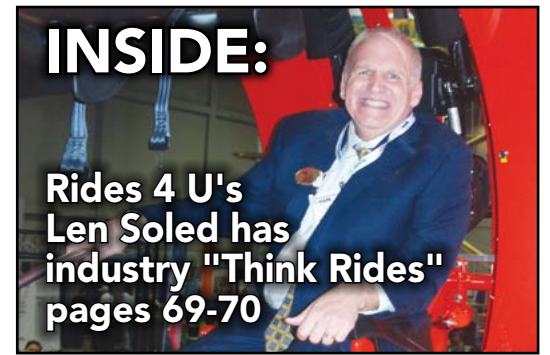


► Eight years in the making, Lagoon unleashes the unique Primordial — pages 10-12

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Digital Edition



Riptide Racer lets riders control the waves. COURTESY CALAWAY PARK

Zierer supplies new family fun to Calaway Park: Riptide Racer

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

CALGARY, Alberta, Canada — Since opening in 1982, **Calaway Park** has seen growth as it has maintained its tradition of providing family fun. This past season, the park has added a new ride and upgraded buildings to keep the park a fresh experience.

New for 2023 was a **Zierer** Jet Ski Ride. The nature of this attraction gives riders some interactive control to carve their path in the water pool as the arms rotate around a central hub in the middle of the reservoir.

"Riptide Racer was selected as Calaway Park's new ride because the ride experience perfectly matches our demographic. It is a family fun ride," said General Manager **Bob Williams**. "Members of our team traveled to **Legoland New York** to experience the ride for themselves, as well as observe its operation. After one ride, we were sold."

For more than 20 years, Jet Ski Ride has been a perennial seller for Zierer.

"Zierer installed the first Jet Ski Ride in Carlsbad, California, at **Legoland California** in 1999," said **Bill Ossim**, sales, North America, Zierer. "We've since installed about 40 units worldwide."

Riders board from the center. Guests ride in a standing position and control their vehicle as it speeds through the water. Certain maneuvers can create waves that not only create fun splashes but also affect riders behind them.

"The Jet Ski Ride is one of those rides that is entertaining for those watch-

► See CALAWAY, page 6

Super team of Six Flags, Skyline Attractions debuts two family racing coasters

Kid Flash: Cosmic Coaster shines in Texas and Georgia

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

SAN ANTONIO, Texas and AUSTELL, Georgia — Anticipation built for the debut of new attractions at both **Six Flags Fiesta Texas** and **Six Flags Over Georgia**. The fall debut of **Kid Flash: Cosmic Coaster** brought excitement to the shoulder season.

Supplied by **Skyline Attractions**, the installation is a single rail-style track system that features trains on a pair of tracks that intertwine and cross over and under each other.

"We knew we were going

to get an efficient and fun profile, because that's what Skyline Attractions does," said Park President **Jeffrey Siebert**, Six Flags Fiesta Texas. "Skyline does fantastic profiles for **Great Coasters International** all across the world. Having their expertise when it comes to profiles, we knew it would be fun, but it is great to see how broad an appeal it really has."

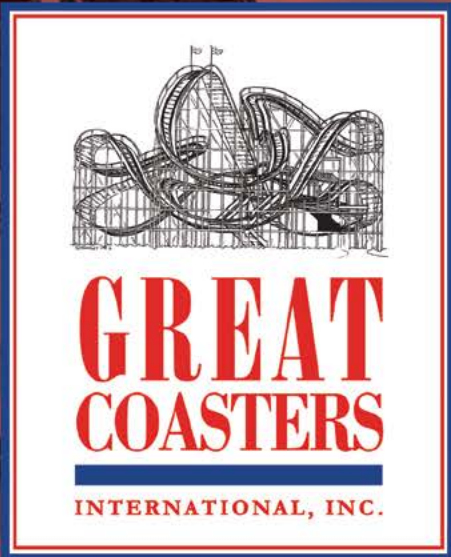
Each park had one junior coaster in its arsenal, but the debuts of **Kid Flash: Cosmic Coaster** brought in newer family fun in a spectacular way. As the name almost implies, it was flashy.

The racing coasters use an Aurora light pack-

► See FLASH, page 8



The P'Sghetti Bowl coasters easily accommodate both adults and children. COURTESY XANDER LEE



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AMUSEMENT VIEWS

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

It is time to come home



Robinson

Much like farming and local shops, the amusement industry is rooted in family businesses and filled with members who have been active working in it — quite literally — since they could walk. The aisles of the IAAPA Expo have long been filled with the youthful eyes and quick-

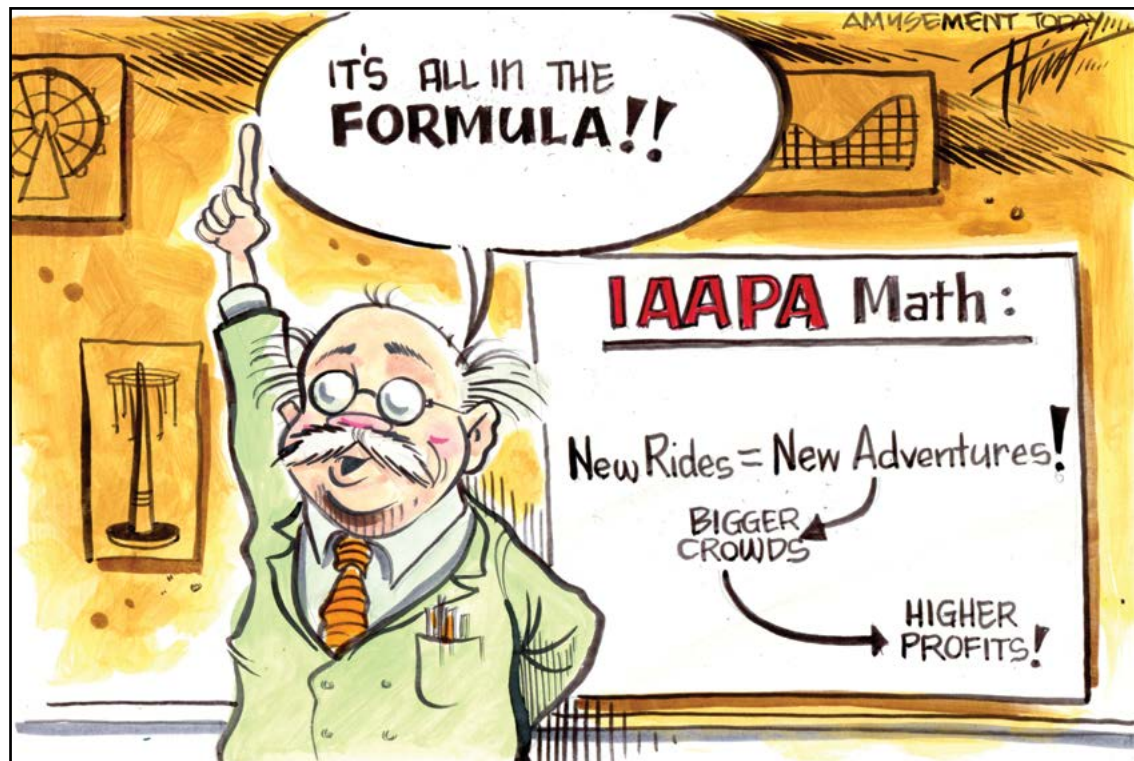
footed steps of the next generation of our industry, walking alongside their family members who are currently keeping our turnstiles turning.

Forty years ago, my eyes were those youthful ones I mentioned. I was a kid who first came to IAAPA Expo more excited by the accompanying visits to Walt Disney World that my family would take. However, it was not long into my first visit to the show floor that I was pulled in by the allure of our unique industry. Those eyes were quickly filled with the magic of the lights and new technology, my feet would move faster to see the latest in theming and my imagination was driven wild by the sites of the forthcoming ideas and creative theming concepts. And, yes, my tastebuds came alive with my first taste of the — then brand new — Dippin' Dots.

I've returned to IAAPA Expo virtually every years since. As a guest of my father, as someone looking to carve his own way in the industry and now as a dedicated part of the *Amusement Today* family. But whether I was a teen, a young man or my rapidly-approaching 50 year-old adult ... I've always walked into IAAPA Expo with those youthful eyes of amazement, eager to turn the corner and feel like I am a child once more. And, I know I'm not the only one.

To the second, third, fourth and even fifth generation family members who are walking the aisles of IAAPA Expo ready to keep this industry thriving today and bring it into the future, I just want to take the time to say to every one of you, "Welcome home!"

FLINT'S VIEW: Bubba Flint



INDUSTRY VOICE: Chris Gray, Skyline Attractions

The only constant is change

Well, it's that time of year for all of us who bleed roller coasters, cotton candy, waterslides and everything else that entertains humans. As someone who lives in Orlando, the show has become just another day in the land of make-believe and tradeshow. IAAPA Expo is not just another tradeshow here in town, though. It also gets a lot of attention from our local media, but as a local, I enjoy taking our clients out to dinner at places that only we locals know about. It always seems to slow the night down a bit when you are not in the liquid-light chaos that is our grand tourist district.

I would like to offer — to anyone visiting — a few of my favorite haunts for dinner or lunch while in town. First on the plate is Delaney's Tavern, which is in the SODO District and offers a new twist to American cuisine. The food and drinks will always impress. You will need a one to two-day reservation.

The second one up is Linda's La Cantina.



Gray

Maybe the best steak in town. Oh, and look for the flaming fountain in the bar. It's our old-school steak house with aged steaks; there's nothing more to say here. You will need a three to four-day reservation for this one. The 25-minute drive will be worth it.

Lastly, there is an entirely unknown restaurant that most of you will walk under leaving the airport. This one is on the top of my list and the top floor of the Hyatt Regency in Terminals A&B at MCO, overlooking the entire east side of the airport. Hemisphere has it all: great view, excellent service and amazing food and drinks. You will not go wrong entertaining clients or associates. It is one of our hidden gems in Orlando cuisine, and it's just over your head every time you land in town.

So Enjoy O-town — my town — and try to get off the beaten-down tourist row and enjoy some of this local's favorite eats.

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



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2 MINUTE DRILL



AT: Janice Witherow

Michael Shelton, IAAPA

For **Michael Shelton**, stepping into the role of executive director and vice president, **IAAPA North America**, last year seemed like a given. With 30 years of experience in the amusement industry, including stints at **Hyland Hills Parks and Recreation District**, **ICE Centre at the Promenade** and **Water World** — all in Colorado — plus previously serving as director of education, safety and membership for IAAPA's North American region, Michael brings a wealth of knowledge and laser vision to the Association. And his sense of humor is a bonus!

Title: Executive Director and Vice President, IAAPA North America.

Number of years in the industry: 30.

Best thing about the industry:

The ability to transport guests to another world separate from their daily routines.

Favorite amusement ride:

Hagrid's Motorbike Adventure.

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

Biggest challenge facing our industry:

It has been and probably always will be staffing.

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

Is there anything better than the sounds of an amusement facility? Coasters zooming by, waves crashing, game bells sounding, screams, laughter, and sunshine. Nothing but happiness all around...and churros.

To me, the most influential person in history is ... Walt Disney.

Favorite dessert:

Anything chocolate...but no nuts!

When I say exercise, you say ...

Let's go to a theme park!

The best pizza I have ever eaten was at ... Old Chicago.

Right now, the ring tone on my cell phone is ...

The theme song from the movie *Up*. I feel good every time I hear it.

The last book I read was ...

The Energy Bus by Jon Gordon.

If I could be part of any TV family it would be ... The Simpsons.



Michael Shelton has spent more than three decades immersed in the amusement industry and stepped into a larger role with IAAPA in 2022. COURTESY IAAPA

The three things I am looking forward to most at the IAAPA Expo are ...

The trade show floor, IAAPA Celebrates at SeaWorld and the gathering of an entire industry in one place.

Growing up, my nickname was ...

Bones ... I was very skinny!

When on an airplane, I typically ...

Catch up on emails...ugh!

The food I crave most often is ...

Burgers and fries (although I wish it was fruits and vegetables).

The concert I would really want front-row seats to is ...

Coldplay (but it must include a ticket for my daughter).

Coolest celebrity chef: Chef Boyardee.

In 10 years, I hope to be ...

Still visiting parks and attractions with family and friends.

People say I remind them of ...

Their funny uncle.

The first thing I do every morning is ...

Stretch and grab an iced coffee...the healthy kind with sugar and whipped cream.

All-time best comedian: Nate Bergatzi.

The most useful invention in the last 10 years has to be ...

It has to be Ring Cameras. I now even have a goat cam!

THE INDUSTRY SEEN

A sign of fame



NEW ORLEANS, La. — While attending the World Waterpark Association Show in New Orleans, *Amusement Today* stopped by Carousel Gardens Amusement Park in City Park. As a gracious welcome, the management acknowledged AT Publisher Gary Slade's recent induction (see upcoming story in AT's December 2023 issue) into the WWA Hall of Fame with a welcome sign, even though the park was closed to the public at that time. Hurricane Katrina in August of 2005 devastated the grounds and the attractions there. Since then, the park has seen continuous growth and a rebirth and is currently thriving. AT/TIM BALDWIN

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► CALAWAY

Continued from page 1

ing from the mall,” Ossim told *Amusement Today*. “The riders actually control their path by steering into or away from the center ring. Rides that allow the guest to control the experience are always very popular; adding the water element steps up that experience to another level.”

Calaway Park purchased the Jet Ski with nine vehicles, but it is also available in a six-unit model.

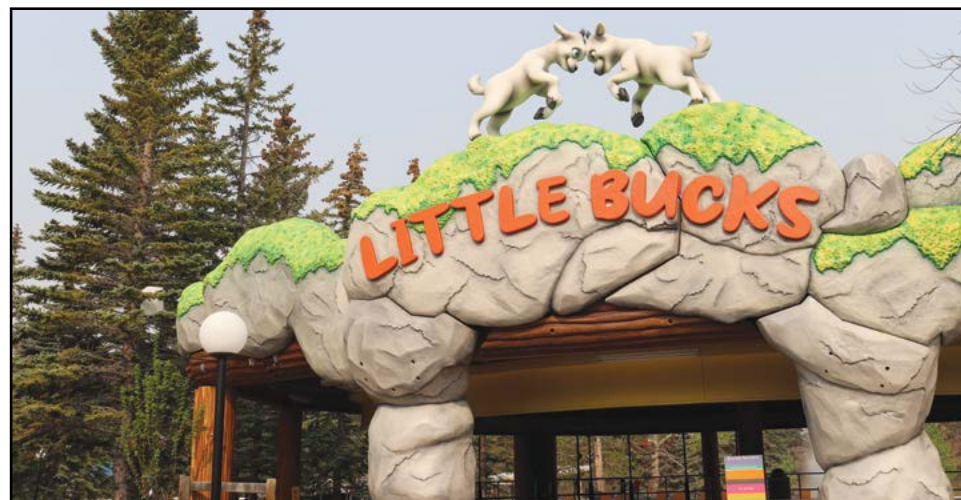
“Just after the ride opened, I had a mom approach me after riding Riptide Racer with her son,” said Williams. “They couldn’t have been more excited and proclaimed it was their new favorite ride at Calaway Park. Our guests are thrilled with this new addition to the park. It is simply a fun ride, and they are having fun every time they experience it.”

With the Canadian location, *AT* asked Williams if water attractions are still popular in the north.

“Though Canadian winters can be cold, our summers are warmer than many might realize,” he said. “We have been consistently adding attractions to the park to help our guests cool off during their day. Two of our most popular rides, the Timber Falls log



Children as short as 40 inches can ride with an adult. COURTESY CALAWAY PARK



New buildings with themed sculptures made for a fanciful upgrade during the 2024 season. COURTESY CALAWAY PARK

ride and Bumper Boats, are water rides, and in 2019 we added CP Spray n’ Play, which has been a home run. In 2022, we had 74 days of our 100-day operation that were over 20 degrees Celsius (or 68 Fahrenheit).”

Zierer supplies the attraction with various themed vehicles.

“The Riptide Racer uses our Rescue Boat theme,” said Ossim. “This theme is

very fitting for the Jet Ski Ride. We have several standard theme options. However, our art and fabrication department has been challenged and effectively developed some great custom themes.”

Children between 40 and 52 inches must ride with an adult. Guests over 52 inches can choose to ride alone or with another.

“It is great to watch

parents and children experience the ride together, while those single riders, whether a child or adult, get to create their own rider experience,” said Williams.

A Chaos ride was retired to make space for the new addition. Calaway Park had been in talks with Zierer for some time.

“We initially were working on a much larger project, but with the COVID interruption, the park decided to wait on that project and went with the Jet Ski Ride,” said Ossim.

In addition to the new ride, the park has done a major upgrade with new, whimsically themed buildings.

“Calaway Park’s Main Street buildings have had the same theme and façades since our opening in 1982. They had served us well but had reached the end of their life cycle,” Williams told *AT*. “It was time to replace the materials, and that gave us the opportunity to refresh the look with a new theme. Four buildings were completed in the winter of 2022/2023.

They include Village Shop, our gift store; Sweet Toothe Candy Shop; Little Bucks bumper cars and The Burger Inn.”

Three-dimensional sculptures make the structures fun and inviting.

“Each building has its own theme,” Williams said. “This completes the west side of our Main Street, and there are plans to complete the remaining buildings in the coming years. We worked with **JRA** to complete the initial concept and then worked with a local studio named **Studio Y** to complete the building façades and installation. This is just the beginning, and we are excited for our guests to experience the area once the project is complete.”

More than 30 rides are offered to guests. In addition to the amusement park, Calaway Park has a 104-site campground within a short walking distance of the rides and offers views of the mountains. Calaway Park is the largest outdoor amusement park in Western Canada.



Jet Ski Rides have been popular in LEGOLand parks worldwide. The first debuted in California; pictured is the one at LEGOLand Deutschland. Calaway purchased the nine-vehicle model. COURTESY ZIERER

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►FLASH

Continued from page 1

age that makes for a fun visual during the day, but at night the transformation into something captivating truly comes to light.

“The Kid Flash Cosmic Coaster installations capitalize on the Aurora LED lighting package by transforming the intertwined tracks into kinetic strands of lightning, perfectly matching the speedy Kid Flash comic character. But the lights have limitless potential,” said **Tyler Mullins**, design engineer, Skyline Attractions. “They can be used for holiday overlays, private events, paid sponsorships and more. The pixels are all mapped in 3D space, meaning that animations are not restricted to a linear path along the track, but can instead treat the full ride as a huge, twisted canvas.”

Staying with the **DC Comics** IP, Six Flags will continue to feature the electronic pulse to go with the theming, although background colors could change with the season. As with outdoor billboards, the lighting intensity reduces at night to adapt to the suitability of the time of day.

In the event a lighting panel goes out, that component can easily be replaced.

“Skyline is supporting the warranty for this new prototype experience,” said Siebert. “Our team has learned to interchange panels and troubleshoot. We anticipate that it will hold up very well, but Skyline has components and replacement panels ready to go.”

“Integrated into the track’s top and sides, the Aurora LED lighting pack-



The Aurora light package makes Skyline Attractions’ P’Sghetti Bowl coasters an eye-popping wow. COURTESY SKYLINE ATTRACTIONS

age transforms the roller coasters tracks into a kaleidoscope of lights and colors, creating a dynamic ride experience to be enjoyed by riders of all ages,” said **Jamie Sebastian**, public relations, Six Flags Over Georgia.

While parks are still installing high-profile, skyscraping roller coasters, an industry trend is to focus on younger riders.

“There’s been extremely limited innovation from American manufacturers regarding children’s coasters over the past two decades, and P’Sghetti Bowl Children’s Coaster addresses this. It introduces a single-rail, weld-free track design that streamlines fabrication and makes the product ideal for parks, zoos and FECs of all sizes,” said Mullins. “It uses an incredibly inclusive train design that allows children and adults to ride together. And the ride is ideal for any location, with its low price tag and compact foot-

print. The ride experience also caters to all ages, with its zippy transitions and dueling nature offering a fun, exciting ride without being too intense for younger riders.”

“Kid Flash satisfies one of the strategic initiatives that we’ve had, which is to offer multi-generational attractions,” Siebert told *Amusement Today*. “We’ve been known for big thrills, exciting thrills — the bigger the thrills the better, but we want to make sure we are building rides and attractions for everyone in the family. And everyone has a different thrill scale and what they enjoy. In selecting Kid Flash, it really hits that multi-generational approach from Mom and Dad to Grandpa and Grandma to enthusiasts and thrill seekers. Hopefully it hits all those sweet spots, and everyone will like it. The profile of the ride and the excitement and the way the ride looks really appeals to a broad audience.”

“Racing is one of the

most exciting parts of Kid Flash Cosmic Coaster,” added Mullins. “The two tracks have 12 crossover moments and a mixture of dueling and racing action. You’ll be able to see the other train throughout the whole ride, and the racing element will make the exciting ride even more re-rideable.”

“The profiling and racing and dueling aspects of the ride hit spot-on, just like the animation [we had provided],” said Siebert. “If you have family members or friends at opposite ends of the train, you are truly seeing them face to face as you duel or go through the crossovers and flybys. You have great sightlines seeing your other family members smiling and screaming.”

Six Flags has programmed the ride to offer two laps per ride.

“The P’Sghetti Bowl train design is incredibly inclusive and can comfortably seat children and adults,” Mullins

told AT. “Each rider has their own T-shaped restraint bar with a large foam covering, which has a large surface area to comfortably restrain them. The cars are also very roomy and easy to transfer in and out of. We fabricated a mock-up of the seat and restraint system and were able to test it with riders of all sizes to ensure a satisfactory design.”

“With a 36-inch minimum height requirement, the new coaster expands ride offerings for families and young thrill seekers,” said Sebastian.

“Each side is different, so you get off one side and say, ‘Gosh, that was fun! Now let’s go ride the other side,’” said Siebert.

The queue tells the story of who Flash and Kid Flash are. Panels explain the nature of their origins and the cosmic treadmill, which the ride is themed after.

Each park retired one ride to make room for the installation of Kid Flash: Cosmic Coaster.

While all partners involved were hoping for a ride debut earlier in the season, the end result has wowed guests.

“As with any prototype attraction, there are challenges along the way, but the great news is it is open and guests love it,” said Siebert. “I really do believe our most ardent thrill seekers enjoy it just as much as our little thrill seekers just because it does offer great coaster aspects in a very small space. It has off-axis airtime hills and double downs, double dips, quick maneuvers, crossovers, head-choppers — you name it; it’s all packed into this very compact space. You want to do it over and over again.”

Skyline Attractions has various-sized models of the P’Sghetti Bowl. Six Flags purchased the largest model, which is the racing version. In addition to the layouts already engineered, Skyline can create custom designs as well. From an operations standpoint, the company’s website states that the coasters operate with VFD logic, removing the need for a complex PLC.

In addition to these fall debuts, both Six Flags parks have new attractions to be added in the 2024 season.



The Kid Flash Cosmic Coaster additions are the only racing coasters in Texas and Georgia. The ride is the 12th coaster at both Six Flags Over Georgia and Six Flags Fiesta Texas (or 13th, if fans count it as two). COURTESY SIX FLAGS

P'Spaghetti BOWL

Children's Coaster

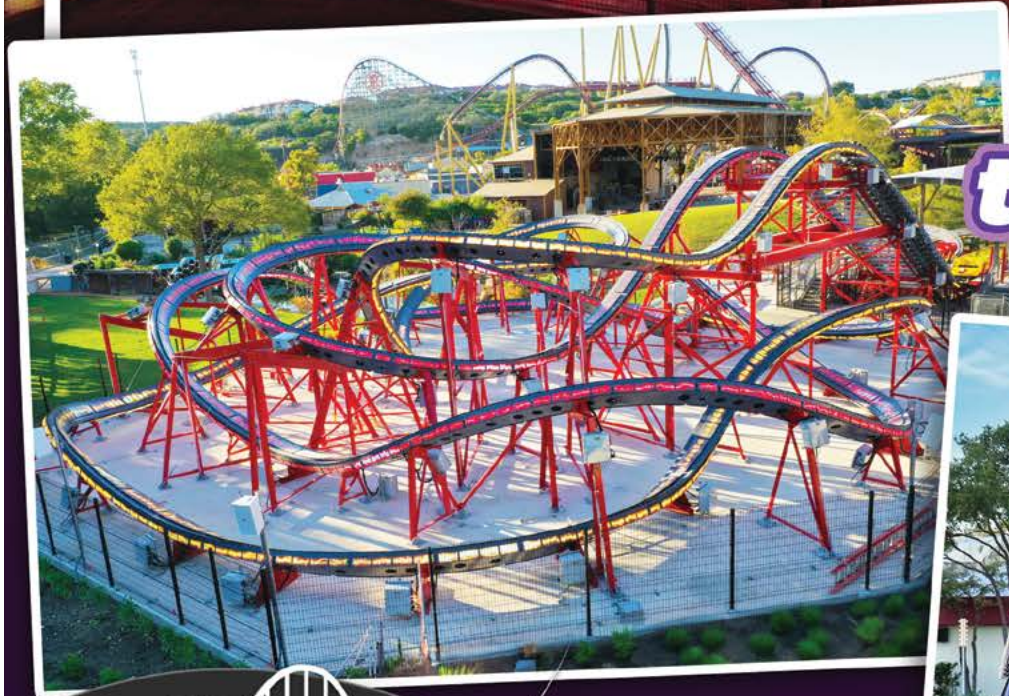
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PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► Midway State Park celebrates 125 years — page 20 / Lost Island adds Interlink flume ride — page 28

After eight years in the making, Primordial opens at Lagoon

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

FARMINGTON, Utah — Delays in attractions are far from uncommon nowadays, particularly with a global crisis still visible in the rear-view mirror. Lagoon might have bragging rights to one of the longest. The park opened its latest — and most ambitious — ride, Primordial, in September.

“The irritating thing about those eight years is that you have to take out about two and a half of those for COVID,” admitted Terry Capener, vice president and general manager. “Eight years — finally — it’s now open.”

To understand the scope of this attraction requires a knowledge of what the ride actually does. To call it a roller coaster sells it short, as it blends a coaster with an interactive dark ride experience.

For a third time, Lagoon has designed a ride in-house and partnered with ART Engineering to create the track.

“This is really something unique. ART Engineering was founded 20 years ago. Since the beginning, Lagoon and Art Engineering have worked together,” said Georg Behringer, managing director, ART Engineering. “We started with engineering service. The Bombora coaster (2011) was our first complete project with Lagoon. We have worked on a lot of rides to improve components. Cannibal (2015) was the next big project.”

“The day after we opened Cannibal, we started working on Primordial,”



Primordial was an attraction eight years in the making. The ride was designed to accommodate nine trains of eight-rider cars (above left). COURTESY LAGOON; AT/TIM BALDWIN



said Capener. “We knew we wanted a family coaster.”

“We started discussions about a new interactive dark ride coaster after our first dark ride coaster project had opened at Canada’s Wonderland,” said Behringer. “After brainstorming with the Freed Family and the Lagoon team, ideas came together. We created a great dark ride coaster with new elements. For the slide drop, we made a feasibility study and then developed this feature.”

To discuss the elements too in-depth reduces a level of surprise, as the park strives to keep the experience shrouded in mystery. The slide-drop maneuver is one possible ending.

Capener says the multiple endings were in the plans from the beginning. “We wanted people to want to come back several times to experience each of the endings.”

“Lagoon and ART culture and ambitions are similar,” Behringer told *Amusement*

Today. “This is the highest quality in customized solutions that have unique elements and features. We work in close collaboration and partnership with mutual trust. I am personally very proud about that.”

The dark ride portion of Primordial involves interactive gameplay with media content. Triotech was a principal partner on the project.

“Primordial is pushing the boundaries of the dark coaster concept,” said Ernest Yale, president and CEO of Triotech. “We’ve included interactivity, pushed the immersion to an astonishing level and most importantly, we’ve included alternate paths as well as multiple different story twists. These different endings will keep guests guessing, and of course, keep them coming back to the ride to experience all its variants.”

“Absolutely,” agreed Behringer. “When the second element was integrated with the purpose that the

riders don’t know which final ride element they will get, it was clearly a cool moment in its design.”

“Lagoon takes great pride in having unique, one-of-a-kind attractions not found at any other amusement park,” said Adam Leishman, media relations, Lagoon. “Lagoon is also proud to create these attractions in collaboration with local fabricators, contractors and vendors.”

“One hundred percent of the steel is from here [Utah],” said Capener. “We try very hard to always use local businesses.”

Intermountain Lift supplied the fabrication of the track.

Guests begin their adventure in a themed queue. While waiting, a pre-show room sets the stage. An animatronic character, a lynx named Queen Azdra, provides the story.

“Instead of ‘getting the bad guys,’ we wanted to have a storyline where the riders ‘free the good guys,’

the Dragon and Owl characters,” said Leishman.

Before entering the station, riders can place all loose articles in double-sided lockers provided by LocketGo. Lagoon has a reputation for some of the best ride operations in the country.

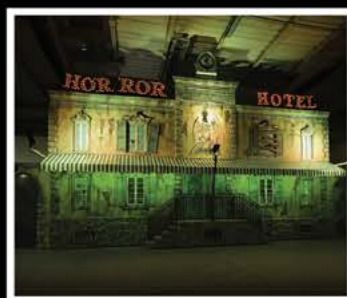
“The introduction of LocketGo’s Smart Ride Lockers aligns with Lagoon Park’s commitment to providing an exceptional and convenient experience for its visitors. These lockers are strategically placed on rides where personal belongings are most vulnerable, thus ensuring safety for all,” said Gabrielle LaRue, CEO of LocketGo. “Our mission is to enhance the overall visitor experience, and these lockers offer a secure and convenient solution for safeguarding personal belongings while enjoying the park’s attractions.”

Free of objects, riders step into the ride vehicles in the station with the use of a

► See LAGOON, page 12



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We would like to thank the entire Lagoon team for the long term collaboration and friendship.



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Bombora



2014 - Mega Coaster
Cannibal



2023 - Interactive Coaster
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LAGOON

Continued from page 10

conveyor belt while loading.

"The conveyor loading in combination with the car seating arrangement has required additional engineering," said Behringer. "I think the result is a great solution for operation."

Once dispatched, two-car trains approach the lift, and vehicles turn to create a train. The climb up the sculpted, mountainous exterior places riders into the attraction's first act, a coaster portion. Then trains dart inside past scenes, special lighting and fog. After turning to engage with the media content, the cars turn into a backward position for more coaster track. Additional gameplay and scenes take place until riders enter the mysterious "unknown" ending.

"It's really fun to ride it with someone who hasn't ridden it before to see their reaction to it," said Leishman. "It has been challenging and rewarding and challenging and challenging again. But that's kind of the weird stuff that Lagoon does that other parks don't, and I'm really proud of that."

Naming this ride was quite fun, according to Julie Freed, director of special events (and part of the Freed family who owns the park). "As per usual, we were all sitting in Dave's office — the Freed family and our Lagoon family — going over three pages of mysterious names. We are ALL very opinionated by the way! It runs deep in the Freed genes apparently."

Dave Freed, Julie's father, resolved the issue.

"We had a number of exciting names from the list that we all liked, but we just couldn't agree on one name. We had been going over names for months. Then, out of nowhere, Dave says, 'I've got it. How about Primordial?' a name that was not on the list. And at first, we all said the same thing, 'I like it, but what does it mean?' To which Dave replied, 'Existing at the beginning of time...' For the first time we agreed — we ALL loved it. The name of the ride was important, similar to the storyline of the



Vehicles rotate to interact with scenes inside the mountain (above). Supplied by Triotech, an animatronic in the queue helps spin the tale for oncoming riders (right). COURTESY LAGOON; AT/TIM BALDWIN



(formerly CL Corporation). They have a long-standing know-how with animatronics," said Martin.

Primordial has a special loading area out of sight built for ADA accessibility.

"We have a whole setup inside in a separate room. When they are ready to go, we can move that car on," Capener told *Amusement Today*. "When it comes back around, it gets taken off the track, because it takes some time to get them unloaded, and we don't want that to become an issue."

The park opted to open the ride without the ADA component. That portion will be commissioned off-season and be ready for 2024. In addition, the park is eager to continue enhancing various details on the ride.

Lagoon owns 11 trains; nine in use will reach maximum capacity. The goal is 900 people per hour. While tweaks lie ahead, the park is beyond excited to have the ride open.

"It's the best feeling," said Julie Freed. "We've been working on this for eight years and the enthusiasm has been overwhelmingly positive."

"The best day of my whole year was the day we opened it," said Capener. "I waited to hear everyone as they came out, just to hear those comments. Every comment was fabulous. To me, that's what makes it worth doing these things."

ride, in that we did *not* want it to be menacing or sinister."

The project involved numerous companies. Dustin Allen, director of engineering, Lagoon, stated: "Stengel did the engineering and fabrication drawings for the ride track and columns. The trains were a combination of Lagoon and ART Engineering for general arrangement. ART Engineering provided the mechanical, Actemium did the electrical and control system, and Triotech handled the show elements (including the pointing device or "blaster") and gameplay. The theming of the ride was designed and fabricated by ThemRise. We designed the mountain in collaboration with Cemrock Landscapes. We designed the ride loading structures and queue in collaboration with a local architect."

"Working with media on a roller coaster is a challenge," said Christian Martin, vice president, communications and alliances, Triotech. "On top of that, working with interactive media is an even bigger challenge. Interactive media requires that you know where every rider is at all times, as well as where each and every rider is aiming and interacting. This is done through sophisticated proprietary Triotech software that we have developed over years of deploying interactive attractions all over the world."

Triotech supplied the animatronic as well.

"Triotech has experience with animatronics, mostly through our Europe-based team which we acquired



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First-ever Super Boomerang supplied by Vekoma debuts in China

AT: Tim Baldwin
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TONGSHAN, Xuzhou, China — **Fantawild Wonderland** opened its gates as China's newest theme park this past summer. Among its attractions is a first-of-its-kind roller coaster. The park named it Cloud Shuttle. It is the first installation of a new variation of the Boomerang coaster from **Vekoma Rides**. The company markets it as a Super Boomerang.

Like the classic Boomerang coasters of the 1980s and '90s, the Super Boomerang goes out and returns in reverse like the rest of this breed, but this one does it in a big way.

"The Super Boomerang was designed as a spiritual successor to both the classic Boomerang and the Giant Inverted Boomerang, using a sit-down vehicle like the former, but having the stature of the latter," said **Benjamin Bloemendaal**, designer, Vekoma.

"According to our present-day design philosophy, the new track design was also to sport more variation in ride elements, while focusing on airtime and hangtime rather than downforce."

With a central tower with track riding up on two sides, the layout offers numerous elements on a narrow plot of real estate.

"The Super Boomerang was not designed for a specific site," said **Jason Pan**, regional director, sales and marketing, Vekoma Asia. "We saw the potential of limited-footprint layouts, then Super Boomerang was designed, and we believe it could be the next classic."

"Other key drivers to the final design were to have a unique and iconic aesthetic and a footprint that could be easily integrated into different park plans," Bloemendall told *Amusement Today*. "These parameters, combined with more energy (i.e. increased train speed) and airtime-focused track elements, lead



One of the ride's inversions offers thrilling hangtime. COURTESY VEKOMA

to a long-stretched, slender design rather than the traditional square base area."

Riders are launched forward from the station only to lose momentum. Racing back through the station, they are launched backward up a vertical spike and experience weightlessness. The following plunge enters the third launch, which reaches speeds of 59 mph. Throughout the course, two follow-up boosts keep the

exhilaration constant.

"It helped Fantawild receive good success in the market," said Pan. "As they are trying to build their next-level parks, some new ideas were required to help them make a new coaster meet the trend."

Among its elements are multiple inversions, one of which features significant hangtime.

"The Inverted Stall Dive on the Super Boomerang is

a variation of the Stall Loop like we've used in the layout for our Wildcat Looping Coaster, Fønix, at **Fårup Sommerland** in Denmark," said **Carin Davits**, marketing, Vekoma. "It combines a traditional Immelman inversion with an unexpected pop of inverted airtime, a.k.a. hangtime, at the top. We wanted to spice up the classic turn-around element by turning its apex into an extended, parabolic arc. This causes the vehicle to pause briefly while upside down."

According to Vekoma, the ride can accommodate 800 riders per hour. The train seats 24 riders.

"Additionally, we opted for a maintenance-free LSM drive to avoid the complex hoisting and catching mechanisms from the days of old," said Bloemendall. "This choice doesn't only improve reliability and reduce maintenance cost, it also provides for a more dynamic ride experience and a higher single-train throughput."

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Intamin supplies multi-launch coaster Zokkon to Fuji-Q Highland

AT: Tim Baldwin
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FUJIYOSHIDA, Japan — In 1961, with stunning views of Mt. Fuji, Fuji-Q Highland opened its gates. Giant Coaster, which appeared in 1966, was a doozy — taking a Guinness World Record for the world’s longest coaster (at the time). While that ride has been removed in the decades since, Fuji-Q has continued to debut some very notable rides. 2023 saw its latest.

Called Zokkon, this new coaster is impressive. Devoid of inversions — as those exist on other offerings in the park — this new multi-launch coaster from Intamin delivers thrills in different ways.

“Zokkon is a motorbike coaster,” said Sascha Czibulka, executive vice president, Intamin. “This motorbike coaster features four powerful LSM launches, of which one is a backward launch right after the breathtaking spike element. Besides the four launches, the passengers get to enjoy



Zokkon features a motorcycle-style of riding (above left). The lighting and design of the station and the trains give Zokkon a futuristic look (above right). COURTESY INTAMIN

12 airtime moments. It’s fair to say that Zokkon definitely delivers every bit of thrill.”

Intamin has a straddle-type seating vehicle within its portfolio, but these trains have the look of a motorcycle but offer a more traditional type of seating but with handlebar restraints.

“The futuristic 14-seater motorbike themed trains, with integrated sound and lighting come in a side-by-side arrangement with two passengers per vehicle, in combination with the individual lap-bar paired with foamed

seats. This roller coaster guarantees a safe and unique ride experience combined with high comfort for passengers,” Czibulka told *Amusement Today*. “This particular seating position gives you the real feel of how a motorbike ride would and should feel. When Hagrids at Universal opened, this seating position turned out to be very popular.”

Once dispatched, riders move into a darkened tunnel, awaiting the initial launch. After bursting into daylight, the layout isn’t dependent on height and drops but rather

curves, directional changes and G forces. After slithering through the first section of the ride, trains enter a second tunnel. Passengers are launched up a reverse spike, this one with speed humps built into it.

“This spike element with a hump is a new element and a great addition to any coaster. We do have different spike versions in our portfolio, depending on the ride character and thrill level,” said Czibulka.

Rushing through the tunnel backward, a switch track puts riders on a section of

curves traveling in reverse. From an elevated third tunnel, a switch track once again changes direction for the final act that involves a fourth, powerful launch.

Zokkon’s length is just shy of 4,000 feet of track.

“A good coaster cannot be long enough,” said Czibulka.

The ride hardware alone is enticing enough, but Fuji-Q has made the ride sleek and futuristic. In addition to onboard lighting and audio, the tunnels have a cosmic ambiance with their linear lighting and stripes.

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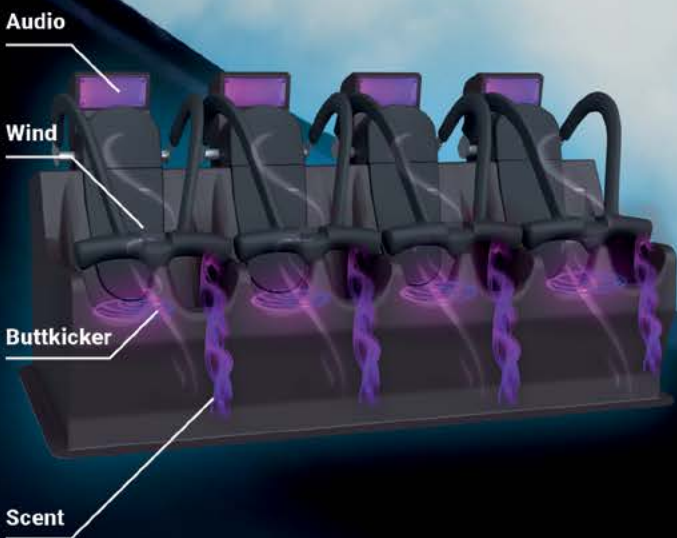
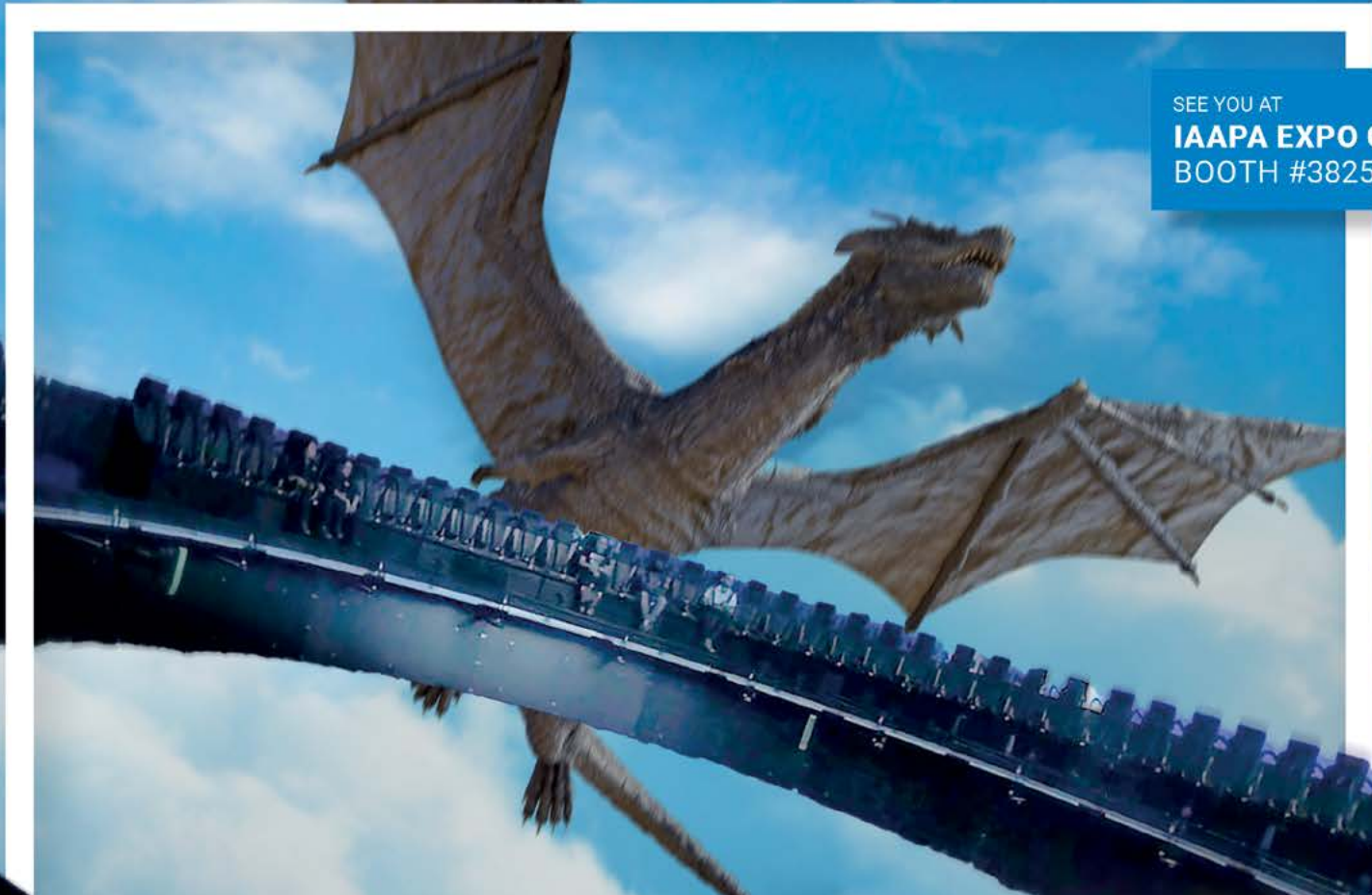
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Palace Playland opens Preston and Barbieri HyperJump in 2023

AT: Pam Sherborne
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OLD ORCHARD BEACH, Maine — Guests to **Palace Playland** this past summer were able to participate in ringing in the debut of the park's new-for-2023 addition, the HyperJump.

The new thrill ride to the Old Orchard Beach, a five-acre park, was manufactured by **Preston and Barbieri**, based in Italy, with the control system designed by the Spanish company **Jumpmatic**.

"The HyperJump was originally expected to open in 2022 but was delayed due to the global supply issues," said **Paul Golder**, park president. "The initial response to the ride was fantastic. We noticed riders across a wide range of age demographics and many repeat riders."

Golder said they had been looking for another major thrill ride to add to their arsenal. After seeing the HyperJump, they felt it



Palace Playland's new HyperJump has a bright and exciting lighting system (above left) that entertains both park guests and other passersby. The park plans to install a new Technical Park Street Fighter in 2024. Officials at Palace Playland state that the new HyperJump is the largest of its kind in North America with its longer arms (above right).
COURTESY PALACE PLAYLAND

was a perfect fit.

Golder said the HyperJump ride runs forward for the first part of the ride, then stops as all the arms raise up to the center together. Then, the ride begins rotating backward and all the arms drop suddenly at different times.

"The HyperJump has a ride capacity of 36 riders

and fast action with plenty of speed," Golder said. "It's hard to find a rider who isn't smiling when the ride is running.

"I would add that this ride is the largest of its kind in North America, with the longer arms," he said. "It reaches just under 30 feet during operation."

The ride can be built

as a park model or trailer-mounted ride.

In addition, the HyperJump has an incredible lighting system that entertains passersby.

"Since the ride was set up and installed, we added a custom vinyl wrap, featuring some designs generated with the assistance of artificial intelligence,"

Golder said.

He also said they already know what they plan to bring to the park in 2024. They have decided on a brand-new **Technical Park Street Fighter** to replace the existing Street Fighter.

Palace Playland has over 28 rides and attractions.

"We love bringing new thrills and excitement to our guests at New England's only beachfront amusement park," Golder said.

Palace Playland is located on the beach at Old Orchard Beach. This beachfront location allows visitors to enjoy Palace Playland's rides and attractions, as well as midway games of skill, food, gift shops and more.

Games are located in a 24,000-square-foot arcade that contains more than 250 games and attractions, ranging from Skee-Ball and Fortune Tellers to the latest in coupon skill games and coin-operated video.

•palaceplayland.com

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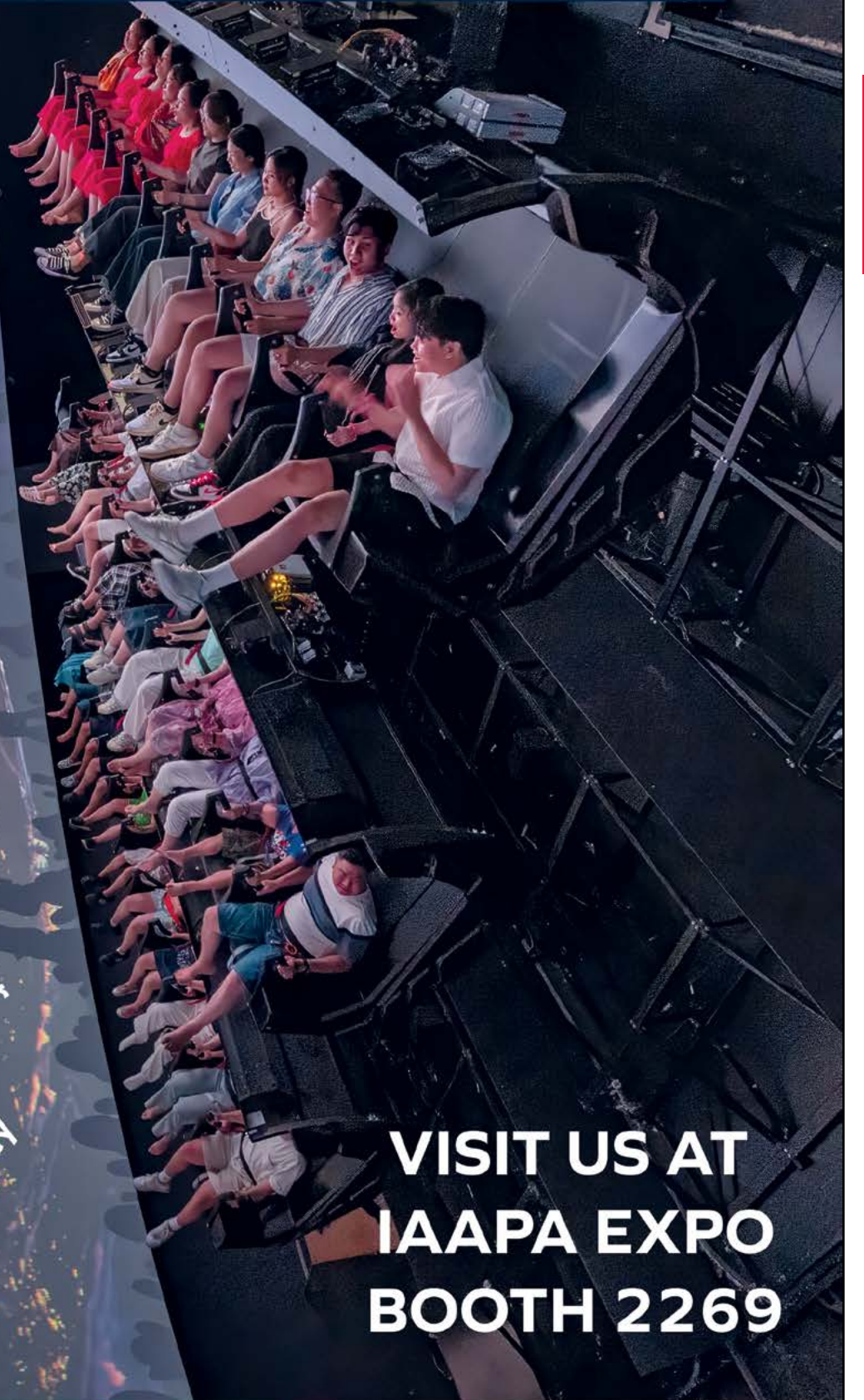
RICK BASTRUP
Foreword by Gary Slade, *Amusement Today*

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Trolley park Midway State Park celebrates its 125th anniversary

AT: Ron Gustafson

Special to Amusement Today

MAPLE SPRINGS, N.Y. — A historic “trolley park” celebrated a milestone in mid-July, marking 125 years of operation to the very day it opened more than a century ago.

Midway State Park — formerly **Midway Amusement Park** — officially welcomed its first guests on July 12, 1898, and it seemed fitting to mark the anniversary in a big way.

“We’re certainly grateful to everyone who attended the day-long event,” Park Manager **Christine Wilson** said.

Activities included a pay-one-price ride wristband, a DJ playing music from throughout the years, contests and fireworks.

“It went well,” Wilson said of the mid-week (Wednesday) celebration, though rain moved in just before the fireworks finale. “There were, perhaps, 1,500 who stayed for the fireworks despite the light rain. We did get the entire show in.”

The state was also able to refurbish and open an **Eli Bridge Co. #5 Ferris wheel** for this season. The ride, which dates back more than 70 years, was acquired from **Lakemont Park** in Altoona, Pennsylvania. The state also purchased an **Allan Herschell Co.** Twister ride from Lakemont, which it is working to rebuild and hopes to have open for the 2024 season.

“It took a lot of work and a lot of new parts,” the park official said of the Ferris wheel project. Donations were accepted through area foundations and others to complete the ride.

By boat and trolley

Located on world-famous Chautauqua Lake about an hour southwest of Buffalo, the park was originally leased and operated by the **Jamestown & Erie Railway**. The property had a dance pavilion, dining hall, tennis courts and ball fields when it opened. Rowboats, bathing and croquet were among other activities.

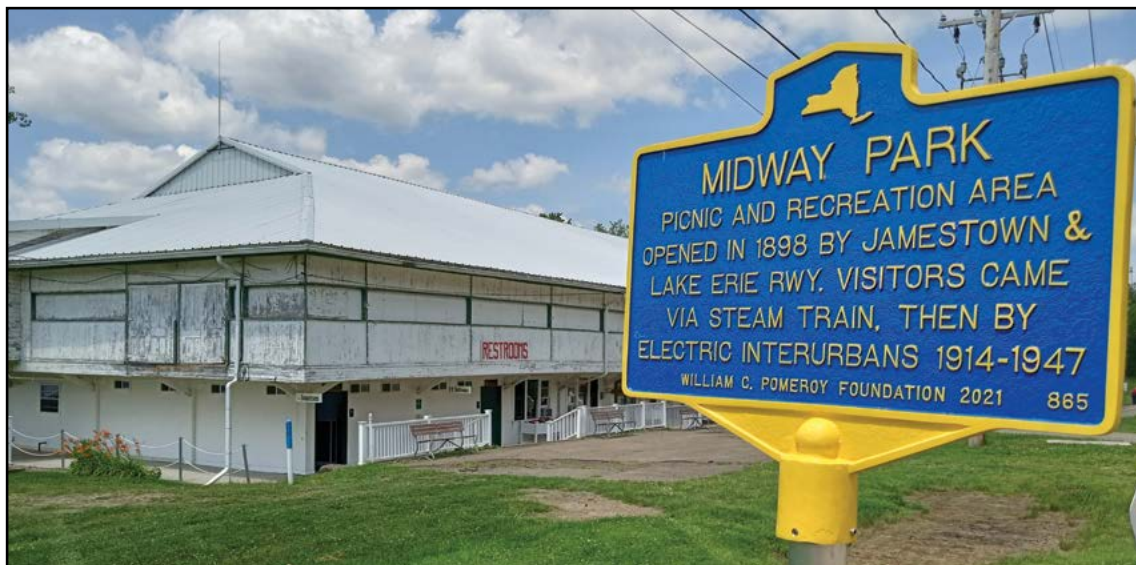
By 1907, steamboats were also used to transport guests to the park from Jamestown, a booming furniture-producing city at the foot of the lake. Jamestown was also the birthplace of actress/comedienne **Lucille Ball**, who frequented the park as a youngster.

A prominent business family that owned the **Jamestown Street Railway**, one of the first trolley systems to be electrified (1891), took over control of the lake’s railroad and steamboats and in 1914 had the tracks from Jamestown to the park electrified for trolley service.

It became common practice for parkgoers to ride the leisurely steamboats to Midway in the morning and return home via the fast trolley.

The **Chautauqua Navigation Co.** (steamboat company) finally purchased the park in 1915 and erected a huge 200-foot-long by 100-foot-wide lakeside pavilion. The second floor consisted of a dance hall and roller rink and hosted the likes of the **Glenn Miller Orchestra** and others during the heyday of touring big bands.

The ground floor had a restaurant, shooting gallery



The huge lakeside building (above) at Midway State Park once held big band dances and roller skating in its open-air second floor. A rail line once stood in front of the structure as guests came by trolley car. The restored **Eli Bridge #5 Ferris Wheel** at Midway State Park features a portrait of **Lucille Ball** and **Desi Arnaz** on the adjacent building. Ball was from nearby Jamestown, N.Y. and frequented the park years ago (right). COURTESY RON GUSTAFSON

and dressing rooms for bathers. The gigantic structure still stands today, though the roller rink/dance hall is no longer used.

The lower level currently houses concessions and restrooms, as well as a museum and gift shop.

The park was owned privately throughout the years by the late **Thomas Carr** (ownership 1939- 1951) and then the **Walsh** family (1951-2006). The state of New York took ownership in 2006.

Rides became a focus

While the facility featured a carousel, wooden roller



coaster and water toboggan ride in its early years, it wasn’t until after the acquisition by the late **Martin “Red” Walsh** that additional emphasis was put on attractions.

More property was purchased, outing pavilions erected, and a new ride area developed under his leadership.

The **Allan Herschell Co.** was only about 75 miles from the park and numerous rides were added from the supplier including a **Little Dipper** roller coaster, **Sky Fighter** jets, wet boats, helicopters, **Roadway** electric cars and a three-abreast carousel. The 1946 **Herschell** carousel replaced an aging machine at the park in the lakeside roundhouse, which was constructed in 1928. All of the **Herschell** rides continue to operate at Midway to this day.

A **Miniature Train** G-16 has also been chugging along a half-mile of track at the facility for more than

60 years while a **Roto-Whip** (**W.F. Mangels**), **Tubs-O-Fun** (**Hampton**), hand cars, and paddle boats round out **Kiddieland**.

Major rides include a **Tilt-A-Whirl** (**Larson International**), **Tidal Wave** (**Sartori**) and **Fun Slide** (**Frederiksen**).

The park also has **Water Wars**, miniature golf, go-karts, a climbing wall and arcade games.

Food concessions are operated by **Fowler's**, an established regional family business known on the fair and festival circuits.

Midway State Park is special in that it is one of only a handful of remaining “trolley parks” in the nation — parks that were serviced by electrified rail lines.

It now appears evident that the summer tradition on Chautauqua Lake will continue for years to come.

• parks.ny.gov/parks/midway



The park’s classic attractions include an **Allan Herschell Helicopter** ride (above left), as well as an **Allan Herschell Sky Fighter** attraction (above right). COURTESY RON GUSTAFSON



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ETF Ride Systems showcases latest projects at 2023 IAAPA Expo

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO — ETF Ride Systems, part of the ETF Group, is celebrating its 25th anniversary in a big way at IAAPA Expo 2023. A leader in trackless dark rides and innovative ride solutions, the company, based in the Netherlands, is showcasing some of its latest and most popular projects.

Among those being highlighted at the Expo is Volkanu: Quest for the Golden Idol, an attraction that ETF worked on with Sally Dark Rides. It is located at the Lost Island Theme Park, Waterloo, Iowa. It won Best New Family Ride of 2022 at Amusement Today's Golden Ticket Awards.

Another ride being showcased is ETF's water ride, Tiki Splash Roulette. This ride utilizes ETF's aqua mover — a trackless system choosing multiple random



Above left is an artist rendering of ETF Ride Systems Tiki Splash Roulette, one of the many projects being showcased by the company during IAAPA Expo 2023. Above right is ETF's multi-mover trackless system, which will also be on display. COURTESY ETF

routes for the mystery voyage into the unknown.

In addition, Maus au Chocolat, an interactive dark ride at Phantasia-land, Brühl, Germany, is being highlighted, as is a project at the Grotte Cosquer, a replica of the Cosquer prehistoric cave and cave paintings in Marseille, France.

While ETF showcases its projects and how they all may be customized, the company continues to work into the future.

"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 contin-

ue our business as usual."

ETF Ride Systems offers a broad range of ride concepts, including track-bound and/or trackless rides, a ride in the water, on the ground, elevated or suspended, all controlled electrical driven.

All ride concepts have the flexibility to integrate specific customer require-

ments. To create a total ride experience, customers may choose to integrate passenger ride interactivity options like speed control or directional control.

For other enhancements including audiovisual, decorations and more, ETF works closely with many partners in the field.

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Universal reveals name of forthcoming year-round horror attraction

LAS VEGAS — Universal Destinations and Experiences, a division of Comcast NBCUniversal and the creator of Halloween Horror Nights, revealed the name of the company's first-ever permanent horror experience: **Universal Horror Unleashed**.

The new concept — to be located at **Area15** in Las Vegas — pairs the company's expertise in the horror genre with next-level immersive experiences in an all-new format. A variety of unique, immersive, and horror-centric experiences will surround eerie eateries and bone-chilling bar areas. It will deliver

UNIVERSAL HORROR UNLEASHED

on the thrills Universal's horror fans have come to love and excite anyone looking for a new level of experiential entertainment. In addition, guests can expect a continuously updated experience with must-see seasonal events and one-of-a-kind merchandise.

"Universal Horror Unleashed is another way we are using our

unique style of horror storytelling to engage fans of this genre," said **Page Thompson**, president of new ventures, Universal Destinations & Experiences. "We look forward to bringing frightful fun to Las Vegas year-round."

Universal Horror Unleashed, first announced earlier in the year, is part of the com-

pany's ambition to introduce new products to new audiences in new markets. It is the anchor tenant in the 20-acre expansion of **Area15**, an immersive entertainment district in Las Vegas.

Universal has long been associated with the horror genre with its classic films featuring iconic characters such as *Frankenstein*, *The Mummy* and *the Wolf Man* — and redefined modern horror and suspense stories through collaborations with such high-profile filmmakers as **Jason Blum**, **James Wan** and **Jordan Peele**.

Celebrating 32 years in

2023, Halloween Horror Nights took place with select locations bringing NBCUniversal's iconic horror brands to life in terrifying ways including *The Exorcist: Believer*, *Five Nights at Freddy's*, *Chucky*, *The Purge*, Universal monsters and more. Universal's popularity within the horror genre ignites guests' thrill and excitement in full scale and three dimensions at the annual event.

Universal Destinations & Experiences has promised to share additional details as plans for Universal Horror Unleashed continue to develop.

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Butterfly Loopster Sundancer



The artist conception originally showed Storm: The Dragon Legend with red track. It was changed to blue before construction. COURTESY PARQUES REUNIDOS

TusenFryd and Gerstlauer debuts Infinity Inverted coaster

VINTERBRO, Norway — Lore and myth came together to send riders soaring at TusenFryd with the grand opening of Storm: The Dragon Legend. The Norwegian park debuted the Gerstlauer Infinity Inverted coaster in June as the focal point of its new medieval-themed area, Dragonville. Complete with dragons, swords and even a dungeon, Dragonville invites guests to become heroes as they take on the fierce and unique Storm.

The park's largest single investment to date, Storm: The Dragon Legend is Europe's first-ever suspended triple launch coaster, and the eighth coaster at TusenFryd.

Located toward the back of the park, surrounded by tall trees and forests, guests are immediately taken back in time within the newly themed area as the deep blue-colored dragon train of Storm: The Dragon Legend soars through the skies above and around them. The coaster's painted scales glisten as the coaster flies under — and flips over — its tracks. Storm: The Dragon Legend accelerates through its three launches first backward, then forward and with a third burst later in the ride.

Reaching speeds of 95 kilometers per hour (59 mph), Storm features a giant dive loop at its highest point, along with three inversions and a sidewinder as the coaster flies over 1,837 feet of smooth steel track. Riders are seated side-by-side in pairs on the train's 16 seats and secured by a lapbar as their feet dangle below. With a minimum height requirement of 51 inches, Storm takes the entire park's thrill factor to an all-new level.

Storm: The Dragon Legend was widely anticipated to join Tusenfryd's coaster collection since it was announced back in March 2020. Like most projects in the global attractions industry, the pandemic slowed progress.

At the grand opening earlier this year, the park's managing director Bjørn Håvard Solli celebrated the long-awaited opening. "This ride is the most important single investment in our ongoing three-year modernization program," he said. "It reflects our ambition to secure Tusenfryd as the largest theme park in Norway for many years to come by providing new exciting experiences."

—Susan Storey



Riders on Storm: The Dragon Legend at TusenFryd are taken through three inversions along the Infinity Inverted coaster's nearly 1,200 feet of track. COURTESY PARQUES REUNIDOS

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Ride Engineers Switzerland unveils Sunseeker flat ride concept



ALTENDORF, Switzerland — Ride Engineers Switzerland (RES) has released a concept of a new flat ride design which the company is offering. Dubbed the Sunseeker, the attraction is a unique-looking concept which features several suspended gondolas moving in a unique pattern while spinning during the ride experience.
COURTESY RIDE ENGINEERS SWITZERLAND



The Carousel at Downtown Palm Beach Gardens reopens

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. — The carousel is back at Downtown Palm Beach Gardens after repairs at the Western Train Co. rides factory. The company's help with refinishing the animals, added decorative features and helped to recreate the rounding boards with a lighter material.

Guests who go to see the carousel in the Downtown Palm Beach Gardens mall will find the brand-new rounding boards have been meticulously recreated to replicate and honor the original artwork. Western Train Co.'s art team spent hours sanding and refinishing the cracked and tattered paint on the animals. Many of the animal figures also received a fresh update to their painted-on name tags.

The company also added row lighting to every sweep on the carousel, a feature that was lacking before the ride's trip to the California rides factory. The light bars are in the antique style of Illions, which complements the modern carousel and gives it a taste of the old world charm of its predecessors.

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From fire to fantastic: Lost Island adds Interlink flume ride to lineup

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

WATERLOO, Iowa — When **Lost Island Theme Park** opened in 2022, it was praised for its elaborate theming and diverse rides. Still, a delay in a few attractions was not what the owners had planned. **Gary and Becky Bertch** were not deterred.

A delay in parts caused the launched coaster to open this year instead, but it was a more tragic incident that pushed the flume to 2023. A fire occurred during construction.

“The theming contractor was doing some Shotcrete rockwork on the exterior of the queue line/loading station building in March of 2022,” Gary Bertch said. “Since the temperatures were quite cold, they were using heaters and insulated blankets to keep the concrete warm. Unfortunately, a heater caught one of the blankets on fire at night, which



The Interlink flume features two splashdowns. AT/TIM BALDWIN

then spread to the building. By the time we and the fire department arrived, the building was engulfed and all we could do was watch it burn.” For a brand-new theme park starting out, that was a discouraging hand to be dealt.

“We immediately contacted the insurance company to initiate the claim and inspec-

tion process, which moved surprisingly slower than expected,” Bertch told *Amusement Today*. “We also immediately contacted **Interlink** so they could begin the process of fabricating and delivering the components and control system damaged in the fire. Once the claims inspection process was complete and the source

of the fire clearly determined, we were able to begin clearing the building site, reordering all the building materials, lining up the contractors and starting the process all over once again. Obviously, this took many months, which was why we were unable to open until the 2023 season.”

It is called Yuta Falls.

Guests who enjoy the new attraction — or just enjoy its iconic presence — are impressed with a masterpiece of theming. **Cost of Wisconsin** was the theming contractor.

“We have partnered with them numerous times over the last 25 years, since first working with them when we built our water park,” said Bertch. At the theme park, they not only worked on Yuta Falls, but also on Matugani (**Intamin** launch coaster) queue/loading station building, Skyborne queue line building and the volcano, queue line and fountain at our award-winning dark ride, Volkanu.”

“Yuta Falls is a great family ride, with up to six people able to enjoy the experience together,” Bertch said. “It has proven to be a very popular ride for us, particularly on those warm days! It’s important for parks to have water rides in the mix to add variety and distinction from all the dry rides. It’s particularly important for us because as a new park without mature trees and shade, the ability to offer guests the opportunity to cool off on a great flume ride like Yuta Falls has been a definite plus.” AT asked why the decision to partner with Interlink. “When we were going through the process of researching ride manufacturers over several years, we found Interlink while attending one of the IAAPA shows,” Bertch said. “Interlink specializes in water rides, and we determined that they produced a nice quality product at a competitive price. In addition, they were pleasant and helpful to work with throughout the project.”

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Surge — a Chance Rides Freestyle ride — will debut at Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk in 2024. COURTESY CHANCE RIDES

Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk preps two additions for 2024

AT: Pam Sherborne
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SANTA CRUZ, Calif. — Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk officials have announced the arrival of two new rides for the 2024 season, including a 65-foot **Chance Rides** wheel, which the park, located in Santa Cruz, California, named Dream Wheel.

“Ferris wheels are as much a part of a classic seaside amusement park experience as wooden roller coasters, carousels and cotton candy,” said **Kris Reyes**, Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk spokesperson. “We are thrilled to add Dream Wheel to our lineup of amazing rides, and I know our guests will love the stunning views.”

The Dream Wheel is a modern take on a quintessential seaside amusement park Ferris wheel. Standing just under 65 feet tall, this family-friendly ride contains 15 colorful gondolas, each capable of seating four adults or six children.

The ride is suitable for riders with a low thrill-seeking threshold and will provide stunning views of the Boardwalk, Monterey Bay, downtown Santa Cruz and the majestic coastline.

This wheel is tentatively scheduled to open around spring break, although an exact opening date has not been announced.

The second ride arriving in 2024 is named Surge. Seating up to 24 people, this unique spin on a classic thrill ride will provide Boardwalk guests with 360 degrees of adrenaline-packed excitement. Surge is also manufactured by Chance Rides. It is called Freestyle in the company's catalog. It has a classic spinning, tilting motion with outward-facing seating, which provides easy entry for loading and unloading.

It has a pre-programmed, electric variable-speed drive that offers a variety of ride experiences. The ride is available in a permanent version, as well as a portable, 48-foot trailer. It is tentatively scheduled to open at the Boardwalk around Memorial Day weekend.

Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk has a history dating back to 1904 when a local businessman, **Fred Swanton**, secured funding and government support to build the **Neptune Casino**. Unfortunately, it burned to the ground two years later, but that didn't stop Swanton from starting to raise funds for a second casino, as well as other tourist attractions, which opened in 1907.

The park's first thrill ride, a roller coaster known as the L.A. Thompson Scenic Railway opened in 1908. The Loeff Carousel opened in 1911. In 1924 the Giant Dipper wooden roller coaster opened.

Ferris wheels have been a part of the Boardwalk's rich history, dating back to 1925, when the first wheel was installed. In 1945, a small kiddie wheel opened for operations and thrilled young visitors until it was removed in 1970.

The Boardwalk's previous Ferris wheel opened in 1959 near the location of the Pirate Ship ride. The wheel was moved to the Boardwalk's lower end in time for the 1984 season, where it operated until it was removed at the end of the 2017 summer season.

Along with a variety of other rides and attractions, the park offers midway games, indoor arcades and mini golf.

• beachboardwalk.com



A new \$2.5 million welcome center is under construction at **Fairytale Town**, located in Sacramento, California. An opening date is expected in April 2024.

The new welcome center project will transform the entrance of the park, which is located in Sacramento's William Land Park near the **Sacramento Zoo**. According to Fairytale Town officials, the welcome center will include more restrooms and a gift shop that will be distinguished with a clock tower.

Fairytale Town has been a family-friendly staple in Sacramento since it opened in 1959. The 3.5-acre theme park has 26 playsets based on nursery rhymes and fairytales, along with farm animals, two performing arts stages and multiple gardens.

More than 250,000 people visit the children's theme park every year, according to Fairytale Town's website.

Officials of **Enchanted Kingdom** theme park, Manila, Philippines, are eyeing plans for the future after celebrating its 28th anniversary.

Among its plans is the Cultural Village, which will highlight rides and attractions focused on Filipino culture and history.

The popular tourist spot is also planning to put branded dining outlets in its portico area beside the park's front gates.

Beginning Dec. 17, Enchanted Kingdom will be open every day of the week in anticipation of the holiday season.

ZooTampa at **Lowry Park** in Tampa, Florida, has reported another year of record attendance.

About 1.17 million guests entered the park in fiscal 2023, the Tampa nonprofit announced last month. That is slightly higher than the 1.15 million mark set in fiscal 2022 and the 1.1 million it brought in two years ago.

Twenty-one years ago, ZooTampa was attracting almost half of what it does today, with just over 683,000 visitors.

The growing attendance figures come amid plans to expand the zoo's reach with additional capital investment.

Officials with the **American Heartland** theme park announced last month that by the end of October, ground will be broken for phase one of the development.

The land was approved for both the theme park and the RV park and campground to be called **Three Ponies RV Park and Campground**.

The **Andy Warhol Museum** in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has announced plans to expand with a \$45 million events venue.

The entertainment project is part of the museum's Pop District initiative and is proposed to build on an existing museum parking lot, according to the museum's officials. They have presented plans for the project to the city's planning commission.

The proposed site is around 58,000 square feet, including a first-floor concert venue with standing room for up to 1,000 people, a second-floor mezzanine and an event space that could hold up to 360 people on the fourth floor. The third floor is planned for use of offices and support spaces.

Guest experience platform **Attractions.io** has launched a first for the attractions industry, with a new addition to the mobile app of popular British theme park **Alton Towers** offering dynamic lighting dependent on the time of day.

Adjusting in real time to mirror ambient light within the **Merlin**-operated park, the interactive map will transition to reflect its environment for after-dark events at Alton Towers, including the popular Scarefest and Ultimate Fireworks Spectacular offerings.

The enhanced night mode on the map also reflects moonlight from bodies of water in the park, including the iconic lake at the front of the towers. Attractions.io said this detail ensures guests are not just informed but immersed in a setting where technology and nature converge to enhance the visual and sensory experience.

Once Upon a Cowboy in Tomball, Texas, is now open. A cowboy and dinosaur theme park that offers a blend of family-friendly attractions, the park opened Sept. 15.

General admission is \$29.99 per person for three hours of park access. Some attractions include Journey Through the Sands, an archeological expedition, and Dino Encounters with life-like animatronic dinosaurs.

The park has several other attractions, such as Dinorah's Treasures Mine, dino scooters, ax-throwing, outdoor laser tag, a virtual reality ride and escape rooms.

The park also offers birthday packages and group rates for corporate events.

Fans of a popular ride at the **Drayton Manor Resort** in Staffordshire, U.K., had until Nov. 5 to ride the attraction before it closes and undergoes a major change. Shockwave is one of three **Intamin** stand-up roller coasters and the last one remaining — the other two have both been closed. The white-knuckle ride opened in 1994. It reaches speeds of 53 mph. Soon, the ride will be changed to a new sit-down train.

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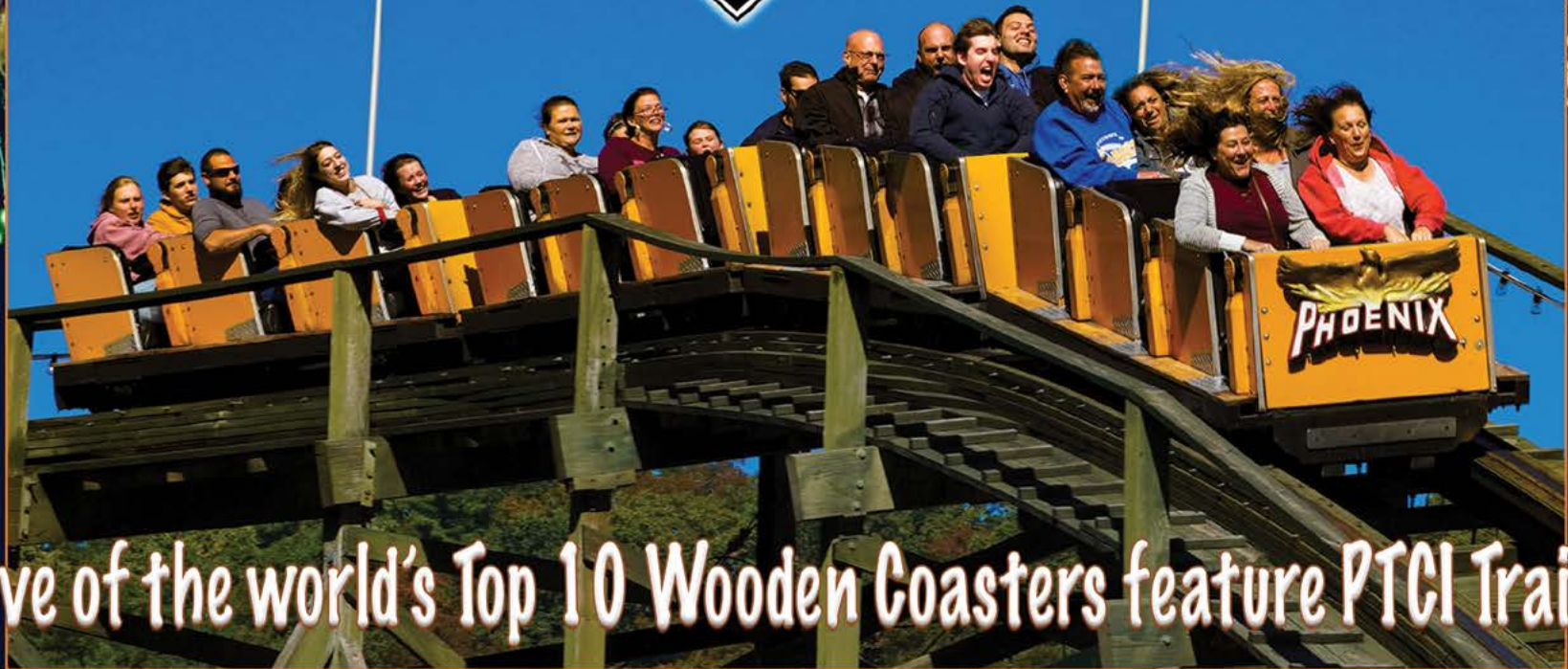
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Zamperla classics go big with Magic Bikes XL and Go Go Bounce

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

VICENTINA, Italy — One of the biggest names in ride manufacturing is Zamperla. The company's portfolio has continuously offered a broad range of children's and family rides to bigger thrills. Two best-sellers are receiving a reimagined makeover for larger capacity.

"The decision to expand didn't necessarily come from park requests but from our ability not only to fulfill customer demands but also to anticipate them, thanks to our extensive experience in the market and the fact that we are also park operators ourselves," said **Ramon Rosario**, director of sales.

For years, Zamperla's Jump Around has been a staple in numerous kids' areas in parks. Fanciful gondolas have ranged from animals to vehicles to themed objects. A new, larger version has magnified not only the ride experience, but also the number of people who can ride at once. Called Go Go Bounce 8.4, this grander version features eight arms with carriages that hold four people (two children and two adults).

"The Jump Around has been a very popular ride but has limited capacity with 12 kids and 6 adults. We wanted to take this concept to the next level,



The Magic Bikes XL will increase capacity to 48 riders. COURTESY ZAMPERLA

nearly doubling the capacity to 32 riders to keep the line moving," Rosario told *Amusement Today*. "While the Jump Around is a complementary ride to go along with other rides, with the Gogo Bounce, we aimed to create a centerpiece attraction around which you can anchor a themed land."

To introduce the ride, Zamperla has chosen a monster truck theme for the vehicles.

"The monster truck theme is just one option," Rosario said. "One of Zamperla's strengths is our ability to customize themes on our rides. Choosing a large vehicle allows parks to theme the gondolas as it works best for them, Zamperla style."

The family thrill ride features a system of air cylinders that drive individual arm movements. The resulting bouncing patterns produce giggles and smiles. According to Zamperla, customized wave patterns and alternating jumps can provide different ride experiences.

"This makes the experience enjoyable both for spectators and riders, so you have fun twice: when you watch it and when you ride it," Rosario noted.

The Go Go Bounce 8.4 goes twice as high and twice as fast as the Jump Around. Individual lap bars secure each rider, regardless of size.

A second ride has also received a size upgrade. The company's Magic

Bikes have always offered interactivity for riders. As they pedal, the arm holding their vehicle rises.

With Magic Bikes XL, Zamperla has increased the capacity from 12 riders to 48.

"If you've been to a kiddie or family area on a busy day, you know sometimes the capacity is really needed," Rosario explained. "Since guests really like the ride, we want the experience to be available to them without them waiting so long."

When riders pedal, they cause their vehicle to fly higher. Because four riders are seated in two rows in each vehicle, AT asked what would happen if riders in the back didn't pedal, but those in the front did. Rosario explained that the

arm would still go up but perhaps not as quickly as if everyone was pedaling.

In a rendering of the new ride, beautiful zeppelins are shown. Zamperla points out that any theme can be used and that the creative team is also excited about a medieval flying machine look.

"The visual appeal and theming opportunities can hold down an area the same way an Aero Top Jet would do this in the past. We did not want to just increase the capacity, we wanted to create a large presence of both rides within the park," Rosario told AT.

Zamperla is excited to showcase the Go Go Bounce 8.4 on the IAAPA Expo trade show floor.



The new, enlarged Go Go Bounce 8.4 will travel twice as high and twice as fast than its predecessor, Jump Around. Rider capacity increases to 32 guests. COURTESY ZAMPERLA



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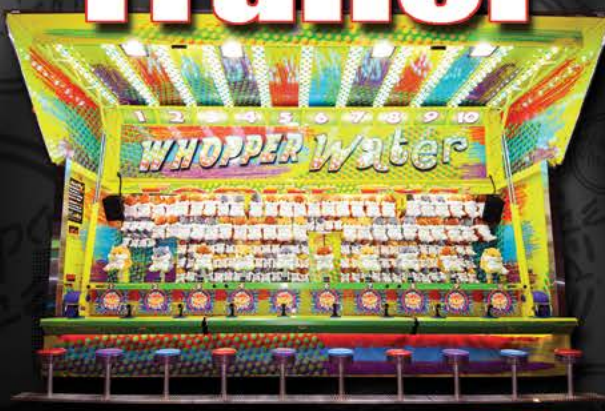


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Unleashed Brands launches foundation to empower at-risk youth

DALLAS — Unleashed Brands — parent company of Urban Air Adventure Parks — announced the launch of the Unleashed Brands Foundation, an organization that's committed to empowering at-risk youth and providing them with the resources needed to successfully transition to adulthood through education, financial support and volunteerism efforts.

CEO Michael Browning founded Unleashed Brands to positively impact the lives of kids by providing fun, engaging and inspiring experiences that help them become who they're destined to be — and this mission of helping youth achieve greatness is the reason why Browning and his wife,



Melissa, started the foundation. The foundation serves as an overarching platform to deepen Unleashed Brands' investment in helping youth reach their potential through strategic partnerships with like-minded organizations.

As lifelong entrepreneurs, the Brownings have always placed an importance on philanthropic initiatives

and giving back in the communities in which they serve. From toy and school drives to offering free birthday parties for foster children to hosting private events for at-risk youth, giving back and supporting youth is what's most important to the Brownings and their franchisees and ultimate purpose for launching the foundation.

As part of the launch, the Brownings have personally committed \$1 million that will directly support the Foundation's eight at-risk youth-focused organization partners, including Foster Love, Court Appointed Special Advocates, Guardian Ad Litem, HopeKids, A Kid Again, The Leukemia and

Lymphoma Society (LLS), Autism Speaks, Hank's Friends and the Boys & Girls Clubs of America.

Unleashed Brands Foundation and LLS are working together to donate 40,000 pairs of grippy socks this year to youth undergoing treatments for leukemia and lymphoma. This partnership, along with the others, are a first of many as the Unleashed Brands Foundation seeks grant-giving opportunities with organizations nationwide that have a similar mission of helping youth and their families.

"My wife and I have always had heart for helping youth, specifically those in foster homes, kids with life-

threatening medical conditions, and lower income families, by giving them the resources needed for a better future — and the launch of the Unleashed Brands Foundation will allow us to continue to do just that in even more impactful ways," said Browning. "Unleashed Brands is a youth enrichment brand with a goal of helping kids reach new heights in all that we do, so helping those in at-risk situations is a natural fit for us. Through this Foundation, we're looking to further impact the lives of those facing hardships with monetary donations and uplifting experiences and opportunities."



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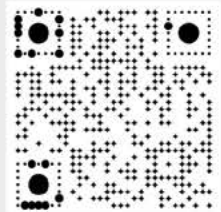
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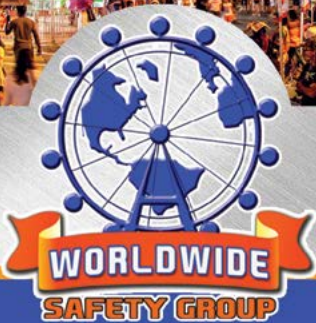
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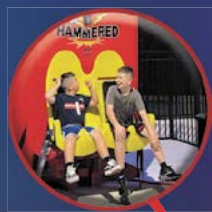
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FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL

AT: John W.C. Robinson
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Jersey Jack Pinball (JJP) has partnered with musical icon **Elton John** on its official Elton John Pinball, which is now available for purchase.

The pinball machine — designed and manufactured in the U.S. by JJP in close collaboration with Elton John — ushers in a new era of kinetic entertainment, featuring state-of-the-art technology, innovative design and a dynamic music experience, including songs such as "Rocket Man," "Tiny Dancer," "Bennie And The Jets" and many more of Elton's greatest hits.

"Having Elton John actively involved in the creative process sets a new standard for pinball machines and showcases the passion and artistry that go into every aspect of JJP games," said the game's Hall of Fame designer Steve Ritchie.

Streaming service provider **Netflix** will soon be opening locations called **Netflix House** that will allow fans to fully immerse themselves in their favorite shows.

The company's vice president of consumer products made the announcement during an interview with *Bloomberg*.

Fans will be able to shop for themed products, eat food based on a show and play some games, too. The locations will have rotating installations.

Netflix is aiming to launch the first two locations in the United States in 2025 before expanding globally. The exact locations have yet to be announced.

Golf entertainment venue **Topgolf** is opening its first location in Massachusetts in November. The Dallas-based company announced that it will open TopGolf in Canton, Massachusetts, on Nov. 3.

Topgolf's first Massachusetts location is the company's 84th in the U.S. and 94th worldwide. The company first announced plans to open in the Boston area in 2022.

"Opening our first venue in Massachusetts is a huge milestone for us, and we can't wait to introduce our style of play to the Boston area," Topgolf COO **Gen Gray** said in a press release. "There's been a ton of excitement within the Topgolf family about this venue opening, and we're so excited to see it come to life."

Funded by a group of local investors, construction on **The Putt Club**

began this fall in East Peoria, Illinois. **J.R. Runkel**, an agent and partner with **Fortner Insurance Agency, Inc.**, and an investor in the project, said construction should be completed in February 2024.

"We're going to have 18 indoor and 18 outdoor professionally designed miniature golf holes where people can enjoy a putting experience," said Runkel. "We're also going to have a full restaurant and bar that's going to be top notch. It should be a great place for corporate events and family outings."

In addition to miniature golf and a restaurant, The Putt Club will offer games for all ages, as well as two indoor and two outdoor cabanas for private events. The cabanas will each be equipped with televisions and seating for 10 to 12 people.

The **One Niagara Welcome Center** is looking to bring in tourists with a high-tech approach.

We looked into developing an arcade," said **Joe Grenga**, son of operating partner **Paul Grenga**. "We wanted it to be state-of-the-art with VR."

After research and soft openings, now Niagara Falls features the **Vortex VR Arcade**. The facility held a ribbon cutting on October 29, 2023.

The two flagship attractions are the Omni Arena and a VR dark ride. The Omni Arena has four people playing eight different VR games on omnidirectional treadmills. The dark ride is described as a seven-dimension experience with 3D glasses, seats moving in every direction and even high winds blowing participants.

Other VR experiences inside have chairs simulating various motions, an X-ship that can simulate a roller coaster and a car-racing station. Elsewhere in the arcade is standard game fare with ski ball, shooting, racing, crane, coin pushing and basketball games.

Mission Laser announced the opening of a new, state-of-the-art laser tag arena in its Norfolk, Virginia, location. The highly anticipated launch took place on October 27.

"We are thrilled to bring our laser tag experience to the Norfolk community," said **Trip Roberts**, director of sales and operations at Mission Laser. "Our mission is to provide a safe space for family and friends to bond, have fun, and create lasting memories."

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Caribe Resort uses AGS system to withstand hurricane force winds

ORANGE BEACH, Ala. — Caribe Resort in Orange Beach, Alabama, along the state's Gulf Coast, recently engaged Adventure Golf and Sports (AGS) to replace a concrete-built miniature golf course on the rooftop of a parking deck that had been severely damaged when Hurricane Sally came ashore in 2020.

While the three 13-story towers of condominiums and vacation rentals that were originally built 16 years ago with poured concrete and post tensioned slabs at the resort were relatively undamaged, the mini golf course and some other outdoor amenities at the resort suffered severe damage and needed renovations estimated at \$3 to \$4 million.

"Since then we have done a tremendous amount of upgrades to the property," said Stan Szapiel, general manager of Caribe Resort. "And when we

started looking at the amenities at our resort, we said, 'Hey, let's start looking at everything and really doing a good overall renovation to the property.'

"When we got to the mini golf, we said 'this just doesn't cut it in today's times.' Our guests and our owners expect spectacular results from our renovation."

AGS proposed using their Custom Modular System that is much lighter in weight than concrete and features a proprietary anchoring system that is safe, secure and even seaworthy. AGS says it is able to withstand heavy 24/7 foot traffic in all kinds of weather — from the harsh Caribbean sun and salt water to monsoon rains, wide temperature fluctuations and hurricane-force winds.

"Their team was super professional," said Szapeil. "[AGS] gave us a truly



The AGS Custom Modular System installed at Caribe Resort can withstand everything from harsh sunlight and salt water to monsoon rains, wide temperature fluctuations and hurricane-force winds. COURTESY AGS

three-dimensional links course that has accents with topography; it's aesthetically exceptional looking.

"The benefit of this thing also is that when it rains, we have drainage up there. This [course] is on top of a deck where we

don't want to pool water into this area. So drainage was taken into consideration with the elevations that they did so they were able to create proper drainage and proper elevation so that we don't have standing water after a big storm.

And that was a big plus to us because down here along the Gulf Coast. We get pop-up showers throughout the busy season and clearly it's ready to go soon after it rains. It all drains fully. And we have ADA access throughout the course."

Caribe Resort was pleased with the end result.

"We've got a full 18-hole course," commented Szapeil. "This is really a three-dimensional kind of aspect and look and feel, whereas the other [course] was pretty flat. We had a little bit of elevation with the old course but not that much. It was a very plain, open course. Here, the elevations give it a true, three-dimensional feel that, when you're playing through it, you've got some more challenges other than flat surfaces. So this is so much more interesting and fun to play."

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FAIRS

Gates of Washington State Fair welcome just over a million guests

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

PUYALLUP, Wash. – This year, during its 20-day operation, 973,000 heeded the call from the **Washington State Fair** with the theme “See You at the Fair.”

“We had a great 18 days of pretty great weather, then it rained the last weekend,” said **Renee McClain**, CEO of the fair.

“Rain [was] heavy Saturday and Sunday. Business [was] still good in the rain,” said **Ron Burback, Sr.**, owner of **Funtastic Traveling Shows**.

The Portland, Oregon-based carnival again operated the ride midway. There were 65 total rides, 31 of which were kiddie ones, along with 58 games and four food stands. Revolution 360 (**Technical Park**) made its first appearance at the fair. The three most popular rides were the Giant Slide (**Fred Pittroff**), Classic



Coaster, the wooden roller coaster (**John A. Miller**) and Space Shot (**S & S Rides**). The rides operate for just a couple of weeks per year during the spring fair in April and during the fair in September. Eight rides are either permanent or remain on the grounds year-round in this unusual arrangement.

The carnival did not disclose ride midway revenue, only indicating it was “very good.” When asked about doing business with the fair, Burback said, “They’re good people to work with.”

“We’ve had a long-standing, great relationship with Funtastic,” said McClain. “They’re a great organization to work with.”



There were 65 total rides, 31 of which were kiddie ones, along with 58 games and four food stands. COURTESY WASHINGTON STATE FAIR

Looking back on the entire season, Funtastic Shows felt this was the worst year ever for attracting people to work for the carnival. To accommodate, the company supplemented the supply with help from friends. “We had a good

year, but our regular crew paid a heavy price. It was an amazing feat they pulled off. I don’t know how they did it,” said Burback.

A new vendor called **The Big Cheese** served up everything cheesy including cheddar soft-serve ice

cream. Another first-timer, **Flaco's Tacos**, offered El pastor tacos as well. **Churreria** sold churros.

A new attraction was a Bee Box activity at The Farm at SillyVille. This area

▶ See **WASHINGTON**, page 44

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► WASHINGTON

Continued from page 43

is Washington's food and farming story: a free, exciting, hands-on exhibit.

There were online savings opportunities for gate admission, a season pass, Xfinity dizzy pass (rides), ride and game tickets, as well as discount parking and reserved parking. Promotions included an opening day food drive, free admission for kids on opening weekend and military Mondays, among others.

The media mix expenditures included 26% outdoor, 23% online marketing, 19% targeted TV and 14% radio. "We do very little print anymore," said McClain.

Entertainment included an opening weekend sell-out with Kane Brown and the Zac Brown Band. Most of the ground entertainment is free and focuses on tribute bands, which have become very popular.



New this year was Revolution 360 from Technical Park (above left). The three most popular rides were the Giant Slide; Classic Coaster — the fair's wooden roller coaster — and Space Shot. Eight of the rides at the Washington State Fair are either permanent or remain on the grounds year-round in this unusual arrangement. COURTESY WASHINGTON STATE FAIR

"We're looking at doing some changes in our grounds in creating a stage where during the day we have traditional fare and entertainment; we have magicians and jugglers — traditional acts. Later in the day, it all becomes tribute bands where we have one basically every night," said McClain.

When asked what sets the fair apart from others,

McClain told *Amusement Today*: "I think what makes us very unique is that we have the largest fair in a smaller city, so we have to be very mindful of our footprint. We have traffic issues that we can't control because we don't have as many transit options out there. But it also makes us have to work smarter when we have a small foot-

print. You have to be very mindful of where you place things inside your grounds. I think that actually makes you more efficient."

This was McClain's first full year as CEO. "I've been in this organization for 27 years. I was the chief financial officer before. We are very excited about the future. There are going to be some very significant

changes made. We're going through our own internal master plan. We're going to really be transforming our grounds in 2024, but also in 2025 as it's our 125th anniversary and that is really going to be transformational," McClain said.

The 2024 edition takes place August 30 — September 22.

•thefair.com



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EXIT

Records set on five days during event

Rain dampens the overall attendance at New England's Big E

AT: Ron Gustafson
Special to Amusement Today

WEST SPRINGFIELD, Mass. — Wet weather hampered **The Big E**, but the exposition still managed to welcome well over a million guests and mark a number of record-setting days.

Total attendance was 1,427,234 for the 17-day run (Sept. 15-Oct. 1), down from 1.6 million in 2022.

Showers and full days of rain had an impact on overall attendance, but when the sun was out, so were the crowds.

According to fair officials, attendance records were set on these five days: Sept. 19 – 57,802; Sept. 22 – 97,477; Sept. 27 – 95,689; Sept. 28 – 108,962; and Oct. 1 – 170,471.

More than three inches of rain fell on the final Friday of the fair, creating a muddy parking dilemma on the grounds, as well as adjacent facilities.

Eugene Cassidy, president and CEO of the **Eastern States Exposition (ESE)**, which hosts **The Big E**, said it was the most rain he had seen during his 30-year tenure.

“We had some major traffic issues,” he noted. “All resulting from the fact that people couldn't come on the day they had planned because of bad weather. And to complicate things, the rain made our parking lots — along with all of the adjacent ones — mud puddles. It was difficult to get traffic off the road.”

Fair admission was \$20 for adults and \$12 for kids 6-12. Onsite parking was \$10.



North American Midway Entertainment provided more than 40 rides on the Midway at The Big E. Jose's Feliciano (below) was a featured performer at The Big E's Court Of Honor stage. COURTESY THE BIG E

Shows did go on The **Big E Arena**, sponsored by **Truly Hard Seltzer**, featured classic rockers **John Fogerty** and **Bachman-Turner Overdrive**. Other headliner acts were **Jimmy Eat World**, **Parker McCollum**, **Quinn XCII**, **Chris Young**, **Zedd**, **Third Eye Blind** and **I Love the 90s**. Separate admission was required for all of the arena shows.

Entertainment with fair admission included **The Big E Circus Spectacular**, **The Big Parade**, **Beyond Belief**, **Swiftly Swine Racing Pigs**, **Dolly's Honky Tonk**, **Pirate Man Dan**, **Mobile Glass Studio** and **Roaming Railroad**.

Also, the **Court of Honor Stage**, sponsored by **MattressFirm**, had a stellar line-up of acts: **Celtic Angels**, **Molly Hatchet**, **Gaelic Storm**, **Vertical Horizon**, **Humble Pie**, **Legacy**, **O-Town**, **Robert Davi Sings Sinatra**.

In addition, **Dokken**, **Banachek's Mind Games Live**, **Megan Moroney**, **Chubby Checker**, **Mike DelGuidice**, **José Feliciano**, **Ginuwine**, **Dire Straits Legacy**, **Motown & More**, **Nicky Youre**, and **Lonestar**.

On the midway North American Midway Entertainment fielded 48 rides, including **Super Wheel (Bussink)**, **Star Dancer (Technical Park)**,



double-deck merry-go-round (Chance Rides), **Matterhorn (Wisdom Rides of America)**, **Ring of Fire (Larson)** and **Vertigo (A.R.M. USA)**.

Kiddieland fea-

tured three **Hampton Umbrella Rides**, **Fire Chief (Zamperla)**, **Traffic Jam (SBF/Visa)** and more.

Wristbands were available Monday through Friday for \$35 each, or a book of 26 tickets for the same price. Tickets were valid for use every day. Rides required three to seven tickets.

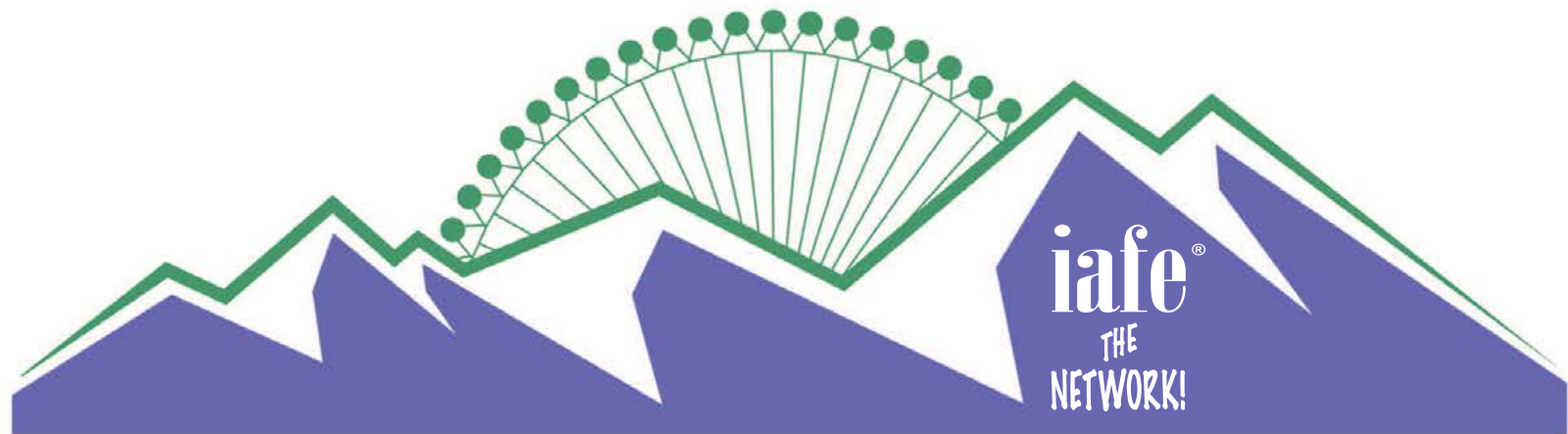
Lots to eat

The Big E welcomed more than 68 new additions to the dining experience, including **Bacon Bomb Empanadas**

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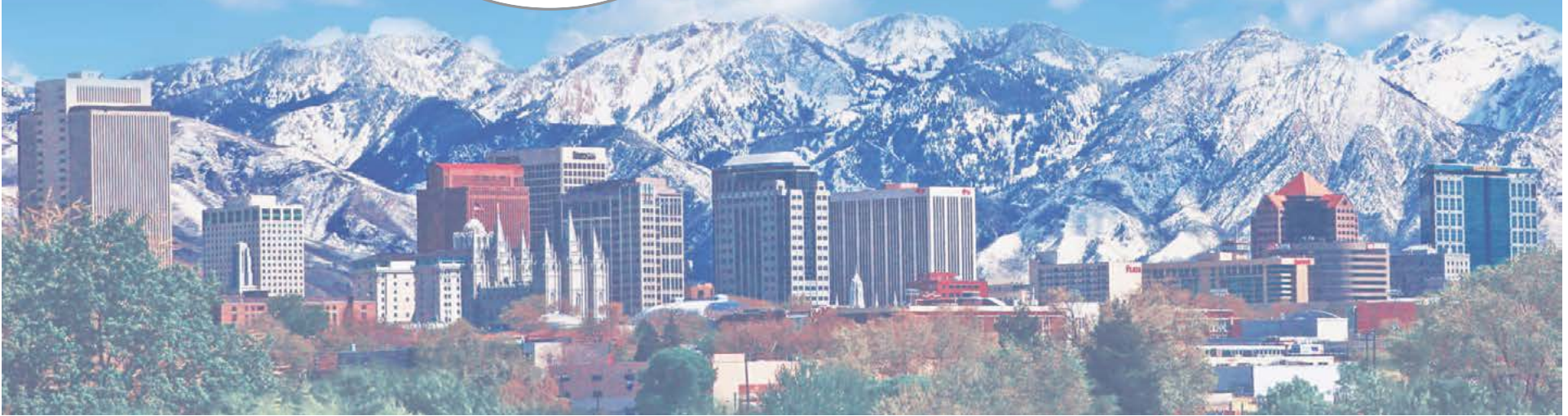
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► **BIG E**

Continued from page 46

at Dolly's Honky Tonk, Ferrindino, Maple La3Plata, Luann's Bakery, Top the Crust and Waffleicious.

Agriculture

ESE hosted competitions for dairy and beef cattle, sheep, goats, alpacas and llamas, swine, giant pumpkins and more, including four national dairy cattle shows and one national sheep show.

Thousands of 4-Hers and Future Farmers of America youth participated in competitions and demonstrations. The Eastern States Farmers Market and Wine Barn offered fairgoers a variety of agricultural demonstrations, cooking demonstrations, samples from The Big E Northeast Gold Wine, Cider & Perry Competition, wine slushies and cheese plates in the Wine Café.



North American Midway Entertainment's midway included a Super Wheel, Star Dancer, double-deck merry-go-round, Matterhorn, Ring of Fire and Vertigo. COURTESY THE BIG E

New England traditions

Each state-building along the Avenue of States brought fairgoers an authentic New England experience.

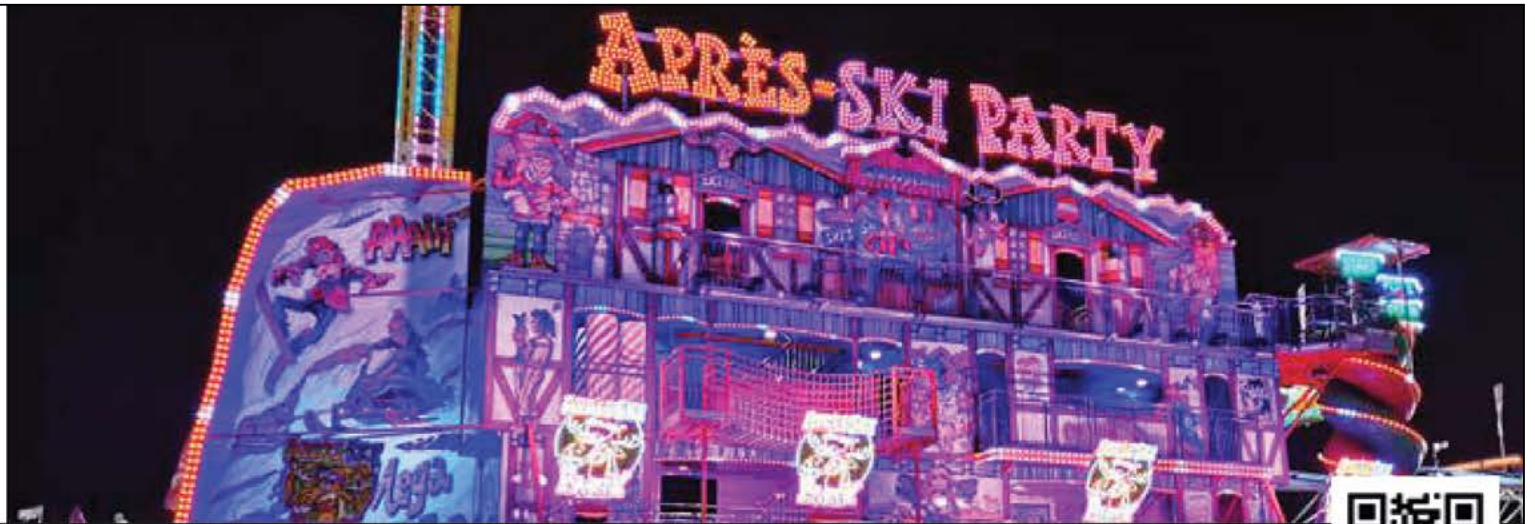
Storowton Village Museum offered tours of its 19th-century buildings, staffed with "villagers" going about their daily routines, as well as

historic demonstrations and glassblowing on the Green.

Home of The Big E's Creative Arts Department, the New England Center

housed displays of entries and winners in competitions for quilting, lace making,

► See BIG E, page 50



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A record was broken at this year's **Bloomsburg Fair** (Pennsylvania) for the heaviest pumpkin in the fair's history — weighing in at 1,621 pounds. Contestants grew their pumpkins from seedlings within a given time-frame before the late September fair. Officials said the previous record holder, set in 2021, weighed 1,341 pounds.

This year's winner was **Robert Broyan** from Berwick, Pennsylvania. Broyan spent \$90 on seed and supplies. He started growing the prize-winning pumpkin indoors before he moved it outdoors later on. "It takes a lot of tender love and care. They have to keep the seed warm for so long before they can replant it and get it to grow," **Faith Oppel**, secretary of the agriculture building told *Fox 56, WOLF-TV*.

"One of the biggest highlights of this building is to come in and see who has the biggest pumpkin. The kids just love it. It's just a tradition I think everybody likes to come and check out."

Amusements of America had the mid-way contract with some rides booked in from **SwikaS Amusements** and **Bartlebaugh Amusements**.

Micaela Halvorson is no longer the coordinator of the **Jefferson County Fairgrounds**, Madras, Oregon. Fair Board Chair **Al Short** chose not to comment on the reason for her departure. Halvorson's last day was October 23.

She took over the position on July 1, 2022, less than a month before the largest annual event for the fairgrounds, the **Jefferson County Fair and Rodeo**. Halvorson came to



MIDWAYSCENE

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

the position with eight years of experience working for the **Crook County Fairgrounds**, Prineville, Oregon.

Short says the board posted the position to find a replacement, and it has a plan in place. In the meantime, County Building and Grounds Director **Tony Anderson** has picked up coordinator responsibilities with assistance from the fair board.

The next fair returns July 24–27, 2024 with **Paul Maurer Shows** as the ride provider.

In mid-September, **Helm & Sons Amusements** held a team appreciation day. To show their gratitude for their hard-working staff, **Davey** and **Colleen Helm** took everyone to the **Under Armour** store in Tulare, California, to purchase a pair of shoes or any item of their choice. On the carnival operator's Facebook page, they said, "Thank you to all of our staff for your endless hard work and commitment and for making Helm & Sons Amusements a safe, fun and exciting workplace. Special thanks to Under Armour and their staff for hosting us!" Under Armour is a sportswear company that manufactures footwear and apparel.

Marla Calico, **International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE)** president and CEO, recently released season four of her podcast series: *Marla by the Numbers*. The

topics include:

- Two Trends and Five Tips for Grounds Entertainment
- Three Big Ideas for Growing the Fair (and Fairgrounds) of the Future
- Four Stories of Unique Fair Visits in Zone One
- 10 Tips for Engaging the Community (Our Fair Cares)
- Five Ways To Be an Agfluencer
- Three Ways Fairs Plan for Animal Disease Response
- Four Ideas for Keeping Yourself Sane & Healthy During Stressful Times
- Five Keys to Effective Ag Education Initiatives

All the episodes are available online on the IAFE website, **Spotify**, **Apple Podcasts** and other streaming services.

Throughout 2023, IAFE members were offered:

- \$62,000 in scholarship opportunities
- 33 online education sessions
- 21 committees to network within
- Promotion and connection with more than 1,700 IAFE members through an online directory search feature
- Six issues of the *Fairs & Expos Magazine* — an industry-leading publication
- Five contests, comprised of 49 categories of competition
- The Management Conference in St. Louis
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►BIG E

Continued from page 48 rug hooking, sewing, doll making and knitting competitions. The department had 1,405 total entries on display throughout all contests and judged 174 quilts.

About The Big E

The Big E is America's only multi-state fair celebrating the rich history, culture and traditions of the six New England states. As the principal event of ESE, The Big E has presented the finest livestock; agriculture; innovative commercial, industrial and artistic developments; and the highest caliber of varied entertainment to the people of the northeastern United States for more than a century. The 17-day event has grown to become the largest fair in the Northeast.

The 2024 edition is slated for Sept. 13-29.

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WATER PARKS & RECREATION

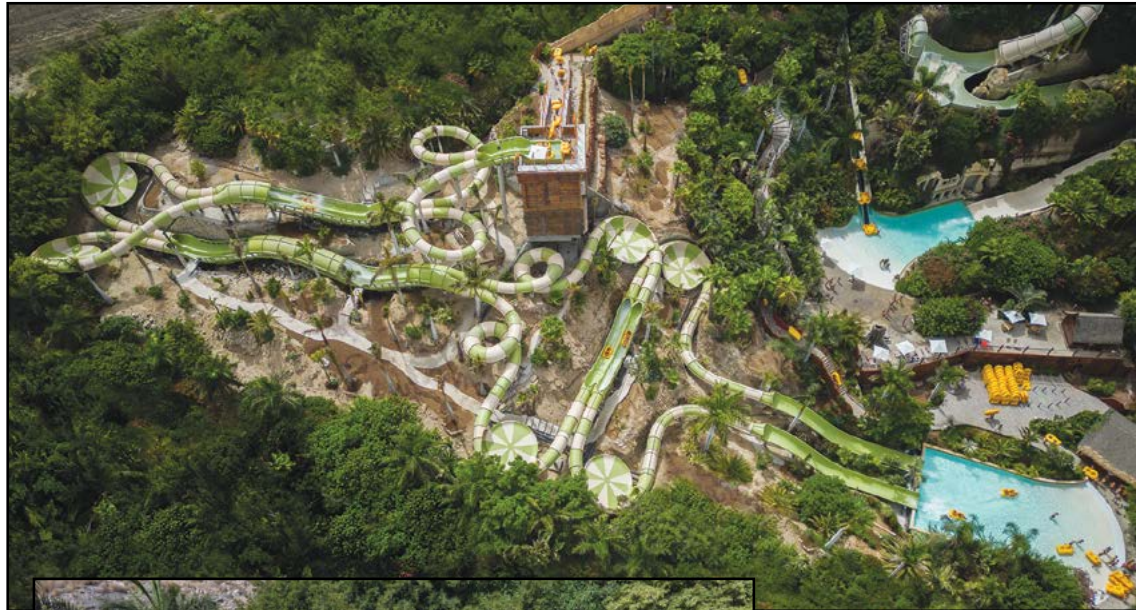
▶ EpicSurf provides surf wave technology to deadmau5 — page 54 / News Splash — page 54

Siam Park, ProSlide team up for dueling PipelineBlast water coaster

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

COSTA ADEJE, Spain — This past summer, **Siam Park** on Spain's Canary Islands opened Saifa, one of the largest dueling water coasters in the world. Saifa was supplied by **ProSlide Technology** of Ottawa, Ontario, with which Siam Park has had a long relationship going back to the park's opening in 2008 when ProSlide supplied the park with 11 water attractions.

Although located in Spain, Siam Park features a spectacular Thai theme that is carried through all of its waterslides, buildings and restaurants. The new attraction, Saifa, means lightning in Thai (Siamese). Saifa takes the form of a ProSlide dueling PipelineBlast. Although using the same technology as the popular RocketBlast uphill water coasters, a PipelineBlast has smaller rafts that hold two riders. With a smaller raft, the uphill inclines can be steeper, but still require less power than the typical RocketBlast uphill water coaster. To address capacity, Siam opted for a racing/dueling attraction, thereby doubling capacity. As with several of its high-profile slides, ProSlide took advantage of the somewhat challenging topography in the park to allow the slide to use natural drops and valleys. In keeping with the tropical theme, the slide colors are muted green and tan to blend with the park's natural beauty comprised of



native rock formations and lush vegetation.

The two slides start together and follow nearly identical routes as thrill seekers race at lightning speed along 306 meters (1,003 feet) of turns, crossovers and excitement, making it the longest ride in the park.

At the top of an elaborately themed 36-foot stone tower, riders board their two-person rafts. Following a small drop, the rafts quickly diverge into a unique 360-degree enclosed spiral drop, only to join up again for the first uphill blast. The paths split again as riders

encounter the first pair of inward-facing flying saucers where competitors will be able to see their opponents as they navigate the high-speed turn of the saucer. The rafts are reunited as they exit the saucers. The double uphill blast that follows takes riders to the highest point of the natural topography where they will once again diverge and encounter an enclosed spiral and open saucer section that sets them up for the dueling portion where the rafts first plunge toward each other for a face-to-face encounter, then head into the final blast as they rocket away from each

The above drone shot reveals the massive size of Saifa and its use of the existing topography of the land. The first pair of inward-facing saucers (left) allows riders in opposing rafts to see each other. COURTESY PROSLIDE TECHNOLOGY

other. A third pair of saucers brings the rafts back together for a final plunge down the hillside to the splashdown pool where the winner is determined.

Siam Park, located on Tenerife Island, is frequently recognized as one of the best and most beautiful water parks in the world. It has received **TripAdvisor's** Travelers' Choice Award multiple years in a row, the European Star Award for Best Park in Europe and a plaque for Merit in Tourism — a prestigious Award of the Council of Ministers of the Government of Spain.

Owner **Wolfgang Kiessling**, originally from

Germany, took frequent trips to the Canary Islands while working for a German charter airline. He fell in love with the islands and developed his first attraction, **Loro Parque**, a tropical parrot park with more than 150 parrots. It has since grown into a preserve for a variety of animal and plant species and now has a collection of more than 4,000 parrots.

When he decided to build a water park on Tenerife Island, he wanted the same tropical paradise theme that made Loro Parque so popular. On a visit to Thailand, he was impressed with the architecture there and decided his new park would have a blend of Thai architecture and a tropical oasis. Kiessling's son, **Christoph Kiessling**, was the driving force behind the development of Siam Park and currently serves as the general manager. Since the initial development with ProSlide in 2008, the park has added 18 signature water rides, including one of the first RocketBlast/FlyingSaucer combination slides in the world, a Tornado 24/TornadoWave 60 combo and the first ProSlide Mammoth fused with a double FlyingSaucer45.

Although governed by Spain, the eight Canary Islands lie much farther to the south off the coast of Africa, near the border of Morocco and Western Sahara. The subtropical climate makes it suitable for the water park to operate year-round.

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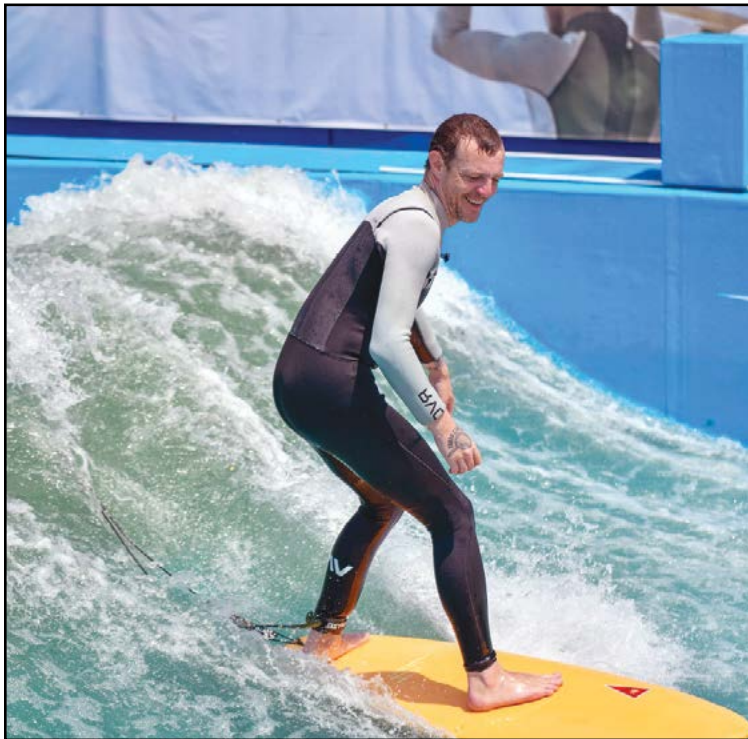
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Joel Zimmerman, known to his fans as deadmau5, enjoys surfing on an EpicSurf stationary wave. COURTESY ADG

EpicSurf providing surf wave technology to artist deadmau5

COHOES, New York — Aquatic Development Group (ADG) has announced its deep-water stationary surf wave, EpicSurf, has been chosen by world-renowned electronic musician and artist **deadmau5** as his surf wave technology provider.

Deadmau5, also known as **Joel Zimmerman**, is a highly influential and accomplished Canadian electronic music producer and performer known for his vast contributions to the genre.

He also enjoys spending his free time surfing. Over the last few years, deadmau5 has been seen wake surfing with celebrities such as World Champion Skimboarder **Austin Keen**, World Champion Wake Surfer **Jake Caster** and Kx5 music collaboration partner **Kaskadee**.

Caster, a professional wake surfer, crossed paths with Zimmerman — already an avid wakeboarder — at **Wake-to-Wake Watersports** in Turks and Caicos where he assumed the role of coach, furthering him to the sport.

Since the EpicSurf product launch, Caster actively participated in testing the EpicSurf wave and joined the myriad of surfers in utilizing the wave as a training tool and for fun. This summer, Zimmerman accompanied Caster to visit the EpicSurf demo wave in New York to practice his technique, spend the day on the wave and tour the factory headquarters which ultimately lead to his decision to choose EpicSurf as his surf wave technology partner.

EpicSurf is a deep-water stationary surf wave made with a real wave of water. Unlike sheet wave technology, this true deep-water wave brings a customizable real surfing experience to guests of all abilities. From beginners learning to surf, to experts perfecting their tricks and turns, to adaptive programming and surf therapy, EpicSurf's real wave surfing provides the ideal platform for training, advancing and enjoying the mental, emotional and physical benefits of surfing.

This first-of-its-kind surf system, made in the USA, produces real deep-waves from three to five feet for all riders. In a compact space, waves are easily customized for beginners learning to surf, to experts cross-training for their next ocean competition.

•epic.surf



NEWS SPLASH

AT: Jeffrey L. Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

A ceremonial “groundbreaking” took place in October on the first phase of a \$30 million revitalization project for the city of Shepherdsville, just south of Louisville, Kentucky. The first phase of the project is a new aquatic center that will include an eight-lane, 50-meter pool, a recreation pool and a splash pad to be located in an abandoned building that was a former warehouse. Parts of the warehouse will also be converted into pickleball courts.

With the project taking place on an already existing paved piece of land, the typical digging shovels of dirt was not possible; instead the “groundbreaking” consisted of cutting the caution tape that had closed off the property. Construction is expected to take two years.

Shepherdsville received a \$30 million loan from the **Kentucky League of Cities** to help start the project. The city will pay that back over the course of a 25-year period.

Additional phases will add soccer, baseball and football fields; a five-kilometer walking trail; a dog park; a 2,500-seat amphitheater; and a town square with benches, lighting and a new streetscape.

Progress has been made with the South Australian government's plans for a state-of-the-art **Adelaide Aquatic Center**. The new AU\$135 (US\$86) million facility is set to replace an existing center in North Adelaide at the northernmost extent of the Adelaide Park Lands.

The new center will include a 50-meter, 10-lane indoor pool; a 25-meter, six-lane outdoor pool; a warm-water indoor pool with a rehabilitation program; an indoor pool designated for learning; diving facilities; both indoor and outdoor play areas with waterslides and splash zones; spa, sauna, steam and locker rooms; gym and fitness area; and a cafe that will serve visitors to the aquatic center and the adjacent park lands.

“The plan we have developed in consultation with pool users and the broader community will also deliver significant benefits for ratepayers in the City of Adelaide — who will no longer have to spend more than a million dollars each year propping up a facility which is past its use-by-date,” said Minister for Transport and Infrastructure **Tom Koutsantonis**. “We’re getting on with the job and delivering what we committed to the people of South Australia — a brand new, significantly improved Adelaide Aquatic Centre.

The existing Aquatic Centre will close

in August 2024. The new project's expected completion is the summer of 2025-26.

Once the existing center closes, most current users, including those in learn-to-swim programs, will be accommodated at other facilities. The center's permanent staff will be redeployed to other facilities or other roles.

High energy costs have forced an early closure of **Alpamare Water Park** in Scarborough, England. The park closed in mid-October with plans to reopen in the spring.

In a statement on its website, Alpamare said: “We are unable to continue trading through the winter due to the ongoing high costs associated with our business (including the very high cost of energy needed to heat our facilities and pools in the winter).

During the closure, the park intends to look at ways to improve energy efficiency and reduce heating costs.

The facility opened in 2016 and features indoor and outdoor pools, waterslides and a spa.

Merlin Entertainments has proposed a water park addition to its **Chessington World of Adventures** resort in Chessington, England. Merlin wants to expand the existing **Safari Hotel** by adding an indoor water park that would include a wave pool, infinity pool, waterslides and an outdoor lazy river. As with the a similar Merlin property, **Alton Towers Resort**, the water park would be open all year round helping increase hotel occupancy rates in the quieter months when the main theme park is closed.

Simon Burge, strategic development director at the Chessington resort, said, “There is currently no water park within the M25 [motorway loop encircling London] so this would be a first for London and the Greater London borough as well.”

The proposal indicates that the new water park will be open to both day guests and those staying at the on-site hotels.

The water park would open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. under the plans, and its maximum capacity would be 1,250 people at any given time.

Burge said assessments showed there would be no significant increase in traffic levels during morning and evening peak hours. He added the resort was “confident that there won't be any noise issues” as the attraction would be mostly indoors.



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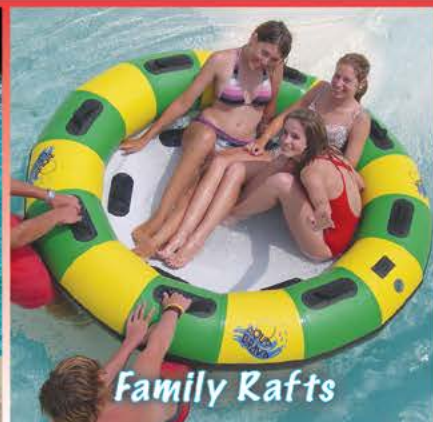
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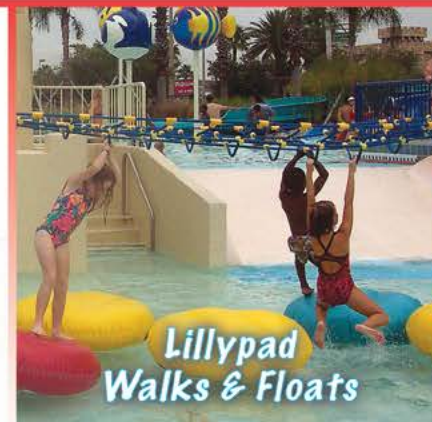
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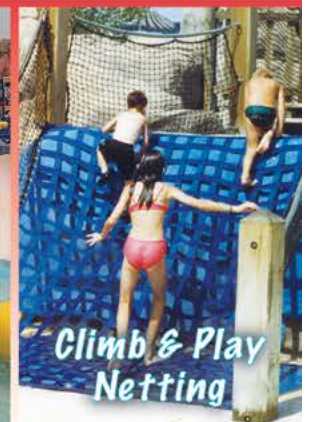
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Sidewinder Tubes & Rafts



Lily Pad Walks & Floats



Climb & Play Netting



► Story Land's finds niche with Nostalgia Nights — page 66 / Thinking rides with Rides 4 U's Len Soled — page 69

Theming company 3dxScenic sees new ownership to steer ship

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

BLUE ASH, Ohio — Founded in 1999 by **Iacono Productions**, **3dxScenic**, previously a subsidiary of **L!VE Technologies**, is a full-service custom theming fabrication studio, servicing the theme park industry as well as interior design firms and corporate branding. Theming includes interactive experiences, custom character sculpts and permanent structural elements that convert spaces from functional to immersive environments.

With close to a quarter century of experience, 3dxScenic is about to enter a new chapter.

3dxScenic served as the custom fabrication and scenic production arm of L!VE Technologies. L!VE would

engage with 3dxScenic for both their custom scenic needs as well as to order scenery from the catalog of rental décor in storage at its facility. 3dxScenic staff would also travel to L!VE events to install scenery, décor, and branding elements. But that partnership is morphing. There is now a change of ownership. Team members **Mark Rosenzweig** and **Matt Waldenmeyer** have now taken the helm.

"The change of ownership has come about because when L!VE Technologies was our owner, we were doing scenic projects for their live events," said new Chief Business Officer Rosenzweig. "When I was brought onto the team in 2020 to sell external projects to themed entertainment such as theme parks, museums, water parks and aquariums,

those started to conflict with internal [L!VE] projects. When you have a project, you need to keep your focus on that. L!VE's ownership came to us and said, 'This isn't working. You guys need to be independent.' It was a mutual agreement. What that does is allow L!VE to continue collaborating with 3dx, but now as a client."

"[The old way] was really trying to do two types of projects with the same resources," said Waldenmeyer, now COO. "When L!VE sold a live event

show, as a subsidiary, 3dx would often times have to take on the scenic elements for that project at the same moment we had to build an external project for themed entertainment. The live-event world is usually rapid-paced. Those projects came in usually with a shorter turnaround."

Now with the new ownership structure, that divided conflict is removed. A supervisor can go to the site and work with local construction workers instead of a larger team being sent to a live event.

When asked what will stay the same and what will be different, Waldenmeyer told *Amusement Today*, "Custom fabrication on more of a turn-key level will stay the same. We have the skills and the tools to produce custom-themed elements. What will be different

is without the live events, we will be able to be more streamlined. We're only focused on one type of project."

"Transparency, collaboration and integrity are the three hallmarks that we are aiming for as an organization both internally and externally," added Rosenzweig. "It's a two-way street between us and our client. We won't take on projects when we know we won't meet a deadline or meet a level of expectation for that project. We aren't a startup; we have the know-how, team, equipment and shop. But we are starting fresh with a 100 percent focus on themed entertainment."

3dx's largest themed entertainment project was in 2022 when it was the key sce-

► See 3DX, page 59

Falcon's Beyond rings market bell amid unprecedented growth

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO, Fla. — After preparing for many months, officials at **Falcon's Beyond** are thrilled to have passed a very significant milestone, closing the transaction to list as **FBYD** on the **Nasdaq**.

Representatives of Falcon's Beyond, a leader in immersive storytelling, rang the stock market bell on Oct. 6, 2023.

"Falcon's Beyond is going through a time of unprecedented growth, and by taking our company public, we can access resources to continue to soar as a global entertainment powerhouse and visionary leader in immersive storytelling," said **Simon Philips**, president, Falcon's Beyond. "We are excited to enter this new chapter and are confident in where we are going as an innovative business."

Philips said that right now, the company's priority is to take Falcon's Beyond into an exciting new era that will enable it to accelerate growth in high-performing core markets, expand into new ones, and rapidly deploy IP across the



On Oct. 6, 2023, representatives of Falcon's Beyond rang the market bell, a company milestone that signified the closing of the transaction to list as FBYD on NASDAQ. COURTESY FALCON'S BEYOND

global entertainment industry.

"We are laser-focused on combining storytelling with technology and entertainment and propelling our portfolio of proprietary and partner brands concurrently across physical and digital experiences, driving long-term value for our

shareholders," Philips said. "We look forward to sharing more news in the near future."

Officials feel focusing on the long-term will allow expansion of **Falcon's Creative Group**, **Falcon's Beyond Destinations** and **Falcon's Beyond Brands**.

In addition to becoming publicly listed, Falcon's Beyond has accomplished a number of notable milestones this year, including:

Falcon's Beyond Destinations 2023 highlights

As part of the company's joint venture with **Melia**, **Falcon's Resort by Meliá**, **All Suites Punta Cana** opened earlier this year, alongside **Katmandu Park, Punta Cana**, nearby.

Falcon's Resort by Meliá, All Suites Punta Cana, is a five-star all-inclusive resort located on the Dominican Republic's Bávaro Beach.

Katmandu Park, Punta Cana, is an award-win-

► See FALCON'S, page 59

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►3DX**Continued from page 58**

nic supplier for the rebranding of **Aquatica San Diego** to **Sesame Place San Diego**. A dozen character sculptures, including the character totem and the entire sesame neighborhood were created. Other noteworthy projects include the world's largest carousel horses which were placed at the entrance of **Lake Compounce** and **Kennywood**. Custom parade floats for **Sea World Parks** (Sesame Street Party), **Cedar Point** (Celebrate Cedar Point Spectacular) and **Cedar Fair** properties (Grand Carnivale Spectacle of Color) are among the 3dxScenic projects.

Outside of themed entertainment, projects recently included branding in the football stadium at **Ohio State University**, décor and wayfinding for the 2023 **Red Bull Flugtag** event in downtown Cincinnati, and interior branding for **Greendigs** — an experiential retail concept in Columbus run by avid garden-

ers and plant enthusiasts.

The company is taking a strategic approach to growth. The new leadership is primed to listen to its team as well. "Our team is very important to us. We want to have a company with input at every level," said Rosenzweig. The goal is to scale up from a fresh beginning.

"We relish a challenge," said Rosenzweig. "We love meeting with clients and listening to their vision. We love figuring out the methodology to meet the vision but also hit the deadline. I can just speak for us; we love the collaborative piece of the business and coming up with the solution."

"The real vision is being solely focused on delivering on the client's needs," added Waldenmeyer. "There is also the aspect of taking care of our own employees. We want to be a good employer — to do all that and maintain having a good time doing it. This industry is fun and interesting and stressful, but we want to knock our client's vision out of the park."

►FALCON'S**Continued from page 58**

ning theme park featuring cutting-edge, first-of-its-kind rides and attractions that immerse guests in the company's original franchise, the **Hidden Realms of Katmandu**.

The IP is brought to life through immersive storytelling experiences, including four marquee attractions that feature proprietary technology and that truly encapsulate Falcon's "big experience, small footprint" philosophy.

Through the inclusion of **Katmandu Park** in the room rate at Falcon's Resort by Melia, guests experience "resortainment," a hospitality experience that blends premium resort amenities with extraordinary integrated entertainment experiences.

IP expansion

In April, Falcon's launched its first mobile game — **Katmandu: Ethermerge** — marking Falcon's debut as a developer on mobile gaming platforms and is

the first in a larger portfolio of mobile games in development.

The mobile game followed the launch of the popular **Beyondland** experience on Roblox, which has amassed millions of visits since its debut.

In addition, last spring, Falcon's launched its first e-commerce shop, **Shop Falcon's Beyond**, featuring a range of apparel, accessories and toys.

Global reach and influence

Falcon's recently announced its joint venture with **Raging Power Limited**, an arm of **K11 Group**, the Hong Kong-based cultural commerce giant. Through this joint venture, Falcon's will collaborate to develop and launch new entertainment franchises and location-based entertainment (LBE) attractions across China.

The first project will be **Vquarium**, a ground-breaking ocean adventure-themed experience designed to be a new breed of location-based

"retailtainment," set to debut at Hong Kong's iconic **11 Skies** development in 2025.

In addition, Falcon's Beyond also announced in 2023 another significant global move with the opening of its first office outside the U.S., **Falcon's Creative Philippines, Inc.**, in Metro Manila.

Falcon's Beyond has a successful 23-year track record executing more than \$100 billion worth of story-driven development projects in 27 countries.

Falcon's has an impressive list of client and IP collaborators, including **Walt Disney World, Universal Studios, SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment, Atlantis, Marvel, National Geographic, NASA, AT&T, Lego, Hard Rock, Formula 1, Lionsgate, Cartoon Network** and **Microsoft**, among others.

As of June 30, 2023, Falcon's is the record owner of approximately 145 trademark registrations and applications, 15 patents and patent applications, and approximately 81 registered domain names.

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Dippin' Dots releases new 'dough-licious' flavor: Frozeti Dough

Flavor is inspired by brand mascot, Frozeti the Yeti

PADUCAH, Ky. — Dippin' Dots, the original beaded ice cream announced the debut of the company's newest flavor, Frozeti Dough. The new flavor was made available for customer purchase beginning in November 2023, with a broader consumer release being planned for Spring 2024.

Inspired by Dippin' Dots' mascot Frozeti the Yeti's cool blue color, fans do not want to miss out on the fun new flavor. The unique flavor profile includes a craveable combination of sugar cookie Dippin' Dots Ice Cream, dotted with pieces of Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough and Chocolate Sandwich Cookie Dough and is certified kosher.

"We're thrilled to intro-

duce our latest Dippin' Dots flavor, Frozeti Dough, to our fans," said Matt Inderlied, senior vice president/general manager of Dippin' Dots.

"There is a lot that goes into a new flavor launch—we're constantly speaking with Dippin' Dots fans and customers to learn more about their tastes and preferences. The cookie flavor profile is trending, and Frozeti Dough was the top performing product in flavor tests. We're excited to share this new playful flavor with our fans nationwide in the coming months."

Frozeti Dough will be available at Dippin' Dots locations, convenience stores, amusement and entertainment venues and local events nationwide. Dippin' Dots product is also available for online order in scoopable bulk and individual serving pre-packs.

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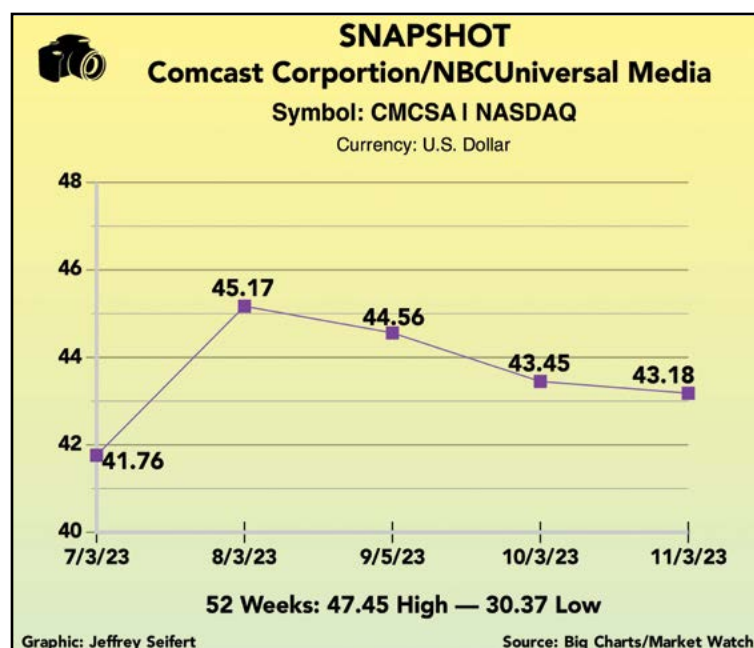
MARKET WATCH

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 11/1/23	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
PARKS AND ATTRACTIONS					
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	94.75	116.78	71.72
Bowlero Corp.	BOWL	NYSE	9.63	17.45	9.09
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	37.51	47.95	34.04
Comcast Corp./ NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	41.82	47.45	30.04
Dave & Busters Entertainment, LLC	PLAY	NASDAQ	34.16	47.29	31.65
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	43.64	47.70	33.92
Falcon's Beyond	FBYD	NASDAQ	15.73	44.00	7.17
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	JP:9010	TYO	4410.00	5820.00	2985.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	1.00	4.09	0.81
Leofoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	17.15	28.45	15.85
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	34.97	51.35	31.40
Parks America, Inc.	PRKA	OTC	0.32	0.47	0.26
Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd.	RCL	NYSE	85.27	112.95	45.80
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	42.26	68.19	40.86
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	21.00	31.29	18.29
Warner Bros Discovery Inc.	WBD	NASDAQ	10.08	16.34	8.82
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	724.00	822.00	684.00
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	81.07	118.18	78.73
SUPPLIERS/OTHERS					
Bregent Technologies, Inc.	TW:5263	TSEC	115.00	148.50	106
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	TYO:6357	TYO	1092.00	1515.00	738.00
Topgolf Callaway Brands	MODG	NYSE	11.78	25.96	11.58

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 10/30/23	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$4.342	(\$1.058)
Midwest	\$4.441	(\$0.886)
Gulf Coast	\$4.115	(\$0.850)
Mountain	\$4.650	(\$0.652)
West Coast	\$4.873	(\$0.551)
California	\$5.890	(\$0.364)

CURRENCY

On 11/2/23 \$1 USD =	
0.9469	EURO
0.8236	GBP (British Pound)
151.12	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9089	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.5728	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.3873	CAD (Canadian Dollar)

BUSINESS WATCH

Cedar Fair announces third quarter results

SANDUSKY, Ohio — **Cedar Fair Entertainment Company** announced its financial results for the third quarter ended Sept. 24, 2023. In addition, the company announced the declaration of a cash distribution of \$0.30 per limited partner (LP) unit payable on Dec. 20, 2023, to unitholders of record as of Dec. 6, 2023, consistent with Cedar Fair's current annualized distribution rate of \$1.20 per LP unit.

Net revenues totaled \$842 million on attendance of 12.4 million guests, compared with net revenues of \$843 million on attendance of 12.3 million guests for the third quarter of 2022. The decrease in net revenues reflected the impact of a 2%, or \$0.97, decrease in in-park per capita spending, to \$61.65, offset in part by a 1%, or 0.1 million-visit, increase in attendance and a 2%, or \$2 million, increase in out-of-park revenues. The decrease in in-park per capita spending in the third quarter was primarily attributable to lower guest spending on admissions, offset in part by higher levels of guest spending on food and beverage. The decrease in admissions spending reflects the reassessment of pricing strategies and the recovery of lower-priced attendance channels during the critical third quarter.

"The strength and resiliency of our business model was on full display during our peak attendance and revenue months, as we delivered another strong performance and positioned Cedar Fair for a great finish to 2023," said Cedar Fair President and CEO **Richard A. Zimmerman**. "Our rapid recovery during the third quarter, combined with our meaningful cost-saving measures, helped offset attendance and revenue shortfalls experienced earlier in the year and put us back on track to deliver another very strong performance in 2023. The strong demand trends we've seen so far in the second half of the year, including in the month of October, give us confidence in our ability to carry our success into 2024."

Comcast reports its third quarter

PHILADELPHIA, Pa. — For the quarter ended Sept. 30, **Comcast** reported net income of \$4 billion, or 98 cents per share, compared with a loss of \$4.6 billion, or \$1.05 cents per share, a year earlier. Adjusted for one-time items, per-share earnings were \$1.08 in the quarter. The prior year's results were affected by one-time impairment and goodwill charges associated with Comcast's 2018 acquisition of **Sky**.

Theme parks' adjusted EBITDA increased 20% to \$983 million — the highest quarterly profit on record for the division — driven by the popularity of Super Nintendo World in **Universal Studios Hollywood**. An increase in revenue for theme parks was also driven by higher revenue at the company's international theme parks, which had COVID-19 related restrictions in the prior year period, and higher revenue at the domestic theme parks. This was partially offset by lower revenue at **Universal Orlando Resort**, which continued to be above comparable pre-pandemic 2019 levels.

Capital expenditures increased 18.0% to \$3.3 billion. Connectivity & Platforms' capital expenditures decreased 2.1% to \$2.1 billion, reflecting lower spending on customer premise equipment and support capital, partially offset by higher investment in line extensions and scalable infrastructure. Content & Experiences' capital expenditures increased 44.0% to \$884 million, reflecting increased investment in constructing the **Epic Universe** theme park in Orlando, which is scheduled to open in 2025.

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ON THE MOVE

JRA, part of **RWS Global** and headquartered in Cincinnati, Ohio, USA, has announced the hiring of former **FORREC** executive **Matt Dawson** as its new vice president of business development. Dawson's appointment comes as the experience design studio enjoys one of the most ambitious years in its 35-year history under the leadership of new Executive Vice President **Mark Amos**.



Dawson

"I've always been passionate about storytelling and creating authentic experiences, and JRA's track record of doing both is what drew me to the studio," said Dawson. "The brand reputation, growth potential and deep bench of talent at JRA are unique in this industry, and I look forward to sharing JRA's story with clients and collaborators around the world.

In his previous role as vice president of business development at global experience design company **FORREC**, Dawson served on the executive team responsible for setting corporate priorities, managing risk and monitoring the financial well-being and growth of the corporation. He also set the strategic direction for **FORREC**'s client relations and led a 12-person team to pursue new business development efforts across North America, South America, Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

"Matt could not be arriving at a more perfect time," said Amos. "With the leisure market hun-

gry for new experiences, we at JRA set a strategic growth plan in motion to expand our reach into new verticals and regions while deepening our relationships in existing ones."

Rapids Waterpark of South Florida announced the hiring of **Audrey Padgett** as director of marketing and sales. Padgett will be responsible for leading all marketing initiatives, communications, events, public relations and brand partnerships for the park.



Padgett

"We are so excited to welcome Audrey, as she brings a wealth of experience to this important leadership position," said **Bryan Megrath**, general manager at Rapids Waterpark. "She'll be a vital part of bringing in new audiences and strengthening connections with our existing patrons and partners."

Padgett brings more than 17 years of experience in the entertainment industry, with 12 of those years at **Merlin Entertainments**. She was an instrumental member of **Legoland Florida**'s opening team in 2011. Since that time, she has also served in lead roles in the opening of numerous expansions at Legoland Florida Resort, including the Legoland Hotel, Legoland Beach Retreat, and Lego Ninjago World.

Falcon's Beyond announced it has named **Bruce A. Brown** as executive vice president of

legal, general counsel and corporate secretary, reporting to the Falcon's Beyond's President **Simon Philips**.

With more than 20 years of legal expertise, Brown will strategically advise and oversee legal, compliance, enterprise risk management and government relations for Falcon's Beyond. Brown will also serve as a key advisor to the executive leadership team and the Board of Directors.



Brown

"I'm honored and excited to join Falcon's Beyond at this pivotal moment in its history, as it celebrates the major business milestone of becoming a public company on Nasdaq," said Brown. "The groundbreaking creativity of this company is beyond impressive and, with so much more to come, I'm thrilled to join the team as it continues its incredible growth journey."

Prior to joining Falcon's Beyond, Brown served as senior vice president, deputy general counsel of **Hilton Grand Vacations**. Previously, Brown served as vice president and general counsel of **Tupperware Brands**. He also held various positions at **Darden Restaurants, Inc.**, where he most recently served as vice president, associate general counsel and assistant secretary. Brown has also held roles with **World Fuel Services, Nice Systems, Inc., American Express Company, General Electric Company** and **Xerox Corporation**.

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BRISTOL, Conn. — With a strong interest in history and a love of nature, it seemed natural that Megan Major would find a way to weave it into her career. Overseeing the team at the oldest amusement park in the country has become more than a dream come true.

Like many attractions industry professionals, Major entered as a seasonal employee looking for a summer job.

"Lake Compounce started as my college summer job," Major said. "I thought it would be something fun between semesters. I worked part-time and didn't think it would become my full-time career, but very quickly I fell in love with the industry. I loved the interaction with our guests, the ever-changing environment, and the team I worked with."

After graduating with a Bachelor's degree in Justice and Law Administration from Western Connecticut State University, a post for a full-time job at the park caught her eye and she applied. She's been a part of the park's management team ever since.

Major quickly discovered providing fun was just one aspect of her job, and it was the back-of-house, inner workings that excited her the most.

"One of my first managers compared running a theme park to running a city," she said. "That stuck with me, particularly as I learned more about what it takes to manage the park. I discovered I love the business side of the business. I enrolled in a master's program because I wanted to grow and learn more about business planning and strategy so I could have an impact on moving the business forward."

"Research and strategy are key parts of a successful business," she shared. "The more I learned about what goes into the park's business plan and how it all comes together each year, excit-

ed me. I'm still learning a lot."

Today, the diversity of park life and management continues to keep her inspired. "No two days ever look the same: every few months the operation of the park shifts. That always keeps me on my toes," she said. "For example, right when I feel like I have mastered peak summer operations, we shift into fall and Halloween operations, and so on. Every day is something new."

She continued: "The saying, 'What feeds the mind, feeds the soul,' definitely describes what I have found at Lake Compounce. It is challenging and satisfying, and I'm proud of the talented team at our park."

Lake Compounce's storied history has special meaning for Major. She recognizes the importance of honoring and celebrating it while also working to keep the park current and modern for its guests. She points to the park's music history as an example.

"This summer we added a new floating stage. Our park has a long history of hosting famous performers — we've had Cher, the Beach Boys, Sting, we're even the park where Milli Vanilli was caught lip-syncing. Seeing live performances at our park is important to our guests. Bringing it back, and with a new stage that's right on the water was the perfect way to blend history with something new."

According to Major, understanding the importance of nostalgia is just one part of guest service.

"We are part of a people-driven business," she explained. "Our industry is about making other people happy. Guest service is my bread and butter. It is at the core of everything I do here, and there is no better feeling than making someone's day."

Major also says the people who are a part of the industry

Megan Major Lake Compounce Bristol, Conn.



keep her inspired. "Not only are we serving in positions that make others happy, but we are also surrounded by like-minded people who are supportive and ready to extend help."

She says the annual training Aquatic Safety School by Ellis & Associates is one of the best parts of her year. "We have such a supportive system here at Palace Entertainment, and taking part in this training with Ellis excites me and helps me — and our entire team — continue to grow, and learn. Most importantly, it's how we keep our guests safe. We really are a close-knit industry, committed to our guests."

Major also loves to share advice she received early in her career with her own employees. "Always shoot your shot," she said. "Someone said that to me, and when I'm giving orientation and guiding our employees, I say the same thing. It's important to go for that next step

and next opportunity. I remind them not to let fear or doubt hold them back from taking the next step forward." She says that even includes applying for a role you may not believe you are ready for.

"While it's always important to challenge yourself, applying for a role that may be beyond your skillset signals to others you are eager to learn and take on more. It can open a door to a new shadowing opportunity or a chance for a lateral opportunity in another area."

She points to herself as an example: "I came to the park thinking it would be temporary. Then, I found myself surrounded by gorgeous landscapes, special history and happy people. Staying with Palace Entertainment and growing here at Lake Compounce has been the perfect, natural fit for me, and I am excited by all that is ahead."

—Susan Storey

Story Land's Nostalgia Nights finds niche with 21-and-over guests

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

GLEN, N.H. — On June 17, 1954, **Story Land** opened for its first season. Geared toward kids, the park has welcomed multiple generations of visitors in the seven decades since. A visit to Story Land is practically a must-do for families in the New England region.

However, the park has created an original concept with completely out-of-the-box thinking.

"We started Nostalgia Night in 2019," said **Eric Dziezic**, general manager. "It's for a totally different demographic in the park; it's for adults 21 and older."

Following the park's closing on certain days of operation, Nostalgia Nights reopens in later hours. The



Grownups relive their childhood at Nostalgia Night. COURTESY STORY LAND

adults-only event serves alcohol, brings in bands and takes on a party vibe.

"You relive your childhood here at Story Land," said Dziezic. "It's such a unique event."

When the first attempt at producing the event in 2019 sold out in two minutes, the park knew it had a hit on its hands. It offered a

second night. COVID caused off years in 2020 and 2021, but for the last two years, Nostalgia Night has really taken hold. This year, four nights were offered every other Saturday from late June to early August.

"Next year we might pare it down to three but expand the offerings," Dziezic said.

"Story Land is part of



a New England kid's childhood," said **Lauren Fullerton**, director of marketing. "You come to Story Land and make amazing childhood memories at some point. You come back as grandparents bringing your grandkids. With Nostalgia Night, you come back as an adult to relive those memories with your *adult* grandkids or *adult* kids. They re-do all the photos they did when they were little."

"Last year, a woman came in with her Storyland driver's license from when she was six years old," smiled Dziezic. "She presented it to me when I was carding her to get into the event, and she was dressed exactly like she was in that picture."

As Story Land is not open at nighttime during the operating calendar, temporary lights had to be brought in so that adults could enjoy all the attractions they enjoyed in their youth. This includes going down slides, crawling through play structures and riding all the rides.

Storyland has grown from its original play areas based on nursery rhymes and children's stories into a

beautiful park with family roller coasters, water rides and themed attractions.

"They go down the slide and get their sticker from the Old Woman in the Shoe. They truly embrace it," said Fullerton.

"The staff, for sure, enjoy the event," she added. "It may be tiring, but it is a totally different atmosphere, and the guests are having a blast, which the staff feeds into. We get rave reviews about how happy the staff is to be there. It is a party, and the staff joins in."

"You'd think it would be people in their 20s and 30s looking to party, but it's really people coming to the park to relive their childhood," Dziezic told *Amusement Today*.

"It's just fun to see them come back over and over again," added Fullerton. "Most people don't come here without children — you're welcome to — but when you make it just for adults, you get to act like a kid without feeling out of place, and that's what they have the most fun with."

Story Land will celebrate its 70th anniversary in 2024.

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Live bands and adult beverages bring a different vibe to the children's park. COURTESY STORY LAND

Rides 4 U's Len Soled: the man who makes the industry 'Think Rides'

AT: Ron Gustafson
Special to Amusement Today

SOMERVILLE, N.J. — **Len Soled** readily admits, "I don't do a great job at delegating."

And that seems to have worked out fine for the 62-year-old president and owner of **Rides 4 U**, which supplies new and used equipment to operations worldwide.

During an extended interview with *Amusement Today*, Soled reflected on his nearly 40 years in the amusement industry.

"I'm a control freak," he chuckled. "I handle our logistics and scheduling of technical teams and spend half of my time working on the road."

Yet, he's quick to point out that the company's success can be attributed to a loyal group of employees — most of whom have been with him for years.

Fresh out of grad school

He got his start in the business in 1985 after obtaining a Masters of Marketing degree.

"I came out of school and immediately started looking for a job," he reflected. "I was supported in all my endeavors by my parents and they gave me a month to relax, then my father put me to work painting the inside of the house."

At the time, Italian ride manufacturer **Zamperla** was looking for marketing and sales personnel in the United States.

"I interviewed with **Alberto Zamperla**," Soled said of his job hunt. The interview resulted in him accepting a position with the company, and he started working sales at industry trade shows. (Alberto Zamperla was the second-generation president of the company until his death last November at age 71.)

According to Soled, it wasn't long before it became evident that he had found his calling in the amusement industry.



"I loved it!" he emphasized. "At the same time, I was building these great relationships with so many people in the business."

He said a unique twist during that era was that Alberto Zamperla's wife, **Paola**, would have her line of ceramic products set up for purchase at the ride company's trade show booths.

Soled also admitted that he was not a person content on focusing on one portion of the industry.

"I enjoyed all different segments, and I felt I could blend in with anybody," he noted. "The park people were wonderful, and I took on all of that business, then branched out into carnivals."

During his early years with Zamperla, Soled was single and acknowledges it helped him become a worthy road warrior to meet with prospective buyers.

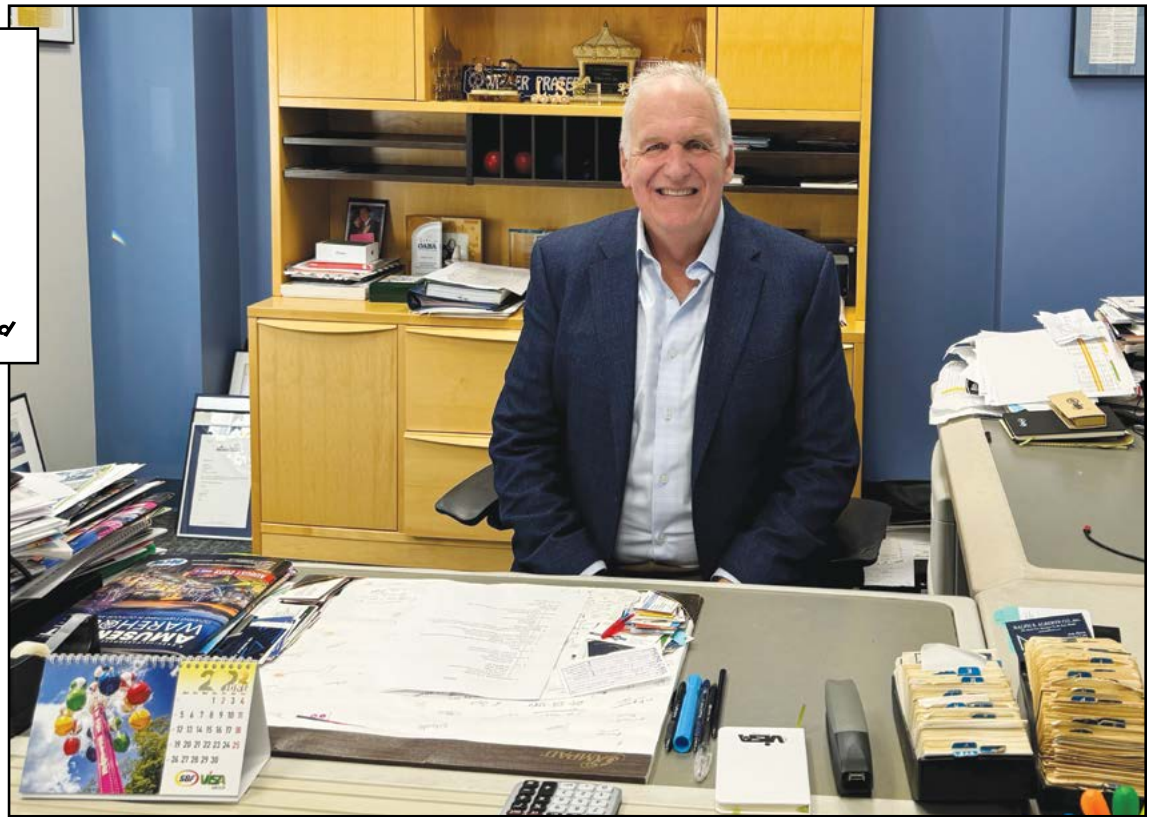
"I was out 24/7 traveling and loved doing it," he said.

Time to break away

In 1995, Soled — now married (Alexis) with a third child on the way — considered himself a seasoned veteran of the business and realized that change might very well be on the horizon.

The time with Zamperla had been exceptional, as he had built a positive reputation among many industry executives.

He had also established a relationship within the growing family entertainment center (FEC) sector of the business through a branch of Zamperla called



Len Soled at his desk (above) in the Rides 4 U offices (below) in Somerville, New Jersey. COURTESY RIDES 4 U

Amusement Source, which offered turnkey solutions for indoor entertainment establishments.

"We were actually building these indoor playgrounds with ball crawls and such," Soled said of that period. "It was really a 'hobby,' yet complementing their (Zamperla) sales at the time."

The past decade also provided him with the opportunity to become known by "basically everyone in the industry."

"People had started to ask me when I would start my own business," he pointed out.

"Alexis was supportive when I decided to break out on my own. **Nancy Buckley**, who was also with Zamperla when I was there, left with me and formed a 50/50 partnership. We teamed up with **Majestic** (ride manufacturer in New Waterford, Ohio) and also got together with **SBF/Visa** (Italian ride builder) and that was the original start-up of Rides 4 U."

No peaceful, easy feeling

While parting ways came with some emotional



anxiety, it was amicable as Alberto Zamperla threw Soled a going-away party.

"I always believed that we needed to do things right, and we did. But after leaving Zamperla, I was afraid it would be short-lived, and I would find myself out of the industry. I didn't need to make a million dollars — I just wanted to stick it out and make it happen," he said of the venture

The tensions were soon eased when Len and Alexis attended a **New Jersey Amusement Association** dinner.

"I was fearful we would find ourselves sitting alone," he recalled of the event. "The next

thing I know, **Roy Gillian** (**Gillian's Wonderland Pier**) and **Bobby Bennett** (**Casino Pier**) led us to their table and said they wanted to see us succeed. That really started the ball rolling."

Both Gillian and Bennett shared their interest in Soled's new and used ride markets and offered some recommendations to him.

That kick-start apparently paved the way for Rides 4 U to become the amusement industry force it is today, now fully owned by Len and Alexis Soled following Buckley's retirement in 2012.

► **SOLED**

Continued from page 67

Count the years

This marks the 29th year for the company, and Soled is quick to point out that the success all revolves around the loyalty of his personnel.

He emphasized the importance of having good people onboard, saying: "We have eight people in-house who have been here for years, a couple of satellite sales staff and around a dozen sub-contractors. When I need them (contractors), they drop everything to get on our job."

Key players at the company include Rich Madden, Earl Heller, Stephanie Magnani, Annie Bauer, Dori Horvath, Joe Migueles and Mark Blumhagen.

Rides 4 U's physical presence in New Jersey has also grown over the past 15 years with the construction



Under Soled's leadership, the Rides 4 U team has become a family. Pictured above are (back, l to r): Rich Madden, Annie Bauer, Earl Heller and Len Soled with Monna Vista and Stephanie Magnani in the foreground. COURTESY RIDES 4 U

of a new building.

"We are set up as strong as a manufacturer," Soled said of the facility. "We have a huge spare parts department and carry in excess of \$1 million in inventory. We don't want to have to tell a customer, 'We're sorry, we

don't have that part."

He continued, saying: "Operators can't afford to have rides down. A lot of times, I have to get involved to expedite service, and we are constantly working on better inventory control to those ends."

Getting through the pandemic

The entire industry struggled to get through the COVID pandemic, which was declared a worldwide health emergency in January of 2020.

Rides 4 U managed to keep its head above water

with bare-bones staffing.

"It was just me and Annie (Bauer) running the company," he asserted. "She was in parts and I handled the office."

Despite the economic downturn caused by the crisis, more than a dozen rides were sold by Soled during the pandemic, and the company emerged on a solid footing.

Post-pandemic, the amusement industry — like many others — has had issues fully ramping up again.

"For us as distributors, the supply chain and cost of product are among the big challenges now," he pointed out. "We've never experienced having such a hard time getting spare parts, and shipping costs have gone through the roof."

Another headache related to shipping is getting equipment into a favorable port of entry, which was not the case

► See SOLED, page 70

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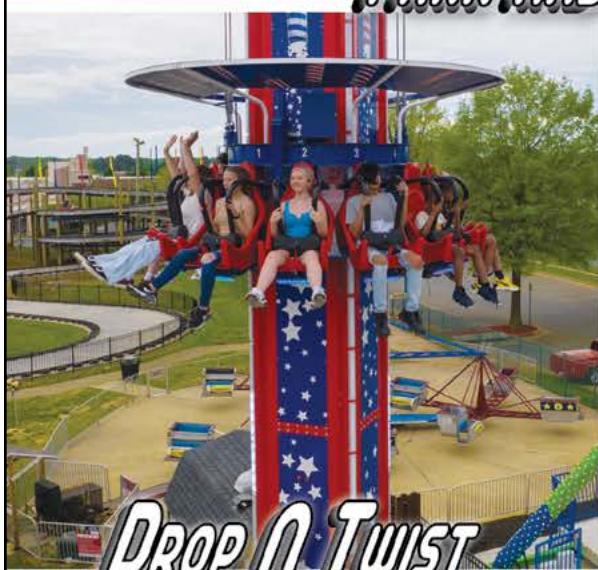
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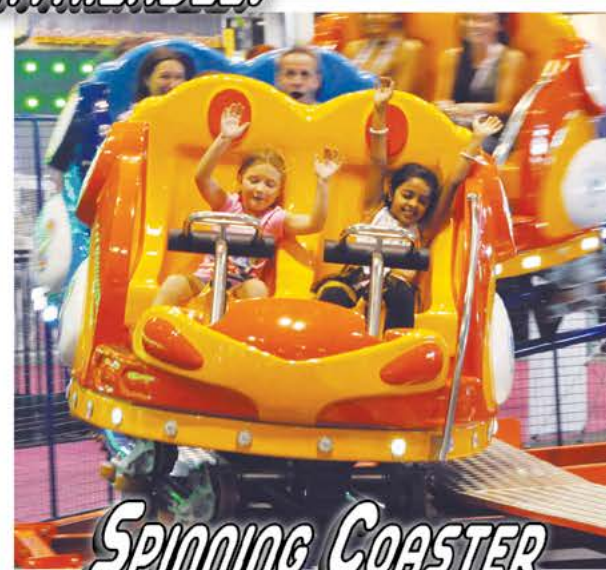
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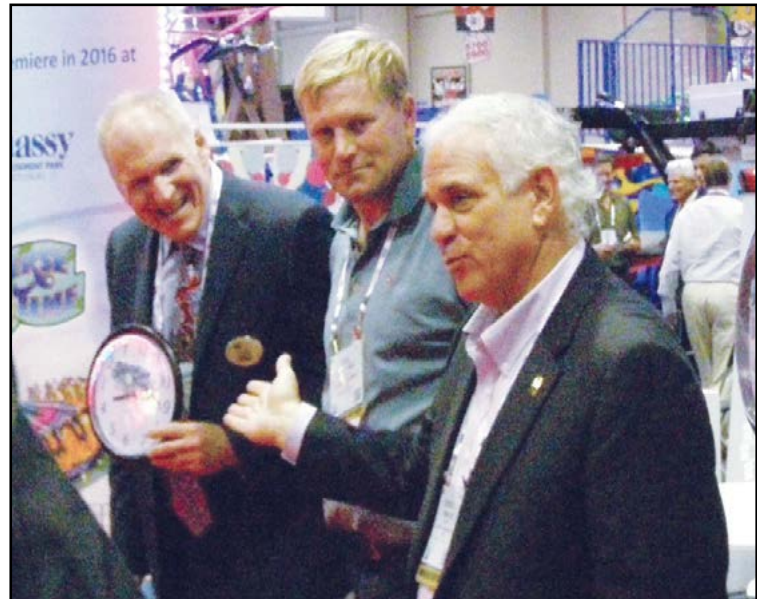


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The parts warehouse at Rides 4 U's offices aids in accelerating service time when needed (above left). Above right, Len Soled (left) holds a backward clock during a 2015 IAAPA Expo press conference announcing Quassy Amusement & Waterpark's purchase of Reverse Time, the first in North America at the time. Looking on are Quassy owners Eric Anderson (center) and George Frantzis II. Below, Len Soled sits in the "hamster wheel" on an SBF/Visa Mixed Coaster during an IAAPA Expo in Orlando, Florida. COURTESY RIDES 4 U, RON GUSTAFSON

► SOLED

Continued from page 70

prior to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Playing the field

SFB/Visa remains one of the top product lines represented in North America by Rides 4 U. The Italian ride builder has a portfolio of dozens of attractions from children's rides to large roller coasters. Among the most popular current attractions are small footprint spinning coasters, Drop'N Twist Towers and Dance Party pendulums.

KMG of the Netherlands is another supplier of spectacular attractions with its large pendulum series the most prevalent at parks and on carnival midways in the United States.

Rides 4 U has also worked with S&S Worldwide, Logan, Utah; Chance Rides, Wichita, Kansas; Wisdom Rides of America, Merino, Colorado; E&F Miler Industries, Portland, Oregon and others.

As for presenting at industry trade shows, "We have one of the largest exhibits at IAAPA Expo," Soled said of the annual November gathering in Orlando, Florida. With more than 36,000 attending the 2022 event, it is

by far the best location for Rides 4 U to show its wares.

Such expos are critical for the business, as it encourages face-to-face conversations with qualified buyers, he pointed out.

"It allows me the ability to sit down and talk to people and provide them with the perfect piece for their company," he commented.

Not only have parks invested heavily in new equipment in recent years, but the FEC market is also strong.

"We have the ideal ride products for FECs," Soled noted.

Taking on the challenges

When the National Football League decided to throw a Super Bowl party in New York's Times Square in 2014, Rides 4 U got involved in the plans.

"I took on a huge challenge," Soled explained. "We got a giant eight-lane slide from SFB/Visa and it was the first time we had exhibited a piece in that kind of (cold) climate. One morning we woke up with snow and ice and had to run heaters under it to get it operational."

While Rides 4 U managed the attraction, Soled had a number of friends from North American



Midway Entertainment (NAME) assist in operations.

"We had it sold before the end of the event," he said, and today the slide is at the Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa.

And Soled was quick to point out that he works closely with the factories when new products are launched.

A prime example was the spinning coaster from SFB/Visa. "We presented some extra ideas related to the design and they worked. The ride has been a home run," he said of the process. "Our signature appears at parks and carnivals throughout the world."

Big change in new gear

Among notable advancements in ride technology is that most of today's new rides operate with the use of a PLC (programmable logic control). These industrial computers are designed for the long haul and are readily found on robotic devices and other machinery that require high reliability.

Soled stressed that they



are ideal for the amusement industry because of the ease of programming and fault diagnosis processing.

"Thankfully, this technology allows for the factory to troubleshoot remotely, which saves operators time and money," he emphasized.

Old is new again

The used equipment market is also a big one for Soled and company.

"We need the used ride market as dealing with a used piece can parlay into another sale of a new ride," he said of the process. "Sometimes,

we do just a listing of a used ride for a client, and it is not unusual for us to have up to two dozen rides warehoused, which is a challenge."

Offering used equipment has another plus side as it allows Soled and his family to travel worldwide.

And when talking with Soled on any occasion, it's likely he'll strike up a conversation about the amusement industry — the business he is so passionate about.

After all, this is the guy who coined the two-word phrase "Think Rides!"

rides4u.com



MUSEUM PROGRESS REPORT

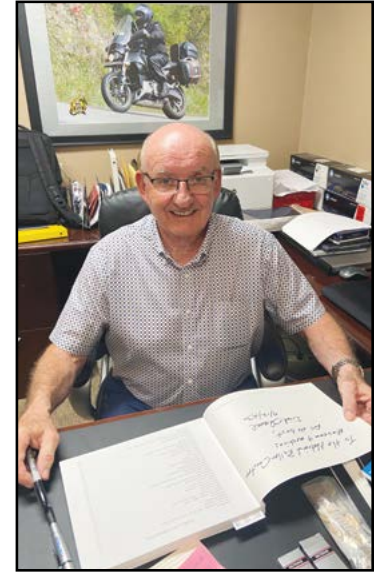
This space is provided courtesy of Amusement Today, a corporate partner of the National Roller Coaster Museum & Archives.



The newest and most welcome addition to the museum artifact collection comes from Lakeside Park, outside Denver, Colorado. Dallas couple Randy Duffer, pictured with his wife Cynthia, painstakingly restored a side friction car from the Derby Coaster, a racing coaster which originally opened in early May 1911. Donated by the Krasner family, the full restoration took several years, including removing layers of paint and replacing deteriorated wood panels. The Derby operated until 1939, replaced by the famous Cyclone coaster. It is presently the oldest vehicle in the Museum collection. COURTESY ROBERT INGLE



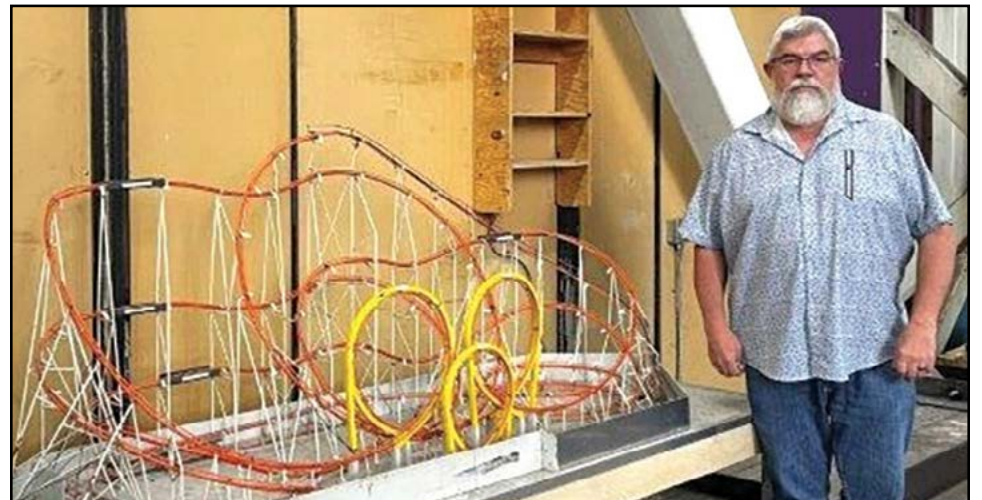
Board member Richard Munch stands next to a section of the Canobie Corkscrew, donated by the park in late 2022. As one of the first four models manufactured at Arrow's Utah plant in 1975, it opened in the indoor amusement park, Old Chicago (Illinois) that year, then moved to the Alabama State Fairgrounds in 1981. It's final stop was in Canobie Lake Park, in Nashua, New Hampshire in 1987. Much of the early coordination to move the one section of the ride 2000 miles to the Texas Panhandle was handled by Canobie Park's Ride Maintenance Manager John Reed, with direction from board members Gary Slade and Hunter Novotny. Beside the generosity of Canobie Lake's ownership, the effort to bring cars, track sections and support to Texas required five flat bed trailers. Although Canobie Lake Park ownership covered a portion of the cost, most of the transportation expenses was generously covered by Museum Chairman Jeff Novotny. This last piece will have its final home near the museum parking lot, where locals will finally discover the purpose of the growing facility in Plainview. AT/GARY SLADE



Dick Chance autographs a copy of *The Book Of Chance*, which covers the history of his family's manufacturing company, Chance Rides. Incorporated by Harold Chance in 1961, the Wichita, Kansas, company continues to offer an assortment of flat rides, kiddie rides, trains and roller coasters for both carnivals and amusement parks. AT/GARY SLADE



A record-setting crowd of coaster fans from the American Coaster Enthusiasts descended upon Plainview, Texas, back in August to preview the National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives' progress. The team from Knott's Berry Farm graciously donated their famous Boysenberry Punch to give the event an even more authentic, historic feel with the unveiling of the parks' Montezooma's Revenge lead and rear vehicles. COURTESY ACE



The original Mindbender display model became available with the recent removal of Anton Schwarzkopf's amazing indoor steel coaster, Mindbender (1985-2021), at Galaxyland, in the West Edmonton Mall, Edmonton, Canada. It was donated by mall management, with the direct assistance of Brian Mykitiuk, Director of Engineering and Maintenance at the property. Additional credit is due Andrew Mowatt of WhiteWater, who donated his time and funding to have the model moved to Rocky Mountain Coasters in Hayden, Idaho. It will join a collection of beautiful models that will soon be on display in Plainview. COURTESY WEST EDMONTON MALL



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▶ SeaWorld San Antonio adding solar canopy — page 76 / Embed provides solutions to Tilt Studios — page 80

The Gravity Group helps restore 1920s Wildcat at Lake Compounce

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

BRISTOL, Conn. — Opened in 1846, **Lake Compounce** has bragging rights to being the longest-operating amusement park in North America. At its center is a wooden coaster that serves as part of the park's logo. Wildcat was originally built in 1927. Over close to a century, much of the ride has been rebuilt, but the park is addressing it as a major project.

General Manager **Doug Hemphill** started at the park at the beginning of the 2023 season. When Lake Compounce opened for the season, he was aware that Wildcat would not operate.

"I did a lot of diligence before I got here," he told *Amusement Today*. "I went online and read articles about Wildcat. It seemed the ride needed to be enhanced because it was rough. I've talked to a lot of guests, and while they told me they loved the coaster, it was a little bit aggressive for them. When I got here, the ride was closed to undergo some assessment."

"We put new trains on a few years ago, and that made the ride faster," said **Jerry Brick**, director of construction and maintenance, **Palace Entertainment**. "This new track we're doing is going to fit the train that's on there."

"It's a historic ride," said Hemphill. "We partnered with **The Gravity**



Palace has opted for the restoration of Wildcat to be a completely wood solution provided by The Gravity Group. A total restoration of sections of track are taking the coaster down to the footings. COURTESY PALACE ENTERTAINMENT

Group, and they did a lot of assessment. We had meetings with them where they showed me a lot. Taking a look at the movement on that ride at every point and how the guests go through it — up and down, side to side and front to back in that coaster car — and from that analysis, we knew we needed to smooth it out to make it more enjoyable. But we wanted it to feel like a wooden coaster."

"We are absolutely thrilled that Palace Entertainment has elected to use our Engineered Precut Track for the refurbishment of Lake Compounce's historic Wildcat," said **Chad Miller**, principal and engineer, **The Gravity Group**. "When we

set out to develop our new long-life track system, we felt that it was imperative that it be made from wood. The wood track is the heart and soul of the wooden roller coaster. By taking a new, smarter approach to its design, we were able to create a product that is dramatically stronger and smoother than the traditional wood track, while maintaining the essence of what people love about the wooden roller coaster. The iconic and picturesque Wildcat is the perfect match for Engineered Precut Track, and we are excited to give this historic ride a new lease on life as it approaches its 100th year."

"It was important to us to keep it a wooden



coaster," added Hemphill. "What hit for me is you come into the entry area of the park, and you have this historic wooden coaster sitting there — and it's closed. I understood why, but it was important to do the right things to get it open for 2024."

Brick said a new brak-

ing system from **Velocity Magnetics** should improve the ride as well. "When we were running two trains, it was coming into the station too fast and would trip sensors," he told AT.

In the previous off-season, Titan Track was

▶ See WILDCAT, page 74

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REPLACEMENT TRAINS
PICTURED: TRAILBLAZER, HERSHEY PARK

► WILDCAT

Continued from page 73

installed in troublesome spots on the park's Bolder Dash coaster. Supplied by **Great Coasters International**, that was the logical solution for challenging, hard-to-get-to areas on the sloped hillside.

"We like what the Titan Track did for Bolder Dash," said Brick. "But with conversations with the park team, we wanted to keep Wildcat a true wooden coaster. We want to stand by that. Over the years, the work we've done on it has mostly been retracking. But we do have a new design here. It will be all wood, but there will be changes."

Brick explained that trouble areas from the original design will be tweaked to make them smoother transitions, particularly with peaks and turns. Some of the ledgers have been raised to make transitions cleaner.

In 2014 and 2015, the

two "fantail" turnarounds were rebuilt. In 2017, the lift was done. Great Coasters International and **Martin & Vleminkx** were involved in those changes.

Hemphill isn't concerned with the challenge of re-educating guests that it will be a newer, smoother attraction.

"A lot of that started months ago with going to our media markets," he said. "I've been out there quite a bit talking about Wildcat. To that end, I've probably done no less than 20 media tours. I've explained the Engineered Precut Track and stressed that it was important for us to maintain it as a wooden coaster. There were a couple of directions we could have gone, including what we've done with Boulder Dash here. With the history of it, to maintain it as a wooden coaster, we are going to continue between now and opening day 2024 to go out and talk about it."

Both Hemphill and



Lake Compounce management is confident that the Wildcat refurbishment will be done for the opening day of 2024. COURTESY PALACE ENTERTAINMENT

Brick point out it is phase one of a two-phased project. The majority is being done in the first phase, which will address about two-thirds of the track.

The Wildcat restoration is one part of the park's investment for 2024, but other projects are undisclosed as of yet. 2027 will be the coaster's 100th anniversary.

More work from GCII will take place on Boulder Dash with Titan Track on high spots on the mountain.

Other 2024 projects for Palace Entertainment include a reimagining of The Underground roller coaster at **Adventureland** in Des Moines. The park is working with **Philadelphia Toboggan Coasters Inc.** to

rebuild the original train. Trackwork and a new roof were done this past season.

Raging Waters Los Angeles is receiving a makeover along the lines of the chain's **Sandcastle** water park. "We're going to focus on when the guest arrives," said Brick. "We want the guests to have that great first impression."

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SeaWorld San Antonio begins construction of solar parking canopy

Structure boasts 4.3 megawatts capacity of energy

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — SeaWorld San Antonio, Texas, officials announced last month the beginning stages of the installation of a state-of-the-art solar parking lot canopy. The project is slated for completion in April 2024.

This project will not only provide valuable shade to visitors during extreme heat but will also help SeaWorld make significant strides toward a more sustainable future, something embedded in its mission.

“SeaWorld San Antonio's investment in this ground-breaking solar project is a testament to our company's commitment to environmental stewardship,” said Jodi Davenport, president of SeaWorld San Antonio, during the announcement.

Davenport said their goal is to inspire and educate their guests not only about the animals but also about conservation.

The solar canopy, boasting a capacity of 4.3 megawatts (MW), will



Seaworld San Antonio, Texas, began construction last month on its new solar canopy. The canopy will provide shade for 1,200 cars and will produce 16% of the park's electricity consumption. COURTESY SEAWORLD SAN DIEGO



be the largest in the SeaWorld system to date, setting a new standard for solar energy integration within the amusement park industry.

Located in the VIP section of SeaWorld San Antonio's parking lot,

the canopy will shade approximately 1,200 parking spots. Beyond its cooling benefits, the solar panels integrated into the canopy will produce 16% of the park's electricity consumption, significantly reducing SeaWorld's carbon footprint.

SeaWorld officials said the impact of this added renewable energy is

equivalent to 28 million pounds of coal burned in a year, 5,500 cars driven in one year, and 3,000 homes' annual energy use.

SeaWorld has a history of ongoing conservation initiatives. In 2019, it opened Turtle Reef, a habitat for endangered sea turtles with a first-of-its-kind filtration system. Instead of the traditional water filtration method that utilizes sand filters, the Turtle Reef system uses a manmade marsh wetland to filter water.

Turtle Reef's 126,000-gallon, coral reef-themed environment was designed as a natural bio-filtration system to build an environmentally-based recirculating filtration system. This system attracts wildlife and reduces water and energy consumption in the park, enabling the park to further its eco-friendly mission.

Other SeaWorld sustainability efforts include collecting rainwater and condensation from air conditioning units for use

in landscape irrigation as well as in pathway cleaning, park lighting systems being on timers to reduce energy consumption when the park is not open and collecting water splashed from animal pools and recycling it back into the habitat.

The manufacturer of SeaWorld San Antonio's solar canopy is **Pivot Energy**.

Construction of the solar panel will be executed in multiple phases. Once energized in August 2024, the solar canopy will harness the abundant Texas sunshine to generate clean, renewable energy.

For many years, SeaWorld has advanced the conservation of marine life in and outside its parks through science, education and exceptional animal care that is Humane Certified by **American Humane** and accredited by the **Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums** and the **Association of Zoos and Aquariums**.

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Safety at the forefront as industry seminars to begin January 2024

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

UNITED STATES — For the amusement industry, the month of January means the kick-off of the industry's annual safety seminars.

All across the U.S., industry professionals are offered the opportunity to participate in a variety of safety educational sessions, helping to continue raising safety awareness.

And there is literally something for every aspect of the industry whether it be in operations, maintenance, management and human resources.

The first seminar to take place this January is the 2024 AIMS International Safety Seminar. It is scheduled for Jan. 7-12, 2024, at the **Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Orlando at SeaWorld**, Florida.

This will be the first safety seminar for **Amy Lowenstein** as AIMS executive director.

AIMS offers certifications levels in maintenance, opera-

tions, inspector and aquatics. Attendees build their own schedule, choosing to best suit their needs and desired outcome.

A new track for 2024 is Authorities Having Jurisdiction designed for state regulators.

This new track is added to AIMS existing tracks which include Aquatics, Operations, Adventure Attractions, Safety, Inspection I, Inspection II, Maintenance I, Maintenance II, Portable Amusements, Spanish Language and Young Professions.

Ellis & Associates will present the aquatics curriculum, and **International Ride Training** will present the ride operations training. **Urban Air** is partnering with AIMS on the Adventures Attractions track. AIMS also works with the **Outdoor Amusement Business Association** to help with the carnival track.

Also new for 2024 is the Advanced Weld Inspection

and Welder Certification training class. The training class will teach advanced methods of weld inspections per **American Welding Society (AWS)** requirements. In addition, attendees can take a welder qualification test per AWS D1.3-18 Structural Steel requirements. If successful testing is achieved, attendees will be issued the AWS Welder Qualification Record for future use.

The nonprofit organization **NAARSO** is presenting its 37th Annual Safety Seminar set for Jan. 28-Feb. 2, 2024, at the Doubletree by Hilton Orlando at SeaWorld.

NAARSO, dedicated to industry safety, administers three industry certifications, the Inspector Certification, Operations Certification and Aquatic Certification. There are specific levels that can be achieved in each category.

Additional training offered on select days includes Train the Trainer, hands-on

training and other special educational opportunities.

During the 2024 seminar, attendees can expect course instruction Sunday to Friday, an opening reception on Sunday evening and a closing dinner on Friday evening.

The **Northwest Showmen's Club (NWSC)** is presenting its 45th Annual Safety Seminar, to be held on **Funtastic Shows'** campus in Portland, Oregon, Feb. 19-23, 2024.

This showmen's club has a long history being established over 45 years ago to promote continuing education by amusement industry professionals and to raise the level of safety within the industry.

Each year classes change according to the needs of the industry.

The NWSC Safety Seminar is aligned with **Portland Community College** for accreditation in their Continuing Education Program providing two CEUs for participation and

completion of the seminar.

The seminar also offers NARRSO and/or AIMS testing on the final day of the event.

International Ride Training (IRT) announced in early fall that its 2024 Ride Camp will be hosted by **Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier** in Texas. This is the first time IRT has held its Ride Camp in this location.

Attendees will stay at the **Hilton Galveston Island Resort** for an action-packed week Feb. 5-9, 2024.

IRT offers a variety of services, including being a full-service provider of training and standard operating procedure development and operational consulting for owners/operators of amusement rides and devices and waterslides.

IRT will provide more than 100 ride operational safety and service sessions to those that attend in 2024. Last year, IRT hosted over 160 attendees from over 65 parks worldwide.

At Ride Camp, attendees are offered subjects that include ride operations leadership, motivating ride operators today, recruiting and retaining ride operators, teaching and advising staff on ADA requirements, leading leaders in ride ops, genuine training needs of trainers and those they train and many more.

This seminar series has been set for Feb. 27-29, 2024, at the **Red Lion Hotel and Conference Center** in Harrisburg-Hershey, Pennsylvania.

This event is designed to offer specialized presentations covering various amusement rides and is approved by the **Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Bureau of Ride and Measurement Standards**.

In addition, the Pennsylvania inspector licenses, and Pennsylvania approved training, are both recognized by the **New Jersey Department of Consumer Affairs for the New Jersey Recognized Certified Maintenance Technician** program.

Presentations will be made for inspector licenses in Inflatables, haunted attractions, go-karts, waterslides and extreme sports for independent and/or insurance inspectors. There are two levels.

This event is coordinated by **Phil Slaggert**.

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Jaskiewicz to deliver 2024 AIMS International Safety Seminar keynote

AIMS International is excited to share **Icon Park** president and CEO **Chris Jaskiewicz** will deliver the keynote address at the 2024 AIMS International Safety Seminar. Representing the **Visit Orlando** Board of Directors, Jaskiewicz will welcome AIMS International and its annual safety seminar back to Orlando for a multi-year run.

Named CEO of the Year by *Orlando Business Journal*, Jaskiewicz took over Icon Park in 2018, a \$300 million 20-acre entertainment destination featuring 50 restaurants, bars, attractions, stores and one of the world's largest observation wheels. After leading an assessment of the brand, guest experience and design, Jaskiewicz restructured and rebranded the

property, creating best-in-class guest service training for employees, directing capital improvement projects, producing high profile public events, and elevating marketing strategies.

After the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Jaskiewicz was the first attraction executive to present to the Orange County Economic Recovery Task Force, positioning Icon Park as a leader in the reopening of Orlando. He then led the formation of the **Orlando Entertainment District** to attract locals to International Drive.

Prior to returning to his hometown Orlando in 2018, Jaskiewicz was president of two divisions of a 100-year-old real estate company in New York

City, managing strategy, operations, and a \$100 million P&L for a 3.5 million-square-foot luxury apartment, retail and office real estate portfolio, with 4,000 residential and 35 commercial tenants. Concurrently, as chief operating officer and general counsel of the parent company, he led corporate contract negotiations, public and community relations, marketing, risk management and human resources.

Jaskiewicz has been cited by publications such as the *Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times* and *Bon Appetit* as an expert in hospitality and real estate trends because he conceived and implemented strategies to build brand awareness and a differentiated customer experience and is credited for lead-

ing a nationally recognized "food hall" trend in real estate development. Jaskiewicz was a lawyer in Manhattan for one of the world's largest law firms, **Proskauer Rose LLP**, where he assisted clients in the sports, entertainment and real estate industries before being hired by a client. Jaskiewicz began his professional career prior to law school at **PepsiCo** as a district sales manager.

Jaskiewicz is a member of the Visit Orlando Board of Directors, **University of Central Florida Rosen School of Hospitality** Dean's Advisory Board, Junior Achievement of Central Florida Board, **International Drive Resort Area Chamber of Commerce** Board, and **Entrepreneurs Alliance of Orlando** Board.

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



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Embed provides solutions to Tilt Studios; announces free FEC tools

AT: David Fake
Special to Amusement Today

BISMARCK, North Dakota — Tilt Studio opened its newest FEC in Bismarck in mid-October. The 90,000-square-foot FEC is the first in the chain to offer go-karts. However, there are still tried-and-true FEC offerings such as minigolf, laser tag, arcade games and a prize redemption center. Another tried-and-true offering that Tilt Studios offers at the new Bismarck location (as well as all other 20-plus locations) is the FEC's cashless system powered by Embed.

Tilt Studio Marketing Director Vicky Peek spoke with *Amusement Today* about Tilt Studio and Embed from Bismarck, North Dakota, in the days leading up to the new location's official opening. Peek expressed her love for the excitement, magic and joy that comes from opening each new facility.

"Each location is new and exciting because you know



Tilt Studio attributes some of Embed Wallet's success in its facility to it being fun to use (above left). Embed announced on that it intends to enter a new era of transformative growth by introducing Embed Success Squad and Embed GoTrain including multiple free services to aid FECs in success. COURTESY EMBED

you've created something from blood, sweat and tears. It's amazing to see the first guests come in in awe. You see guests walk around and they've got the prizes, and you know they've been to the redemption counter. Or they're having a blast on the [mini] golf course and they're synching their Embed cards using their mobile wallet," said Peek.

"Our parent company, Nickels and Dimes Incorporated, which just cel-

ebrated its 50th Anniversary, was established in 1972 at Six Flags Mall in Arlington, Texas. The success of the early Gold Mine and Tilt arcades has grown and evolved into Tilt Studio and Tilted Ten facilities. While our size has changed, our primary focus is still for families of all ages to have fun and provide a high-quality experience," Peek explained.

In addition to the convenience of the mobile wallet,



Peek explained that there are additional ways that Embed helps its FECs ensure success. Embed provides marketing packages at no extra charge.

Customers can customize the look of the app and add their branding to the mobile wallet. Embed also provides marketing material such as table toppers with QR codes to assist with easily reloading the wallet, helping our customers and our guests reload their cards so they don't have

to leave the game.

"Embed Wallet is just kind of fun to use. You can use your phone with our tap readers. You just take your phone over to the reader, and it will start your game. There's a convenience factor in it. It's like I have one of my credit cards loaded onto my wallet. I load my plane tickets in my wallet. So, you don't have to worry about losing a card. I'm not as

► See EMBED, page 81

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► **EMBED**

Continued from page 80

afraid of losing a physical card, because it's on my phone. If you lose your phone, there are ways that you can prohibit and protect your phone and your information. So that's just an added security right there," Peek continued.

"We started with Embed in 2011 at our Katy, Texas, location; that was the first Tilt Studio location that Nickels and Dimes built from the ground up. Embed Card was the core system for that location," she added.

"Nickels and Dimes and Embed have grown together over the last 12 years, starting with one location to now 21 locations. Mobile Wallet has enhanced experience for the guest with not having to leave your game, interrupting your gameplay, to reload your play card, Peek concluded.

Mobile wallet is just one of Embed's ever-growing, ever-evolving set of tools and solutions it provides to customers. Embed continues to lead the industry in customer support with a 99% Consumer Approval rating, widening the overall service, care, and training support area with the Embed Help Centre, the world-class support and training platform created on Zendesk for the Embed family.

Most recently, Embed announced that it intends to enter a new era of transformative growth by introducing Embed Success Squad and Embed GoTrain at IAAPA Expo 2023

The goal of the Embed Success Squad is singular: to take the Embed family to the next level with high-value no-cost perks for every single Embed customer. Embed Success Squad includes the following: exclusive access to Embed's limited-time offerings like free Mobile Wallet for one year and free STATS for three months; cloud technology consultation from its SaaS experts; best practice sharing from the biggest FECs in the business to know what makes them so successful; complimentary payment gateway cost-savings analysis from the resident Payment Gateway Guru, who just saved an

► See EMBED, page 82

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► **EMBED**

Continued from page 81

Embed customer 500K simply by helping them change their payment gateway; free printed promotional creative kits to drive consumer adoption of Mobile Wallet; and a choice of tailored training experiences like DIY online training via the Embed Help Centre or one on one training.

“This is why we formed the Embed Success Squad — a dedicated team of consultants, champions, and trainers — a mix of growth gurus, SaaS experts, and payment specialists, who will bring their individual expertise to our customers so they can maximize their Embed system to drive transformative growth. Our aim is more than a game-changer, it’s a life-changer!” said Sara Paz, CMO at Embed.

The company is introducing Embed GoTrain, a gamified, in-venue training of FEC operators and staff on how to drive greater Mobile Wallet registrations and sign-ups.

“The Embed Success Squad is excited for cus-

tomers to take the Embed GoTrain and learn how to accelerate Mobile Wallet consumer uptake so they can experience the dramatic results we’re seeing across the industry for FECs with Mobile Wallet: double the reload value, using the registered customer data to drive return visits which shorten the revisiting cycle, and experience the operational efficiency of customers reloading before they even arrive at the FEC!” said Joshua Chappell, Embed GoTrain Conductor.

“We listened to the feedback from our customers and worked in real time to deliver everything they requested and more! This frees up more time for FECs to focus on their operations to ensure no downtime occurs during operating hours because of missing parts or manual back-and-forth processes, like quotes, quote approvals and invoices,” said Megan Lim, Embed’s Global eCommerce Director. “Operators can do it online in a heartbeat in just three easy steps: Select. Ship. Pay.”

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January 7 - 24, 2024
Orlando, Florida
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**NAARSO Annual
Safety Seminar**

January 28 - February 2, 2024
Orlando, Florida
naarso.com

**International Ride Training's
2024 Ride Camp**

February 5 - 9, 2024
Galveston, Texas
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IISF 2024 Trade Show

February 13 - 16, 2024
Riverview, Florida
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**Northwest Showman's
Safety Seminar**

February 19 - 23, 2024
Portland, Oregon
nwshowmensclub.com

**Pennsylvania Amusement
Ride Safety Seminar**

February 27 - 29, 2024
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
paridesafety.com

Amusement Expo 2024

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Las Vegas, Nevada
amusementexpo.org

IAAPA Expo Asia

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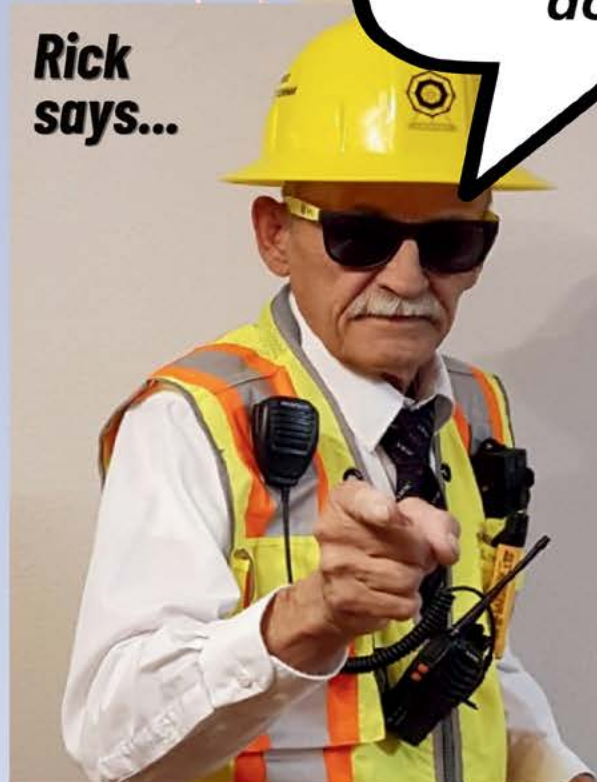


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IRT welcomes Dreamworld, WhiteWater World as iROC-certified

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — International Ride Training, an amusement industry operational safety service training provider, welcomed Australian parks Dreamworld and WhiteWater World as the newest members of the In-



ternational Ride Operator Certification, or “iROC,” family of parks. They join nearly 50 other amusement parks, water parks,

family entertainment centers, and attractions located in the United States and Canada — including Cedar Point, Elitch Gardens, Fun Spot America Theme Parks, Glenwood Caverns Adventure Park, Kings Island, Canada’s

Wonderland, Pacific Park on the Santa Monica Pier, The San Antonio Zoo, and New York New York Hotel and Casino — with iROC ride operators welcoming their guests every day.

Designed by International Ride Training, the iROC Program is the world’s only third-party certification of ride operator safety, efficiency, and professionalism. Built on the “Ten Critical Components of Ride Operator Safety,” iROC enhances standardization, risk management, accountability, education, and communication, all to improve and maintain guest and operator safety. In 2022, nearly 15,000 ride operators were certified under the rigorous requirements of the iROC Program.

“Dreamworld and WhiteWater World are incredibly proud to be the first Australian theme parks to implement the International Ride Operator Certification program,” said Michelle Erasmus, operations director at Dreamworld. “With a focus on pursuing global-best safety standards across all of our park’s operations, IRT has provided us the consistency and confidence to continue delivering exceptional experiences for all of our guests.”

“IRT could not be



more excited to welcome Dreamworld and WhiteWater World to the iROC Family! As two of the premier attractions in Australia, their depth of experience, dedication to safety, and adherence to high professional standards are a perfect fit with and will enhance the iROC Program globally,” said Erik Beard, managing member and general counsel for IRT. “As the first iROC facilities in Australia, Dreamworld and WhiteWater World have demonstrated their commitment to having the safest, most efficient and most professional ride and aquatic operators in the world and IRT is so pleased to be able to partner with them in this effort.”

International Ride Training provides operational safety services to the amusement industry through direct operations training, auditing, advisory services, interactive safety education and coaching, training and leadership development, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) development, and general ride safety consulting to theme parks worldwide. IRT also offers Ride Camp, a multi-day hands-on training program for operations and training managers, and ADA FAQ, the amusement industry’s first-ever ADA training program geared towards front-line operations employees.

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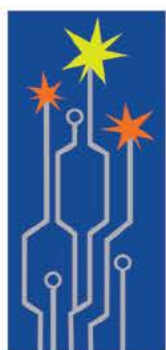
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Wild Mouse is among Baynum off-season restoration projects

AT: David Fake
Special to Amusement Today

SACO, Maine—Baynum Amusement Solutions recently completed a restoration of Funtown Splashtown U.S.A.'s Wild Mouse coaster.

The restoration of the Maurer Rides Wild Maus Classic model coaster, which has operated at Funtown Splashtown U.S.A. since 2009, included a complete repaint of the coaster. The color scheme was updated from a yellow structure with purple track to a vibrant green structure with purple track.

According to Roller Coaster Database, Wild Mouse has a storied history. Manufactured in 2000, the coaster was acquired by an unknown individual in Florida in 2001. That owner placed the coaster with Strates Shows for approximately one year, over which it traveled and appeared at multiple carnivals and fairs, including the New York State Fair. After one season on the road, the owner chose



Baynum Amusement Solutions completed the restoration/repainting of Funtown Splashtown U.S.A.'s Wild Mouse coaster. The coaster was updated from a yellow structure with purple track color scheme (above left) to a vibrant green structure with purple track (above right). COURTESY BAYNUM SOLUTIONS

to find a more permanent home for Wild Mouse. Ocean City, Maryland's Jolly Roger Amusement Park became that home from 2002 to 2006.

Funtown Splashtown U.S.A.'s Wild Mouse is just one of Baynum Solutions' six already completed or underway amusement maintenance/restoration projects so far for the 2023/2024 off-season. Additional completed or underway projects include:

- Sesame Place's Sunny Day Carousel Restoration

- Noah's Ark's Congo Bongo Slide Restoration and Resurfacing

- Morey's Piers' Sea Serpent Painting

- Cedar Point's Top Thrill 2 Rebrand Painting

- Kings Island's, Diamondback Rethemed Painting

"Coming off one of our busiest summers for the Baynum Amusement Solutions team, we are poised for another great project season featuring a number of

incredible opportunities with some of our top industry customers. Our projects span from painting major steel and wood coasters, coating water park slides and APU restorations, some very exciting new and aftermarket construction ventures and colorful retheming and rebranding endeavors," said Walt Bowser, president of the Amusement division of Baynum Solutions.

There are 30 additional 2023/2024 off-season projects that have been slated, but not

yet started which include:

- Six new coaster installations receiving touch-ups
- Seven aquatic slide complex installations
- Seven waterpark slide and aqua play restorations
- Two historic wooden coaster paintings
- Two flat ride attraction recoatings
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- Three new attraction installation

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(conveyor lift included)
- 2008 ARM Super Drop Tower....p/m
- 1963 Eli Bridge Scrambler....p/m

- 1917 Historic CW Parker Carousel....p/m
(1987 Chance/Bradley Kaye Replacement Horses,
2 rows, building included)
- 1954 G-16 Railroad....p/m
(1 engine, 3 coaches, 2300' of track included,
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Orange County Convention Center continues as sustainability leader

AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO — As IAAPA Expo 2023 participants readied themselves for the trip to Central Florida, recycling and sustainability efforts were already underway by both IAAPA staff and officials at the **Orange County Convention Center (OCCC)**, in Orlando, where the expo is taking place, Nov. 13-17.

In 2013, the OCCC was awarded the Gold Level of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification. It was an undertaking that took building officials three years to obtain. The center still is one of the largest LEED Gold Level certified convention centers in North America.

Going into the OCCC this year, IAAPA officials made some significant changes to reduce the event's environmental footprint. Those efforts include stories from the trade show floor being produced in real-time in a video format and shared on social media, reducing the need for paper and resulting in 0% carbon emissions by, for one thing, eliminating the need for trucks to deliver printed materials. And, of course, by reducing the amount of paper waste.

In addition, IAAPA session handouts this year are only available electronically. Session surveys are administered digitally, and exhibitor material is distributed electronically.

And there is more. IAAPA tickets are tied to the badge



The Orange County Convention Center is a leader in its sustainability efforts and was awarded the Gold Level of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification in 2013. COURTESY OCCC

instead of printed. Lanyards will be collected at the end of the Expo and will be reused at future events. IAAPA is using digital signage to replace some paper-based signage.

IAAPA partners with **Give Kids the World**, so leftover exhibitor products such as plush, games, T-shirts, supplies and more will go to the charitable organization.

The OCCC has built its sustainability program with a variety of efforts. It has continued to be a leader in sustainability in the convention center industry.

It was the first convention center in the United States to have its Environmental Management System ISO 14001 certified and the

third to receive the APEX/ASTM certification.

As part of the center's continued commitment, center staff work with all clients as well as its contract service provider, **Freeman**, and its food and beverage provider, **Sodexo Live**.

Attendees may not see some of the building's behind-the-scenes background efforts, but there are many.

Here are some ways the OCCC continues to reduce its environmental footprint and increase its sustainability.

Transportation

The OCCC has five pedestrian bridges available to help attendees avoid on-the-ground vehicle traffic. Visitors

may access the OCCC through five pedestrian bridges, which are connected to four surrounding hotels, the **Hilton, Hyatt Regency, Rosen Plaza and Rosen Centre**.

Visitors may access the Centerline bus route for travel to and from the West and North-South buildings. The I-Ride Trolley is available for traveling to neighboring restaurants, shops and attractions.

The OCCC campus provides 12 electrical vehicle charging stations for guests and visitors at both the West and North-South Buildings.

About 89% of the OCCC's fleet is electric or hybrid, including on-site vehicles, golf carts, scooters and lifts.

Food

The OCCC's Center-to-Table Gardens' program has 81 indoor aeroponic grow towers consisting of 44 planting spots per tower. This growing program produces more than 50,000 lettuces and herbs annually. In partnership with Sodexo, the exclusive food and beverage provider, the OCCC is proud to be a leader in innovative urban agriculture.

In collaboration with clients, Sodexo Live works to donate any unused or surplus food items to local organizations like **Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida** and **Orlando Union Rescue Mission**.

Food scraps are collected back of house and deposited

in designated organic compactors. The OCCC's organic waste hauler then takes the organic food waste to be processed into nutrient-rich soil.

The recycling of cooking oil ensures the proper disposal of such waste. The OCCC partners with **Brownie's Septic and Plumbing** to pick up and recycle cooking oil and grease turning it into biodiesel.

Energy

The OCCC's North-South building houses a one-megawatt rooftop solar farm and five on-the-ground solar arrays which offsets an average of 100 kilowatt-hours of energy use per month.

The OCCC incorporates natural lighting from floor-to-ceiling windows and is currently converting to LED lighting throughout concourses, meeting rooms, eating areas and office spaces.

During off-show hours, escalators and moving walkways are powered off to conserve energy.

Water

The OCCC prides itself in preserving natural lands, including multiple vegetative areas, which hold rainwater and drain into water bodies.

The OCCC has retrofitted low-flow faucets and reduced water leaks throughout the West Building.

OCCC officials tout that 100% reclaimed water is used to irrigate its 400-acre campus and the North-South building utilizes smart irrigation to sense efficient watering.

Waste

OCCC works with clients and contractors to reduce event waste by 20-25% annually in an effort to increase the annual waste diversion by 3%.

The campus is home to over 575 outdoor and indoor duo landfill and recycling containers at concourses, meeting rooms, bus stops, outdoor entrances, walkways and pedestrian bridges. These receptacles were manufactured in the U.S. using recycled plastic.

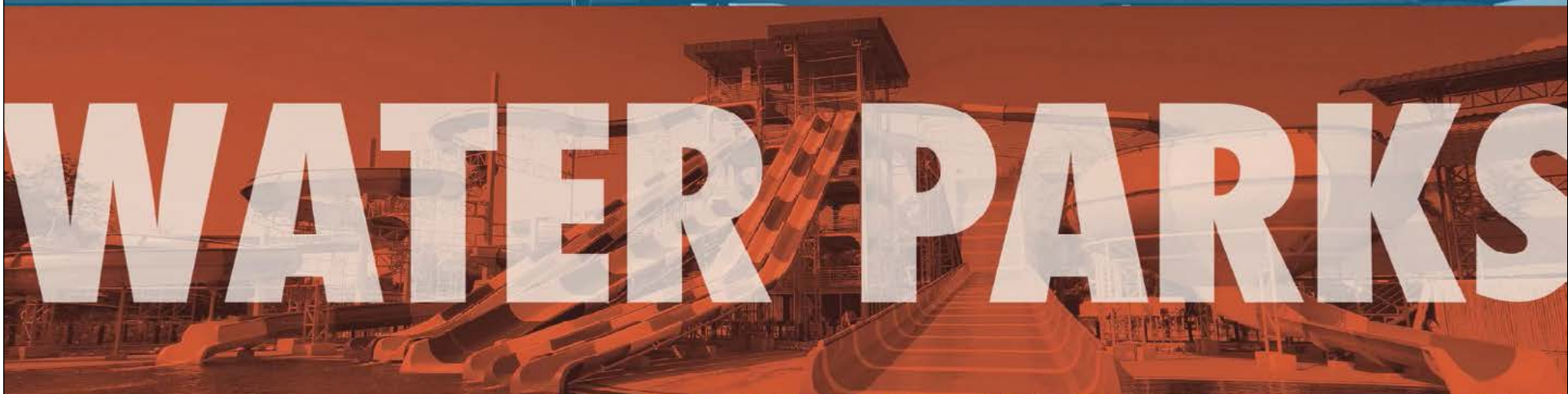
The North-South and West buildings are equipped with multiple water fountains with built-in bottle-filling capabilities.

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Ralph S. Alberts acquires facility to expand fiberglass manufacturing

MONTOURSVILLE, Pa. — **Ralph S. Alberts Co., Inc.** (RSA) purchased a new building that neighbors the company's existing Montoursville, Pennsylvania, campus.

The new building will add 25,000 square feet of manufacturing space to the company's already existing 75,000 square feet, bringing the total campus to 10 acres and 100,000 square feet of operating space. The additional manufacturing space is dedicated to the expansion of the company's Fiberglass Reinforced Plastic department, which has seen over 100% growth in



Ralph S. Alberts Co., Inc. has acquired a new 25,000-square-foot building, which the company plans to utilize for its expanding Fiberglass Reinforced Plastic department. COURTESY RALPH S. ALBERTS CO., INC.

► See **ALBERTS**, page 94



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As seen from the rooftop of the company's main facility, the new building expands Ralph S. Alberts Co.'s existing 75,000-square-foot campus to more than 100,000 square feet by adding 25,000 square feet of manufacturing space. COURTESY RALPH S. ALBERTS CO., INC.

► **ALBERTS**
Continued from page 92

the last year. RSA will begin immediate renovation in the new space, including installation of three large custom booths, along with new technology and equipment. With those technology and equipment additions, RSA is introducing an expanded resume of fiberglass production capabilities including: Infusion Processes, Resin Transfer Molding, Silicone Vacuum Bagging and Carbon Fiber.

In recent years, RSA has been awarded fiberglass projects across multiple industries in varying scales. Notable projects include:

- Waste water tanks as large as 5,000 gallons for sanitation
- MRI simulator tables for the medical industry
- Forklift skins and body components for the industrial, automation and material handling industries
- Train bodies, seats and other ride components for the amusement industry
- Theming and scenery designs associated with queue lines also for the amusement industry
- Slide components for the water park industry

In 2024, RSA will focus on building its portfolio of work in existing industries and will also look to find work in new places. The company has intentions of attending multiple marine and boating tradeshows along with highlighting the company's new fiberglass capabilities at the IAAPA Expo in Orlando, the largest trade show for the attractions industry.

This past July, RSA announced the addition of a new material and production capability: EVA. Now, followed by this fiberglass expansion, RSA is taking on new heights of business growth. 2024 will be an exciting year for the company, as well as its new and existing customers as RSA continues to fulfill custom orders through a solution-based, one-stop-shop business model.



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BREAKING NEWS

Cedar Fair, Six Flags combining to create leading park operator

ARLINGTON, Texas and SANDUSKY, Ohio — Cedar Fair and Six Flags Entertainment Corporation announced that the two companies have entered into a definitive merger agreement to combine in a merger of equals transaction. The combined company, with a pro forma enterprise value of approximately \$8 billion based

on both companies' debt and equity values as of October 31, 2023, will be a leading amusement park operator in the highly competitive leisure space with an expanded and diversified footprint, a more robust operating model and a strong revenue and cash flow generation profile.

Under the terms of the merger agreement, which has

been unanimously approved by the boards of directors of both companies, Cedar Fair unitholders will receive one share of common stock in the new combined company for each unit owned, and Six Flags shareholders will receive 0.5800 shares of common stock in the new combined company for each share owned. Following the close of the transaction,

Cedar Fair unitholders will own approximately 51.2%, and Six Flags shareholders will own approximately 48.8%, of the combined company's fully diluted share capital on a pro forma basis.

"Our merger with Six Flags will bring together two of North America's iconic amusement park companies to establish a highly diversified

footprint and a more robust operating model to enhance park offerings and performance," said **Richard Zimmerman**, president and chief executive officer of Cedar Fair. "Together, we will have an expanded and complementary portfolio of attractive assets and intellectual property to deliver engaging entertainment experiences for guests. The combination also creates an enhanced financial profile with strong cash flow generation to accelerate investments in our parks to delight our guests, driving increased levels of demand and in-park value and spending."

"The combination of Six Flags and Cedar Fair will redefine our guests' amusement park experience as we combine the best of both companies," added **Selim Bassoul**, president and chief executive officer of Six Flags. "Six Flags and Cedar Fair share a strong cultural alignment, operating philosophy and steadfast commitment to providing consumers with thrilling experiences. By combining our operational models and technology platforms, we expect to accelerate our transformation activities and unlock new potential for our parks."

The merger is expected to close in the first half of 2024, following receipt of Six Flags shareholder approval, regulatory approvals, and satisfaction of customary closing conditions. Approval by Cedar Fair unitholders is not required. Six Flags' largest shareholder, which owns approximately 13.6% of Six Flags' shares outstanding, has signed a voting and support agreement to vote in favor of the transaction. The transaction is not expected to trigger any change of control provision under Cedar Fair's and Six Flags' respective outstanding notes. The companies expect to refinance their respective revolving credit facilities, and Six Flags expects to refinance the Six Flags Term Loan, ahead of transaction close.

Upon closing of the transaction, the combined company will operate under the name Six Flags and trade under the ticker symbol FUN on the NYSE.

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Artist concept rendering. Courtesy of Cedar Point

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Artist concept rendering. Courtesy of Cedar Point