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## Gold Striker marks a shiny new era for California's Great America

**STORY:** Dean Lamanna  
Special to Amusement Today

SANTA CLARA, Calif. — The steady stream of shrieks and post-ride buzz emanating from Gold Striker, the eighth and newest roller coaster at California's Great America (CGA), initially rattled the nerves of some of the neighbors. But to the park's operators, the lack of silence is, well, golden.

"This ride is the shot

across the bow — the start of a new beginning," said Raul Rehnberg, GCA's vice president and general manager, of the twisting wooden thriller rising from the park's Celebration Plaza. "Not only is the coaster exciting in and of itself, it really is a symbol of bigger and better things to come."

With a 103-foot-long first plunge and speeds approaching 54 mph, Gold Striker is being touted as the tallest

and fastest wooden coaster in Northern California. Delivering what Rehnberg calls a "world-class" combination of nostalgia and smooth, state-of-the-art engineering along nearly 3,200 feet of tightly curving, heavily banked (up to 85 degrees), sometimes low-to-the-ground track, the ride also boasts an initial descent tunnel of 174 feet — the longest ever installed on a wooden coaster.

▶ See **GOLD**, page 1

Billed as the tallest and fastest wooden roller coaster in Northern California, Gold Striker has drawn raves from park guests who have been waiting, and rooting, for the comeback of California's Great America.

COURTESY DAN PEAK / CALIFORNIA'S GREAT AMERICA

## Following Superstorm Sandy, Coney Island renaissance continues

**STORY:** Scott Rutherford  
srutherford@amusementtoday.com

BROOKLYN, N.Y. — Summer at Coney Island is in full swing and Central Amusement International (CAI) has made sure that visitors to the People's Playground will find Luna Park and the surrounding attractions are all up and running.

The 2013 season, which officially kicked off on Memorial Day weekend, features a number of new rides and attractions that are all part of the major overhaul that has been taking place at Coney Island over the last several years.

"As we maintain our original attractions and add new ones to Luna Park, this season we demonstrate our commitment to Coney Island and our mission to be an innovative and exciting place for visitors of all ages," said

Valerio Ferrari, president of Central Amusement International, operator of Luna Park, the Cyclone and other area attractions.

The new rides and attractions that opened this season at Luna Park and the rest of the Coney Island amusement area include:

### Water Mania

Supplied by Zamperla, Water Mania made its world premiere at Luna Park and is one of Coney Island's largest capacity rides. The new family attraction featuring 12 four-seat cars, offering a total passenger capacity of 48. As the first ride of its kind from Zamperla, Water Mania is reminiscent of dueling tea-cups, with each passenger seated in front of a water blaster. This attraction also features interactive water cannons located on the

periphery of the attraction for spectators to soak friends and family who are onboard the ride.

### Magic Bikes

Located next to the Tickler coaster, the new Magic Bikes is another in a long line of interactive family rides from Zamperla. The new flat ride features eight colorful two-seat hang glider-style vehicles equipped with bicycle pedals and rear-mounted fans that are suspended from radiating sweeps. Once the attraction begins to revolve, the riders' pedaling action causes the fans to rotate. Guests control their individual flights as they swoop up and down through the air.

### B&B Carousel whirls again

▶ See **CONEY**, page 1



Luna Park's 2013 season is highlighted by a number of new attractions including Water Mania and Magic Bikes, both of which were manufactured by Zamperla. Water Mania is reminiscent of dueling tea cups with each of the 48 passengers seated in front of a water blaster. Off-ride water cannons allow spectators to join in on the fun. Magic Bikes features eight colorful two-seat hang glider-style vehicles suspended from radiating sweeps. Each vehicle is equipped with bicycle pedals and rear-mounted fans. Riders control the up and down motion. COURTESY CAI

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CONTINUING COVERAGE: SUPERSTORM SANDY  
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# NEWTALK

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**EDITORIAL:** Gary Slade, [gslade@amusementtoday.com](mailto:gslade@amusementtoday.com)

## Weather and a wheel



Slade

It seems like we hear stories each summer of something weather related that makes an impact on our parks, testing their ability to quickly recover so that the smiles, laughter and thrills can continue.

This season we have already heard of the late spring snowfall that created monster cleanup efforts for both Worlds of Fun and Six Flags St. Louis as well as creating a cold visit for patrons at Silver Dollar City.

Then came news of record rains and flooding in Grand Rapids, Mich. that spilled over to Michigan's Adventure.

The Oklahoma City back-to-back tornado outbreak disrupted business for the area parks. Within the same few weeks Frontier City was hit with a massive hail storm causing roof damage to more than three-quarters of the park's buildings. Always looking on the bright side, park GM Stephen Ball laughed saying: "At least we will get much needed new roofs out it!"

Now in this issue (pages 13 and 14) we have reports that Wonderland Park suffered a hit from large hail at June 25 that broke approximately 10,000 light bulbs and caused other damage to signs and roofs in the park, including their one day old bumper car building roof.

Just down I-27 two hours Joyland Park suffered tornado-like winds from the same storm that ripped signs apart and blew off some facade cover from their Mack Rides Musik Express. Joyland lost a full week of business while debris was cleared and power restored.

Having visited all three area parks recently, my guess is that most guests are not aware of the damage that has hit those facilities, thanks to each park's dedicated staffs that got the "clean-up" job done.

Lastly, while in Puebla, Mexico the last weekend in June for the debut of Ronald Bussink's new R80XL Observation Wheel, (full coverage coming in AT's Sept. issue) it was interesting that I found myself taking a photo of their nearby active volcano that seems to be spitting up steam during my visit. A few days after returning home, national news networks reported that flights in and out of the local airport had been cancelled while the volcano blew out ash over most of the city.

For once timing was on my side.

—Gary Slade

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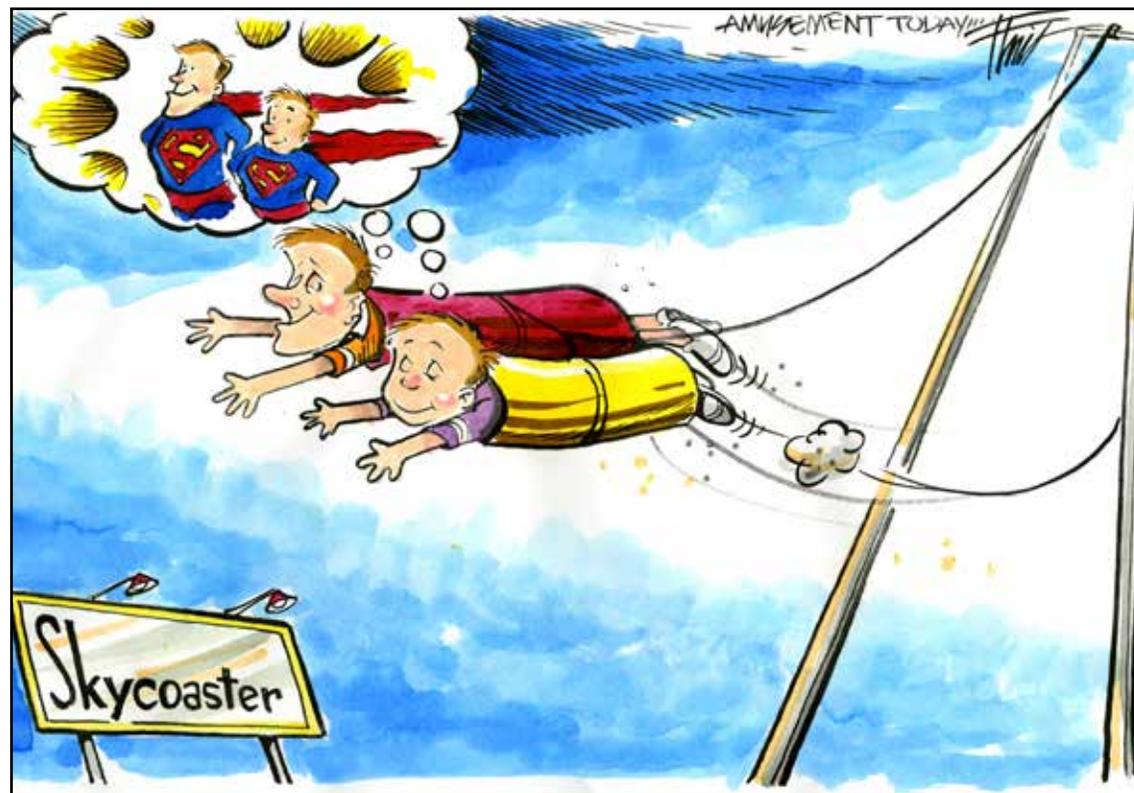
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## Pulling in the crowds



Mellor

I recently attended the U.K. parks association, BALPPA's, annual summer conference during which attendees visited several attractions just outside London.

Among these were Chessington World of Adventures, Warner Bros. Studio Tour, London — the Making of Harry Potter and Thorpe Park and it was good to note how busy each venue was despite it being outside the main summer school holiday period and during week days when we went to each one.

In particular I think we were all pretty impressed with how well the Harry Potter attraction is doing and specifically its forward bookings. Visitors have to book tickets in advance — there is strictly no turning up on the day to just by a ticket and go in — and it's booked up several months ahead. Additionally, the attraction caters to approximately 3,500 people maximum per day so it must be comforting to know from a management point of view that you have so many people coming way into the future.

How many other attractions can say that?

The crowds had also flocked to Thorpe Park despite it being a week day that always threatened rain. Again, this was great to see and it's an encouraging situation to note in what are still hard economic times for many, even more so perhaps when you consider the market Thorpe Park is aimed at, teens and young adults.

Many parks that went down the thrill ride route over the years have today altered their thinking and moved back to targeting the family market with their rides and attractions but at Thorpe, operator Merlin Entertainments has directly targeted the teens and young adults market with an array of thrill rides that would make any park proud. Merlin does, of course, also operate Chessington and the nearby Legoland Windsor, so caters for all ages and tastes in the area with the three venues, but it was still pleasing to see such a good attendance. People of all ages clearly still want to have a good day out and choose to spend their spare money doing so, no matter what the economic climate is.

Hopefully, weather permitting, it's a good sign of things to come this season.

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# 2 MINUTE DRILL



COMPILED: Janice Witherow

## Reed Gonzalez, Beech Bend Park

Reed Gonzalez strives for excellence in all he does. And it shows. After recently graduating at the top of his class in mechanical engineering from Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green, Ky., Reed is jumping right in at his family-owned amusement park, Beech Bend Park, as Director of Operations. His love of the business is evident, and Reed plans to use his background in engineering to make great contributions to the amusement industry, making him "one to watch" in the future.



Reed Gonzalez has returned to his family's Beech Bend Park as Director of Operations after receiving a mechanical engineering degree from Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green. He is looking forward to being back at the park, now on a full time basis. AT / SUE NICHOLS

**Title**  
Director of Operations

**Number of years in the industry**  
8

**Best thing about the industry**  
My main job is to make our guests happy! What's better than that?

**Favorite amusement ride**  
My favorite type of ride is a roller coaster, but I'm definitely not old-fashioned. I love a good steel coaster!

**If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be ...**  
Pursuing a career in engineering. I just graduated with a degree in mechanical engineering.

**Biggest challenge facing our industry**  
Consistently pleasing our guests. It is very hard to please each and every guest that enters our gates.

**The thing I like most about amusement/water park season is ...**  
Amusement parks at night. There's nothing like a roller coaster ride in the dark to cool you off during a humid summer night!

**The last time I was on a boat was ...**  
This past December in Hawaii.

**It's your birthday ... how do you typically celebrate?**  
The only thing I have consistently had during my birthday is my family. It is always during park season!

**On my screensaver right now is ...**  
Aaron Rodgers, Jordy Nelson or Randall Cobb. I am the biggest Green Bay Packers fan!

**My last purchase under \$5 was ...**  
A bottle of soda.

**On life's "to do" list, everyone should have this on it ...**  
Watch the sunrise from Mt. Haleakala on Maui.



Gonzalez

**Best place I have ever eaten pizza**  
I have had killer deep-dish pizza in downtown Chicago. Locally, you can't beat Lost River Pizza Co.

**In 10 years, I hope to be ...**  
In an upper management role with some amusement park company. My dream is to take Beech Bend to the next level.

**Favorite place to catch up on reading**  
Anywhere quiet and cool.

**All-time favorite cartoon**  
South Park.

**If I were to join the circus, I would be ...**  
The guy that sells popcorn in the stands!

**My ideal Sunday evening consists of ...**  
Cooking a homemade meal and catching up with my favorite TV shows (Breaking Bad and Dexter!).

**My favorite mode of exercise is ...**  
Swimming.

**The best sports analyst on television is ...**  
Football analyst, Herm Edwards. He's always so excited!

**If I could travel anywhere in the world, it would be to ...**  
Germany. That's first on my list.

**When I say fast food, you say ...**  
A necessary evil.

**At the grocery store, you can usually find me in this aisle ...**  
Meats, chesses and dairy. I am a big breakfast eater.

**In one word, my office is ...**  
Organized.

**Favorite summertime beverage**  
A homemade sweet tea.

## THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

Presented by



www.RollerCoasterMuseum.org

•**1898:** The **Trans Mississippi and International Exposition**, in Omaha, Nebraska, featured many wonderful exhibits and demonstrations, but the most popular attraction would be the **Griffiths & Crane-designed Scenic Railway**. Besides being a key attraction at the fair, it was also a great marketing tool for selling more devices to a relatively new industry. In keeping with the formidable exhibition, James Griffiths (who was involved with the very first scenic railway design in 1887) hired musical entertainment — a seven piece band — that began playing in front of the popular ride in mid-August. It continued to attract large crowds, who enjoyed the performances before purchasing their tickets to ride. The Exposition closed on November 1, 1898 with a final attendance of more than 2,600,000 visitors.

•**1905:** On August 17, a fire at **Brandywine Springs Park**, Wilmington, Delaware, consumed several buildings, including damaging the park's **Scenic Railway** (which had been built by **George Crane**). After leveling the park's restaurant, the flames spread to the Scenic Railway, where the lift hill was almost completely destroyed. It would be rebuilt in time for the 1906 season.

•**1907:** **George Tilyou's** great **Steeplechase Park** in Bridgeport, Connecticut, was almost completely destroyed by fire on August 18. The afternoon fire was believed to have started under the bleachers where Bridgeport was about to play the Chicago baseball team in an exhibition game. Less than 40 minutes later the bleachers, grand stand, the main Steeplechase building, and other attractions were destroyed by the flames, with a loss of about \$60,000. With no water pressure and the possibility that the fire would consume the entire island, dynamite was used to stop the spread of flames. It would be Tilyou's second fire in a matter of weeks, with his Steeplechase property in **Coney Island** completely destroyed on July 28, 1907.

•**1932:** After a fire destroyed **Frederick Ingersoll's Giant Racer** at **Saltair Beach** in 1931, a larger model was constructed the following year. Upon completion in early August, the \$75,000 ride was described as the longest scenic roller coaster ride in the world. At the time, it may have also been the largest. One hundred men constructed the new twin tracked wooden coaster in less than five months, where most of its support structure was buried in the Great Salt Lake. Marketing the massive ride, management suggested that it was over a mile and a quarter in length with a maximum height of 100 feet, although some suggest it was nearly 110 ft. high, adding the distance to the lake bed. It would be blown over in a fierce windstorm (see 1957 below).

•**1944:** Brooklyn's **Steeplechase Park** had a horrific fire leveling seven blocks of amusements in 1907, followed by the complete destruction of **Dreamland** in 1911. **Coney Island** would survive without Dreamland and a rebuilt Steeplechase Park, but **Luna Park** would remain unscathed for another three decades until August 13, 1944. A small fire that began in the **Dragon's Gorge** scenic railway's washroom, quickly spread through the flimsy wood framed buildings and destroyed more than half of the parks famous grounds and attractions, including the popular **Mile Sky Chaser**, the opera house and 15 assorted buildings. Amazingly, management opened the park less than a week later, but without its signature attractions near the front entrance, the crowds never returned except out of curiosity.

•**1957:** The famous **Giant Racer** at **Saltair**, would be blown over during a fierce windstorm on August 29. An estimated crowd of 500 people witnessed it shudder against nature's wrath (some said it was a twister that left half the ride standing). It was never rebuilt, and the park limped along for another season before closing permanently in 1958.

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

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## ►GOLD

Continued from page 1

That distinctive feature, it turns out, serves both thematic and practical purposes — evoking the confines of a mine shaft while damping the sounds produced by the plunging trains and their passengers.

Pointing out the “stark contrast” between Gold Striker and GCA’s 1986-built wooden coaster Grizzly, long a favorite of San Francisco Bay-area fun-seekers, Rehnborg couldn’t be happier with the general guest reaction. “The ride’s smoothness, strong sensation of speed and relentlessness are what people talk about the most,” he said. “It surpasses everyone’s expectations.”

Designed and built by Great Coasters International, Inc., of Sunbury, Pa., and hewn from 700,000 board feet of Southern yellow pine, Gold Striker had been on the drawing board since 2008. It wound up in limbo for several years while Sandusky, Ohio-based Cedar Fair Entertainment Company, which acquired the park formerly known as Paramount’s Great America in 2006, explored a possible (and eventually aborted) sale of the property.

With Cedar Fair’s commitment to Great America reaffirmed in late 2011, and the announcement that the com-

pany had reached a long-term agreement with the San Francisco 49ers football team involving parking and the building of a new stadium adjacent to the park, Gold Striker was back on the fast track.

“For Cedar Fair to bring back a project that had been on the drawing board for so many years and immediately make it a priority — and to use all of its resources to be able to push that through in as short of a time frame as possible — was corporate support that we enjoyed and appreciated,” said Rehnborg, a 26-year industry veteran who joined GCA in 2009 following management stints at the Knott’s Soak City waterparks in Chula Vista, outside San Diego, and Buena Park, Calif.

Because of GCA’s proximity to other businesses and office buildings, noise mitigation was a crucial issue addressed by the park and coaster builder at the design stage. Still, Gold Striker’s sound levels exceeded what had been agreed upon with the City of Santa Clara when testing began in late spring. Some necessary adjustments resulted in an uncertain ride opening date — it finally debuted June 1 — and an abrupt but brief two-day closure just prior to the July 4th holiday weekend, during which an additional, 70-foot soundproofing tunnel was built.

According to Rehnborg, several factors, including track banking and drop direction, were considered in the design-stage noise mitigation effort.

“Certainly, the tunnel covering the first drop was a benefit in that we felt that was where the biggest screams were going to come from,” he said. “But during the first month of operation, the enthusiastic physical reaction from our guests throughout the ride was beyond what we expected, and subsequent testing showed that we slightly exceeded some of the allowable noise standards. Great Coasters International and the City of Santa Clara have been great partners through all this; obviously, it was in everyone’s interests to keep the coaster open and running. But at the same time, we wanted to be compliant and considerate to the neighbors.”

Those neighbors include Prudential Real Estate Investors, with which GCA has a specific agreement regard-



Great Coasters International, Inc. (GCI), of Sunbury, Pa., has designed and built a cartload of classic, heavily banked twists into Gold Striker. Bob Dean of Sarasota, Fla.-based Leisure Labs, LLC, brokered the deal between GCI and Great America’s parent company, Cedar Fair. COURTESY DAN PEAK / CALIFORNIA’S GREAT AMERICA

ing the level of joyous noise emanating from Gold Striker. Rehnborg laughed at the suggestion that the Prudential folks might be a tad, er, prudish.

“They just want to be sure we’re taking their interests into account,” he said. “Great America has been here 37 years, and we haven’t been able to exist that long without taking into consideration the viewpoints of the neighbors and local businesses. We want to do our civic duty and be a good partner and neighbor.”

“Hopefully, as soon as [the Prudential employees] get days off, they’re compelled to go get a pass and come on in and enjoy themselves,” Rehnborg added with a chuckle.

While Gold Striker is getting the lion’s share of the attention at GCA this season, other improvements have been made in the park. Several new shows, picnic area upgrades and a Subway food outlet have been added to the property, as well new paint and roofing throughout.

“As I walk the midway, I’ve been approached by many guests — and even ride inspectors and the fire marshal! — who have noticed the changes,” Rehnborg said. “We’ve got amazing opportunities in front of us in 2014 with the opening of 49ers’ new stadium and its facilities. And we have an optimistic viewpoint of where this park is going to go in terms of ride product and offerings.”

“Our guests are excited about what the future holds for Great America, and that energizes us.”



Noise-mitigation efforts on Gold Striker include a 174-foot first-drop tunnel incorporated into its original design and a late-added 70-foot midcourse tunnel that necessitated the coaster’s sudden two-day closure in early July. COURTESY CALIFORNIA’S GREAT AMERICA



### FAST FACTS

#### Name/Park

Gold Striker/  
California’s Great America,  
Santa Clara, Calif.

#### Type

Wooden coaster

#### Public Opening

June 1, 2013

#### Height/Length

108 feet/3,197 feet

#### Maximum Speed

53.7 mph

#### Duration/Capacity

2.5 min./850 pph

#### Trains

2 trains with six  
Millennium Flyer cars each  
(24 riders per train)

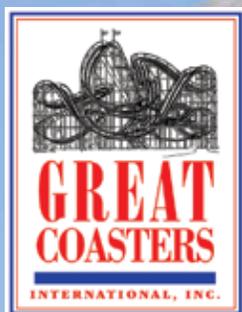
#### Designer/Manufacturer

Great Coasters  
International, Inc.,  
Sunbury, Pa.

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The fully restored B&B Carousell is the grand centerpiece of Steeplechase Plaza, a new \$29.7 million project undertaken by the City of New York. Built in 1906 by M.C. Illions, this historic machine features 50 hand-carved horses and two chariots. The B&B Carousell's eight-year, \$3 million restoration was carried out by Ohio-based Carousel and Carvings, Inc. and The Intermuseum Conservation Association. COURTESY CAI, INC.

## ► CONEY

Continued from page 1

CAI also took over operation of another of Coney's historic attractions, the famous B&B Carousell. The B&B's 50 horses were carved by MC Illions, a renowned carousel manufacturer who developed the Coney Island style of carving. In 2005 the city of New York rescued the machine from auction after which it was sent to an Ohio workshop where it underwent an eight-year, \$3 million restoration. The city owns the recently-reopened carousel but it is operated by

### FAST FACTS

#### Name/Park

B&B Carousell/  
Steeplechase Plaza,  
Coney Island, N.Y.

#### Type

Hand-carved  
wooden carousel  
50 Horses (36 jumpers/  
14 standers, two chariots)

#### Ride Refirbishment

Carousel and Carvings,  
Inc., Marion, Ohio and  
The Intermuseum  
Conservation Association,  
Cleveland, Ohio

#### Operator

Central Amusements  
International, Inc.

#### Reopening

Originally opened in 1906,  
reopened Memorial Day  
weekend 2013

#### Original Manufacturer

M. C. Illions  
—Source CAI, Inc.

CAI inside a new pavilion beneath the Parachute Jump in the new Steeplechase Plaza at the boardwalk and 15th Street.

Steeplechase Plaza is a project undertaken by the City that carries a price tag of \$29.7 million. In addition to the B&B Carousell, the Plaza offers fountains, creative landscaping and the new Carousell Grill that features everything from fresh fish to organic burgers. Also operated by CAI, the new Carousell Grill is being billed as Steeplechase Plaza's premier restaurant.

#### More Coney Dining

In addition to the Carousell Grill, CAI has opened yet another dining option, the Place to Beach, located directly on the boardwalk with 800 feet of frontage space. This sleek bar and cantina offers Mexican-inspired cuisine. Brimming with lunch options, PTB features a boardwalk window that provides a selection of grab'n'go tacos, burritos and fresh salads. Visitors can soak up the sun on the cabana-style patio and full-service bar where PTB serves a full selection of Mexican entrées, a wide-variety of beers and margaritas. The patio turns into a dance floor at night where live DJs and bands perform weekly events and monthly dance parties all summer long.

#### Parachute Jump lights up the night

Along with the Cyclone and Wonder Wheel, the iconic Parachute Jump is one of Coney's most recognizable and historic features. Originally operated at the 1939-40

World's Fair in Queens, the ride was purchased by the Tilyou family and relocated to their Steeplechase Park property. It operated from 1941 until the end of the 1964 season when Steeplechase ceased operation.

Though the Parachute Jump has been structurally reinforced and illuminated in various manners over the years, never has it popped so brilliantly as it does this season thanks to a project undertaken by CAI. The creative minds behind Luna Park outfitted the Jump with 7,500 high-intensity LED light modules that are fully programmable. The multi-million makeover is so bright that it can reportedly be seen from space.

First fully powered up on Friday, June 21, the Parachute Jump is a sight to behold. "It will be lighted every evening during the summer when Luna Park is open. It is very impressive. It turned out much better than we expected, so we are very happy with the result," commented Ferrari.

"We are working it out as we go but we are thinking of lighting up the tower during the off-season as well. Like the Empire State Building, we may choose different color configurations on specials days like Halloween, Christmas and St. Patrick's Day."

#### Historic Cyclone restoration continues

The magnificent Coney Island Cyclone is truly running 'faster than ever' thanks to the multi-phase track and structural rehab work performed by Great Coasters International, Inc. under the direction of CAI.

"Working with GCII, we spent \$700,000 this year rebuilding another section of the Cyclone. At this point we have rebuilt a full one-third of the ride in two years," said Ferrari. "We will keep moving along over the next two to three years as we complete the retracking of the entire ride. Once that is done, we plan to buy new trains, which will be supplied by an as-yet-unnamed manufacturer."

#### Coney's future is bright

Ferrari made it clear that CAI's role in the Coney Island reboot is just getting started. "Our next major project is the new Thunderbolt steel coaster that will open next year. With a track layout designed by



Above, CAI has opened this Place to Beach outside dining location on 800 feet of beachfront property. Right, the Parachute Jump has been outfitted with 7,500 high-intensity LED light modules that are fully programmable. Below, the Coney Island Cyclone structural rehab work, performed by Great Coasters International, Inc., continues its multi-year renovation plan. COURTESY CAI; CYCLONE COURTESY JOHN HUNT



[German designer Werner] Stengel, it will feature a new nine-seat train designed by Zamperla. It will open Memorial Day weekend 2014.

"Coney Island is rapidly becoming the place to be," concluded Ferrari. "Along with all that CAI is doing with Luna Park, Scream Zone and our other properties, the Coney Island Aquarium will open a new \$150 million exhibit in 2015 while the City is planning a new amphitheater with seating for 5,000, also in 2015-16. So, yes, things are happening in Coney Island. Really, the face of the resort is changing day by day ... and only for the better. We at CAI and Zamperla are very happy to be a part of this renaissance."

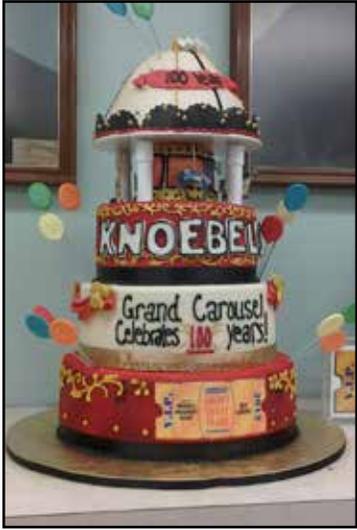
Luna Park is a project of Central Amusement International, which was designated by the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYC EDC) to operate the amusement park for a 10-year period. Central Amusement International built the 3.16-acre Luna Park in just over three months at a cost of more than \$15 million, with support from the City of New York, local residents, community organizations and Coney Island fans throughout the world.

Luna Park features 21 rides by Zamperla S.p.A., the world's leading designer and manufacturer of amusement attractions, as well as a world-class mix of games, entertainment and food.

•www.LunaParkNYC.com

Scheduled for September 6 & 7, 2013 at Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk

## 2013 Golden Ticket Awards registration continues; early booking suggested



Knoebel's Amusement Resort recently celebrated the 100th anniversary of the opening of its Grand Carousel with this ornate birthday cake that fully captures the spirit and fun of the historic machine. To mark the milestone of the eight-time winner in AT's coveted Golden Ticket Awards for Best Carousel, Knoebels offered free rides and cake to guests on July 4, 2013.

COURTESY KNOEBEL'S

SANTA CRUZ, Calif. — Get your ticket... it's a "don't miss" industry event, with registration and the complete itinerary for *Amusement Today's* coveted Golden Ticket Awards are now available at [www.GoldenTicketAwards.com](http://www.GoldenTicketAwards.com).

The two-day event will be hosted this year by the beautiful Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk in Santa Cruz, Calif., where the staff is hard at work preparing to roll out the red carpet for the industry on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 6 and 7.

As a bonus for attendees, Cedar Fair, L.P., is extending an extra play day at nearby California's Great America in Santa Clara, Calif., on Sunday, Sept. 8, before event attendees head home.

Special behind-the-scenes tours, receptions, dinners, a bowling tournament to benefit the National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives, and of course the much-anticipated awards show are all part of what's being planned for this year's event.

To check out the itinerary and hotel information for the Golden Ticket Awards, as well as to register, please log on to [www.GoldenTicketAwards.com](http://www.GoldenTicketAwards.com). This event is reserved for working professionals in the amusement industry. Representatives from parks and attractions, manufacturers, suppliers, consultants and more will come together to celebrate another industry season — all in the name of fun.

The Dream Inn, adjacent to the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, will serve as the host hotel

for the event. The deadline to make reservations is Aug. 16. Reservations can be made by calling (831) 460-5019 or at [www.jdvhotels.com](http://www.jdvhotels.com). Please use the code "1309GOLDEN" when making reservations. Special rates range from \$179 to \$219 per night. If you experience any difficulty in making a reservation, please contact Dan Smart, Dream Inn Sales Manager, at (831) 460-5019. A second hotel, Beach Street Inn and Suites, is also available for attendees with information at (831) 423-3031 or [www.beachstreetinn.com](http://www.beachstreetinn.com).

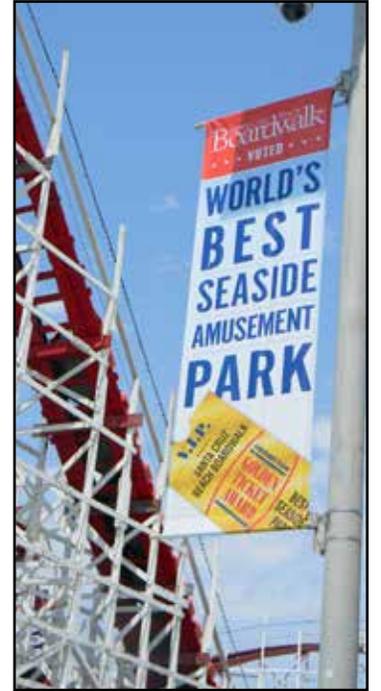
Industry professionals planning on attending are urged to book their hotel reservations ASAP and well before the discounted room cutoff dates.

AIMS International board of directors are reminded that your annual BOD meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 5 at the Deam Inn from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

National Roller coaster Museum board members are also reminded of their annual board meeting set for Friday, Sept. 6 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. also at the Dream Inn.

This is the 16th annual year for the Golden Ticket Awards; they are presented to the "Best of the Best" in the amusement industry and are calculated from an international poll conducted by *Amusement Today*.

[www.GoldenTicketAwards.com](http://www.GoldenTicketAwards.com)



Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, winner of the Best Seaside Park Golden Ticket for six years proudly displays their award on banners throughout the park. The classic seaside park plays host to the GTA's this year for the first time.

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# INTERNATIONAL

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## New Mystic Point themed area opens at Hong Kong Disneyland

**STORY:** Andrew Mellor  
amellor@amusementtoday.com

HONG KONG — A new themed area has opened at Hong Kong Disneyland, adding an entirely new and original experience to the resort and one of the most sophisticated attractions ever built by Disney.

The opening of Mystic Point marks the final phase of the current expansion project, which will be completed one year ahead of schedule and effectively increases the size of

Hong Kong Disneyland by 25 percent.

The new area is made up of the Mystic Manor, which features one of the most sophisticated ride systems ever built by Disney, a themed photo area, a new restaurant and a merchandise location, each of which plays an important role in creating a fully immersive experience within the park.

Speaking of the new area, Tom Staggs, chairman of Walt Disney Parks and Resorts, said: "At Disney Parks we

strive to create and deliver the best possible experience for our guests and we have invested significantly in expanding the offerings here at Hong Kong Disneyland. Mystic Manor is the first Disney attraction of its kind and it is sure to surprise and delight our guests of all ages. Like Toy Story Land and Grizzly Gulch, which were instant hits, we are certain Mystic Point will quickly become one of our guests' favourite attractions."

Mystic Manor is home to brand new characters, special effects and architecture, each of which seamlessly blends with state-of-the-art technology designed to transport guests into a strange and fantastic universe. The story follows the adventures of eccentric explorer and art collector Lord Henry Mystic and his Victorian manor house, and invites guests to board the Mystic Magneto-Electric Carriage for a tour of his private museum. In addition to the projection



On display in the Garden of Wonders are some unique ancient sculptures and 3D mosaics. Guests see a scale illusion and can have fun taking mystifying photos.

COURTESY HONG KONG DISNEYLAND

technology that creates unique visuals, a haunting tune and special music overlay weaves its way through the rooms of Mystic Manor.

The attraction uses a trackless system with RFID tags and a wireless communication system to control the movement

of 32 vehicles simultaneously. Also part of Mystic Point is the Explorer's Club Restaurant and the Archive Shop.

In February this year, the Resort also announced its first ever net profit since opening in September 2005.



Tom Staggs, chairman of Walt Disney Parks and Resorts (middle); Bill Ernest, president and managing director, Asia Walt Disney Parks and Resorts (left); and Andrew Kam, managing director of Hong Kong Disneyland Resort (right), in front of the Mystic Manor.

COURTESY HONG KONG DISNEYLAND



Guests board the Mystic Magneto-Electric Carriage in Mystic Manor for a tour of Lord Henry Mystic's museum.

COURTESY HONG KONG DISNEYLAND



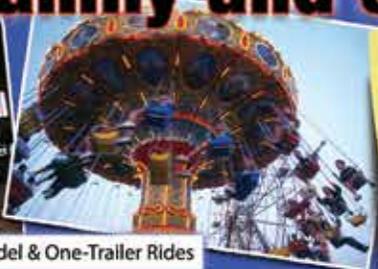
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# nWave Pictures Distribution launches new 4D Film at AAE

SINGAPORE — nWave Pictures Distribution launched a new 4D/3D attraction film named “The Good, The Bad and A Horse” at IAAPA’s recent Asian Attractions Expo. Directed by Ben Smith, the film tells the story of a brave young sheriff and his horse as they track down the meanest, baddest and stinkiest bandit in the whole wide Wild West. The 11-minute 4D experience is available for distribution exclusively from nWave and will premiere at attractions and theme parks this summer.

“We are thrilled to collaborate with our production partner Red Star again, as we bring this exciting comic adventure to our clients,” said Eric Dillens, chairman of nWave Studios. “The film offers a truly immersive attraction experience by taking full advantage of the potential of 4D effects such as 3D-stereoscopy, sound and special effects, smell, explosions and wind blasts.”

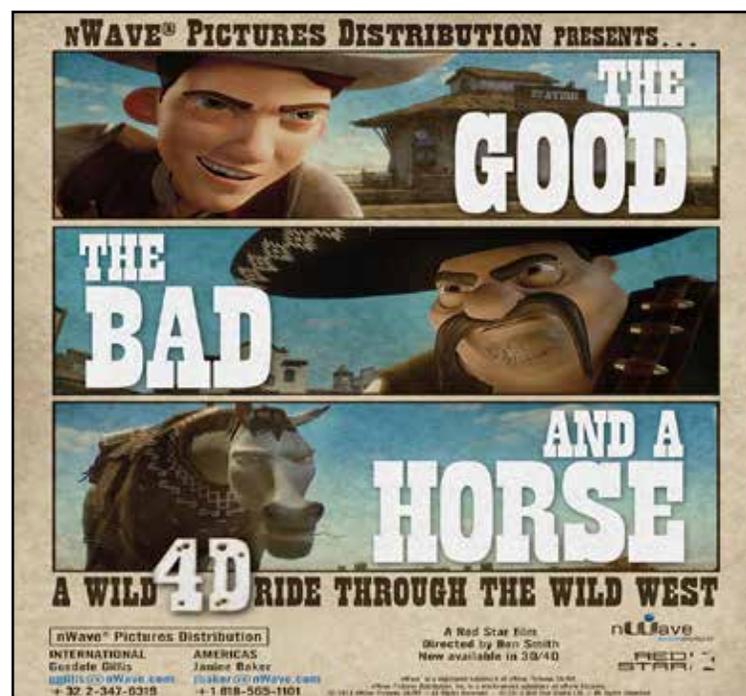
“Westerns have entertained audiences since the dawn of cinema and with nWave Pictures Distribution, we’re delighted to show this popular theme in an entirely new 4D format to family audiences worldwide,” said film direc-

tor Ben Smith, who is also Red Star’s Creative Director.

Attraction and theme park exhibitors experienced “The Good, The Bad and A Horse” in 4D in the company’s state-of-the-art screening room during the IAAPA Asian Attraction Expo.

The film depicts the tribulations of a plucky sheriff and his horse, the West’s most ornery, most reluctant and most apple-minded of steeds. When a bank robber evades capture by means of an unusual weapon and then escapes by train with the loot, our hero goes after him in hot pursuit, unfazed by the dangers posed by a deserted mine and a broken-down railway.

“The Good, The Bad and A Horse” is produced by British 3D animation studio Red Star. It marks the third collaboration between the two companies, which have already released two other 4D titles, “20,000 Leagues Under the Sea” (2012) and “Sherlock Holmes” (2013).” nWave is the market leader for attraction and ride simulation films, maintaining a catalogue of 64 titles in distribution. nWave Pictures is based in Brussels, AB, Belgium.



nWave Pictures Distribution launched a new 4D/3D attraction film named “The Good, The Bad and A Horse” at IAAPA’s recent Asian Attractions Expo in Singapore. The 11-minute film tells the story of a brave young sheriff and his horse as they track down the meanest, baddest and stinkiest bandit in the whole wide Wild West. Produced by British 3D animation studio Red Star, the new film marks the third collaboration between the two companies.

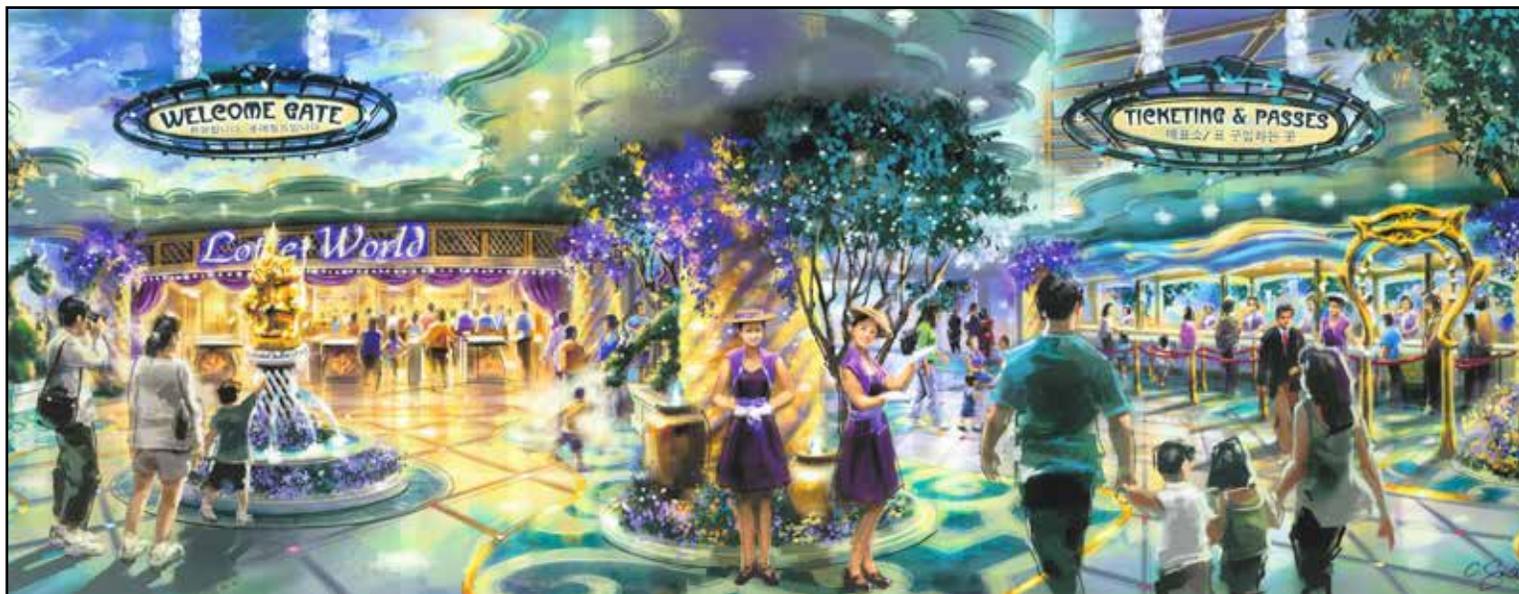
COURTESY nWAVE PICTURES

# Lotte World, Goddard Group to create upscale ticketing experience

SINGAPORE — South Korea’s Lotte World has announced plans to introduce the world’s first upscale ticketing experience at a major theme park. The announcement was made during the recent IAAPA Asian Attraction Expo in Singapore.

Designed by the Goddard Group, a Hollywood-based design firm, the Lotte World Welcome Center will replace the park’s existing entry experience — one that has remained virtually untouched since opening in 1989. When the multi-phased Welcome Center project, currently under construction, is ultimately completed in October of this year, guests will find that the traditional ticket booths have been eliminated. In their place will be long flowing ticketing desks — an experience which the designers claim will be much more akin to that of checking into a luxury hotel.

“With each new project we take on, our goal is to challenge tradition and advance the medium,” says Taylor Jeffs, the Goddard Group’s director of design. “Here, we realized early-on that the idea of having an inherently — unwelcoming plexiglass barrier between guests and their hosts was antiquated,” he adds, citing the trend toward cashless



Opening in October of this year, the new Lotte World Welcome Center will replace the park’s existing entry experience. COURTESY GODDARD GROUP

payments in markets like the U.S. and Korea. “I think it’s safe to say that what we’ve created for Lotte World’s new Welcome Center represents the future of the theme park arrival experience.”

The development of this project comes on the heels of a decade-long shift towards non-traditional upscale experiences all around the world taking place in luxury cinemas, drug stores, and even bowling alleys. According to the Goddard Group, the luxury ticketing concept was first conceived in 2008 during the development of the Six Flags Dubailand project. Since plans

for the park were abandoned following that region’s economic difficulties, Goddard’s team has been searching for a partner willing to take the bold step of bringing this idea to reality, and is thankful to have found that partner with their client Lotte World.

According to Lotte World’s Ashley Choi, the project’s internal producer for the park, the new Welcome Center will be operationally superior, as well. “As part of the re-development, we’re literally doubling the number of ticketing stations available for our guests, in addition to increasing our turnstile capacity

by over thirty percent,” said Choi, noting that the park has experienced steadily-increasing visitorship over the last two years.

As for the design of the space itself, Jeffs says the ambiance will be that of a dreamlike garden. “By its nature, a theme park’s entrance is generally chaotic, so our primary goal is to organize the chaos as best we can, and to put guests in a calming and stimulating multi-sensory environment.” He adds that the Goddard Group will employ visceral elements including smells, sounds, and transforming mood-lighting to achieve this

effect.

Jeffs hopes other parks around the world will be inspired by the trend towards upscale arrival experiences. He notes, “When you spend tens of millions on an E-Ticket attraction, only a fraction of a theme park’s daily visitors will actually experience it. Yet, a park’s entrance is something that literally every single guest experiences, and also represents the first and last impression that is made. So why has this critical element long remained an after-thought? Our goal here is to change that.”

## 360 Play operator DP Leisure celebrates opening of new offices

MILTON KEYNES, U.K. — 360 Play operator DP Leisure has moved into newly created offices and workshops in its home town of Milton Keynes, while at the same time celebrating its fifth anniversary.

Founded in 2008 by Duncan Phillips, DP Leisure is the operating company behind the popular 360 Play children's entertainment centre brand, while also within the group is the strategic leisure consultancy DP Associates. The company has grown impressively since its inception and now operates three 360 Play sites — in Milton Keynes, Stevenage and Leicester, with more in



DP Leisure Managing Director Duncan Phillips is seen outside the company's new offices with 360 Play mascots Twizle and Twirl. COURTESY DP LEISURE

the pipeline — as well as employing over 142 staff company-wide.

The new DP House premises have been created from a

totally empty office/workshop building, and from here the company will provide central support to the group and its venues as expansion contin-

ues. The new interior has been designed and built in-house by DP Leisure's own staff and now features a reception area, main boardroom and separate meeting room, a design studio, a large open plan office area with adjacent office and other facilities.

The rear half of the building houses the company's workshops, in which much of the content of the 360 Play venues is manufactured, along with storage areas and an outdoor area.

"I'm delighted to announce our move into new offices and workshops," said DP Leisure Managing Director Duncan Phillips. "We have grown steadily during

the past five years and have been looking for larger offices and workshops for some time. From what was literally a shell of a building we have created a carefully designed, modern office space with excellent facilities, including those in the workshop, and we are justly proud of what we have achieved.

"At the same time we have also marked our fifth year in business having opened our first 360 Play site in our home city of Milton Keynes five years ago, so it is a double celebration. I am very happy with our progress and growth to date and look forward to continuing the company's development in the future."

## Asian Attractions Expo reaches new heights in Singapore

**STORY:** Andrew Mellor  
amellor@amusementtoday.com

MARINA BAY SANDS, Singapore — Another record-breaking number of participants at this year's IAAPA Asian Attractions Expo (AAE) once again highlighted the continued growth of the industry in the region when the event took place from June 4-7.

Held at the Sands Expo and Convention Center, Marina Bay Sands, Singapore, initial attendance estimates from the organizers indicate that 5,350 people (5,000 in 2012) participated in the event, either as exhibitors or visitors, with numbers in both groups increasing on the previous year's figures. The IAAPA Institute for Attractions Managers was sold out and attendance was also strong for the education conference programs.

The figures released show that 3,600 buyers from theme parks, waterparks, FECs, zoos, aquariums, museums, science centers and resorts from 67 nations attended AAE 2013 and IAAPA President and CEO Paul Noland commented: "Asian Attractions Expo 2013's success reflects the tremendous industry growth in the Asia-Pacific region and confirms the Expo is the attractions industry's leading event for industry professionals."

A total of 286 companies from 34 countries exhibited



The Leadership Breakfast featured a keynote presentation by Tom Mehrmann, Chief Executive of Ocean Park Corp. COURTESY IAAPA AAE

within the trade show on 6,824 net square meters (73,453 square feet) of space, the largest show floor in the event's history. Almost 1,500 people took part in the education conference, while 280 attended the Leadership Breakfast which featured a keynote presentation by Tom Mehrmann, Chief Executive of Ocean Park Corp.

An official opening ceremony was held once again, this year the occasion highlighting new attractions in Asia and including performances by Victoria's Way from Enchanted Kingdom in the Philippines and Sesame Street characters from Universal Studios Singapore. More than 500 attendees took part in tours of Marine Life Park and Adventure Cove at Resorts World Sentosa during the Opening Night Event, while visitors also had the opportunity to participate in behind-the-scenes tours of Legoland Malaysia, Lat's Place, Hello Kitty Town and Universal Studios Singapore.

Although some felt the trade show was quieter than in previous years, the overall response was very positive for exhibitors. Among these was Vekoma Rides Manufacturing, for whom Peter van Bilsen noted: "AAE 2013 has been an excellent show for Vekoma Rides. Many solid, new projects with great potential have been discussed. The attendance was good both with respect to numbers and quality buyers."

At Jack Rouse Associates, CEO Keith James commented: "We had some very positive meetings and those prospective clients who visited our booth had real, quality projects. The Asia-Pacific market is one that continues to gather steam and I see that momentum continuing for years to come."

Asian Attractions Expo 2014 will be held at the China National Convention Center in Beijing from June 17-20.



The AAE trade show floor attracted a record number of companies in 2013 with 286 companies from 34 countries exhibiting. Companies such as Vekoma rides Manufacturing (above) and Dynamic Attractions (below) were on hand to meet with the 3,600 buyers who attended the show.

COURTESY IAAPA AAE





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# PARKS & ATTRACTIONS

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## 2013 season for four family-owned parks looking good, even with damaging storms

**STORY:** Pam Sherborne  
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

A round up of two New Mexico and two Texas family-owned amusement parks show that by mid-season attendance was going well and new ride and attractions installed were receiving a great response.

Two parks, Wonderland Amusement, Amarillo, and Joyland, Lubbock, were both hit with storm damage in June and are still working to repair all damage.

Yet, both these parks were back up quickly and having what appears will be a very good 2013 season.

### Western Playland Sunland Park, N.M.

The response to Western Playland's new SDC Windstar coaster has been great so far, said park owner Pat Thomson. The coaster, which the park named The Hurricane, opened Memorial Day weekend. It was purchased from Santa Cruz Beach (Calif.) Boardwalk and brought to Western Playland last November. The piece



The new addition to Cliff's Amusement Park for the 2013 is this Zamperla Happy Swing, dubbed Cliff's Swing Set.

COURTESY  
CLIFF'S AMUSEMENT PARK

is about 20 years old.

"After bringing it here, we started repainting and rebuilding it," Thomson said. "Everything now has been rebuilt. It took us about a month to put up. Then, we started it in April."

The support structure was painted blue, and the track is white. The rollercoaster features two trains of three cars apiece. Up to four people can fit in each car.

This is the second coaster for Playland. The park has a Pinfari Zyklon.

"We were looking for another ride when this Windstar came up," Thomson said. "We weren't necessarily looking for another coaster, but we were hoping it might be."

The new coaster is about the same height as the Zyklon, 50 feet, but Thomson said it has a smaller footprint, about 100 feet by 40-50 feet. It is also faster, traveling up to 50 mph. It boosts several 80-degree turns.

The hourly capacity is about 1,000 people. Track length measures between 1,100-1,200 feet and ride time is about one and half minutes.

"The response has been great," Thomson said.

They have seen an increase in attendance this year due to the new addition.

"We saw an increase in attendance even before the ride opened," he said.

Western Playland now has 23 rides.

### Cliff's Amusement Park Albuquerque, N.M.

The 2013 season has been going very well for Cliff's Amusement Park. Justin Hays, manager, said the park purchased a new Zamperla Happy Swing for this season



Western Playland has opened this SDC Windstorm coaster to the delights of guests. The coaster was purchased from Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, and completely refurbished and repainted by Western Playland's staff before opening in April. COURTESY WESTERN PLAYLAND

and the response to that ride has been really good.

"We also built two more tunnels for our wooden roller coaster," he said. "We already had one tunnel."

The park's coaster is a Custom Coaster installed in 2004. Called the New Mexico Rattler, Hays said they purchased it right before that company went out of business and actually had to end up finishing erecting it themselves.

"But that is another story," he added, with a laugh.

Park officials are sort of kicking around ideas for the 2014 season. At the first of July, plans included remodeling the front gate and possibly reconfiguring the train track.

With the addition of the Happy Swing this year, the park now has 26 rides.

### Wonderland Park Amarillo, Texas

Paul Borchardt, owner, Wonderland Amusement Park, felt he most probably was down in attendance at the first of July, but it certainly wasn't due to the new bum-

getting our attendance back up. I probably didn't lose the business from being closed, but from the attitude of the people. When something like this happens, people have a tendency to hunker down for a while."

Borchardt said his attendance came back up around the Fourth of July and it has stayed that way.

The beginning of the season had been great for Wonderland. The response to Borchardt's new seating pavilion and new bumper car building has been great.

"The bumper cars were located in the center of the park," he said. "The original concept was to have somewhere for adults and children to congregate under cover."

So, he removed the cars from the original location and created the pavilion and added seating and tables for patrons. He has named it the Gnome Home. Gnome's are used in his advertising spots.

The new bumper car building was purchased from Len Soled at Rides-4-U. It is 40 feet by 80 feet. It is a steel building with themed murals covering the steel. Borchardt said it has a very nice feel with colorful panels along the outside. The new building came from Cyprus Gardens I Florida.

Borchardt refreshed his Miler Mouse coaster, the Cyclone, by giving it a brand new blue paint job and installing magnetic brakes from Velocity Magnetics.

He also purchased a used Eli Bridge Scrambler from Soled that had come from Funtime Amusements.

"Right before the season opened, we discovered

▶ See PARKS, page 14

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## ►PARKS

Continued from page 13

a crack in our Scrambler," he said. "Len was able to get us one quickly. We only lost one day of having no Scrambler. That ride is staple for us. I had asked that Eli go ahead and fix my existing ride. So, when it is done, we will have two."

### Joyland Park Lubbock, Texas

David Dean's park also had storm damage. He didn't have the hail Borchardt's area received. He had high winds, up to 90 mph, and flooding.

"We had closed early so no one was in the park," Dean said. "I think we really might have had a tornado. The winds were pushing my truck around on the road, but it was dark and I couldn't see what was going on."

Dean said he was closed for five days. The park suffered damage from signs and panels being blown around and from fallen trees. He wasn't even sure how long his power was off because they

didn't even attempt to turn anything on for several days due to trees over power lines.

"We had had a great spring," Dean said. "It probably took about a week for people to realize we were back open after being closed for those five days. Now, we are back up to normal attendance."

Dean had purchased a SCS waterplay structure from Cliff's Amusement Park in late fall of 2012. His original idea was to install the structure for the 2013 season, but instead decided to redo his Galaxi coaster and his Reverchon flume ride.

"It just made sense to go ahead and do those two things for this season, then turn our attention to the new structure," he said. "We will be developing an undeveloped area of the park for the waterplay structure so it will take a while. I hope to be scratching the surface in mid-September for that, but I don't sweat it being open in time for spring break next March."

The Galaxi coaster is a

SDC coaster Dean installed in the park in 1990. It came from White Swan Lake, Pa. The coaster was completely painted by Million Painting, Norman, Okla. Dean said they used a urethane paint, a long-lasting type paint. The coaster also received all new wheels from K & K Machine Shop, Atlanta. He purchased new anti-rollback ratchets from Larson International and purchased all new axles locally. The car frames were rebuilt and repainted.

The portable-version Reverchon flume received a new liner from Waterloo Tent and Tarp, and the conveyors received new bearings and bushings. The boats were also rebuilt.

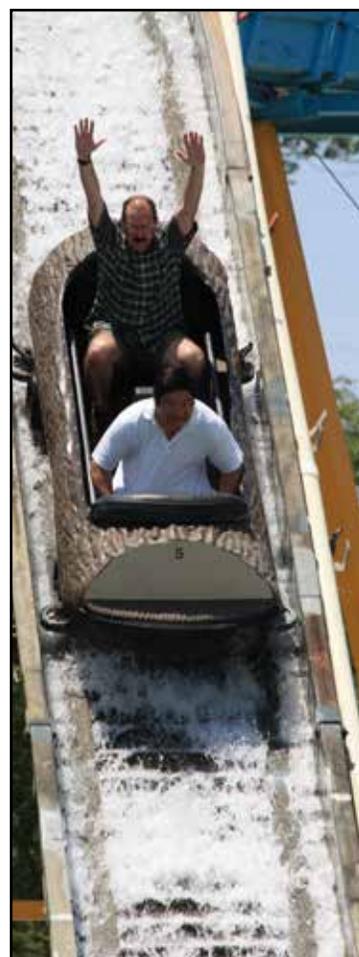
"This flume ride is a Wild River model and a very nice ride," Dean said. "There are only two working in the U.S., this one and the one at Coney Island that Zamperla is operating."

Dean said the flume ride has two lifts, one almost 20 feet high and the other is 40 feet high.

"We also installed a mist tunnel that is popular for our summers," he added.

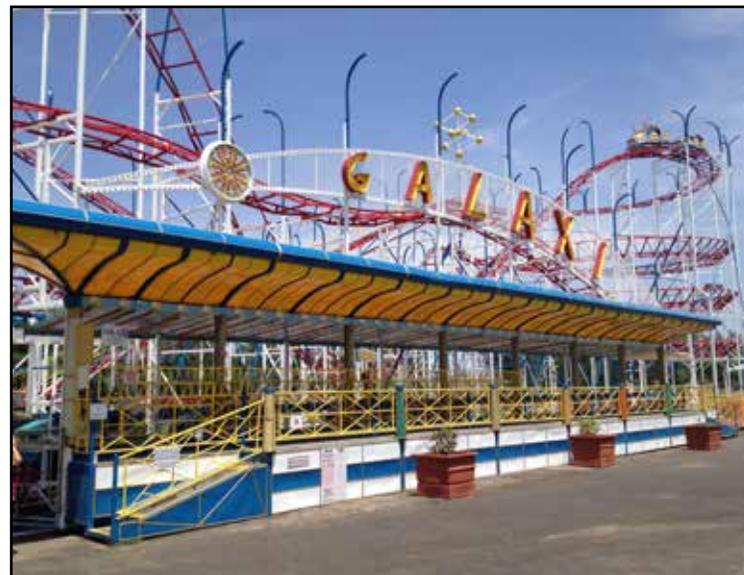
Dean purchased a Sellner Dizzy Dragon, but in the second week of July, he still hadn't opened it.

"We didn't receive delivery of the ride until mid-May," Dean said. "Then, the storm hit so we haven't really had time to get it going."



Wonderland Park moved their bumper cars into this new building (above) provided by SBF Visa/Rides 4U, then took their old bumper car site (below) and built a new covered pavilion for guests to relax and enjoy food and beverages from their nearby concession area. At left, the park's historic Miller coaster received new paint and Velocity Magnetic braking and other safety improvements.

AT/GARY SLADE



Above, Joyland Amusement Park's SDC Galaxi coaster received a complete overhaul as the coaster received a major paint job, new wheels, new anti-rollback ratchets, new axles, and frames for the cars. At left, the park's Reverchon log flume also received a complete rebuild and a new misting system in a tunnel.

AT/GARY SLADE

## Kay Park Recreation Corp.

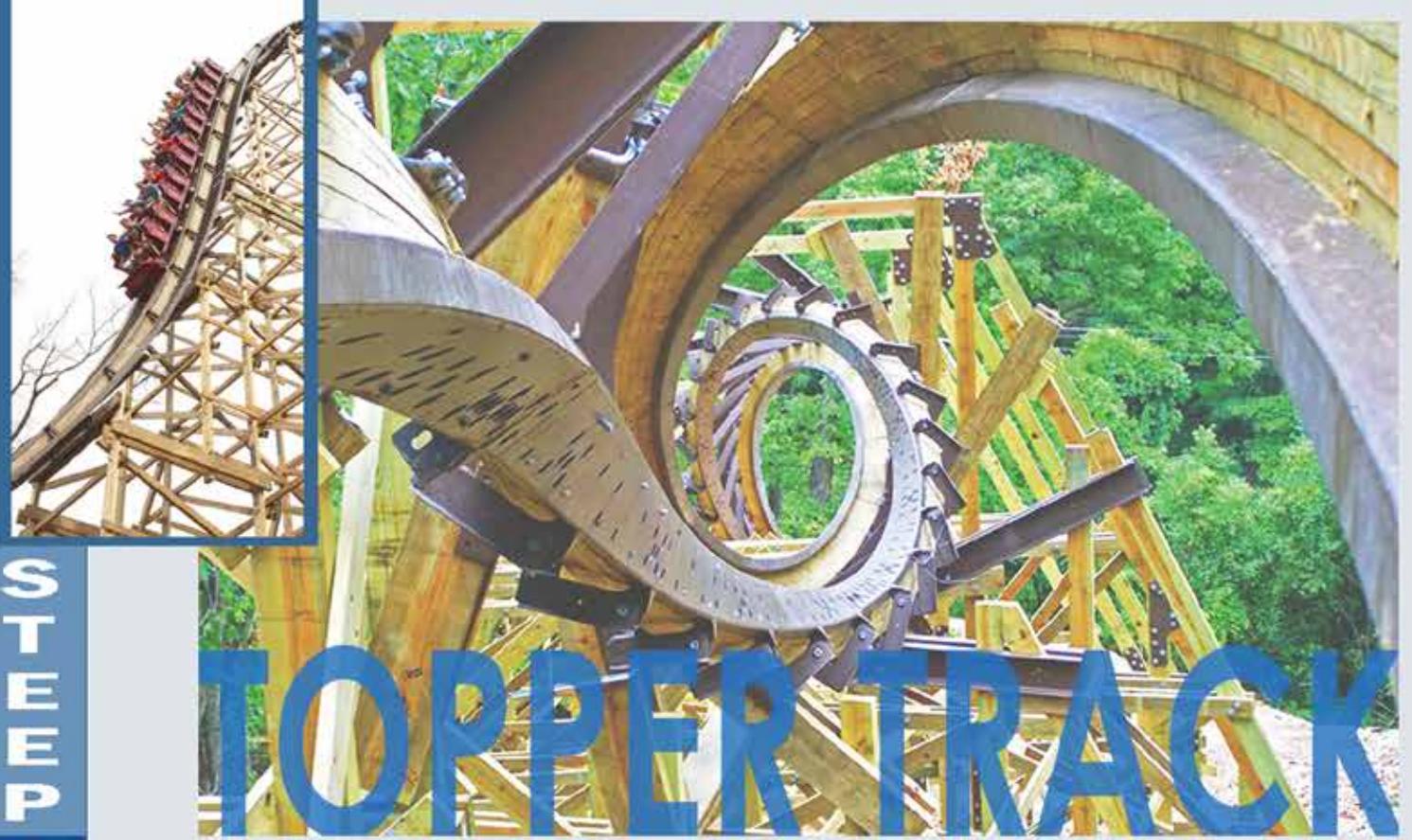
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## Record-setting launch coaster from Premier Rides

# Six Flags Magic Mountain goes Full Throttle with looping thriller

**STORY:** Dean Lamanna  
Special to Amusement Today

VALENCIA, Calif. — As viewed from Interstate 5 in the Santa Clarita Valley, Six Flags Magic Mountain (SFMM) has sprouted a remarkably dense technological sculpture garden of track-based amusements in its more four decades of operation.



The park's evolution as a world-class thrill spot, beginning with its 1976 opening of the first modern vertical-looping steel coaster, Great American Revolution, now comes full circle in the most literal way with the debut of Full Throttle — the tallest, fastest looping coaster on the planet.

Praising her "dream team" — the entire ranks of SFMM's personnel — during a speech preceding the new coaster's media preview on June 21, park president Bonnie Rabjohn hit some emotional high notes and amped the crowd's



Several views (above and below) of Full Throttle cresting the outside of its record-setting, 160-foot-high loop just before the train returns to the station. This one-of-a-kind, loop-capping "top hat" element is made possible by consecutive reverse and forward midcourse LSM launches after the initial 70-mph LSM launch.

AT/DEAN LAMANNA; COURTESY SIX FLAGS MAGIC MOUNTAIN

### FAST FACTS

**Name/Park**

Full Throttle/  
Six Flags Magic Mountain,  
Valencia, Calif.

**Type**

Looping launch coaster

**Public Opening**

June 22, 2013

**Loop Height**

160 feet

**Maximum Speed**

70 mph (first launch)

**Launch System**

Linear synchronous motor  
(3 launches total)

**Trains**

2 trains, 3 cars each  
(18 riders per train)

**Inversions**

Full loop, dive loop

**Designer/Manufacturer**

Premier Rides, Inc.,  
Baltimore, Md.

—Source: SFMM

anticipation in front of Full Throttle's towering, 160-foot-tall white loop, which sports track on both its inner and outer structure.

"Full

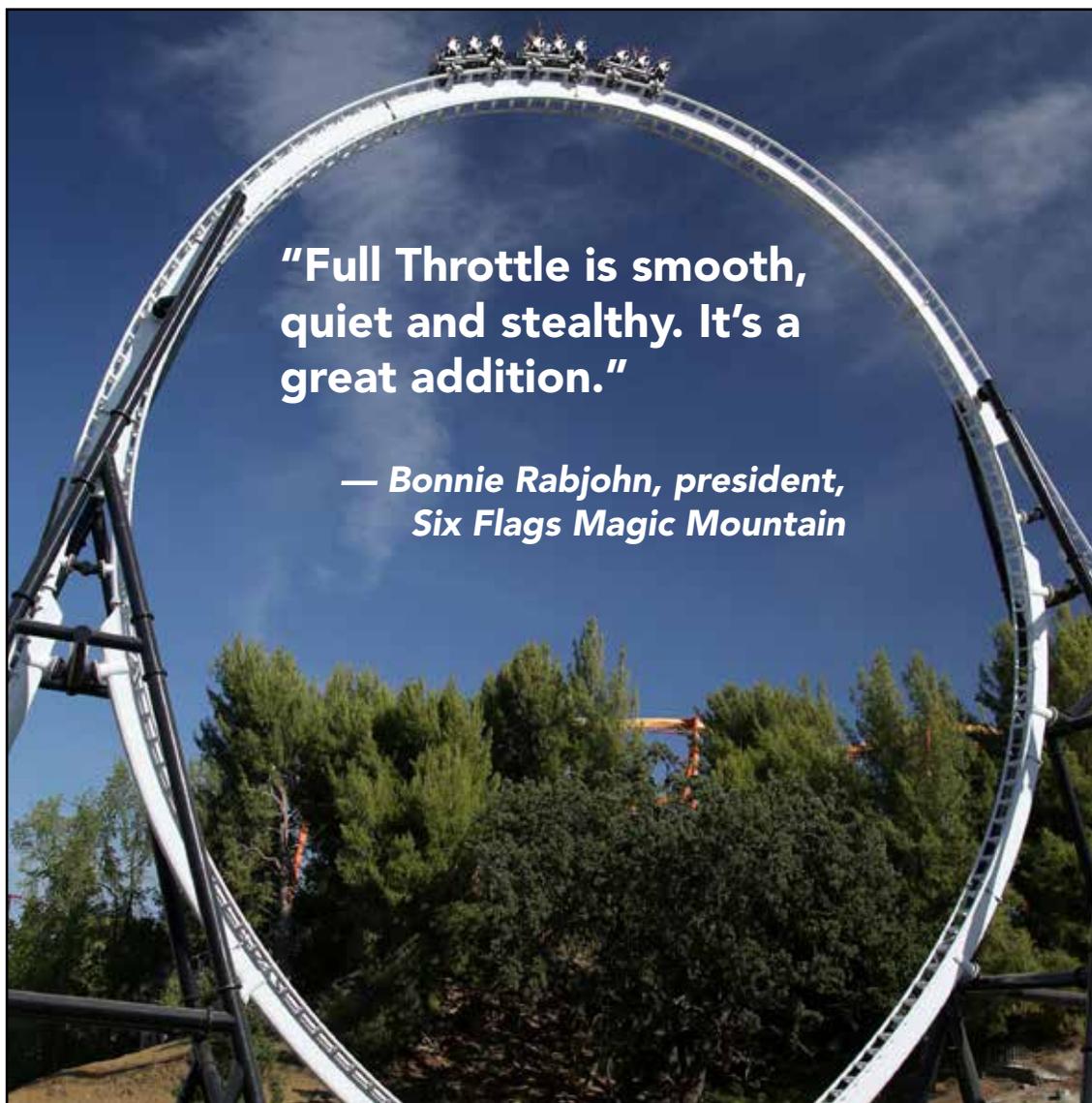
Throttle has been in the works for three years, and it's really exciting," Rabjohn told AT immediately following the ceremony. "We do a lot of brainstorming and long-term planning, and this was a collaboration of the entire Six Flags organization. They came together to see what was missing, what we needed — and what would really put us back into the [coaster] leadership position."

Full Throttle appears finely geared to that challenge.

Located near the front gate, in a partly-forested section skirted by two older generations of cutting-edge steel coasters, Revolution and the flying, 2006-built Tatsu, the new ride fills the former site of the Log Jammer flume. Its ini-



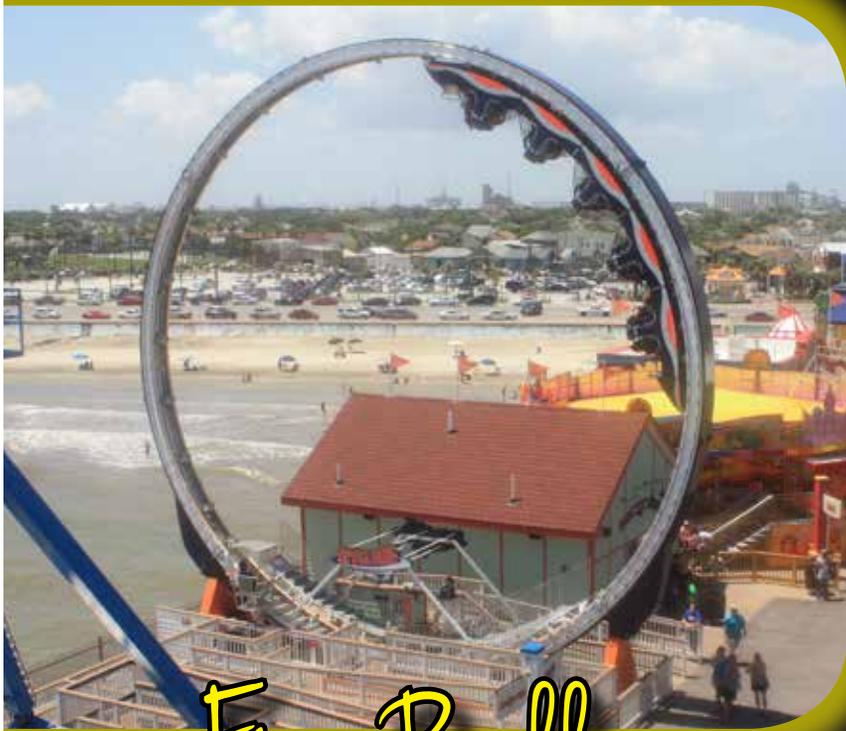
**Rabjohn**



"Full Throttle is smooth, quiet and stealthy. It's a great addition."

— Bonnie Rabjohn, president,  
Six Flags Magic Mountain

▶ See SFMM, page 18



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► **SFMM**  
Continued from page 16

tial linear synchronous motor (LSM) launch sends passengers straight into the massive loop at 70 mph, subjecting them to a couple seconds of impressive upside-down "hang time," and

**Premier Rides has built some surprising "hang time" into Full Throttle at Six Flags Magic Mountain.**

COURTESY SIX FLAGS  
MAGIC MOUNTAIN

then through a twisting, high-banked, energy-expending stretch of terrain-hidden track before arriving at a midcourse tunnel. There, a dual LSM segment performs a reverse / forward maneuver that rocks the train up and over the outside of the loop "top hat"-style. (A first-ever feature for a fully looping structure.)

According to Tim Burkhart, a 37-year SFMM operations veteran who was promoted to vice president of maintenance and construction

for the entire Six Flags chain earlier this year, Baltimore-based Premier Rides had the best ideas for integrating into the site the park's predetermined "must-have" characteristics for its 18th coaster.

"We were looking for a signature Magic Mountain element, which is a world record of some kind," Burkhart said. "Once we got the loop idea established and realized we had a tunnel to work with, we asked ourselves, What can we do with that tunnel to make it something really 'wow'? What happens at that point in the ride is unexpected and fun."

He added: "The coaster is exhilarating — not intense. You could ride it all day long." (Well, maybe Grandma couldn't.)

Full Throttle also differs from the rest of SFMM's harder-core attractions thematically. Rather than giving the ride a strictly commercial or character-driven name and story, the park opted for something more inspirational that's reflected by coaster's slogan: "Live It. Be It. Ride It."

"It's about the positive things that drive all of us, and living life to the fullest," said Debbie Erickson, director of marketing and sales, explaining that the name and theme resulted from several months of research involving SFMM guests and outside sources.

The theming package includes an original song, "Live It Up," and a film depicting various human adventures and challenges that unspools in a 20-minute loop on a huge screen beneath a soaring canopy, which serves as the centerpiece of Full Throttle's mist-emitting, mandala-like entrance plaza.

"Not only is Full Throttle a roller coaster, but it's an entire zone," said Bonnie Rabjohn of the five-acre area encompassed by the ride and its environs, which include several new food and retail outlets and live entertainment. "We've given this dated area of the park a facelift and made it relevant again. At night, this place completely comes to life"

And SFMM's president loves the coaster itself.

"It's smooth, quiet and stealthy," she said. "It's a great addition."



**Burkhart**

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# Space Shuttle Atlantis exhibit on display at Kennedy Space Center

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex opened the doors to the world's most comprehensive and interactive attraction devoted to NASA's 30-year Space Shuttle program — Space Shuttle Atlantis on June 29.

More than 40 NASA astronauts participated in the grand opening, making appearances and signing autographs throughout the Visitor Complex. The festivities also included more than 20 special NASA exhibits throughout the Visitor Complex.

Speaking at the event were: NASA administrator Charles Bolden; Kennedy Space Center director Bob Cabana; Delaware North Companies Parks & Resorts president Rick Abramson and Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex chief operating officer, Bill Moore.

Of the three space-flown orbiters distributed by NASA to science centers and museums throughout the country, only Atlantis is the focal point of a \$100 million, 90,000-square-foot attraction containing four multimedia

and cinematic productions and more than 60 interactive experiences that invite guests to "be the astronaut" and to celebrate the people, passion and patriotism behind the shuttle program.

Only at Space Shuttle Atlantis can guests come literally nose to nose with an actual space shuttle orbiter that flew in space 33 times and still bears the scars, scorch marks and space dust of its last mission. Only at Space Shuttle Atlantis can guests get a nearly 360-degree view of Atlantis as only astronauts have seen it before, tilted on its side at a 43.21-degree angle, seeming to float in space with its payload bay doors open and its robotic arm extended, as if it has just undocked from the International Space Station (ISS). And only at Kennedy Space Center can guests say they saw a shuttle at the home of human spaceflight, where all 135 space shuttle missions from 1981 to 2011 were launched and processed.

Developed by Delaware North Companies Parks & Resorts, operators of Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex



Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex opened the doors to Space Shuttle Atlantis, the world's most comprehensive and interactive attraction devoted to NASA's 30-year Space Shuttle Program on June 29. Guests come literally nose to nose with an actual space shuttle orbiter that flew in space 33 times and still bears the scars, scorch marks and space dust of its last mission. COURTESY KENNEDY SPACE CENTER

for NASA since 1995, as well as St. Louis-based PGAV Destinations, in partnership with NASA, Space Shuttle Atlantis is the marquee element in a 10-year master plan for the Visitor Complex. Here, top-of-the-line audio/visual and show systems, theme park technology seen in Orlando's newest and most popular attractions, seldom seen NASA images and footage, and reality-based

astronaut training simulations combine to create a first-of-its-kind attraction.

"It's true that there is more than one space shuttle orbiter out there, but there is nowhere else on Earth like Space Shuttle Atlantis," said Bill Moore, chief operating officer of Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex. "This completely immersive experience is about much more than seeing Atlan-

tis close up. With hi-fi replicas, simulators and interactive activities touching on all aspects of the shuttle program and its accomplishments, including the Hubble Space Telescope and the International Space Station, it's the closest guests can get to living and working in space — short of applying to the astronaut corps."

# Madagascar Live! Operation Vacation opens at SeaWorld San Diego

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — Guests can sing, clap and dance along to classic and original songs while partying with their favorite characters as they join the cast in the ultimate interactive show Madagascar Live! Operation: Vacation now open at SeaWorld San Diego.

This new original live musical show features the characters from DreamWorks Animation SKG, Inc.'s beloved Madagascar franchise showing at the park's renovated Mission Bay Theater.

"SeaWorld San Diego and our sister park Busch Gardens in Tampa are the only two theme parks in the United States where fans can see this incredibly funny and engaging new show," said Rick Schuiteman, vice president of entertainment. "We welcome these characters to our family."

The 20-minute musical show follows the antics of Alex the Lion, Gloria the Hippo, King Julien, Mort and the Penguins during a vacation adventure. The production features rock/pop music performed by a live band and include clas-



Madagascar Live! Operation: Vacation is a new live show that premiered in June at SeaWorld San Diego. Singers, dancers and a live band join the rollicking Madagascar characters for a 20-minute musical performance that entertains audiences eight times daily. COURTESY SEAWORLD SAN DIEGO

sic and original songs. Guests even get the chance to be part of the party! The stage production runs year-round and will feature up to eight shows per day. After shows, the characters conduct meet and greets with park guests.

To make the show a reality, the Mission Bay Theater has been completely renovated.

Modern theater modifications include a new stage, screen, lighting, scenery, special effects and more than 700 new theater-style seats have been added. In the back stage area, the theater has been outfitted with costume changing and storage rooms and other amenities to meet the needs of the cast and crew.



Madagascar Live! Operation: Vacation replaces the park's popular 4-D movies, which have included Sesame Street presents Lights, Camera, Imagination! in 4-D, which ran from 2008 to 2012; R.L. Stine's Haunted Lighthouse, from 2003 to 2008; and Pirates 4-D, which ran 2000 to 2003.

Madagascar is one of the

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

# Vekoma Boomerang flies at Six Flags St. Louis

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — The latest addition to the thrill ride arsenal at Six Flags St. Louis is a Vekoma Boomerang which opened to the public on June 6, 2013. Boomerang sends riders through loops and rolls not once, but twice, offering a different experience than any other coaster in the park.

Boomerang features a 28-passenger train which is pulled up 125 feet backward to the top of a lift hill and then released to propel riders through a double-looping cobra roll maneuver and then a vertical loop before climbing another lift. Once released, the train repeats the entire 935-foot-long course in reverse. The dual lift hills of Boomerang takes riders up over The Screamin' Eagle's first drop, a view they can't get anywhere else in the park. The bold orange and lime green twisting track of Boomerang is located in the Il-



A Vekoma Boomerang, the ninth roller coaster at Six Flags St. Louis, opened to the public on June 6, 2013. Located in the Illinois section of the park, the 125-foot-tall The dual lift hills of Boomerang take riders up and over The Screamin' Eagle's first drop. The Boomerang was relocated from sister park Six Flags Over Texas where it operated as Flashback from 1989 through the 2012 season.

COURTESY SIX FLAGS

linois section of the park.

"Providing thrills for our guests is what we do best. It is in our DNA," said Dave Romer, Six Flags St. Louis park president. "Bringing yet another great coaster experience to our park with the addition of Boomerang is why Six Flags

St. Louis is the Coaster Capital of Missouri. We provide exciting thrills, family fun and great value...Six Flags St. Louis has it all!"

As part of the opening day events, Six Flags St. Louis hosted throwers from the United States Boomerang team, in-

cluding three-time member James Stickney, who has won two career tournaments and has found himself as high as fourth in the world rankings. Members of the team took the ceremonial first ride on Boomerang.

The Boomerang was re-

located from sister park Six Flags Over Texas where it operated as Flashback from 1989 through the 2012 season. The ride was painted by Ky.-based Baynum Painting at the Texas themer before being shipped to St. Louis.

## Guinness names Texas SkyScreamer as world's tallest

ARLINGTON, Texas — The Texas SkyScreamer at Six Flags Over Texas is officially the world's tallest swing carousel ride, according to Guinness World Records. The park received notification on June 28, 2013 that the ride surpasses the previous record holder, Prater Turm in Vienna, Austria, by 19 feet.

The Texas SkyScreamer was certified to stand 402 feet, 10 inches tall by crews working for Guinness.

"The notion that everything is bigger in Texas certainly rings true now that the Texas SkyScreamer has officially been named the world's tallest swing ride," said Steve Martindale, Six Flags Over Texas park president.

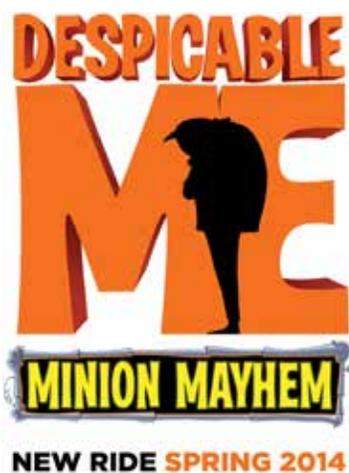
The work to survey and record the ride's height was overseen by Britain & Crawford Land Surveying and Topographic Mapping, of Fort Worth, Texas. The official witnesses were Decima Cooper, Director of Public Relations for Experience Arlington and Warren Williams, an engineer and surveyor of Graham Association, Inc. of Arlington, Texas.

## Universal Hollywood announces Despicable Me plans

3D ride to be key part of new area: Super Silly Fun Land

UNIVERSAL CITY, Calif. — Universal Studios Hollywood has announced that the theme park will be home to the newest version of the wildly popular Despicable Me Minion Mayhem attraction during a press conference at the recent International Pow Wow, one of the largest travel trade shows in the United States recently held in Las Vegas. News of the Spring 2014 grand opening also revealed that the theme park will unveil a Super Silly Fun Land, based on the park depicted in *Despicable Me*, adjacent to the attraction.

"Coming off the successive, highly popular launches of King Kong 360 3-D and Transformers: The Ride-3D, the Despicable Me Minion Mayhem attraction is our next global movie blockbuster come to life," said Larry Kurzweil, president and chief operating officer, Universal Studios Hollywood. "Our park will also be home to Super Silly Fun Land — a colorful and whimsical play land sure to be an all-time favorite."



Despicable Me Minion Mayhem will be a movie motion-simulator adventure inspired by Universal Pictures and Illumination Entertainment's worldwide blockbuster, *Despicable Me* which entertained audiences around the globe in 2010, grossing more than \$540 million and becoming the 10th-biggest animated motion picture in U.S. history.

The ride continues the storyline from the film through all-new 3D Ultra-HD animation in an interactive ride vehicle system. The fully immersive experience features the cast of leading characters that have captivated audiences worldwide: super-villain Gru, his adorable girls (Margo, Edith and Agnes) and the unpredictably

hilarious Minions.

"The Despicable Me Minion Mayhem attraction at Universal Studios Hollywood will continue to push the creative envelope with its exceptional show content, sight gags, special effects and 3D digital animation. The exterior treatment will feature even more thematic and colorful creative touches that will literally place park guests inside Gru's world," said Mark Woodbury, president, Universal Creative.

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

Guests will be transported into Gru's house as they meander through his living room and encounter visual elements as seen in the film — including the moon-shrinking SR-6 shrink ray — while they zig-zag through a comedic adventure featuring Gru's super-villain laboratory. The exciting journey continues as they swerve, bounce and plunge to get through the frantically humorous Minion training mission while

donning specially designed 3D Minion goggles. Fun and frolic continue in a post-show dance party where Minion walkaround characters invite guests to strut their stuff in an impromptu Minion-inspired dance party.

Directly adjacent to Despicable Me Minion Mayhem will be Super Silly Fun Land, an elaborate activity zone inspired by the memorable pierside park featured in *Despicable Me*. A colorfully themed waterplay area will delight guests of all ages with a multitude of fountains, water dumps and splash pools. Nearby, a dry play zone will invite guests to climb, crawl, jump and slide — while a themed ride will soar and spin guests aboard a fleet of imaginative ride vehicles for a view of Super Silly Fun Land.

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



# WATERPARKS & RESORTS

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## Wet 'n' Wild makes return to waterpark thirsty Las Vegas

### Wet 'n' Wild takes its queue from Lo-Q

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — Wet 'n' Wild Las Vegas, along with its sister park in Phoenix, have partnered with Orlando-based Lo-Q to bring virtual queuing technology to their guests this summer.

Called Xpress Band, the Lo-Q system utilizes a lightweight, waterproof radio frequency identification wristband that allows guests to queue for their favorite slides without standing in line. Users select their desired ride from self-service kiosks throughout the park and then the wristband notifies them when to return.

Additionally, guests use a separate entrance to enter the attraction for wristband scanning, avoiding long waits.

"The Lo-Q band is selling very, very well," said Takuya Ohki, general manager of Wet 'n' Wild Las Vegas. "It's a very good idea, and it's not about cutting in line — it's about reserving a virtual space in it. It helps reduce the risk of heat exhaustion at our location, and the beauty of it is that it allows you to do other things while you're positioned in a virtual queue."

"These operators understand that guests want a premium park experience," said Steve Brown, chief operating officer of Lo-Q, noting the company's five-year agreement with the Wet 'n' Wild parks. "We are proud to provide a product that meets this need and helps increase overall guest satisfaction."

•www.lo-q.com

—Dean Lamanna

### WhiteWater West supplies slide equipment for newest Village Roadshow park

**STORY:** Dean Lamanna  
Special to Amusement Today

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — The fortunes of family entertainment have come and gone several times in this traditionally adult-oriented sandbox during the last quarter century. Now, with high-profile Ferris wheel and zipline projects staking new Sin City territory and the revival of a waterpark brand that held its own for nearly 20 years among The Strip's glittering gaming palaces, Las Vegas — after a more than a decade of sprawling suburban growth — is welcoming amusements again.



Australia-based Village Roadshow Theme Parks, together with some local partners, is betting on a mix of nostalgia, cutting-edge water attractions and the need for cool desert fun to draw business to its new Wet 'n' Wild Las Vegas. And based on the success of the \$50 million, 40-acre waterpark since it debuted Memorial Day weekend, the gamble is already paying off.

"The public has been very responsive," said Takuya Ohki, the park's general manager. "The old Wet 'n' Wild waterpark closed nine years ago, and people have been longing for something similar locally."

Excitement began building last year when Village Roadshow was approached by a Las Vegas-based SPB



Australian-based Village Roadshow has brought aquatic thrills back to Las Vegas with the Memorial Day opening of Wet 'n' Wild. The \$50 million park was built on 40-acres and features the latest in thrilling slides and waterplay from WhiteWater West.

AT/GARY SLADE

Partners, a private equity fund partnership that includes several prominent local business names as well as retired tennis pros Andre Agassi and Steffi Graf.

With Village Roadshow retaining the majority share in the project, a deal was struck last fall. As soon as ground was broken in January, the new Wet 'n' Wild took to social media like wildfire — stirring interest with contests and growing its Facebook following to over 50,000 in short order.

By Wet 'n' Wild's opening on May 25, enthusiasm rivaled the swells generated by the park's Red Rock Bay wave pool. Patrons for the Gold Pass

holders-only premiere began arriving before dawn to line up at the entrance, causing the park to reach capacity quickly and resulting in a number of people being turned away.

As Ohki stated to local media at the time and later explained to *AT*, the park had reached what he termed "comfortable capacity" — and not the official capacity of 6,000 designated by city agencies.

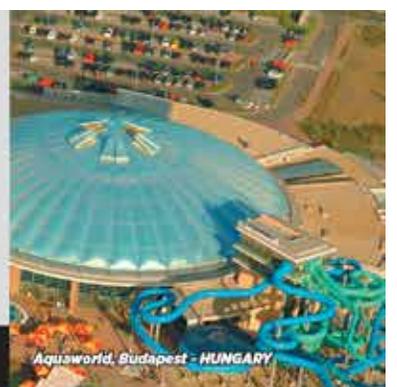
"We denied entry to additional patrons for about an hour and a half, and they were angry," he said. "A news helicopter showed up and it became a humongous story. But we were being service- and safety-minded and wanted

to make sure the many people already in the park had a great experience." Additional guests were allowed in as others exited, he pointed out.

Although Wet 'n' Wild has consistently exceeded its attendance expectations since its debut, it has not had to close its gate again for capacity reasons. Ohki attributes this to the morning, midday and evening "guest shifts" that have naturally emerged.

"One thing about waterparks: Nobody stays the entire day," he said. "Especially in Las Vegas, where the temperature can hit 110. The average stay is four and a half hours, so there is turnover

▶ See VEGAS, page 22



## ►VEGAS

Continued from page 21

throughout the day.”

Based on the demand, Wet ‘n’ Wild expanded its summer operating schedule into weekend evenings less than a month after the park’s opening. Beginning June 21 and continuing every Friday, Saturday and holiday through September 1, hours were extended to 10 p.m., with a twilight admission of \$24.99 offered after 5 p.m. This allowed for the addition of a biweekly Friday night Dive ‘n’ Movie event, commencing on June 28 with the 2012 animated feature *ParaNorman*, on a big screen at the Red Rock Bay wave pool.

Located on a parcel leased from The Howard Hughes Corporation along Fort Apache Road in southwest

Las Vegas, just off the I-215 beltway and about six miles west of The Strip, the park’s vividly-hued array of slides and attractions creates an inviting contrast against the arid foothill backdrop. Ohki, for one, feels it is a much better site than the South Las Vegas Boulevard one that was occupied by the old Wet ‘n’ Wild. Valley residents from burgeoning communities such as Summerlin and Henderson, upon which the park is dependent for season pass sales, don’t have to brave the typically congested main resort drag to reach it, and tourists don’t have to drive too far to find it.

“We’ve sold many season passes,” added Ohki, “and again, we’ve had to stop doing so because we want to be sure our patrons have a great experience. We’re now just

selling our Wild Weekdays Pass, which is good weekdays only.” He expects total attendance to surpass 400,000 — the number reached by the busiest of Village Roadshow’s three U.S. waterparks, Wet ‘n’ Wild Phoenix, last year.

Among the park’s two dozen or so attractions — all products of British Columbia-based WhiteWater West Industries — is Rattler, the first multi-passenger raft slide of its type in North America and the most popular ride at Wet ‘n’ Wild Las Vegas.

“Rattler sends you down on a flume and you get dumped into a funnel area, where you oscillate back and forth,” said Ohki, whose personal favorite is Constrictor, a very fast, tightly banked slide (and a Travel Channel top-five waterslide pick). “Then, you go into a tube and into another funnel, where you get rocked. It’s really fun.”

Village Roadshow’s commitment to family entertainment is personally important to Ohki, who moved his wife and five children to Las Vegas from Oahu, Hawaii, where he managed the company’s Wet ‘n’ Wild Hawaii (formerly Hawaiian Waters Adventure Park) for more than 13 years.

“This company believes in being the biggest and best, and it is very selective,” Ohki said. “We take pride in providing comfortable atmospheres for people: Our parks are very clean and guest-friendly. Particularly in Las Vegas, where the family market is underserved, we want to be the favorite thing for families to do.”

Guest input is encouraged by the park’s manager and 400 other employees, and it will be actively sought as Wet ‘n’ Wild Las Vegas considers what to do with its 14.5 presently vacant acres beginning next year. A second sales kiosk for the frozen snack treats Dippin’ Dots, Ohki noted, is a sure bet.

“We can’t keep up with the demand for Dippin’ Dots,” he said with a laugh. “We hit that company’s annual sales goal for this location in our first 10 days of operation.”

And so it has been with the park’s reception at large.

“People really seem to love the place,” Ohki said. “It is quite an honor for us to give back to this community by bringing back Wet ‘n’ Wild.”

### Vendors take a ride on the wild slide

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — A partnership between Village Roadshow Theme Parks and SPB Partners, one of Nevada’s first private equity funds, Wet ‘n’ Wild Las Vegas represents a colossal collaboration of local, regional, national and international vendors.

The park’s design, layout and attractions reflect a Baja beach theme — incorporating bright coastal colors and decorative animal and pattern stencils — and many companies made contributions. Theme park design veteran **Jayne McGuire** was contracted to assist with theming elements, while water slide manufacturer **WhiteWater West Industries** developed and installed all attractions.

**Ledcor** served as the park’s general contractor for original construction. **California Commercial Pools** installed the Red Rock Bay wave pool and Colorado Cooler lazy river as well as all slide catch pools and pump rooms, while **AzStar** installed audio, network and visual systems.

Other companies contributing to the fun:

Chemical: **Brenntag**

Chemical Controllers: LMI Chemtrol installed by **California Commercial Pools**

Filtration Equipment: Pentair Filters and Defender Filter by **Neptune Benson**

Food, Beverage and Retail Point of Sale: InfoGenesis by **Agilysys, Inc.**

Food/Equipment: **AAA Bar & Restaurant Supply, Brady Industries, Dippin’ Dots, US Foods, Dreter’s Ice Cream**

Front Gate & Online Ticketing: **OmniTicket Network**

Furniture, Shade Structures and Misting System:

**Grossfillex** Chairs and Lounges, **Fiberlite** 9’ Umbrellas, purchased through **People Helping People (PHP); Mist AMERICA**

Line Management: **Lo-Q** (see sidebar this page)

Locker System: **Smart Carte, Inc.**

Netting: **Nets Unlimited, Inc.**

Park Map Artwork: **R & R Creative Amusement Designs, Inc.**

Pool and/or Deck Coatings: **Westdeck Concrete Coatings**

Pumps: **Pentair and Aurora** installed by **California Commercial Pools** and **Helix Electric**

Signage: **High Impact Sign & Design, LLC**

Tubes and Mats: **Kwik Tek, Inc.** and **Zebec Water Sports**

Uniforms: **American Stitch** and **Water Safety Products**

—Source: Wet ‘n’ Wild Las Vegas



Wet ‘n’ Wild’s most popular slide is this multi-passenger tube named Rattler, shown here and at left with green and red colors. A Constrictor slide (yellow) is also located on the tower. AT/GARY SLADE



Above, the park’s bowl and Boomerango combo slide tower serves as a backdrop for guests cooling off in the wave pool. Below, the gentle wet thrills of the lazy river is fun for all ages. AT/GARY SLADE



The desert mountain landscape of Las Vegas serves as a backdrop to the park’s AquaPlay structure. All slides for the waterpark were provided by WhiteWater West. AT/GARY SLADE

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# Six Flags debuts several waterpark attractions

**STORY:** Jeffrey L. Seifert  
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

GRAND PRAIRIE, Texas — This summer Six Flags Entertainment Corporation debuted multiple water attractions at parks throughout the country.

On the East Coast, both of the Hurricane Harbor waterparks integrated into Six Flags New England and Six Flags America opened Bonzai Pipelines attractions. These two-first-of-their-kind attractions feature six near-vertical slides with drop-tube capsules. All six riders face each other before being simultaneously dropped into a spaghetti-like bowl of twisted slides.

"We are proud to expand New England's largest waterpark, Hurricane Harbor," said John Winkler, president, Six Flags New England. "Bonzai Beach is the largest expansion Hurricane Harbor has seen in over a decade giving us the ability to welcome more guests for more fun. Bonzai

Pipelines is a great addition to an already stellar lineup of attractions and another great way for guests to cool off this summer."

The two slide complexes, provided by SplashTacular of LaQuinta, California, stand 65 feet tall and riders achieve speeds of 40 mph during their rapid descent through the 250-foot chutes.

In Jackson, New Jersey, Six Flags Hurricane Harbor adjacent to Six Flags Great Adventure opened Big Wave Racer — a ProSlide six-lane KrakenRacer slide that sends riders barreling head-first on aero-dynamically-designed water toboggans. After climbing four stories, riders rocket down twisting, enclosed tubes and upon seeing daylight, plunge down several steep drops stretching 1,800 feet before crossing the finish line.

"Big Wave Racer is a thrilling experience that allows you to plummet face first, which is what our guests have been asking for," said John Fitzgerald,

park president. "It complements our already incredible portfolio of slides and demonstrates our commitment to our guests by delivering the best waterpark experience in the Northeast."

Celebrating its 30th anniversary, Six Flags Hurricane Harbor in Arlington, Texas, originally opened as Wet 'n' Wild, it was George Millay's second waterpark project. To help commemorate its anniversary, this historic waterpark debuted two ProSlide attractions, a CannonBowl and PipelineWave dubbed Typhoon Twister and Tsunami Surge.

Guests on Typhoon Twister board slides built for two for a thrilling ride down a 68-foot enclosed tunnel and into a bowl-shaped slide. After spinning around multiple times, riders drop into a corkscrew exit then into a splash pool. Tsunami Surge riders are sent twisting and turning down an 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.

The park also received some much-needed paint from Kentucky-based Baynum Painting and sprucing up of existing attractions.

"This is a very exciting time for our park and our guests. These new slides, along with the overall enhancements that have been made to the park this season, should make for a more enjoyable, thrilling and overall fun-filled experience for our guests during their visit," said Steve Martindale, Six Flags Hurricane Harbor park president.

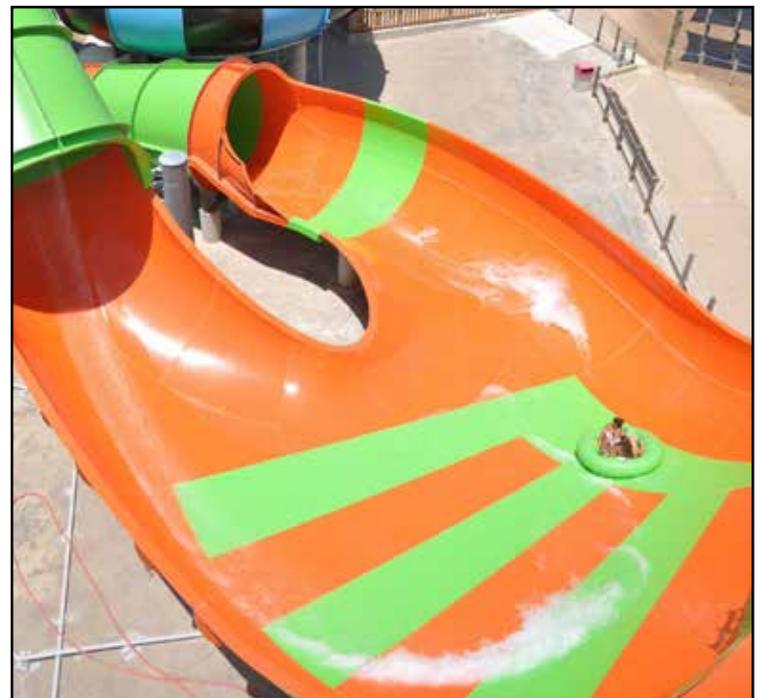
The largest waterpark in the Southeast, Six Flags White Water in Atlanta, Georgia, opened a ProSlide BehemothBowl. Though larger than its Texas sibling, it was christened with the same name — Typhoon Twister. Thrillseekers board four-person rafts and drop nearly five stories through an enclosed tube before exiting into a 67-foot wide bowl where they will spin around the perimeter. Eventually losing momentum, the raft will then drop through a chute in the center of the bowl



Above, Hurricane Harbor at Six Flags New England added the Bonzai Pipeline, from SplashTacular. This thriller features six slides that drop riders through the floor (left) of the ride platform before sending them into a maze of twisting enclosed slides. Below, ProSlide delivered this double slide thriller to Six Flags Hurricane Harbor in Arlington, Texas that features the company's CannonBowl, named Typhoon Twister and Pipeline Wave, named Typhoon Twister. SFNE/TIM BALDWIN; SFHH COURTESY SIX FLAGS



Above, To add ride capacity to the park, Six Flags Hurricane Harbor in Jackson, N.J. added this Big Wave Racer, a ProSlide six lane KrakenRacer. Below, at Six Flags White Water, the Atlanta park opened a ProSlide BehemothBowl called Typhoon Twister. It features a five story drop into a 67-foot wide bowl, before riders slide into the landing pool. COURTESY SIX FLAGS

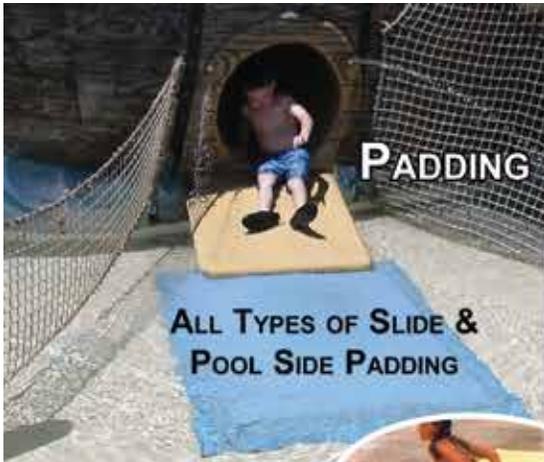


into a splash pool.

"With the addition of Typhoon Twister, guests will experience an entirely new level of thrilling, water park entertainment at the region's largest waterpark," said Dale Kaetzel, park president. "This is unlike any other water ride in the area with its five-story drop and corkscrew chute rid-

ers will get the sense of being in an actual typhoon."

Although still investing in dry rides and coasters, Six Flags, like many other parks, knows that a new waterpark attraction can bring visibility, have a similar impact and increase attendance for considerably less than a multi-million dollar roller coaster.



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COMPILED: Jeffrey L. Seifert, [jseifert@amusementtoday.com](mailto:jseifert@amusementtoday.com)

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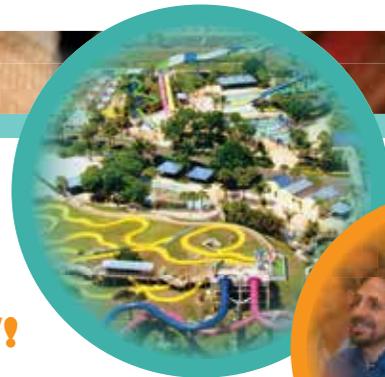
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# BUSINESS

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## Land acquired for all new Grand Texas theme park

*Houston residents may soon have a theme park to enjoy, again*

NEW CANEY, Texas — A tract of land measuring approximately 600-acres has been acquired by developer, Monty Galland, and a team of private investors in New Caney, Texas, just North of Houston, Texas, as the future site of the all new Grand Texas Theme Park and Big Rivers Waterpark.

Construction on the mixed-use, year-round family attraction, themed to honor the history of Texas and the Wild West, is slated to begin before year's end. Plans for Grand Texas, which will be the

Houston market's first major theme park and entertainment venue since the sudden closing of AstroWorld by Six Flags in 2005.

Plans include a theme park, waterpark, adventure park, equestrian center and an accumulation of dining, retail and entertainment establishments. For camping enthusiasts, the park will also offer an upscale RV resort. Future plans for the site include a number of hotels, as well as additional retail opportunities. Developer, Monty Galland, responds to the closing of the land deal by stating, "We are extremely pleased to have reached such a major milestone in the birth of Grand Texas and couldn't be more



excited for the opportunity to bring such a unique attraction to families and visitors of the Houston area."

Galland and investors have chosen Innovative Leisure Partners of Houston, Texas as the Project Managers for the development of the new facility. Chuck Hendrix, CEO of ILP, will be directly involved in the planning, development and operational strategy of Grand Texas.

Hendrix began his career

in the industry with the Six Flags Corporation and served as the former General Manager of Six Flags AstroWorld, WaterWorld and SplashTown in Houston, Texas. Hendrix was then promoted as the corporate Vice President of Park Strategy and Management for Six Flags Parks, Inc.

Following his time with Six Flags, Hendrix founded Innovative Leisure Partners and has been involved in projects within the industry on a global scale. Most recently he led the highly-successful launch of the new Hurricane Alley Waterpark in Corpus Christi, Texas in 2012. The park is located adjacent to Whataburger Field, minor league home to the Corpus Christi Hooks.

These accomplishments have now enabled him to partner with developers in the Houston area to address what he refers to as "an exponential demand for a unique and valuable family entertainment experience within our country's fourth largest market."

Grand Texas Theme Park is Southeast Texas' newest and largest entertainment complex and family attraction. Development of Grand Texas is scheduled to begin before year's end. Although no project cost or land price was released it is estimated that the new facility will open sometime in 2015.

For more information, please contact [info@grandtx.com](mailto:info@grandtx.com).

## SeaWorld, Southwest Airlines celebrate 25-year partnership

ORLANDO, Fla. — Southwest Airlines and SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment are celebrating 25 years of partnership with the unveiling of the airline's newest specialty aircraft, Penguin One — a Boeing 737-700 co-branded with images of one of SeaWorld's iconic penguins.

Southwest and SeaWorld revealed the aircraft at a recent ceremony at Orlando International Airport (MCO) with live penguins, Southwest and SeaWorld employees, community members, and executives, including Southwest Airlines Chairman, President, and CEO Gary Kelly, and Sea-

World Parks & Entertainment President and CEO, Jim Atchison.

The partnership between the two companies dates back to 1988, which began when SeaWorld opened in San Antonio, Texas. Back then, Southwest and SeaWorld launched their partnership with the introduction of a new

Boeing 737, Shamu One.

The featured penguin on the aircraft is a gentoo, one of the species found at SeaWorld Orlando's new Antarctica: Empire of the Penguin. The attraction includes a first-of-its-kind family ride that transports guests into the penguins' icy world.



Above, SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment President and CEO, Jim Atchison, and Southwest Airlines Chairman, President, and CEO Gary Kelly christen the new aircraft, Penguin One. Right, the new SeaWorld-themed fleet, Penguin One, made its debut on June 20 at Orlando International Airport in celebration of the 25-year partnership between SeaWorld and Southwest Airlines. COURTESY SEAWORLD



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Chance Rides' Stuart Showalter was scheduled to go onto the board of directors for AIMS International in 2013 replacing Chance's Steve Laycock whose term expired. His AIMS Member Profile can be found on this month's AIMS News & Notes, page 32.

COURTESY AIMS INTL.

## Traffic accident claims life of Chance Rides' Stuart Showalter

WICHITA, Kan. — Chance Rides Customer Service Manager Stuart K. Showalter, 43, was killed in a traffic accident on June 29, 2013, in Wichita.

He was born May 31, 1970, in Hutchinson to Ray L. and Sheri Showalter. Showalter attended Hutchinson High School, graduating in 1988 and graduated from Hutchinson Community College in 1990. Stuart previously worked at Optima Bus Corp. for 15 years, Kalmar Industries in Ottawa for five years, and was presently working at Chance Rides, Wichita, as the customer service manager.

He liked playing racquetball, riding his motorcycle, working with electronics, doing projects around the house, and spending time with his family.

"Stu was a very dedicated employee who took on the challenges of his jobhead on in order to keep our customers satisfied. This is a truly tragic loss for Stu's family and everyone at Chance Rides. He will be missed dearly," said Mike Chance, president Chance Rides.

"The Amusement Industry Manufacturers and Suppliers International (AIMS) extends it's sincere condolences to the family and friends of incoming board member, Stu Showalter, who was killed in a motorcycle crash on June 29, 2013. Stu served as the customer service manager for

Chance Rides and was to serve on the AIMS board of directors for the 2013-2014 term" said Kelly Bernish, AIMS volunteer. "Stu was just one of those quality people that I was proud to call a colleague and friend. His skill in a challenging position of making everyone happy was remarkable, particularly since his involvement in the amusement industry was relatively recent. His love and commitment to his career was remarkable, second only to that for his family. He was so excited to be a part of our unique industry family — it's just such a tragedy his life was cut short. He will be sincerely missed."

Stuart is survived by his wife, Janie; children, Nicholas and Kaitlin and their mother, Dawn Gresham; stepchildren, Tyler and Laci; parents, Ray and Sheri Showalter; brother, Scott and wife Carol; nephew, Zachary and niece, Allison.

Following his cremation, a memorial service was held locally at Elliott Chapel on July 6. A private inurnment was held in Memorial Park Cemetery.

A Memorial Fund has been established to benefit the family. For donations make checks payable to: **Stuart Showalter Memorial Fund** and send to:

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## FAST TRACK

COMPILED: Scott Rutherford,  
srutherford@amusementtoday.com

In response to the recent tornados in Oklahoma and the severe storms across the country, **The Walt Disney Company** made a \$250,000 donation to the **American Red Cross**. In addition, ABC Television Group and ESPN are encouraging viewers to support the Red Cross' relief efforts. Cast member and employee contributions to the Red Cross also are being matched by **The Walt Disney Company Foundation**. Disney is a proud supporter of the **Red Cross Annual Disaster Giving Program**, which enables the organization to respond immediately to the needs of kids and families impacted by disasters anywhere in the United States.

**Legoland Florida** has introduced a dramatic "floating" centerpiece, called Mount Cavora, to the site of The Lego World of Chima presented by Cartoon Network expansion. The installation, which will tower 55 feet above the attraction, marks the final major construction milestone ahead of the area's July 3 opening. Mount Cavora is a mystical floating mountain that provides animals with the energy source CHI via its waterfalls. The attraction structure will cascade water into the interactive splash-battle family ride, The Quest for CHI, soaking everyone below. The Quest for CHI is one of three new attractions at Legoland Florida this summer.

**Gordon Hartman**, CEO of **The Gordon Hartman Family Foundation**, lauded **Fundación Teletón USA's** decision to locate its first U. S. rehabilitation center for children with disabilities near **Morgan's Wonderland** in San Antonio, Texas. Groundbreaking ceremonies for the 45,000-square-foot facility have been tentatively set for August, after which construction is scheduled to take almost a year. The new center is designed to accommodate youngsters up to age 18, and fees are based solely on one's ability to pay. A team of doctors, therapists and counselors will develop a treatment plan for each child that requires involvement of the entire family.

**Kings Dominion's Intimidator 305**, an Intamin giga coaster, has raced its way to world domination by defeating three other menacing roller coasters on Travel Channel's "Insane Coaster Wars: World Domination." The roller coaster, inspired by the late NASCAR driver **Dale Earnhardt**, received a final score of 915 points out of a possible 1000 from park guests. Intimidator 305 outpaced the **Titan** in Texas, **Blue Fire** in Germany and **Tower of Terror II** in Australia to capture the win.

**RWS and Associates Entertainment, Inc.**, a NYC based, Emmy Award winning, full service entertainment firm specializing in live productions, has been tapped by **Holland America Line** as a new partner. The two firms, known as leaders in their respective industries, are collaborating to expand and enhance the live stage experience aboard Holland America Line's remodeled main stage theaters on the ms Eurodam and ms Westerdam premium cruise ships. RWS and Associates, will write and produce a total of five new productions ex-

clusively for Holland America Line. Each original show will feature 12 singers and dancers performing amid new state-of-the-art sound and lighting systems and a digital, kinetic LED scenery package. Many of the talented performers, directors and choreographers at RWS and Associates are straight off the Broadway stage.

For the third year in a row, **Holiday World & Splashin' Safari** have received a Certificate of Excellence award from TripAdvisor.com. The accolade, which honors hospitality excellence, is given only to establishments that consistently achieve outstanding traveler reviews on TripAdvisor. It is extended to qualifying businesses worldwide.

A replica of Ohio's historic **Coney Island Amusement Park** opened on June 21 at **EnterTrainment Junction** in West Chester, Ohio. All built by hand from scratch, the Coney Island replica features real working rides from Coney Island's glimmering past, such as the **Shooting Star** wooden roller coaster, the **Lost River**, the **Ferris Wheel**, **Flying Rockets**, **Tumblebug**, **Wild Mouse**, **Sky Ride**, **Lake Como** train ride, **Turnpike** and **Carousel**, just to name a few. All rides and attractions are based on historic photos and dimensions of Coney Island in the 1960s, with most items created in a 1/24th scale.

The **Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk** and **Santa Cruz Mountain Brewing** unveiled a new Boardwalk beer for the 2013 season. "Casinos IPA" is the result of a unique collaboration between the two Santa Cruz companies. The Boardwalk worked with Mountain Brewing to design the Boardwalk beer and will now sell it though the Boardwalk's numerous food concessions. Casinos IPA marks the first time a locally brewed beer will be sold in cans on the Boardwalk.

**Space Center Houston** has launched a statewide Name the Shuttle Contest — a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for one lucky Texan to name the high-fidelity NASA Space Shuttle replica that will sit atop the massive 747 Shuttle Carrier Aircraft as part of a new \$12 million, six-story attraction currently under development. Texas residents can visit [www.nametheshuttle.com](http://www.nametheshuttle.com) and submit an original name, no more than three words, that symbolize the spirit of Texas and its unique characteristics of independence, optimism and can-do attitude. The contest closes Labor Day, Sept. 2, 2013.

A *Forbes* report named **The Walt Disney Company** as America's most reputable company in an independent study by Reputation Institute, a private consulting firm. The study examined consumer perception of 150 of the largest companies' products and services, innovation, workplace, citizenship, governance, leadership and performance. The Walt Disney Company also was ranked among the top 10 companies with the best work-life balance by job search engine Indeed.com and among DiversityInc.'s top 50 companies for diversity.

## Skycoaster's new look tower a cost saver on installation

**C O T T O N W O O D H E I G H T S**, Utah — After more than 20 years of thrilling guests worldwide, Skycoaster is excited to introduce a new look for the 2013 season. The attraction, which combines the sensations of hang gliding and skydiving, is available in heights of 100 feet (single), 175 feet (single and dual), and 250 feet (dual).

A new single Skycoaster design, which features a sleek half arch, is being offered this year. This new structure eliminates an entire foundation which allows the ride's installation cost to be significantly lower than in previous models. In addition, the new design requires 40 percent less steel and fewer connections than the older lattice-style arches, resulting in the park spending less time and money assembling and erecting the ride.

"We are thrilled with new, sleek Skycoaster design and the ongoing success of this proven attraction", said Mike Gutknecht, Skycoaster managing director. "Skycoaster has become an iconic brand in the attractions industry with more than 80 sites worldwide at amusement parks, waterparks, and some other pretty unique and bold locations like Royal Gorge Bridge and Park in Colorado."

Skycoaster is having another successful year with three 2013 openings at: Fun Spot America in Orlando, Fla.; Wet 'n' Wild Sydney in Sydney, Australia; and Copper Canyon in Chihuahua, Mexico", added Mark Rosenzweig, Skycoaster sales and marketing director. "We cannot wait until the industry sees our new lightweight design debut at Wet 'n' Wild, it will really revolutionize people's percep-



**For the 2013 season, Skycoaster is introducing this sleek new half arch design. The new structure eliminates an entire foundation which allows the ride's installation cost to be significantly lower than in previous models. The new design requires 40 percent less steel and fewer connections than the older lattice-style arches.**

COURTESY SKYCOASTER

tions of a Skycoaster."

Skycoaster is one of the Ride Entertainment Group of Companies and continues to produce attractions that are

the most popular upcharge rides in the amusement industry. With Skycoasters operating on six continents this thrill ride remains popular at

amusement and waterparks worldwide.

• [RideEntertainment.com](http://RideEntertainment.com)

## Waterloo's Wendell Meacham dies at 82 in Iowa

**JANESVILLE**, Iowa — Wendell Meacham, 82, of Janesville, Iowa, and a long-time Waterloo (Iowa) Tent and Tarp employed, died Tuesday, July 9, at Sartori Memorial Hospital, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Meacham began his career at Waterloo in September, 1981 and worked there for 17 years before retiring in January, 1999. He worked part time off and on for a few years and remained a source of information afterwards.

Pete Downs, Waterloo, described Meacham as a long-time friend and "a true gentleman with a big heart and a tremendous work ethic."

"He along with Vern Reiter helped to create a foothold in the Outdoor Amusement Industry," Downs said in an email to the industry about Meacham's death. "The success of Waterloo Tent can be directly attributed to the efforts Wendell put forth during his tenure with Waterloo, and his companionship and guidance he shared during his retirement.

"He will be missed by those he touched," he said. "Our condolences go out to the Meacham family, our thoughts and prayers are with them."



**Meacham**

Meacham was born May 9, 1931 in Dawson, Iowa. He married Marilyn Bailey in 1951. She preceded him in death Jan. 6, 2004.

He is survived by two sons, Doug (Chris) Meacham of Cedar Falls and Scott Meacham of Janesville; three grandchildren, Nathan (Jorie Schutte) Meacham, Trevor (Karen) Meacham, and Abbi Millett; and one great grandchild, Dallis Meacham.

He was preceded in death by his parents, wife and one son, Devin Meacham.

Services for Meacham were held Sat., July 13, at the Dahl-Van Hove-Schoof Funeral Home, with inurnment in Cedar Valley Memorial Gardens, both in Cedar Falls.



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# NEWS & NOTES

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## AIMS News & Notes launches monthly Member Spotlight

SANTA ANA, Calif — This month, AIMS International President Roger W. Berry (R.S. Alberts Company) announces the debut of its new monthly AIMS News & Notes feature, Member Spotlight.

Each month AIMS will highlight an AIMS International member who's membership and support of AIMS is responsible for the association's ability offer world class educational training and certification to the Amusement Industry. "Without their support our efforts here in the states, as well as our continued penetration into international markets, would not be possible," said Berry.

Continuing, Berry said, "Creating and sustaining a well-educated and certified industry is the very core benefit to AIMS membership. As your park needs arise, please take the opportunity to support these fine corporate responsibility-driven AIMS manufacturers and suppliers."

AIMS International also offers associate memberships for individuals within the industry wishing to support and be a part of the team. Please check our website at [www.aimsintl.org](http://www.aimsintl.org) for more information on joining.



## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Company Name:  
**Chance Rides**  
Wichita, Kan.



Company Rep:  
**Stu Showalter**

### What services or products does your company provide to the amusement industry?

Chance Rides sells a diverse selection of amusement rides, coasters and people movers. Rides include iconic carnival rides like the Zipper, to beautifully hand painted carousels for all types of attractions and a variety of different wheel designs among many others. We have a variety of steel coasters each specifically designed for its location from the entry level family coasters to some of the steepest, fastest hypercoasters in the industry. And, our People Movers include our flagship item, the C.P. Huntington trains, along with our Tramstar and Sunliner II line of trams.

### How did your company come to be involved in the amusement industry?

Our company was founded over 50 years ago by Harold Chance, who had a love for trains. It was his goal to share that passion in parks and attractions all over the world so he began manufacturing C.P. Huntington trains in our Wichita, Kan. factory. All these years later we are still producing that same model train. Prior to starting his own company Harold was involved in the amusement industry through a family connection that worked in the

carnival business. This experience aided in our expansion of the products we provide today.

### What makes your company different from your competitors?

Chance Rides is the largest U.S. manufacturer of amusement rides in the country, with the most diverse product line. We have supplied the industry with more than 300 C.P. Huntington trains, 300 carousels and countless other amusement rides and trams over the years.

### What is something about your company that makes you especially proud?

At Chance Rides we have an exemplary commitment to safety and quality. While it is not actively being used in an amusement park, we can proudly attest to the fact that our very first C.P. Huntington locomotive is still operational, 52 years after it was first built.

### What are some of the challenges your company faces within the amusement industry today?

Our company faces some of the same challenges that our entire industry faces. We are a seasonal business, meaning most of our customers require the same delivery time in order to start their season with their newest and greatest ride each year. Also, a big challenge facing us today is accommodating the newest laws in place for ADA compliance. At Chance Rides we take pride in producing rides that everyone can enjoy, but this does require some out of the box thinking as the rides weren't originally designed

with wheelchair accommodations in mind. There will be great expenses in engineering and design costs and there will be challenges involved for the operators as well.

### How long has your company been a member of AIMS?

Chance Rides has been a member of AIMS since its inception in 1995. Prior to that Harold Chance had been a member of AREA since 1948 and Dick Chance was heavily involved in the transition from AREA to AIMS. Chance even hosted some of the initial AIMS seminars at our factory in Wichita, Kan.

### How does your company benefit by being a member of AIMS?

AIMS allows us a vehicle to stay abreast of the ever changing amusement industry. And, the annual seminar is the perfect way for us to educate ride operators on our products, including safety training and service bulletins.

### Please tell us about a favorite memory, story, or special experience from the AIMS Safety Seminar?

As recounted by long time AIMS board member, Steve Laycock, his fondest memory is of hosting the AIMS seminar in 2000, which gave us the opportunity to showcase Wichita, and the Chance family.

—Compiled by Tony Claassen,  
AIMS board member

To suggest a future Member Spotlight for consideration on this page email Tony Claassen at:

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## Kentucky Kingdom's Ed Hart details plans for reopening Hurricane Bay waterpark to double in size with additioon of slides, lagoon and river

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Ed Hart, president of Kentucky Kingdom, LLLP, along with his partners Ed Glasscock, Bruce Lunsford, and the Al J. Schneider Company, announced on June 27, 2013 that the biggest expansion in Kentucky Kingdom's 25-year history is officially underway.

The announcement was made just an hour after representatives of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Metro Louisville, the Louisville Convention & Visitors Bureau, the Kentucky State Fair Board, and The Bank of Kentucky signed the agreements required for the official reopening of Kentucky Kingdom.

"We are very excited and proud to have this opportunity to restore Kentucky Kingdom," Hart told *Amusement Today*. "Yes, it may have taken a bit longer to get to this point than we hoped, but we've assembled a great team and we all share a commitment to restore the park to its former position as the number one paid tourist attraction in Kentucky."

"The highlights of the new Kentucky Kingdom will be the addition of the first new roller coaster in 17 years and a large expansion of the Hurricane Bay waterpark. We are doubling the size of the waterpark, adding three new waterslide complexes, a 12,000-square-foot wave lagoon, and an adventure river, which is six times faster than the existing lazy river. All in all, we will have one of the largest waterparks in the region," said Hart. "We will also reopen such signature rides as the Thunder Run wooden coaster, the Mile High Falls giant spill ride, the 150-foot-tall Giant Wheel, the rapid river raft ride, and the Thrill Park Theatre, as well as all of the park's remaining rides and attractions.

"We're not stopping there. In 2015, we will unveil a complete makeover of our



[Vekoma] suspended looping coaster, T2, and we are well on our way to converting the two intertwined wooden coasters known as Twisted Twins into a much superior ride, which will debut in 2016," added Hart. "We will continue to introduce new attractions each season. In fact, per our lease with the state, we have an obligation to invest as much as \$2.5 million each year for as many as 70 years. That would equal an investment of more than \$200 million, including our initial outlay of \$43.5 million."

Dr. Mark Lynn, chairman of the Fair board commented, "Ed Hart and his partners, all respected local businesspersons, are the right people at the right time to restore Kentucky Kingdom to its previous success. A full-scale renovation of the park's more than 100 buildings and 40 rides is already underway."

"The vision that my partners and I have for the new Kentucky Kingdom is demonstrated not only in our financial commitment, but also in our focus on re-engaging with the community," Hart concluded. "We are hard at work not only with all of the construction and refurbishment that's underway at the park, but also with re-establishing the connections with the community that were such a key part of our previous success."

As information becomes available, *Amusement Today* will continue to follow the plans for the park's reopening in future issues.

Additional information on Kentucky Kingdom's reopening, including a countdown timer, can be found at the park's new Website: [www.kentuckykingdom.com](http://www.kentuckykingdom.com).

## CONTINUING COVERAGE | SUPERSTORM SANDY

### Park staffer creates rooms with a view to recovery

Keansburg marketing pro founds nonprofit

**STORY:** Dean Lamanna  
Special to *Amusement Today*

MIDDLETOWN, N.J. — Since the age of 10, Katharine Koehler has had an affinity not only for the local seaside amusement parks, but for old, odd items and furnishings that most people would consider junk.

When Hurricane Sandy devastated the northern New Jersey coast last fall, Koehler, the marketing and advertising director for Keansburg Amusement Park since 1996 — quickly converted her second personal passion into public action, aiding families that were left without belongings by the storm.

"I always thought the idea of trying to design a room on no budget would be a fun challenge," said Koehler, a life-long Monmouth County resident. "So when Sandy hit, and it hit many people I know very strongly, I felt it would be the time to do it."

Called Room in our Hearts (RIOH), Koehler's non-profit organization works from word of mouth and lists provided by officials in local, mostly blue-collar boroughs to select families in need. It then provides one completely renovated room in the household to help get each family's recovery rolling.

"These are people who are seriously underinsured who, while perhaps having gotten some money to repair their structures, were left with nothing to replace their homes' contents," Koehler said, noting that RIOH accepts donations of money and furnishings that have been gently used or can be restored. "For example, we'll take an old dining room buffet and repurpose it as an entertainment center. It's all about recycling the usable stuff that's out there — and there were piles of items several stories high in landfills following the storm."

The response, she added, has been "overwhelming, but it feels good. And people need to have at least one nice



In addition to restoring the living room in his family's storm-damaged home (below), the New Jersey nonprofit Room in Our Hearts arranged for five-year-old Tyler Blewitt (above, held by his father, Jay) of Union Beach to meet with Toronto Maple Leafs hockey player James van Riemsdyk (above, far left). RIOH Executive Director Katharine Koehler (left) pitches in to redecorate another family's bedroom using a wallcovering donated by Thibaut, Inc., of Newark, N.J.  
COURTESY RIOH



room."

As executive director of RIOH, Koehler runs the organization from her home in Middletown and utilizes storage space she rents out-of-pocket in Union Beach. Two RIOH board members and several other volunteers manage donations, pick up furniture and materials in a dedicated truck (purchased by Koehler), and undertake the room makeovers. Koehler's husband, Rick, and their three children ranging in age from 27 to 19 — the kids, like mom, also have put in employment time at Keansburg Amusement Park — have happily pitched in.

Of the dozen families RIOH has assisted since January, a project involving young Tyler Blewitt and his parents is among the most memorable. Not only did RIOH help get the family's living room and play area back into shape, it arranged for Tyler and his dad to meet National Hockey League

player James van Riemsdyk, a Middletown native who plays left wing for the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Koehler credits her relationship with the Gehlhaus family, owners of Keansburg Amusement Park — where her other post-Sandy chores are ongoing, and which she noted should be "90 percent operational" by the end of this season — with making her a better multi-tasker.

Meanwhile, RIOH has boosted her to a new level of personal satisfaction.

"It's fantastic, and it keeps me motivated," Koehler said. "And I'm surprised and delighted that many of the younger employees of the amusement park have offered to volunteer with RIOH, too. A lot of good things have come out of Hurricane Sandy."

For more information on RIOH or to make a donation, visit [www.roominourhearts.org](http://www.roominourhearts.org).



## NEW JERSEY AMUSEMENT ASSOCIATION

### SUPERSTORM SANDY

# Restore, Rebuild and Reopen

## IAAPA officials re-tour Jersey Shore parks, sees industry back in action

**STORY:** Kim R. Samarelli  
NJAA Executive Director  
njaa40plus@aol.com

ALONG THE NEW JERSEY SHORE — The International Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) recently set out to see just how “Stronger than the Storm” the New Jersey Amusement Association (NJAA) members really are during a recent re-visit to the Jersey Shore parks and piers.

We knew back in October 2012, that there was no rule book written on how one organization, that has members globally, could help out one state trade association. We both found out quickly, and both associations have been working hand in hand ever since this disaster struck.

The New Jersey Amusement Association is a major stakeholder in the amusement industry. Many know that the amusement industry was born in the north east, and after Sandy struck, IAAPA paid a visit to New Jersey in early December. They wanted to see for themselves just how severe the NJAA park members had been affected, and to see the damage firsthand. The tour took them through mountains of debris, piles of sand, houses on their sides and rides underwater. Not to mention one lonely roller coaster car that had floated 12 miles north up the coast from one amusement pier to another.

Subsequently, IAAPA held their summertime summit in Wildwood, New Jersey during the last week of June 2013. They wanted to revisit the same NJAA member parks that had been affected by Hurri-



IAAPA officials toured several New Jersey piers and parks recently to see the progress made following Superstorm Sandy. Shown here at the Jersey Shore Beach and Boardwalk waterpark are l to r: David Mandt; Edward McGlynn, NJAA lobbyist; Kimberle Samarelli, NJAA executive director; Gerardo Arteaga; Will Morey; Bill Gelhaus, Jersey Shore Beach; Paul Nolan; Bob Mendes; Rajen Shah; John Maurer, NJAA president; Susan Mosedale and Rachmat Sotiono.

COURTESY IAAPA/NJAA

cane Sandy to see the progress they'd made since their December tour. We all share a commonality to the amusement industry, and it was of little surprise when they witnessed the leaps and bounds that were made in just six short months. Miracles do take place, and what was seen firsthand by all who'd visited is nothing short of miraculous.

The group visited Jersey Shore Beach and Boardwalk in Keansburg, owned by Bill Gehlhaus, and was taken on a much different tour than the one they took in December. This one depicted a scene full of life. It was alive! The vitality of a park reborn was evident, and except for the coaster which is still dismantled due to severe damage, all the rides and arcades have been replaced. The group was greeted with the familiar sights and sounds that endear us to amusement parks, especially the sound of children's laughter. A wonderful lunch was then served at the waterpark amid the hustling and bustling of smiling children at play. Oh, the sounds of FUN! A true indication that once

again, the summer has given us a special time to create memories we can share with the generations to follow.

The group then headed to Jenkinson's Boardwalk in Point Pleasant Beach, where in December, we saw tents and survival wear that had been set up in the aftermath of the storm. A much brighter and finished picture this time, and even a visit from a new baby penguin that was a remnant of Superstorm Sandy's close quarters. There was also



another amusement facility that had made a 100 percent recovery and is once again creating memories for generations to come.

The group then made its way through Mantoloking, N.J. (Prince Harry's first stop on his Jersey Shore tour) where on their previous visit they were only allowed a 25 percent glimpse of the residential area due to it being shut down after the storm. And while the area is more widely accessible today, the future still seems quite bleak for the homeowners.

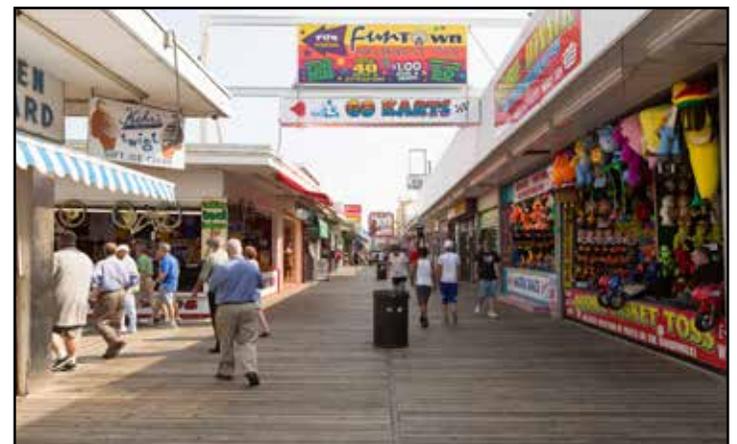
The group went to Seaside Heights for their final venture and visited the seaside resort community and Casino Beach Pier — the area where the images of the roller coaster sitting in the ocean were taken. The group also experienced the brand new, completely renovated boardwalk which is now 40 feet wide and covers over 2 miles in length. The Casino Beach Pier was overwhelming with all that was going on with the new construction, the removal of old debris, and laying out the new rides that are to be opened as soon as possible. It is a

huge project. The opening day is set for any day they can get 12-15 rides up and running safely. The opening target date was June 29, 2013. Some may say they're reaching for the stars, but we say WHY NOT?

The IAAPA touring group now knows just how much “Stronger than the Storm” their N.J. amusement partners truly are, and I, in return, extend my gratitude and applaud them for all of their support and commitment to the NJAA members.

As I sit and write this article, it is sunny, hot, humid, and according to some reports that are coming in, this 4th of July will be one for the record books. It has been a long eight-month road to recovery and the industry still has a few more years to truly recover, but many people came out and showed both their true inner spirit, and the spirit of being an amusement park partner.

Thank you to all of those who have cried and supported and cheered for us. We are truly on our own Roller Coaster!



During their New Jersey Shore and park tour, IAAPA members saw the progress being made at Jersey Shore Beach and Boardwalk in Keansburg (left) and saw the games area in Seaside Heights at the Casino Beach Pier (above).  
COURTESY IAAPA/NJAA

# MARKETWATCH

## RIDING THE MARKET



\*Six Flags stock split on June 27, 2013

| Company                     | Prices        |          | 52 Weeks |         |
|-----------------------------|---------------|----------|----------|---------|
|                             | One Month Ago | 07/11/13 | High     | Low     |
| Cedar Fair L.P.             | \$39.89       | \$42.04  | \$44.29  | \$30.54 |
| MGM Mirage                  | \$14.79       | \$15.26  | \$15.95  | \$8.83  |
| Six Flags Ent. Corp.*       | \$37.23       | \$37.11  | \$40.31  | \$26.24 |
| CBS Corp.                   | \$47.09       | \$51.41  | \$52.46  | \$29.85 |
| Walt Disney Co.             | \$63.80       | \$66.58  | \$67.89  | \$46.53 |
| Apollo Global Mgt. LLC      | \$23.52       | \$24.76  | \$28.14  | \$12.37 |
| Blackstone Group            | \$21.00       | \$21.79  | \$23.80  | \$12.50 |
| Village Roadshow            | \$5.15        | \$5.54   | \$5.75   | \$2.91  |
| NBC Universal               | \$23.58       | \$23.94  | \$24.45  | \$19.36 |
| SeaWorld Entertainment Inc. | \$37.02       | \$38.92  | \$39.65  | \$30.26 |

## CURRENCY DIESEL PRICES



| Region (U.S.) | As of 07/08/13 | Change from year ago |
|---------------|----------------|----------------------|
| East Coast    | \$3.831        | \$0.100              |
| Midwest       | \$3.821        | \$0.183              |
| Gulf Coast    | \$3.753        | \$0.148              |
| Mountain      | \$3.811        | \$0.131              |
| West Coast    | \$3.864        | \$0.166              |
| California    | \$4.026        | \$0.144              |

### TOP 7 MOST TRADED CURRENCIES



On 07/11/13 \$1 USD =

|                                |
|--------------------------------|
| 0.7801 EURO                    |
| 0.6712 GBP (British Pound)     |
| 100.52 JPY (Japanese Yen)      |
| 0.9699 CHF (Swiss Franc)       |
| 1.0900 AUD (Australian Dollar) |
| 1.0516 CAD (Canadian Dollar)   |

## BIRTH

### Matt Ouimet to deliver IAAPA Expo keynote address

ORLANDO, Fla — The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) has announced that Cedar Fair Entertainment Company President and CEO Matt Ouimet will deliver the keynote address at the GM and Owners' Breakfast, taking place in the IAAPA Theater, presented by the Wanda Group, Wednesday, Nov. 20, during IAAPA Attractions Expo 2013 at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Fla.

Ouimet will discuss his leadership strategy, share his thoughts on developing young professional talent, and outline his vision for the future of the industry.

Ouimet is a 20-year veteran of the attractions industry, spending 17 years with the Walt Disney Company in a variety of roles including president of the Disneyland Resort.

"We are thrilled that one of the great leaders in the industry, Matt Ouimet, will share his more than 20 years of experience with Expo attendees," said IAAPA President and CEO Paul Noland. "Senior executives, owners, and manag-

ers alike will draw invaluable lessons from Matt's address."

### WhiteWater Spare and Replacement Parts now online

RICHMOND, Canada — In our continuing effort to improve service to its customers, WhiteWater West has announced its new e-store allowing parks to quickly and easily order spare and replacement parts for their WhiteWater products online.

"Our new e-store will make it easy to find and order factory authorized Spare and Replacement parts such as nets, hose jets, platforms, hand wheels, water guns etc., for WhiteWater's Aqua-Play and SCS interactive play structures," said Geoff Chutter, WhiteWater president and founder. "You'll also find parts including shock absorbers, springs, etc. for our waterslides including the Aqua-Loop."

Customers may check out WhiteWater's e-store where they will be directed to set up their own customer account, log in and start shopping. Customers may pre-pay with Visa, MasterCard or they can upload a purchase order for

## PEOPLE WATCH

### Six Flags makes financial donation to National Roller Coaster Museum



The National Roller Coaster Museum & Archives (NRCMA) received a \$5,000 donation on June 18 from Six Flags Entertainment Corporation at the 36th Annual ACE Convention in Springfield, Mass. The financial donation was presented by John Odum, vice president of park operations for the Six Flags' East coast properties. The donation was made in support of the goals of ACE and the NRCMA. Shown left to right are: David Altman, ACE president; Carole Sanderson, ACE past president and NRCMA board member and Jerry Willard, ACE vice president and NRCMA board member.

COURTESY MADONNA HORCHER

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# MIDWAY

CARNIVALS

STATE FAIRS

REVENUE

SUPPLIERS

## Mary Chris Smith talks about Allied, her family and the industry

**STORY:** Pam Sherborne

[psherborne@amusementtoday.com](mailto:psherborne@amusementtoday.com)

TREASURE ISLAND, Fla. — Mary Chris Smith has spent her life in the carnival and amusement industry. Like her parents and grandparents, she spent many hours on the road with Luehrs Ideal Rides.

After marrying David Smith in 1992, she became part of the team of Allied Specialty Insurance of which she is now chairman.

She has also been very involved in industry associations. She began as a board director of the Outdoor Amusement Business Association (OABA) last February.

Here, Mary Chris Smith speaks with *AT* about her family, her company and the carnival industry.

**What is your background in the carnival industry? How did you meet David Smith and what year did you marry?**

I have been in and around the carnival industry all my life. My grandparents were Hub and Winnie Luehrs, founders of Luehrs Ideal Rides, which is still owned and operated by my aunts. During my teenage years, we traveled with my grandparents' show, owning and operating the games around the midway. It was during my early adult life my parents left the "road" and I continued to be in touch with friends and family within the industry.

I was introduced to David Smith in 1991 by my aunts (Lorelei Schoendienst and Jean Clair). David and I were married on March 28, 1992 and we have two sons Conner William Smith, age 16 and Daniel Roy Smith, age 14.



SPECIALTY INSURANCE

**Was it difficult for you to take over Allied after the death of your husband, David in 2004 (son of Duke Smith, who started the company)?**

My involvement in Allied with David was focused on client relations. I attended most conventions with David and our entire family (David, myself, Conner and Danny) traveled extensively during the season visiting clients. During these trips and in our conversations, David and I discussed the industry, our clients and how our company helped our clients to continue to succeed.

It was a natural transition for me to step in and run the company, as the leadership team remained the same. Both the company and the industry were, and still are, a part of my extended family. As a multigenerational family-owned company, in existence for 30 years with the third generation now in place, preserving the grand company David and Duke built was just part of the life I was accustomed to since childhood; a life that mirrors that of the carnival industry. While our company will continue to grow and change as our industry does the same, our focus on meeting the insurance needs of this special group of people will never change.

**Is it more difficult now than say five years ago for**



Mary Chris Smith has spent her life, so far, in the outdoor amusement industry. Stepping into the role of head of Allied Specialty Insurance after her husband's death was a natural direction. Becoming a director of the Outdoor Amusement Business Association February, 2013, also was an important and natural course for her. COURTESY ALLIED SPECIALTY

**carnival operators and owners (and other outside amusement companies) to be able to afford insurance and, in your role, to provide it?**

The company's unique knowledge and hands-on experience in understanding the carnival operations has created a sustainable capability to provide affordable insurance. We manage our company with a long-term view. We know that no matter how well our clients manage and operate their businesses, they will experience claims. We will stick with them during these periods and they have demonstrated that they want to partner with us. We know that while other insurance companies will come and go, our slogan of "30 years, 3 Generations" is not just a marketing term. I'm looking forward to adopting a new one in the future. How does "40 years and ...." sound to you?

**You have a very unique role in the industry and, as that, you also have a very unique inside look. What is**

**your opinion of how the carnival industry is doing? What trends have you seen?**

I think very highly of the carnival industry. It has always been a tough but rewarding business. The carnival industry is part of the fabric of America. Many state and municipal revenue bases depend on the local and state annual festivals and fairs. Each year, families continue attending these events, and even more so when the economy is challenging and tight discretionary family funds limit extravagant summer vacations.

Weather continues to be the most significant event impacting any given season. Carnival owners are smart, motivated business people who work hard to mitigate the impacts weather has on their business. As primarily family-owned companies, carnival owners manage their businesses with a main focus on long term growth and preservation, rather than maximizing short term returns to the shareholders like public-

ly-owned companies. This industry is filled with tough business people who know how to survive challenging times. They are motivated to grow their business so it may be passed on to the next generation of proud family owners/operators.

**In your opinion, how important is it for operators and owners to stay involved and support the carnival associations such as the OABA, IISA (International Independent Showmen's Association), SLA (Showmen's League of America)?**

As it is vital for my company to stay involved and support the industry trade associations, it is equally as vital for the owners and operators to do so. These associations provide structure to the industry for navigating the multiple legal and regulatory requirements and they bind the industry together from a fraternal perspective to provide for the future generation. The associations protect our

▶ See SMITH, page 38

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►SMITH

Continued from page 37

members and make sure that our voices are heard by decision makers in all levels of government.

**Who in your family is involved in Allied Specialty?**

Both of my sisters, having the same industry roots as I, are involved in the marketing and client relation's aspects of Allied. Given the unique nature of the carnival industry, Allied benefits tremendously by involving folks that understand the industry from within. My sons Conner and Danny, like me, have been exposed to the carnival industry their entire lives.

The last couple of years, Conner and Danny have spent time working on my family's show gaining firsthand knowledge of the operations. For many years, they have attended Gibtown and IAAPA

with me, and have actively participated in award presentations on behalf of Allied. They have attended numerous social events involving clients and are comfortable discussing the industry they and I love. As I mentioned earlier, the carnival industry is an extension of our family.

The Allied organization has never been stronger than it is today. The exceptional combined team of Allied Specialty Insurance and T.H.E. Insurance Company look forward to many more years of utilizing our operational and risk management expertise to benefit customers and the industry we consider family with the services that have defined Allied. We are excited about our clients' past business successes and look forward to helping them to continue to grow for years and generations to come.

# Ray Cammack Shows' Leavitt looks forward to Chance Freestyle

**STORY:** Pam Sherborne  
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

DEL MAR, Calif. — Guy Leavitt, Ray Cammack Shows, was hopeful he would have his new Chance Freestyle on the midway by the end of July.

He would love to have the ride, one of the first mobile amusement rides Chance Rides has manufactured in a long time.

Leavitt hopes to be able to run it for the second half of his 2013 season, which included the upcoming Orange County Fair, Costa Mesa, Calif., July 12-Aug. 11. He was playing the independent midway at the San Diego County Fair, Del Mar, Calif., June 8-July 4, when he spoke with AT.

Chance Rides exhibited



This is an artist rendering of Chance Rides new Freestyle. The first Freestyles off the line will be for the portable amusement industry. Ray Cammack Shows will receive the first one. COURTESY CHANCE RIDES

the Freestyle at the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions convention last November in Orlando, Fla.

Mike Chance, Chance president, said then that Leavitt had purchased the ride and hopes were to deliver it at the first of 2013. Chance described the Freestyle as "a Tribault on steroids."

But, engineering delays delayed delivery for Leavitt.

"My son-in-law, Benjamin Pickett, has been working with Chance, helping to design features that the portable industry wants," Leavitt said. "He helped design the loading feature."

The Freestyle can seat up to 24 passengers in outward facing seating for easy entry loading and unloading. The ground-level entry and side ramps with walkways allow side loading so all passengers load and unload at the same time, increasing hourly capacity.

The portable model is completely self-contained on a 48-foot trailer.

It has a classic titling spinning motion with pre-programmed, electric variable speed drive that can offer a variety of ride experiences.

Optional features include a sound system with digital safety message and colorful backdrop and a programma-

ble LED lighting package.

Leavitt said in late June that he had not ridden his new ride, but expected to do so on a return trip to the Chance plant in Wichita, Kan., sometime in July before receiving it.

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**FAST FACTS**

**Freestyle**  
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**Wichita, Kansas**

- 24 total seats
- Maximum total passenger weight is 4,080 lbs.
- Minimum passenger height is 48 inches
- Loading for all passengers is done simultaneously
  - Lap bars have simultaneous auto-release
  - Ride speed (turret) is 10 rpm
- Ride speed (rim) is 24 rpm
  - Drive type is variable speed electric
- Motor type is 208/230 volt, 3 phase, 60 Hz
  - 2 total motors
- Ride duration (maximum) is 2.5 minutes
  - Ride duration (recommended) is 2 min.
- Maximum boom angle is 65 degrees from ground
  - Maximum wind speed (operating) is 35 mph
  - Maximum wind speed (static) is 80 mph
  - Maximum ride weight empty is 45,000 lbs

—Source: Chance Rides

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## MIDWAY LIGHTS

COMPILED: Pam Sherborne, psherborne@amusementtoday.com

**San Mateo (Calif.) County Fair** officials announced in late June that the 79th annual fair exceeded attendance goals of 120,000 this year when the fair ran June 8-16. Attendance was up 20 percent over 2012 and surpassed 2011's total, one of the largest attended fairs in several years.

According to San Mateo County Event Center's General Manager, **Chris Carpenter**, "We have developed an integrated marketing, advertising, public relations and social media program with a solid team. The successful numbers demonstrate that our program and content are resonating with the community."

Carpenter said they have already started planning the 80th annual based on input, research and data from this year's patrons.

**Butler's Amusements** provided the midway this year, its 40th there. Among its large arsenal, the carnival brought in its Chance Giant Wheel, the Zillerator Roller Coaster by Pinfari, Thunderbolt by Chance, 1001 Nachts by ARM, Zipper by Chance, Cliff Hanger by Dartron and its Super Shot Drop Tower, ARM.

This year's fair also expanded the Technology and Industrial Arts Department, brought in musical talent from Three Dog Night, Starship featuring Mickey Thomas, and continued the popular Rainforest exhibit and Racing Pigs events.

Like a number of other places in Huron, the **South Dakota State Fairgrounds** took a few lumps from severe weather in June. Fair Manager **Jerome Hertel** said the fairgrounds sustained damage to several structures, trees, and lost power for about 24 hours.

Hertel said the damage should not delay or have any effect on the **South Dakota State Fair** set for Aug. 29-Sept. 2.

Damage included a number of lightweight booths that were shredded and wrapped around trees. Trash barrels were strewn about and a light pole near the midway was down.

The fairgrounds are located a short distance south of the Huron Regional Airport, which recorded one of the largest gusts of the storm at 87 miles an hour. Hertel was surprised to see so many healthy trees damaged by the winds, including a large cottonwood.

At the time of the storm, the fairgrounds was hosting the 2013 Wally Byum Caravan Club International Airstream Rally. Hertel said roughly 250 of the iconic aluminum campers were in place when the storm moved in. Some of the Airstreamers rode out the storm in their travel trailers.

Attendance at the 122nd **Merced County Fair** wasn't quite what it was a year ago but the community still turned out in droves for the annual event.

The fair saw a four percent drop in attendance from 2012, with 68,601 people attending this year. That makes for a difference of 7,052 fairgoers, but Merced County Fair officials feel the bulk of that difference was in the free attendees.

"You look at the difference between this year and last year and it's really not that big," said Diane Conway, marketing manager. "We're still very pleased with

the turnout."

Some differences this year included an increase price of the fair five-packs of tickets from \$16 to \$20. Conway said they didn't sell "nearly as many."

"The other big difference was a five percent drop in free attendance," she said. "We still had a number of free fair opportunities, like our senior citizens' day and our kids' day, but we really tried to limit the number of free tickets we passed out."

Even with fewer people walking the grounds, Conway said the 2013 fair may come out on top.

Participants from the local FFA and 4-H clubs as well as independent exhibitors sold 576 animals for \$513,305. That's a \$19,833 increase from 2012.

**Butler Amusements** provided the midway and brought several new and/or different rides to the fair this year including ARM's Vertigo and for the kids, the Dizzy Dragon, Sellner/Larson International.

Other rides on the midway included the Giant Wheel by Chance, Starship 3000 by Wisdom, Zipper by Chance, Eagle 16 by Eli Bridge, Raiders by Wisdom and the Spin Out by Tivoli.

New entertainment such as karaoke and the Gas-car Crazy Animal Races were also held. The community was particularly pleased with the Salute to Veterans theme, said Conway.

In June, **Outdoor Amusement Business Association** (OABA) board member **Dan Kroeger**, chairman and president of **Gold Medal Products**, tendered his resignation as OABA's Treasurer/Officer to the association's Chairman **Mike Featherston**, who accepted on behalf of the entire board.

Kroeger, who has been OABA's treasurer for the past six years, reported on OABA's financial reports as well as investments not only to board members but also to all the members at the association's annual meetings.

He implemented accounting procedures and controls as well as investment policies that guided board and staff actions. He worked closely with OABA's CPA and audit firm to make certain accounting controls and reports were impeccable, said **Bob Johnson**, OABA president, when announcing the resignation.

"We all know Dan heads a major, international company that supplies equipment, product and services to the movie theater, festivals, fair concessionaires and carnival industries," Johnson stated. "Gold Medal and its key management staff have been and hopefully will continue to be amusement and entertainment sponsors and advertisers. Dan never hesitated to say, 'You can count on Gold Medal,' which was music to my ears and others. Dan continues to lead this company as his duties have been expanded and his time is precious, now that he is a grandfather, to boot!"

**Larry Yaffe**, senior vice president, sales and marketing, **Firestone Financial**, and OABA Director since 2007, has accepted the duties of interim Treasurer until the board meets in November to officially elect Larry as the new officer and member of the executive committee.

The stars of **A&E's** most-watched series, **Duck Dynasty**, will be at the **2013 Kentucky State Fair**. Willie, Korie, Si and Kay Robertson will appear August 25 at 3 p.m.

The performance is called "A Conversation with the Robertsons" and will be a part of the Main Stage Concert Series in Freedom Hall.

"We are thrilled to have the Robertsons bring a new type of entertainment to the fair this year," Kentucky State Fair Board CEO **Clifford "Rip" Rippetoe**, said. "They have a large fan base who watch and follow them for their values, lifestyles and hobbies."

High waters from the Wapsipinicon River forced the cancellation of this year's **Linn County Fair**, Central City, Iowa. The 125th edition of the fair was set for June 26 through July 1.

Even though the fair is canceled, the fair's 4-H livestock shows continued at the **Delaware County Fairgrounds** in Manchester. That fair ran July 8-14.

**Jennifer Dunn**, president of the Linn County Fair, said they received numerous offers from different counties to host the fair. It's the first time the fair was forced to move locations. Delaware County Fair officials called them and said they were ready for them.

"You can't be mad when something like this happens," Dunn was quoted saying in a local newspaper. "You can't be mad at Mother Nature. It is what it is. We are all here with smiles. Yes, it can be frustrating, but it is one of those things that you just have to roll with the punches."

Those who purchased grandstand tickets for this year's Linn County Fair can exchange them at the 2014 fair for any grandstand event of equal or lesser

**Next Generations Shows**, owned by **Vern Tripes** and based in Lone Tree, Iowa, was scheduled to provide the midway.

Oregon Gov. **John Kitzhaber** has put his signature to a bill creating a public corporation to run the **Oregon State Fair and Expo Center**, located in Salem.

Kitzhaber signed a bill that sailed through the Legislature without a single "no" vote.

The bill provides the fair more flexibility to contract with vendors, advertisers and others who do business with the fair by removing it from state agency contracting restrictions.

The bill stipulates the state can dissolve the corporation and resume management of the fair if the corporation fails to turn a profit in three years of any five-year period.

A council designed under the bill to oversee the fairground's management will assume management of the fair on Dec. 31, 2015, at the latest.

Until then, the state will continue to fund the fair and exposition center.

The state has budgeted \$3.8 million for the fair and exposition center in the next biennium, on top of a \$4 million debt service package.

The **2013 Oregon State Fair** is set for Aug. 23-Sept. 2.

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# Boulevard Bank acquires Tropic Capital loan portfolio

LEE'S SUMMIT, Mo. — Prairie Financial, the Outdoor Amusement Division of Boulevard Bank, has acquired the majority of the loan portfolio of Tropic Capital, effective May 31, 2013. The move strengthens the company's position in the market, ranking it among the top financial lending companies serving the industry.

"We already know and work with a large segment of Tropic Capital's customers," stated Paul Muller, Prairie Financial vice president. "This acquisition allows us to better serve these new and existing customers, and helps us access a segment of the market that we were not previously addressing."

Prairie Financial is a division of Boulevard Bank, which is in turn a wholly owned subsidiary of Scottrade Bank. The combined financial backing of these companies allows Prairie Financial to help its customers finance their operations with few limitations as to the size of its transactions. The Tropic Capital portfolio acquisition underscores the commitment Prairie Financial and its parent companies have made to the outdoor amusement market.

"At its heart, Prairie Financial is literally a family business, and we have a deep understanding of the unique needs of the outdoor amusement industry," says Muller, whose wife, Pam, is the company of-

fice manager. Their son Wade and long-time associate Mark Walker round out the Prairie team. "We're known for partnering with our customers, offering longer, more flexible terms and custom-structured deals with extremely competitive rates."

"We want to assure existing Tropic Capital customers that we'll be working with them to make this transition as smooth as possible, with no changes in loan terms, loan structure, payment amounts or due dates," says Wade Muller. "We want our Tropic Capital customers to feel like they're part of the family."

For additional information, please contact Paul Muller at 816-554-3863, or [pnmuller@blvdbank.net](mailto:pnmuller@blvdbank.net).



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## 2013 Northeast Fair gains in attendance

PITSTON TOWNSHIP, Pa. — The growing 2013 Northeast Fair, Pittston Township, Pa., June 18-23, exceeded its 2012 attendance, but temperatures approaching 90 degrees on the final day of the fair seemed to diminish crowds throughout the afternoon.

According to fair committee President Joe Aliciene, attendance had been above the usual 34,000 to 35,000 through Saturday night.

He had expected final figures to show the fair had beat out 2012's record number.

Reithoffer Shows provided the midway for the fair and brought in just over 25 rides including the Power Surge by Zamperla, Zipper by Chance, Orient Express Coaster by Wisdom, Cliff Hanger by Dartron, Starship 2000 by Wisdom, and Fireball by Larson.

The fair usually raises between \$60,000 and \$70,000 for the Pittston Twp. Volunteer Fire Department. Aliciene said he hoped to at least match that this year.

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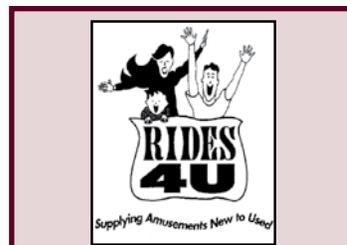
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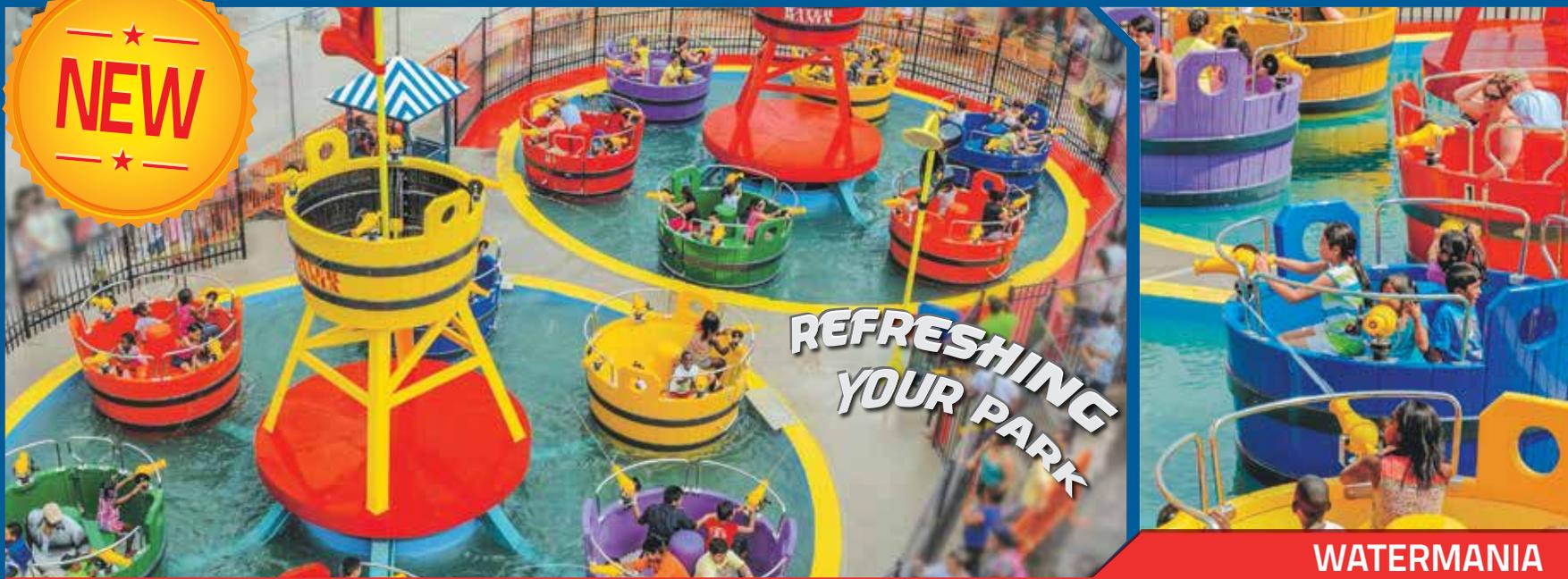
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