

Amusement TODAY

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NEWS Leader

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Print Edition

New innovations as IAAPA Expo 2023 soars back into Orlando



IAAPA Expo 2023 is expected to have more than 1,100 exhibiting companies. AT/DAVID FAKE

AT: Pam Sherborne
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ORLANDO, Fla. — **IAAPA Expo 2023**, the premier event for the global attractions industry, is almost here. Featuring more than 1,100 exhibitors, this year's expo highlights an expanded exhibit space and sponsored programming that shines a light on major industry brands.

The event is set for Nov. 13-17 at the **Orange County Convention Center** in Orlando, Florida.

"The team has outdone themselves with the number and creativity of sponsorships and only-at-IAAPA-Expo programming being offered this year," said **Jakob Wahl**, president and chief execu-

tive officer for IAAPA. "IAAPA Expo 2023 is going to be great. We wanted to bring new offerings to the participants this year and the team, together with our partners, has come up with many fun ideas to present to the larger attractions industry."

Here's a look at some of the new offerings available this year:

• **Hasbro** Clue Game in the IAAPA Expo Insider Booklet. Upon registration, each attendee may pick up their exclusive IAAPA Expo Insider Booklet, sponsored by leading toy and game company Hasbro. This booklet is the key to an attractions industry twist on the classic mystery

► See IAAPA, page 6

Rookie Racer introduces family thrills, lower height requirement

Vekoma junior coaster fills gap in Six Flags St. Louis coaster lineup

AT: Tim Baldwin
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EUREKA, Mo. — **Six Flags St. Louis** retired its kiddie coaster in 2006. While the park boasts a diverse lineup of roller coasters — including three wooden roller coasters, a rarity nowadays — a family coaster that young children can ride had been missing.

The availability of a family junior coaster from **Vekoma** materialized in January, and the park immediately requested it. Six Flags didn't wait until next season to debut it; the park opened **Rookie Racer** in late September.

"We have received a bigger response to this family coaster than we have for a ride in ... I cannot remember how long," said **Elizabeth**

Gotway, public relations. "We have been absolutely blown away by the response to this ride. We have wanted a family coaster for years. When we moved the kids' area up the hill and created **Bugs Bunny National Park**, that was something we lost in the process because there wasn't room up there. That was a kiddie coaster, but for years, we have wanted a family coaster."

"Rookie Racer adds an experience for all ages at Six Flags St. Louis. It is extremely smooth, with family-friendly track elements and nice theming. The perfect combo for families. Kids will love it; so will their adult companions!" said **Ricardo Tonding**

► See ROOKIE, page 22



Six Flags St. Louis is pleased to finally offer guests a junior coaster for the whole family. COURTESY SIX FLAGS ST. LOUIS

2023 GOLDEN TICKET AWARDS



THANK YOU AMUSEMENT TODAY FOR A WONDERFUL GOLDEN TICKET AWARDS!

The GCI team extends our warmest congratulations to Clair Hain and Michael Boodley on their outstanding 'Legends Award' at the 2023 Golden Tickets. Clair and Michael have undoubtedly left an incredible mark on the hearts and minds of all parks, riders, and fellow vendors with their exceptional work. Their commitment, dedication, and passion for our business and the industry have earned them this well-deserved recognition. We hope to continue this success and recognition with the up-and-coming generation and future projects. Congratulations once again to Clair Hain and Michael Boodley for this incredible achievement and all the 2023 Golden Ticket Award receivers!



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AMUSEMENT VIEWS

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

Do not waste opportunity



Robinson

Probably the most popular comment I hear every year during the Golden Ticket Award events boils down to a version of "Everything is so much more laid back here. It's not as crazy as the IAAPA Expo, where we're just too busy to socialize to any real degree."

And here we are, on the threshold of IAAPA Expo 2023, and I'm using this space to not only remind *Amusement Today* readers but also to challenge them: do not waste the opportunity when you see friends and associates at the Expo.

It's a sad moment during the Golden Ticket Awards ceremonies every year when we view the retrospective, remembering industry members we've lost each year. The months of the COVID shutdown saw many of our industry brethren change jobs, change careers, leave the industry all together or find themselves choosing to do business via Zoom rather than travel in the years that followed. What all that means is, we're never sure when, how or if we're going to see our industry family and friends again.

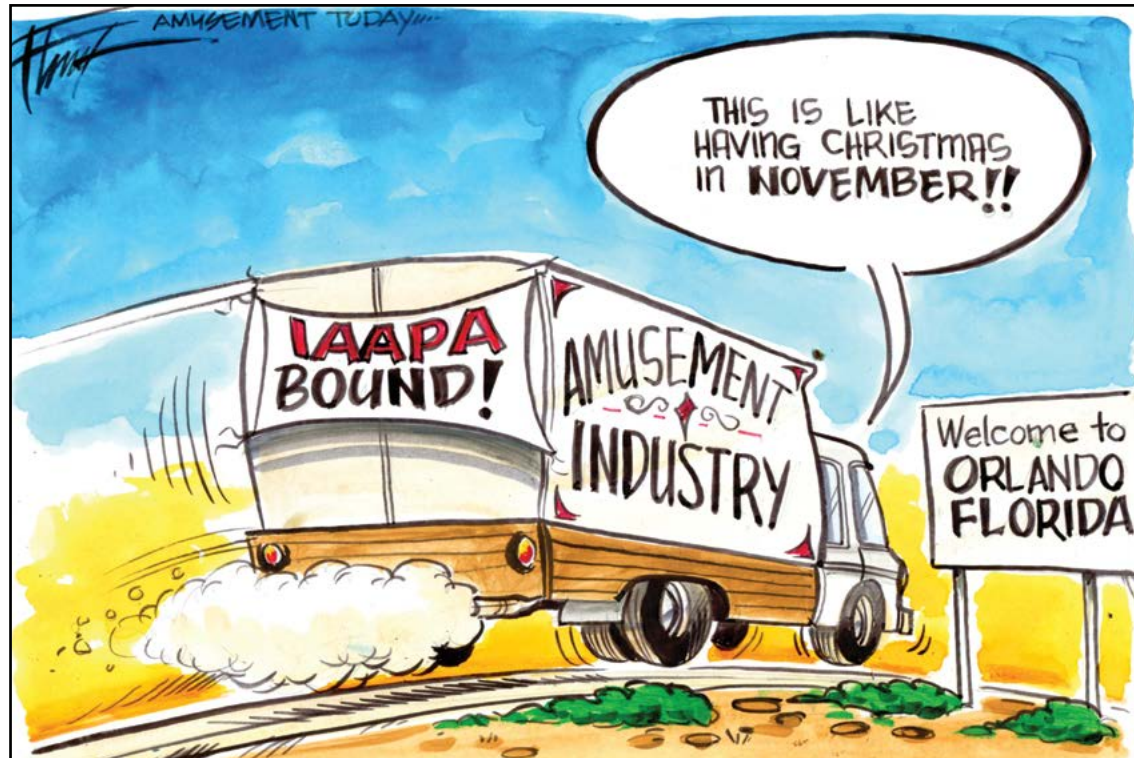
So do not waste the opportunity that the IAAPA Expo presents.

For the handful of days that we're gathered in Orlando, take time to not just smile and wave at the people you know. Stop them, shake their hand, say hello and ask how things are. Learn and share from one another on a one-to-one level for just a couple minutes.

Yes, there are seminars and roundtables to attend. Yes, there are business meetings to sit through and contracts to be signed. But most of us got into this industry, this business, because it was different than any other industry. It was about the business of fun. It was about entertaining families and creating smiles.

We should never let the business completely overshadow the fun, never let the deals overshadow the people. Take time, socialize and enjoy the fact that for the next few days, we're all surrounded by our amusement industry family from across the globe.

FLINT'S VIEW: Bubba Flint



INDUSTRY VOICE: Michael Shelton, IAAPA North America

The only constant is change

Each year at IAAPA, we set out to reimagine our marquee annual event, IAAPA Expo. It brings to mind the many years I spent in operational roles back in Colorado and the planning that took place as our parks opened and closed with the seasons. This included not only the time spent preparing and maintaining our facilities but also reimagining the guest experience with new technologies and fun ways to engage our visitors. Our industry is always on the frontline of change and innovation, and much of it comes from the creators and dreamers that exhibit at and sponsor IAAPA Expo.

Here's just a sampling of the trending changes you'll find at IAAPA Expo this year.

Attractions have increasingly adopted digital solutions for ticketing, reservations and guest interactions. Contactless payments and mobile apps for accessing attractions have become more prevalent in our industry, and I see it almost everywhere I go. Furthermore, facilities continue to invest in cutting-edge



Shelton

technologies, including augmented reality, virtual reality and interactive displays to enhance the visitor experience. For Expo, we're applying new technologies with a new cashless experience in our registration area and with the deployment of an evening drone show at the Orange County Convention Center.

Speaking of the visitor experience, I continue to see growth in gamification. We witnessed this firsthand during our IAAPA Meetup at Super Nintendo World in Hollywood, California, earlier this year. It's been so interesting to see the development of custom experiences around a video game IP that was first released in 1985. For Expo, we're picking up on this trend as well for our attendees. We've partnered with Hasbro to offer an interactive game of Clue for attendees on the show floor; a game that has been around in various forms since the 1940s!

I'm excited to share these new elements and look forward to seeing everyone at IAAPA Expo this November!

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



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



2 MINUTE DRILL



AT: Janice Witherow

Carin Davits, Vekoma

Carin Davits joined the **Vekoma** team in 2019 after spending time in the sports and leisure industry. She is skilled in Dutch, English, German and French, which is an asset in her international sales and marketing role with one of the largest roller coaster manufacturers in the world. Carin loves spending time with family and friends and brings a sense of calm — and fun — to those around her.

Title: Marketing and PR Coordinator.

Number of years in the industry:
Almost five years.

Best thing about the industry: Our industry is always moving forward, providing the best experiences to explore, while having fun and creating memories for a lifetime.

Favorite amusement park ride:
Can't choose one as there are so many fantastic coasters and attractions to experience. But my top three are Guardians of the Galaxy at EPCOT, F.L.Y. at Phantasialand and Fønix at Fårup Sommerland in Denmark.

If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be ...
Traveling around the world!

Biggest challenge facing our industry:
To keep innovating and providing solutions the market is asking for regarding topics like sustainability and ride accessibility.

The thing I like most about amusement park season is ... I love to visit theme parks and amusement parks together with my family. Seeing your kids moving their boundaries every time you take them on another ride and that big smile on their faces, that's so rewarding.

Favorite junk food: French fries.

I typically celebrate my birthday by ... Inviting my family and friends to come over, eating birthday cake that my mom has baked and enjoying the drinks!

The best place I have ever watched a sunset is ... Lake Como, Italy.

The last time I cooked a meal, I whipped up ... Lasagna – Italian cuisine is my favorite.

When going somewhere, are you usually early, on time or late? On time.

Favorite spectator sport: Football



Vekoma's Carin Davits finds a sense of fun truly important, a mentality she brings to her role in the company's international sales and marketing. COURTESY VEKOMA

You're at the beach: Do you stay on the sand or hit the waves? Hit the waves.

I would describe my backyard at home as ... A cozy place to spend time with my family and friends, playing games, enjoying the flowers in the garden and lighting the fireplace at night.

The worst movie I've seen lately is definitely ... *Your Place Or Mine*.

Something I would love to wear but don't have the nerve is ... A red dress.

When drinking water, do you like yours with or without ice? Without ice.

On a rainy day, I like to ... Be creative like painting, playing games with my family or watching a good movie with a glass of wine.

If you could be in a band, what would its name be? Wild Cat.

My all-time best "bloop" moment would have to be ... Breaking off my heel while getting off the bus. Had to wear my boss's snow boots in the office as I didn't have an extra pair of shoes with me.

When I think of doing laundry, I ... Wish there would be something invented to take care of this.

The habit I would most like to break is ... Eating chocolate.

I wish I could be paid to ... Travel the world and discover hidden gems.

THE INDUSTRY SEEN

Cross country friendships



SOMERVILLE, N.J. — Len Soled and the team at Rides 4 U in Somerville, New Jersey, recently received a visit from guests out of Amarillo, Texas. Paula (far left) and Paul Borchardt (far right) from Wonderland Amusement Park stopped in to see Len Soled (middle) and everyone at Rides 4 U. The trio spent their time excited for the forthcoming IAAPA Expo in Orlando and discussing the upcoming 2024 season. COURTESY RIDES 4 U

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► IAAPA

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game, Clue, which was recently reimaged by Hasbro earlier this year. Attendees are encouraged to channel their inner detective and solve the mystery for a chance to win a special prize and, of course, gain bragging rights among their industry peers.

•New Alcohol, Beverage and Innovation Pavilion — As IAAPA continues growing its membership base and welcomes more companies that align with the evolving needs of the industry, this year's trade-show floor will include a new Alcohol, Beverage and Innovation Pavilion. This area, which will feature brands like **375 Park Avenue Spirits, Dogfish Head, Twisted Tea, Liquid I.V., BuzzBallz, Beverage Management, Craft Standard Draft Cocktails** and **Taub Family Wines**, includes a fully operational bar and networking space. This is



The halls of the Orange County Convention Center will once again host exhibitors, members and buyers of IAAPA Expo. AT/TIM BALDWIN

different from the Food and Beverage Pavilion, ensuring that there's something for everyone's taste.

•Take a ride on **Brightline** to IAAPA Expo 2023 — IAAPA is offering a new way for attendees to get to the Orange County Convention Center this year. Through a new partnership with Brightline, a new rail connection that links central and south Florida, attendees can use promo code IAAPA15 at checkout to save 15% on select SMART fares starting in September

and running through November 17, 2023.

•**SkyElements** Drone Shows — Attendees should keep their eyes to the sky on select nights Nov. 10-17 as four spectacular drone light shows will take place. The shows will, of course, take place after sunset and feature aerial displays and cutting-edge light shows.

•**ShimmerTech** Photo Ops — Attendees at IAAPA Expo 2023 will be able to capture memories that shimmer and shine with two selfie walls. Look for those

on the South Concourse and North Concourse.

•**Connect+** and **CaptureLife** photographers — IAAPA Expo 2023 is fully replacing the trade show program with Connect+, IAAPA's official mobile app. Attendees can access the complete IAAPA Expo agenda, networking tools and a full list of exhibitors on Connect+. Additionally, through a sponsorship with CaptureLife, photographers will scan IAAPA Expo badges to sync event photos to Connect+, creating a personal

photo gallery for attendees to relive the experience.

The IAAPA Expo trade show will have displays from more than 1,000 companies from around the world, which will showcase new products and services as well as the tried-and-true products. Hours this year include 10 a.m.-6 p.m. on Nov. 14, 15 and 16, and 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Nov. 17.

The show floor is carefully curated by strategically grouped pavilions creating an efficient show experience that demonstrates the diversity and uniqueness of the industry. Pavilions include family entertainment, first-time exhibitors, games and arcade, inflatables, rides and equipment, show production and design, and water parks.

Other exciting components of the IAAPA Expo 2023 is the educational programming featuring a full gamut of topics to reach all aspects of the amusement

► See IAAPA, page 8

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►IAAPA

Continued from page 6

industry. The association curates and develops industry education based on the IAAPA Common Body of Knowledge (CBoK), which lists the skills that individuals should possess to ensure a successful career in the attractions industry.

Attendees are able to learn through classroom sessions, panel discussions and tours of facilities.

Some of the topics that will be presented this year include Quantifying Risk — How Much is Too Much?; Finding Your Revenue; Beyond the Blockbuster, Exploring New Platforms for Visitor Experiences; Marketing Presents, A Simple Guide to Short-Form Video: TikToks, Reels and Shorts; 24 “Do It Today” Food and Beverage Ideas for ‘24; Power of Recurring Revenue Through Subscription Offerings; Speaking the Language of Company and Group Events; The Seven Most Common Guest Service



IAAPA Expo 2023 will hold its opening ceremonies on the morning of November 14 (above left). Education seminars, roundtables and EDUTalks remain a popular part of the Expo (above right). AT/DAVID FAKE, TIM BALDWIN



Challenges and How to Solve Them and Merchandising and Flashing Activations.

Others are Emerging Technologies, What’s Next in Immersive Experiences?; Fix Your Train Wreck, Strategies for Creating Engaging Training Programs to Increase Your Workplace Performance; Top Trending Communications Topics in Our Industry for 2024 (and how to navigate them!); 12 Best Practices to Prevent Chargebacks and Reduce Fees; We’re Hiring! Recent Legal Developments For

Job Ads, Interviews, and Applications; Burnout and Mental Health... What We Should Be Talking About and Games and Merchandise Roundtable.

The IAAPA Expo 2023 is also offering a variety of tours during the show. The EDUTours take attendees behind the scenes of local attractions. This year attendees have the opportunity to go to **Fun Spot America**, Orlando, on Nov. 12; **Minion Land on Illumination Avenue at Universal Orlando Resort**, on Nov.

13; **Premium Guest Experiences and Revenue Streams at Universal’s Volcano Bay**, Nov. 13; **Pipeline The Surf Coaster**, Nov. 14 and **Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance, An Attraction Unlike Anything Else, Disney’s Hollywood Studio**, Nov. 15.

Annual IAAPA charity events are on the schedule Nov. 11 for the 20th Annual IAAPA International Charity Golf Tournament and the 13th Annual IAAPA Charity Motorcycle benefitting **Give Kids the World**. The Annual IAAPA Footprints

from the Heart 5k Fun Run and One Mile Walk is set for Nov. 16.

All throughout the week there are events and receptions great for networking or just catching up with those specific to a certain area of the industry.

IAAPA Celebrates is set for the evening of Nov. 16. Attendees have the opportunity to spend an extraordinary night viewing marine life, taking thrilling rides and visiting attractions at **SeaWorld Orlando**.

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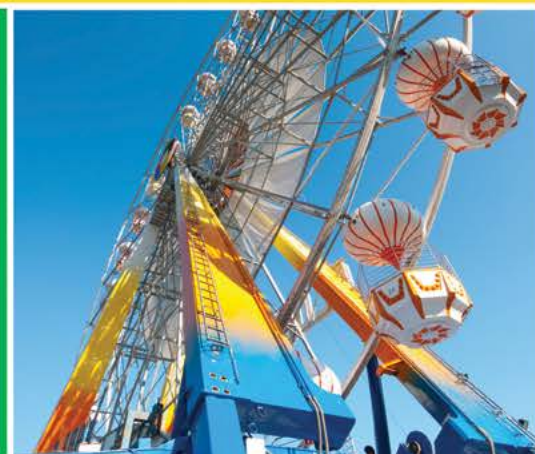
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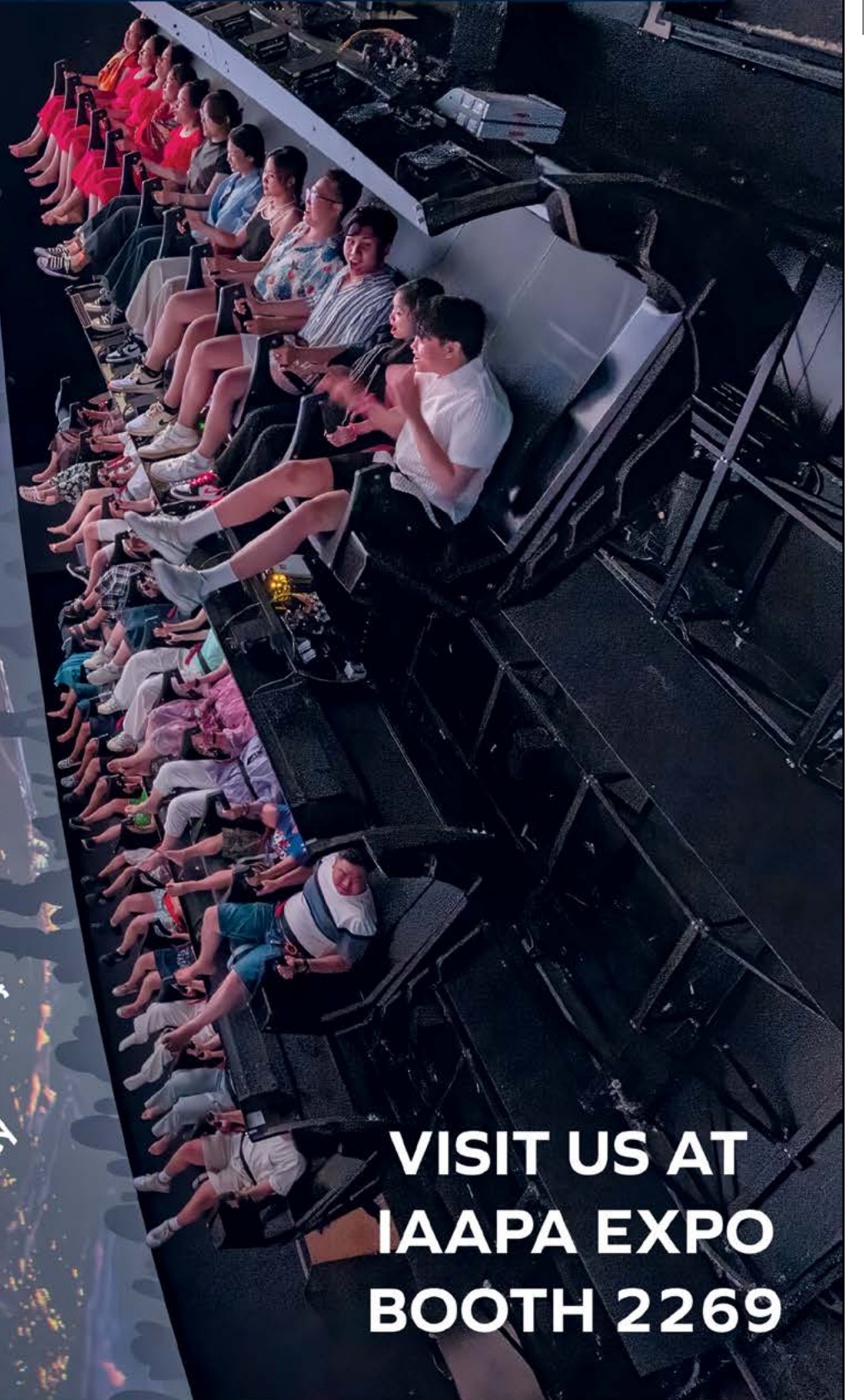


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IAAPA names second Vice Chair, elects 2024 board members

VIENNA, Austria — **Luciana Periales**, the chief executive officer of **Neverland Park** in Argentina, was named second vice chair of the IAAPA Board of Directors for 2024.



Periales

She will serve as the first vice chair of IAAPA in 2025 and lead the global association for the attractions industry as the chair of the board in 2026.

Periales' selection was made during a board of directors meeting on September 23 in Vienna, Austria, just before IAAPA Expo Europe opened its doors at **Messe Wien Exhibition & Congress Center**. Periales has been a valued volunteer and committee member with IAAPA for more than a decade, including serving on the Association's Family Entertainment Center, Strategic Planning, and

Service Awards committees, and the IAAPA Board of Directors as the chair of the Latin America, Caribbean Regional Advisory Committee.

"Luciana Periales was chosen as the second vice chair for the 2024 IAAPA Board of Directors because of her deep industry roots and innovative leadership as CEO of Neverland, a successful group of entertainment centers," said **David Rosenberg**, chair of the 2023 IAAPA Governance Committee.

Luciana's selection was part of a larger election of seven people who will take new positions on the IAAPA Board. New board members begin their service in 2024. The following board members were also named:

EMEA Regional Advisory Committee Chair Director (2024-2026) – Håkon Lund

Håkon Lund is president and owner of **Lund Gruppen** in Norway. Lund Gruppen is

deeply rooted in a legacy of amusement parks and attractions. Lund Gruppen is a family business, that dates to 1895 and spans four generations. He has served as a member of the IAAPA EMEA Regional Advisory Committee for several years and has presented at several IAAPA events.



Lund

North America Regional Advisory Committee Chair Director (2024-2026) – Denise Beckson

Denise Beckson is the vice president of government affairs and human resources for **Morey's Piers**, a seaside amusement and water park resort in Wildwood, New Jersey. Beckson has been involved in the parks and



Beckson

attractions industry for more than 30 years. She also served a three-year term on the IAAPA Board, was a member of the association's headquarters relocation task force, and is actively engaged in advocacy representing the industry on vital issues at a state and federal level and educating lawmakers and regulators about attractions.

Facility Member Director (2024-2026) – Su "Dale" Zhan Hang

Su "Dale" Zhan Hang is group vice president at **Chimelong Group**, located in China, the parent company of the comprehensive resort, **Guangzhou Chimelong Tourist Resort**, which owns major theme parks and attractions in China.

Facility Member Director (2024-2026) – Neil Dwyer

Neil Dwyer is the vice president of operations for **Qiddiya Investment Co. – Six Flags Qiddiya** in Saudi Arabia. With nearly 20 years

of experience in several industry companies, Dwyer offers a deep understanding of the attractions industry.

Facility Member Director (2024-2025) – Gina Claassen

Gina Claassen is the vice president of safety for **Herschend Family Entertainment** in the United States and has been with the company for 25 years. Claassen has a long history of involvement with IAAPA, including serving on the IAAPA Board of Directors in 2023.

Facility Member Director (2023-2025) – Rajen Shah

Rajen Shah is the managing director of **The Great Escape** water park and **Arihant Industrial Corporation Limited**. He has much experience within IAAPA serving on several committees and the IAAPA Board of Directors. He was the recipient of the IAAPA Outstanding Service Award in 2021.

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2023 IAAPA Expo exhibitor listing

List is current as of Oct. 19, 2023. For last-minute changes, booth additions and cancellations, consult the IAAPA show directory.

360 Karting	4059	Apple Industries, Inc.	1000, 600, 800	BookNow Software	2860
A&A Global Industries	824	AquaBanas	847	Bouncer Depot	5184
A.E.Jeffreys Insurance Brokerage House Inc.	3952	Aquafinity	690	BounceWave Inflatable Sales	5888, 8150
Aardvark	3419	Aquakita	1350	Bouncing Angels	5154, 8140
abc rides switzerland.	3924	AquaRevival	1844	Bouncy Castle Network	5472
AC Radiocom	3333	AquaShield Products LLC	2142	Bowling Proprietors' Association of America	1626
accesso	5131	Aquatic Development Group, Inc.	2655	BowlMarc Robotics	286
Accumulators, Inc	3433	Aquaventronics / CarnivalGames.com	4890	Box Blox / Pop-Up Play-Zones	4378
Ace Amusement	738	ARCADE ARENA	284	Brand Vending Products	744
ACE Controls	4409	ArenaVerse	3966	BRBkarts	4689
Action Lighting Inc	4602	Arihant Water Park Equipment	654	Breaking Barriers Mobility	8250
ADCI	1949	Art Attack	5147	Breeze Creative LLC	1857
ADJ	475	ART-FX Studios, Inc.	2886	Bridgewater Studio	1686
Admit One Products	5633	Artistic Contractors, Inc.	182	Brogent Technologies, Inc.	5627
Adrenaline Amusements.	1054, 1354	Artsy Couture	2088	Bron Tapes	282
Advanced Animations.	965	Ascentium Capital	5483	BRUNSWICK BOWLING PRODUCTS.	4832
Advantage+	2956	Asia Amusement Machine Co.Ltd	217	Bumper Boats, Inc.	3620
Adventure Golf & Sports	4869	Association Kiosk Manufacturers	6137	Bushtec Safari	7230
Adventureglass	2604	Astro Carpet Mills	4254	BuzzBallz	1586
Aerial Adventure Dome	4318	Astronaut Foods	1828	Buzzpark	4690
Aerodium Technologies	4406	Atlas Commercial Products.	8350	C Tiger Attractions Inc	3810
Aerophile S.A.S.	4015	ATM Merchant Services	408	C. Cretors & Co.	3654
Aier Inflatable Group Co. Ltd	6082	Atmosphere	4071	C.PI Amusement & Pageantry World	2842
AIMS International	2808	Attractions.io	4343	Ca\$hMateUSA	4010
Air & Water Systems	184	AUDIO INNOVATORS INC	2642	Cadron Creek Play	1347
Air Essentials Inc	3382	Audiokinetic	1781	CALPLUSH TOY CORPORATION.	1631
Airparx	3588	Autofry/ MTI Products	3454	Camaleon LED	3204
Airspace Solutions.	1345	Autograph Foliages	1367	Capital Online Auctions, LLC	4465
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Albanese Confectionery	3757	AVS Companies.	1619	Capturelife	964
Alberici	644	Axcitement	3854	Caravan Soft Toys and Big T Toys & Sports, Inc.	5404
Alberts Co RS	3024	Axess AG	6041	Cardinal Distributing	3883
Alcorn McBride, Inc.	869	Axiom Holographics	1638	Cardknox.	5442
Alinco Costumes, Inc.	2802	B J Toy Company	2909	Castle Golf, Inc.	2669
ALIVE RISK	6131	Bad Dog Tools.	122	Catalyst Engineering	471
Alligator Ice	3259	BAGJUMP Airbag Systems.	4686	CAVE DISCOVERY	6008
Alterface Projects	1764	Baishun (Hua Tai) Animation	1737	Cawley Company	4102
Altitude Rides and Attractions, LLC	4857	Bandai Namco Amusement	1300, 1600	Cemrock	1880
Aluvii, Inc.	4640	BarChefs	3288	Centaman	4650
Alvarado dormakaba Group	4647	Barron Games International	240	CenterEdge Software	4454
Amazing Magnets	4518	BatFast	5429	Central Tent.	4356
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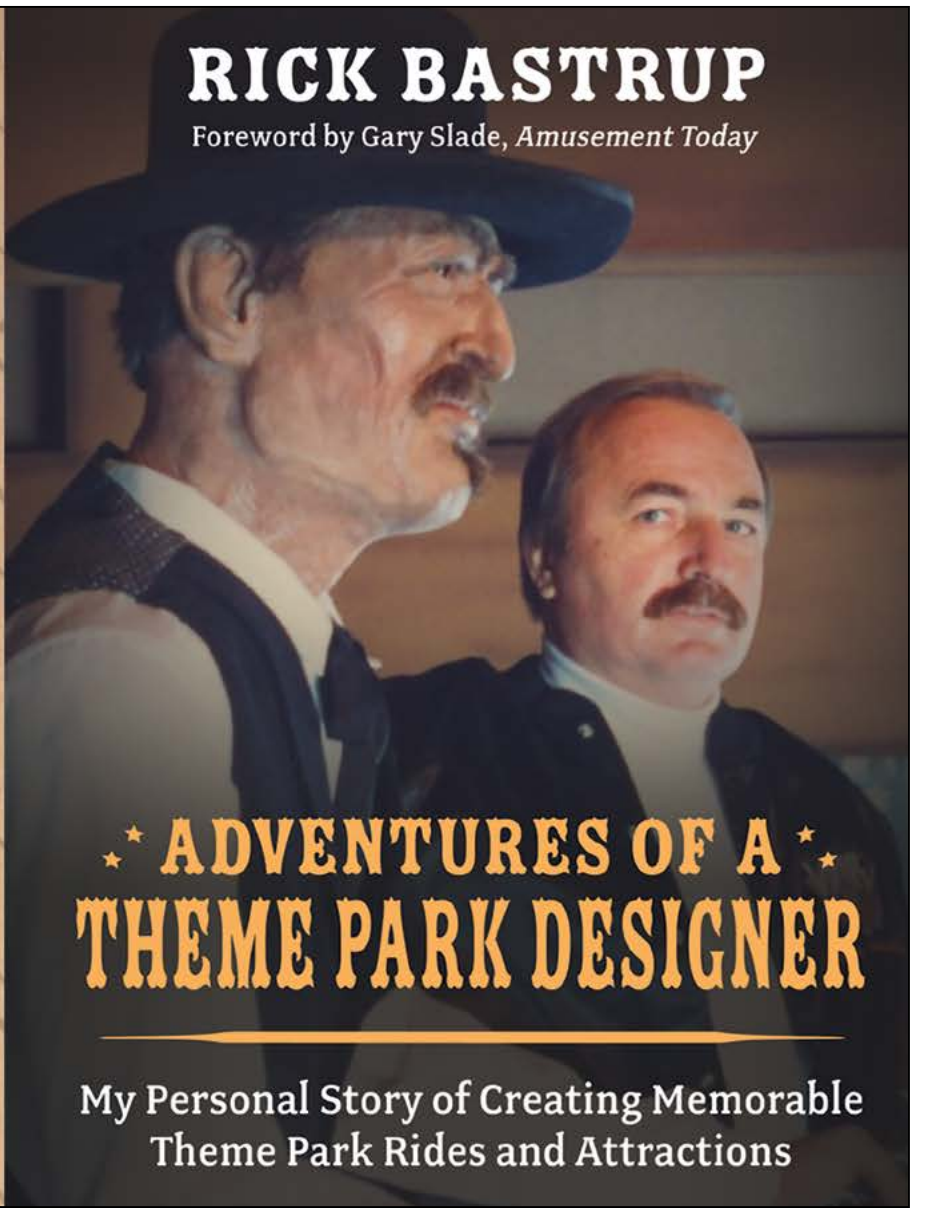
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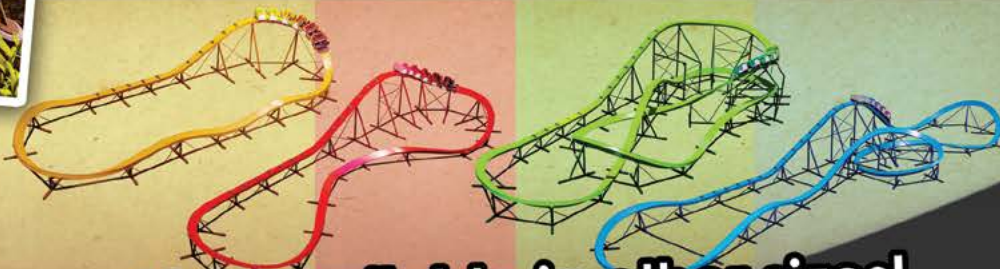
Details

- Base frame option available for indoor or outdoor use
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- 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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►ROOKIE

Continued from page 1

Etges, vice president sales and marketing for the Americas, Vekoma.

Gotway admits that January was a late start to begin a new-for-2023 project, but the availability to fill a notable void in the park's offerings was too good to turn down.

"We knew it would be late in the season, but we wanted that coaster," she told *Amusement Today*. "We said, 'yes' — astoundingly yes."

Gotway and Six Flags have been pleased with the response on social media. She smiled at one response: "I thought this was going to be lame, but it might be my favorite coaster in the park." She loves standing at the exit and seeing the reactions of the new riders, particularly younger kids who realize they are tall enough to ride.

"They feel like they have won the lottery," Gotway said.

"Theme parks are places for families to have fun and create memories together," Etges told *AT*. "I am a strong believer that parks should focus on offering experiences to all age groups, regardless of location, IP or size of the park. Rookie Racer, with its 36-inch rider height restriction, is probably going to be the first real coaster experience for many kids and an opportunity for different family members to create memories together."

Gotway praises Paul Ambrose, the IT manager on property, for making the ride even more exciting. It was his idea to add racing car audio throughout the experience, both in the station and with speakers along the track. The effect is even more immersive for the riders, as the speakers kick in when the train approaches that area.

"You hear all the cheering and hear all the race car sounds, and when you head into the helix, you hear, 'Okay racers, this is it, last push!' And you come in and hear the roar of the crowd and 'All right, rookie, that's a P1.' In formula racing, that is Position 1," said Gotway. "It's loud. It is so cool. It makes the ride. When the kids come into the station and hear the cheering, they cheer. It's immersive; it makes it a package deal."

People in the queue hear a different audio that features commentators covering a race. Fun commercials, such as "Bob's Garage," have Easter eggs for those in the know as they were created by people in the park or names of people who used to work at the park are written in the script of the pit crew.

"The audio really makes the ride a completely different experience," said Gotway.

Operations can be set to run the ride with a single circuit or two laps. The park has chosen to run it taking riders around twice. The track length is



Rookie Racer's tight spirals make the 27-mph speed feel forceful. COURTESY SIX FLAGS ST. LOUIS

843 feet. The train seats 16 passengers.

Because of the sunken terrain upon which the ride is built, the ride itself is elevated, which makes it look bigger. The space was used for a go-kart attraction up until a few years ago. That was removed to put in a large thrill ride in 2020, but the global pandemic delayed that attraction. In that time span, the park decided to place that thrill ride in a different location, leaving the space available for the coaster. Being raised up gives a sense of impressive height, even for a junior coaster.

"It took me a little off-guard the first time I rode it," Gotway said. "I wasn't expecting the first drop to be as much as it was. If you are in the back seat or the back four cars, that is a completely different ride than the first four cars."

The tight spirals make

the 27-mph speed feel forceful.

The name Rookie Racer was chosen because of the Formula 1-style coaster cars. The park felt the name suggested it was for the younger guests and everyone would be able to ride. The trains have been praised for being comfortable for adults as well. Gotway is happy teenagers and adults without kids are seeking out a spin on the new ride as well.

"We're really proud of it. We absolutely know we made the right choice," said Gotway. "Thrill seekers come in all heights, in all sizes. They start young, and this is where you build their love for roller coasters and theme parks. You build it from the young up, and if you don't have anything for them to ride, they don't catch that fever."

The new coaster gives Six Flags St. Louis 10.

Reaching those double digits is always a milestone for a theme park to offer guests a truly diverse lineup of coaster thrills.

"To have 10 coasters is a double reward because of what the tenth one was — to be able to say we truly have something for everyone," said Gotway. "The Mine Train [Arrow, 1971] is most definitely a great ride for kids to start on, but again, that's 42 inches. There can be a couple of years in those six inches for kids waiting to get to a coaster."

Rookie Racer will have its first full season in 2024, but the park will also be debuting a large Giga Discovery from Zamperla, as well as reintroducing its Grand Ole' Carousel, which has undergone a multi-year, stunningly beautiful restoration. Excitement for next season will deliver both high thrills and family fun.



Rookie Racer sports a Formula 1 racing theme and the low 36-inch height requirement allows young ages to enjoy the ride. COURTESY SIX FLAGS ST. LOUIS



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PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► Daniels Wood Land, Sally unveil Treasure Hunt: The Ride — page 28 / Cedar Point Esports debuts — page 30

The future looking strong for Sunkid with multiple projects ahead

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

BASSENHEIM, Germany — Sunkid, an internationally active group of companies, continues its growth worldwide with new projects coming online or in the works constantly.

"With the company's Moving Carpet conveyor belt, the Sunkid company has become the world market leader for conveyor belts in the tourist environment," said Sunkid's Johannes Wiedorfer, head of marketing. "The hallmarks of our products are their ease of use, small footprint, high level of interactivity and greatest fun."

The company offers a wide range of products for tourist regions, theme parks and adventure worlds. Its innovative solutions for passenger and freight transport move millions of people around the world today.

Just in the last few months, the company announced three new world-wide projects.

Spring Valley Beach Water Park in Blountsville, Alabama, a family-owned and operated slide and adventure pool, opened a new attraction for the summer: a Double Tornado Wave.

The Double Tornado Wave is a partially enclosed waterslide for four-person tubes with two huge banked turns, designed and delivered by ProSlide Technol-



Sunkid partnered with Almholtz to expand and provide a number of components of its Wood'n'Fun products at Montelino's adventure trail and water playground, Kodok's adventure and play world, around the popular family mountains Kohlmais Kopf and Reiterkogel as well as at the newly created Rosswald reservoir. COURTESY SUNKID

ogy. It is a slide design that the park had not previously offered and is designed to appeal to existing customers and new visitors.

To transport the clover leaf four-seater tubes back to the starting point after the slide, a raft return conveyor from Sunkid was used. It has a gradient of 44% over a length of 190 feet.

The park staff in the pool helps the passengers get off and then pushes the tubes towards the conveyor belt. This picks up the tubes directly from the water, transporting them upward in a safe and quick way. Further transport at the up-

per end of the conveyor belt is done by means of a gravity roller track.

Sunkid officials said that its past successful projects together with the slide manufacturer as well as the excellently positioned sales and service network in the U.S.A. were among the decisive factors for the integration of the Sunkid conveyor belt into the overall system.

A huge benefit of Sunkid's conveyor belt on the slide is that without heavy tubes, swimmers can easily and comfortably master the stair climb to the start.

Another project is a



One of Sunkid's newest project is this Double Tornado Wave, by ProSlide, a partially enclosed water slide for four-person tubes with two huge banked turns, designed and delivered by ProSlide. Sunkid provided a return conveyor belt with a gradient of 44 percent and over 190 feet in length. COURTESY SUNKID

Mountain Coaster 2.0, with enhanced features that opened at Trysil, Norway, this past summer.

Some of the features for the new Mountain Coaster 2.0 includes an ergonomically-shaped backrest and a toboggan shell that form a dynamic unit and increase seating

comfort with two possible positions for foot support.

Added features include LED headlights, taillights, an optional backpack tray and the easy-folding backrest.

The basic design, including redefined logo areas, also allows for a wide

► See SUNKID, page 25



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SUNKID

Continued from page 24

variety of individual customer themes.

In addition, newly integrated intelligent assistance and braking system increases safety by actively controlling speed and distance between the toboggans.

Thanks to weight optimization, handling for operators and personnel is still manageable. This means that new customers can often continue to use their existing "uphill infrastructure, whether surface lift, chairlift or gondola lift, in a cost-efficient manner.

Another new Sunkid project coming online in January 2025 is a four-cabin version of the Sundancer Galaxy going to **Lotte World, Busan, South Korea.**



This Sundancer Galaxy is going to Lotte World, in Busan, South Korea. The opening is set for January 2025. COURTESY SUNKID

The Sundancer Galaxy offers ride fun in three dimensions: circular track, rotation and swinging out of the cabin. As an interactive element, the passenger independently controls the direction of rotation of the cabin.

At the same time, the

ride ensures a capacity of 480 people per hour and a small footprint of just under 12.5 feet in diameter.

The popular interactive Loopster family ride by Sunkid got a modern facelift. The company displayed the revised concept at DEAL in Dubai last March.

Under Sunkid's Wood'n'Fun category, the company worked on a variety of projects surrounding popular family mountains Kohlmaiskopf and Reiterkogel, as well as at the newly created Rosswald Reservoir, all in Austria.

The team of Berg-

bahnen Saalbach-Hinterglemm, together with Sunkid and its partner **Almholz**, expanded the existing adventure worlds for the 2023 season, with individually designed experiences from the Wood'n'Fun portfolio.

Some of the activities created in this area included an area for romping that offers a new water play facility. Two play huts on the lake can be reached either via footbridges or via a water balancing course that trains motor skills and coordination.

At the Rosswald Reservoir, there were several new highlights including Lassig adventure play letters, a slide tower, water playground and a motor skills course.

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Worlds of Fun spotlights history with 50th-anniversary exhibit

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Along with the final weekend of **Worlds of Fun's** Halloween event comes the close of the park's 50th anniversary [see AT AUG 2023]. Along with a new ride from **Great Coasters International** and an abundance of colorful paint and refreshed theming, part of the flavor of the anniversary was captured in a history exhibit within the park's Tivoli Music Hall.

Starting at the beginning, displays let visitors see the park being constructed in images. The visionaries **Lamar Hunt** and **Jack Steadman** are given their due in creating the park. From there, a journey through time lets a half-century play out.

"It has been a tremendous exhibit," said Communications Manager **Brian McGannon**. "A lot of people pouring out their memories for the 50th anniversary has been the most exciting part of all of this. Once we heard the outpouring of memories, we knew we needed to capture them somewhere."

"It all became about what would be a good space at the front of the park," said **Darren Keith**, manager of entertainment. "Tivoli Music Hall is filled with so much history. It became a natural place to host the museum."

As guests were drawn in, it was easy for multiple generations to find moments they could relate to or recall.

"One of the things that surprised me when we opened the museum space was guests were almost giddy to see the front doors open," Keith said. "We haven't used this space for performances for a few years, so guests were excited to see what was going on — and it's a showcase of our history."

The rich park history is spotlighted through colorful panels, numerous souvenirs and artifacts, videos and costumes.

"We got to open [the exhibit] with the Hunt Family on Memorial Day weekend, which was an exciting event," McGannon told *Amusement Today*. "**Lee Derrough**, who was the general manager from 1974 to 1988, was here and we got to hear stories from him, as well as **Clark Hunt**, who grew up with the park."

The exhibit was a cumulative effort of many people and organizations.

Keith was among the team that curated the exhibit, but he also gives credit to **Cedar Fair** and its **XDS Creative Studio**. The support of **Hunt Midwest** was noted, which provided many historical views. Keith recalled, "We were ... WOW ... there were some images that really surprised us."

Among the images were not only those of early years of the park but also aerials of the land before Worlds of Fun was even built.

Other artifacts included an Orient Express car on loan from the **National Roller Coaster Museum**



Souvenirs, costumes and photos helped tell Worlds of Fun's 50-year story (above). An Orient Express car on loan from the National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives was a real treat for those who remember riding it (right). AT/TIM BALDWIN

and Archives. The **Arrow** multi-loop coaster stood at the park from 1980 to 2003, giving an iconic presence to the park.

Jeff Mast and **Jennifer Lovesee-Mast**, members of **American Coaster Enthusiasts** and the owners of history site **worldsoffun.org** also shared items from their collection.

"We have had a relationship with the park for 20 to 25 years," said Lovesee-Mast. "When they've had questions about park history, they've come to us. We had done several small history exhibits at Worlds of Fun over the years but nothing like what they did. We were involved in this. For us, it was really nice for guests to see what we have. The real value of having those things is letting other people appreciate them, as well as the memories attached to them. I think the park did an amazing job. We were



pleasantly surprised with the quality of the exhibit."

Both Mast and Lovesee-Mast worked at the park in their younger years and met there.

The exhibit was self-guided, so visitors could enjoy it at their leisure for as long as they wanted, pausing at particular elements that resonated with them.

One of the displays showcased **The Cotton Blossom**, the Hollywood set piece that welcomed guests at the front of the park for many decades.

"As I walk through this space and hear so many people reminisce — 'I was here opening day' or 'I remember riding this' — and to hear all those memories, because

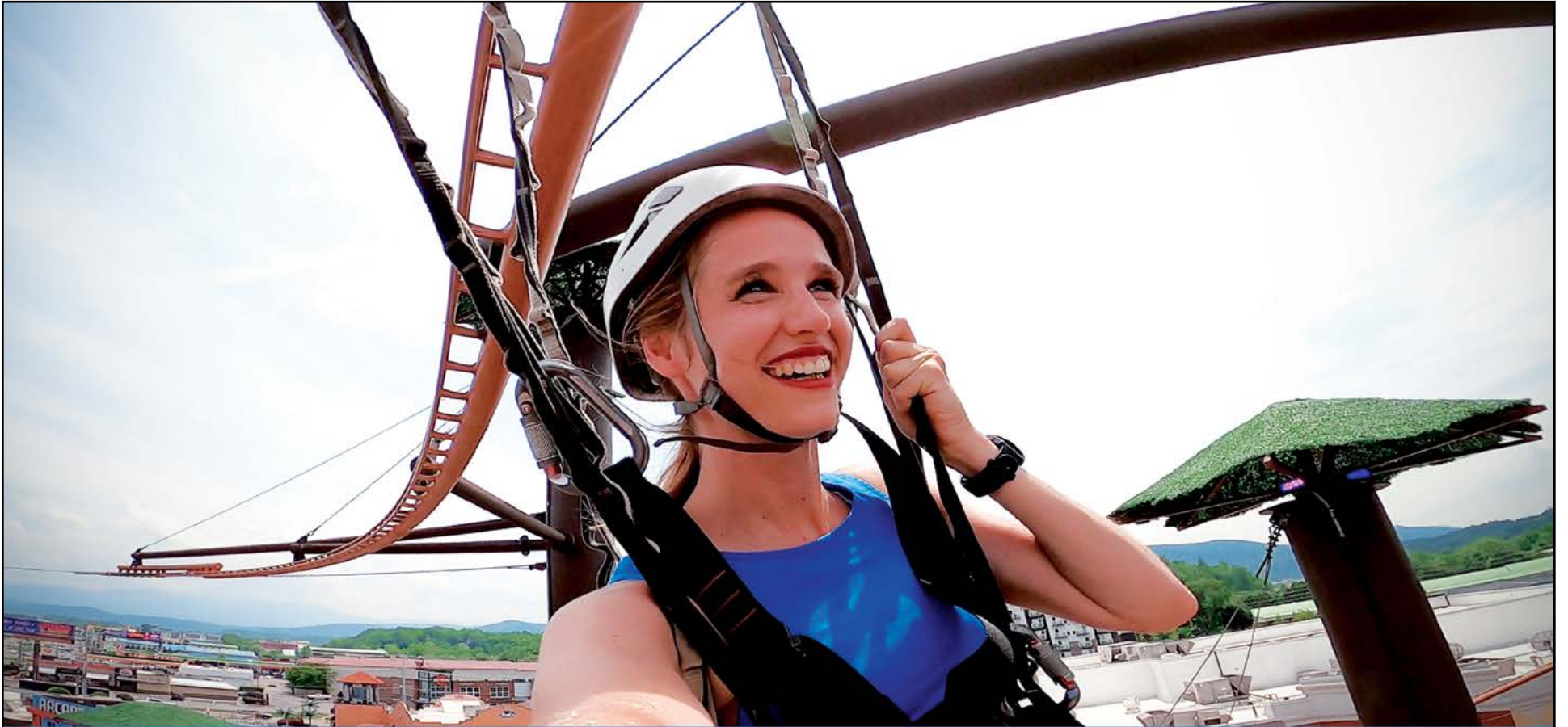
I have those memories from my childhood, it has been heartwarming," Keith told AT. "Just getting to interact with so many guests about the history has been the most rewarding part of it."

The exhibit is presented so well, AT asked what the future holds for the items. McGannon has confirmed to AT that the exhibit will continue into 2024.

Keith added, "A lot of the artifacts are on loan, but we were excited that we were able to pull it all together so people could come out and see it. But a lot of hard work went into putting these panels together, so they definitely will be saved and stored. I have no intention of letting them get thrown out."



Designer **Randall Duell's** drafting table and some of his artwork were incorporated into the exhibit (above left). Numerous items were curated from various organizations to create a diverse and elaborate display. AT/GARY SLADE, TIM BALDWIN



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Daniels Wood Land, Sally Dark Rides imagine Treasure Hunt

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

MONTEREY, Calif. — A little bit of history brings an attraction to life. **Treasure Hunt: The Ride** plunders just a bit of California folklore and turns it into a new entertainment experience on the world-famous Cannery Row in Monterey.

The new attraction comes from a partnership between **Daniels Wood Land (DWL)** and **Sally Dark Rides**.

“Monterey’s Cannery Row is home to the world-famous **Monterey Bay Aquarium**. Over five million people from all over the world walk up and down Cannery Row each year. Two million of them visit the aquarium and their average stay at the aquarium is just a few hours,” said **Ron Daniels**, president, DWL. “So, guests are looking for more entertainment options to fill their day. Treasure Hunt is perfectly positioned in the heart of Cannery Row to bring more world-class entertainment to a world-class destination.”

Daniels noted more attractions are coming.

“There are a lot of unique attributes to Treasure Hunt,” said **Lauren Wood Weaver**, VP marketing and business development, Sally. “For starters, this is not in a ‘typical’ theme park location — this is a unique, stand-alone attraction in the heart of a tourist destination. We love that a whole new audience of people can enjoy an attraction of this caliber as part of their day, making for a truly unforgettable stay in Monterey. I think it’s great because the overall storyline ties in with local lore, making it a true ‘you can only experience it here’ type of ride.”

Monterey was attacked in 1818 by **Hippolyte Bouchard**, the only pirate who ever plied the West Coast. He sacked Monterey and kidnapped



Treasure Hunt: The Ride is an immersive, stand-alone attraction on Monterey’s Cannery Row. Daniels Wood Land and Sally Dark Rides own and operate the attraction. COURTESY SALLY DARK RIDES

TREASURE HUNT THE RIDE

Molina, the town drunk. Treasure Hunt: The Ride builds on this history with a fun story that taps into guests’ imagination.

“Treasure Hunt: The Ride is the most richly themed environment DWL has ever created,” Daniels told *Amusement Today*. “And when we say it’s ‘immersive,’ there’s not a square inch of shame in our game! From the very first step guests take when they enter the line, all the way to the exit that leads back to civilization, guests are transported through a world they never imagined existed right beneath their feet. Riders get to enjoy meticulous detail in every direction they look. We knew we had to deliver the highest quality because even though we’re not **Universal** or **Disney**, our guests have been to those parks, and they expect that level of entertainment. So only the



highest-quality theming and storytelling will allow us to tap into their inner sense of adventure when we invite them to join the hunt for Bouchard’s lost treasure in the caverns beneath Cannery Row. DWL worked nearly 60,000 manhours to create layers upon layers of storytelling scenic work.”

“The (simulated) elevator preshow experience is not one that we’d done before, and not only does

it work, *it works well!*” said Weaver. “We worked with **Extreme Engineering** to create the effect. There are vibrations, accompanying media surrounding you, even overhead, making the ‘fall’ quite realistic, then the surprising appearance of two very lifelike animatronics. I don’t think people expect it at all. And that’s all *before* you ride!”

The ride had been in development for two-and-a-half years.

“When the right space became available to DWL, it didn’t take us long to realize the location was a great fit for a dark ride,” said Daniels. “Soon after that, we approached Sally and proposed a partnership that would allow us to stay in our lanes by doing what we each do best, and then allow us to transition as owners and operators. Both of our companies are fam-

▶ See **TREASURE**, page 29

► TREASURE

Continued from page 28

ily-owned businesses and we found that we're a lot alike. It's been great working together."

"I really do enjoy the attraction from start to finish, but if I had to choose a favorite scene, I think it'd be the very first one on the ride, where we're greeted by Molina at the entrance of the caverns. This is where you really start to understand the gameplay and then oops, you light a fuse, and everything goes awry," said Weaver. "Your car spins, the cavern floods, water hits you — it feels like all the bells and whistles are being thrown at you and really sets the tone for the ride."

From entrance to exit, the experience lasts about 20 minutes.

Gosetto provided the ride vehicles. Interestingly, an industry trend is to not use the



Lifelike animatronics from Sally bring the adventure to life. COURTESY SALLY DARK RIDES

term *guns*. Here they are "treasure collectors."

Ride tickets start at \$17.99. Two upgrades are offered: +\$5 for unlimited re-rides, and +\$5 for power-up tokens.

"Guests can ride one time and enjoy a stunning experience leaving them feeling like they were just

at a major theme park, or they can ride 10 times in a row and still notice new things on their last ride," said Daniels. "DWL created an experience that appeals to all guests from the casual, single-time rider to the dark ride fanatics that enjoy and appreciate the tiniest of details."

When purchasing tickets, guests can upgrade their experience with a power-up token. If purchased, the tokens are said to turn Treasure Collectors from flint locks to deck cannons. They provide the greatest level of interactivity and allow guests to collect more treasure and

score faster points.

"The attraction itself stands out because of its quality," Weaver told AT. "From floor to ceiling, every scene is laced with all things pirate. Countless gold coins, treasure, skeletons — things coming to life around every corner. You actually enter the hull of a pirate ship as a kraken swims overhead. Having the privilege to create alongside Daniels Wood Land means scenic restraints went out the window, and we both threw everything at it. Dark rides are complicated. You really have to get in the weeds time and time again to truly become a specialist in the field. I think our years of experience and a general understanding of all the many moving parts of a dark ride was key to delivering not only a scenically beautiful, but a fun, functional and well-orchestrated attraction."



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Cedar Fair steps into new arena by opening of Cedar Point Esports

AT: Pam Sherborne
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SANDUSKY, Ohio — Cedar Fair Entertainment opened its new Cedar Point Esports last month, Oct. 6, and expectations are high that the venue will be a fun spot for amateur gamers as well as a premier location for high school and gaming events in the region and more.

Located just a few miles from Cedar Point amusement park and within the existing 145,000-square-foot Cedar Point Sports Center, the esports venue is in phase one of its development.

Park officials are excited about the esports opening as they are looking at it as the inception of a new era for the park, as it expands into the exciting realm of esports and gaming entertainment.

The new gaming facility will initially cover an area of more than 1,000 square feet. The first phase of the development includes 32 state-of-the-art gaming stations, each equipped with the latest



The new Cedar Fair Esports venue opened October 6. The first phase covers an area of more than 1,000 square feet within the existing 145,000-square-foot Cedar Point Sports Center. COURTESY CEDAR FAIR

hardware and peripherals. It features the high-end HP Omen gaming set-ups built with RTX306 OT graphic cards and 32 GB of Ram.

Through this initiative, Cedar Point Esports aims to establish a dynamic hub for gaming enthusiasts and competitive gamers, offering them a world-class platform to nurture their gaming passion.

"Our long-term strategy

is focused on delivering immersive entertainment experiences that differentiate our parks and make our guests want to come back again and again," said Richard A. Zimmerman, Cedar Fair president and chief executive officer. "The opening of Cedar Point Esports marks a significant step for us as we diversify our offerings and engage with a broader audience."

Given the booming popularity of esports, Zimmerman said he is excited about this opportunity to tap into the growing appetite for that form of entertainment and package it with all that Cedar Point has to offer.

Cedar Point Esports has partnered with North Coast Entertainment, a leading entertainment company with a strong presence in the gam-

ing industry, to deliver the gaming experience to its visitors. Cedar Fair officials said North Coast Entertainment has an exceptional track record of organizing successful esports events, making them a natural fit for this project.

Cedar Fair Esports stations will have access to a multitude of games. Just some of them include Fortnite, League of Legends, Valorant, Counter Strike 2, Overwatch 2, Apex Legends, Rocket League and Teamfight Tactics.

This phase one of Cedar Point Esports will focus on organizing leagues, camps and clinics to guide and support aspiring esports athletes and anyone looking for new entertainment.

Cedar Fair Sports Center is a four-story, multi-purpose gaming venue. There are 10 basketball hardwood courts or 20 volleyball courts. There also is a championship arena with retractable seating and on-site concessions.

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Rocky Mountain Construction imagines small footprint Wild Moose coaster

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

HAYDEN, Idaho — Whether mid-20th century classic or more modern wild mouse coasters, the staple has seen its skittering presence on midways and in amusement parks for decades. The tight turns always elicit screams.

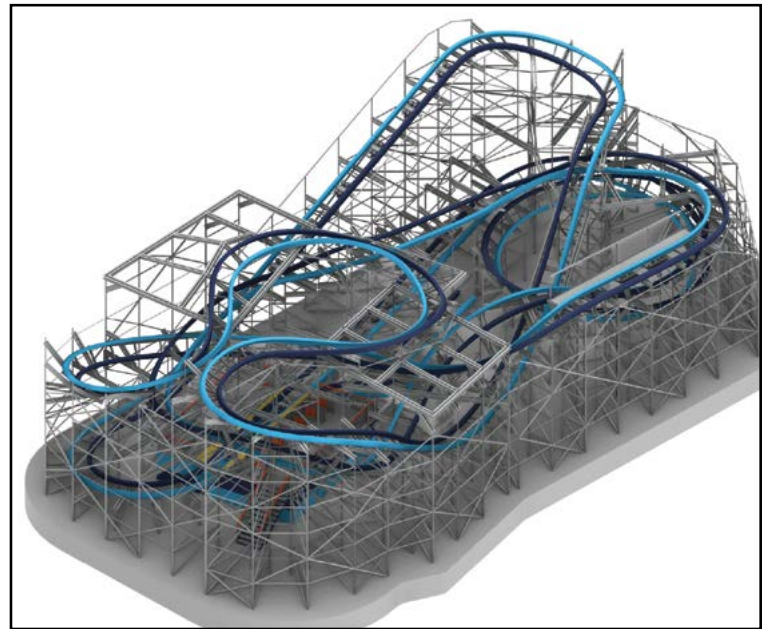
Rocky Mountain Construction (RMC) has conceived a new twist on the family favorite that increases capacity. Called Wild Moose, the newfangled family coaster uses the company's I-Box track system. According to the company's wording: "We've scaled this product down to accommodate track fabrication so twisted that it seems impossible."

"Our patented track system allows us to really manipulate the train in unique ways, to keep our new family coaster true to who we are. We wanted to make an emphasis on these silly feeling movements," said **Hunter Novotny**, business development, Rocky Mountain Construction and **Larson International**. "[Noted designer] **Alan Schilke** describes one of the inspirations for this coaster layout being rolled around in a wheelbarrow as a child with very off-axis and slower-than-expected "wonky" elements that we've become known for using between the station and lift hill in some of our previous installations."

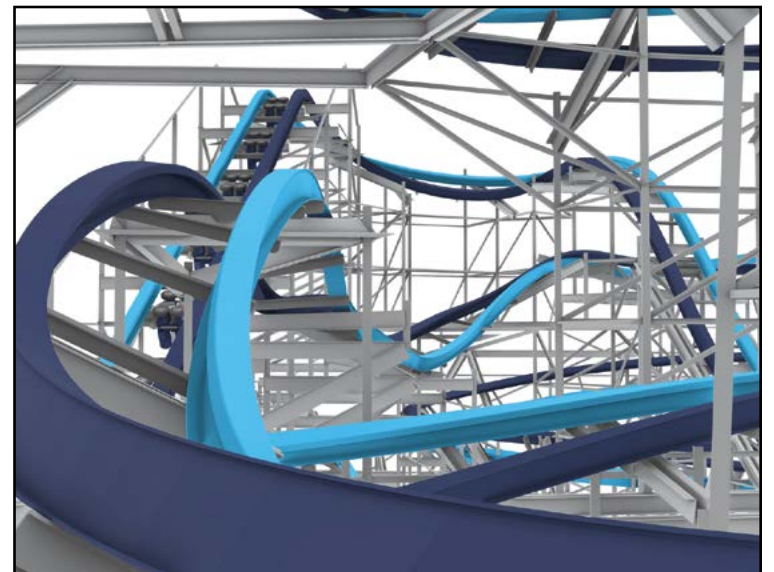
In RMC's eyes, it provides a cost-effective replacement for aging wild mouse coasters and can re-use the same slab foundation.

The moose theme is a tongue-in-cheek name that is a right fit for RMC.

"The Wild Moose name came from two different directions — the homage paid to the classic Wild Mouse coasters that have been engrained into classic coaster culture as well



The new Wild Moose layout (above) can fit on a traditional Wild Mouse pad. RMC's style of coaster design is integrated into a tight, compact configuration (below). COURTESY RMC



as a nod to our primary facility in North Idaho," said Novotny.

The coaster concept uses a train instead of individual cars. Wild Moose is designed to have a true capacity of 800 riders an hour. The layout designed by RMC can accommodate one train or two, depending upon the customer's needs. Riders 42 inches can ride with a companion or alone if they are 48 inches or taller.

"The trains are designed so that they feel much more open and less confined, which should just add to this ride's whimsical feel," Novotny noted. Our goal is listening to customer and patron feedback to create comfortable seating so

that people of all ages can comfortably enjoy the ride time and time again free of physical discomfort."

The lift system uses drive tires instead of a chain lift.

"The main reason for the pinch drive lift is to keep maintenance as simple as possible," Novotny told *Amusement Today*. "By using the independent friction drives, the park is able to keep spare motors on the shelf for a "drag and drop" part that can be repaired quickly rather than the large motor and chain that would typically be cost prohibitive to keep in stock. The additional perk is that this system will also reduce the amount of noise from the lift system."



Chimelong Spaceship Theme Park includes the world's largest curved projection screen as part of the Bermuda Storm simulator attraction. COURTESY LEGACY ENTERTAINMENT

Chimelong Spaceship from Legacy receives Guinness World Records

ZHUHAI, China, and HOLLYWOOD, Calif. — In the buildup to its grand opening, the all-new Chimelong Spaceship Theme Park in Zhuhai, China, has become the recipient of an unprecedented seven Guinness World Records.

The Chimelong Spaceship was designed by the team at **Legacy Entertainment**, a California-based firm. Legacy is globally renowned for its large-scale theme park and aquarium projects, including **Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park** as well as **The Sea Shell Aquarium** at **VinWonders**, Phu Quoc.

The new Chimelong Spaceship Theme Park began soft openings on September 16, 2023, in order to take advantage of the high demand generated by the upcoming National Day and Mid-Autumn Festival holidays in the area. An official opening date has yet to be announced.

The attraction's world records include:

- **World's Largest Indoor Theme Park:** With 397,064 square meters of enclosed area (4,271,783 square feet), the park surpasses previous recordholder **Warner Brothers Abu Dhabi**.

- **World's Largest Aquarium:** With a combined total of 75,350,969 liters of tanks (16,574,889 gallons), Chimelong surpasses its own record established at the neighboring **Chimelong Ocean Kingdom** in 2014. The facility houses 38 aquarium tanks, home to nearly 300 species.

- **World's Largest Aquarium Tank:** Breaking their own record once again, the park's largest tank has a capacity of 56,450,136 liters (12,417,288 gallons).

- **World's Largest Indoor Artificial Wave:** The park's record-breaking main tank is equipped with hardware capable of generating waves measuring up to 3.2m (10.5 feet).

- **World's Largest Living Coral Reef Exhibit:** Spread over 10 specialized coral tanks, the 2,848,562 liter (626,595 gallons) exhibit is the largest of its kind.

- **World's Highest Seated Capacity Motion Simulator:** Boasting a capacity of 304 riders on a single platform, the Bermuda Storm simulator ride is unprecedented in scale.

- **World's Largest Curved Projection Screen:** Accompanying Bermuda Storm's supersized simulator platform is a colossal projection screen, encompassing over 1,682 square meters (5,518 square feet) of surface.

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Conny-Land Switzerland's RES indoor tower opens

WÄLDI, Switzerland — **Ride Engineers Switzerland (RES)** installed its indoor vertical drop tower in collaboration with **Conny-Land** to create a new attraction called **Crazy Professor** which opened to the public in April 2023 to the excitement of the park's visitors.

The Crazy Professor tells the story of a mad scientist that succeeds in defying gravity, kind of. Conny-Land built a beautiful building to house the 20-meter (66-foot) drop tower and is paired with a large multimedia screen installed over different levels of the tower. As the story unfolds, guests are thrilled with multiple unexpected freefalls and special effects. Since the ride's opening, Conny-Land social media has been flooded with positive feedback.

The ride utilizes RES's Vertical Dark Ride concept. The Vertical Dark Ride offers additional freefalls per ride cycle, by moving up and down various times. A fantastic option for multiple indoor storytelling at different levels. Depending on the story, the ride can even start with a freefall.

RES has a variety of tower rides that range from 50 passenger observation towers as tall as 75 meters (246 feet) and tipping towers that move back and forth as well as side to side while rotating 360 degrees.

RES' newest generation of drop towers deliver unexpected freefalls without sensing any warning in advance of the drop, leaving riders surprised and thrilled. Multi drop towers offer additional freefalls per ride cycle by moving up and down the vertical track various times.

•ride-engineers.com



The highly themed **The Crazy Professor** ride at Conny-Land (above) houses an indoor, 66-foot drop tower from RES (right) which creates a vertical dark ride experience for guests.
COURTESY RES



Six Flags Magic Mountain, Valencia, California, has opened a new convenience store on-site that includes a very convenient technology for guests. Park officials opened the Quick 6 store in a heavily trafficked area of the park to offer guests the opportunity to grab drinks, snacks and other refreshments.

But at this convenience store, there is no check-out line. Utilizing **Amazon's** Just Walk Out technology, guests swipe their credit or debit cards as they enter the store, make their selections and then walk out the back without stopping to pay. The store features dozens of high-tech cameras and the shelves feature weight sensors to ensure that you're charged for what you grabbed and not charged for anything you may have put back.

According to park officials, Amazon was an ideal partner for the concept store because the company has the technology and infrastructure to make the project work seamlessly and easily for theme park guests.

This is the second such store to open at a **Six Flags Entertainment Corporation** property, the parent company. The first opened earlier this year at **Six Flags Great Adventure** in Jackson Township, New Jersey. But this is the first store to be opened within the theme park itself.

For those in and around **Alabama Adventure**, Bessemer, Alabama, this holiday season, things will most likely look a little brighter. That is because the amusement park is debuting its transformation into **Magic of Lights**, a new vibrant drive-through holiday-themed light display. The festive event kicks off on November 17 and runs through December 31.

Produced by **Family Entertainment Holdings, LLC**, **Magic of Lights** will feature dozens of displays, festive favorites and digital animation, all constructed with millions of individual LED lights to create a memorable holiday experience for the whole family.

The Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, Santa Cruz, California, announced last month a new ride coming soon.

According to a local news agency **KSBW-TV Monterey**, park officials reported the name of the new ride is **Surge**, and it is expected to arrive next year. The ride will seat up to 24 people

and it will provide guests with 360 degrees of adrenaline-packed excitement.

This is the second big change announced by the **Beach Boardwalk**. In August, the company announced that it was bringing back a Ferris wheel. The **Dream Wheel** will be 65 feet tall and sports 15 gondolas.

The **Rock and Roll Hall of Fame**, Cleveland, Ohio, broke ground last month on a more than \$135 million makeover, adding about 50,000 square feet of space and re-vamping the building's lakefront location.

The announcement was made at a press conference by **John Sykes**, chairman of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Foundation, as he was surrounded by city officials, artists and supporters, all of whom are excited about this enhancement to the downtown area.

The project will increase the exhibition hall by more than 40% and add space for indoor concerts, private events and educational programs.

A completion date hasn't been disclosed. The museum has welcomed more than 14 million fans since it opened in 1995.

ZooTampa, Tampa, Florida, has some new upcoming additions, including a re-vamped kids zone as well as new interactive habitats and attractions.

The first addition to open will be **Stingray Shores**, expected to come online this winter. This new interactive habitat will allow guests to touch and feed stingrays.

ZooTampa experienced record attendance levels in the fiscal year of 2023 with 1,171,319 guests reported.

The **Owensboro Museum of Fine Art** in Kentucky has raised more than \$2.3 million, surpassing its fundraising target of \$2 million.

The money raised will be used to construct a new entrance and upgrade some of its galleries and facilities.

Officials at **Djurs Sommerland**, located in Denmark, revealed in October plans to open a drop tower attraction in the Mexican-themed zone of the park.

According to reports, the ride will soar 196 feet high and hit a top speed of 62 mph.

The manufacturer of the drop tower attraction has not been revealed, but news is expected ahead of construction. It should be ready to roll next season.

An exhibition on the history of **Barbie** is expected to open at the **Design Museum in London**, U.K., next year.

The museum says it has been granted special access to the Barbie archives in California and dozens of rare and unique items will be displayed to tell the story of the brand over the course of 65 years.

Barbie was born in 1959, the creation of U.S. businesswoman **Ruth Handler**. The toy company **Mattel** manufactured the doll and her accessories.

Hersheypark arcade team gets training from Intercard

HERSHEY, Pa. — In September, cashless technology supplier Intercard provided a two-day advanced arcade operations seminar to the arcade leadership team at world-renowned Hersheypark amusement park in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Hersheypark uses Intercard technology throughout its arcades and outdoor Midway attraction.

The executive level arcade and card system operations training focuses on card system best practices, including enhanced security, data mining, payout management, enhancing guest service and maximizing revenue.

Jason Mitchell, Intercard's customer success manager, leads the program.

"New customers typically use only a fraction of the features of their cashless system," said Mitchell. "We do a deep dive into their operation so we can show them how to leverage the full power and benefits of Intercard's cashless technology."

Hersheypark's arcade leadership team was quite pleased with the training.

"I expect the system management to be better streamlined and our COGS to be better targeted and closer in line with our long term goals," said the park's Financial Analyst James Schauer.

"We will have better reports to help us monitor our business, which is something we did not have before the program," stated Adda Jasper, assistant director of retail and games. Team members also appreciated the additional in-depth training as their Intercard system was installed during pandemic restrictions.

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Gametime Lanes announces FEC expansion in Massachusetts

AMESBURY, Mass. — Gametime Lanes and Entertainment announced that the company will open a second Massachusetts location at Northshore Mall in Peabody, Mass. The new location will build on the growth and success of

the existing Amesbury family entertainment center. Gametime recently agreed to lease a 30,000-square-foot space on the Simon Property.

“The reimagining of the mall makes this the perfect time to bring Gametime

to this location and to create a unique entertainment and recreation destination for their customers,” said Anthony Decotis, owner.

The new location will feature similar attractions to the Amesbury complex. In addition to 12 lanes of 10-pin



bowling, the new complex will feature two bars, including a sports bar with giant TV screens and a full pub menu. The state-of-the-art arcade will occupy 6,000 square feet with a redemption counter, popular video and virtual reality games, axe throwing and other adult amusements. Private function rooms will be available for large or small corporate events, bachelor/bachelorette parties, or birthday parties for all ages. Live music and special events in this premier setting are planned to bring a unique energy to the property, offering a wide array of experiences for patrons to enjoy during the day or evening, after work or on weekends.

“We are delighted to welcome Gametime Lanes and

Entertainment to our already thriving mall community,” said Scott DeCost, general manager at Northshore Mall. “Gametime now brings our valued guests an unbeatable experience with their friends and family they will carry with them.”

Construction is underway, and the expected grand opening will be in mid to late 2024.

Gametime Lanes will join other recently-opened upscale establishments at the mall such as L.L.Bean, Arhaus and Sweetgreen as part the final phase of the Promenade redevelopment at Northshore Mall.

Gametime Lanes and Entertainment was started in 2019 and is owned by Decotis, Steve Belmonte, Jeff Lajoie, Fursey Keleghan and Tony Sorrentino. The quintet have a combined 75 years of experience in the FEC industry.

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

Bingemans Hospitality is teaming up with **K1 Speed** — a California-based indoor electric go-kart company — to bring a facility to the same space once occupied by an indoor skating rink in **Cambridge Centre Mall** in Ontario, Canada.

K1 Speed has three Ontario locations, including Cambridge, among 75 locations around the world. This is the second partnership between the mall owners **Morguard and Bingemans**, which operates **Kingpin Bowling** at the mall.

News of the partnership comes a month after Cambridge City Council voted in favor of a recommendation report to allow go-karting to be added to the list of approved uses for the space within the mall. The former indoor skating rink, which shut down at the beginning of the pandemic, was previously occupied by **Suso Skate Co.** roller skating. The company vacated the space on September 3.

An immersive digital art venue popular in east Asia will open its first North American location near the center of the Las Vegas Strip in November.

Arte Museum, a \$25 million, two-story space spanning 30,000 square feet will start showings of its projection mapping attraction in early November and host a grand opening on Nov. 29.

Produced by Korean digital design company **D'strict**, the 14 distinct projections will feature natural elements like waterfalls, beaches and the Northern lights. A special installation for the Las Vegas location will highlight the landmarks, nightlife and natural beauty found in Nevada.

Leslie and Craig Tincher hope their new family entertainment center will keep local and regional residents closer to home by offering them all the fun attractions they'll find in bigger cities in their hometown of London, Kentucky. Creating nearly 100 jobs, the FEC dubbed **The Palace** opened its doors in early October.

The Palace was opened with one goal in mind: to make sure the Tincher's friends and neighbors have as much fun as they have had bringing their new investment to the region.

"People couldn't wait for something like this to come to our small town. There's nothing like this between Lexington and Knoxville," said **Craig Tincher**. "We're hoping it will attract people from all around."

The FEC offers 18 bowling lanes, indoor electric go-karts, laser tag, 60 arcade games, escape rooms and golf simulators, as well as a full-service restaurant and bar.

A video game and sports bar entertainment center in Cincinnati, Ohio's **Liberty Center** is the first of its kind in Ohio for its national owner, and, it is already attracting fans.

In The Game opened in mid-September in the mixed-use Liberty Center and features everything from axe throwing to virtual reality games to an escape room.

Designed for all ages, the 19,000-square-foot venue also has a sports bar with a full menu and more than a dozen 75-inch TVs for sporting events.

The entertainment venue, which during warmer weather also features giant open garage doors — across from the Liberty Center's grassy area used for musical acts — and has an outside patio for customers.

"We're very excited to be celebrating the grand opening of our seventh In The Game location," said **Scott Brown**, director of marketing for the Illinois-based **Family Entertainment Group**. "We look forward to creating a vibrant, exciting space where families and communities can enjoy excellent food and exceptional entertainment."

Launch Entertainment, an indoor family entertainment concept, has named franchise industry veteran **Yvette Martinez** as chief operating officer.

With more than 20 years of experience in the restaurant space across several senior leadership roles, Martinez was most recently the COO of **Brix Holdings**, a Dallas-based franchisor best known for its award-winning brands **Orange Leaf**, **RedBrick Pizza**, **Red Mango**, **Smoothie Factory** and **Souper Salad**. Joining Launch in August of 2023, Martinez is taking point on transformative changes in the operational department, including to continue upholding the highest safety and brand standards, and solidifying the foundation that Launch is built upon.

"With years in the franchising industry, I understand the importance of collaboration to meet the needs of our operators," said Martinez. "When working in previous operations roles, I've loved that no two days are the same; entertainment is synchronous with restaurants — guests visit our parks seeking something and leave happy, which is what we strive to do across all our locations. I was attracted to the position at Launch because of the opportunity to be part of a great leadership team, while leveraging my experience to take operations to the next level. I am looking forward to working with the leadership team and all of our franchisees."

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Kern County Fair — a large fair with an honest small-town feel

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. — The dozen-day Kern County Fair experienced larger crowds due to cooler temperatures than in years past. “We had incredible weather this year at the Kern County Fair,” said Chelsey Roberts, marketing specialist.

“Our community is used to it reaching the 100s during the fair — but we lucked out with most of our days being in the 80s.” Sean Butler, COO of Butler Amusements agreed. “We had amazing weather for the 2023 Kern County Fair, some of the best weather in our history of playing the fair.”

Those cooler days resulted in 347,480 guests going through the turnstiles, up from the 2022 edition. The theme this year was, “Treat Yourself.”

Butler Amusements brought in a total of 53 rides including its largest Kiddieland layout of the year with 27 rides. New rides playing that spot included Puppy Roll (Sellner), Pirate Jet 6 (SBF/Visa) and Jumbo Dumbos (Kolmax). The most popular rides included the White-water log flume (Reverchon), Giant Wheel (Chance Rides) and Wave Swinger (Zierer)

Ride midway revenue came in at \$2,774,927.00.



Butler Amusements had the spot. They brought in a total of 53 rides, 27 of which were in Kiddieland. COURTESY KERN COUNTY FAIR

The Kern County Fair also had 40 games and 12 food stands including two new food joints: Hot Stuff and a fry wagon.

“We are starting to see a change in customer spending,” said Butler. “This is our second year using Magic Money as our electronic ticketing system, and this allows us more insight into customer spending habits than ever before. This year we saw an 18% jump in credit card usage and less repeat purchases, but a higher average initial purchase. This was partially helped by increasing fast pass pricing \$5 on the weekends as a relief to

FAIRS

the fast pass lines, but the package still sold out.”

Butler shared the company's employment strategy: “We rely heavily on the H2B program, and with the help of our industry advocacy groups, we were able to get our allotment of H2B's for 2023. Lance Moyer, our CEO, is on the board of OABA and is actively involved in pursuing easier ways for our industry to get some relief in the H2B program or preferably our own industry program for foreign workers.”

Butler had nothing but praise for the fair board and

staff. “We have had a long-lasting great relationship with the Kern County Fair. Mike Olcott and his team do an amazing job of connecting with the community and getting the customers in the gates. Kern County Fair is one of the few fairs that has shown continuous growth over the years with no signs of slowing down. The board of directors are very involved with the fair, giving a unique connection with board members and our staff. We look forward to many more decades of partnership.”

Roberts said they were pleased with the midway operator. “We have a long relationship with Butler Amusements. They are such great partners and we can always count on them to bring us a fun, safe carnival.”

Pre-fair promotions

included Pint for a Pass: those who donated blood got free admission and Reading Round-Up: those students who read 200 minutes got a free child ticket.

Special promotions during the fair included Special Friends Day — free admission for those with special needs and their caregivers; Senior Day; Friends and Followers Day (for those who follow the fair on its-social media accounts or subscribe to its newsletter); School Day and Feed the Need for the local food bank.

Roberts told *Amusement Today* how media and advertising was handled: “Our budget is about \$200,000. We have recently started moving more of our budget each

► See KERN, page 44

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The Kolmax Jumbo Dumbos ride was new to the Kern County Fair for 2023. Also new were a Sellner Puppy Roll and an SBF/Visa Pirate Jet 6. All were located in Kiddieland. COURTESY STEFAN HINZ

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 Pierce Adventure Law ”

On the Midway: Kissel Entertainment, LLC



Kissel Entertainment is believed to be the only operator still using a pair of Chance Astro Wheels. Typically, the Okeana, Ohio-based company places each at a 45-degree angle from the other, creating a striking visual presentation. Winter quarters are located in Clanton, Alabama.
AT/B. DEREK SHAW

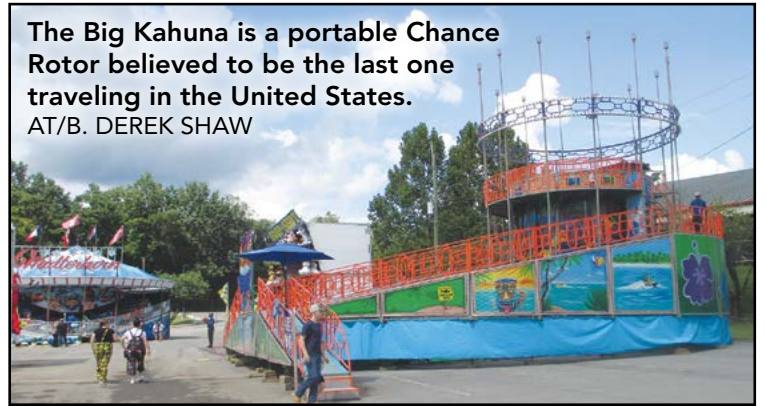


This 1963 front gate entrance arch was purchased from Cumberland Valley Shows. Originally built by the Zacchini Brothers (of circus fame), it was lovingly restored, replacing the metal skin that was in bad shape and updating the 11-watt bulbs to LED ones that give off a warm glow, maintaining the old-time look. The company also has the "Knoxville" gate arch that is currently in restoration. AT/B. DEREK SHAW



Key people in the company are (from left) Barend Botha, safety administrator; Madison Kissel, office manager; Brittany Lane, accounting department; Savannah Kissel, accounting manager; Nick Seibert, operations manager; Paris Kissel, public relations and Russ Kissel, owner.
AT/B. DEREK SHAW

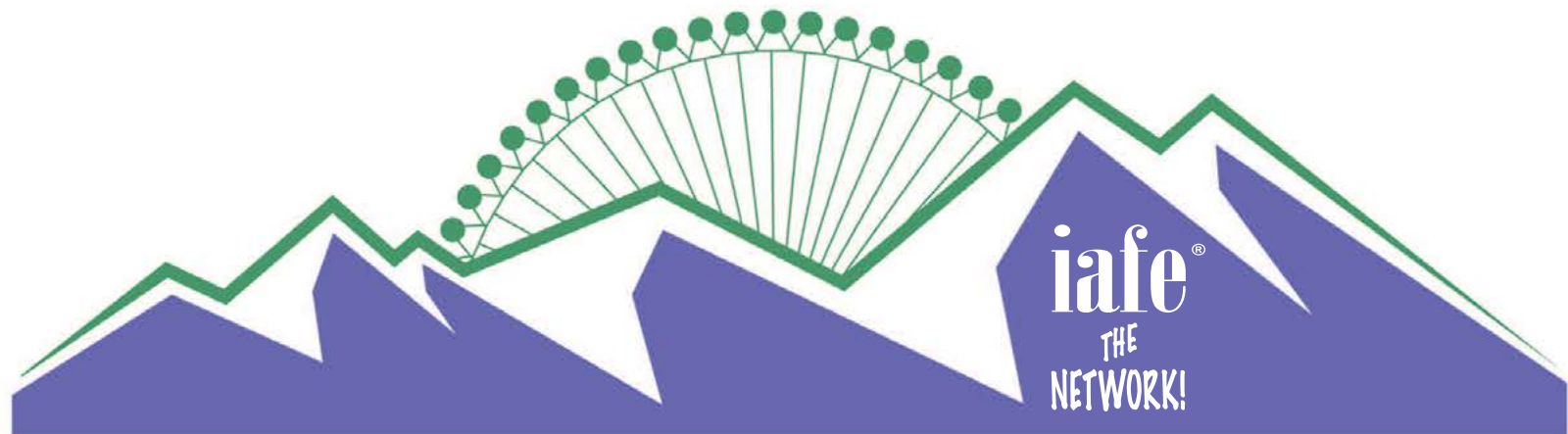
The Big Kahuna is a portable Chance Rotor believed to be the last one traveling in the United States.
AT/B. DEREK SHAW



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WATER PARKS & RECREATION

► Schlitterbahn's water coaster for kids — page 50 / Chuck E. Cheese, California Dreamin' partner — page 52

New five acre Waterland Water Park opens in Israel resort town

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

EILAT, Israel — This past August, **Waterland Water Park** opened to the public in the resort town of Eilat. The opening comes following nearly four years of construction and an investment of 110 million New Israeli Shekels (\$28 million). The site covers more than five acres, and it is the first water park in southern Israel.

The park encompasses several complexes, including three water slide towers for adults, a section for children, a computerized wave pool, food courts, an amphitheater, conference space and a changing area.

The park has 24 slides, 14 of them for adults. At 24 meters (79 feet) in height, two of the slide towers are among the tallest traditional stair-towers in the Middle East. The three different complexes are geared toward different levels with tower number one designed for adrenaline junkies, tower number two for adventure lovers and tower number three for tube lovers.

Tower one has several body slides, including the Kamikaza speed slide with a steep drop from the top of the tower accelerating riders to nearly 30 mph. A similar body slide, Skyfall, right next to Kamikaza, starts with a small drop, flattens out for a bit, and then surprises riders with



Almost all of the water park can be seen in this aerial, including the three slide towers, wave pool and covered seating, as well as the park's close proximity to the Red Sea. COURTESY WATERLAND EILAT

a final steep drop. The Aqua Smash Waterslide includes a gaming system that requires quick thinking and fast reflexes in order to earn points while sliding. As the name implies, Water Racer is a four-lane mat racer with multiple speed bumps to produce an airtime-like experience as riders traverse down the slide. The final body slide on this tower, called Easy Slider, is a more traditional, nostalgic slide that twists its way down from the top of the tower.

Tower two supports three tube slides, including a multi-funnel slide called The Experience, which features digital projections on mist walls inside the funnels. The videos are designed to startle thrill seekers with scenes

such as a shark lunging toward them. The Family Waterslide is an enclosed slide that is wider than the typical tube and is able to accommodate larger family rafts. It includes colorful translucent stripes and patterns to produce a fanciful light show. The Fantasy Waterslide features dark sections punctuated with special pulsating lighting synchronized with fun music.

Tower three also has multiple single- and double-tube slides. Super Crater is a bowl slide that is highlighted with translucent stars embedded in the fiberglass on the sides of the bowl. Crazy River is a boomerang-type slide that has riders in rafts gaining speed as they shoot down an enclosed chute,

then burst into daylight and encounter a steep wall, where the rafts climb until they lose momentum, giving riders a brief period of weightlessness. After losing momentum, adventurers slide back down the wall, over a speed bump and into the final splash pool. The Crazy River boomerang-style slide is the first of its kind in Israel. Fun & Sun Waterslide is a more traditional tube chute that winds its way down from the top of the tower.

Children have the opportunity to sample smaller versions of many of the adult slides. In addition to the slides, there is a waterplay area with fountains and streams, water mushrooms, palms, arches and leaf swings in which

the kids can frolic. A water-play structure with multiple interactive features and a handful of slides is topped with a giant tipping bucket.

The wave pool is computer-controlled and can produce different styles of waves at different times throughout the day. A large seating area is covered with a light and airy shade cloth that allows air to flow through. The nearby dining area has four different types of cuisine: American, Turkish, Italian and Asian. The kitchen is certified kosher during the week but will still produce hot food on Saturday. However, meals cooked during the Sabbath are not kosher. Previously prepared, cold foods will be available for those who follow stricter traditions. Alcohol is available but only in the Beach Bar, and it must be consumed there.

Everyone who enters the water park is given a wrist bracelet that can be linked to a credit card to serve as an electronic wallet for food and souvenir purchases as well as locker rentals.

The resort town of Eilat is Israel's southernmost city and sits at the northern tip of the red sea. It is part of the Negev Desert with temperatures that can exceed 104 degrees in the summer and warm winters with an average of 70 degrees. With very little rainfall, it is sometimes called the City of Eternal Sun.



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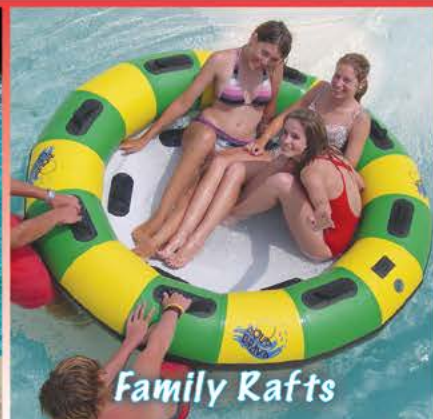
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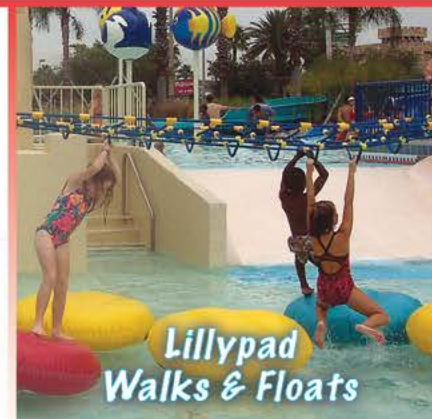
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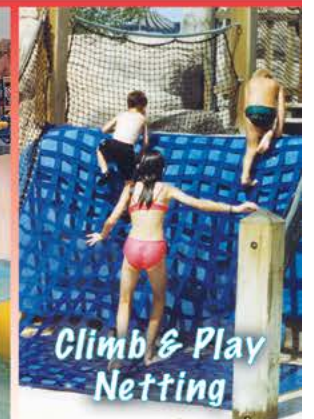
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This aerial view shows the placement of the new Storybrook Park in what used to be Polywog Pond and Tadpool. COURTESY SCHLITTERBAN WATERPARKS & RESORTS

Schlitterbahn announces new water coaster for kids

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

NEW BRAUNFELS, Texas — In 2024, Schlitterbahn Waterpark & Resort New Braunfels will continue its tradition of premiering first-of-its-kind attractions by adding Bow Wow Blaster, the world's first water coaster for kids. The new water coaster will be part of Schatze's Storybrook Park, an all-new kids' area being developed in the original section of the park.

The new area, named after Schlitterbahn's short-legged mascot pup, will include waterslides, more than 70 interactive water features, spray toys, splash pads and a 1,200-gallon tipping water bucket. All the attractions are supplied by WhiteWater West.

Bow Wow Blaster, the world's first kids' water coaster, will be a pint-sized version of the park's famous Master Blaster, which opened in 1996 as a follow-up to the original Dragon Blaster — the world's first uphill water coaster.

Storybrook Park is a redevelopment of the space that was formerly used for Polywog Pond and Tadpool. The new area, next to Schatze's Central Park, will be divided into three storybook lands: Fur-Bidden Forest, Schatze's Pawn'd and Fairy Tail Trail. Sidewalks connect the three areas like a babbling brook — a "storybrook" — that cascades through an enchanted land. Classic stories will be reimagined with Schatze's reinterpretation into puppy-themed fairy tales including Little Red Riding Hound, Houndsel and Petzel, Rapawnzel and the Three Little Pugs. The new park will feature shaded seating areas under which guests can relax or enjoy a meal.

"Schlitterbahn has always been known as a place where families come together to have fun, make memories and stay cool during the hot summer months," said Darren Hill, vice president and general manager of Schlitterbahn Water Parks and Resorts. "We are known as a water park that introduces first-of-its-kind attractions, and with the addition of the world's first water coaster for kids and Schatze's Storybrook Park in 2024, the tradition of families making lifelong memories in New Braunfels will continue for many years to come."



Fur-bidden Forest includes waterplay features and a 1,200-gallon tipping bucket. COURTESY SCHLITTERBAN WATERPARKS & RESORTS



NEWS SPLASH

AT: Jeffrey L. Seifert
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Construction is underway on a water park at the **Almatti Dam** in the Karnataka Region of India. Since its completion in 2005, as one of the largest dams in India, it has become a tourist destination and several attractions including parks, gardens, a laser show and a fountain show have been added.

The new water park will be divided into five themed areas — one for children, another for seniors and three for families. In addition to waterslides and pools, the park will include a lazy river, wave pool, locker rooms, rest rooms, food-service area and a first-aid center. Initial capacity of the first phase of the park is 1,000 visitors. If the park is successful and tourism increases, then it will be expanded by adding more features.

In September, ground was broken on the first phase of **Williston Water World** in North Dakota. A three-acre land donation from the city, along with a late summer push with fund raising, made it possible for **Williston Community Builders** to move forward with the project. The initial phase will feature a zero-depth pool with a ninja-cross system, lazy river and two waterslides. Other features will include a bathhouse, family changing rooms, concessions, rental space, bike racks, shade structures and open green space.

The **Great Wolf Lodge** in Webster, Texas, is currently accepting reservations with an anticipated opening in late 2024. As an incentive to book in advance, the resort is offering a 30 percent discount on rooms booked between November 15, 2024, and February 28, 2025, if booked by October 29, 2023.

The 532-room resort will be the second in the state of Texas. A location in Grapevine, near the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport opened in 2007.

The Webster location is near NASA's Space Center Houston within the Houston-Woodlands-Sugar Land metropolitan statistical area — the fifth most populous area in the country.

Bermuda's newest water park held a soft opening in September in anticipation of a full season next year. What makes this water park unique is that it is entirely inflatable, but it is not the typical floating inflatable obstacle course.

Aqua Waterland was created as the result of customer demand. Husband and wife **Tyone Fubler** and **Torika Cholmondeley** sold and rented fun castles and other inflatables through their com-

pany **Just for Fun Rentals**. People really enjoyed the pop-up parks and party inflatables and suggested the couple do one with water. After doing some research, they decided to put together an inflatable park with water features.

"This is our first year with the water park. We intended to open up a bit earlier, but due to shipping delays, we're just doing a soft opening to see how everything flows, in preparation for next year," said Fubler. "People are really enjoying it so far, even though we're not fully set."

The water park is located in Bermuda's West End. Admission is \$25 and customers can stay as long as they wish. Even though the attractions are inflatables, some are as tall as 30 feet in height.

In Newburgh, New York, construction has started on the new **Delano-Hitch Aquatic Center** for the city. The \$11 million aquatic center, located within **Delano-Hitch Recreation Park** is replacing an existing pool that has deteriorated beyond repair. The first pool was built in 1931, then about 30 years later, a new pool was built within the old pool. After falling into disrepair, the facility was closed in 2020. Both pools, as well as an old locker room, will be demolished. The city is planning to use a portion of its American Rescue Plan Act funds to pay for the new center.

The new facility will feature a 49-by-75-foot swimming pool with depths ranging from three-and-a-half to six feet. A deluxe splash pad and waterplay structure that will be constructed near the pool will have more than 26 features that spray and dump water on visitors. There will be shaded sitting areas with lounge chairs. A pool house will be built at the entrance to the Aquatic Center with locker rooms, bathrooms, rooms that will hold filtration systems for the pool and splash pad, and a concession stand.

A \$22 million investment at **Soldiers Field Memorial Park** in Rochester, Minnesota, will include the addition of a new Aquatic Center. The plan calls for expanding the existing pool to add shallow-water activities and programs so that it can be used by lap swimmers, casual swimmers and those learning to swim. The center will also include a lazy river, multiple waterslides, splash pad and a wading pool.

The funding for the project includes a \$5 million federal grant, a \$10 million contribution from the Destination Medical Center, \$7 million from the city's voter-approved park levy, and a \$250,000 grant from the state.

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Chuck E. Cheese signs licensing deal with new California Dreamin'

IRVING, Texas — CEC Entertainment, LLC and California Dreamin' Entertainment, Inc., announced a multi-year licensing, entertainment and marketing partnership that will bring the Chuck E. Cheese iconic brand outside its traditional four walls, for the development of a new branded area within the new water park.

The former Raging Waters Sacramento Water Park is being reimagined by California Dreamin', the new operator of the park, after announcing a long-term lease with its owner, Cal Expo, on August 1. An updated master plan includes new rides, food and beverage, and entertainment offerings, featuring two distinct California-inspired areas: Calibunga Water Park and Cal Soleil. Calibunga will be a family-friendly water park, while Cal Soleil will be a year-round operation featuring a restaurant and wine bar.



COURTESY CEC ENTERTAINMENT, LLC

"I am absolutely thrilled to partner with California Dreamin' on our first-ever location-based entertainment project," said David McKillips, president and CEO of CEC Entertainment. "In nearly 50 years, Chuck E. Cheese has hosted more than one billion guests and is one of the most popular children's properties in and outside our fun centers. Evolving our IP in

new areas of location-based entertainment is another exciting and natural step for our iconic family-friendly brand."

In addition to the branded children's and family area, the two companies will develop immersive branding, entertainment and marketing elements such as:

- Chuck E. Cheese-themed children's area to feature family-friendly

branded water rides, slides, and splash zones.

- On-site arcade and branded retail shop.

- Pasqually's Pizzeria Restaurant, serving Pasqually's pizza, wings and desserts.

- Market-wide cross promotions with the Sacramento and Northern California Chuck E. Cheese fun centers.

- Special live appearances throughout the season, featuring Chuck E. Cheese and

his fellow iconic characters, including Jasper T. Jowels, Mr. Munch, Helen Henny, Bella B. and Pasqually.

"Chuck E. Cheese is an instantly recognized premiere kids and family brand that transcends generations," said Steve Dooner, CEO of California Dreamin'. "With millions of fans in California and around the world, this will be a fun and unique themed experience for our guests. Plus, the company's expertise leading the industry with the world's best arcades, innovation in F&B, and original entertainment makes for a perfect partnership for our park."

Current plans for the water park include a new wave pool, surfing attraction, new slides, tubes, raft rides, an expanded lazy river and an all-new children's area that will feature the Chuck E. Cheese brand. More details on rides, theming and master plan timing are forthcoming.

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BUSINESS & NEWSMAKERS

► **Chance Rides continues to evolve — page 57 / Return of Skyline Attractions' SKYnext — page 60**

ETF Ride Systems celebrates 25 years in the amusement industry

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

NEDERWEERT, Netherlands — **ETF Ride Systems**, part of the **ETF Group** and a leader in trackless dark rides and innovative ride solutions, is celebrating its 25 anniversary this year.

Company officials said they plan to keep on growing.

"We are steadily working on new projects," said **Ruud Koppens**, company president. "We have a new one coming out next year that we can't discuss at this time, but we plan to continue our business as usual."

Usual for ETF Ride Systems is not really "usual" for all businesses. The company has a variety of products in different atmospheres around the world. In the past 25 years, the company boasts hundreds of installations.

ETF Ride Systems' parent company, ETF Group, was founded in 1951. That company built a unit that



Above is ETF's Experience trackless mover in Legoland, Goshen, New York. **Ruud Koppens** (right), president of ETF, feels the company's background in industrial development and history of high quality, aided in its quick rise in the amusement industry. COURTESY ETF



detected material faults in threads at weaving looms. It was a big step forward at the time for textile production companies in the



This track-bound suspended ride system from ETF Ride Systems was constructed in 2010 at Europa-Park and opened the following year. COURTESY ETF

Netherlands. The company then expanded sales in Europe.

In the 1980s, ETF Group also invested in the development of industrial automation for its production companies.

Since the mid-1990s both technical excellence and a deep understanding of industrial automation were translated successfully into rides for the leisure industry.

When ETF Ride Systems first started making rides, the company would form a joint-venture with

other ride manufacturers to supply them with the trackless technology as well as with some track-bound attractions.

The products created by ETF in the joint-venture were transferred to ETF Ride Systems when the joint venture ended.

Koppens feels the company's background in industrial development and history of high quality, aided in its quick rise in the amusement industry. Those are the qualities that keep them growing.

The company has con-

sistently delivered cutting-edge ride systems and its commitment to quality, safety and innovation has cemented its reputation as a trusted partner in the world of theme parks, family entertainment centers and museums.

"People know us and people can find us all over the world," he said.

One of the company's first projects was to create a dark ride system for **Sally Corporation's** Labyrinth of the Minotaur ride. It opened in 2000 at the **Terra Mítica** amusement park in Spain. The ride system consists of several vehicles featuring laser blasters moving along a trackless system.

In 2010, ETF Ride Systems began designing a new ride system for **Europa-Park** in Germany. Following nine months of design and construction, **Volo da Vinci** opened in August 2011.

This ride system consists of several vehicles suspended from an overhead monorail line with guests controlling the speed of the ride through the use of on-board pedals.

Koppens is proud of all of the company's ride installations. He pointed to some such as the trackless multi-mover at **Effing**, the Netherlands; a trackless multi-mover at **Saint-Ours-Les-Roches** in

► **See ETF, page 54**

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Specialist for people movers and dark rides



►ETF

Continued from page 53

France and a track-bound multi-mover at the **Free-style Music Park**, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Looking over a list of ETF's installations, it quickly becomes apparent how the company has encircled the globe. Other than in South Carolina, there are installations in the United States, and even more can be found in Turkey, Spain, Belgium, Korea, Norway and Sweden.

Koppens said they plan to come out with a new ride next year, but he isn't ready to disclose what it is.

ETF also will be expanding its footprint in

Europe with new attractions set to debut in England and Germany, among others.

In an industry where innovation is key, ETF Ride Systems takes immense pride in its longevity of attractions.

Koppens said he is the second generation of his family to be at the helm of the company. He started in ETF Ride Systems 50 years ago.

"Reaching 25 years in this industry is a significant achievement, and it's a testament to the hard work, passion, and innovation of our team," Koppens said.

"We are excited about the future and the oppor-



The above mystic mover can be seen at the Legoland Discovery Centre Scheveninger in the Netherlands. At right is a rendering of ETF's Tiki Splash Roulette, an example of the company's aqua mover. COURTESY ETF

tunity to continue creating unforgettable memories for guests around the world."

•etf.nl



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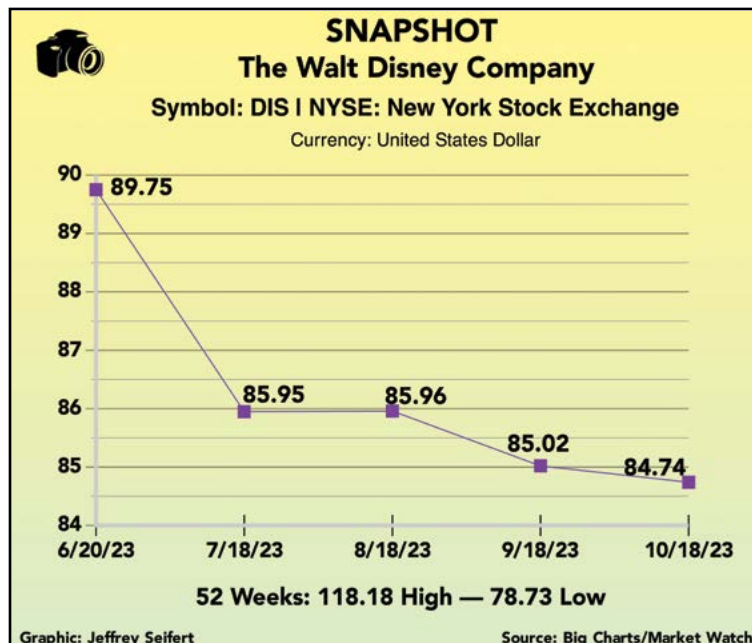
MARKET WATCH

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 10/17/23	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
PARKS AND ATTRACTIONS					
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	105.33	116.78	71.72
Bowlero Corp.	BOWL	NYSE	10.95	17.45	9.09
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	35.81	47.95	34.35
Comcast Corp./ NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	44.36	47.45	30.04
Dave & Busters Entertainment, LLC	PLAY	NASDAQ	36.91	47.29	31.65
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	42.93	47.70	33.92
Falcon's Beyond	FBYD	NASDAQ	12.25	44.00	7.17
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	JP:9010	TYO	4230.00	5820.00	4040.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	1.04	4.09	0.81
Lefoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	16.65	28.45	15.60
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	36.84	51.35	31.40
Parks America, Inc.	PRKA	OTC	0.32	0.47	0.26
Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd.	RCL	NYSE	86.50	112.95	45.80
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	45.12	68.19	42.24
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	21.10	31.29	18.98
Warner Bros Discovery Inc.	WBD	NASDAQ	10.92	16.34	8.82
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	724.00	822.00	684.00
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	86.20	118.18	78.73
SUPPLIERS/OTHERS					
Brogent Technologies, Inc.	TW:5263	TSEC	112.00	148.50	100.5
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	TYO:6357	TYO	1123.00	1515.00	738.00
Topgolf Callaway Brands	MODG	NYSE	13.92	25.96	12.62

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



DIESEL PRICES

Region (U.S)	As of 10/16/23	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$4.404	(\$0.946)
Midwest	\$4.304	(\$1.042)
Gulf Coast	\$4.114	(\$0.904)
Mountain	\$4.664	(\$0.604)
West Coast	\$5.010	(\$0.562)
California	\$6.119	(\$0.380)

CURRENCY

On 10/18/23 \$1 USD =

0.9467	EURO
0.8207	GBP (British Pound)
149.65	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9007	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.5727	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.3636	CAD (Canadian Dollar)

BUSINESS WATCH

Merlin, Immersive Gamebox partner

LONDON, U.K. — **Merlin Entertainments** announced a multi-million dollar and multi-territory partnership with **Immersive Gamebox**, the immersive group gaming platform which brings families together through active shared play.

Immersive Gamebox, which currently operates 27 play locations in the U.K., U.S.A., Europe, and United Arab Emirates, is an interactive group gaming experience, combining motion tracking, projection mapping, touch screens and surround sound to deliver a 360-degree experience for groups of two-six players, of all ages and abilities, to enjoy together.

"**Will Dean** is an extraordinary entrepreneur who has masterfully built a world-class team, developed cutting-edge technology and partnered with iconic IP, making Immersive Gamebox the perfect complement in our build out of our clusters around the world," stated **Scott O'Neill**, CEO of Merlin Entertainments. "Immersive Gamebox provides a prudent business model and an immersive 'come together — play together' experience that is second to none. This new, exciting chapter with Immersive Gamebox is being executed with the hope that with success will come a deeper rollout throughout our global estate."

The partnership with Immersive Gamebox further expands Merlin's offering in Europe, U.S., U.K. and ANZ, and supports the company's wider strategy to create and build strong clusters of 'Midway' attractions (indoor city attractions in key tourism gateway hubs), replicating its existing success of creating entertainment clusters in cities including London, Berlin, Sydney, New York, Hong Kong and other global tourism destinations. The new Immersive Gameboxes will sit alongside a range of attractions already present in the city clusters which cater for every age.

Walt Disney World supports local community

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — In a move displaying its long-standing commitment to the community, **Walt Disney World** recently pledged \$1.5 million in new donations to 19 nonprofit organizations in Central Florida and beyond. The chosen nonprofits represent a diverse range of initiatives aimed at improving the lives of Floridians and their families.

"Florida has been our home for more than half a century, and each organization receiving a grant is doing amazing work for our community," said **Rena Langley**, senior vice president of communications and public affairs at Walt Disney World Resort. "This will help them continue making big differences and is another step forward in our long history of giving back to those around us."

Some of the Disney Grants recipients include the **Central Florida Community Arts, Conductive Education Center of Orlando, Habitat for Humanity, IDignity, Orlando Science Center, Osceola Arts and Zebra Coalition**.

Falcon's Beyond wins workplace award

ORLANDO — **Falcon's Beyond** has been awarded a Top Workplaces 2023 honor by **Orlando Top Workplaces**. The list is based solely on employee feedback gathered through a third-party survey administered by employee engagement technology partner **Energage LLC**. The confidential survey uniquely measures 15 culture drivers that are critical to the success of any organization: including alignment, execution and connection, just to name a few.

"Earning a Top Workplaces award is a badge of honor for companies, especially because it comes authentically from their employees," said **Eric Rubino**, Energage CEO. "That's something to be proud of. Leaders must ensure they're allowing employees to have a voice and be heard."

ON THE MOVE

Merlin Entertainments announced that **Alistair Windybank**, chief financial officer, has informed the board that he intends to retire.

Alistair will remain in place for at least his 12-month notice period and will continue to support the CEO, the wider Merlin executive team, and the Board, as they identify the most suitable successor and ensure an orderly and smooth handover.

"I would like to thank Alistair for his outstanding contribution over the last 15 years," said **Scott O'Neill**, CEO of Merlin Entertainments. "Even before he was CFO, he was a key member of the team, and has played an important part in Merlin's international growth and success. Notably, he played a key role in taking the company public back in 2013 and more recently in helping steer Merlin successfully through the pandemic. We will all miss Alistair enormously and are reassured that we have many months with his guidance and support, while his successor is found, and an orderly handover takes place."



Alistair

New leadership is ahead for the **Missouri State Fair**. **Missouri Department of Agriculture** Director **Chris Chinn** and Missouri State Fair Commission Chairman **Kevin Roberts** have announced that **Jason Moore** has been named director.

Moore has been a member of the fair staff since 2007 and currently serves as facilities manager.

Current Missouri State Fair Director **Mark Wolfe** retires from the position on December 31, following 15 years in the role. Wolfe will leave on a high note. Missouri State Fair attendance increased this year. Nearly 350,000 people paid a visit to the fair — a roughly 2.5% increase from last year.

After 20 years of dedicated service to **Ellis and Associates** (E&A), **Dr. Larry Newell** — whose contributions have impacted the company's innovations and advances — is retiring.

"It is with personal regret but best wishes that I announce the upcoming retirement of Dr. Larry Newell, effective December of this year," said E&A President and CEO **Jeff Ellis**. "Larry's retirement marks the end of a groundbreaking era for the Ellis family of aquatic safety and risk management consulting companies, but not the end of innovation. Larry's inspiration and drive for excellence are now a part of the culture of every one of our companies. For that, I cannot thank him enough."

According to Ellis, Newell's medical and operational guidance helped establish E&A's national line of safety and health programs, gain regulatory approvals and get the industry through the difficulties of operating during COVID-19. He was the first person in the company to see the value of elearning, specifically blended learning, well ahead of any other training organizations.

"We are indebted to Larry — his vision and commitment — which has helped to propel us to our present position in the industry," added Ellis. "And his work has assured our success for years to come. We wish him well and look forward to his continued involvement with our Ellis family in other capacities."



Moore



Newell

OBITUARY

Long time industry veteran Joe Heflin of WhiteWater West passes away at 76

VANCOUVER, B.C. — Joe Heflin, a 35-year veteran of WhiteWater West Industries LLC, Vancouver, British Columbia, passed away on September 6. He was 76 years old.

An amusement industry icon, world traveler, gourmand and a friend to many, Heflin passed away at his home in Reston, Virginia. He was born in Washington, District of Columbia, to parents Salas Gordon Heflin and Beulah Shanholtz Heflin. He attended Montgomery High School and the University of Maryland before moving on to the amusements industry, where he'd make his mark.

Post-university, Heflin focused his energy and career research on roller coasters and amusement parks, which included meeting, interviewing and writing about those who today are considered by many to have shaped the Golden Years of the amusement park industry.

His passion for the industry began in 1963 in high school, when he worked part-time as a brakeman on a wooden roller coaster in the D.C. area.



Joe Heflin

He was a coaster fanatic.

He was employed at some of the best ride manufacturers in the industry: Intamin, Chance Rides and WhiteWater West.

He described his experiences in the amusement industry as "magical moments." He spent his career selling roller coasters, water rides and water park attractions to a vast and elite list of clients throughout the industry.

He traveled the world looking after his customers.

Along with the amusement industry, Heflin also was passionate about gourmet food and fine wines. He was a great chef in his own right.

For several years before his retirement, this publication carried Joe's personal column of the best restaurant picks and recommendations around IAAPA trade show time.

Heflin served on the IAAPA Board of Directors and several committees while he continued to make a difference on both sides of the Atlantic.

Heflin's romantic love of his life was his wife, partner and best friend, Carol, who was an administration manager for the Natural Science Foundation when they met.

She recalls she was attracted to Joe's natural charm but added that they really clicked over their mutual love for cats. They were married in Malibu, California, on July 7, 1996.

In his own words, Heflin said: "I sincerely hope that those who are coming behind me share the love and the passion for both the parks and for those who come to them."

"Rest in peace, dear friend," said Andrew Mowatt, WhiteWater. "You were one-of-a-kind, and you definitely made a big difference in the lives and businesses of many. You will be missed!"

Travel expert Daniel J. Decker of the Texas Travel Alliance passes at age 58

BRADENTON, Fla. — Daniel John Decker of Bradenton, Florida, passed away on Thursday, August 3, 2023. He was 58 years old.

Decker was an accomplished and an award-winning executive leader involved with coaching, training, instructing and advising individuals and organizations. He spent over 30 years in the travel industry, with hotels and attractions, most notably at SeaWorld, San Antonio, Texas, where he spent 12 years and had moved into the park president position before leaving that company.

He later became involved with the Texas



Daniel J. Decker

Travel Industry Association, the Texas Travel Alliance and the Texas Commercial Airports Association (TCAA) where he served as executive director and CEO for more than four years.

Decker helped lead the Texas Travel Alliance

through its darkest times of the pandemic and ensured it was set up for success in the future. Many believe the Alliance would not be where it is today without Decker's steady leadership through those times.

He also served on the board of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Decker attended the University of Hartford, West Hartford, Connecticut, where he earned a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Business Administration.

He was a mentor to so many and will be missed greatly.

He was survived by his wife Denise Branstetter Decker.

Chance Rides moving forward: what's next for legacy ride supplier

AT: Susan Storey
Special to Amusement Today

From the beginning, **Chance Rides** has been a company focused on movement. “Trains, trams and carousels — for more than 60 years we have created experiences that move people,” shared **Aaron Landrum**, president and CEO, Chance Rides, Inc. “Along the way we have also created new ways for them to enjoy that movement. We pioneered the portable amusement ride industry in the United States, helping operators of carnivals and fairs move their rides more easily, so they could be more accessible to more guests. New ride products such as the Zipper and the Skydiver came along, and we have continued to move. Today, we want everyone to know forward movement remains our focus. We are not looking back but are instead focused on the next 30 years and beyond.”



Landrum

To help make that future vision a reality, this August the company announced it had formed a financial partnership with Missouri-based **Permanent Equity**, a private equity firm. “This is a long-term relationship,” Landrum continued. “We are still Chance Rides and

will continue to be Chance Rides. We recognize the power and legacy in our name, our products and commitment to the industry. Permanent Equity recognizes and understands all of that, too — and more.”

With IAAPA Expo 2023 just a few weeks away, Landrum is readying the team for discussions with current and new clients about how Chance Rides can better understand and meet their needs.

“**Dick Chance** built a company and culture that has never said, ‘We can’t do that,’” he explained. “We have always been focused on doing what is right and being good shepherds for our customers. We are heading into IAAPA ready to help solve client problems, answer questions and to build the right Chance product that will excite and delight their guests for years to come.”

Chance Rides has manufactured, delivered and installed over 3,000 amusement rides and people movers. The company’s product diversity is as broad as its client base, which includes large and regional theme parks, family entertainment centers, zoos and aquariums and stand-alone attractions.

“We have proudly completed every project we have taken on. True, some have been a bit more



This Chance double-decker carousel was recently featured on the North Carolina State Fair midway provided by Powers Great American Midways through Wade Shows. COURTESY RON GUSTAFSON

challenging than we may have initially expected,” Landrum laughed, “But we have always delivered, providing the customer service and partnership that sets Chance Rides apart.”

With the COVID-19 pandemic in the rearview mirror, Landrum acknowledged that while the topic no longer leads conversations, its impact can still be felt on both sides of the industry — the suppliers and the destinations. He also points out, the end user, park guests are also different post-pandemic.

“Families had the time together at home to relook at how and where they spend their time and money. While it’s easy to think of us as a product society — one that buys this and that and collects the stuff of life, COVID forced everyone to slow down. They began to re-experience what it was like to be together. As the world reopened, we found most people wanted to return to experiential activities. They wanted to visit places and travel again. The core memories are about what they did and how they felt while doing it. Rarely do they remember what shoes

they were wearing or shirt they had on, but they can tell you what it was like to ride Thomas the Tank Engine with their child or experience a carousel for the first time.”

“Chance provides the rides everybody enjoys,” he continued. “We want our clients to understand we do mean everybody. That includes the needs of today’s guests as well. Today we ask ourselves questions about how we can meet the needs of guests with physical limitations, how we can provide experience for guests with autism or similar cognitive diversity. We understand inclusivity has many variables and we are adapting and creating the solutions our clients need.”

Sustainability is just as important. In as early as 2018, **John Chance** led the company’s efforts to convert its C.P. Huntington Trains to electric. The shift dramatically increased sales while demonstrating sustainable practices could apply to classic ride products as well as new.

A self-described “recovering engineer,” Landrum acknowledges that carousels, the industry’s beloved classic, hold a special place for him. “How can you not

be happy when you are on a carousel?” he asked. “Families can ride a carousel together and in that very moment you see memories as they are being formed.”

His logical side also reminds him that the “rides that look the simplest are not always the ones that are easiest to operate and maintain. The Chance difference is not just in the creation and delivery of our rides; it’s in our service and partnership. We think long-term. Our rides are built to last for 20, 30 years — and beyond. That means our relationship with our client will last that long. We are a long-term company that serves a long-term industry.”

“Nothing we do is cookie cutter,” Landrum furthered. “We are creative, artisanal, modern, solution-oriented and focused. Those traits build on the values the Chance family founded the company with. They allow us to continue to design and build rides that last and leave our clients — and in turn, their guests — wanting more.”

While not sharing too much yet, Landrum smiled



One of the most anticipated rides from Chance is the forthcoming **Hot Wheels: Bone Shaker** roller coaster which is slated to open in 2024 at the **Mattel Adventure Park**. The coaster’s lead car was on display at IAAPA Expo 2022.

AT/TIM BALDWIN

► See **CHANCE**, page 58

► **CHANCE**

Continued from page 57

when asked what's next for Chance. "I'll say again — our approach is evolving, and we are growing and revitalizing," he said. "We will have new product news to share during the IAAPA Expo. There is so much energy and excitement — at all levels — in the company. Dick (Chance) prepared us well for this next chapter with a financial equity partner and we are in this for the long haul."

Permanent Equity has kept the Chance leadership team, including Landrum, intact, along with the promise the Wichita, Kansas-based company would remain there. Landrum has been adding to the team as well, focusing on engineering and product development. "We are really looking at all areas of our rides and products, and what our clients need from us. Our teams are asking



Sustainability is important as Chance Rides evolves. In 2018, John Chance led the company's efforts to convert its C.P. Huntington Trains to electric. The unveiling of the first Electric C.P. Huntington Train was at Landry's Downtown Aquarium in Houston where (from left) Roger Berry of Lithionics; Steve Howe, director, Landry's Downtown Aquarium Houston; and Dick Chance, Chance Rides attended the event. COURTESY CHANCE RIDES

'What can the ride do and what will it do' as well as, 'How do we make it better?' Product development and engineering start from separate places, and our team ensures it all comes together so our clients say, "Wow!"

He also says the company is looking to expand into new geographic markets. "Chance Rides has had incredible success here in the United States. Dick Chance built this company so that the entire industry knows Chances Rides.

Everyone wants a Chance ride! Permanent Equity now gives us the opportunity to expand our previous domestic focus. We want anyone who has ever wanted a Chance ride to know we can build and meet their need. We understand there

are clients out there that want a Chance product. Our goal is to fulfill those needs and wants. Wherever they may be!"

And while people movers are at the heart of Chance Rides, "Our people are its soul."

"Leaders across all industries are having conversations about what it truly means to be a leader. We have a responsibility to all who work for us. Everyone is just as important as the person next to them. Every time I see our team members work together, with each other, I am reminded I truly work for each of them," Landrum stated.

"Chance Rides can only do what we do because of the incredible people who are a part of our team. The sheer diversity of experience, expertise and thinking amazes me every day. Chance Rides would not be who we are without each person here. I'm excited to see what they will do next."



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Women INFLUENCE

A view from the top...

For more than 12 years **Stacey Mills** has been the partner **IAAPA** Expo exhibitors turn to as she oversees every aspect of the tradeshow floor. Her approach to orchestrating the lights, sounds and activities of the event? Keep calm and carry on.

Mills, the calm amidst the chaos

ORLANDO — The IAAPA Expo is nationally recognized as one of the top tradeshows in the United States. Each year hundreds of people come together to ensure the event is ready on opening day, and one person is known as the behind-the-scenes conductor for the entire process. Stacey Mills, Head of Global Expo Operations for IAAPA is the calm and collected leader who is the first to arrive and the last to turn out the lights.

Originally from Michigan, Mills attended Michigan State University and earned a Bachelor's Degree in Communications. Upon graduation, she sought something that would help expand her world view and experience. "I love to help and work with people, and I wanted a career where I could do both," Mills shared. "I actually moved to Zimbabwe for six months working in rural villages, alongside families who lived there and learned a great deal about working with people."

Eventually Mills settled in the Washington D.C. area and began her career with associations. "I started out as a meeting planner, but was quickly drawn to tradeshow operations," she remembered. "IAAPA is my fifth association. I joined in 2011, and the tradeshows have been my focus ever since."

Growing up, Mills would visit Cedar Point every summer. Now a mother of three, she says park visits still dominate summer adventures, especially since she lives in Orlando. "I love visiting parks, and now I find myself looking to see which of IAAPA's members manufactured each attraction. IAAPA has taught me so much about this industry and I love it all."

When discussing her career, Mills says that she's an introvert at heart who supports a boisterous industry. "Each year I challenge myself to improve in some way. My goal is to coordinate a show that everyone returns for each year. I love implementing a new idea and when our team adds a program that enhances the Expo experience for our exhibitors and attendees."

Mills is known for her easy demeanor and partner approach, and she says remaining calm is her key to success. "In my first position I ran into an unexpected crisis. A colleague told me to remember to always take a deep breath, deal with whatever is causing the immediate issue, and then move on. Throughout my career I have learned to anticipate and prepare to handle things if — and when — they go wrong. Staying calm is always most important."

That also means listening to her inner voice. "We all have that gut feeling," Mills explained. "Our intuition helps us know if we are in the right role, heading down the right path and doing the right thing. That applies to both our personal and professional lives."

Building and maintaining relationships is another part of Mills' success recipe. "The IAAPA Expo is a huge annual reunion," she explained. "Everyone in this industry genuinely cares for each other. The relationships I have with the exhibitors keep me motivated to do all I can for them. It's an honor to partner with the hundreds of people and vendors who orchestrate the full Expo. We all come together for a common goal."

Stacey Mills

IAAPA
Orlando, Florida



"My favorite moment is walking on the show floor before anyone else on Tuesday of Expo week," she shared. "The carpet is in place; the lights are on, and the doors are ready to open. IAAPA Expo is a gorgeous event filled with rides and excitement. Yet each year, it starts with a plain concrete floor. I love the feeling of knowing that in a few short days we transform the hall into a mini amusement park where major business takes place. It's truly magical."

With all that Mills gives to her role at IAAPA and to her family as "coordinator of all the things," few know she also gave the ultimate gift to a stranger in 2020. Mills read a post on Facebook by an IAAPA colleague that stated her family was praying for a kidney transplant for her husband. "I felt immediately that I should get tested. I just knew."

Miraculously, she was a match, and she said she would donate her kidney. "I did not feel any fear or worry," Mills remem-

bered. "I knew in my heart it was the right thing to do and my family supported me." The surgery was a success, and today, the two families remain united by their shared journey.

How did she handle such a major decision? "I remained calm," she said. "There were many steps we had to go through to get to surgery day — including a postponement because of COVID. I stayed focused, knowing it would all work out. And it did."

Mills has a sticker on her car that simply says, "Organ donor." It's a badge of honor. "I never thought I would be an organ donor, but then I saw a way to help someone who was part of my extended IAAPA family. I had to try."

As she approaches her 11th IAAPA Expo, Mills reflected on her path so far. "I have always looked for ways to be better," Mills concluded. "And I tell others, we can always find small ways to make a difference. I plan to keep doing that."

—Susan Storey

Return of Skyline Attractions' SKYnext celebrates industry careers

AT: Susan Storey
Special to Amusement Today

ORLANDO — The future of the global attractions industry is at the forefront of its leaders' minds. In 2015, Skyline Attractions, the Orlando-based amusement ride design and manufacturer, created an annual event for the next generation of themed entertainment industry leaders. In September, after a multi-year hiatus, Skyline celebrated the return of its incredible professional networking event, SKYnext.

Held at the IAAPA Global Headquarters, industry legends and contemporaries shared their career paths, work experiences with theme park companies including SeaWorld Parks & Resorts, Universal Creative, Six Flags, Inc., and Cedar Fair Entertainment Company and personal anecdotes about everything from ride openings to celebrity encounters.

"SKYnext was started to help serve as a steppingstone for the next generation of theme park industry visionaries," shared Tyler Mullins, design engineer, Skyline Attractions, and SKYnext alum. "We are proud to host this event that allows college students to come to Orlando and learn directly from industry leaders. It is an opportunity to experience firsthand what it is like to work in the themed entertainment industry."

Interested SKYnext candidates apply online and answer questions about their goals, areas of study, and reason for wanting to be a part of SKYnext. Skyline Attractions received close to 100 applications from 59 colleges and universities for the 2023 class. A SKYnext committee reviewed and dis-



The 2023 SKYnext attendees posed during their exclusive visit to SeaWorld Orlando (above). SKYnext 2023's classroom sessions took place at the IAAPA Global Headquarters. COURTESY SKYLINE ATTRACTIONS/DANIEL LEAVELLE

cussed every applicant, and in the end, 51 students from 21 states took part. While most attendees were engineering students, the diverse mixture of majors included 3D Animation, English Literature, Interior Design, Mass Communications and Supply Chain Management.

The same focus and consideration went in to identifying SKYnext's speakers. Providing a diverse array of background, experience and insight were important to the Skyline team as they built this year's lineup. "We discussed SKYnext's potential speakers a great deal," Mullins explained. "We wanted representatives with technical and creative backgrounds as well as operations and management. We were pleased with the final roster."

"Our goal is to welcome young men and women to SKYnext, and it was critical the speakers reflect that," added Chris Gray, founding partner, Skyline Attractions. "Their experiences and candor inspire and excite tomorrow's industry leaders."

This year's speakers featured Melissa Oviedo, vice president, marketing and

global development, Nassal, and president of the Themed Entertainment Association; Maxwell Glorit, program manager, Expo Education, IAAPA; Jacob "Jack" Falfas, veteran industry executive; Tom Iven, executive vice president, business development, Premier Parks, LLC; Brian Andrelczyk, project manager, SeaWorld Parks & Resorts; Charles Laureano, senior director, operations, maintenance and construction, Six Flags Inc.; Susan Storey, president, Storey to Story Communications; and Jimmy Dagley, manager, ride and show, Universal Creative.

A first-time speaker at SKYnext, Tom Iven was impressed and excited by the attendees. "I appreciated the enthusiasm of the young people in the room. They clearly had a love of all things theme parks," he shared. "SKYnext gave me the opportunity to step back and to the best of my ability, capture some of the essential bedrock principles and concepts that grounded the strategies and priorities I worked within for many years. By and large, I learned all those lessons the hard way. I hope that my experiences helped the



students in any small way, and thereby the industry, I would be exceedingly happy."

Veteran industry executive, Jack Falfas, shared his experiences with Cedar Fair Entertainment, focusing a great deal on his time as the park president of Knott's Berry Farm. He saw the future of the attractions industry in the eyes of the attendees. "I hope they learn from and enjoy the industry as much as I did," he said. "I met outstanding individuals throughout my career and had a great deal of fun. I hope these future park leaders have fun, too. They will carry the tradition of providing fun for guests and they'll get so much satisfaction from doing it. I always

say, I've had so much fun all those years, it should have been against the law."

Feedback from attendees demonstrated the speakers did leave lasting impressions. "My favorite thing [about SKYnext] was the speakers — we had incredible speakers with incredible stories and incredible lessons," SKYnext attendee Kylie Stamey, a recent graduate from the University of Texas at Austin, shared. "We heard from so many unique individuals, and they packed everything into two days. That is amazing considering how much I learned."

Zach Schuler from Bentonville, Arkansas, echoed Stamey's statement. "I am so grateful for the SKYnext experience," he said. "Skyline brought in such a diversity of speakers highlighting all aspects of the amusement industry, showcasing the many different ways someone can make an impact in this business as well as how to start your career as a young professional."

Hands-on experiences added layers of fun and education to this year's SKYnext.

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► SKYNEXT
Continued from page 60



At the conclusion of the first day, everyone attended an exclusive, behind-the-scenes tour of Pipeline: The Surf Coaster at **SeaWorld Orlando**. SeaWorld's Design and Engineering Vice President **Clint Brinker**—together with Brian Andrelczyk — escorted attendees through the ride's maintenance building, electrical room and around the ride plaza. For most, it was their first opportunity to get a peek into the back areas of a theme park. They were then treated to exclusive rides on Pipeline, followed by the chance to attend Howl-O-Scream, SeaWorld Orlando's evening Halloween-themed event.

Andrelczyk returned to SKYnext on Saturday to share his career experience with SeaWorld. "The SKYnext attendees are our industry's future," he said. "To be in a room where so many people are as excited as you are about the work that you do and the hobbies you have is a fantastic feeling. I remember all the advice and career tips I received as I was starting in the industry. Now, to be able to pass on that favor with the next generation, what a special opportunity."

Local Orlando favorite, **Fun Spot America** hosted the attendees Saturday night, providing the perfect ending to the weekend. The group's thrill seekers took on the park's SkyCoaster attraction and throughout the evening, contact information was exchanged so connections would continue once everyone returned home.

An unexpected treat for SKYnext attendees was the



chance to share the excitement with the Skyline team as its newest ride product, the P'Sghetti Bowl Children's Coaster, took its inaugural test runs. Scheduled to open later this fall, Kid Flash Cosmic Coaster was in the final stages of installation at **Six Flags Fiesta Texas** in San Antonio during the SKYnext event. Onsite team members sent videos that were shared with everyone in attendance as the coaster trains made their first passes around the track. Attendees learned about the ride, which was unveiled during IAAPA Expo 2022, and heard what the Skyline team was watching for as the trains traveled around its course.

While putting together SKYnext was a huge endeavor for the Skyline team, Mullins noted it was equally rewarding to have it all come together. "There was a ton of planning and organization involved," he said, "And it was all worth it. The attractions community came together to support SKYnext. In addition to our speakers, this event was made possible by the generous support of industry partner organizations including IAAPA, *Amusement Today*, Nassal, **Vekoma** and **Merit Fasteners**. We are already looking ahead to SKYnext 2024 and the continued growth and success of the event for years to come.

"Since we began SKYnext in 2015, several attendees have gone on to earn positions with a company they met while attending the event. Me included," Mullins said. "SKYnext helps our team, and each of the companies that take part, to meet talented individuals interested in internship opportunities and full-time positions in the dynamic world of themed entertainment and design," Mullins added. "It truly is a win-win event for everyone involved."

Tom Ivens of Premier Parks shares stories and insight from his career in the attractions industry.
COURTESY SKYLINE ATTRACTIONS/
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The Networking Event of the Year wows amusement industry

2023 Golden Ticket Awards at Dollywood a resounding success

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

PIGEON FORGE, Tenn. — Whether it was to see other park operations, connect with suppliers, talk about best practices — or even kids — the Golden Ticket Awards provided industry professionals much to do well beyond an awards ceremony. But awards were a major part of the event as well.

Celebrating 25 years, *Amusement Today's* Golden Ticket Awards surpassed expectations on all levels. There were moments of surprise, but more importantly, the event has evolved in its quarter-century history into a time to connect.

"I can't think of a better way to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Golden Tickets than seeing people have these meaningful conversations," said AT Publisher Gary Slade. "The amusement industry is a close community. Finding the time to catch up or discuss ideas is often hard in our schedules. I'm proud that our networking event has become very cherished and respected by so many people in our profession."

Friday, September 8, allowed people time to explore host park **Dollywood**, join in the golf tournament or enjoy the amenities of host facility **The DreamMore Resort**. Check-in was held at the hotel, and attendees were given a wide assortment of swag from Dollywood, *Amusement Today* and **The**



Golden Ticket winners posed for a group photo following the ceremony (above). The Friday night reception was a mix of food, drinks, coasters and conversation (below). COURTESY OF DOLLYWOOD/CURTIS HILBUN

Hoffman Consulting Group.

That evening, things kicked into full swing with a reception held in the park's award-winning Wildwood Grove. Gourmet food stations and beverage offerings were spread about the area. Attendees mingled or found seats among numerous tables to have deeper conversations.

A brief light rain had some finding cover, but the park was quick to react by distributing ponchos. The sprinkles moved out quickly, and once the skies permitted, the park's newest coaster, Big Bear Mountain, along with the equally family-friendly Dragonflier — both products of **Vekoma** — opened for attendees to ride. It was a great chance to see new prod-

ucts, as well as laugh and share with industry peers.

"Every single activity at the Golden Ticket Awards is designed to be informal and casual. Industry representatives aren't wearing three-piece suits and game-show-host smiles, they are being themselves and enjoying opportunities to be genuinely personable with one another," said **John Robinson**, editor and production manager, AT. "At the Golden Ticket Awards, guests are just two people riding a coaster together and laughing as they do it ... or sharing some time at a cocktail hour just to talk about the football game from the night before. Industry people just become people, and



associates become friends."

After a full evening of fun and refreshment, attendees shared even more at the DreamMore lounge, almost overwhelming the space — but in a good way.

On Saturday morning, the park offered three tours. All were engaging to those who woke up early to enjoy them. A tour of the park's magnificent train and its maintenance facilities, a walking landscaping tour or a preview of the soon-to-open HeartSong Lodge (Dollywood's second resort hotel) were all well received.

Professionals had several hours to see what Dollywood had to offer, and those eager to jump on a ride could use the event credential as a Time Saver pass.

Later that afternoon, all attendees convened in the

park's Showstreet Palace Theater for a reception of light bites and beverages. Just before the official ceremony, a limited number of the general public was allowed in to fill the theater.

As the ceremony began, a quick recap of the Golden Ticket Awards was given in honor of its 25th anniversary. Once welcomed by Park President **Eugene Naughton** and Golden Ticket Awards Communications Coordinator **Tim Baldwin**, who introduced the young professionals assisting the ceremony as Golden Ticket Ambassadors, the ceremony was under way.

Counting two safety awards from **AIMS International**, 30 awards were given out in the two-hour-plus ceremony.



Attendees enjoyed rides on the new Big Bear Mountain, supplied by Vekoma (above left). Saturday morning tours included a behind-the-scenes look at the steam train operations (above right). AT/DAVID FAKE; COURTESY SUE NICHOLS

Golf outing benefits National Roller Coaster Museum

As close to 300 attendees checked in at **Dollywood's DreamMore Resort** for *Amusement Today's* Golden Ticket Awards, 30 participants were up early on September 8 to show off their golfing skills — or lack of — on the links nearby.

"**Sevierville Golf Club** was a great host for this year's GTA Annual Golf Outing and NRCMA Fundraiser," said **Baynum Solution's Chloe Hausfeld**, outing organizer. "We had a fantastic group, who seemed to have a wonderful time on the River Course that Friday morning/afternoon. **Gary Slade** and his entire *Amusement Today* team spent endless hours preparing for an unforgettable weekend for all of us, which made it easy to pull a fun group together for a great time."

The event started at 8:30 a.m. with a four-person scramble format.

"We wanted to keep it light and have fun," said Baynum Solution's **Walt Bowser**, co-organizer. "It's all about having fun."

Participants were from the following companies: **ASTM**, Baynum Solutions, **Fun Spot America**, **Great Coasters International**, **Hass Wilkerson**, **Herschend Corporation**, **Knoebels**

Amusement Resort, **Leisure Labs**, **PB Amusement**, **ProSlide**, **S&S Worldwide**, **WhiteWater West** and **Zamperla**.

The winning team defaulted to **Andy Maurek**, **Steve Avery**, **Jeff Hudson** and **John Andrews**, with a score of 61. "This was after the disqualification of Team Bowser as they had five players contribute to their low score of 60," joked Baynum's **Melissa Bamford**. Others on the tongue-in-cheek disqualified team were **Chloe and Eric Hausfeld**, **Katrina Koperna-Christmas** and **Andrew Mowatt**.

Michael Coleman from Zamperla purchased an NRCMA canvas print to support the fundraising efforts.

Money raised went toward support of the **National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives**. The facility is erected in Plainview, Texas, and is in the process of displaying and storing historical roller coaster artifacts, as well as amusement park-related items. The outing raised \$1,500 for the museum. The NRCMA donated sets of drink coasters to the winning team.

Participants received swag from *Amusement Today* and **Chance Rides**. Prizes were awarded for the last-place team, longest drive and



GTA golfers gathered for a group photo at Sevierville Golf Club. COURTESY RON GUSTAFSON



The tournament was all about having fun with each other, as witnessed by **Brad Doolittle**, **Brian Knoebel**, **Pete Barto** and **Melissa Bamford** (above left). The NRCMA canvas print was photographed once it arrived at the Zamperla facility (above right). AT/GARY SLADE; COURTESY ZAMPERLA/MICHAEL COLEMAN

closest to the pin.

This was the second year for the outing, which is intended to be an annual tradition.

"We had a beautiful afternoon,

filled with laughs, Mulligans, and hopefully donations, and are looking forward to doing it all again, close to **Kennywood** in 2024," Hausfeld said.

►GTA

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And there were some surprises to be found. During the three Legends presentations, both **Clair Hain Jr.** and **Mike Boodley** of **Great Coasters International** were completely dumbfounded and almost rendered speechless. A bigger surprise that knocked the audience off their feet was an unexpected appearance by **Dolly Parton**. While she was backstage to accept the Legend award along with brothers **Jack and Peter Herschend**, she appeared on stage to accept the first-time win for Best Park as well. Before announcing the host park for 2024, she treated the audience to a rendition of "9 to 5."

Touching moments were embraced when **Steve Gorman**, general manager of **Waldameer & Water World** accepted Best New Water Park Ride, noting the park opened **Rocket Blast** just a few weeks after owner **Paul Nelson** had passed. **John**



Above left, **Fun Spot's John Arie Jr.** (center) accepts the Best New Installation Attraction award from presenters **Rene Stanbury (VLocker)** and **Rick Root (WWA)**. **GCII's Clair Hain Jr.** and **Mike Boodley** were surprised with Legend awards (above right). COURTESY DOLLYWOOD/CURTIS HILBUN, RICHARD MUNCH

Arie Jr. of **Fun Spot America** made heartwarming remarks about his father, **John Arie Sr.**, being the inspiration for **ArieForce One**, the roller coaster that won Best New Attraction Installation.

There were also moments of humor. After **Holiday World**, the winner of the most Golden Tickets in the awards' history, won the 600th Golden Ticket for Best Water Park Ride — a surprising upset of the park beating itself with **Mammoth** dethroning the long-running

Wildebeest — presenter **Jeff Pike** from **Skyline Attractions** was pleased to announce the winner of the 604th Golden Ticket when it was his turn. Near the show's conclusion, just as Parton prepared to sing "9 to 5," **Jack Herschend** told a tale of singing with Dolly on only one occasion, in which he was told by her not to quit his day job.

New winners this year included a first-time win for **Puy du Fou** in France for Best New Show, **Fun**



Land of Fredericksburg for Breakout FEC, **Universal Studios Hollywood** for Best New Family Attraction and **Hersheypark** for Best New Roller Coaster.

"The Hersheypark team was honored to be recognized for the first time with our first Golden Ticket Award," said **Vikki Hultquist**, vice president. "Sharing time with our industry peers is a reminder of how special our industry is. From the hospitality demonstrated by the

Dollywood team to the warm welcome from *Amusement Today*, we were thrilled with the networking and engagement with so many from around the world."

The AIMS International Safety Award was presented to **Jeff Abendshien** of **Recreation Engineering, Inc.** A second Organization Safety Award was presented to the **ASTM F24 Committee**.

Eric Anderson of

► See GTA, page 63

▶GTA

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Quassy Amusement Park was recognized with the Leadership Award.

"For Quassy being a small, family-owned park, this was a very moving acknowledgement," Anderson told *Amusement Today*. "But to receive the award in front of some of the best professionals in the industry made it very humbling."

Following the ceremony, attendees gathered back in Wildwood Grove for music, rides, food and drink to cap off the event. The networking aspects, the spotlight on the positives the amusement industry brings, and a celebrity appearance made for a successful industry experience.

"We enjoyed meeting the leadership of other industry suppliers and making new connections. It was a wonderful experience to congratulate our customers in person as they received their Golden Ticket Awards and to celebrate together that same evening," said first-time attendee, **Michael Andre**, president, **Gateway Ticketing**. "What surprised me was the depth of enthusiasm for the industry that just resonated through the evening of the awards. And the wide-ranging focus on the guest experience in the award winners from mega theme parks with high-tech rides to family-owned parks like **Knoebels** with generations working together, clearly and rightfully proud of what they've been able to accomplish. Also surprising was the resurgence of wooden roller coaster numbers and hearing firsthand from the people who've built them."



Quassy's Eric Anderson accepts the Leadership Award from Leisure Labs' Bob Dean (above left). Dollywood's "Chicken Lady" entertained attendees — and AT's John Robinson (above right). COURTESY RICHARD MUNCH; AT/TIM BALDWIN



Closing the awards was a crowd pleaser with Peter and Jack Herschend, along with Dolly Parton (seen here with AT Publisher Gary Slade, right) receiving a Legend Award (above). Dolly brought the house down with a surprise rendition of "9 to 5" sung with kin (below).

COURTESY DOLLYWOOD/CURTIS HILBUN; AT/DAVID FAKE



"My biggest takeaway was from Thunderhead, Dollywood's classic wooden coaster," said **Matt Hughey**, vice president of park operations, **COTALand**. "It had rained earlier in the day, and Thunderhead was running faster than I had ever seen. As I waited in line on the dock for my turn, I was taken away by the cheering, clapping and smiles from all those in our industry that were riding. Whether you're young or old, it doesn't matter; we all come together as one family when riding roller coasters. This is our industry at its finest, bringing joy and everlasting memories to all."

"The informality of the



Golden Ticket Awards event allows for industry executives and members to just let their hair down amongst their peers," added Robinson. "Seeing the more open, fun-loving side of industry associates always creates priceless moments that are sprinkled throughout every evening. **Baynum Solutions'** **Walt Bowser** and **Chloe Hausfeld** leading a Bengals 'WHO DEY!' chant while enjoying the welcome reception, **Steven Wooley** of **VLocker** taking time to ride the coasters with his young daughter and seeing various industry representatives have fun reacting to Dollywood's infamous 'Chicken Lady' are just some examples of the unique moments that only happen at the Golden Ticket Awards."

"The Golden Tickets event is a very intimate gathering for easy networking opportunities compared to larger events in our industry," Hughey told *AT*. "I believe networking is our industry's greatest tool. The learning, sharing and relationships developed during this event cannot be replaced."

In addition to Dollywood and *Amusement Today*, the weekend event was

Golden Ticket Ambassadors represent youth in industry

Each year, *Amusement Today* reaches out to the Golden Ticket Awards facility to find young professionals to assist with the awards ceremony. These individuals from **The Dollywood Company** were selected for the 2023 event.

Alani Gomez attends Pasco Hernando State College in her home state of Florida and is working toward her Associate in Arts degree. Her anticipated graduation year is 2025. She has not yet declared a major but loves the hospitality industry.

George Turmail attends Georgia Tech, studying mechanical engineering. His anticipated graduation is Fall 2024, and his goal post-graduation is to work in the theme/amusement park industry. A fan of frogs, he thinks there should be more frog-based attractions in parks around the world.

Rin Willocks attends Middle Tennessee State University. Her major is Integrated Studies with concentrations in Criminal Justice as well as Leisure, Sport and Tourism Studies. Once she graduates in the spring of 2024, she hopes to become a park ranger for the National Park Service.

Born and raised in east Tennessee, **Colby Vesser** grew up going to Dollywood and jumped at the opportunity to work there. Currently a senior studying Finance/Accounting at Maryville College, he works as a finance intern and works on various analyses/projects and helps with the budgeting of both the parks and resorts. He plans to further his education with a Master's from the University of Tennessee in either Business Administration or Finance.



GTA Ambassadors work either at Dollywood or The DreamMore Resort. Pictured left to right: George Turmail, Rin Willocks, Alani Gomez and Colby Vesser. AT/TIM BALDWIN

made possible by sponsors Vekoma, Baynum Solutions, **Ellis & Associates**, Great Coasters International, **Maclan Corporation**, **Ride Entertainment**, VLocker, Chance Rides, **CPI Amusement**, **Irvine-Ondrey Engineering**, **Ralph S. Alberts** and **SunKid**.

AT was also appreciative of the many industry representatives who served as presenters during the ceremony.

"The Golden Ticket Awards is an event I look forward to each year," said presenter **Sara Seay**, **Premier Rides**. "It's a chance to get together to celebrate the hard work and successes of those in our industry. While the focus is on the award

recipients, I must admit I felt extra magic in the air from having the opportunity to present — and to be on the same stage as Dolly!"

"We were very proud to host the amusement industry here at Dollywood for the Golden Tickets again," said **Pete Owens**, vice president of marketing. "It's always a challenge for us to find ways in which to impress our peers in the industry. All of the teams pulled together to try to create a memorable experience for everyone who attended. We're very proud of Big Bear Mountain, and with the help of Vekoma, we believe we really showcased that ride and its role as the next generation of family thrill coasters."

Dolly Part-ner — the secret to success at "Best Park" Dollywood

AT: Susan Storey
Special to Amusement Today

PIGEON FORGE, Tenn. — The 2023 Golden Ticket Awards event was fun and entertaining, and for host park, **Dollywood**, a true celebration. Dollywood was honored with five Golden Tickets, the most the park has ever collected in one year. Earning Best Guest Experience, Best Christmas Event of 2022, Best Kids Area and Best Family Coaster excited attendees, but it was the announcement of Best Park that almost brought the house down.

Barely able to hold her own excitement for the park and her partners, **Dolly Parton** herself burst on the stage to join Dollywood President **Eugene Naughton** as he accepted the Best Park Golden Ticket for Dollywood.

"I'm thrilled!" said the park's founder and business partner. "I've always said if you can dream it you can do it, and this is one honor I don't think I dreamed up yet."

Moments later, she heard her name again when Parton, along with her Dollywood business partners, **Jack and Pete Herschend** were together named Golden Ticket Award Legends. The Award celebrates the work, partnership and genuine friendship the industry leaders have had for more than 35 years.

As the legend — or story — itself goes, Parton said in an interview with **Barbara Walters** she hoped to one day open a theme park. At the same time the founders of **Silver Dollar City**, Jack and Pete Herschend, were expanding their park operations in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, very near Parton's hometown. Known for their family values and good business sense, Parton's own business acumen and values aligned with the Herschends and in 1986 the trio formed a business partnership that rebranded and renamed today's Dollywood. The rest is theme park history and has been music to the ears for guests of all ages.

Today, Dollywood annu-



Dolly Parton — who earlier in 2023 was inducted into the Rock N Roll Hall of Fame — surprised Golden Ticket Awards attendees by showing up in person to accept Dollywood's honors as Best Park of 2023 as well as being named a Golden Ticket Legend alongside her partners **Jack and Pete Herschend**. COURTESY DOLLYWOOD

ally welcomes more than three million guests and has expanded to include a second gate water park and the beautiful **DreamMore Resort**. The property's second hotel, **HeartSong Lodge & Resort**, is set to open in early November.

"Jack and Pete call me the 'Dreamer In Chief,'" Parton shared. "I ask the questions and together we find a way to be sure the answer is always yes." Parton says while entering the attractions industry was new to her, she has found parallels with the music industry for which she is so well-known. She says the true formula for success in both industries — and everything else she does — comes down to people.

"I learned early on how important it is to surround yourself with great people," she continued. "I have always had dreams and ideas. God gave me the spirit and drive to pursue those dreams and share them with others. I knew right away Jack and Pete would work with me to create something special right here in Tennessee."

The Herschends brought their park operation experience, along with core business leadership values that focus on caring and kindness to Parton's dream. They

aligned perfectly with her goals and personal values. Their shared faith bonded them as they discussed plans for the partnership. "Joining Pete and Jack is one of the smartest things I have ever done," Parton said. "Bringing Dollywood to life was meant to be. And we're not done. We continue to dream and build and entertain in ways even I couldn't imagine. God comes to us, connecting us with others we can learn from. We just need to be open to it. Through Him, I have been able to dream big, and do even bigger things.

While honored to be

named a Legend alongside the Herschends, Parton is especially proud Dollywood earned the Golden Ticket for Best Park. "This award belongs to the team," she said. "We are lucky to have Eugene Naughton and his team leading and guiding everyone at the park. We are blessed to have the right people working for us. They share their hearts with our guests and truly help us provide memorable experiences for our guests."

Parton says **Big Bear Mountain**, the newest — and longest — roller coaster at Dollywood, is an example

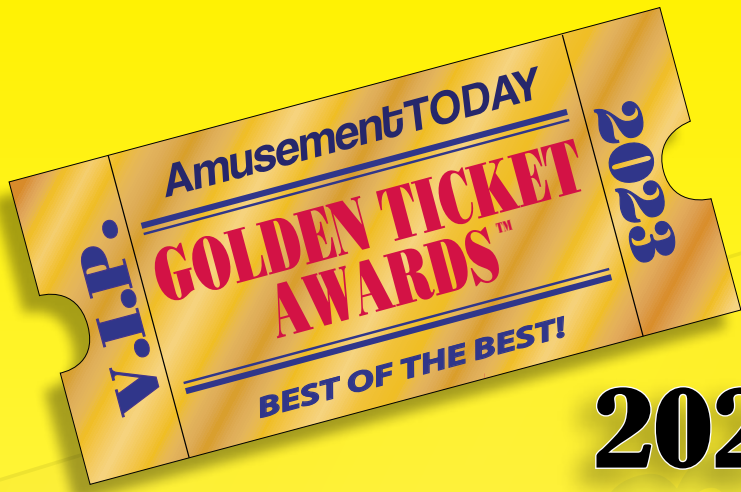
of how the business partnership with the Herschends and the park team's passion come together to create the right experiences guests will enjoy for many years to come.

Providing a complete vacation experience has become a core part of the destination. Dollywood and Parton are ready for **HeartSong** to welcome its first guests. "We have put so much love into the hotel," she said. "DreamMore has done so well, and this is the next step. We have added a convention center and balconies to the guest rooms. We've also kept signature elements such as having bunk beds in all rooms so families have a comfortable experience. I'm so excited to welcome everyone."

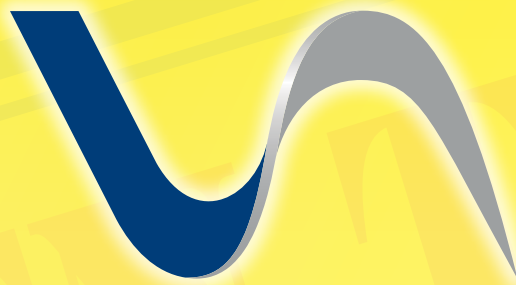
"Jack and Pete have called me 'Dolly Part-ner' for quite some time," Parton finished. "And that is the best way to describe me, and everything we have accomplished here at Dollywood. Shared goals, hard work and partnership — that's what makes Dollywood special. Without their partnership, and the many, many people who we've worked with over the years, Dollywood would still be an idea. We dreamt it, we built it and today I'm blessed to be just one of the many people who continue together to make sure we keep doing it right."



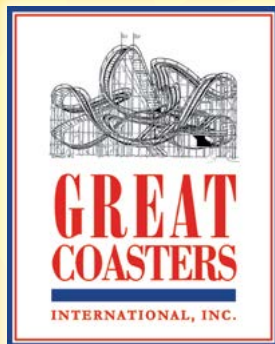
Silver Dollar City in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, was rebranded as **Dollywood** in 1986 when Parton formed a partnership with Jack and Pete Herschend. Today, the park welcomes more than three million guests annually. COURTESY DOLLYWOOD



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"Amusement Today's annual Golden Ticket Awards is a very special event because it recognizes the 'Best of the Best' of our industry. With the ceremony being at Dollywood this year, which won for Best Guest Experience among others, it was by far one of the greatest events I've ever attended."
—Ed Hodgdon, NEAAPA



Dollywood's Big Bear Mountain won for Best Family Coaster, the newest category in the Golden Tickets. AT/TIM BALDWIN



Dinner receptions both Friday and Saturday provided quality time to network, congratulate and celebrate. AT/TIM BALDWIN

"We are thrilled that Rocket Blast won the Golden Ticket for Best New Water Attraction! 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."
—Steve Gorman, Waldameer Park



Dollywood brought out characters to make for great photo ops. COURTESY DOLLYWOOD/CURTIS HILBUN



Networking at The DreamMore Resort are (l. to r.) Lois Arie (Fun Spot America), Fotini Backhaus (Mt. Olympus Water & Theme Park), Gary Slade (Amusement Today), Maria Laskaris (Mt. Olympus Water & Theme Park), and John Arie Sr. (Fun Spot America). COURTESY MT. OLYMPUS



Cedar Fair's Angela Flournoy excitedly accepted on behalf of Schlitterbahn for Best Water Park, the only GTA category that is undefeated. COURTESY RICHARD MUNCH

"An electrifying weekend unfolded celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Golden Ticket Awards. The festivities kicked off with a successful day of competition and camaraderie at the charity golf tournament — we're eager to see that event thrive and grow in the years to come, fueling our collective commitment to the National Roller Coaster Museum. A heartfelt thank you to Amusement Today and Herschend Entertainment, our gracious hosts, for their warm hospitality. The crescendo was a truly unforgettable surprise — the iconic Dolly Parton taking the stage to perform! It was a weekend etched in our memories and we're profoundly grateful to all who made it extraordinary."
—Melissa Bamford, Baynum Solutions



"Thank you for putting together an amazing event! The team at Amusement Today, as well as Pete Owens and his team, deserves a huge round of applause for a well scripted and amazingly memorable few days. I adore these people; they are absolutely my second family, and I am blessed to be a part of this incredible industry."
—Brian Knoebel, Knoebel's Amusement Resort

Attendees received perks when visiting The Island entertainment district in Pigeon Forge. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

After accepting for Best Wooden Coaster, owner Dick Knoebel took his motorized scooter for a victory lap on stage. COURTESY DOLLYWOOD/CURTIS HILBUN

"It's so evident the Amusement Today team puts their heart and soul into this event. The absolute and undeniable highlight of the year — so many smiling faces and passionate people."
—Joe Draves, Ride Centerline





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►Maurer introduces Spike Coaster: Speed Chaser — page 71 / Amuse aiding Funland refurb — page 76

Dollywood making changes to award-winning Lightning Rod

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

PIGEON FORGE, Tenn. — When Lightning Rod opened in 2016, it had its operational challenges, but the innovative coaster still took the Golden Ticket Award for Best New Ride. Dollywood had continued to tweak and adjust the launched coaster in the following years in hopes of making it more reliable. After eight seasons, the decision was made to give the roller coaster a complete overhaul.

Although the park hasn't indicated any name change, it did quietly announce via social media that the coaster, built by Rocky Mountain Construction, would transition from a launched system to a more traditional chain lift in 2024. When operating properly, the uphill launch was an exhilarating thrill for riders. However, inconsistencies owing to the launch have finally prompted the park to change the beginning of the ride.

"Innovation is sometimes very complex," said Eugene Naughton, president, The Dollywood Company. "The reason why we are doing this is when you walk through the front gate, you know Lightning Rod will be working."

"As I believe everyone knows, Lightning Rod is the only one of its kind. It is a wooden coaster with an LSM launch," said Pete Owens, vice president, mar-



keting. "When you push the envelope, despite all of the tweaking and reinvestment in the technology, sometimes you need to make a change and select reliability and the opportunity for more guests to experience the ride. In this case, we estimate the reliability will climb to 95% uptime or better and as many as a million additional guests will be able to ride Lightning Rod in 2024."

The park has indicated that the chain lift will be very fast, and at the crest at the top, trains will go over at 13 mph, which will maintain the speed previously experienced during the layout of the ride.

The park has been looking at the engineering behind this change for a few years.

With the change will come a new look for the

The launched lift (above) on Lightning Rod will be replaced with a high-speed chain in 2024. Following the lift, no changes will be made to the rest of the ride's dramatic layout.

AT/TIM BALDWIN

trains. "The trains will look very similar, but the chassis will be much different to accommodate the high-speed chain lift and the removal of all of the accoutrements of the LSM system," Owens told *Amusement Today*.

Dollywood made the announcement on September 12 so that the many fans of the ride could come back and experience the coaster one last time with the magnetic launch through October 30.

"With any change, there are detractors, but most of the feedback has been posi-



tive," Owens said. "Because the dynamics of the ride are going to be the same with the chain lift, most commenters are just excited that they will have many more chances to ride it."

Lightning Rod has a top speed of 73 mph. The track length is 3,800 feet and its

largest drop is 165 feet. One of the iconic features of the coaster is its quadruple-down maneuver.

With the announcement made weeks in advance, any fans who wanted one last ride on the launched version had until the end of October to do so.

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AARMSS is unique in the amusement industry and only offered as a track at the AIMS Safety Seminar, held January 7-12 of 2024 in Orlando, Florida. Courses are taught by subject matter experts from within the industry as well as professionals from agencies which specialize in the course topics.

This structured two-year certification program is built on the following four pillars: Safety, Security, Emergency Management, and Risk Management. The AARMSS curriculum educates and equips students with management level knowledge and skills.

Year 1 (CASSA) focuses on Safety and Security. Year 2 (CASSP) is dedicated to Emergency and Risk

Management. Students are required to complete all program requirements within a three-year window. In addition to the program curriculum, successful completion of an OSHA 10 class is required prior to Year One and independent study is required by the students prior to Year Two. This additional work includes, but is not limited to, select FEMA Emergency Management Institute courses.

As part of the selection process, candidates complete an application and show proof of their eligibility to be reviewed by the AARMSS Committee.

Successful program candidates are awarded one of two certificates; Certified Amusement Safety & Security Associate (CASSA) or Certified Amusement Safety and Security Professional (CASSP) based on the program requirements below.

Certified Amusement Safety and Security Associate (CASSA)

- Proof of at least 36 months of employment in the amusement industry in a safety related role or 36 months of experience in a safety-related role in another industry plus at least six months of employment in the amusement industry

- 8.0 CEUs (80 hours) from an approved continuing education provider earned during the two-year program period

- Proof of a high school diploma or equivalent

- Submission of a resume

- Admission Review/Letters of Recommendation/Questionnaire

- Pre-requisite before Year One: OSHA 10 Course Completion (will be offered at AIMS)

Certified Amusement Safety and Security Professional (CASSP)

To qualify for the Certified Amusement Safety and Security Professional certification, the candidate

must complete the certification requirements listed below. Completion of the program is required within three years. Faculty advisor assigned to each student.

- Pre-requisite: CASSA Certification

- 10 years of experience in a safety role (with at least five years in the amusement industry)

- 4.0 CEUs (40 hours) from an approved continuing education provider earned during the one-year program period

- Co-teach four hours (one course in each of the four pillars) at the in-person Safety Seminar

- Completion of a project or dissertation (to be approved by AARMSS faculty)

- Interview with AARMSS faculty

- Pass the CASSP exam

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Maurer introduces new version of Spike Coaster: Speed Chaser

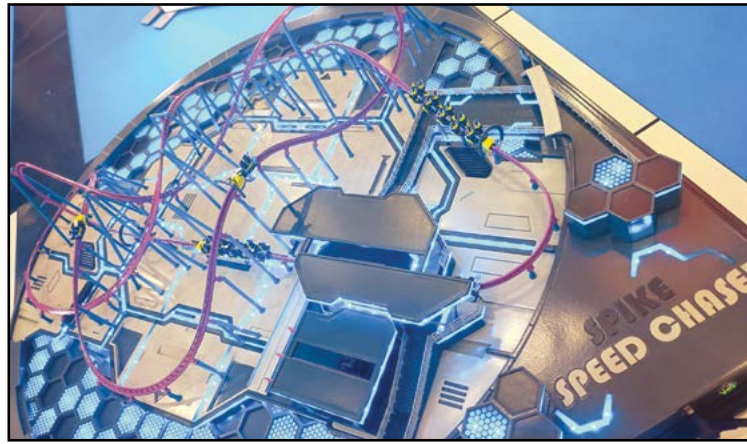
AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

MUNICH, Germany — Since introducing its Spike Coaster, **Maurer Rides** has installed the passenger driven coaster attraction in amusement parks and on cruise ships.

In time for the IAAPA Europe trade show, the company unveiled its newest variation, Spike Speed Chaser.

“We were asked, ‘Is it fun? Where can I ride it?’ Naturally, we talk about the park in Italy (**Mirabilandia**) and **Carnival** cruise lines. Once we show the videos, the fun speaks for itself. Usually, the response is, ‘I need to go try that!’” said **Steve Boney**, executive business development, Maurer.

Spike Speed Chaser offers a new thrill with a theoretical capacity of up to 1,000 people per hour. Maurer’s installations have utilized two-seater cars, but



Maurer Rides showcased a model of the Spike Speed Chaser at the IAAPA Europe trade show (above left). The tight layout can feature three inversions (above right). One of the gaming features can control a water curtain, such as at Skyline Park (right).
COURTESY MAURER



with a train of eight, the capacity goes way up. The new concept adds a lot to a customer’s options. Maurer has added gaming to the

▶ See **SPIKE**, page 73

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► **SPIKE**

Continued from page 71

coaster experience. In the two-seater vehicle, the lead person “drives,” controlling the speed. The tiered back-seat rider can take aim at various elements within the track.

“In our example, the rider can push a button or a sequence of buttons to activate a ring of light, shut off a waterfall before they become wet, or perhaps boost the coaster’s speed. The variation in what a customer can ‘win’ is only limited to creativity,” Boney told *Amusement Today*.

Maurer had previously offered tilting seats and speed boosters.

“Everyone can have an option to play and have their ‘moment’ if the park desires. For competition, a leader board could be provided or a bonus round (maybe on a slow day). Endless variations,” Boney noted. “Winning an accomplishment is a fun experience; it adds complexity to simply enjoying a ride. If the guest doesn’t accomplish their goals, they often try again. This is a nice benefit to the park for repeat ridership.”

The new variation can alternate between two-person vehicles and full trains. Spike Speed Chaser features a layout with inversions, but they have also created a more family-friendly model that does not feature upside-down moments. The model that has been created is 1,246 feet (380 meters) in length and stands almost 50 feet (15 meters) high.

“The park can control multiple ride profiles,” said Boney. “For example, at 1 p.m., the train goes completely backward. At 4 p.m., the park announces it is ‘Power Hour’ and the ride will go as fast as possible. So, as many ride profiles as the park and Maurer can dream up together is a great benefit to the park as it can buy one coaster with lots of variations without extra costs.”

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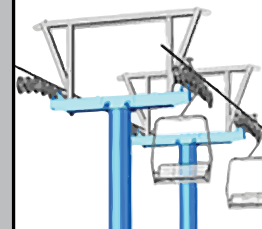
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AT: Pam Sherborne
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MECHANICSBURG, Pa. — **Spirello BV**, the Dutch company that makes the spiral Spirello potato on a stick snack, has had a good start in the U.S. market and the owner of **PB Amusement**, the official U.S. distributor, feels the desire for this unique snack will grow immensely.

Peter Barto, owner of PB Amusement, said the product is made from the best Dutch potatoes and is pre-skewered, pre-cut and pre-fried. Customers just open the box, dip the product in oil and 20 seconds later, the product is ready.

"Spirello BV was founded in 2016," said **Robert Luttjehuizen**, company owner. "Since then, Spirello BV has produced

and sold millions of Spirellos. Business in the EU is successfully booming. Most of the leading parks serve Spirello."

Spirello B.V. is based in North Brabant, Netherlands. The U.S. launch was a bit slow, Barto said, having just come on line last spring.

"We got a bit of a late start launching the product in the U.S., because of all the paperwork and approvals required to import a food item into the U.S.," Barto said. "It also took some time to get the logistics established so we could cost effectively provide and distribute product to the parks."

"I have often said I have learned more about potatoes and importing food than I ever wanted to know," Barto said.

With all that being said,

he and Luttjehuizen feel it was a successful first year.

"We have been able to successfully perform a proof-of-concept and are happy to say we have some very prestigious repeat customers currently serving Spirello at their properties, including **Hershey Entertainment Resort**, Hershey, Pennsylvania, and several **Ripley's Entertainment** locations and **Knoebel's Amusement Park**, Elysburg, Pennsylvania," Barto said.

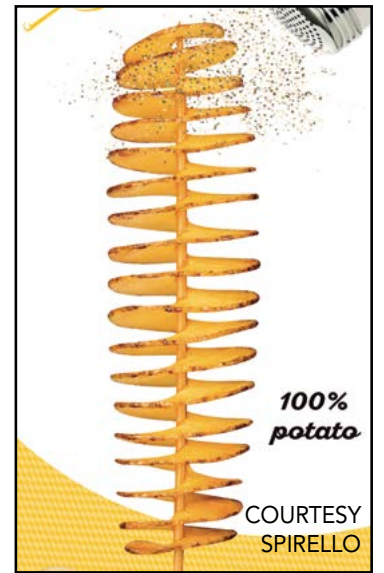
With the product being delivered almost ready to eat, the company is finding that it takes less than one minute for the entire transaction to take place for those in the queue lines.

"We are unique in the

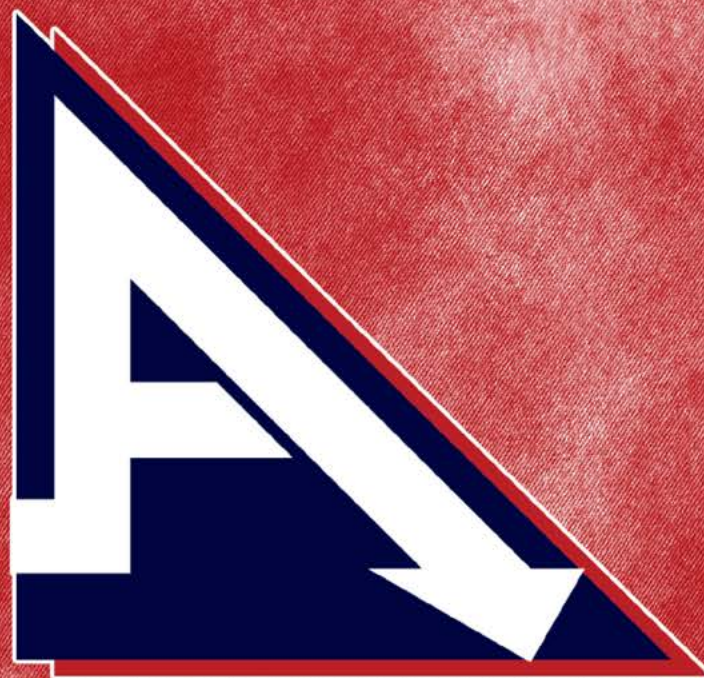
world," Luttjehuizen said. "Spirello is the only one doing this. It is an ideal impulse buying food item, fast service, fast moving queues, volume item."

"Our costs will continue to drop as more parks come on line," Barto said. "We could go a lot of different directions as the business grows. The model is definitely scalable."

"We could have regional frozen storage facilities for direct distribution," he said. "We could work with some of the larger food distributors and allow them to distribute to our customers and allow for more frequent delivery of lower quantities. We have even talked about building a production plant



here in North America and use home-grown potatoes that meet the stringent quality control requirements of Spirello and make it here on our soil. The sky is the limit."



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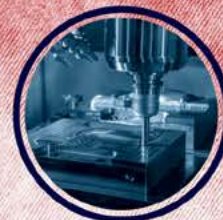
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Funland in Idaho Falls sees rebirth; Amuse helps with refurbishment

AT: Tim Baldwin
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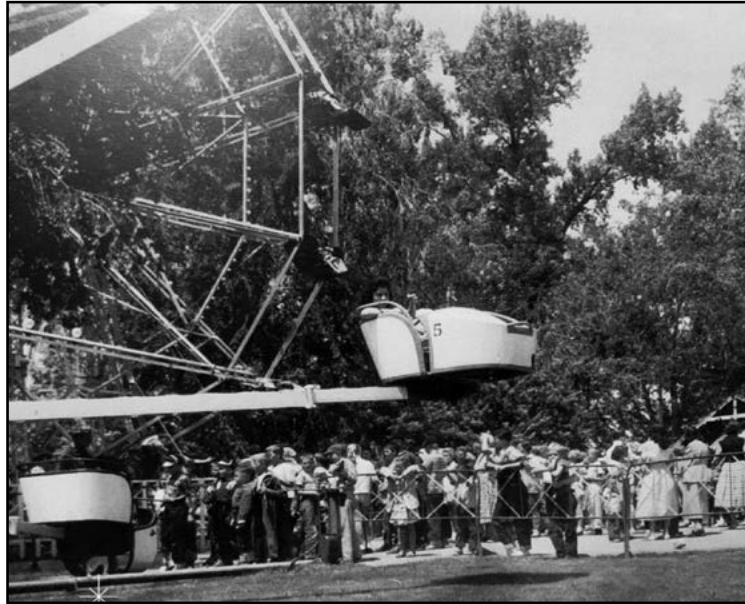
IDAHO FALLS, Idaho— Since opening in Tautphaus Park in 1947, **Funland** has delighted families that have grown up with the amusement rides for decades. It's a small park, but one that has served the community well, as there are no larger amusement parks within a few hours' drive. It resides adjacent to and is now operated by the **Idaho Falls Zoo**.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Funland ceased operation, and the family-owned park looked to become a thing of the past. In 2023, the zoo changed that.

"Funland is now part of the zoo," said **Tim McCammon**, facility manager. "The City of Idaho Falls has always owned the land that the rides sat on since the late '40s."

Some of the rides were close to 75 years old.

"They needed a face-



Funland has a history in Idaho Falls dating back to 1947. Idaho Falls Zoo put a lot of effort into groundwork and infrastructure to reopen the park (above right). COURTESY FUNLAND



lift; they needed love," McCammon said. "They needed to be taken down and inspected."

Since being purchased by the city, the rides remained dormant with the arrival of the global crisis. McCammon explained that the zoo received the funds this year to address the goal

of refurbishment.

"Amuse has experience with carnival rides," McCammon said. "We entered into a contract with them to come out and deconstruct the rides and inspect them all. We made a list of what we needed to do. I then began to acquire parts and had my painters

begin their work."

"We were excited to do it," said **Brandon Paul**, president, Amuse. "We really value things being kept open. Local people just want a place to take their family. So many people had memories of going to this park."

Amuse is known through the industry for its

work on repairing wooden roller coasters.

"In the last couple of years, we kind of split our company into two divisions," Paul explained. "Amuse has a wood coaster crew, but we have this whole separate division that does [rides like]

► See FUNLAND, page 77



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Continued from page 76

drop towers, carousels and flat rides. We have two different tool trucks. As you can imagine it requires different types of tools."

"When we were ready to reconstruct, Amuse came back out," McCammon said.

The rides were ready to welcome customers again in the summer.

"We opened up on a limited scale," McCammon told *Amusement Today*. "This year we had to first renovate it, which included the park area itself — overhead lines, new asphalt, landscape, electrical and all that. All the rides were open on the weekends beginning the end of July. Operation continued through mid-September. Our hopes and dreams, with our weather being what it is, is in the future to be open from Memorial Day to Labor Day. We are going to run it six days a week and are hopeful that we can do seven days a week."

Funland is adjacent to Idaho Falls Zoo, so a zoo ticket is not required for families to enjoy the rides. Plans are in development for a new architectural entrance to be built between the two, and then ticketing can allow for either or both.

Rides on offer were an **Allan Herschell** carousel, **Eyerly** Octopus, an **Eli Bridge** Ferris wheel, a children's airplane ride and a small train. Rides cost either \$2 or \$3.

"We did a great facelift to them," said McCammon. "We made them look like they were when they were new."

"The older rides have a distinct feel and character to them," added Paul. "People remember that, and they want to feel it again. Those rides birth new ideas to make new rides and to make new and better things."

The carousel was a more involved project. Parts were acquired to make it operational, but Amuse handled some work with wood panels that was required. More painting and reconstruction



A revived Funland was brought back to life over the summer. Amuse utilized an existing panel from the carousel to use as a template (right) in the restoration process of the family ride. COURTESY FUNLAND, AMUSE

over the winter will make the carousel a labor-of-love project in the months ahead.

"We took all the panels off the carousel, measured them and made templates," Paul told *AT*. "We routed them, sanded them and then the park painted them."

When removing rides from a **Boomers** facility in Long Island, Paul was engaged in discussion with

the people there to investigate moving a larger train to the zoo in the future.

"They were just going to leave it, and I thought, 'Gosh, someone could use that.' I contacted Funland to see if they would be interested," Paul reported.

"The lawyers talked for a few months, and finally they wrote it all up. They gave it to them for free.

It's there now, so next year we hope to help them get it installed. It's a beautiful train. I'm happy to see things not get destroyed."

With good weather and good luck, Funland is poised to see a bright future.

"This is a gem of the city," McCammon said. "There was a study done in 2015 by the city asking, 'What do you want to see

done with Funland?' The overwhelming response was 'Make it safe; make it look better.' And that's what we did. Watching people come in and they come up to you and tell you they remember their grandmother taking them there — we have four or five generations now riding these rides."

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IAAPA makes regulation progress in multiple states

ORLANDO — At the peak of the state legislative season, IAAPA was tracking nearly 1,000 individual pieces of legislation addressing a wide variety of issues that may have impacted the attractions industry directly or indirectly.

Arkansas and Iowa passed bills that would extend the amount of work hours available to those under 18. New Jersey also fully implemented its 2022 law that reforms existing labor programs. Working with lawmakers to find ways to help local operators hire the workers they need, remains a top priority for IAAPA at the state and federal level.

The State of Florida passed new amusement ride safety standards. The new law contains provisions for new inspection requirements including nondestructive testing changes, adds urgent care clinic visits to injury reporting, updates language on staff training and documentation, changes the major modification statutory definition, as well as signage updates.

For more than seven months, IAAPA worked in concert with the **Florida Attractions Association (FAA)** to communicate industry concerns with the bill as introduced and supported more practical amendments. IAAPA plans to continue to work with FAA, members and state regulators during the rules process in an effort to better align provisions of the law with current industry standards.

IAAPA achieved its top state legislative priority when Alabama passed ride safety legislation in the state. The new law includes ASTM-referenced standards, a rider responsibility law, as well as insurance and inspection requirements. Alabama was one of three states without adequate ride safety legislation. The last two are Montana and Wyoming. It's IAAPA's goal to have all 50 states enact adequate ride safety laws.

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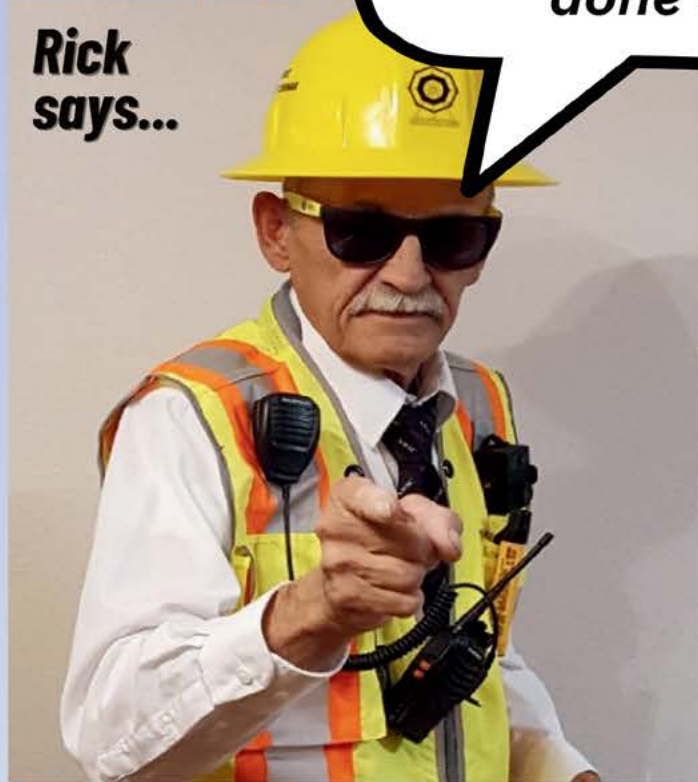


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U.S. ride industry pioneers, others still building 'the right stuff'

AT: Ron Gustafson
Special to Amusement Today

UNITED STATES — Amusement ride manufacturing in the United States dates back more than a century as the industry continually evolved to support the public's growing appetite for family entertainment.

Among the earliest ride builders were names such as **Philadelphia Toboggan Co.** (PTC), **Allan Herschell Co.** and **W.F. Mangels Co.**

All three of these firms produced carousels, with PTC being — perhaps — the most famous due to the elaborate hand-carved menagerie of animals on its massive machines. PTC built more than 80 carousels between its founding in 1904 and shortly after The Great Depression of 1929. The company also constructed 147 roller coasters designed by industry icons **John Miller**, **Herbert Schmeck** and **John Allen**.

Today the company is doing business as **Philadelphia Toboggan Coasters, Inc.** in Hatfield, Pa., and supplies a variety of new coaster trains as well as service to existing ones.

Huge ride portfolio

Herschell was once the largest producer of amusement rides in the world, pumping out 100 carousels annually in the late 1800s from its facilities in North Tonawanda, N.Y.

The company operated under a variety of names, including **Armitage-Herschell** (circa 1873), **Herschell-Spillman** (1899) and finally, **Allan Herschell Co., Inc.** (1915).

In more than 80 years of manufacturing in the Buffalo, N.Y., area, Herschell had a diversified lineup of equipment by the 1950s and 60s. One of the most popular rides during that era was the Little Dipper roller coaster, which was produced after rights were acquired in 1948 from the former **Bradley & Kaye Amusement Co.**, Long Beach, Calif.

Herschell also built a Mad Mouse coaster, Twister, Flying Bobs and Caterpillar thrill rides along with offer-

ing complete kiddielands with boat, car, tank and jet rides and more.

To add to its arsenal of equipment, the company also secured the rights to build what was known as the "King of the Midway," the Sky Wheel. Called the "double Ferris wheel" by many, the ride was designed by the **Velare Brothers** (Curtis and Elmer) of Long Beach, Calif. Though portable versions were most common, a few park models were delivered.

The Velares also designed and constructed the Seattle Wheel, which was featured at the 1962 World's Fair in Seattle, Wash. Herschell reportedly built one Seattle Wheel — now with **Drew Exposition** of Augusta, Ga. The ride used towers similar to the Sky Wheel.

Miniature Train of Rensselaer, Ind., founded in 1932, was also added to the Herschell arsenal in 1956. The company was known for its G-12 and G-16 trains, some of which are still operating today.

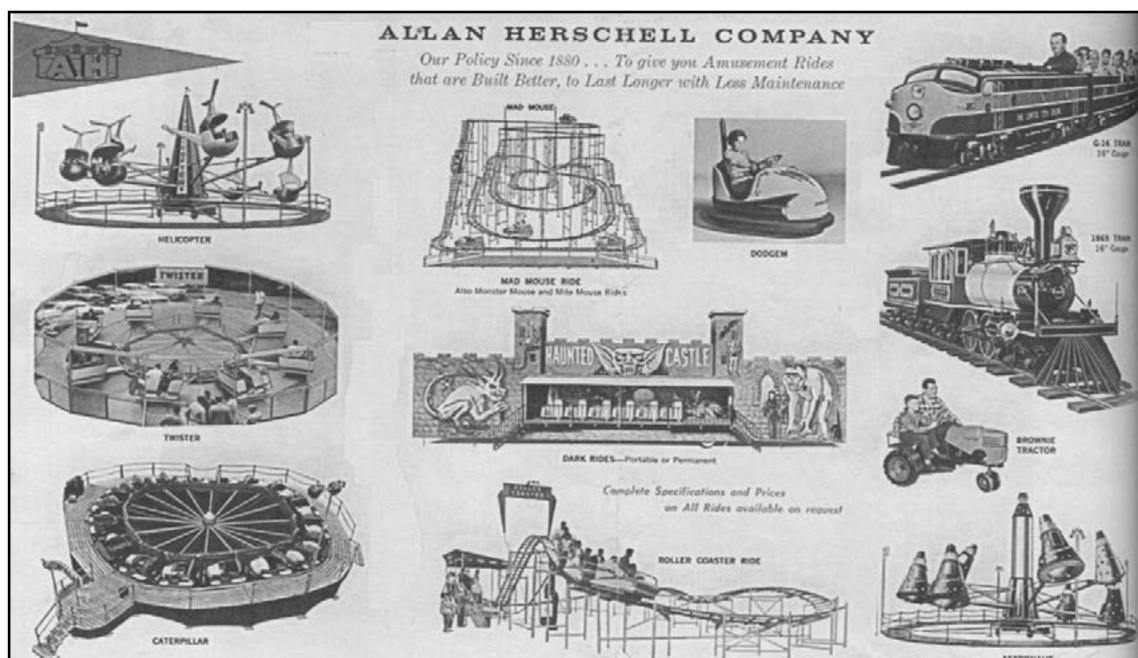
Herschell also entered the bumper car manufacturing in 1961 by purchasing the **Dodgem** name and business from the Massachusetts company.

After changing ownership a number of times and with manufacturing moved to Buffalo, the company was sold to **Chance Rides Manufacturing** in Wichita, Kan. Following the 1970 acquisition, Chance ramped up its own carousel production while continuing to produce other Herschell rides, including the Twister, Flying Bobs and Sky Wheel.

By the late 1990s, Chance had decided to let the Herschell side of the business go, but retained the rights to the carousels.

In 1997 the Allan Herschell Co. returned to its roots in North Tonawanda, N.Y., when the **Carousel Society of the Niagara Frontier**, which operates the **Herschell Carrousel Factory Museum**, purchased the company back.

Today the Herschell firm provides parts for hundreds of the company's rides still



Above is an Allan Herschell Co. brochure (circa 1965) after the company moved under new ownership to Buffalo, N.Y. from nearby North Tonawanda. Below is an original W.F. Mangels Co. sales flier featuring the Roto-Whip ride. COURTESY RON GUSTAFSON ARCHIVES

in operation. A portion of the revenue generated by the sales supports the museum.

Serving up The Whip

The W.F. (William Frederick) Mangels Co. was best known for manufacturing the Whip ride, which was introduced to the carnivals and amusement parks in 1914. The Coney Island, Brooklyn, N.Y., supplier, founded in 1890, produced more than 500 Whips in less than 15 years, according to company records.

Whip rides are still operating at **Dorney Park**, Allentown, Pa.; **Knoebels Amusement Park**, Elysburg, Pa.; **Kennywood**, West Mifflin, Pa.; and **Lakeside Park**, Denver, Colo.

Mangels was also said to be one of the first manufacturers to provide a series of children's rides, including a smaller version of the Whip called the Roto-Whip.

He had more than 50 patents for amusement devices, including one in 1907 for an improved galloping mechanism for carousels. It is believed his creation led to the development of jumping carousel horses, which are popular today.

W.F. Mangels died in 1958, and the company was moved to Bay Shore, N.Y., and became known as the **A.G. Mangels Co.**, operated by son, Albert G. Mangels.

The company lasted until the late 1970s.

KIDDIE ROTO-WHIP

This novel amusement ride for children has proven itself the leader of Kiddie Rides. Children will pass up other rides to enjoy this new thrill and without exception they giggle and smile as they ride. Any Kiddie ride offering such a pleasure to children will endure in popularity. Mothers do not hesitate a moment to trust their little ones on this beautiful and safe children's ride.

The small Whip Cars seat two children each. They operate in an eccentric course on a circular platform at a higher speed than other Kiddie rides, yet with perfect safety. The eccentric motion imparts to the cars a pleasant riding sensation without jolt or jar.

These ROTO-WHIP Cars are a duplicate in miniature of the famous "WHIP." They are of streamlined design and trimmed with Chrome fittings, upholstered in imitation leather and fitted with safety handle bars; they are highly decorated in colors. The wheels run on Timken bearings. Each car is provided with a waterproof canvas cover for closing.

The driving mechanism consists of Electric Motor, Automatic Clutch and sealed Gear Box with steel gears running in oil. This drive is regarded as the simplest and most effective of any Kiddie ride.

Included in the equipment is a portable Steel Cabinet in which all the switches, fuses and starter buttons are located. This cabinet may be placed in any convenient location. The starting and stopping is by pushbutton.

The Kiddie ROTO-WHIP is of excellent construction of best material and skilled workmanship giving long trouble-free service.

DIMENSIONS

Diameter of circular platform 24 feet.
Number of Whip Cars 8, seating 16 children.
Size of Electric Motor, 1 H.P., 1 Phase 60 Cycles, 110-220 Volts.

Number of Electric Light Sockets, 18.
Total weight 5200 lbs. Cubic Feet 500.
Crating, when required, extra.
Complete — ready for operation.

Net Price F.O.B. Factory **\$2450.00** Subject to change without notice

Manufactured exclusively by

Eyerly and Hrubetz

The West Coast is no stranger to amusement ride manufacturing either as some of the most popular attractions in the industry have been produced there.

Lee Eyerly and **Frank Hrubetz** built rides that have stood the test of time as many of their machines are still operating at parks and carnivals. The two men are also credited with pioneering an era

of owner-friendly folding portable rides on single-trailers.

Eyerly made his name as an aviation expert and opened **Eyerly Aircraft Co.** in 1930 adjacent to the airport he founded in Salem, Ore. To his surprise, the company's Orientator flight simulator, later called the Acroplane, became a popular amusement attraction, resulting in the

U.S. Ride Manufacturers (present)

Company name	Products produced
A.D.G., Cohoes N.Y.	Builder of Mountain/Alpine coasters
Allan Herschell Co., North Tonawanda, N.Y.	Supplier of parts of former Allan Herschell rides, excluding carousels — those rights held by Chance
Altitude Attractions, Logan, Utah	Builder of new rides: Zip Lines, Hammered Drop Tower
Amusement Devices & Manufacturing, Schaller, Iowa	Builder of new rides: Slides, Swings, Fun Houses, Pirate Ships, Spin Rides
A.R.M. (USA) Inc., Wintersville, Ohio	Builder of new rides: Rock Star, Vertigo, Super Shot, Mega Bounce, Sky Hawk
Battech Enterprises, Salem, Ore.	Builder of new rides: DownDraft, Zero Gravity, Cliff Hanger, Black Widow, Spider, more; Parts support for Hrubetz, Kilinski, Manco and Eyerly, Oregon Rides
Bumper Boats Inc., Newport, R.I.	Builder of Kiddie Bumper Boats
Chance Rides, Wichita, Kan.	Builder of new rides: Carousels, Ferris Wheels, Steel Coasters, People Movers, C.P. Huntington Trains, Flat Rides
Dalton Kid Ride Rebuilders, Foley, Mo.	Builder of new rides: Various Umbrella Kids Rides; Parts support for Hampton Umbrella Rides
E&F Miler Industries, Portland, Ore.	Builder of new steel roller coasters
Eli Bridge Co., Jacksonville, Ill.	Builder of new rides: Ferris Wheels, Scrambler, SpiderMania, Construction Zone
Extreme Engineering, Athens, Texas	Builder of tower rides and various flat rides
Frederiksen Industries, Tampa, Fla.	Builder of new rides: Fun Slide in various sizes
Great Coasters International, Sunbury, Pa.	Builder of new wooden roller coasters, coaster trains, Titan steel track
High-Lite Rides, Greer, S.C.	Builder of new rides: Gondola Wheels, Scat, Spinner, Carousels, Walk-Throughs, Trains,
J&J Amusements, Salem, Ore.	Builder of new rides: Bumper Boats, Go Karts
KidSteam, Dallas, Texas	Builder of new rides: Hand Cars, Trackless Trains
Larson International, Plainview, Texas	Builder of new rides: Super & Giant Loop, Flying Scooter, Tilt-A-Whirl, Star Dancer, spin rides, Mega Bounce, Super Shot
Majestic Manufacturing, New Waterford, Ohio	Builder of new rides: Scooter Bumper Cars, Charlie Chopper, Back Spin Roller Coaster, Central Park, Catch N' Air, Music Express
Majestic Trains, Astatula, Fla.	Builder of Trackless Trains
Martin & Vleminckx Haines City, Fla.	Wooden Roller Coasters
Mulligan Amusement Rides, Gibsonton, Fla.	Builder of new rides: Gondola Wheels, Sea Ray, Sky Quest Swing
Owen Trailers Inc., LaPorte, Ind.	Builder of Fun Houses, Glass Houses, Dark Rides
Philadelphia Toboggan Coasters, Inc., Hatfield, Pa.	Roller Coaster Trains, Fin Brake Systems
Premier Rides, Baltimore, Md.	Builder of Steel Roller Coasters, Dark Ride Coasters
Rocky Mountain Construction, Hayden, Idaho	Builder Of Steel and Wooden Roller Coasters, Coaster Trains
Ride Development Co., Independence, Ore.	Builder of new rides: Bumper Cars
Sally Dark Rides, Jacksonville, Fla.	Builder of Dark Rides, Interactive Attractions
Skyline Attractions, Orlando, Fla.	Builder of new rides: Roller Coasters, Children's Rides
SkyTrans Manufacturing, LLC, Contoocook, N.H.	Builder of Sky Rides and Ski Lifts
Speciality Ride Mfg., Greensboro, N.C.	Builder of Chair Jet Swing Ride, Crazy Bobs, Ticket Offices, Support Equipment
Swanee River Railroad, Lufkin, Texas	Builder of Train Rides
S&S Worldwide, Logan, Utah	Builder of Steel Roller Coasters, Coaster Trains, Tower Rides, Support for Arrow Development Rides
Texas Bells & Whistles, Austin, Texas	Builder of Train Rides
Theel Co., La Cygne, Kan.	Builder of Carousels
The Gravity Group, Cincinnati, Ohio	Designer of wooden roller coasters; Sister firm Gravitykraft Corp. builds coaster trains
Trainworks Global, Charlotte, N.C.	Builder of Trains, Supplemental Equipment
Wisdom Rides Of America, Merino, Colo.	Builder of numerous Spectacular, Family and Children's rides
Wadkins Expo Wheel, Upper Falls, Md.	Builder of Gondola Wheels

— compiled by Ron Gustafson

► RIDE

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company changing its focus from aircraft manufacturing to amusement rides. Despite moving into the ride business, Eyerly didn't change the company name or logo.

Working with Eyerly in those early years was engineer Frank Hrubetz, who helped develop rides such as the Loop-O-Plane and Roll-O-Plane. Hrubetz left the company in 1939 and formed the **Frank Hrubetz & Co.** just across the airfield.

Eyerly's most popular ride, the Octopus, led to a later version named the Spider and then the granddaddy of the series, the Monster. The company also produced the popular Rock-O-Plane, Fly-O-Plane and a couple of kiddie rides.

Lee Eyerly retired in the 1950s and son, Jack, took over as company president. Jack's son, Jon, operated the company during its final years leading up to 1990, when the company filed for bankruptcy after a fatal accident on one of its Monster rides.

Guy Sherbourne was a long-time technician at Eyerly and recalled in a 2020 conver-



Above is a Grover C. Watkins Heart Flip shown in 1978 shortly after leaving the factory in Paducah, Ky. Pictured at right is a 1965 Allan Herschell Sky Wheel owned by Big Rock Amusements. COURTESY RON GUSTAFSON ARCHIVES



sation how he acquired the company: "I would go out and train people on how to set up and operate them (Eyerly rides)," Sherbourne said of his tenure. "Jack offered the business to me with plant and everything (after the bankruptcy filing)."

Sherbourne purchased the company and formed **Oregon Rides**, which provided parts for Eyerly rides for more than a decade. **Battech Enterprises** of Salem, Ore., bought the

assets of **ORI, LLC**, formerly Oregon Rides, in 2015 and continues to supply parts for Eyerly equipment.

Another line of attractions

Hrubetz gave the industry popular rides such as the Paratrooper, Round Up, Hurricane, portable slide and Tip Top. Lesser know pieces included the Spitfire, Meteor, Hi-Ball and Fireball.

By the 1970s, the company was said to be the second largest manufacturer of

rides in the U.S., producing 60 pieces annually.

Dan Kilinski, Hrubetz's son-in-law, became vice president of the firm and eventually took over the company, renaming it **Kilinski Manufacturing Co.** The company changed ownership twice — becoming **Manco** and **Dartron** — before Battech acquired Dartron's assets in 2009.

Battech continues to build new rides such as the Downdraft (Hurricane with new features), Zero Gravity

(modern version of Round Up), slides and Cliff Hanger. It also resurrected the Eyerly Spider with an updated model it calls Black Widow.

Grew up in the business

Jerry Barber was another industry innovator, best known as the owner and chief executive officer of **Venture Ride Manufacturing Co.**, (1972-1990) of Greenville, S.C.

The company, according

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Above left is Arrow's first Corkscrew roller coaster shown in Feb. 1976 at Knott's Berry Farm, Buena Park, Calif. One of the popular Chance Zipper attractions is shown above middle. This 1936 Smith & Smith Chair Plane (above right) is shown in operation at the former Midway Amusement Park in Maple Springs, N.Y. The ride operated more than 80 years before formally being retired at Bay Beach Amusement Park in Green Bay, Wisconsin. COURTESY RON GUSTAFSON ARCHIVES; RON GUSTAFSON

►RIDE

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to Barber in a 2019 interview, built around 30 different rides, the most popular being the Scat, Cobra, Venture Rider, Mini Himalaya and a series of Venture Go-Round kiddie pieces.

He grew up in the industry as his father, Earl, operated **Barber Brothers Shows** in Cedarville, Ohio.

After high school, Jerry bought an Allan Herschell Little Dipper and booked it with Drew Shows, but returned home shortly after and attended Ohio State

University, earning a Bachelor of Science in Comprehensive Science in Education.

He taught for a couple of years and at age 25 became principal at the high school in Finley, Ohio.

"I was the youngest person ever appointed to that position," he recalled.

While he enjoyed his stint in education, Barber really wanted to build amusement rides.

One of his earliest creations — built in a garage in Finley — was the Caravel, which incorporated two rotating wheels on a center hub. The seats looked like

small boats and were suspended from 10 sweeps on each wheel.

Barber cut a deal with **Chance Rides** and the attraction became known as the Turbo with the open-air seats converted into enclosed tubs.

In 1969 the late **Harold Chance** offered Barber a job with the company and he moved to Wichita, Kan., to become an advisor within the firm.

A prototype of the popular Zipper ride was being tested at Chance during that time and Barber's engineering skills paid off as he came up with a solution to make oper-

ating the ride more efficient.

He designed a framework which allowed two seats to be loaded during one stop, instead of the single-seat concept which would have likely spelled doom for the ride. The rest is history as the Zipper quickly found its way onto many a midway in the years that followed.

Royalties from the Turbo helped him launch Venture, where he invented 38 patents, including the Free Fall which he licensed to **Intamin Amusement Rides** in Switzerland.

Known for the Chair Plane

Of the lesser-known ride builders of yesteryear was the **Smith & Smith Co.** of Springville, N.Y., near Buffalo.

Founded in 1920 by brothers Joseph and Louis Smith, they set up shop in a company formerly known as Armitage Guina where they developed the Chair Plane, which became the flagship product for the company.

"It was probably our best seller," recalled **James J. Neff** in a 1992 interview. Neff was one of the last owners of the company before it closed in 1963.

Smith & Smith produced two models — 18 and 22-foot towers — of the popular swing ride and sold them to parks and carnivals around the world.

"After the war (World War II), we manufactured hundreds of rides," Neff asserted, whose father was a son-in-law of the Joseph Smith. "We couldn't fill orders fast enough."

The company also produced a kiddie chair plane; 30-foot, 10-seat Ferris wheel; as well as kiddie plane, car and boat rides.

One of the oldest operating Chair Planes (1936) was taken out of service this year at **Bay Beach Amusement Park** in Green Bay, Wis. Prior to finding a home in Wisconsin, the ride operated for years at the former **Midway Amusement Park** in Maple Springs, N.Y., which was about an hour from the manufacturer.

Swings and things

Swing rides in the amusement industry have taken

U.S. Ride Manufacturers (defunct)

Company name

Dinn Corp., Cincinnati, Ohio
 Goforth Industries, Shelby, N.C.
 Eyerly Aircraft/Oregon Rides, Salem, Ore.
 Frank Hrubetz/Kilinski/Manco/Datron
 Funni-Frite Industries, Columbus, Ohio
 Hodges Hand Cars
 W.F. Mangels Co., Coney Island, Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Miller & Baker Co., Philadelphia, Pa.
 Pretzel Amusement Co., Bridgeton, N.J.
 Smith & Smith Co., Springville, N.Y.
 Philadelphia Toboggan Company, Philadelphia, Pa.
 National Amusement Devices, Dayton, Ohio
 Sellner Manufacturing, Faribault, Minn.
 King Amusement Co., New Haven, Mich.
 Garbrick Amusements Inc., Centre Hall, Pa.
 Hampton Rides, Portage des Sioux, Ill.
 Venture Rides, Greer, S.C.
 Grover C. Watkins, Paducah, Ky.
 B.A. Schiff & Associates, Miami, Fla.
 Spillman Engineering, North Tonawanda, N.Y.
 Custom Coasters International, West Chester, Ohio
 Arrow Dynamics, Clearfield, Utah
 O.D. Hopkins Associates Inc., Miami, Fla.
 Childress Manufacturing Co./Expo Wheel, Easley, S.C.
 Miniature Train, Rensselaer, Ind.
 Dodgem Corp., Salisbury, Mass.
 San Antonio Roller Works, San Antonio, Texas
 Bradley & Kaye Amusement Co., Long Beach, Calif.
 D.H. Morgan Manufacturing, La Selva Beach, Calif.
 Norman Bartlett, Miami, Fla.
 Traver Engineering, Beaver Falls, Pa.
 Bisch Rocco, Cicago, Ill.
 Velare Brothers, Long Beach, Calif.
 Loof Carousels, Riverside, R.I.
 E.J. Morris, Philadelphia, Pa.

Products produced

Roller coaster designer
 F-80 Jets, Sky Ride, Swinging Gyms
 Loop-O-Plane, Rock-O-Plane, Fly-O-Plane, Roll-O-Plane, Octopus, Spider, Monster
 Paratrooper, Round Up, Hurricane, Slide, Meteor, Star Trooper,
 Dark Rides, Fun Houses
 Kiddie Hand Cars
 Whip, Roto-Whip, Carousels, Children's Rides
 Wooden Roller Coasters
 Dark Rides
 Chair Plain, Ferris Wheel, kiddie rides.
 Carousels, Roller Coasters
 Trains, Roller Coasters
 Tilt-A-Whirl, Spin Rides, Toboggan Water Slide
 Frolic, Other Adult and Kiddie Rides
 Ferris Wheels, Merry Mixer, Other Adult and Kiddie Rides
 Various Children's Umbrella Rides, Tubs-O-Fun, Hand Cars
 Cobra, Scat, Mini Mimalaya, Venture River, Venture Go-Rounds, Speedway
 Tempest, Swinger, Heart Flip, Rampage, Children's Rides, Electronic Shooting Gallery
 Kiddie Roller Coasters, Wild Mouse
 Carousels
 Wooden Roller Coasters
 Steel Looping and Mega Coasters, Flume Rides
 Flume Rides, Steel Roller Coasters
 Musical Chairs, Castle Mania, Slide, Gondola Wheel
 Various Sizes of Miniature Trains
 Dodgem Bumper Cars
 Carousels, Umbrella Rides, Kiddie Ferris Wheel
 Little Dipper Roller Coaster, Kiddie Boat Ride, Ballon Ride, Carousels, Red Baron Plane
 Roller Coaster Trains, Hypercoasters, Carousels, Auto Rides, Custom Rides
 Flying Coaster
 Caterpillar, Circle Swing, Tumble Bug
 Flying Scooter
 Sky Wheel, Space Wheel (one)
 Carousels
 Carousels

— compiled by Ron Gustafson

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► **RIDE**

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on many shapes and sizes throughout the years and few operations don't have some version of the attraction.

Another former manufacturer of a popular portable swing ride was **Grover C. Watkins Inc.** in Paducah, Ky. Its Swinger can still be found on numerous carnivals today as it neatly folds down on its trailer and is easy to erect. More than 100 Swingers were reportedly sold during the 1970s when the company was in its heyday.

Watkins also built a swing called Heart Flip, which had eight heart-shaped seats patrons could spin at will — similar to Frolic offered by the former **King Amusement Co.** of Michigan. Lakeside Park in Denver, Colo., currently has a Heart Flip and a few are still with carnivals.

Watkins was also known for the Tempest, which was a unique spinning thrill ride for its time. Though trailer-mounted and another easy ride to move and set up,



Above left is a Larson International Giant Loop (also known as a Fireball) attraction. A Chance Rides Giant Wheel is pictured above right. COURTESY RON GUSTAFSON

some smaller amusement parks featured them. A sister piece with less elaborate theming was the Hustler. Also setting the two rides apart was that the Tempest's trailer tilted on out-riggers

and jacks, whereas the Hustler did not. From time-to-time you can still see these rides on carnival midways.

The company also built the Rampage, which some show owners referred to as

the "poor man's Sky Wheel." It had two revolving wheels attached to a center boom which also rotated. Though mounted on a single trailer, only a handful were built. The attraction saw new life

a few years ago as **Wisdom Rides Of America**, Merino, Colo., started retrofitting existing Rampages with new seating, lighting and con-

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Above is a Venture Granny Bug. COURTESY RON GUSTAFSON

► RIDE
Continued from page 83

trols. Wisdom also launched its own updated version called Stampede.

Longevity

Recognized as the oldest continually-operating ride manufacturer in the country is family-owned **Eli Bridge Co.** of Jacksonville, Ill. According to the company's website, **W.E. Sullivan** start-

ed building Ferris wheels in 1900 at his bridge-building firm and new wheels are produced to this day.

In 1955 the company introduced the ever-popular Scrambler ride and has broadened its offerings with a couple of kiddie rides.

Chance Rides has been building attractions for more than 60 years with the C.P. Huntington train, its most popular piece with more than 400 sold. Steel coasters, Ferris

wheels, carousels, trams and other thrill rides are also currently built by Chance.

Others of note

Other prominent suppliers include:

J&S Rides, Inc. (doing business as **Larson International, Inc.**), Plainview, Texas, builder of Fire Ball and Giant Loop, Flying Scooter, Tilt-A-Whirl and more.

Great Coasters International, Inc., Sunbury, Pa. and **The Gravity Group**, Cincinnati, Ohio. Both firms design wooden coasters and supply coaster trains as well as track service.

Rocky Mountain Construction (RMC), Hayden, Idaho, builds steel and hybrid coasters as well as coaster trains. RMC is also noted for transforming existing wooden coasters into hybrid models.

S&S Worldwide, North Logan, Utah, builds a variety of steel coasters, as well as the Screamin' Swing and drop towers. The company also acquired the rights to the former **Arrow Dynamics** and maintains parts and support for many of Arrow's steel coasters and flume rides. Arrow introduced the industry to Corkscrew (1975) and other looping and mega coasters.

ARM Rides, Wintersville, Ohio, provides spectaculars such as Rock Star, Sky Hawk, Vertigo and Super Shot towers.

Frederiksen Industries, Inc., Tampa, Fla., is the maker of the popular Fun Slide series.

Majestic Manufacturing Inc., New Waterford, Ohio, supplies Scooter bumper cars structures, bumper cars and other thrill and family rides.

Skyline Attractions, Orlando, Fla.: steel coasters and children's rides.

Trainworks Global, Charlotte, N.C., and **Texas Bells and Whistles**, Austin, Texas, also provide trains to the parks and attractions industries.

Resilient industry

As proven time and again, the amusement ride industry is certainly one of resilience as it emerged from The Great Depression, World War II and — most recently — the COVID pandemic.



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- Experience in the amusement industry a plus

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