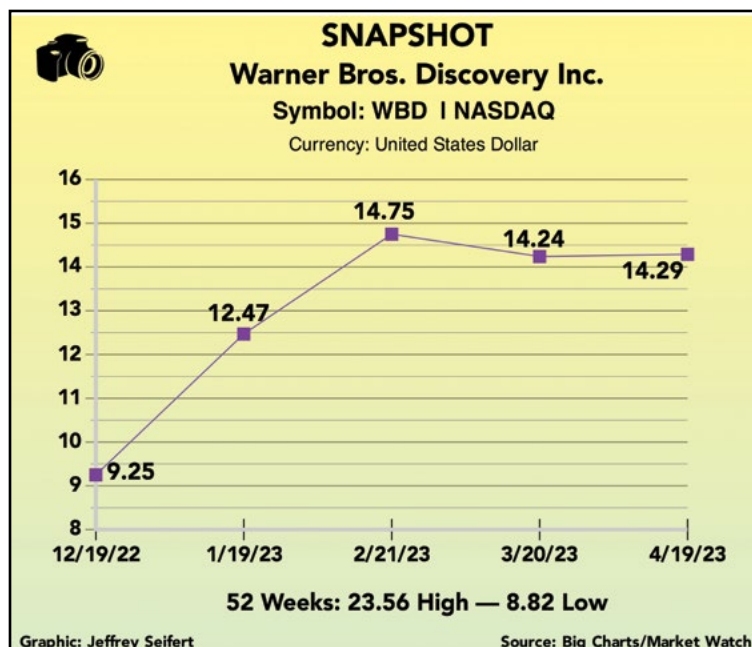
**MARKET WATCH** \*NEW listing!

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 4/20/23	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
<b>PARKS</b>					
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	91.94	126.80	71.72
Bowlero Corp.	BOWL	NYSE	15.50	17.45	8.19
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	41.76	57.00	37.58
Comcast Corp./ NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	37.73	48.19	28.39
Dave & Busters Entertainment, LLC	PLAY	NASDAQ	33.99	50.17	29.59
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	40.31	56.38	33.92
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	JP:9010	TYO	4945.00	5130.00	3750.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	1.58	4.28	0.81
Lefoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	17.90	20.20	15.40
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	44.60	46.23	26.41
Parks America, Inc.	PRKA	OTC	0.39	0.50	0.26
Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd.	RCL	NYSE	62.23	87.68	31.09
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	53.08	76.57	40.01
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	24.08	43.98	16.83
<b>*Warner Bros Discovery Inc.</b>	<b>WBD</b>	<b>NASDAQ</b>	<b>13.83</b>	<b>23.23</b>	<b>8.82</b>
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	812.00	900.00	650.00
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	98.07	126.48	84.07
<b>SUPPLIERS/OTHERS</b>					
Brogent Technologies, Inc.	TW:5263	TSEC	124.50	148.50	99.6
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	TYO:6357	TYO	965.00	985.00	731.00
Topgolf Callaway Brands	MODG	NYSE	22.62	25.96	16.80

Details and information available at [amusementtoday.com/stocks](http://amusementtoday.com/stocks)

**Worldwide Markets** — CSE/DK: Copenhagen Stock Exchange; HK: The Stock Exchange of Hong Kong; JP: The Tokyo Stock Exchange; NASDAQ: National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations; NYSE: New York Stock Exchange; OCT: Over-the-counter stocks; TAIEX: The Taiwan Capitalization Weighted Stock Index; TYO: The Tokyo Stock Exchange; TW: The Taiwan Stock Exchange.

—SOURCES: Bigcharts.com



**DIESEL PRICES**

Region (U.S)	As of 4/17/23	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$4.198	(\$0.953)
Midwest	\$4.027	(\$0.894)
Gulf Coast	\$3.876	(\$0.979)
Mountain	\$4.104	(\$0.990)
West Coast	\$4.456	(\$0.822)
California	\$4.963	(\$1.287)

**CURRENCY**

On 4/20/23 \$1 USD =

0.9125	EURO
0.8042	GBP (British Pound)
134.57	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.8976	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.4884	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.3428	CAD (Canadian Dollar)

**BUSINESS WATCH**

**Warner Bros. Discovery celebrate 100 years**

BURBANK, Calif. — As part of its centennial campaign "Celebrating Every Story," **Warner Bros. Discovery** has unveiled its collection of global products, content and experiences honoring **Warner Bros. Studios'** 100th anniversary. The commemorative offerings celebrate the company's milestone birthday and includes toys, apparel, collectibles and more.

"We are thrilled to be part of Warner Bros.' storied legacy and to bring these commemorative products and experiences to our fans around the world," said **Pam Lifford**, president, Warner Bros. Discovery Global Brands and Experiences. "Our anniversary offerings will keep coming all year long so that our fans can be a part of Warner Bros.' history and celebrate their fandom wherever they are."

As part of the celebration, **Warner Bros. World Abu Dhabi** started a trip down memory lane in April to the greatest moments in Warner Bros. history. The indoor theme park will be entertaining guests with a unique live show inside the Warner Bros. Plaza featuring a special rendition of Warner Bros.' 100th year.

**Warner Bros. Movie World** in Australia will have various celebrations running throughout the entire year with events such as DC Super Heroes and Super-Villains, Fright Nights and Hooray for Hollywood. Guests at these events and others will have the opportunity to be transported into the world of Warner Bros.' iconic franchises such as Looney Tunes, Justice League and Hollywood classics such as *The Wizard of Oz*.

Madrid's **Parque Warner** is adding a new show and new character meet & greets that will surprise and delight guests with some never-before-seen characters in the park as well as the return of some favorites. Additionally, the park will introduce new streetmosphere shows throughout the year to keep the celebration in full swing.

In addition, DC-inspired **Park Row** in Soho, London, is launching a Master Wayne table with butler service and a Taste of Gotham City menu to join the worldwide anniversary party. And **Warner Bros. Studio Tour Hollywood** debuted a "100 Years of Warner Bros." exhibit on April 4 which explores Warner Bros. impact on storytelling.

**Accesso, Adventureland ink five-year deal**

ORLANDO — **Accesso Technology Group** announced a five-year partnership with **Adventureland Amusement Park** of New York City's Long Island. Through this long-term agreement, Adventureland will leverage the award-winning Accesso Passport eCommerce ticketing suite to deepen guest connection and boost pre-visit sales, as well as the acceso Siriusware point-of-sale ticketing platform to streamline onsite transactions.

Now open for the 2023 season, Adventureland is harnessing the power of Accesso technology to deliver even greater value for ticket and season passholders, unlock faster guest entry at the gate and uphold its reputation as Long Island's family-favorite amusement park.

"We're thrilled to welcome the 2023 season with Accesso's technology guiding a well-ordered ticketing process that delivers an exceptional experience — from ticket purchase to park entry — for our valued guests," said **Jeanine Gentile**, manager at Adventureland Amusement Park. "As the attractions industry continues to make its comeback, we couldn't be happier to have Accesso's help in facilitating growth."

"The right technology is critical to promoting memorable experiences for park visitors," said **Steve Brown**, CEO at acceso. "We're excited to partner with Adventureland to streamline and enhance its eCommerce and in-person ticketing systems, creating exceptional guest experiences in the process."



# Women INFLUENCE

## A view from the top...

With a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education and Teaching, from the **University of Tennessee at Chattanooga** and a masters in Business Administration from **Western Governors College**, **Lauren Lowery** has advanced to become the **Dollywood Company's** Operations Manager for **Dollywood's Splash Country**. Each day, she applies her passion for teaching and creating smiles to provide safe, memorable fun for her guests.

## Aquatic education continues to prove invaluable for Lowry

PIGEON FORGE, Tenn. — Lauren Lowery entered the attractions industry as a teenager. And it was during that first summer job that she discovered her true passion and calling, eventually turning her part-time role into her full-time career with the Dollywood Company.

Originally from Mobile Bay in Alabama, Lowery says she has been in the water for her entire life. "I'm a water baby," she said. "I gravitate toward it. And my job is surrounded by it."

When her family moved to Tennessee, she applied for a summer job at Dollywood's Splash Country to become a lifeguard. She continued to work there through college.

"I went to Dollywood's Splash Country because I had heard it would be fun for the summer," she shared. "During college, it became so much more than a seasonal job. I found my role as a lifeguard, and the incredible people at Splash Country, had become part of my DNA."

"My mother is a teacher, and she hoped I would also become one, but I planned to study nursing," Lowery explained. "However, when I joined Splash Country and became a lifeguard instructor, I found myself realizing, 'I am meant to be here. I am meant to do this.'"

She also discovered that through the education and instruction she received, and later passed on to others at Splash Country, her true calling emerged. "I found my joy, and discovered I really am a teacher. I'm a teacher through and through."

Lowery earned her Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education and Teaching at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, ready to continue teaching. After two

years working as a first grade teacher, she also recognized her gift for teaching was best served outside the traditional classroom. She soon shifted her focus to water safety, lifeguard instruction, and hospitality by becoming a full-time team member at Splash Country.

"It's important to understand we need public education teachers and it was hard to shift careers, but I recognized I would continue to do good work and have an impact on people. Seeing lifeguards grow is my passion. Knowing that I have taught them important skills inspires me.

"It's so cool to see a 15-year-old come into themselves over a summer," she continued. "You see them grow and their confidence build. You are teaching skills that will be with them for the rest of their lives."

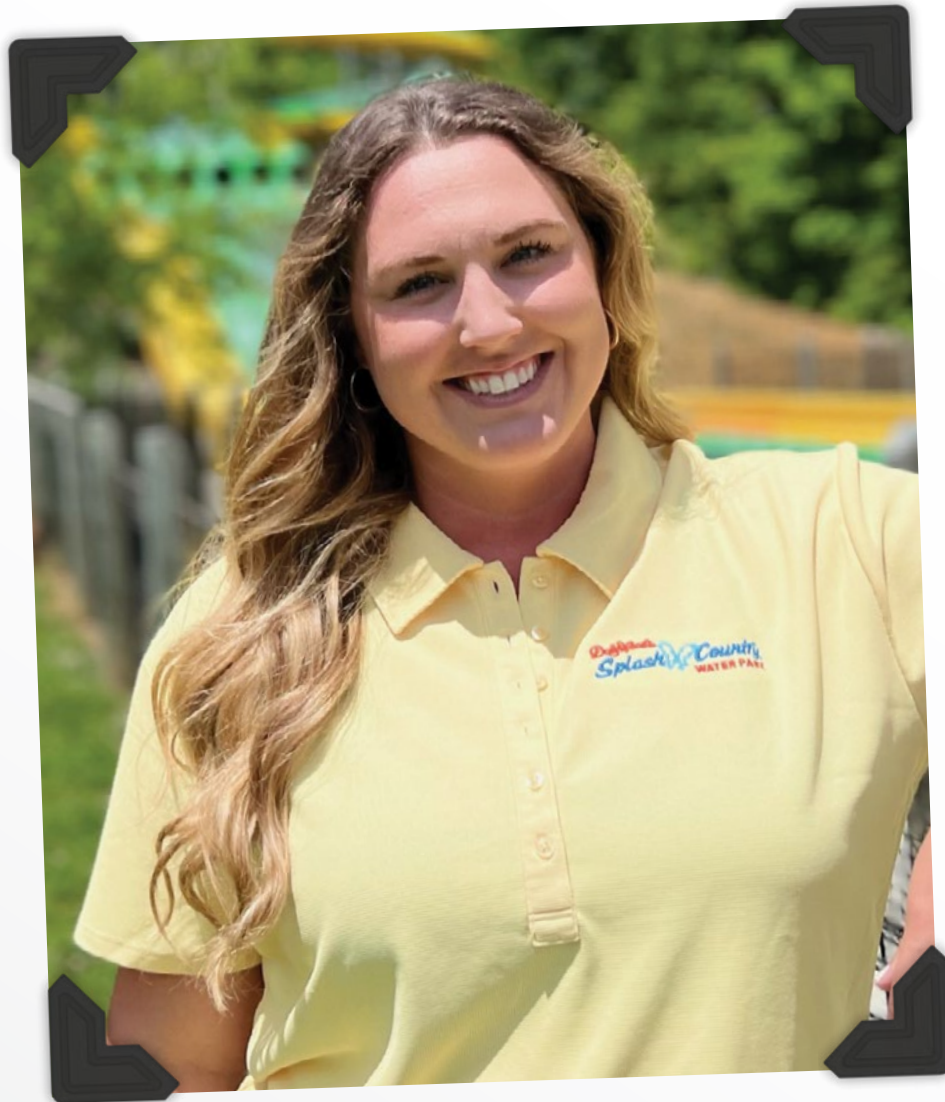
Lowery credits her training from Ellis and Associates, Inc (E&A) for empowering her. Continued training and certification with E&A allowed her to grow as an instructor and help others learn how to save lives.

"When you are teaching CPR, you have so much to consider — the ages and sizes of your guests, the environment you are in, the range of emotions felt during a potential life-saving situation. All of it comes together in a moment. I believe every aspect of the education I received, both as a lifeguard, and as a teacher, go hand in hand with what I am doing today."

And while she no longer teaches children the "Three R's," part-time summer teenagers are not her only students.

"We just taught CPR Certification to 50 members of the management team at Dollywood," she shared. "It's a voluntary compa-

## Lauren Lowery Dollywood's Splash Country Pigeon Forge, Tennessee



ny opportunity but one I'm proud our culture supports. CPR can be learned at any time, at any age, and I love to provide that training. Teaching lifesaving skills that can be applied anywhere is a gift. It's hard to think of it as a job."

It is a key part of Lowery's job, of course, and in addition to the lifeguards at Splash Country, she also oversees the aquatics team at Dollywood's DreamMore Resort.

"I have grown so much since I began here," Lowery stated. "Our water park operation is incredible, and I continue to learn every day. I've also expanded my experience and am responsible for the aquatics operation at the DreamMore Resort and am preparing for the opening of our second hotel.

"We get paid to make people happy," she added. "That's our job, and it's special to see families of all types disconnect and spend time together. You rarely see phones in a water park, and instead you see families engaging with each other. It may sound cheesy, but it really is the best part of my job."

Lowery's degree in educa-

tion includes an endorsement in Special Education. She applies those core concepts to better serve her guests by partnering with her colleagues across all areas of the Dollywood operation.

"I'm on a panel with fellow members of Dollywood management that focuses on making our parks more inclusive and accessible across all areas," she explained. "We make suggestions and implement operational changes that help bring families closer together — and that means all families. I'm so lucky to be part of such a supportive and forward-focused company that truly embodies its culture and values.

"I love learning as much as I love teaching," she finished. "I love professional development, taking on new responsibilities, and seeking ways to better myself. You can definitely say my personality fits perfectly with Dollywood's core value to constantly improve. I'm thankful to the Dollywood Company for their support and for providing opportunities that allow me to learn. I will keep going forward."

—Susan Storey



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## OBITUARIES

## Canadian Showman Jim Conklin of Conklin Shows passes away

BRANTFORD, Ontario — James Conklin died March 22, 2023, in Brantford, Ontario. He grew up at home in Brantford, at Ridley College in St. Catharines, and on a private rail car with his parents, Patty and Edith, as they traveled across Canada with their carnival, Conklin and Garrett Shows. Patty was a very well known carnival owner and operator who, in addition to playing fairs and exhibitions across Canada, provided the Midway to the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto.

James, known as Jim or Jimmy, attended McGill University before joining his father in the company. He married Norma and they had three children, Patricia, Frank, and Melissa. While they called Brantford home, they travelled extensively.

Conklin brought his imagination, creativity and vision to both his compa-



Conklin

ny, Conklin Shows, and the amusement business in general. In 1970, his father, Patty, passed away. Jim Conklin took the reins of Conklin Shows. Under his guidance, Conklin Shows expanded to play fairs both large and small across North America. He implemented rules regarding ride safety and legitimized game operations. He introduced Conko (the well known logo), uniformed staff, guest relations centers and training programs.

The amusement business is time consuming but, when at all possible, Conklin enjoyed many diverse interests. He loved to fish, curl, play and attend tennis events. Rarely without a book, he was a keen reader and liked to share opinions on books and authors. But above all else, he adored his Westies, of which he had two or three at any one time.

He spent his last years actively curating both personal and industry associate's memorabilia to create a North American vintage carnival museum.

## Amusement ride consultant Klaus Huss has passed away

BREMEN, Germany — Born in July 1939, Klaus Huss passed away in Bremen, Germany on March 21, 2023, at the age of 83. His life was linked to the amusement ride industry from a young age.

At the beginning of the 1970s, Klaus Huss took over Huss Maschinenfabrik GmbH & Co. KG, which for 50 years was devoted almost exclusively to the construction of machines and silencers, especially for the shipbuilding industry. From 1969, when the funfair and amusement ride industry began to boom and only a few years later the first fairy tale and amusement parks were founded, the company also positioned itself in carousel construction. Over

time, the company evolved into what is now known as Huss Park Attractions.

At the end of 1984 — with the entry of new owners — Klaus Huss left the company, but not the amusement industry, and has since been active and well-known in the industry as a freelance consultant and representative.

Klaus Huss, who is described by his friends and companions as a very cosmopolitan person, will be remembered by all who knew him as a very friendly, calm and discrete person who was always pleasant to talk to.



Huss

## ON THE MOVE

## Buzz Price Award presented to Roland Mack

RUST, Germany — **Roland Mack**, founder of **Europa-Park**, is considered one of the most innovative and successful pioneers in the international entertainment industry. **The Themed Entertainment Association (TEA)** presented the coveted Thea Award to Roland Mack. At the gala event at the **Disney Hotel** in Los Angeles, California, Mack was the first theme park owner to receive the Buzz Price Award for his life's work, namely his outstanding entrepreneurial achievements and great commitment to the industry. The award is named after **Harrison Alan 'Buzz' Price** (1921-2010), one of the closest confidants of the legendary **Walt Disney**.



Mack

Together with his father **Franz**, his wife **Marianne** and brother **Jürgen**, Mack developed Europa-Park and led the close-by production company **Mack Rides**. Now, Roland Mack is gradually handing over the company to the next generation.

"I am a trustee for our family business and want to be able to hand over a company that is well prepared for the future," said Mack. "To not do so would mean I have failed as an entrepreneur."

His sons **Michael** and **Thomas** have long been managing partners, and daughter **Ann-Kathrin** is a qualified architect and authorized signatory.

The **International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE)** announced the promotion of **Brittney Harper** to the position of director of marketing and communications.

"The IAFE's strategic plan, approved by the Board of Directors in 2022, outlines initiatives and action items to develop and execute marketing and communications," said **Marla Calico**, president and CEO. "This will retain and engage our current members, effectively communicate the wealth of association resources available and attract new members to the association. Brittney's work leading the launch of the IAFE Ambassador Program and rebrand of Young Professionals exemplifies the strengths she will bring to lead our existing team of dedicated communication professionals."



Harper

Harper first joined the IAFE team in 2016 as an intern before transitioning to the member services coordinator in 2017 and the member services manager in 2022. During that time, Harper has achieved many accomplishments, including receiving **ASAE's** Innovation grant, developing the #FAIRSTRONG initiative, creating the IAFE Ambassador Program, enhancing and growing the annual contest program and leading the Young Professionals rebrand, mentor program and community launch.

**RES GmbH — Ride Engineers Switzerland** has appointed London-based **Deborah Eicher** as international sales and marketing director.

"I'm thrilled to be joining RES and to work with such a talented group," says Eicher. "I've known the RES team for many years and the quality and innovation of their products is outstanding."



Eicher

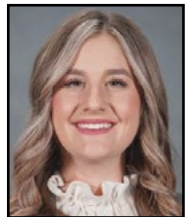
Eicher brings more than 20 years experience in the leisure industry, has an MBA, ICAE and is on the Board of Directors of the **IAAPA Foundation**. Eicher has operated London based **Eicher Leisure Consultants**

**Ltd.**, where she worked with suppliers around the globe since 2014.

**Willy Walser**, RES managing director and co-owner, stated: "I am very excited that Deborah has joined our team to head up our international sales and marketing. Deborah has the experience we have been looking for to help us build on our recent growth and successes."

**Mikayla Arnold** has returned to the **Ralph S. Alberts Co. Inc.** as the company's business development executive, responsible for developing new business and managing existing customer accounts. Arnold previously served with the company as a marketing assistant and in customer service.

"We are absolutely thrilled to have Mikayla back as a team member once again. She brings a personality with energy that is unparalleled and infectious. Because of her vast technical knowledge of our products



Arnold

and services from previous employment, combined with the skills she has since developed from other industries served, we expect her to make an immediate positive impact," stated **Seth Alberts**, president and CEO of Ralph S. Alberts Co. Inc. "She will be tasked with strengthening our current customer relationships, while building an outside sales team that will be responsible for both territories and industries. I personally believe that we've built an internal team that's the strongest and most cohesive in decades, and Mikayla's return only solidifies that belief. I'm excited for our customers to share in that experience and engagement now also!"

Arnold will continue to lead and grow existing relationships with key clients and expand business relationships with prospects whose business needs pair well with the company's offerings of services, solutions and products. In addition, Arnold will be responsible for strategic planning and implementation of sales and marketing initiatives to contribute to growth efforts for The Ralph S. Alberts Co. Inc.





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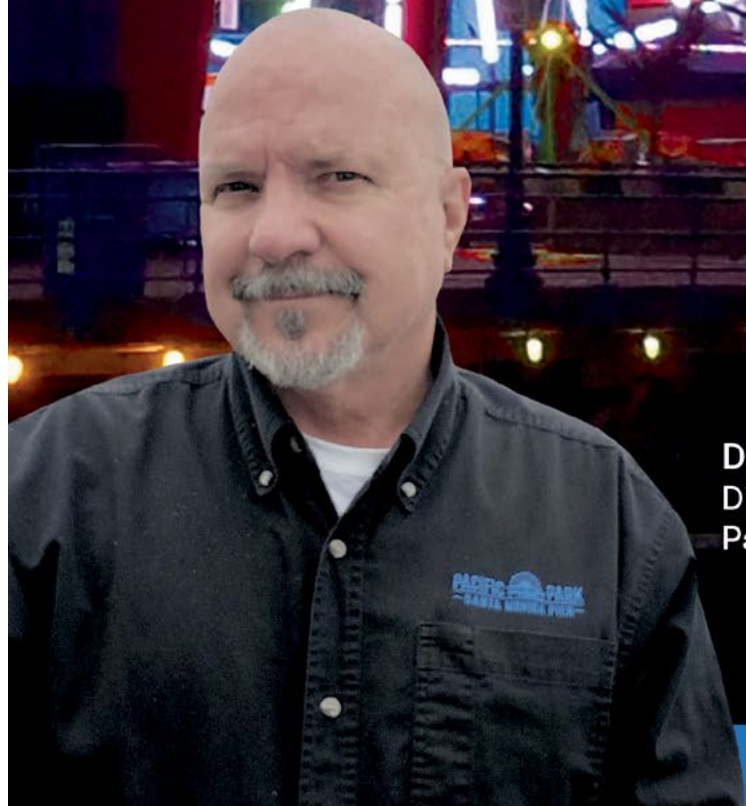
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# SAFETY, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

▶ GCII revitalizes two popular coasters — page 58 / VLocker introduces new locker technology — page 66

## Lifeguarding: a professional position that offers lifelong skills

AT: Susan Storey  
Special to Amusement Today

MAITLAND, Fla. — “The first thing we must do is dispel the rumor that a summer job as a lifeguard is just “fun in the sun,” stated **Richard Carroll**, chief operating officer, **Ellis and Associates, Inc.** “Lifeguarding is always a professional position. It comes with a duty to act, it carries high expectations, and it’s a role that can potentially impact someone’s life.”

May is National Water Safety Month, and as water parks prepare to open for the summer season, and resorts prepare to reopen swimming pools, there is no more important time to recognize those who keep their eyes on the water, and those around them, safe. Being a professional lifeguard, according to Carroll, teaches skills that are invaluable throughout life and in any career field.

“As a lifeguard, you are your own leader, from the very beginning,” Carroll continued. “Lifeguards manage everything about how guests interact with the environment. Lifeguards control guest actions and activities through rule enforcement; they communicate both verbally and nonverbally and they are in full control of the environment within their zone of protection. They remain the most responsible party in that area. Lifeguarding provides learning and a sense of responsibility that never leaves you.”

According to Carroll,



**With lifeguarding being many youths first jobs, it is the time they receive their first-ever formal training and learn how to work, how to manage and how to be responsible. The very essence of lifeguarding is physically giving care to someone.**

COURTESY  
ELLIS & ASSOCIATES

most teens come to lifeguarding for a first job. This is the time they receive their first-ever formal training and learn how to work, how to manage and how to be responsible. From the very beginning, lifeguards are taught individual skills that remain with them long beyond time spent by the water.

“Lifeguarding is foundational. Each process of training builds on a set of skills that are taught and used in progression,” Carroll explained. “Everything can quickly fall apart if the skills are not fully understood or implemented in the right



sequence. Foundational training that teaches how to focus on a goal and recognize that reaching that goal does not happen by accident is a trait that can be applied throughout our entire life. Through lifeguarding, individuals become better problem solvers, they understand safety, they learn how to be leaders and be a part of a team.”

Carroll further shared that lifeguarding breaks down barriers of societal norms.

“The very essence of life-

guarding is physically giving care to someone. You must be prepared to do that. Lifeguards work closely with people of all ages, experiences and backgrounds, and do to so, they must care. You must have empathy for others as well as be ready to assist. Lifeguards act, get close, and remain focused on providing immediate care, without worry of appearances or what others may think.”

Carroll points to the simplest of these skills, looking

others in the eye, as something that has become almost a lost art.

“Think about holding the door open for someone,” he said. “Most of us look at each other during this simple contact. Yet today, many younger people look at the floor, or around the other person, avoiding that moment of connection. Lifeguards make some of the most important connections people may ever have in the blink of an eye, without any hesitation.”

This empathy and immediate reaction to provide care for others remains with anyone who has worked as a lifeguard beyond the pool, water park or beach. “We have seen time and again that lifeguards use their training at home or while out in public. They know what to do during times of crisis, and they do not have to second guess. Their training and practiced competence can be applied anytime, anywhere. Lifeguards know how to assist in saving a life. They have learned how to be aware of those around them and they understand how to care for others. That training, that sense of duty, never leaves.”

How important are lifeguards to the attractions industry? The answer, according to Carroll is easy. They are vital.

“With so many roles in our industry, it is possible to adjust personnel, shift the schedule or redeploy someone temporarily to a differ-

▶ See **LIFEGUARD**, page 56

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## AIMS International announces appointment of new Executive Director Amy (Briley) Lowenstein

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — **AIMS International**, announced the appointment of new Executive Director **Amy (Briley) Lowenstein**.

"Amy possesses an exceptional knowledge of the amusement industry, having served as a leader in the areas of operations, administration, human resources, risk management, safety and security for more than three decades," said Board President **David Bromilow**. "We are confident that Amy will continue to strengthen not only the AIMS International organization, but the industry as a whole by delivering upon our mission of providing cutting-edge safety, maintenance, and operations education."

Lowenstein began her theme park career more than 30 years ago as a teenage ride operator at **Six Flags Over Texas**. Her tenure with **Six Flags Entertainment Corp.** continued through college and beyond, and included leadership positions across many disciplines at four different parks. In addition, Lowenstein worked as a vendor designing and selling labor management software specifically created for the theme park and attractions industry. Most recently, she served as vice president of human resources with **Unleashed Brands**, a multi-unit brand company with over 750 locations, and as vice president of human resources, safety and compliance for **Urban Air Adventure Parks**.

Lowenstein received her Bachelor of Science degree in Recreation, Park & Tourism Sciences from

**Texas A&M University**.

"The amusement industry exists to provide guests with an escape from their day-to-day. At our core, we are tasked with ensuring that their visit is safe. This is, in many ways, a sacred duty that we all share, and I am honored to be entrusted with the role as executive director," Lowenstein said.

"It has been exciting to follow AIMS International's record growth and development and its increased global presence. Through the hard work of **M.J. Brewer**, the board of directors and others, the list of notable achievements has positioned this organization for continued success and expansion. With my HR background, which includes training and development, I am thrilled to lead AIMS into its next chapter, providing cutting-edge resources and networking opportunities that are so vital to the success and growth of our industry."

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Amy (Briley) Lowenstein

## ►LIFEGUARD

Continued from page 55

ent role. Perhaps a game remains closed one day, or one less register is opened in retail. Without lifeguards, the water park cannot open. If you don't have a lifeguard, you don't have the option to open. There is no compromising with safety. Lifeguards are vital to our industry's workforce and to the industry as a whole."

He is also quick to point out, lifeguards are the future industry leaders. "The ability to grow and take on more comes naturally in lifeguarding. It opens doors to learn staff management, hone problem-solving skills, understand scheduling, and how to work with other departments. Lifeguards can become supervisors, trainers, operations managers and directors, all while remaining true to their core training as someone who provides care to others."

While obvious career paths for early lifeguards often lead to roles as first responders and medical personnel, the attractions industry benefits from those who began as lifeguards, too.

"The patience, vigilance and ability to make decisions with confidence are important skill sets for professionals at any stage of any career," Carroll explained. "Those are key values and traits that are shared with every lifeguard, starting day one."

**Fred Rogers** of *Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood* was often quoted sharing this advice: "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping." Carroll stressed that lifeguards are the helpers.

"They provide the first line of help. They are the bridge between basic life support and the next level of care. Parents, children, everyone, turn to them at a moment's notice."

Carroll understands that quote and sees how it applies to anyone who considers working as a lifeguard. "In an industry that provides fun, entertainment, and memories, what an incredible opportunity and honor it is to be one who helps others."

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# Great Coasters International renews life of two wooden coasters

AT: Tim Baldwin  
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

MINAMI, Japan and BRISTOL, Conn. — For more than a quarter century, **Great Coasters International, Inc.** (GCII) has created iconic and award-winning wooden roller coasters for parks around the globe. In addition, GCII is also widely known for its wooden coaster refurbishing. The company has been responsible for restoring some of the most highly regarded wooden coasters in the world. Two recent projects have spotlighted its strengths.

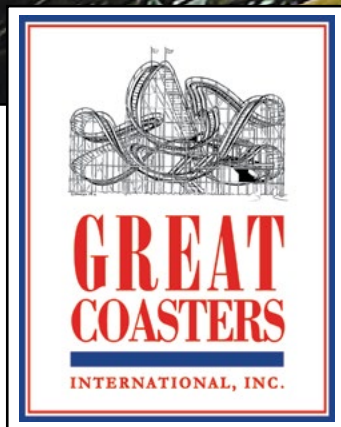
Japan has only a small handful of wooden coasters. When Regina at **Tobu Zoo** closed in August of 2019, coaster fans mourned that the outlook appeared the coaster was closed for good. Four years later, the wooden coaster sees a new birth. It's now called Regina II, owing to the extensive repair.

At a height of 121 feet and a length of 4,376 feet of track, Regina was — and is — a substantial attraction. Designed by **Dennis Starkey** and built by **Intamin** in 2000, the coaster is perched on a lake which offers a beautiful reflection, but also creates challenges when working on the ride.

"We could not get a crane to remove and add materials, so everything had to be done by hand," said **Clair Hain Jr.**, president, GCII. "Tools had to



With 825 feet of track rebuilt, the coaster at Tobu Zoo will have a much smoother ride experience. COURTESY GCII



be tied to the body because they could fall into the body of water underneath the coaster." In addition, the language barrier offered expected challenges as well.

Three GCII employees were in place for the duration of retracking. Later, two others arrived for mechanical tasks and the installation of trains. Hain was also there for five weeks for the commissioning process and to help finish.

The refurbishment job lasted from October 2022 to February 2023.

When originally built, much was still being learned about how to properly design and construct wooden coasters to provide longevity. The GCII team carefully examined every inch of the coaster, looking for areas that needed repairs or replacement. One of the major upgrades that GCII implemented was replacing sections of the wooden track with ipe (a dense wood from Brazil) and #1 dense southern yellow pine. The new track not only provides a smoother ride for guests but also increases the overall safety of the coaster. A total of 825 feet of track was redone with the two types of hardwood.

Other enhancements include two new Millennium Flyer trains as

well as new queue gates, which had not been in place before. In addition, a new control system, new magnetic brake system, new chain for the lift and new transfer tables for maintenance were installed.

"These renovations have not only improved the coaster's functionality but have also rejuvenated its appearance, making it look like a brand-new ride!" said Hain.

Regina II reopened on March 18.

A second project features GCII's newer Titan Track. Boulder Dash at **Lake Compounce** had won the Golden Ticket Award five times for Best Wooden Coaster. Built by **Custom Coasters International**, it too opened in 2000. Like Regina, Boulder Dash is

a sizable wooden coaster: 4,725 feet of track and a drop of 115 feet. Its unique setting sends riders on a journey through the trees and rocky landscape while hugging the mountainside.

For this season, the park has upgraded the coaster with 580 feet of Titan Track in problematic areas.

"Since Boulder Dash was completed at Lake Compounce and opened to riders in 2000, it has been a massive draw for park-goers of all ages," said Lake Compounce Director of Operations **Megan Major**. "Adding Titan Track to the coaster will not only enhance the ride experience but the steel tracking will also allow for easier maintenance on the coaster, allowing our team to ensure the ride can stay open longer for guests."

As captivating as the ride's setting is, the mountainous terrain also comes with its share of challenges.

"Built in the middle of a forest and up on a mountain, this ride needed a large crane to reach everything," Hain told *Amusement Today*. "The weather was bad too. Our crew dealt with large blizzard conditions."

The rewards are there



Two Millennium Flyer trains will help give Regina new life. COURTESY GCII



▶ See **COASTERS**, page 60



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► **COASTERS**

Continued from page 58

though. Hain commented, “The smoothness! The Titan Track was easy to install and gives a great result in performance.”

“Boulder Dash is situated within the mountain-side at Lake Compounce, America’s First Amusement Park. The coaster’s location allows for a stunning ride during the summer and fall months,” said **Jerry Brick**, director of construction and maintenance, **Palace Entertainment**. “It reaches speeds of more than 60 mph and is the longest wooden roller coaster in New England. The ride’s stunning landscape, speed and uniqueness have landed the coaster in the number one spot five times.”

When asked why Titan Track was chosen as the solution, Brick told *AT*: “Titan Track was selected after visiting **Darien Lake** last season. I went to visit



The installation of 580 feet of GCII’s Titan Track (right) will provide a solution to problem areas on Lake Compounce’s popular wooden coaster Boulder Dash (above). COURTESY LAKE COMPOUNCE, GCII

and rode it, and there was a considerable change in the ride. The section that has been replaced is an area that expands and requires quite a bit of maintenance to maintain, and with Boulder Dash’s setting, it is very difficult to get to. While over time we don’t believe the entire coaster should be Titan Track, we should be repairing the areas that

are difficult to get to — that require track work multiple times a season — with the Titan solution. We were also excited by GCII’s approach to go from wood to steel and back to wood again.”

Titan Track is designed and engineered by **Skyline Attractions**; it is manufactured by GCII.

“Boulder Dash is one of the best coasters in the



world,” said **Chris Gray**, vice president, Skyline. “It’s always great to be a part of a project that helps preserve great rides for the next generation. Sometimes that preservation depends on new technologies without taking away from the original design. Titan Track gives us the ability to keep older coasters smooth, fun

and preserve their original centerline.”

Lake Compounce will continue to operate with rolling stock from **Philadelphia Toboggan Coasters Inc.** The park opens for the 2023 season on April 29, at which time Boulder Dash will be officially opened for rides with the refurbishments.

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## A farewell to AIMS International

As I sit here pondering what to write in my final **AIMS International** column as its executive director, I reminisce about the challenges that AIMS International has overcome during the past four years.

My tenure as executive director began in the spring of 2019 when **Karen Oertley** retired from the role and the AIMS Board of Directors selected me to be her successor. Karen was an organized leader and had done a wonderful job building AIMS International into a financially viable organization with a positive reputation.

I was given the mission of creating an online learning management system, while, at the same time, growing the annual safety seminar, as well as the other AIMS education and certification programs. This proved to be a daunting (and ultimately fortuitous) task.

The 2020 AIMS International Safety Seminar, held in Galveston, Texas, was an unmitigated success.

Despite concerns over the impact an online learning program would have on the organization's annual safety seminar and other financial risks, we moved forward with AIMSCoNECTED, a platform devoted to providing world-class education to the amusement industry. It launched on April 4, 2020, just two weeks after the global COVID-19 pandemic shutdown.

As the pandemic continued, it seemed that the 2021 safety seminar may have to be cancelled. By September, however, we started to think about a virtual event to take the place of the in-person seminar. Although we had no experience creating a live, virtual learning environment, we moved forward as if we knew what we were doing. The 2021 AIMS International Virtual Safety Seminar took place



Brewer

online in January of that year, with an incredible turnout of remote attendees, instructors and student moderators.

The 2022 Safety Seminar was planned and executed to a record number of attendees. New were education partners — **International Ride Training** and **OABA** — who coordinated the Aquatics, Operations and Carnival curriculum, respectively. A brand-new Young Professionals program was also implemented, with several students acting as AIMS Ambassadors at the seminar. The new Academy of Amusement Risk Management, Safety and Security (AARMSS) was also launched.

The 2022 AIMS International Safety Seminar shattered the record-books with another all-time high number of attendees, instructors, sponsors and exhibitors. We also introduced two new education tracks: Adventure Attractions and the second year of AARMSS, which

included a new AIMS certification.

During this timeframe, we cultivated relationships with the Colombian Association of Parks and Attractions, the **Pacific Northwest Exhibition**, the **State of Massachusetts Office of Public Safety Inspections**, the State of California QSI Program, **Lagoon Park** and more. We created customized education and certification experiences through the AIMS On The Road educational outreach program.

With AIMS now in the capable hands of its new Executive Director **Amy Briley-Lowenstein**, I am proud of the accomplishments we've made. I want to thank the AIMS staff and board, education partners and sponsors, as well as the hundreds of students, volunteers and certificate-holders who make AIMS special. Moving forward, I'm joining the list of volunteer instructors at future AIMS Safety Seminars.

—M.J. Brewer

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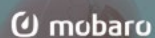


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# Blackpool Pleasure Beach re-opens popular Vahalla after completing rehab

AT: Pam Sherborne  
[psherborne@amusementtoday.com](mailto:psherborne@amusementtoday.com)

BLACKPOOL, U.K. — After spending close to 4.5 million dollars (£ 4 million) on the renovation of the Valhalla dark ride, Blackpool Pleasure Beach was excited to announce the reopening of one of its more popular rides.

Park officials are boasting the ride as U.K.'s wettest ride. It reopened last month for technical rehearsals. As the ride is tweaked to perfection, guests that have been anticipating its return get to participate.

Featuring many of the exciting elements that made the ride so popular when it first opened in 2000, the team at Blackpool Pleasure Beach have hinted that there are some surprises in store now that the ride has been truly brought into the modern era.

Riders can expect to be taken on a fantastical journey to Valhalla, boarding a longboat and journeying into a parallel world guided by a brave Viking named Ivar. There, they encounter the spirit of Odin and pass into the afterlife to try to make it to Valhalla. While on their journey, riders get to experience the elements of fire, ice and lots of water.

"We know how long fans have been waiting for us to announce the reopening of Valhalla and we're confident they won't be disappointed with our reimagining of one of the country's best-loved rides," said Amanda Thompson OBE, CEO of Blackpool Pleasure Beach.

"The team has been hard at work behind the scenes, and we can't wait to have the famous Valhalla waterfall back on in the park once more," Thompson said.

She said Valhalla has truly been given the reimagining it deserves, now boasting some exciting new features and impressive sustainability credentials to



Vahalla has returned to Blackpool Pleasure Beach, Blackpool, England. The popular dark ride reopened last month for technical rehearsals to tweak all the functions. It will open full time later in the season.

COURTESY BLACKPOOL PLEASURE BEACH

help ensure the ride is more environmentally friendly without compromising on the sense of adventure for which it's been known for many years.

Adam Slevin, director of creative, design and experience at Blackpool Pleasure Beach, who has headed up the Valhalla project, also is very excited.

"The reopening of the U.K.'s most beloved water ride has been a tricky secret to keep, so it's fantastic to be able to confirm we will be bringing back Valhalla for the 2023 season," Slevin said during a March announcement.

He said the technical rehearsals last month were to be intermittent throughout the day. It gives Blackpool officials, along with industry experts working to enhance the ride, the chance to continue making sure the ride is functioning exactly as it should.

"The legend has

returned to Blackpool Pleasure Beach, and we couldn't be more excited," Slevin said.

Valhalla was a multiyear winner of *Amusement Today's* Golden Ticket Awards Best Water Ride prior to its closure.

Blackpool Pleasure Beach offers 125 rides and attractions, including some of the U.K.'s most thrilling coasters. It is a family-owned-and-operated park and has been since it first opened in 1896.

Blackpool Pleasure Beach also has two onsite hotels. The 157-room Big Blue Hotel is great for families, while the stylish 120-room Boulevard hotel offers stylish stays at the heart of the excitement.

It also offers live entertainment shows and events, including the "Hot Ice" show, which takes place each summer at the Pleasure Beach Arena.

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



# CALENDAR

## IAAPA EMEA

### Spring Summit 2023

May 24 - 25, 2023  
Liseberg, Sweden

[iaapa.org/iaapa-emea-spring-summit-2023](http://iaapa.org/iaapa-emea-spring-summit-2023)

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## IAAPA Expo Asia

June 13 - 16, 2023  
Marina Bay Sands, Singapore  
[iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo-asia](http://iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo-asia)

•

## International Bowl Expo

June 25 - 29, 2023  
Las Vegas, Nevada  
[bpaa.com/expoexhibitors](http://bpaa.com/expoexhibitors)

•

## IAAPA Presents: Lagoon

July 18, 2023  
Farmington, Utah

[iaapa.org/events/connections/meet-iaapa](http://iaapa.org/events/connections/meet-iaapa)

•

## Golden Ticket Awards

September 8 - 9, 2023  
Pigeon Forge, Tennessee  
[goldenticketawards.com](http://goldenticketawards.com)

•

## IAAPA Expo Europe

September 25-28, 2023  
Vienna, Austria  
[iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo-europe](http://iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo-europe)

•

## World Waterpark Show

October 24 - 27, 2023  
New Orleans, Louisiana  
[wwashow.org](http://wwashow.org)

•

## IAAPA Expo

November 13 - 17, 2023  
Orlando, Florida  
[iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo](http://iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo)

•

## 2024 IAFE Convention and Trade Show

December 1 - 4, 2023  
Phoenix, Arizona  
[fairsandexpos.com](http://fairsandexpos.com)

•

## 2024 AIMS International Safety Seminar

January 7 - 24, 2024  
Orlando, Florida  
[aimsintl.org](http://aimsintl.org)

Have a Calendar event listing you want to share?  
Email it to: [editorial@amusementtoday.com](mailto:editorial@amusementtoday.com)

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## New amusement rides standard aids in measuring water slide G-force

W. CONSHOHOCKEN, Pa. — **ASTM International's** amusement rides and devices and committee (F24) has approved a new standard that will be used to collect gravitational force data for water slides. The new standard (soon to be published as F3493) focuses on using humans fitted with measuring instruments to generate the G-force data.

"The new standard will be useful to designers as a tool for collecting and measuring accelerations on a waterslide to validate their calculations as they pertain to G-forces," said ASTM member **Andreas Tanzer**, director of research, design and standards, **ProSlide Technology Inc.** "This can also be globally used by inspectors and third-party inspection agencies that validate rides and use data collected to ensure it meets existing waterslide standards that have acceleration limits."

Tanzer noted that the new standard will ensure consistent measurement of forces on a rider and removes interpretation of results based on different methods that are inconsistent with each other. The standard will measure forces that are actually felt by a rider, which directly relate to the maximum allowable forces prescribed in ASTM's standard on classification, design, manufacture, construction and operation of water slide systems (F2376)..

"We are always looking for individuals who take an interest in the measurements of G-forces," added Tanzer. "We are also looking for anyone willing to help in the expansion of this standard to possibly include bumper boats, zip lines or any other areas in which forces need to be known to be felt on a person."

In addition, Tanzer stated that the task group that developed the standard will continue to gather real-time data used to update acceleration requirements and ensure values for the forces reflect real time current data within F2376.

## Pool Safe name, logo rebrand for its award-winning Loungenie product

TORONTO, Ontario — **Pool Safe Inc.** celebrated a new name, logo and website for its popular PoolSafe product. Originally launched in late 2012, the newly rebranded Loungenie by Pool Safe Inc. offers guests of hotels, resorts, cruise ships and water parks a safe and convenient way to order, stash, charge and chill.

Loungenie's guest-friendly service options include a waterproof electronic safe to store guests' valuables, service call button that alerts service staff to a guest's order, storage compartment with an insulated ice bucket, USB charging port for charging small electronic devices as well as three beverage holders.

"Loungenie is a fantastic addition to any guest experience," said **David Berger**, CEO, Pool Safe Inc. "It allows a hotel or water park to ensure their guests' belongings are safely stowed while driving F&B sales and improving staff performance."

Berger developed the pool safe concept in response to a need expressed by hotel and resort operators who were looking for a way to curb theft around



**Pool Safe's Loungenie product delivers multiple conveniences to waterpark and cruise guest in one, versatile package.**  
COURTESY POOL SAFE

the pool and beach area. Starting in late 2012, Berger spent two years designing and engineering a prototype that he then tested in a large pool setting at a well-known resort brand in Las Vegas.

Loungenies are being used in a variety of venues throughout the U.S., the Caribbean and on cruise ships. Current clients continue to provide feedback on how to make the Loungenie even more impactful.

"Since the original concept, we have continued to work with our clients to make Loungenie a more ef-

fective, user-friendly product," added Berger. "We're excited to unveil our rebrand and to share improvements we've made to the product including increasing the size of the solar panel, increasing the voltage going to the USB port and changing our software to make the sales process more efficient."

Pool Safe Inc. offers clients an option to participate in a revenue share program that allows facilities to introduce the Loungenie to their customers without up-front costs.

•poolsafeinc.com





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# Innovative VLocker introduces new locker technology in 2023

AT: Tim Baldwin  
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

QUEENSLAND, Australia — Since 1991, VLocker has been designing, manufacturing, installing and servicing locker systems worldwide. The company is now preparing to launch new technology which makes the rental process easier for the guests while reducing staffing needs on the operator.

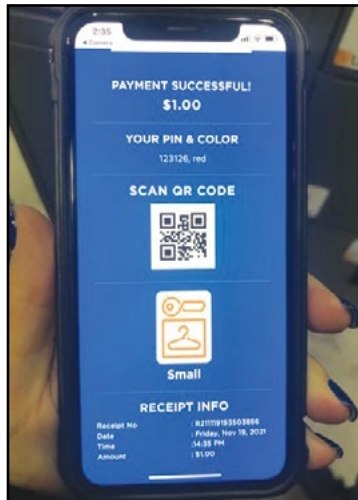
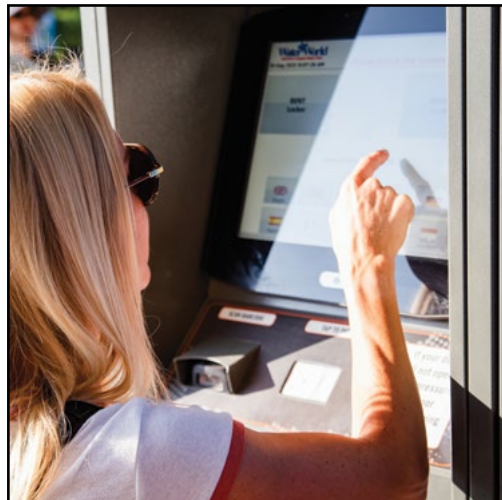
Termed “VRental,” this new software solution moves the locker rental process into a more organized approach.

“This is a customizable product to meet a facility’s desired guest experience,” said **Steven Wooley**, COO. “We can modify and customize with logos and color schemes. Everything inside the software is themed to match a facility.”

VRental allows the facilitation of locker rentals to be more streamlined with a guest-driven interactive format with visitors being able to go straight to a locker station upon arrival.

One of the greatest strengths of the VRental system is that guests can pre-purchase their locker online, just as they would with tickets, and have that task already taken care of. By simply showing a QR code at the locker station, guests would immediately be assigned a locker and gain access with no waiting for an interaction with a staff member.

VLocker is always working to innovate and keep up with industry demand with



Guests interacting with locker stations allow for immediate access to lockers without the need for frontline sales personnel. Guests bring QR codes from online purchases to go straight to locker stations (above middle). COURTESY VLOCKER

the addition of features all year long such as being designed to work with variable and dynamic pricing, which allows guests arriving late in the day to be offered a reduced rate.

“If you want to do a Moonlight Special and a locker hasn’t been used all day or has already been vacated, let’s at least generate some capital for both the facility and the owner of the equipment if it’s a revenue share,” Wooley told *Amusement Today*.

Administration has the ability to view and support the system from a mobile device or tablet instead of a member of upper management having to physically be on hand to open a locker. A guest-facing staff member can now meet those needs, or a manager can attend to the task from a remote location.

Locker rental can also be bundled in with cabana rentals and pre-purchased meal options.

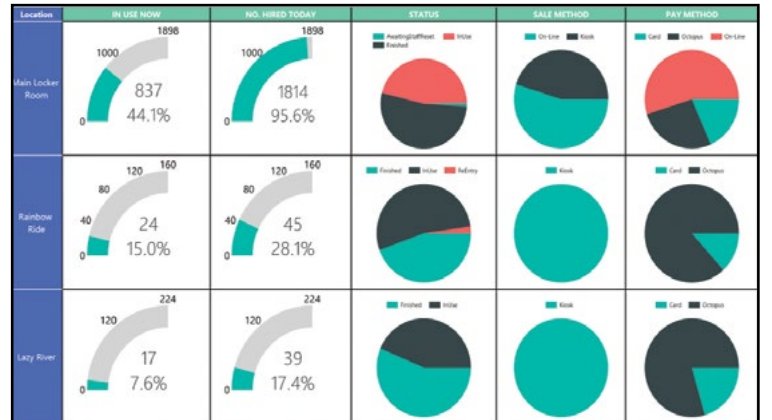
“It removes the feeling

of ‘nickel and diming’ the guests,” said Wooley. “It can all be inclusive.”

VLocker can offer an application program interface (known as an API) to connect with the point-of-sale software or other tracking devices.

“We are already partnered and integrated with multiple large point-of-sale and smaller point-of-sale partners within the industry such as **Viva Ticket** and **Connect&Go**,” Wooley said. “We can customize the payment and media options for RFID, bar code, wristbands or any other type of material being used on property.”

A real-time analytical reporting system through **Amazon Server System** allows administrators to see guest spending patterns. In addition, if lockers are located in various locations throughout the facility, management can monitor inventory and communicate availability options to their customers.



Management receives real-time rental data on their personal devices. COURTESY VLOCKER

They can also check usage rates to confirm the right number of lockers for each area of the park. These reports can educate management on repositioning the locker setup between seasons (or mid-season) to help maximize profits by having installations in the most popular areas.

“This allows more flexibility for our customers to offer to their customers,” said Account Executive **René Stansbury**. “Flexibility is something we all like, especially when we are trying to cater to our customers to give them more options and utilize the software in different ways.”

“VLocker customizes every project for our partners so they can improve their overall guest experience and desire. We want to understand what [an operator’s] expectations are from delivery all the way to that individual walking through the turnstile,” Wooley

Screens not only note how many lockers (and sizes) are available but also present logo possibilities, such as **Amusement Today** in this image. COURTESY VLOCKER

added. “With the new system, we’ve been able to complete projects within 10 days. Innovation of the technological advancement in the software has contributed greatly to this accomplishment. This has been a two-and-a-half-year project for us to develop. Being able to brand it with the facility’s information brings the whole establishment together and creates a synergy in the family.”

•vlocker.com

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## BREAKING NEWS

# RMC and Larson International announce companies joining forces going forward

HAYDEN, Idaho and PLAINVIEW, Texas — Rocky Mountain Construction (RMC) and Larson International have partnered to form a single operating entity. The new organization will provide a comprehensive portfolio of thrill and family rides. The companies will combine engineering R&D efforts to drive innovation. Additional operational synergies will be derived through leveraging manufacturing capacity and streamlining back-office operations such as benefits, accounting and software licensing.

After more than 30 years with Larson International, **Jeff Novotny** has elected to retire.

"The decision to retire and merge with RMC is based on being closer to family and ensuring the future of our staff members," said Jeff Novotny.

**Hunter Novotny**, son of Jeff Novotny, will continue to be an integral part of the new organization. All existing management and staff will be retained.

RMC is committed to "building dreams" by consistently delivering award-winning rides. Going forward, the combined entity will continue to modernize existing ride platforms as well as develop new and differentiated rides. The joined companies will be led by **Darren Torr** as president and CEO of RMC and Larson International.

"I am excited to bring together these two incredible organizations," stated Torr. "Our values are closely aligned, and I look forward to future success by putting out incredible rides, providing a great value and treating our customers and crew members like family.

Larson International and RMC have collaborated for several years on multiple projects. This merger



Larson International's production of Flying Scooter rides triggered an industry-wide revival of the popular attraction. AT/FILE

provides current Larson International customers with the same quality rides and service that they have known for years and provides the Larson International staff the opportunity to grow, learn and contribute to a different side of the industry. Adding the proven product line from Larson International immediately gives RMC additional diversity and allows RMC to supply rides to any size of operator.

"The acquisition puts RMC and Larson International in a unique position — being able to offer customers anything from attractions designed for toddlers to some of the most highly anticipated coasters on the planet," said Hunter Novotny, Larson International.

Unbeknownst to some, the **National Roller Coaster Museum** takes up residence in the backyard of Larson International. A nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation, protection and advancement of past and future roller coasters. This institution — alongside RMC and Larson International — shares a collective passion to contribute to the advancement, growth and betterment of the amusement industry. Jeff Novotny,

chairman of the organization, will remain heavily involved in continuing the development of the National Roller Coaster Museum.

"I am looking forward to being located near the National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives and supporting its mission," added Torr.

Larson International was founded in 1967 by Walter Larson. In 1972, the company began building amusement rides. In 2002, Larson began producing **Bisch-Rocco**-type Flying Scooters ride. In 2006, the company was purchased by long-term employee, Jeff Novotny, who remained the owner though the recent merger. In 2011, the company acquired **Sellner Manufacturing**, famous for the Tilt-A-Whirl. The company offers more than 30 thrill and family-style rides, such as Giant Loop, Flying Scooters, Super Shot drop tower and Tilt-A-Whirl.

RMC was founded by **Fred Grubb** in 2001. RMC revolutionized coasters by establishing a new category of wood / steel "hybrid" coasters. RMC's current offerings include both wood and steel coasters, thrill and family coasters, as well as steel replacement track for traditional wooden coasters.

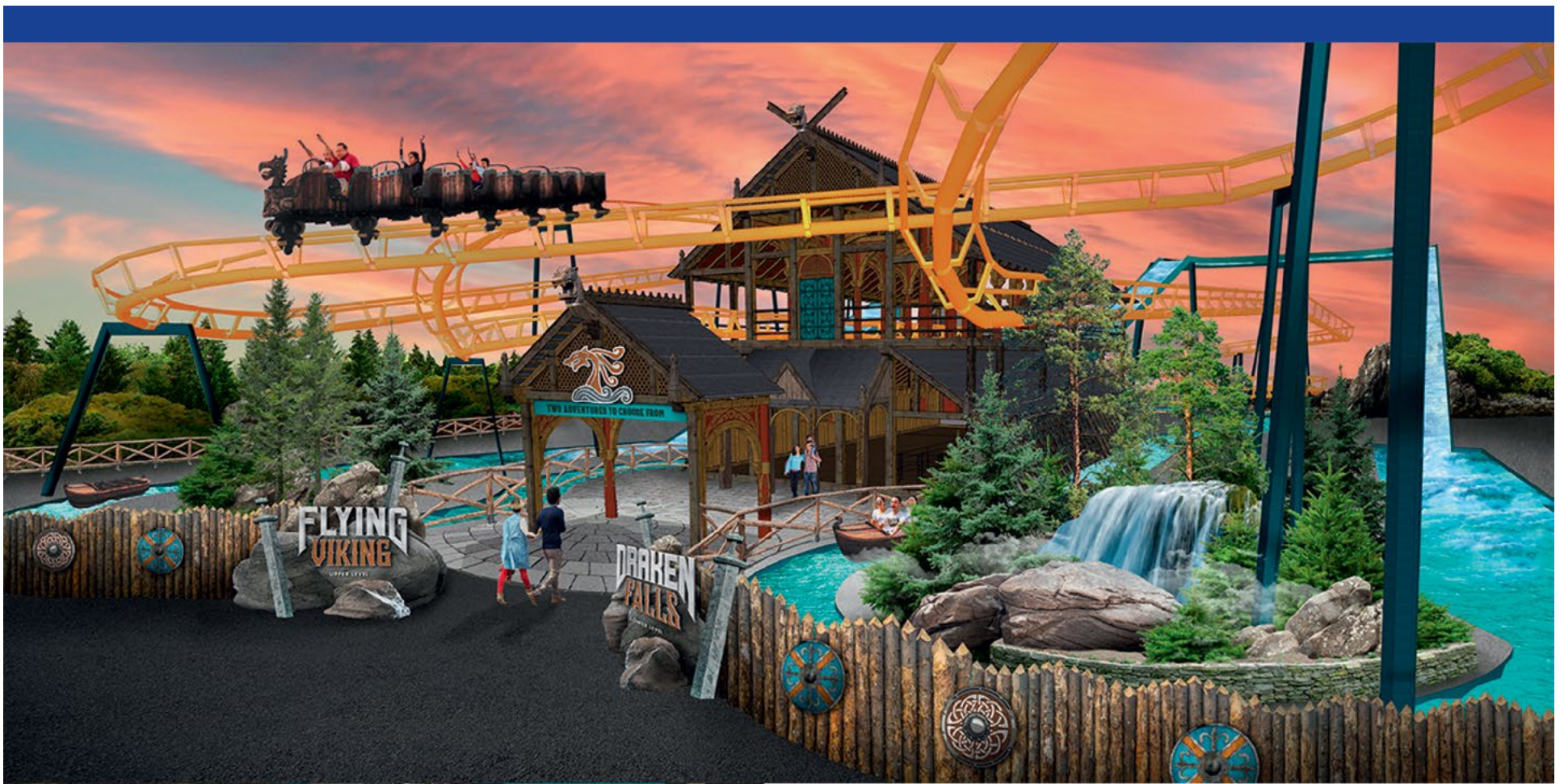
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