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Print Edition

2023 WWA Symposium, Trade Show headed to the Big Easy for learning, fun

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

NEW ORLEANS, La. — The 43rd World Waterpark Association's (WWA) Symposium and Trade Show, is set to return to the Big Easy Oct. 24-27, a place the event hasn't been to since 2016.

As the WWA's largest annual event, the Symposium and Trade Show provides hundreds of water park professionals with an opportunity to come together in one city to share ideas, address challenges and prepare for what's new and next in the upcoming year.

The Symposium and Trade Show will be held at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in the heart of New Orleans, Louisiana.

"Attendance is coming in strong," said Rick Root, WWA president.

Registration was still open and more signing up was expected.

In addition, Root said the trade show floor at the WWA Symposium will be filled with the products and services that water park owners, operators and developers use on a daily basis. He is expecting about 350 booths representing about 200 different companies.

"In addition, this year we have a record number of sponsorships," Root said. "We are very pleased with the tremendous amount of support for us this year."

One highlight of the

► See WWA, page 6



The aerial view shows how Rocket Blast had to be carefully fitted over and under the park's existing slides. COURTESY WALDAMEER & WATER WORLD

Waldameer's Water World launches Rocket Blast water coaster

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

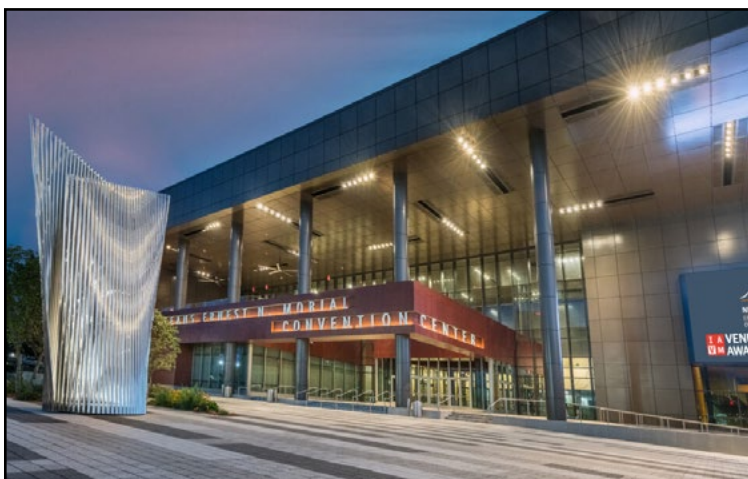
ERIE, Pa. — This past June, Waldameer's Water World opened Rocket Blast, a water coaster from ProSlide Technology of Ottawa, Ontario. As the name implies, the coaster utilizes ProSlide's patented RocketBlast water propulsion mechanics to propel four-person inline rafts uphill with jets of water strategically placed alongside the sides of the water trough.

Rocket Blast is a significant installation for the family-owned park. At a reported \$9 million, it is the biggest investment in the park's history, and it comes just a few years after the opening of Rally Racer, a massive, six-lane mat-racer, also from ProSlide.

In order to experience Rocket Blast, guests must first make the trek up a 67.6-foot slide tower — 116 steps total. The rafts are transported to the top via a conveyor lift. Once assembled into groups, up to four riders board the inline rafts to begin their journey.

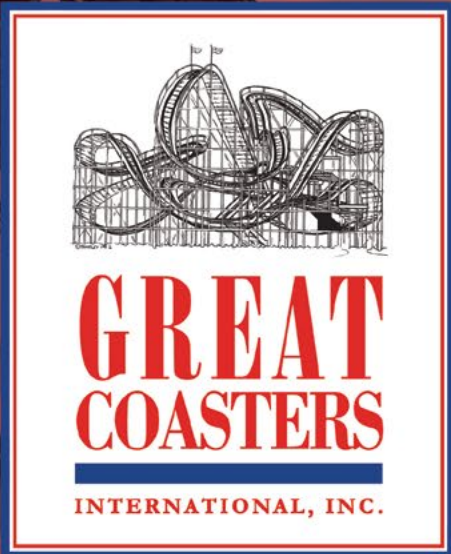
After getting a green light indicating all is clear, the riders on the raft begin their journey by entering an enclosed tube and then accelerate through a right-hand turn. Riders then burst into daylight as they encounter the first saucer section, where they will make a quick turn to the left while experiencing increased G-forces as the raft careens through the saucer. The exit to the saucer leads into the first uphill blast. The same series of elements is repeated with an enclosed right-hand turn followed by a left-turn saucer. Following the second saucer, riders are surprised by a quick drop that leads to the second uphill blast. The exit to this blast leads immediately into a right-turn saucer, followed by another surprise drop and then the third and final blast. From there, an enclosed tube winds its

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The 43rd Annual World Waterpark Symposium and Trade Show, set for October 24-27, will take attendees deep in the heart of the Big Easy at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, New Orleans, Louisiana.

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AMUSEMENT VIEWS

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

No longer the off-season



Robinson

This was always the time of year when parks took on a new look of lifelessness. Vibrant colors gave way to tarps and leafless trees, crowded midways became desolate slabs of concrete and the promise of summer fun fell silent as only maintenance crews and office staff populated parks.

Industry executives and suppliers start gathering regularly during this time of year for the annual trade shows and expos as "the business of fun" finds itself getting down to its more traditional business side.

However, recent years have brought change to the industry as a whole. Fall festivals keep families coming through the turnstiles throughout September and October. Many parks turn spooky — and some, downright terrifying — not from the silence of the rides but from the arrival of haunts and ghouls to give guests something more to scream about. Even the chillier winter months don't stop the festive lights, snowy treats and jolly shows of the various Christmas holiday celebrations.

And, when it comes down to it, why should the fun stop? Let's be honest, the "business" side of the "the business of fun" has been something all industry insiders have looked forward to since they stepped foot into this one-of-a-kind industry. Expos are educational, but they are also loaded with chances to celebrate, network and enjoy the company of our amusement industry family. New attractions are on display — and often available to be experienced. New tastes are on the showfloors waiting to be sampled. New ways to bring smiles to guests' faces — and, of course, generate revenue — are in abundance.

The holiday celebrations within our attractions have extended the operating season for our guests, but there never really was an off-season for those of us working in the industry. The festivals, haunts and winter extravaganzas are just our way of sharing the year-round fun we've all been experiencing with our loyal guests. There is no off-season. Be it a unique celebration or an expo, it's always the season of fun.

FLINT'S VIEW: Bubba Flint



INDUSTRY VOICE: Andrew Chafatelli, WWA and Rocking Horse Ranch Resort

Collaboration is essential to finding sustainable solutions

Were you recently hit by an increase in insurance premiums? Rising insurance costs have plagued our businesses. While it may not bring immediate relief, recognizing that you are not facing this issue alone will hopefully drive collective action and collaboration. To address the situation, various associations, including the World Waterpark Association, have created their own insurance programs.

Further efforts are needed to ensure our industry can continue to access affordable and comprehensive coverage. A collaboration between insurance providers, associations and regulatory bodies is essential to find sustainable solutions that protect businesses while ensuring the financial viability of the insurance industry.

Insurance companies and their actuarial teams have valuable access to vast amounts of data regarding the risks associated with their respective sectors. The potential of harnessing this data and utilizing it to effectively reduce the frequency and severity of claims cannot be overstated. However, insurers often exhibit



Chafatello

hesitancy when it comes to sharing this valuable information.

Many view data as a competitive advantage and privacy concerns related to sensitive customer information as well as regulatory constraints further hinder sharing data. However, recognizing that data sharing and collaboration can drive innovation, benefits the industry as a whole.

By forming strategic partnerships, leveraging data analytics technologies and safeguarding data exchange, insurance carriers can unlock the full potential of data-driven decision making, leading to enhanced efficiency, improved industry safety and defensibility strategies.

Augmenting the safety of our future patrons is of utmost importance, even though it may appear daunting. By prioritizing their well-being, we are making responsible decisions that will benefit insurers and the insured. Investing in the collaboration yields positive outcomes, leading to improved loss ratios, increased profitability and ensuring a prosperous and safe future for all.

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



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Address: P.O. Box 5427, Arlington, Texas 76005-5427, USA

Deliveries: 2004 E. Randol Mill Road #502, Arlington, Texas 76011, USA

Phone: (817) 460-7220

Fax: (817) 265-NEWS (6397)

Websites: www.AmusementToday.com, www.GoldenTicketAwards.com

Call **(817) 460-7220** for advertising, circulation or editorial inquiries

Founder & Publisher

Gary Slade • (817) 460-7220
gslade@amusementtoday.com

Accounting & Classified

Sammy Piccola • (817) 460-7220
spiccola@amusementtoday.com

Advertising

John Robinson • (513) 256-1441
jrobinson@amusementtoday.com

Gary Slade • (817) 460-7220
gslade@amusementtoday.com

Editor & Production Manager

John Robinson • (513) 256-1441
jrobinson@amusementtoday.com

Editorial

Tim Baldwin • (972) 697-9745
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

Jeffrey Seifert • (817) 460-7220
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

B. Derek Shaw • (717) 843-3050
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

Pam Sherborne • (615) 308-3310
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

Monthly Contributors

David Fake, Bubba Flint, Ron Gustafson, Susan Storey, Janice Witherow

Association Memberships

ACE, AIMS International, ASTM, IAAPA, IISF, IRT/iROC, NAARSO, NEAAPA, NJAA, OABA, PAPA, PACE, SLA, TTIA, WWA

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2 MINUTE DRILL



AT: Janice Witherow

Stacy Yutko, Knoebels Amusement Resort

Stacy Yutko loves being part of the "family" at **Knoebels Amusement Resort** where she oversees public relations, social media and guest experience at the beloved Pennsylvania park. Her creativity, organization, pleasant personality and get-the-job-done attitude are perfect characteristics for her role at Knoebels. Stacy is a favorite among the roller coaster enthusiast community and loves it when the park's popular Phoenix Phall Phunfest event rolls around every October!

Title: Director of Public Relations & Guest Experience.

Number of years in the industry: The start of next season will mark a decade full-time! I clocked in seven seasons growing up, too.

Best thing about the industry: Our opportunity to be truly creative with the ways we bring joy to guests.

Favorite amusement ride: Sky Wheel (double Ferris wheel). I do love roller coasters and dark rides in general.

If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be ... Either a nurse, modeling my career after my mom's incredible work, or I would own a PR agency, helping local businesses grow by telling their story.

Biggest challenge facing our industry: Maintaining guest confidence in safety, including shedding light on ride stops.

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

A renewed energy thanks to the realization that our guests could be anywhere but chose to visit Knoebels.

Favorite hangout: Anywhere my husband, son and I can take our camper.

The best thing about living in Pennsylvania is ...

Experiencing all four seasons.

When I say fall, you say ... Phoenix Phall Phunfest. It's like Christmas to me!

One piece of clothing that never goes out of style is ... A comfy sundress.

The last time I went to a concert was ... June to see Ed Sheeran. But I must mention I got to experience Taylor Swift's Eras Tour the month prior!



Stacy Yutko's creativity, organization, pleasant personality and get-the-job-done attitude are perfect characteristics for her role at Knoebels. COURTESY KNOEBELS

In one word, my friends would say I am ... Genuine.

The quietest time of my day is typically ... Long after most people have gone to bed. I've always been a night owl. That's my time to catch up on just about everything.

It's football season! Who's your favorite team? Philadelphia Eagles, with the Green Bay Packers holding a special place in my heart.

My "feel-good" song is ... "You Got It" by Roy Orbison. Every time I hear it, it takes me back to dancing on my dad's feet to it as a little girl.

When making dinner for guests, my specialty is ... Whatever my husband feels like making. He thankfully does the majority of cooking in our home!

Most helpful invention in the last decade: The incredible safety features in my vehicle.

The last thing I misplaced was ... I've misplaced my phone so often lately I'm beginning to wonder if I'm doing it on purpose.

Favorite expression: "That's incredible!"

My television is mostly set to this channel ... We stream everything and Discovery+ is my most-used service.

On a rainy day, I like to ... Use it as an opportunity to slow down.

THE INDUSTRY SEEN

Big enough for Big Bear



PIGEON FORGE, Tenn. — During the recent 2023 Golden Ticket Awards ceremonies held at Dollywood in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, attendees enjoyed an opening reception held in the park's popular Wildwood Grove area. The evening included socializing, networking, food, drinks and even private ride times on some of the area's popular attractions. Brian Knoebel of Knoebels Amusement Resort celebrated when he discovered he met the height requirement to ride the new Big Bear Mountain roller coaster, which would take home the Golden Ticket for Best Family Coaster of 2023. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

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► WWA

Continued from page 1

WWA event is the careful focus the WWA event planners give the overall agenda. There are an abundant amount of opportunities for attendees to learn from experts in their fields, as well as other attendees and exhibitors.

Educational sessions, workshops and committee meetings take place at different times throughout the entire four days of the event. The only time other activities aren't scheduled is during the actual trade show hours. The trade show runs two days, 12:30-6:30 p.m., Oct. 25 and 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Oct. 26.

Although, officially, the start date of the WWA Symposium and Trade Show is October 24, there are related events and certification courses that begin on October 22, with the first of the two-day Aquatic Facility Operator Certification Course. It concludes the next day, October 23.

Also on October 22, is the first day of the two-day Certified Pool Operator Certification Course, which also will conclude October 23.

The first of the three-day **Ellis and Associates** Lifeguard Instructor Licensing Program begins October 22. It continues all day on October 23 and concludes October 24.

There will be a series of WWA University offerings to kick off the official opening of the symposium on October



The Annual WWA Symposium and Trade Show is expecting about 350 booths representing 250 companies this year's event, set for Oct. 24-27, New Orleans, Louisiana. COURTESY WORLD WATERPARK ASSOCIATION

24. Those university courses are Water Park Design, Development and Expansion Workshop; Ready, Set, Go: A Guide to Getting Started Workshop; Water Park Maintenance School and Food and Beverage School, which is new this year.

The **StarGuard Elite** Lifeguard Supervisor Course will run all day on October 24.

The popular WWA Annual Golf Tournament is set for the afternoon of October 24. It will be held at the **Lakewood Golf Club**.

Committee meetings, as well as other educational programming, will take place the next morning, October 25.

New this year to the com-

mittee line-up is the Food and Beverage Committee.

"Some of our food and beverage members have been meeting virtually on a monthly basis for about two years," Root said. "We have decided to make this an official committee this year."

Another new committee added this year is the Northern Africa Committee.

"There is a lot of interest in both of these new committees," Root said.

Other committees set to meet include the Safety Committee, Resort Committee, Public Sector Committee and Smaller Park Meeting.

The Opening Session is also set for this day, just prior to the opening of the trade show. During this hour-long

event, attendees will hear updates from the WWA's board of directors, honor Hall of Fame inductees and Board Award winners and review the most recent industry news from 2023.

Topics of the educational programming that takes place over the next days will span the gamut of interests this year. One new area is in de-escalation techniques. Root said **Capt. Hayden Brown**, of the **Livingston Parish SO Training Academy**, New Orleans, will be on hand to conduct sessions on this subject.

A sampling of other topics include: Sink Or Swim: How To Navigate Legal And Operational Issues And Stay Afloat; the Evolution Of Next-Level Waterpark Theming and Design; CDC Guidance For Surf Venues; How To Create and Leverage Short Form Video Content; How To Create Usable Maintenance And Capital Improvement Plans; Creating Waves: A Conversation About Surf and Brand Mindful Litigation Strategies In The Era Of Cancel Culture.

In addition, more topics include: Water park Engineering For Risk Mitigation And Operations; Managing Aquatic Related Emergencies — A Full Lifecycle Approach To Preparedness; Do You Need A Hammer Or A Socket

Wrench? Lessons Learned In Leadership; Dive Into Success: New And Improved Strategies For Group Sales And Birthday Parties; Mental Health First Aid; Here's The 4-1-1 On Employing 14- And 15-Year-Olds; Building The Bench: Identifying And Developing Upcoming Industry Leaders and Worst Case Scenario Survival Handbook.

The WWA Opening Session is set for the morning of October 25. The Welcome Reception is set for that afternoon on the trade show floor.

The Annual Reunion Party is planned for the evening of October 25 at **Generations Hall**, an events venue in downtown New Orleans.

It is the premier networking opportunity provided at the WWA Symposium. Shuttles provide transportation to the event.

And while the Reunion Party is a primary networking opportunity, the WWA has built in many times for industry attendees to get together.

Aside from luncheons where attendees and exhibitors can chat, the WWA booth will host specific times for various experts to be on hand to talk with attendees. For example, there will be representatives from the public sector, safety, technology and innovation, education and marketing, to name a few.

•waterparks.org



The Annual Reunion Party, WWA's premiere networking opportunity, is set for the evening of October 25. It will be held in New Orleans Generations Hall, which was originally built in the early 1820s as a sugar refinery. It offers a glimpse into a bygone era showcasing artwork depicting the history of New Orleans jazz. COURTESY WORLD WATERPARK ASSOCIATION

World Waterpark Association 2023 Symposium and Trade Show

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A surprise drop thrills riders as they exit the saucer section (above left). Rafts of up to four riders speed through the ride's open saucer sections.
COURTESY WALDAMEER & WATER WORLD

▶ROCKET Continued from page 1

way back down into the final splash pool, where an attendant will assist riders as they exit. The attendant then directs the raft onto the conveyor, where it is transported back to the top of the tower.

Before opening the new attraction to the public, Waldameer invited family and friends to test the slide, run the crew through their paces and work out any operational issues. Approximately 150 guests got to enjoy the slide over the two-day soft opening.

At a media preview, just prior to the official opening, Park President **Steve Gorman** told news reporters, "We are so glad that we are just about ready to turn the switch and have people come ride this ride because I think the public will really, really enjoy it."

The ride's opening came just a few weeks after the passing of Gorman's father-in-law, **Paul Nelson**, who was the long-time owner and visionary of Waldameer Park & Water World. In his final weeks, Nelson oversaw the installation and near-completion of Rocket Blast. While the ride is a professional milestone for Gorman, it's also a person-

al one, as Rocket Blast was the last ride he and Nelson worked on together.

At 831 feet, Rocket Blast is the longest slide at the park, almost twice as long as any other slide at Water World, according to Gorman. The slide earned Waldameer a Golden Ticket Award for Best New Water Park Ride of 2023.

"We are thrilled that Rocket Blast won the Golden Ticket for Best New Water Park Attraction," said Gorman. "For our family, it's somewhat bittersweet because this was the final attraction that Paul Nelson selected to

install before passing away in late May, three weeks before it opened. He personally was the driver in all additions and upgrades to Waldameer for the last 60-plus years. We still have three generations of family members managing the park and will try our best to continue his legacy. Paul would have loved to have ridden this amazing water coaster and seen the positive reactions of our guests. They love the twists and turns and the wet splashes of the blast sections. Designing and installing this slide so close to existing slides and

buildings was quite a feat, but ProSlide and **USA, Inc.** managed to succeed and provide Waldameer with a winner that will be loved for years."

Nelson started at the park in 1945 when he was just 11 years of age. The previous park owner, **Alex Moeller** adopted Nelson, who worked his way through the ranks to become general manager. When Moeller died in 1965, he willed the park to Nelson.

Under Nelson, the park expanded to include waterslides. Water World debuted in 1986 with two

waterslides provided by **Molded Fiberglass Company** of nearby Union City along with a children's play area. The expansion paid off, and the water park breathed new life into the park with record seasons closing out the decade. Attractions were added over the years, and then in 2015, Water World doubled in size with the addition of a giant wave pool. That was the beginning of an aggressive expansion leading to the installation of the massive Rally Racer in 2020 followed by Rocket Blast just three years later.



Strategically placed water jets blast rafts full of riders uphill three times throughout the ride's course.
COURTESY WALDAMEER & WATER WORLD

PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

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Bolliger & Mabillard to supply Iron Menace coaster to Dorney Park

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

ALLENTOWN, Pa. — It has been more than a decade since **Dorney Park & Wildwater Kingdom** introduced a new roller coaster. Ironically, that coaster came and went after six seasons. Fans of the park felt Dorney Park was due. In 2024, coaster fans will finally jump aboard something new — and it is a major investment.

Capitalizing on the history of steel manufacturing in Pennsylvania, Iron Menace will have a story to tell.

"All parties involved in this project, both locally and nationally, felt strongly that we need to be a park that represents the proud history and people of the Lehigh Valley," said **Ryan Eldredge**, public relations manager. "As we begin to transition into a future of precisely themed rides, entertainment and areas, we felt as though a callback to the steel industry was absolutely necessary. Further,



Iron Menace will feature four inversions.

COURTESY DORNEY PARK



The new coaster at Dorney Park will tie into the history of steel production in the region (above). The tilted loop will be the first such maneuver on a B&M dive coaster. (inset). COURTESY DORNEY PARK



understanding that legacy and what it means and how it feels or looks to Lehigh Valley residents was critical. I believe you'll see that reflected in the pride in which we tell the story of the ride, the care with which we construct all elements of it and the tones we utilize to capture the imagination of all our guests."

Dorney Park spins the backstory this way: In the early 1900s, Scottish businessman Hiram S. McTavish opened McTavish Steel Mill, a direct competitor to Bethlehem Steel Company. Greed dictated McTavish's every move, and he was well known to prioritize profits above people. With an eye on maximizing output, McTavish created a massive hauler he dubbed "Iron Menace," a device the steel industry had never seen. The

rail transporter moved workers and ore at record volumes and dizzying speeds.

As all good stories go, a mystery surrounds the steel baron's disappearance. Following the closure of McTavish Steel Mill, all that remains are rusty relics and the Iron Menace.

"The station itself and a number of buildings around the ride will be themed out to the rich industrial heritage of the Lehigh Valley, giving our guests the feeling of walking through an old area steel yard," Eldredge said.

Iron Menace is supplied by **Bolliger & Mabillard**. It will be a dive coaster from the Swiss firm's portfolio. It will be the seventh dive coaster from B&M in North America, and 17th globally.

"The Iron Menace project has been one of passion and

collaboration for a little over a year, but to be clear, Dorney Park and Cedar Fair have had continuing discussions about a signature ride that would help propel the park into a bold future of fun and entertainment," noted Eldredge.

Standing at 160 feet tall, Iron Menace will have an imposing presence at the lower level of the park's sloped terrain. The ride will feature the customary hold brake at the precipice of the first drop. Following that hanging moment of adrenaline, riders plunge beyond vertical at 95 degrees down a 152-foot drop, reaching a top speed of 64 mph.

"The park, our guests, our community and the theme park industry at large are bubbling with excitement. We have received an overwhelming number of posi-

itive and encouraging messages since we announced, and it's truly remarkable to see the impact an investment like this can have on the parties listed previously," Eldredge told *Amusement Today*. "Additionally, we have seen an uptick in attendance, pass sales and social media followers since news broke of the Iron Menace project."

The coaster layout will feature four inversions throughout its 2,169 feet of track. The layout is customized to Dorney Park. Each vehicle seats three rows of seven riders, making for 21 per car. Passengers will flip upside down through an Immelmann inversion, zero-G roll, a tilted loop and a corkscrew.

When the coaster opens next spring, Dorney Park will have eight roller coasters in its arsenal.



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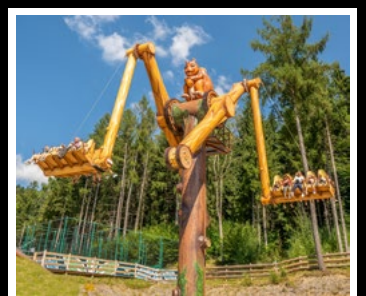
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Mattel Adventure Park will become Arizona's first fully themed indoor/outdoor amusement park upon opening in 2024. COURTESY MATTEL ADVENTURE PARK

Hot Wheels Bone Shaker opening in 2024 with Mattel Adventure Park

GLENDALE, Ariz. — Pulse-pounding Hot Wheels rollercoasters and a life-size Barbie Beach House are just a few of the attractions underway at **Mattel Adventure Park**, which will become Arizona's first fully themed indoor/outdoor amusement park upon opening in 2024.

Set to open just south of **State Farm Stadium** in Glendale at **VAI Resort**, Mattel Adventure Park will welcome guests 365 days a year and serve as a year-round Arizona entertainment destination showcasing the full spectrum of the iconic toymaker's expansive portfolio of brands. The uniquely designed, massive, nine-acre park combines inspiration from **Mattel**, **Epic Resort Destinations** and other industry-leading partners in amusements and entertainment. Substantially indoors, the park's attractions load and unload inside a fully air-conditioned space, making the park a comfortable, family-friendly destination at any time of year.

Mattel Adventure Park will include two fully themed

Hot Wheels rollercoasters: **Hot Wheels Bone Shaker**: The Ultimate Ride and the **Hot Wheels Twin Mill Racer**. Designed to delight kids and adults of all ages, the **Hot Wheels Bone Shaker** themed ride will be the first-ever family coaster to feature the famous hot rod's skull design; it climbs 84 feet in the air. The double-looping **Hot Wheels Twin Mill Racer** guarantees a serious adrenaline boost for guests seeking an even higher-octane experience. The **Hot Wheels Twin Mill Racer** features a double loop and two corkscrews, qualifying it as the first coaster of its kind in Arizona.

"Mattel Adventure Park is an amazing opportunity to bring our beloved brands to life," said **Julie Freeland**, senior director of global location based entertainment at **Mattel**. "Construction is underway and substantial progress has been made on what will give fans of all ages a day of thrills and nostalgia. We're especially excited for families to experience the **Hot Wheels Bone Shaker** roller coaster."

"Mattel Adventure Park features a unique and strategic year-round indoor/outdoor design providing acres of air-conditioned space to ensure a cool guest experience all summer long here in the heat of Arizona," said **Mark Cornell**, president at **Epic Resort Destinations**. "Our Attractions Development team are simply redefining the entertainment channel by bringing **Mattel's** powerhouse, ever-green brands to life like never before. This hand-picked, gifted team continues to find truly innovative ways to create pioneering attractions that are certain to bring continuous fun for the whole family."

While these and other **Hot Wheels**-themed attractions promise full-throttle fun for race enthusiasts of all ages, there is also plenty in store for park guests from other favorite **Mattel** brands, including **Thomas & Friends: World of Sodor**, with seven family-friendly experiential attractions; a full-scale **Barbie Beach House** where **Barbie** fans can get a closer look inside **Barbie's** iconic closet in the **Barbie Dream Closet Experience**; and **Masters of the Universe** fans can fight for **Eternia** in a massive, laser tag arena as well as a mini golf experience featuring nine holes inspired by beloved **Mattel** games such as **Magic 8 Ball** and **Pictionary**.

"Watching the excitement build as these mega attractions are being installed in Glendale has been tremendous, and we promise, you've never seen a park quite like this one," added **Cornell**.



A highlight of the forthcoming **Mattel Adventure Park** will be the **Hot Wheels: Bone Shaker** roller coaster from **Chance Rides**. It will be the first-ever coaster themed to the popular toy car line. COURTESY MATTEL ADVENTURE PARK

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Halloween Horror Nights open for Golden Ticket-winning scares

AT: David Fake

Special to Amusement Today

ORLANDO — The world's premier Halloween event and 15-time Golden Ticket Award winner is back for its 32nd year with 10 haunted houses, five scare zones, live entertainment, *dead-fully* delicious food and beverage offerings. This year Halloween Horror Nights at Universal Studios Florida runs a record-breaking 48 nights from September 1 through November 4.

While there is no overarching theme this year, there is a new "icon" for 2023, Dr. Oddfellow, who not only has his own themed house, but also carries an "odd" connection to each of the five scare zones.

Universal Creative, in its true creative genius, also connects Oddfellow and his backstory to Halloween Horror Nights' original icon, Jack the Clown.

Oddfellow's fictional back story is told throughout Dr. Oddfellow: Twisted Origins house. The house explains that Oddfellow's Grand Circus & Exposition would travel across the country throughout the 1930s, showcasing various circus and freakshow acts. On a fateful day during the Dust Bowl of 1939, Dr. Oddfellow would stop in a rural Midwest town and set up his carnival. He advertised his carnival with posters across the town to entice curious and unsuspecting patrons to visit his



Dr. Oddfellow (above left) is a new icon for 2023's Halloween Horror Nights and sports his own Dr. Oddfellow: Twisted Origins house. The popular *Stranger Things* franchise returns to Orlando with the *Stranger Things 4* haunt (above right). AT/DAVID FAKE



carnival. Once there, he would kidnap, torture and force them to participate in grotesque carnival "acts," eventually sacrificing them in order to capture their souls with his Cane of Souls, to harness the power of the Zodiac. He would then mutilate their corpses, contorting their bodies in ways that mimicked the 12 Zodiac signs. Once he sacrificed enough souls to the Zodiac, he adorned the carnival with Zodiac symbols to complete the ritual and gain immortality.

Coincidentally, it was during this same period that Jack the Clown confessed to the murders of 13 children, whom he hid in Jack-in-the-box displays in Dr. Oddfellow's House of Horrors. Fearing capture and wanting to cover his

HALLOWEEN

tracks, Dr. Oddfellow killed Jack the Clown and stuffed him in a box, like Jack did to his victims. Before he was murdered, Jack the Clown would scratch Dr. Oddfellow, permanently scarring him and causing some of his blood to drip onto Jack the Clown, granting the dying clown the same immortality as Oddfellow.

Ne'er-be-well-intended locals who snuck into the carnival to see the sights late at night would discover the sinister true nature of Dr. Oddfellow's purpose, only to also meet their fate at the hand of Oddfellow, who sent their souls into another plane of existence, to maintain his secret.

After the carnage and

mayhem in each town, Dr. Oddfellow would cover his tracks by burning every trace of his name, including all posters and billboards advertising the carnival and flee to another unsuspecting town to create chaos with his newly gained powers and immortality.

In addition to the Oddfellow house, there are four other Universal original houses: Yeti: Campground Kills, The Darkest Deal, Bloodmoon: Dark Offerings and Dueling Dragons: Choose Thy Fate. The last of which tells a unique story that is based on the much-loved but now defunct Dueling Dragons suspended roller coasters designed by **Bollinger and Mabillard** which operated at **Universal's Islands of Adventure** from 1999 until 2017, experiencing a name change in 2011 when it reopened with new theming as Dragons Challenge within the new Wizarding World of Harry Potter themed land.

There are also five existing IP-themed houses – *Stranger Things 4*, *The Exorcist: Believer*, *Universal Monsters: Unmasked*, *Chucky: Ultimate Kill Count* and *The Last of Us*, inspired by *Naughty Dog* and PlayStation's award-winning post-pandemic video game as they join a brutal journey in a world overtaken by a fungal virus that turns humans into a new threat, the "Infected."

Set in a ravaged civilization, where Infected and hardened survivors run rampant, "The Last of Us" video game, which celebrates its 10th anniversary this year, has captivated audiences since its release. Guests can now immerse themselves in an experience that puts them directly into the game's frightening world.

It was "The Last of Us" video game creator and **Naughty Dog** Co-Studio Head and Head of Creative, **Neil Druckmann**, who planted the seed for turning the game into a haunted house by tweeting his idea several years ago after visiting Halloween Horror Nights with his family.

"I was amazed at how much traction the tweet received, and even more surprised when after only a few days, Universal Creative reached out to me to see if I was serious about the idea. I was," said Druckmann.

While not an official part of Halloween Horror Nights, an ominous presence can be found in *The Wizarding World of Harry Potter* within Universal Studios Florida, as *Death Eaters* appear for the first time ever in *Diagon Alley* on select dates that correspond with the run of the Halloween event. The **J.K. Rowling** IP has never participated in Halloween Horror Nights in any manner before, even though the themed land is open for the event.



The *Last of Us* video game creator and **Naughty Dog** Co-Studio Head and Head of Creative, **Neil Druckmann** with actor **Troy Baker**, the video game voice talent of "Joel," visit a scene inside the video game-inspired haunted house, a highlight of the 32nd Halloween Horror Nights at Universal Studios Florida. COURTESY UNIVERSAL ORLANDO

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The Brick-or-Treat Monster Party has returned for family-friendly fun at Legoland California in Carlsbad on select dates. It kicked off Sept. 16 and will run through Oct. 29. For the event, the park transformed into a fun-filled Halloween escape with tons of candy, new shows and a never-before-seen Lego character. COURTESY LEGOLAND CALIFORNIA



Hersheypark Halloween and Dark Nights, Hershey, Pennsylvania, is expanding its offerings for 2023. There are immersive haunt experience with more days and hours, a new fifth haunted house, enhanced scares and exclusive food. The event began Sept. 15 and will run through Oct. 29. COURTESY HERSHEY PARK



Luna Park in Coney Island, Brooklyn, New York, is welcoming the transition into fall with its popular annual Halloween Harvest. The event kicked off Sept. 22 with fun-filled activities such as balloon twisting, caricature portraits, trick-or-treating, tractor racing, pumpkin decorating station and a pumpkin patch. It runs through Oct. 29. COURTESY LUNA PARK



Phantom Fall Fest at Lake Compounce, Bristol, Connecticut, began Sept. 23 and will run through Oct. 29 on select days. The event is packed with thrills and frights that include all new scare zones and a completely reimagined haunt, mAlice in Wonderland 3D. COURTESY LAKE COMPOUNCE



Haunted Nights at Toverland, Netherlands, is introducing an all new haunted house for its 2023 fright event, which runs Oct. 7-Nov. 5. During the day, the park offers family-friendly fall events but, after dark, the spooks, as well as 160 scare actors, come out. The new haunted house is called Now You're Mine, where guests will visit a mining museum. COURTESY TOVERLAND



Big Ed's Demolition Derby is one of the new scare zones at this year's Howl-O-Scream at Busch Gardens Tampa Bay, Florida. The event began Sept. 10 and will go through Oct. 31 on 28 select nights. COURTESY BUSCH GARDENS TAMPA BAY



Sesame Place, Langhorne, Pennsylvania, is now full of little ghosts and goblins. This park's Halloween event opened Sept. 16. It will run through Nov. 5, with family-friendly fun, rides and activities. Called the Count's Halloween Spooktacular, the event is featuring shows and parades, pumpkin decorating and interactive scavenger hunts. COURTESY SESAME PLACE



With the arrival of October comes Italy's Gardaland Magic Halloween, the most scarily fun event of the season. Zombies, witches and vampires will welcome guests from Oct. 6-Nov. 5, every Friday, Saturday and Sunday. COURTESY GARDALAND



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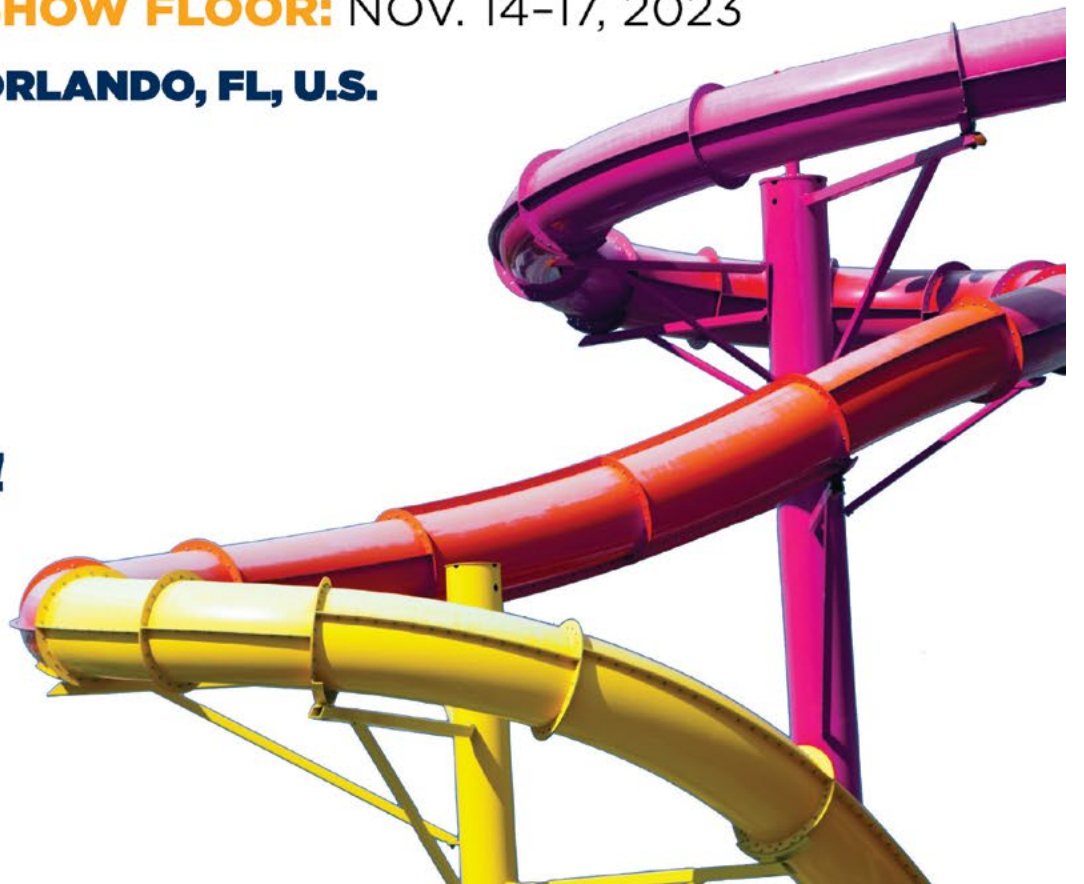
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Wild Adventures expands Great Pumpkin LumiNights



VALDOSTA, Ga. — Wild Adventures announced additions to its Great Pumpkin LumiNights event, including a pumpkin carving gallery and a new area with activities for kids. The park's third annual Great Pumpkin LumiNights began September 22 and continues every Friday, Saturday and Sunday through October 29. This year's event will include the new LumiNight Legends Pumpkin Gallery, which stars 150 carved foam pumpkins. These remarkable creations include depictions of famous Georgians, regional icons and beloved members of Wild Adventures' animal family from renowned pumpkin carver Jim Morey. COURTESY WILD ADVENTURES

Halloween in the Sky show featuring 400 drones comes to Holiday World

SANTA CLAUD, Ind. — Holiday World's 2023 Happy Halloween Weekends will feature Halloween in the Sky, a brand-new, 400-drone spectacular every Saturday night from September 23 to October 28.

Happy Halloween Weekends is Holiday World's family-friendly fall event that runs weekends through October 29. The event includes the rides of Holiday World, plus Halloween-themed shows, food and attractions, including a 12-acre corn maze.

"The fun doesn't stop at Holiday World and Splashin' Safari just because we are weekends only," said Director of Entertainment and fourth-generation Owner **Lauren Crosby**. "Between KidsWorld [which ran until September 16] and Happy Halloween Weekends, there's a ton of



HALLOWEEN

family fun packed into the rest of the season!"

Halloween in the Sky will begin at 7:45 p.m. — September 23 through October 28 — and is included with guest admission. The brand-new show will

feature a new generation of drones that are brighter.

"Guests can't get enough of our drone show," added Crosby. "It is something so incredible that you must see to believe. The newest generation of drones is truly stunning!"

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Nickelodeon Universe at Mall of America announces two attractions

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — Nickelodeon Universe has announced two new attractions will debut at Mall of America within the next year. The fun-filled rides feature beloved characters Boots from *Dora the Explorer* and Appa from *Avatar: The Last Airbender*. Construction on the rides will begin this fall.

“Nickelodeon Universe is a place for fans to let their imagination run wild by seeing their favorite characters come to life, while enjoying thrilling and playful rides,” said **Jill Renslow**, chief business development and marketing officer at Mall of America.

Get ready to go on an adventure with Boots. Boots’ Banana Swing will allow guests to monkey around as they swing along with Boots through the breathtaking rainforest treetops. The fantastical



Boots’ Banana Swing (above left) and Fly with Appa (above right) promise more family fun at Nickelodeon Universe within Mall of America, while continuing the park's tradition of showcasing the brand's popular franchises. COURTESY MALL OF AMERICA

ride is set to open this holiday season just in time for winter break.

Visitors will soon be able to take flight on Fly with Appa, where they will climb aboard their very own sky bison and feel the rush of exhilaration as they take to the skies, enjoying stunning aerial views while traveling up, down and all around. These loyal and loving creatures use air-

bending to navigate air currents with their tails, allowing them to fly. Fly with Appa is set to open during spring break 2024.

“The addition of Boots’ Banana Swing and Fly with Appa are sure to provide a new element of excitement and special family memories for years to come,” added Renslow. “Whether you’re young or young at heart, we can’t wait for everyone to experience our

newest attractions.”

Those aren’t the only changes guests can expect to find during their upcoming visits to Nickelodeon Universe, as Bubble Guppies Guppy Bubbler will be moving to a new location in the park. Although the ride will be temporarily closed when construction begins on the new attractions, it will reopen for riders this holiday season.

Nickelodeon Universe

celebrated 15 years of fun at Mall of America this past March. Nickelodeon Universe opened its doors on March 15, 2008. Since its opening, millions of guests have visited the one-of-a-kind destination featuring nearly 30 rides and attractions. The seven-acre theme park is home to many of Nickelodeon’s globally beloved characters from the brand’s iconic franchises.

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Vekoma family boomerang to anchor expansion

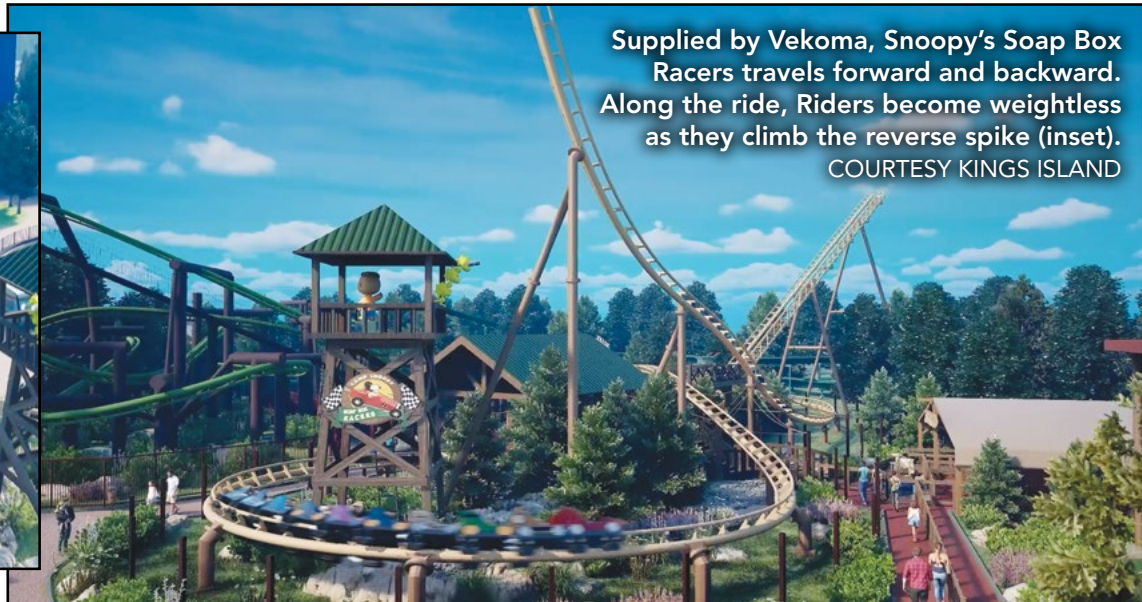
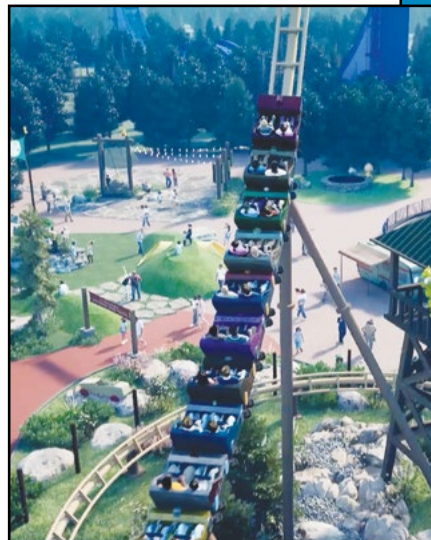
Kings Island to make award-winning kids' area bigger in 2024

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

MASON, Ohio — Kings Island has reached the age where multiple generations of visitors have grown up with the park. That loyalty is continually created with new guests at a young age. Kings Island's kids' area, Planet Snoopy, has been an award-winning section of the park. It has a lot to offer, but there are new attractions coming for 2024.

Partnering with Vekoma, the park will be adding a new roller coaster to the lineup. Snoopy's Soap Box Racers will be the first family boomerang coaster in the Cedar Fair chain.

"With four coasters already in Planet Snoopy, we wanted a coaster that was different and unique to add to the collection," said Mike Koontz, vice president and general manager. "In addition, we wanted an accessible coaster that kids at least 38 inches tall, their older siblings, parents and grand-



Supplied by Vekoma, Snoopy's Soap Box Racers travels forward and backward. Along the ride, Riders become weightless as they climb the reverse spike (inset). COURTESY KINGS ISLAND

parents could enjoy riding together. The Vekoma family boomerang coaster is a great fit and meets all those requirements. Snoopy's Soap Box Racers gives riders a unique experience as it lifts the soap box cars backward up a 70-foot spike hill and then plunges the train back down through the station traveling at 37 mph. The train crosses the 'finish line,' climbs the second spike hill,

and then travels backward around the same course for a total of 1,400 feet."

Vekoma has enjoyed great success with the family boomerang coaster since the original opened at Drayton Manor in 2011. The offering has found enormous popularity in Europe and Asia over the last decade but has eluded North America. Among the multiple instal-

lations globally in 2024, two will finally appear in the United States; Kings Island boasts one of them.

Snoopy's Soap Box Racers will be the fourth roller coaster in the Planet Snoopy kids' area. (Of note, the park promotes the Zamperla Disk'O Coaster as a fifth "roller coaster experience.") The coaster will be the anchor to a new section

called Camp Snoopy.

"Our biggest challenge was to position Snoopy's Soapbox Racers in an area that connected it with the new Camp Snoopy theme without removing or retiring any existing rides as part of the project," Koontz told Amusement Today. "The space between the Flying

► See KINGS, page 19

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► **KINGS**
Continued from page 18

Ace Aerial Chase junior suspended coaster and the existing Peanuts theater was ideal, and the only building we had to retire was a food snack stand. We were able to incorporate not only the new coaster, but also our log flume ride, suspended coaster and the existing outdoor show theater into the new Camp Snoopy area footprint.”

In addition to the new coaster, kids of all ages will have a chance to become full-fledged members of the Beagle Scouts at Camp Snoopy. Beagle Scout Acres, the official headquarters of the troop, will provide more outdoor summer camp fun and activities. In this new shaded, nature-themed play area, kids and their families will be able to explore and

play on their own among turfed mounds and grassy areas, filled with camping equipment to play in, climb over and crawl through. The park will offer “camp-tivities,” and, on an innovative note, young ones can work to earn merit badges with lofty goals such as sharing, working together and helping someone in need. Parents can engage or sit back in the shade and enjoy a snack while their children take in what Beagle Scout Acres has to offer.

“Beagle Scout Acres is an exciting addition to the Camp Snoopy area. Other Cedar Fair parks have incorporated similar active play areas for younger kids while providing their parents with a comfortable space to sit and relax,” said Koontz. “This new shaded, nature-themed space will be located primarily under the existing Peanuts theater cano-



Kings Island will have more coasters that parents can ride with young children than anywhere in the U.S. COURTESY KINGS ISLAND

py but will also extend out to some of the surrounding spaces adjacent to the theatre. With this new area, we really want kids to be able to explore and play on their own, while feeling as though they’re at the ultimate summer camp with their family. We’re also excited to introduce a series of entertaining camp activities led by members of the Peanuts gang that both kids and parents will

enjoy together.”

Snoopy’s Box Car Racers is suitable for the family. The low height requirement is something that has gained momentum in the industry.

A single train is pulled backward up an incline before being released to rush through the station and navigate curves and spirals. After reaching a reverse point, the 20-passenger train loses

momentum and completes the 672 feet of track in reverse. The roller coaster is accented by camp-style landscaping, rocks and a ranger’s tower.

Kings Island will soon have bragging rights as “Kids Coaster Capital” as the most kids roller coasters in one park in the United States that parents can ride with their children.

Once opened, Snoopy’s Soap Box Racers will give Kings Island 15 roller coasters.

“Camp Snoopy is just what families visiting Kings Island have been looking for,” said Koontz. “We’ve designed this new immersive area to feel like a day at camp where families can spend time with each other in a variety of ways, from the thrill of a new coaster to exploring and relaxing in the great outdoors with their favorite Peanuts characters.”

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Gravity Group, Intamin, Vekoma, Zamperla supply 2024 attractions

Six Flags theme parks roll out largest investment since 2019

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

ARLINGTON, Texas — Since the pandemic created a global situation, Six Flags Entertainment has opted for a modified strategy in investments in new attractions. However, 2024 looks to be the chain's largest investment since 2019.

Six Flags Great Escape will debut the only new wooden roller coaster in North America in 2024. Designed by The Gravity Group, the family wooden coaster will replace the park's Alpine Bobsled, which was manufactured in 1984. The new coaster is dubbed Bobcat.

"Six Flags and specifically Great Escape were very excited about the designs of our family coasters. They thought that the size and style of these would be just right for their audience, providing a fun ride experience for all ages of the family," said Michael Graham, principal, The Gravity Group.

"Sometimes retiring an older attraction is a necessary part of the process," noted Jennifer Mance, marketing, Six Flags Great Escape. "In the case of Alpine Bobsled, it was also important that we find an attraction to deliver family thrills but was not so weather dependent."

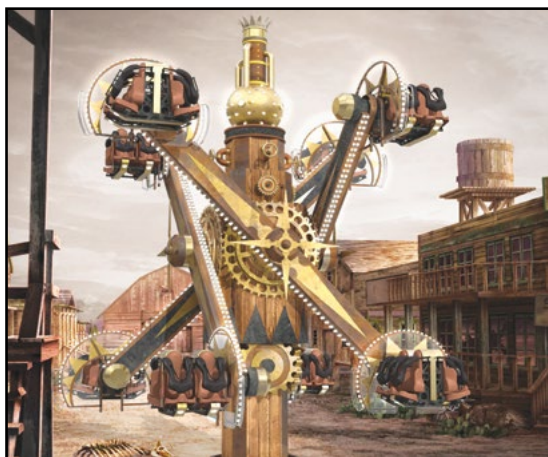
Owing to the trackless nature of the retired bobsled ride, which closed on September 4, rain could cause the ride to cease operation. The new coaster will utilize the site.

"The layout of the Alpine Bobsled did impact the design of The Bobcat," Graham told *Amusement Today*. "The park wanted to use the site of the bobsled ride without disturbing other attractions. There was also discussion about possibly reusing Alpine Bobsled's station, which had a direct influence on the location of the lift hill and brake run for the ride. If you look at an aerial view of the site, The Bobcat fits the site like a glove."

"Bobcat will be the first new coaster at The Great Escape since 2003," said Mance. "Its size and scope, including the all-natural



The Bobcat (above) will be the only wooden roller coaster built in North America in 2024. SteamWhirler (below left) will anchor Six Flags America's new SteamTown. Two Zamperla Giga Discoveries will make their way to Six Flags St. Louis and Six Flags Great America (below right). COURTESY SIX FLAGS; AT/TIM BALDWIN



wood and quintessential coaster design, make it the perfect fit in the current Bobsled location. The Bobcat brings a thrilling family coaster addition to the Six Flags Great Escape coaster lineup for both coaster beginners and long-time enthusiasts. The Gravity Group has an incredible reputation in the industry, and we are thrilled to begin the partnership with them."

The track length will be 1,412 feet, with a height of 55 feet. Two 12-passenger trains will run at 40 mph.

"I am most looking forward to the second hill," said Graham. "The train will fly over the brake run with great airtime and then dive under the double-down with a fantastic 'head-chopper' [effect], where the track creates the illusion of a really tight opening that the train needs to pass through."

"Bobcat's 42-inch height restriction allows for new coaster enthusiasts to fall in love with wooden roller coasters before taking on The

Comet!" added Mance.

Six Flags Over Georgia will be the site of Intamin's first Ultra Surf.

"We introduced the ride in 2021. This Ultra Surf installation is the first worldwide," said Sascha Czibulka, executive vice president, Intamin.

The park hosted a naming contest for the new coaster. The ride features a single platform of two rotating 10-seat spindles. The vehicle races the 20 passengers forward and backward up two reverse spikes with a speed bump in the middle. The project includes water features, but the vehicle itself doesn't come in contact with the water.

"These water effects elevate the experience for both riders and spectators alike, allowing for a number of different fountain patterns," noted Czibulka. "Speeding through a water vortex tunnel, creating a water wall, or riding right through a water curtain — the optional installation of these interactive water features allows for a controlled



degree of how wet you want your riders to get or simply allows for adaptations to the seasonal weather situation."

Intamin points out that these effects are not restricted to water. Customers can theme the ride to a number of other elements, enhance it with fire shows, add a fog tunnel or dedicate the whole ride to a fantasy figure.

Six Flags Great Adventure is adding the first Vekoma Super Boomerang in North America. Called Flash: Vertical Velocity, the ride launches riders both forward and backward up the side of a central tower — twice. Offering serious hangtime and multiple inversions, the attraction will be the park's 15th roller coaster.

"The Super Boomerang will not only be the first in North America, but also the first model of our new generation of Vekoma's thrill LSM launch coasters in the States," said Ricardo Toding Etges, vice president of sales, Vekoma. "This was long awaited by theme park fans

and coaster enthusiasts. The Super Boomerang combines a state-of-the-art and extremely comfortable ride vehicle, cutting edge drive system and a unique track layout full of airtime, four inversions and multiple launches. The first Super Boomerang opened in Asia earlier this year and is considered by many the best shuttle coaster ever."

Etges added, "The quantity and variety of elements in such a compact layout will definitely be a surprise for the guests. Airtime, multiple inversions, triple launch tower, vertical stall, forwards and backwards elements, all blended in one ride. The visual impact of the ride is also remarkable, with its 170-foot tall tower and the other elements up high. There are a couple of other surprises with the ride vehicle, but I will wait for Six Flags to talk about them!"

In addition, Great Adventure is taking advantage of its animal safari setting and creating Savannah Sunset Resort & Spa, a new luxury "glamping" experience, just feet away from giraffes. The overnight experience will offer fine dining and a state-of-the-art spa.

Six Flags America is introducing a rethemed land. The former Coyote Creek will be transformed into SteamTown. The steampunk-themed area will reimagine three attractions (bumper cars, rapids ride and suspended coaster, which will receive new trains) and introduce a brand-new ride. SteamWhirler will be a NebulaZ ride provided by Zamperla.

The ride has become a hot seller for the Italian company. When asked why it has been so popular, Sales Director Ramon Rosario, told AT: "Two words: Broad appeal. The global market was ready for a new, unique attraction that accommodates most guests walking onto any property. Not only is the NebulaZ a great experience for riders, but it is also a great off-ride visual for guests waiting or who do not

► See FLAGS, page 21

► **FLAGS**

Continued from page 20

ride. It creates a gathering point in parks of all sizes for families while providing an excellent opportunity to ride together. We only introduced the ride to the market in 2019, lost all of 2020 from a global perspective, and delivered nearly 40 units with various well-designed themes.”

SteamTown will also see the return of a large, air-conditioned eatery, as well as the wildly popular stunt show. A new quick-service dining experience is also being added.

Zamperla is also the supplier for three new rides at **Six Flags Fiesta Texas**. In addition to a *NebulaZ*, the San Antonio theme park will add a family drop tower and an overhead observation ride, which will feature a train with a sleek retro look.

“Seeing some of our evergreen attractions like the *Aerial Ride* gain new traction with some redesigns and a high level of custom theming is fun,” said Rosario. “The last train model done in the U.S. was for the *American Dream*, and now we’re



The retro look of Fiesta Texas’ Metropolis transit Authority (above left) will give an aerial overview to families. Flash: Vertical Velocity (above right) will be a major addition for Great Adventure’s 50th anniversary. COURTESY SIX FLAGS



ecstatic to provide a bird's-eye view of the new DC area at Six Flags Fiesta Texas.”

“We wanted to create a visually stunning ride vehicle where your entire group can sit together (four guests per cabin, 16 per train, two trains for 32 guests), and produce a covered cabin to offer shade and keep our guests happy while they ride high in comfort and style,” said Park President **Jeffrey Siebert**. “The three new rides were selected by using guest research, industry trends and by moving forward our multigenerational strategic initiatives — building experiences everyone in the fam-

ily can enjoy together.”

In addition to the new rides, other rides will receive a **DC Comics** makeover, which will make the former children’s area into more of a family-friendly section of superhero-themed attractions.

“Five rides are being rethemed, so we can offer a consistent storytelling experience. All of the existing rides will receive new names and a brand-new thematic look,” Siebert told *AT*. “Our new *Kid Flash Cosmic Coaster* will open this fall. Once we complete our *Fright Fest* event in October, our current kids’ area will shut down in phases to begin construction of our new

expansion of the DC Universe. The entire area will be closed at times for construction.”

Both **Six Flags Great America** and **Six Flags St. Louis** will receive a *Giga Discovery* from Zamperla, which have been popular additions at Six Flags parks.

“Height and speed are King and Queen,” said Rosario. “[Both parks] are getting world record-level thrills in the *Giga Discovery*. At nearly 175 feet tall in operation and nearly 75 mph, our pendulums pack a punch like no other. The programming for the ride also allows for a more sensational ride experience compared to other

pendulums on the market. The repeat acquisitions have a wonderful undertone that speaks to the relationship between our organizations.”

Six Flags Over Texas is reinvesting in its history. The park debuted the industry’s very first log flume in 1963. It was so popular that the park added a second installation in 1968. Both flumes only run on the busiest days, so the park is cleverly adding a new lift that will connect them, thus creating the longest log flume ever built by **Arrow Development**. Upgrades and thematic enhancements will come with the experience.



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Last month Academy Award-nominated director **Darren Aronofsky** gave the world a first look from inside the **Sphere** in Las Vegas.

The video shared by Aronofsky gave viewers an "incredible preview of the 160,000-square-foot immersive display plane," according to a news release from Sphere Las Vegas.

The footage also gave a sneak peek of Aronofsky's Postcard from Earth attraction that will premiere on Oct. 6 as the first Sphere Experience.

Two local groups sued the city of Los Angeles on Wednesday over its planned renovation of the **Los Angeles Zoo in Griffith Park**.

Friends of Griffith Park and the **Griffith J. Griffith Charitable Trust** filed a lawsuit in Los Angeles County Superior Court alleging that the city failed to adequately consider the environmental impacts of the proposed zoo makeover.

In August, the Los Angeles City Council backed a major renovation of the zoo, which city leaders want to upgrade ahead of the **2028 Summer Olympics**. Their plan calls for expanded conservation efforts and more space for animals.

Zoo officials also envision a new visitor center and condor exhibit, both of which are criticized by hillside neighborhood and environmental groups as harmful to the habitat.

The lawsuit states that the zoo renovation would include the removal of 16 acres of Griffith Park's native California chaparral biome.

The historic Jantzen Beach Carousel has finally found a new permanent home after spending more than a decade in storage following its removal from the **Jantzen Beach Center** in North Portland, Oregon.

The nonprofit historic preservation group **Restore Oregon** announced on September 12, that the carousel will be relocated to the **National Neon Sign Museum** in The Dalles, Oregon.

The City of Rye, New York, claims that Westchester County and **Standard Amusements** owe more than \$1.5 million in property taxes and penalties on **Playland Park**.

On Aug. 29, Rye petitioned Westchester Supreme Court to compel the county and amusement park operator to pay city and county taxes while they are challenging the public park's tax status. According to officials, the City of Rye taxpayers are footing the bill for not just the unpaid tax bill but the accumulating penalties and interest.

Playland opened 95 years ago, and in 1987 it was declared a National Historic Landmark. Standard Amusements struck a deal with the county in 2016 to manage the amusement park for 30 years and operate Playland as a public park open to the general public.

For its side, Standard Amusements has said that it is committed to being a good neighbor, that it has made significant upgrades to the park and remains in agreement with Westchester County in opposing the lawsuit.

Extreme Engineering's Rocky Top Glider opens in Tennessee

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

SEVIERVILLE, Tenn. — **Extreme Engineering's** new cloud coaster installation opening in early October at the **Wilderness at the Smokies**, Sevierville, Tennessee, is offering a new concept unlike anything Extreme Engineering has done before.

Called the Rocky Top Glider, riders soar in a suspended vehicle over and throughout Wilderness at the Smokies Adventure Forest family entertainment center. It engages riders and guests below, enhancing the experience for all.

"The coaster goes over the adventure park, then through a wall and out over the miniature golf course," **Phil Wilson**, chief development officer, Extreme Engineering. "It is interacting with the activities below. We have never done that before, going from room to room like that."

Wilderness at the Smokies sits in close proximity to



Extreme Engineering's new installation of the company's cloud coaster is now open inside the family entertainment center at Wilderness at the Smokies, with the ride's blue rail running throughout the facility. COURTESY EXTREME ENGINEERING

the **Great Smoky Mountain National Park**, the most visited national park in the country with over 11 million visitors a year. Its offerings include 234 Stone Hill guest rooms, 472 River Lodge suites, 20 Villas, an indoor water park, two seasonal outdoor water parks and the indoor family adventure center, Adventure Forest.

The Rocky Top Glider features 400 linear feet of

track with two lift hills. A raised platform launches riders at a starting height of 18 feet, with maximum heights of approximately 25 feet in the air.

Guests who are at least 42 inches in height will be able to ride the new attraction. The maximum ride weight will be 250 pounds per seat.

The family coaster is mostly suspended in the Adventure Forest's ceiling,

reducing the amount of necessary structure needed for operation. The overall layout allows the operator to achieve moderate to quick cycle times, allowing many riders per hour.

Pete Tennis, the resort's managing director said: "We are super excited about adding the Rocky Top Glider to Adventure Forest. We think our guests are absolutely going to love soaring over our

different attractions. It's going to be a lot of fun."

The Adventure Forest remained open during construction.

Wilderness at the Smokies also features a variety of dining and shopping, as well as a 36-hole championship golf course adjacent to the resort and more than 200,000 square feet of meeting and convention space adjacent to Stone Hill Lodge.

As a year-round water park vacation destination, Wilderness at the Smokies delivers an exciting lodging and entertainment option for families vacationing in the Pigeon Forge/ Gatlinburg/ Sevierville region.

Extreme Engineering is a global supplier in family-friendly attractions, such as coasters, ziplines, climbing walls and mobile adventure. The company also offers shade structures coming out with a new type, the FLX Shade, late last year.

• extremeengineering.com
• wildernessatthesmokies.com

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

Semnox has announced an innovative partnership with **RaceFacer**, a provider of timing management software in the go-karting industry.

"While our go-kart timing and management software is already highly regarded, particularly for go-kart tracks, we have a much grander vision," explained **Georgi Chelev**, CTO and partner at RaceFacer. "We aim to serve all kinds of leisure and attractions businesses. Now, with the added benefit of seamless cashless and contactless experiences, the added value of our software for the leisure industry has become significant."

"We're happy to partner with RaceFacer to empower clients around the world," commented **Umesh Prabhu**, director, business head – FEC at Semnox Solutions.

Art-FX Studios has debuted Alpha Arenas, which the company is promoting as "the next evolution of laser tag excitement." The state-of-the-art arenas combine futuristic technology, pulse-pounding action and strategic gameplay to provide an exhilarating experience for players of all ages.

At the same time, the company has unveiled the first in the upcoming Sigma Escapes experience lineup will be a chilling adventure in Mystery in the Mausoleum. Designed to be among the most immersive escape rooms in the world, Sigma Escapes features meticulously crafted theme fabrication and fully automated, interactive puzzles. Sigma Escapes offers both fully turnkey and customizable design.

Cinergy Entertainment Group announced that it has acquired two formerly-owned **Regal Cinemas** locations—one in Midland, Texas, and another in Amarillo, Texas.

"We couldn't be more excited to invest in these real estate properties within the communities that we already know so well," said **Jeff Benson**, founder & CEO.

Known for its luxury, dine-in auditoriums, arcades, bowling alleys, escape rooms, axe throwing, chef-inspired menus and sports bars, Cinergy has not yet determined the exact future for each of these newly acquired locations and will engage real estate and development professionals to assess the best use for each property.



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AEM consulting on \$60 million development of entertainment properties

BUFFALO, N.Y. — Strategic consultant Amusement Entertainment Management (AEM) has been selected by award-winning golf ball manufacturer OnCore Golf Technology and its affiliated ShotClub Social, LLC real estate development partner to guide the construction of two entertainment complexes in Buffalo, New York, and Knoxville, Tennessee.

Each 40,000-square-foot facility, which will trade under the name ShotClub Social, powered by OnCore, will contain 60 golf driving range bays, a fully interactive range game-board, OnCore's exclusive GENiUS ball technology, artificial-intelligence-based on-site swing instruction, duckpin bowling and a host of amusement game, simulator and virtual reality attraction offerings.

AEM's Managing Partner Jerry Merola commented: "OnCore Golf Technology has the history, know-how and bandwidth in the golf ball and technology sectors which, when combined with ShotClub Social's development track record of notable projects, will evolve the golf driving range experience to a new level not yet achieved within the sector. We look forward to bringing this dynamic experience to the communities of Buffalo and Knoxville in the near future."

"We're very excited to be working with AEM and our local development partners in Buffalo and Knoxville on what we have spent the past several years refining and preparing for launch," added ShotClub Social's CEO Doug Swift. "The interest in off-course golf has reached record levels and the emergence of exciting new technologies to make the driving range experience both fun and instructional will make this a destination for golfers and non-golfers alike."

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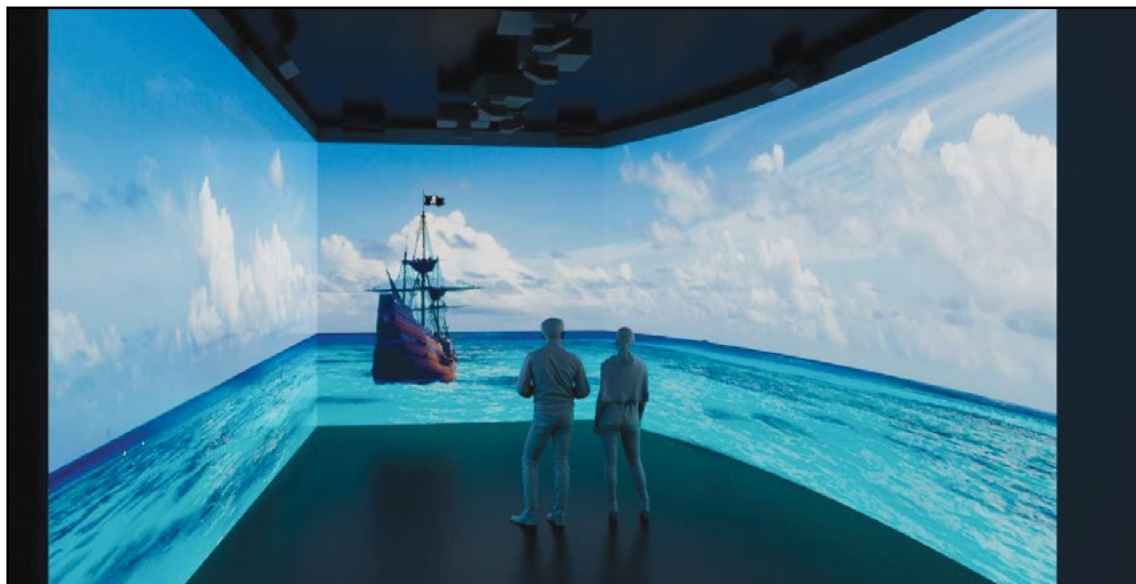
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ALTITUDE RIDES AND ATTRACTIONS



The intimate and immersive Dreambox360° is coming to Las Vegas in 2024 and plans to transport guests to fantastical realms. COURTESY DREAMBOX 360°

Dreambox360° experience is set to open on Las Vegas Strip in early 2024

LAS VEGAS — Dreambox360°, the immersive and intimate 5D projection experience, announced it will open at **The LINQ Promenade** on the Las Vegas Strip in early 2024. Developed by the team behind **Minus5° Icebar**, Dreambox360° will offer several captivating adventures, including *The Arctic Ghost Ship: A Quest in Search of the Lost Rum*, *The Weekend Trip* — a psychedelic-inspired experience — and more.

“As passive projection attractions continue to grow in popularity, we aim to spearhead the future of storytelling by producing an even more personalized and action-packed experience with Dreambox360°,” said **Noel Bowman**, owner, Dreambox360°. “Combining smaller, more intimate crowds with 5D elements will create an immersive atmosphere that you can actually feel, unlike anything seen

before. We cannot wait for visitors to enjoy this concept next year.”

Featuring a 15-minute original, animated adventure, *The Arctic Ghost Ship* experience will invite guests to sip cocktails with Captain Flint McGregor as they embark on a quest for the lost rum. Surrounded by 360 degrees of cutting-edge visuals and sound, guests will become even more immersed in this unique journey with 5D effects such as rain, mist, wind and more.

On Friday and Saturday evenings, Dreambox360° will transform into *The Weekend Trip* — a psychedelic experience that will offer mind-blowing, trippy projections, a live DJ, open bar featuring an array of libations and 5D effects such as thunderstorms and blizzards.

Distinctive from other projection attractions around the globe, Dreambox360° is designed for small audiences of up to 35 to create an even more intimate and immersive atmosphere.

The versatile space will also be customizable for corporate events and product launches with branded logos and imagery. Bespoke slideshows can also be produced for personal celebrations and private events such as engagements, anniversaries, birthdays, reunions and more.

Guests must be 12 or older to visit the attraction.

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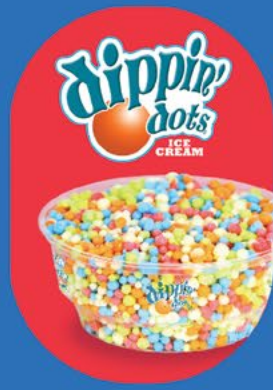


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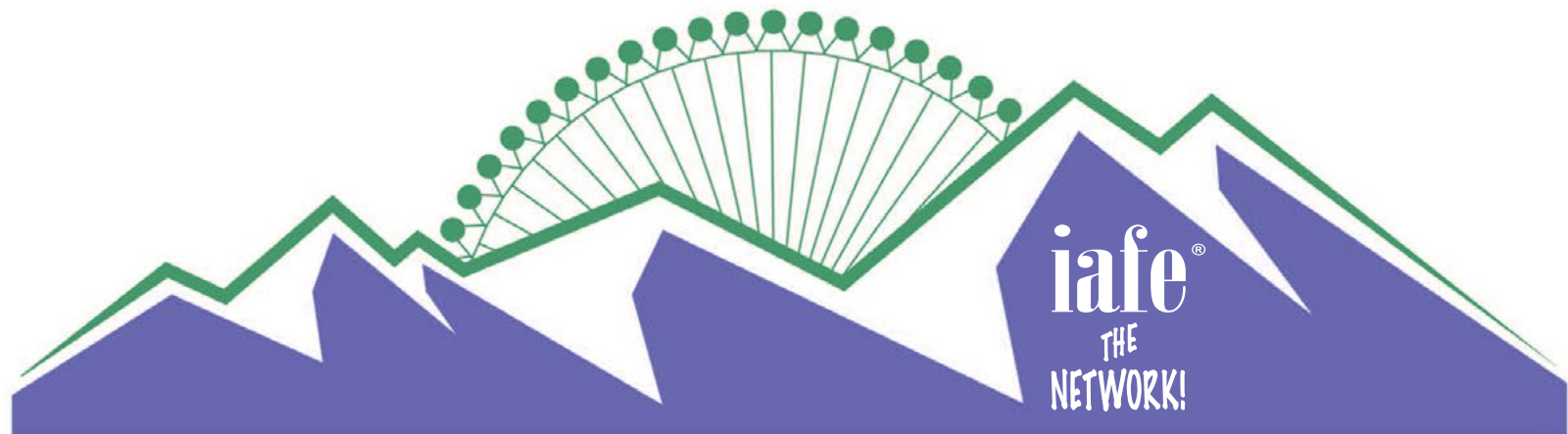
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Minnesota State Fair has 6th best attendance in 164-year history

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

ST. PAUL, Minn. — The 12-day **Minnesota State Fair** saw 1,835,826 people through the turnstiles, down 6,400 from last year. It was, however, the sixth best-attended fair in its history.

“This was my first fair as CEO, and I was more awe-inspired by the dedication of so many than I could have imagined — the dedication of fair fans, staff, volunteers, vendors, livestock exhibitors, competitors, safety and security partners and so many others who went above and beyond to be a part of an amazing fair experience despite some challenging high temperatures,” said fair CEO **Renee Alexander**. “All of us across the state came together to celebrate one of the best Great Minnesota Get-Togethers.”

The fair has operated its own in-house, independent carnival midway for the past 28 years, utilizing the equipment and services of multiple providers. In 2023, a total of 56 rides and 45 games were operated by 19 different ride companies and 11 different game owners/operators in the main midway and Kidway areas. There were 26 rides on the Mighty Midway



There was a total of 56 rides and 45 games operated by 19 ride companies and 11 game owners/operators. The 12-day Great Minnesota Get-Together runs late August through Labor Day each year. This is the first year Renee Alexander is serving as CEO of the Minnesota State Fair (below). COURTESY MINNESOTA STATE FAIR

and 30 rides in Kidway.

The 19 independents included: **Alamo Amusements** (six rides); **Arnold Amusements** (three); **B-Thrilled Attractions** (two); **D & K Amusements** (four); **FairRideEntertainment, LLC** (five); **Family Entertainment, LLC** (two); **Fun Attractions, LLC** (two); **Gopher State Expositions, Inc.** (five); **Iconic Midway Rides, LLC** (two); **Joyrides, Inc.** (two); **Lauther Amusements** (three); **Mr. Ed's Magical Midways, Inc.** (two); **Prime Pacific Entertainment, LLC** (three); **Skerbeck Entertainment**



Group, Inc. (four); **State Fair Spectaculars, LLC** (two); **Tinsley Amusements, Inc.** (two); **Wanderlust Technical, LLC** (two); **Wood Entertainment Company**

(three) and **Michael F. Wood** (one). **Iconic Midway Rides**, owned by **Marina Zaitshak**, played this spot for the first time.

A **Pump and Jump (Zamperla)** was brought in by **D & K Amusements**; **Beach Shack** (also **Zamperla**), **Iconic Midway Rides** were new to the Kidway, while **Infinity** (a larger **Larson International** loop) was new to the main midway (also **Iconic**

Midway Rides).

A few of the more popular rides included the **Crazy Mouse Spinning Coaster (Reverchon)**, **Wood Entertainment Company**; **Iron Dragon Roller Coaster (Interpark)**, **State Fair Spectaculars** and **Wave Swinger (Zierer)**, **Fair Ride Entertainment**.

“Our experience with all of our mobile amusement industry ride and game business partners was outstanding,” said Alexander.

Pre-fair discount gate admission tickets were available for \$15. Once the fair started, there were numerous discount days including opening day, two senior days, two kid days and military appreciation day. On both ride midways, there were four ride and game promotion days, and four different days offered special pricing before 1 p.m. There also was a **Blue Ribbon Bargain Book**, a deals, drawings and giveaways guide and a last chance flier for specials closing day.

The fair had a \$510,000 media buy budget, which was spent on traditional TV and radio; digital media including local site direct, premium video and connected TV, programmatic, social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok); bus sides; outdoor digital boards; and targeted print. The primary focus was on the seven-county metro area, with secondary focus on larger communi-

► See MINNESOTA, page 34

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A Zamperla Beach Shack was one of two new rides to this year's Kidway area. COURTESY STEFAN HINZ

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Infinity, an expanded Larson International loop, was new to the main midway this year. It first appeared at the Florida State Fair earlier this season. COURTESY MINNESOTA STEFAN HINZ

►MINNESOTA

Continued from page 32

ties in greater Minnesota and western Wisconsin.

All told, there were 500 food items (more than 80 on-a-stick) with 34 new foods and seven new food vendors. A few of the new offerings included bacon wrapped waffle dogs, basil hummus with spicy walnut topping, cheese curd stuffed pizza pretzel, chicken Momo with tomato chutney, fried butternut squash ravioli, hot honey cheese sticks, pickle fries, smoked beef arepa and walleye fritter pops.

The Minnesota State Fair's agricultural and creative competitions drew more than 33,000 entries this year, with competitors vying for a share of ribbons, trophies and special awards and nearly \$2 million in prize money. The Miracle of Birth Center welcomed 156 newborn animals, including 122 piglets, 10 calves and 24 lambs. This year was the 50th annual amateur talent contest. More than 1,700 singers, dancers, jugglers, instrumentalists and others have auditioned over the past five decades for this showcase of Minnesota's most talented. The fair had its first sensory-friendly morning at Mighty Midway and Kidway. It was provided to

better accommodate those with sensory sensitivities by reducing light brightness and sound volume on a fair day.

Total grandstand attendance was 110,543. Some of the acts included **Duran Duran: Future Past** with special guests **Bastille** and **Nile Rodgers and Chic**; **Jonas Brothers** with special guest **Lawrence**. Sold out concerts included **The Chicks** with special guest **Wild Rivers**; **Keith Urban** with special guest **Lindsay Ell** and **Brandi Carlisle** with special guest **Wynonna Judd**. There were over 900 free entertainment shows throughout the dozen days of fair operation — all included with gate admission.

Each year, the fair operates an employment center that does hiring throughout the summer leading up to the start of the fair. In addition, they held a job fair on July 26.

The Minnesota State Fair is one of the largest and best-attended expositions in the world, attracting more than two million visitors annually. Showcasing Minnesota's finest agriculture, art and industry, the Great Minnesota Get-Together is always 12 days of fun ending Labor Day.

The 2024 fair takes place August 22 through September 2.

• mnstatefair.org



MIDWAYSCENE

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

Renaë Korslien, a well-known figure at every **North Dakota State Fair** in Minot, is retiring after helping make the fair a reality for the past half century. She served as general manager.

She oversaw fair growth, including expansion of the grandstand, which drew world-class entertainers. Korslien also guided the fair through challenging times, including cancellations due to the 2011 flood and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

"I am so grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of the North Dakota State Fair for the past fifty years. It has been an honor to contribute to such an important event in our state, and I am proud of all that we have accomplished together," she told *KMOT-TV*.

Craig Rudland, who has worked for the fair for more than 40 years, most recently as assistant manager, has been appointed as the fair's new GM. Rudland named **Aaron Ottmar** as assistant manager. "I am confident that Craig and the rest of the team will continue leading the fair with the same passion and dedication we have always had," said Korslien.

Todd Teasley is the new manager of the **Gwinnett County Fair**, Lawrenceville, Georgia. He previously served for two years as assistant to **Dale Thurman**, who retired, however passed shortly after last year's fair. "I am excited that this is my first fair," Teasley told the *Gwinnett Daily Post*. "It is exciting to see families and kids get so excited about being able to come to the fair and see the cattle and see the petting zoo and the entertainment."

Teasley is working to ensure the 11-day fair attracts more families and to keep it as safe as possible. "We worked really hard over the [past] two years, even before Dale left, to create more of a family atmosphere with the '15 and under must be accompanied by a parent' (rule) and the clear bags to make it safe for folks so families will want to come back and be a part of the fair," Teasley said.

He spent six years as an agriculture teacher, then joined Georgia's **FFA** program and **Family, Career and Community Leaders of America** (FCCLA) program, running their camps for 25 years. Teasley got experience working on agriculture activities and events, including some at the **Georgia National Fair**, Perry.

During his tenure as assistant manager, Teasley said, "I studied a lot just picking Dale's mind about the fair, learning what went on, meeting the people, making relationships with the vendors and the concessions and the carnival people and building relationships with all of the board members."

The fair's new assistant manager is

Bee Vang. The fair ran September 14 – 24 with **Amusements of America** as the carnival ride provider.

In early August, straight line winds overnight caused the **Eli Bridge** wheel at the **Crowley County Fair**, Winfield, Kansas, to topple over. The ride, owned by **WEEE Entertainment**, Wichita, Kansas, was laid on its side along with the trailer it was on by the 70-mph force. From the carnival Facebook page: "Thankfully, no one was hurt in the storm and no other equipment was severely damaged." While power was down on the fairgrounds for a period of time, the carnival operated with its own generators.

Chris Williamson, carnival owner, said the Ferris wheel held a special spot on the show for decades. "It's brought a lot of smiles to people's faces," he told *KWCH 12 News*. "It's kind of been in my family for a long time. My grandfather owned it, and then my aunt and uncle owned it. Then they sold it to me when they retired."

According to the Crowley County Fair board via their Facebook page: "No animals were lost or injured in the storm, and there was no damage to the Barn 4 exhibits or to the vendors under the grandstands. However, there were numerous trees uprooted, power lines down and broken utility poles."

Board President **Josh Dobbs** is thankful for how the community came together to help get the fair up and running for its final nights. He told *12 News*, "It's solid and in times like these it's a testament to small town living. Everybody pitches in. I know numerous people, churches, just people are helping."

Also in August, a severe storm passed through Hampstead, Maryland, destroying numerous tents the **Hampstead Volunteer Fire Company** uses as part of its annual carnival fundraiser. Organizers cancelled the opening evening's operation well in advance of the approaching storm. "We made the decision early in the afternoon to not open the carnival for the evening, so we were very fortunate to have no injuries," Lt. **JJ Lynott**, PIO for Hampstead Volunteer Fire Company said in a statement. Fire company losses exceeded \$30,000.

Rosedale Attractions & Shows was the carnival providing the rides for the six-night event. "There was damage to a lot of little stuff. We got very lucky, overall," said **Joey Gaylin** with the company.

Heavy rain, wind and severe flooding wreaked havoc in northeastern Pennsylvania in mid-September, cancelling the final day of the 61st annual **Luzerne County Fair**, Dallas. On Sunday, the fairgrounds were empty as devastation could be seen from the damage caused by Saturday night's storms.

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WATER PARKS & RECREATION

▶ Story Land growing with water park addition — page 41 / Land of Legends opens RocketBlast — page 42

Silverwood Theme Park announces forthcoming park expansion

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

ATHOL, Idaho — Coming off another great season, **Silverwood Theme Park** located in Athol, Idaho, announced August 24, a \$15 million expansion that will include a dueling water coaster that will be added to the theme park's **Boulder Beach**.

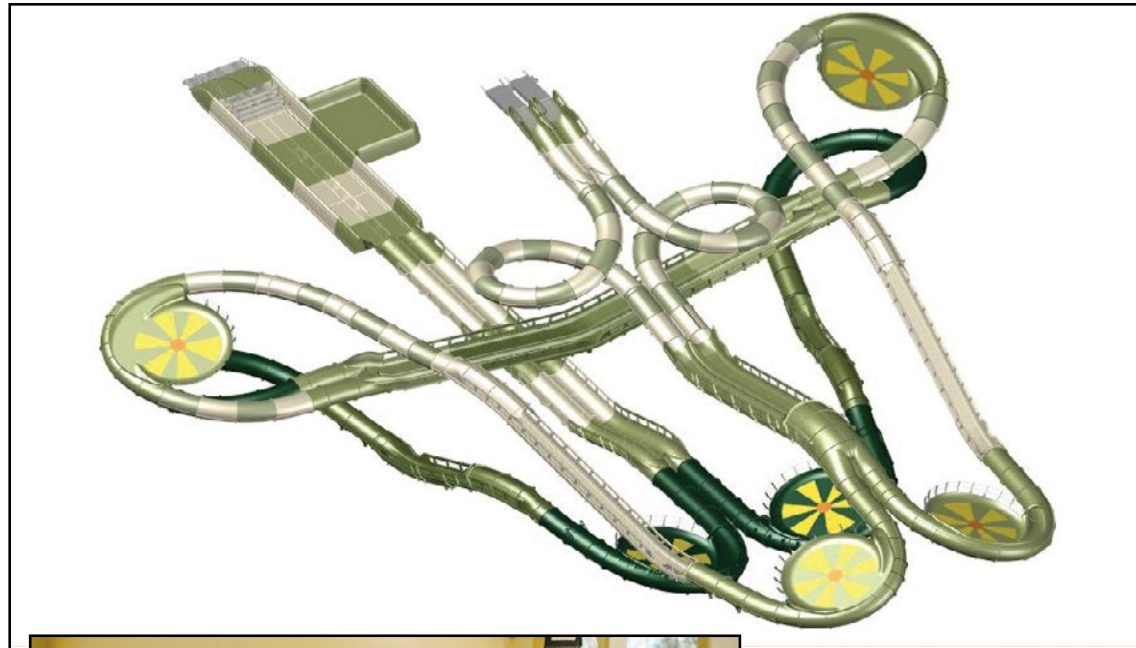
Park officials added that the 3.86 acres being developed in the water area will also include a large food pavilion, kid slides with a splash pad, and another restroom.

"The decision to expand Boulder Beach was driven by a deep understanding of the importance of creating unforgettable experiences for our valued guests," said **Stephanie Sampson**, public relations manager at Silverwood. "We wanted to create a space that not only offered thrilling attractions, but also immersed our visitors in a world of natural wonder and enchantment."

The new section has been officially named **Emerald Forest**. The new water coaster, touted as the first dueling coaster on the west coast, has been named **Eagle Hunt**. It is being manufactured by **ProSlide Technology**, Ottawa, Ontario.

It will be able to put through 720 riders per hour. Park officials said this will not only be the longest water slide in all of Boulder Beach, but at 925 feet, it will be the longest dueling water coaster in the nation.

Another feature that will



A ProSlide dueling water coaster is planned for Boulder Beach (above). A brand new train show was created this season at Silverwood Theme Park, dubbed the **Silver Mine Shoot Out** (left).
COURTESY SILVERWOOD

make it unique to the property itself will be it's eagle theme and race-against-the-clock capabilities.

This new section in Boulder Beach will also have the **Salmon Run** splash pad area that will feature eight different slides for kids to choose from. Also from ProSlide, these slides range from 36 to 82 feet long and six feet to nine feet tall.

Silverwood has plans to improve efficiency with its new food pavilion, officially named **Rapids Grill**. This grab-and-go location can theoretically serve up

to 1,200 guests per hour, which will help with food wait times and the overall guest experience. The large kitchen is expected to produce more food than all of the other food options in the park combined.

Private cabanas is another feature that will be to add to this expansion, guests indicated that cabanas are coveted during the summer. With this expansion, the park will add 32 new private cabanas and five new group cabanas that can hold up to 20 guests each.

"I think that the best

mus plate with pita, carrots and celery.

Idaho Nachoes were added to the menu this season at the **Kool Cactus** location.

A brand new train show was created this season as well. Called the **Silver Mine Shoot Out**, the train show was a hit.

In addition, the park's **Treehouse** climbing attraction was repainted, and mulch made from recycled tires was used as ground covering instead of gravel.

Silverwood Theme Park is located in northern Idaho about 180 miles northeast of the Tri-Cities. **Gary Norton**, owner and founder of the park, is still a big part of the management there along with other family members.

The park had a partial season in 2020, due to COVID-19, but when it reopened in 2021, a new single-rail steel roller coaster, **Stunt Pilot**, came on line. Park officials attributed the **Rocky Mountain Construction** coaster with the 803,000 attendance number for 2021, which was a record for the park.

In 2023, June and July attendance was on track with the record setting 2021 season. However, a wetter than usual August, and nearby wildfires, flattened those early season increases to on par with 2022 numbers.

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A typical Wavegarden installation features a triangular pool with the wave-generating sweep in the middle. Ciudad del Deporte, which includes the surf park, is being constructed on land surrounding Atlético de Madrid's existing stadium (inset). COURTESY WAVEGARDEN

Wavegarden to install an inland surf beach within its home country of Spain

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

MADRID, Spain — The capital of Spain will soon be home to one of Europe's largest artificial urban beaches with surfing waves generated by **Wavegarden**, the Spanish engineering company that supplies large-scale, manmade surf pools. The project will cover a vast area of four hectares (9.88 acres).

The Spanish capital has always been known for its vibrant culture, imposing architecture, and passionate love for sports. Madrid is preparing to add a new jewel to its crown — one of Europe's most significant sports complexes and within that, a massive surf park.

The Wavegarden installation is a part of the **Ciudad del Deporte** (Sports City) project being developed by **Atlético de Madrid** — a Spanish professional football (soccer) club in collaboration with **Stoneweg** — a real estate developer headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, along with **Teras Capital** — a Madrid-based telecommunications investment company. The sports city complex is being built around the football club's existing **Cívitas Metropolitano Stadium**. It will eventually include training facilities, including multiple soccer fields; a smaller, 6,000-seat stadium for the women's and reserve teams; an athletic track; indoor paddleball courts and the aforementioned surf cove, along with other sports facilities. The entire project is estimated to cost €200 million (\$213 million).

The waves produced by the Wavegarden Cove technology are suitable for everyone, from beginners to experts. Wavegarden's Wave Menu has more than 20 types of waves, ranging in size and power from half a meter to two meters (20 inches to six feet).

Similar to other recent projects, the Madrid lagoon will be divided into two halves, each capable of producing different types of waves at the same time. Beginners can learn how to surf with gentle waves in one half of the pool, while experts can hone their skills with larger

waves in the other half.

Wavegarden's noise-free, wave-generating technology can generate up to 1,000 waves per hour, depending on the wave setting and operational requirements. The machinery is capable of running in non-stop mode and can produce sets of waves of almost any desired quantity. This high frequency of quality waves ensures there's plenty for everyone without the need to compete with fellow surfers.

Wavegarden is also focused on economic and environmental sustainability. Despite the massive size of the installations, studies reveal that Wavegarden's technology consumes less energy than the popular pneumatic wave generation equipment typically used for wave pools. The mechanical system employed by the Wavegarden Cove requires less than one kilowatt-hour per wave. Very little energy is lost in the transmission of forces and part of the energy is recovered and reused. Snow-plow-like "wavefoils" move back and forth on underwater tracks, generating ocean-like waves. As the waves reach the end of the pool, some of the energy generated by those waves is recovered in order to minimize electricity use and to help power the water treatment system. For this project, the possibility of recycling water from the sports city is being considered.

To keep the water crystal clear and hygienically safe, each Wavegarden Cove is supplied with its own state-of-the-art water treatment system. Designed specifically for wave lagoons, the system is based on a series of sustainable treatments including fine filtration, ozone and UV disinfection, and low chemical chlorination.

Over the past 18 years, Wavegarden's development team has grown to more than 60 full-time staff members. The firm consists of engineers, architects, computer science and fluid dynamic experts, along with water treatment specialists and those responsible for business development and operations. The company headquarters' near San Sebastian, Spain, and has its own Wavegarden demo and testing pool.

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The Boomerango water ride Perfect Day at Coco Bay, Bahamas — also by WhiteWater West Industries — is very similar to the ride that will open in 2024 at Canada's Wonderland. COURTESY WHITEWATER WEST

Moosehorn Falls to debut at Canada's Wonderland in 2024

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

VAUGHAN, Ont. — Officials at Canada's Wonderland, Vaughan, Ontario, announced in August that a new attraction will be available to guests in 2024.

Called Moosehorn Falls, the attraction is a Boomerango from WhiteWater West Industries, Vancouver, British Columbia. It is located in the park's 20-acre water venue, Splash Works Waterpark.

With a zero-gravity wall summit, Canada's Wonderland officials are excited about the new water park addition.

"We're excited to provide attractions that our guests can enjoy together, and Moosehorn Falls will be a perfect water park adventure for families and friends," said Phil Liggett, general manager at Canada's Wonderland.

The attraction is a new expedition within Splash Works. The rafts will have the capacity to take up to six guests down a rushing river cascade of twists, turns and drops before being propelled to the summit of a zero-gravity, 42-foot-tall wall.

As rafters crest the vertical apex in a moment of weightlessness, the rafts will reverse direction and send them downstream to a crystal-clear pool where their journey ends with a breathtaking splash.

Moosehorn Falls is inspired by waterfalls on the Broad River along the Moosehorn Trail in Fundy National Park, New Brunswick, within the UNESCO-designated Fundy Biosphere Region.

"The new water slide is the park's latest addition of Canadian-themed attractions, venues and events," Liggett said. "As Canada's premier amusement park, we want to celebrate the best this country has to offer, including its natural diversity, as well as the adventurous spirit of its people."

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NEWSPLASH

AT: Jeffrey L. Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

Great Wolf Resorts is looking to expand into the United Kingdom. A new holiday park alongside the existing **Basingstoke Golf Centre** will include a 500-room hotel, along with an indoor water park and the usual activities such as a climbing wall and ropes course that are associated with the typical Great Wolf Lodges found in North America. Located near the cities of Chesterton and Bicester, the resort has received preliminary approval and is working with the local councils on final details and design materials.

A lodge in England has been on the drawing boards since at least 2019. The original application for the resort was denied due to opposition from locals. The denial was overturned by planning authorities who felt the economic benefits outweighed concerns of increased visitors and the resulting traffic.

Island H2O Water Park in Kissimmee, Florida, will once again transform into a holiday lights spectacular with the addition of Holiday Nights. The event will start on November 8 and run Wednesday through Sunday until December 10. Starting December 13, it will open every night through December 31. As was done last year, a portion of the proceeds will be given to **Give Kids the World Village**.

In 2020 and 2021, Give Kids the World Village hosted a fund raiser at the village called Night of a Million Lights. Following the pandemic, with a return to normal operation, it was no longer feasible to have visitors roaming through the village at night, so Island H2O stepped in last year.

What makes it particularly challenging is that Island H2O operates during select days through November 26. On those days the water park closes at 5 p.m., the park is cleared and Holiday Nights opens at 6 p.m.

The Strathcona Regional District is planning to move forward with a CA\$ 48.3 (US\$35.9) million upgrade to the existing **Strathcona Gardens Facility** in Campbell River, British Columbia, Canada.

The REC-REATE project includes a new aquatic center with an eight-lane, 25-meter pool, accessible therapy pool, hot pool and leisure pool with lazy river, climbing wall and waterslide. Also planned for the first phase is a new fitness center with sauna and stream rooms, as well as renovated changing rooms and administrative areas.

The project still needs approval from the residents of the communities that pay into the facility. If all goes well, construc-

tion could begin in the spring of 2024.

Splash Island Water Park in Plainfield, Indiana, will expand in time for its 20th anniversary season. The Plainfield Town Council approved an \$8.36 million contract that will add three new water slides, a splash pad and tiki hut cabana rentals. The contract also includes an update to the maintenance building.

"The Plainfield Parks & Recreation Department is thrilled the Town Council approved this project," said **Brent Bangel**, director of parks & recreation. "These updates will give Splash Island a new face, making it bigger and better for our residents and visitors."

The expansion is expected to be completed when the park opens for the season on Memorial Day 2024.

A new indoor aquatic facility is under construction in the borough of Pierrefonds-Roxboro in the city of Montréal, Québec, Canada. The CA\$62.4 (US\$46.3) million will include a 25-meter pool with eight swimming lanes and a recreational pool that includes water features, a waterslide and a wading pool.

The **Complex Aquatique de Pierrefonds-Roxboro** will also house a multi-purpose room and common areas. The facility is located next to the **Pierrefonds Comprehensive High School** giving easy access to the students. It is, however, intended to service all the residents of the borough, as well as the entire west end of Montréal, as anyone living within those areas will have free access.

The center is financed mostly by the city with the education ministry contributing \$7.5 million.

"It does cost a lot of money to do libraries and sports centers and building pools, but it is necessary and it contributes so much to the quality of life of citizens," said Montréal Mayor **Valerie Plante**.

The city of Redmond, Oregon, is finalizing options for its \$49 million recreation center that is to include a 74,500-square-foot pool that will be divided in two sections to provide recreation and relaxed activities, as well as competition. The new center is badly needed as the current pool in Redmond was built in 1979, when the city's population was 6,500 people. Today, the park district serves around 45,000 people.

The park district's executive director said the board is engaged in a more formal permitting process and the project will tentatively break ground this spring.

Story Land to grow park with water park addition from Vortex

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

GLEN, N.H. — **Story Land**, one of the top five finalists for Best Family Park in *Amusement Today's* Golden Ticket Awards, is growing. A previous Oceans of Fun sprayground area will be replaced with something bigger and bolder in 2024. Moo Lagoon will be the park's first introduction of water park attractions.

Story Land is planning for all members of the herd to find something to enjoy in the farm-themed water park. Parents will find places to relax, kids will like the interactive features, and a waterslide tower will cater to various ages.

The attractions will be themed to a farm, which will help engage kids in imagination.

Vortex is the supplier of the attractions. Moo Lagoon will feature a slide tower with three slides of varying height, a play structure with a tipping bucket and a splash pad.



Moo Lagoon from Vortex will be Story Land's first introduction of water park attractions. COURTESY STORY LAND

"Working with the people at Story Land to create the new Moo Lagoon Splashpad has been a total blast!" said **Terry Dubuc**, director of business development, Vortex. "There's something for everybody from ground level play, dumping features, elevated play structures and waterslides — sure to provide those memorable moments! The new splash pad will be sure to Moo-

ve you!"

"The splash pad has so many activities," said **Eric Dziedzic**, general manager. "It's a water park perfect for our demographic. It totally rounds out our offerings here. The one thing we have been missing for years is that cooldown on a hot day."

With the introduction of the water area, a nearby building will be repurposed as a changing area,

and a store will be able to sell beach towels and swimwear for families who came unprepared.

"It's a [retail opportunity] we've never been able to capitalize on," noted Dziedzic.

Story Land is operated by **Palace Entertainment**. Moo Lagoon is seen as a first step.

"It's the perfect size park to start with," said **Jerry Brick**, director of construction and maintenance, Palace. "But there is opportunity down the road. We made sure we didn't box ourselves in; we have space to continue."

Hampton Creative did the design for the park, and **Wet Engineering** will be handling the filtration.

The cow theme makes it fun.

"It's all about research," Dziedzic told *Amusement Today*. "We as a group sat down, knowing we wanted to do a water park. We gave four or five options out to the public, and they voted on a farm-

themed water park. I'm *udderly* excited with the choice."

"I have a three-year-old," said **Lauren Fullerton**, marketing. "I think it gives the guests more opportunity regardless of weather. Right now, we don't have a hot-weather element to cool down. It will round us out. Kids love water; from a mom's perspective, that's important. The big thing at Story Land is that no ride is 'just' for kids. The whole point is to make memories with your children and you ride with your children. So, we want parents in the water park playing with their kids. But there are places to lounge too."

A farm motif will transform area structures with a new look, and an eatery will be added.

Other than the sprayground, no other rides are being retired, however, a Tilt-A-Whirl and Flying Skooters will be relocated. The park will be celebrating its 70th anniversary in 2024. It's a perfect opportunity to party until the cows come home.

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Land of Legends opens record-breaking RocketBlast Water Coaster

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

SERIK / ANTALYA, Turkey — This past summer, the **Land of Legends** theme park opened Turtle Coaster, a record-breaking RocketBlast coaster. Supplied by **ProSlide Technology** of Ottawa, Ontario, and with a length of 433 meters (1,421 feet), it is the longest single-lane RocketBlast water coaster in the world.

Turtle Coaster was a collaborative effort with **Creative Studio Berlin** bringing together ProSlide's cutting-edge technology and creative theming to produce a unique water coaster that was specifically tailored to the Land of Legends site. **Chris Lange**, creative executive and owner of Creative Studio Berlin, was responsible for the design of the project. He has previously worked with ProSlide on the theming at **Europa-Park's Rulantica** water park in Rust, Germany.

The rainbow-colored Turtle Coaster revitalized the former Secret Lagoon which has now become Tropic Lagoon with the new water coaster as its central feature. A mas-



Thrill seekers on board four-person rafts careen through multiple saucer elements (above). The massive turtle (right) provides not only a focal point but shade for guests waiting in the queue. COURTESY LAND OF LEGENDS

sive, vibrant, multi-colored fiberglass and fabric "turtle" is suspended over the queue and the station to provide shade and cover to guests waiting in line and boarding. The entire queue and station are on a raised terrace, eliminating the need for a slide tower.

Although turtles are usually thought of as methodical, slow-moving creatures, the Turtle Coaster is anything but. Passengers board four-per-

son inline rafts via a moving conveyor. Following a small drop off the station belt, riders are accelerated along a flat section utilizing ProSlide's patented water propulsion "blast" technology. The FlatBlast section is immediately followed by an uphill booster, allowing the raft full of riders to gain elevation for the multiple drops, curves and uphill blasts that follow.

The slide includes ProSlide's patented saucer sections — high-speed curves along an outer wall with a flat section in the center to provide an open feel. Placed in a series, the high-speed curves in opposite directions mimic the feeling of slaloming down a ski slope. In total, riders experience one FlatBlast, eight uphill blast sections, four saucer sections, open and closed tube sections and cumulative drops of 42.7 meters (140 feet). The last blast section brings riders to the final water-filled flume where they can regain their composure as they gently float around a U-shaped curve back to a conveyor belt that brings them to the loading station. Unlike some other water coasters, there are no stair



towers to climb nor any belt-driven lift hills.

Land of Legends Theme Park opened in 2016 as a joint venture with Turkey's **Rixos Hotels**; Dubai-based **Emaar Properties** and **Dragone Productions** based in Las Vegas, Nevada, and Luxembourg. Dragone Productions is led by **Franco Dragone**, formerly with **Cirque du Soleil**. The idea behind the imaginatively themed park is that a meteor fell to earth, spawning a variety of worlds, each rooted in a different legend. The Dragone Gate, which separates the **Kingdom Hotel** from the park, is a portal to those worlds.

The original Land of Aqua opened with more than 40 slides and 70 water-based attractions including splash pads, water-play structures, lazy and action rivers, along with multiple pools — including wave and surf pools.

An adjoining waterfront kingdom featured animal shows; animal encounters; boat trips and Mythical Journey, an underwater walk among tropical fish. The two areas have since been integrated into Aqua Land and a new area, Secret Lagoon (now Tropic Lagoon), was added.

Belek, a neighborhood of the Serik district, where Land of Legends is located, is a major resort town that attracts more than 30 million visitors per year. The area is famous for its spas and mineral waters that flow from seven springs; it has attracted visitors for thousands of years. The city is home to more than 30 four-star and five-star hotels, as well as the ancient Roman **Aspendos Theater**, a 2,000-year-old amphitheater that holds 20,000 people. It is still used to this day to host open-air classical ballet and opera festivals.



The rainbow-colored slide dominates the renamed Tropic Lagoon section of the park as it roams throughout the area. COURTESY LAND OF LEGENDS

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Legacy signed to design, build new Uzbekistan water park resort

HOLLYWOOD, Calif., and TASHKENT, Uzbekistan—Uzbekistan’s capital city of Tashkent will soon be home to a world-class integrated resort that will feature unique water attractions, a thematic hotel, immersive dining and live entertainment among other experiences. **Legacy Entertainment**, a global entertainment design firm responsible for many of the world’s top new theme parks and destinations built over the last two decades, has been signed to design and build a groundbreaking water park to anchor the resort.

The upcoming complex will be located on the way to the city’s New Tashkent District and is being designed with a scope and scale intended to draw visitors not only from the local market, but from surrounding nations as well.



Legacy Entertainment’s Chief Business Development Officer and Co-Founder Eric Carnagey inked a deal for the company to design and build a new water park as part of a new, world-class integrated resort in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. COURTESY LEGACY ENTERTAINMENT

A formal ceremony was held in Tashkent on July 18, in which **Eric Carnagey**, Legacy Entertainment’s chief business development

officer and co-founder, signed the deal.

Regarding this massive new project, Carnagey said: “World-class entertainment projects like this

can be transformational for a community. Once complete, this new resort will supercharge tourism, create hundreds or even thousands of jobs,



and enrich the lives of the people of Tashkent and Uzbekistan, as well as Central Asia.”

Following an international search, Legacy Entertainment was selected for the groundbreaking water park, upon the company’s track record of successful projects including work with **Cirque du Soleil**, **Six Flags**, **Lotte** and **Haichang**, as well as the company’s experience designing integrated resorts for Macau.

•legacyentertainment.com



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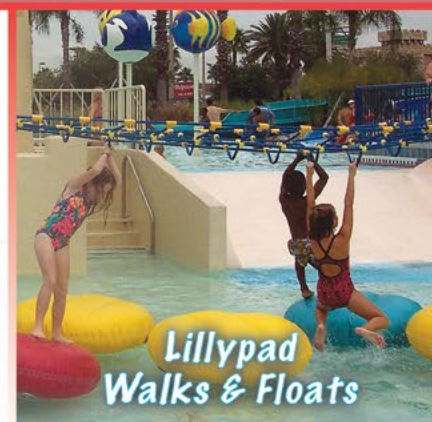
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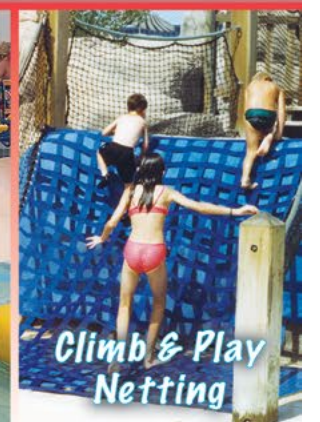
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Sidewinder Tubes & Rafts



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Climb & Play Netting


BUSINESS & NEWSMAKERS

► **Focus on the Horizon: Hudson Wood** — page 48 / **On The Move** — page 50

Midway provider Strates Shows celebrating Centennial of Smiles

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO — It all started with two kiddie rides and grew from there.

In May 1923, Greek immigrant **James E. Strates** started **Southern Tier Shows**, in Bath, New York. In time, his reputation for running a clean, honest and entertaining carnival allowed him to turn a collection of over-the-road wagons and rigs into a railroad caravan that traveled up and down the eastern seaboard. In 1932, the carnival was officially renamed the **James E. Strates Shows** and two years later traveled by rail for the first time.

E. James Strates took over leadership of the show following the passing of his father in 1959. These days the operation is known as **Strates Shows, Inc.**, owned and run by third and fourth generation family members. Prior to the pandemic, 61 rail cars and 34 trucks transported equipment for the 400 employees and families who operate the rides, games and concessions. The rail operation is currently suspended; however, the trucking side is in full swing and has been beefed up.

The show has been celebrating its 100th anniversary throughout this year at the various fairs and carnivals it has played. The celebration continues during the 2024 season, culminating at the **Erie County Fair**, Hamburg, New York, next August, when the show will be playing there for the 100th time. The carnival uses "Centennial of Smiles" as its theme.



Above left is a 1959 photo taken before the founders' passing (l to r) **E. James Strates**, second generation poses with his father **James E. Strates**, founder. Standing over eight feet tall is a motorized **Wave Swinger** 100th anniversary cake created by **Cake Boss** TV show's host, "**Buddy**" **Valastro Jr.** (above right). COURTESY STRATES SHOWS, INC.



One hundred free minutes of rides were offered for the midway at numerous spots including the **Osceola County Fair**, Sanford, Florida; **Carolina Classic Fair**, Winston-Salem, North Carolina; **York State Fair**, Pennsylvania; **Lake County Fair**, Eustis, Florida, **Southwest Georgia Regional Fair**, Albany and **North Florida Fair**, Tallahassee.

"The promotion was highly successful at the fairs we worked with," said **Marty Biniasz**, manager of fair and community development. "It was a cold and windy day at Erie County, however attendance was strong, salvaging that day." The **Champlain Valley Fair**, Essex Junction, Vermont had its single best day with the promotion.

There were many celebrations given to the carnival all season. "We have been hon-

ored by fairs and fair boards with anniversary cakes and proclamations in honor of our 100th year in operation," said Biniasz.

"We have been humbled by the way our partner fairs have honored our history," said **Jimmy Strates**. "The relationships we have created with the fairs and communities over the last 100 years are very special and something we do not take for granted."

In July, **State Fair Meadowlands**, East Rutherford, New Jersey, created a motorized cake replica of a **Wave Swinger** ride standing over eight feet tall. It was created by TLC's **Cake Boss** show host, **Bartolo "Buddy" Valastro Jr.** He owns **Carlo's Bakery**, a family-owned bakery that is the location used in the show.

A selfie photo op was made available to York State Fair fairgoers with a car from the **Zyklon** roller coaster car featuring special signage in

the background.

The **New York State Fair**, Syracuse, had a special Strates Shows historical display inside the fair's Art & Home Center. It included vintage pictures and signage alongside a 50-car, scale model of the **James E. Strates Shows** train, circa 1964. The model, owned by **William Pfeifer** of Rochester, includes 12 coaches, two animal cars and 36 flat cars filled with colorful wagons, rides and

equipment that was typical of a Strates train from the 1960s. There were also numerous miniature rides on display.

The **Circus Model Builders of Central New York** Hoxie Tucker Ring #73 had a tribute to Strates Shows as part of its annual state fair display. The organization's exhibit featured more than 3,000 square feet

► **See STRATES, page 47**



Third and fourth generations of Strates family members gathered prior to the start of their 99th season at the **Erie County Fair**, Hamburg, New York: (l to r) **John, Nick, James E. and Jay Strates**. COURTESY STRATES SHOWS, INC.

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►STRATES

Continued from page 46

of model circuses, model carnivals and historic posters.

During the **Erie County Fair**, a poster contest was held. Graphic artist **Crista Sukkenik** had her design selected as the 2024 Erie County Fair commemorative poster contest winner. The design honors Strates Shows, as it marks 100 years of providing the midway at that fair in 2024. A special expanded exhibit will be there next year.

100th anniversary buttons have been given out throughout the season to fair attendees. A series of four limited-edition T-shirts was created. They feature graphics from the 1940s, a 1970s crew member “jumpsuit” design, one that pays homage to the 1980s crew clothing and a color scheme used on the Strates Shows train. All have the 100th logo on the right sleeve. In the works are a 100th anniversary Strate Shows poster, a pictorial history book, and an O gauge scale toy train replica of the rail cars and engine.

For the upcoming spring 2024 fair and carnival route, the show is working with its locations to incorporate a Strates Shows competitive category with **Lego** blocks,

photo exhibits and other fine arts department exhibits.

Over the decades, Strates Shows has brought many innovations to the carnival industry, including cooperative promotions, a centralized ticket system, advance ticket sales and the FunCard electronic ticketing system that utilizes bar codes to control access to carnival rides on the midway and provides seamless, transparent accounting to partners.

“After 100 Years, the show is still focused on quality,” said **Susan Strates Magid**. “When my father E. James Strates took over the reins of his father’s show, he had one goal in mind — not to be the biggest, but the BEST. He was an innovator in the outdoor amusement business as he identified changes in demographics, spending habits and customer expectations. The result was to bring Strates Shows, and the whole carnival industry, into the big-business, high-tech world of modern family entertainment. This is a legacy that continues to drive the industry and Strates Shows forward to this day.”

The next 100 years look bright for the show that started with two kiddie rides and lots of determination.

•stratescarnivalcompany.com



The future looks bright for Strates Shows as it enters its second hundred years. Above is the company's midway from the Erie County Fair, Hamburg, New York. During the York State Fair, one of the 12 selfie stations throughout the grounds featured a Strates Zyklon car where attendees could take a picture. It was located under the grandstand (left). COURTESY STRATES SHOWS, INC.

Connecticut hosts successful NEAAPA Summer Meeting and Golf Tournament

MIDDLEBURY, Conn. — **NEAAPA's** 110th Anniversary Summer Meeting and Golf Tournament, held over two days on July 24 and 25, drew more than 80 attendees to Central Connecticut to network with colleagues and get a behind-the-scenes peek at two historic parks: **Quassy Amusement & Waterpark** at 115 seasons and **Lake Compounce Theme Park** at 177 seasons.

“Fore!”

Monday, July 24, started at the beautiful **Lyman Orchard Golf Club** in Middlefield, Connecticut. Sixteen participants got out their clubs to raise funds for NEAAPA's Pinnacle Scholarship Program, which is awarded to an employee whose post-secondary education is leading them to a career in the attractions industry. This year's recipient will be receiving a \$1,000 scholarship. Over \$1,500 was raised during the tournament, which will help to expand the program and fund future scholarships.

“This event is designed to be fun,” said Golf Committee Chairman, **Pete Barto**. A few NEAAPA members were introduced to the game of golf for the very first time at this tournament. “We welcome every skill level to play in this tournament, although we do require that players have fun.” Even Cyle the Crocodile from Lake Compounce and NEAAPA Secretary **Ed Hodgdon** made celebrity appearances and were able to get into the action as additional golfers helping groups on one of the holes.

In addition to having **NXT Capture** on-site taking photos of the action, the tournament featured a raffle for a **Garmin** Approach S42 GPS Golf Watch (sponsored by **Haas & Wilkerson Insurance**), a hole-in-one contest on all par-threes for a \$500 **Cal-laway** Gift Card (sponsored by **PB Amusement**), and a number of on-course contests (sponsored by **Tatvam Analytics by NetServ**), like the Wheel of Destiny, evened the playing field and added a little levity by having golfers do wacky tasks like playing a hole on one leg or having to play the hole with only one club. Also sponsoring this year was the 2022 NEAAPA Golf Tournament Champions – The Killer Bs.

Capturing the title again this year was the Killer B's: **Melissa Bamford** of **Bay-num Solutions**, Newport, Kentucky; **Pete Barto** of **PB Amusement**, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania; **Bradford Doolittle** of **Haas & Wilkerson Insurance**, Fairway, Kansas and **Brian Knoebel** of **Knoebel's Amusement Resort**, Elysburg, Pennsylvania.

Time at the parks!

The afternoon brought attendees to Quassy Amusement & Waterpark where park co-owners **George Frantzis II** and **Eric Anderson** greeted attendees as they arrived at the park. While some guests hit the attractions like Rocket Rapids, Frantic and new-for-2023, Super Himalaya, others went on a behind-the-scenes tour of their park, led by Frantzis and Anderson.

In the park's Fieldside Pavilion, a reception featuring “Quassy Calamari,” steamers and charcuterie was held where attendees got to mingle and network. **Jim Sisti**, a slight-of-hand magician and historian of his craft, entertained the group with close-up magic. As the evening went on, the park rolled out an appetizing dinner which included lobster rolls, a carving station and barbecued spareribs. To cap off the day, guests got exclusive ride time on the park's coaster, **Wooden Warrior**.

On Tuesday, July 25, Lake Compounce opened its doors to Summer Meeting, where guests got a chance to experience many of the park's signature attractions, like Boulder Dash, Venus Vortex and Phobia. Park management, including new General Manager **Doug Hemphill**, was on hand to greet attendees before the park opened for the day. Attendees made their way to the Lakeside Pavilions, either by walking, taking the 1911 Trolley or the Compounce Railway for the Board of Directors meeting and lunch.

During the meeting, NEAAPA President **Chris Nicoli** welcomed everyone and thanked the parks and sponsors. Updates were given on state legislation, future events and NEAAPA Academy Online Training. Following a delicious buffet lunch of BBQ chickens, hamburgers and hot dogs, guests made their way through the park on various tours, including maintenance, in-park revenue and events.

Attendees were treated to two bags full of goodies provided by sponsors and the hosting parks, including a vacuum mug from **Rhode Island Novelty**, a reversible spider from **Premier Rides** in honor of Phobia at Lake Compounce, a sloth from Quassy and homemade fudge from Lake Compounce.

Sponsors of the Summer Meeting included: Premier Rides, Inc., St. Petersburg, Florida; **Amusement Entertainment Risk Insurance Agency**, Fitzwilliam, New Hampshire; **Tatvam Analytics by NetServ**, Alpharetta, Georgia; **Rhode Island Novelty**, Fall River, Massachusetts and **Hodgdon Consulting**, Scarborough, Maine.

—Ed Hodgdon, NEAAPA

Focus *on the* HORIZON

Take a (Dark) Ride With Hudson

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — It is not a surprise that Hudson Wood works for Sally Dark Rides, the globally recognized creator of turnkey dark rides. “Every day I work alongside my father, sister and brother-in-law, and the incredibly talented team that I’ve considered aunts and uncles longer than we have been co-workers,” Wood shared.

Together with his colleagues, Wood develops, sells and debuts the imaginative and unique rides Sally is known for. And while one can say it’s because he was born into the company, he points to his own childhood activities and how they helped mold him for his role as a sales executive. “While growing up, my favorite things were to meet new friends and play with toys. I would spend entire days creating elaborate stories about good versus evil, creating evil, secret agent missions, even mysteries, like Scooby-Doo episodes. I loved to collaborate with my friends and cousins, improvising one thing after the next. And now, in my role at Sally, not much has really changed. Everyone has a story to tell. My job is to pull the inner kid out of park owners and operators. Then together, we “play” in a sort of creative toybox until we start to develop the ideas for a new story Sally can then open for their guests.”

Originally from Jacksonville Beach, Florida, Wood remained in the state for college. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, Marketing, from the University of Central Florida, and upon graduation, took a role with Herschend Family Entertainment as the Florida Sales Representative. “Essentially my job was group sales,” Wood remembered. “I would reach out to corporate groups and large organizations to coordinate outings at Herschend’s parks, most often for Wild Adventures Theme Park in Georgia.

“The role was tremendously valuable and helped me learn

a great deal,” he continued. “I worked on property, communicated with park management, and learned about park operations and the many considerations leadership look to when making decisions. I worked nearly every weekend as my clients enjoyed the parks and attractions and sometimes even helped to cook and serve group meals. The work experience greatly bolstered my desire to continue to create ‘memories worth repeating’ — Herschend’s company mission.”

Ready to help Sally create new dark rides and memories for park guests around the world, Wood joined the company full-time in March 2020. “I watched my sister work hard and overcome new challenges when she joined Sally,” he remembered. “Coming to Sally as both her colleague and brother, I worried at first it could negatively impact our relationship. I was wrong. It has been a bigger blessing than I ever anticipated. We love that we now work beside each other; it makes the job that much better. Together, we deeply care about the company’s culture and its continued success.”

While still on the early side of his career, Wood notes: “Seeing the smiling faces of families as they come off the attractions that I had a hand in making happen is the highlight. I dream about it every night.”

Fellow colleagues, peers and even competitors are the keys behind those smiles. “The people of the attractions industry truly are the best part. Everyone has a job to do, and while companies are always looking for more business, we are all here to share joy and happiness. We are all focused on putting smiles on people’s faces and creating lasting memories. It is something special.”

Wood knows being a part of the attractions industry is not easy. “I tell others, ‘Don’t wait for good things to come to you. If you believe in something, go out and

Hudson Wood

Sally Dark Rides
Jacksonville, Florida



grab it,” he advised. “Just DO it. Get started, the next step is waiting for you just a little further down the road.” He encourages students to get started now, and not wait for graduation.

“Application is a key part of my personal learning process,” he explained. “Looking back, I sometimes think I should have been more involved with on-campus groups and clubs, but by spending nearly every afternoon at a theme park, my love for this industry strengthened. My Universal Orlando annual pass was one of the best purchases of my life. I visited, I watched, I experienced, and I thought about what I could bring to parks. Even while I was having fun, I was learning. I think no matter what it is you are passionate about, experiencing and taking part in it is just as important as studying in class.”

He loves the fact that travel is now a key part of his role in the attractions industry. “While I was growing up, my father, mother and sister were always all over the

world. I am ecstatic to be a part of that now — representing Sally and continuing to grow from the personal and professional growth that travel provides. I was thrilled to attend the Golden Ticket Awards for the first time this year and celebrate the industry with many old — and new — friends.”

Looking ahead, Wood is eager about what’s next for Sally. “I’m excited to continue to better understand every part of the company as we build to the future,” he shared. “Sally is an amazing place to work, and we have an incredibly talented team. Ultimately, I’d like to help scout for emerging talent who will thrive within our incredible work culture.”

“Walt Disney once said, ‘All of our dreams can come true if we have the courage to pursue them,’” Wood finished. “I’m so grateful I have the opportunity to both pursue my dreams and work alongside my family to help others’ dream come to life through our attractions.”

—Susan Storey

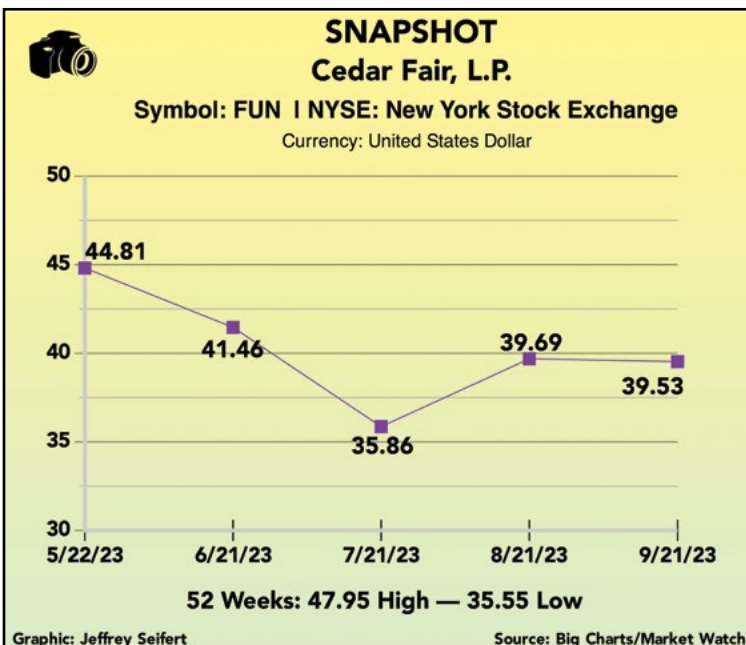
MARKET WATCH

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 9/21/23	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
PARKS AND ATTRACTIONS					
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	111.13	116.78	71.72
Bowlero Corp.	BOWL	NYSE	10.52	17.45	9.71
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	39.59	47.95	35.55
Comcast Corp./ NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	45.70	47.45	28.39
Dave & Busters Entertainment, LLC	PLAY	NASDAQ	35.53	47.29	30.36
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	41.76	47.70	33.92
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	JP:9010	TYO	5120.00	5820.00	4040.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	1.19	4.09	0.81
Lefoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	16.85	28.45	15.40
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	37.03	51.35	29.20
Parks America, Inc.	PRKA	OTC	0.36	0.47	0.26
Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd.	RCL	NYSE	94.32	112.95	36.92
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	47.01	68.19	44.38
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	23.74	31.29	16.83
Warner Bros Discovery Inc.	WBD	NASDAQ	11.51	16.34	8.82
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	694.00	822.00	650.00
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	82.73	118.18	79.75
SUPPLIERS/OTHERS					
Brogent Technologies, Inc.	TW:5263	TSEC	116.00	148.50	99.6
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	TYO:6357	TYO	1247.00	1515.00	738.00
Topgolf Callaway Brands	MODG	NYSE	14.59	25.96	14.45

Details and information available at 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



BUSINESS WATCH

Bluestone Equity Partners invest in RWS

NEW YORK — **Bluestone Equity Partners** (Bluestone), the global sports, media and entertainment (SME) private equity firm, announced a minority investment in **RWS Global**, the world's largest provider of live shows, destinations and immersive experiences across the hospitality, leisure, theatrical, corporate, retail and sports sectors.

"Bluestone partners with uniquely capable and scalable businesses to accelerate growth on a global basis, creating lasting value for all stakeholders," said **Bobby Sharma**, Bluestone's founder and managing partner. "RWS Global is a perfect addition to Bluestone's strategic growth equity portfolio, and as its first institutional investor, we're excited to be an integral part of its next chapter as an industry pillar."

RWS Global marks the second investment for Bluestone, which launched its inaugural \$300 million growth equity fund, in a single closing, during the first quarter of 2023. Bluestone is differentiated in the SME capital marketplace by its blue-chip industry operating experience, expansive international network, stable institutional capital base and collaborative synergistic approach with portfolio companies. In connection with this investment, Bluestone will hold two seats on RWS Global's Board of Directors.

"Turning the big and small moments into powerful and lasting memories is what we do," said **Ryan Stana**, who founded RWS Global in 2003. "This is an inflection point on a remarkable journey that has taken us to over 500 productions a year on land and sea and virtually every corner on Earth. We couldn't ask for a better partner than Bluestone to take us to the next level of growth, and an even higher level of operation, service and commitment to our clients."

Dollywood announces healthcare partnership

PIGEON FORGE, Tenn. — **Dollywood Parks & Resorts** and **Covenant Health** have announced that the East Tennessee healthcare system now serves as the operating partner for the theme park company's employee health-care center. The two entities have enjoyed a strong partnership since February 2020, when Covenant Health was named the "Official Health System Partner of Dollywood."

Dollywood employees enjoy a large number of perks, including free lunches, 100% free tuition through the Herschend GROW U. program, complimentary park admissions for family and friends, as well as free or reduced admission to a large number of regional attractions. A key benefit for all hosts and their families, however, is access to the on-site Dollywood Family Healthcare Center.

"The Dollywood Family Healthcare Center is a unique benefit for our employees," said Dollywood Parks & Resorts President **Eugene Naughton**. "Thanks to our partners at Covenant Health, we are able to provide a high-quality and convenient healthcare option that is affordable for our hosts and their families. We take host care very seriously, and I'm proud that we have a relationship with a team that feels the same way."

"Not only does Covenant Health believe in our mission of creating long-lasting memories for our guests, they sponsor two of our popular festivals — Flower & Food Festival and Great Pumpkin LumiNights — as well as our baby care facilities and nursing centers. They are eager to provide the absolute best healthcare experience possible for our hosts. We've leaned on them a lot since 2020, and I'm glad we're able to now partner in this way. It just makes sense!"

DIESEL PRICES

Region (U.S.)	As of 9/18/23	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$4.537	(\$0.352)
Midwest	\$4.492	(\$0.503)
Gulf Coast	\$4.352	(\$0.338)
Mountain	\$4.864	(\$0.068)
West Coast	\$5.260	\$0.116
California	\$6.192	\$0.043

CURRENCY

On 9/22/23 \$1 USD =	
0.9388	EURO
0.8129	GBP (British Pound)
147.90	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9030	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.5590	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.3487	CAD (Canadian Dollar)

OBITUARY

Amusement park owner Richard Williams passes

WASHINGTON, Utah — Richard James Williams, 92, passed away peacefully on August 24, 2023, of natural causes. Known to friends and family as "Dick," Williams was born on May 12, 1931, in Panguitch, Utah, to James Clarence (Shupe) Williams and Cecil Dean Norton Williams. A member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he grew up in the idyllic small town of Panguitch, playing with friends, helping his neighbors during the Great Depression, and going fishing with his father on Panguitch Lake.



Williams

After moving to Salt Lake City with his family during World War II, he worked for Liberty Park where he developed a love for the amusement park business. During his life, Williams owned and operated three amusement parks: one in Kearns, Utah; one in Murray, Utah; and culminating with the Fun Spot in Boise, Idaho.

Williams served in the United States Navy during the Korean War before returning home to marry and start his family. He studied education at the University of Utah while working for El Paso Natural Gas Company but loved to hunt and fish, preferring to be outdoors to any other activity.

Williams is survived by his wife, Shauna Marie Williams (Washington, Utah), her four children with many grandchildren and great-grandchildren, four children — from his first marriage to Laverne Nonpariel Crowley — Richard Shane Williams, Lance Clenné Williams, Darren James Williams and Wendy Cecilia Anderson, a stepson from his second marriage to Marion Sharpe Barber, Dan Barber (Jackie), a close family friend Michael Tase, nine grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, and seven great-great-grandchildren.

Hall of Fame Resort and Entertainment Company

announced the appointment of **Val McGee** as the company's senior vice president of revenue. McGee brings a wealth of experience from her distinguished 30-year career in the hospitality and family entertainment industries.

As the company continues to successfully open **Hall of Fame Village** in Canton, Ohio, McGee's role will predominantly be focused on the destination-based asset vertical and the experiences that will be offered as part of the Village development. McGee's work will center around the maximization of revenue growth while creating a more seamless guest experience. She will also lead efforts to create and integrate revenue streams throughout the company's diverse business verticals which include media and gaming.

"We are delighted to welcome Val McGee as our senior vice president of revenue," said **Michael Crawford**, president and CEO of HOFV. "Val's track record of successfully leading top line innovation, revenue generation and operational excellence is unparalleled in the industry. Her leadership will play a pivotal role in advancing our commitment to delivering outstanding guest experiences and driving growth across all of our business verticals and to supporting the optimization of the company's financial performance and overall profitability."



McGee

Stern Pinball, Inc. (SPI) announced the appointments of **Josh Henderson** as game software developer and **Joseph Marchfield** as marketing manager as part of the company's organizational commitment to investing in all processes of its rapidly growing business.

Henderson, a graduate of **Southern New Hampshire University** with a B.S. in Computer Science, has had an accomplished background in competitive pinball. A two-time Illinois State Pinball Champion and PAPA 2012-14 finalist, he was previously ranked among the top 25 players in the world. With his high-level tournament experience and passion for rules design, Henderson will help develop and release content for current and future Stern Pinball games as a game software developer.

Bringing more than 15 years of marketing, media and business management experience for **Miller Brewing, NBC Universal, CME Group** as well as his own entrepreneurial ventures, Joseph Marchfield is looking forward to delivering consumer growth and marketing strategies for Stern, reporting and working directly with Director of Marketing **Zach Sharpe**. A graduate of **Colorado State University** majoring in Journalism, Marchfield returned to his hometown of Chicago to help build brands and businesses, developing ecommerce, marketing and media products in entertainment, finance and sporting goods industries.



Henderson



Marchfield

Canadian design firm **Forrec** has named **Linda Hung** as its new vice president of business development. Hung, who is working with Forrec for 25 years, will assume the position on October 1 from **Matthew Dawson**, who is leaving the company. Hung will be responsible for developing, coordinating and leading all sales and business development strategies and initiatives from then on.

ON THE MOVE

"Linda's strong relationships with the clients, vendors and consultants that make up our dynamic industry reach all corners of the globe and encompass multiple sectors," stated Forrec CEO **Cale Heit**. "Her deep understanding of our business, key partner relationships and the wider industry make her the perfect fit for this role."

"I'm excited to continue building the best teams in the business, collaborating with our partners and deepening our client relationships to translate their needs into unique and transformative destinations and experiences," said Hung.

Storyland Studios has announced that **Sean Featonby** has been promoted to head of business development for Europe and the U.K.

Featonby's promotion follows two years of growth for the company. Throughout this time, he has continually proved his commitment to quality and to serving his clients, his colleagues and the themed entertainment sector.

As head of business development for Europe and the U.K., Featonby will lead on the management of both new and current relationships, with the main objective of providing all visitors to Storyland Studios with a market-leading experience.

"I am thrilled to take on this new role as head of business development for Europe and the U.K. at Storyland Studios," shared Featonby. "This is an exciting opportunity to build on our successes, connect with new clients and partners, and continue delivering exceptional themed entertainment experiences to a region we have not actively developed but has organically grown."

Featonby will report to **Marlene Toussaint**, who was recently appointed as director of business development. Toussaint has worked with top IP companies such as **Mattel, Feld Entertainment** and **The Walt Disney Company**. This experience further strengthens the Storyland Studios' strategic development team.

Intercard has hired **Steven Guignon** as its house accounts manager. He will work on the inside sales team along with key accounts manager **Chris Deusinger**.

An experienced small businessman, Guignon has expertise in growing business-to-business sales from existing accounts. A **U.S. Coast Guard**-certified boat captain, Guignon most recently handled sales for **Alaska Luxury Tours**, a company he co-founded. In 2022 the company made \$1.7 million in sales providing luxury whale watching tours for 11 major cruise lines. Prior to Alaska Luxury Tours, Guignon was a cruise ship captain in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. Guignon also has extensive experience in tech sales. For several years, he was an area sales manager for **AT&T**, managing five retail stores across the Midwest.

"Steve has over 20 years of experience in sales and relationship building as a sales executive and business owner," said **Bill Allen**, North America sales manager for Intercard. "His skill in growing sales with existing customers will be a great asset to Intercard as we continue to expand our inside sales operation."



Hung



Featonby



Guignon

SAFETY, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

► Skyline Attractions to debut Aurora LED system — page 54 / Europa-Park adds staff housing — page 56

New Ellis Aquatic Vigilance System provides end-to-end monitoring

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

MAITLAND, Fla. — Ellis Aquatic Innovations (EAI), a member of the Ellis & Associates family of aquatic safety and risk management consulting services, combined three decades of knowledge, research and advanced innovation in creating its newest innovation, Ellis Aquatic Vigilance System (EAVS).

The veteran aquatic safety company is touting EAVS as the world's most complete drowning prevention and facility security vigilance system.

And the system does seem to have the total package.

EAVS utilizes high definition "smart" cameras strategically placed to monitor movement on land, on the



Using high-definition smart cameras (inset) strategically placed, the new Ellis Aquatic Vigilance System by Ellis Aquatic Innovations is making the water park industry safer. The new product monitors movement on land, on the water and under water to help identify items before they become a problem. COURTESY ELLIS AND ASSOCIATES

water and under water to help identify items before they become a problem. The system is able to do this by

capturing live video and using analytics that "learn" to identify patterns and behaviors specific to each client facility.

Working in conjunction with a control room operator, this unique aptitude creates a situation that alerts lifeguards to a potential issue, even those that are out of sight of the lifeguards at duty stations.

Point by point, this is some of what EAVS does:

- EAVS gives the lifeguard safety team an additional set of "eyes" on attractions to provide an increased level of safety.

- Cameras enable EAVS operators and supervisory personnel to see activity above and below the water, on deck, and the perimeter via the onsite control room and remotely.

- Select analytic alerts

are programmed to aid safety, increase response time, provide backup and give insight into live and evolving situations.

"For all of us in the industry, regardless of our roles, safety is the most important priority in everything we do," said Larry Newell, chief operating officer, EAI. "Ellis and Associates was founded to elevate safety for aquatic facility guests and for lifeguards. The introduction of EAVS leverages new and emerging technology to give lifeguards, supervisors, managers and even security personnel an extra set of eyes that provide enhanced safety for facility guests."

Water parks, resorts, municipal pools and aquatic facilities of any size can now offer this higher level of safety and security, be-

cause the cameras see what a lifeguard can't.

Employing analytic high-definition cameras with thermal capability, EAVS can monitor property and pools day and night, offering perimeter security in addition to aquatic safety.

Systems are completely scalable for any size and type of facility, not just those in aquatics. Systems include multiple camera function, pan/tilt/zoom operation, live and recorded monitoring, integrated communication and alerts via Motorola radios, video capture for incident investigation, staff audits, training, and with its newest analytics, COVID-19 health and safety peace of mind.

"I founded Ellis & Associates in 1983 out of a de-

► See ELLIS, page 52

Advantages of EAVS

Provides additional views of guest activity that may otherwise be obstructed from lifeguard view.

- Having an additional person watching the attractions, along with system alerts, enables consistent recognition, timely response and effective coordination of incidents.

- EAVS can rapidly aid in locating a missing guest, provide video documentation of rule breakers, provide occupancy counts and enable slide dispatchers to monitor guests from dispatch to splashdown.

- Provides exceptional training for lifeguards.

- Review past situations to improve operations, safety, customer service, park efficiency and implement preventative measures.

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Who operates EAVS

EAVS is operated by Lifeguard and aquatic supervisory personnel who have successfully completed our certification course.

EAVS is manned via the control room during all operational hours and in constant communication with all lifeguards and leadership on property.

Operators adhere to strict written Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for EAVS operation integrated with the facility Emergency Response Plan (EAP)

Besides onsite supervisors verifying EAVS Operator performance, Operators are also periodically monitored remotely by Ellis national staff.



All 20 Great Wolf Lodge indoor/outdoor water park locations — in 18 states and Canada — are utilizing Ellis Aquatic Innovations new EAVS technology. COURTESY GREAT WOLF LODGE

► ELLIS

Continued from page 51

sire to make the aquatic environment safer — to save lives," said Jeff Ellis, founder and CEO of Ellis & Associates. "Making things better, safer and more efficient is at the heart of what we do. We saw what the security community was doing with cameras and artificial intelligence and knew we could apply that technology to various aquatic environments."

Newell said that at its core, EAVS is a drowning prevention system, but by no means, does it eliminate the need for lifeguards. It provides additional safety.

Even though the company is just now rolling out EAVS, it is already being used in the industry. **Roaring Springs**, Meridian, Idaho, was the first outdoor water park to utilize EAVS.

All Great Wolf Lodges indoor/outdoor water parks are utilizing it, as are **Gaylord Marriott Resorts**, **Illinois Park and Rec Districts** and an upcoming installation at **Fort Wayne Indiana School District**.



EAVS cameras feature thermal imaging capability. COURTESY ELLIS AND ASSOCIATES

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Registration now open for AIMS International's annual Safety Seminar.

Sign up for the 2024 **AIMS International** Safety Seminar before October 15 and take advantage of early-bird pricing. Select from over 300 hours of course offerings which include new courses, new exams and a completely new track!

Highlights for 2024

New this year, AIMS International is pleased to introduce a week-long Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) Track. This new track focuses on the safety of guests and staff members through regulatory efforts. The curriculum is designed for both new and experienced amusement industry professionals and state regulators. Students will learn to understand regulations, learn what their objectives are and explore methods to improve the inspection process for all of those involved.

Back by popular demand, **Ellis**

& Associates (E&A) will deliver the seminar's aquatics curriculum. E&A will ensure a comprehensive and innovative program providing the most cur-

rent industry information and sharing global trends. Also returning in 2023 is the **International Ride Training (IRT)** certification with a new curriculum, instructors and an expanded **Operations Track**. Additionally, this year's seminar will again include over 20 hours of operations, inspection and maintenance education delivered entirely in Spanish.

Discounted early-bird tuition for the seminar is \$595 through October 15 and includes the CEU certificate.

Visit aimsintl.org for more information or to register for the seminar.



Lowenstein

Applications for the Safety, Security and Risk Management Academy and Certification are now being accepted!

In response to a recognized need in the amusement industry for additional specific and in-depth safety education and certification, AIMS International has created the Academy of Amusement Risk Management, Safety and Security (AARMSS). This structured certification program is designed to develop the safety, security and risk managers of today and tomorrow based on the following foundational pillars: Safety, Security, Emergency Management and Risk Management.

For more information, and to apply for the program, please visit: aimsintl.org/education/aarmss

Scholarships available

Five scholarships to the 2024 AIMS International Safety Seminar are available. To apply for an AIMS International scholarship, send an email to info@aimsintl.org with "Seminar Scholarship" in the subject line and describe why you are deserving. Please include your current position or, if you are a student, your current field of study. Scholarship applications are due by November 10.

Become a sponsor

AIMS International is a non-profit association. Industry support of this important annual Safety Seminar is vital to the health and prosperity of the entire amusement industry. For sponsorship information, please contact Amy Lowenstein at 714.425.5747 or email sponsors@aimsintl.org.

—Amy Lowenstein

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Skyline debuts bright, vivid Aurora LED system with P'Sghetti Bowl

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — The new coaster set to open soon at Six Flags Fiesta Texas, San Antonio, Texas, is presenting two debuts for Skyline Attractions LLC. The new ride is Skyline's first P'Sghetti Bowl Children's Coaster, and it is also the debut of the company's Aurora LED lighting package.

The ride began testing last month and hopes are to have the ride open in October.

Skyline's Aurora LED lighting package first showcased at the 2022 IAAPA Expo. These LED panels are installed atop and on the sides of the single-rail track, transforming the roller coaster's tracks into a kaleidoscope of lights and colors with a multitude of LED panels. This feature can be used for custom theming, holiday overlays, paid spon-



The above artist rendering showcases a model of Skyline Attractions' P'Sghetti Bowl children's coaster with the Aurora LED lighting package. Skyline is debuting the ride and lighting system at Six Flags Fiesta Texas, San Antonio, Texas. COURTESY SKYLINE ATTRACTIONS

sorships or other displays. The lights are bright and visible both day and night. They are rated for outdoor operations, including rain and snow. Panels include a protective layer to simplify the cleaning process.

All wiring is concealed and all electronics are spaced clear of the train's running wheels. The new coaster, called Kid Flash Cosmic Coaster, features an innovative weld-free track design, which allows for

a streamlined fabrication process and lower price tag. The roller coaster also includes an inclusive train design, capable of comfortably seating an adult and child, or two children, in each row. Riders are restrained by individual T-shaped bars for added comfort and safety.

The twin tracks span a cumulative 1,158 feet and are as twisted as a bowl of spaghetti, each crossing over and under other segments of track a dozen times during the ride cycle. The two sides can operate simultaneously for racing action or with one side only for limited operation.

Skyline's P'Sghetti Bowl children's coaster is available in six off-the-shelf models. The product can be installed indoors or outdoors and can be custom-designed to fit any park, zoo or FEC's existing space.

For larger spaces, Skyline Attractions also offers the TrailRunner Family Coaster product. All Skyline Attractions roller coasters are available with the Aurora LED lighting package.

Skyline Attractions, LLC, founded in 2014, is based in Orlando, Florida. skylineattractions.com

FAST FACTS

Aurora LED system

- Bright and visible, day or night.
- Rated for outdoor operations, including rain and snow. Panels include a protective layer to simplify the cleaning process.
- All wiring is cleverly concealed and all electronics are spaced clear of the train's running wheels.
- Animations are easy to swap out, including for holiday-specific designs.

P'Sghetti Bowl coaster

- Six off-the-shelf models with increasing footprint, length and thrill level, all while remaining accessible to children of all ages.
- Base frame option available for indoor or outdoor operation
- Innovative track design that streamlines fabrication and increases savings, plus offers infinite customization opportunities
- Inclusive train design that allows children and adults to ride together

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P'Sghetti

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Details

- Base frame option available for indoor or outdoor use
- Inclusive train design fits both children and adults
- Weld-free track design for reduced maintenance
- Theming opportunities for both the track and trains!

Ride Stats

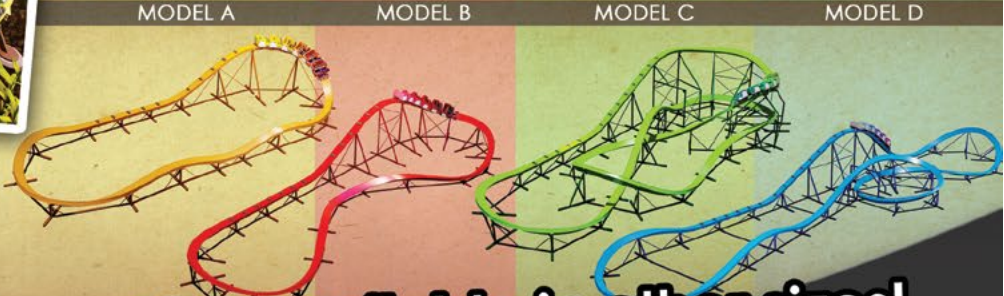
Height	24.5' [7.5 m]
Length	566' [172.7 m] 592' [180.4 m]
Footprint	162' x 83' [49.5 m x 25.3 m]
Capacity	1,200 pph
Power	100 kW
Height Req.	36" [91 cm]



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Europa-Park strives to meet staffing needs with new housing

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

RUST, Germany — The years following the global pandemic will be historically remembered for the challenges that arose in its wake. Among them have been staffing shortages.

To meet its needs, **Europa-Park** is meeting the challenge with employee housing and enticing initiatives.

“Rust is a small village, and 20 or more years ago, we expanded the park. We found we couldn’t find enough employees in the region,” said **Jürgen Mack**, managing partner. “We hired people from great distances, and we needed housing.”

Initially, the resort started renting houses but quickly began building accommodations. In 2023, there was a completion of a new employee campus, now with four buildings. The new campus sports more than 200 beds, but in total, the resort estimates about 1,500 beds are in use.

The first phase opened in May 2020. Of those 129 rooms, 72 are for singles, 45 are shared flats, and 12 are two-room flats. The recent addition to the campus offers 12 single rooms, 12 shared flats and eight two-room flats, bringing the total furnished residential units on the campus to 161. The new units can house from 230 up to 340 people.

“We have made compensation for inflation,” said



New buildings (above) creating an employee campus welcome staffing from outside the region. Living areas (below left) and kitchens (below right) make for a comfortable lifestyle for those workers who are temporarily away from their homes.

AT/TIM BALDWIN; COURTESY EUROPA-PARK



Frederik Mack, director of human resources. “Energy prices went up, so inflation came with it.”

While many parks hire individuals from international locations, the expand-

ed campus meets the needs of families as well.

“There is a kindergarten on the ground floor,” said Jürgen. “It is in cooperation with the village.”

Europa-Park has been



blessed with appropriate staffing throughout the resort. Part of the success of finding employees comes from the benefits the resort provides. The theme park itself is a draw to many. But an enjoyable lifestyle complements the work to be done.

“We have bicycles to lease,” said Frederik. “This allows them to get around for private use. Our academy offers different trainings. We have a leadership program. Workshops allow them to improve their language skills. We have a gym.”

“We have an organization where they can use different gyms all over Germany,” added Jürgen. “We pay a part of it.”

“We offer a lot for employees to develop themselves,” Frederik told *Amusement Today*. “If they want to be successful, they can train to be in a position of more responsibility. We have

a lot of different programs.”

There are also perks with tickets for public events, which extend to the employee’s family.

With six resort hotels — which do a booming convention business in the winter — and the year-round Rulantica water park, Europa-Park is finding its “off-season” shrinking.

“The number of full-time employees gets higher,” Jürgen said. “Twenty or 30 years ago, we had a summer season, and we closed the park in October. We now have Rulantica and the convention business, so only Europa-Park is closed for three months. We can offer more and more jobs year-round.”

Started with the pandemic, online ticketing is an industry trend that continues today. Management feels it helps with planning and scheduling.

“Online ticketing helps us know how to schedule employees for special days,” Jürgen noted. “It also helps the guests. Because we have a limit, we want the guests to have a good experience.”

As many employees come from outside Germany, Europa-Park has created a welcome center near the campus.

“We want a central point of arrival for all our employees,” explained Frederik. “Those from foreign countries get a tour — through their workplace and through the park — and get an orientation. But it’s not only limited to new arrivals. It’s a meeting place to have a cup of coffee and talk about different things and some might have issues that they can share. You have to offer things to employees to where they are happy and have good feelings and good connections with each other.”

More than 100 countries are represented among the employees.

Europa-Park also offers a one-year future leaders program for talented, young employees. They receive various training courses to guide them into leadership positions.

“You can develop talents to prepare them for the future,” said Jürgen.

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How lifeguards can successfully address the "I'm a doctor" situation

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

Dr. Justin Sempstrott has worn many hats. Beginning his career as a beach lifeguard, he attended a firefighters and paramedics school before going to a medical school. His specialty is emergency medicine. With his diverse background, he often addresses water park owners and operators. Within his presentation is a topic of medical professionals being bystanders during incidents.

"Often you will see emergency action plans or protocols that end with 'Transfer care to EMS.' It is well established that lifeguards are EMS," said Sempstrott. "They are part of the EMS system."

He points out that their training goes beyond CPR training; lifeguards get facility-specific training as well. They know what the facility's resources are and what to do with the equipment at hand and the environment they are in.

"Whether it is an injury,



Lifeguards should feel empowered to know that their training provides the correct protocols to deal with emergency situations. COURTESY STARGUARD ELITE

a serious medical [situation] or, God forbid, a drowning or suffocation situation at their specific slide or pool or deck, the lifeguards are the professional rescuers," said Sempstrott. "Lifeguards are often young teenagers, and to perform at the same level as doctors, nurses and paramedics, they need to know

that what they do matters." Situations can unfortunately be complicated by medical professionals who might happen to be visiting the water park or facility.

"Oftentimes you will have off-duty nurses, paramedics, doctors or other well-intentioned bystanders who may not have that

experience of working outside the hospital or with the equipment or resources you have," Sempstrott told *Amusement Today*. "I've reviewed legal cases where well-intentioned, medically trained bystanders intervene and begin asking for hospital resources they normally have, which aren't necessar-

ily available to a lifeguard. The lifeguard knows to focus on the basics and get breaths in and start compressions. Sometimes it can become overly complicated by adding in those extra layers."

Admittedly, these bystanders are wanting to help. AT asked how lifeguards should respond. Sempstrott advised: "Bystanders can help, whether they are medically trained or not. They can go to a certain gate and flag down EMS that might be arriving or help set up a perimeter, and when extra assistance is needed, they can perform chest compressions or hand equipment. As the on-duty lifeguard, it may seem odd that you are directing them, but that is the more important role. CPR for health care professionals is the exact same CPR card that lifeguards receive. They are held to the same standards. In an emergency situation, you aren't able to verify cre-

► See DOCTOR, page 59

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► **DOCTOR**

Continued from page 58

dentials and licensing and you have to take people on their word for it, which sometimes people can over-represent their abilities.”

While not necessarily common, there are far-extreme scenarios in EMS when an off-duty professional is trying to direct lifeguards and paramedics. In those situations, that bystander is assuming the care of the person, which comes with numerous responsibilities.

Sempsrott pointed out that many operators have both amusement rides and water parks within one facility, and quite often management perspectives in matters of safety may not hold the same weight when it comes to water safety.

“The public perception is lifeguards are the Pamela Anderson and David Hasselhoff who are sitting there spinning a whistle doing nothing,” observed Sempsrott. “The reality is that [a lifeguard’s role] may be one of the biggest risk profiles for the facilities. No mat-



Dr. Justin Sempsrott addresses attendees at a StarGuard Elite camp (above left). Lifeguards are trained to know the equipment and facility-specific resources (above right). AT/TIM BALDWIN; COURTESY STARGUARD ELITE



ter what [lifeguard training] you use, the message to ‘rides operators’ is that aquatics is important. We need to steer away from ‘just a couple of waterslides with discharges’ and ‘just a wave pool.’”

He advises that management discuss the possibility of involvement from bystanders to lifeguards and staff to bring the situation to mind.

“Like with anything, you have to train for it and prepare for it and have something in place,” he told AT. “It certainly doesn’t have to

come across as adversarial; it can be cooperative. Step One is empowering lifeguards and training them to the point to where they know what they are doing is correct, and they know the protocols. They should have confidence in that and not be shaken by someone else who is telling them they have a higher level of training and that it should be done differently. The next step is to be prepared for what to do in that situation and tell the lifeguards that if someone

comes up who says they are medically trained and are willing to help, this is where to direct them — go into this building and get this supervisor or carry equipment or wait at a certain point to direct paramedics or perform chest compressions. You have to have that plan in place ahead of time.”

Advice to operators is to consider this possibility before it happens and not after a situation has already developed.

“We love our first

responders and off-duty professionals. We want to utilize their skills, but we want them to know to place faith in the lifeguards as well,” Sempsrott noted. “Sometimes the best help they can provide is to give the lifeguard space to do their job.”

In addition to his role as a medical professional, Sempsrott serves as medical director for **StarGuard Elite**, an aquatic risk prevention agency that trains and certifies lifeguards and consults with aquatics management.

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\$1,800/kart

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Extra tires and parts, no charge.

1978 Selner Tilt a Whirl

Like new bonnets • Cable 1 year old.

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OPPORTUNITY

WANTED: Advertising Salesperson

Industry newspaper *Amusement Today* is seeking an individual to join our ad sales staff. This is the perfect position for networking and being part of the Amusement Industry! Candidate will work from home and receive 20% commission on all ad sales.

Duties:

- Contact potential new advertisers within the Amusement Industry
- Build relationships with above contacts
- Sell electronic and print advertising for *Amusement Today*
- Represent *Amusement Today* in a positive and professional manner at all times

Requirements:

- Familiarity with MS Word and MS Excel
- Familiarity with the Amusement Industry
- Willingness to be easily contacted via phone/email throughout workday

Please send resume and contact information to
Publisher Gary Slade:
gslade@amusementtoday.com

OPPORTUNITY



Field Service Technician (\$70-85k)

To install, troubleshoot, and maintain our extensive product line.

Job Duties:

- Travel as needed to customer locations (domestic and international) to install or troubleshoot with high regard to customer service and quality
- Utilize mechanical and electrical knowledge to comprehend all facets of design, manufacturing, assembly, installation, and troubleshooting of products
- Oversee installation projects onsite by delegating, communicating, training, organizing and facilitating effectively
- Follow safety guidelines at all times and report any violations to management
- Other duties as assigned

Job Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree in an engineering or technical field preferred
- 3-6 years of experience in the industry, field of study, mechanical/electrical, overseeing assembly and/or installation of quality specialized products
- Proven understanding of electrical/mechanical applications, project management, and quality assurance programs
- Ability to travel (domestic and international) 60-70% of the year and for extended periods of time
- Strong communication (oral and written), customer service, technical and troubleshooting skills
- Sound organizational skills, proven ability to delegate tasks, and experience with customer relations a must
- Strong computer and mobile device skills a must
- Ability to manage on time arrival and as scheduled to job sites and to work within established guidelines and procedures
- Valid driver's license and good driving record; valid passport (or ability to obtain)
- Experience with mechanical design concepts and Auto CAD, Pro-E, and prototype development a plus
- Familiar with ASTM safety standards a plus
- Experience in the amusement industry a plus

Chance Rides, LLC Offers:

- Competitive salary (commensurate with experience)
- Relocation/sign-on bonus
- Annual Performance Reviews
- Comprehensive benefits including medical/dental/vision
- COBRA continuation coverage reimbursement
- 401(k) with company match
- Flexible Spending Accounts
- Employee Referral Bonus Program
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City Walk Jeddah Season, Saudi Arabia



Big WaveZ



WAVE HEIGHT
18 m
59 ft



FOOTPRINT
46 x 15.5 m
150 x 49 ft



INSTANT CAPACITY
20 seats



ENGAGING SCENARIO



SEE IT IN ACTION!

An engaging experience both to ride and to watch

- The ideal combination of a classic shoot-the-cute and a drop tower. That is how the Big WaveZ guarantees Big thrill in a small footprint and a Big splash with great spectacle.
- The wave flies in the air to splash an area in front of the ride open to all park guests.
- A unique ride that doubles the fun and creates real show: the adrenaline of the drop is enhanced with a huge splash into the water.
- An engaging experience to be filmed and shared with your community! Pure fun not only for the riders but also for the whole audience around the installation.
- The vehicle carries 20 riders to a drop height of 50 ft (15 m), while the structure is over 70 ft tall (21 m). The water, after the big splash, drains back and it's collected on a small slope on the ground.