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Outlaw Run charges into Silver Dollar City

Rocky Mountain Construction Group supplies new coaster

STORY: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

BRANSON, Mo. — Although the setting of Silver Dollar City may be the 1880s, it was March 15 of this year that featured the debut of Outlaw Run, the park's newest roller coaster. If the reactions of early riders were any indication, response to the new attraction is overwhelmingly animated and enthusiastic. At its media preview, some comments were heard among theme park observers that the industry is keeping its eyes on this new brand of wooden coaster. They should. It's that good.

Solidifying their place in coaster design and erection, Rocky Mountain Construction Group (RMC) delivers a home run to the beloved Branson themer. Several aspects make this ride unique, but its construction is what makes it so innovative. In recent years, Rocky Mountain has been providing Topper Track to parks who are finding maintenance issues and rough wooden coaster rides. Outlaw Run is the very first wooden coaster to be built entirely with RMC's Topper Track from the beginning. Its amazingly smooth ride is expected to last years upon years. The tradi-



tional wood bed (six layers) of coaster track is crowned with the Topper Track steel rail that not only delivers a smoother ride, but allows for dynamic maneuvers.

In addition to its construction characteristics, Outlaw Run is also groundbreaking in what it does from the standpoint of the rider. No other wooden coaster has attempted acrobatics such as what is seen in one of the most outrageously thrilling layouts ever designed. Descriptions don't do them justice, particularly taken at speeds of up to 68 mph, but features include several overbanked turns — the most dramatic at a virtually upside down 153-degrees, surprising directional changes into the terrain's valleys, a 90-degree swoop turn through the lift, and a wild double barrel roll finale. The tag line to Outlaw Run is "The World's Most Daring Wood Coaster." It is no false claim.



Silver Dollar City's new Outlaw Run thrills riders with three upside down barrel rolls (top) and this first drop (right) of 162 feet at 81 degrees.

AT/GARY SLADE;
AERIAL SERVICES/CHOPPER
CHARTER, BRANSON

"It's a blast!" shouts Director of Public Relations Lisa Rau, following her first ride. "B-L-A-S-T! Blast! It is so fun." Count her among the ride's new legion of fans.

Another one would be Pete Herschend, co-owner and co-founder of Silver Dollar City and Herschend Family Entertainment. "We just came from a corporate meeting and we decided we are going to



keep it," jokes Herschend, who rode the first train out during previews. "We're not going to make it a temporary installation. It's with us forever," he laughs. "I'm delighted with the response I see from people who are not a part of Silver Dollar City. They are really enjoying it a lot." With deep pride, Herschend adds, "It is a great piece of entertainment."

In a new expansion at the far end of the park, Outlaw Run explores the outskirts of the safe haven of Silver Dollar City. Untamed territory where unlawful rogues may lurk sets the stage for the thematic storyline for Outlaw Run. As the park's guests enter the area, an authentic and refurbished stagecoach draws people to the Western Missouri Stage-

► See **OUTLAW RUN**, page 4

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EDITORIAL: Gary Slade, gslade@amusementtoday.com

More than records and thrills



Slade

During the first full operating weekend of Silver Dollar City's new Outlaw Run, it was clear that park General Manager Brad Thomas was as giddy as a youngster on Christmas morning.

His park had debuted their new record-setting \$10 million wooden coaster just a few days prior. The coaster, from Rocky Mountain, was all the buzz in the park by both guests and long-time employees.

But Brad was quick to point out what the Branson theme is really all about — its food.

Just down the walkway from the new coaster fun, the park debuted Crossroads Pizza. This 145-seat sit down restaurant features hand-tossed (think of it as airtime for the dough!) oven fired pizza, calzones and other Italian-style sandwiches.

Not stopping there, across the street is the new Cokes and Floats stand where guests can mix and match their favorites together to recreate that float enjoyed as a child.

What may go unnoticed is that the Silver Dollar City team did both of these new establishments in-house. The attention to detail, as seen in hand crafted Coke barrels, and corresponding theming is a perfect match for the park. Thomas was quick to point out that many SDC guests are repeat visitors to the park, and some of those will never get on a single ride. They are at the park simply to visit the park, enjoy the wide variety of food and take in as many shows as time allows.

The Silver Dollar City recipe for success is not built around its rides, it's built around the food, shows and its people. The paying guest is truly the one who benefits, although you can't tell that to the employees.

As one candymaker told this publisher, "I was ready for a break after the Christmas season. Then when the calendar turned over to March, I was ready to come back to the park, because I know I have baking to do. Baking is my love!"

Ahh — the sweets...well that's another story.

—Gary Slade

Gary Slade is the founder and publisher of Amusement Today. His love for amusement parks began at age six when he first visited Pontchartrain Beach Amusement Park and Six Flags Over Texas. His long newspaper career helped lead to the launch of AT in 1997.

CARTOON: Bubba Flint



EDITORIAL: Andrew Mellor, amellor@amusementtoday.com

Tourism a key player in economic growth



Mellor

I attended an attractions industry conference in the U.K. recently at which the keynote speaker was the head of tourism at the government's Department of Culture and Media Studies (DCMS).

The lady in question discussed a number of key issues relating to tourism in her presentation but one clear message that came across was that the tourism industry — which obviously incorporates all types of attractions, including theme parks, seaside piers et al — is key when it comes to growth in the country's economy.

She stated that "from the government's perspective, all departments realize how important tourism is to the economy," providing examples such as the fact that it creates GBP90 billion of direct business per annum and is the third highest export earner for the country. She also gave examples of various initiatives and funding that have been put in place by the DCMS and other parts of government to assist the tourism industry as a whole, adding that the tourism industry was growing significantly compared to the rest

of the economy.

The Olympic Legacy was also mentioned as a major part of the government's tourism strategy as it seeks to build on the tremendous public relations opportunities that were generated during last year's games. All in all, therefore, it looks like tourism is at last being taken seriously by government and is being properly recognized for the important part it plays in the country's economy.

Which is refreshing, to say the least. Hopefully, though, things can be taken further still and various issues which have been impacting on the industry can also be dealt with to help operators and encourage more growth within the sector. VAT (Value Added Tax) on the admission price to parks is currently at 20 percent, while in other parts of Europe it is significantly lower, in some places just five percent, so a reduction here would help enormously. Likewise, a fairer playing field when it comes to public projects supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

I just hope all the positive "noises" I heard will actually bear fruit for everyone's long term benefit.

AMUSEMENT TODAY STAFF

Gary Slade, Founder
Publisher and Editor-in-Chief
(817) 460-7220
gslade@amusementtoday.com

Stacey Childress / Childress Media
Web & Graphic Design
stacey@childress-media.com

John Robinson / W.H.R. Inc.
Daily E-mail Newsletter
johnwrobinson@cinci.rr.com

Tim Baldwin
Editorial
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

Pam Sherborne
Editorial
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

Scott Rutherford
Editorial
srutherford@amusementtoday.com

Jeffrey L. Seifert
Editorial / Special Projects
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

Sammy Piccola
Accounting / Circulation
(817) 460-7220
spiccola@amusementtoday.com

Sue Nichols
Advertising
(615) 662-0252
snichols@amusementtoday.com

Bubba Flint
Cartoonist
bflint@amusementtoday.com

AMUSEMENT TODAY

Deliveries
2012 E. Randol Mill Rd., Suite 203
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Contributors: Andrew Mellor, B. Derek Shaw, Richard Munch, Marlon Scott, Janice Witherow, WHR Inc.

2 MINUTE DRILL



COMPILED: Janice Witherow

Paul Noland, IAAPA

For Paul Noland, taking the reins in January as president and CEO of IAAPA seemed natural. With vast experience as a respected theme park consultant, IAAPA Board Member and former Walt Disney Parks and Resorts executive, Paul brings a varied background with proven results to the association. Known for his keen business sense, analytical approach and passion for the industry, Paul is looking forward to taking IAAPA and its members on a "great ride" ... working together ... into the future.



Newly appointed IAAPA CEO Paul Noland takes a minute to enjoy an amusement park favorite for all ages, a game of Skee-Ball. No word yet on how his game skills were!
COURTESY IAAPA



Noland

Title
President and CEO.

Number of years in the industry
18.

Best thing about the industry
The people that work in it.

Favorite amusement ride
It's hard to answer in my position and since there are so many great rides in the world, but if I have to pick just one, it is the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk Giant Dipper since it was my first roller coaster.

If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be ...
Somewhere else in the travel and hospitality world.

Biggest challenge facing our industry
People and families crunched for time.

The thing I like most about amusement/water park season is ...
We bring families and friends together.

To me, the most influential person in history is ...
The world is too diverse to have a single most influential person. For my money, though, it's hard to beat Abraham Lincoln.

Favorite dessert
Coconut cake or key lime pie.

When I say exercise, you say ...
Where are my running shoes?

The best pizza I have ever eaten was at ...
A small Trattoria in Italy.

Growing up, my nickname was ...
Well, my actual first name is Royce. With that as a first name you don't need a nickname.

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

The last book I read was ...
The Devil in the White City by Erik Larson.

The food I crave most often is ...
Unfortunately, pizza.

The concert I would really want front-row seats to is ...
The Beatles reunion that never happened.

Coollest celebrity chef ...
I think food should be the celebrity, but I will say that we do have some real family favorites from Ina Garten in my house.

In 10 years, I hope to be ...
In the best shape of my life.

My favorite sport to play is ...
Poker ... just kidding, it's tennis.

My next vacation will be ...
Nice, I'm sure, but unknown at this point.

People say I remind them of ...
Funny, I don't get that a lot.

If I could be part of any TV family it would be ...
Modern Family—The Dunphys perhaps, a great extended family that takes care of each other.

The newspaper I read every day is ...
The Wall Street Journal.

All-time best comedian
Tough one, but I would likely go with Bill Cosby.

The most useful invention in the last 10 years has to be ...
The iPhone is the easy answer, but I think, really, the cases protecting your iPhone which keep you from having to get a new one every three months are probably the MOST useful!

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

Presented by



www.RollerCoasterMuseum.org

•**1893:** An accident on the **Switchback Railway** at **Bloomsbury Park**, Raleigh, North Carolina, on April 4, resulted in multiple injuries, when one car jumped the track, passing onto the oncoming track, where a car from the other end had already started. Both cars, loaded with school children from a local school (St. Mary's), met at the lowest point where the crash occurred. Eight children were hurt, although no deaths were attributed to the incident.

•**1904:** A fire on the afternoon of April 11 at **Bergen Beach Amusement Park**, in Brooklyn, New York, almost wiped out the resort on Jamaica Bay. The rising tide and two Brooklyn Rapid Transit trolley cars, which carried firefighters to the resort, would supply all the help necessary to extinguish the flames. The *New York Times* called the two trolley cars the real heroes, as it was impossible to get fire equipment to the park by any other means. The **L.A. Thompson Scenic Railway** was saved, but the park still suffered about \$25,000 in damages. Firemen said without water, their fight would be over before it even started.

•**1924:** The newest wood coaster at **Kennywood Park**, West Mifflin, Pennsylvania, opened on Sunday, April 18. **The Pippin**, designed by **John A. Miller**, at a cost of \$60,000, would follow Miller's earlier **Jack Rabbit**, which opened in 1920. In a reversal of the accepted standard, the Pippin was built in a valley, with its first drop immediately out of the station into the gully. The final drop would also be the largest, with the lift in the middle of the course. Today, the lower gully portion still remains, although after modifications in 1968, it is known today as the highly enjoyable **Thunderbolt**.

•**1928:** The final cash settlements from **Westchester County**, on a part of the land acquired for **Playland**, in Rye, New York was released in early April. **Fred Ponty**, who owned **Paradise Park** received \$536,000 for the property, not including \$137,000 for devices such as the **Old Mill**. Appraisal on the **John Miller Blue Streak** was for \$62,000 to **Harry C. Baker** of Port Chester, N.Y. In today's dollars, the property alone sold for about \$7 million.

•**1942:** Owner **Neville Bayley** announced on April 26, that Connecticut's famous **Roton Point Park**, in South Norwalk, would not reopen in 1942. The park, on Long Island Sound, was comprised of over 30-acres, which had been an excursion resort and amusement park for New Yorkers and locals, for nearly three-quarters of a century. Neville, who had operated the park for 28 years, suggested that the war effort had hurt the park. The park was placed on the market, and all amusements were removed that summer. Today, the roller coaster station is still used in the public park, a faint reminder of better times.

•**1963:** **Sky Hook** opened at **Six Flags Over Texas** on April 20. The 150-foot ride featured two enclosed baskets that hoisted riders into the air where they could see the skylines of both Dallas and Fort Worth. Manufactured by **Von Roll** of Switzerland, the ride was actually a cargo crane modified to carry passengers. It formally operated at the 1958 **Brussels World's Fair**.

—Compiled by Richard Munch, NRCMA and Jeffrey Seifert, AT

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►OUTLAW RUN

Continued from page 1

coach Depot. While roaming the queue, guests pass the office of Depot Proprietor Clem Barker, whose wall of ticking clocks demonstrates his passion for punctuality and the determination for keeping the stagecoaches on time. "Take the time to notice the subtle things," says Rau. "I like the theming. I like the whole wild adventure of the West. America going out into the great adventureland where we didn't really know where we were headed. And that's what happens on this ride." Rau adds, "That's one of the coolest things about Silver Dollar City — when we immerse ourselves in the theming. You don't want to miss anything."

When asked about the name, President and CEO of Herschend Family Entertainment Joel Manby says, "Our big issue was whether to have guns in the photos with all the gun issues out there. Origin-



nally in our logo we had a gun in it, and we passed on that. And of course, we don't want to 'promote' outlaws as a positive thing. We are dedicating a lot of our work to the police force. The whole storyline is getting away safely from the outlaws." In April an iconic monument dedicated to law enforcement will be installed adjacent to the ride during a Grand Opening Celebration.

With the sound of the crack of a whip and an audible "H'yah!!" riders are dispatched from the depot and engage the lift for its 107-foot climb. But don't let that height be deceiving. Like virtually all the coasters at Silver Dollar City, the park's hilly terrain always offers greater potential

speeds as first drops are typically — and dramatically — far larger than the lift height itself. In this case, Outlaw Run has a first plunge of 162 feet. Combine that with the fact that it is the steepest drop on any wooden coaster at 81 degrees, and the makings for a rollicking adventure are underway. The wooded landscape then permits the coaster to make startling dives and curves darting into the valleys and through the trees. It is marvelously orchestrated and redefines "out of control." For the park to boast that there is no other wooden coaster like it, that's dead on.

Manby says, "That ride never lets you go. It's a fantastic ride. More importantly for the park, it makes [Silver Dollar City] a unique experience whether anyone is 2 to 92. We have a very complete park now that will serve the needs of more and more customers each year."

Brad Thomas, general manager of Silver Dollar City, adds, "Outlaw Run provides us with something we needed which was more thrills, more excitement, more fun, but keeping it to where it is not so intense that mom doesn't feel safe and mom doesn't want to ride it with her kids. You've got three significant components — you've got the world's steepest drop on a wooden coaster, we'll take you upside down three times, and at 68 mph, it is the second fastest wooden coaster on the planet."

Fred Grubb of Rocky

To navigate the twists and turns of Outlaw Run, ride supplier Rocky Mountain created their own style of coaster train, shown here.
AT/GARY SLADE



Riders race past Outlaw Run's first drop in a blur as the new coaster tops out at 68 mph, making it the world's second fastest woodie. AT/GARY SLADE

Mountain could bask in the opening day success of his latest project, but should also take considerable pride in his trains. Debuting with Outlaw Run, the "coaches" — as Silver Dollar City terms them — are of innovative and researched design. Grubb says "First of all we had to design the trains to be able to handle the amount of twists we put into the track. We put suspension systems on the train so the wheels are always touching the track — there's no bouncing back and forth." Grubb adds that this design of train will ride on any existing wooden coaster out there.

Other companies involved in Outlaw Run were Costasur Inc. of Cincinnati that supplied the boosters, chain drive assembly and transfer table; Velocity Magnetics, New Castle, Pa., supplied the braking system; and Consign, Hanover, Md., supplied the control system. In addition, Silver Dollar City installed the mechanical components.

Both Grubb of Rocky Mountain and Thomas of Silver Dollar City praised one another for the teamwork involved in putting the project together. "The overall experience was just great," comments Thomas. "Our guys are accustomed to building in tough terrain. There's not a lot of soil to work with. You get past a quarter inch, you hit solid rock. Putting in all those footers was a real challenge. Our guys had to work shoulder to shoulder with Rocky Mountain. There were opportunities for friction and there was no friction. From the 108 degree weather of the summer to the frigid temperatures of the winter, our guys got along. They were great and they created this amazing coaster that a lot of people are going to come visit."

In this case, the good guys really do win.

FAST FACTS

Name/Park

Outlaw Run/
Silver Dollar City
Branson, Mo.

What

Wooden coaster utilizing Topper Track on a wooden structure. Highlights are the steepest drop on a wooden coaster (81-degrees) and a 720-degree double barrel roll (world's first) on a wooden coaster

Height/Length/ Inversions

107 feet/2,937 feet/3

Opened/Cost

March, 15, 2013/
\$10 million

Drop/Maximum Speed/ Airtime Moments

162 feet at 81 degrees/
68 mph/
9 locations during ride

Ride Time/Capacity/ Height Requirement

1 minute, 27 seconds/
800-850 riders an hour/
48 inches

Trains

2 trains, 24 passengers per train. Each train features U-bar lap restraint & individual fiberglass seats

Design

Alan Schilke,
Ride Centerline, LLC
Hyde Park, Utah

Supplier of Record

Fred Grubb,
Rocky Mountain
Construction Group,
Hayden, Utah

Other Suppliers

Costasur Inc., Cincinnati, Ohio/
Velocity Magnetics,
New Castle, Pa./Consign
LLC, Hanover, Md.



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Asian Attractions Expo moves to Beijing for 2014

Industry to convene at the China National Convention Center June, 17-20, 2014

BEIJING, China — The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) announced Asian Attractions Expo (AAE) 2014 will take place at the China National Convention Center (CNCC) in Beijing June 17-20, 2014. Since 1997, Asian Attractions Expo has been the premier international trade show and conference for the multibillion-dollar leisure and attractions industry in Asia.

"IAAPA is looking forward to bringing Asian Attractions Expo to China," IAAPA Vice President, Asia Pacific Operations Andrew Lee said. "The attractions industry

within China is growing at a rapid pace with several attractions recently completed and a number of other major amusement parks in development, making its capital city, Beijing, a logical choice to host AAE 2014."

"Beijing's experience as host to the 2008 Olympic Games, its area tourist attractions, and its history and diverse culture make it a perfect backdrop for Asian Attractions Expo, the attractions industry's fastest growing trade show and conference in the region," said IAAPA President and CEO Paul Noland.

More than 5,000 attrac-



tions industry professionals from more than 60 nations are expected to participate in the event. The trade show floor will showcase products from more than 250 companies from around the world in more than 100 categories,

including amusement and theme park rides; architectural and design services; and coin-operated games, skill games, and redemption prizes.

Beijing is the second most populated city in China, and it serves as the country's political, educational, and cultural center, filled with historic sites and government institutions. The city is home to Tiananmen Square, in Dongcheng District, which is surrounded by such landmarks as the Great Hall of the People, the Museum of Chinese History, the Museum of the Chinese Revolution, the Chairman

Mao Memorial Hall, and the Monument to the People's Martyrs. While in Beijing, Asian Attractions Expo participants can visit the Beijing Zoo in Xicheng District, famous for its traditional landscaping and giant pandas, see the Olympic Water Park, tour the Palace Museum also known as the Forbidden City, enjoy the Beijing Aquarium, or experience the attractions at Beijing Happy Valley, Beijing Shijingshan Amusement Park, or World Park Beijing. Also, participants can walk the The Great Wall of China located approximately, 90 minutes from the capital city.

Tivoli Copenhagen, Sentosa in co-operation agreement

STORY: Andrew Mellor
amellor@amusementtoday.com

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — Tivoli Gardens Copenhagen, one of the world's oldest amusement parks, and Singapore's premier Sentosa Island resort have entered into a two year co-operation agreement.

The agreement will enable Tivoli and Sentosa to establish closer co-operative ties through the exchange of best international tourism practices, as well as gain insights and inspiration from each other. The arrangement includes developing feasible collaboration concepts within the tourism and amusement park sectors, in addition to an employee exchange program and other cultural and gastronomic initiatives.

The co-operative agree-

ment provides a platform for both attractions to tap into each other's experiences and strengths. The first common project saw Tivoli contribute to Sentosa's annual international Sentosa Flowers festival, one of its award winning, signature events, which took place on Sentosa Island in February, on the occasion of the Chinese Lunar New Year.

Commenting on the arrangement, Tivoli A/S CEO Lars Liebst said: "One of Tivoli's prime objectives is to be among Denmark's best work places and with that in mind, we have established a strategic co-operation with Sentosa, one of the largest leisure and lifestyle operators in the tourism industry. With a co-operative partner of Sentosa's calibre, Tivoli obtains a fantastic showcase of our capabilities, and with the employee ex-



Sentosa Development Corporation CEO Mike Barclay (left) and Tivoli A/S CEO Lars Liebst sign the co-operation agreement.

COURTESY TIVOLI

change program, select Tivoli employees get a unique opportunity to increase their professional competences at

the highest level. It is essential for us to bring in inspiration from the outside but also to inspire others. The first step will be (was) Sentosa Flowers and other initiatives are in the pipeline."

For Sentosa Development Corporation, CEO Mike Barclay commented: "We are very happy to collaborate with one of the world's oldest and most famous amusement parks. Through this collaboration, we aim to tap into the strengths and advantages of our respective leisure offerings and gain from a constructive employee exchange program. This partnership is in line with Sentosa's growth strategy to continuously set new benchmarks and pursue best-in-class service standards for the benefit and enjoyment of our guests."



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Gröna Lund set to debut Europe's highest StarFlyer

STORY: Andrew Mellor
amellor@amusementtoday.com

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — As part of its 130th anniversary celebrations, Gröna Lund amusement park in Stockholm, Sweden, is due to open its latest new ride on April 27 in the shape of the Europe's highest StarFlyer.

To be named Eclipse, the new, 400-foot (122-meter) high addition is located at the park's waterfront, opposite the Main Stage, and will provide a breathtaking experience as riders soar high above Stockholm. The new attraction replaces the Extreme ride.

Representing an investment of SEK 50 million (USD \$7.9 million), Eclipse is the first StarFlyer in Sweden and is being promoted as a unique family attraction, with a height requirement of just 47 inches. It features 12 swings with double seats hanging from 26-foot



(8-meter) long chains. Riding at full speed, passengers will travel at 43 mph (69 kph) as they circle above the city.

"Eclipse takes thrills to new heights," says the park's ride manager Peter Osbeck. "Standing an imposing 400 feet tall, Eclipse has redefined our skyline and will offer guests a 360-degree, bird's eye view of the capital of Sweden. Not everyone will dare to ride it, but those who do will admire a fantastic view across Stockholm, thanks to the waterfront location. Luckily it has double seats, which means that you're not alone up there."

Ride time on Eclipse will be two minutes and the capacity per ride is 24 people. Capacity per hour is 600. Sup-

plied by Funtime of Austria, the attraction's design is inspired by architecture from the end of the 19th century and uses the Eiffel Tower as one of its sources of inspiration, with a color scheme of white and gold. The theme of the attraction follows the Steampunk style — a mix of 19th century architecture and science fiction with inspiration from Jules Verne and H.G. Wells.

Gröna Lund is the oldest amusement park in Sweden and is part of the Parks & Resorts Scandinavia theme park group, together with Kolmården, Vildmarkshotellet, Furuvik, Skara Sommarland and Aqvaria Vattenmuseum.

Gröna Lund's Eclipse StarFlyer ride will be the first in Sweden and the highest example in Europe.
COURTESY GRONA LUND



DP Leisure opens third U.K. 360 Play FEC

LEICESTER, United Kingdom — With two successful sites already in operation, DP Leisure (DPL), operator of the 360 Play family entertainment center brand, has now opened a third venue, in Leicester, U.K.

The latest addition to the chain is located at the Meridian Leisure Park, just five minutes drive from the M1 motorway. The site already features a Vue cinema, Hollywood Bowl, David Lloyd Leisure center and a variety of restaurants and the 360 Play center brings another high quality leisure choice to the mix.

As with the existing sites, design and master planning of this latest project, which is housed within an 18,000-square-foot building, was carried out by DPL's sister company, DP Associates (DPA), who also project managed the build, with construction commencing in August.

The new venue offers 360 Play's well established mix of
▶ See 360 PLAY, page 10

Jora Vision to design new Russian park

STORY: Andrew Mellor
amellor@amusementtoday.com

RIJNSBURG, Netherlands — Dutch design and production company Jora Vision has signed a contract with the Russian company Entertainment Industry Ltd. to begin work on the new Anapa Theme Park project.

Located on the northern coast of the Black Sea, Anapa Theme Park will be "the first themed theme park in Russia" according to Jora Vision, who will be responsible for the development of the 10 hectare attraction's master plan and theming design utilizing a team of 14 designers and developers.

Anapa is principally known as a family holiday destination, attracting hundreds of thousands of families annually, so it is an ideal location in which to create and develop new entertainment offerings. The design of the park will take into account the local landscape and climate and will be based on stories from in and around the Black Sea. The area has a rich history of



Jora Vision's past projects have covered a wide range of venues and attractions, such as the design and production of the theming for the Safari Ride at Kolmården Zoo in Sweden, shown here. COURTESY JORA VISION

cultures and civilizations and will serve as inspiration for the attraction.

The park will feature a wide range of rides and attractions suitable for all ages, while also incorporating a variety of F&B and merchandise outlets. Jora Vision CEO Jan Maarten de Raad said: "We are very proud to sign the contract with the Entertainment

Industry Ltd. and start working together. We both have one common goal — to create a unique theme park in Russia. We cannot wait."

Entertainment Industry Ltd. is equally pleased with the co-operation between the two companies, CEO Valeriy Zirinov commenting: "The establishment of such a park has both economical and stra-

tegal value for our company in particular and Anapa in general, as it will attract even more guests to our sea coast city. Our choice for a partner in production of the park was not random. We took into account Jora Vision's great experience in theme design and the well co-ordinated team."

Major new developments for PortAventura waterpark

STORY: Andrew Mellor
amellor@amusementtoday.com

SALON, Spain — PortAventura will complete the renovation and extension of its Costa Caribe Aquatic Park, the second park within the resort, for the main 2013 season.

Following the recent addition of the hugely successful SesamoAventura family area and the Shambhala roller coaster, the highest in Europe, the investment will continue with the much-anticipated Costa Caribe project which will see the park extended by 14,000 square meters (150,694 square feet), resulting in the Aquatic Park covering a total of 50,000 square meters (538,195 square feet). The budget for the new area is €10 million (U.S. \$13.4 million) and it is scheduled to open in May.

The project is part of the €75 million (U.S. \$101 million) investment plan approved by the resort's owner, Investindustrial, in November last year with the goal of expanding and adapting the venue increasingly to an international audience. The waterpark, which originally opened in



Above, This artist's impression of how the new area in Port Aventura's Costa Caribe waterpark will look. Left: The proven Sesame Street theming will be brought into the waterpark with the addition of a Sesame Street themed pirate ship for younger guests.

COURTESY PORTAVENTURA

2002, is a key part of this strategy, something that is proved by the fact that foreign visitors account for over 50 percent of the visitors to the water playground, most of these being English and Russian.

Among the new attractions will be the highest free

fall waterslide in Europe, The Toboggan, a FreeFall supplied by ProSlide, which will top out at 31 meters (102 feet). With a 55 degree pitch and a drop speed of 6 meters (20 feet) per second it will provide a thrilling and fun experience. Alongside will be a Multi-

bump waterslide, also from ProSlide, standing at almost 20 meters (66 feet) high and taking guests on a 100 meters (328 foot) journey.

In another area of the park a six lane, ProSlide ProRacer waterslide attraction will be added, on which both chil-

dren and adults will be able to compete against each other for the fastest descent, while the success of PortAventura's Sesame Street themed area will also be reflected in the introduction into the waterpark of a Sesame Street themed pirate ship in the children's pool area. Youngsters will be able to wander around the decks of the ship and slide down any of the four slides into shallow surrounding pool areas. Next to the children's pool will be a Splash Pad play area offering a variety of interactive water jets for young visitors to play in.

Connected to the children's pool will be an adult Tropical pool, placed at a different level to the former to create a waterfall in the children's area. A waterfall will also be a feature of the adult pool to enhance the Caribbean theme of the whole park, while water beds and invigorating water effects will be incorporated too. A new snack bar will be another new addition and with the exception of the attractions from ProSlide, all other new additions have been created by PortAventura's Development Department.

Huss introduces unique film-based family ride concept

BREMEN, Germany — German ride manufacturer Huss Park Attractions GmbH has announced the development of a new ride concept (patent pending) that will provide a unique experience for visitors to parks and other attraction destinations.

The Explorer makes use of Huss' many years of experience in the design and manufacture of observation towers, combining this with an audio visual system and sensory elements that together provide an immersive experience in a totally enclosed environment.

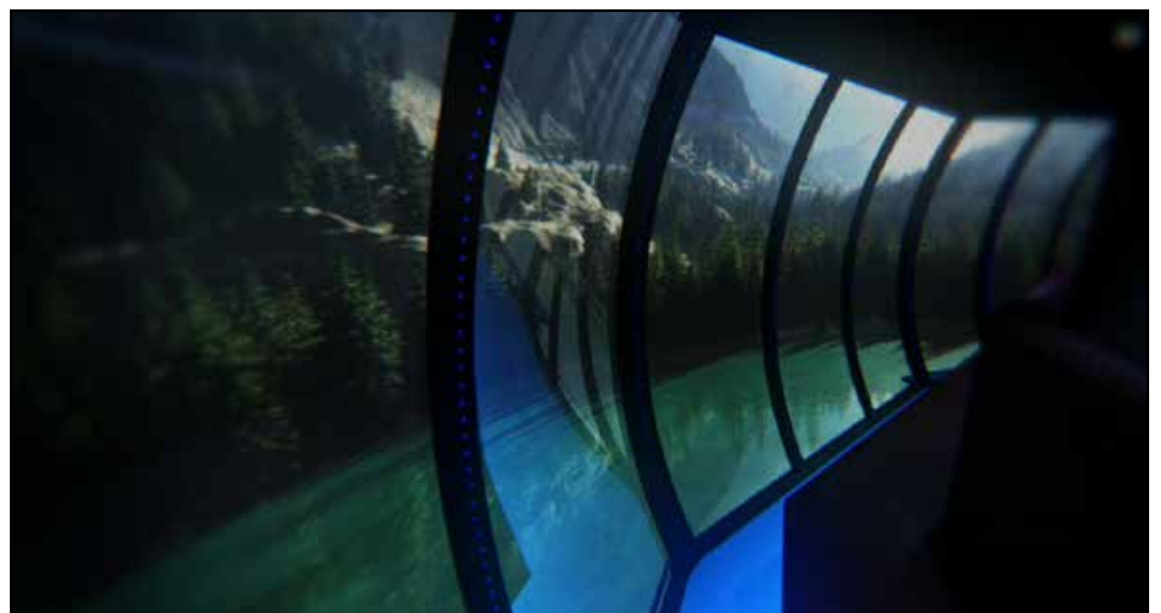
Utilizing a circular gondola similar to those used on the company's Sky Tower rides, the Explorer will accommodate up to 70 guests, including wheelchair users. The experience begins with a themed pre-show in the queuing area as waiting guests watch the gondola descend dramatically into the 'earth' and out of sight beneath a closed iris. The scenery and theming in the pre-show section will depend on the subject chosen for the core

content of the ride.

Guests are seated in the enclosed cabin facing outwards, looking through the full height glass sides of the gondola that allow for unrestricted views of the surrounding screen. A seamless 360-degree multi-projector film format delivers immersive, high definition content which is unique to each installation.

Once below the surface, guests can enjoy a wide range of environments, such as those beneath the sea, in space, in the eye of a storm or some of the world's most spectacular scenery. The content can also be created as CGI, live action or a composition of both, the flexibility of the system being one of its key benefits. As a film based attraction, the experience can be almost anything an operator chooses, from a calm, scenic journey to a white knuckle thrill ride, while refreshing the ride is simple and cost effective with only the media needing to be replaced.

Huss has taken a number of key considerations into



Huss Park Attractions GmbH has announced the development of the Explorer, a new ride concept that will take guests into a variety of exciting environments viewed through the full height gondola windows and delivered via a seamless, 360-degree, multi-projector film format, creating a totally immersive experience.

COURTESY HUSS

account in the design of the Explorer, as Mirko J. Schulze, CEO of Huss Park Attractions GmbH, explains: "We are genuinely excited by the Explorer concept and believe it ticks all the right boxes for operators. It is brand new, is based on our

proven observation tower technology, has a high capacity, offers a smooth guest flow for loading and unloading, is easy to maintain, can be enjoyed by all ages and is extremely flexible as far as changing the experience is concerned. It

also covers a relatively small footprint in combination with minor requirements on building construction; even the utilisation of existing building structures is possible.

▶360 PLAY

Continued from page 8

creative play and amusement which has proved so successful at the company's other two sites, in Milton Keynes and Stevenage. Arranged over two floors, there are four main zones inside and two outside, the indoor areas including the 360 Street creative play zone, made up of individual play units such as a fire station, supermarket, pizza parlour, car garage/body shop and dressing up shop.

The central indoor feature is an active zone designed by DPA and supplied by the Soft Brick Co., which incorporates a three story soft play structure with a host of sliding, climbing, crawling and other activities and a skills area with mid-size dodgem cars from IE Park/Soli Bumper cars that children can ride on their own or with an adult. A sports zone with sports games and a feature carousel, also from IE Park, along with a party zone accommodating a dedicated area for up to four individual parties, are also on offer.

The two outdoor zones, due for completion in time for



DP Leisure has opened its third 360 Play family entertainment center in the U.K. Located at the Meridian Leisure Park, the FEC offers a number of indoor and outdoor activities and attractions including mid-size dodgem cars from IE Park/Soli Bumper cars.

COURTESY DP LEISURE

the spring/summer months, will include one designed for very young guests with a sand play activity area and outdoor seating, and a larger, Club 360 area catering for the three to 10-year-old age group, with water boats, climbing attractions, water play and an events area. A café serving a wide assortment of drinks, refreshments and freshly cooked food choices is also available, as are

seating areas throughout the building, while the center will also offer 'out of hours' opening on specific nights for families with children with special needs.

The new venue has brought an impressive number of new jobs to the area too, with approximately 50 full and part time positions being created.

Bumper Action Amusements and Redemption Plus team up for industry partnership in Australia

MELBOURNE, Australia — Melbourne's Bumper Action Amusements recently announced that the company has partnered with Redemption Plus of Lenexa, Kansas in the United States to exclusively supply redemption and incentive merchandise to Family Entertainment Centers (FECs) and Children's Entertainment Centers (CECs) across Australia.

Bumper Action Amusements has operated in the sales, service and hire of classic amusements and collectibles for more than 40 years — offering the best new and vintage pinball machines, video arcade games, sports table games, Wurlitzer jukeboxes and neons for the home consumer, corporate and leisure location based markets. Recently, the company also inked a partnership deal with Castle Golf of Mesa, Arizona in the U.S. to design and build miniature golf courses in large city markets Australia wide.

Established in 1996, Redemption Plus is the leading provider of redemption and incentive toys, tools, and training. Offering a unique mix of staple, licensed and exclusive items, product range includes novelties, plush toys, sports and souvenir memorabilia, party goods, homewares and electronics. A leading crane operator and counter merchandise manufacturer and supplier, the company currently serves the amusement, educational, fundraising and specialty retail markets.

"As the exclusive representative of Redemption Plus in Australia, this partnership will deliver our growing Australian customer base a more diversified offer of quality products at a lower price," said Robert Farrell, General Manager of Bumper Action Amusements. "With direct shipment to their door, we can now deliver the kind of product variety and ordering convenience with special attention to one-of-a-kind merchandise not otherwise available in Australia," Farrell added.





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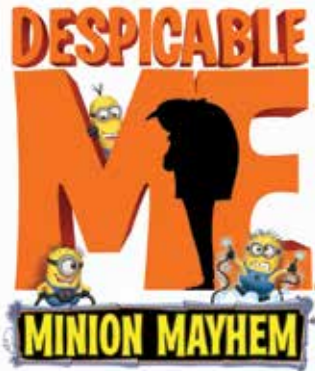
Universal Studios announces Despicable Me attraction

UNIVERSAL CITY, Calif. — Universal Studios Hollywood recently announced the much-anticipated arrival of Despicable Me Minion Mayhem, a 3-D Ultra-HD movie motion-simulator adventure. Universal Pictures and Illumination Entertainment's worldwide blockbuster *Despicable Me* will come to life in Hollywood in an attraction modeled after the one in its sister park, Universal Orlando Resort — with the addition of a few surprises.

"Based on the consumer feedback at our sister park, we expect the Despicable Me ride experience to be a popular, family-friendly attraction for Universal Studios Hollywood.

The ride continues the story line of the main characters from the blockbuster film through all-new 3-D Ultra-HD animation, together with an interactive ride vehicle system," said Larry Kurzweil, president and chief operating officer, Universal Studios Hollywood. "In Despicable Me Minion Mayhem, our guests will experience the hilarious and heartwarming characters of the beloved film in a whole new way."

The fully immersive experience will debut in 2014 with the loveable cast of leading characters that have captured the laughter of audiences worldwide: super-villain Gru, his adorable girls (Margo, Edith and Agnes) and



the unpredictably hilarious Minions.

"The Despicable Me Minion Mayhem attraction at USH will continue to push the creative envelope with its exceptional show content, sight gags, special effects and 3-D digital animation. The exterior treatment will feature even more thematic and

colorful creative touches that will literally place park guests inside Gru's world," said Mark Woodbury, president, Universal Creative.

Guests will experience whimsically themed queues, preshow videos and comedic dialogue that set up the fundamental plot: Gru schemes to create more mischievous Minions from human recruits.

Guests will be transported into Gru's house as they meander through his living room and encounter visual elements as seen in the film — including the moon-shrinking SR-6 shrink ray — while they zig zag through a zany adventure featuring Gru's super-villain laboratory. The exciting journey continues

as they swerve, bounce and plunge to get through the frantically humorous Minion training mission while donning specially designed 3-D Minion goggles. Fun and frolic continue in a post-show dance party where Minion walkaround characters invite guests to strut their stuff in an impromptu Minion-inspired dance party.

Despicable Me Minion Mayhem was produced in collaboration between Universal Creative and Illumination Entertainment, and was recently honored as Best Animated Special Production at the 2012 Annie Awards, which recognizes Outstanding Achievements in the field of Animation.

Petition to save Rye Playland gains momentum

RYE, N.Y. — A Change.org online petition has been created by those who want Playland Park in Rye, N.Y. to remain a true traditional amusement park. The petition is gaining momentum with several thousand individuals from around the world showing their support by signing and commenting.

The petition asks that the Westchester County, N.Y. Executive and Board of Legislators select a future operator of Playland Park that will maintain Playland as a traditional and historic amusement park without reducing the footprint of the amusement area. Signatories of this petition want Playland to be operated by an experienced amusement park operator which will main-

tain and improve the existing amusement park including all historic buildings and structures, without shrinking the footprint of the amusement area or decreasing the number of rides.

The petition states: "Signatories support plans of Standard Amusements and/or Central Amusements International (CAI) as said proposals stood as of Feb. 20, 2013. Both companies would improve the amusement park and invest in additional capital improvements, while respecting the property's history and atmosphere. They believe that these proposals offer the strongest choices for the financial success of Playland.

"Signatories are opposed
▶ See PETITION, page 12



The Change.org online petition created by those who want Playland Park in Rye, N.Y. to remain a true traditional amusement park is gaining momentum with numerous individuals from around the world showing their support by signing and commenting. The Fred Church-designed Dragon Coaster (pictured here) is just one of the many historical highlights of a trip to Playland.

AT/SCOTT RUTHERFORD

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Chance Rides offering Hyper-Lite steel coaster

WICHITA, Kan. — Chance Rides recently added a new item to its arsenal of steel roller coasters. Sporting the appropriate name of Hyper-Lite, this latest offering addresses those customers who want a thrilling coaster in a slightly smaller package.

Obviously influenced by the legacy of the larger Morgan Manufacturing hypercoasters, Chance's new Hyper-Lite tops out a 100 feet and features 2,500 feet of track arranged in a compact layout. Despite its relatively smaller dimensions, the Hyper-Lite is no slouch in the thrills department. The new ride kicks off with a steep 80-degree first drop followed by a rapid-fire collection of climbs, drops and high-G spirals at speeds of 55 mph. The Hyper-Lite's run home is punctuated with a series of airtime-inducing speed bumps.

The Hyper-Lite can accommodate 800 guests per hour with two 20-passenger trains. Chance offers the Hyper-Lite with custom track layout configurations.

•www.chancerides.com



Chance Rides recently added the Hyper-Lite steel roller coaster to its ride arsenal. Inspired by larger hypercoasters, the Hyper-Lite features a 100-foot, 80-degree first drop and 2,500 feet of track. With custom configurations available, the Hyper-Lite's 20-passenger trains can reach a top speed of 55 mph and offer many of the same thrills in slightly smaller package.

COURTESY CHANCE RIDES

►PETITION

Continued from page 11

to the proposal of Sustainable Playland Incorporated (SPI) as said proposal stood as of Feb. 20, 2013. SPI plans to remove 30 percent of the rides and reduce the footprint size of amusement park by over 50 percent. We believe that decreasing the size of the amusement park and removing rides will drastically reduce the number of paying users of Playland."

The petition and signatories comments can be found at: www.change.org/petitions/save-playland-amusement-park.



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Six Flags Great America to run Batman The Ride backward

GURNEE, Ill. — Go Big. Go Backward! For a limited time only, the world's first suspended looping coaster, Batman The Ride at Six Flags Great America in Gurness, Ill., will be more intense than ever when riders dare to take on an all new experience — going backward!

As the roller coaster climbs the 10-story lift hill, riders will take in the full scope of Batman The Ride's track as they anticipate the adventure that lies ahead. The train will reach speeds of 50 mph and travel through 2,700 feet of track, all while maneuvering hairpin turns, vertical loops, corkscrews and a zero-g roll. The excitement is magnified since guests cannot see the maneuvers that await.

"Batman The Ride will open for its [22nd] season this spring, offering our guests an entirely different ride experience by going backward. No matter how many times you have been on Batman The Ride, nothing compares to the thrill of racing down 10 stories facing the other direction," said Hank Salemi, Six Flags Great America park president. "You literally have no idea what is coming next. This is a tremendous new experience for our guests and one to take advantage of quickly since it will only be available for a limited time."

Six Flags has given *Amusement Today* confirmation that all of the seats on both trains will face backward. No forward-facing seats will be available during this limited time period.

Since opening in 1992, Batman The Ride has given more than 28 million thrilling rides and reigns as one of the most popular roller coasters in the world. Batman The Ride backward will launch on Saturday, May 4 — the park's opening weekend — and be available for a limited time this summer.



Fire Ball



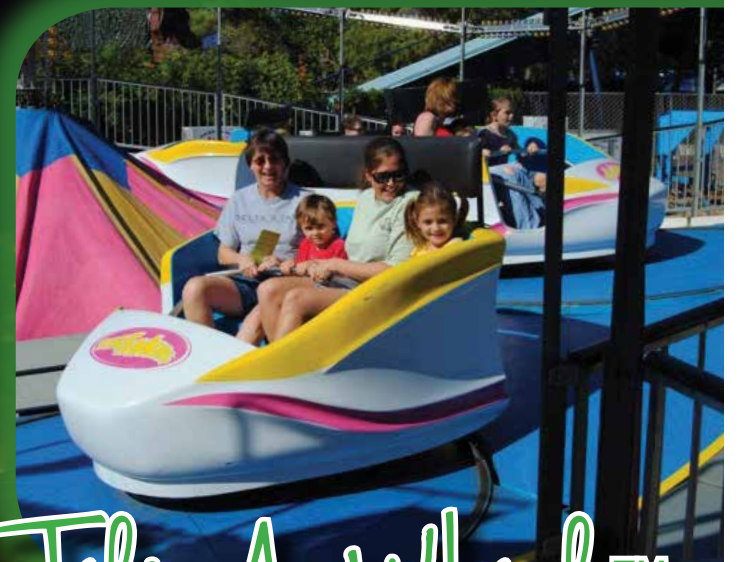
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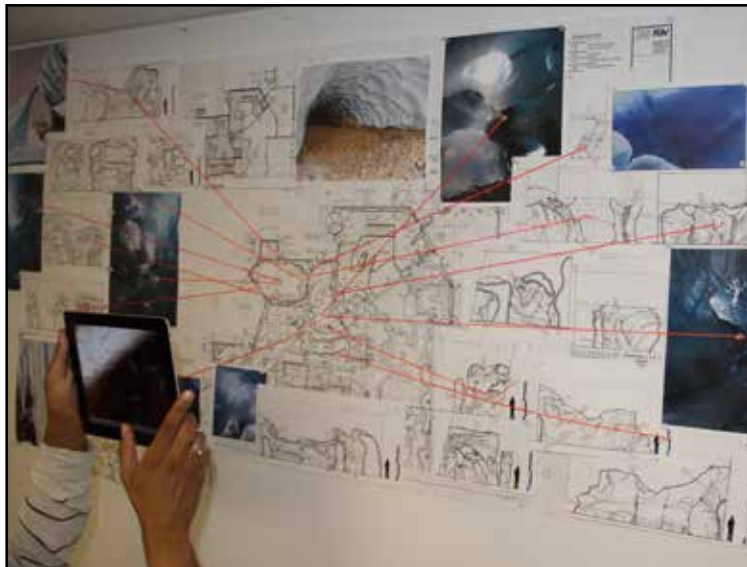


SeaWorld Orlando sets May 24 for Antarctica opening

ORLANDO, Fla. — SeaWorld Orlando's Creative Director Brian Morrow has revealed that Friday, May 24, 2013 will be the official opening date for the park's newest attraction, Antarctica: Empire of the Penguin.

During a recent tour of the exteriors of the attraction under construction, Morrow explained that theming of the interior sections are nearly complete. "That is a critical path for our project," said Morrow. "All that work inside had to be done first — allowing various show, lighting, sound, architectural facility and ride and animal teams to all get in there and do the work they had to do to prepare for opening."

Work on the exterior rock and "ice" has started in earnest. Artists have now completed the largest section of ice located near the southern end of the compound. "It was



a treat to walk out here and see it all finished and done. I get excited about that!" added Morrow.

The simulated ice is a blend of acrylic and fiberglass material. To Morrow, this was a critical element of the "Glacial Rift" lining the main walkway that connects the gift

Shown here during a recent media tour is the Creative Model Room for SeaWorld's Antarctica: Empire of the Penguin opening on May 24. Park Creative Director Brian Morrow shows how the model and images help keep things organized during the construction phase.

AT/MARLON SCOTT



SeaWorld San Antonio introduces new adopted animal show

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — Pets Ahoy!, opening at SeaWorld San Antonio in June 2013, is a new comical show featuring the talents of a menagerie of dogs, cats, birds, rats, pot-belly pigs, and other animals performing a series of amazing skits. Most impressive is the fact that nearly all of these animals will be rescued from animal shel-

ters.

"Not only is Pets Ahoy! a hilariously funny show, but it also talks seriously about the importance of properly caring for animals," said Park President Dan Decker. "Last year, SeaWorld's Happy Tails thanked more than 8,000 animal lovers with free admission tickets to SeaWorld for adopting a dog or cat from

either Animal Care Services, Animal Defense League or the San Antonio Humane Society. These shelters are doing phenomenal work to save as many animals as they can, yet this remains a significant issue for our community. By continuing the Happy Tails program in 2013, we're supporting these incredible organizations and saying thank you to people

who help save animals."

Nationally acclaimed SeaWorld animal trainer Joel Slaven has more than 30 years of animal training experience, with numerous television appearances and major film credits such as Ace Venture, Pet Detective and That Darn Cat. For SeaWorld's newest show, he directs the training of more than 130 animals,

from the initial selection to the shaping of behaviors. "There is nothing more gratifying than adopting a shy, untrained cat or dog from a shelter," said Slaven, "and seeing the animal transform into an amazing, confident and happy show animal. I'm looking forward to building relationships with all of these animals."

SeaWorld Parks & Ent. launching new Madagascar show

Busch Gardens Tampa and SeaWorld San Diego to receive shows



SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment will premiere *Madagascar Live! Operation: Vacation*, an original live musical show featuring the characters from DreamWorks Animation SKG, Inc.'s *Madagascar* franchise, at Busch Gardens Tampa (May 18) and SeaWorld San Diego (June 15).

COURTESY SEAWORLD PARKS & ENTERTAINMENT

ORLANDO, Fla. — SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment has announced it will premiere *Madagascar Live! Operation: Vacation*, an original live musical show featuring the characters from DreamWorks Animation SKG, Inc.'s *Madagascar* franchise, at two of the company's parks this summer.

Celebrating the box office success of *Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted*, which has grossed more than \$740 million worldwide, Alex the Lion and friends will party while on vacation with guests at Busch Gardens Tampa and SeaWorld San Diego throughout 2013.

The 20-minute musical show follows the antics of Alex the Lion, Gloria the Hippo, King Julien, Mort and the Penguins during a vacation adventure. The show will feature rock/pop music performed by a live band and include both classic and original songs. The characters also will conduct meet and greets with park guests.

Additionally, special co-branded merchandise exclusive to the parks, will be available.

These two locations will be the only theme parks in the U.S. where fans can see the characters of *Madagascar* live. The new show *Madagascar Live! Operation: Vacation* premieres at Busch Gardens Tampa on May 18 and SeaWorld San Diego on June 15.

The company also has the opportunity to expand the show to other parks in the SeaWorld family in the future.

"Audiences around the world have embraced the characters of *Madagascar*, and SeaWorld and Busch Gardens parks are the ideal places for families to enjoy this immersive live entertainment experience," said DreamWorks Animation's Head of Worldwide Licensing & Consumer Products, Kerry Phelan. "The entire creative team behind this uniquely original version of *Madagascar Live!* has done an

impressive job of translating the beloved world from screen to stage, bringing it to life for young park guests and family audiences alike."

"Our parks both entertain and inspire guests to care about animals," said Scott Helmstedter, chief creative officer of SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment. "Likewise, the *Madagascar* movies also inspire animal lovers, but in a different way with their inimitable charm and humor. We welcome these characters to our family with open arms and look forward to working with DreamWorks Animation on this incredibly funny and engaging new show."

Madagascar is one of the most successful CG animated movie franchises of all time, grossing more than \$1.8 billion at the worldwide box office. In 2012 *Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted*, grossed over \$740 million at the global box office, becoming the highest grossing film of the series.



This rockwork depicting a mother penguin and a (yet to be completed) baby herald will be featured at the main entrance to the ride. AT/MARLON SCOTT

▶ANTARCTICA

Continued from page 14

shop, restaurant, educational facility to the ride and live penguin environment. "We wanted the ice to have a proper scale, we also wanted to not paint the rockwork (just) blue, or white — most important was the integration of the ice and how it 'glows' in the Antarctic sun," said Morrow.

The materials used in the rock and ice allow the sun to glisten realistically but will also allow show lighting to pass through it at night. The robust lighting package

will be integrated with the soundtrack and various sound effects to complete the immersive environment.

At the heart of Antarctica: Empire of the Penguin is a motion-based simulator vehicle that will utilize a trackless navigation system. The seemingly free-roaming vehicles will whisk riders into the story of a young penguin named Puck, his family and their adventures at the bottom of the world.

AT will cover the opening of SeaWorld Orlando's newest attraction in a future issue.

—Marlon Scott

Kings Dominion announces largest entertainment line-up in years

DOSWELL, Va. — Kings Dominion has announced a major expansion in its live show offerings for the 2013 season, highlighted by a high-energy BMX bike show and a Broadway-style musical revue. In all, the entertainment package will include seven new live shows, 10 total, making it the largest entertainment line-up in years at Kings Dominion.

Headlining the 2013 live entertainment package is the all new All Wheel Sports, a BMX-style show with bikers, skaters and gymnasts who were semi-finalists on Season 7 of NBC's "America's Got Talent." Park guests will watch in awe as the cast will flip, dive and perform stunts that defy gravity. All Wheel Sports will be performed in the Peanuts Showplace Theater in Planet Snoopy daily from June 22 – August 18.

Broadway is making its way to Kings Dominion with the all new On Broadway musical revue at the Kings Dominion Theater. From the classics that started a sensation to the biggest hits in New York, On Broadway takes over from June 15 – August 18.

The additional live entertainment schedule includes:

New – Charlie Brown's All Star's: Help cheer on Charlie Brown, Lucy and Linus as they gear up for the big baseball game in this all-new family musical, running March 29 – October 27.

New – Schroeder's Sing-Along: Warm up your voice and join Schroeder and the

Peanuts gang for singing and dancing fun, running March 29 – October 27.

Got Country: Kick back and relax as country music takes center stage as we celebrate some of today's hottest hits, running March 29 – September 2.

New – Karaoke Superstars: Take to the microphone with the biggest hits from the 50s to today and be a star on stage, running March 29 – September 2.

New – Pop Fusion: Keep the party going as Kings Dominion presents today's most electrifying hits, running April 27 – September 2.

Peanuts Rockin' Party: Join the Peanuts gang for a rockin' party on International Street; photo opportunities, along with meet and greets following the show.

New – Dominion at Dusk: The sky lights up at night with Dominion at Dusk, featuring more than one million LED lights in Snoopy's Starlight Spectacular, a chance to join singers and dancers with a new live show, Street Beats and time to blast off with our nightly fireworks show. Dominion at Dusk will start at dusk on all 10:00 p.m. park closings, April 27 through September 1.

"This expansion of our live entertainment, along with our new Planet Snoopy at Kings Dominion, emphasizes our commitment to provide our guests with the best family-fun in the region," said Kings Dominion Entertainment Manger Jason Holbrooks.

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STORY: Jeffrey L. Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

YAS ISLAND, Abu Dhabi — After a few days of sneak previews to Facebook friends, Yas Waterworld officially opened to the public on January 22, 2013 — four days ahead of schedule. The 15-hectare (37-acre) waterpark was built with an investment of \$245 million and has been under development for more than two years. The waterpark is part of a \$36 billion Yas Island development that includes Ferrari World, Yas Marina, Yas Marina Circuit race track, Yas Links golf course, Yas Gateway Park, Yas Arena, as well as restaurants, hotels, resorts, villas and shopping centers. The man made island on the coast of the Persian Gulf was a dusty wasteland that was separated from the mainland by a series of canals and waterways, and transformed into a lush recreational area over a period of 30 months.

The opening ceremony involved hundreds of performers, fire-breathing dragons, high-thrill flowboard tricks, a tight rope walk over the waterpark's canals and death-defying sword fights. His Highness Sheikh Tahnoon bin Mohammed Al Nahyan, the Ruler's Representative in the Eastern Region, officially opened the waterpark, signing a classically-styled guestbook with a flourish in keeping with Yas Waterworld's Emirati-inspired setting. The ceremony concluded with the tumbling roar of the waterpark's central waterfall and a spectacular fountain show.

"Yas Waterworld Abu Dhabi came to life today — both symbolically and literally. It has been an incredible journey to this point and unbelievably satisfying to watch the people's reaction to what has been created. We are confident that people will have seen nothing like it before and we look forward to the waves of visitors expected to arrive now that the park is officially open," said Mike Oswald, Yas

Waterworld Abu Dhabi, general manager.

Even before opening to the public, the park was proclaimed the winner of the World Waterpark Association's (WWA), "Leading Edge Award" in 2012.

WhiteWater West supplied and manufactured 12 of the 14 slide complexes including the world's first Rattler that contains special effects, lasers, lights and sounds; and an AquaLoop with an AquaDrop capsule — the first looping waterslide in the Middle East.

ProSlide provided the two largest attractions at the park — the largest HydroMagnetic Mammoth in the Middle East and the world's first HydroMagnetic Tornado. Both use ProSlide's six-man Clover-Wheel tubes.

Vekoma supplied the park's Bandit Bomber roller coaster. The 550-meter (1,800-foot) Vekoma Splash Party suspended coaster winds over slides and attractions. The vehicles are equipped with water tanks and riders can shoot water guns at guests below or drop a 20-liter (5.2-gallon) water "bomb." Guests under the coaster can fire back with water cannons.

A Wave Loch FlowBarrel Ten Double is allegedly the largest sheet wave surf ride in the world, awaiting confirmation from Guinness World Records. The water temperature in all of the attractions is controlled and varies with different seasons to keep guests comfortable.

Other attractions include a wave pool, lazy river, shops and boutiques, eight restaurants, and a unique pearl diving attraction that showcases traditional Emirati pearl diving. The choreographed show, presented in both English and Arabic, allows guests to interact with the divers to select the oyster of their choice then have the pearl mounted into a necklace, bracelet or keychain. Cabanas throughout the park are available for rent. Splash-Quest, a WhiteWater West



partner, created PearlMasters an interactive game that uses RFID technology to take guests on a treasure hunt around the park.

Upon entry to the park every guest is given an RFID wristband that can be loaded with money for the convenience of not having to carry cash around and can be used at any of the food outlets and shops located within the waterpark. The RFID wristbands can also be used to access lockers throughout the day, at an additional cost. The same wristband will be used to play PearlMasters if that option is purchased. The park accepts Visa, American Express, MasterCard and cash in Dirham and U.S. Dollar currencies. Complimentary wireless Internet is provided throughout the park. In keeping with Islamic traditions, two prayer rooms are available in the park.

"Yas Waterworld Abu Dhabi is a milestone in the leisure sector in the Middle East, and indeed in the world. Our 43 rides, slides and attractions feature five one-of-a-kind rides that have never been seen in any other water-

▶ See WATERWORLD, page 18

At the newly opened Yas Waterworld, six different WhiteWater slides (above) are intertwined in this area of the park, including a SuperBowl and the world's first Rattler with lasers, lights and sounds. Below, WhiteWater supplied multiple water play structures including an AquaPlay Giant RainFortress as well as the The FlowBarrel from Flow Rider, below. Ten Double is allegedly the largest sheet wave surf ride in the world, awaiting confirmation from Guinness World Records. COURTESY WHITEWATER





NEWS SPLASH

COMPILED: Jeffrey L. Seifert, jseifert@amusementtoday.com

Blue Mountain Ski Resort in Pa. was given approval, after four years of waiting, to create a \$20 million waterpark. The waterpark is the first step toward making the ski resort a year-round operation with a hotel. Feasibility studies indicated that a hotel would not be profitable unless the resort could attract customers during the summer months. Although Blue Mountain does offer disc golf, mountain biking and an adventure camp, these activities do not draw enough visitors to keep the hotel occupied in the summer — but the addition of a waterpark will. The initial plan is to create a 20-acre family-friendly park with a wave pool, lazy river, children's pool and multi-slide structure. The resort intends to give the waterpark a natural look and utilize the scenic vistas available atop the mountain. Boulders and rocks discovered during excavation will be incorporated into the landscape.

The waterpark will also allow the resort to keep more of its winter staff by creating full-time positions for some of the seasonal departments. Park President Barbara Greens feels that full-time year-round employees will provide better customer service. "We will take departments we already have now and say 'OK, you are full-time people now and are eligible for benefits,'" said Green. Current plans are to have the waterpark completed for the 2016 season.

Sunway Lagoon in Malaysia is getting ready to open Vuvuzela, the world's largest water ride. The MYR15 million (\$4.8 million) slide is 11 stories tall and includes an elevator to take guests to the top of the ride where they will board four- and six-person rafts. Once aboard, the rafts will traverse a 152 meter (500-foot) course before dropping into the world largest water funnel. The rafts are expected to make at least four oscillations within the 22-meter (72-foot) diameter funnel before entering an enclosed flume and finally ending in a splash pool. Vuvuzela was designed and built by **WhiteWater West** of Canada and was scheduled to open mid-March.

In the short span of just three weeks, more than 20,000 people in **New Brighton, New Zealand**, have signed a petition calling for a waterpark to be built in their home town. City councillors of this seaside suburb of Christchurch hope the waterpark will rescue New Brighton from decline and help put it on the map. The Christchurch city council has about \$30 million set aside for an aquatic center on the eastern side of the city and another \$37 million is in the city coffers from the Prime Minister's Earthquake Appeal Trust. Those monies along with money secured from private investors could make a waterpark in Brighton a reality. Preliminary estimates showed that a waterpark could be built for about \$50 million. New Brighton and Christchurch were both heavily damaged in a December 2011 earthquake. Much of the rebuilding effort has been taking place in the central city area of Christchurch. "Here is an opportunity for an area that was very badly damaged to get something really great," said

City Councillor Peter Beck.

Rapids Waterpark in West Palm Beach, Fla. opened its new **Wave Loch FlowRider** on March 9. Sold by Wave Loch's North American Licensee and Partner, **Aquatic Development Group (ADG)** the FlowRider adds to the growing legion of FlowRiders in Florida and fits perfectly with Wave Loch's strategy of growing the sport of flowboarding. Rapids waterpark is scheduled to have a US FLOW (Flowboarding League of the World) Tour Pro Am event June 8, 2013, to help promote the sport.

Raging Waves Waterpark in Illinois, is adding a new playful character this season — Lil' Nicky — the crispy, crunchy, yummy onion mascot for Onion Crunch. Unlike the typical theme park character, Lil' Nicky is not a theme park mascot, but a new character that will appear to promote a new item on the condiment shelf. Onion Crunch is a brand new condiment that is the only kosher pareve, vegan, crispy, crunchy onion topping that delivers a delicious roasted onion flavor to enhance any amusement park meal whether it's a hotdog, hamburger, pizza or salad.

Hilton Milwaukee City Center Hotel closed its indoor waterpark in March in favor of something more "upscale and contemporary." The indoor waterpark, which opened in November 2000, was the first urban indoor waterpark in the country. It helped draw a number of weekend leisure travelers until the novelty wore off. Now, families who want to do a hotel waterpark vacation will typically drive to the Wisconsin Dells area, where there are a number of large indoor waterpark hotels. Although the hotel announced no plans for the space, this downtown Hilton does not have a spa and salon or a lap pool with a lounge area.

Wisconsin Resorts Consulting wants to build a new \$85 million indoor/outdoor waterpark, retail, restaurant and hotel resort in the Caban Marketplace development in **Bel Aire**, just outside of the capital city of Wichita, Kansas. The project depends on the approval of sales tax revenue (STAR) bonds from the State of Kansas but the developer is confident the approval will go through. Craig Wilkinson, principal owner of Wisconsin Resort Consulting was formerly an assistant general manager at Great Wolf Lodge Wisconsin Dells. He claims to have hotel-development partners ready to help finance the project once the bonding is approved. Without the STAR bond financing Wilkinson said something smaller might be possible. The Bel Aire project would be less than three hours away from **Schlitterbahn Kansas City** which has had a similar waterpark, retail, restaurant resort under construction for several years. So far, only the waterpark portion of Schlitterbahn has opened.

Have waterpark, resort or other aquatic facility, news of interest for **NewsSplash?** Email it direct to Jeffrey Seifert at: jseifert@amusementtoday.com.



ProSlide supplied this **HydroMagnetic Mammoth** (above) and the world's first **Hydromagnetic Tornado**, below. Both attractions use high-capacity, six-person rafts to provide a thrilling, unique thrill ride for its guests.

COURTESY PROSLIDE



► WATERWORLD

Continued from page 17

park in the world," said Mike Oswald. "We have a collection of attractions that have never been seen before in the region. Our unique combination of rides, innovative themes and location on Yas Island, which is already one of the global hotspots for leisure and entertainment, is an unparalleled draw for visitors."

The park is built around a central theme — the "Legend of the Lost Pearl," based on a legend that represents local Emirati culture and heritage. Visitors will be able to enjoy attractions that follow the adventures of the waterpark's main character Dana — a young Emirati girl in search of a legendary pearl that brought prosperity to her village. Other characters include Dana's parents and brother as well as playful animals such as a camel, falcon and dolphin along with two greedy bandits and a snake that serve as antagonists.

"WhiteWater collaborated closely with Yas Waterworld to develop and custom theme unique and innovative

signature attractions", said Geoff Chutter, WhiteWater's CEO. "We are thrilled with the results and are extremely proud to showcase our attractions at this groundbreaking waterpark, including several world's firsts: the Family Rattler waterslide, the largest FlowBarrel Ten Double, and SplashQuest, an interactive video game adventure."

WhiteWater attractions featured include an AquaLoop AquaPlay AP300, AquaPlay Giant RainFortress, AquaTune, Extreme River, Family Waves, FlowBarrel Ten Double, FlowRider Double, Freefall Slide, Inner-Tube Slides, Kids' Slides, Rattler, SplashQuest, Speed Slide, Super-Bowl and Whizzard.

"We turned to ProSlide for our two most spectacular water rides because we want to deliver out-of-this-world experiences that create lasting memories for our guests," says Mike Oswald, general manager, Yas Waterworld. "We're counting on these custom, one-of-a-kind rides to help us attract close to 700,000 guests a year and be profitable in our first year."

► See WATERWORLD, page 19

▶WATERWORLD

Continued from page 18

“What we care about most is helping our customers differentiate themselves in the market which is why we’re so proud to have provided Yas Waterworld with the two most iconic water rides in their park”, says Rick Hunter, ProSlide president & CEO.

The project was developed by Aldar Properties PJSC, constructed by Al Jaber L. E. G. T. Engineering and Contracting LLC, and will be managed by Farah Leisure Park Management LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Aldar Properties.

Yas Waterworld is scheduled to operate year-round. The park opens at 10 a.m. and closes at 6, 7, or 8 p.m. depending on the season. Tickets cost AED 225 (U.S. \$61) for adults and AED 185 (U.S. \$50) for children. The park is 10 minutes from Abu Dhabi International Airport, 30 minutes from the city of Abu Dhabi and 50 minutes from Dubai.

Schlitterbahn breaks ground in Corpus Christi

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas — Residents turned out in force February 15, to celebrate the groundbreaking of Schlitterbahn’s newest waterpark and resort. The new 65-acre project will embody the best of Schlitterbahn — rivers, rides, slides, surf, and lodging — in a community that has been anxiously anticipating the new park.

“We’ve been impressed by the incredible support and enthusiasm from citizens in Corpus Christi,” said Jeff Henry, co-owner of Schlitterbahn. “While the groundbreaking is taking part today, ride fabrication is already underway. Schlitterbahn plans on opening Summer of 2014.”

Schlitterbahn’s Waterpark and Resort in Corpus Christi will launch with Schlitterbahn’s signature attractions including a Torrent Tidal Wave River, a river system that allows guests to float along a wave-filled river; swim-up bars; beaches; and of course, a Boogie Bahn, an inland surfing ride; as well as on-site lodging.

Lake Compounce introduces patio in Crocodile Cove

BRISTOL/SOUTHINGTON, Conn. — Lake Compounce’s Crocodile Cove waterpark is not only featuring a new wave pool called Bayou Bay this season, but now has announced the addition of a Lakeside Party Patio, where groups of up to 15 people can gather for a celebration of any kind.

The Lakeside Party Patio may be reserved online in advance, for a two hour period, between noon and 7 p.m., from Memorial Day to Labor Day. The price includes admission to Lake Compounce and Crocodile Cove for up to 15 people, as well as food and bottled beverages.

“This is an excellent option for birthday parties, office gatherings, family reunions and even club events, where our catered pavilion area may be too large for just 15 guests,” says Jerry Brick, general manager. “We know that it can be difficult to find outdoor gathering places in the summer, and this affords groups the chance to be outside instead of hosting an event at an indoor venue.”

Reservations for the Lakeside Party Patios must be made in advance, and can be done by visiting the park’s website.

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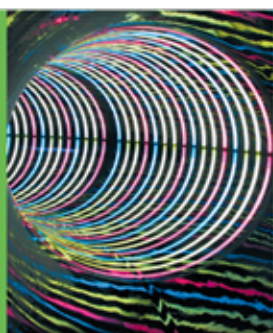


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Ingenuity from R&R Creative Amusement Designs

Aqua Talkers poised to add 'cool' to waterparks, spraygrounds

STORY: Dean Lamanna
Special to Amusement Today

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Patrons at waterparks, theme parks and other leisure spots looking to amp their fun may find extra-cool compadres in some new animated characters that are seeking a berth in the world of amusement.

Called Aqua Talkers and sprung from the ever-playful, multi-award-winning minds of Southern Californians Rick Bastrup and Richard Ferrin of R&R Creative Amusement Designs, these friendly and highly vocal interactive fountains are aimed at keeping park guests engaged longer in an age of decreased attention spans.

"We've incorporated more than 30 years of experience doing dark rides and animated characters into this system," said Rick Bastrup, speaking with *AT* at his company's residential office not far from Disneyland — where he and

Ferrin, as park employees, struck up a friendship and then formed their company in 1981. "Kids just love it, and it always attracts a crowd."

Working with the Hawaiian Falls waterpark chain in Dallas-Fort Worth, for which it has been doing overall park design, R&R Creative began conceptualizing Aqua Talkers about seven years ago. The patent-pending animatronic system, which incorporates electronics and up to seven spray features within a customizable character that comes with dozens of pre-programmed voice scripts, music selections and sound effects, was first tested at Hawaiian Falls' Roanoke, Texas, location before being fully introduced at its Mansfield park last spring.

That character, the Tiki-themed Maui Max, was so successful that a Fort Worth-based company, Aqua Talkers, LLC (www.aquatalkers.com),

was organized to manufacture the system and market it industry-wide. It is being pitched not only as an innovative waterpark peripheral, but as a cooling diversion and/or promotional tool for theme parks, FECs, zoos and shopping malls.

Bastrup pointed out Aqua Talkers' versatility. "You can override the automatic programming and operate it manually from a nearby location for maximum interactivity with guests," he said, adding that his company supplies scripts and voice recordings for the characters in addition to coordinating their assembly. "It has a built-in microphone that allows the operator to hear what guests are saying and address them 'in character,' as if there's someone actually inside of it."

Considering the cost of attractions these days, Bastrup feels that the current \$35,000

▶ See AQUA TALKERS, page 23



Maui Max, the first fully themed and operational Aqua Talkers character designed by R&R Creative Amusement Designs, is a proven crowd-pleaser at Hawaiian Falls Waterpark in Mansfield, Texas. COURTESY R&R CREATIVE AMUSEMENT DESIGNS



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▶ AQUA TALKERS

Continued from page 22

to \$45,000 price tag for a single, standard Aqua Talkers character package is “a reasonably economical way to do something unique.” Park owners must provide some basic infrastructure in the form of water and conduit run to the installation location, plus a nearby concealed place in which an operator can use the option of working the controls manually.

Bastrup noted that Maui Max is already extending his celebrity status at Hawaiian Falls. “Along with this character, we’re doing merchandising — like mugs and T-shirts. There’s a lot of opportunity for further branding with Aqua Talkers: their promotional and storytelling potential is unlimited. And it can all be applied and customized to the existing mascot of a park or other entity.”

For R&R Creative, whose highly personalized service has led to its close relationships with Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk and Palace Enter-

tainment as well as to numerous projects nationally and around the world, the Aqua Talkers concept is another extension of its wholesome brand of family entertainment. The company’s gabby brainchild also supports the one key thing the team has learned in its decades of industry work: the importance of creating a memorable connection between person and place.

“Tastes change and technology changes, but fundamentally and universally, people like to be entertained,” Bastrup said. “What we’ve always worked hard at doing — whether it’s something with a simple theme, like a miniature golf course, or an elaborate dark ride — is taking people into a different environment that allows them to have fun and laugh. Details matter, as do emotions and reactions. And in this business, you don’t need vast amounts of money to deliver that.

“There are now a couple of generations of parkgoers who are enjoying our designs. And for us, that feels great.”



Aqua Talkers concept drawings by R&R Creative Amusement Designs illustrate the versatility of the animatronic characters’ theming and placement.

COURTESY R&R CREATIVE AMUSEMENT DESIGNS



R&R Creative Amusement Designs founders Richard Ferrin and Rick Bastrup show off their animatronic motormouth / fountain, Maui Max, at Hawaiian Falls Waterpark in Mansfield, Texas. COURTESY R&R CREATIVE AMUSEMENT DESIGNS

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Universal's Cabana Bay Beach Resort is scheduled to open in 2014 at Universal Orlando Resort. COURTESY UNIVERSAL ORLANDO RESORT

Universal's Cabana Bay Beach Resort accepting reservations

ORLANDO, Fla. — Guests can now book reservations for Universal's Cabana Bay Beach Resort, the new, 1,800-room hotel at Universal Orlando Resort that will feature value-priced guest rooms and moderately priced family suites. The hotel is scheduled to open in early 2014, with reservations now being accepted for stays beginning on March 31, 2014.

The new hotel is the fourth hotel within Universal Orlando Resort and will evoke the classic, retro-feel of iconic beach resorts from the 1950s and 60s. An area located around the North Courtyard will open first, followed later in 2014 by an area located around the South Courtyard. Each area will have a unique look and feel.

Families will have two options for experiencing the hotel, a value-priced standard guest room or a moderately priced, 430-square-foot family suite that sleeps six. From the moment they arrive, they will be surrounded by the hotel's bold design, period colors, neon and retro feel. When complete, there will be two pool complexes with a sand beach and interactive features, a themed lazy river experience and 10-lane bowling alley.

"We believe Universal's Cabana Bay Beach Resort will offer an experience unlike any other in Central Florida," said Alice Norsworthy, executive vice president of marketing and sales at Universal Orlando Resort. "And at the same time, it will create an entirely new, value-driven option for families that want to stay within the Universal Orlando Resort."

Each of Universal's Cabana Bay Beach Resort's courtyards will have a unique design and atmosphere. They will share a highly themed, two-story arrival building that will also be home to a food court serving traditional American classics along with an ever-changing selection of international cuisine, a bowling alley, a game room and a fitness center.

PAPA Spring Meeting well attended

NJAA's Kim Samarelli gives New Jersey park re-opening update

STORY: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

HERSHEY, Pa. — One hundred eleven members of the Pennsylvania Amusement Parks Association (PAPA) met March 4 and 5 for their annual spring Meeting at Hershey Lodge. The event was attended by representatives of over 20 manufacturers and 10 of the 17 member Pennsylvania parks and attractions.

The first day consisted of a board of directors meeting followed by a reception and banquet that evening that was run by Carl Crider, general manager of DelGrosso's Amusement Park in Tipton, Pa. He is the current president of PAPA, finishing his second year of a two year term. Speakers included Kimberle Rolle Samarelli, executive director of the New Jersey Amusement Association (NJAA). She spoke about the recent devastation from Superstorm Sandy and the seaside park owners resolve to move past this setback, adopting the mantra, "Rebuild, Restore, Reopen."

The second day was reserved for the membership meeting held over breakfast. Association business included reports in various aspects of the industry: legislative, amusement ride safety advisory board, ride safety seminar, scholarships, waterpark and human resource issues. When asked to give a financial report, Secretary/Treasurer Dick Knoebel led the group (with many responding in unison), "We are solvent!"

The new slate of officers



Outgoing PAPA President Carl Crider, Jr., DelGrosso's (left) handed the reins off to incoming President Brian Bossuyt, CamelBeach Waterpark during the association's 78 annual Spring Meeting in Hershey, Pa. AT/GARY SLADE



New Jersey Amusement Association Executive Director Kim Rolle Samarelli gave the PAPA attendees an update on the rebuilding underway by many of the damaged amusement facilities and piers, following the path of destruction by Superstorm Sandy. Also on hand was NJAA President John J. Maurer. AT/GARY SLADE

was presented by Ron "Buddy" Knoebel, voted on and approved. The 2013 - 2014 team moves Crider to past president and chairman. Brian Bossuyt with Camelback Mountain Waterpark is the new president; Jeff Davis from Sesame Place is first vice president and Dick Knoebel continues as secretary/treasurer. The second vice president po-

sition is vacant at the moment. In his welcome in the 2013 PAPA directory, Crider had this to say about Dick Knoebel: "He is an amazing wealth of knowledge for our association as well as our industry."

The biggest issues facing PAPA member parks continues to be legislation pertaining to post Labor Day school

▶ See PAPA, page 30

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New CEO is committed to family fun, founder's legacy

Beyond chocolate, Hershey's William Simpson is raising the bar

STORY: Dean Lamanna
Special to Amusement Today

HERSHEY, Pa. — The well-traveled president and newly appointed CEO of Hershey Entertainment & Resorts Company (HE&R), William F. Simpson, Jr., cheerfully admits to skipping a trip on Hersheypark's recently installed Skyrush roller coaster.

"I'm in my late 50s, so my body doesn't hold up that way," he says with a laugh. "I've turned that over to the younger generation."

Besides, Simpson, who succeeded retiring CEO Ted Kleisner on January 1, is fully immersed in everything else that makes Hershey a destination for families and conventioners. In addition to Hersheypark, his purview includes Hersheypark Arena & Stadium, ZooAmerica North American Wildlife Park, The Hotel Hershey, Hershey Lodge and the newly re-branded Hersheypark Camping Resort.

All of this supports the most important legacy of company founder Milton S. Hershey: the Milton Hershey School (www.mhskids.org), that has provided opportunities for children in need since 1909.

Simpson began his successful career at HE&R in 1996 as general manager of Hershey Lodge. In 2002, he became vice president of the company's entertainment group, overseeing the Hersheypark Entertainment Complex and leading it to new performance and guest satisfaction benchmarks.

In April 2010, Simpson was promoted to HE&R's chief operating officer and soon after given the role of president. He was appointed to the company's board of directors the next year.

Previously, Simpson, a native of Reidsville, N.C., was general manager of the Sheraton Grand Hotel in Houston. He also held key leadership positions with the Williamsburg Inn, The Opryland Hotel and Hyatt Hotels Corporation in Phoenix.

Now residing in Hershey with his wife and their two children, Simpson took a few moments to chat with *AT* and offer his take on hospitality and the business of fun done



William F. Simpson, Jr., is the new CEO of Hershey Entertainment & Resorts Company. His job includes keeping Hersheypark's approximately 2.5 million seasonal guests happy. COURTESY HERSHEY ENTERTAINMENT & RESORTS the HE&R way.

What's your take on the industry's current health?

Back in October, we presented our strategic direction for the next three years to our board, and of course, part of that is a lot of environmental scanning to see what we could learn about where our (hospitality and amusement) industries are going. We've determined that the growth rate is probably around two and a half percent — and while that's not the number we'd love to see, it's still a number moving in the right direction.

We've continued to invest in our properties even through tough economic times. Other companies may not have been in the same position to do that, but it's exciting to see that they're now making capital improvements and adding attractions. That's a great boost for the industry.

How well has HE&R, and specifically Hersheypark, weathered the recession?

Very well. Part of our advantage is very loyal guests who come back time after time. We put in a \$27 million roller coaster, Skyrush, last year, and that did well for us — boosting our attendance about five percent, based on our guest research. Our location also works to our advantage, given the demographics of the population around us.

You oversee a much more

diversified company than the typical industry executive. How do you make all the parts work together?

We take a three-pronged strategic approach. Our core assets that have been here awhile — the Hotel Hershey, built in the early 1930s, and Hersheypark, now 106 years old — require a lot of maintenance capital. We've also got to identify capital to grow the business and keep it fresh and attractive.

The third area we in which we invest is our employees by providing opportunity for professional growth and development. It's up to them, after all, to make sure we create lasting memories for our guests and make them want to come back.

How are you positioning Hersheypark for overall strength and growth?

We are a destination for families, so everything we do goes into that thought process; we don't do the biggest, tallest, fastest. We offer things every member of the family can participate in, ride or enjoy.

Being associated with iconic brands people have grown up with — whether it's a Hershey bar or the Reese's Peanut Butter Cup — sets us apart from other parks. Those brands have great strength, and we model the experiential part of them into our thinking in terms of how we develop and operate the park.

What changes in and around the park will we see this season and beyond?

We hear from our guests all the time: "More coasters!" and "More water!" Having just added Skyrush, this year we're making an additional investment in The Boardwalk. We've taken out the Roller Soaker coaster and repurposed that area as a sprayground, with 12 new play structures, 16 dancing fountains, and more shade and seats in about 7,000 square feet of interactive play. We're also adding two more slides to the complex, doubling our throughput.

Outside of the park, we're re-branding the Hershey Highmeadow Campground as the official Hersheypark Camping Resort. And on the hospitality side, we're renovating and relaunching The Hotel Her-



shey's signature restaurant, the Circular Dining Room, at The Circular. We'll be offering menu selections and practices that fit the current needs of diners, who have a little less time these days.

Have you been trying to keep ticket and season pass pricing relatively flat?

We've been very conservative in raising prices; we're very sensitive to that. The great news for us is that our season pass sales are as strong this year as they were last year, when there was excitement over Skyrush. It's very encouraging that people are willing to make that investment. We're also paying attention to appropriate discounting and coupon programs to reach a broader market.

How are new technology and social media starting to figure into park operations?

We've learned through our research that the smartphone app for your park is very important. People want to pull that technology out of their pocket and know where they and the attractions are, so we're continuing to look at developing that technology. And we pay very close attention to social media. Not only does it have a lot to say about who's coming to visit your park, it helps us learn in real-time about what their experience of it is — what they like and what they want to see us change.

What do you admire most about HE&R's culture and your work with Ted Kleisner?

We're unique in that that the legacy of Milton Hershey, and the Milton Hershey School, is at the core of everything we do. Knowing that they're working to enrich the lives of almost 1,900 kids who are in some way disadvantaged adds to our employees' sense of pride. We do every-

thing we can to advance Milton Hershey's story and his school's goals, and to make sure that our guests understand what a great philanthropist he was.

As a company, we experience very low turnover rates for the hospitality and entertainment industries — 13 percent of our full-time staff has been here 25 years or longer. Having stayed here myself almost 17 years is a testament to the culture and how much I enjoy the company's legacy, and working for six of those years with someone as experienced as Ted Kleisner, who had come out of The Greenbrier Resort (in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia) with a great hospitality background, was a great learning opportunity for me.

You've got a famous brand with a long history of customer loyalty. How do you maintain it?

It's a huge responsibility. We want to deliver on the promise of our service and brand every day, and that takes tremendous focus and dedication on everyone's part. We hire 6,000 seasonal employees every summer who work throughout the destination; their training, development and onboarding is vitally important to our success because they're the frontline folks interacting with our guests.

What satisfies you the most in being a part of this industry?

It's great to go to work every day knowing that your job is to make other people happy. When you walk through the park and see families spending time together, and you see the smiles on their faces and feel the energy — it's awesome to be part of that.



FAST TRACK

COMPILED: Scott Rutherford,
srutherford@amusementtoday.com

Visitors to the **Magic Kingdom** at **Walt Disney World** will notice that Disney has done away with turnstiles completely at the park's entrance. Instead, visitors are greeted by Cast Members holding iPod touches in their white-gloved hands. The change is part of a larger initiative by Disney known as "MyMagic+," which has the ultimate goal of making the company's theme parks even more convenient and inviting for those who attend.

Fun Spot Attractions, working with the City of Orlando to change the name of one small access road off International Drive, saw the fruits of its labors on March 6, 2013 when "Touchstone Road" was changed to "Fun Spot Way". This road that connects International Drive (at Festival Bay) and Grand National Drive will become the main entrance for the expanded **Fun Spot America** that opens on June 1.

Playland-Not-At-The-Beach in El Cerrito, California has two **Laughing Sals** — a traditional looking one that was originally at an amusement park in Ohio and another that was specially created by sculptor Chuck Jarman of Bump-in-The-Night-Productions. The latter is known as Sinister Sal. During the Halloween season they bring out a third Sal known as Psycho Sal.

Discount Plush has launched a new, online "Pick Your Plush" feature that allows their customers to build custom small or jumbo mixes of generic and/or licensed plush. The new feature allows Discount Plush customers to choose specific quantities of different varieties of plush, making it simple for customers to meet their price points while catering to their preferences and the needs of their locations. This service is provided at no extra cost and all custom orders qualify for Discount Plush's free freight program. More details can be found at: www.discountplush.com/pick-your-plush.

After 38 years in its original site at Tooley Street, the infamous **London Dungeon** has now re-opened in a brand new site in County Hall on the Southbank. The brand new Dungeon experience offers new shows, updated rides and a host of new characters and stories.

The **Hawaii Community Development Authority** recently gave the green light to a developer's plan to turn a vacant lot along Ala Moana Boulevard in Honolulu's Kakaako neighborhood into a \$10 million amusement park. Developer **Billy Balding's** plan was approved by the HCDA's board of directors but still needs to obtain a special management area permit. It would put go-cart racing, a skate park, miniature golf course and other activities on the three-acre site.

One of the largest exhibits in the **Akron Zoo's** 60-year history is clawing closer to its debut. Akron Zoo officials have announced that the **Mike & Mary Stark Grizzly Ridge** exhibit will open to the public on July 20, 2013. Grizzly Ridge, which has been under construction for months, will include more than six different animal species, highlighted by grizzly bears.

The Great Lakes Aquarium, Duluth, Minn., will be getting a makeover, thanks to financial support from the Minnesota Power Foundation. The aquarium announced that details of their **Exploratorium Project** will involve transforming unused space into three new classrooms with a teacher resource center. The aquarium serves about 10,000 students a year and this new space will give them double the current amount of room.

Fairy Tale Treasures, one of the enchanting locations at **Fantasy Faire** in **Disneyland** park, opened its doors March 12. Guests will find this quaint little store filled with costumes, accessories and endless storytelling, themed to the beloved Disney Princesses. This location, with its royal Old-World European charm and medieval ambiance can be found nestled between the Royal Theatre and the Royal Hall.

Kennywood Park officials have confirmed that the park has finalized the land purchase of the large valley behind the **Jack Rabbit** and **Racer** wooden roller coasters from the **Union Railroad**. Immediate use for the property is to restore a large building and use it as a storage facility for props and equipment from the Fright Night and Holiday Lights displays.

DreamWorks Animation has tapped **Rovio Entertainment**, the creators of **Angry Birds**, to produce a mobile game for its new animated film "The Croods." The game launched globally for iOS and Android devices on March 14.

The **City of Squamish** in British Columbia has approved a \$25 million gondola to carry visitors 2,700 feet above Howe Sound. The city council approved plans to build the **Sea to Sky Gondola** between Shannon Falls and the Stewamus Chief, a popular hiking destination. The ride will last about seven minutes and end at a ridge on Mount Habrich, where developers are building a terminal with dining, interactive exhibits, a suspension bridge and hiking trails.

Jack Rouse Associates (JRA) has won The Cade Museum for Creativity + Invention's exhibit design competition, competing against 26 other design firms from the United States and Canada. Together with GWWO Architects from Baltimore, Jack Rouse Associates will build a world-class museum in downtown Gainesville, Fla. named after Dr. James Robert Cade. Dr Cade was a University of Florida physician who led the team that invented **Gatorade** in 1965 and the museum will focus on inspiring creative thinking, future inventors, and early entrepreneurs.

Radio Disney recently announced the **Radio Disney Music Awards** will be held on April 27 in Los Angeles. The show will feature live performances from some of Radio Disney's biggest stars including Selena Gomez, Bridgit Mendler, Cody Simpson, Austin Mahone, Cher Lloyd and Coco Jones. There will also be awards as voted on by the fans plus other surprises.

Cedar Point preserves two iconic rides with donations

Disaster Transport and the Wildcat are newest additions to the growing NRCMA collection

SANDUSKY, Ohio — Cedar Point is one of America's oldest amusement parks and it knows the importance of preserving history. When the park's Anton Schwarzkopf Wildcat Coaster was removed in 2011 and then the installation of the park's 16th roller coaster, GateKeeper, displaced the park's Disaster Transport (formerly Avalanche Run) attraction near the front gate Cedar Point knew the history of those iconic attractions should be preserved so they called the National Roller Coaster Museum (NRCMA) for help.

"Both the Wildcat and Disaster Transport/Avalanche Run thrilled millions of Cedar Point guests in their history. We are very happy that the National Roller Coaster Museum will be able to preserve their memories," said H. John Hildebrandt, Cedar Point vice-president and general manager.

In late 2012, ride vehicles from both attractions were shipped to the NRCMA's archive facility in Plainview, Texas for processing and storage. Each ride shows a snapshot of time and technology in the history of the fun.

"These are great examples of well-loved family attractions," Gary Slade, chairman of the NRCMA said. "We are excited to build on this relationship with John and the Cedar Fair Corporation with their history in the timeline of family fun in the United States."

"The NRCMA shows our commitment as an industry to preserving and honoring the wonderful machines that so help to define who we are," Hildebrandt said.

The organization's first traveling exhibit showcasing the history of the roller coaster and a sampling of the hundreds of thousands of artifacts in the NRCMA collection is on display at Dollywood this summer beginning in May.

• rollercoastermuseum.org



Vehicles and track from both the Intamin Disaster Transport (above) and the Schwarzkopf Wildcat were recently donated to the NRCMA by Cedar Point. COURTESY NRCMA



Popular arcade reopens, repairs continue apace

Long Beach Island eager for revival of Fantasy Island fun park

STORY: Dean Lamanna
Special to Amusement Today

BEACH HAVEN, N.J. — Fantasy Island Amusement Park faced nightmarish reality last October when Superstorm Sandy steamrolled over this town and the adjoining string of tight-knit communities that comprise slender Long Beach Island, turning streets into raging rivers, destroying homes and dislocating residents.



Spanning three blocks between the beach and the bay, the Victorian-flavored fun spot — with 19 rides and a cavernous year-round arcade surrounded by ornate brick walkways, old-fashioned lampposts and cozy oak benches — somehow managed to endure a tidal surge possibly exceeding seven feet deep. The park remained mostly intact even while suffering the type of costly damage caused by water.

“Our arcade was flooded and we lost all of the carpeting, and a number of the machines were affected,” said Diane Frey, Fantasy Island’s marketing director. “But there was a lot of devastation throughout Long Beach Island, so we are beyond grateful that it wasn’t worse at our location.”

Frey noted that Sandy

defeated most of the family-owned operation’s pre-storm efforts to elevate its normal level of winterization. “We didn’t anticipate that it would be as bad as it was,” she said. “We raised things up higher than usual, but when the water comes up to seven or eight feet, it doesn’t make much of a difference.”

Due to mold concerns, most of the 28-year-old park’s buildings had to be gutted, and the general cleanup — dependent on the availability of already-overworked contractors — took several months. Yet Fantasy Island’s rides will reopen as normal the weekend of May 18.

Frey pointed out that it was critical to Long Beach Island’s recovery that contractors focused on repairing and rebuilding the resort’s many damaged and lost homes. “If there’s no one on the island, there’s no need to have businesses here,” she said. “It’s important to us that the island comes back in its entirety.”

Meanwhile, an all-out effort was made to clean up, repair and re-carpet Fantasy Island’s arcade, which benefited from being built about nine feet above ground level. The park reopened the fully enclosed and heated space for regular winter weekend operation on February 16.

“Customers have been checking in with us constantly through our Facebook page — sending letters and prayers and well-wishes,” Frey said. “The most beautiful reaction has been from children, which has just melted our hearts. Growing up and going to the



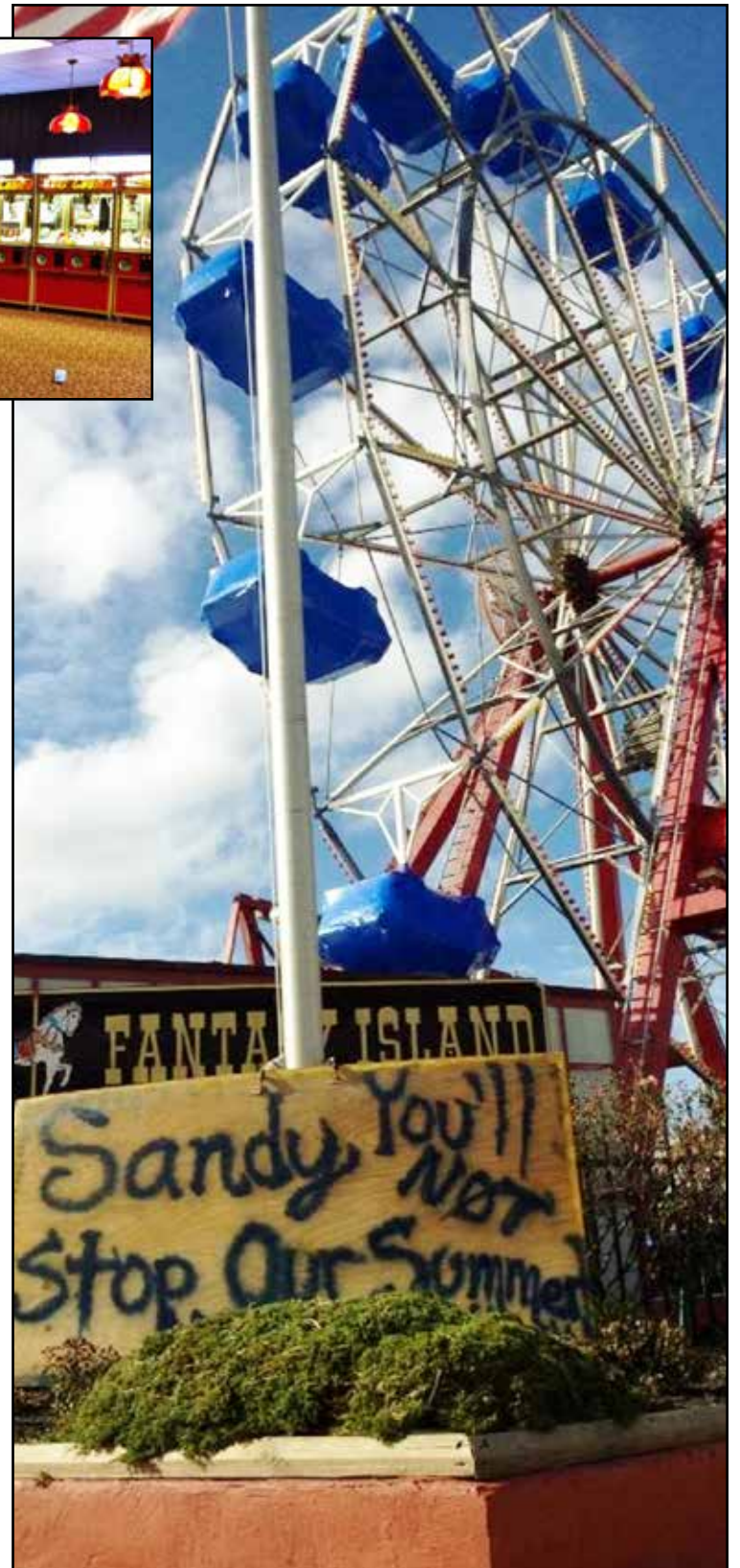
Superstorm Sandy damaged buildings and equipment throughout Fantasy Island Amusement Park. After the storm, an unknown local resident erected a hopeful handmade sign at the base of the Ferris wheel. And following more than three months of intensive cleanup and repair, the property’s newly re-carpeted coin-op arcade reopened February 16.

COURTESY FANTASY ISLAND AMUSEMENT PARK

shore is a lot more than just an arcade machine or a ride; it’s all the memories that these kids have.”

Fantasy Island’s proprietors and staff will always remember the recovery efforts of the first responders, various community members and the New Jersey Amusement Association. “We are very fortunate to have such a strong association to work with,” Frey said.

“It’s hard to put into words how close everybody became after this devastation,” she acknowledged. “People just want to return to enjoying the beauty of the island. And we want to help boost the community’s morale by continuing to provide happy moments for families.”



Shore-ing up the Garden State

NEW JERSEY SHORE — Just how important is it to get the New Jersey coastline back into shape for the summer 2013 season?

According to a study conducted last year for the New Jersey Amusement Association (NJAA), tourism along the Jersey shore — with its mix of amusement piers, boardwalks restaurants, lodgings and casino resorts — is the foundation of the state’s \$38 billion leisure and hospitality industry.

NJAA’s study found that 312,000 people, accounting for \$9.6 billion in wages, are employed by Jersey shore tourism. The number rises to 486,000, or nearly 10 percent of the state’s total employment, when jobs indirectly related to tourist spending are counted.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics found that leisure and hospitality is the third-largest employment source statewide after trade, transportation and utilities; and professional/business services.

SF Great Adventure fetes storm relief

JACKSON, N.J. — Six Flags Great Adventure (SFGA) kicked off its 2013 season March 23 with a Superstorm Sandy benefit concert. Grammy Award-winning Motown Records artist Ne-Yo, most of the cast of MTV’s *Jersey Shore* and Andrew Jenks of MTV’s *World of Jenks* were among the many celebrities who appeared on stage to a cheering crowd. The event was both the culmination and a celebration of a spring break-timed storm relief initiative called Spring Fix, sponsored by MTV, mtvU.com and United Way to help rebuild impacted communities along the coast. Fifty college students from around the country who successfully applied to participate in the volunteer effort earlier this year were transported to the New York / New Jersey area by MTV, which recorded their activities.

The concert was free with SFGA admission. A portion of the park’s opening day ticket sales directly benefited United Way.



NEW JERSEY AMUSEMENT ASSOCIATION

SUPERSTORM SANDY

Restore, Rebuild and Reopen

NJAA East Coast Expo sells out, money raised

STORY: Kimberle Samarelli
NJAA executive director
(732) 904-0580 • Njaa40plus@aol.com

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — In February, the New Jersey Amusement Association (NJAA) celebrated its 18th annual East Coast Expo at the Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City, N.J. The show sold out quickly and turned out to be a better one in record books. The attendees were upbeat and full of positive energy. Serious buyers from all over the Northeast filled the room buying for the upcoming summer season. It was evident that moving ahead is the momentum from this point forward.

The trade show is another way of rebuilding the

industry, and the powerful emotions expressed by the attendees; are a sure sign that it is indeed rebuilding and reopening.

The annual scholarship cocktail party was well attended. The N.J. Pier Pressure group (shown here) presented the association with a \$7,150.00 check for the NJAA 1st Responders Relief Fund. The proceeds were raised during a December benefit concert hosted by the group. Look for Pier Pressure 2 fundraiser concert coming soon. These girls are unstoppable!

Upcoming NJAA events

Please join us on May 13 for the 54th Annual NJAA Dinner Dance. This year we



Left to right: NJAA President John Maurer, NJAA Executive Director Kim Samarelli accept a check for \$7,150.00 from Amanda Kacperowski and Sara Brilliant for the NJAA Volunteer 1st Responders Fund. The money was raised through a benefit concert organized by N.J. Pier Pressure. A second fundraiser by the group is in the planning stages.
COURTESY NJAA

will be honoring New Jersey Governor Chris Christie (we are just awaiting final confir-

mation).

For all details and up-to-date information, please visit

our website: www.Nj.amusements.com and thank you for your ongoing support.

Ready for summer season after emergency duty

Morey Resorts opened doors to Superstorm Sandy homeless

STORY: Dean Lamanna
Special to Amusement Today

WILDWOOD, N.J. — Popular lodging for vacationing families drawn to the Wildwoods and the synonymous-with-fun Morey's brand, the Blue Palms Resort and StarLux Hotel— two of the five local nostalgically retro, meticulously maintained properties owned and operated by Morey Resorts — served as temporary emergency shelter for New Jersey residents left homeless by Superstorm Sandy.

Working with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the two motels housed displaced residents of Seaside Heights, Lavallette and parts of the Wildwoods. The Blue Palms had 50 rooms occupied by 125 storm survivors and the StarLux had 15 rooms occu-

piated by 45 at the height of the effort.

"We soberly recognize that Sandy could easily have hit us," said Gordon Clark, general manager of Morey Resorts, noting that the storm spared Wildwood, North Wildwood and Wildwood Crest a direct punch. "When we found out that there were hundreds of persons in a rescue shelter outside of Seaside Heights, with no place to go, we quickly made our properties available. We didn't think twice."

Clark added that Morey Resorts and Morey's Piers were "so impressed" with the commitment and service of the Cape Atlantic Red Cross and another organization, the Lunch with Lynch Foundation, that the sister companies donated a total of \$15,000 to the charities in



The Blue Palms Resort and StarLux Hotel in Wildwood, both properties of Morey Resorts, served as emergency housing for New Jersey families displaced by Superstorm Sandy. At least 170 were sheltered at the height of the effort. COURTESY MOREY RESORTS

January. The last sheltered family was able to check out of the StarLux on February 21.

Both properties now are ready for the season. The Blue Palms, which underwent a \$1.2 million renovation last year, is offering complimentary continental breakfast and complimentary bicycle,

beach chair and boogie board usage. The Blue Palms and StarLux also are participating in Morey's Pier's 2013 Generation to Generation vacation package, which offers up to 60 percent savings on pier and waterpark admission. (See www.moreyspiers.com for more.)

"We're not really sure

what this summer season will be like," acknowledged Clark. "On one hand, we might be busier because of the reduced number of rental units in other beach towns, but on the other, it might be a little slower because many people think all of the Jersey shore was damaged. At this point, we are optimistic."

►PAPA

Continued from page 25

start along with the interpretation of the new Affordable Health Care Act and how it impacts their staffing.

The Association also awarded four, one thousand dollar scholarships this year to deserving students throughout the Commonwealth.

The morning session also featured a talk on Emergency Preparedness by Rocco DiPietro with Cocciardi & Associates of Mechanicsburg and Scranton, Pa.

Reflecting on his two



years of leadership, out-going President Crider was asked about what he accomplished. "I chose to center my focus around our mission statement and based upon its premise of: promoting the industry by gathering and disseminating information among members, upholding a good public image, and actively participating in legislative issues which promotes the best interest of our industry, I believe I helped to advance those core values of our organization." He continued, "I thank the PAPA Board of Directors and all the members for their support over the past two years. It is an exceptional group of individuals in an exceptional industry."

When asked about the direction the PAPA is heading, Crider replied, "The organization has been strong for 78 years and I do not foresee any deviation in its core mission. As long as there are parks and attractions in the state, there will always be the need for a group to gather and promote the industry."

This was the 78th Spring Meeting of the Pennsylvania Amusement Parks Association. It was formed in 1935 with R.L. Plarr from Dorney Park serving as the first president. In 1946, roller coaster designer Herbert P. Schmeck from Philadelphia Toboggan was president. The 2013 Summer Meeting will be held at Idlewild and SoakZone, Li-gonier, Pa. on July 15 and 16.

OBITUARIES

Former N.J. Steel Pier owner George Hamid dies at 94

SOMERS POINT, N.J. — George A. Hamid Jr., a former owner of the Steel Pier in Atlantic City, died of pulmonary failure Feb. 23, at Shore Memorial Hospital in Somers Point, N.J. He was 94.

Born in Jersey City, Hamid attended the Kew-Forest School in Forest Hills, N.Y., and earned a bachelor's degree in economics at Princeton University. He studied at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania but dropped out to enlist in the Navy.

He served as a lieutenant commander in the South Pacific. When the war ended, he returned to New Jersey, married Patricia Reilly Monahan, and joined the family business.

Hamid's father, George Sr., was a former circus performer who bought the Steel Pier in 1945. The family operated the Steel Pier for 30 years, building a family-entertainment venue that blended circus acts, amuse-



George Hamid

ment-park rides, and concerts. The younger Hamid made his mark by booking acts that appealed to younger generations.

Hamid booked numerous vocalists including Diana Ross, and unusual acts like the high-diving horse that helped transform the Steel Pier the pier into a main attraction for Atlantic City vacationers. He booked Ricky Nelson in the late 1950s, bringing in a

then-record crowd of more than 44,000 in one day. He went on to book other teen sensations such Bobby Rydell and Frankie Avalon. In 1964, Hamid brought the Beatles to what is now Boardwalk Hall.

Hamid's father died in 1971, and the family sold the Steel Pier to a group of businessmen, but Hamid continued managing the venue until 1975.

Anthony Catanoso, president of Steel Pier Associates, recalls Hamid with fondness: "George Hamid, Jr. and his father, George Sr., had a profound impact on making Atlantic City what it ultimately became: 'America's Favorite Playground.' The vision and showmanship demonstrated by the Hamids are unparalleled still to this day. I met George Jr. on several occasions and he recalled some incredible stories of the 'old' Steel Pier. He was delighted that its current owners — my family, the Catanosos — were keeping

it an amusement venue and that we were the torchbearers of a such a great American icon. George Jr. was with us in 1998 to celebrate the centennial of the pier. He shared several photographs of his days at Steel Pier that illustrated what a truly amazing time it was in the city, as well as the country. The spirit of the Hamids lives on — and we will always have cherished memories, thanks to them."

Hamid is survived by sons, James, George and Timothy and by a daughter, Elizabeth as well as seven grandchildren and nine great grandchildren.

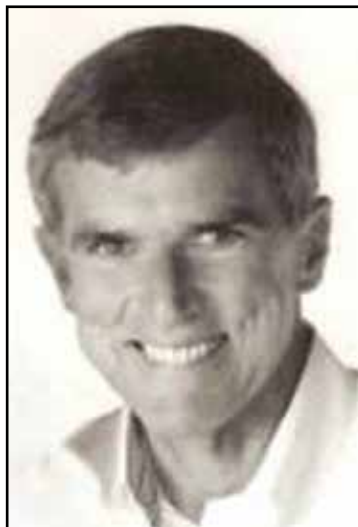
Memorial donations may be made to the Shriners Hospitals for Children (www.shrinershospitalsforchildren.org) or to the John Davis, III Memorial Scholarship Fund in care of Jeffries & Keates Funeral Home, Tilton Road and Infield Ave, Northfield, N.J. 08225. To share memory of Hamid, visit www.lifecelibration.com.

Bill Dawson, longtime industry veteran, dies at 74

LONG BEACH, Calif. — Bill Dawson, who was picked from a nationwide pool of candidates in the 1970's to manage Long Beach, California's gleaming new Convention Center and associated attractions, including the Queen Mary, died March 2, 2013 at his Long Beach home. The cause of death was pancreatic cancer. He was 74.

Born Sept. 7, 1938, in Kansas City, Kan., William Flemming Dawson graduated from the University of Kansas with a degree in journalism. While at college, Dawson postponed graduation to work for the international People-to-People Program started by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. He later worked for Six Flags Entertainment Corp. in Atlanta. After his time heading the Promotion and Services Corp., Dawson bought Resort Parks International, a campground network, where he was president and chief executive officer until several years ago.

Bob Minick of Minick Associates recalls his initial



Bill Dawson

encounter with Dawson: "I first met Dawson soon after Charlie T. Thompson (the first VP/GM at Six Flags Over Texas and then Georgia) hired him to be the Director of Marketing for Six Flags Over Georgia while the park was under construction," said Minick. "At that time I was designing and building Pirates World in Florida and I asked Charlie T. for some ideas to help me with marketing and he told me he had hired Bill Dawson, who was a red hot young marketing

guy that had worked with Bobby Kennedy's "People to People" program. Bill and I were first introduced over the phone by Errol McKoy and became fast friends. He not only set up the Six Flags Over Georgia marketing program, including some of Six Flags first 2-for-1 promotions, but also sold most of their sponsorship deals with national advertisers. Bill provided me marketing and sales programs for Pirates World, which really helped its first year."

Before being drawn to Long Beach, Dawson had taken a failing Jackson, N.J., amusement park, Great Adventure, and turned it into one of the most popular in the country, with 2.7 million visitors annually. The hope was that Dawson's theme park acumen could bring pizzazz to Long Beach's new downtown entertainment and convention space, built near the site of the razed, 1930s-era Municipal Auditorium.

He was described by family and friends as gregarious, ever-smiling and willing to

help others.

"Bill was very close to many amusement park people including Melinda Ashcraft, Mike Bandera, Gary Benson, Eddie Carrol, John (Buster) Cherry, Lewis Chessler, Vic Donovan, Lars Iverson, Errol McKoy, Lottie Minick, Jim Palmer, Tom Parrish, Dennis Speigel, Ed Stone, Bill Sullivan, Spurge Richardson, and Ira West - to name only a few," added Minick. "He was also a creative genius and could always devise a unique program to reach out and attract the audience targeted for the project. Whether it was a traditional amusement park, a theme park, a Neal Simon tribute, or a million dollar motor coach resort, Dawson could make them all work. He will be missed as a great friend."

Along with his wife, Vickie, Dawson is survived by two daughters, Jill Dawson and Claire Dawson; sisters Dee Dee Higley and Cindy Crow; and as well as nieces and nephews. As of press time, services were pending.

ASTM F24 Spring Conference attracts more than 200 attendees

CONSHOHOCKEN, Pa. — ASTM F24 held its semi-annual meeting Feb. 14-16 at the Hyatt French Quarter in New Orleans, La. Approximately 50 separate meetings were held, each one focusing on a specific safety element of the amusement industry. Attendance was very strong with more than 200 safety experts from 10 different countries participating.

Jim Seay, chairman of ASTM F24 Committee and president of Premier Rides, commented, "With the most scheduled meetings we have ever had for an F24 meeting, I was grateful for high level of interest and attendance. To see so many people travel on a voluntary basis from all corners of the globe in the name of safety is quite humbling and really shows a high level of passion."

Much of the attention was focused on F24's newest global safety standard, ASTM F2959, Practice for Requirements for Aerial Adventure Courses. Stakeholders including operators, manufacturers, regulators, and consumers held open discussions to review the new standard in detail, which will now allow uniformity for installations and operations of the industry's fastest growing segment.

Len Morrissey, director/TCO Division of ASTM International, stated, "The approval of F24's newest global safety standard highlights the effectiveness of the open ASTM process that brings together the best experts, with diverse interests in an industry, to collaborate on a wide range of issues and develop effective solutions through the development of global standards."

Some of the most attended meetings focused on trampoline parks, another rapidly growing segment and approval of a new standard is very close. Extensive discussions also addressed the topic of supervising companions as it relates to different categories of rides. Additionally, the committee approved its first safety standard for parasailing, another new area of focus; a standard focused on auditing was also approved.

The International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions (IAAPA), including the IAAPA Safety Committee, collated multiple meetings at the same location. The California Attractions & Parks Association (CAPA) also held a meeting. Additionally, the following organizations were represented at the ASTM F24 Spring 2013



Meeting: Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC),

Association for Challenge Course Technology (ACCT), AIMS International, National Association of Amusement Ride Safety Officials (NAARSO), Outdoor Amusement Business Association (OABA), and the World Waterpark Association (WWA).

The ASTM F24 meetings were sponsored by Hewitt Wolensky LLP, IALDA,

Premier Rides, ProSlide Technology Inc., Rockwell Automation, Seipp, Flick & Hosley LLP, Tapeswitch, Uremet Corp., Van Stone Conveyor Inc., and Vekoma Rides.

The next ASTM Committee F24 Fall Meeting will be held October 24-26, 2013 at the Valley Ho in Scottsdale, Ariz.

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**1310 West Fourth Street
Mansfield, OH 44906
Office: (567) 247-8204
Fax: (419) 529-4288**

Contact:
Jack Falfas | (419) 202-7876
Gary Gast | (567) 247-8204
Randy Payne | (567) 247-8204

**reamusement@gmail.com
sales@reamusement.com**

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MARKETWATCH

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Company	Prices	Prices	52 Weeks	
	One Month Ago	03/18/13	High	Low
Cedar Fair L.P.	\$38.00	\$37.40	\$39.55	\$25.00
MGM Mirage	\$13.29	\$13.03	\$14.80	\$8.83
Six Flags Ent. Corp.	\$65.00	\$69.00	\$70.39	\$43.13
CBS Corp.	\$42.94	\$46.54	\$47.42	\$29.81
Walt Disney Co.	\$54.88	\$56.83	\$57.82	\$40.87
Apollo Global Mgt. LLC	\$22.27	\$23.03	\$24.87	\$10.42
Blackstone Group	\$18.58	\$20.39	\$21.09	\$11.12
Village Roadshow	\$4.54	\$4.94	\$5.14	\$2.85
NBC Universal	\$23.41	\$23.25	\$23.09	\$18.02

CURRENCY DIESEL PRICES



Region (U.S.)	As of 03/18/13	Change from year ago
East Coast	\$4.082	-\$0.102
Midwest	\$4.015	-\$0.025
Gulf Coast	\$3.989	-\$0.064
Mountain	\$3.971	-\$0.148
West Coast	\$4.105	-\$0.267
California	\$4.212	-\$0.269

TOP 7 MOST TRADED CURRENCIES



On 03/18/13 \$1 USD =

0.7646 EURO
0.6614 GBP (British Pound)
95.26 JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9382 CHF (Swiss Franc)
0.9604 AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.0191 CAD (Canadian Dollar)

Six Flags Atlanta properties president retires

Melinda Ashcraft steps down after 45-years; Dale Kaetzel promoted

AUSTELL, Ga. — Six Flags Over Georgia announced on March 4, 2013, the retirement of its park president, **Melinda Ashcraft**, capping an incredible 45-year career with Six Flags. Ashcraft has enjoyed a remarkable journey with Six Flags that began at Six Flags Over Georgia, where she worked as a ride operator the year the park opened. She continued to rise through the ranks, holding a number of managerial positions at parks in St. Louis, Mo.; Ft. Lauderdale, Fl.; Valencia, Calif.; Louisville, Ky.; and San Antonio, Texas. Melinda has served as park president at Six Flags Over Georgia and Six Flags White Water since January 2004.



Ashcraft

honor of her numerous organizational and community achievements.

"When I began my journey at Six Flags Over Georgia I never thought I would be where I am today; it has been a wonderful privilege," said Melinda Ashcraft. "There are exciting plans on the horizon for the Six Flags Atlanta properties. I look forward to cheering Dale on as he leads our team to even greater heights."

Industry veteran **Dale Kaetzel**, who most recently served as park president at Six Flags Discovery Kingdom in Vallejo, California has been named to succeed Ashcraft.

Prior to joining Six Flags Discovery Kingdom, Kaetzel served for eight years as a senior executive at four Paramount Parks, including Canada's Wonderland in Toronto where he served as senior vice president and general manager. Kaetzel also spent 13 years in executive roles for Center Management/MCI Center in Washington, D.C. and was the former marketing director of the San Francisco Giants.

2013 ROTC event a hit with attendees



The 2013 ROTC training school, held Feb. 5-7 at the Circus Circus Casino/Hotel and Adventuredome was a big hit with 42 attendees (seen here inside the Adventuredome) from as far away as Hersheypark gaining valuable operations and safety knowledge. The program is hosted each year by Creative Operations Concepts and When Pigs Fly. Below, event host, Cindee Huddy, works a piece of Cat equipment as part of their 2013 "Building Monumental Training" theme. COURTESY ROTC



Berkshire Bank joins Firestone Financial's bank group

NEWTON, Mass. — Firestone Financial Corp. a leading provider of equipment financing, announced the addition of Berkshire Bank to its bank group and the signing of \$150 Million, multi-year revolving credit facility. Provided through a bank group led by Citizens Bank, the facility is an increase of \$25 Million to the line secured in May of 2011.

FIRESTONE FINANCIAL

David Cohen, president and CEO of Firestone Financial, said "We are growing and have partnered with banks that understand our growth strategy and support our initiatives. The addition of Berkshire Bank will provide the additional capital we need to increase our presence in our existing markets and to explore new ones."

Patrick Sullivan, executive vice president of commercial banking and wealth management at Berkshire Bank, commended the Company. "Firestone Financial has built its business based upon long standing customer relationships and industry expertise, a philosophy that is shared by Berkshire Bank. They serve their customers well and we look forward to continuing to partner with them as they grow even further."

In addition to Berkshire Bank and Citizens Bank, other banks that participate in the financing are Wells Fargo Capital Finance, LLC, Bank of America, N.A., TD Bank, N.A., and Brookline Bank.

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REVENUE

SUPPLIERS

Revenues show increase at 2013 Florida State Fair



STORY: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

TAMPA, Fla. — Celebrating the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Juan Ponce De León in Florida, this year's 109th Annual Florida State Fair theme of "Discover the Fun," brought out over 440,000 fairgoers to do just that.

The fair ran Feb. 7-18. Charles Pesano, executive director, Florida State Fair Authority, said mid-March that preliminary unaudited attendance for 2013 was 443,000, compared to 2012's total of 457,000.

Even though total attendance did show a slight drop, revenues increased. Cumulative gate revenue and midway revenue for this year was \$7,221,000, compared to \$7,007,000 in 2012.

There were 112 rides on the independent midway this year, representing 14 owners/operators. The top two rides this year were the Sky Glider, owned and built by Sky Fair Inc., and the Giant Slide, owned by the Florida State Fair and built by Dave Barham

2013 Florida State Fair

Top 10 rides

- 1) **Sky Glider**, Sky Fair, Inc., built by Sky Fair Inc.
- 2) **Giant Slide**, Florida State Fair, built by Dave Barham
- 3) **Hit in 2000 Himalaya**, Wade Shows, Mack
- 4) **Giant Gondola Wheel**, Wade Shows, Chance
- 5) **Super Himalaya**, Reithoffer Shows, Bertazon
- 6) **Stinger (Loop Fighter)**, Reithoffer Shows, Technical Park
- 7) **RC48 Coaster**, Wade Shows, Pinfari
- 8) **Magnum**, Michael Woods (Wood Ent.), Mondial
- 9) **Vertical Swing**, Reithoffer Shows, Zamperla
- 10) **Himalaya**, Dreamland Amusements, Wisdom

Top 5 foods

- 1) **Fried Lobster**, Cuzin Tim's Seafood/Tim Stewart
- 2) **Redneck Burger**, Carousel Foods/Dennis Reas
- 3) **Red Velvet Funnel Cakes**, Kevin McGrath
- 4) **Sirloin Tips**, Joe Colglazier
- 5) **Amish Donuts**, Nate Peachy

Florida State Fair traditionally offers an array of fair food, which, as seen here, is popular to fairgoers. Top foods this year were Fried Lobster, Cuzin Tim's Seafood/Tim Stewart; Redneck Burger, Carousel Foods/Dennis Reas; and Red Velvet Funnel Cakes, Kevin McGrath
COURTESY FLORIDA STATE FAIR

coming in second.

Wade Shows had the third top ride this year with its Hit in 2000 Himalaya, manufactured by Mack.

There were three new rides this year. Tom and Jeanne McDonagh, Sky Attractions, brought in two of them: Big Bamboo, a super fun house manufactured by Owens Trailers, and KMG's Fun

Factory. The McDonagh's took delivery of their new Big Bamboo at the State Fair of Texas last September. The attraction moves on three trailers, one 48-foot and two 28-foot pup trailers. It features water fountains and a detailed façade.

The third new ride at this year's Florida State Fair was the Air Raid, manufactured by Owens Trailers, and KMG's Fun
▶ See FLORIDA, page 34

Transition going well for Rhode Island Novelty after acquiring NANCO



Bob Nowak

FALL RIVER, Mass. — Bob Nowak, Rhode Island Novelty, Fall River, Mass., feels the transitions made after acquiring Nancy Sales Company (NANCO) at the end of January has been as seamless as was possible.

"We have moved everything over in our building and we have been up and running," Nowak said last month.

The acquisition of Nancy Sales by Rhode Island Novelty was official Jan. 28, 2013, but Nowak said negotiations for the company began last fall after Nancy Sales choose the course of action to sell. Nancy Sales, which was started in 1937, was located in Chelsea, Mass. That was only 60 miles from Rhode Island Novelty.

In early February at the International Independent Showmen's Association Trade Show & Extravaganza, Nowak said they were in the process of transferring the Nancy Sales product from the Chelsea location to a 200,000 sq.-ft building Rhode Island already owned in Cumberland, R.I.

Rhode Island Novelty works from a 500,000 sq.-ft. building

in Fall River. The two buildings are about 35 miles apart.

Nancy Sales Co. was a leading supplier of licensed plush products to the amusement industry. Customers included amusement parks, carnival and fair game operators, family entertainment centers (FECs) and arcades.

Rhode Island Novelty, founded in 1986, is a leading importer and wholesale distributor of novelty toys, and a number of other products.

"I have known them (Nancy Sales) for years and have always admire their line of products," Nowak said. "Now, we can offer their plush line and our other products. Their products compliments ours."

He also said Rhode Island hired Nancy Sales key sales people. And, the company is working hard to make this transition as easy as possible for Nancy Sales Co. customers.

Now, Rhode Island's focus is "to support the indoor and outdoor industries by supplying high-quality generic and licensed plush, novelties and prices."

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There were 112 rides on the 2013 Florida State Fair independent midway, representing 14 owners/operators. Blue skies over the fair brought fairgoers out. Top rides this year included the Sky Fair's Sky Glider; Florida State Fair's Giant Slide; and Wade Shows' Hit in 2000. COURTESY FLORIDA STATE FAIR

►FLORIDA

Continued from page 33

by Zamperla and brought in by Kyle Brady, Playworld Amusements. It also debuted at the 2012 State Fair of Texas.

The 2013 Florida State Fair showcased new and unique agricultural and cultural exhibits to go with the anniversary celebration. There was the new "Discovery Center," a Tampa Bay History Center curated exhibit, and a traveling exhibit celebrating "Florida Agriculture: 500 Years in the Making" hosted by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Also new was the "ConquistaTOUR," a self-guided adventure through the State Fair including the new Florida Cattlemen's Ranching Museum, Florida's Learning Garden and Cow Hunter's Camp in Cracker Country. Fairgoers could get a map at the fair's entrance and take the "ConquistaTOUR."

In addition, fairgoers were treated with *Discover Florida*, a Broadway-style musical performance. There was a new

Cattlemen's Exhibit celebrating Five Centuries of Tradition and a new Florida's Learning Garden.

Also new this year was the "Zoom N" high-energy musical concert series with Starship, Mickey Thomas, Bellamy Brothers, Country Gold Tour, Less than Jake, and

Leann Rimes.

Fairgoers also were offered traditional attractions such as shopping in Expo Hall, arts and crafts, a giant sand sculpture, tropical fish, the "Mooternity Ward," horse shows, lots of animals and live grounds entertainment.



The Florida State Fair, held Feb. 7-18, 2013, celebrated the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Ponce De Leon in Florida as well as the 109th anniversary of the fair. The fair experienced a slight dip in attendance from the 2012 event, with an attendance of 443,000 this year compared to 457,000 in 2012. But, revenues increased for the fair and its vendors. COURTESY FLORIDA STATE FAIR

Zaitshik looks forward to an exciting 2013 for Wade Shows

LUTZ, Fla. — Frank Zaitshik, Wade Shows, is looking forward to the 2013 season. He has three new dates and plans to bring back his Huss Rainbow out of its three-year hiatus.

The first of his three new dates is also a new event. Called the Funshine Music Festival, Zaitshik will have between 30-35 rides on the Florida State Fairgrounds May 3, 4 and 5. The event is being presented through a partnership with the fair and Live Nation.

"I was very flattered that they talked to me about doing this," Zaitshik said.

"And, it just so happened that I had one unit that, with a little tweaking to that unit was available for that event."

Zaitshik, who lives in Lutz, Fla., about 15 miles north of Tampa, said there had been some talk about the new event, but it wasn't until the 2013 Florida State Fair, which ran Feb. 7-18, that it was finalized.

He said his plans to have some of his bigger, more spectacular rides such as his Pinfari RC-48, a seven truck and trailer ride; Reverchon flume ride, a five-trailer ride; and Mack Himalaya ride, a four-trailer ride. This latter ride is his Hit in 2000, which consistently lands in the Florida State Fair's top ride list.

"I also plan to bring in some of the bigger rides from Fiesta San Antonio (Texas), which I know isn't really economical but I think they will fit well at this event," Zaitshik said.

Fiesta San Antonio runs April 18-28.

Zaitshik also will provide the games and bring in some food for the event. And, he said, he plans to bring in some kiddie rides as well.

"This is uncharted waters for us so we want to make sure we have a well-rounded midway," he said.

But, doing special events on the Florida State Fairgrounds is not totally new. The Miles of Smiles special event he, in partnership with fair, did for disadvantaged children Dec. 14-16, 2012, was very successful. Zaitshik said they were able to offer between 5,000-6,000 children free rides, free food and free games.

"This was something I really felt strongly about; to be able to offer these children something like this during the holidays," he said. "We hope to have this become an annual event and to grow it."

The Florida State Fair will also book in food, and there will be a craft and vendor area, and a petting zoo at the Funshine Music Festival.

The other two new dates for Wade Shows this year is the Nebraska State Fair, Grand Island, Aug. 23-Sept. 2, and in conjunction with Murphy Brothers Exposition, the Tulsa (Okla.) State Fair, Sept. 26-Oct. 6.

Zaitshik is excited about the new dates and he is looking forward to bringing out his Huss Rainbow, which has been off the road for the last three years. He said it is now in refurbishment, which includes adding an LED lighting package. He hopes to have it ready for the Tulsa (Okla.) State Fair.

"You know, we have looked around at new pieces of equipment, but have found not only is the price tag very large, but also in an effort to try to reduce the number of trucks, they have reduced the number of seats on the rides," he said.

In addition to all of this, Zaitshik said he has his cashless system up and running now.

—Pam Sherborne

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COMPILED: Pam Sherborne, psherborne@amusementtoday.com

The **Sheridan (Wyo.) County Fair Association** board announced last month the appointment of **James "Jamie" Ringley** to the position of Sheridan County Fairgrounds director.

Ringley, who took over just a few days after the announcement, fills the position left vacant when **Melissa Albrecht** resigned earlier this year. No reason was given for her resignation.

"Mr. Ringley brings an extensive list of credentials to support the needs of the fairgrounds facility, staff and the many users of the venue," Fair Board Chairman **Steve Eliason** said in a press release.

The board reviewed 28 applications for the position and six were interviewed.

The **Bedford County Fair**, Shelbyville, Tenn., has a new date, and a new carnival and plans for a bigger year in 2013.

The 16th annual fair will be held from July 29 to Aug. 3, instead of the third week of July it has been running. According to **Judy Gambill**, fair president, the date changed to accommodate **Carnival Tyme Amusements**, Eaton, Ind., a new carnival that just signed up.

The old carnival was **Geren Rides**, Valdosta, Ga.

Gambill said she did not want to say why the carnivals were changed, other than to say that Carnival Tyme is better established and will offer more rides.

Bedford County's 2012 fair won three awards from the **Tennessee Association of Fairs**, said fair director **Jerri Lynn Smith**. The first honor, the Merit Award, is given to agricultural fairs that show improvements from the previous year, and \$1,000 is given for future improvements.

The fair also won a second place award for its program book and a third place award for the Pick Tennessee agriculture display.

Board members for the **Umatilla County Fair**, Hermiston, Ore., are considering a new smoking restriction policy that would be phased in over two years.

The *East Oregonian* report said the board is responding to a request from members of a 4-H club. The youngsters said they have experienced cigarette smoke drifting into camping areas and animal barns during fair week in the summer.

Board members looked at a first draft of a policy last month. They hoped to be able to vote on a final draft soon.

Fair and fairgrounds Manager **Peggy Anderson** says board members learned that a handful of other Oregon county fairs already ban smoking, while several others have designated smoking areas.

Anderson says that in 2014, the Umatilla fair likely will be smoke-free.

More than 80,000 people visit the summer fair in northeast Oregon.

The **Freeborn County Fair Board**, Albert Lea, Minn., last week added an additional smoke-free day to the annual festival dubbed "Six Greatest Days of Summer."

Freeborn County Partners in Prevention requested the fair board make Senior Day a smoke-free day, and the board approved. Kids Day last year was smoke-free. Smokers could smoke only in designated smoking areas.

Kids Day is the Saturday of fair week, while Senior Day is Wednesday.

That leaves Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Sun-

day as days people can smoke in any outdoor areas of the Freeborn County Fair.

People heading to the 2013 **N.C. State Fair**, Oct. 7-27, Raleigh, may need another dollar to get in.

The **N.C. Board of Agriculture** voted 7-0 to approve a \$1 increase in admission prices. The increase is subject to final approval by the board later this year.

Under the proposal, adult admission would increase to \$7 for advance sales and \$9 at the gate. Children ages six through 12 would cost \$4 at the gate, with a \$1 discount for advance purchases. Children under six and adults 65 and over still would get in free.

State Fair Manager **Wesley Wyatt** said the increase would allow the fair to keep up with rising operating expenses and still make improvements to the fairgrounds. The State Fair does not receive tax dollars.

If a sit-down meal with a happy-hour beverage is more appealing than a fried Twinkie on a stick, the **Pima County Fairgrounds** Tucson, Ariz., will be more appealing this year.

The fairgrounds will open a new restaurant this spring, The Sunset Cantina Bar and Grill, just in time for the **Pima County Fair**.

The restaurant will stay open year-round during weekends and other special events, too, hoping to draw business from the residents of southeast Tucson and the communities of Vail, Rita Ranch, Corona de Tucson and Sahuarita.

The American-cuisine menu will include chicken and bacon quesadillas, pulled pork sliders, burgers, salads and fries. The signature dish will be chicken, bacon and cheese sandwiches served on ciabatta bread with garlic fries. Sunset Cantina said it has a secret and surprise signature dessert in the works as well.

The grill is tentatively scheduled to open on April 4 at 4 p.m.

During the fair, April 18-28, Sunset Cantina will offer daily specials and \$2 drink specials during a 4 to 6 p.m. happy hour, as well as faster menu options and takeout.

Indoor and outdoor settings will be available, along with five large-screen televisions, live music, karaoke, dance lessons and entertainment.

The restaurant will be available for rental for weddings and private events, said **Launa Rabago**, Pima County Fair entertainment and marketing manager. The restaurant can accommodate groups of up to 200 people indoors, or 500 when outdoor seating in an open courtyard is added. A full-service catering department also will be available.

While the weather forecast is calling for more winter, that hasn't stopped a group of local enthusiasts from making plans for one of the area's longest running traditions. Plans are currently underway for the 2013 **Scotland County Fair**, Memphis, Mo.

The fair board recently announced the 2013 fair dates, July 8-13.

This year's fair will feature a rodeo, a tractor pull, the country music showdown and the demolition derby. Additional grandstand shows will feature a hypnotist as well as a contemporary Christian music concert and a super farmer contest.

With the number of kids enrolled in 4-H nearing 100, combined with the number of FFA students

that swell those ranks, the traditional livestock shows will continue to be a huge draw for the event.

A contract is already in place to bring a carnival to the fairgrounds throughout the week-long festivities.

The advertising for the 2013 event is undergoing a change. The fair book will transition to a smaller, more portable format that will feature full-color, glossy pages that are sure to make it a keepsake.

The 2013 **Boulder County Fair** will return to a 10-day schedule and will once again include a rodeo.

This year's fair will run from Aug. 2 to 11, reverting to a longer run after scaling back to five days in 2010.

Fair coordinator **Laura Boldt** said the decision was made after last year's exhibitors expressed concerns that the five-day schedule was too short and events were crammed together.

Among the other new attractions this year is a beer festival, farm-to-table dinners and a BMX bicycle and skateboard competition.

"We're hoping that we're appealing to a broader range of the county," Boldt said.

Even with fewer days, about 91,000 people attended last year's fair, a 21 percent increase from the 80,000 who showed up for the 2011 event.

Boldt anticipates about 120,000 attendees this year.

The rodeo is also back by popular demand. The Colorado Pro Rodeo Association will present nine events.

The Colorado Senior Pro Charity Rodeo Association, formerly called the Longmont Old Timers' Rodeo Association, hasn't been part of the Boulder County Fair since 2010. The rodeo has since relocated to Estes Park's Fairgrounds at Stanley Park.

The excitement for the **Sherburne County Fair's 125th anniversary celebration** is building as plans are underway for the July 18-21, 2013 run.

In addition to a button contest involving youth of Sherburne County and a search for the residents who have lived in the county the longest, there's now a history book about the fair on sale.

The history of the **Sherburne County Fair**, Elk River, Minn., is now chronicled in a new book. It is simply titled *Sherburne County Fair History: 1889-2013*. It was authored by Marion Salzmann, who's been involved in 4-H and/or the Sherburne County Fair since 1951.

In Dallas, **State Fair of Texas** officials announced last month that the public has pitched in \$45,000 to help the **Big Tex** return to **Big Tex Circle** on the fairgrounds.

Last October, an electrical fire left the 52-foot iconic statue as only a burned, skeletal frame. The State Fair has a design in mind for the new icon, said **Sue Gooding**, a spokeswoman for the state fair.

The entire project is estimated to cost \$500,000. The fair had a \$160,000 insurance policy with a \$5,000 deductible. Some sponsors have also expressed interest in helping the fair pay for the statue's remaining \$300,000, Gooding said.

The icon is expected to stand around 55 feet and will continue to wear Dickey's clothes, Gooding said.

The statue will be unveiled Sept. 27, 2013, the opening day of the State Fair of Texas.

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Wallis elected president of Showman's Guild of Great Britain



David Wallis is shown with his president's chain of office. He will serve as president of the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain until 2016.
COURTESY THE GUILD

LONDON, England — The Showmen's Guild of Great Britain – the national U.K. trade association for the fun fair or carnival industry – recently elected David Wallis as its new president, who will serve in the role until 2016.

"It's an honor to represent my industry at the highest level and I am very grateful for the support of my family and showman colleagues along the way," says Wallis. "I hope that as well as catering to the needs of the Guild's 4,000 members I can also increase the profile of this safe, affordable form of family entertainment."

Wallis represents the fifth of seven generations of the Wallis family that have made their living in the fairground business. Spending the earlier part of his life touring around

the North West of England, in more recent years his touring itinerary has extended across the country and overseas. In his 50-year career as a ride operator (or riding master), David has owned a succession of attractions from fairground favorites like the Waltzer and Helter Skelter to newer novelty rides including the Tagada and Sea Storm (Happy Sailor). He currently travels the U.K.'s only ice-themed Mirror Maze.

Since making the short hop to the Isle of Man for the famous TT Races in the early 1990s, he has taken his attractions abroad on frequent occasions and was once recognised as "The World's Most Travelled Showman" in the Golden Pony Awards from Italian publisher *Facto Edizioni*.

"Once we'd done it for

the first time, I realized it was no more difficult to put your rides on a boat to Africa than to the Isle of Man. I've been fortunate enough to operate amusements in such varied places as Ireland, Iceland, Norway, South Africa, Hong Kong and New Zealand. Some of these ventures have proved more successful than others, but I've loved every minute of it."

Current concerns within the British fairground industry include the cost of diesel (for both transport and generators), the provision of education for fairground children and the availability of sites for fairs and for showmen to live and store their equipment in the winter.

Formed in Salford near Manchester in 1889, The Showmen's Guild of Great Britain boasts 10 regional offices around the country, in-

cluding headquarters near London. Its members include fairground organizers (or lessees), ride owners, stall holders, caterers and other associated businesses in the tourism and hospitality sector. As well as implementing rules governing fair play among members, the Guild also liaises closely with the (U.K.) Health & Safety Executive, local authorities, education departments and external event organisers.

David Wallis is a member of the Lancashire, Cheshire & North Wales Section of the Guild and has served on multiple regional and national committees over the years. A member of the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, he also represents the Showmen's Guild in the European Showmen's Union (ESU).

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Used Rides Europe founded

Len Soled, Rides-4U, and Peter Theunisz, KMG, have formed a new partnership to offer used rides in the European market. The formation of the new company, called Used Rides Europe, was officially formed two weeks before the International Independent Showmen's Association annual Trade Show and Extravaganza, which was held Feb. 5-9, Gibsonton, Fla. The two announced the new partnership during the show. Soled is a used ride broker in the U.S. and sells new rides for several companies including KMG. That relationship is not altered in any way. Based on the interest they were getting, Soled and Theunisz feel Used Rides Europe will be a success. Their website is: www.usedrideseurope.com.
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Loop coasters were found at fairgrounds in early 1900s

When most people think of roller coasters, they picture them in amusement parks, however, documentation of permanent roller coasters at fairs and exhibitions goes all the way back to at least October, 1904 with photographic evidence of a standard Prescott "Loop the Loop" at the York Fair in York, Pennsylvania. Roller Coasters were far more popular than imagined at the turn of the last century.

This real photo postcard shows two similar views. The card was sent to a young lady on Staten Island postmarked March 9, 1905 — six months after the 1904 edition of the York Fair had concluded. Why the card was held for so long is a mystery.

Prior to this discovery, Flip Flaps and Loop Coasters had only been built as permanent attractions at Coney Island; Atlantic City; Olentangy Park, Columbus, Ohio, and a few other places.

Amusement Park historian Mike Chew also shared news of an installation out his direction. A small fair in Vallejo, California (across from Marine World) apparently had a side-friction fairgrounds "woodie" prior to 1910.

This postcard provides photographic evidence, confirming that roller coasters were far more popular than ever imagined at the turn of the last century. People were not content to travel to their nearest amusement park (perhaps there wasn't one where they lived). So, the exciting new invention, the roller coaster, came to them!

Today a few examples of fairground coasters still exist. The most popular ones are the wooden coasters that operate at the Western Washington Fair in Puyallup and Playland Park in Vancouver that doubles as the midway for the Pacific National Exhibition each late summer. Their ride package along with their 1958 wooden coaster provides the thrills for fairgoers.

— B. Derek Shaw

This photo postcard was dated 1904, but not postmarked until 1905. It was not uncommon for "loop the loop" coasters to be built at the turn of the last century, however they were usually permanent installations. This is a portable one traveling from fair to fair.

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Western Montana Fair names North Star as carnival provider

MISSOULA, Mont. — Western Montana Fair and Rodeo, Missoula, will have a new carnival at the fair this summer for the first time in more than half a century.

According to a report in the *Ravalli (Mt) Republic*, county commissioners signed a three-year contract for the Aug. 6-11 fair with North Star Amusements of Cody, Wyo., the longtime provider of carnivals and games at the Ravalli County Fair in Hamilton.

Bret McKenney is the principal owner of North Star Amusements.

“The trucks still say Wyoming, but I live in Billings and have my whole life,” McKenney was quoted as saying in the news report.

Cody was where McKenney started the company. According to the news report, the change came after a multiyear contract with Royal West Amusements and Inland Empire Shows expired last year amid a morass of problems. The carnival was late to arrive on the first day of the fair due to an ownership conflict and several rides either never showed up or weren't operated.

There was, said fairgrounds director Steve Earle, “a big gap in the middle of the carnival where there should have been rides.”

Earle said he negotiated a settlement with Royal West/Inland Empire to cover some of the fair's losses. Even before that, though, he and the



Five legitimate offers came in last fall, from companies as far away as California and Texas. “They were all relatively the same in terms of monetary value, but (McKenney's) operations we're a little more familiar with,” Earle said. “He's got a good track record as far as equipment safety goes, and he does the Hamilton fair, so we got good references from there and others.”

The biggest deciding factors in McKenney's favor were “probably his references and his operational ability – the shape of his rides and the way his help works and things like that.”

The new carnival will provide at least five spectacular rides, 14 major adult rides, 11 kiddie rides and between 20 and 40 games. North Star will also be required to put up a \$50,000 performance bond, and Earle said there are clauses in the contract that claim damages back to the fair if, for instance, rides don't start in time. Previous contracts had no such stipulations.

McKenney said he'll likely have a work force of around 100 people, including 15 to 20 local hires “if I can get them.” “We've got a big selection of rides. We promised to bring 30 minimum rides to the fair in Missoula there, so there'll be a big carnival spread, probably the best the town has ever seen, I would imagine,” he said.

North Star Amusements is looking at a 25-week schedule that includes 13 fairs. McKenney said he'd also be going to Bozeman, Helena and, this year, the Northwest Montana Fair in Kalispell the week after Missoula.

The three-year contract through 2015 includes optional renewal periods the following two years. It ends a string of 53 straight years that the company that started out as Inland Empire Shows came to the Missoula fair. Its longtime owner, Reed Williams, moved to the Missoula area 10 years ago. He sold Royal West Amusements to Todd and Becky Keenan in 2008, and the Keenans purchase Inland Empire Shows the following year.

—Pam Sherborne



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Western Fairs Association meeting honors 35 fairs

RENO, Nev. — The Western Fairs Association Achievement Awards were rewarded to membership fairs during the 2013 WFA Convention held Jan. 20-23, Reno, Nev.

The 331 award-winning entries from 35 fairs were on display in the Award Center.

The awards program was sponsored by Ray Cammack Shows. The Awards Center was sponsored by the Antelope Valley Fair.

Garnering the most awards this year was the Marin Co. Fair, San Rafael, Calif. a Class Medium fair. It was honored with 33 different division awards.

There were several fairs honored with 26 different awards. They were the San Diego, Del Mar, County Fair, Class Mega; the Sonoma County Fair, Santa Rosa, Ca-

lif., Class Large; and the Alameda County Fair, Pleasanton, Calif., Class Mega, which was honored with 25 first, second or third awards, and one honorable mention.

The San Mateo (Calif.) County Fair, Class Medium, was rewarded 24 awards.

The following is a list of the other fairs honored during the 2013 convention:

- The OC County Fair, Costa Mesa, Calif., Div. Mega, with 14 awards;
- Puyallup (Wash.) Fair, Div. Mega, with 12 awards;
- Fresno (Calif.) Fair, Div. Mega, 11 awards;
- Nevada Co. Fair, Grass Valley, Calif., Div. Medium, 11 awards;
- Stanislaus County Fair, Div. Large, 11 awards;
- California Mid-State Fair, Paso Robles, Calif., Div.



- Large, 10 awards;
- Santa Clara County Fair, San Jose, Calif., Div. Small, 10 awards;
- Antelope Valley Fair, Lancaster, Calif., Div. Large, 10 awards;
- Calgary (Alta.) Stampede, Div. Mega, nine awards;
- California State Fair, Sacramento, Div. Mega, nine awards;
- Napa County Fair, Calistogo, Calif., Div. Small, nine

- awards;
- Santa Barbara County Fair, Santa Maria, Calif., Div. Large, nine awards;
- Santa Barbara Fair (Calif.) & Expo, Div. Small, eight awards;
- Santa Cruz County Fair, Watsonville, Calif., Div. Medium, eight awards;
- Ventura (Calif.) County Fair, Div. Large, eight awards;
- Del Norte County Fair, Crescent City, Calif., Div. Small, seven awards;
- El Dorado County Fair, Placerville, Calif., Div. Medium, six awards;
- Redwood Empire Fair, Ukiah, Calif., Div. Small, six awards;
- Salina Valley Fair, King City, Calif., Div. Small, six awards;
- Amador County Fair, Plymouth, Calif., Div. Small,

- four awards;
- Chowchilla (Calif.) Madera County Fair, Div. Small, four awards;
- Arizona State Fair, Phoenix, Div. Mega, four awards;
- School's Agriculture and Nutrition, Walnut, Calif., Div. Small, three awards;
- Arizona National Livestock Show, Phoenix, Div. Small, two awards;
- Solano County Fair, Vallejo, Calif., Div. Small, two awards;
- Sonoma-Marin Fair, Petaluma, Calif., Div. Medium, two awards;
- Douglas County Fair, Roseburg, Ore., Div. Medium, one award;
- Tulelake-Butte Valley Fair, Tulelake, Calif., Div. Medium, one award.

—Pam Sherborne

Seen at Gibtown...



The hard working ladies from Amusements of America were on hand during Gibtown, checking out the show floor. Shown here, l to r, are: Jane Baxter Vivona, Helena Vivona and Lourdes Vivona. AT/GARY SLADE



Two New Jersey park operators stopped by the AT booth to talk about the Sandy relief efforts. Shown here are Angelo P. Cappetta (Carousel Family Entertainment Center) and Tricia Thomas (Fantasy Island Amusement Park). AT/GARY SLADE



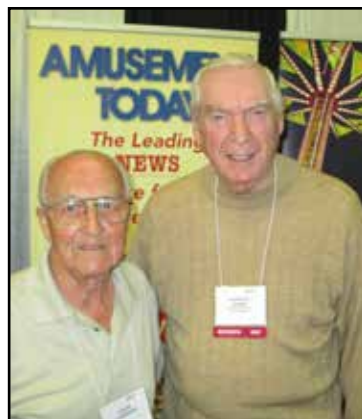
Wayne McCary and his wife, Annette McCary, center, had a great time during the Gibtown show visiting friends such as Bea Negus, right, North American Midway Entertainment. McCary retired as president and CEO of The Big E, Springfield, Mass., last year. He is also a former OABA chair and he received the Hall of Fame award from OABA during that organization's annual meeting Feb. 8, Tampa. AT/PAM SHERBORNE



Walking the floor and visiting with customers from SkyFair were Donald DiGirolamo, left, and company owner Jerry Pendleton. AT/GARY SLADE



Taking in all the sights during Gibtown from Palace Playland, l to r, are: Joel Golder, CEO and Paul Golder, vice president of operations. AT/GARY SLADE



Catching up on industry news were David Conedera, president of the Tampa Showman's Association (left) and Charles J. Edens, independent carnival ride operator. AT/GARY SLADE



All smiles at the Rides 4U booth over their purchase of a new Dance Party 360 ride from SBF Visa Group are l to r: Len Soled, Rides 4U; Michele Frison, SBF Visa Group; Jeff Savelesky, Silverwood project manager; Denny Higdon, Silverwood director of maintenance and Mark Blumhagen, Rides 4U. AT/GARY SLADE



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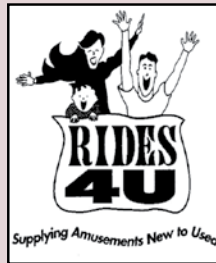
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