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Digital Edition

Vekoma family boomerang added to park's coaster lineup

Kings Island expands Planet Snoopy kids area with Camp Snoopy

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

MASON, Ohio — Kings Island has built a reputation for having one of the best sections for children in the industry. It took the Golden Ticket for Best Kids Area for 18 years.

"The family component of the park is really the Planet Snoopy area," said Chad Showalter, communications director. "There are rides and attractions all over the park suitable for and enjoyed by families, but when we talk about families with young kids, we talk about Planet Snoopy. When we announced last fall that we were expanding with Camp Snoopy, a lot

of our families who come time after time told us they were excited about it. I love it because it allows us to introduce a new coaster to our lineup, and it's for kids, and it provides a different experience than our other kids' coasters."

Snoopy's Soap Box Racers is a family boomerang model from Vekoma. Riders are pulled backward up a 75-foot lift and then released, sending the train back through the station. After zipping through the tangled curves, the train rises up a reverse point, and passengers navigate the rails in reverse. Track length is 672 feet, but riders go in both directions.

Top speed is 37 mph.

A woodsy theme surrounds the ride, including a sculpture of Franklin in a watchtower calling the race.

"If you're looking at raising a 'coaster rider,' Kings Island is the spot to do that," Showalter told *Amusement Today*. "It complements the other coasters we have for kids so nicely."

Snoopy's Soap Box Racers is the fourth gravity-driven children's coaster in the area and 15th in the park.

No rides were lost or relocated to add the new coaster.

A single train accommodates 20 passengers.

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Snoopy's Soap Box Racers takes family members forward and backward. Franklin calls the race as the cars zip through the course.
AT/TIM BALDWIN



Tiana's Bayou Adventure set to make a splash with Disney guests



Nestled in at the far end of Frontierland and occupying the former home of Splash Mountain, Tiana's Bayou Adventure provides a fresh experience. AT/DAVID FAKE

AT: David Fake
Special to Amusement Today

LAKE BEUNA VISTA, Fla. — On June 10 Magic Kingdom at Walt Disney World welcomed media representatives from around the globe for an exclusive sneak peek into the highly anticipated new attraction, Tiana's Bayou Adventure.

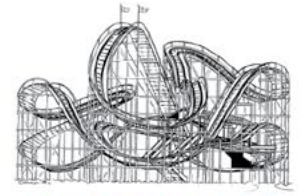
Nestled in at the far end of Frontierland and occupying the former "mountain" home of Splash Mountain, this retheming of the attraction is more than just a simple overlay, it is an immersive, fresh experience that transports guests into the whimsical world of Princess Tiana and

her charming companions from Disney's *The Princess and the Frog*.

From the moment guests step into the attraction, they are enveloped in the sights and sounds of the Louisiana Bayou. Moss-draped trees, twinkling fireflies, and the gentle hum of Cajun melodies set the stage for an adventure that promises to captivate audiences of all ages.

The attraction features innovative technology that seamlessly blends physical sets with fluidly animated characters, projections and

► See TIANA, page 7



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

FLINT'S VIEW: Bubba Flint

Failure inspires success



Robinson

The centuries-old history of the amusement industry is filled with stories of inspiration, ideas, successes and, of course, failures. Rides and attractions were created, opened, but somehow fell short and were shuttered ... leaving generations to never have the chance to experience the imaginative ideas. However, so very often, those failures only inspired better ideas that would appear along midways in the future.

As an example, Zamperla's Telecombat flat ride from the 1980s featured riders "battling" each other via an on-board screen and saw installations in its time, but it has faded from the modern midways. Now, more and more interactive rides are popping up industry-wide taking that original inspiration of interactivity to the next-level.

The inspiration from our imaginative concepts does not stop at our attraction midways. It spreads to our guests.

Walt Disney World famously debuted the Star Wars Galactic Starcruiser in March of 2022 only to shutter the entire experience in September of 2023. For whatever reason, the experience — which combined elements of a hotel, an interactive show, immersive roleplay, as well as visits to Galaxy's Edge within Disney's Hollywood Studios — had failed to turn sufficient profit.

However, many of those that were able to board the Galactic Starcruiser during its brief operation fell in love with the experience. To the point of which, Orlando will play host in October to Halcy-Con (named for the experience's ship, The Halcyon). The two-day event is for fans of the experience to immerse themselves in the world once again and celebrate the unique experiences shared aboard the Galactic Starcruiser. In addition, a documentary entitled *Halcyon Daze* is currently in production, showcasing the final days of the experience.

I was fortunate enough to attend A Galactic Dinner, a special event done in the immersive style of Disney's Galactic Starcruiser, where guests from across the country journeyed to experience an evening together. The event — a benefit for the Make-A-Wish Foundation — featuring a five-star meal and a unique storyline. Guests (many of whom were loving fans of Disney's Galactic Starcruiser) dined and became part of the performance, as they were once again part of the worlds created "...a long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away."

The Halcyon may no longer "sail" from Orlando, but its time paved the way for imaginations to bring more unforgettable moments into our world.



INDUSTRY VOICE: Michael Graham, *The Gravity Group*

Focusing the imagination of the next generation

Anybody can come up with a great idea! Implementing that idea can be a challenge. It can be a fun challenge or a frustrating challenge. What if you had only one week to design an entire theme park area along with a model of it and a marketing plan?



Graham

Well, that's exactly what students in grades five through eight get to do at Coaster Camp. My wife, a teacher at Mars Hill Academy, and I started the camp at the school here in Cincinnati after brainstorming with John Robinson of *Amusement Today* and Mark Rosenzweig of 3DX Scenic. Campers work together in teams to design and build a CDX Blocks roller coaster and other flat rides, all supplied by CoasterDynamix, and then create an immersive environment with craft supplies and generous amounts of inspiration and teamwork.

But why create something if you do not

tell everyone about it? This year, to present the process of marketing this themed area, Don Helbig, of Cedar Fair renown, provided these future creatives with tools and knowledge of how to present their new worlds to others towards the end of the week.

Lastly, how could you have a Coaster Camp without riding roller coasters? The capstone last day involved a trip to Kings Island to soak in the details and ascertain the design thoughts behind the various themed areas of the park. Of course, riding the rides was an integral part of the experience as well.

Each year, these Coaster Campers blow me away with their new ideas, and I find it reassuring that each individual comes up with fun details and overall concepts. The future is bright as we train and guide this next generation to become the next leaders in the themed entertainment industry.

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2 MINUTE DRILL



AT: Janice Witherow

Andrew Mowatt, WhiteWater West

A well-known professional in the amusement industry, **Andrew Mowatt** has been part of the **WhiteWater** group since 1995 when he was responsible for the company's marketing team. Today, he leads WhiteWater West's key account clients and has been a guiding force in projects all over the world. He brings a sense of fun and passion, along with a great deal of knowledge and experience, to the job. Andrew is a member of the **WWA** Hall of Fame and has been known to share his talent of impressive piano playing at events over the years.

Title: Executive Vice President, Global Key Account Sales.

Number of years in the industry: 30+.

Best thing about the industry: Creating fun for families and seeing people smile.

Favorite amusement ride: Hulk at Universal Studios Florida.

If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be ... Selling aircraft for Boeing.

Biggest challenge facing our industry: Climate and high costs of construction.

The thing I like most about amusement/water park season is ... Wearing shorts, flip-flops and sunscreen.

I could eat this every day and never get tired of it ... Chicken souvlakis, oh, OK, funnel cakes too!

Finish this sentence: the 2024 U.S. election will be ... Here before you know it!

My favorite thing about July is ... The weather.

I am in the best mood when ... I am sailing.

All-time favorite song ... *American Pie* by Don McLean.

In one word, summer television is ... Boring.

If you could have a home with the most beautiful view in the world, where would it be? British Columbia, Canada, near Saltspring Island.



Andrew Mowatt has enjoyed a more-than-30-year career in the water park industry and is a member of the WWA Hall of Fame. COURTESY WHITEWATER WEST

If I could do anything when coming home from work, it would be ... Walking the dogs.

What is your definition of fun? Having a good time!

My favorite summertime food is ... BBQ ribs (ok and, again, funnel cakes)!

My idea of a good surprise is ... Visiting friends unannounced.

I feel most comfortable wearing ... Forever in blue jeans.

I know I need a vacation, when ... I've met my goals for the year.

The celebrity I am most tired hearing about would have to be ... Harry and Meghan.

I would love front-row concert tickets to see ... Taylor Swift, but I'd re-gift the tickets to my pals who are seriously-serious Swifties!

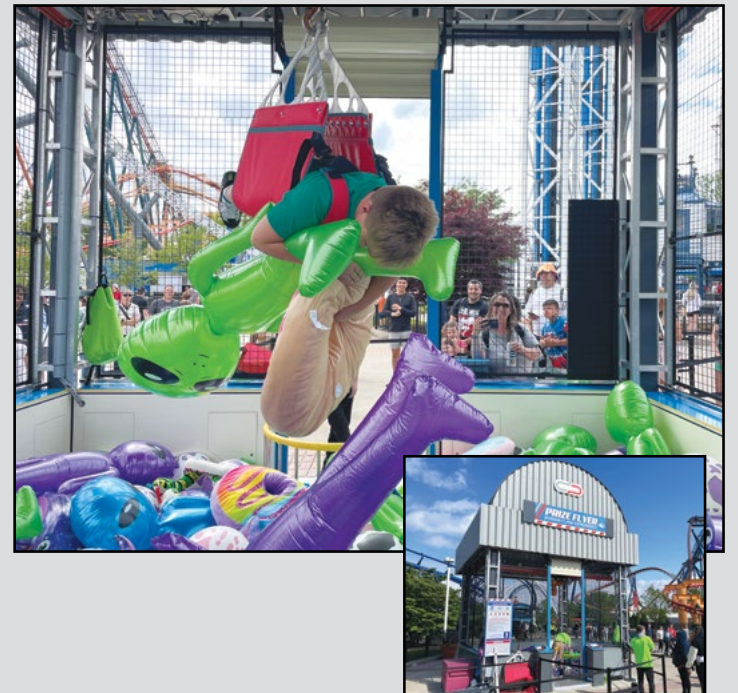
To me, the biggest news story of the summer of 2024 is ... Water Parks Save The World!

What would you rather give up: text or e-mail? Junk/spam email.

Best place to hang out on a rainy day... A water park, of course.

THE INDUSTRY SEEN

Getting into the game



SANDUSKY, Ohio — In early June, Cedar Point and Kings Island both unveiled the Prize Flyer: Human Claw Experience along their midways. The attention-getting attraction is a giant claw prize machine where guests are hoisted into the air, guided by a nearby joystick over an array of prizes and use their own arms to collect their winnings. COURTESY CEDAR POINT

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► SNOOPY

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Children only have to be 36 inches tall to ride.

Each car has a distinguishable design, making it identifiable to individual Peanuts characters.

“The creation of 10 different cars for this coaster, each with different patterns and colors (with different show wheels too!), was actually a big achievement,” said **Ricardo Tonding Edges**, VP sales and marketing, Vekoma. “The process included working on the first layer of painting and patterns and sending pictures to both **Cedar Fair** and Peanuts every end of the day (European time) and getting their feedback overnight so we could tweak, adjust and ultimately finalize the painting process while the paint was not completely dry. Time was critical for it, and smooth collaboration with the client team was key to achieving the expected goals. The creative intent was brilliant, and I believe we did a great job by delivering and executing the creative intent.

“Working with IPs is challenging and rewarding at the same time,” he added. The process usually requires several design reviews and a clear attention to detail, but the results are definitely worth it. It helps to raise the bar when it comes to the attention to the details.”

Like the other coasters, parents are able to join their children and participate comfortably on the ride.

“People come to make memories with the people



The family boomerang coaster from Vekoma has been a huge seller in Europe and Asia. It has finally arrived in America in 2024. The journey begins with a backward climb before being released down a slope (below left). The Beagle Scout Acres area have activities for kids to participate, as well as spaces for children to burn off some energy (below right). AT/TIM BALDWIN



that matter most to them,” said Showalter. “It might be a couple dating or a family with young kids whose parents grew up in the park and are now taking their own kids and continuing that tradition. For my own kids, those memories are etched in stone. I can almost mark the eras of my life when my kids grew enough to ride the big coasters in the park.”

The coaster isn’t the only thing new. A big area called Beagle Scout Acres provides a lot of activity.

“One of the things

we’ve heard from parents is that they would love to have more shade in Planet Snoopy,” said Showalter. “We have reconfigured what used to be a petting zoo and a performance pavilion to be a shaded interactive play area. It’s huge! It allows kids to burn off some energy while letting parents sit in the shade and recharge.”

Mounds and tunnels invite exploration.

The covered spot also provides new space for families to meet the Peanuts characters. For this area, the

characters are decked out in camp gear.

“That’s totally unique to the Kings Island experience,” Showalter said.

Pigpen’s Mess Hall is a new, walk-up counter-service location. Comfort foods are found here.

“I love the desserts,” smiled Showalter. “I love the s’mores brownie. We also have what we call a hobo pie, which is a peanut butter and jelly sandwich that is fried and topped with powdered sugar and strawberry filling. It is incredible.”

Other adjacent rides have been encompassed into the rethemed area. The park’s venerable log flume has been enhanced and renamed Charlie Brown’s Rushing River Log Ride, and the family suspended coaster (also Vekoma) has been painted in tree colors and renamed Woodstock’s Air Rail. The flying scooters have been made over into Franklin’s Flyers, the first ride named after that particular character.

The new section opened for Memorial Day Weekend.



Pigpen’s Mess Hall (above left) has comfort foods and fun desserts. Camp Snoopy is a themed expansion of the park’s award-winning Planet Snoopy. The Peanuts characters are dressed in camp gear for this particular area (above right). COURTESY KINGS ISLAND; AT/TIM BALDWIN



While embarking on a boat ride through the bayou, guests encounter animatronic figures of Princess Tiana (above middle), Prince Naveen, Louis the alligator (above right), and Ray the firefly, each one faithfully recreated to capture their unique personalities and charm. AT/DAVID FAKE

► **TIANA**
Continued from page 1

lighting effects, bringing to life beloved scenes and characters from the film.

While on the attraction, guests embark on a boat ride through the bayou, encountering animatronic figures of Princess Tiana, Prince Naveen, Louis the alligator and Ray the firefly, each one faithfully recreated to capture their unique personalities and charm.

Throughout the adventure, guests are immersed in Tiana's journey as she pursues a quest to pull together a Mardi Gras party amidst the enchanting backdrop of New Orleans and its surrounding bayou. The attraction culminates in a breathtaking splashdown followed by a festive celebration where visitors join Princess Tiana and her friends in a joyous musical finale that resonates with the spirit of the film, celebrating the power of love, friendship and following one's heart.

The attraction captures

the heart and soul of *The Princess and the Frog* by bringing its magic to life in a way that is both authentic and memorable.

Dustin Eshenroder, principal production designer at Walt Disney Imagineering, was the production design lead in the creation of Tiana's Bayou Adventure. When asked if there was a particular aspect of the scenic design of the attraction that he found particularly challenging in process but rewarding in completion, Eshenroder responded, "Specifically for my team, I think we've made a lot of big bets on foliage as a transforming factor both on the interior and exterior of the attraction. I'm really pleased with how it all came out. The good news is we had enough."

Disney representatives have repeatedly emphasized the attraction's commitment to cultural authenticity and inclusivity, highlighting the importance of representing diverse stories and voices within the Disney Parks experience.



The Chase family (above right) are proprietors of Dooky Chase's Restaurant, a New Orleans staple since 1941, on which some aspects of the family restaurant in *The Princess and the Frog* was based. The restaurant has entered into an agreement with Disney allowing guests the opportunity to purchase cookbooks, spices, rubs and souvenirs from Dooky Chase's Restaurant in the country store at the exit of the new attraction. AT/DAVID FAKE

This quest for authenticity was evidenced in conversations with several Disney creatives, and even in conversation with members of the Chase family, proprietors of **Dooky Chase's Restaurant**, a New Orleans staple since 1941, on which some aspects of the family restaurant in *The Princess and the Frog* was based.

Edgar "Dook" Chase IV, chef and grandson of Executive Chef Emeritus, the late **Leah Chase**, recalled, "Years ago, some Disney folks came to sit down with my grandmother in the restaurant, and she was able to share her story. And we don't know, working in a hectic and busy restaurant, what she is talking about with people coming in to interview her all the time, but she spent days and days just sharing her story. And then you go, and you see the movie and, well, just wow. As a family member, you can clearly see the connection to our stories."

Chase added, "Then fast forward to Tiana's Bayou

Adventure. Certainly, we all knew them by then, because we were all part of those conversations. Disney would fly down to New Orleans often. So much so that I never thought they left. That's been a beautiful thing to see. Not only the involvement of my family but the involvement of New Orleans artists, musicians, the murals on the walls, looking at the landscape and seeing what's native in Louisiana. You know, you're talking about water lilies and all their different aspects. 'What's this?' 'What's that?' They really researched and wanted to give that true experience of what it would be like to be in the Louisiana Bayou. What it would that feel like? What would that look like? They even checked in once to ask about the kinds of blades of grass. Then they went and captured that all in the ride. It's just fascinating."

"I had the privilege of being able to go on some of those research trips early on in the creative process and meet the Chases," said Eshenroder.

"It's such a lovely family. Just so generous with their time and sharing of their story and their knowledge of New Orleans history. It was greatly helpful and appreciated, especially when even going so far as to take an airboat ride with us out into the bayou."

The Chases have entered into an agreement with Disney, and guests will be able to purchase Dooky Chase's Restaurant cookbooks, spices, rubs and souvenirs in the country store at the exit of the new attraction.

With the official opening to the public just around the corner, Tiana's Bayou Adventure is poised to enchant visitors and continue the legacy of storytelling excellence that defines Disney Parks. The attraction is certain to be an immediate crowd-pleaser for both young and young at heart and is sure to become another cherished favorite at Magic Kingdom, inviting guests to experience the magic of Disney storytelling in a whole new light.



Tiana's Bayou Adventure is poised to enchant visitors and continue the legacy of storytelling excellence that defines Disney Parks. AT/DAVID FAKE

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WEST MIFFLIN, Pa. — The Golden Ticket Awards, hosted by **Kennywood** on September 6 and 7, 2024, are just around the corner, and *Amusement Today* is eager to welcome the global industry once again with a lively networking event. Registration is open at GoldenTicketAwards.com for the 2024 event which is free to industry professionals to attend! 2024 sees a return to a traditional amusement park, and Kennywood is one of the most treasured in the U.S. For more than a quarter century, *Amusement Today* has spotlighted the many strengths of the amusement industry.

The event includes a welcome reception on Friday evening, September 6 at **Sandcastle Water Park** where attendees are encouraged to socialize and network.

The host hotel is the **Westin Pittsburgh**. Room reservations should be made now with discounted rooms available via goldenticketawards.com/2024hotel.

The Golden Ticket Awards have honored the Best of the Best for more than a quarter century, and the two-day outing has become the Networking Event of the Year. All professionals in the amusement industry are welcome. *Amusement Today* is proud to maintain the Golden Ticket Awards as a free industry event.

All industry professionals will find casual opportunities to connect with what's happening in the industry, making for a vital and beneficial experience for all who attend.

In addition, the event will have three unique behind-the-scenes tours at Kennywood on Saturday morning, September 7, for attendees to enjoy! A Kennywood Park Walking History Tour will be hosted by surprise former Kennywood Park legend. An exclusive look at Kennywood's Wood Coaster Preservation/Track Maintenance will be presented at the park's Carpenter's Shop (hosted by **Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters**). And, in an exclusive offered only to park owners and general managers, a detailed tour of Kennywood Park Security and Weapons Detection with AI that will be hosted by the innovative people at **Evolv**.

Once again, a golf outing is planned for September 6. Following the fun and laughter, all proceeds benefit the **National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives**. "Held at the Westwood Golf Club, this event is your chance to support the NRCMA while enjoying a day of golf and camaraderie," said tournament organizer **Melissa Bamford** of **Baynum Painting**. The golf outing will have an 8 a.m. shotgun start and is priced at \$150 per golfer, with proceeds benefiting the NRCMA. Registration information and additional details are available at goldenticketawards.com/2024golf.

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A look at Kennywood's wooden coaster preservation efforts is one of multiple behind-the-scenes opportunities offered to Golden Ticket Awards attendees. COURTESY KENNYWOOD



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Kennywood has left no stone unturned for its 125th birthday

AT: Pam Sherborne

psherborne@amusementtoday.com

WEST MIFFLIN, Pa. — There is absolutely no doubt officials at **Kennywood** amusement park, located just outside Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, wanted to make sure guests this year would be able to celebrate Kennywood's 125th birthday in grand fashion.

Officials began several years ago preparing for this event, starting a different area as they completed another. The result has been an enormous effort and its fruition has brought enhancements, additions and upgrades all across the parks with all phases completed for the 2024 season.

"Generations of families have visited Kennywood park over the past 125 years," said **Tasha Pokrzywa**, the park's communications manager. "To be in a community that long is such an honor. We have the most passionate fan base, so we want to give them even more fun to enjoy this season."

There is more to do, to see, to enjoy and, of course, to eat for the 2024 season.

So beginning with the new 2024 ride **Spinvasion**, Kennywood park brought the first ride of its kind to the U.S. The ride is manufactured by **Zamperla**. It opened over Memorial Day weekend.

It has been described as an electrifying combination of speed and gravity, along with its unique single-rider experience. The ride features 24 riders at one time, who fly airborne in a wave-like pattern with seats swinging out for multiple cycles. Riders must be 48 inches tall.



The bumper cars were reimagined to honor the park's signature potato food (above). Kennywood's Turtle ride (below) has received some sprucing up for the park's 125th anniversary season. COURTESY KENNYWOOD; AT/GARY SLADE



The ride is located in the alien-themed Area 412, featuring a new UFO-shaped Gift Ship gift shop. The shop is now flanked by a 12-foot-tall alien.

"Spinvasion and other new experiences will wow our guests like never before," said **Rick Spicuzza**, the park's general manager.

The adjacent **Cosmic Chaos** ride received a new coat of paint and is now neon green and will have the detail of chartreuse aliens.

Kennywood's Classic Turtle ride is running again with new paint, refurbished vehicles and struc-

ture. The Turtle is touted as the last operating ride of its kind in the world.

The park's popular pendulum ride showcasing the iconic Kennywood arrows, **Aero 360**, is refreshed and rejoins the ride lineup with vibrantly painted seats and a completely updated control system.

The park's **S&S Swingshot** ride that catapults riders more than 90 feet has received a new paint job. That was completed before the 2023 season.

And speaking of new paint jobs, **Baynum Painting** performed work throughout the park, including repaint-

Sandcastle opens 35th season refreshed

PITTSBURGH, Pa. — Nestled next to a boardwalk overlooking the Monongahela River and a beautiful wooded hillside and just minutes from downtown Pittsburgh is **Sandcastle Waterpark**.

The water park is celebrating 35 years of fun and sun this 2024 season with a completed multi-year park transformation, part of which is new and refreshed painting, as well as an upgraded Boardwalk and Sandcastle Bridge Bar and Grill.

Part of the multi-year project also included the **Bomb's Away** water slide, which opened in 2022.

The park has 16 total water slides including **Lightning Express**, **Bombs Away**, **Dragon's Den**, **Blue Tubaluba**, **Cliffhangers**, **Tubers Towers**, **Boardwalk Blasters** and **Thunder Run**. There also are two children's areas — **Tad Pool** and **Wet Willie's Waterworks** — that continue to keep guests of all ages cool all summer long.



COURTESY SANDCASTLE

ing all the wooden coaster (as well as **Thunderbolt's** station), the **Windmill** and more from the beginning of the full-park renovations.

Part of **Thunderbolt** track layout was formally **The Pippin**. The **Pippin** turns 100 this year and is celebrated with signage on the sections that were once **The Pippin**.

The total transformation of the park's classic bumper car ride, themed to Kennywood's iconic fresh-

cut **Potato Patch** fries, **Potato Smash** will feature 20 new cars modeled after the park's signature snack. Each car, manufactured by **Majestic**, is fitted with fries, oozing cheese sauce and an oversized fork, completing an appetizing look for the most drool-worthy attraction around. The new bumper cars enabled park officials to lower the height requirements from 48 inches

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The ultimate revolving tower experience!



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► **KENNYWOOD**
Continued from page 10

to 42 inches to drive the cars. Wacky Wheel, the park's 100-year-old miniature Ferris wheel, has been completely reimagined and is taking the little ones for a birds-eye view of Kiddieland this season. Plus, the park's largest retail space, the Lost Kennywood Gift Shop, has undergone a complete makeover and is offering delicious sweet treats and park souvenirs.

Also new this year is Jeeters' Pub, a hometown bar themed to Kennywood's popular pink mascot from the 1970s. The pub is offering 12 different draft beers on tap, including eight from Penn Brewery. It also is offering charcuterie boards, wings and other pub snacks. The costumed character Jeeters, the pub's namesake will return later in the summer.

Carousel Burger Company is another new 2024 food location offering a one-of-a-kind Kennywood dining experience in the park's original Merry-Go-Round pavilion. It features an all-American menu including juicy burgers, chicken, fries, delectable milkshakes, the new signature Carousel Shakes stacked high with sweet treats and much more.

Carousel Burger was the Johnny Rockets location.

Another new addition for this year is the 1898 Coffee, featuring an array of coffee flavors, including Kennywood's own blend.

Pagoda, one of Kennywood's existing restaurants, also has undergone a façade enhancement. One side is called Fire-Breathing Sausage and the other side Blizzard-Blast Creamery.

Pizza Warehouse also has received an upgrade.

The Golden Nugget ice cream stand was revitalized with a turquoise and Kennywood-yellow exterior.

Entertainment and special events throughout the season will enlighten guests' moods as well. One of the popular events at the park is the Bites and Pints Food and Drink Festival. It has been expanded this year and will run on weekends in June and July. Celebrate America will

be back for July 4th weekend. Every Saturday and Sunday in July, the park will celebrate everything that makes the Steel City a special place to live and play. From arts and culture to sports and beer, Pittsburgh will be on display. Plus, the entire family can join in a high-energy dance party around the Lagoon with a live DJ every night.

A Kennywood first is a new drone show above the Lagoon on Saturday, July 20. "Kennywood continues

to elevate the guest experience with even more thrills and excitement, in what is sure to be the biggest and best season yet," Spicuzza said.

Kennywood is owned by **Palace Entertainment**.
• kennywood.com

Original parts of Pippin — now Thunderbolt — are pointed out with new signage (right). The park's historic windmill (far right) has received a fresh coat of paint with new signage.
AT/GARY SLADE



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Nemesis Reborn: all-new makeover of Alton Towers' B&M classic

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

STAFFORDSHIRE, U.K. — Thirty years ago, the inverted coaster from **Bolliger & Mabillard** (B&M) was wowing the amusement industry with its innovative technology and marketable thrills. Among the earlier complement of installations was a creative masterpiece called Nemesis. Built at **Alton Towers**, the ride benefited from the park's most challenging restriction — rides can't be built above the tree line.

To offer an exciting ride, park leadership dug ravines into the terrain to allow for larger drops and faster speeds. In reality, the roller coaster only stands 43 feet tall, but 50 mph is still achieved owing to drops into dramatic trenches making for elevation changes of more than 100 feet.

Themed to an alien creature with extra track morphing into an organic-like life-form, Nemesis was an instant sensation. It was the first of



Retracking and immersive theming bring new life to Alton Tower's B&M inverted coaster. A large, blinking, staring alien eye (above right) amps the cool factor on Nemesis Reborn. COURTESY ALTON TOWERS

three roller coasters from B&M for Alton Towers, the following two being the first of their kind. The name and imagery conjured up was a merchandising goldmine.

For 29 seasons, Nemesis remained a signature attraction among the park's ever-growing lineup, but in 2022, the park announced that the ride would be closed for the 2023 season in order to replace the track. Fans clamored for a last ride on November 6, 2022.

This spring, the park

opened for the 2024 season and easily impressed guests with Nemesis Reborn. While the layout of the ride remained the same, re-using the same supports, a vibrant new look to the track was just the beginning. The exterior of the station received a spectacular makeover with new theming. Most prominently is a giant three-dimensional eye that stares and blinks at spectators and riders flying by. Fog shoots at the trains and into the lower depths, which adds to the mystery.

The station itself now throbs with life with pulsing, illuminated veins and organic material to immerse guests into the internal bowels of the creature itself. It's all wickedly, wonderfully weird.

Theming also extends into the remodeled queue. One of the coaster's soaring, swooping turns encircles a crashed helicopter that helps elaborate on the attraction's storytelling environment. There are other intriguing props and an enhanced soundtrack and sound effects as well.

The ride operates with two trains that seat 32 riders and roar over 2,349 feet of track.

Reinvesting in a long-time attraction often involves risks. But when it pertains to an attraction for which a park is known, just simply making it the same isn't typically the best option. Bringing it back bigger and bolder not only appeases fans but wows them.

On opening day, throngs of fans queued up for well more than an hour — just to get into the gift shop! *That's* the sign of a job well done.



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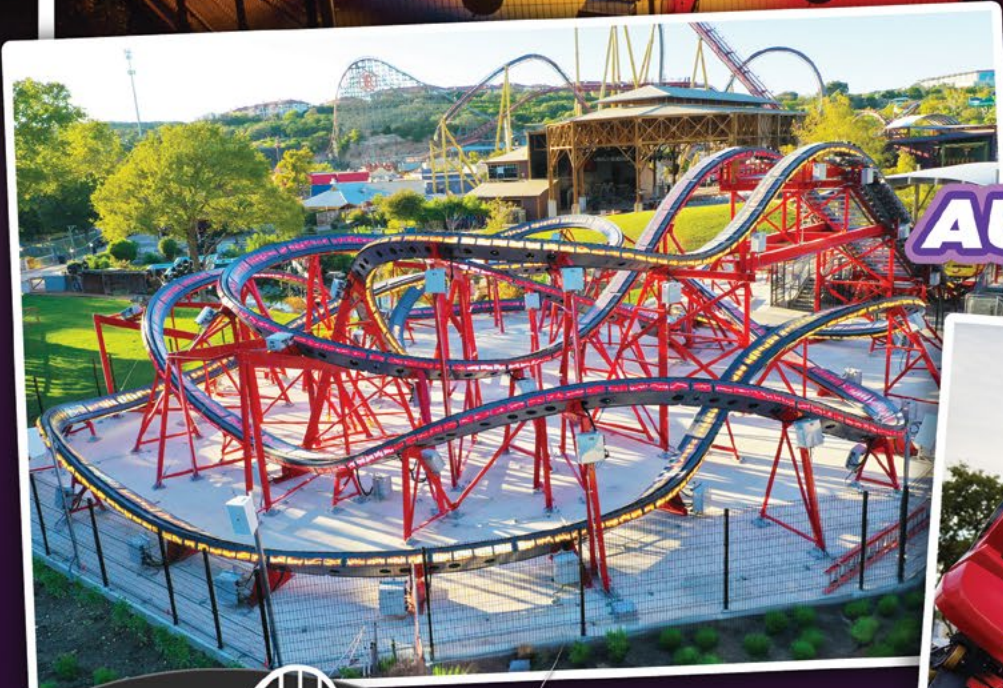
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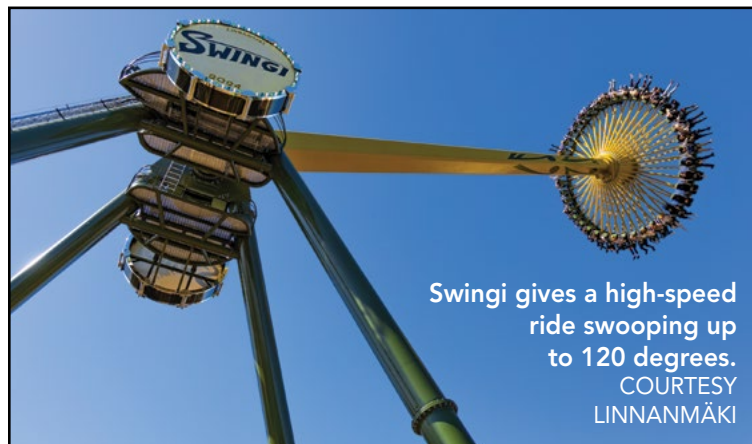
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Swingi gives a high-speed ride swooping up to 120 degrees. COURTESY LINNANMÄKI

Linnanmäki adds thrilling new Intamin Gyro Swing

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

HELSINKI, Finland — **Linnanmäki** opened its doors in 1950. Now entering its 75th season, something big and fast has risen. The park calls it Swingi. It is a huge Gyro Swing from **Intamin**.

The swinging arm is 25 meters/82 feet long, and seats 40 riders. When in operation, the pendulum swings up to a height of 42 meters/137 feet in the air at a 120-degree angle.

"The decision to purchase the Swingi ride was driven by our commitment to continually enhance the excitement and variety of attractions at Linnanmäki," said CEO **Pia Adlivankin**. "This world-class attraction was chosen to ensure our visitors have unforgettable experiences every time they visit the park. This type of pendulum ride was also missing from our ride selection."

The biggest swings deliver high speed and positive G-forces at the bottom while offering weightlessness while in the sky.

"The guest reaction to Swingi has been overwhelmingly positive," said Adlivankin. "The combination of speed, height and the feeling of weightlessness has made it a standout attraction and one of our guests' favorites. This ride has been a great addition to our thrill seekers selection."

In order to accommodate the new attraction, a previous flat ride was retired.

"Limited space is indeed a significant factor when deciding on new rides at Linnanmäki," Adlivankin told *Amusement Today*. "Our location in the heart of Helsinki means we have to be strategic about using our space. We strive to maximize the impact of each attraction by carefully planning and utilizing every area of the park. This often involves replacing older rides with new ones. Swingi is a perfect example of how we continue to innovate and provide exciting and memorable experiences for our visitors."

The ride has been customized to a musical theme.

According to Intamin, the drive system enables the recovery of up to 40% of the power needed to operate the ride, resulting in energy savings.

"Year after year, inventing one ride after another over a period of more than half a century, Intamin has created a solid knowledge base behind the largest range of products available in the amusement and theme park business," said an Intamin spokesperson. "This line of products ranges from roller coasters, vertical rides, water rides, immersive attractions, round rides, and observation attractions to monorails. Acquired expertise on different rides is combined by our teams to push product development forward. This leads to optimizing and sharing common systems, databases, sophisticated engineering, dimensioning, safety aspects, operation and maintenance manuals, common spare parts philosophy, and conscientious after-sales service. So, as new challenges and demands arise, the Intamin team of skilled engineers and technicians share innovations across the product lines as an ongoing process and as a response to the business model established by the company's founders."



Children's Fairyland, the storybook theme park in Oakland, California, received the Non-profit of the Year award from California Assembly member **Mia Bonta** in June.

Awards aside, the 75-year-old institution is also partnering with the State of California to launch 510 Summer Fridays, exclusive discounted admission, \$5 per child and \$10 per adult, for Oakland residents every Friday. This started in June and will run until the end of August.

Visitors can receive the discount by showing their ID with an Oakland address at the ticket booth.

Give Kids The World Village is partnering with eight of the nation's amusement parks, including **Kennywood** (West Mifflin, Pennsylvania) and **Hersheypark** (Hershey, Pennsylvania) for a fundraising program that allows participants to experience their favorite local attractions while giving back to charity.

Proceeds from Coasting for Kids: The Inversion Tour will benefit the Village, an 89-acre nonprofit resort in Central Florida that provides children with critical illnesses and their families with week-long wish vacations at no cost.

The event takes place at Hersheypark on July 13 and at Kennywood on Sept. 1.

Other participating parks include **Six Flags Over Texas** in Arlington, Texas; **Adventureland** in Altoona, Iowa; **Six Flags Fiesta Texas** in San Antonio, Texas; **Dollywood** in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee; **Holiday World & Splashin' Safari** in Santa Claus, Indiana; and **Six Flags Great Adventure** in Jackson Township, New Jersey.

North Carolina Land of Oz theme park will reopen in September for its 2024 Autumn at Oz event.

The Beech Mountain park based on the iconic *Wizard of Oz* movie announced it will be reopening for tours in September.

Visitors can take a trip somewhere over the rainbow with Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Man and the Cowardly Lion on the yellow brick road. This year's event will be a celebration of the film's 85th anniversary.

Recom Technologies, a European PV

module manufacturer, has partnered with **Solar Optimum** to supply solar panels for a solar carport project at **Six Flags Magic Mountain**, Valencia, California. The 12.37 MW solar carport system will be constructed over the main guest and employee parking lots. It is expected to offset 100% of the park's electricity usage.

The project is the largest solar carport in California and the "largest single-interconnection commercial and industrial development in the world," said **Ara Krikorian**, executive vice president of commercial development, Solar Optimum, in the latest press release.

After a month-long construction delay, Camp Snoopy opened to Peanuts fans on June 27 at **Knott's Berry Farm**, Buena Park, California.

Officials had hoped Camp Snoopy would be ready by Memorial Day Weekend.

The Camp Snoopy makeover added a new family coaster and super-sized kids swing, as well as updated an off-road rally race and miniature train ride. Two original attractions were removed from the themed land that opened in 1983.

The last major Camp Snoopy overhaul took place in 2014 for the 30th anniversary of the kiddie land when Knott's added Charlie Brown's Kite Flyer, Pig Pen's Mud Buggies and Linus Launcher – all from Italy-based ride manufacturer **Zamperla**.

Will **Jungle Island**, Miami Florida, survive? Well, that is a question still unanswered according to an article in the *Miami Herald*.

With proposed plans to redevelop the Watson Island site into condos and a free waterfront park, no one knows at this time if the park will survive.

According to the news article, the Miami theme park's roots go back to 1936, when it opened as **Parrot Jungle** in what is now Pinecrest. The park moved to Watson Island, along the MacArthur Causeway in Miami, in 2003.

The attraction added other animals and a large complex for meetings and banquets. Through the years, there were plans to turn the property into an eco-park adventure land with zip lines and a hotel.

But those plans dissolved and have now given way to another proposal for a large condo complex and free park on the 18-acre site.

Visitors this summer to **Busch Gardens Tampa Bay** in Florida are in for a refreshing treat with the return of free beer. For a limited time, the Tampa theme park will offer one complimentary beer per day to all guests and two complimentary beers per day to Pass Members. Guests will be able to enjoy free ice-cold beer daily at Orang Café located in the Jungala area of the park, with a variety of rotating options to choose from: classic domestic brews to artisanal craft beers.



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Indiana Beach preserves famous Schwarzkopf triple-looping legend

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

MONTICELLO, Ind. — After mastering transportable roller coaster classics in his Wildcat and Jet Star models, Anton Schwarzkopf pioneered looping coasters in the modern day — the modern day being the 1970s at the time. The clothoid shape of his vertical loops revolutionized roller coaster technology and gave numerous theme parks a marketing bonanza.

In the mid-1980s, Schwarzkopf manufactured a string of looping coasters for the fair circuit. Dreier Looping was a powerhouse that toured German fairs for 15 years. Eventually, it was purchased by Flamingoland in England and La Feria in Mexico. After the closure of the park in Mexico, the intense but beloved thriller could have been lost forever.

Gene Staples, owner of Indiana Beach, went to the park to see what rides could be preserved, and in so doing,



The Schwarzkopf legend could have been lost forever if Indiana Beach had not saved the ride. AT/TIM BALDWIN

rescued the triple looper. Getting it up to operating status took some time.

“We didn’t hire anyone to put it up. We did it ourselves,” said Mike Hobart, general manager. “So, when the park is open, all your guys are out maintaining rides. We didn’t have the time to dedicate to the ride we just got. It took a while to take down [at the former location] and twice as long to put up because of the way it was taken apart.”

The park rebuilt the trains

from Mexico, but in time purchased the five trains from Galaxyland at West Edmonton Mall, after the Mindbender had closed.

“There are several gearboxes on the ride that were sitting out since 2019,” Hobart added. “You have to go through every one of them, and they are all drive-shaft driven. It takes a while to rehab.”

When purchasing the trains, Indiana Beach was able to acquire additional parts and motors from West Edmonton



Mall, which turned out to be quite beneficial. As advantageous as that was, the trains from Canada came with cumbersome shoulder restraints which could potentially be addressed in the future.

“The lift hill is very fast,” said Amy Foster, operations manager. “It takes you right up. I like how the first drop curves sideways.”

Fans of the ride watched it go up in the past years and had been eager to hop on. The ride has dramatic spec-

tator appeal.

“It draws quite a few people, particularly if you are entering through the north gate,” said Foster. “We have a lot of people drive up and want to watch it.”

The park has given the coaster its newest name, All American Triple Loop. Considering the three countries that have had their hands on the ride, it raises an eyebrow.

“It really became a marketing thing,” Foster said. “Gene liked something like that.”

The red, white and blue painted colors vividly carry out the motif.

The coaster has a striking presence, standing 108 feet tall with a 101-foot curving, first drop. The top speed is 53 mph and the track length is 3,389 feet.

If the park can resolve the shoulder restraint issue, All American Triple Loop could boast being one of the greatest acts of roller coaster preservation in the 21st century.

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Gardaland debuts Wolf Legend tower



GARDA, Italy — Merlin Entertainments's Gardaland recently opened its new SBF/ Visa Group Drop N' Twist tower dubbed Wolf Legend. The more than 80-foot-tall attraction is highly immersive and eye-catching, with riders emerging and dropping through the jaws of a 50-foot-tall stone wolf. The ride features extensive theming, as well as fog effects. COURTESY GARDALAND

Fast & Furious drifting into Universal Studios Hollywood

UNIVERSAL CITY, Calif. — In May 2024, Universal Studios Hollywood announced its first-ever, high-speed outdoor roller coaster. Fast & Furious: Hollywood Drift will join the theme park's array of attractions in 2026.



The thrill ride—themed to Universal Pictures' blockbuster film saga, *Fast & Furious* — is scheduled to feature innovative and technological achievements which have never previously been employed on a roller coaster.

The state-of-the-art ride system is being designed to immerse guests within the high-speed *Fast & Furious* universe. Highlights will include groundbreaking 360-degree rotation of the individual ride vehicles as they rocket along the track constructed with sound reduction technology for a superior experience. The park hopes these attributes create a seamless sensation of drifting cars as guests spin in motion at fast speeds.

tainment theme park destination with a rich history in immersing guests in incredible rides based on today's most inspiring movie, television and gaming properties, we are excited to introduce our very first, high-speed outdoor roller coaster," said Scott Strobl, executive vice president and general manager, Universal Studios Hollywood. "As Universal Studios Hollywood continues to evolve, the arrival of *Fast & Furious: Hollywood Drift* will be a powerful game changer that will infuse a new level of thrill into our already dynamic theme park, and we look forward to welcoming guests when it races onto the scene in 2026."

Fast & Furious: Hollywood Drift will be located on the Upper Lot of Universal Studios Hollywood. Guests will queue up within a large, red brick, garage-style structure before settling into the ride vehicles, modeled after several authentic cars featured in the films, and catapulting along an aerial track that winds its way over parts of the theme park.

The *Fast & Furious: Hollywood Drift* roller coaster will benefit from Universal Destinations & Experiences' decades-long expertise and the ride's designers hope to continue to revolutionize the development of the contemporary roller coaster with the attraction.

The new roller coaster will be a marquee ride alongside the theme park's signature Studio Tour attraction, which commemorates 60-years of moviemaking magic this year.

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Adventureland Resort's 50th year sees exciting updates, activities

AT: Pam Sherborne

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ALTOONA, Iowa — The 50th anniversary season of **Adventureland Resort**, Altoona, Iowa, is now underway. Opening the season on May 18 with a special ceremony, celebration activities will continue all season long with brand new events, tasty new food options and the return of the reimagined attraction, **Underground**, the world's only indoor wooden roller coaster.

There is something for everyone, even for history buffs, to learn more about the park from archives researched by an Adventureland team.

"We wanted to create an experience that not only celebrates our rich history, but also introduces exciting new adventures for our guests," said General Manager **Mike Lusky**. "From the reimagined **Underground** ride to the all-new **Festival of Decades** and the pork-focused **Oink's** restaurant, there's something for everyone to enjoy as we embark on our 50th celebration season."

Officials expected that the highlight of the 2024 season will be the debut of the reimagined **Underground**. So far, their expectations have been right on.

The transformation of **Underground** offers a more dynamic ride experience, complete with new scenes, enhanced classics and elevated theming. Guests will encounter all-new experiences, including a nearly nine-foot-tall talking skull and 10 new and updated



It took about eight months for PTCI to take apart the older trains, get all the dimensions and scales and then rebuild them to scale (above left). An all-new entrance to **Underground** (above right) transports guests into the old, abandoned coal mine in search of missing gold, all while encountering the spirit of the notorious outlaw **Bad Bob**.

COURTESY PTC, ADVENTURELAND

animatronics, offering a better storytelling experience throughout the ride. With a 360-degree audio experience, all-new lighting and special effects, the ride promises thrills like never before.

Guests are noticing the changes before they even get in line. An new entrance to the ride transports guests into the old, abandoned coal mine in search of missing gold, all while encountering the spirit of the outlaw **Bad Bob**.

Philadelphia Tobbaggon Company Inc. (PTCI) supplied the new trains for **Underground**.

"Initially, they called us and asked if we would be interested in helping them upgrade them," said **Tom Rebbie**, president and CEO. "They sent the trains to us, and as we began taking them apart, we realized they really needed to be rebuilt."

PTCI set about getting the dimensions needed and, as they were building, keeping them as close to the same weight as possible.

"We came with 100 pounds," Rebbie said.

It took PTCI about eight months to complete the project and get the new trains back to Adventureland. Rebbie said the response has been great.

Celebrating the return of **Underground**, the park unveiled a special **Underground**-themed **Dippin' Dots** flavor called **Chocolate Brownie Bounty**. It features creamy brownie batter ice cream and rich brownie batter pieces. The new flavor will be offered at all five **Dippin' Dots** locations throughout the park.

Park officials said that for culinary enthusiasts, the all-new **Oink's** restaurant and bar will be a pork lover's paradise with a selection of **Berkshire Pork** products from Iowa's own **Berkwood Farms**.

The new restaurant and bar will be in a big red barn on the **Boulevard**, serving juicy tenderloins, savory pork chops and popular beverages.

Nearby, the new **Falling Star Lounge** debuts as a nostalgic retreat, featuring the iconic sign from the **Falling Star** ride and serving a variety of beverages. This hideaway will feature a classic touch, showcasing Adventureland's past.

With a growing craft beer scene across Iowa, Adventureland has become

illuminating the **Boulevard** during the **Festival of Decades** in July and August.

With later closing times in 2024, guests can experience the park in a whole new light as colorful displays dance across the night sky, creating magical memories under the stars.

The Altoona resort was founded by Des Moines businessman **Jack Krantz** in the 1970s. The first phase opened in 1973 with **Adventureland Inn** and the neighboring campground.

The theme park opened in 1974, delighting visitors with attractions like the **Silly Silo** and **Log Ride**. The park's continued expansion introduced new rides and attractions, quickly making it a beloved part of summer in Iowa.

The resort made a splash in 2008, with the addition of **Adventure Bay** water park.

In 2021, **Palace Entertainment** took the reins, injecting fresh energy with 11 new rides and investments throughout the resort.

"As we commemorate this milestone, we are grateful for the countless guests who have made Adventureland a beloved destination for families and thrill-seekers," Lusky said. "The reimagining of **Underground** and other major park improvements symbolizes the evolution of Adventureland over 50 years — always changing, always innovating and always delivering unforgettable moments."

The park holds its **Octoberfest** in late September, as well as **Fall Fest** which runs weekends through October.



The **Falling Star Lounge** makes its debut at Adventureland and features the refurbished, iconic sign from the former **Falling Star** ride. COURTESY ADVENTURELAND



The updated **Underground** offers a more dynamic ride experience, complete with new scenes and elevated theming. COURTESY ADVENTURELAND

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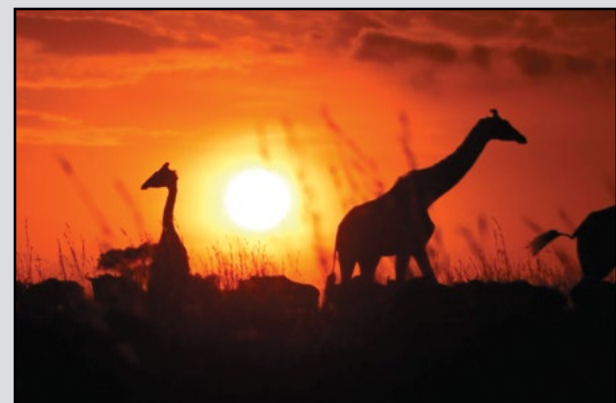
CHICAGO — Think VR without the glasses. **Illuminarium** — a breakthrough global experiential entertainment company created by leaders in cinematic immersion, theatrical design and venue operations — is headed to Chicago's iconic **Navy Pier**.

Scheduled to open its doors on Friday, June 28, the immersive venue will debut with two breathtaking experiences: *Wild: A Safari Experience* and *Space: A Journey to the Moon and Beyond*.

Affectionately dubbed "the place that can take you anyplace," the awe-inspiring 32,000 square-foot entertainment venue will be located within the former Crystal Gardens venue, marking the company's fifth Illuminarium location following installations in Las Vegas, Atlanta, Toronto and Macau, China.

"We are elated the time is officially here for us to introduce Chicago to what we hope will be an unforgettable adventure," said **Alan Greenberg**, CEO of **Illuminarium Experiences**. "Illuminarium is a totally transpor- tive experience with some of the most amazing, inspiring spectacles from around the world and beyond, and we hope audiences of all ages will come to Navy Pier to check us out and leave feeling inspired and wanting more."

Using cutting-edge, innovative technolo-



Chicago's Illuminarium will debut with two immersive experiences: *Space: A Journey to the Moon and Beyond* (above left) and *Wild: A Safari Experience* (above right). COURTESY ILLUMINARIUM

gies, Illuminarium's visually-stunning venue will transport locals and visitors of all ages to places they previously could only dream of experiencing. By enabling audiences to see, hear, and even personally affect an experience, Illuminarium will place patrons "inside" the narrative using techniques from traditional motion picture production and virtual reality, and pair it with interactive features that mimic that of the real world, all without wearable hardware.

Wild: A Safari Experience will provide attendees with an idyllic journey through the vast beauty and splendor of Africa, fully immersing visitors in the authentic sounds and

scenes of an extraordinary safari experience, allowing them to come face-to-face with some of the world's most majestic animals in their natural habitats.

Space: A Journey to the Moon and Beyond will take patrons out of this world and onto a mind-blowing journey through space and time. Audiences will have the opportunity to experience firsthand what it is like to walk on the surface of the Moon, step inside a nebula, or see the remarkable James Webb Space Telescope unfurl in space, all while being completely enveloped in the beauty of our galaxies and Solar System.

•illuminarium.com/chicago

Carousel Arcade adds Sacoa cashless system

MACKINAC ISLAND, Mich. — **Sacoa Cashless Systems** announces the grand opening of the **Carousel Arcade**, a new family entertainment center (FEC) on Michigan's Mackinac Island. This installation marks another successful chapter in the longstanding partnership between Sacoa and **Family Entertainment Group** (FEG).

The Carousel Arcade now features Sacoa's cashless system technology, transforming the FEC's experience into a seamless, efficient and more engaging activity. As visitors enter the arcade, they are greeted by the K4 Kiosk, a beautifully placed POS branded with their own imagery.



"Sacoa's technology is specifically designed to streamline operations and enhance customer interactions, making each visit fun but incredibly convenient," explained **Martina Mochkovsky**, global mar-

keting manager at Sacoa.

"We are thrilled to continue our partnership with Family Entertainment Group and are deeply grateful for their trust in our cashless solutions," said **Pol Mochkovsky**, CEO of Sacoa Cashless.

Area15's Portal in Vegas adds new Holoplot sound system

LAS VEGAS — **Area15**, Las Vegas's immersive entertainment district and events venue, announced the installation of a new state-of-the-art **Holoplot** sound system in its iconic 360-degree, projection-mapped Portal. This upgrade reaffirms The Portal not only as a visual marvel but also as a top-tier venue for audio excellence.

"Integrating Holoplot's revolutionary audio technology with our existing **Meyer LFC1100** subwoofers elevates the auditory experience to match the stunning visual capabilities of our **Panasonic 4K** projectors," said **J.D. Bouck**, director of production, Area15. "This upgrade is part of our commitment to providing unparalleled sensory experiences for all our visitors."

The newly installed sound system features four X1 Modul 96 and four X1 Modul 80-S from Holoplot. Unlike traditional sound systems, the Holoplot X1 system utilizes 3D audio-beamforming and sophisticated digital processing to direct sound with pinpoint accuracy, creating an enveloping audio environment without relying on increased decibel levels. This technology enables sounds to be steered precisely, focusing on target areas only without the loss of sound quality in large spaces.

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Outdated systems can be a long-term liability for FECs

DALLAS, Texas — Downtime brought on by factors such as mechanical breakdowns, computer shutdowns, staffing issues and other common occurrences within our industry is the bane of creating happy, delighted guests. Reliability is key to continuous operations at any attraction. At family entertainment centers (FECs) specifically, that downtime is often marked by having to shift manpower from customer service to dealing with inconvenienced guests or hardware maintenance, unsuccessful payment processing at attractions and games taking time to reboot.

Successful FECs have found that integrated hardware and software solutions can boost operational efficiency, cut back on manpower, lower operational and maintenance costs as well as business management.

"This is what can be achieved with the **Embed** system. With our hybrid model, on-premises servers plus cloud systems ensure that it's business-as-usual," commented **John Keys**, regional sales manager of Embed, to *Amusement Today*. "This reliability pays for the cost of the system itself, as what operators lose during a downtime can cover the investment."

Investing in a reliable system can deliver greater savings to FEC operators rather than spending revenue on upgrading and maintaining an older, outdated system.

"A system's reliability should be complemented with a smart reporting tool — such as our **STATS** business intelligence dashboard — to oversee the day-to-day and make business predictions based on data," added Keys.

Investing in a reliable system means investing in the guest experience. "A reliable operational system results in a seamless guest experience, enabling customers to know exactly what to expect at every visit and make it easier for them to play and pay," offered Keys. "Continuous guest spend means an increase in profitability."

Even old-school coin and token systems at FECs have looming reliability issues, even moreso when paired with traditional redemption tickets. "Coin jams and ticket dusts are common issues which appear minor, but generate maintenance costs," said Keys. "Embed's **Mobile Wallet** is designed with this in mind. It sits in guests' Apple Wallet or Google Wallet so they can pay and play with their phones, employing a technology they already trust."

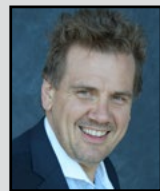


Keys

Lagotronics unveils innovative food experience



VENLO, The Netherlands — The **Future Food Experience** is a new, unique facility at Brightlands Campus Greenport Venlo where visitors are introduced to innovations in the agri-food sector during a virtual journey in a futuristic greenhouse. Lagotronics Projects provided innovative custom solutions for the experience, executing the project from concept to reality. In the eight-minute 360-degree video experience, thoughts are reset, senses are stimulated and visitors discover what happens when they think and dare differently. COURTESY LAGOTRONICS



FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL

AT: John W.C. Robinson
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Merlin Entertainments' Madame Tussauds Hollywood is set to open the latest addition to its famed attraction — **The Hollywood Rooftop Bar and Restaurant**. This new Hollywood hideout, opening August 2, is the first-of-its-kind "celebrity" dining experience, offering guests an unparalleled opportunity to dine amongst its famed waxed stars. Perched high above the world-renowned Walk of Fame in Hollywood, it stands out as one of the few rooftop dining destinations in Los Angeles where visitors can enjoy a timeless Hollywood VIP experience and live out their A-list fantasy.

"The Madame Tussauds brand is expanding its offerings in a way that makes sense, extending the guest experience to include dining with their favorite celebrities," said Marketing Manager **Linsey Stiglic**. "For those visiting TinselTown, The Hollywood Rooftop Bar and Restaurant will bridge the gap between the shimmering media-fueled vision of Hollywood and the bustling reality of Hollywood Boulevard."

Guests will be whisked to the restaurant in a VIP elevator, where they will get a taste of Old Hollywood glamour with a modern vibe. The restaurant will offer a crowd-pleasing and sustainable menu created by **Shirley Belloso** that caters to a wide range of tastes in keeping with the artistry and excitement synonymous with Madame Tussauds.

Electric Playhouse — a new 10,000-square-foot social gaming destination in Las Vegas — opened inside **The Forum Shops at Caesars Palace** on the Las Vegas Strip on Saturday, June 22. Merging the digital and physical worlds into one through dozens of motion-activated games and experiences, Electric Playhouse fosters human connection and gets visitors of all ages and interests moving.

"In a world where passively sitting in front of screens with video games, smartphones, VR and TV is all too common, Electric Playhouse provides an active, social and energetic entertainment alternative," said **Brandon Garrett**, chief executive officer and co-founder, Electric Playhouse. "Our goal is to re-energize the way people of all ages interact with technology by inviting them into an experiential world where they can connect, play and create lasting memories together."

Utilizing proprietary body-mapping technology and motion sensors combined with its own, original collection of games, Electric Playhouse offers an incomparably engaging and sociable gaming experience. The venue is equipped with a network of sensors that generate a real-time point cloud, enabling precise tracking of individuals and large groups throughout

the facility. This volumetric data is used to create a digital twin of each guest, similar to a player inside a video game. As guests move, the walls, floors and tables react to their actions in a variety of ways, enhanced by 360-degree projection mapping that fully immerses guests in interactive games and dining experiences.

Sacoa Cashless System announced its second FunBox installation inside of **Gravity Max Stratford** in London, U.K., after an equally successful 2023 installation in Liverpool. This comes as part of the company's ongoing strong partnership with **SEGA Amusements International**.

"This partnership has been an overwhelming success and crucial for our brand's growth," said **Kamil Strulak**, FunBox's operations manager. "Sacoa's support throughout the project was invaluable and unmatched, clearly demonstrating they were the cashless technology supplier we needed. Sacoa has proved themselves once before in Liverpool, and they have proved themselves again here."

Located inside the more than 70,000-square-foot Gravity Max is FunBox. FunBox is an arcade with all of Sacoa's latest in entertainment technology; customers can purchase and recharge PlayCards at Sacoa's K4 Kiosk, play at games with the Spark Reader, and redeem tickets through self-service redemption prize machines, also powered by the Spark Reader.

The **Friends Experience** will debut its West Coast flagship location in Las Vegas at the **MGM Grand** later in 2024.

Created by **Warner Bros. Discovery Global Themed Entertainment, Original X Productions (OGX)**, and **Warner Bros. Television Group**, the **Friends Experience** features several nostalgia-packed rooms and activations.

"The One in Vegas" transports guests into the world of **Friends** allowing fans to explore the show's iconic moments, behind-the-scenes content and photo opportunities within life-sized set recreations. Fans can become part of Ross and Rachel's iconic Las Vegas wedding scene bursting out into the chapel's lobby, kick back in Monica's apartment, or even dance around the legendary fountain featured in the opening credits.

"Las Vegas is the perfect destination to debut The **Friends Experience's** second U.S. flagship location," said **Stacy Moscatelli**, CEO of OGX. "Not only does the city attract millions of **Friends** fans every year, but Las Vegas plays an integral role in the series featuring some of the show's most iconic and hilarious moments."

LA County Fair experiences a significant bump in attendance

AT: B. Derek Shaw

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POMONA, Calif. — When all was said and done, 787,843 people went through the turnstiles during the 16-day **LA County Fair** in May.

“The weather in May was cool, perhaps the coolest fair we’ve ever had but it did not deter guests from coming out,” said **Renee Hernandez**, director of communications. “The average temperature for our 16 days was 73 degrees. It made for nice days and light-jacket-needed evenings.”

In 2022 the fair moved from being a September event to a May offering. “Guests are now acclimated to us being a May fair and, despite the cool weather we had this year, they are coming early and staying late. The fair continues to be a tradition for so many, and an exciting new outlet of fun for those who’ve never been here before,” said **Walter Marquez**, president and CEO of **Fairplex**, referring to the fair’s attendance and excitement. “The fair is definitely the place to be.”

The theme of the 102nd edition was “Stars, Stripes and Fun.”

Carnival provider, **Ray Cammack Shows (RCS)** brought 66 rides, 30 games and 20 food concessions. Nearly half of the rides were kiddie ones. There were no new rides to the fair until the last week when RCS was able to set up its **Bojux Manufacturing Overdrive**



All told, there were three wheels at the 2024 LA County Fair in Pomona. The were the **Big Wheel, Grand Wheel and Liberty Wheel (above)**. Carnival provider **Ray Cammack Shows** brought **66 rides, 30 games and 20 food concessions**. COURTESY STEFAN HINZ, LA COUNTY FAIR

attraction. The Czech-built ride was held up at the Port of Baltimore due to the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse in late March.

The three most popular rides included **G-Force (KMG)**, **Titan Booster (Fabbri Group)** and **Joker 360 (Technical Park)**. The fair also offered three wheels: **Big Wheel (Lamberink)**, **Grand Wheel (Kroon)** and **Liberty Wheel (Lamberink)**.

“This was RCS’ 38th year at the fair. Their service and safety protocol is unparalleled,” said Hernandez.

Hernandez was then asked what sets their fair apart from others. “We have a large footprint, nearly 500 acres, making us one of the largest county fairs in the country. We operate on a



year-round basis a five-acre farm. During the fair, the farm is one of the most popular locations with information on California specialty crops, livestock competitions and a large petting zoo produced by our partner **California State Polytechnic University, Pomona**.”

Special promotions included discounted tickets through **Costco, Superior Grocery Stores** and **O’Reilly Auto Parts**. They also had food-drive Thursdays where anyone could bring five cans of nonperishable food, receiving free admission from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. during all three Thursdays of the fair.

Guests donated nearly 95,000 cans of non-perishable food on three Food Drive Thursdays, one-quarter more than 2023. Donations will go to **Inland Valley Hope Partners, LA Regional Food Bank, God’s**

Pantry and the **Pomona Unified School District’s** Community Schools Initiative’s food pantry.

A couple of the unusual food items included a hot honey funnel cake chicken sandwich and a pickle split — a dill pickle split down the middle served with pineapple whip ice cream topped with Chamoy and Tajin. Also new were Korean corn dogs and SPAM fries.

Chicken Charlie went through 15 pallets of French fries, 5,000 ears of corn, 2,000 chicken kebabs, 10,000 drumsticks and 3,000 chicken sandwiches.

Midway gourmet **Dominic Palmieri** used more than a mile of sliced bacon for bacon-wrapped pork belly on a stick, used two miles of sausage for Big Daddy Corn Dogs and sausage sandwiches, three tons of sugar to make cotton

candy and lemonade, 1,000 pounds of grated parmesan cheese for roasted corn, 700 pounds of chopped garlic for garlic fries, and 200 gallons of BBQ sauce and hot sauce to sauce up turkey legs.

For the first time ever, the fair hosted a roller skating rink in Expo Hall 9. In partnership with L.A.’s Grand Park Foundation’s All Skate for Alzheimer’s, fair guests enjoyed free skating and skate rental for a spin around the rink, complete with a DJ and disco ball. All Skate for Alzheimer’s promotes healthy exercise and mental health resources.

On May 16, the LA County Fair offered a day called Thoughtful Thursday, where the lights and sounds of the fair were turned off or down to encourage neurodivergent individuals to visit in a more suitable setting for them. The day started with school children, called the Fair Stars program, from 9 to 11 a.m., then opened to the public with the sound lowered from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

“It was well received. We even offered sensory kits at our guest relations booths, with headphones, fidget toys and ID cards. We worked with **KultureCity** on the program,” said Hernandez.

Some of the grandstand entertainment included **Pat Benatar, Neil Giraldo, War, Ramon Ayala, Los Tucanes de Tijuana, Dustin Lynch, Russell Dickerson, 38 Special, The Outlaws and Molly Hatchet**.

The fair evolved from a commercial-industrial show first held along the **Southern Pacific** railroad siding in downtown Pomona in 1921. The following year, the LA County Fair began on 43 acres of a beet and barley field. Now 500 acres strong, the fair is one of the top destinations in Southern California during its run.

The 2025 fair returns next May. No dates have been set.

•lacountyfair.com



The three most popular crowd-pleaser rides included **G-Force, (shown), Titan booster and Joker 360**. COURTESY STEFAN HINZ

MIDWAY MARKET PLACE



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MIDWAYSCENE

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The **Chemung County Fair** (N.Y.) has a new midway ride operator as **Wheelock Rides** went out of business earlier this year. Speaking to *WENY TV*, Chemung County Agricultural Society board member **Matt Bryant** said: "We're really happy to announce that we've signed a contract with **SwikaS Amusements** for the 2024 Chemung County Fair, and it's going to be huge."

Bryant said they contacted SwikaS Amusements initially, as they are the ride provider for nearby **Troy Fair**, however, they were not available at the time. Troy Fair organizers helped secure a new contract on short notice and said SwikaS Amusements, based out of Scott Township, Pennsylvania, is aiming to make the Chemung County Fair their premier event in New York.

"They've guaranteed us at this point in time that they're going to have the 90-foot drop tower, which is one of the largest portable drop towers on the East Coast," said Bryant.

"Sometimes blessings come in disguise. We couldn't have asked for a better relationship that we've started to build with SwikaS, and the folks there are fantastic, so we're looking forward to an incredible fair, re-imagined," said Bryant. "SwikaS is going to run their rides from 1 p.m. until 10 p.m., so that's going to be fantastic."

This year's fair runs from July 31 to August 3.

Now that the **East Texas State Fair** (Athens, Texas) has a new place to call home, it recently brought in new management. **Cody Rosenbalm** has been named president and CEO of the organization and **Michael Stoltz** is chairman of the board of directors.

"The East Texas State Fair was always the home fair for me," Rosenbalm told *CBS 19*.

Rosenbalm said the fair recently purchased 60 more acres of land, making the total 300 acres at the Park of East Texas, as the new site is known. For the first few years of the fair, 50 acres will be used.

"We're looking at some raw land that is going to be flattened, asphalted with drains, electricity and all that kind of stuff in just a matter of a few months," said Rosenbalm. "It's adjacent to our property, so it allows us to grow into our original 240 acres. [This land] is going to be asphalted, but this is where the fair proper is going to happen."

For the first year, the stock show will be held off-site at the **Henderson County Expo** in Athens a few weeks prior to the start of the fair. Within the next three to five years, organizers hope to use the land for fairground expansion, eventually adding an amphitheater and a large multipurpose room for different expos. The livestock show would be housed there.

"For us, it serves the needs of our livestock show, but for the community, it serves the needs of any other event year-round. We're hoping to build a very dynamic facility," he said. "It's always been said that the fair could double in size if we just had the space. Now we have the space to grow and the resources to grow."

The next fair is scheduled for September 20-29 with **North American Midway Entertainment** as the carnival operator.

Meadow Event Park, the site of the **State Fair of Virginia** in Doswell, was the subject of a recently completed economic impact study conducted for the property by **Chmura Economics & Analytics**.

The property hosted more than 536,000 visitors at 182 diverse events in 2023, firmly planting itself as one of the Richmond area's most popular event venues.

Of that number, the state fair drew more than 210,000 attendees despite a washout on the first Saturday of the fair's 10-day run. The study analyzed the economic impact of the venue in Caroline, Hanover and Henrico counties along with the city of Richmond, Virginia. The rest of the 326,000 visitors came from trade shows; dog, livestock and equine shows; rodeos; concerts; weddings; corporate functions and community happenings.

The overall economic impact in 2023 was \$41.5 million, supporting 288 jobs.

Marlene Jolliffe, executive director of the state fair and the complex, said she and her staff "have worked so hard over the past decade to grow business at The Meadow Event Park. This study is proof that our venue has made an incredible financial impact on the region."

Deggeller Attractions is the midway provider for the fair that takes place from September 27 – October 6.

January 21-23, 2025, are the dates for the **European Showmen Union's** 43rd Congress in Edinburgh, Scotland. The international meeting occurs every other year. Delegates from ESU associations can expect an extensive program of work. There will be plenary sessions along with expert discussions. Current topics such as safeguarding the industry and the preservation and promotion of European fairgrounds will be discussed and the course set for the professional future.

ERRATA: In the May 2024 issue coverage of the *Miami-Dade County Fair* (page 43), the manufacturer was incorrectly listed for the *Family Swinger* ride. It is a *Preston & Barbieri* piece on the *NAME* midway. In addition, the *RCS* ride *Overdrive* — delayed at the *Port of Baltimore* because of the *Key Bridge* collapse — is made by *Bojux Manufacturing*.



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WATER PARKS & RECREATION

► News Splash — page 30 / Hattiesburg Zoo opens water park — page 32

Hurricane Harbor Maryland adds WhiteWater West water coaster

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
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BOWIE, Maryland — Hurricane Harbor Maryland at Six Flags America opened its newest attraction, RipQurl Blaster, over the Memorial Day weekend. This tallest water coaster in the mid-Atlantic is a thrilling Master Blaster from WhiteWater West and represents the largest capital investment in the park in more than a decade.

RipQurl Blaster is an innovative water coaster, which takes riders at a time for a white-knuckle ride through powerful uphill rip currents while careening through 550 feet of twists and turns. The ride features three drops, three uphill blasts, three AquaLucent hairpin turns, and a completely enclosed wall-hugging helix finale with black-and-white sections that lead into the final splashdown. Although similar to the Master Blaster slide that opened a few weeks ago at the indoor Wilderness at the Smokies in Tennessee, this is the first time reverse AquaLucent slide tube sections have been used outdoors, allowing the slide to be illuminated with natural sunlight.

"We are excited to debut RipQurl Blaster, which will be both a thrill-



RipQurl Blaster (above) features three drops, three uphill blasts and colorful reverse AquaLucent hairpin turns. As riders start their journey, they can catch a glimpse of the three drops and three uphill blasts that await (below left). RipQurl Blaster features the first outdoor use of WhiteWater's latest reverse AquaLucent tubes (below right).

COURTESY HURRICANE HARBOR MARYLAND



ing and refreshing experience for guests visiting this summer," said General Manager Ramar Vaughan. "This is just one of many

investments we're making to be the DMV's [D.C., Maryland, and Virginia] most convenient and enjoyable out-of-home experi-

ence for the whole family."

After climbing to the top of the 39-foot slide tower, riders on RipQurl Blaster board two-person rafts and upon dispatch plunge down a 22-foot drop reaching speeds up to 30 mph before encountering the first uphill blast. That propels them into a right hairpin turn inside the first Reverse AquaLucent section which is punctuated with colorful dots. A second drop leads into an open flume, followed by an uphill blast into a sharp left turn inside another Reverse AquaLucent tube with striped patterns. The water coaster drop-and-turn sequence repeats a

third time into a final set of patterns inside another Reverse AquaLucent tube. For the finale, riders loop through a dark tube with black-and-white sections before finishing in the open runoff section.

Prior to opening to the general public, Six Flags pass holders had an exclusive opportunity to preview the ride on Saturday and Sunday, May 18 and 19. Throughout the season, Six Flags Diamond-level pass holders will have early admittance to the park to beat the crowds and experience a few rides prior to the



RipQurl Blaster is the largest capital investment the water park has made in more than a decade. COURTESY HURRICANE HARBOR MARYLAND

► See HURRICANE, page 30



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The signature uphill blast of the Master Blaster defies gravity by propelling rafts uphill on a waterslide. COURTESY HURRICANE HARBOR MARYLAND

► HURRICANE Continued from page 28

park opening for the day.

Six Flags Hurricane Harbor dates back to the 1980s, when what was originally **The Wild Life Preserve**, a drive-through animal safari park, was sold to a group of local businessmen who transitioned the safari park into a ride park known as **Wild World**. Four waterslides made their debut in 1982, along with a children's water-play area. The following year, the waterslide complex was expanded into a full-fledged water park with additional slides and a wave pool, making it one of the earliest theme parks in the country to include both dry rides and a water park. The water park was eventually named Paradise Island. Following several ownership and management changes over the years, the amusement park transitioned from Wild World to **Adventure World** becoming Six Flags America in 1999. In 2005 the water park was again upgraded and renamed Hurricane Harbor, a brand name that Six

Flags had started using at **Six Flags Magic Mountain** in 1995. By the late 2010s every water park owned or managed by **Six Flags Entertainment Corporation** carried some version of the Hurricane Harbor moniker.

Today, Hurricane Harbor Maryland is a convenient summer destination for residents of the DMV area, with its location right off the Capital Beltway. The water park features lush tropical landscaping, the region's largest 800,000-gallon wave pool, three family waterplay areas, an endless river with seven different water action zones and more than 15 slides ranging from mild to wild to appeal to all age groups.

The addition of RipCurl Blaster is part of Six Flags America's 25th season celebration of operating as a Six Flags-named park. Special events and festivals will take place every month throughout the entire season.

"With the culmination of 25 years, Six Flags America is gearing up for the best season yet," said Vaughan. "We're investing in the future here in Prince George's County."



AquaLucent tube sections allow the slide to be illuminated with natural sunlight. COURTESY HURRICANE HARBOR MARYLAND



NEWSPLASH

AT: Jeffrey L. Seifert
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Plans to construct a water park at the **Mall of America (MOA)** in Bloomington, Minnesota, have been resurrected once again. A water park project was first conceived more than 30 years ago to complement the existing indoor theme park. After sitting dormant for a few decades, interest was renewed around 2018-2019 but was then placed on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Now, city leaders, working with **Martin Aquatics**, have been making strides toward bringing the **Mystery Cove Waterpark** to life.

The newly imagined water park will be housed in a separate 143,000-square-foot structure with a fully retractable roof. Plans call for more than 30 waterslides and rides along with food and beverage options, cabanas, daybeds and other amenities.

Bloomington city leaders released a report stating: "Continuing to keep the Mall of America destination fresh and developing attractions and experiences that bring new audiences is essential to the financial health of the mall. They are a significant contributor to Bloomington's tax base. MOA's continued strong performance is essential to defraying the property tax that residents would otherwise need to pay."

Construction is expected to begin next year, with an anticipated opening in 2027.

Two new pools opened in June at the **Rivermead Leisure Centre** in Reading, England. The main pool, a 25-meter, eight-lane pool features a partially movable floor that can change from pool-side level to 1.8 meters (six feet) deep. It will allow a range of activities including swimming lessons, community groups, synchronized swimming, rehabilitation exercises, water aerobics and much more. It is also equipped with starting blocks and spectator seating for more than 250 people, making it suitable for competition swim meets.

A teaching and diving pool includes a five-meter dive tower; a three-meter springboard; and two, one-meter springboards. It is also equipped with a moveable floor that can lower to a depth of 3.7 meters (12 feet). The dive tower is equipped with a safety gate to prevent access when the pool floor is raised.

In addition to the two new pools, a splash pad was constructed for younger children. The facility also includes state-of-the-art changing facilities with fully accessible showers and toilets, as well as 'pool pods' to enable swimmers with limited mobility, including wheelchair

users to get in and out of the water easily and independently.

The Rivermead community pool and diving and teaching pool complement the leisure center's dry side facilities which opened in July 2023.

Construction began in May for a new 75,000-square-foot aquatic center in DeSoto, Texas, in south Dallas County. The two-story \$43.2 million **McCowan Aquatic & Recreation Center**, designed by the **SmithGroup** of Dallas, Texas, is expected to open in January 2026.

The facility will include an eight-lane competitive pool, leisure pool, gyms, indoor track, fitness and strength training area, meeting rooms and a social gathering space.

The indoor competition pool is equipped with observation decks on the second level. Suspended above the first level is a roughly 400-foot fitness track for cardio workouts.

The facility is being realized as part of a larger master plan which includes other public and sports-related amenities, including additional sports fields, an amphitheater, a sculpture garden, water features and surrounding trails.

The **Kahuna Laguna Indoor Water Park** at the **Red Jacket Mountain View Resort** in Conway, New Hampshire, reopened in May. The water park has been closed since April 2022 when a fire destroyed the south wing of the resort. Although the water park itself was not damaged, the entire facility was closed after the fire and remained closed for more than two years. In February, the property was sold to **Ashok Patel** of **Jamsan Hotel Management, Inc.** Patel's first order of business was to reopen the water park while redevelopment of the property takes place.

Patel indicated that plans for renovating the north wing are under development and the master plan for the entire site is also in the works. As it is no longer part of the Red Jacket Resorts brand, the development will be renamed the **Birchmont Resort and Spa**, in honor of the first building on that location.

The 1890-built Birchmont Estate was a private retreat for employees of the **Manufacturer's Trust Co.** It was destroyed in a fire in 1970 and the following year the Red Jacket Mountain View was built on the same site. The 2022 fire destroyed 75 rooms in the south wing. The north wing remained intact. It did suffer some smoke damage but no water damage.



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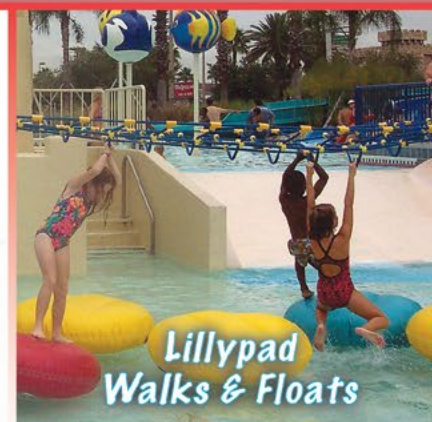
Inflatable Barriers



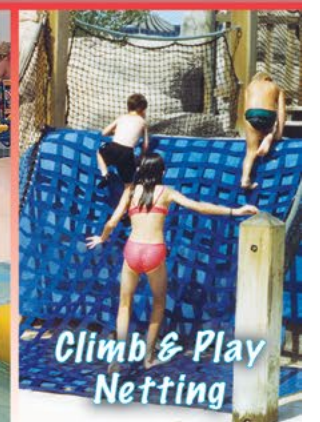
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Hattiesburg Zoo opens first water park in Mississippi Pine Belt area

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

HATTIESBURG, Mississippi — **Serengeti Springs** water park at the **Hattiesburg Zoo** opened to the public on Memorial Day weekend. The water park has been on the drawing board since 2022 and was planned to open last year, but heavy rains coupled with supply chain issues delayed construction.

The new water park features **Polé-Polé River**, a lazy river with a small wave pool beach area and a swim-up bar. A **WhiteWater Fusion Fortress** multi-level water play structure called **Tree-Top Trek**, features climbing areas, interactive water toys, two dumping buckets and five body waterslides including a bowl slide and a three-lane racing slide and covers more than 17,000 square feet all coated with **Life Floor** safety surfacing.



The **TreeTop Trek** water play **Fusion Fortress** (right) offers multiple immersive water toys, plenty of climbing opportunities and five slides, including a three-lane racing slide (above). COURTESY MARTIN AQUATICS



The water play structure is designed to immerse adventurers into an African landscape with 2-D and 3-D animal elements, playful signage and grassy foliage.

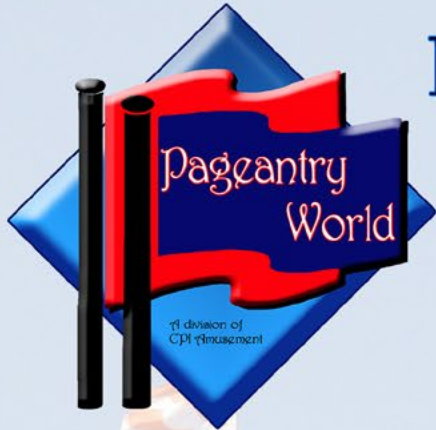
Martin Aquatics provided the concept design, as well as hydraulic, structural, filtration and chemical services.

A small shop at the entrance to the water park offers swimsuits, towels, souvenir T-shirts and other water park necessities. Inside the park, a food truck, snack stand and swim-up bar provide food and refreshments. Numerous lounge chairs offer plenty of opportunities for relaxation, and private

cabanas are available for an additional fee.

Hattiesburg Zoo is a small 12-acre zoo that was established in 1950 and serves the Pine Belt area of southern Mississippi with outreach programs and onsite edZOOcation programs. The zoo is operated

by the **Hattiesburg Convention Commission**. The addition of **Serengeti Springs** introduces aquatic opportunities in an area that has no other water park attractions. A second expansion is planned with construction starting next year with an expected 2027 opening.



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BUSINESS & NEWSMAKERS

► Six Flags management reunion — page 36 / Audio Innovators creates state-of-the-art messaging — page 38

Wonderland Park family freshens atmosphere with new paintings

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

AMARILLO, Texas — Family-owned parks have a way of getting things done. Without the extravagant budgets of big chains, many operators simply do things themselves instead of outsourcing services.

Wonderland Park has kept it all in the family when it comes to giving the park a fresh makeover.

Kristen Lovey, daughter of owner Paul and Paula Borchardt, has brightened the park with her own artistic talents. She has an educational background in interior design from Texas Tech. At the time, she probably never envisioned her art education being utilized for amusement rides.

It started five years ago when Lovey repainted the backdrop of the Rainbow ride.

"It used to have pirates, and it was dark and creepy," Lovey said. "They were talking about how it [the backdrop] was in bad shape and needed to be redone, and they gave me a shot. I got artistic juices from the family, obviously. I just grew up watching my parents and grandparents create something from nothing."

For that project, she had to use a man lift and hand sand the backdrop for two weeks, Lovey said.

She had dabbled in painting certain items in



The newly painted frogs have a whimsical amphibian look (above). Some of the rides' vehicles received a makeover from Kristen Lovey (below left). The previous Himalaya backdrop was just solid white. A winter scene with skiers (below right) pays homage to the original ride when acquired. AT/GARY SLADE; COURTESY WONDERLAND



the park in years prior, but 2024 has seen a long string of colorful projects. The endeavors range from ride signage to backdrops to coaster cars.

One she particularly likes is a complete makeover of Wonderland's Himalaya ride. When Wonderland acquired the ride decades ago, a wintery mural with skiers adorned the backdrop.

"Over the years, the

background had been painted solid white," Lovey said. "A book had been written about our park, and the Himalaya had been featured in it. The old backdrop had been painted over, and my dad said, 'I want that back.' I wanted them to hire me — and I committed January through March."

Collaborating on the look, they felt updated clothes on the figures were in order, but there was still

enough retro focus to pay homage to the original.

From that, she was inspired to refresh the park's Frog Hopper. She looked at pictures of real frogs to add colorful details, which she had to convince her father it was worthy enough to do so.

As long as she had permission to do it "her way," Lovey was off and running.

► See WONDERLAND, page 36



New drinking fountains have a bright colorful appeal. COURTESY WONDERLAND

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like a partnership."

Entertainment Industry Client



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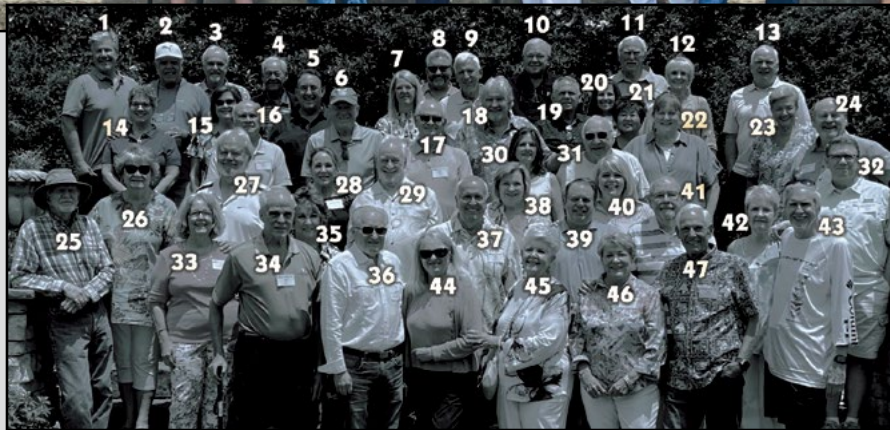
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Six Flags Management holds 2024 Alumni Reunion in Tennessee



FRANKLIN, Tenn. — Former park presidents, VPs and other management positions from Six Flags parks (from the 60s to 90s) held their 2nd Alumni Reunion May 28 and 29, 2024 in Franklin, Tenn. as a central location for attendees. The group's first event was held in 2016 at Six Flags Over Texas. Interest in the event has organizers considering meeting every three years. Attendees were treated to the beautiful downtown Franklin and its many restaurants, bars and well-known ghost tours. The Harpeth Hotel served as the headquarter hotel and site for the catered dinner and presentations. Second day activities included a visit and lunch to the Eastern Flank Event Facility. The organizing committee included Mike Glennan, Mike Foster, Joe Schillaci, Bob Johnson and Harold Hudson. A Who's Who in the amusement industry, these former Six Flags managers were in attendance (listed by number): 1. Philip Seeger; 2. Cass London-Williams; 3. Ben Peterson; 4. Russell Melton; 5. Jim Franz; 6. Mike Foerster; 7. Diane Steele; 8. Johnny Dunn; 9. Dan Elkins; 10. Chuck Corley; 11. Charlie Rawlins; 12. Candi Rawlins; 13. Brian Joyce; 14. Josephine London-Williams; 15. Suzanne Jasper; 16. Monty Jasper; 17. Bob Kochan; 18. Mike Glennan; 19. Andy Barkley; 20. Lisa Corley; 21. Gayle Barkley; 22. Kathryn Dunn; 23. Melinda Ashcraft; 24. Dan Bloemke; 25. Jim Wintrode; 26. Linda Doty; 27. Tom Hutson; 28. Denise Logan; 29. Bob Logan; 30. Lorraine Horlacher; 31. Frank Horlacher; 32. Willie Calloway; 33. Rita Hutson; 34. Larry Cox; 35. Merita Cox; 36. Harold Hudson; 37. Gary Vien; 38. Mary Vien; 39. Ron Steffey; 40. Angela (Cochran) Steffey; 41. Jim Kearney; 42. Jill Moore; 43. Bill Moore; 44. Betty Lynn Hudson; 45. Pat Cochran; 46. Alex Johnson and 47. Bob Johnson. Attendees not in the photo were: Keith Alper, Cindi Glennon, Ken Henderson, Dee Henderson, Mimi Mosely, Marty Mosely, Tom Moulton, Mike Peller, Gary Slade and Pat Walker. AT/GARY SLADE

►WONDERLAND Continued from page 35

"The mechanics have been made new and shiny. With the new paint job, it's like we have a new ride," she smiled.

In addition to the Frog Hopper ride vehicle, Lovey painted the coaster cars on the park's Cyclone.

General Manager **Adam Hutchens** created new drinking fountains that are stylized as flowers, which now look bright and vivid with bold colors.

Her touch continued on more rides. The center panels of a classic helicopter ride had just been painted blue. Lovey approached it with more colors and attempted to make it more "kid-like."

"I put mushrooms and bees to make it bring out the colors of the cars," she said. "It all flowed together."

Throughout the park, several signs were redone, which included the Rattlesnake River, Tilt-A-



The mermaids on the swinging ship (above left) got a refreshed look (above middle). A before/after view of the Rattlesnake River signage shows an updated look (above right). COURTESY WONDERLAND

Whirl and various Route 66 signs spread along the car ride. An area of the park called the West End also received some TLC.

The swinging pirate ship had two mermaids on the mast. They have been refreshed with vivid colors.

Several of the projects occurred in the winter months when the desert cold

made the work challenging.

"I'm really excited about having someone on my staff that is part of the family who is contributing to the painting of the park itself," said Paul Borchardt. "Not only lettering but designs of the operation, information and all the exciting things that happen to communicate to

our customers."

"We're very proud of our artistic daughter," added his wife, Paula. "She's so very talented. Her latest artwork has received so many customer comments — the cute faces of the frogs and the amazing scenery on the Himalaya — they think it's so cool we have such a

talented daughter."

Lovey doesn't live in Amarillo, but when time allows her to stop in, the rewards for her have been great.

"I was raised being told, 'You can do anything you put your mind to.' Art is a skill that God has given me to beautify the world," she told *Amusement Today*.

Women INFLUENCE

A view from the top...

Toni Caracciolo knows marketing is a critical component to a company's success. With a career that began sharing tales from the sea and led to marketing a top vacation region, her guiding principle is that successful marketing is the result of hard work and understanding the equation: Research + Brand + Audience + Creativity = Campaign. She employs that equation in her duties as executive vice president of marketing and branding of **Falcon's Beyond**.

A career sharing inspired stories

ORLANDO — With an accomplished career steeped in the travel and tourism industry, Toni Caracciolo has led marketing and driven strategy for company expansions, the launch of new theme parks, pivotal destination marketing campaigns and special events. Through it all, Toni has found it to be a great honor to be along for the adventure. "I've seen first-hand how people in the attractions and tourism industry strive to make the impossible happen, and I've had the privilege of telling their stories," shared Caracciolo. "Their work and passion have helped me to market incredible destinations and experiences. They inspire me."

As the first Executive Vice President of Marketing and Branding for Falcon's Beyond, Caracciolo is charged with building the team and raising awareness of an emerging growth business with global reach.

"I am honored to work with some of the best creative minds in the themed entertainment industry," she said. "Every day I am in awe of the work the Falcon's team accomplishes. It's exciting to communicate with partners, stakeholders, potential clients and other business leaders we can reach to share our brand and the work we do."

"My entire career has been grounded in tourism," she continued. "I've always been fascinated by the process — to market an experience by giving others authentic information to help them make the best decision on how, where and when to spend their hard-earned income for the sole purpose of entertainment and making memories. I thrive on building relationships to tell stories that will become part of others' shared experiences. Whether it's a new theme park, a new attraction, location-based entertainment, or even

an app or intellectual property (IP), it always comes back to the team of people who worked together to create that story."

In Caracciolo's approach she is quick to remind everyone, "Marketing is an investment. It's not an expense."

In addition, "The research and rigor required to develop and implement an effective marketing campaign should never be discounted. It does not matter if you are working with a large advertising budget or with limited resources. Either way, a successful marketing approach must be grounded in pre-work and planning before pulling any triggers."

"For every campaign or project, it is important to always define 'what does success look like,' and then plan toward that desired outcome.

Before joining Falcon's Beyond, Caracciolo was Vice President of Global Marketing at Visit Orlando, the official tourism association for Central Florida, the most visited destination in the United States and theme park capital of the world where she drove successful marketing campaigns that resulted in record breaking visitation.

Her career began in the hotel industry, but it was a role as a public relations representative for SeaWorld Orlando that offered her the chance to hone her skills as a storyteller and showcase the dedicated work of the SeaWorld Rescue Team.

Caracciolo grew with the company, and went on to lead the brand management and advertising for Sea World Parks and Entertainment Inc. and the marketing and sales for the Orlando-based parks: SeaWorld, Aquatica and Discovery Cove.

"It was exciting to market the parks, but I found even greater satisfaction in developing the brand,

Toni Caracciolo

Falcon's Beyond
Orlando, Florida



the story, the why behind each park location," Caracciolo continued. "All the parks have unique brand identities. Our team developed the brands through storytelling and messaging, while remaining true to the core mission: inspire others to care about our oceans and the wildlife both above and under the sea."

Working on the Discovery Cove and Aquatica brands remains a career highlight for Caracciolo. "When we opened Aquatica, we not only surpassed our visitation goals for the year, the water theme park also became the number one most visited water park in the country. Our marketing plans and hard work came together in ways that were even better than we had planned and hoped for. The park's success was one thing, celebrating my team's dedication and effort was the true win."

Caracciolo earned an Executive MBA from the University of Central Florida in 2016 and has furthered that experience by serving the next generation of MBA candidates.

"Each year, I have the privilege of mentoring a UCF MBA student," she said. "I appreciate the

opportunity to support their educational journey and help guide them through career decisions and choices."

"I think for anyone who has had a long career in the same type of industry, it's the most rewarding to be able to give back," Caracciolo shared. "It is important to me to be available to mentor and guide a young professional as they also work toward their advanced degree. It's especially meaningful knowing I've helped make a difference in their career trajectory."

"Mentoring is not just about providing praise. There is a responsibility in always telling the truth and being authentic. If you care enough to take the time to mentor someone, then you must provide them with honest, straightforward feedback and advice."

"There's a Swedish proverb that says, 'When the sea is calm, every ship has a good captain,'" Caracciolo concluded. "It means the true test of leadership comes from rough waters. I hope I have been a good captain who inspires future great captains."

—Susan Storey

Audio Innovators helps ensure the industry gets the message

AT: Ron Gustafson
Special to Amusement Today

RIVERVIEW, Fla. — When you need to get your message across, you can rely on Dale Hershberger.

Since 1975, Hershberger has been at the helm of **Audio Innovators Inc.**, a small company he founded to provide state-of-the-art messaging equipment to the outdoor amusement industry.

His idea for creating a unique product line was sparked years ago when he had the opportunity to work a couple of jobs, including that of an arcade mechanic and even a stint with the former **Murphy Brothers Exposition** carnival.

"When a carnival passed through town, I became a game operator," he recalled during a recent interview with *Amusement Today*.

"I saw what was needed and a trend in the industry, so I picked up the ball and ran with it," he added.

The first message repeater Hershberger, now 72, engineered was designed for use in concession stands. It utilized an audio cassette looped tape, amplifier and a horn speaker.

Messages could be created to entice those roaming the midway to "step right up and play," explain the rules of a game or even to buy something to eat fresh off a sizzling grill.

What operators were seeking — and got — was consistency in what was said via Hershberger's mes-



Above left, the father and son team of (l to r) Dale and Zack Hershberger are shown at an industry trade show (above left). Despite being a small business, Audio Innovators houses a full recording suite (above right). COURTESY AUDIO INNOVATORS

saging machines.

Diversified

"Our customer base saw a need for the products I was producing," Hershberger explained.

The next logical step was to produce procedural messaging for attractions such as go-kart tracks, bumper cars and other amusement rides so safety instructions wouldn't slip through the cracks.

"We basically do it all in-house," he said of the design and assembly of the message machines. "We have another company do the (electronic) board printing, but they are our design."

As the company found its footing, it expanded into other ventures such as being a supplier of two-way radios and sound equipment.

Despite being a small business occupying 2,400 square feet, Audio Innovators has created a solid reputation in the industry as it has serviced

more than 13,000 customers throughout the years. While most sales are domestic, a handful of international firms buy from the company, he noted

Things have changed

With the advent of the digital age, Hershberger was quick to adapt with electronic memory boards taking the place of audio tape. Operators welcomed the updates as the equipment was more reliable and required less maintenance.

The company has also embraced solar power for some of its latest gear.

"Right now, it's pretty much for waterparks, but we also see ski resorts incorporating our solar units for their operations," he said of current trends. "We also have a new one coming out for the top of slides — different from what was offered in the past. And our safety messages are designed for all types of rides — from kiddie rides to coasters, to elevators and



people movers."

He emphasized that his company is always producing something new in digital products, including sequenced announcements with each press of a button. Of particular note is a five-by-five-inch box with nine buttons, with each button's memory capable of incorporating more than 500 paraphrases. That all adds up to the compact component serving up more than 5,000 phrases.

"There's not very much analog equipment out there anymore," he noted of the advancements. "And we even have evacuation messaging systems for Ferris wheels and funhouses."

All of the messaging is created in elaborate recording suites at the company where background music and dialog are mixed and added to each unit prior to being shipped to customers.

While carnivals, amusement parks and fairs have been at the heart of busi-

ness for Audio Innovators, **NASCAR** tracks and airports are among some of the newest clients.

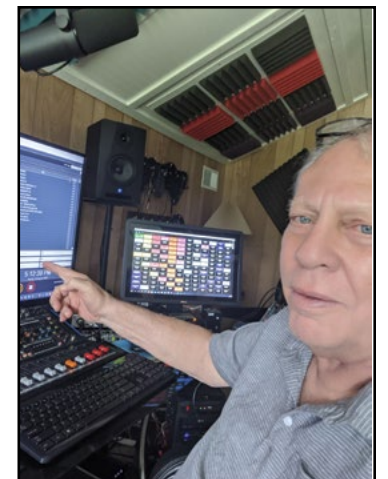
In addition to two-way radio sales and rentals, the company also provides window intercoms, weather-resistant speakers and carousel sound systems.

"I've enjoyed traveling and meeting people," Hershberger said of his business. "And it's always fun to see our products in action and making people smile."

He also serves as the master of music and sound on the **International Independent Showmen's Association** float in Tampa area parades and has been a staple at the **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA)** Expo since 1976.

And the future looks bright for the company as Hershberger's son, **Zack**, who is also an engineer, is following in his father's footsteps.

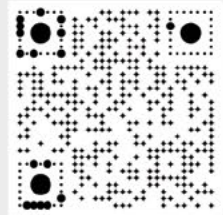
• audioinnovators.com



Above left, a state-of-the-art solar-powered unit is shown by Dale Hershberger. The Audio Innovator's proprietor appeared atop the International Independent Showmen's Association parade float (above middle). Hershberger often sets up background tracks for messaging mixes some of the company's components (above right). COURTESY AUDIO INNOVATORS



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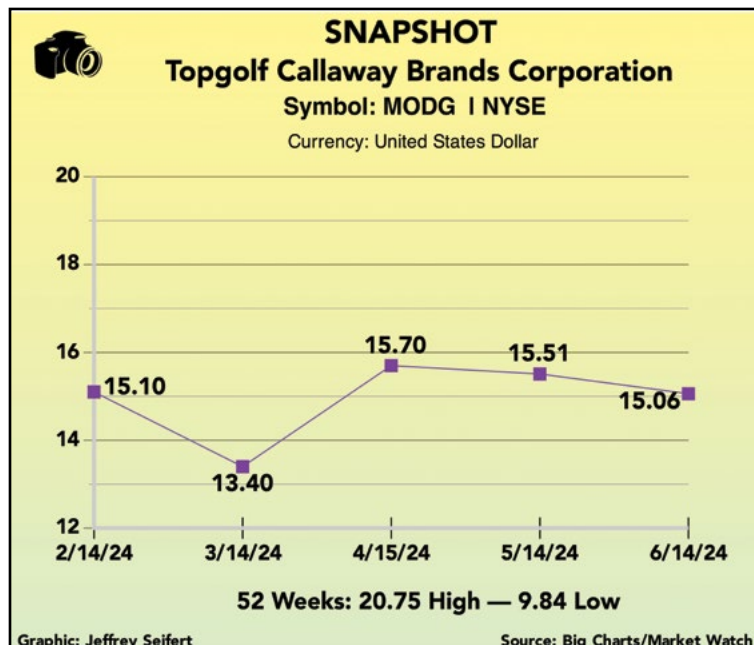
MARKET WATCH

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 6/18/24	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
PARKS AND ATTRACTIONS					
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	122.90	133.56	87.40
Bowlero Corp.	BOWL	NYSE	13.73	15.47	8.85
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	51.89	52.53	34.04
Comcast Corp./NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	36.90	47.45	36.43
Dave & Busters Entertainment, LLC	PLAY	NASDAQ	41.60	69.82	33.07
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	40.67	49.10	39.65
Falcon's Beyond	FBYD	NASDAQ	11.66	44.00	7.02
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	JP:9010	TYO	2735.00	5820.00	2735.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	0.74	1.26	0.67
Lefoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	20.10	28.45	16.15
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	40.53	51.35	34.12
Parks America, Inc.	PRKA	OTC	0.43	0.61	0.23
Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd.	RCL	NYSE	151.48	157.58	78.35
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	31.98	32.23	18.29
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	710.00	778.00	684.00
United Parks & Resorts Inc.	PRKS	NYSE	50.85	58.45	40.87
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	101.50	123.74	78.73
Warner Bros Discovery Inc.	WBD	NASDAQ	6.99	14.76	6.96
SUPPLIERS/OTHERS					
Brogent Technologies, Inc.	TW:5263	TSEC	166.50	165.50	108.00
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	TYO:6357	TYO	1816.00	1817.00	1026.00
Topgolf Callaway Brands	MODG	NYSE	15.00	20.75	9.84

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 6/17/24	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$3.834	(\$0.080)
Midwest	\$3.621	(\$0.118)
Gulf Coast	\$3.472	(\$0.060)
Mountain	\$3.682	(\$0.350)
West Coast	\$3.984	(\$0.153)
California	\$4.915	\$0.142

CURRENCY

On 6/18/24 \$1 USD =

0.9331	EURO
0.7882	GBP (British Pound)
157.62	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.8908	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.5138	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.3737	CAD (Canadian Dollar)

BUSINESS WATCH

Cedar Fair, Six Flags move to finalize merger

ARLINGTON, Texas and SANDUSKY, Ohio — Cedar Fair, L.P. and Six Flags Entertainment Corporation announced the senior management team that will lead the combined company following the completion of their previously announced merger of equals.

As previously announced, upon closing of the transaction, **Richard Zimmerman**, president and chief executive officer of Cedar Fair, will serve as president and chief executive officer of the combined company and **Selim Bassoul**, president and chief executive officer of Six Flags, will serve as executive chairman of the combined company's board of directors.

"We are fortunate to have a proven team of leaders who bring decades of park operating experience and significant expertise in integrating businesses and achieving synergy targets for the combined company," said Zimmerman. "Their insights and complementary skill sets will be instrumental as we combine two of North America's iconic amusement park companies and forge a new future together."

After completion of the mergers, the following leaders will report to Zimmerman in the combined company: Tim Fisher as chief operating officer (currently in same position at Cedar Fair); Brian Witherow as chief financial officer (currently in same position at Cedar Fair); Brian Nurse as chief legal and compliance officer, as well as corporate secretary (currently in same position at Cedar Fair); Christian Dieckmann, chief strategy officer (currently in same position at Cedar Fair) and Gary Mick as chief integration officer (currently executive vice president and chief financial officer at Six Flags).

The closing of the mergers is expected to occur on July 1, 2024, subject to satisfaction or waiver of a number of conditions set forth in the merger agreement, including the satisfaction of regulatory conditions. Upon closing of the transaction, the combined company will operate under the name Six Flags Entertainment Corporation, trade under the ticker symbol "FUN" on the NYSE and be structured as a C Corporation. The combined company will be headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, and will maintain significant finance and administrative operations in Sandusky, Ohio.

Betson expands customer experience

CARLSTADT, N.J. — **Betson Enterprises** announced a comprehensive expansion of its customer experience offerings. These enhancements aim to provide unparalleled customer support, ensure equipment runs smoothly, and keep profits coming in for customers.

"In today's fast-paced amusement industry, providing immediate, expert technical support isn't just a service — it's a commitment to our customers' success and satisfaction," said **Cliff Bradberry**, director of technical services, Betson Enterprises. "Our expanded technical support offerings represent our dedication to ensuring that every game runs as smoothly as the experiences they're designed to create."

At the heart of Betson's enhanced customer experience initiative is the team of highly experienced and knowledgeable technicians. With years of hands-on experience troubleshooting various games, these experts are available to support customers. Understanding the urgency of technical difficulties, Betson has streamlined the process to connect customers with the technical support team.

ON THE MOVE

Franceen Gonzales appointed president of Legoland Florida

WINTER HAVEN, Fla. — **Merlin Entertainments' Legoland Florida Resort** announced the appointment of **Franceen Gonzales** as its new park president, effective June 10, 2024. With more than 30 years of experience in amusement parks, water parks, hotels and family entertainment, Gonzales brings a wealth of expertise to the role. She will oversee all park operations for **Legoland Florida Resort, Legoland Water Park, Peppa Pig Theme Park, Legoland Hotel, Legoland Pirate Island Hotel and Legoland Beach Retreat.**

"I'm excited to return to my roots in park operations and thrilled to continue the legacy of success at the world-class Legoland Florida Resort, alongside a dedicated team committed to delivering exceptional guest experiences," said Gonzales. "Stepping through the park, I rediscovered the sense of wonderment that both children and adults experience here. It's truly special, and I feel deeply honored to be joining this incredible team."

Gonzales has garnered extensive industry knowledge from leading U.S. companies in the theme park sector. Previously, she served as park director at **Six Flags Great Adventure** and as vice president of risk management at **Great Wolf Resorts**. Most recently, she held the position of chief experience officer at **WhiteWater West**, spearheading customer experience initiatives across five business units and five global offices.



Franceen Gonzales

Altitude Trampoline Park announced the appointment of **Chris Kuehn** as the company's chief operating officer, effective immediately. In this role, Kuehn will leverage his extensive experience to lead the brand's operations, marketing and training initiatives.



Kuehn

"Chris brings a wealth of general management expertise that will be crucial for Altitude's innovations and development," said **Mike Rotondo**, CEO of Altitude Trampoline Park. "Chris' broad skill set are precisely what we need to create a more seamless guest experience during this expansion. We are excited to continue to grow our leadership team with industry veterans and are fortunate to welcome such a strong executive who will significantly contribute to our ongoing growth and success."

Kuehn most recently led business development teams for software provider **Restaurant365** partnering with **Enterprise Brands** delivering operations and financial technology platform solutions that drive efficiency and profitability.

Intercard has added amusement industry veteran and redemption expert **Justin Michaels** to its team as an account executive. He will cover the Mid-South territory for the company.



Michaels

"Justin's extensive experience in arcades and redemption operations makes him a strong addition to the Intercard team

as we are steadily growing our customer base," said **Rob Geiger**, North America sales manager for Intercard.

Michaels began his career helping to manage the **Cool Crest** arcade and went on to work for route operator **Lee Arcade Solutions**. He comes to Intercard after 20 successful years at Kansas City-based **Redemption Plus**.

Lehigh County Agricultural Society, Allentown, Pennsylvania, the owner and operator of **The Great Allentown Fair**, announced that **Staci Horvath** has rejoined the organization as marketing specialist. Horvath worked at the society for 16 years in operations before departing in 2013.



Horvath

Horvath's experience aligns perfectly with her proven track record in marketing and sponsorship along with her vast knowledge of the overall organization itself. Her passion and commitment to the society's mission will allow her to make meaningful contributions to the society.

UNIS Technology Ltd. announced the appointment of **Logan Schneider** as its North America sales manager.

"We are thrilled to welcome Logan Schneider to our team," said **Steven Tan**, general manager of UNIS Technology (Canada) Ltd. "His strategic vision and customer-centric approach align perfectly with our company's goals and values."



Schneider

OBITUARIES

A founder of multiple amusement facilities, Jack Lazarus has passed

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. — The founder of one of many amusement parks that for decades created memories for thousands of vacationers and Myrtle Beach residents has died. Jack Lazarus — fondly known to his family as "Grandad" — passed away on June 15, 2024.

Born in 1937, he lived a life filled with love, dedication and significant achievements. He married the love of his life, Bonnie Lazarus, on July 27, 1960, and together they enjoyed nearly 61 wonderful years of marriage.

Lazarus grew up in Charlotte, North Carolina, where he graduated from Central High School. He was an outstanding football player, playing on the North Carolina Shrine Bowl team and excelling in both offensive and defensive positions at tackle. Lazarus continued his education and football career at the University of North Carolina, earning his degree in Industrial Relations and always remaining a proud Tarheel. It was during his time at UNC that he met Bonnie, who was also from Charlotte.

In 1976, he and Bonnie moved to Myrtle Beach and quickly became beloved locals through their business, the Myrtle Beach Grand Prix. A true pioneer in the amusement industry, Lazarus introduced racing as a form of entertainment. Alongside his two sons, he opened and operated multiple amusement parks over four decades, including the Myrtle Beach Grand Prix, North Myrtle Beach Grand Prix, Wild Water and Wheels, and Funsville in Augusta, Georgia.

Lazarus's contributions to the industry were recognized through his service on the Board of Directors for IAAPA and the Executive Finance Committee. His early career included roles with Johnson and Murphy and Chrysler, before becoming the youngest owner of a Volkswagen dealership in Gastonia, N.C. at age 29.

Predeceased by his beloved wife Bonnie, his mother Bonnie M. Lazarus, his father Morris Lazarus, and his brother Norman Prevatte, Jack leaves behind a loving family.

Lifelong showman, PSSA member Mary Kelly O'Jevich passes away

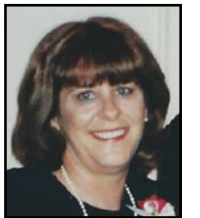
HANOVER TOWNSHIP, Pa. — Mary Kelly O'Jevich, 68, from Warrior Run, Pennsylvania, passed away very suddenly in late February at home. An ardent supporter of the Pennsylvania State Showman Association (PSSA) she was involved in the carnival industry all her life.

As a child, her family ran bingo up and down the East Coast. O'Jevich married her partner in life and business, Clem (Chipper) and together they operated two jewelry concession trailers attending 30 sports events each year. She joined PSSA in 1974 and soon after became a director.

In 2004 O'Jevich became PSSA president. She was influential in the introduction of the carousel as a fundraiser at the annual Pennsylvania Farm Show each January. This project, "Dollars for Scholars," has generated more than \$310,054 for the PSSA Youth Scholarship program and \$361,431 for the Farm Show Youth Scholarship Foundation since its inception in 2005. O'Jevich served on nearly every PSSA committee and in 2009 she was named "Showperson of the Year."



Lazarus



O'Jevich



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SAFETY, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

DMT creates new ride safety device — page 48 / Gorilla Lube keeps industry running smoothly — page 50

SkyRide renaissance: Cedar Point gives new look to Von Roll ride

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

SANDUSKY, Ohio — Whether one is an industry professional or a theme park junkie, the name **Von Roll** carries a special place in the heart. As amusement parks grew and the development of theme parks surged in the 1960s and 1970s, Von Roll sky rides were a staple in the burgeoning industry. Looking for memorable experiences, parks felt the inclusion of a sky ride was a must for two reasons: an observational experience and a way of transport.

Von Roll is a Swiss company with roots going back to 1803. The company has been involved in various forms of business, including industrial products and systems, which is its business today. But its fan base remains for the adoration of the beloved sky rides around the world.

More than 100 sky rides or “ropeways” were installed. The first ones appeared in Europe in the early 1950s, but in 1956, **Disneyland** debuted the aerial-style ride to the United States.

Cedar Point debuted its Sky Ride in 1962. The original cabins only seated two, but that was changed in 1967 to four-seater cabins. Cedar Point was not alone when offering park guests two Von Roll cable experiences. Other parks did as well, but Cedar Point had a second Frontier Lift going to the back of the resort property from 1968 to 1985. The cabins from that ride are reported to be on the current still-operating Sky Ride.

“The Sky Ride is a



Cedar Point's Sky Ride has been a park tradition since 1962. The views from each cabin allow guests to enjoy the beauty of the park and adjacent Lake Erie, as well as the record-breaking rides at Cedar Point. The Von Roll logo appears on the door of each car (above middle). AT/TIM BALDWIN

uniquely perfect attraction for Cedar Point that serves multiple purposes for guests: some utilize it to simply get from one end of the midway to the other; some take the gentle ride to get perfect birds-eye views of the park,” said **Tony Clark**, director of communications. “Ultimately, it’s a wonderful attraction for families to ride together. The ‘oohs and ahhs’ that likely happen while taking in the sights are alone worth the work our team puts into keeping it in operation. It’s an instantly recognizable part of Cedar Point’s history and we are proud to have it in our lineup of attractions.”

Over the years, the ride has had various paint schemes. For 2024, the aerial cableway sports a new look. According to Clark, the project was intended to be a refresh for the 2022 season, but the complexity of gathering close to 40 cabins to the sign shop over that winter caused the plans to be put on hold. He

credits **Melissa Conquest**, creative services specialist, for reviving the project.

Conquest has been a Cedar Point team member in various departments: Rides, Marketing and Operations. Now in the Sign Shop, she took the lead in making the Sky Ride initiative see its desired result.

“One of my favorite things to do in the winter is to go through the park and look at things that need to be refreshed,” she told *Amusement Today*. “The Sky Ride cabins have been on my list for a while. I felt they could be more dynamic-looking. Initially, I wasn’t sure it would happen, but during the approval process, everyone seemed to like it.”

The new look took place during the winter.

“The Sky Ride cabins only come off every two years,” Conquest noted. “Even though this was designed two or three years ago, this was the winter to do it since the cabins were coming off for routine

maintenance. We really had to work with the welders, maintenance [team] and painters. It took about a month and a half for the Sign Shop to complete all the cabins.”

Base colors on the cabins have always made the skyline bright with vivid hues overhead. During the ride’s history, cabin designs have featured various styles, but it has changed with the times. Logos, numbering and some types of ornamentation have accented the gondolas. The Sky Ride now features the park’s most current logo.

“The ride is very beloved by both guests and ride operators,” Conquest said. “It’s like a cult classic. I went back and looked at all the photographs of the different designs Sky Ride has been through — quite a few. Two stood out; I liked how they had designs that wrapped around all four sides. As it comes down from the midway, I liked how it looks different on both ends. I think a

nostalgic design is kind of in trend right now. The cabins were bold and bright and [the design] grounds them a bit.”

Cable rides have always been enjoyed by guests. Taking a load off one’s feet is always a plus, but being able to admire a park’s skyline and what’s on the horizon has always been a moment of relaxation and appreciation. Cedar Point’s stunning lineup of record-breaking coasters and the beauty of the Lake Erie beach make for an enjoyable ride. However, park guests get an extra bonus as the cabins are transported over numerous flower beds, which make for a beautiful view by looking immediately down to the ground.

“Each year, our Landscaping team, led by **Martha Beverick**, meticulously maps out and designs the famous ‘medallion’ in the center of the midway,” noted Clark. “While this may look

► See SKYRIDE, page 44

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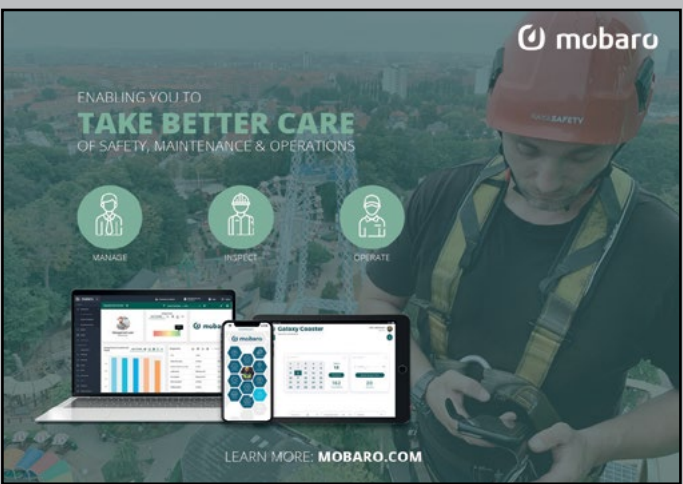
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► SKYRIDE

Continued from page 43

like one of the many beautiful beds of flowers that we're known for, the medallion often features the logo of the season's new attraction which can be seen in all its glory, by riding Sky Ride. The medallion design goes through several revisions as Martha and her team figure out which plant and flower varieties will perfectly match the logo or attraction design. It's fascinating to see it come to life, as it's unrecognizable at first — and then it blooms into this gorgeous visual when seen from above. I know *how* they do it, but I still can't figure out how it seems to bloom perfectly every year, every time."

A ride takes about two minutes and 40 seconds from station to station, traveling at 6 mph. The tallest of the support towers is 87 feet tall.

Although there were numerous Von Roll cable rides just a few decades ago, they have diminished dramatically, with less than 10 operating in the United States today.

Owing to the fan base of Von Roll sky rides, Cedar Point tipped its hat to the company this season by placing the Von Roll logo into the new cabin design.

"I think that's really important to people who enjoy Sky Ride," Conquest said. "It's a cool nod. I think it does educate guests that there are a lot of manufacturers that create all these rides, and I don't think that's something everyone necessarily knows walking into an amusement park."

Conquest found the project very rewarding. "It's very exciting to walk down the midway and see them up there."



The landscaping along the midway is particularly appreciated from above. AT/FILE

Keep our amusement park industry strong!
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Vigilance, focus key in avoiding slow days becoming deadly days

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

WALPOLE, Ma. — Shawn DeRosa is the owner of DeRosa Aquatic Consulting. He is a water safety expert committed to reducing drowning rates with risk management strategies and emergency response protocols. In addition to program audits, facility inspections and expert witness services, DeRosa offers presentations on numerous topics.

At a recent conference in February, sponsored by StarGuard Elite, DeRosa noted in his presentation that “slow days can be deadly days.” *Amusement Today* followed up to allow him to elaborate.

“This really stems back to sports psychology,” he said. “In that world, they’re going to call it ‘choke theory.’ Why would an athlete make a mistake after doing it over and over again? Why is the performance different?”

DeRosa connects it to stress levels.

“In the psychology realm, we’ll say if there is not enough interest — in other words, the strongest team is going against the weakest team — there isn’t



On slower days, less active pools can cause a lifeguard to become less engaged. AT/TIM BALDWIN

enough engagement, and then mistakes can be made. That’s one end of the spectrum, where you aren’t engaged enough.”

Too much stimulus is the opposite extreme.

“Why would a long-distance kicker who time and time again lines up and makes the point suddenly go wide on Super Bowl Sunday? Knowing the world is watching and so much is on the line, the stress is so much higher. You get the best performance from your athletes when they aren’t too stressed but also not bored.”

Applying that hypothesis to the lifeguarding realm, there is a correlation.

“What we see is if there are only a couple people in the pool and things are quiet, for whatever reason, lifeguards may unintentionally ‘check out,” he illustrated. “They think, ‘We got this,’ and they may miss things. At the same time, when a park is absolutely packed, they may make mistakes because they are over-stressed; they can’t watch everything because there is so much going on. Their performance could be affected. But I think [knowing] slow days are deadly days is important.”

Statistics have shown DeRosa that many times when there are incidents at facilities, it is not at peak hours, but when attendance is lower than normal.

“We have to wonder why that is happening. Are the lifeguards unintentionally daydreaming? Or if they are bored, do they walk away from their stand because no one is in the water until someone is? There could be many reasons, but I think we have to be aware of the slow days,” he cautioned.

AT asked what management can do in these situations. In his answer, he encouraged management to also not become complacent with other tasks, but to help control the situation by engaging the lifeguards.

“Managers need to be out in the pools or the beach more so than normal,” he said. “Checking in on staff and having a brief inter-



action — ‘How are things going? Are you all set? How many people are in your zone?’ — any type of questions that direct their focus. These are the days we talk about situational awareness. Sometimes being aware of the issue might be enough to keep staff mentally focused.”

Slow days can also be times when operators access labor costs or close attractions.

“Taking lifeguards out of a zone can be a dangerous mistake,” he said. “Someone might miss a person going into the zone and then getting in trouble. I like to tell people we need to guard empty water, to guard the *potential* for someone to swim, not necessarily the people in the zone at the moment.”

He explained that if a guard scans to the left and a child jumps in a zone at the right that is unguarded, when that guard looks again to the right, the child may be underwater.

In water parks or facilities with attractions, if a decision is made to close an attraction, it is imperative that the slide is clearly marked closed, and if possible, gated off from any entry into the pool.

“If it is more of an open pool where people have access, then that pool should be fully guarded,” he said. “Any time you attempt to close an attraction down, you have to assume that

someone will try to defeat that attempt — someone will go across the rope or under the chain to try to engage with the attraction.”

DeRosa speaks about the legal aspects of those situations.

“Did you adequately provide notice? Was it clear that they were trespassing into an unstaffed area? There we can start to distinguish in an accident that the party was the cause of the injury. They avoided the safety mechanisms and ignored the posted instructions. But our hope is to prevent the injury in the first place.”

DeRosa still encourages some kind of supervision in closed areas, even if it is a walking patrol or camera surveillance. “I don’t think we can walk away from an area completely if we think a patron might be able to gain access,” he noted.

At the conference aboard a **Royal Caribbean** ship, he was impressed with netting that restricted passengers from gaining access to closed pools.

Something he feels that all facilities should always do is to make sure the manufacturer’s instructions are strictly followed. “Most water parks provide training and display signs the manufacturer supplies. They need to follow those requirements because they exist for a reason,” he stressed.

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As a safety precaution, Royal Caribbean ships will restrict passengers from gaining access to closed pools by the use of netting. COURTESY SHAWN DEROSA

Precision Chains focuses on amusement industry and expansion

AT: David Fake
Special to Amusement Today

DUDLEY, U.K. — Precision Chains Ltd has been producing heavy series and special purpose chains in the U.K. since 1957. It was then that Harold Merley began a journey that would ultimately link the name Precision Chains with a reputation of quality and service excellence around the globe.

By employing industry best manufacturing techniques, the company has earned a reputation for the production of superior chains. These techniques, which include best-in-class material specifications, heat treatment conditions, optimized construction and reliable maintenance processes, have struck a customer-satisfying balance between high quality and cost-effectiveness.

Over its years of enhancing its manufacturing expertise in the U.K., Precision Chains has ingrained itself in an array of markets, including both industrial and amusement park product applications. However, an acquisition by the John King Group Company amid the pandemic has refined Precision Chains' focus to the amusement industry.

Marthinus "Matt" Janse van Rensburg, Precision Chains' Country Sales Manager, spoke with *Amusement Today* about the company's longstanding

relationship with parks and operators in the U.K. and its revised focus and business model which includes further establishing its presence across the Atlantic in the North American amusement park market.

In contrast to Precision Chains' years of experience in the U.K. and having supplied chains to such parks as Alton Towers, Essington World of Adventures, Thorpe Park, Drayton Manor, The Looping Group and Merlin Entertainments, van Rensburg explained that it has only been within the last five years that the company has expanded across the Atlantic and broken into the U.S. park market, partially due to combining forces with John King Group Company.

"John King Group Company is our parent company. They are also John King Chains' parent company. John King Group acquired Precision Chains three years back in 2021," said van Rensburg. "Basically, what we've done is divide industry focus between the two companies, because otherwise [the two companies] would, technically, be opposition to each other. So, Precision Chains is now focusing more on the theme park industry, whereas John King Chains' focus will be on industrial applications."

Precision Chains also proudly shares its accolades and feedback provided to them by their customers.



Founded in 1957, Precision Chains has supplied products for almost 70 years and has serviced such parks as Alton Towers, Chessington World of Adventures, Thorpe Park, Drayton Manor, The Looping Group, and Merlin Entertainments in the U.K. and Canada's Wonderland and Six Flags in North America. COURTESY PRECISION CHAINS

One recent endorsement of the company's products and services came from Alton Towers, and stated, "Precision Chains has provided us with a cost-effective, bespoke solution which has given us an increased longevity of 66% when compared to rival products. This has improved our ride availability and resulted in reduced upkeep costs."

With fully trained and accredited installation and maintenance teams, and business and manufacturing facilities now in both the U.S. and the U.K., Precision Chains and the John King Group are unique in offering new



and replacement chains to both U.S. and European standards.

"We are ready for the next phase of growth and are looking to the U.S. Market for that growth," stated van Rensburg.

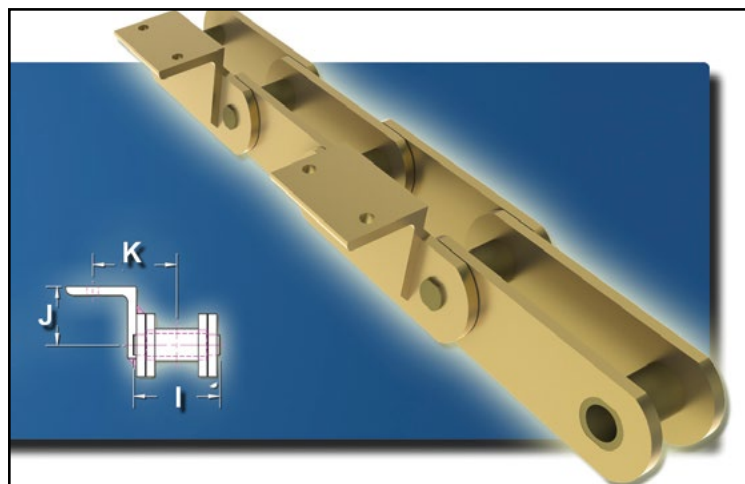
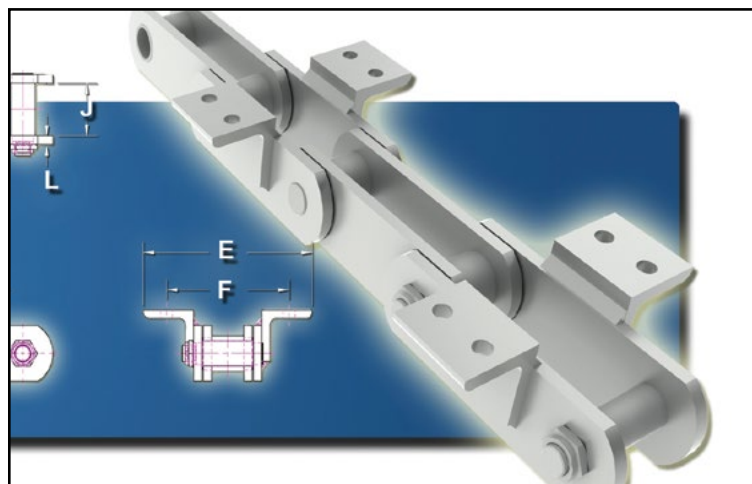
Whether it is in the U.K., U.S. or Canada, or pertaining to roller coasters, water rides or other amusement rides, Precision Chains offers a full spectrum of amusement park ride chains designed to minimize downtime and maximize safety.

As it continues to grow, Precision Chains is commit-

ted to providing superior products at the forefront of its market, as well as ensuring its current and future customers receive the same superior products and services the company has built its reputation upon for nearly 70 years.

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- Chessington World of Adventures (since 2002)
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- Alton Towers (since 1998)
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- Joe Blocks Inc. (since 2023)
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- Six Flags (since 2019)
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- Premier Rides (since 2019)



Precision Chains offers zinc coating (above left) on all components to help reduce rust formation, helping in a variety of conveyor chain applications. The finish can be undertaken in either gold (above right) or silver, depending on the client preference. COURTESY PRECISION CHAINS



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DMT creates new ride safety device to monitor rides in real time

AT: Pam Sherborne
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ESSEN, Germany — DMT, a global engineering services and consultancy group with 280 years of experience, is launching what the company is touting as the world's first AI-supported, real-time monitoring system for amusement rides, just in time for the new amusement park season.

The new device, DMT RideGuard, offers additional safety as well as high efficiency through optimized maintenance processes. The system is already in operation at **Movie Park** in Germany.

DMT RideGuard complements the standards for monitoring amusement park rides. The system enables seamless monitoring of vibrations, shocks and movements for the very first time. This provides additional safety and makes maintenance more efficient.

Using state-of-the-art

IoT sensor technology and AI algorithms, the system continuously records all relevant data and streams it to a cloud-based application in real-time. As a result, park operators receive a comprehensive status overview of their attractions and are provided with support in identifying and rectifying potential risks at an early stage.

"Thanks to DMT RideGuard, amusement park operators can now monitor their attractions in real time for the very first time," said **Konrad Widera**, product manager DMT RideGuard. "Our system enables targeted planning of maintenance intervals and reduces possible downtimes, resulting in an increased availability of attractions. The existing high safety standards are not only fulfilled but even improved. For visitors, this can create additional trust."

The Movie Park



Movie Park's Technical Manager Carsten Prang (left) and Konrad Widera, product manager for DMT RideGuards, discuss the system already in operation at the German theme park. COURTESY DMT

Germany film and leisure park in Bottrop-Kirchhellen is already successfully using DMT RideGuard. After a test phase on two rides from August 2023, the operator has decided in favor of the system and intends to continue using DMT RideGuard in the future.

"DMT RideGuard enables constant monitoring

of our attractions in a way that has never been possible before," said **Carsten Prang**, technical manager, Movie Park Germany. "This feature of non-stop monitoring is a great advantage. The system reports automatically and informs us of any deviations. This is a great support for us in our day-to-day operations."

Movie Park offers about 40 rides and attractions that include fast-paced roller coasters, as well as shows in seven themed areas.

DMT officials emphasize that the safety of amusement park visitors already has top priority. Therefore, strict controls are conducted by the responsible inspection bodies. Visual inspections on a daily basis and regular check and maintenance procedures involving comprehensive checklists by the operators ensure that the high safety standards are met. These inspections can now be further enhanced with the DMT RideGuard.

DMT RideGuard monitors constantly, directly and reliably. The system automatically reports abnormalities and anomalies using a combination of alarm and notification functions via e-mail or SMS, according to the operator's requirements.

•dmt-group.com

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Kinder joins AIMS International as seminar manager

AIMS International, the world leader in amusement safety education, has announced the appointment of **Eddie Kinder** as its new seminar manager.

Kinder began his career more than 25 years ago as a ride operator on the classic Blazing Fury attraction at **Dollywood** in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. Spending 20 seasons at Dollywood, Kinder served many roles in operations, parking and amusements.



Kinder

"Looking back, patron safety has been baked into every role of my career. From a front-line attraction operator, employee training, leadership and management. We work in such a unique industry. We create worlds with a dynamic mix of entertainment, thrills, themes and experiences connected by the common thread of safety. Our industry depends on our guests escaping their everyday world without the fear of an incident. We impact lives in so

many ways and nearly all of it happens behind the scenes. Safety works best when a guest does not have to give it any thought."

"As my career began to take on a more direct role in guest and operator safety, I attended my first AIMS International seminar, not knowing what to expect. I was impressed by the depth of knowledge, experience and expertise on display by both the course instructors and my fellow attendees. I returned to work with page upon page of notes and action items I set out to implement for my organization. The knowledge I gained and the people I met at that first seminar have been invaluable in my career."

After Dollywood, Kinder's career focused specifically on safety for the Family Entertainment Center environment and enhanced his safety knowledge by attending **ASTM** meetings and AIMS Safety Seminars. Kinder has served on the AIMS Adventure Attractions Committee helping to develop content and build that curriculum for the Safety Seminar.

Most recently, Kinder served as the safety manager for **Urban Air Adventure Parks** and was responsible for safety and compliance of a brand with over 175 locations in 38 states.

"My experience working with managers and owners, training team members, and serving as the state liaison for all of these parks across the country has provided me with an ideal preparation for my role as the AIMS International seminar manager. Through young professionals, ambassadors, experienced speakers and our core of manufacturers / sponsors the AIMS International seminar impacts the entire industry. I am proud to be part of this organization and to help my fellow safety professionals as they grow in their own careers."

Kinder is proud to call East Tennessee his life-long home, and finds joy spending time with his wife, son and the family dog, **Murphy**.

For questions about the AIMS International Safety Seminar, contact Eddie Kinder at eddie.kinder@aimsintl.org.

—Amy Lowenstein

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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AIMS International, the unmatched leader in amusement safety education, returns to Orlando, FL Jan 12-17, 2025. Interact with your products most frequent users and maintainers and gain invaluable feedback. **Learn more at aimsintl.org.**



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AT: Pam Sherborne
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BROWNVILLE, Maine — Scott and Kathie Lee have come a long way since founding their company, **S&K Unlimited LLC**, in 2006, a family-owned and operated manufacturing company specializing in bio-based product research located in the heart of Maine.

This also is the home base for Gorilla Lube, a bio-based lubricant and protectant designed specifically for industrial applications associated with the ski industry, amusement parks, ziplines and other outdoor attractions.

Scott and Kathie Lee set out to manufacture non-toxic industrial lubricants using all-natural, USA-sourced, biobased, biodegradable and sustainable raw ingredients. And that is what they did.

"Gorilla Lube can be used in just about all areas and in all climates," Scott Lee said. "We have sent out product to areas that are cold and to a shrimp company in Georgia. All you need to do is tell me what you need and the applications, and I can get you the correct variety."

"We do have a couple of varieties," he said. "And, it comes in liquid, aerosol



Kathie and Scott Lee

and paste or grease."

Lee found his mission while still in college. At the time, he worked for the **Connecticut Department of Health** inspecting public water supplies and tracing the source of pollutants. Through his studies and work, he realized the extent to which petroleum-based lubricants from industrial uses seep into the natural environment. He also worried about potential health risks for people exposed to traditional lubricants while going about their lives.

These concerns stayed with him after he and his wife, Kathie, later joined the family manufacturing business in Maine. Conservation was always at the heart of the company's mission, along with a unique penchant for working with outdoor industries.

So when a friend from an amusement park nearby called him in 2006 asking for help, Lee responded.

"He was having some issues that the EPA wasn't too happy about," Lee said.

He needed a lubricant that was more environmentally friendly. So Lee went to work in his lab and came up with Gorilla Lube just two weeks later.

"I had been in the manufacturing business for so long, I just felt I knew what was needed," he said.

Apparently, he did, and he and wife became the owners of Gorilla Lube.

Since then, Lee has had some heavy-hitting customers rely on the unique, nontoxic product. Gorilla Lube is used at nationally recognized sites such as **Busch Gardens, SeaWorld, Six Flags, Silver Dollar City, Snowbasin Resort, the Space Needle** and Maine's own **Sunday River Resort**.

The product also has been used just on a handful of products made in Maine that are certified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) as "BioPreferred."

The Lees sought BioPreferred certification for Gorilla Lube in 2010 and have maintained the rating ever since.

•gorillalube.net

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neaapa.com

2024 Golden Ticket Awards

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West Mifflin, Pennsylvania
goldenticketawards.com

SKYnext Educational Event

September 13 - 14, 2024
Orlando, Florida
skylineattractions.com/about/skynext

IAAPA Expo Europe

September 23 - 26, 2024
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo-europe

PACE Safety Seminar

October 29 - November 1, 2024
Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania
paceseminar.com

Pinball Expo 2024

October 15 - 19, 2024
Schaumburg, Illinois
pinballexpo.com

World Waterpark Association Annual Symposium and Trade Show

October 8 - 11, 2024
Las Vegas, Nevada
waterparks.org

Pa. Amusement Ride Safety Seminar

November 12 - 14, 2024
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
paridesafety.com

IAAPA Expo 2024

November 18 - 22, 2024
Orlando, Florida
iaapa.org/expos/iaapa-expo

2024 IAFE Convention & Tradeshow

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fairsandexpos.com/annual-convention

JuiceBox power distribution unit is introduced by Betson

CARLSTADT, N.J. — **Betson Imperial Parts and Service** announced the launch of The JuiceBox. The JuiceBox power distribution unit is designed to revolutionize equipment power by centralizing multiple power needs into a single UL-certified solution.

“The JuiceBox is a result of our team’s relentless pursuit of excellence and a direct response to the needs we see in the field,” said **Richard Zayas-Bazan**, president of Betson Imperial Parts & Service. “We are proud to not only serve the industry but to actively redefine it by introducing innovative solutions like The JuiceBox.”

The JuiceBox eliminates the requirement for multiple power supplies within a single machine, thereby reducing material costs, simplifying operations, increasing reliability and uptime, and enhancing safety.

The inception of the JuiceBox stems from Betson’s close relationship with partner manufacturers and working to address unmet needs within the industry. The JuiceBox fills a significant gap in efficient, cost-effective power distribution solutions. Unlike other products in the market, the JuiceBox is not sourced and rebranded, it is an inhouse, engineered and designed Betson solution.

The new JuiceBox reduces the need for multiple power supplies whichs reduces material costs, centralizes power management into a single unit which reduces operational complexity, enhances uptime with its robust and reliable power distribution architecture and its UL-certification as well as its streamlined design enhance safety standards across gaming operations.

•betsonparts.com

38th Annual NAARSO Safety Seminar announced for Charlotte, N.C.

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – The **National Association of Amusement Ride Safety Officials** (NAARSO) is excited to announce the 38th Annual Safety Seminar, taking place from January 26 to January 31, 2025, in beautiful Charlotte, North Carolina.

NAARSO — a non-profit organization committed to promoting safety within the amusement industry through the doctrine of “Safety Through Communication” — invites industry professionals to join this comprehensive event aimed at enhancing the safety and reliability of amusement rides and attractions.

The seminar is highlighted by expert speakers, allowing attendees to have the opportunity to learn from industry leaders about best practices in amusement ride safety. The event is loaded with networking opportunities where attendees may connect with peers, professionals and vendors from across the industry, fostering valuable relationships and collaborations.

The semiar features certification courses where participants can enhance their qualifications with specialized safety certifications with CEUs available. Courses available include Inspector Level 1 through 3, Operations Level 1 through 3, Aquatic Operations Level 1, and there are additional certifications to still be announced.

There will also be hands-on training during the event, where attendees can gain practical knowledge by visiting **Carowinds** and learning about the diverse needs for operations and inspections of various attractions.

Mark your calendars for this enriching week dedicated to advancing safety practices within the amusement ride industry. NAARSO will be releasing more information on the exact location, hotel group rate discounts and registration information later this year.

NAARSO is dedicated to providing resources and education to amusement industry professionals, ensuring the safety and well-being of industry patrons. Through events like the Annual Safety Seminar, NAARSO promotes a collaborative approach to enhancing industry standards.

•naarso.com



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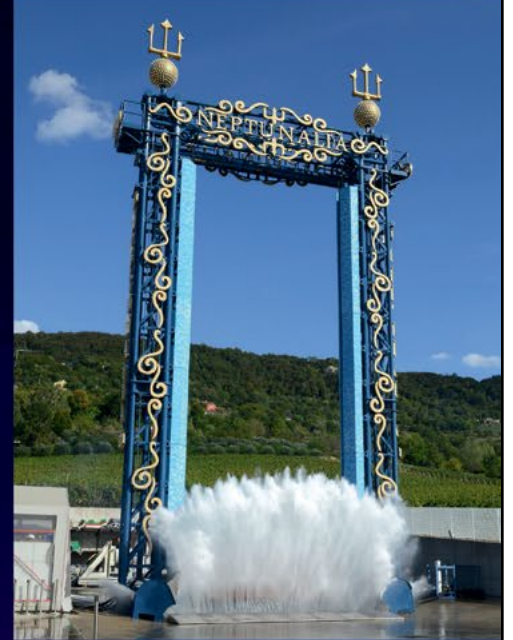
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