

IAAPA headquartered in Orlando just 'makes great sense'



ICON Orlando 360 illuminates a Florida night.
COURTESY VISIT ORLANDO

AT: Pam Sherborne
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ORLANDO, Fla. — The importance of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) headquarters move to this central Florida area can't be more underscored than a look at the numbers. The IAAPA Attractions Expo (IAE) 2018, set for Nov. 12-16 at the Orange County Convention Center, is expected to draw between 35,000-40,000 attendees. That equals about \$77 million in a local economic impact. The significance is there.

It's also a record for the show, which has broken its attendance record with 38,161 global attendees including 24,720 global verified buyers. There were 1,114 exhibiting companies last year and that number is expected to increase this year with a new outside exhibit area. There were 37 press conferences on the trade show floor with worldwide press representatives on hand.

In addition, in 2017, \$123,000 was raised for Give Kids The World village that is located in the area, in Kissimmee, Fla. IAAPA heavily supports this charity and holds fund-raising events at

Last year, the IAE shat-

▶ See IAAPA, page 5

New coaster anchors area themed to popular Pixar franchise

Toy Story Land is giant step in beefing up Disney's Hollywood Studios

AT: Tim Baldwin
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LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. — While Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom remains a global attendance juggernaut, the resort's other properties jockey to find their own place. Epcot, often a two-day experience, seems to have taken the No. 2 spot for visitors for many years. In 2017, Disney's Animal Kingdom came into its own with the stunning addition of Pandora: The World of Avatar, giving Epcot a run for its money. All this continued to find Disney's Hollywood Studios to trail in the pack. But things are changing.

Much is planned for the

movie-themed park. While the original concept of movie-making is transitioning into IP-based lands, the concept seems to be working. That first step is Toy Story Land. Based on the incredibly popular Pixar films, the land's presentation is a real crowd pleaser.

"The opening of Toy Story Land is a big step in the evolution of Disney's Hollywood Studios, as we transform it from a place that took guests behind the scenes into one that puts them at the center of the action," said Bob Chapek, chairman, Disney Parks, experience and consumer products. "We're thrilled to invite guests to visit Andy's backyard and to experience what

it's like to play right alongside their favorite Toy Story characters — all thanks to the amazing partnership between our Imagineers and the storytellers at Pixar."

Roger Gould, creative director, theme parks, Pixar Animation Studios, added, "Everyone at Pixar is thrilled to see the Toy Story films coming to life so spectacularly in Toy Story Land. Naturally, we love animation and we love the Disney parks, so it's amazing to collaborate with

▶ See TOY STORY, page 6

A larger-than-life Woody welcomes visitors to Toy Story Land.
AT/TIM BALDWIN



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AMUSEMENT VIEWS

AT NOTEBOOK: Gary Slade, gslade@amusementtoday.com

Industry museums need your financial support



Slade

Two amusement industry museums are currently fundraising for building expansions and need financial support from the entire industry membership to make both of these building projects a reality for future generations to enjoy.

The **National Roller Coaster Museum & Archives** (Plainview, Texas) board of directors reminds the industry that financial donations are still underway for funding that will soon build the Mark Moore Wing to the current museum building complex. If your company, or park, has not yet made a financial donation it's not too late as the museum still needs your help.

To make a donation, visit: rollercoastermuseum.org/donate. If you wish to be contacted, email: info@rollercoastermuseum.org.

Currently the NRCMA has raised \$372,000 of a estimated \$900,000 goal that will soon build a large climate controlled building, housing the museum's biggest and rarest of collected archives. The board thanks Vekoma Rides Mfg. for their recent financial donation and ongoing support of the museum effort. Vehicle donations as well as other collections continue to pour into the growing museum archives.

The **International Independent Showman's Museum** (Riverview, Florida) launched its capital campaign building fund last year to raise funds for a new building to be built at the back of their current facility. Additional funding is still needed.

This new building will house the museum's growing collection of circus wagons and other big carnival trailers and mobile equipment.

Contact Doc Rivera at (813) 765-7031 or via email at ShowmensHistory@gmail.com to make a donation.

FLINT'S VIEW: Bubba Flint



INDUSTRY OPINION: Tim Baldwin, tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

No need to 'super-size' me

With the announcement of Kentucky Flyer at Kentucky Kingdom in Louisville, the midsize roller coaster seems to have found a niche not only with manufacturer The Gravity Group, but the industry at large.

The marketing clout of a monstrous coaster with extreme superlatives is undeniable. But there is something to be said about building rides that everyone can ride. Families are the lifeblood of theme parks, not necessarily thrill-seekers. Fortunately, midsize coasters deliver enough daring and fun action that everyone enjoys them.

The Gravity Group has produced several winning examples in recent years, including Oscar's Wacky Taxi at Sesame Place. We've also seen Slinky Dog Dash at Disney's Hollywood Studios delight park guests. Dutch Wonderland introduced Merlin's Mayhem, SeaWorld San Antonio offered Wave Breaker and Palace Playland debuted Sea Viper — all great family fun, even if the height of these coasters is far from statuesque.

And that's just it: fun. Often the industry



Baldwin

loses sight of that. When the focus turns solely to promoting statistics, perhaps it is time to step back. Those parks that haven't forgotten how vital it is for parents and kids to ride together have probably noticed a successful formula. Not everything needs to be intimidating. Fun is still fun, usually at a lesser price tag.

Of particular note is the runaway success of SBF-Visa's spinning coaster. While its compact nature is the big selling point, it is not a kiddie coaster by any means. Compact, yes, but fun and exciting, too.

S&S Worldwide is developing the reintroduction of the Steeplechase, a great midsize coaster concept from the past. What a treat it will be to see this enjoyable ride appear in a park again.

Even some looping coasters of intermediate size have found homes, such as the Gerstlauer Euro-Fighters at Oaks Park and Casino Pier, both of which are under 75 feet.

Yes, those marketable behemoths are certainly thrilling, but look at the smiles on the smaller coasters. The smiles aren't medium-sized at all, and that says everything.

Opinions expressed on this page do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.



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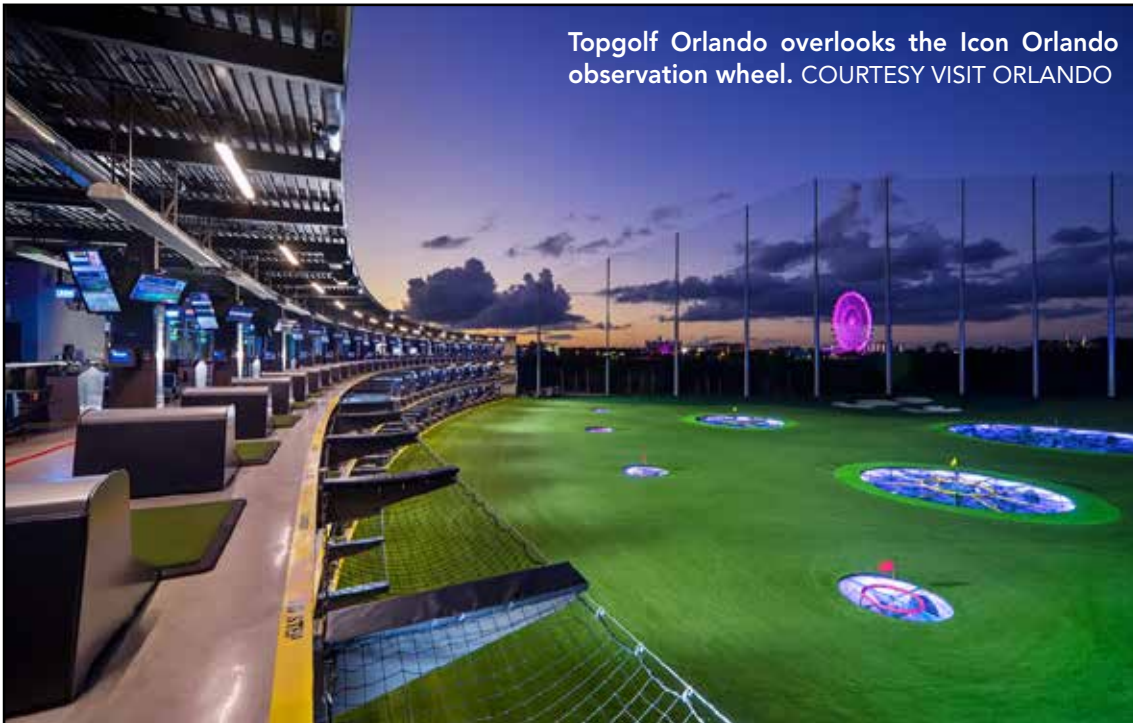
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Topgolf Orlando overlooks the Icon Orlando observation wheel. COURTESY VISIT ORLANDO

IAAPA Continued from page 1

each and every year.

IAAPA officials are expecting bigger numbers this year.

IAAPA's long-term agreement with the Orange County Convention Center to hold its IAE there has been extended through 2030. With the headquarters located there now, a move of its expo is unlikely to happen in the foreseeable future.

IAAPA announced it would move its headquarters from Alexandria, Va., to Orange County, just outside Orlando's city limits, during the 2016 Euro Parks Show in Barcelona, Spain. Orange County Mayor Teresa Jacobs was on hand in Spain for the announcement.

"I remember the tremendous excitement of our September 2016 trip to Barcelona, Spain, and the awesome Euro Parks Show, but without



Jacobs

question, the highlight of that trip was IAAPA's announcement that they would be moving to Central Florida," Jacobs said. "And, of course, we're so excited that IAAPA is celebrating their centennial with the construction of their new international headquarters right here in the heart of our global tourism hub.

"With more than 500 (IAAPA) members located in Florida, it makes great sense for IAAPA to have its headquarters operations here including the obvious opportunity for synergy with our

world-class theme park, hospitality and entertainment industries," she said.

Ground has already been broken for the new headquarters and completion is expected some time next year. With 73 world-wide employees and 47 based in Orange County, the new headquarters is a \$14 million investment for the association and for its members worldwide.

"Orlando is the epicenter of tourism activity and creativity," said George Aguel, president and CEO of Visit Orlando, the local tourism association. "IAAPA's commitment to headquarter both the association and annual show in Orlando is a testament to the powerful mix of industry leaders, businesses and talent that reside here and will shine an even greater spotlight on our destination's resources."

The association also will benefit from this move. Since 2010, when IAAPA signed the long-term contract with the Orange County Convention Center, it has seen a steady rise in attendance to the annual IAE.

That steady rise in attendance is only one aspect leading to the decision to extend its agreement to the center and, in the end, to move its headquarters. An IAAPA survey showed IAE attendees preferred this location for several reasons. The travel access both by air and water (the latter used primarily for equipment moves) is much easy and plentiful. And, because of the abundance of attractions in the area, attendees are more likely to bring their families along.

Since it is a preferred destination, attendance should con-

tinue to rise or, at least, remain constant for the association.

And, there is certainly a lot to do in and around the Orlando area. That aspect continues to grow. Tourism is the number one industry there.

"Orlando welcomed 72 million visitors to the destination in 2017, once again solidifying our position as the most-visited destination in the U.S.," Aguel said. "Our research shows that the majority of these guests visit our world-famous theme parks."

Aguel said the area is home to more than 100 attractions including the large theme park resorts, Universal, Disney World and SeaWorld. More stand-alone attractions also are coming on-line, such as the 400-foot-tall Icon observation wheel that opened in April 2015, up along International Drive. This past year saw the 450-foot Orlando StarFlyer open up alongside the wheel.

Businesses along International Drive continue to grow and shopping and entertainment areas, such as Disney Springs, Universal CityWalk and Pointe Orlando continue to add new options for tourists.

As an example, earlier this year Disney Springs opened The Edison, a restaurant designed to look as if it was built inside a converted power plant.

The Orange County Convention Center also is having growing pains. An expansion announcement was made this year that will add 280,000 square-feet to the seven-million square-foot building. The project cost has been set at \$605 million.

THE INDUSTRY SEEN

Fun sprouts anew in Garden State



EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Intertwined launched Euro-Fighter and spinning coasters from Gerstlauer are rising apace inside American Dream Meadowlands, a \$3 billion retailtainment center just outside New York City tentatively set to open next spring. The sprawling complex, which, among other attractions, will offer a Nickelodeon Universe theme park, a DreamWorks Water Park, a Legoland Discovery Center and an indoor ski slope, is the latest project of Triple Five Worldwide — the company behind West Edmonton Mall and Mall of America.

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▶ TOY STORY

Continued from page 1

our partners at **Walt Disney Imagineering** to create this enormous immersive world. And just as each *Toy Story* film expands the world of our favorite toy friends, our land gave us loads of opportunities to invent and open up the world with new fun and surprises. We're delighted to join Disney in the fun and invite guests to explore Andy's backyard — full of their favorite toys — 'cause Andy's away and it's time to play!"

Florida's Toy Story Land is not Disney's first. The original Toy Story Land debuted at Disneyland Paris in 2010. The concept of guests feeling toy-sized was an idea that resonated with guests. It was simple to engage one's imagination with such whimsical theming. A second also opened this year at Shanghai Disneyland. The Floridian version has its own distinction, however. A major one.

"When designing new lands and attractions for Disney Parks, we always develop what we feel is the best guest experience and attraction mix for the particular park and land we are focusing on," **Dave Minichiello**, executive creative director, Walt Disney Imagineering told *Amusement Today*. "The Slinky Dog Dash coaster is a great example of this. For Toy Story Land at Disney's Hollywood Studios, we wanted to give our guests a family coaster experience that fit into the overall story of being in Andy's backyard. This family coaster attraction features a coaster track that Andy has built all over his backyard using his Mega Coaster Play Kit."

Well, Andy and **Mack Rides**. The new coaster places riders inside Slinky Dog's body, and the quick dispatches make for impressive capacity.

Slinky Dog Dash is the star of Toy Story Land.
AT/TIM BALDWIN



The ride features two LSM launches into a tangle of dips and curves. One particular stretch of bunny hops captures the slinky feel and never fails to elicit giggles. Going along with the story, this signature attraction lets Andy's imagination combine this playset with his Slinky Dog toy and other toys to make a colorful coaster that zips, dodges and dashes all around his backyard through building blocks, TinkerToys and figures giving guests viewpoints of the ride from virtually all walkways within Toy Story Land. At the ride's conclusion, Wheezy the singing penguin serenades passengers with "You've Got a Friend in Me."

In creating this new land, Imagineers were able to cleverly rework the entrance of the incredibly popular Toy Story Mania! attraction into the new area.

"Toy Story Mania! is one of the most beloved attractions at Disney's Hollywood Studios," said Minichiello. "When our Imagineering team started to develop Toy Story Land for the park, we felt Toy Story Mania! had to be part of this exciting new land. This also gave us a great opportunity to reimagine a new



story and design for the entry that fit into Toy Story Land and worked with the existing attraction storyline. Today in Toy Story Mania!, guests now enter the box that Andy's carnival game play set came in while seeing many new toys, new characters, gameboards and game pieces along the way. We also restaged Mr. Potato Head once you are inside the new toy boxes so that guests see him on his toy box stage better than ever before as you enter this fun attraction to take aim at the 3D objects and game inside."

Some people could argue that the rides are almost secondary while in Toy Story Land. Guests can easily find photo opportunities with every step. Whether it is Andy's giant footprint embedded into the "backyard" walkway or the unending variety of movie characters,

toys, Christmas lights and the famous Pixar ball, pictures are taken constantly. The green toy army men are also extra fun and build an audience quickly. In addition to Slinky Dog Dash, the area features Alien Swirling Saucers, a rotating whip-style flat ride from **Zamperla** themed to the adorable aliens from the films. The food outlet is also themed to a lunch box spilled open with temptingly delicious offerings.

"At Woody's Lunch Box, we dish out classic sandwiches and sides with a modern twist — in flavor and presentation — plus nostalgic soda floats and specialty beverages," said **Robert Adams**, culinary director, Disney's Hollywood Studios. "We honor these classic 'lunch box' items by using the best ingredients to elevate the flavors."

While no gift shop was built, kiosks sell clever and



The Pixar ball (above) is an immediate photo spot. Andy's giant footprint (below) can be seen in the walkway.

AT/TIM BALDWIN



"must have" toys for kids to ask for.

As Toy Story Land is the first step with other major attractions on the horizon — including the enormously anticipated *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge* — Disney's Hollywood Studios is on track for record-setting attendance.

"Toy Story Land showcases Pixar Animation Studios and Walt Disney Imagineering's high caliber of storytelling and brings a new energy and enthusiasm to Disney's Hollywood Studios," **Bob Weis**, president, Walt Disney Imagineering told *Amusement Today*. "As the design lead on the park's creation, and having worked on various expansion projects, it's been rewarding to see the park evolve and grow throughout the years. I'm looking forward to 2019, as we put the finishing touches on this amazing transformation, which is the largest expansion Disney's Hollywood Studios has ever seen and will bring to life some of the most immersive experiences we've ever created."



Alien Swirling Saucers (left) whips riders in circles. Green army men (right) quickly draw a crowd. AT/TIM BALDWIN

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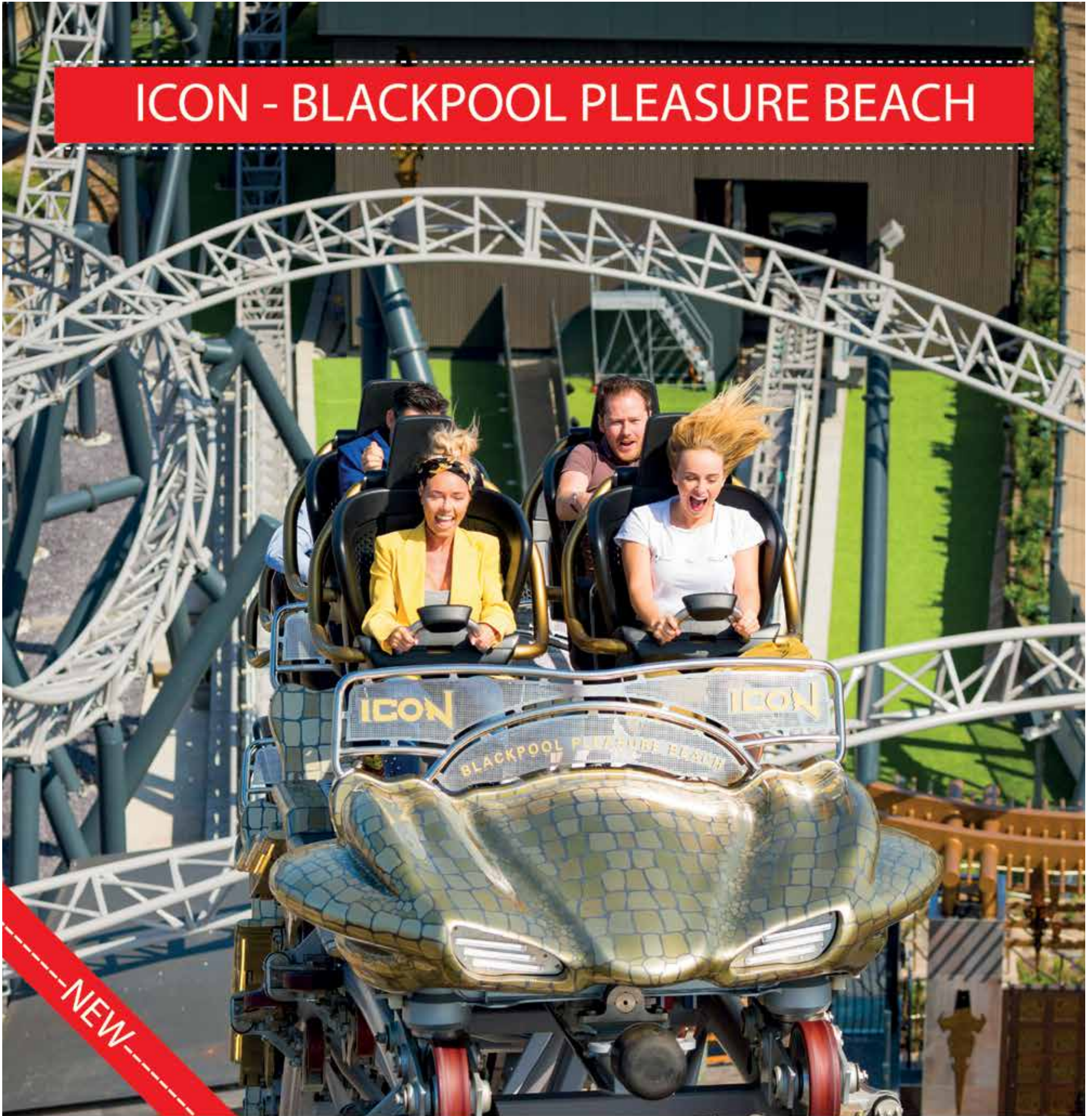


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PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► **SeaWorld Orlando debuts Infinity Falls — Page 14; Spokane's Loeff Carrousel gets home rebuilt — Page 24**

The Gravity Group builds Kentucky's next coaster

Mid-sized wooden thriller the right fit for Kentucky Kingdom

AT: Tim Baldwin

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. — **Kentucky Kingdom** is eager to start on its next project. The park has enjoyed a great comeback after **Ed Hart** purchased the park and brought it back to life in 2014 following five years of the park lying dormant. After five years of success, Hart is ready to introduce a new coaster once again. It will be the park's sixth. This time, the coaster will find the right fit for a broad audience.

Currently, the park operates a **Vekoma** Roller Skater and four larger coasters, one wood and three steel. **Kentucky Flyer** will target something between these which is intended to reach kids, families and coaster fans.

"Ed Hart told us that he was really intrigued by the **Wooden Warrior** at **Quassy Amusement Park**, and thought that something similar, but just a little bigger, would be a good fit at **Kentucky Kingdom**," said **Chad Miller**, engineer and principal, **The Gravity Group**. "While he certainly wanted a ride that fit squarely in the category of 'family coaster,' it was also very important to him that it be an exciting and action-packed experience. Over the course of several months, Ed explored several different potential locations around the park for the ride, and we provided ride concepts for most of those locations. He settled on an area along the southeastern edge of the water park, lending itself to a kind of squiggly out-and-back that



Kentucky Flyer brings a family sized coaster to the park. COURTESY KENTUCKY KINGDOM

nicely framed **Hurricane Bay**."

"We've been planning to add a new coaster to **Kentucky Kingdom** to celebrate the park's 30th anniversary in 2019, and I was looking for one with plenty of thrills for enthusiasts, but that can also be enjoyed by mom, dad, and younger children," said Hart. "There are so many kids who don't meet the height requirement for the typical roller coaster and have to sit on the sidelines and watch the rest of their family enjoy the ride. We decided we weren't going to make them wait any longer to grow tall enough to meet the typical height requirement (generally 48 inches or taller) for a coaster. Most children as young as

age four will be able to ride the **Kentucky Flyer** because the **Gravity Group** has designed it for a 40-inch height requirement when accompanied by an adult, and 40 inches is the height of the average four-year-old. To ride alone on the **Kentucky Flyer**, passengers need to be only 46 inches tall, or the height of the average seven-year-old. In short, the **Kentucky Flyer** can be enjoyed by all but the very youngest members of the family!"

The new ride will use **Timberliner** trains from the **Gravitykraft Corp**. Hart found advantages to the vehicles.

"The **Gravity Group's** specially designed **Timberliner** trains can handle a 9-foot turning radius and 56-degree banked curves, and they have a unique restraint system that accommodates a wide range of sizes, making it comfortable even for hefty passen-

gers. With its tightly banked curves and 12 big airtime moments, **Kentucky Flyer** will really fly!" Hart eagerly told *Amusement Today*. "We can't say enough about **Larry Bill**, **Korey Kiepert**, and the rest of the **Gravity Group's** team. We're so pleased to have these world-class designers build our sixth coaster, **America's** next great family coaster. We're very proud of our line-up of five great coasters and the **Flyer**, our sixth, will be a terrific addition to the family."

The ride will have a first drop of 45 feet and reach speeds of 35 mph. In addition to the 12 airtime moments, the layout will sport curves banked up to 54 degrees. Total length of the ride is 1,280 feet.

In past years, these mid-sized coasters have become somewhat of a niche for **The Gravity Group**.

"A lot of larger parks have a nice collection of big thrill

rides, some flat rides, and a kiddie area. But there is often a void in the line-up of coasters that exists between the kiddie coasters and the larger thrill rides," said Miller. "Our small-to-medium sized wooden coasters fill this void quite nicely. On the other hand, we often find that small family-owned parks and **FEC's** are looking for a ride to catapult them to the next level. For these parks, these family rides have enough punch to become their signature attraction. To date, most of our family coasters have fallen into the latter category, but **Kentucky Kingdom** is one of those larger facilities that will be fulfilling the need for a solid family coaster quite nicely."

AT asked Hart about the naming of the ride. "As many folks know, a number of our

► **See FLYER, page 10**



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► **FLYER**

Continued from page 9

coasters — Thunder Run, Lightning Run, and Storm Chaser—have a certain severe weather component to their names” he said. “Frankly, I think we just ran out of turbulent weather conditions (just kidding)! Actually, when I think about the Kentucky Flyer’s 54-degree banked turns within a 9-foot turning radius, it reminds me of the way World War II fighter planes would maneuver, especially when engaged in dog fights. The Kentucky Flyer will generate the same sort of thrills, whether you’re riding or watching, though of course a lot closer to ground level! So, it was only natural that we would give the front car of each train on the Flyer the vintage look of a World War II fighter plane, propeller and all.”

The woodie will be built using a berm near the park’s wave pool. It will be positioned near the park’s Skycatcher swing ride, which will help bring more ridership into that area.

“As a child growing up in

New York City, I have many wonderful memories of Coney Island, where amusement park rides (including coasters, of course!), a sandy beach, and the Atlantic Ocean all came together,” said Hart. “We’ve tried to recreate that imagery at Kentucky Kingdom and the Kentucky Flyer will mesh beautifully with that. With a galvanized steel structure painted in bright white, a track and edges made of Southern yellow pine, and handrails of bright red, the *Kentucky Flyer* will create a beautiful backdrop, with more than a touch of beachfront amusement park nostalgia, for Hurricane Bay.”

The park operates on land owned by the State of Kentucky and under the direction of the Kentucky State Fair. Kentucky Kingdom leases land from the State Fair. This agreement does not come without its challenges. Any delays with approvals and permitting have been resolved and the park is targeting the coaster to debut on opening day 2019.

“We’ve been wanting to add a thrilling and family-friendly coaster ever since we reopened the park five years



ago,” said Hart. “Believe it or not, I’ve had an early sketch for a family coaster logo in my office all that time and it was called Kentucky Flyer. It’s great to see this longtime wish come to fruition, and the Gravity Group design fits it perfectly.”

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Park Post-its



AT: Pam Sherborne
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Quassy Amusement & Waterpark in Middlebury, Conn., announced that it will add Bouncing Buggies, a **Zamperla** Jump Around model, to its ride lineup in 2019. The ride has six vehicles and accommodates both children and adults.

In addition, the park is refurbishing its Ice Cream Parlor and adding LED lighting to more of its existing rides.

The city-owned **Happy Hollow Park & Zoo** in San Jose, Calif., held its popular Senior Safari event series last month. The program invites adults 50 years to have the run of a kid-free zoo on select dates in October.

In addition to docent-led tours, zookeeper chats, watercolor painting and QiGong breathing exercises, the series finale featured an appearance by **Something Ridiculous**, a duo specializing in comedy and high-energy acrobatic juggling.

With about 500,000 seniors in Santa Clara County, the Senior Safari program has been hugely popular.

After nearly a decade of rave reviews and financial success in Myrtle Beach, S.C., **Dolly Parton's** newest **Pirates Voyage Dinner & Show** attraction is set to open next spring in Pigeon Forge, Tenn. When complete, the 21,000-square-foot arena, adjacent to **The Island in Pigeon Forge** entertainment complex, will be where Crimson and Sapphire pirates battle on deck, in the water and in the sky above full-sized pirate ships in a 15-foot-deep indoor lagoon.

Spectacular acrobatic competitions, live animals and an original music score by Parton and **Mark Brymer** comprise the immersive adventure, which unfolds while guests enjoy a four-course pirate feast. Construction is slated to begin in January.

SCarowinds, the Halloween spectacular at **Carowinds** in Charlotte, N.C., was among the top five Best Theme Park Halloween Event picks made this fall by *USA Today*.

For 18 years, Carowinds has turned from theme park to "scream park" for the annual holiday celebration, which features over 500 ghastly monsters in six scare zones and six haunted mazes. In addition, the park operates its rides and features three live shows during the event.

The riverfront in Wausau, Wis., is receiving more upgrades, according to a news report by the local **CBS** television affiliate. The ongoing project aims to beautify and refash-

ion the riverfront area into more of sports and fitness park — one that will include climbing rocks, fitness equipment, a ropes course, a concession stand and a bath house.

"It's a transformation of an area that used to be very blighted, everybody knew how it used to be," said Wausau Mayor **Robert Miekke**. "And it's just something that's really going to contribute to the future of our city and its success and our sense of being unique on the riverfront."

The project is being funded by tax dollars and private donations. It is set to open next spring.

The latest location of **Get Air Trampoline Park**, a registered trademark of **Get Air Management, Inc.**, has opened in State College, Pa. The facility, which caters to everyone from toddlers to adults, features wall-to-wall trampolines, foam pits, ninja obstacle courses, basketball hoops and a dodgeball court.

Get Air has multiple locations in the U.S. as well as in Belgium, Canada and Japan. It is part of a growing trend in trampoline fun centers. (See story, page 65.)

The original idea for a new app for the **Palm Springs Aerial Tramway** in Palm Springs, Calif., was to enhance guest experience in the queue. As it has turned out, the **Guru**-developed app is providing much more to both visitors and operators. And it can even be accessed off-site.

The tramway carries visitors aloft on a two-and-a-half-mile journey through the craggy cliffs of **Chino Canyon** toward the peak of **Mt. San Jacinto State Park**. During the 10-minute journey, the tram cars rotate slowly, affording panoramic views across the Coachella Valley and beyond. At the upper tram station, which is located 8,514 feet above sea level, there are two restaurants, observation decks and a natural history museum.

The app provides a history of the attraction, which was opened in 1963, and the unusual desert-to-alpine ecology of its surroundings. It also offers 360-degree vistas from the tramway via a **Virtual Reality Lite** experience, along with push-button notifications for special events, severe weather alerts and hours of operation. For operators specifically, the app's data dashboard provides valuable customer insights via metrics such as visitor paths and dwell times.

A mid-October safety drill at the **Akron Zoo**, Akron, Ohio, became all too real for neighbors when someone following police scanner chatter missed the word "drill" and thought it was the real thing. Word spread quickly through social media that Bella, the zoo's female jaguar, was on the loose, and Akron's police SWAT team responded along with zookeepers armed with tranquilizers.

Local news reports indicated that zoo employees fielded numerous calls from nervous residents as well as Akron school administrators en route to the zoo for field trips. Employees were able to set the record straight, and help relieve the panic, via phone and social media.

The zoo normally holds between 10-15 drills a year.



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Record setting Intamin rapids ride opens

SeaWorld Orlando debuts Infinity Falls, sets sights on 2019

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO, Fla. — Rapids rides splashed into the theme park world in 1980. An instant sensation, the river attractions soon became a staple in parks around the globe. The unpredictability of each journey made it a thrilling — and most often drenching — experience. SeaWorld Orlando opened Infinity Falls this autumn and it has upped the game for such rides in both statistics and thrills.

Infinity Falls, supplied by Intamin, offers adventurers a splashy voyage that lasts more than four and a half minutes. The height requirement to ride is only 42 inches, but a maximum of 78 inches (6 feet, 6 inches) is also in place. SeaWorld and Intamin introduced a new seating configuration placing eight passengers in an arrangement of four adjacent seats on opposite sides of the raft. Rafts are maneuvered into position for the open spaces to allow for proper loading and unloading. Of note, each raft has its own name, such as A Little Nauti.

One of the big differences that separate Infinity Falls from other rapids rides is the writhing, churning river that continuously twists and bends giving passengers around the boat plenty of action. The adventure features a handful of smaller dips and several stretches of world-class rapids.

The ride features three lifts. A typical conveyor takes place mid-ride, but the



Infinity Falls offers refreshing entertainment year round. An iconic tower (right) adds flair to the record-setting plunge. COURTESY SEAWORLD

momentary pause is accompanied by sprays and geysers to keep the watery fun coming. The ride's signature feature is the iconic tower, which sets up the record-breaking 40-foot plunge for the finale splash. This tower utilizes a rare vertical lift. A smaller lift following that plunge returns riders to the loading platform.

"At the very beginning of the process we were kind of split into two teams that functioned with one goal," said Erik Essig, corporate experience design manager. "We have the engineering team that knows the ride and knows the manufacturer, and then my team which was responsible for the creative overlay. At the front end we come together to decide what we wanted to deliver. One thing we pride ourselves on is having rides that are enjoyable to ride.



Essig

We could build all kinds of record breakers, but we want something that is repeatable to ride."

From the start, the park came at the project to determine what was the right amount of wetness. Because the park is open daily year round and guest preferences differ in how soaked they want to be, the park surveyed other parks and also the landscape there in Orlando, as well as talking to their own families and friends. Essig gives Infinity Falls a 7 on a scale of 1 to 10 on how wet riders get. Disembarking guests may challenge Essig's assessment.

The storyline has a group of explorers who happen to stumble upon this particular river. As guests queue, they pass explorers' encampments. Upon discovery of the various views of the attraction, guests are sure to notice the engaging architectural structures and elements that add even more mystery to the experience. After departing the station,



they even casually float past a flamingo habitat.

While aboard, passengers hear tropical music and mysterious drumbeats emanating from the jungle. The theming includes fun signage, bridges, waterfalls and an abundance of plant life.

"This project is one of the largest horticulture projects we've ever done, if not the largest," said Essig. "It is a veritable jungle out there. Horticulture is super important for us, so we wanted to showcase that to where it was important to tell the story. We are transporting guests somewhere in South America. We want to make sure they feel like they are there. We have some really interesting and rare plants. We were even able to repurpose some huge trees from within the park, and they have been thriving so far."

The ride takes the place in what was previously a quieter garden and animal encounter area. Infinity Falls is expected to bring new life to the area. Essig termed it as

"sleepy."

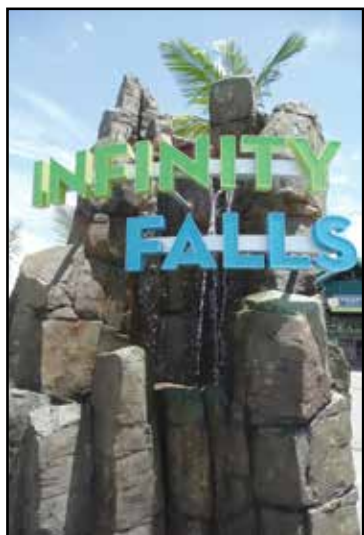
Waterway Grill is a revamped dining outlet in the area. Signature dishes developed by SeaWorld Orlando's culinary team help sell the theme of Central and South America. Those particular items, such as Moho chicken and pork, skirt steak, vegetarian options and grab-and-go items, are available only at Waterway Grill. Specific craft beers are also on tap.

The theme of the ride is "Water is a Home." Typically, SeaWorld's mission focuses on the oceans, but Infinity Falls lets them take a different approach.

"We don't often get to talk about fresh water," Essig told *Amusement Today*. "Almost everyone has a creek or river or pond near their home. We thought that was an important educational story — the importance of water. Here in Florida, all fresh water feeds into the Everglades, which is super important to the ecology of Florida."

Upon opening the new ride, which was admittedly delayed from its intended summer opening, the park also detailed more new 2019 attractions with its Sesame Street at SeaWorld Orlando, which will feature six rides appropriately aimed at younger kids and their parents. The new rides will be themed to Big Bird, Abby Cadabby, Elmo, Super Grover, Cookie Monster and more. The new area will also feature a parade. Aquatica will also debut a new water-slide, KareKare Curl.

•seaworld.com/orlando



The churning river of Infinity Falls offers world class rapids. Rock formations add thematic (left, right) touches to the ride area. COURTESY SEAWORLD; AT/TIM BALDWIN



Legoland Florida Resort reveals three new rides for 2019

WINTER HAVEN, Fla. — Ever fancied a flight aboard a Triple Decker Couch? Aspired to ascend the heights of Cloud Cuckoo Land? Fantasized about fighting against a Duplo alien invasion?

Legoland Florida Resort promises to deliver all of this and more next year with The Lego Movie World, where guests will be able to step into the universe of *The Lego Movie* and onto the streets of Bricksburg.



“This will be the only place in the world that you can experience the pure wonder and imagination inspired by the *Lego Movie* universe,” said Rex Jackson, resort general manager. “We’ve been hard at work, building brick-by-brick, to create state-of-

the-art experiences that bring the movie to life.”

Opening in early spring, the project, created in partnership with Warner Bros. Consumer Products, will feature three family-friendly attractions inspired by the characters and themes of the globally popular film franchise.

•**The Lego Movie Masters of Flight:** This flying theater attraction inspired by Emmet’s Triple Decker Flying Couch takes guests on an action-packed adventure on a suspended ride with a full-dome virtual screen, creating the sensation of flight. It features both familiar and new faces, such as Sweet Mayhem, a character set to debut in the upcoming feature *The Lego Movie 2: The Second Part*.

•**Unikitty’s Disco Drop:** Enter through a rainbow portal to join the fun with Unikitty and her many personalities. The ride carries guests to the top of Cloud Cuckoo Land, then drops, spins and bounces them back down to earth.

•**Battle of Bricksburg:** Duplo aliens have invaded Bricksburg for some other-



Opening next spring at Legoland Florida Resort, The Lego Movie World will offer three new attractions, including a flying theater and two additional themed rides. COURTESY LEGOLAND FLORIDA RESORT

worldly playtime. Guests are challenged to stop them from stealing Lego bricks by spraying water at targets.

Visitors can complete their Lego Movie World experience in downtown Bricksburg. This is the home of Emmet’s Super Suite, a character meet-and-greet experience; Taco Tuesday Everyday eatery; and The Awesome Shop, offering themed souvenirs. The downtown area will also include a



space-themed playground structure inspired by Benny’s spaceship, as well as special photo opportunities.

The fun doesn’t stop in the park. The Legoland Hotel will offer accommodations with details mirroring those of The

Lego Movie World. Adults can relax in a room designed in the style of Emmet’s bedroom, while kids can dream of interstellar adventures in the spaceship-themed children’s room.

—Dean Lamanna

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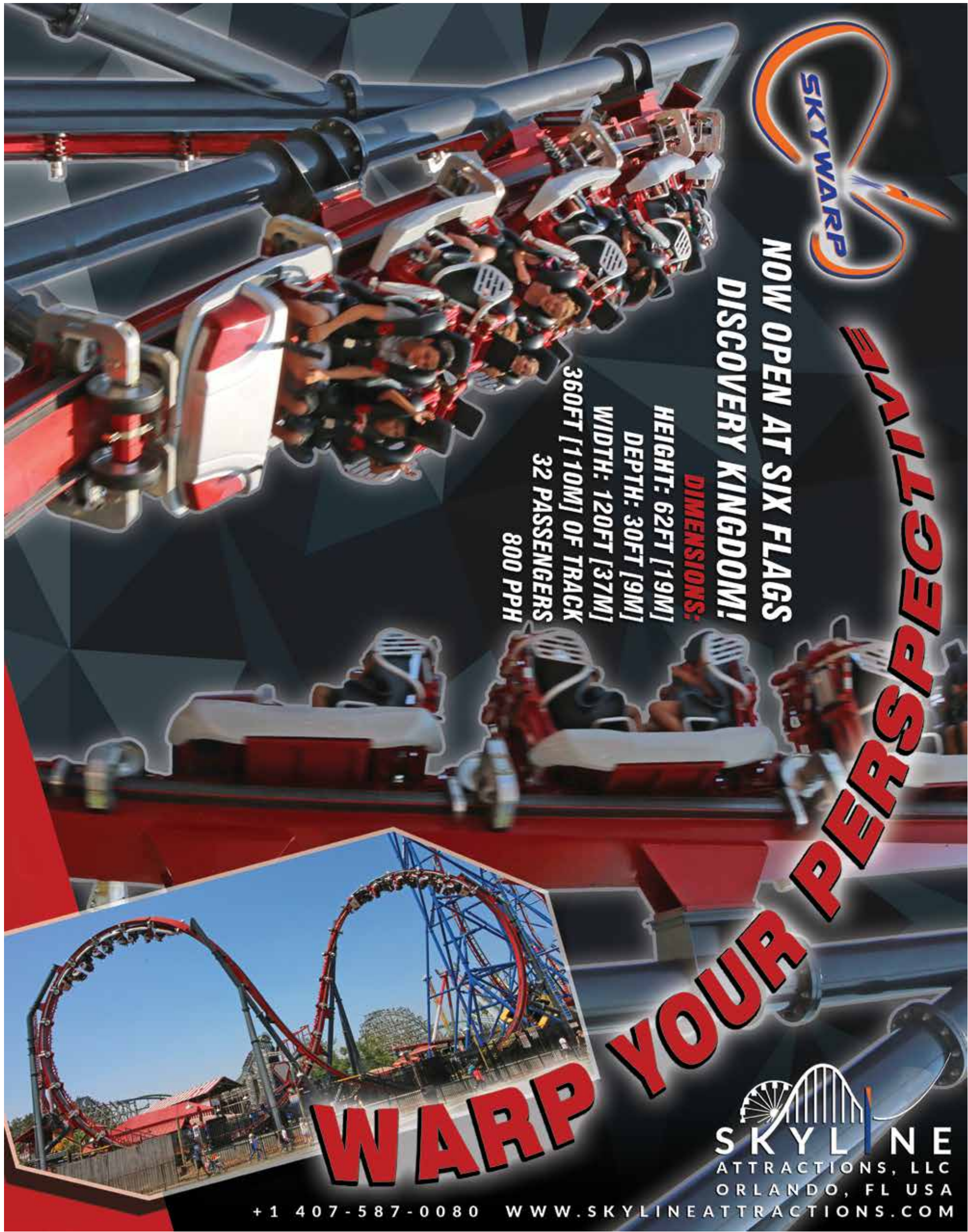


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Paw Patrol kids' play area raises the 'woof' at Mall of America

More immersive, TV show-themed fun at Nickelodeon Universe

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. — A new kind of immersive diversion for kids opened Oct. 25 at Nickelodeon Universe inside Mall of America.

Paw Patrol Adventure Bay, based on the Nickelodeon television channel's top-rated animated preschool series *Paw Patrol*, produced by Spin Master Entertainment, is a 4,000 square-foot area designed to spur children's imaginations as they recreate their favorite Paw Patrol missions inside the world of Adventure Bay.

The attraction transports kids into a fun, creative play environment where they can help the search-and-rescue team characters Chase, Marshall and their friends maneuver through many of the familiar TV show-inspired sites of Adventure Bay, a shoreside community. Whether preparing for rescue



Paw Patrol Adventure Bay, an open-play experience for children based on the popular, computer-animated Nickelodeon TV series, has opened at Mall of America's Nickelodeon Universe indoor theme park. COURTESY MALL OF AMERICA

missions inside of Lookout Tower or climbing down to the beach to see if there are any turtles or crabs that need saving, there's something new to be discovered around every corner.

"We're thrilled to bring the first fully immersive Paw Patrol experience to life in Nickelodeon Universe at Mall of America," said Jill Renslow, the mall's senior vice president of business development and marketing. "When we made the announcement about this new attraction earlier this year, we

heard the excitement from fans all around the world. We can't wait for our guests to explore and discover all that Adventure Bay has to offer."

"Paw Patrol has proven to be a truly universal property," noted Gerald Raines, senior vice president of global location-based experiences for Nickelodeon Group. "We're excited to continue expanding its reach through unique on-the-ground experiences like the Paw Patrol Adventure Bay attraction, which will enable fans to interact with their favorite characters in all-

new ways."

Admission for Paw Patrol Adventure Bay, which is a 20-minute timed experience, is six points (\$7.20) and is also included as part of the unlimited all-day wristband for Nickelodeon Universe (\$35.99). The attraction additionally offers a waiting area for parents to supervise their children and gives them the opportunity to charge their electronic devices.

Located at the east entrance of Nickelodeon Universe, Paw Patrol Adventure Bay joins the more than other 27 rides and




attractions at the seven-acre indoor theme park, as well as the 520-plus shops and attractions at Mall of America. The park also offers Nickelodeon channel character meet and greets, an indoor zipline, unique retail and more.

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Roaring Springs splashes into ZooTampa at Lowry Park

TAMPA, Fla.—ZooTampa at Lowry Park kicked off the summer with a splash, introducing a new family water adventure, Roaring Springs, presented by Pinch A Penny.

Following the zoo's introduction of a more contemporary identity featuring a new logo and a revitalized vision, the launch of the ride heralded the facility's most exciting expansion to date — and its largest in a decade.

Roaring Springs carries guests in a boat to the top of a three-story lift for a gentle, current-driven drift at treetop level. The zoo's palm tree-accented scenery continues to unfold around a horseshoe bend before the boat plunges down a waterfall-like flume — giving riders a pure adrenaline rush.

Less-adventurous guests can enjoy observing the journey and its big splashdown on Lookout Landing, a bridge positioned above the final segment of the attraction.

The area surrounding Roaring Springs combines the Sunshine State's natu-

ral setting with a nod to the original Florida way of life. Guests have opportunities to glimpse black bears, alligators, panthers, Key deer and other native species as they trek along the zoo's winding Florida Trail.

"Part of our mission is to create exceptional, personalized experiences that connect people with wildlife and each other in fun, immersive ways," said Joe Couceiro, CEO of ZooTampa. "Roaring Springs provides thrills for guests while the continued transformation of the zoo's own Florida Region improves our capacity to rescue threatened native wildlife throughout the state. With these enhancements, the evolution of the zoo continues and gives our guests reasons to keep coming back."

The new water adventure, a Shoot the Chute ride supplied by WhiteWater West with an installation assist from Amuse Rides of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, is set within the town of Roaring Springs. The area features a traditional

country store with Florida souvenirs and local novelties. Joe's Diner serves classic Florida favorites — from conch fritters to fish tacos to frozen rum drinks. Adults can indulge in these treats while kids enjoy the town's new play area.

Guests who purchase memberships or admissions to ZooTampa are helping to support the zoo's mission to protect and preserve wildlife. For more on ticket pricing and benefits, visit zootampa.org/tickets.

—Dean Lamanna



A Shoot the Chute ride from WhiteWater West, Roaring Springs offers a brief tour of ZooTampa's grounds before thrilling guests with a three-story plunge. COURTESY WHITEWATER WEST

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Entertain the Possibilities

Downtown Spokane's Loeff Carrousel's home is rebuilt

Historic ride's new riverfront shelter is climate-controlled

AT: B. Derek Shaw

bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

SPOKANE, Wash. — It was four years in the planning and making. And last May, a project to showcase one of the oldest operating amusements in the U.S. was finally completed.

That's when the 109-year-old **Loeff Carrousel**, among the nation's best-preserved hand-carved wooden carousels, emerged from storage. The ride's completely reconstructed home on the bank of the Spokane River in **Riverfront Park**, where it previously operated until 2016, provides a superior public enjoyment experience while protecting this treasure for future generations.

The contemporary circular building that now surrounds the mechanical marvel features large glass panels that mirror the look of old music boxes encasing miniature carousels — though on a grand



The classic Loeff Carrousel, the spinning pride of Spokane, is enjoying its latest turn at entertaining the public inside a newly reconstructed home on the bank of the Spokane River. AT/GARY SLADE

scale. Visitors approaching the structure can see the ride in nearly its stunning entirety, while those on the carousel itself can enjoy views of the river and park grounds as they whirl.

In 2014, Spokane citizens approved a \$64 million bond to improve and redevelop Riverfront Park. The bond, which did not increase citizen taxes, funded five major design elements in the Riverfront Park Master Plan — one of which was the Loeff Carrousel building reconstruction. The project got under-

way in February 2017.

"The total cost of the building and surrounding area was \$11.2 million," explained **Fianna Dickson**, communications manager, parks and recreation, for the City of Spokane. "This included a \$2 million change order that expanded the scope of the work to include the renovation of an adjacent, treasured sculpture known as the Rotary Fountain and surrounding surface areas in the Rotary Plaza."

The price tag included project management and per-

mits, she added.

The carousel's building is supported by 12 structural pillars — each 28-30 feet tall and weighing approximately 15,000 pounds. The roof is essentially a "roof within a roof," with a raised dome above the ride itself. The dome is finished with 40 wedges of treated quarter-inch plate steel that overlap in a spiral pattern.

Justin Paine, vice president of **Walker Construction, Inc.**, of Spokane and the company's lead on the project, told *Amusement Today* that the Loeff

Carrousel site was not without problems and challenges.

"There was a significant amount of contaminated soils, along with solid bedrock, that was discovered in the process," he said. "The Spokane River level was above the foundations. Artifacts were discovered. Structurally, it was very complicated to build."

Surmounting these hurdles and others, however, has paid off, according to Dickson.

"Rider reaction has been amazing," she said. "Citizens

▶ See LOOFF, page 26



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The new structure housing the 109-year-old Loeff Carrousel offers greater ADA accessibility, expanded queueing and a climate-controlled environment for year-round operation.
AT/GARY SLADE

► **LOOFF**
Continued from page 24

love how well the new facility displays the beautifully restored Loeff Carrousel, and many have commented on the improved ADA accessibility, expanded queueing area and better connectivity to the river. Just between opening day and September 30, over 100,000 tickets were sold. We've also kept the price at two dollars."

A combination of local lore and actual history has swirled about the carousel during the last century. There is a widely circulated story that Charles

Loeff built the ride in 1909 for his daughter as a wedding present. However, it was originally commissioned by an electric trolley company known as **Spokane Traction**.

The carousel contains 54 horses, one giraffe, one tiger, one goat and two chariots — all hand-carved by Loeff himself — along with a 1900 **Ruth & Sohn** band organ imported from Germany. It also has a brass ring dispenser. It is one of 213 pre-1940 wooden carousels that still exist in the U.S. and is listed on the **National Register of Historic Places**.

"We're proud that Spokane

citizens cherished this historic ride enough to invest in giving it a proper, climate-controlled home so that it can be enjoyed for many generations to come," Dickson said.

The new Loeff Carrousel facility features a gift shop, three party rooms and a patio overlooking the river. The reconstruction effort was a collaborative one, with two Seattle-based firms, **NAC Architecture** and **DCI Engineers**, contributing in addition to Walker Construction and the City of Spokane.

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Wonderland Park to introduce new rides, picnic area in 2019

AMARILLO, Texas — **Wonderland Amusement Park** owner **Paul Borchardt** knows how to get things done. And it's usually by building or renovating or designing said things himself.

"We are here all winter long," he told *Amusement Today*. "So, we just take it on."

In Borchardt's shop right now are two rides he plans to debut in 2019. One is a compact spinning coaster from **SBF-Visa** and the other is an antique car ride of German manufacturing origin. Both were purchased through **Len Soled** of **Rides-4-U**.

"We have them in our shop, taking them apart, going through them, redoing what needs to be done," he said. "We do all that in-house. The next thing I will be looking at is our **Tilt-A-Whirl**. We will either renovate our existing one [from **Sellner**] or find a replacement for it."

The two additional rides will be part of a new section of the park where a picnic area was completed in August, but remained under wraps. The section will not be opened to the public until it is completely finished.



Among the improvements to be unveiled at Wonderland Amusement Park next year are a compact spinning coaster from **SBF-Visa** and a new picnic area with plenty of shade. **AT/GARY SLADE**

The picnic area also was built in-house, Borchardt noted. This includes not only the foundation, but the tables and sail-like canopies.

"I have someone here who can do the sewing," he said of the canopies. "So, I design them and she sews them. We need the extra shade. I just can't get the trees to grow any faster around here."

Borchardt is planning to put in new cabanas next year as well.

—Pam Sherborne



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Palace, Cartoon Network partner on animated accommodations

LANCASTER, Pa. — Some of the world's most well-loved cartoon characters will be coming to life through a new lodging concept — the result of partnership recently announced by **Cartoon Network** and **Palace Entertainment**.

The **Cartoon Network Hotel**, aiming to become Central Pennsylvania's premier family accommodations, will be located along Route 30 just outside Palace's **Dutch Wonderland** amusement park. It is slated to open next summer.

Joining a global portfolio of Cartoon Network-branded family experiences, the network's first hotel will feature 165 rooms and immerse guests in the animation and antics of characters from shows such as *Adventure Time*, *We Bare Bears* and *The Powerpuff Girls*. Through a combination of character animation and creative technology, the entire property will offer fun and unexpected ways to experience Cartoon Network's animated worlds from the moment of arrival.

In addition to a themed,



The 165-room **Cartoon Network Hotel**, the network's first themed lodging, will open next summer just outside of project partner **Palace Entertainment's Dutch Wonderland** amusement park. COURTESY PALACE ENTERTAINMENT

resort-style pool / water play zone and a movie screen-equipped outdoor amphitheater, the nine-acre property will feature guest rooms and suites with interchangeable show theming that can be customized around children's preferences to make each visit a new adventure. An indoor pool, a game room, a kids' play area and a Cartoon Network store will keep the fun going year-round.

The hotel is being real-

ized with the help of Los Angeles-based design firm **Retroactive**. "We are excited to bring Cartoon Network's portfolio of IP's to life beyond the screen," said **Tim Rheault**, COO. "Cartoon Network has made such a huge impact on pop culture with its innovative programming, and this translates well to the hip, immersive environments which will become the benchmark for IP-driven hotels and resorts."

Added **Retroactive CEO**

Steve Trowbridge: "We believe this is the future of immersive hospitality, and the way we're doing it with Cartoon Network is totally fresh and new. We're connecting fans with Cartoon Network's shows and characters in a way that's never been done before."

Project partner **Palace Entertainment** currently owns and operates more than 20 amusement parks, water parks, and family entertainment centers across the U.S.

and Australia. The **Cartoon Network Hotel** is Palace's first collaboration with an international brand on a lodging property.

"This is going to be a game changer," said **Rolf Paegert**, COO of Palace. "With sleek contemporary designs that parents will appreciate and Easter egg-type surprises for kids throughout the resort, the entire family will love this place. Cartoon Network's stories and themes appeal to everyone in a fun whimsical way."

The network is equally excited about the property's prospects.

"With just the right mix of technology, design and animation, we're aiming to bring our characters to life in a way that we haven't seen done before," said **Christina Miller**, president of **Cartoon Network-Adult Swim-Boomerang**. "We can't wait to be part of many family vacations with the ultimate Cartoon Network experience."

The hotel is currently under construction. Visit cartoonnetworkhotel.com for more information.

—**Dean Lamanna**

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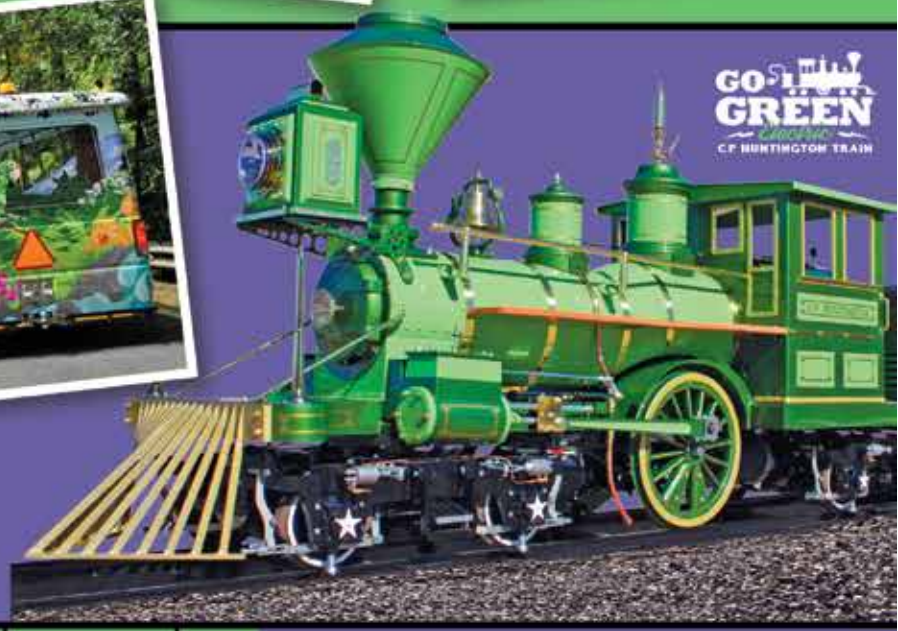
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PREMIER RIDES

Legacy Entertainment completes brand evolution, now senior employee-owned

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. Legacy Entertainment has completed its brand evolution and is making its official company debut under its new banner during IAAPA Attractions Expo 2018 (booth #1062) in Orlando.

The announcement of the new brand also coincides with the completion of the transition from a sole proprietorship to senior employee ownership.

Barry Kemper, one of the owners of Legacy Entertainment and the company's Chief Operating Officer, stated that the company will be making "A number of very impressive announcements," during the Expo.

"While we now have a new name and a new logo, we are still providing our clients with the same standard-setting creative services for their bold and innovative projects based around the world," Kemper said. "During the past 16 years, we've assembled the industry's top talents, and have recently even made several new hires to



LEGACY
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strengthen our already robust team."

Kemper adds that the company's evolution has concluded at an optimal time. He says, "Soon, two of our largest and most exciting projects to date will be coming online — Shanghai Haichang Ocean Park, and Chimelong Ocean World, two massive projects in China slated to debut in November 2018 and mid-2019, respectively. The openings of these two major attractions will allow us a wonderful opportunity to reintroduce ourselves to the global industry as Legacy Entertainment."

•legacyentertainment.com

Dolly Parton selects Pigeon Forge for Pirates Voyage Dinner Show

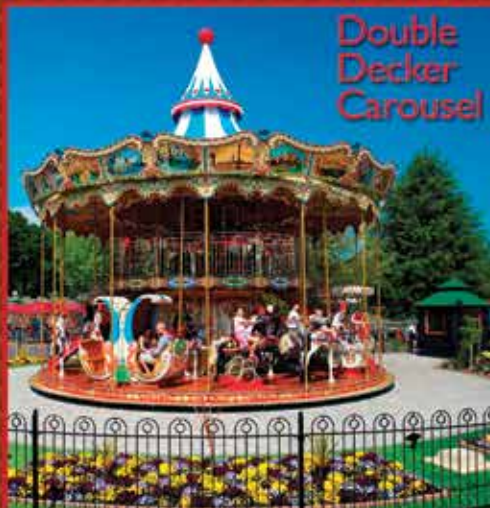


PIGEON FORGE, Tenn. — After nearly a decade of rave reviews and financial success on the Carolina coast, Dolly Parton's newest Pirates Voyage dinner attraction is slated to open in the spring. "The show has been so successful in Myrtle Beach that we kept looking at Pigeon Forge and wondering why we didn't already have a Pirates show there," Parton said. "We have the perfect location, in one of the hottest areas of Pigeon Forge, and the time is now for my pirates to stake claim to the Great Smoky Mountains!" When complete, the 21,000 square foot arena, adjacent to The Island in Pigeon Forge, will be the stage for Crimson and Sapphire pirates to battle on deck, in the water and in the sky above their full-sized pirate ships in a 15-foot-deep indoor lagoon. Spectacular acrobatic competitions, live animals and an original music score by Parton and Mark Brymer creates an immersive adventure experience all while guests enjoy a spectacular four-course pirate feast. Site construction is slated to begin in early January with an opening projected for spring. COURTESY PIRATES VOYAGE



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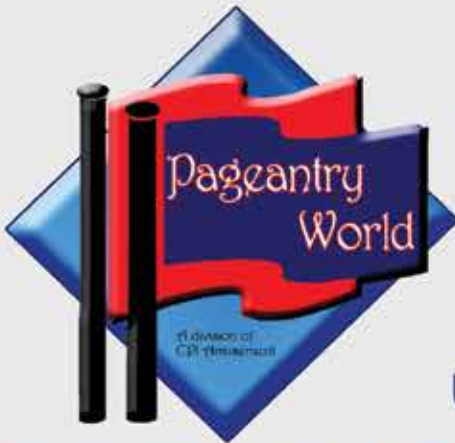
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Mack family coaster headed to Efteling



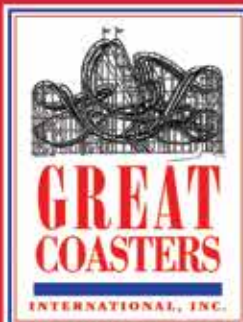
KAATSHEUVEL, Netherlands — Efteling, the fairytale theme park in the south of Holland, has announced that a family roller coaster from Mack Rides will open in 2020 in the location currently occupied by the Bob bobsleigh run. The new dual-tracked coaster, called Mack & Moritz, is designed most specifically for the enjoyment of children between four and 10 years of age. Its theming is based on the well-known 1865 German illustrated story of the same name, written and drawn by Wilhelm Busch, about two naughty boys who make fun of their fellow villagers and engage in mischievous behavior. As part of the project, the Bob's current Swiss theming and station building will be retained for the new attraction; construction will start in September 2019. The opening of a previously announced 20-acre themed area to the east of the park has been postponed until 2021. COURTESY EFTELING



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Hersheypark announces Hershey's Chocolatetown, \$150 million investment

Region featuring coaster, restaurants and retail opens in Summer 2020

HERSHEY, Pa. — Inspired by the legacy of founder **Milton S. Hershey**, Hersheypark, the 121-acre amusement park in Hershey, Pa., announced on October 3 a \$150 million transformational expansion.

Opening in summer 2020, Hershey's Chocolatetown is a new region at Hersheypark where guests can eat, play, shop and gather year round as part of the development of 23 acres.

"We are incredibly excited to enter this next chapter in the rich history of Hersheypark. Hershey's Chocolatetown will mark the true intersection where fun meets chocolate," said **John Lawn**, president and CEO of **Hershey Entertainment & Resorts** (HE&R). "Chocolatetown will be a place where chocolate-inspired attractions will transform the guest experience in new and engaging ways."

The investment of \$150



million dollars into the 23-acre Hershey's Chocolatetown development represents the largest capital investment and most transformative expansion in Hershey Entertainment & Resorts' history.

"This will be a definitive project for Hersheypark, HE&R and our destination," said Lawn. "Inspired by our visionary founder, we are so proud to be able to leverage our remarkable history and our shared iconic brand in creating a sense of place that you can only find in Hershey, Pa."

Construction is slated to

Hershey's Chocolate town will feature a KISSES Fountain (top right), new front gate as well as the park's longest, tallest, and fastest coaster (bottom right).

COURTESY HERSHEY PARK

begin in January 2019 and Hersheypark will remain fully operational during the 2019 season as Chocolatetown comes to life for the summer of 2020.

One of the most dramatic changes to Hersheypark will

▶ See **HERSHEY**, page 41



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FAST FACTS

Hershey's ChocolateTown will feature several marquee elements:

- New arrival experience and front gate
- 15th coaster: fastest, tallest and longest
- Restaurant, bar & patio: largest full-service themed restaurant in Hershey
- Ice Cream Parlor and Confectionery Scratch Kitchen
- 2,200-square-foot Starbucks store
- Largest Kettle Corn location at Hersheypark
 - One-of-a-Kind KISSES fountain
- New home for park's 100-year-old Carousel
- Flagship Store with the largest collection of Hersheypark merchandise.



Hershey's ChocolateTown will feature five food and beverage locations including the largest restaurant bar and patio in the park. COURTESY HERSEYPARK

►HERSHEY

Continued from page 40

be the new welcome experience and a new front gate. The arrival at ChocolateTown will create a unique sense of place and seamless passageway between **Hershey's Chocolate World** and Hersheypark.

Hersheypark plans to add its 15th coaster as part of ChocolateTown — its longest, tallest and fastest to date with details coming next summer. The iconic Carousel, turning



100 next year, will have a new home in ChocolateTown, along with a signature **KISSES** Fountain and Hershey's Character experiences.

Hershey's ChocolateTown will offer more than five locations to eat, drink and gather, including the largest themed restaurant, bar, and patio in Hershey with one-of-a-kind

views of Hersheypark. Open year round, this full-service restaurant and bar will feature a second-story patio & bar and offer an innovative menu with hints of chocolate, craft cocktails, and signature desserts.

Other sweet experiences in ChocolateTown will feature an ice cream parlor with personal ice cream-ologists serving up exclusive ice cream creations. A new confectionery scratch kitchen will invite guests to watch the candy makers at work. Other welcome addi-

tions to ChocolateTown will be a full-service 2,200-square-foot **Starbucks** store, with indoor and outdoor seating areas, and the largest kettle corn location at Hersheypark.

Finally, a new 10,000-square-foot flagship retail experience will feature the largest collection of apparel, personalized souvenirs, and toys exclusive to Hersheypark. In addition, guests will enjoy interactive boutique shopping experiences.

•hersheypark.com

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Zierer supplies first-of-its-kind Wild West roller coaster

France's OK Corral cracks the whip on creativity with Pioneer coaster

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

CUGES-LES-PINS, France — Park owner **Mathijs Bembom** knows how to keep a secret. Managed along with his wife **Maria** and two sons **Henk** and **Anthony**, **OK Corral** in southern France added a new roller coaster in the summer of 2018 and kept it under wraps for quite a while. In development for about four years, the ride was brought to life in a partnership with **Zierer**.

"We didn't dare talk to anybody about it because it had to stay a world's first, and that was not easy as it was so exciting to work on something that unusual," Bembom told *Amusement Today*. "We only announced it to our staff in December and told the public a month before the opening."

Dubbed **Pioneer**, the ride is an absolute perfect fit for **OK Corral** as the park is completely themed to the Wild West. Horses, saloons, teepees and the like set the stage.

The park already had success six years ago with an innovative coaster from **Gerstlauer** called **Gold Rush**. That attraction features an unusual complete circuit ride that offers a forward-and-backward experience within its ride cycle. For the next coaster attraction, the Bembom family wanted something equally as unique.

The answer to this question was horses. The family wanted a horse-themed roller coaster, and the park had a mountainous terrain setting they wanted to utilize.

"The reason why we chose horses is very simple," said Bembom. "All our rides have a Wild West theme, but



Cowboys and Indians are living it up aboard **Pioneer** at **OK Corral** in France (Right). From above, **Pioneer** riders plunge down the first drop (above). COURTESY OK CORRAL

we wanted to make it very special and make it a world's first, so we decided that they had to pull a cowboy chuckwagon like the real thing in the old days and like we show every day in our Wild West cowboy shows in the park. This had not been done before, and we knew that you would get two totally different ride experiences from sitting once on a horse and once in a chuckwagon."

From there, it was a search for which company to build it.

"It was not easy to find a rollercoaster construction company to build it, but it was **Zierer** from Germany who took up the challenge to build it," said Bembom. "They had never built a horse train before, but found the idea very interesting, and it gave them a new type of train. Only after they agreed

that they could build a horse did we tell them that it should pull a chuckwagon. Sure, that gave them a new challenge because the forces on the passengers would be completely different and had to be all checked and calculated."

AT asked Zierer about the demands of having two restraint types on the train. "To develop a suitable passenger compartment for the horses was a big challenge," said **Stephan Hackl**, project manager, Zierer. "We had strict specifications from our customer. Definitely, the hardest thing was that the restraint on the horse looked authentic while securing the guest in a proper and safe way. For the wagon seating there was no development needed, since we were using our standard Elevated Seating Coaster restraint."

The two trains on **Pioneer** feature two distinct halves. The first three rows of riders are seated on horses. The back three rows are themed to wagons, making for a total of 12 riders for each train. Not only does this offer different ride experiences, but also helps with various body types. Riding horses have their own allure, while the traditional kick in the back of a roller coaster still calls to those fans. The creative look of the horses pulling the wagon is quite dramatic.

"During the four years



of development, we explored quite a few different track layouts before we decided that the one we built was the right one," said Bembom. "It had to fit on our mountain and follow the shape of the land. Of course, the seats of the horses had to give you the total freedom when seated. That's why we developed **Pioneer** with Zierer — a new seat restraining system."

"Once the details on the train were clarified, we worked at developing a restraint system for the horses which was satisfying for the customer and our inspection body," added Hackl.

With a height just over 82 feet and a length just shy of 2,000 feet, the layout is a tangled charge of curves and directional changes. Top speed is more than 37 mph. Efforts were also made to keep the lift quiet further mimicking the concept of riding a horse.

"For me, the best part of the ride is the first couple

meters after the train drops down from the lift hill and has quite some speed in the steep curve," said Hackl. "However, another lovely moment is when the train decelerates by the braking unit and travels slowly toward the station. You can see the whole park because the ride is at the highest point."

"The visitors at the park are all pleasantly surprised to see that they can ride on the back of a horse or in a chuckwagon, said Bembom. "The ride was designed that the whole family can go on it. Children from one meter (39 inches) can go on the chuckwagon and if you are 1.3 meters (51 inches) you can ride the horse. We have had a very good summer season and feel that this is all because of **Pioneer**. It was well worth all the lengthy days during the seven months to build it last winter, but the most difficult thing about the new ride was to keep the idea a secret for nearly four years."



Zierer designed new restraints so riders in the front three rows can give chase aboard horses. COURTESY OK CORRAL



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SeaWorld San Diego will unveil unique family coaster in 2019



First park to install Skywarp Horizon by Skyline Attractions

SAN DIEGO — Having gone successfully vertical earlier this year with Electric Eel, its 150-foot-tall, triple-launch looping roller coaster, SeaWorld San Diego is taking a lower-profile, yet still dynamic, approach to its next major ride project.

Arriving in May 2019,

the park's new attraction, Tidal Twister, is the Skywarp Horizon — the horizontal version of Skyline Attractions' Skywarp figure-eight coaster, which debuted at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom in Vallejo, Calif., last summer.

The dueling ride will feature two 16-passenger trains that load at opposite ends of the figure-eight track and cross at the center, with guests seated both forward and backward on the trains. Accelerating to 30 mph, the fun includes a zero-G roll amid the tightly banked turns.

"There is no other coaster experience in the world like Tidal Twister," said Marilyn Hannes, park president. "The two trains duel one another and guests will see the excitement on the faces of other riders. You'll almost feel like you can reach out and touch them. The tight turns, the inversion and the airtime hill will leave our guests wondering which way is up."

According to local reports, the project was greenlighted quickly by the California Coastal Commission, which, not surprisingly, gave greater scrutiny to the scale and potential environmental impact of the park's Electric Eel before approval. Tidal Twister's 290 feet of track will be no more than 30 feet high and will occupy just 1.2 acres.

The ride's height requirement of 48 inches makes it ideal for younger guests and families. It is expected to deliver an hourly throughput of more than 550 persons per hour.

Tidal Twister will be situated in the northwest area of the park, adjacent to the Aquaria touch tank and aquarium, and it will incorporate elements encouraging oceanic conservation and sustainability from Rising Tide Conservation, a collaborative aquaculture research effort SeaWorld launched in 2009. The initiative seeks an alternative to the collection of wild fish and the damage this activity can cause to coral reefs.

"Creating sustainable populations of these marine fishes helps support healthy fish populations, which are a cornerstone of maintaining healthy, active coral reefs," said Mike Price, SeaWorld's fish curator. "It's great to help advance this groundbreaking science here at the park."

•seaworld.com

SeaWorld San Diego will stir up family-friendly thrills next spring with Tidal Twister, a horizontal, dueling figure-eight coaster from Skyline Attractions. Skyline Attractions introduced its Skywarp Horizon ride model at last year's IAAPA Attractions Expo in Orlando. COURTESY SEAWORLD SAN DIEGO; AT/TIM BALDWIN

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The capital campaign has officially begun.

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The Big E welcomes another record number of attendees

AT: Ron Gustafson

Special to Amusement Today

WEST SPRINGFIELD, Mass. — It was a record year, again, for **The Big E**, also known as the **Eastern States Exposition (ESE)**.

Fair officials reported that 1,543,470 guests passed through the gates during the Sept. 14-30 run. The previous mark was set last year when attendance was 1,525,553.

“The Eastern States Exposition closed its doors on the 102nd edition — another record year! The outpouring of support for this organization from our region is humbling, as that support provides a mechanism for our mission to continue,” said **Eugene Cassidy**, ESE president and CEO.

A single-day turnstile record was set when 172,659 attended on Saturday, Sept. 22. In addition, five daily attendance records were set on Sept. 14 (87,092), Sept. 15 (118,627), Sept. 23 (134,986), Sept. 27 (105,084) and Sept. 29 (171,965).

North American Midway Entertainment (NAME) again provided the midway with more than 40 rides.

Mark Fanelli of New Hampshire-based **Fanelli’s Traveling Amusement Park** booked in his new Hyper Loop from Italian manufacturer **Technical Park**. He also provided a Pharaoh’s Fury and Zipper (**Chance Rides**) on the main midway, as well as a couple of pieces in the kiddie ride area.



The movers and shakers behind the Big E are (from the left) **Greg Chiecko**, ESE sales director and past president of the **New England Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (NEAAPA)**; **Gene Dean Sr.**, president of **Dean Enterprises** — **Fiesta Shows**, **Seabrook, N.H.**; **Gene Cassidy**, ESE president and CEO; and **Gene Dean III**, **Dean Enterprises** and **The Big E Bakery**. COURTESY NEAAPA



The Big E was held Sept. 14-30 in West Springfield, Mass. Among the larger rides at the event was the new **Super Cyclone** roller coaster (**Interpark Rides**). **Dreamland Amusements** brought the coaster to the sprawling midway, which was operated by **North American Midway Entertainment**. AT/RON GUSTAFSON

Nevada’s **Dreamland Amusements** showcased its new **Super Cyclone** roller coaster from **Interpark Rides** of Italy.

Other large rides included a **Frisbee (Huss)**, **Twin Flip (Moser)**, **Speed (KMG)**, **Vertigo (A.R.M.)**, **Power Surge (Zamperla)**, **Matterhorn (Wisdom Rides)**, **1001 Nachts (A.R.M.)**, and **Mega Drop (Fabbri)**.

The Big E’s **Avenue of the States** is one of the most popular attractions as each New England state is represented in a separate building lining one side of the fairgrounds. This year, vendors again served traditional food from the region among the numerous booths.

The adjacent **Storowton Village Museum** offered tours of its 19th century buildings, populated with “villagers” going

about their daily routines as well as historic demonstrations.

World-renowned daredevil/clown **Bello Nock** was the star of “**The Big E Circus Spectacular**,” sponsored by **Coca-Cola**. Other acts included **Hot Diggity Dog Revue**, **Ivan Arestov**, **The Flying Cortes** and **The King Charles Troupe**.

Ticketed and free concerts at the Xfinity arena included **The Marshall Tucker Band**; **Old Dominion’s** **Happy Endings World Tour**; **Casting Crowns**; **B.B. King’s Blues Band**, featuring **Tito Jackson**; **Ice-T**; **Jacob Sartorius**; **The Beach Boys** and several others.

On the exhibit side, “**Eastern States Exposition: A Walk through History**,” in the **Hampden County Building’s** auditorium, made its debut last year and is now a permanent exhibit. It tells the tale of the fair through photography, memorabilia, artifacts and historic items from the ESE archives.

New food vendors for 2018 included **Stella’s Milk and Cookies**, **Fluffy’s Hand-Cut Donuts**, **Barbie’s Ice Cream**, **Sweet and Salty** and **Cranston Enterprises**.

New treats also were in abundance. Among them were the **Polish Sampler Platter** at **Bernat’s Deli**; **Cinn-a-Roll Gourmet Mini Donuts** at **The Donut Family**; **Poutine Gourmet’s** **Pulled Pork Poutine**; **Shrimp Mac & Cheese** at the **International Lobster House & Yankee Boy**; **Moolicious’s**



Ripino in peach, orange and lemon; **Italian Stuffed Peppers** at **Deluca’s**; the **Dilly Dilly Dog** offered at **The Giant Corn Dog**; the **Quesadilla Burger** and **Large Tater Tot Keg Kabobs** at **Captain Nemo’s**; **Bud & Burger Pub’s** **Gourmet Sliders**; **The Coffee Break’s** **Deep Fried Pop Tart**; **Deep Fried Corn on the Cob** from **The Deep South Company** and **Chompers’ Taco Chompers**.

The agricultural attractions included the all-new **Eastern States Farmers Market and Wine Barn**, offering fairgoers a variety of demonstrations such as spinning and weaving; cooking; samples from **The Big E Gold Medal Cheese Competition** and **The Big E Northeast Gold Wine, Cider & Perry Competition**; new wine slushies and cheese plates in the **Wine Café**, and more.

During the course of the fair, thousands participated in competitions and presented educational demonstrations. The **4-H Beef Grand Champion Steer**, raised by **Kamryn Forrest** of Rhode Island, was purchased by **The Barn Yard & Great Country Garages** at the fair’s

4-H Beef Auction. ESE purchased the reserve **Grand Champion Steer**, raised by **Victoria Briggs** of New Hampshire. Overall, 23 steers were sold for an average of \$3.09/lb. this year, an increase of 37 percent over last year.

The **ESE Horse Show**, sponsored by **Williams Distributing**, featured **Hunters and Hunt Seat Equitation**, the **USHJA Zone I HOTY** finals and the \$15,000 **Hunter Classic** as well as **Saddlebreds, Hackneys, Morgans, Friesians** and **Opportunity Classes**. The **Big E Draft Horse Show** featured world-renowned horseman and performer, **Guy McLean**, and included the 2018 **North American Classic Cart Series Finals**, the **Haflinger and Hitch Pony Championship series** and the \$35,000 **Big E Six-Horse Hitch Showdown** (the latter won by **Lor-Rob Dairy Farm** of East Bethany, New York).

The **ESE Equestrian Hall of Fame Induction ceremony** honored **John Bennett** on Saturday, Sept. 22.

The **Big E tradition** continues next fall on Sept. 13-29.

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Pa.'s Bloomsburg Fair endures weather-impacted attendance

Amusements of America midway debut highlights event's 163rd year

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

BLOOMSBURG, Pa. — Extensive midweek rains put a damper on attendance at the Bloomsburg Fair in north central Pennsylvania. But the weather failed to cast a wet blanket over the fun delivered by the nine-day event, which ran Sept. 21-29.

“Although two days of rain fell on the fair this year, it didn’t dampen the spirit or enthusiasm of our crowds on those days,” said **Paul Reichart**, fair president. The gate tally was 400,707, down from 405,699 in 2017.



Rain and overcast skies dampened this year's attendance, but couldn't extinguish the fun at the Bloomsburg Fair. A total of six carnival operators contributed to the midway. AT/B. DEREK SHAW



Persistent heavy rains early in the month of September caused local flooding, including at the fairgrounds, where all buildings had to undergo extensive cleaning. During the event itself, wind and rain caused vendors and exhibitors to secure light signs and displays.

After a 50-plus-year relationship with **Reithoffer Shows, Inc.** (Blue Unit), the fair gave **Amusements of America** (AOA) the midway spot for the first time this year. AOA modified the visual landscape with its patriotic red, white and blue motif and a different midway layout.

“We changed both entrances to the midway — the grandstand side and the sky ride side — and opened them up a lot wider,” said **Morris Vivona, Jr.**, owner of AOA. “We made it so you could see right through the carnival. We changed the flow of the traffic into an oval, with no cut-throughs, and tried to make it more patron-friendly.”

There was a total of 48 rides, with nearly 20 kiddie rides located in another

area of the fairgrounds. AOA brought in the bulk of the equipment. Other carnivals with rides onsite included **SwikaS Amusements, LLC**; **Bartlebaugh Amusement, Inc.**; **Del Rio Cristiani**; **Shamrock Shows & Amusements** and **Tons of Fun Shows**. The three top-grossing rides were the Ferris wheel and **Rock and Roll**, both from **Chance Rides**, and a **Chaos** ride from **Technical Park**. Ride revenue figures were not made available.

The number of vendors at the fair this year reached an all-time high: 1,200. Visitors lined up most enthusiastically for food treats featuring bacon — whether deep-fried, caramel-covered or part of a **PB and J. Makin' Whoopie Pies**, a new vendor, offered nine different whoopie pie shells with 18 different fillings at its stand.

On the exhibit side, the

horticulture building was a favorite among fairgoers. Inside, a display called **A Fairy Tale Adventure** used flowers and other attractive props to recreate scenes from popular fairy tales. The agriculture building featured the usual huge pumpkins; this year they were showcased within a mock pumpkin patch adorned with scarecrows.

This was the first fair for two new directors: **Brian Wawroski**, superintendent of grandstand, and **Brian Campbell**, superintendent of agriculture. Both implemented subtle changes in their respective areas. Wawroski championed the early signing and scheduling of grandstand entertainment that allowed ticket sales to begin in the spring, much earlier than ever before. Under Campbell's direction, the agriculture displays were reinvented for

2018.

A very strong talent lineup was presented this year. **Brett Eldredge** was the most popular, followed by ventriloquist **Darci Lynne** (winner of Season 12 of NBC television's *America's Got Talent*) and **Casting Crowns**. Also featured this year were **Vince Gill**, **Melissa Etheridge** and **Cole Swindell**. The **Amish Outlaws**, a mix of former Amish and “honorary” Amish musicians sporting traditional Amish attire who surprised crowds their music and comedy, delivered two shows on the free stage. The always-popular **Rick K and the Allnighters** were back again on the free stage; their tribute to veterans included local World War II and Vietnam veterans.

The fair arranged for **Darci Lynne** to visit the children of the **Janet Weis Children's Hospital** in Danville, Pa.,

where she posed for photos with many critically ill children and their families.

For the first time, social media was used heavily to promote the Bloomsburg Fair. It also provided updates and promotions during the event, with photos, videos and notices of the various events and exhibits posted each fair day. In addition, newsletters highlighting schedules and other key information were emailed to members and media outlets daily.

The Bloomsburg Fair is a traditionally family-centered showcase of local agricultural, horticultural, historical and mechanical exhibits in addition to amusements and entertainment. Next year's event is tentatively scheduled for Sept. 20-28, with the possibility of an additional date being added, according to the fair's Reichart.

•bloomsburgfair.com



Making its debut at the fair this year, Amusements of America was the main contracted midway operator. Company event staff included (from left) **Anthony Lopes**, rides supervisor; **Mark Gagne**, office manager; **Kellie House**, safety director; **Dave Gonzales**, operations; **Keith Gillette**, concessions manager; **Greg Inman**, manager; and owner **Morris Vivona, Jr.** COURTESY BLOOMSBURG FAIR/TOM ADAMS; AT/B. DEREK SHAW (GROUP)



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Powers Great American Midways grows with new equipment

GAITHERSBURG, Md. — The Montgomery County Agricultural Fair, which ran Aug. 10-18, had 40 rides brought in by Corfu, N.Y.-based Powers Great American Midways. New at this location was a Kolmax Plus Flying Elephants, a PWS Mini-Paratrooper and a Batech Downdraft, all of which were shipped into the Port of Baltimore and then trucked to the site of the fair, which was founded in 1949. Powers took delivery on a Batech Zero Gravity ride at their next stop in Rhinebeck, N.Y. The 65-year-old carnival company also added eight new ticket boxes from Uni-Glide Trailer featuring programmable LED signs; four of the units also have built-in ATM machines. Finally, the carnival added six new Roush Performance semi-tractors to its fleet. The Powers team on hand at the Montgomery County event were (from left) Marc James, public relations; Dean Corl, office manager; and Debbie and Corky Powers, principals. AT/B. DEREK SHAW



KMG kicks up 'surf' with new ride



NEEDE, Netherlands — This past spring, KMG revealed a new portable attraction. The company's Surf Ride is designed for quick setup, low overhead costs and easy transportation on one semi-trailer. It can be erected within 45 minutes and themed to suit the customer. (KMG client Mike Klinge, a German showman, had a super heroes theme applied to his Surf Ride, shown here.) KMG began taking orders for the attraction at Euro Attractions Show 2018 in Amsterdam in September and will continue to do so at the IAAPA Attractions Expo 2018 this month in Orlando. Delivery slots are available beginning July 2019. COURTESY KMG

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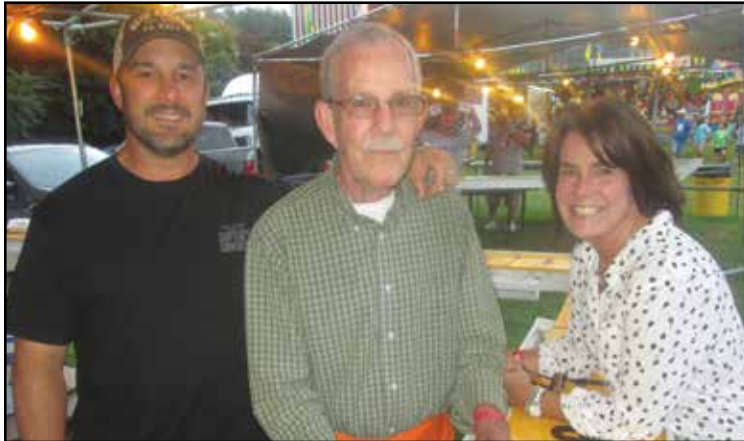
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Russ Amusements rolls into Pa.



MARYSVILLE, Pa. — In mid-August, Russ Amusements unfurled its midway at the Marysville Lions Club carnival. The Wellsville, Pa.-based company has 19 rides and brought 11 of them to the Marysville spot, which it has played for over 20 years. (Its most recent addition is a used 70-foot A.R.M Super Shot 200 Drop Tower, purchased from the Mighty Thomas Carnival in Austin, Texas.) Jim Ford, (pictured, center) has been a volunteer at the Marysville event for 49 of his 71 years. Ford's wife married him on the condition that he join the Lion's club and help with their projects, as her father was a member. On top of that, Ford has never missed a carnival operating day since he started, which adds up to 294 days. Ford's son, Jason, and daughter, Nicole (both shown), also help in various capacities at the carnival each year.

AT/B. DEREK SHAW

LJM & Assoc. provides audits at N.C. State Fair



LJM & Associates, Inc. conducted the Contract Compliance Audits of the North Carolina State Fair in Raleigh. The audits were performed on site October 7-14 with the LJM team (left to right) Doug Clark, Lewis Merz and John Ott working with Amusements of Rochester, Inc. dba Powers Great American Midways. Despite losing the scheduled opening day of the fair to Hurricane Michael, the fair just missed the one million attendance mark with 977,256 guests attending the fair.

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MIDWAYSCENE

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

The **Mississippi State Fair** in Jackson, which ran Oct. 3-14 with **Steve Hutton**, the new executive director of the **Mississippi Fair Commission**, at the helm, saw gate revenue from this year's event increase 5.6 percent over 2017. Ride revenue for midway provider **North American Midway Entertainment (NAME)** was up 7.1 percent. Thanks to where the **Columbus Day** falls on the calendar in 2019, the fair will be expanded to include the holiday and run 13 days: Oct. 2-14.

The **Erie County Fair**, Hamburg, N.Y., reported its second-best attendance ever this year, with 1,198,789 visitors passing through the gates Aug. 8-19. The fair's previous attendance high was 1,220,101 in 2014. Orlando-based **James E. Strates Shows**, which has supplied the midway for 94 consecutive years, showcased its refurbished **Huss** Pirate ride, which has been absent from the company's route for several years. Strates is the last carnival in the nation that travels by railroad, and large crowds typically gather each year to see the flatcars loaded with equipment arrive at the fairgrounds. The Erie County Fair's 180th edition takes place Aug. 7-18, 2019.

The **New Hampshire Preservation Alliance** has named the **Rochester Fairgrounds** to its annual "Seven to Save" list. The list is used to attract new investment and reuse options for historically or architecturally significant places facing threats to their preservation. The fairgrounds property and its 1883 exhibition hall are in limbo due to outstanding debt and 22 code violations lodged against the hall. The Rochester Fair returned this past September for eight days after being canceled in 2017 because of financial issues **Fiesta Shows** was the midway provider. Owned by the **Rochester Agricultural and Mechanical Association**, the fair dates back to 1875.

On Nov. 23-24, the **Bloomsburg Fair** in Bloomsburg, Pa., is staging Winterfest, a first-time event underneath the grandstand featuring vendors and activities. As of late October, 55 craft vendors, 20 food vendors and five wineries were confirmed for participation. The fun will include ice sculpting, wood carving, face paint-

ing, live reindeer, pony and wagon rides, and toy train and race car displays. The **Dan and Galla Musical Show** and the arrival of Santa, who will lead the Parade of Lights, will be the highlights on Friday evening. According to **Paul Reichart**, fair president, advance tickets for the 2019 Bloomsburg Fair will be available and three grandstand shows for that event may be announced. (For a recap of this year's fair, which ran Sept. 21-29, see page 48.)

The **World Ice Art Championships** is relocating its ice festival to the **Tanana Valley State Fairgrounds** in Fairbanks, Alaska, in 2019. Organizers hope to make this their new permanent home. Ice-carving competitions will include Single Carver-Single Block, Two Carver-Two Block, Multi-Block, Youth Competition, with Ice-Carving Clinic Interactive Ice Park among the activities. The festival runs Feb. 14-March 31.

In fairgrounds-related news, **Tanana Valley State Fair** Executive Director **Blake Matray** has left his position to return to his aviation roots. The former **U.S. Air Force** and **Alaska Air National Guard** pilot accepted a position in air cargo. A search committee has been formed to find the fair's next executive director. The Tanana Valley State Fair, established in 1924, is the oldest in Alaska.

For the better part of four decades, **Bob's Space Racers, Inc.**, has been manufacturing Whac-A-Mole and other popular gaming products. Recently, a section of 15th Street in Holly Hill, Fla., where the company's plant is located was renamed Whac-A-Mole Way in honor of the arcade icon. The resolution by the **Holly Hill City Commission** praised Bob's Space Racers for "providing games and management services for the arcade, park and trailer industries throughout the world."

Wintersville, Ohio-based **A.R.M. (USA), Inc.**, is currently developing a 100-foot-tall tower swing ride prototype dubbed Sky Hawk. While similar to the company's Vertigo ride, the passenger seating will be offered in a prone, or "Superman-style," position to provide a more dynamic flying experience. **Danny Huston** with midway provider NAME has committed to purchasing the first unit for a mid-2019 delivery.

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▶ SoundWaves to 'play' in Nashville — Page 60

Canobie Lake Park expands with full-fledged water park

ADG provides custom Tidal River for a highlight attraction

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

SALEM, N.H. — **Canobie Lake Park** in Salem, N.H., opened a water park expansion for the 2018 season that included a first-of-its-kind Tidal River from **Aquatic Development Group**.

In 2005, Canobie Lake Park opened Castaway Island with a **WhiteWater West** Rain Fortress water play structure featuring nine water slides, multiple levels and the ubiquitous tipping bucket. Instantly popular, guests started requesting more water park attractions including slides and activities for adults. The new section is adjacent to that existing water play structure.

The expansion added a 370,000-gallon lazy river complete with tidal waves, a zero-entry wave pool river entrance, a 60-foot tower with three waterslides, a restaurant, tiki bar, chil-



Fancy rock work, realistic-looking palm trees and bright green and yellow slides give the new area a tropical look and feel. COURTESY CANOBIE LAKE PARK

dren's aquaplay area, 12 cabanas, restroom/changing facilities and maintenance/support buildings. The new attractions are located on a two-acre parcel near the park's **Arrow** Corkscrew that was previously used for a corn maze.

The Tidal River at Canobie Lake Park is a 17,500-square-foot, 20-foot-wide, fast-paced action riv-

er that starts riders off in a beach-style entry pool. As guests enter the wave pool, they can grab a clear tube and head to the side channel where they are quickly swept into a fast-paced river straightaway.

ADG's Wavetek wave system powers the ride and produces a small tidal wave that moves riders down the river with a swell of water.

As riders are pushed around the island, the lapping waves continue to move patrons back toward the beach entry pool, where they can exit, or choose to go around again.

"We designed the Tidal River water ride to create a new and exciting river ride experience. It's a differentiating attraction for properties and is great for guests of all ages," said **Jim Dunn**,

president of ADG.

"Canobie Lake Park's Tidal River has been a passion project for our staff. ADG's vision of how the Tidal River ride and Castaway Island expansion would come together was second to none," said **Chris Nicoli**, brand manager, Canobie Lake Park. "We couldn't be happier with our new ride and can't wait for our guests to experience it."

Tidal River is part of ADG's innovative line of water ride series, designed to accommodate a large number of people in a single attraction. The idea is to get guests out of the ride queue and into the water for a better overall water park experience. The Tidal River at Canobie Lake Park is the 8th water ride installation that has opened since the launch of the product line in 2016.

The three adult slides and the runout pool are contained on the island that is surrounded by the lazy river. To help control traffic and keep young children from straying into the area,

▶ See **CANOBIE**, page 56

Massive Kalahari resort taking shape in Round Rock

ROUND ROCK, Texas — **Kalahari Resorts** is building a \$550 million, 345.2-acre complex that will include 1,000 guest rooms; 200,000 square feet of meeting space; outdoor pools; five restaurants; a spa; arcade; and retail space. The project also includes what the company is claiming to be the largest indoor water park in America at 223,000 square feet.

Tom Foolery's Adventure Park will be part of the complex. The 80,000 square foot facility will feature thrill rides, a ropes course, climbing walls, an indoor zipline, bowling, laser tag and mini-golf.

The resort will feature five restaurants, including Kalahari's signature steakhouse, Double Cut Charcoal



COURTESY KALAHARI RESORTS

Grill. Overnight guests have access to all of the resort's facilities. The restaurants and attractions will be open to local guests or others day visitors. Day passes to the indoor waterpark will be made available on certain

days and at certain times of the year based on the overall occupancy of the resort.

Groundbreaking took place on May 15. The facility is scheduled to open in 2020.

Round Rock will be the fourth African-themed resort



by Kalahari to open in the United States, but its first in the southern states. The others are located in Wisconsin Dells, Wisc., Sandusky, Ohio, and the Pocono Mountains in Mt. Pocono, Pa.

—Jeffrey Seifert



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►CANOBIE

Continued from page 55

the island is accessible via bridges that crosses over the river. WhiteWater West of Richmond, British Columbia, Canada, supplied the three slides which share the same 60-foot tower, and splash pool. Both attractions utilize one- and two-person rafts.

Lil' Squirts Lagoon, the children's aquaplay area, is separated from the adult attractions and surrounded by lounge chairs where adults can keep an eye on their children playing in the shallow water. The children's area also has two of the 12 new rentable cabanas.

"We are extremely excited for this major growth forward," said Nicoli. "The development of this water park is a passion project for all of us on the Canobie team as water has been one of the most requested additions to our attractions mix. The resort feel of this new area was specifically designed to transport our guests to a tropical experience while still being close to home."

•canobie.com



Guests enter the river through a zero-entry wave pool (above) where they can grab a tube and begin their adventure around the island. A swell of water (below) creates waves that propel guests through the river as they circumnavigate the island. COURTESY CANOBIE LAKE PARK



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SoundWaves to 'play' in Nashville



NASHVILLE, Tenn. — In December, the Gaylord Opryland Resort will introduce SoundWaves — an upscale, four-acre indoor/outdoor water park with music. The 111,000-square-foot indoor portion of the attraction offers a tower with five waterslides, a FlowRider Double surfing machine, rapid and lazy rivers, an activity pool, private cabanas, and an adults-only pool, lounge and bar area — all in an environment maintained at a tropical 84 degrees. Opening next summer, the 106,000-square-foot outdoor portion will feature a 315,000-gallon wave pool with a giant LED movie screen, a pool / play structure for kids, an adults-only pool area and several dining options. Each experience incorporates musical components ranging from country to pop, including the programming on the giant screen.

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NEWS SPLASH

AT: Jeffrey L. Seifert

jseifert@amusementtoday.com

In October, the new \$32.7 million **East Side Community Center** opened in Tacoma, Wash. The center, which has been in the works for seven years, was born out of a response to the shooting of 17-year-old **Billy Ray Shirley III**. The senseless killing galvanized Shirley's mother, friends, his community and eventually city officials to provide a safe, healthy hangout for the area's youth. At the funeral, **Shalisa Hayes** announced to the assembled mourners that she would do something to keep the kids from hanging out and playing in the streets. Her crusade has become legendary to those on the east side of Tacoma.

The centerpiece of the building is a 318,000-gallon swimming pool with lap lanes, a waterslide, zipline, diving board, vortex pool, climbing wall, log roll and a hot tub.

The center is also equipped with a running track, basketball court, recording studio, training kitchen, meeting rooms, classrooms, social hall, locker rooms, fitness areas, dance room and a cafe.

Although the new center is focused on youth, it is designed to serve the entire community, including seniors.

Hot on the heels of its new-for-2018 mega attraction, Ray Rush, **Aquatica Orlando** has announced plans for another new attraction in 2019. Although details are still sketchy, Aquatica has released a name — KareKare Curl. According to Aquatica, kare means waves and curl refers to the curved shape. Utilizing two-passenger rafts, the new slide will deliver a high-adrenaline, weightless adventure as riders experience the feel of a curve-shaped wave while climbing a vertical wave wall. Aquatica will release additional details as the new season gets closer.

Also new for 2019, SeaWorld and Aquatica will offer four tiers of annual passes with the lowest, a bronze pass, offering an affordable experience but with some restrictions such as blackout dates. The ultimate platinum pass includes amenities such as unrestricted admission to all **Busch Gardens**, Aquatica and **SeaWorld** parks, preferred parking, free ride again access, two free guest tickets and much more.

Lake Travis overflow from heavy rains in October has resulted in flooding at the **Volente Beach Resort & Waterpark** in Leander, Texas, outside of Austin. **Adam Weedman**, an owner and partner at Volente Beach Resort, said the water park portion of the business is submerged but the attached restaurant, Beachside Billy's, remains open.

The pool, slides, lower bar at the waterpark as well as the entire beach are covered in water. Weedman was waiting for the water to recede in order to assess the damage. He expects there will be electrical damage to the waterslide pumps and components in the bar. There may also be physical damage to some of the decks.

The Lower Colorado River Authority reported Lake Travis was 144 percent full on October 22. A wetter than average September followed by heavy rain in October re-

sulted in Travis County being declared a local disaster area.

Universal's Volcano Bay has not made any announcements concerning a 2019 expansion, but permits filed with the city indicate the park is wanting to add a ride structure and building. Volcano Bay, which opened last year, was designed with an expansion in mind. Five acres of undeveloped land are located at the southern edge of the current water park.

Capacity issues have plagued the park since it opened last year. A second phase could help alleviate some of those capacity problems and keep fresh, new attractions coming to the park so that it can remain competitive in the saturated Orlando water park market.

Waldameer Park & Water World, Erie, Pa. is building a \$500,000 heated relaxation pool for the 2019 season. The current heated pool has been popular, but is small and often crowded. The new pool, heated to a relaxing 100 degrees Fahrenheit is designed to accommodate more than 100 people.

The attraction is part of the park's ten-year plan to feature new upgrades to both the amusement park and water park every year.

On November 3, Houstonians were given a sneak peek at the **Big Rivers Water Park**, New Caney, Texas. The water park, part of the **Grand Texas Theme Park**, is now scheduled to open in 2019.

Gator Bayou Adventure Park, part of Grand Texas, was open for free on November 3. The East Montgomery County Improvement District, which promotes business in the park's New Caney area, bought out Gator Bayou out for the day. Locals were invited to "come and enjoy a free day at Gator Bayou and also get a glimpse of Big Rivers before it opens in the spring."

The district provided free parking, free admission to the park, and free access to most of the rides and adventures. Guests were able to take a zipline over the new park, enjoy pony rides, and visit the animal exhibits — including the namesake gators.

The challenge park is adjacent to the water park so guests were able to see the slides, pools and lazy river under construction and confirm something really was happening there.

Multiple delays have plagued Grand Texas since it was first announced more than five years ago.

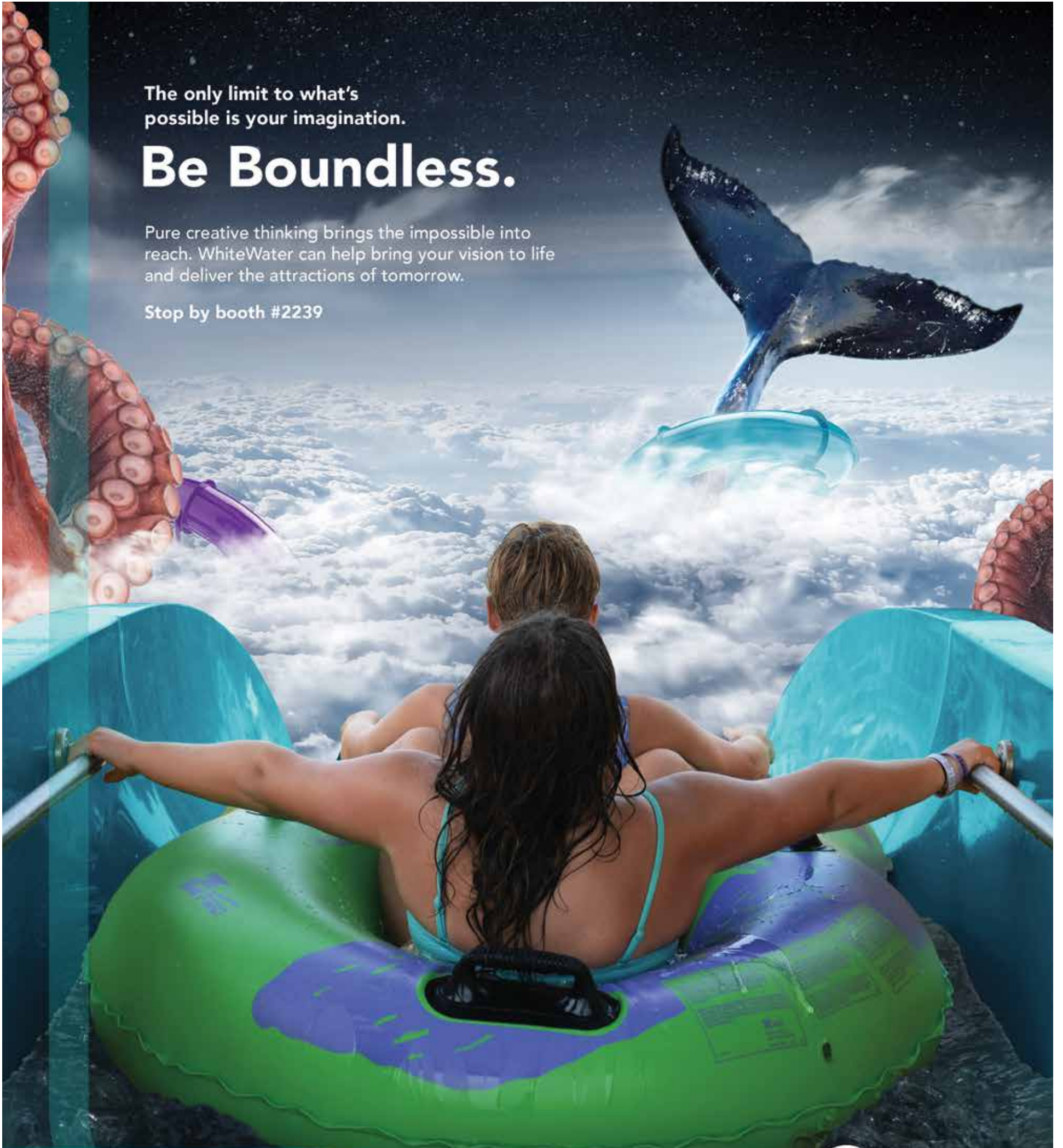
The city council of Waterloo, Iowa, is looking into proposals to replace two failing swimming pools with updated facilities. Plans call for an \$11 million investment to replace one pool with a six-lane lap pool, lazy river and slides. A study indicated the city does not need two swimming pools, so the second pool would be replaced with a splash park featuring numerous water features. Because of the high cost of the proposal, it will likely need to be decided by public referendum.

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Entertain the Possibilities

Wibit Sports finds success with floating obstacle courses

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

BOCHOLT, Germany — Established in 1996 by friends Robert Cirjak and Romann Rademacher, Wibit Sports GmbH has found extraordinary success in the inflatable water park industry.

The company has revolutionized water play over the years, and its team is constantly working on new creations. Inspired by a passion for sports, the Wibit's portfolio has transformed over the years from single water trampolines to massive floating sports parks that can provide activities for up to 500 thrill-seekers at a time.

Cirjak and Rademacher were soccer teammates 22 years ago when they saw an ad for a water trampoline in an American water sports magazine and decided to import the product to Europe. The enterprise got off to a rough start at **Boot Düsseldorf**, one of the largest boat and water sports trade shows in the world, when their one and only trampoline was stolen. Undaunted, they continued building the business.

The water trampolines were a hit, and soon, Cirjak and Rademacher came up with the idea of adding other inflatable water play devices. They began to design and build their own products using high-quality PVC vinyl suitable for any water environment — fresh, chlorinated or saltwater. The first devices, sold under the brand name **Aviva Sports**, were standalone products — rockers, climbers and small slides — that could form a dynamic activity area when anchored in close proximity.

Eventually came the idea to make interconnected courses using interlocking, modular attractions that could be laid out in any configuration to create a giant water playground. Marketed as a sports park package, it came in various sizes — with the Sports Park 60 being one of the more popular options. It was a complete turnkey package, roughly 130 feet by 105 feet, with 20 different obstacles and activities including trampolines, balance beams, curved bridges, a cliff, a slide, long-jump and high-jump areas, a free-floating catapult, an action tower and even a swing. It could accommodate 60 people at a time (thus the product's name). Three electric



Massive Wibit parks with varying degrees of challenge are now becoming the norm. COURTESY WIBIT SPORTS

pumps inflated the entire package in just three hours. It sold for \$60,000.

The concept caught on quickly. Any recreation entity with a pool, waterfront or lake quickly saw the potential to increase attendance and revenue by adding a floating obstacle course.

Realizing they needed to differentiate themselves from their competition and all the knock-off products, Aviva turned to Vancouver-based **Wow Branding** to come up with a new name for its product line. The frog seemed a perfect metaphor for the company, as it was all about leaping and climbing and swimming on the water. A name was derived from the musical "ribbit" sound frogs make. And with a frog hand dotting the "i" in the logo, the Wibit brand was born.

Not resting on their laurels, the hard-working staff at Wibit keeps developing new products and new ways to market them. In 2015, Wibit Tag was

introduced, using the floating courses to spell out the name of a city, state, country or attraction as a giant sign on which people can actually play. Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Cancun, Porec in Croatia and **Vinpearl** resort in Vietnam were among the first to promote their locations with a Wibit Tag obstacle course.

Product expansion continues, and many vendors are coming back to Wibit to purchase expansions or invest in new products.

The company's latest offerings include a more challenging Ninja-style course designed to accommodate two people competing against each other and the clock. The first of these went to **Liquid Leisure Aqua Park** in Berkshire, England. The park, already reaping the benefits of a Wibit installation, decided to more than double the size of its existing course and add the brand-new Ninja course. The increase in attendance was so significant that Liquid Leisure canceled all of its marketing the

first year.

Some of the larger courses that have been installed incorporate different routes with varying degrees of challenges. The routes designated numerically from 1 for "easy" to 4 for "challenging." For young thrill-seekers, or ninja-warriors-in-training, Wibit has designed a KidsZone product with easy obstacles specifically designed for younger conquerors. It can

even be placed in a shallow water environment, allowing parents to stand in the water and walk their kids along the course.

Wibit has also designed a number of inflatable watercraft products such as paddle boats, stand-up rafts, and even a motorized inflatable craft designed for lifeguards and maintenance personnel monitoring a large attraction. All can be parked at a floating dock, and as with everything Wibit, it can all be deflated, folded and stored in area a fraction of the size of the inflated product.

The inflatable aspect of the Wibit product makes it ideal for seasonal locations, or even large multipurpose pools. A 50-meter multipurpose pool can have a floating course available for a limited time; when the pool is needed for competition, the entire course can be removed and stored within a few hours.

Wibit Sports now has products in more than 75 countries across six continents. An estimated 12 million people have bounced and splashed and climbed on Wibit obstacle courses.

• wibitsports.com

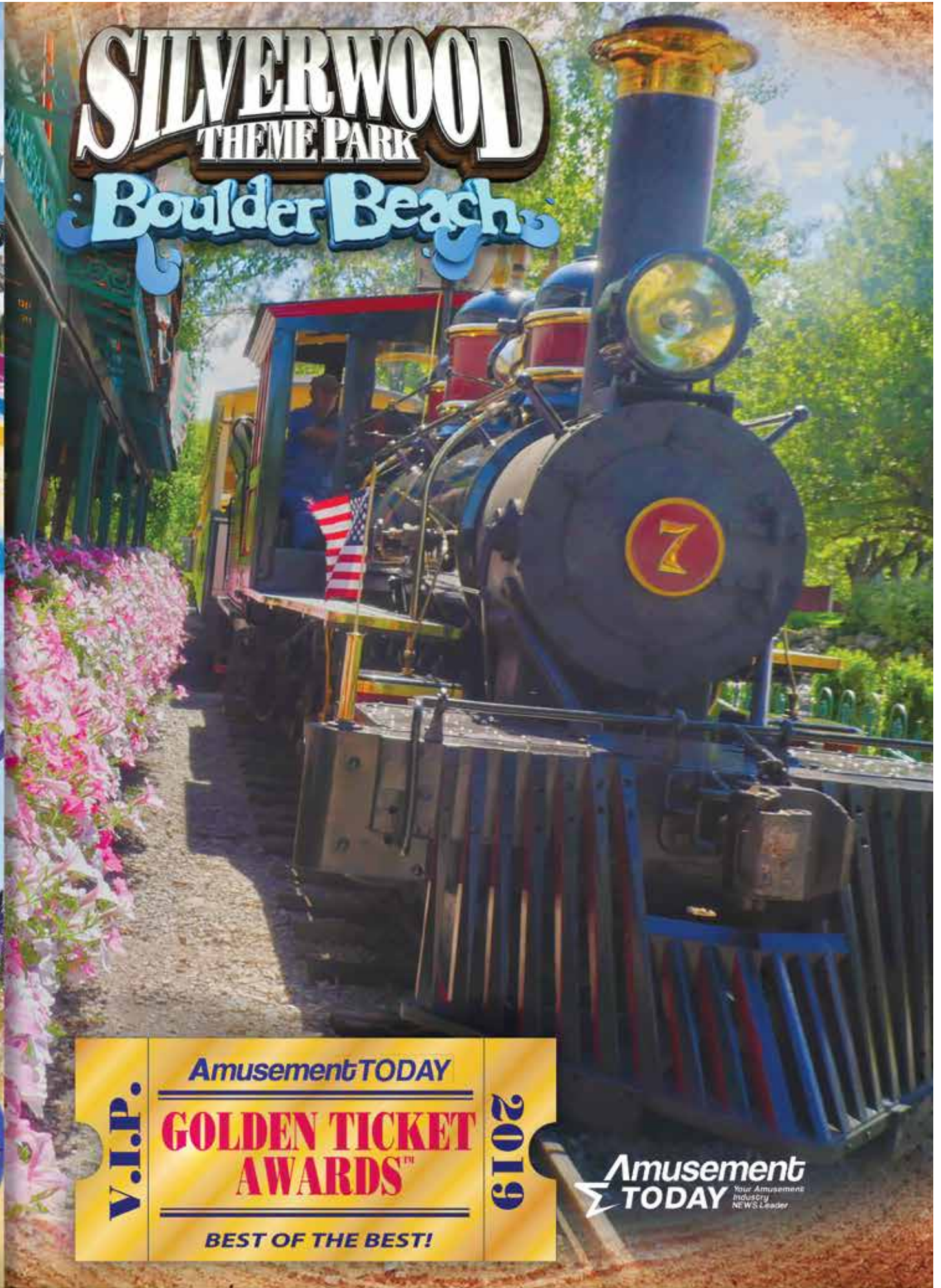


Dubai was one of the first to capitalize on the Wibit Tag product. Floating within sight of multiple high-rise buildings, the obstacle course spells out Dubai in both Western (blue) and Arabic (magenta) lettering. COURTESY WIBIT SPORTS



The Aqua Course 60 (left) linked obstacles together to form a course. The first Aviva parks were individual devices (right) in close proximity to each other. COURTESY WIBIT SPORTS





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BUSINESS & NEWSMAKERS

► **Women of Influence: Amanda Thompson, Managing Director, Blackpool Pleasure Beach — page 70**

Urban Air gets a jump on the growing trampoline park trend

Expanding company adds other activities to the family fun mix

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

BEDFORD, Texas — One of the most recent trends in interactive family recreation is the indoor trampoline park. It is an attractions industry niche that has been expanding rapidly over the past decade.

For its part, **Urban Air Adventure Parks** is going full speed to keep things... well, bouncing along. As the company expands, it is finding new ways to not only excite customers, but to add spring to the business itself.

Michael Browning, CEO of Urban Air, actually finds the “trampoline” label to not be the ideal description anymore.

“When we opened, we were about 80 percent trampolines; now it is 20 percent or less,” he said. “We quickly had the vision that it could be faddish. Having one attraction was like owning only one stock in your stock portfolio. You’re not diversified, you’re not well positioned for any type of market changes.

“We felt the trampoline park didn’t provide the customer the overall experience they were looking for. So, we started innovating the space.”

Urban Air is the largest adventure park operating company. Launched in 2011, it currently has 60 facilities in operation, with 84 under construction and an additional 56 being negotiated.

To keep its offerings



Dodgeball on trampoline courts (left) allow guests to be competitive if they so choose. Urban Air Adventure Parks is the largest company of indoor adventure parks that began with trampoline activities (right).
COURTESY URBAN AIR ADVENTURE PARKS; AT/TIM BALDWIN

fresh, Urban Air installed obstacle courses — marketed as the Urban Warrior Course — similar to those seen in television shows such as *American Ninja Warrior*. The success of the course spurred the company to add rock climbing walls, indoor soft-play structures, ropes courses and more.

Browning felt the additions took the facilities to the next level. “We’ve broadened our demographic,” he said. “We get a lot more corporate events, singles nights, date nights and church outings because the attractions are more conducive to that type of thing.”

Urban Air terms its parks 1.5 or 2.0, depending upon their size. As the annual trade show hosted by the **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions** gets underway in Orlando, new facilities termed 3.0 will be opening that include indoor go-kart tracks and indoor skydiving. The smallest facility is 21,000

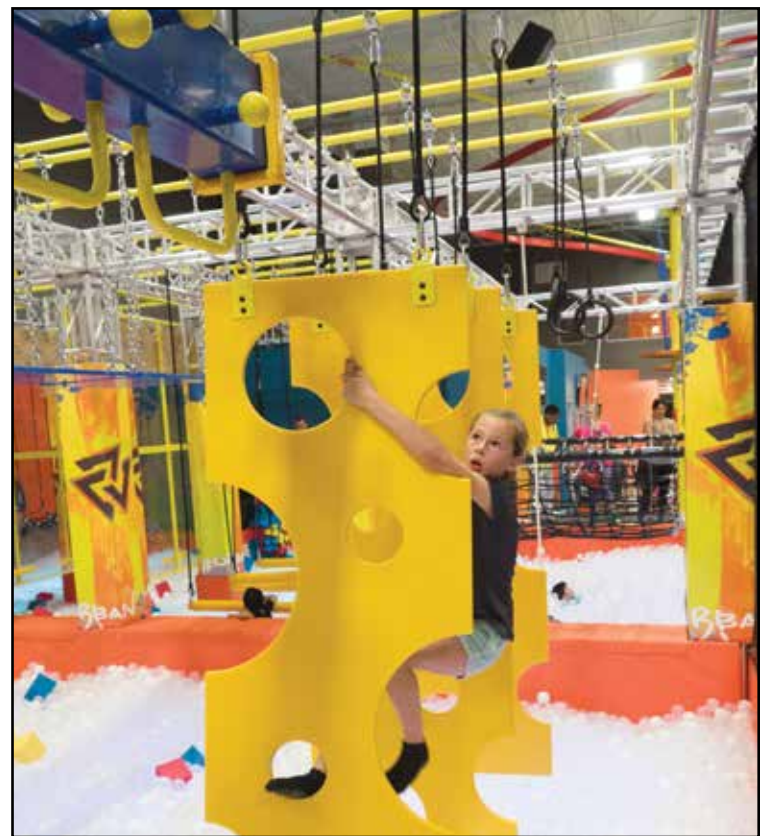
square feet and the largest is 85,000 square feet; Browning estimates the average location is around 40,000-50,000 square feet.

Urban Air is looking at former **Toys R Us** and **Sears** store locations for future expansion possibilities. The large, vacant existing spaces provide opportunities for what Browning called “speed to market.”

“We’ll be the only company other than iFly with indoor skydiving,” he said. “Our business model is to provide an active entertainment experience for the consumer that is very valuable. We don’t have to rely on any one attraction to be what they are coming for.”

With the variety of activities, “you don’t leave until you’re worn out,” Browning added with a laugh.

Urban Air’s facilities average about 180,000 guests per location annually, and the company is expecting a year-end total of 23 million guests in 2018. The attendance num-



Warrior courses mirror television reality show competition.
COURTESY URBAN AIR ADVENTURE PARKS

bers do not include spectators, such as parents and grandparents; while some elect to play along with their

kids, not all actively engage in the attractions.

► **See URBAN AIR, page 67**

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Dynamic Attractions logo evolves; company looks toward the future

ORLANDO, Fla. — **Dynamic Attractions** has quickly risen to be one of the industry's most recognized companies with cutting edge technical innovation and unparalleled mechanical systems for amusement rides, to becoming one of the top attractions suppliers. With this swift and strong evolution, it's only fitting that the company's logo evolves right along with it.

With the approaching IAAPA Attractions Expo in Orlando, Dynamic Attractions has unveiled a new logo as the company moves to solidify itself on the very tip of fresh concepts and revolutionary attractions in the amusement industry.

"Our company's foundation was laid in complex engineering and fabrication for rides for over 20



years," stated **Guy Nelson**, Executive Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Dynamic Attractions. "We are celebrating our seventh year as an OEM ride manufacturer, and we are still evolving and shaping our infrastructure. We are designing and building bold, new ideas while fully immersing guests into experiences like never before.

"Our updated logo embodies our company's

mission forward. It represents our vision as it points the way for the continued growth of our company with the focus on exceeding our customers' expectations," noted **Hao Wang**, Dynamic Attractions' President and COO.

Dynamic Attractions will be exhibiting during the IAAPA Attractions Expo Nov. 13-16 and will host a press event in their exhibit booth (#1073) at 12:30 pm on Tuesday, Nov. 13.

"We've been working hard behind the scenes on the next stage of our evolution," **Cindy Emerick Whitson**, Senior Vice President, Business Development echoed. "At Dynamic's IAAPA media event, we'll be making several forward thinking announcements to excite and inspire the industry."

•dynamicattractions.com



Nelson



With its Robotic Arm Ride (above left), the all-terrain ride vehicle (above right), and the popular Flying Theater (below) innovations, Dynamic Attractions continues to evolve both itself and the industry as a whole. COURTESY DYNAMIC ATTRACTIONS



ON THE MOVE

Jeff Davis has been named director of attractions for **American Dream Meadowlands**, an entertainment and retail complex in East Rutherford, N.J., tentatively set to open next spring. Davis started in the attractions industry as a seasonal team member at **Sesame Place** in Langhorne, Pa., in 1987. After graduating from **Penn State University** in 1994, he took his first full-time job at that park as a human resources manager, returning to operations in 1997 and serving in a variety of roles — most recently as vice president of operations, a position he held for more than 10 seasons. At American Dream Meadowlands, Davis will oversee a variety of attractions, including **Nickelodeon Universe** theme park, **DreamWorks Waterpark**, an **NHL**-sized ice rink.



Davis

Leading photo booth manufacturer **Apple Industries, Inc.**, creator of the Face Place brand and based in Greenvale, N.Y., has tapped **Francois De Freitas** as senior director of marketing. De Freitas brings vast knowledge of the photo booth market gained through his former employer, **Photo-Me International**. He has over 20 years of experience in marketing photo booths and other photographic equipment as well as international experience launching amusement products in new markets. Apple Industries is exhibiting at **IAAPA Attractions Expo 2018** in Orlando, Nov. 13-16, and De Freitas invites attendees to stop by booth 1600 during the event.



De Freitas

Chance Rides of Wichita, Kan., has hired **Mathew Mount** as the company's controller / CFO, effective Oct. 24. Mount reports to President and COO **Aaron Landrum** and will be responsible for overseeing the finance and accounting team. With more than 20 years in investments, finance and accounting, Mount previously was CFO at **Wescon Plastics**, where he led its spin-off from **Wescon Products Co.** Earlier, Mount held the roles of senior accountant and controller at Wescon Products Co.



Mount

New York-based **Imax Corp.** has appointed **Megan Colligan** to president, Imax Entertainment and executive vice president, Imax Corp, effective Feb. 19. Reporting to CEO **Rich Gelfond**, Colligan will oversee the company's global entertainment division as well as cultivate strategic relationships and partnerships. Colligan also will be responsible for, among other areas, the company's domestic and international film slates and global distribution and programming of the IMAX theater network. From 2006-2017, Colligan served in executive roles at **Paramount Pictures**, most recently as worldwide president of marketing and distribution — spearheading the marketing and distribution efforts for many of the studio's most successful film franchises.

RES makes strong market showing



AMSTERDAM — Ride Engineers Switzerland (RES), which provides ride design, construction and maintenance services, has become a strong and successful market presence in the two years since its launch. During Euro Attractions Show 2018 in September, Roby Gasser of Conny-Land (left), a Swiss amusement park, and Willy Walser, managing director of RES, signed a contract for a vertical dark ride attraction planned for 2020. For more information on RES and its services and projects, visit ride-engineers.com. COURTESY RES

►URBAN AIR

Continued from page 64

A perk for parents is a substantial discount when a regular ticket is purchased for a child. “We’re going from a zero-dollar transaction to \$5.99,” Browning said. “We believe when a parent and a child interact on our attractions, it creates lasting memories and builds brand equity and customer loyalty, and they come back more.”

In June, Urban Air brought on **Jay Thomas**, a 30-year-plus veteran of **Six Flags**. In his role as chief commercial officer, Thomas is leading the company’s commercial strategy as well as developing and optimizing all Urban Air facilities.

“The pure growth of Urban Air and what Urban Air represents is exciting,” Thomas told *Amusement Today*. “We are the innovators of indoor adventure park space.

We are the creators of that model. Getting my hands on the overall operation



Thomas

of the organization is something that is right up my alley.”

“We were thrilled to have Jay join the team,” Browning said. “He brings an enormous amount of industry knowledge to Urban Air, and he is responsible for developing new attractions and content ahead of the competition while maximizing gross revenue at all the touchpoints.”

“We have aspirational targets — we want to have 300 parks by 2020 and 600 by 2022,” Thomas said. “A lot of our growth is coming from franchisees that are opening their second, third or fourth locations.”

In trying to remain innovative, Urban Air looks at each location for what attractions will work best in that specific space along with the base attractions. Indoor go-karting, miniature golf, bumper cars, bowling, laser tag and virtual reality are among the options available for placement in each market.

Looking ahead, Urban Air is developing innovative technology-based attractions, currently in beta testing, that it hopes to launch next summer.

•urbanairtrampolinepark.com



Sky Rider (left) is a coaster-like attraction suspended from the ceiling at some facilities. Ropes courses add variety to the activities. COURTESY URBAN AIR ADVENTURE PARKS; AT/TIM BALDWIN

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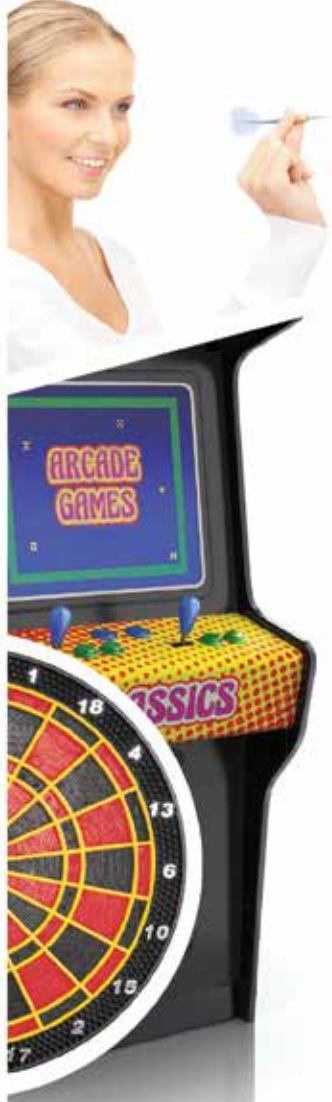
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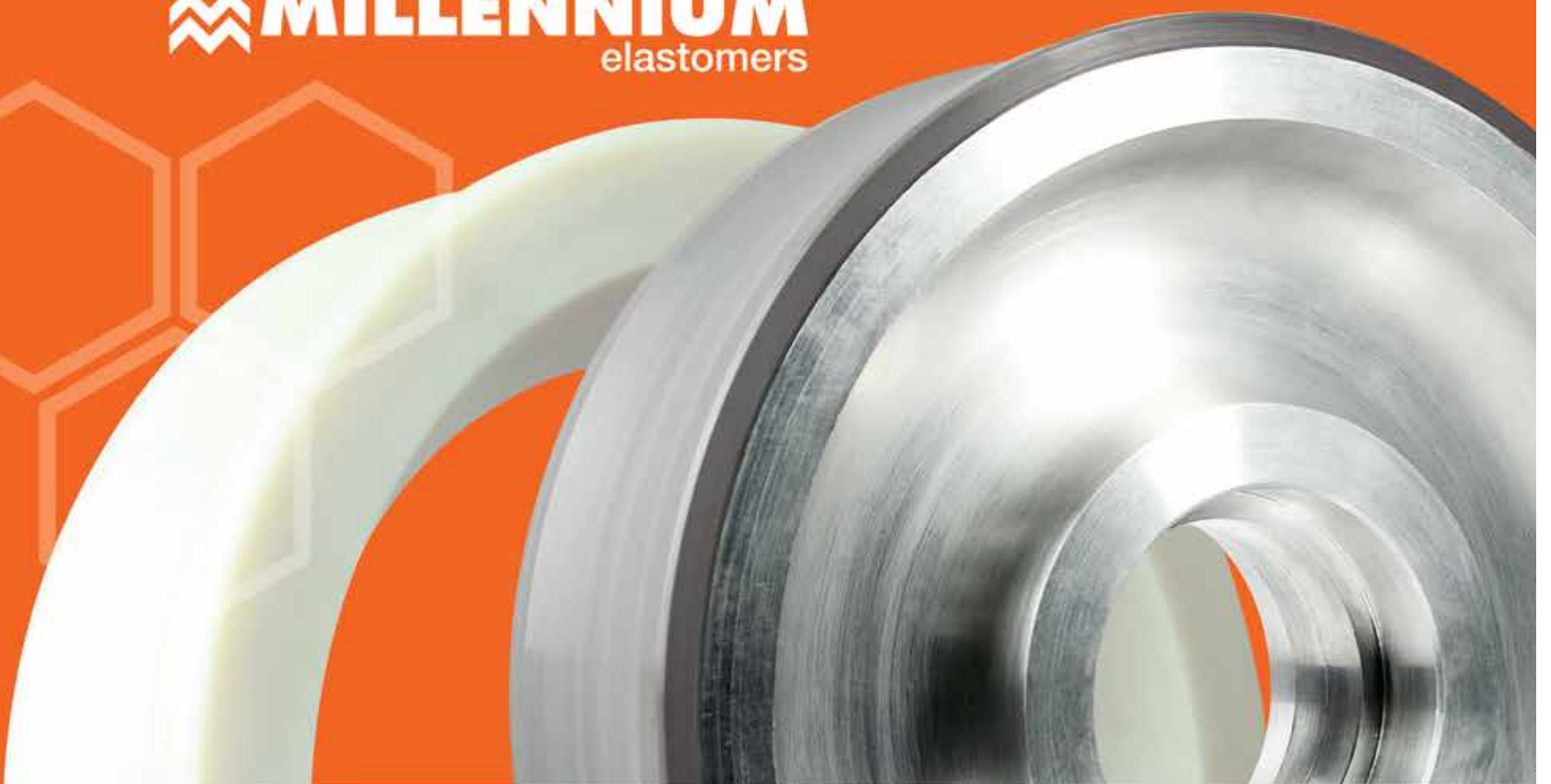
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Women INFLUENCE

A view from the top...

Amanda Thompson has been the managing director of Blackpool Pleasure Beach in Blackpool, England, since 2004. The historic amusement property is one of the most visited tourist attractions in the U.K. and has won numerous awards from industry associations.

Thompson is the fourth generation of her family to head up the property. Blackpool Pleasure Beach was founded by her great grandfather, W.G. Bean, in 1896. Her grandmother, Doris Bean Thompson, and grandfather, Leonard Thompson, assumed leadership in 1931. Her father, Geoffrey Thompson, oversaw the business from 1976 until 2004.

Accomplishments and affiliations...

- Received the coveted Order of the British Empire (OBE) honor for her services to tourism in 2012
- First vice chair, International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (will chair in 2020, becoming first woman from Europe to chair IAAPA, first second member of a family to chair and third woman to chair in organization's 100-year history)
- Has chaired IAAPA's Europe, Middle East and Africa Advisory Committee and served on board of directors and various committees
- Michael Elliott Award for Director of the Year

Being involved is the key to success

BLACKPOOL, England — Amanda Thompson OBE is not a simple person. Far from it. Yet her formula to success includes elements that are notably simple.

"I am very involved," said Thompson, referring to all aspects of the companies she leads. "I have a team of people that I work with, and I work with my team. I am not afraid of making mistakes or taking responsibility.

"You have to make it happen. You can either sink or swim."

And swim she has, all while juggling the management of Blackpool Pleasure Beach and Stageworks Worldwide Productions, an entertainment company she founded in 1982 that produces shows globally. She directs and produces with very much a hands-on approach.

In 2019, Thompson will open Blackpool's second hotel, the 120-room Boulevard Hotel, which she designed. It follows the 157-room Big Blue Hotel at Blackpool, a success since its debut in 2003.

Her design vision for a new coaster led to the opening of Blackpool's \$18 million-plus Icon earlier this year. Manufactured by Mack Rides, it is the U.K.'s first double-launch coaster, soaring to a maximum height of 88 feet and speeds of up to 53 mph.

Like Icon, Thompson is a force. She's also a fighter, and it has not been an easy road.

Thompson's rise to managing director of Blackpool was neither gradual nor comfortable. Not that she wasn't a part of the family business over the years: she had been very active in the industry while also gaining life experiences.

Thompson worked for a fashion design label, Joseph, in London. She launched her Stageworks business. She even produced and directed shows on an annual basis for Europa-Park for 13 years. She stacked her jobs one on top of the other, always maintaining at least two at any given time. In 2000, she became deputy managing director of Blackpool with a focus on live entertainment.

Much earlier, as a child, Thompson had stints at the park. Right before her seventh birthday, she worked for about two weeks at the pony rides. It was a deal she had struck with her grandfather because she wanted a pony for her birthday, unbeknownst to her father, who had already nixed the idea. (She got the pony anyway.)

When she was 17 years old, Thompson's father gave her permission to set up a booth at the park. She had an idea of spray-painting guests' hair different colors.

"And they paid me to do it," she said.

But on a Saturday in June 2004, her life changed dramatically. During her wedding reception, her father collapsed. He was pronounced dead

Amanda Thompson

Managing Director
Blackpool Pleasure Beach
Lancashire, England



shortly thereafter at Blackpool Victoria Hospital.

There was no honeymoon for the newlyweds.

"It was an extraordinary situation, actually," Thompson recalled. "It was not one I was ready for, but I knew it was my responsibility to take over the family business. When I arrived at work on that next Monday, I had bankers knocking at my door. They hadn't been prepared for what happened, either. They didn't know what to expect."

It was overwhelming for Thompson and not a great time financially for the park. But giving up was not part of her character. She knew she had to stand up, devise a plan, make changes.

Thompson began developing her team, leaning heavily on family. Her brother, Nick Thompson, became deputy managing director. Close by were her sister, Fiona Gilje; her mother, Barbara Thompson; her grandmother, Doris Bean Thompson; and her husband, Steve Thompson. She also had support from members of IAAPA.

Yet life struck another blow later that same month when her grand-

mother passed away at age 101.

It was a harrowing time. And it was even more challenging because it was not common at that time for a woman to be in such a high-profile position. Thompson found she had to work harder than any man.

"You have to have a strong personality," she said. "You have to lead by example."

She dove in. Over the next years, she streamlined the park's operations while also introducing new attractions, such as Nickelodeon Land in 2011. She continued producing new entertainment shows.

She delivered. Her team delivered. Blackpool Pleasure Beach continues to thrive.

Thompson's advice to young women entering the industry is what has worked for her.

"Be prepared to be way better than any man," she said. "Never complain. Never moan. Just get to the job at hand.

"You are only as good as your last production."

—Pam Sherborne

MARKET WATCH

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 10/29/18	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	30.43	40.60	29.57
Merlin Entertainments Group / Legoland	MERL	LSE	321.80	415.70	304.50
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	51.33	70.82	47.89
Comcast Corp./NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	35.99	44.00	30.43
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	113.04	119.69	97.68
Dubai Parks & Resorts	DXBE:UH	DFM	0.35	0.76	0.32
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	68.06	71.00	51.87
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	9010	TYO	3245.00	3750.00	2501.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	1.24	2.30	1.18
Lefoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	5.49	8.26	5.45
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	24.23	38.41	23.81
Parques Reunidos Servicios Centrales S.A.	ES:PQR	MCE	10.80	15.45	10.12
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	JP:6357	TYO	1511.00	1864.00	945.00
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	25.08	32.47	10.42
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	52.61	73.38	51.91
DreamEast Group Ltd.	HK:0593	SEHK	9.65	15.88	8.46
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	640.00	704.00	554.00
Village Roadshow	AU:VRL	ASX	2.24	4.15	1.73

STOCK PRICES ABOVE ARE GENERALLY QUOTED IN THE FOREIGN CURRENCY IN WHICH THE COMPANY IS LOCATED

Worldwide Markets: ASX, Australian Securities Exchange; CSE, Copenhagen Stock Exchange; LSE, London Stock Exchange; NYSE, New York Stock Exchange; NASDAQ, National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations; SEHK, Hong Kong Stock Exchange; SZSE, Shenzhen Stock Exchange; TSEC, Taiwan Stock Exchange, Corp.; TYO/TSE, Tokyo Stock Exchange

—SOURCES: Bloomberg.com; Wall Street Journal

BUSINESS WATCH

Cedar Fair's third-quarter net revenues rise

SANDUSKY, Ohio — Cedar Fair Entertainment Co. reported record net revenues of \$664 million in its third quarter, which ended Sept. 23, and announced a four percent increase in its quarterly cash distribution. A two percent increase over last year's third-quarter results was driven by a two percent increase in average in-park guest per capita spending and an eight percent increase in out-of-park revenues, including resort accommodations. Preliminary net revenues for the 10 months ended Oct. 28 were up one percent, driven by a one percent increase in average in-park guest per capita spending and a five percent increase in out-of-park revenues. The company reaffirmed its expectations to achieve full-year net revenues between \$1.32 billion and \$1.34 billion and adjusted EBITDA between \$460 million and \$470 million.

Six Flags is up, but analysts not impressed

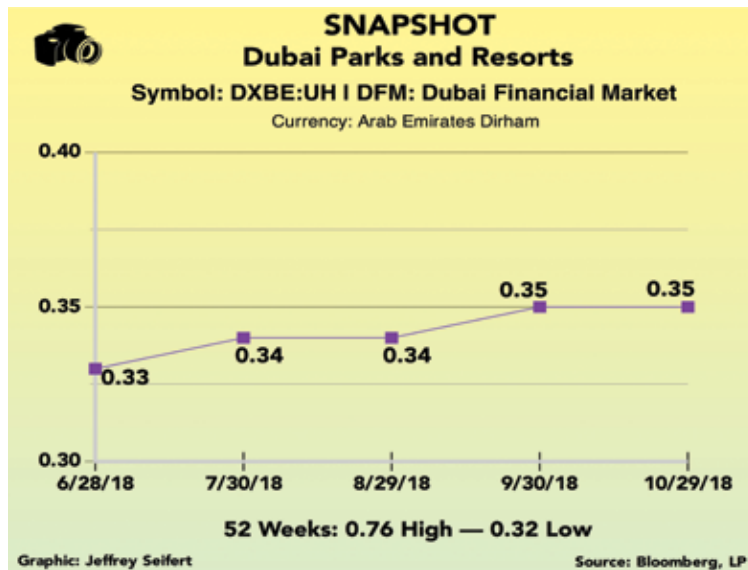
GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas — Six Flags Entertainment Co. announced that its third-quarter revenue increased \$39 million, or seven percent, from the same period last year to \$620 million. The revenue growth was primarily driven by a five percent increase in attendance to 13.6 million and a 42 percent increase in sponsorship, international agreement and accommodations revenue. Net income for the quarter increased \$3 million, or two percent, compared to the prior-year period, and diluted earnings per share increased two percent to \$2.16, primarily due to the growth in the business and the positive impact of tax reform, partially offset by an increase in stock-based compensation related to accounting for the company's Project 600 award. Adjusted EBITDA in the third quarter increased \$6 million, or 2 percent, to \$307 million compared to the prior-year period. Six Flags' numbers did not meet the expectations of some analysts, including one who told **Bloomberg.com** that the "softer-than-expected quarter was driven by attendance levels below expectations and higher operating costs." Shares reportedly sank as much as 16 percent in the day following the company's third-quarter announcement — said to be a 13-month low. During an earnings call, Six Flags CEO **Jim Reid-Anderson** attributed the slower attendance growth to "the worst third-quarter weather" in his nine years with the company.

Dave & Buster's enjoys double-digit growth

DALLAS — Entertainment center operator **Dave & Buster's Entertainment, Inc.**, reported double-digit revenue growth in its second quarter, ended Aug. 5. Key highlights compared to the prior-year period include a 13.7 percent increase in total revenues to \$319.2 million from \$280.8 million (or 11.4 percent on a comparable week basis); net income of \$33.8 million, or \$0.84 per diluted share, versus net income of \$30.4 million, or \$0.71 per diluted share; and a 17.1 percent increase in EBITDA to \$75 million from \$64 million (or 6.7% on a comparable week basis). The company also opened five new locations during the quarter — one more than in the same period last year. Comparable store sales decreased 2.4 percent.

Djurs Sommerland sees record attendance

NIMTOFTE, Denmark — Following a record-breaking Halloween celebration in October that drew more than 96,000 visitors, **Djurs Sommerland** theme park has notched a new record for total attendance — with more than 817,000 guests having passed through its gates in 2018. CEO **Henrik B. Nielsen** has credited the park's bold investment strategy, which has placed heavy emphasis on major rides and attractions, with an overall 50 percent increase in attendance over the last decade.



DIESEL PRICES

Region (U.S.)	As of 10/29/18	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$3.346	+\$0.535
Midwest	\$3.310	+\$0.500
Gulf Coast	\$3.117	+\$0.478
Mountain	\$3.405	+\$0.462
West Coast	\$3.564	+\$0.544
California	\$4.074	+\$0.889

CURRENCY

On 10/30/18 \$1 USD =

0.8780	EURO
0.7800	GBP (British Pound)
112.19	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9997	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.4119	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.3111	CAD (Canadian Dollar)

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For R&R Creative Amusement Designs, it's all in the details

Anaheim company delivers solutions, value for customers

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Over the last four decades, **R&R Creative Amusement Designs, Inc.**, has been producing the kind of reliably imaginative design and theming work that turns rides into classics and keeps park visitors coming back.

The award-winning firm, headquartered in a quiet neighborhood not far from the **Disneyland Resort** and without a large staff, is strikingly modest given its longevity and output. But its work is far from low profile — having garnered the World Waterpark Association's Innovation Award three times.

R&R's clientele includes 40-plus water parks, a number of which are ongoing customers. The company has worked on more than a dozen dark rides, including classics such as Yosemite Sam and the Gold River Adventure at **Six Flags Over Texas** and Cave Train Adventure at **Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk**. **Indiana Beach Amusement & Water Park Resort**, **Noah's Ark Waterpark** in Wisconsin Dells, the **Miami Seaquarium** and **Sea Life Park Hawaii** are among the theming rehabs for which it has been hired in recent years. From creating park souvenir maps to designing entire parks, no job is too small or large for R&R and its president, **Rick Bastrup**.

"I've got six or eight artists and technicians that I bring on a needed, depending on the scope of the project, but sometimes I do it all myself," Bastrup told *Amusement Today*. "For the client to be able to talk to me anytime, anywhere, makes a lot of difference in keeping a project controlled."

Such direct-dealing, collaborative efficiency, together with a long track record of great



R&R Creative Amusement Designs supplied theming and produced storytelling videos for **Merlin's Mayhem**, a new family suspended roller coaster at **Dutch Wonderland** in Lancaster, Pa. Actor **Luke Cook** played Merlin opposite the animated dragon, **Mayhem**. COURTESY R&R CREATIVE AMUSEMENT DESIGNS

results, has earned R&R a reputation for one-stop shopping — particularly with customers who have large and diverse property portfolios. They include the national amusement park and family entertainment center operators **Apex Parks Group** of Aliso Viejo, Calif., and **Palace Entertainment** of Newport Beach, Calif.

Palace called R&R in 2017 for a theming assist on **Merlin's Mayhem**, the new family inverted roller coaster (from **S&S Worldwide**) at the company's **Dutch Wonderland** amusement park in Lancaster, Pa. R&R delivered thematic designs for the coaster's queue, loading station and retail store; graphic design for all themed signs; and fully produced videos for the queue and loading station featuring two characters associated with the ride — Merlin and Mayhem.

"The park wanted to tell the story that this little dragon named Mayhem was running around causing trouble, and Merlin, a wizard, was looking for him," Bastrup said. "They already had illustrations of the characters, so I took it from there as far as the theming. We talked about doing animatronics, but I kind of steered them toward telling the story with videos instead, because you can do a lot more. I basically did

the writing, producing and editing."

A challenge of the project for Bastrup was finding a reasonably priced actor to play Merlin as a live character in the videos. He lucked out when, after some auditioning, he found a tall performer named **Luke Cook**.

"Luke had a small part in *Guardians of the Galaxy* as one of the bad guys," said Bastrup, who works with a studio in Anaheim and other regional contacts when a project calls for acting and voiceover talent. "Luke is actually from Australia, and he's here working on his career in Hollywood. He did a great job."

The **Merlin's Mayhem** project was just one of many R&R either completed or initiated this year. Others have included new special effects for the **Lost River of the Pharaohs** dark ride and color selection / theming for the **Glacier Run** waterslide at **Water World** in Hyland Hills, Colo.; renderings for **Quarry Park Adventures** in Rocklin, Calif. (near Sacramento); redesigned theming for the major buildings at **Raging Waters Los Angeles** in San Dimas, Calif.; and park area maps for **Roaring Camp Railroad** north of Santa Cruz, Calif., and **Thomas Town** at **Kennywood** amusement park in West Mifflin, Pa.



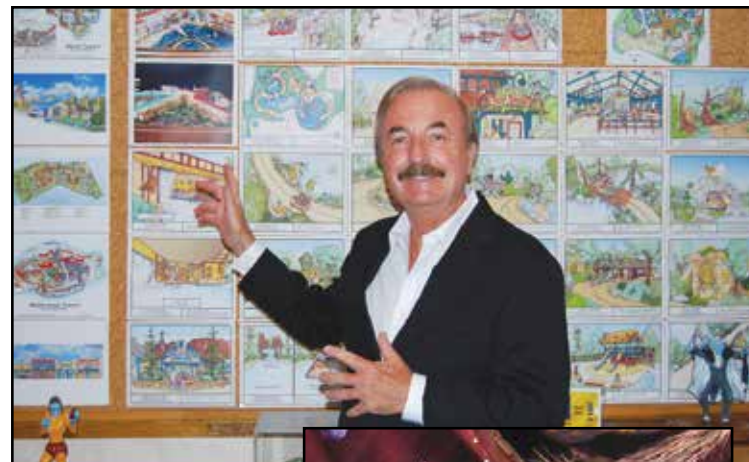
When he isn't creating and updating attractions, Bastrup, who also does police work, performs around Southern California with his 1960s surf music-inspired band, **The Nocturnes**. The pacing and rhythm of music, he noted, also inspires his attractions work.

Ultimately, it all goes into keeping his clients happy.

"Being creative and effi-

cient, and listening to what clients want and what they're thinking, is the key," Bastrup said. "A lot of times the client may have no real idea, or sometimes they've got a fairly defined idea, of what they want. Listening to the client's needs and working within budget, and yet being creative, is the way I do things."

•randrdesign.com



When he isn't filling his office wall with project storyboards, **Rick Bastrup**, president of **R&R Creative Amusement Designs**, is hitting the stage with **The Nocturnes**, his 1960s surf music-inspired band.

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Legendary game recognized by Florida city

Bob's Space Racers honored with Whac-A-Mole street name

HOLLY HILL, Fla. — On Nov. 1, the city of Holly Hill honored **Bob's Space Racers** and the Whac-A-Mole game brand by renaming the street where the Bob's Space Racers company is located. The new street name is Whac-A-Mole Way. The name change recognizes the contribution of the ubiquitous Whac-A-Mole game to the local economy and the amusement industry. The game has become a part of American culture.

In the beginning Whac-A-Mole was just a challenging game where the player tries to whack moles popping up in the game. Just as you whack one another pops up. Today the reference to Whac-A-Mole game is used as an analogy for the problems and annoyances that just can't be beat down. The game has taken on many forms in arcades, carnivals, amusement parks, home board games, playing cards, toys and various branded merchandise.

Bob's Space Racers has been at the same location for 46 years. **Don Anderson** and **Garold Denton**, two carnival businessmen, attempted to build the first mole hunter game. These enterprising men wanted something new for the carnival midway. They had not been able to build a

working model. That is where **Bob Cassata**, founder of Bob's Space Racers, came in and finished the development of the Whac-A-Mole game in 1977. Current Bob's President **Jack Cook**, said, "It isn't easy to make a game that is hammered on hours every day and stays in one piece and works every time."

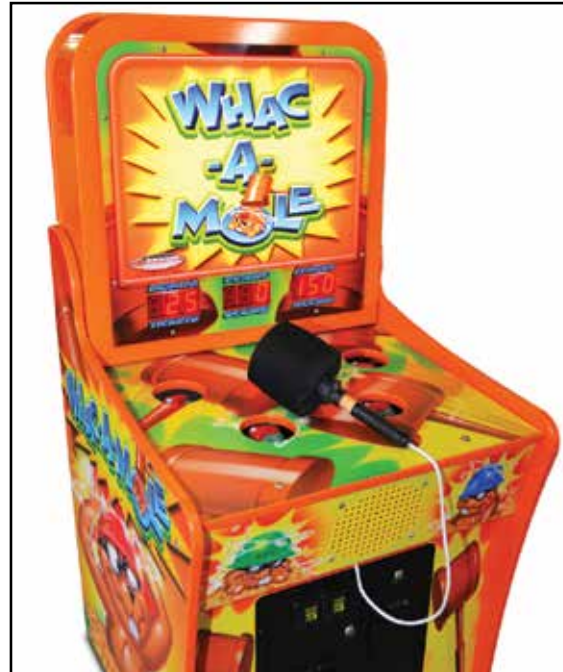
From there, Cassata acquired the rights to the Whac-A-Mole game from Anderson and Denton. He then went on to invent the arcade coin operated version, a best score of the day, computer-controlled electronics, durable hammers, optical sensing technology, sound effects, special kid versions and custom "Whac-A" games for corporate marketing. In 2008 the brand rights were sold to **Mattel Inc.** which manufactures a home board game. But still the company holds the rights to produce all of the amusement versions.

The game can be found in almost every amusement park and fair in the country. In closing, Cook said, "We are proud of the honor to have the street named after our game. It is one of the most widely recognized game brands in the world. To think it all started right here on Whac-A-Mole Way in Holly Hill, Florida is amazing."



Bob's Space Racers, Bob Cassata, seating far right, was the creator of the popular Whac-A-Mole game. Two carnival operators had worked on the concept for the game but could not get it to work long term. They turned to Cassata who developed a working model for the two men. He then acquired the rights to the game and advanced it into a coin-operated game that took amusement arcades and facilities by storm. Also shown here are BSR's Glenda and Jack Cook.

COURTESY BOB'S SPACE RACERS



Bob's Space Racers has been producing the largest selection of cutting-edge games in their same Holly Hill, Fla., location for 46 years. Now, on Nov. 1, the company was honored with its most recognized game, Whac-A-Mole, receiving its own street name from the city. The first Whac-A-Mole was produced in 1977. It has since been rebranded into countless themes making it the most recognized game in the company's rich game portfolio.

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An amusement industry retrospective

The long business ride of the Miler coaster-manufacturing clan

AT: Ron Gustafson

Special to Amusement Today

PORTLAND, Ore. — It was an image that captivated the nation in late October 2012. The somewhat gnarled yet still largely intact steel framework of a roller coaster, plucked from its perch on a wave-battered amusement pier in Seaside Heights, N.J., protruding from the calm, chilly Atlantic in the wake of Superstorm Sandy.

"I had two emotions after seeing it on television," recalled **Fred Miler**, 75, who engineered and built the ride, called **Star Jet** and opened on **Casino Pier** in 2002. "Of course, I was heart-broken, but at the same time somewhat proud of how it supported itself against the fierce wind."

The ride plunged 20 feet into the ocean after a portion of the pier collapsed in the storm, which caused damage in excess of \$65 billion along the eastern U.S. coast. In May of 2013, the coaster was dismantled and finally removed from the surf.

"It was especially hard to see that clamshell excavator ripping it apart," Miler said.

The fate of this particular attraction is just one chapter in the 73-year history of **Miler Mfg.** and its association with some of the industry's most popular rides. The Portland-based family is in its third generation of providing roller coasters large and small to domestic operators.

"My dad [**Carl Miler**] actually completed his first prototype of a kiddie coaster in our backyard in 1946," Miler said. "That made me very popular with the neighborhood kids, as they would come over to test the ride. I also remember my grandfather helping to work on it."

That early Miler coaster was booked for the summer into **Jantzen Beach Amusement Park** (1928-70) in Portland, where it had a successful season.

In 1948 Carl Miler sold his first production unit roller coaster to **Douglas Shows** carnival. "That was a second-generation coaster, and Dad had a patent on the wheel system, filed in the same year," Miler said.

Carl Miler's train design incorporated an articulating axle and two wheel-trucks under each car. Flanged steel wheels ran on top of the rail with the flanges running on the inside.

"Dad used his newer design on his larger track systems, including the Wild Mouse rides he built in the '50s," Miler said.



Two 1956-built Carl Miler Wild Mouse coasters operate today: Lakeside Park in Denver and this model at Wonderland Park in Amarillo, Texas. The Wonderland coaster was recently outfitted with magnetic braking. AT FILE/GARY SLADE

"It's interesting to note, too, that my father was a high school dropout but had an amazing talent for creativity and eyeball-engineering. Some of us try very hard with all of our sophisticated engineering tools to do those same things."

Compact thrills

According to family records, the first portable Wild Mouse built by Carl Miler was booked in 1957 with **Royal American Shows**, an iconic carnival company with which Miler already had an 18-foot portable coaster dubbed the world's largest. Both rides traveled with the rest of the carnival by train until about 1970.

Lakeside Amusement Park, Denver, Colo., operates a Miler mouse, as does **Wonderland Amusement Park**, Amarillo, Texas. Both rides were built by Carl Miler as park models in 1956.

"It's still one of the most popular rides in the park," noted **Paul Borchardt**, owner of Wonderland, which acquired the piece — named **Cyclone** — in 1967 from **Funtown** in Atlanta, Ga., after that park closed. Prior to that, the ride operated at Oklahoma City's **Springlake Park** for one year.

"People ride, get off and right back on," Borchardt said. "We still have the original cars and just rebuilt them. There are a lot of mouse coasters out there, but none that are as thrilling as this ride."

Miler had stiff competition from other manufacturers, including **Allan Herschell Co.**, of North Tonawanda, N.Y., and **B.A. (Ben) Schiff & Associates** of Miami, Fla.

"Dad's second-generation coaster, we felt, was copied by Schiff," Fred Miler said. "You can see the similarities in the

tracks."

The largest coaster produced by the company was the **Hi Miler**, which operated at **Playland at the Beach** in San Francisco, Calif., in the early 1970s.

"It was his masterpiece," Miler said. "He took this one on the road for a few years and it was a top ride in the Southwest fair circuit."

The ride eventually wound up with Arizona's **Ray Cammack Shows**, which toured it from 1982 to 2011 before retiring it.

Carl Miler built a children's mixer-style ride in the early 1960s as well as a portable fun house and a portable electric monorail for **Royal American Shows**.

Miler Mfg. ceased operation in the mid-1970s. Carl Miler passed away in 2001 at age 91.

A legacy revived

Earning an engineering degree from **Oregon State University**, Fred Miler did not immediately set about following in his father's footsteps.

"I didn't want to go into the rides business," he said. "I



The first family coaster to be built by Fred Miler's new Miler Coaster, Inc. was the **Scooby Zoom** at Ohio's **Kings Island** where it operates today. AT FILE/TIM BALDWIN

worked at **Hyster** designing forklifts and then for **Dan Kinski** [former amusement rides manufacturer in Salem, Ore.] for a few years before he closed."

Miler moved into infrared imaging and computerized material-handling equipment. But by the late 1980s, the amusement industry beckoned. In 1989 he started **Miler Coaster, Inc.**, and reserved booth space at the **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA)** trade show, where — thanks to the family name — he immediately got a nibble from Ohio's **Kings Island** theme park.

Three years later, Kings Island opened **Scooby Zoom**, the first family coaster designed and built by Fred Miler. The ride continues to operate with the name **Great Pumpkin Coaster**, inspired by **Charles Schulz's** "Charlie Brown" comic strip.

The manufacturing shop had six on staff during that startup period.

"It was tough getting started," Miler reflected. "We were doing low volume; insurance costs were high as well as other

overhead. We had some tough years in there, but built some pretty good rides."

It was not long before the company was creating some larger coasters, log flumes and a water coaster model it named **Kersplash**. Fred Miler's son, **Eric Miler**, joined him in running the company during the same period.

The additional orders allowed Miler to expand his workforce to 30. But still, there were struggles.

"Everything during that time frame was a prototype, and it was hard to be profitable," he said of the process.

But through it all, the Miler business persevered — and produced. Since 2008, Fred and Eric have been partners in a new company: **E&F Miler Industries**. It caters to what Miler called a "niche" market.

"I kind of like it," he said, noting that the company is flexible enough to maintain production even in the coaster-building off-season. "We're also doing some work in the lumber equipment industry, and that diversification helps the ride business. Eric runs the shop, does much of the purchasing, and supplies parts and technical advice to customers. I still do the engineering and sales, but in a small business you do what you have to do when you have to do it."

After ramping things up three decades ago, Miler now has more than 50 roller coasters in the field — most of them in the U.S., with a few in Canada.

Since Miler began manufacturing his own coasters, he has used channel iron for the track. The train system uses wheel trucks with two road wheels and two side wheels. Polyurethane-coated wheels also make



One of the largest of the Miler coasters is the **Scandia Screamer** in Ontario, Calif., which stands 87 feet high and has 2,600 feet of track. The coaster is currently poised for relocation. COURTESY ERIC SAKOWSKI

► See MILER, page 75

► MILER

Continued from page 74

for a much quieter ride than older coasters with metal on metal.

Most of the roller coasters being built by Miler are children's rides in a variety of sizes but do accommodate adult riders.

One of the largest of the Miler coasters is the Scandia Screamer, located at Scandia amusement park in Ontario, Calif., which stands 87 feet high and has 2,600 feet of track.

"The majority are custom designs to fit into someone's space," Miler said of industry trends. "They want 'one exactly like this, except for...' — that's what we hear a lot of the time."

He also hears owners of his company's rides talk happily about them.

The Ravine Flyer 3 at Waldameer Park in Erie, Pa., is a custom Miler coaster that opened in 2000. It travels over a former bumper boat pond in the park.

"It's a very good family ride," said Steve Gorman, park president. "It has been low maintenance and parts are easy to replace."

Seabreeze Amusement Park in Rochester, N.Y., also has a custom-designed Miler, Bear



The destruction left by Superstorm Sandy in 2012 wrecked several of the New Jersey shore parks, including casino Pier and the Miler-built Star Jet which fell into the ocean when the amusement pier collapsed. AT FILE/NJAA

Trax, installed in 1997.

"It's our number-one kiddie ride, but parents can ride, too," said John Norris, park vice president. "Family rides are very important to us, and this is a small coaster but packs a wallop. It took the place of our Allan Herschell Bunny Rabbit [Little Dipper]."

Tom Canfield, executive vice president of Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk in Santa Cruz, Calif., described his park's Miler installation, the Sea Serpent, as a thrilling first coaster experience for younger guests as well as for families.

"It's custom-built into the

terrain, so it is not like any other coaster," Canfield said. "Fred Miler came down multiple times to take measurements so that he could go back to the shop and design a coaster to fit the location. That attention to detail really helped make it the great ride it is."

These days, Miler himself would rather be fishing. But he acknowledged that he will "probably always stay in the engineering side" of his company.

"Nothing makes me happier than seeing a kid run off one of my coasters and say, 'Mom, I want to go again,'" he said.

•miler-ind.com

The misadventures of the Miler Old Mill

Carl Miler was an independent ride operator at the Oregon State Fair in Salem for a number of years. In January of 1955 he signed a contract to build and operate one of his all-steel roller coasters at the fair, according to a report in the *The Billboard*.

"Dad had two rides at the fair," Fred Miler recalled. "Besides the coaster, which was a pretty good shaker [sending loose change and other passenger items flying], he had an Old Mill."

The water current-driven boat ride, housed in permanent structure, provided its share of fun — along with opportunities for rider mischief.

"Kids were always holding the boats back so they could throw stuff at the scenes," Miler said. "I remember a few times when drunks came staggering out late at night after sinking the boats inside."

Two episodes were particularly memorable.

Someone tossed detergent into the water that churned through the ride's trough, creating a mountain of foam. "The bubbles coming out of the tunnel were all the way up to the ceiling," Miler said with a chuckle. "We got them knocked down in a hurry and they finally dissolved."

The attraction's props, when not vandalized, sometimes malfunctioned. Miler laughed as he recalled the fate of a monkey figurine that rode a unicycle as it spun around on a turntable.

"There was an electrical problem one day and the monkey caught fire, so he was actually flaming — still riding the unicycle — for a few minutes. Thankfully, the fire was put out and no one was injured."

—Ron Gustafson

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

National Roller Coaster Museum to expand with new building

New exhibition space will honor Mark Moore, industry pioneer

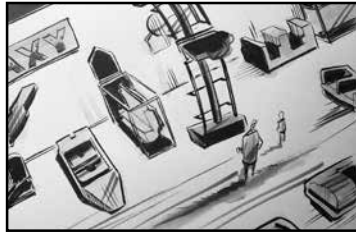
PLAINVIEW, Texas — Thanks to the incredible generosity of the entire amusement industry, the **National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives (NRCMA)** is expanding its Plainview, Texas, archive facility to include a nearly 10,000-square-foot exhibition space to be named after founding board member and **Uremet Corporation** founder **Mark Moore**.

The Mark Moore Wing will display a portion of the Museum's vast collection of artifacts, designs, photographs and ride vehicles for public viewing and for research purposes. Its nearly three-story vaulted ceiling will allow the largest of the equipment and signage to be displayed, as well as provide a second floor mezzanine for additional exhibits. The

new building will be attached to the existing 10,000-square-foot archive space with a new entrance building featuring a 1930s Eyerly Octopus ticket booth, pre-experience theater and a multi-purpose carousel-themed meeting room.

Building construction will begin in spring 2019. The interior design and exhibition space completion are estimated to conclude in the summer of 2021. Fundraising for the expansion is ongoing. Donations can be made online at rollercoastermuseum.org or by mailing the NRCMA at PO Box 5424, Arlington, Texas 76005.

A 1:48 scale model of the entire museum building complex, including the donated artifacts, will be on display during the **2018 IAAPA Attractions Expo**



Clockwise from top left, the NRCMA new Mark Moore Wing will feature more than 100 park artifacts including this section of Vekoma SLC track from The Great Nor'Easter at Morey's Piers; visitors will be able to look down on the main floor displays from the second floor exhibit area and a carousel theme has been selected for a multi-use meeting room. The new exhibit area will open in summer 2021. NRCMA RENDERINGS/BUBBA FLINT

at the NRCMA booth #4314, November 12-16. The model was recently on display during the 2018 **Golden Ticket Awards** in Branson, Mo. After the IAAPA Expo, its industry tour will

continue in January 2019 traveling to the annual **AIMS Safety Seminar** in Galveston, Texas.

The NRCMA continues to expand its collection of artifacts and archiving facilities in

Plainview, Texas, but the museum needs financial support from the amusement industry, its loyal fans and amusement parks everywhere if these efforts are to continue.

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SAFETY, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

▶ Quassy's Eric Anderson to become next NEAAPA president — Page 84

Safety and efficiency by design at new S&S Worldwide facility

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

LOGAN, Utah — When S&S Worldwide debuted its new facility in the spring, considerable thought went into the layout of the new headquarters. In addition to employee comfort and collaboration being engrained, the production bays were designed logically, and in so doing created advancements in safety.

“After six months in our new facility, the increased productivity and improved work flow that we had anticipated have begun to be realized in a far more cost-efficient manner,” said **Tim Timco**, CEO. “The additional space and state-of-the-art facility provides an environment that allows for our projects to be processed in such an organized and structured fashion that uniformly has improved working conditions, safety and employee morale with appreciable results.”

Approaching its 25th anniversary, S&S Worldwide has seen incredible growth as



Overhead cranes and state-of-the-art air circulation made significant strides in safety in S&S' welding shop. AT/TIM BALDWIN

a company. That launch to the global stage found the company having to continue to build onto the original facility. A few years ago, S&S decided a more efficient approach was necessary and the new headquarters was built and opened in 2018. Improvements have been significant.

“For the weld shops and the air scrubbers, we worked with a local vendor to put in [systems] to circulate the air,” said **Jason Mons**, COO. “In our previous shop, the business and building grew up around us, not vice versa. We forced the building to do what we needed it to do. We were handling a lot by forklifts. There are better ways to do it. The problem with handling equipment with forklifts, it can move. By adding the workstation cranes, we have reduced individual lifting and decreased forklift traffic. They have their tools right in their work station to do everything they need to do safely. We've minimized the movement of product from one place to another which minimizes the opportunity for injuries. I'm excited about it.”

Mons feels that the improvements eliminate the

possibility for an employee to attempt something by themselves which creates an opportunity for simple mishaps. Also, the additional jib cranes can lift the finished item and move it on in the process. With less handling, the chance of damage to the parts is also reduced in the

new environment.

“When you think of weld shops, you think of dark, stinky, smoky [places],” **Preston Perkes**, director of administration, told *Amusement Today*. “Now the facility is bright and has all the resources available to everyone. We have air that can be cleaned in six minutes. It is a complete ‘extreme home makeover.’ It's like a facility like no other I have seen.”

In the past, welders had to use mag lights for small parts, but with the new lighting they are no longer needed.

From the positioning of the building to best receive shipments of materials in the Utah climate to the circular flow of production in correct sequence, careful planning has achieved results in this past half year. Shipping and receiving materials on the south side of the building is more productive as the northern side can sometimes deal with ice.

“The flow of operations in the previous facility was very

▶ See S&S, page 78



Improvements made in the machine shop where raw materials are prepared for welding include brighter LED lighting and special doors and conveyors leading from the outside directly to equipment for processing. AT/TIM BALDWIN



The flow of parts in production moves directly into new painting bays followed by areas that prepare them to be shipped eliminating a need for extensive movement throughout the facility. AT/TIM BALDWIN

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► **S&S**

Continued from page 77

scattered — a lot of bouncing back and forth. Here the clockwise motion — from the time it comes into receiving to inspection to weld shop, paint and assembly — we've tried to minimize the steps and keep everything flowing from one person to the next. This minimizes handling and increases efficiencies," said Mons.

Before heading into the paint shop, blast bays prepare the steel for painting. A dust collection system overturns the air every 90 seconds. This helps maintain temperature control in the workspace for the employees as well by not having to send the conditioned air out with the dust.

All parts of the new headquarters are interconnected. At no point does a ride part or crew have to venture out of the walls of the facility; all work connects indoors. This brings an additional layer of safety, efficiency and productivity in creating the parts and rides for the customer as no segment of the production is disconnected. Even a wood-



shop area created to build the shipping crates is located adjacent to the room where finished product awaits shipping to the customer.

Mons recalled that the separated buildings at the previous site would sometimes have parts stored outside. "We got two feet of snow in one day. I had to get a metal detector to locate the parts we were looking for," he laughed. "In the northern Utah environment, never having to go outside is very important."

With a massive new center to put safety at the forefront, S&S Worldwide has positioned itself to approach each new project with invigorated gusto.

"The building is working just as we had planned," said Mons. "Our improvements to lighting, lifting and flow not only contribute to employee comfort and productivity, but also to safety."



When S&S Worldwide opened its new facility, even the orientation of the receiving doors was taken into consideration to best work with Northern Utah's range of climates. All S&S and Arrow parts have been meticulously organized and barcoded for renewed efficiency in fulfilling orders.

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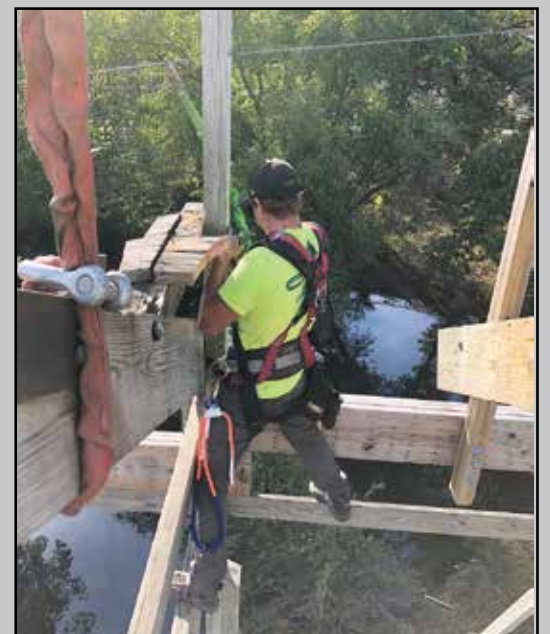
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Busy 2018 for builder/installer Amuse Rides



COEUR D'ALENE, Idaho — Wooden roller coaster repairs, ride installations / relocations and complete site work are among the specialties of Amuse Rides. Projects this year have taken the growing company and its 12-man crew from coast to coast and included track repair on the Comet at Six Flags Great Escape, Queensbury, New York; Thunder Run at Kentucky Kingdom, Louisville; Apocalypse at Six Flags Magic Mountain, Valencia, Calif.; and Zeus, Hades 360 and Cyclops (shown) at Mt. Olympus in Wisconsin Dells, Wis. Other projects included ground-up construction of the French Quarter Funnel Cake & Churro restaurant at California's Great America in Santa Clara (shown) and the installation, with WhiteWater West, of Roaring Springs — a Shoot the Chute at ZooTampa at Lowry Park in Florida (see story, page 38). COURTESY AMUSE



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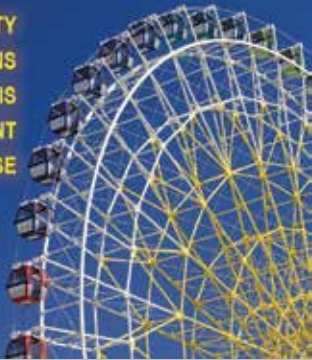
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All clear for the Zippin Pippin



Control panel operator Hayley Winzenried awaits the all-clear signal on the station of the Zippin Pippin roller coaster at Bay Beach Amusement Park, the city-owned park in Green Bay, Wis. Hayley is in her third year of being a certified control panel operator. The coaster plans were purchased from Libertyland in Memphis, Tenn. Bay Beach did receive the old coaster but, in the end, none of it could be used. It was built anew by Martin & Vleminckx and opened in 2011. AT/GARY SLADE

NAARSO safety school returns to New England

SPRINGFIELD, Mass. — On March 18-22, the New England Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (NEAAPA) again hosts the National Association of Amusement Ride Safety Officials (NAARSO) outreach safety school and testing session. The seminar will take place during the 106th NEAAPA Anniversary Education Conference & Annual Meeting at the Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel. Participants may enroll in 32- or 16-hour tracks or testing only.

In addition to educational sessions, the conference will include time with manufacturers and suppliers in the vendor showcase, an NEAAPA awards presentation and Hall of Fame induction, and the annual meeting dinner.

More than 50 took part



The 2018 NAARSO outreach safety school and testing session, hosted by NEAAPA, drew more than 50 participants. The seminar returns to New England March 18-22, 2019, with NEAAPA hosting again. COURTESY NEAAPA

in the 2018 program, which included state inspectors in New England and individual NEAAPA members who inspect and maintain their own

rides, as well as others who inspect facilities nationwide. Registration is now open at neaapa.com.

—Ron Gustafson

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Before



After



After

Park leader to become next NEAAPA president

How Eric Anderson's operational savvy helped save Quassy

AT: Ron Gustafson

Special to Amusement Today

MIDDLEBURY, Conn. — When Eric Anderson was a youngster in 1974, he would make his way into what was then known as Lake Quassapaug Amusement Park from the adjoining Middlebury Recreation Area and — when he thought no one was looking — toss a few extra balls down the arcade's Skee-Ball alleys in hopes of winning some redemption tickets.

His antics didn't last long, though, as the park's owner, John Frantzis, caught on to his scheme.

"I was 11 at the time, and John put me to work on the spot," said Anderson, now 54.

It was his introduction to the amusement industry. And he never looked back.

Having since held a number of positions at the park, Anderson today is president of what now is known as Quassy Amusement & Waterpark. He is also a part of the family, having married the owner's eldest daughter in 1992.

Anderson has, over the last 15 years, overseen vast capital improvements at the property, which just closed its 110th season. Once serviced by an electrified rail line, Quassy is recognized as one of 11 remaining "trolley parks" in the U.S.

Early next year, Anderson will reach another milestone in his career when he is sworn in as president of the New England Association of Amusement Parks and



In August of last year, Quassy's Eric Anderson posed alongside a banner announcing three giant raft slides coming to the park for 2018. Anderson made good on the promise after the park held a press conference in 2015 outlining future projects at the family-owned property. Category 5 Rapids – Extreme Waterslides, opened Memorial Day weekend of this year – the single largest investment in the park's history. COURTESY QUASSY

Attractions (NEAAPA) at its annual meeting, to be held in Springfield, Mass.

The early years

With John Frantzis as his mentor, the young Anderson initially worked the Skee-Ball and Pokerino games in Quassy's arcade. During his teens, he became more involved with the park's group games operation and constructed a building for a 16-player water race concession.

"I remember it very well, as it was during the time when Cabbage Patch Kids [dolls] were a huge moneymaker in the games," Anderson said.

Quassy's arcade machine business reached far beyond the boundaries of the 20-acre

park. Frantzis placed video games, jukeboxes and pool tables in schools, bars and restaurants, generating sizable year-round income. For a number of years, Frantzis, an iconic figure in the arcade industry, also operated a game room in Clearwater Beach, Fla.

Anderson began assisting with the arcade games route in the late 1970s while still in high school and took it on full time after graduating.

"We had more than 100 locations, and it was nonstop," Anderson said of the booming enterprise. "We also played fairs and carnivals in the area while keeping three game rooms running at the park. It was an exciting time — especially the Danbury Fair." He eventually purchased the arcade games business from Frantzis, who is now semi-retired.

By the 1990s, many of the attractions at Quassy itself had become outdated, and the property had fallen into disrepair. In 1999, Anderson and his wife acquired the shares of another park partner, giving Quassy's ownership "all in the family" status. Today, he oversees the daily operation of the park with business partner George Frantzis II, son of late Quassy President George Frantzis and John's nephew.

"I always knew [the park] had potential because I was here and could see the crowds — just envisioning all that could be done."

Anderson had conversations with Ken Ellis of



Quassy's Eric Anderson (third from the left) cuts the ribbon at the new Category 5 Rapids – Extreme Waterslides in May as the park unveiled its largest single project ever. At Eric's left is business partner George Frantzis II. Eric will be sworn in as president of the New England Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (NEAAPA) early next year. COURTESY QUASSY

Cohoes, N.Y.-based Aquatic Development Group, who attended college with Eric's wife, about adding water attractions to the park. The talks initiated what became Quassy's plans to build a water park.

Although the original water park blueprint was rejected by the bank, Quassy forged ahead with a scaled-down version, which received approval.

Of water and wood

Quassy's "rebirth" began in 2003 with the introduction of Saturation Station, an interactive, modular water play area adjacent to the park's beach. Two large waterslides were added in 2006 as the public's hunger for water activities grew.

In 2013, the water park was rebranded Splash Away Bay with the completion of a second major expansion, which included a BulletBowl and two speed slides from ProSlide Technology, Inc., and a children's splash pad from Vortex Aquatic Structures Intl., Inc.

"The water park changed the direction of Quassy," Anderson said of Splash Away Bay's resounding success. "It produced the revenue that permitted us to eliminate all the old debt and put us on stronger financial footing — enabling us to continually add to the park."

There was another significant ingredient in Quassy's formula for success: Wooden Warrior, a 35-foot-tall,

1,250-foot-long family roller coaster that garnered widespread attention after it was introduced in 2011.

"It put us on the international map, that's for certain," Anderson said. "It wasn't that it was a huge or incredibly fast coaster, but it was rather unique in its design along with a state-of-the-art [Timberliner] train."

Designed by The Gravity Group of Cincinnati, Ohio, the ride received rave reviews from coaster and theme park enthusiasts and has been ranked among the top 50 wood coasters in the world ever since.

Wooden Warrior is one of nine new rides added since 2004. Others include Yo-Yo (Chance Rides), Reverse Time (SBF-Visa Group) and Galleon Pirate Ship (Zamperla). Last Memorial Day weekend, Splash Away Bay introduced Category 5 Rapids — Extreme Waterslides, a three-slide ProSlide installation, which marked the single largest investment in the park's history.

"Category 5 capped the last area of the park that wasn't up to our new standards," Anderson said. "It has done exactly what we wanted it do to by doubling our water-park attractions capacity and spreading out our guests from one end of the property to the other."

He added that, with Quassy Amusement & Waterpark now

► See ANDERSON, page 86



Quassy Amusement & Waterparks's John Frantzis (left) and Eric Anderson met more than 40 years ago when Eric — as a youngster — tried his hand at the Skee-Ball alleys at the Middlebury, Conn., facility. Today, Eric serves as the park's president and has led the charge in rejuvenating the 110-year-old property. Frantzis, well known throughout the arcade business, is semi-retired but still makes his daily morning rounds filling arcade games with prizes. COURTESY QUASSY

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Aerial view of Splash Away Bay at Quassy Amusement & Waterpark, Middlebury, Conn. New Category 5 Rapids shown at the top left from ProSlide Technology. The latest addition brings to 15 the number of slides at Splash Away Bay. COURTESY QUASSY

►ANDERSON

Continued from page 84

on solid operational ground, more improvements are planned for coming years.

"I see water — and lots of it. Being in the Northeast, people want to be out and have fun in the summer. We will continue to install new water attractions and modernize our older land rides."

Anderson also sees chang-

es being made in the park's lucrative catering operations. "We hope to consolidate our catering areas, enabling our sales team to offer more economical options."

In the meantime, he is looking forward to his imminent term as president of NEAAPA, which has more than 120 members, including parks, family entertainment centers, attractions, zoos, traveling units, fairs, festivals, manufacturers

and suppliers.

"The association has flourished thanks to the dedicated board of directors, committee members and Secretary Ed Hodgdon [marketing manager of Funtown Splashtown USA in Saco, Maine]," Anderson said. "The board worked on a strategic plan last year with some great groundwork that we can build on. It's a great organization."

•neaapa.com

Eric Anderson's 'magic moments'

• **A Fulfilling Career Highlight:** "Receiving the 2015 Golden Ticket Awards' Turnstile Award with business partner George Frantzis II from *Amusement Today* Publisher Gary Slade."

• **An Episode Best Forgotten:** "We held a professional wrestling event that drew two persons."

• **A Bit of Motivating Wisdom:** "Our son, Chris, went to Lake Compounce [in nearby Bristol, Conn.] with some friends, and when he came back to Quassy, he said 'Dad, you gotta fix this place up!'"



Eric Anderson stands on the lift hill on Wooden Warrior, the marquee ride at Quassy Amusement & Waterpark in Middlebury, Conn. Eric oversaw the building of the much-ballyhooed roller coaster during the 2010-11 construction process. A warrior in his own right, Eric gave up offseason vacationing to see the project completed for an on-time opening. COURTESY QUASSY

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Pa. Amusement Ride Safety Board conducts fall meeting

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

HARRISBURG, Pa. – Representatives from the amusement industry and community volunteers met at the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture headquarters in mid-October.



The 10-member Pennsylvania Ride Safety Advisory Board serves as a recommending body for potential ride approvals that come before them. At the quarterly meeting, members discuss and either accept, conditionally accept, table or reject rides submitted for approval. This helps the Bureau of Ride & Measurement Standards determine their course of action on a particular ride approval process.

The fall meeting featured approvals for three rides.

One involved a **Jung Max (Kolmax) Dragon Coaster DRC 01** model for use in the portable industry. **Deggeller Attractions** is the first operator to bring one into Pennsylvania, as was seen at the recent **York Fair**. "I wish everyone else in Europe was as easy to work with as Kolmax," said **Joe Filoramo**, supervisor of the department's **Amusement Ride Safety Division** — describing the ride application filing and inspection process required with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

EB Entertainment, LLC, based in Konstanz, Germany, recently installed **Wild Hex**, an outdoor aerial adventure course attraction, for the **Chester County Sports Arena** in Downingtown, Pa. The course offers children and others a safe, fun climbing experience utilizing a harness.

SwikaS Amusements, LLC, took delivery on a new kind of portable spinning coaster from **Majestic Manufacturing, Inc.** Called **Back Spin**, it played a few events this season, including the **Bloomsburg Fair**.

"[Together we] built it, exceeding all standards," said company principal **Steve Swika III**. "It is built like a tank." The coaster incorporates numerous safety redundancies.

Robert Henninger, assistant general manager and director of maintenance and construction for **Kennywood** in West Mifflin, Pa., gave a presentation on the park's new 220-foot-tall **S&S Worldwide, Inc.** coaster **Steel Curtain**, which is expected to open Memorial Day weekend. The ride features nine inversions along 4,000 feet of track.

Gary Chubb, senior director of maintenance for **Hershey Entertainment and Resorts Co.**, offered a video and details on a \$150 million expansion of **Hersheypark** in 2020. The entrance area will include numerous year-round shops, a 600-seat restaurant and the park's 1919 carousel, which will be enclosed as well as relocated. The high-profile highlight will be **Hersheypark's** 15th roller coaster. (See story, page 40).

Fred Strathmeyer, deputy secretary of agriculture, thanked the parks, portable operators, advisory group and the state ride safety department. "I'm always impressed with this group, with the diligence of what you do and the level of professionalism you ask of your employees," he said, noting there very few ride incidents during this past season.

Finally, representing *Amusement Today*, this article's reporter congratulated three Pennsylvania parks — **Knoebels Amusement Resort**, **Idlewild & SoakZone** and **Kennywood** — for their **Golden Ticket Awards**, which the publication presented at **Silver Dollar City** in Branson, Mo., in September. **Knoebels** took the **Best Carousel**, **Best Food** and **Best Wooden Coaster** (**Phoenix**) honors, while **Idlewild** was named **Best Children's Park** and **Kennywood** won for **Best Fun House/Walk-Through Attraction** (**Noah's Ark**).

The next meeting is scheduled for January 23.

•agriculture.pa.gov













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10 reasons to attend the 2019 AIMS Safety Seminar, Jan. 13-18

1. Safety is the number-one priority in the amusement industry.

2. The **AIMS Safety Seminar**, to be held Jan. 13-18 in Galveston, Texas, is the top-rated amusement industry safety seminar worldwide.

3. From maintenance and operations workers to top management and industry suppliers, the seminar attracts more than 450 students from all areas of the business — theme and amusement parks, water parks, carnivals, zoos, family entertainment centers and other attractions. You will also learn from your peers and make connections you can use for years to come.

4. Classes are taught by more than 100 instructors — all top-quality industry experts in their fields. More great connections!



5. No other seminar offers such a diverse range of classes. At the AIMS Safety Seminar, you can choose classes that fit your needs.

6. Learning takes place in the classroom, where students and instructors exchange information, as well as through hands-on opportunities at local attractions.

7. AIMS offers certifications in maintenance, operations, ride inspection and aquatics. Students can also earn certifications in OSHA 10, Certified Pool Operator (CPO).

8. Tuition is \$645 and includes class materials, an opening reception, all lunches and snack breaks, a completion certificate and Continuing Education Unit (CEU) from **Old Dominion University**. AIMS has a discount rate of \$115 per night at the **Hilton Galveston Island Resort** with free parking.

9. You can apply for scholarships! The **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA)** provides five scholarships to the AIMS Safety Seminar in memory of **Alan Ramsay**. Application forms can be found at aimsintl.org. The **Outdoor Amusement**

Business Association (OABA) offers four scholarships to OABA members who are first-time AIMS Safety Seminar attendees. Contact oaba@oaba.org for more information.

10. AIMS delivers! More than 92 percent of students who attend an AIMS Safety Seminar plan to attend another.

A complete schedule and class list along with hotel and other information can be found at aimsintl.org. For more information about the AIMS Safety Seminar, please email info@aimsintl.org or contact **Holly Coston**, seminar manager, at (714) 697.6654

During IAAPA Attractions Expo 2018 in Orlando, please visit **AIMS International** at booth #4527!

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Mobaro Park digital solution streamlines attraction operations

AARHUS, Denmark — Addressing the safety, maintenance and operational management needs of the attractions industry, **Mobaro Park** provides a turnkey digital mobile solution that removes the often slow and cumbersome processes associated with paper checklists and documentation.

The company's technology currently is being utilized in more than 40 locations worldwide — including amusement parks, water parks and zoos. Two of the latest include **Sesame Place** in Langhorne, Pa., and **SeaWorld San Diego** in Southern California, both owned by **SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment**. The company expanded its use of Mobaro Park's solution to these properties after successfully testing it at **SeaWorld Orlando**.

Mobaro Park's digital platform streamlines operational management. With two main interfaces — an online portal for managers and a hands-on mobile app for staff — it optimizes daily safety and maintenance regimes by interconnecting the organization and providing a clear, real-time overview. The system dispenses with the need for paper checklists by allowing staff to work through all the key safety and maintenance checks via the mobile interface.

Key features and functions:

•**Real-time dashboards** — Operational tracking and historic data enable benchmarking, analysis and performance improvement on the fly — and the ability to monitor which staff member is on top of what.

•**Checklists** — By structuring and subdividing safety and quality inspections, operators can rest assured that all details are dealt with. Setting up advanced checklists in the back-office system allows routines to be examined digitally. Checklists, and who is responsible for completing them, can be attached to rides and attractions. Once configured, staff can upload valuable information for real-time dashboard monitoring

•**Assignments** — Ad hoc tasks are easily created in the back-office system and forwarded to the responsible maintenance technician. This way, once an issue pops up, a specific task can be monitored until it is completed.

•**Media** — When a water-slide pump stops working or a seat unit suffers damage, documenting observations in the field may be necessary. Mobaro Park enables the attachment of photos, audio files and videos to provide clarity of the type and location of an issue.

•**Manuals** — Vital information in the form of PDFs, photos, videos and technical documentation can be uploaded and attached to a specific attraction or location, allowing

staff to complete tasks via the mobile app.

•**Online / Offline** — Sometimes Wi-Fi connections fail. However, completing checklists and working in the Mobaro Park app can continue offline. Changes made offline are uploaded when connections are restored.

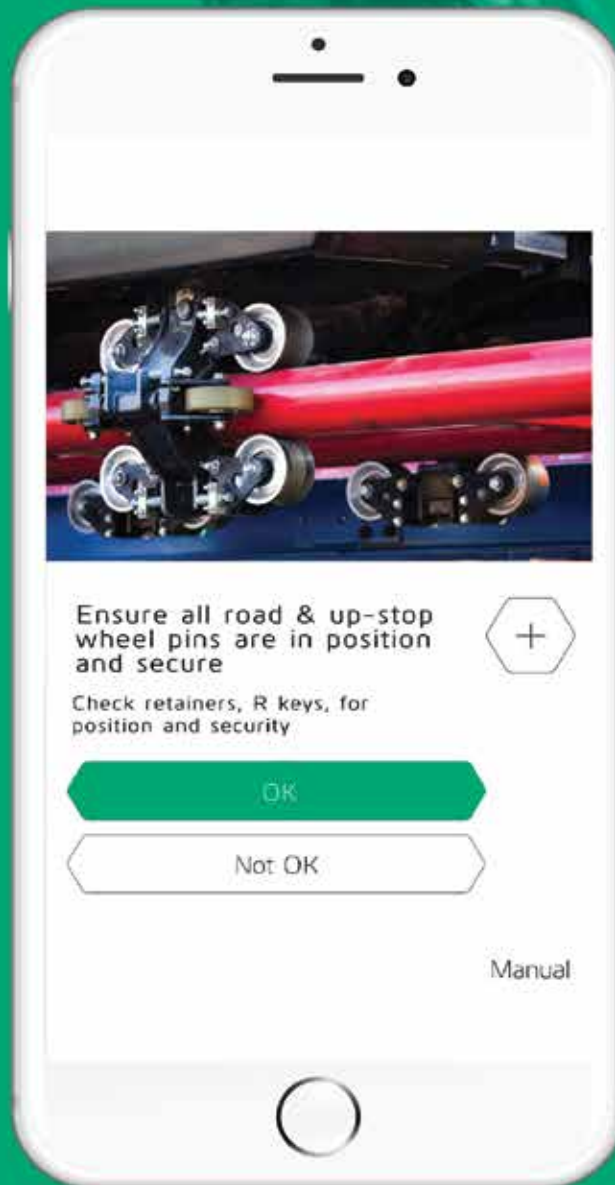
Mobaro Park opened an office in New York City earlier this year. Visit the company's website for more information.

•**mobaro.com**



Mobaro Park's mobile app optimizes daily maintenance regimes. COURTESY MOBARO PARK

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HVAC design to save Texas rec center almost \$1M in costs

AT: Dean Lamanna
dlamanna@amusementtoday.com

GRAPEVINE, Texas — An innovative heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system promises to save the new \$30 million **The REC of Grapevine** center — “REC” stands for recreation, education and community — an estimated \$918,000 in costs over the equipment’s expected 25-year operational life.

The savings will result from high-efficiency design and equipment choices, such as an energy-recovery indoor pool dehumidifier, condensing boilers, high-efficiency chillers and other energy-efficient selections, according to **Bert Baiotto**, P.E., principal, who led the design team for project consulting engineer firm **The Ballard Group** of Lakewood, Colo.

The center’s natatorium is a hybrid of water park and community pool designs. The high evaporative rates of its many aquatic features, combined with the region’s excessive humidity, made it one of The Ballard Group’s more challenging projects. Features generating high evaporative rates include a lazy river heated to 84 degrees; a 12-by-12-foot spa heated to 102 degrees; a 60-by-60-foot play island featuring sprayers, water cannons and a water-dumping bucket; and two 150-foot-long waterslides,



Seresco USA, Inc., supplied a 125-ton, 40,000-cubic-foot-per-minute dehumidifier as part of an innovative HVAC system that will boost energy efficiency and savings at The REC of Grapevine.

COURTESY THE REC AT GRAPVINE; SERESCO USA, INC.

70 percent of which travel outside the building before emptying into a splash pool indoors.

Using proprietary psychrometric software developed by The Ballard Group, which over the past decade has designed 237 recreation centers, Baiotto calculated the indoor evaporative rates and outdoor air humidity loads in order to size the dehumidifier.

“In a water park-type atmosphere, it’s critical to assure there’s enough tonnage [refrigeration] to keep the relative humidity in check,” Baiotto said. “Because of the higher water temperatures and the higher evaporative effect of the water features, the natatorium required approximately

125 percent more dehumidification capacity than a typical community indoor pool of similar size.”

Specifying a cooling / heating hydronic four-pipe loop design for the project enabled The Ballard Group to use cooling and heating coils in air-handling equipment versus more energy- and maintenance-intensive individual direct expansion (DX) methods.

For example, the 18,000-square-foot natatorium’s 125-ton, 40,000-cubic-foot-per-minute dehumidifier — a NW-Series rooftop model manufactured by **Seresco USA, Inc.**, of Decatur, Ga. — dehumidifies, cools and heats the space with factory-installed



coils. Instead of an integral DX refrigeration circuit, the coils are supplied economically by the facility’s three high-efficiency, air-cooled 200-ton chillers and two 3,000-MBH condensing boilers. (Each MBH represents 1,000 BTUs per hour.)

The extra capacity enabled converting the adjacent 48,000-square-foot library’s existing 15 packaged rooftop units from DX to chilled water / heating coils, which will also significantly reduce the city’s HVAC maintenance costs. All

the equipment contributes to the aforementioned \$918,000 in savings.

The Ballard Group’s specification of a dehumidifier with chilled / hot water coils supplied by central plants also saved Grapevine approximately 25 percent in equipment capital costs versus a DX model.

The unique HVAC design makes The REC “one of the top municipal rec centers in Texas” for energy savings, said **Chad Hester**, facility manager for the City of Grapevine.

•serescodehumidifiers.com

South Carolina FEC installs air curtains, lowers utility bills

MOUNT PLEASANT, S.C. — Steamy indoor temperatures and steep utility bills used to be among the costs of doing business in summer for **Charleston Fun Park**, a five-acre indoor / outdoor family entertainment center (FEC).

Now, four entranceway air curtains help protect the property’s 16,000-square-foot indoor facility from outdoor temperatures and have lowered annual utility costs by approximately \$20,000. The improved indoor air comfort also helped increase sales 20 percent after the air curtains were installed.

Housing a 60-machine arcade and virtual reality space along with a snack area and restrooms, the indoor facility is air conditioned with five 10-ton split-system air conditioners. But the units were unable to overcome heat gain from three sets of double doors that saw constant foot traffic during peak periods, when they each opened an average of 60

times per hour.

Consequently, the 85-degree minimum indoor temperature on summer days discouraged patrons from seeking fun or relief indoors.

“In 2016, regular customers thought our air conditioning was broken, and now they think it’s fixed,” said **Brian Lee**, general manager of the FEC, which now maintains an indoor temperature of 70 to 72 degrees year-round. “But we never touched the air conditioning.”

Indoor entertainment patrons are staying longer and buying more game time because of the air comfort, according to Lee. The park attracts nearly 300,000 people annually, and Lee believes return business has increased, too, because patrons felt more comfortable during their previous visit.

While the sales increase was surprising, the utility savings was expected, according to an energy audit initially performed for the park

using the **Berner Energy Saving Calculator** — a free Web-based program from air curtain manufacturer **Berner Intl.** of New Castle, Pa. (berner.com). The program uses data inputs, such as door dimensions, use times, cycles, local energy rates and regional weather history to provide the user with energy savings and payback estimates.

Each air curtain features a 24-volt control panel and two heavy-duty magnetic reed switches that automatically activate the air curtain when the door is opened.

In addition to energy savings and indoor air comfort, the air curtains also help prevent dirt and insect infiltration, increasing sanitary conditions in the FEC’s 35-seat snack area. The kitchen’s four-foot-wide shipping door also received an air curtain.

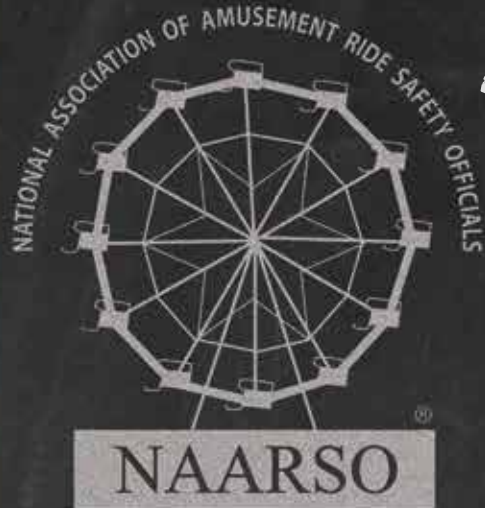
Charleston, S.C.-based material handling distributor **Custom Equipment Co.** supplied the air curtains.

—Dean Lamanna



Air curtain systems installed on four entranceways at Charleston Fun Park shaved off about \$20,000 in annual utility costs.

COURTESY CHARLESTON FUN PARK



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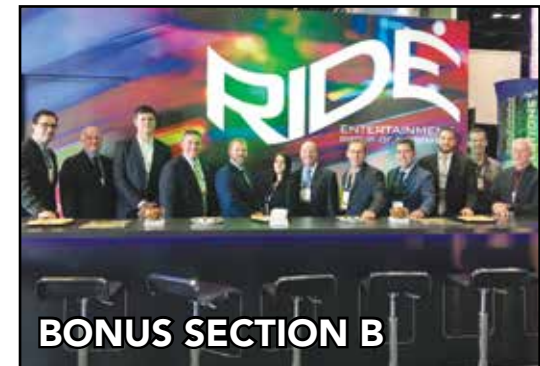
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November 2018 | Vol. 22 • Issue 8.2

www.amusementtoday.com

Innovative company sees massive growth while serving clients worldwide

Ride Entertainment celebrates 20 Years in amusement industry

AT: Tim Baldwin

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BALTIMORE, Md. — **Ed Hiller** says **Ride Entertainment** grew from one laptop, one other employee and him to three offices today in Stevensville, Md., in Baltimore at the World Trade Center and in New York in the financial district. Today Ride Entertainment employs 160 people.

"I went from representing a group of manufacturers, from being a really good financial guy, to now where we do everything from A to Z. We install the rides, we lease the rides. I think we are the largest leasing company in the world in doing revenue shares and financial partnerships," said Hiller.

It has been an exhilarating journey for Ride Entertainment. Now celebrating a 20-year anniversary, the company has become an industry leader in selling, operating and installing amusement and thrill park attractions worldwide. The RE team finds their booth exceptionally busy during the IAAPA



Attractions Expo. In its two decades of business, Ride Entertainment has seen more than 200 thrill rides launched to market and over half a billion dollars in sales since the company's founding.

The company has a specifically diverse portfolio in both its sales and operations. Among its accolades is the world's tallest swing ride, originally at **Six Flags Over Texas** and now in Orlando on International Drive; the world's tallest Skycoaster at **Fun Spot** in Kissimmee, Florida; the world's tallest Slingshot ride at **Cedar Point**; and the \$16 million **SeaGlass Carousel**, located at The Battery in Manhattan, N.Y.

"It's humbling to think that Ride Entertainment has 210 projects under its belt. With a number of multi-million-dollar projects still to be announced, we are poised to have 2018 be the company's highest grossing year to date," said Hiller.

On the horizon are some buzz-worthy installations coming to The American Dream project located in East Rutherford, N.J. What is expected to be the largest indoor theme park in the Western Hemisphere



The Sling Shot at Cedar Point (above) is one of Ride Entertainment's financial partnerships. Acquired in 2005, Skycoaster (right) continues to grow under the Ride Entertainment banner. COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT



when completed, the attraction will boast two **Gerstlauer** roller coasters conceptualized and sold through Ride Entertainment. One will be the longest and tallest free-spinning roller coaster in the world, and the other is a launched Euro-Fighter roller coaster that will feature the world's steepest drop. A ropes course will also be the tallest and largest in the world.

Ride Entertainment consists of five divisions: sales (representing some companies in North American and some worldwide), operations, financial partnerships and revenue shares, installations and Skycoaster.

Even when RE doesn't get the project, they have found themselves involved. "Someone else may win a bid on a project and then still call us to install the ride," Hiller laughs. "We really have a tremendous installation division."

Adam Sandy, president, Business Development division, has found some particular projects rewarding. "Being involved in the Firechaser Express project at Dollywood was a great one. **Mark [Rosenzweig]** and I got to write the initial pitch for the storyline at IAAPA when **Herschend** was still deciding. We were at the IAAPA social working on the computer because we got the call," he told *Amusement Today*. "I got to be involved in the whole project. We went to Dollywood and worked the initial proposal into something even better and met with **Herschend** and **Forrec**; being able to do something like that where we're giving a really different experience for guests is a lot of fun for me. I sat at the exit on opening day and watched guests come off, and they all were thrilled. It was rewarding."

Sandy also enjoys the opportunities to scale the

heights of many of Ride Entertainment's projects such as the **Orlando StarFlyer**.

In developing a diverse portfolio of companies to represent, Sandy said, "We've been very deliberate about that. We can now go into a meeting with a park and say 'What are you looking for? What are you interested in?' Whether you're looking for family or thrill, have height restrictions or a certain budget, we have a little bit of everything. I think the power of our partners lets us offer more."

In the past two decades, as it has grown, the company feels that it is unique in the industry. The goal of sales and service combined with skills and experience is something Ride Entertainment strives for with each customer. "We're very personalized," said Sandy. "Ed has built good relationships. We're not someone who sells something and won't be around in five years. Ed has a very long-term vision for the company."

"Ride Entertainment has so much to celebrate, but the team is most thankful for the thrill seekers that keep this industry thriving," said Hiller.



Ride Entertainment has overseen world-record-breaking projects such as the Texas Sky Screamer (above left) at Six Flags Over Texas. The stunning Sea Glass Carousel (above right) is one of the attractions in the Parks & Attractions division. AT/TIM BALDWIN



Amusement Today talks one-on-one with Ride Entertainment's Ed Hiller

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

Ed Hiller began his career in the amusement industry starting in the early 1990s from a finance standpoint. Working for a large ride manufacturer, he managed deals with customers. He credits learning the industry from a contractual side of things. Today he leads Ride Entertainment, one of the busiest players in the industry that has shown enormous growth in its 20-year history.

Amusement Today sat down with Hiller to talk about his company, the industry and a look ahead.

AT: How did you break out of the financial and transactional mindset and enter the "fun side," if you will?

Hiller: In the mid-90s, I had the opportunity to learn the other side of the business by going to Europe. I lived there for two years and worked for a ride manufacturer running their factory. I really learned how they bent pipe, how they made product from start to finish. I then basically had those skill sets ... what went into it, all the intricacies and the art of it. I also knew from a high level how to do difficult transactions with corporate parks and come out of it with everyone very happy.

You left that company in 1998 and started your own. How did that happen?

While I was in Europe I made a lot of connections with other European manufacturers. Living in Europe wasn't really for me, I was from the United States, that was my background. When I went



Ed Hiller

back, these other manufacturers said, "Wow, we need someone to represent us in the United States. Obviously, you know the legal and financial side," which was of concern for them. I came back in 1998 and started Ride Entertainment. I started representing four or five European manufacturers. I tried to have Ride Entertainment have a product in every ride category. We took off like a rocket. 1999 was a tremendous year. We did an incredible amount of sales.

Today, Ride Entertainment does far more than just represent companies.

We like to call it the Mercedes Benz or Nordstrom approach when we touch that project, we want to make sure it was good from beginning to end. People really enjoyed working with us. We couldn't just represent ride manufacturers entirely. People started asking, "Can you install that ride? Can you finance the ride?" Eventually ... "Can you operate that ride?" The company organically grew. Today we employ 160 people.

Is there a key to your success?



Seen at the opening of Mystery Mine are (l to r) Franz Maier, Mark Rosenzweig, Siegfried Gerstlauer, Joel Manby, Hubert Gestlauer, Ed Hiller and Adam Sandy. Team member Amanda Mercado (right) installs Hangtime at Knott's Berry Farm. COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT

It's all about the people who have grown with us. Over the past 20 years, they're all still here. We've built a team that has stayed here. We have a team that is very loyal that is focused on the product and focused on the customer. That sounds corny, but we really do.

With all the growth, were there any bumps along the way?

I remember one project. We knew after signing the contract that we were going to lose money on that project. We not only did it well, we did it very well. That's kind of been our mantra the whole time. Whatever it takes to get the job done. That's the legacy I've always looked for with this company — very professional and high integrity. We really handle each project with care.

What are your personal favorite things to do in an amusement park?

I actually like amusement park food. (laughs) I'm not a ride fanatic, but I ride all the rides we represent many times.

I can still get butterflies.

Do your kids think you have the coolest job?

I have two great children, one in college and one entering high school. Here's an interesting story. They've been all around the world with me. Nothing has really impressed them. They never say "Wow, Dad." I took them for two days to New York where we manage a micropark. It has miniature golf and go karts. When we left, they looked at me — and I'm serious — they looked at me for the first time and said, "Wow, Dad! We're really impressed." I'm thinking, "Are you kidding me? We've put in Guinness world record-breaking rides and been on TV, been everywhere, but playing miniature golf, an indoor sports arena and riding go karts... like that was it!"

What is your vision for the company? You're at a 20th anniversary, what do you see at a 30th anniversary?

My hope is not only continued growth in the divisions



we currently have, but we opened an office in New York in the financial district, and the hope is for capital to grow. We have a section of the company called Ride Entertainment Parks and Attractions where we are working on microparks. Some are anchored by a carousel with about five rides around it. We'd like to grow that division. I'd also like to see us develop some stand-alone locations where we would do a giant wheel or a StarFlyer.

Most of your operations are East Coast. Are you open to opportunities on the West Coast or the Southern U.S.?

Definitely. We'd love to expand it out of New York and Boston and in to other parts of the United States.

Did Ride Entertainment do anything special to celebrate 20 years?

We had 20-year bourbon especially made. We will have a 20 Year Party at the IAAPA Expo at the Orlando StarFlyer. It will be a big blowout.



Mark Rosenzweig, Ed Hiller, Beau Berni, Bill Wright and Adam Sandy do IAAPA planning. COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT

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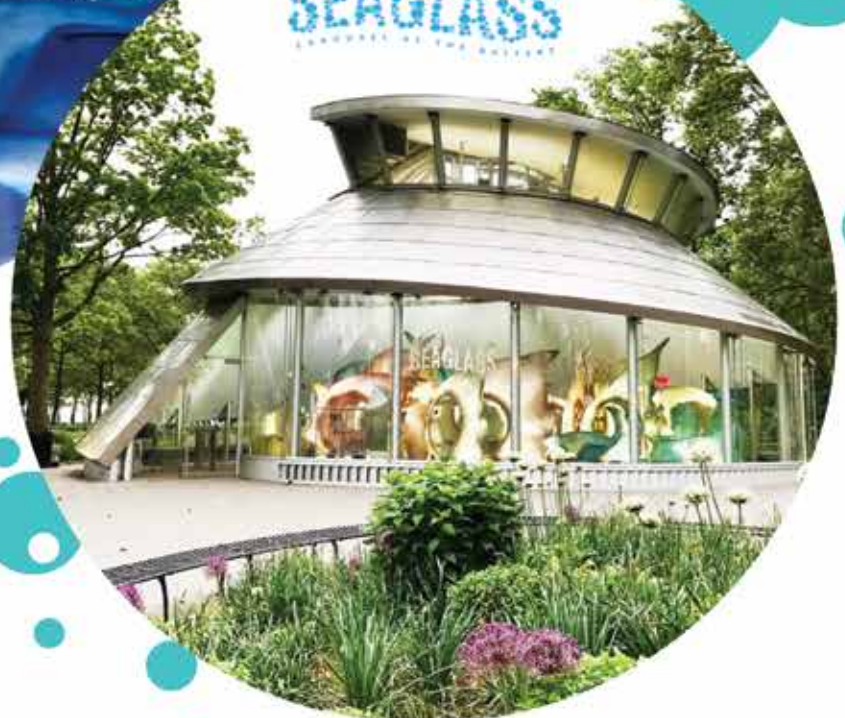
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What industry companies does



COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT



Gerstlauer: Primarily known for roller coasters of all sizes, Gerstlauer has a wide range of genres. The vertical lift and beyond-vertical drop on the company's Euro-Fighter has virtually become synonymous with Gerstlauer. However, multiple styles of family coasters are offered as well. To date the company has had more than 90 roller coaster projects. The upcoming American Dream Meadowlands project will place two record-breaking roller coasters indoors when the New Jersey project opens to the public next spring. For 2018, HangTime at Knott's Berry Farm provided the park with its newest signature layout and the West Coast with its steepest coaster drop.

The company also supplies giant wheels, flat rides and transportation systems.

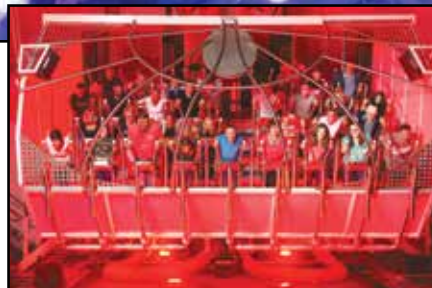


AT/TIM BALDWIN



Funtime: Funtime's StarFlyer attraction has spread throughout the world taking the enjoyment of classic swing rides to record-setting heights. In 2018, Funtime beat its own record by opening the Orlando StarFlyer which tops out at 450 feet. Stunningly ornate, the thrill ride offers panoramic views during the day and offers a captivating light package at night.

The company also offers other vertical thrill rides, including the Slingshot.



COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT



V&P Rides: From its beginnings as an architecture firm, V&P Rides has brought the most technologically advanced theater system to the world. The E-Motionboard Flying Theater is unlike a typical theater experience as visitors enjoy the theater in a standing/leaning position adding a new dimension to the flying theater genre. Moving with six degrees of freedom, the experience combines special effects — wind, temperature and scent — to immerse the guests more fully into the storyline.



COURTESY SKYLINE ATTRACTIONS

Skyline Attractions: This newer company produces clever thrill and family rides like the Skywarp. Having just opened its first variation at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom this past summer, the company is contracted to install the newest variation called Skywarp Horizon to SeaWorld San Diego.

When the company was founded in 2014, it quickly gained much attention at the IAAPA Attractions Expo for introducing GamesURide.

The principal members of the company share an abundance of industry experience, and their passion for new innovations in the industry are evident in each project.



AT/TIM BALDWIN



Metallbau: Park guests that are young or still enjoy fancies of the imagination adore family attractions like the Pony Trek. Metallbau has installed this children's attraction in parks around

the globe. Parents and children can ride together, and customized figures go beyond horses, although ponies make for a popular choice.

Other family attractions

include car rides, train rides, circular rides, flying wheels, swinging ships and many more. The company has worked with Mattel brands such as Thomas the Tank Engine and Peppa Pig.

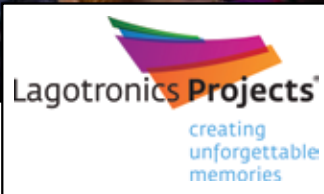
Ride Entertainment represent?



Extreme Engineering:
The original inventors of the mobile rock-climbing walls and auto-belay systems, Extreme Engineering has been globally recognized as a leading, award-winning manufacturer of premier family-friendly thrill rides, roller coasters, ziplines and more. Recently, the company has developed unique interactive attractions for parks and resorts like Cloud Coaster.



COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT



COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT



COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT

Lagotronics Projects:
Having started out in the audio and lighting business, Lagotronics create interactive attractions for theme parks, museums and shopping malls today. GameChanger is one of the company's latest examples of out-of-the-box thinking in which a rotating platform keeps ride capacity consistent while riders interact with continually changing game experiences.
Lagotronics has also upgraded existing dark rides with state-of-the-art technology for more reliable performance.



COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT

Ropes Courses, Inc: Ropes courses and ziplines using the company's SkyTrail system have been supplied to interactive facilities around the world. Since 1989, Ropes Course, Inc. has worked with FECs, cruise ships, resorts, malls and other amusement attractions. The company's attractions are found in 30 different countries on five continents.

In addition to the zipline and navigation of ropes courses, the company also offers Sky Rail which combines the fun of a zipline while using a Sky Trail structure. Guests are suspended from overhead and glide down the rail. Curved layouts can offer a longer ride, and operators have a choice of two braking systems: mechanical and electronic.

Amaze'n Mazes and Clip 'n Climb are two newer products offered by the company.

The world's largest ropes course is under construction at the American Dream project scheduled to open in 2019.



COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT

KCL Engineering: Known for its engineering expertise, KCL Engineering has also made its mark in the amusement industry with its lighting systems. Cleverly used on roller coasters, the customized lighting brings brilliance and flash to the attractions at night with a multitude of light patterns, including being able to follow the coaster train while on the course.

On the recent addition of HangTime at Knott's Berry Farm, the lighting system has helped make the new installation a signature attraction at the park. Adrenaline Peak, another Gerstlauer coaster at Oaks Park, was also the recipient of the talents of KCL Engineering in 2018.

Ride Entertainment Operations look at years of growth

Adam Sandy credits its Ride Entertainment President Ed Hiller as a visionary who is always looking for what more the company could do. As its various divisions grew, operating small parks or attractions became a new direction for the company.

"We found a bid put out by the New York City Parks Dept. in 2011. It was to operate the Forest Park Carousel and Flushing Meadows Carousel. They had different operators that had been hit-and-miss over the years. We won that bid," said Sandy.

The two carousels were less than six miles apart.

"We saw right away that Flushing Meadows could be a money maker. We had the ability to add our own rides around the carousel and did so over a few years. In time we did that in Forest Park as well," Sandy told *Amusement Today*. "There aren't a lot of companies out there operating multiple small attractions, and we felt that was kind of a nice niche. In the long term we'd like to operate locations where a Skycoaster would be offered with some family rides around it and bring the two halves of the company together really nicely."

"With our Fantasy Forest Amusement Park and Forest Park Amusement Village



Adam Sandy

operations in Queens, each site started with only a historic carousel," said David Galst, president, Parks & Attractions division. "Children and adults can enjoy the ride experience together. "We wanted to expand upon this and add rides where children and parents or grandparents could enjoy different ride experiences together. This was the main factor as we searched to see what rides were available on the market."

Sandy said Ride Entertainment evaluated the investment level to be fairly low risk. He feels the small properties are not so much destination locations, but neighborhood amenities that are a part of people's lives.

"The Forest Park Carousel isn't necessarily our highest-generating ride, but the community support



The operations team at Forest Park Carousel Amusement Village. COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT

has been amazing," said Sandy. "They had [questionable] operators before, and now it is a New York City Historical Landmark. We've received a lot of direct feedback from the community association. They appreciate the way we are running it at the quality level and the way it looks. We do a lot of seasonal events and free entertainment in the summer; it's very positive. That relationship is what encouraged us to add more rides."

Both carousels have considerable history behind

them, one operating since the World's Fair of 1963/64 and the other dating back to 1903.

Galst finds these microparks have certain advantages. "Having various operations in Manhattan, Queens, Staten Island, and Boston (all highly populated areas) allow our guests to ride a carousel, roller coaster, or zipline without having to drive far to a destination. In this day and age of instant gratification, our microparks allow our guests to get their

amusement park fix while staying local," he said.

As the operations division of Ride Entertainment grows, AT asked if future growth would lead to more small parks being introduced or the existing parks getting bigger.

"Both," said Galst. "We always want to continue to grow and improve our current sites. However, we are also always looking and evaluating where our next operation could be established."

—Tim Baldwin



David Galst speaks at the NYC Landmarking of the Forest Park Carousel. COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT



Operating small parks fits into a great neighborhood experience. COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT

Lake Compounce hosts annual event

Skycoaster Safety Seminar continues to grow in 2018

The Skycoaster was introduced in 1992 as the industry's first extreme thrill ride upcharge attraction. The goal was to — combine the thrills of sky diving, bungee jumping and hang gliding and bring it to the masses at a price point that was more approachable to the average consumer.

Ride Entertainment acquired Skycoaster in 2005 and has continued to develop the brand within their portfolio. The original Skycoaster operations were located in Salt Lake City, Utah. In 2014 the Skycoaster operations were relocated to the home offices in Maryland.

"The annual Skycoaster Safety Seminar was created by **Bill Kitchens** when the ride was brand new as a means to bring all Skycoaster operators together," said **Mark Rosenzweig**, managing director, Skycoaster. "The attractions industry is a niche industry, or a subculture if you will. Skycoaster is sort of a subculture within a subculture. How we go about things is a little different than running a flat ride or a roller coaster. It's very hands on; it's very manually operated. At the seminar we bring people together. We get people out of their park. People in operations very rarely get to see other operations."

Rosenzweig is pleased that since 2016, the seminar has been able to take place in a park which allows attendees to observe and enjoy other facilities. On October 12 and 13, the 2018 event happened at **Lake Compounce** in Bristol, Conn.

"From a Skycoaster side



Mark Rosenzweig

of things, we offer hands-on classes and workshops. This year we had vendor partners doing classes on our flight suits, harnesses, cables and rigging, and all hydraulics. We were able to go back and point out all the components. It let people know if they were having any issues, this was probably the reason," said Rosenzweig.

Mike Berge of **High Energy Sports**, the manufacturer of all Skycoaster's flight suits and sky sleds, was a speaker at the recent seminar and brought examples of flight suits that have problems. The class let individuals go through the suits to identify the problems creating for a great safety takeaway.

"The seminar also offers an element of marketing and salesmanship," Rosenzweig told *Amusement Today*. "We had about 80 people from as far away as Guadalajara, Mexico, and Vancouver, British Columbia. Everyone has different markets and different marketing tactics and how they go about selling flights. People talk about what works for them and others would say, 'Hm. We never thought of that. Maybe we'll try that.' Our industry — or

any industry — is nothing without communication. Just doing things you've always done doesn't work. It eventually leads to fading out."

At this year's event, Lake Compounce General Manager **Larry Brick** welcomed attendees and offered a little history of the park, which is America's oldest continuously operating amusement park. In the past, the seminar has taken place in January, which typically would limit host sites to locations such as California or Florida. After attending the event in **Fun Spot** in Kissimmee last year, the representative from Lake Compounce went back and encouraged the park to do it. The direction now, according to Ride Entertainment, is to offer the seminar in the fall between daily operations and before the big Halloween rush.

"The social element of the event was taken to a whole new level this year," Rosenzweig said. "The park hosted us with a reception at the Croc Pot patio deck. Jerry Brick created an ice luge and ice carving with the Skycoaster logo. It was an ideal setting. It was cool enough to bundle up, the leaves were changing on the trees, a beautiful sunset over the lake and everyone was in great spirits. We rode Boulder Dash in the dark and did the Haunted Graveyard. Jerry and his team just went beyond. The operations team is also very knowledgeable."

He estimated that 25 to 30 percent were new attendees, so class topics were new to them. For future seminars, questionnaires were handed



Discussion included all aspects of Skycoaster operation and best practices. COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT

out at the end, and strong consideration is being given to an expanded curriculum. Plans to blend the technical aspects with operations topics are already underway for 2019.

"This event is generally attended by full-time Operations managers," said Rosenzweig. "It's not typically the type of position that gets to attend IAAPA [Expo] or the Golden Ticket Awards. The opportunity to network with their counterparts and also to see how other parks operate — only good things can come from that."

A new style of riding harness was introduced at the IAAPA Attractions Expo in 2017. That new experience officially debuted at Fun Spot at the Kissimmee location this November. Instead of riding in a prone ("flying") position, thrill seekers are secured in a more typical seated position. All existing hardware on Skycoaster operations is designed to work with the

new sky sled harness, so customers can queue up with the harness style of their choice. The new harness can seat single or double riders.

"It's a very different experience. It's exactly what we wanted. We think it will offer parks some creative marketing tactics such as a combo ticket to fly both ways," said Rosenzweig. "Because you are sitting upright you are able to take in the view. You can see the three cables in front of you. That initial drop is intense. It takes your stomach every time. But the subsequent swings are rather relaxing. When doing double rides, we see it as kind of a 'date night' ride — if freefalling from 300 feet is your idea of romance."

Ride Entertainment encourages Expo attendees to check it out during the trade show.

Currently, Skycoaster operates 82 flightlines at 68 individual sites.

—Tim Baldwin



A new harness has been introduced (left) which offers operators more marketing opportunities. Attendees enjoyed visiting Lake Compounce (center) at the Skycoaster Safety Seminar. The seminar taught attendees to examine flight suits for potential problems (right). COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT



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