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Walt Disney World continues attraction rollout

Epcot's revamped Test Track lives up to all the hype, now tells Chevrolet's vehicle design story

STORY: Scott Rutherford
srutherford@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO, Fla. — While much of the attention and accolades have been showered on the latest expansion phase of New Fantasyland at the Magic Kingdom, there's plenty more to discover over at Epcot's Future World where a major re-imagining of the park's Test Track has also been unveiled.

Closed since April 2012 for the makeover, the ride has since reopened as Test Track Presented by Chevrolet. The proven slotcar-style ride system and track layout remain the same, but the popular

▶ See **TEST TRACK**, page 4



"Test Track Presented by Chevrolet" is a major re-imagining of the park's Test Track attraction that has operated at Epcot's Future World since 1999.

COURTESY EPCOT

Downtown Disney rolls strike with opening of Splitsville Luxury Lanes

STORY: Scott Rutherford
srutherford@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO, Fla. — Downtown Disney works diligently to feature something for virtually every visitor's taste. The popular entertainment district's latest offering comes in the form of boutique bowling, which can now be found at the aptly named Splitsville Luxury Lanes.

Opened this past December at Downtown Disney's West Side between DisneyQuest and the AMC 24 cinema, the upscale, retro-style bowling venue is the largest in the Splitsville brand's fleet and joins other family-friendly entertainment venues

at Downtown Disney at Walt Disney World Resort.

Splitsville is the brand's only two-level location with 30 lanes and more than 50,000 square feet of entertainment space — twice the size of any other Splitsville — featuring billiards, live entertainment, an outdoor balcony bar with sweeping views along with upscale dining options that cater to almost every palate. From the moment you step into Splitsville, you realize right away that this place is light years apart from a typical bowling alley.

"Splitsville is a perfect fit for Downtown Disney," said

▶ See **SPLITSVILLE**, page 4

2013 Amusement Expo preparations well underway

STORY: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — John Schultz, president, American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA), expects attendance at this year's Amusement Expo to be up at least 10 percent over the 2012 event.

This year's Expo is set for March 20-22, at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

The AAMA co-sponsors Amusement Expo with the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) and co-locates with the National Bulk Vendor Association (NBVA), which has its exhibitors grouped together within the same hall.

Its purpose is to bring the coin-op

Amusement Expo 2013



and entertainment industry members together with industry manufacturers and suppliers.

Amusement Expo also offers a variety of educational opportunities for

attendees as well as networking and social opportunities.

Hours for the tradeshow this year are 12 noon-6 p.m., Wed., March 20; 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Thursday, March 21; and 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Friday, March 22.

Educational seminars are held on the mornings of March 20-21.

A preliminary seminar schedule released in February showed attendees may select one of three sessions running from 8-9 a.m., Wednesday, March 20.

One is titled "Self-Redemption: Obtaining Your Greatest Returns," with Chip O'Hara, Midwest Coin Concepts, Waite Park, Minn., moderator and panelist; Joe Camarota, partner, Alpha-

Omega Amusements & Sales Inc., East Brunswick, N.J., presenter and panelist; and Jim Chapman, Coast to Coast Entertainment, presenter and panelist.

Discussion topics in this session will include growth opportunities for operators in self-redemption, changing trends, hottest merchandising techniques, best approaches for running high value prize games, and key strategies for long-term sustainability.

The second choice is titled "What You need to Know About ATMS," with Michael Guthrie, Cypress Advantage, Spokane, Wash.; moderator and panelist; and Brandon Hedley, Rich and Junnies Coin, Inc., Dubuque, Iowa, and

▶ See **EXPO**, page 5

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EDITORIAL: Gary Slade, gslade@amusementtoday.com

Tidbits



Slade

The amusement industry recently lost two great individuals who will be missed.

June Hardin founded Wapello. She was one of the kindest and most caring persons I ever had the pleasure of meeting. She loved her family, the business and her work with AIMS, to promote safety in our industry. She was always available for a good talk. I know, I had many with her during past Gibtown shows, something I missed during this year's show.

Cliff Hammond was one of our industry's "old school" legends. As a small park owner, he grew his New Mexico kiddieland park into the bigger Uncle Cliff's. I remember my dad taking me to Uncle Cliff's during my youth. Like the thousands who attended each year, both my dad and I had a wonderful time, and that's exactly what Uncle Cliff wanted — for his guests to have a good time.

We extend a thank you to Jim Reid-Anderson and Six Flags for the efforts they are making to paint and freshen up their properties. From Magic Mountain to Hurricane Harbor, reports are coming in on the smallest of jobs that will surely get the guests attention. We know the Six Flags appearance had slipped during the previous management teams and the years leading up to bankruptcy. Now with a solid business plan in place, it's good to see money being spent in the areas that have been overlooked for far too many years.

Speaking of paint, two Texas traditional parks did just that, invested in paint for 2013.

Along with their newly relocated bumper car building, Wonderland Park in Amarillo painted their historic Miler mouse coaster, giving it a blue color this time.

Joyland Park in Lubbock did a complete overhaul and painting of both their log flume and Galaxi coaster.

Congrats to both for keeping the focus on clean family fun.

—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: Scott Rutherford, srutherford@amusementtoday.com

Rye Playland's future in limbo



Rutherford

Let's get right to it: New York's celebrated Playland Park (aka Rye Playland) is teetering on the edge of extinction. That might sound alarmist but all it takes is a little reading between the lines. While there are some who want to save Playland and allow it to remain an amusement park, there are others planning to transform it into something its original architects would have never imagined or approved. An article I wrote for AT's Feb. issue on the subject was distributed at a recent meeting of the Westchester County Board of Legislators where Playland's fate was under review. For that piece, I did get some negative criticism from the other side — I was accused of writing with bias.

Well, of course I'm biased! I live and breathe this industry. I want nothing more than for Playland to survive fully intact. But the way to remedy this situation is NOT to remove rides, provide "open green spaces" and convert a large portion of the parking area into soccer fields.

Sustainable Playland claims to have the

park's best interests in mind. Myself and plenty of others remain unconvinced. If that plan is approved and their amusement "zone" eventually fails, the rides will be removed. Playland will cease to be a traditional amusement park. End of story.

Bottom line: People don't come to an amusement park for soccer. The only games they DO want to play are those on the midway. They visit an amusement park to escape the norm, to have fun in ways unavailable elsewhere. They come to savor the sights, sounds and those unmistakable scents inherent only to a real amusement park. They come to ride and to be thrilled, not to sit on the grass or gaze at the sea. This really isn't that difficult of a concept to understand. The Board must choose someone skilled and familiar with amusement park operations. They need to look no further than Central Amusements Int'l or Standard Amusements. These competent entities have decades of proven hands-on experience in these matters, and they honestly care about returning this grand old park to its former glory.

Playland's clock is ticking. Choose wisely.

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
Arlington, Texas 76011

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Contributors: Kelly Bernish, Andrew Mellor, B. Derek Shaw, Richard Munch, Marlon Scott, Janice Witherow, WHR Inc.

2 MINUTE DRILL



COMPILED: Janice Witherow

Matt Eckert, Holiday World & Splashin' Safari

Matt Eckert is enjoying diving right into his new role as president and CEO of Holiday World & Splashin' Safari ... a position he accepted just over a month ago. For Matt, it is a homecoming of sorts, as he first served as the park's controller in 2000 and later as one of its general managers before leaving the industry in 2012 for a short time. Matt will work closely with the board of directors for Holiday World & Splashin' Safari to keep this popular family theme park in Santa Claus, Ind., flourishing. Matt values time with his family, speaks French and loves catching re-runs of *The Brady Bunch!*



Matt Eckert played "The Candy Man" in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* in community theater in 2010. His two daughters, Abby and Claire, were Oompah Loompahs. COURTESY MATT ECKERT

Title
President/CEO.

Number of years in the industry
13 years.

Best thing about the industry
That we manufacture FUN.

Favorite amusement ride
The Voyage (at Holiday World), of course.

If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be ...
An accountant. This is what my academic background is in, and I am a certified public accountant.

Biggest challenge facing our industry
Continually finding new ways to delight and entertain our guests.

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

Favorite breakfast food
Frosted Flakes cereal.

The most memorable class I have ever taken would have to be ...
History of World War II.

When I need advice, I turn to ...
My parents.

If I had to be named after one of the Seven Dwarfs it would be ...
Happy.

When dipping tortilla chips, do you prefer salsa, cheese or guacamole?
Guacamole – fresh, not canned!

My latest big bargain was ...
An upcoming beach vacation.



Eckert

My all-time favorite Barry Manilow song is ...
Sorry, I am not a Manilow fan. I do, however, know several songs by Jason Mraz who is one of my favorites.

Choose one: African safari or Australian outback
Australian outback.

When I say baseball, you say ...
Actually, boring. I am more of a college basketball fan!

Spring is almost here! My favorite springtime activity is ...
Going to my daughters' soccer games.

You are on an elevator. Do you look straight ahead or make small-talk?
Straight ahead. I am very weird about elevators and riding on airplanes. I am usually very outgoing, but for some odd reason, not on elevators or planes.

It's Friday night at 7 p.m. Where can we typically find you?
With my family, out and about.

The last time I went in the ocean was ...
Spring Break last year.

My favorite pizza topping is ...
Pepperoni.

Are you a little bit country or a little bit rock 'n' roll?
A little bit of both!

One week ago today, I was ...
Starting my second week as president of Holiday World & Splashin' Safari.

The first thing I do when I get home from work is ...
Hug my kids.

Coollest museum
The Children's Museum of Indianapolis.

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

Presented by



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•**1895:** In the March 24 edition of the *Wheeling Register* newspaper, **Mozart Park** management announced improvements that were to be made to the small park on the outskirts of Wheeling, in West Virginia. Management was most proud of their purchase of a new roller coaster to be erected north of the dancing pavilion. Of note was that the ride would be similar to the ride at a park in Toledo, Ohio.

•**1907: Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk**, Santa Cruz, California, continued to rebuild the seaside park after a June 22, 1906 fire damaged most of the buildings. In mid-March management announced that the park would be even "larger & grander, with a new casino and a new **Figure 8** roller coaster." The park would also build a **Scenic Railway** in 1908, then the **Giant Dipper** in 1924, which is expected to thrill riders during its 90th year of operation this spring!

•**1912:** Newspaper advertisements in late March detailed the sale of the **L.A. Thompson Scenic Railway** at **Wonderland Park**, Minneapolis, Minnesota. With five trains, seating 20 passengers each, the unit was to be sold within 30 days. Meanwhile the 20-acre park, opened in 1905, was to be demolished, to make way for new residential lots. One structure from the park still stands today, an apartment building that at one time housed the premature infant exhibit.

•**1920: John Miller** and **Harry Baker** began a strong marketing campaign in March, for their new wheel assemblies that included a third set of wheels under the track (today known as underfriction wheels). The 1920 model cars would be the first cars to incorporate these additional wheels, making the roller coaster safer and allowing designers to provide longer and steeper drops. Miller and Baker would enjoy a very successful year, with new rides constructed in Baltimore, Rochester, Buffalo, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Youngstown, Spokane, Venice (Calif.), Des Moines, Springfield (Ma.), Norfolk and Buckroe Beach (Va.).

•**1923: Paragon Park**, Nantasket Beach, Massachusetts, had a major fire on the evening of March 28. Flames, driven by high winds, destroyed several park structures. A local resident was believed by authorities to have started the fire which swept from the park property to Straits Pond, wiping out 50 buildings, although most of the rides were saved. It was believed the fire began in a paint shop at the rear of the park. In a few moments, part of the park, including the Palm Garden, was in flames. The fire was seen for miles, glowing in the night sky, and was finally put out when regional fire brigades, handicapped by the cold weather, arrived. Damage was estimated at \$750,000. In 1916 Paragon Park had another devastating fire, although the park reopened the following May, this time with the tallest roller coaster in the world, the **Giant Coaster**.

•**1940:** Owners of **Neptune Beach Park**, in Alameda, California, held a final auction at the popular amusement park, closed since the end of the 1939 season. While many bid on small items, as well as some of the remaining rides and attractions, others stopped by during the late March auction to say goodbye to the park on the bay. Ownership expected that everything would be sold to the highest bidder, but the two large roller coasters did not move, and except for some small items, the park was demolished. Opened in 1917, it competed with nearby **Idora Park** in Oakland for a dozen years with the largest swimming pool in northern California.

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

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►TEST TRACK

Continued from page 1

attraction now features a new story, queue and new show scenes with amazingly vibrant graphics.

Disney and General Motors renewed their long-term business relationship with a new multi-year corporate alliance. As part of the new alliance, GM was fully involved with Walt Disney Imagineering in the development of the new Test Track experience. The refurbished Test Track will be presented by one of GM's most famous brands, Chevrolet. As Chevrolet marks its 100th anniversary, the new alliance agreement enables General Motors to tell its story in new and exciting ways to millions of guests from around the world and continue as the official vehicle sponsor of Walt Disney World Resort.

"We are excited to renew our long-term alliance with General Motors," said George Aguel, senior vice president, corporate alliances for the Walt Disney Company. "This unique agreement extends



Featuring high-energy music, colorful graphics, theatrical lighting and a collection of Chevrolet concept cars and model vehicles, guests on the revamped Test Track can become automotive designers. Offering a glimpse into the future of personal transportation, the experience is highlighted by a high-speed spin around the slot-car inspired Test Track itself.

COURTESY EPCOT

collaboration between two of the most recognized brands in the world, a relationship that spans over 30 years. The reimagined Test Track Presented by Chevrolet continues our shared goal of providing unique and innovative experiences that engage Disney guests in exciting and interac-

tive ways."

"As a global brand, Chevrolet is looking forward to welcoming guests from around the world to the reimagined Test Track," said Joel Ewanick, global chief marketing officer for General Motors. "The best of Disney and the best of Chevrolet will come

together to bring guests an immersive experience in the design process of the vehicles they see on the road today and will see in the future."

As part of the refurbishment, the attraction now features a sleek new "Chevrolet Design Center at Epcot" that fully integrates visitors into the world of automotive design. Featuring high-energy music, colorful eye-popping graphics, theatrical lighting and a collection of Chevrolet concept cars and model vehicles, guests can become automotive designers — and have a glimpse into the future of personal transportation during the experience.

"As storytellers, to be able to tell Chevrolet's design story was fun for our Imagineers," said Eric Jacobson, senior vice president of Walt Disney Imagineering. "Chevrolet designers come from the same creative roots as Imagineers. Test Track presented by Chevrolet will become, for Epcot guests, an exciting part of their visit to Walt Disney World Resort."

Guests use interactive workstations to realistic-

ly design their own custom vehicle concepts. A word of advice: if guests opt to utilize Disney's Fast Pass system of the Test Track's single rider line, you are not offered the chance to create your own vehicle. Instead, to speed up the process, you are offered pre-designed models from which to choose.

Once the design phase is complete, the actual ride portion of the attraction begins as guests are loaded into individual six-seat SimCar ride vehicles where they get to experience their design on the exhilarating Test Track roadway.

After performance testing is finished, guests are directed into a post-show area where they learn how well their vehicle did. They will also be afforded the opportunity to check out the latest Chevrolet vehicles in a new classy showroom.

GM became involved with Disney in the 1970s and was the first partner for Epcot, opening its World of Motion there in 1982. The original Test Track opened in 1999.

►SPLITSVILLE

Continued from page 1

Keith Bradford, vice president of Downtown Disney. "From a new twist on a beloved sport to an impressive menu you'd never expect to find in a bowling facility, Splitsville offers a great experience that complements our other unique offerings at Downtown Disney. I'm sure it will quickly become a guest favorite."

The Splitsville concept is anchored by bowling — the largest participation sport in America — but with a modern take that brings together entertainment and upscale food in a non-traditional bowling setting. Unlike typical bowling centers, Splitsville's décor is a blend of contemporary and nostalgic elements with the bowling lanes separated into clusters that create unexpected sight lines for guests. There are also lane concierges available nightly to help maximize the guest experience.

"Splitsville is about socialization and creating memories. In a world of smart phones, texts and social media, people need an outlet to connect in person again," said Mark Gibson, co-founder of Splitsville. "Bowling is an activity that appeals to almost

everyone and the natural gaps of time between frames allows families, friends or work mates to engage in conversation, grab some sushi or encourage guests on the next lane."

Splitsville's dining options are distinctly different than the usual fare one might expect. Under the direction of award-winning chef Tim Cushman, the menu features a variety of higher-end offerings such as grilled Mahi Mahi with Voodoo shrimp, filet sliders and grilled chicken parmesan, plus a kids menu, in addition to traditional bowling alley food items. There are even two sushi bars where guests can get fresh-rolled sushi.

"We've created a collection of menu items that are perfect for sharing," said Guy Reville, co-founder of Splitsville. "Whether it is sushi, sliders or pizza, customers can order combinations of food and then taste a little bit of everything. It creates a very interactive and social experience where the Splitsville concept helps 'break the ice' and allow guests of all ages to relax and enjoy their time at our luxury lanes!"

Prices vary based on time of day and party size, and include the cost of shoe rentals. For guests who would like

to take advantage of priority bowling, to receive access to the next available lane upon check-in, the rates range between \$8 to \$125 per person for one hour of bowling. The wait time will vary based on volume and there are a number of restrictions that may apply for the duration of priority bowling.

The addition of Splitsville builds on the expanding list of entertainment and retail options for guests at Downtown Disney. Florida's first AMC Fork & Screen movie theater, Characters in Flight operated by Aerophile, Sunglass Icon, and Something Silver are just a few of the other recent additions to Downtown Disney at Walt Disney World Resort.

Splitsville at Downtown Disney is the Orlando-based chain's fifth location joining venues in Tampa, Miami, Fairview, Texas and Fredericksburg, Va. The expansion to Downtown Disney comes during a growth era for the sport of bowling, which is the most popular participation sport in America with nearly 70 million people participating in the sport each year, according to the Bowling Proprietors' Association of America.



Splitsville Luxury Lanes is the retro-style bowling venue that opened this past December on Downtown Disney's West Side. The new venue offers billiards, live entertainment and plenty of upscale dining options. Splitsville is the brand's only two-level location with 30 lanes and more than 50,000 square feet of space — twice the size of any other Splitsville.
AT / SCOTT RUTHERFORD



►EXPO

Continued from page 1

Rob Lowe, PAI/ATM Express, Billings, Mont., serving as presenter and panelist.

Discussion topics for this session include how ATM business models work, how to get started, available revenue streams, and how to incorporate advertising, among other topics. There will also be a question and answer period at the conclusion.

Then, the third choice is "The Ten Rules of FEC Design," with Doug Wilkerson, Principal, Dynamic Design & Associates Inc., presenter. Discussion will include things one needs to know to prepare to open a new family entertainment center or the best way to renovate.

Then, running from 9:10-10:10 a.m. attendees will have three more choices. One of the sessions is "Enhancing Your Route Via Social Networking," with Mary Lavine, Bullseye Inc., Madison, Wis., moderator and panelist; Barry Chandler, Chandler Interactive, Columbus, Ohio, presenter; and Michael Martinez, N2 Industries, Inc., Brea, Calif., panelist.

Discussion topics will include how to use social media to build awareness, generate excitement, and enhance participation, as well as to new ways and ideas to attract and maintain closer ties with business constituents.

Also from 9:10-10:10 a.m. is "Keeping Those Cranes Cranking: Tweaks That Make A Difference," Marty Murin, Rainbow Falls Video Service Co., Tannersville, N.Y., moderator and panelist, along with a panel of experienced executives. The discussion will include practices for maximizing crane productivity.

The third choice is "Financing and Capital Fundraising Strategies in the New Economy," with Jerry Merola, CFO Amusement Entertainment Management & Alpha-Omega Amusements & Sales, as presenter.

Discussion will include strategies in appropriately positioning an entertainment organization for financing.

From 10:20-11:40 a.m., another three choices are available.

There will be an "Operator Roundtable — Survival for Route Operators III."

Co-Moderators expected to be on hand are Dale Lazar, H. Lazar & Son, Inc., Pittsburgh, Pa., and Phil Juckem, All BrandsVending, Tampa, Fla.

At the past two annual Expos, this session has consistently received high marks from attendees, so much so that it has "made the cut" for the program lineup again this year. The ingredients that have made this so compelling have been the open, often-spirited and frank discussion on timely, important industry topics.

The second choice is "Service Basics To Remarkable Experiences, When Guest Service Becomes a Weapon!" with Frank Price, founder, Birthday University, as presenter. Topics will be geared to the best way to create memorable experiences at an entertainment facility.

The third choice from 10:20-11:40 a.m. is "The New Reality for FECs, Innovate or Die," with Randy White, CEO, White Hutchinson Leisure & Learning Group, presenter.

Directed by operator facilitators, attendees will immerse themselves in peer-to-peer

dialogue in areas such as cost-control, product procurement, redemption, jukebox trends, gaming, and emerging equipment.

Set in a roundtable format, different topics will be assigned to each table. History has shown it doesn't take long at all to spark the exchange of ideas and information.

Upon conclusion of this last session, attendees may meet for the tradeshow Ribbon Cutting and Awards Presentation beginning at 11:45 a.m., just prior to the tradeshow opening at 12 noon.

There are two sessions in the morning of Thursday, March 21. Each runs from 9-10 a.m., creating, again, nice choices for attendees.

One is "Social Media & Marketing for Your FEC," with Alan Fluke, managing partner, Sparians Bowling, Sports Bar & Events Center, presenter. This is an overview on the importance of a dedicated social media strategy and understanding who the core demographics are in an area to promote business.

The second choice for that time slot is "The Ten Critical Steps to the Financial Suc-

cess of Your FEC," with Jerry Merola, CFO, Amusement Entertainment Management & Alpha-Omega Amusements & Sales, presenter.

Networking and social opportunities offered by Amusement Expo include: The AAM-CF Charity Golf Tournament, set for 12:30, Tuesday, March 19, at the Royal Links Golf Club; and the Industry Gala Reception, set for 6:15 -8:15 p.m., March 20, at the Las Vegas Hotel.

But no doubt, there will be other networking opportunities being provided throughout the Expo.

This will be the second year for the two-day Foundations Entertainment University, an in-depth seminar completely directed to the FEC industry. It will be held prior to Amusement Expo, March 18-19, and will run 8:30 a.m.-9 p.m., Monday, 18, and 8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., Tuesday, 19.

This program isn't included in the Amusement Expo registration. However, registrants of the Foundations Entertainment University will gain entrance into the Amusement Expo tradeshow as well as its education seminars.



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Bellewaerde adding themed Zierer indoor coaster, Huracan

STORY: Andrew Mellor
amellor@amusementtoday.com

BELGIUM — A new family coaster, Huracan, from German manufacturer Zierer is set to make its debut at Bellewaerde Park in Belgium for the 2013 season.

With a scheduled opening

Guests will enter Bellewaerde's latest coaster via a themed Mayan temple building.

COURTESY BELLEWAERDE PARK

date of March 30, the new ride will represent an investment of approximately €4 million (U.S. \$5.4 million) and will be themed on a storyline around the mythological Mayan god of wind, storm and fire, Huracan, who was locked in a hidden temple by the Mayans on the site of the park many years ago. The Mayans wanted to protect their descendants from the destructive forces of the god, and guests to the park will get the chance to visit the temple when they sample the

new attraction. But the treacherous Huracan will use all his forces to imprison the visitors in the temple — forever!

The coaster has been custom-built for Bellewaerde and is an indoor attraction featuring unique characteristics and effects. Situated in the Mexico square area of the park, the experience begins as guests enter the ride through a striking entrance in the shape of a life-size Mayan temple, through which they will see Huracan

▶ See HURACAN, page 8

Oakwood investing in major family park area

STORY: Andrew Mellor
amellor@amusementtoday.com

WALES — Oakwood Theme Park in South Wales, U.K., has revealed ambitious plans for a huge new investment program for 2013.

The Pembrokeshire-based venue is spending more than GBP 4 million (U.S. \$6.3 million) on the creation of a major new family park area featuring a series of new rides and experiences. The area will also include a family friendly restaurant and café alongside outdoor play areas and themed retail experiences.

The new development will feature seven new rides and attractions in total, including a spectacular water ride alongside a series of children's play areas and other themed attractions, although at the time of writing full details of what the new additions will be were still under wraps. It is due to open prior to the main



Dominic Jones
Oakwood Park Director

summer holidays.

"This represents by far the largest investment at the park for more than a decade and is a direct response to visitor feedback we have received," commented park director Dominic Jones. "As well as creating a must-see new destination for families, the development also

represents a major boost for the local economy and will create a number of new jobs."

And he continued: "It will totally transform the visitor experience and provide a magical new series of attractions aimed specifically at the family market. As part of the investment we are also creating family-friendly facilities within the themed area as well as baby-changing facilities, high chairs and microwaves. This will be the largest new attraction of its kind in Wales and is the first phase in an ambitious and on-going program of investment over the coming years," he added.

Work on the project is well underway and despite some very bad weather conditions throughout the U.K. over the winter months, everything is going according to plan, Jones confirmed.

Significantly too, despite the considerable investment

▶ See OAKWOOD, page 8



Construction is underway on the new area at Oakwood Theme Park in South Wales. It is scheduled for completion before the main summer holidays this year.

COURTESY OAKWOOD PARK

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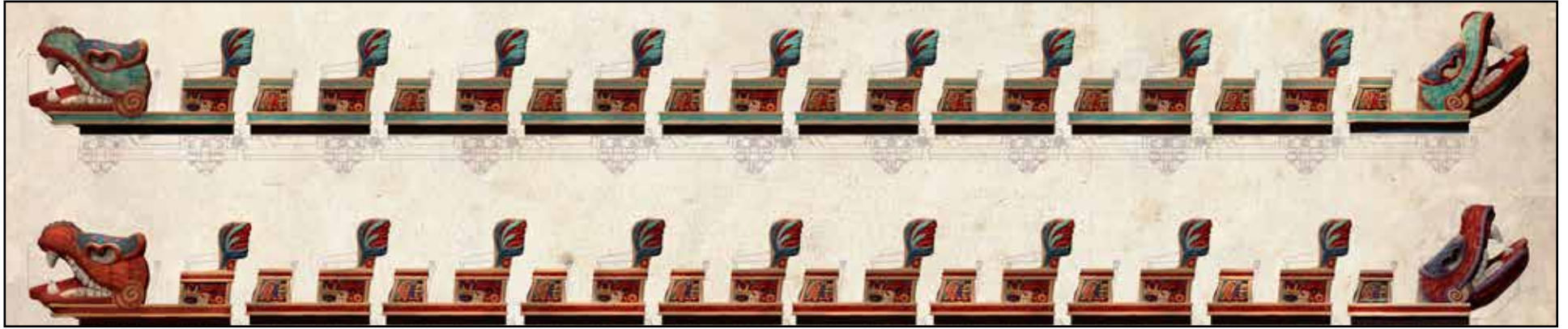
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The new coaster at Bellewaerde Park in Belgium is themed as Huracan, the mythical god of wind, storm and fire. To accent the theme, Zierer has designed these two snake-themed trains, each seating 20 riders.
COURTESY BELLEWAERDE PARK

► HURACAN Continued from page 7

and a two headed snake which forms the coaster trains.

The ride begins as a dark ride where visitors are exposed to fire, water and wind effects all within authentic Mayan décor. On leaving the station area via a lift, the train takes a curve above the Mexico Square before diving back inside the building where more special effects and on-board music add to the overall experience.

Huracan is a Zierer Custom Force Five coaster and has a track length of 500 meters (1,640 feet). It will have a maximum height of 15 meters (49 feet) and the two, 10 wagon, 20 passenger trains will reach a top speed of 50 km/h (31 mph). Hourly capacity will be 1,000 riders.

► OAKWOOD Continued from page 7

ment, Oakwood has pledged to freeze its admission price for 2013, again in response to feedback received from visitors, many of them locals, who continue to be affected by the current economic climate.

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Family Kingdom's 2013 season to be highlighted by four Zamperla rides

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. — The 2013 season at Family Kingdom Amusement Park is shaping up to be a memorable one thanks to the recent announcement that South Carolina's only traditional park is installing a quartet of new family rides along with a rebranding of the complex's adjacent seaside waterpark.

Family Kingdom's reigning king of the midway remains the venerable Swamp Fox, a PTC/John Allen wooden roller coaster that opened in 1966. But the popular ride gets a steel cousin this spring with the addition of a Zamperla Zig Zag coaster. The 35-foot-tall wild mouse-style ride features a compact course laced with plenty of tight, switchback turns and quick drops. Prior to migrating south to

Myrtle Beach, this coaster thrilled guests at Gillian's Wonderland Pier (Wild Wonder, 1999) and Magic Springs & Crystal Falls (Twist 'n' Shout, 2000-12). At Family Kingdom, the ride will retain the name of Twist 'n' Shout.

The coaster deal was brokered by Len Soled of Rides-4U as was a park model Frog Hopper, which came from Happy Home Amusements in Goffstown, N.H.

Also joining the 13-acre park's ride arsenal this season are two more Zamperla attractions: a Kite Flyer (relocated from Itz Family Food & Fun in Colorado Springs, Colo.) and Flying Tigers, a suspended airplane ride.

In addition to the new rides at the amuse-

ment park side of the operation, Family Kingdom's Waterpark will now be known as "splashes," a name change that officials say better reflects that it is a full-scale waterpark on two acres. Located directly on the beach across Ocean Boulevard, the waterpark has operated since 1977 and remains the region's only true oceanfront waterpark.

The amusement park has operated since 1966 and was originally known as Grand Strand Amusement Park. It was renamed Family Kingdom in 1992 when it was purchased by the Ammons family, which also owns the Sea Mist Oceanfront Resort next door.

Family Kingdom opens for the 2013 season on March 23.

—Scott Rutherford

SBF Visa, Zamperla supply Silverwood with two new rides for 2013



ATHOL, Idaho — Silverwood Theme Park has announced the addition of two new rides for the 2013



Silverwood Theme Park has announced the addition of two new rides for the 2013 season. The Dance Party 360 swinging pendulum ride (supplied by SBF Visa Group) will be the first model to make complete 360 inverting rotations. A Zamperla Barnstormer, biplane-themed family ride, will be located in the Garfield Summer Camp area of the park.

COURTESY SILVERWOOD

season. One will be geared for thrill seekers while the other was selected to appeal to families and children.

The first, supplied by Italian manufacturer SBF Visa Group through U.S. sales representative Rides-4-U, is a Dance Party 360 swinging pendulum ride. Standing 107-foot-tall, the ride accommodates 24 guests in a circular gondola with outward-facing seats. As the ride cycle starts, the gondola begins to swing back and forth as well as rotate at the end of its support arm. This will be the first model to make complete 360-degree inversions. Rotational speed of the main gondola is 15 rpm while the overhead rotational speed is 14 rpm. Guests will experience up to 3.5 Gs when the ride is in full motion.

After being shipped via land and sea in five containers from Italy, the attraction is expected to arrive at Silverwood on April 4. The area of installation will be prepped and ready with final assembly requiring only five days. The ride will be effect-

ed within a five-foot-deep pit so that riders can board at ground level instead of climbing onto a platform. A naming contest for the new ride is currently underway.

Also Italian-made, the Barnstormer from Zamperla, is a colorful biplane-themed family ride that accommodates up to 20 guests (including adults) in two 10-seat gondolas. Once in motion, the passenger vehicles reach up to 10 rpms. It will be located in the Garfield Summer Camp area of the park.

The Barnstormer is one of only two rides like it in the United States, with the other being located at Six Flags Great Adventure. The ride has already arrived at the park and will be assembled as soon as weather permits and the winter snow dissipates.

With a price tag of over \$2.2 million for the two new rides, Silverwood continues to invest in its infrastructure to maintain its position as one of the northwest's premiere destination for family fun and thrills.

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S&S El Loco going to Adventuredome

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — S&S-Sansei Technologies, Inc. has confirmed that the Utah-based ride manufacturer will supply one of its El Loco steel roller coasters for the Adventuredome at Circus Circus. The new coaster will replace one of the park's original rides, the Rim Runner (Arrow Dynamics Shoot-the-Chute), which closed to the public on Feb. 3, 2013.

When El Loco opens later

this year it will be only the second such ride to operate in the U.S. The first opened as Steel Hawg at Indiana Beach in 2008. Like that coaster, El Loco will feature a 70-foot beyond-vertical first drop along with a 45-degree outward banked turn and a 180-degree barrel roll along its 1,300 feet of track.

"The addition of El Loco to the Adventuredome is a significant move in our

efforts to entice a new generation of roller coaster lovers," said Tom Nolan, vice president of operations for Adventuredome.

S&S-Sansei's El Loco steel roller coaster is coming to the Adventuredome at Circus Circus, with an opening slated for December 2013.
COURTESY S&S-SANSEI



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Beech Bend Park chooses name for new Revolution

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. — After two months of contemplation, officials at Kentucky's Beech Bend Park have finally chosen the name Vortex for the park's new-for-2013 attraction. Beech Bend owner Dallas Jones and his family signed a contract to purchase the Chance Revolution while attending the IAAPA trade show in Orlando last November.

"We got a little help from our friends at the American Coaster Enthusiasts (ACE)," said Jones. "We asked for ideas and they came up with some great ones and some pretty funny ones as well. We thought we'd share a few of our favorite unchosen ones: Spin Dry, The Claw, The Spin Cycle, Beech Blender and The Duke of Hurl."

"Bill Denekamp submitted the name close to the one we chose: Spinning Vortex of Terror. We shortened it up just a bit and settled on Vortex, which means a whirling mass of air," added Jones.

Guests will definitely feel some airtime on Vortex, The revolving swing will take them 60 feet into the air reaching a maximum swing angle of 240 degrees. Riders will sit facing each other to maximize the interactive experience, and at the height of the swing, they will be suspended upside down.

Beech Bend's new Vortex ride is currently scheduled to open on May 18, 2013.

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Lake Compounce introduced their new 3Pay Season Pass payment plan. The plan allows purchasers to pay for their passes in three even installments. They also have the option of adding parking passes to their purchase. The passes may be purchased online at www.lakecompounce.com for a limited time, and must be paid in full before the pass holders are able to use them.

SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment launched new mobile websites for the three **SeaWorld** and two **Busch Gardens** parks, providing guests and fans with a convenient and easy way to plan their vacations and purchase and redeem tickets directly from their mobile devices. The new sites were designed to work with some of the most popular cell phone operating systems, including Apple, Android and Windows.

Younger visitors are invited to join in the fun at **Legoland Discovery Center** Dallas/Fort Worth and **Sea Life Aquarium** Grapevine with the launch of Toddler Tuesdays featuring discounted admission. At Legoland, the event will be held the third Tuesday of each month through Dec. 17 while at Sea Life Aquarium, it will be on the second Tuesday through Dec. 10.

Kings Dominion has confirmed that **SweetFrog**, the popular Richmond-based self-serve frozen yogurt company will open its first-ever amusement park location at Kings Dominion in the spring of 2013. SweetFrog will be located outside of the **Woodstock Express** roller coaster in the park's newly expanded **Planet Snoopy**. SweetFrog offers guests a large selection of frozen yogurt flavors including fat free, sugar free, and gluten free options. Customers will also have dozens of toppings to choose from including fresh fruit, granola, wet walnuts, crushed candy bars, chocolate, caramel, shredded coconut and more.



FAST TRACK

COMPILED: Scott Rutherford,
srutherford@amusementtoday.com

SeaWorld Orlando launched its "Epic Voyage" campaign in New York City to preview **Antarctica: Empire of the Penguin**, the park's all-new, largest-ever attraction opening this spring. The campaign includes stops in seven cities and a new mobile app, both designed to give families a sneak peek into the new attraction's thrilling and chilling adventure in ways as amazing as the continent itself. For more information about the Epic Voyage, visit SeaWorldOrlando.com/Antarctica.

Three Space Shuttle astronauts have been selected for the 2013 U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame Induction. Curt Brown, Eileen Collins and Bonnie Dunbar, Ph.D., will join an elite group of American space heroes as they are inducted into the **U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame** on Saturday, April 20, 2013, during a ceremony at **Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex**.

Canada's **Assiniboine Park Zoo** in Winnipeg recently unveiled a new eatery and play area, the Tundra Grill and Polar Playground. As part of the second-phase of a \$200 million upgrade at the zoo, the playground features a jungle gym, slides and interactive games where children can make their own music.

Wisconsin State Fair executives have announced a partnership with Bank Mutual Corporation for the 2013 fair. Bank Mutual will serve as the title sponsor of the Bank Mutual Amphitheater, which is the biggest free entertainment spot on fair grounds. Bank Mutual will also sell \$5 Wisconsin State Fair tickets during a special

"Fair Deals" promotion from May 1 through June 30. Tickets will be available at each of its 76 offices in Wisconsin along with its one office in Minnesota.

Chicago's **Shedd Aquarium** took the highest spot in attendance among all aquariums in the United States in 2012. The Shedd Aquarium welcomed exactly 2,169,333 guests, which also helped the iconic Chicago institution hold its ranking as most-attended cultural attraction for the sixth year in a row.

Five of 49 cold-stunned sea turtles rescued from North Carolina's coast have been taken to the **N.C. Aquarium** at Fort Fisher for treatment. The unusually cold temperatures caused the turtles to become cold-stunned, and to help the public understand sea turtle conservation, the aquarium will be offering special behind-the-scenes turtle rehab hours.

The Los Angeles City Council has unanimously approved a development agreement with **Universal** to fully execute **The NBCUniversal Evolution Plan**, a \$1.6 billion multiphase expansion of the theme park and adjacent studio lots.

While **Big Thunder Mountain Railroad** at **Disneyland** is closed for a major refurbishment that will include all-new track and updates to the mountain itself, another area receiving an update will be the **Rainbow Ridge Mining Town**. Dating back to 1956 and the Rainbow Caverns Mine Train attraction, Rainbow Ridge Mining Town is a classic feature of Frontierland. When the Big Thunder Mountain Railroad reopens this fall, Rainbow Ridge Mining Town will look very much the same as it always has. It is being refurbished with new materials, but many items from the original area will be reused such as props, signs and select doors, windows and shutters.



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White Water Bay announces largest expansion to the park in 20 years

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla. — White Water Bay has announced for 2013 the largest expansion to the park in over 20 years, adding two major water attractions: CannonBowl and Pipeline Wave. The combination of these high thrill tube rides is the first of its kind in the country and is sure to double the fun for park guests this season.

The expansion will be located on the northeast side of the park and includes a structure combining both attractions.

The CannonBowl is a two-person double tube ride, 317 feet long with a 41 foot drop. Riders will experience the adventure of a steep decent down a tunnel and into the bowl where they revolve inside the perimeter before being dropped through the cork-screw exit.

The Pipeline Wave is an



ProSlide is delivering this two-slide tower to White Water Bay for 2013. It is the waterpark's largest expansion in 20 years. COURTESY WHITE WATER BAY

extreme two-person face-to-face WhirlyWheel tube ride, 201 feet long with a 41-foot drop in which guests blast through enclosed tunnels and soar to the top of banked

curves. Both attractions are provided by ProSlide Technology of Canada.

"We are thrilled with the expansion to the park and are confident that the new attractions will quickly become a favorite," says David Riddles, general manager at White Water Bay. "Our loyal guests were ready for a new ride and we are excited to offer them two."

The CannonBowl and Pipeline Wave will open with the park for the 2013 season on May 18. This great new attraction comes on the heels of Wild West Water Works at Frontier City, Frontier City's first major waterpark attraction.

White Water Bay is owned by CNL Lifestyle Properties based in Orlando, Fla. and operated by Premier Attractions Management in Oklahoma City.

Six Flags Hurricane Harbor announces two new slides

ARLINGTON, Texas — Big changes are coming to the largest waterpark in North Texas. The 2013 season at Six Flags Hurricane Harbor will be even bigger, better and wetter with the debut of two thrilling new slides — Typhoon Twister and Tsunami Surge. Scheduled to open in early summer, these two new rides will beckon guests of all ages to take the ultimate plunge.

On Typhoon Twister, guests board slides built for two for an adrenaline-packed



ride down a tunnel and into a bowl-shaped slide. After spinning around multiple times
 ▶ See SLIDES, page 17

Splish Splash adding ProSlide Rocket

CALVERTON, N.Y. — Already known for unique rides, Splish Splash Waterpark will offer guests a radically different experience with Bootlegger's Run, the new attraction opening in 2013.

Bootlegger's Run will be the first ever water ride in the state of New York featuring new generation hydromagnetic technology. "Bootlegger's Run is like a roller coaster that races on water instead of rails," said general manager Mike Bengtson.

Supplied by ProSlide of Canada, Bootlegger's Run will take a four-person raft uphill, for a series of breathtaking drops, including one from nearly five stories high.

"The ride begins with a 235-foot long lift hill climb, then rockets into an exhilarating rush of drops, rapids and slingshot climbs, rac-

ing to speeds of 30 mph, all experienced in the spray of splashing water," Bengtson said.

The ProSlide hydromagnetic technology uses linear induction motors to generate powerful electromagnetic fields that propel the steel-bottomed rafts uphill. This new ride will be the largest single investment Splish Splash has ever made and is one of only a handful of such rides in the nation.

"We feel Bootlegger's Run will immediately become the most popular ride at the park," Bengtson added. "Splish Splash is already one of America's greatest waterparks...and it just got better."

Splish Splash opens the 2013 season on Memorial Day weekend.

—Jeffrey Seifert





NEWS SPLASH

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

The 35-acre **Beach Waterpark** in Mason, Ohio, is scheduled to reopen May 18, 2013 with \$5 million in improvements. The park will be under the management of Florida-based **Adventure Holdings LLC** that currently operates 18 family entertainment centers across the country. Improvements include renovations to the wave pool, activity area and kids area along with some exciting new slides. Adventure Holdings has agreed to honor the nearly 8,800 season passes that were sold for the 2012 season. The waterpark's previous owners sold the season passes before announcing on March 9, 2012, that the park would not open for the 2012 season. Refunds were not offered as the park claimed all of the money generated from pass sales had been spent, and utilities and vendors were still owed money. Prior to the 2012 closing the Beach Waterpark had operated for 27 years.

Pennsylvania's largest waterpark, **Camelbeach Mountain**, and **Dollywood's Splash Country** in Tennessee have both jumped on the virtual-queue bandwagon, signing an agreement with **Lo-Q**. The parks will offer the Q-band RFID wristband at additional cost. Guests who take advantage of the service can check-in at kiosks located around the park, and will be notified when it is their turn to ride. Q-band-wearing guests will then use a separate entrance to bypass those standing in line.

"Venues like Camelbeach understand that today's guests want and expect a premium park experience that includes limiting the amount of time they stand in line," said Steve Brown, president and chief operating officer of Lo-Q. "We're thrilled to offer a product that allows our clients to meet that need within the unique waterpark environment." Brown added, "We are thrilled to be extending our partnership with Dollywood for an additional three years. We are also extremely excited that the company has decided to install our additional Q-band system at its water park. For us, this decision marks another important vote of confidence in the value and capability of our technology."

In **Fort Smith, Ark.** the city and county governments are working together to build an \$8 million waterpark for city residents. Sebastian County has pledged \$4 million from its sales tax revenues that are reserved for capital improvements. The city of Fort Smith will provide the remaining \$4 million through the extension of an existing tax. The project is expected to generate enough revenues to cover its operating costs. Plans, unveiled to the city residents in February, show several large slides as well as gradual entry pool area with play amenities for smaller children. Although the waterpark is scheduled to open Memorial Day 2014, the project developer and suppliers have yet to be announced.

The troubled **Wild River Country**, Arkansas' largest waterpark, has been sold. The park filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in November of 2005 after Community Bank of Cabot threatened to foreclose on the property for defaulting on a \$3.08 million loan. The park, owned by **Halcyon Attractions of Arkansas LLC**, a subsidiary of Halcyon Attractions Corp. of Toronto, had been operated for the past three years by a company called **Reve Management**. The park was sold to **Aquapark Holdings LLC** of North Little Rock, a private investment company that had recently registered with the state of Arkansas in October. **Chris Shillcutt**, a 22-year veteran of the waterpark and amusement industry was named the new vice president of operations. Shillcutt most recently worked for Great Wolf Lodge Resorts. A spokesperson for Aquapark Holdings said, "The new

owners are committed to implementing significant improvements over the next few years." Shillcutt added, "Our short-term vision is to improve the park each year so to add value to our guests and make the waterpark a showcase for the Little Rock area."

Great Wolf Lodge, Grand Mound, Wash. has installed a Howl at the Moon mini-golf course. The indoor course, installed by **Art Attack** of Alberta, Canada, continues Great Wolf Lodge's wilderness theme by immersing guests in a rich black light environment full of colorful forest creatures. The fun and challenging nine-hole course is designed for players of all ages.

City officials of **Cedar Park, Texas**, continue to meet with representatives from **Schlitterbahn** in the hopes of developing a waterpark plan resembling what was announced in January 2010. The original plan called for \$360 million resort that included lodging, retail stores and restaurants built by Schlitterbahn with partner Cedar Park Land. The first portion of the waterpark was predicted to open in May 2012. Financing fell through on the deal and Cedar Park Land is no longer involved in the project. Schlitterbahn has confirmed the company is still interested in building a waterpark in Cedar Park but would not discuss a timeline for the project. The project has been reduced to a \$75 million, 16-acre indoor/outdoor waterpark close to the original location.

Wet 'n' Wild waterpark, under construction in Las Vegas, utilized Facebook social networking to decide the name of the park's wave pool. Facebook friends were first asked to submit names, then the field was narrowed down to five and opened up for voting. More than 2,300 people voted and the winning name of Red Rock Bay was chosen over runners up Ragin' Rebel, Neon Beach, Mojave Monsoon and Cactus Curl. Ted Stringer submitted the winning entry and will be awarded a VIP experience during opening weekend. Wet 'n' Wild is scheduled to open Memorial Day Weekend.

Visitors to **WaterWorld@i-City** [Editor's note: yes, this is the correct spelling!] in Shah Alam, Malaysia, can now enjoy splashing and swimming under the stars, with nighttime operation running from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. daily. Director Monica Ong said, "While the daytime is mainly targeted at families with children, the night operation is aimed at young working adults. They usually don't have time to visit this place during the daytime due to their working hours. Now that we have extended our visiting hours, busy adults can now enjoy a splash and experience the fun-filled rides here after a hard day's work."

When the expanded waterpark at **Quassy Amusement Park** opens for its 105th season it will have a new name. The former **Saturation Station** is being changed to **Splash Away Bay**. The four new attractions — three from **ProSlide** and one from **Vortex Aquatic Structures** will nearly double the size of the existing waterpark.

PortAventura, Salou, Spain, is investing €10 (U.S. \$13.4) million to expand its **Costa Caribe Aquatic Park** for 2013. Among the new attractions will be the highest freefall slide in Europe, a six-lane racing slide, and a pirate ship waterplay structure with four slides, and a Splash Pad play area for young children. The waterpark expansion was the result of a 2012 study that indicated foreign visitors who choose to visit PortAventura did so because there is both a waterpark and theme park.

Work on the AUS115 (U.S. \$118) million **Wet 'n' Wild** Sydney waterpark is on schedule for the planned December opening. The largest waterpark in the southern hemisphere will feature 37 slides including several world firsts. A spokesperson for developers **Village Roadshow** said the park is expected to generate AUS500 (U.S. \$517) million in economic activity for the local economy.

The children of Boise, Idaho, can have fun at a water spray park at the **Comba Neighborhood Park** thanks to an anonymous donor. \$50,100 was donated to pay for in-ground fountains, bubblers, a rotating splash blaster and interactive play features at the partially developed park. The land for the park was donated to the City of Boise in 2000 by the Comba family. In addition to the splash park, the master plan calls for community gardens, a picnic shelter, shade structures, green space, a playground and community center.

The **Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians** has proposed a \$93 million indoor waterpark, hotel and entertainment complex to help attract tourists year-round to its reservation. The tribe's current tourism offerings include a successful **Harrhah's Casino** and resort that primarily draws a 21-and-over crowd. Currently more than 80 percent of the visitors are 45 and older. The tribe feels the addition of an indoor waterpark resort would encourage more families to visit for an overnight stay. The reservation, just south of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, also offers a spa, golf course, museum and other cultural centers as well as hiking and fly fishing.

The **World Waterpark Association (WWA)** needs waterpark operators and aquatic centers to make as big a noise as possible during this year's **World's Largest Swimming Lesson (WLSL)**, Tuesday, June 18th, 2013 at 3 pm GMT (11am ET, 8 am PT). The WWA is going to need all hands on deck in order to set a new world record for the fourth year in row!

Waterparks — even those that don't normally offer swimming lessons — are great venues for this event. Just ask **Schlitterbahn** waterparks in Texas and Kansas, **Big Surf Waterpark** in Arizona and **Hyland Hills Water World** in Colorado. They've all participated in this out-of-the-box water safety event to impact water safety in their community and generate positive media coverage in their market.

To get started promoting a WLSL event parks can use the Save The Date tool kit. A customizable press release, a Save-the-Date snipe and a Save-the-Date web banner can be found at WLSL.org. Look for the blue web button that says "Promote WLSL 2013" on it.

Castaway Cove waterpark in Wichita Falls, Texas has started making changes in order to comply with stage three water restrictions brought about by a drought emergency affecting much of northwest Texas. When the park opens for the season, a number of spray features in the children's area and lazy river will be turned off to prevent water loss through evaporation. According to city reports the park uses less than 0.03 percent of the city's total water consumption. Except for what is lost through evaporation, all of the water in the park is filtered and reused. However if the city is forced into stage four water restrictions, enacted when lake levels drop below 30 percent, the waterpark could be forced to make even more changes and possibly even shut down. Castaway Cove brings in \$1.5 million in revenue and provides approximately 150 summer jobs.

►SLIDES

Continued from page 15

in the belly of the slide, riders are thrust through a corkscrew exit into a refreshing splash pool. Tsunami Surge sends couples twisting and turning down a 68-foot enclosed tunnel while they build up speed to take on a 40-foot wave slide on the other side. Guests experience zero-gravity as they surge to the top of the slide before gliding down to the landing pool. Typhoon Twister and Tsunami Surge are built by Canada's ProSlide Technology.

To celebrate the announcement of the park's two new rides, Six Flags Hurricane Harbor hosted a Polar Plunge Wedding on February 14 at 11:00 a.m. Four couples took the ceremonial "plunge" before taking the ultimate plunge into the park's wave pool. Two of the couples got married, while the other two renewed their vows. After the ceremony and polar plunge, a reception was held, complete with a first dance, cake cutting, and a bouquet and garter toss.

Polin to begin construction on Macedonia waterpark

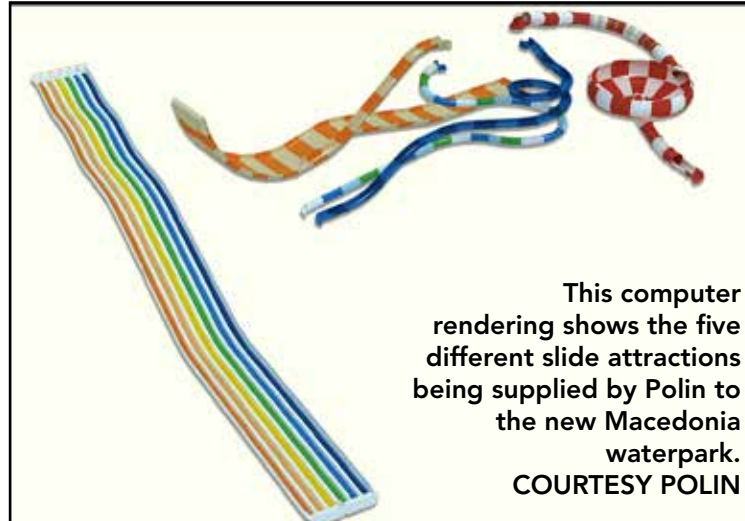
MACEDONIA — Construction has not yet started, but Polin Waterparks and Pool Systems has begun shipping materials to the site of a new government-funded waterpark in Skopje, a city in the Balkan country of Macedonia.

Skopje is the capital and largest city in Macedonia, home to about a third of the country's population.

Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski attended the groundbreaking ceremony last month. Ratko Kapusevski, director of the new aquatic venue, said the attraction complements the city's "Skopje 2014" project in which the country has been working to build on the area's historic roots. Improvements that are part of that project include the erection of new statues, fountains, bridges and museums.

"We expect this new aqua park will allow our area to provide guests with even more reasons to visit our remarkable city," he said.

Costs of the new waterpark are estimated to be €4.2 million. The venue is named



This computer rendering shows the five different slide attractions being supplied by Polin to the new Macedonia waterpark. COURTESY POLIN

after Boris Trajkovski, former president of the Republic of Macedonia from 1999 to 2004 whose presidency ended when he died in a plane crash on his way to an economic summit.

A perfect playground

Skopje offers a climate that lends itself well to the attractions of a waterpark. Summers are long, hot and humid with average temperatures of 31 degrees C (88 degrees F), though high temperatures sometimes reach 40 degrees C

(104 degrees F). Summertime precipitation is rarely an issue with most rainfall from April to June and October to December.

Construction for the waterpark is planned to begin in March, before the rainy season begins. And despite the potential for rainfall during the construction period, city officials said they expected the park to be open by the start of summer. Kapusevski said construction would take no longer than 45 days. "This waterpark will be Skopje's main

summer attraction," he said. "It will provide a direct impact on local tourism efforts and on the Karpos municipality's economy, along with providing 35 jobs."

Specifically, some of the major attractions at the new park will include:

- A waterslide with head-first mat racing.
- An extreme slide with a water-propelled uphill portion followed by steep drops that ends in a splash pool.
- A Space Boat, which combines the elements of Polin's Space Hole with its Black Hole attraction.
- A body slide that propels riders along a slide of both drops and straight-aways at different speeds.
- An Aquatube, a fast ride that can include both visual and auditory special effects.

A kids area with a rabbit slide, giraffe shower, mushroom fountain, mini octopus slide and a pirate-themed multi-level water-play structure with slides, tipping buckets, water cannons and net climbs.



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Dragon at Siam Park, Spain

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Gold Medal experiences growth, purchases new Ohio warehouse



Gold Medal Products continues to experience double-digit sales growth. To accommodate the additional business, the company recently purchased a new 42,000-square-foot building that will ultimately serve as manufacturing and storage space. COURTESY GOLD MEDAL

CINCINNATI, Ohio — World-renowned popcorn giant Gold Medal Products continues to enjoy a brisk business. For 82 years it has outgrown five locations and expanded its current building four times. It became the worldwide concession leader from its home base in Cincinnati, and has never laid off an employee. And now, as the company continues to experience double-digit sales growth, Gold Medal purchased a new building to accommodate this growth.

The new space, located across the street from the current world headquarters, is approximately 42,000-square feet and features tilt-up concrete construction. While it is currently being used for warehousing the building will ultimately serve as manufacturing and storage space.

Gold Medal continues to look toward the future and worldwide expansion by aggressively pursuing new opportunities that not only fit within existing product lines and current distribution channels, but that also expand the overall scope of their market share, including new product lines.

• www.gmpopcorn.com

Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex's debuts new entry plaza

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER, Fla. — The new entry experience, retail shop, and restaurant at NASA's Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex were all recently unveiled. The \$16 million project is the first phase of a 10-year master plan developed by PGAV Destinations, which precedes the opening of the new \$100 million home for the space shuttle Atlantis later this year.

The new entrance incorporates a grand entry plaza, a 75-foot-long, 5,000-gallon fountain, and a completely re-designed ticket station, increasing guest flow with will-call and guest services stations. New offerings like the Voyagers retail shop provide rich new opportunities for visitors before they've even set foot inside the Kennedy Space Center. The retro-themed Rocket Garden Cafe restaurant offers an all-new menu and a view of the historic rockets.

"The entry experience at

any destination is one of the most important moments you have with your guests," said PGAV Destinations Principal Mike Konzen. "You only have one chance to make a crucial first impression that sets the tone for their entire day."

Working in tandem with Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex operators Delaware North Companies Parks & Resorts, PGAV Destinations' design incorporates numerous thrilling elements into the entry experience. The strongest of which is the complete redirection of foot-traffic entering and exiting Kennedy Space Center: guests are now directed through the Rocket Garden, dwarfed by the towering powerhouses of Titan, Redstone, Atlas, and Saturn 1B rockets that propelled capsules into space. Combined with these brand-new intriguing elements is the theme of Explore, interwoven throughout the design imagery of the entry experience — melding with Kennedy Space Center



The Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex's has debuted this new 75-foot-long, 5,000-gallon entry plaza. COURTESY KENNEDY SPACE CENTER

Visitor Complex's over-arching brand.

Among many elements is a fountain show themed to a space shuttle launch, an 18-foot glass model of Mars, a pathway constructed of the same Tennessee river rock which the "crawler" moves along to carry rockets from the Vehicle Assembly Building to the launch pad, and an entire

themed layout that evokes the lift-off of space shuttles.

The Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex's Chief Operating Officer Bill Moore said, "We are eager to reveal to our guests the first stage in an array enhancements that create for them a more meaningful, purposeful and enjoyable experience at Kennedy Space Center Visitor

Complex," said Moore. "The changes to our entrance and ticket plaza, along with our new Voyagers retail shop and Rocket Garden Café, are just the initial elements in a comprehensive plan. Next we unveil the new home for space shuttle Atlantis, which is already well under way for a scheduled opening in July 2013."

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Attendees flock to annual seminars, conferences

AIMS Safety Seminar hits 300 mark with attendance

STORY: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO, Fla. — Last fall organizers of the annual AIMS International Safety Seminar were optimistic attendance would reach 300 and, according to Kelly Bernish, AIMS business consultant, that is just what happened when they met at the Doubletree by Hilton at SeaWorld Jan. 13-18.

AIMS Safety Seminar is a comprehensive safety-training experience for individuals responsible for the care and safety of the amusement industry's guests. The seminar offers a diverse curriculum.

And, this year, there were 50 brand new courses. At the end of January, Bernish didn't have the results of the surveys given to participants, but she felt the new courses were very well received.

"Overall surveys were very positive and, generally speaking, many people said this was the best seminar yet," she said.

The new courses replaced some of the older ones that have been offered for a while.

There were a total of 30 hours of coursework.

Participants of the AIMS seminar build a tailored course curriculum that best suits their needs and the needs of their employers. Safety information is carried home and shared with colleagues and co-workers back on the job.

The seminar has both sit-down and hands-on classes. This participation is a requisite for all professionals in the amusement industry.



Above, Steve Laycock of Chance Rides teaches one of the many courses offered during the 2013 AIMS Safety Seminar. At right, the silent auction had plenty of merchandise for students to bid on.
AT/MARLON SCOTT



It includes: Certified Maintenance Technician - Level I; Certified Maintenance Technician - Level II; Certified Operations Technician - Level I; Certified Operations Technician - Level II; Certified Aquatics Operations Technician - Level I; Associate Ride Inspector - Level I; Certified Ride Inspector - Level II; and Professional Ride Inspector - Level III.

The Inspector Certification, the Maintenance Cer-

tification and the Aquatics Operations Certification programs are all designed to test the knowledge of individuals working in the specific field within the amusement industry.

All have three levels of certification except for the Aquatics, which has only one.

The 2014 AIMS Safety Seminar is scheduled for January 12-17, 2014, at the Doubletree by Hilton at SeaWorld in Orlando.

operators. Topics include current and future trends, attraction and revenue performance, food and beverage, group sales, social media, parties, management and human resources, the future of the industry, and more.

"The response to FEC Phoenix has been amazing and underscores there is a need for this type of education and networking conference," said Gregg Borman, senior vice president of operations, FEC Division at Palace Entertainment and chair of the IAAPA FEC Committee. "We've put together a unique education program and the opportunities for networking, sharing ideas, and making new connections are unparalleled. It should be a great experience."

Thirty-eight supporting companies sponsored FEC Phoenix.



During NAARSO's 2013 Safety Forum at Dollywood, Pigeon Forge, Tenn., the host park created 12 different ride scenarios and inspection stations to provide hands-on learning experiences for each participant at different ride types. Shown here is training on the Dizzy Disk, a Zamperla Disk'O.
COURTESY DOLLYWOOD

26th annual NAARSO seminar deemed another success story

PIGEON FORGE, Tenn. — The 2013 NAARSO Annual Safety Seminar drew 250 park and ride operators, maintenance personnel and safety inspectors from around the world here from Jan. 26-Feb. 2 to learn and share stories in a hands-on environment at Dollywood.

The six-day conference provided classroom instruction and practical inspection classes at the host park. This year NAARSO introduced a brand new track for training and certification. Exclusively for operators of amusement attractions, Laura Woodburn, NAARSO public relations and director of operations of Hersheypark, Hershey, Pa., said the new track seemed to be very well received.

"It was very well attended," said Woodburn, who presented the new seminar. "We had 70 people out of the 250 at the seminar to participate."

Woodburn said participants for this debut were primarily those in charge of training and creating safety programs for their facility's attractions operators. It was a 16-hour seminar that included topics such as ride training, passenging, ASTM, documentation, inspection of the attraction, how to identify problematic riders, weather related safety and how to train employees.

NAARSO has an outreach arm that takes the association's seminars on the road, but Woodburn said they weren't sure when this new track would hit the road.

"It won't be this year," she said. "We want to get feedback from the participants and understand what we can do to make it work for those that need it," she said.

Woodburn said Dollywood was a great host park. Park officials created 12 different ride scenarios and inspection stations to provide hands-on learning experiences for each participant at different ride types. Certification testing is done at the end of the week.

"We're proud to have NAARSO at Dollywood and in Pigeon Forge this week," Robbie Fox, Dollywood vice president of safety said. "We are a firm believer in what NAARSO does. We send our key personnel to the school each year for certification and when the school is at Dollywood, it helps us be even safer."

All instructors for NAARSO are volunteers who are committed to the organization's mission, which is safety through communication. As the industry leaders in safety certification, NAARSO works to make park and midway rides safer for families through a comprehensive training program with communication at its core.

"I've been coming to NAARSO for more than 20 years and as far as I'm concerned, it's the best place to learn new things not only from the instructors but from the participants," said Dan Dudley, a veteran Texas ride inspector. "No one has all the answers, but schools like NAARSO and parks like Dollywood help make rides safer for kids."

IAAPA's FEC Phoenix conference sells out

PHOENIX, Ariz. — A sellout crowd of more than 150 family entertainment center (FEC)-industry leaders has registered for FEC Phoenix, the new FEC operators' conference produced by the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA). The two-day education, networking, and business-building event was taking place at the Millennium Scottsdale Resort and Villas, near Phoenix, Arizona, Feb. 26-28, just as *AT* was going to press.

FEC owners, operators, and professionals were meeting face-to-face to discuss the latest trends, build a network of business colleagues, gain insight from others, and share best practices all with a keen focus on improving sales and the bottom line. Attendees participated in fast-paced meetings, information-filled presentations, and conversations with successful FEC



NEWS & NOTES

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AIMS and the sharing of life's tales

Mike Gutknecht

Ride Entertainment Group
of Companies and
AIMS president
mike@rideentertainment.com

I have a book at home called "Never Quit". This book is a compilation of quotes by famous and not so famous people. The back cover describes it as "Thoughts to inspire the will to win." I like books like this. A lot of times I get caught up in day-to-day business, and I find that words of wisdom lift me up and help me look at the big picture instead of the sometimes monotonous details.

I think one of the best quotes in this book is by Betty Bender in which she said, "Anything I've ever done that ultimately was worthwhile initially scared me to death." Over the last two years I've gone through every emotion you can imagine as President



Gutknecht

of AIMS International. Fear was the biggest challenge I faced when I found myself in this position. Yes, I was scared, and quite frankly I questioned the judgment of **Brian King** and **Mark Moore** when they asked me to be a member of the AIMS Executive Committee. However, I worked through it. I knew that this position was going to challenge me, but I also knew that it was a great opportunity. Now that it's the end of my term, taking on this responsibility has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career.

Gary Slade, publisher of *Amusement Today* and a long time AIMS board member, has been gracious enough to allow me to express my thoughts and share portions of my life with the amusement industry through the AIMS News & Notes page. Writing these articles has allowed me to share stories about my bicycling adventures, thoughts about my father, as well as commentary about my previous job experience as a blackjack dealer in Las Vegas. Gary even printed the article where I went off on a tangent about acronyms. In each, I've tried to draw correlations between what was going on in my life and how it relates to AIMS. It's

made me realize that there really is a common thread between our personal lives and our lives at work: how we live our personal lives has an impact on how we perform in our chosen careers. I truly believe that if you live a kind life, are generous and supportive of others and give 110 percent in everything you do, you'll be amazed about how much you can achieve.

One last thought that I love from "Never Quit" is a quote by Jim Henson, the creator of the Muppets. Jim said, "My hope still is to leave the world a bit better than when I got here." This is how I look at the position AIMS International has in the amusement industry. Each year industry icons come together at the AIMS Safety Seminar to impart their knowledge on everything from detailed maintenance issues to operational procedures, and each year, the AIMS Safety Seminars leaves our industry a bit better than it was the year before. I am proud to have been able to serve as president of AIMS International, and I thank each of you for allowing me to share a portion of my life with you.

2013 AIMS Safety Seminar a success; awards presented

Kelly Bernish

AIMS business consultant
kellyb@aimsintl.org

ORLANDO, Fla. — January 13 marked the kick off of the Amusement Industry Manufacturers and Suppliers (AIMS) 40th Safety Seminar, this year held at the Doubletree at SeaWorld in Orlando. With more than 300 attendees from around the globe, this year was one of the best attended in recent years. Sponsors of this year's event include **Kumbak, The Amusement Engineers** and 18 other industry leaders.



Bernish

Being my first year as an official AIMS staffer, it gave me a great perspective for how much work goes into this event to make it so seamless, the backbone of which is AIMS administrative professional **Holly Coston** and her team of volunteers including **Ed Zakar** of Six Flags Great Adventure, **J.R. Lane** and **Maegan Wallace** of Maclan Corp., **Joanne Marchesani** of Rye Playland, **C. W. Craven** of Skyride Enterprise Inc.,

Ric Achard and **Barry Schiable** of Coulter & Associates, **Jan** and **Brian King** of Recreation Engineering and of course the AIMS ambassadors. Nearly 150 attendees sat for their certification testing thanks to the hard work and organization of AIMS Certification Administrator, Jan King. Volunteerism is certainly the hallmark of the AIMS Safety Seminar and I wish we could individually thank each person for their contributions.

"The overwhelming success of this year's event is due, in no small part, to the dedication of this industry's best minds and of course the generous support of our sponsors and the SeaWorld Orlando who made hands-on training for our students possible," said Mike Gutknecht, of Ride Entertainment Group and AIMS president.

"I could not be more pleased with the AIMS Safety Seminar this year. The quality of instruction and classes as well as students was unsurpassed. The whole event was fantastic and things could not have gone more smoothly!" said AIMS Education Director, Patty Beazley from industry consulting group, When Pigs Fly.

AIMS International, the leading provider of education for the amusement industry, this year offered over 300 instruc-



Rick Beddow, center, vice president of operations, SeaWorld Orlando receives the Outstanding Partner Award from **Kelly Bernish** and AIMS President **Mike Gutknecht** of Ride Entertainment Group.

AT/MARLON SCOTT

tional hours including 56 new classes and more than 100 industry experienced instructors thanks to the great work of Patty and her entire Education Committee.

During this year's seminar **SeaWorld Orlando** was awarded the **AIMS Outstanding Partner Award** for their support of the AIMS Safety Seminar, providing instructors, students, silent auction items and multiple venues for hands-on instruction.

Also recognized this year was **Best Student Russ Reynolds** of Busch Gardens Tampa Bay and **Craig Fox** of Fox Systems for **Best Instructor**. **Uremet Corporation**, manufacturer of urethane and nylon

wheels for amusement rides was recognized as **AIMS Outstanding Manufacturer & Supplier**. These awards are given based upon feedback from their attendee industry peers.

Len Morrissey was honored as the **AIMS Significant Contributor**. Morrissey is a Standards Development Director for ASTM International and has worked tirelessly as the liaison for the standards effort for the amusement industry.

A posthumous **Founders Award** was given to **Dr. Richard Brown** for excellence in Biodynamic Testing and Technical Safety Development in the amusement park industry. "Doc" represented the epitome

of what is meant to give back to the industry. As a reliable volunteer to the AIMS Safety Seminar, he not only would typically teach as many hours as anyone else but after classes ended you could count on finding him in the host hotel lobby/bar sharing his wide array of industry knowledge with the students. Often Doc was there to the late hours as attendees lined up to gain his insight into biodynamics. He never walked away from a learning opportunity," warmly recalls Jim Seay, AIMS board member and president of Premier Rides.

This year we began including vendor displays which we will continue to expand in the coming years. Our students appreciated the opportunity to interact with our industry manufacturers and suppliers. A special thank you to **Roger Berry** of the Ralph Alberts Company and **Jim Seay** of Premier Rides for their support of this effort.

I was honored to teach again this year, leading a best practices class in Accident Investigation. I had a great class and thanks to the **James E Strates Shows**, we were able to simulate a situation so that all of my students could participate in the process.

CONTINUING COVERAGE | SUPERSTORM SANDY

Volunteers contribute to recovery in northern N.J.

Storm-lashed Keansburg Amusement Park to return this month



Signs of major progress abound in the cleanup and repair of Keansburg Amusement Park, including rebuilt kiddie ride platforms and a new entrance ramp and pond installation for the swinging pirate ship ride, Pharaoh's Fury. The latter ride, plus the park's carousel and Chaos ride, were inspected and deemed structurally sound by their manufacturer, Chance. COURTESY KEANSBURG AMUSEMENT PARK



STORY: Dean Lamanna
Special to Amusement Today

KEANSBURG, N.J. — Superstorm Sandy swept through this borough's bay-side playground, Keansburg Amusement Park and Runaway Rapids Family Waterpark, with the force of a giant battering ram — leaving pieces of it scattered for many blocks around. But the relentless pounding dealt the property by the record-breaking hurricane wasn't enough to obliterate a 108-year history of fun.

Despite damages totaling as much as \$4 million (not including losses suffered by tenants and vendors), Keansburg, according to brothers and third-generation proprietors William and Henry Gehlhaus, is coming back. And that's great news for its approximately 300,000 annual visitors.

At least half of the property will be ready for Keansburg's opening on Palm Sunday, March 24, with the rest becoming fully operational by Memorial Day. Although much of the amusement park was wrecked by six-foot-deep floodwaters that surged in from Raritan Bay on October 29, the Gehlhauses have moved quickly to assess and repair the damage.

"Every ride and building was in the flood's path," said Hank Gehlhaus, president of the two parks' umbrella company, Jersey Shore and



Boardwalk Co., noting that 39 of Keansburg's 41 rides were impacted in some way. "Most of the damage was electrical in nature, but the water and sand also destroyed the floors of our bumper car building and the Spook House, which goes back to the 1930s." Both rides needed heavy repairs.

Company chairman Bill Gehlhaus added that moving untold tons of sand and debris, and getting the park's infrastructure back into shape, were immediate priorities. "We had a lot of ramps and walkways that were completely ruined, so we've been rebuilding them," he said. "We took out all our ride motors for inspection. New parts for various control panels have been purchased, too."

Keansburg's recovery has come a long way since the days following the storm, when the Gehlhauses faced the difficult and depressing task of rounding up ride vehicles, coin-op arcade games and other equipment the tidal surge had carried as far as half a mile inland.

"We had three search parties out with pickup trucks and trailers getting all of our belongings," Hank said. "To date, we have recovered

about 97 or 98 percent of those things. A couple ride vehicles were stolen along the way, but most everything can be replaced."

Hank admits to being "shocked" by the devastation and looting he observed at the park the afternoon after the storm had passed.

"When I first arrived, there was still water in the streets," he said. "People were in rowboats, smashing open the arcade games looking for money. After half an hour of surveying the situation, I had to leave — I couldn't take it. The next day, I rounded up all my forces and we went to work."

In addition to scrutinizing motors and controls, the Gehlhauses have removed huge drifts of sand and power-washed and repainted almost every surface. The waterpark emerged in good structural shape for the most part, with some electrical components needing replacement.

Utterly irreplaceable are the display cases that contained all types of small park memorabilia, including photos and other decades-old items; they were washed out of Keansburg's historic carousel building and are presumed lost. The building itself, which dates to an 1899 exposition in Philadelphia, remains structurally sound; the 1996 Chance carousel it houses has been refurbished after a severe beating from the surge.

The Gehlhauses have been working with a crew of carpenters and a structural engineer to ensure that new construction is up to code, and in early February, they inked a deal with Bob's Space Racers to refresh and handle all of Keansburg's game operations. A number of the property's service buildings, ramps and walkways are being reinforced, and some structures are being rebuilt on higher pilings for any future inundation.

► See KEANSBURG, page 27

Morey's Piers donates to N.J. storm charities

WILDWOOD, N.J. — To thank local charities for their dedication to the community and their involvement with Superstorm Sandy relief efforts, Morey's Piers has donated a total of \$15,000 to the Cape Atlantic Red Cross and the Lunch with Lynch Foundation. Each group received \$7,500 in January.

Cape Atlantic Red Cross and the Lunch with Lynch Foundation were the lead organizations supporting Morey's Piers in working with the Federal Emergency Man-

agement Agency (FEMA) to provide shelter at Morey's Resort's Blue Palms Resort in Wildwood for families displaced by Hurricane Sandy.

In a joint statement, brothers Will and Jack Morey, second-generation proprietors of Morey's Piers, said: "Local relief agencies, their volunteers and the city's governing officials all seamlessly united together to help numerous victims of Sandy. We're humbled by the generosity of our community and honored to be able to sup-



Celebrating Morey's Piers' donations to Superstorm Sandy relief efforts in January were (left to right) Will Morey, Vicki and John Lynch of the Lunch with Lynch Foundation, Yvette Soto and Carol Cohen of the American Red Cross — Southern Shore, Jack Morey and Gordon Clark of Morey's Resorts.

COURTESY MOREY'S PIERS

port local charities who are out there every day working to improve the shore towns."

—Dean Lamanna

CONTINUING COVERAGE | SUPERSTORM SANDY



Volunteers from American Coaster Enthusiasts (ACE) and the nonprofit Jersey Cares helped remove sand deposited five feet deep around Keansburg's Wild Cat and Sea Serpent coasters. ACE members from as far as the Shenandoah Valley, some 200 miles away on the Virginia-West Virginia border, joined the early-January effort.

COURTESY KEANSBURG AMUSEMENT PARK

► KEANSBURG

Continued from page 26

Keansburg's 2,500-foot fishing pier, which was stripped to its pilings by Sandy's violent surf, will be rebuilt to sturdier, more storm-resistant standards and should be at least partly open later this year.

"We're taking this opportunity to accelerate our original 10-year plan of improvements," Bill said. "The two parks will be better than ever when they reopen."

Meanwhile, the Gehlhauses are counting on the State of New Jersey and the Army Corps of Engineers, as well as the Hurricane Sandy supplemental emergency funding bill signed by President Obama in late January, to develop better protection for the adjacent shoreline.

"We'd obviously like a

bigger, stronger berm," Bill said, pointing out that Sandy bulldozed the previous dune, which was more than 20 feet high. He learned how to operate a Bobcat front-end loader to help remove the large volumes of sand spread across the property.

While acknowledging that several major storms, including Hurricane Donna in 1960, slammed Keansburg during the 20th century, Hank harbored worries about the extratropical weather pattern that appears to have targeted the Northeast in recent years.

"We're used to having hurricanes go up the coast," he said. "Very rarely, though, have we seen them actually come inland — especially like this one. Most of us took precautionary steps before Sandy arrived, but I don't think anyone was really prepared for what we got. It certainly wor-



The park's umbrella motorcycle ride and popular shish kebab stand were left in storm-tossed piles by the hurricane's six-foot tidal surge. Parts from the kiddie ride have been salvaged, and the food stand has been rebuilt.

COURTESY KEANSBURG AMUSEMENT PARK

Keansburg goes Hollywood

KEANSBURG, N.J. — While Keansburg Amusement Park prepares to unveil its newly spiffed up and rebuilt self later this month, its beloved incarnation of old remains preserved forever in movies and television shows. The traditional, intimately scaled environs of the fun spot have long appealed to Hollywood, making it a favorite filming location.

Among the productions that have rolled cameras in the park are the acclaimed 1996 feature *Big Night*, the 2011 James Gandolfini drama *Down the Shore* and a 2008 episode of the reality TV series *Jonas Brothers: Living the Dream*. Keansburg's latest screen credit, *Girl Most Likely*, a feature comedy with *Bridesmaids* star Kristen Wiig, filmed at the park during the summer of 2011 and is set for national release July 19.

Wiig plays Imogene, a once-promising New York playwright who suffers a crisis of confidence and a broken relationship, which lands her back in the gambling-addicted graces of her mother (Annette Bening) and her mom's new



Kristen Wiig and Annette Bening star in *Girl Most Likely*, a feature comedy filmed partly at Keansburg Amusement Park and set for national release July 19.

COURTESY NICOLE RIVELLI, LIONSGATE/ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS

boyfriend (Matt Dillon) at the Jersey shore. There, a crew of kooky characters provides a distinct contrast to Imogene's more glamorous Manhattan existence.

The filmmakers spent a full day shooting at locations throughout the amusement property, including a lemonade stand, a crab stand, a tattoo parlor and a house

adjacent to the waterpark. "We mostly coordinated their needs," said Katharine Koehler, Keansburg's manager of marketing and advertising. "They told us Kristen did not like to be approached, so we left her alone."

No matter. For park enthusiasts, Keansburg will be the real star of the show.

—Dean Lamanna

ries me going forward because we can't afford to take many more of these hits."

Although coping with their park's condition has been alternately heartbreak-

ing and hard, the Gehlhaus brothers feel fortunate that their families and homes farther inland pulled through Sandy unharmed. And they are grateful for the volunteer assistance Keansburg Amusement Park has received from its namesake community — a small, blue-collar borough for which the park serves as a top economic driver and employer. The New Jersey Amusement Association, Bank of America, the non-profit organization Jersey Cares and the Garden State chapter of American Coaster Enthusiasts are among the entities that have contributed to the recovery.

A surprise hand also has been lent all the way from Canada. Montreal-based independent filmmaker Ina Fichman, through her production company Intuitive Pictures, has offered to fund the repair and restoration of the park's

iconic, circa-1920s beer-and-grilled hot dog restaurant, the Old Heidelberg Inn, for a documentary.

"It's like a gift from God," Hank said. "After seeing pictures of the flooding here, the filmmaker called with great concern and asked, 'What can we do to help?'" We had other projects to focus on, so I said, "We don't have anybody to make this restaurant fly." She just felt it would be a great project for her crew to undertake." Work and filming at the eatery were to begin in February.

"A disaster can bring out the worst in people, as we saw with the breaking open of the arcade games, but it also brings out the best," Bill said.

Hank echoed his brother's sentiment. "Every bad thing we've been through has been tempered by the good deeds of others."



NEW JERSEY AMUSEMENT ASSOCIATION

SUPERSTORM SANDY

Restore, Rebuild and Reopen

Show Your Love for the Jersey Shore

Acting Governor Kim Guadagno unveils initiative to encourage Jersey Shore tourism

Public-private partnership to promote shore area dining, accommodations, cultural and entertainment venues

TRENTON, N.J. — Acting New Jersey Governor Kim Guadagno kicked off on Feb. 11 “Show Your Love for the Jersey Shore,” a public-private initiative designed to encourage the public to visit and support restaurants, hotels, local businesses and entertainment venues along the Jersey Shore for Valentine’s Day and beyond.

“Tourism is a critical economic engine for New Jersey, particularly along our shore. It is an industry that contributes significantly to the health of our communities by creating jobs and bringing revenue into our shore towns,” said Acting Governor Guadagno. “I encourage residents and visitors to ‘Show Your Love for the Jersey Shore’ by supporting local shore area businesses through Valentine’s Day and the months ahead. Through this initiative, we will continue to demonstrate support for local businesses recovering from Sandy and show that the Jersey Shore is still a great place to have fun and create memories.”

The New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism and the state’s shore tourism partners will use their social media network, consisting of Facebook and Twitter, to distribute news and information about special promotions offered by shore area attractions. New Jersey destination marketing organizations (DMOs) will also post this information, along with the “Show Your Love for the Jersey Shore” logo, on their websites.

“Superstorm Sandy has caused damage and destruction like we have never witnessed here in New Jersey,” said U.S. Small Business Administration’s New Jersey District Director Al Titone. “This initiative is a reminder to all of us that small business owners along the Jersey Shore are resilient, are open for business, and need our support. This is a great opportunity to get behind local merchants who are looking to get back on track.”

“The New Jersey Destination Marketing Organizations support positive initiatives that promote the state to its visitors. The ‘Show Your Love’ initiative allows the business community along the shore area to shine. By partnering with federal and state agencies, I am hopeful the word will continue to spread quickly that the shore we all love is ready

and waiting for visitors,” said Lori Peppenella, state-wide chair of NJDMOs and destination marketing director of the Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce.

Before Superstorm Sandy, New Jersey’s tourism industry had been on the rebound with tourists spending \$38 billion on their visits to the Garden State in 2011. The new visitor expenditures were just shy of the all-time high of \$39.5 billion reached in 2007 and are a 7 percent increase over 2010 figures.

In 2011, domestic visits to New Jersey jumped 14.6 percent, representing an increase in domestic trip volume from roughly 68 million visitors in 2010 to 80 million visitors in 2011. Out-of-state visitors, which drive New Jersey tourism revenue, accounted for 64 percent of all tourism revenue, followed by resident/in-state (25 percent), and international visitors (9 percent).

Equally important, tourism-related employment began to recover in 2011, directly supporting 312,000 jobs and \$9.56 billion in wages and salaries last year. When combined with indirect and induced jobs, the total climbs to 486,000, or nearly 10 percent of all New Jersey jobs.

Wildwood, New Jersey officials announce no beach fees in 2013

Shared Services established as an alternative solution

WILDWOOD, N.J. — The board of commissioners of the City of Wildwood pulled the beach fee referendum and announced on Feb. 14 at the Wildwood Commissioners meeting that they will enter into serious discussions on the implementation of Shared Services with the municipalities of Wildwood Crest and North Wildwood as an alternative solution to beach fees.

The Shared Services solution is a collective effort by the island’s three municipalities, Wildwood, North Wildwood and Wildwood Crest, and is with the support of the Greater Wildwoods Tourism Improve-

ment and Development Authority (GWTIDA).

“There are always a number of possible approaches when it comes to addressing budget issues. Shared Services is a viable and financial solution that could work for everyone,” said Commissioner Byron. With the Shared Services solution, the three municipalities would pool their efforts and assets and share various services, including, but not limited to, beach maintenance, lifeguarding, fire and police.

“We are excited and thrilled to be collaborating with the other municipalities on this solution. We are all working together for

common goals,” said Mayor Troiano. “These goals include the preservation of tourism — the life blood of the island — and unifying and strengthening our municipalities’ budget issues and shortages,” he added.

The three communities have agreed to form a Shared Service Committee, to include members or officials from each municipality and GWTIDA to work out and oversee the details on a Shared Services Plan for maximum benefit to all.

“We strongly believe that this Shared Services solution is a win-win for everyone involved,” added Commissioner Leonetti.

•www.WildwoodsNJ.com



City officials in the municipalities of Wildwood, North Wildwood and Wildwood Crest have dropped beach fees for the 2013 tourism season as a way to help lure tourists back to the popular Jersey Shore. Last year a study by the NJAA determined that Jersey Shore tourism is the foundation of the state’s \$38 billion leisure and hospitality industry, with 312,000 people employed by Jersey Shore tourism.

AT FILE PHOTO

MARKETWATCH

RIDING THE MARKET



Company	Prices	Prices	52 Weeks	
	One Month Ago	02/14/13	High	Low
Cedar Fair L.P.	\$36.65	\$38.00	\$39.55	\$25.00
MGM Mirage	\$12.96	\$13.29	\$14.94	\$8.83
Six Flags Ent. Corp.	\$62.16	\$65.00	\$65.50	\$43.13
CBS Corp.	\$40.95	\$42.94	\$43.47	\$28.88
Walt Disney Co.	\$52.41	\$54.88	\$55.50	\$40.87
Apollo Global Mgt. LLC	\$20.05	\$22.27	\$23.95	\$10.42
Blackstone Group	\$17.15	\$18.58	\$19.25	\$11.12
Village Roadshow	\$4.22	\$4.54	\$4.70	\$2.85
NBC Universal	\$21.30	\$23.41	\$23.48	\$18.02

CURRENCY DIESEL PRICES



Region (U.S.)	As of 02/14/13	Change from year ago
East Coast	\$4.002	\$0.059
Midwest	\$3.834	\$0.088
Gulf Coast	\$3.824	\$0.047
Mountain	\$3.661	-\$0.162
West Coast	\$3.900	-\$0.045
California	\$4.063	-\$0.053

TOP 7 MOST TRADED CURRENCIES



On 02/14/13 \$1 USD =

0.7430 EURO
0.6402 GBP (British Pound)
88.34 JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9173 CHF (Swiss Franc)
0.9671 AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.00229 CAD (Canadian Dollar)

PEOPLE WATCH

Withers named vice chairman of ASTM

Michael R. Withers, vice president of ride engineering for Walt Disney Imagineering in Glendale, Calif., has been elected to serve a two-year term as vice chairman of the ASTM International board of directors.

At Walt Disney Imagineering, Withers has responsibility for amusement ride design and engineering. In addition, he is currently serving as project manager for the Walt Disney Imagineering Global Design for Safety Initiative within the Walt Disney Theme Parks and Resorts Segment.

An ASTM International member since 2000, Withers is vice chairman of Subcommittee F24.24 on Design and Manufacture, a part of Committee F24 on Amusement Rides and Devices. He is an active member of several F24 subcommittees, and he represents ASTM on the European Technical Committee CEN/TC 152, which is responsible for EN 13814, Fairground and Amusement Park Machinery and Structures – Safety, the European standard on amusement park safety.

KeyLime Cove employee receives award

Anthony "T.J." Pollack, the director of aquatics at KeyLime Cove, Gurnee, Ill., has been distinguished as the Department-Division Head Employee of the Year by the Illinois Hotel & Lodging Association's (IHLA) state "Stars of the Industry" awards.

Pollack was honored during the statewide competition at the 24th Annual IHLA Membership Meeting and State Stars of the Industry Luncheon held in Chicago. Nearly 800 nominations were submitted.

"This past October T.J. was named a regional winner, and I was thrilled to see him recognized at the state level last month," said Dale McFarland, general manager of KeyLime Cove. "This is the only program in the state that recognizes employees in the hospitality industry. We are truly fortunate to have someone of T.J.'s caliber overseeing our aquatics team and indoor waterpark."

Walt Disney Parks announces promotions

Chairman of Walt Disney Parks and Resorts **Tom Staggs** has announced key leadership changes across

one of the world's leading providers of family travel and leisure experiences to better position the organization for growth.

Effective Feb. 1, **Meg Crofton** will fully assume her global role as president, Walt Disney Parks and Resorts Operations, U.S. and France — a position she has held since July 2011 — while concurrently serving as president of Walt Disney World. With Crofton's transition complete, **George A. Kalogridis** is named president of the Walt Disney World Resort, and **Michael Colglazier** is named president of the Disneyland Resort. Both Kalogridis' and Colglazier's roles also are effective Feb. 1.

"With all that we currently have in flight across our resort destinations in the U.S. and France, the time is right to move forward with this leadership transition," said Staggs. "This group of Disney veterans has the knowledge and expertise needed to continue delivering on our legacy of creating unforgettable experiences that our guests have come to know and expect."

Schlitterbahn announces new hire, move

Winter Prosapio has been named director of Corporate Communications and Government Relations for Schlitterbahn Waterparks. Most recently the senior vice president of Communications with the Texas Credit Union League, Prosapio was part of the opening team for Fiesta Texas, where she worked in public relations. She brings over 25 years of experience to her new role including expertise in media relations, crisis communications, political affairs, and strategic communications.

Tara Henry has been named manager of Social Media Communications for Schlitterbahn Waterparks.

Tara has worked in operations at Schlitterbahn for four years, and has a wide range of experience. Tara will be managing the company's social media presence and assisting with ongoing communications initiatives.

GWL Grapevine Resort adds to team

Great Wolf Resorts, Inc., has announced **Andrew Pena** as director of sales and catering of Great Wolf Lodge at the company's resort in Grapevine, Texas.

Pena is responsible for leading the Group Sales division of the resort and its full service team of sales and

catering professionals. He will focus on building presence and awareness of the resort's groups and meetings capabilities within the region.

With 23 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Pena is a leader in the Dallas-Fort Worth area in hotel sales and tourism, earning his CTA in 2012. Most recently, Pena served as an area sales leader with Marriott International where he provided strategic sales direction for 14 hotels and over 300 local accounts.

Wet 'n' Wild Las Vegas announces sales team

Wet 'n' Wild Las Vegas has hired **Derek Eige** and **Nick Murray** as sales executives. The pair's deep Southern Nevada roots and marketing and sales savvy are proving invaluable in managing the group sales and sponsorship effort for the 41-acre, \$50 million waterpark opening Memorial Day weekend.

Eige was vice president of sales for the Las Vegas Locos of the United Football League. He began working in Las Vegas in 1997 as an account executive for both the then-Las Vegas Stars minor league baseball team and Las Vegas Thunder hockey team.

In addition to this sales position, Murray is a director at Wet 'n' Wild Las Vegas investor SPB Capital Partners, a Las Vegas-based private equity firm, where he plies his skill in financial analysis and strategy, investor relations and government relations, and corporate adherence.

Tim Timco joins S&S team

S&S/Sansei Technology, Inc. announced that **Tim Timco** has joined their team as the director of business development. Tim has over 30 years experience in the amusement industry, with 14 of those years in an executive management position. Most recently he has been providing business development management services to a number of manufacturers within the industry as an independent contractor, this after serving 28 years as a senior executive in the admissions and ticketing business.

Timco has also been heavily involved with IAAPA, recently serving on its board of directors, as well as the chair of the Manufacturers and Suppliers Committee.

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June Hardin, Wapello Fabrication founder, dies at 76

WAPELLO, Iowa — June Marie Hardin, 76, of Wapello, Iowa died January 19, 2013, at the University of Iowa Hospitals & Clinics. The daughter of Ralph "Bill" and Ethel Marie Hessler Wilson, she was born on December 4, 1936, in Iowa City. She married Don Hardin on July 29, 1955, in Wapello.

June attended school in



A tribute to June Hardin was on display in the Wapello booth during the 2013 IISF Gibtown show. AT/GARY SLADE

Morning Sun and graduated from Wapello High School in 1954. She attended Gehl Institute in Minneapolis where she studied airline communications. She worked at the Farm Bureau Insurance in Wapello and then spent several years raising her four boys. She then worked for nine years at IRC in Burlington before working as a receptionist and secretary for Scott & Company in Wapello. In 1973, she purchased that business which became Wapello Fabrications. Through these last 40 years they were at the beginning edge of the pillow entertainment construction and remain as one of the last two that continue in the U.S.

June was an active member of the United Methodist Church in Wapello having served on several committees and boards along with the UMW and the church choir. She was a member of



June Hardin was active with AIMS Intl, having served many years on its board of directors

the Kiwanis Club, Wapello Development Corporation and Wapello Community Health. She helped develop the Hardin Fun Times kiddy rides etc., and she served on the board of directors for the Amusement Industry Manufacturer's and Suppliers International (AIMS) and the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) along with being a member of various other amusement organiza-

tions. She was a wonderful homemaker and enjoyed her flower and vegetable gardens.

"AIMS has lost one of it's most dedicated and beloved volunteers. June Hardin, known to all simply as Miss June, was a former board member of AIMS, and an education and planning committee volunteer for many years. Her unstoppable sense of volunteerism to AIMS will be fondly remembered as part of the AIMS legacy," said Mike Gutknecht, AIMS president, "and I know I speak for all of our members as we send our deepest sympathy to her loved ones." "Simply put, she was loved by all," added AIMS Education Director, Patty Beazley who worked with her for many years at the annual AIMS Safety Seminar. As a pioneer in the inflatable industry, her keen sense of humor and dedication to

the amusement industry will be sorely missed.

Her family includes her husband, Don; four sons, Randy & Kris Hardin of Iowa City, Kevin & Patty Hardin of Wapello, Gordon & Lisa Hardin of Wapello and Don & Annette Hardin of Wapello; 10 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; a sister, Joyce & Michael Jackson of Davenport; and her stepfather, Arturo Padilla of Wapello. She was preceded in death by her parents and an infant sister, Julie.

The funeral ceremony for June Hardin was held at 10:30 a.m. on January 23, 2013, at the United Methodist Church in Wapello, with Rev. Pam Kranzler officiating. Burial was at the Edwards Cemetery in Oakville followed by a fellowship lunch at the United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall in Wapello.

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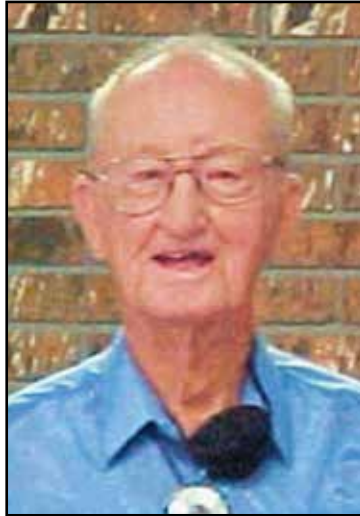
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Cliff Hammond, Uncle Cliff's Amusement Park, dies at 97

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — 'Uncle' Cliff Hammond, founder of New Mexico's Cliff's Amusement Park, passed away from natural causes on January 29, 2013. He was 97.

Born Carlis Clifford Hammond on March 9, 1915 in Clark County near Martinsville, Illinois, he persevered in a farmer family of 10, growing up in poverty. He excelled in academics, agriculture and sports in high school. In 1933, during the height of the Great Depression, he joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), the FDR program designed to get Americans back to work again.

It was during this time that Cliff "rode the trains" throughout the country, looking for work and food.



Cliff Hammond

Toward the end of the depression, he owned and operated a grocery and liquor store in California. In 1941, he joined the war effort by enlisting in the Army Air Corps and was trained as an air traffic controller. On September 16, 1942, he

married Zella Mae Ferguson and moved back to Illinois to continue his experiences in farming.

Over the next several years, Cliff and Zella and their two children, Carl and Linda, enjoyed a variety of entrepreneurial ventures from restaurant management in Kansas to homesteading in Idaho. He moved his family to Albuquerque on his 43rd birthday to begin a new career as an air traffic controller. During that time he would take his kids to a small amusement park at the N.M. state fairgrounds which gave him the idea of developing his own facility since the pressure of air traffic and working for someone else was not that inspiring to him.

It was then, in 1959, that Uncle Cliff's Kiddyland was born at 7600 Lomas N.E. with a go kart track, small food stand and a few kiddie rides. It thrived there until forced off by city officials in 1961, at which time the park moved to join forces with Little Beaver Town in Tijeras Canyon at the eastern limits of town. Realizing that this could be a losing proposition, Cliff moved one last time to the northern edge of the city at 5301 San Mateo, where he leased property from the Yonemoto family until he was able to purchase. There, the park began to grow from six to 15 acres, to become the largest and most attended park in New Mexico. For more than 53 years, having entertained millions of people, Cliff's Amusement Park has continued on the very same principles Cliff established at the beginning — safety, cleanliness and courteousness.

Hammond was featured in a recent broadcast of the PBS series, *The American Experience*.

Clifford Hammond is survived by his wife of 70 years, Zella; two children, Carl Hammond and wife, Susie of Santiago, Chili and Linda Hays and husband, Gary; four grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; and three greatgreat-grandchildren.

The family suggests that donations may be made in Mr. Hammond's memory to the Manzano Del Sol — Resident Endowment Fund, 5201 Roma N.E. Albuquerque, N.M. 87108.



Above, Cliff and Zella Hammond founded Cliff's Amusement Park in Albuquerque, N.M. as seen in this 1959 first year photo. Three rides can be spotted that were added on a revenue share to complete the new park. They are the Roll-O-Plane, Tilt-A-Whirl and Eli Ferris Wheel. Below, the couple stand in front of the park's ever popular Galaxi roller coaster. They were married 70 years.

COURTESY NRCMA/CLIFFS ARCHIVES



'Uncle' Cliff Hammond remembered...

"I've known Cliff since he first got his start. My late husband Paul had heard he wanted to move the park in New Mexico but needed help in getting some additional rides. Paul pulled some of his air base buddies together and they all chipped in and bought rides on a revenue share. James Dean, Joyland Park, provided a Roll-O-Plane, George McKinney (who would later operate Funland Park in Wichita Falls, Texas) provided a Tilt-A-Whirl and Paul's air base friend Harry Bullcock purchased a Ferris Wheel. Paul helped all three men find the used rides and Paul went to New Mexico to help set the rides up for Cliff. I think it really made a difference in the park's early success. After two or three years, Cliff and Zella purchased the rides from each, as the park was now growing and making money."

"I also remember all of us small park owners being in Europe in the early 70's on a trip to Oktoberfest and the Schwarzkopf factory. Our group all thought it was funny when Cliff told the Germans that he had the only park in New Mexico. We knew, at the time New Mexico could only support one park! It was a fun time with good friends."

—Aletha Roads, Wonderland Park, Amarillo, Texas

"I first met Cliff in 1978. Paul Roads at Wonderland Park knew Cliff real well and had talked to him about adding a SkyGlider. Paul said I needed to go see Cliff. So I made the call and Cliff agreed to meet and said he would pick me up at the airport. After arriving, I couldn't find him, so I grabbed my bags and headed outside to the curb pickup. There he was, waving at me. He was dressed in a pair of coveralls and driving a really old dented pickup truck that must have been used in the park as it had paint and who knows what else all over it. Cliff drove me to the park and we talked about the positioning of the ride. That evening I met his wife Zella over dinner, and soon after Cliff told me to go ahead and start on the ride. I didn't have a price or a contract to him for several more weeks, but we had a handshake deal. That was 1978 and the ride opened in 1979. That's the way things were done back then, it was a really fun time for this industry."

"I have tremendous respect for Cliff Hammond. It was such a pleasure to deal with him. He was always kind and professional and someone you were honored not only to do business with but to call a friend. I will miss him greatly."

—Jerry Pendleton, Skytrans Mfg., LLC, Contoocook, N.H.

"The association of Cliff, the Deans [Joyland Park] and the Roads [Wonderland Park] generated an interest and passion of the amusement industry among these families. Cliff was always working hard to improve his Cliff's Kidland and later Uncle Cliff's park. He offered Jimmy Dean the opportunity to put a ride in at Cliff's as a revenue share in an effort to help Cliff's grow and help give Jimmy Dean a start in the amusement industry. I remember the times Mary Dean and Linda Hammond would ride the rides together at Cliff's. This helped feed our interest in the amusement park industry. Because of Cliff's hard work and high standards, he helped lay the groundwork for the family owned amusement industry in this part of the country."

—Katie Dean, Joyland Park, Lubbock, Texas

"I only met Cliff Hammond one time during an interview we did to document the park's history for the National Roller Coaster Museum's archives. From that interview, I could tell he was a great man and a man you would want as your friend. Cliff Hammond, Jimmy Dean and Paul Roads are all true legends in our industry as they relied on each other for their very survival in those early years."

—Gary Slade, Amusement Today, Arlington, Texas



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45th Annual IISF Trade Show offers wide mix to attendees

STORY: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

GIBSONTON, Fla. — The 45th Annual IISF Trade Show and Extravaganza gave attendees just what they wanted this year when it ran from Feb. 5-9, Gibsonton, Fla.



There were ample exhibitors on the grounds of the International Independent Showmen's Association club. And, exhibitors brought a variety of products along to display including plush, novelty merchandise, rides, food trailers, food products, lighting and sound systems, wheel and tire products, tents and tarps, and others.

And, the consensus of most of the exhibitors was that there might not have been quite as many attendees

this year compared to last, but those that were there, were there to look and to shop and buy.

The extravaganza also provides those associated with the outdoor mobile industry a place to gather, socialize, raise money and do business before hitting the road this year. There is nightly entertainment on the club grounds.

The IISM, the museum fund raising arm of the association, raised over \$18,000 from the raffle and live auction.

There were also educational sessions during the week.

The following are comments and company information from some of the exhibitors on hand at this year's show.

Amusement Wraps Coal Grove, Ohio

Amusement Wraps was on hand showing off some of the company's amusement wrap designs. Chuck Wheeler heads up the company and handles the art direction on



Albert Frieden, Battech Entertainment LLC, Salem, Ore., exhibited his new motorcycle ride, Hog Rally, at the Gibtown show this year. ALL PHOTOS: AT / PAM SHERBORNE

most of the projects.

The company's services include wrap design and installation, painting, theme design, and a full service sign department.

This was the fourth year Amusement Wraps has exhibited at the IISF show.

Battech Entertainment LLC Salem, Ore.

Albert Frieden exhibited his new motorcycle ride, Hog Rally, at the Gibtown show this year. Each motorcycle can seat up to four with two children on the cycle and an adult and smaller child in the sidecar. The first ride, still in production, will go to P.B.J. Happee Days Shows. It is expected to be delivered in May.

Frieden showed that the motorcycle can actually do a wheelie when a handle is turned.

The lighting package for the ride is being done by Denny's Electronics.

Frieden also exhibited his Zero Gravity, which also went



Rick D'Aprile, left, and Gene Berger, Allied Specialty Insurance, Treasure Island, Fla., said the Gibtown show was going well for them. They were seeing clients and making sure they had everything they needed.

to P.B.J. Happee Days Shows.

Bob's Space Racers, Daytona Beach, Fla.

Always busy, Bob's Space Racer's outdoor booth space stayed that way this year. Company founder Bob Cassata was on hand for the show, meeting and greeting. Cassata is retired from day to day operation and now lives in West Palm Beach, Fla.

He has turned over daily operations to his family members.

The company exhibited its Water Gun Fun, a Whopper Water and a fish pond game.

Dalton Kid Rides Foley, Mo.

Kevin Dalton delivered the tractor ride he exhibited at Gibtown to Roger Wadkins, Sherwood Amusements, after the show.

Business has been going well, said Dalton.

Denny's Electronics Nokomis, Fla.

Dennis Bartosik said the IISF show had been pretty good for Denny's Electronics, an LED lighting specialty and games manufacturers. Bartosik said there didn't seem to be a huge quantity of attendees, but those that were there, were looking and ready to buy.

Eli Bridge Co. Jacksonville, Ill.

Patty Sullivan of this family-owned 100-year-old company said business has been good. Not only has she been working closely with Scheels All Sports stores by supplying wheels, she has also been busy in a variety of metal work. For example, over the last year Eli Bridge has manufactured metal pallets, and done repairs to truck and trailers, recreational vehicles, and an antique tractor.

The company has done a trellis with wheel ornaments and custom ornamental railings. The company's relation-

▶ See IISF, page 34



Dennis Bartosik, left, Denny's Electronics, Nokomis, Fla., exhibited his company's LED lighting at the IISF trade show this year. With him here, are Andrew Preston, center, and John Warrington.

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► IISF

Continued from page 33

ship with the large Scheels store and its various locations has been great. Store officials have installed the wheels within the atrium areas of their stores. She started working with the Scheels in 2004 and is scheduled to supply two more wheels to that company by 2014.

Fabbri Amusements Arlington, Texas

Jeff Miller was joined by his father, Jim Miller, in his booth this year at the IISF show. Jim Miller said he hadn't been to the Gibtown show for 20 years. It was obvious his son enjoyed the visit.

Jeff Miller said the Vortex is still doing very well for him. He has sold five of them in the last four years. He delivered one to Steel Pier amusement park, Atlantic City, N.J., not long before Hurricane Sandy hit.

"It survived the hurricane," he said, "unscathed."

Falgas Amusement Rides (based in Spain, with an office in Miami, Fla.)

Christian Ribot, vice president of sales, Falgas, a manufacturer of kiddie and non-major rides, was manning the company's booth at the Gibtown event showing the new Western Train. The train, with a seating capacity of 20, has made several upgrades that Ribot feels makes it very desirable. Some of those upgrades include the anti-derailment system and the new rail system where there are no electrical cords running from car to car.

There are two engines in

the standard design, which was at the show.

"The train can run on one engine, but there are two there," Ribot said. "We have made access to the engines very easy."

In fact, the company has also created easy access to the control panel for the LED lighting system and the sound system. There are also three speeds.

Ribot was also giving information on some of the company's other rides including their carousel and swing carousel.

Gold Star Manufacturing (Formerly Sellner Staging) Faribault, Minn.

Troy Krenske exhibited his Puppy Spin Ride at the Gibsonton show. Krenske said his puppies fit on a Sellner base, which he refurbishes, if need be, and fits the new puppies onto the ride.

The ride fits onto a 26-foot trailer.

Krenske has partnered with Jim Hermel and Mike Featherston, Goldstar Amusements, in Gold Star Manufacturing.

Gold Star, which began manufacturing mobile stages, portable stages and staging accessories for Seller, continues with this side of the business.

Ital International LLC Nashville, Tenn.

Carlo Guglielmi has been busy. For one thing, he had to arrange to have a wet Bertazzon Swing Carousel sent from its original destination, Steel Pier, Atlantic City, N.J., back to the Bertazzon plant in Italy.

"The carousel was going to Steel Pier," Guglielmi said. "It had been delivered to the



Dalton Kid Rides, Foley, Mo., exhibited its tractor ride at the IISF trade show this year. Here are, from left, Kevin Dalton, Matthew Kleeschulte, and Russell Dalton, all with the Dalton Kid Rides.

port and there it sat for two weeks."

That was when Hurricane Sandy ravaged that area of the coast and there weren't any trucks making deliveries. When the ride, still in its crates, was finally delivered, workers opened the crates.

"When they opened them, water just poured out," he said. "The ride had been sitting in salt water for two weeks."

So, back it went to the factory. The goal was to get it back before the 2013 season started.

Other projects Guglielmi has been working on include a Technical Park Street Fighter Revolution to a U.S. park. Guglielmi said an announcement by the park would come at some point so he declined to disclose the park name.

"But, it will be the first one in the U.S.," he said. "It should arrive in the U.S. at the end of March."

He has also sold a Technical Park Heavy Rotation ride to another U.S. park.

And, he sold a brand new Bertazzon Music Express to



Carlo and Cindy Guglielmi, Ital International, Nashville, Tenn., were having a good show and have had a good run of selling rides. They stayed busy at the 2013 IISF Trade Show and Extravaganza.

Waldameer Park in Erie, Pa. That ride will open for the 2013 season.

Maclan Corporation Lakeland, Fla.

Maclan's brother and sister duo of J.R. Lane and Maegan Wallace were on hand at the IISF show this year exhibiting the company's wide range of products.

Maclan has been supplying the amusement industry with high quality urethane wheels and products since 1975. This is the fourth year the family-owned company has been coming to the show.

Lane said business was going well at the show.

Peek-A-Boo Toys Pennsauken, N.J.

Barry Lederman, vice president of sales, for this New Jersey plush company, felt traffic was down somewhat, but those on the floor were the authorized buyers and were buying.

Lederman said the company's line always produces a great response from buyers. Two of the top items this year were the Panda Bear and the donut.

Rides 4-U Somerville, N.J.

Len Soled was busy selling, selling, selling at Gibtown this year. He exhibited quite a few rides. The most eye catching ones were the two KMG Speeds, Mach I and Mach III because of their height. The Mach I was being delivered to Ray Cammack Shows and the Mach III was going to North American Midway Entertainment.

The KMG Speed is about 131 feet tall (40 meters) with two gondolas for four persons each. The arm revolves at 13 rpm, in which each passenger

experiences 3.5 G.

But, there were many others. The S&S Frog Hopper at the show was going to Alpine Amusements. Soled also had one going to Murray Brothers.

The SBF/Visa Flying School at the show was going to Beauce Carnival. Soled had another going to Helm & Sons.

The Groovy Bus exhibited was going to Luehrs' Ideal Rides. But, in line for another were World's Finest Shows and Talley Amusements.

Soled brought two rides, SBF/Visa Dog's Ride and Flying Elephant, to the show that hadn't already been committed. However, when *Amusement Today* spoke with Soled, one of those, the Dog's Ride had already been sold. It was going to Campbell Amusements.

Wisdom Rides Merino, Colo.

Wisdom Rides had promised to exhibit three rides at Gibtown and that is exactly what the company did. The company brought its Jungle Twist, Monster Truck and the Rampage. Mai Wisdom had described the Rampage as "a new old ride."

Wisdom redesigned it and put new seats on it. New LED lighting illuminated it and the company installed new over the shoulder restraints. The Rampage stands 55 feet high and seats 32 in 16 seats.

Zamperla Boonton, N.J.

Roman Rosario felt the IISF show was a little slow this year compared to last year, but, like other exhibitors, also felt that attendees that were there were ready to buy.

On exhibit at the Zamperla booth was a Happy Swing and a Lolly Swing.



Brother and sister duo Maegan Wallace and J.R. Lane, Maclan Corporation, Lakeland, Fla., were displaying their company's wide range of products at the IISF trade show. They said business was very good.



Jim Miller, left, and Jeff Miller, Fabbri Amusements, Arlington, Texas, attended this year's IISF trade show. Father and son spent the time catching up with each other and visiting with others.



The OABA presented the IISM Corp. the sum of \$5,000, the first of five such donations the association has committed to the museum project the International Independent Showmen's Association started several years ago. The OABA is finally supporting the museum through a partnership with the museum board so that the OABA may house its Hall of Fame and Pioneer awards. From left are: Larry Nieu Kirk, IISA past president; Tom Gaylin, OABA third vice chair; Tom Arnold, IISA past president and museum director; Ivan Arnold, IISF; Bob Johnson, OABA president; Jeanne McDonagh, OABA 2012 chair and trustee; Michael Wood, OABA second vice chair; Doc Rivera, IISM curator; and Dan Kroeger, OABA treasurer.
AT/PAM SHERBORNE

OABA awards finally have a permanent home

Display space will be provided in the Museum of the American Carnival

GIBSONTON, Fla. — The International Independent Showmen's Association (IISA) fundraising arm for the Museum of the American Carnival, the IISM Corp., has entered into an agreement with the Outdoor Amusement Business Association (OABA) to permanently house OABA's Hall of Fame and Pioneer Award.

The agreement, announced during the IISA Annual Trade Show and Extravaganza, held Feb. 4-9, at the club grounds in Gibsonton, Fla., allows the OABA to take over a 20-foot-by-20-foot space on the second floor at the front, southwest corner of the museum.

The museum has been an on-going project undertaken by the IISA several years ago. It is located across the street from the club grounds.

Bob Johnson, OABA president, said they have made a financial commitment to the IISA for the space.

"Our pledge is \$25,000, initially, to be spread out over the next five years," he said.

He expects OABA's exhibits to incorporate technology to give the information about the Hall of Fame award recipients and the Pioneer Award recipients. There most likely will be visual as well as audio information.

Tom Gaylin, OABA third vice chair, said that they didn't have a home for the Hall of Fame and Pioneer awards.

"About a year and half ago, we started on this idea," Gaylin said. "We had to first sell it to our board. Then, we went to the IISA."

In October, 2012, the OABA drafted a proposal to the museum's board of directors. During mid-January, Mike Wood, Mike Lauther and Jeanne McDonagh of the OABA struck a deal.

The OABA plans to raise the money to support the project.

The IISA was able to raise \$18,000 during the Extravaganza through a raffle and live auction at the 2013 event. The museum has sustained several large donations over the past few years including one of \$1.1 million from Jim Frederiksen, Frederiksen Industries.

—Pam Sherborne



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OABA annual meeting presents Hall of Fame and Pioneer awards

STORY: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

TAMPA, Fla. — There were some surprises and a lot of fun and laughter at this year's annual Outdoor Amusement Business Association (OABA) membership meeting and dinner.

In a Mardi Gras theme, the event was held at the Embassy Suites Tampa.

During the event, food and drink, there was quite a show for attendees. They found out who received the Pioneer Award and the two Hall of Fame awards. They also were able to hear from their 2013 chairman and found out which young people received association scholarships.

In addition, one OABA scholarship recipient was announced. That was for the \$3,000 Duke Smith Memorial Scholarship. It was awarded to David Soled, a high school student and the son of Len Soled, Rides-4-U. In all, OABA will award 35 scholarships this year. The remaining recipients will be announced at a later date.

The Pioneer Award this year was presented to Jack Eyerly and the Eyerly Aircraft Company. Jack Eyerly is now deceased, however his son, Jon Eyerly accepted the award for his father.

The Eyerly Aircraft Company was founded in Salem, Oregon, during the Great Depression by Jack Eyerly's father Lee Eyerly. Lee Eyerly earned a pilot's license (signed by Orville Wright), after just three hours of formal training. He started an aviation school and established Salem, Oregon's first airport.

Lee Eyerly searched for inexpensive ways to train new



Mike Featherston, right, Gold Star Amusements became the 2013 chairman of the OABA during the Feb. 8 annual meeting in Tampa. Here is Featherston with his wife, Connie, and Bill Johnson, A Fantasy Amusement Co.

AT/SUE NICHOLS

pilots, which led him to build the Whiffle Hen, a training aircraft that used only two gallons of fuel per hour.

Lee Eyerly also patented the Orientator, a flight simulator that looked like a small airplane suspended in a giant tuning fork. The Orientator became a popular attraction at fairs and festivals, and Lee Eyerly realized that the device could be sold as an amusement ride. He renamed it the Acroplane.

The Eyerlys went on to design, patent, and manufacture over 1,000 rides before, and after, World War II and into the 50's, 60's, 70's, and 80's, including park and portable models: 60 Acroplanes; 75 Loop-O-Planes (pre-WWII production); 300 Roll-O-Planes; 80 Fly-O-Planes; 250 Rock-O-Planes; 400 Octopus and Spider rides; 28 Monsters; 80 Midge-O-Racers; and 80 Bulgy the Whale rides.

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While his dad had other interests, Jack Eyerly's sole interest was in building amusement rides. His business and hobby were one and the same. Jack Eyerly's son recalled that

his dad would travel almost constantly, going from carnival to carnival and fair to fair. During the summer months, father and son would sell rides, check out equipment, and adjust clutches on the Octopus.

The two Hall of Fame awards this year went to Bob Johnson, OABA president, and Wayne McCary, retired president and CEO, The Big E, Springfield, Mass.

Apparently, keeping a secret like this from the OABA president wasn't an easy task. But, as it turned out, the timing was just right. Johnson and his wife, Alex Johnson, were to celebrate the next day, Feb. 9.

"My recognition was a total surprise," said Johnson. "The board voted electronically to honor me with the OABA's Hall of Fame. My family members were there under the ruse to honor our 47th wedding anniversary."

Johnson took a circuitous route to the amusement industry. He attended Otterbein College where he studied pre-med and worked as an emergency room orderly. He transferred to Parsons College where he graduated in 1967

with a degree in Psychology.

He met Alexandra Allman during a college spring break and they married in February 1966.

Johnson was hired by the Bendix Corporation, Teterboro, N.J., in a management training position, then moved on as personnel supervisor at Universal Manufacturing Corporation. In 1973, he was hired by the Addressograph-Multigraph Corporation. He was transferred to Illinois, then later was promoted to corporate director of personnel and moved to Los Angeles.

In 1979, a search firm contacted Johnson to become in charge of human resources of Six Flags Corp.

He was there until 1992 at which time he resigned and started a plastic recycling company in Florida. He and his wife moved to Boca Raton.

But, Johnson maintained his amusement industry contacts, and in 1994 got a call from OABA Trustee Jimmy Drew asking him about his possible interest in becoming the association's executive director. He began serving in that capacity in 1995.

Johnson and his wife have two children Chris and Carolyn, and three grandchildren.

McCary is the first fair manager to lead OABA. He was elected to sit as third vice chair of the OABA in 2005. He became the chairman in 2009. He has been on the OABA board for 13 years.

McCary has a long and honored history in the industry. He studied business administration at the University of Hartford. He was a reporter for the *Norwich Bulletin* there, and he learned how to book talent, including the Flying

Wallendas, at Ocean Beach.

He landed a job at the Lordly and Dame talent agency and started their outdoor entertainment department, from scratch.

One of their customers was the Big E in Springfield, Massachusetts.

In 1973, McCary took a position at the Big E as executive assistant to manager Bill Wynne. He left briefly to become the manager of the Cumberland County Civic Center, Portland, Maine. But then returned in 1986 as manager elect under George Jones. He took over as president and CEO of the Big E in 1991. He retired from there in June 2012.

Wayne McCary is in the hall of fame at three other organizations: the IAFE, the New England Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions, and Massachusetts Agricultural Fairs Association.

He was recognized by the International Entertainment Buyers Association with the Founders Award in 2007.

He served as president at the IAFE, the Midwest Fairs Association and the Massachusetts Agricultural Fairs Association, and on the board of the Country Music Association. Wayne is vice president of a Monte Carlo world circus organization.

Mike Featherston, Gold Star Amusements, became the chair of OABA during the Friday night event. Featherston began his amusement career when he got a job after high school traveling with a Pronto Pup and Lemonade concession at fairs in Illinois in 1976.

When that fair season ended, Featherston served food on the Jack Thompson

▶ See OABA, page 37



OABA President Bob Johnson was presented with the Hall of Fame award during the association's annual meeting held Feb. 8, Tampa, Fla. From left, are Julie and Greg Johnson, Bob Johnson's brother and sister-in-law; Johnson's wife, Alex; grandson Jackson; Johnson, and daughter Carolyn.

AT/SUE NICHOLS



Wayne McCary and his wife, Annette McCary, had a very enjoyable time during the OABA annual meeting Feb. 8 in Tampa. McCary received the Hall of Fame award from the association.

AT/SUE NICHOLS

Talley Amusements provides the midway for the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo, which ran this year from Jan. 18-Feb. 9. The event drew more than one million visitors for the second consecutive year. At far right, the Fabbri-built Fast Trax, has proved to be a very popular ride for Talley Amusements.

COURTESY FORT WORTH STOCK SHOW AND RODEO



Fort Worth Stock Show falls short of last year's record

Great weather helps event draw more than one million visitors for second straight year

FORT WORTH, Texas — Although attendance was down from 2012, the 2013 Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo still drew over one million folks to the event which ran Jan. 18-Feb. 9.

Total attendance was 1,148,400 compared to 2012's of 1,166,000, which was an all-time record.

"Since we are such a weather-driven event, what is remarkable was that the weather was nice enough for two years in a row for us to be able to break the one million mark," said Shanna Weaver.

▶ See FORT WORTH, page 42

▶ OABA

Continued from page 36 shows. He ended up meeting Jack and Hope's daughter, Connie, courting her and marrying her in 1979.

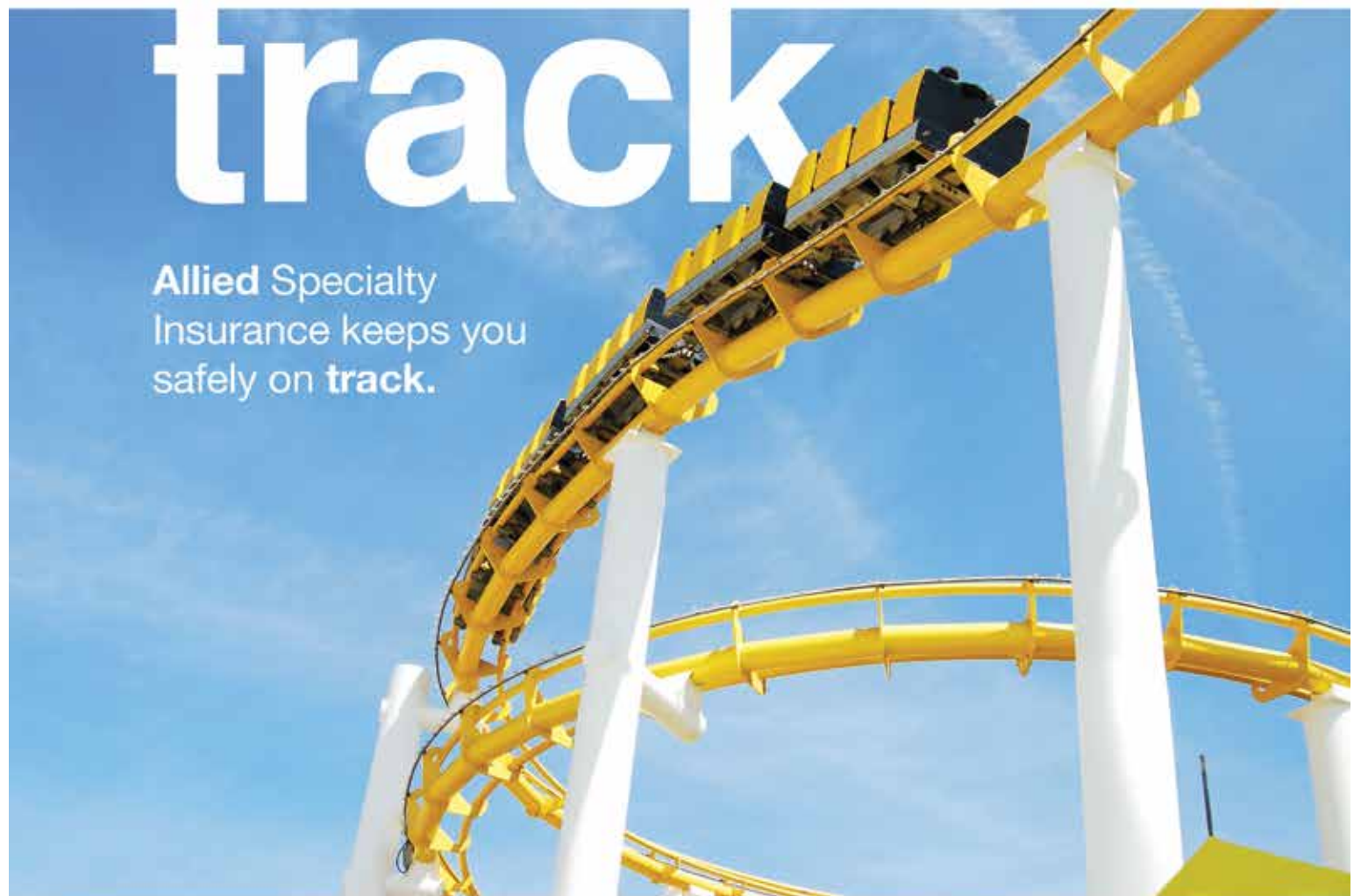
Jack Thompson suffered a heart attack and passed away in 1986. Hope Thompson was a victim of breast cancer in 1991. Mike and Connie took over the operation of the Jack Thompson Shows, eventually re-naming it Gold Star Amusements 21 years ago.

Mike and Connie have three children and 6 young grandchildren. All the children and their spouses work and travel with the show.

Featherston has served on the OABA board since 2001. He was president of Showmen's League of America in 2010, leading the move to new headquarters in Chicago. And he is twice past president of the Midwest Showmen's Association.

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MIDWAYLIGHTS

COMPILED: Pam Sherborne, psherborne@amusementtoday.com

Renovations were expected to start soon on the **Buffalo County Fairgrounds'** Exhibit Building that could cost approximately \$843,000 in base and alternate projects. The work is expected to be completed when the **100th Buffalo County Fair**, Kearney, Neb., opens July 24-29, 2013.

Base bid projects for the Exhibit Building are roof repairs, painting inside and outside, air-conditioning and heat on the north side, new floors and ceilings, heavy-duty drywall around the main room that is used for indoor tennis, and consolidating kitchens and lunchrooms into one larger kitchen and event-meeting space for as many as 150 people.

The alternates approved include larger overhead doors that could allow events to expand indoor exhibit space, concrete and lighting repairs around the outside of the building, and new gutters and downspouts.

The 2013 **Manatee County Fair**, Palmetto, Fla., Jan. 17-27, is being called a success. Total attendance was reported as being between 155,000 and 160,000, just slightly off 2012's record of 172,000.

Belle City Amusements provided about 54 rides and attractions for the event.

The **Minnesota State Fair** board announced a decision last month to ban smoking in virtually all open-air space on the 320-acre grounds for 2013. Smoking had already been prohibited in fair buildings. Now, those wanting to smoke will be restricted to designated outdoor smoking areas.

Details hadn't been worked out but should be by the time the fair opens in August.

The **Washington County Fair**, Salem, Ind., has moved its dates from July to June this year. The decision was based on the school calendar as well as how closely the dates ran to the start of the Indiana State Fair.

This year the Washington County Fair will run June 23-30. The fair parade, which officially launches the event, is set for 3 p.m. Sunday, June 23.

Midland (Mich.) County Fair has a new fair manager, **Trish Steele**, 47. Steele, who is replacing **Tom Valliere**, is no stranger to the Midland fair. As a youth 4H member, Steele showed her cattle at the fair with her siblings just as her father did.

Steele will not only be responsible for managing the annual county fair but also all the events and festivals held at the year-round, 118-acre facility.

This year's dates are Aug. 11-17.

The Manchester (Mich.) Community Fair Board has signed a new contract with a carnival for the 2013 **Manchester Community Fair**. At the close of the 68th Manchester Community Fair in July 2012, there were some questions about the event dates for the 2013 season.

After months of uncertainty and phone calls, e-mails and other communications with numerous carnival companies, the fair board received word that **Elliott's Amusements** would be returning to the Man-

chester Community Fair for their 11th consecutive year. The 69th Manchester Community Fair will take place July 2-6.

The **Richland County Fair Board**, Sidney, Mont., last month announced not only the concert line up for the 2013 fair, but a new carnival as well.

North Star Amusements will provide the midway in 2013 when the fair runs July 31-Aug. 3.

Just after the 2012 **Colorado State Fair**, the fair board renegotiated a new contract with **Crabtree Amusements**.

General Manager **Chris Wiseman** said although carnival finances showed a decrease from the 2011 event, he felt the relationship cultivated between the fair and carnival was worth continuing.

The 2013 fair will run Aug. 23-Sept. 2.

Last November the **Alpena (Mich.) County Agriculture Society/Fair Board** was granted one year by the board of commissioners to straighten out its financial issues and to smooth tensions with the local 4-H, or be replaced by a different board formed by the county.

During January's commissioners meeting Fair Board Treasurer **Katie Bleau** updated the commissioners on the past year, announced a change in the date of the 2013 fair and paid back the remainder of the money the board owed the county for a small financial bailout.

Bleau said there were several things that needed to be done in order to stabilize the fair board's finances and host a more successful fair. She said the board had to watch how it spent its money and also improve its relationship with 4-H. She said these things have been addressed and with about \$24,000 in several funds, things are moving in the right direction headed into 2013.

The date of the fair for the past several years had generated a lot of concern from the public. It had been held on Labor Day weekend and the days leading up to the holiday. Bleau said in 2013 the date of the fair will be held Aug. 6-10 and a new carnival company, will take over operations for a year.

The fair board entered into a one-year agreement with **Schmidt Amusements** to handle the carnival portion of the fair in 2013. If things go well, Bleau said, a longer contract could be signed with the new business.

"The Thrill of it All" is the new theme for the 2013 **Nebraska State Fair**. The theme was chosen to highlight the new partnership with midway carnival provider, **Wade Shows**.

According to State Fair Executive Director, **Joseph McDermott**, "Our partnership with Wade Shows actually began at the 2012 Nebraska State Fair when we erected the new SkyTram. Wade Shows owns and operates the SkyTram, which provided 30,000 fairgoers with a high-flying look over the fairgrounds this past year.

"This year, the new ride line-up will prove to be a huge draw with kiddie rides in the 'Lil' Pardners' area, family rides, thrill rides and a new slate of spectacular

rides fairgoers expect when visiting the Nebraska State Fair," McDermott said.

He added, "Wade Shows is unprecedented when it comes to customer appeal and service. Their customer service amenities include shaded seating area, mouthwatering food, landscaping, games and their all-new Gold Access Program, offering more opportunities for guests of the Nebraska State Fair.

The Nebraska State Fair runs from August 23 through September 2, 2013.

Thomas Ryan, former chief of staff of the **New York State Thruway and Canal Corporation**, took over as director of the **New York State Fair**, Syracuse, N.Y., Feb. 1. **Tom Young**, former Syracuse mayor from 1986-1993 and former fair director from 1975 to 1985, will advise Ryan for the 2013 fair set for Aug. 22-Sept. 2.

Ryan is taking the reins from **Dan O'Hara**, who will move to another job within New York City. Young's advisory role is unpaid.

The **Oxford Fair**, South Park, Maine, has earned the Most Improved Large Fair award by the **Maine Association of Agricultural Fairs**. The award was presented to Jackie Young, president of the Oxford County Agricultural Society, at the 101st annual meeting of the association at the Holiday Inn by the Bay in Portland on Jan. 25 and 26.

Young, who serves as the fair's livestock superintendent and was elected president of the society in 2011, said the fair has made a number of major changes over the last year. They include lower admission prices, a return to the Wednesday to Sunday schedule and hiring top-notch entertainment, including 2012 headliner LeAnn Rimes.

The fair is held on the 100-acre Oxford County Agricultural Society fairgrounds and includes horse racing, livestock demonstrations, live music, carnival and other attractions.

In the past few years, the fairgrounds has had a new entrance, several new barns, new parking areas and lighting, a new museum, a roof for the bleachers, a racetrack, a crow's nest for judges, a grandstand for the entertainment area and comprehensive electrical upgrades.

The 2013 fair will be Sept. 11-14.

Over the past five years, **Pacific National Exhibition (PNE)**, Vancouver, British Columbia, attendance has been in flux. It was 753,298 in 2008, but reached a high of 937,485 in 2010, boosted by the centennial celebration concerts featuring Bryan Adams and the Beach Boys.

Since then, attendance has dropped back to 763,689 in 2012.

The 2013 PNE officials hope to attract a wider range of visitors with a cut in the admission price to \$16 from \$20.

Officials say the cut will be largely funded through lower operating costs as a result of the reduction of days from 17 to 15. This year's fair will run from Aug. 17-Sept. 2. It will close on the first two Mondays.



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Annual Pennsylvania combined convention a big success

1,566 attendees on hand at the four-day event in Hershey

STORY: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com



HERSHEY, Pa. — Another strong convention was enjoyed by 1,566 attendees during the annual Pennsylvania State Association of County Fairs (PSACF) and Pennsylvania State Showman's Association (PSSA) convention held at Hershey Lodge and Convention Center January 23-26. The 101st edition brought together board members, volunteers and staff from 84 of the 108 county and local fairs held throughout the Commonwealth each year. It also was an opportunity for carnival owners/operators, food/game concessionaires, entertainers and suppliers to show off their wares by way of a two and a half day trade show.

This year there were over

135 exhibitors on the Trade Show floor, along with Communication Exhibits — an aisle devoted to scrapbooks, advertising samples, premium books and memorabilia from fairs held throughout the state during the past year.

In addition, educational seminars, daily workshops, breakfast table topics and banquets each evening completed the schedule of events. Wednesday evening was the night to showcase entertainment of all types and variety, from musical acts, impersonators, magicians, comedians and clowns, western shows and more. Sixteen acts were on the stage this year. Many of these acts were also on the trade show floor each day.

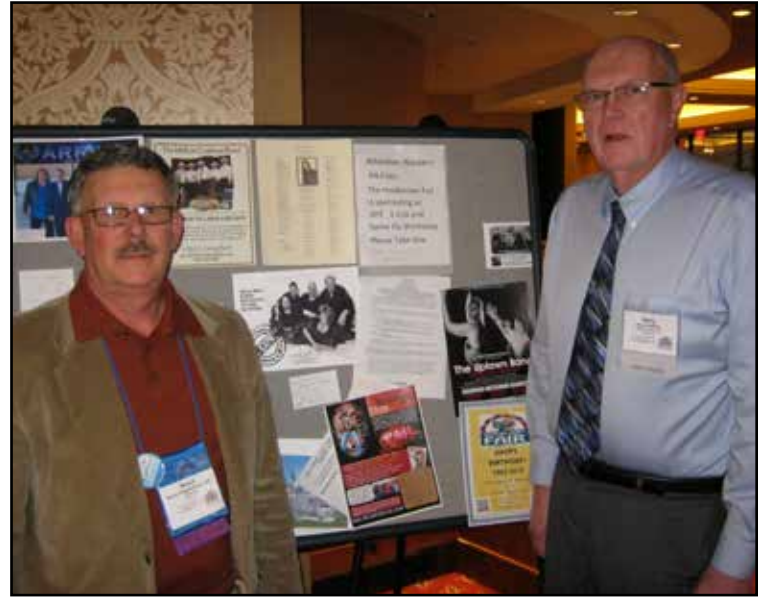
Each evening, hospital-

ity rooms were the gathering places after the business of the day was over. The Showmen's Association, which has been in existence in Pennsylvania the past 45 years, had an active room. Others were hosted by Variety Attractions, Reithoffer Shows, Inc., Otto's Amusements, S&S Shows, Tropical Amusements, Goodtime Amusements and numerous others.

New this year was a food drive, conducted by IAAFE and supporting the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank. National sponsor ETIX has a goal of 20 million pounds of donated food from all fairs across the country.

Also new for this year's convention was a dedicated website for the convention, exclusively. That site: www.pafairsconvention.org along with Facebook and Twitter social media improved the event's presence. "We got some mileage out of that," said Bruce Kopenhaver, re-

► See FAIRS, page 42



Changing of the guard: Bruce Kopenhaver, retiring executive secretary/treasurer of the PSACF from Gratz (Pa.) Fair with incoming Secretary/Treasurer, Harry Reffner, Bedford County Fair.

ALL PHOTOS: AT/B.DEREK SHAW



All smiles: Mike Froelich, general manager at York (Pa.) Fair and York Expo Center, wife Brenda and James Ingram with Deggeller Attractions, Stuart, Fla.

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► FAIRS

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tiring Executive Secretary/Treasurer of the PSACF and a member of the Gratz Fair Board. Harry Reffner with the Bedford County Fair is the new Executive

Secretary/Treasurer. John D Blaney, Jr. with the Fayette County Fair is the new president, while Dr. David Reese with the Tioga County Fair is the new vice president.

Attendee breakdown included 1,019 from the various fairs across the Pennsylvania Commonwealth; 49 fair associates; 34 guests; 9 judges; 19 others; 309 trade show vendor participants; 4 speakers and 123 Showman associates.

The 2013 convention was kicked off by Jon Dorenbos, Long Snapper for the Philadelphia Eagles. He has played in every Eagles game since the mid 2006 season.

Dorenbos is a professional magician in his spare time, performing in Las Vegas and Hollywood.

Another integral part of the PSACF portion of the convention is the crowning of the Pennsylvania State Fair Queen. Since there is no "official" state fair, the Saturday evening banquet serves as the opportunity to announce the 2013 Queen who visits any Pennsylvania fair upon request during the upcoming

season. This year 55 contestants representing their local/regional fair participated in three days of judging activities before a winner to this 27th annual event was selected and crowned. Rhonda Carl was crowned the winner, representing the Schuylkill County Fair.

The 2014 convention is slated for January 22-25, again at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center.

► FORT WORTH

Continued from page 37

In fact, the show was running ahead of last year's figure through the third Saturday, Feb. 2, with 777,900 visitors compared to 2012's 775,100. That third Saturday set a record attendance for a single day with 157,800 people on that one day.

But, with Super Bowl Sunday hitting on the third weekend (Feb. 3) and cloudy and cooler temperatures on the final day, numbers dropped.

FORT WORTH STOCK SHOW & RODEO

However, officials were delighted with the results. Weaver said new this year was the upgraded interactive smartphone app, Score it!

Stock show officials had already introduced an app for visitors to get schedules, view locator maps and receive updated show information.

But, for the first time in the history of the professional rodeo industry, Scoreit, provided rodeo fans with an opportunity to score roughstock rides, predict timed event competitors' times, learn about the history of the Fort Worth Rodeo, access professional competitors' biographies and develop an understanding of the sport of professional rodeo.

For the 11th consecutive year, Talley Amusements provided the midway for the 2013 event.

—Pam Sherborne

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