

▶ 2021 IAFE Convention and Trade Show comes to San Antonio, Texas — pages 36-39

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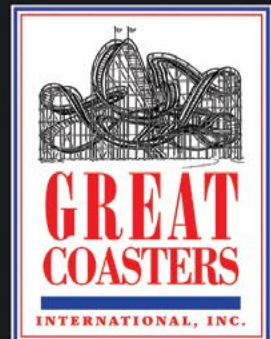
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AMUSEMENT VIEWS

AT NOTEBOOK: B. Derek Shaw, bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

I am an industry man



Shaw

This past summer, I visited fairs and carnivals, many fairs and carnivals — 20 to be exact. It was a follow-up for a story about one fair where I reached out to a carnival owner, after numerous attempts with others in the operation, for information about their rides, food and game joints. The person got back to me and said, “You’re a (specific carnival) man!” I was taken back by this comment.

I went on to explain to this person that when I first got into the industry on the park side as a hobbyist, my friends and I would visit many amusement parks. Most in Pennsylvania were family owned and operated at that time. Upon entry, my friends went straight to the roller coaster, while I headed to the park office. Why, might you ask? I wanted to meet and get to know the people who own and run the operation.

When publisher Gary Slade asked me five years ago to take over the fair and carnival section of *Amusement Today*, I immediately responded, without hesitation, “Absolutely.” The reason is simple. The carnival segment of the industry is operated primarily by families and small businesses. I want to know who owns the operation and better understand their successes, problems, challenges and accomplishments.

I responded to the person, saying, “I’m a Reithoffer man. I’m a Deggeller man. I’m a Strates man. I’m a Funtastic Shows man. I’m an RCS man. I’m a (you fill in the blank) man.”

All parts, all companies, all facets of this industry are intertwined. Each one of us — in one way or another — needs the other, grows from one another and stands on the shoulders of those who were here before us.

Bottom line: I’m an industry man. I am here to promote your successes, your challenges — your operation. We’re all in this together and together this industry will survive and thrive.

FLINT’S VIEW: Bubba Flint



INDUSTRY VOICE: Marla J. Calico, IAFE

Never give up

I recently reread an article I wrote toward the end of 2020. This is what I said then: “Here is what I believe with all my heart: people in the fair industry have passion and perseverance. Your passion shows in everything you do. And you never give up, no matter what obstacles are in your way. When we all reach the other side of this storm, we will all be stronger. And we will be stronger because we’ve gone through this together.”

That “storm” does not seem to be quite over, but we are stronger because of it. Every person I know in this industry has done something in the past 20 months that they would have never envisioned possible. I am particularly proud of how everyone in “The Network” — fairs, carnival operators, concessionaires, producers, agents, and every type of service provider — has stayed connected, encouraged one another, and shared ideas on how to not only keep the business afloat, but to put on a fair in these turbulent and uncertain times. Or how



Calico

to cancel yet another fair without giving up hope for the future. Apropos to our industry, I recently heard it referred to as the “COVID rollercoaster.”

As we gather reports from members, we are finding that many had unparalleled success — records of all types shattered. For others, weather — the #1 nemesis of our industry — was a factor in dampening (literally) crowds. Costs were up; labor (paid and volunteer) hard to find. Incidents of violence (especially from teenagers) popped up in surprising places and with much more frequency than imaginable. Through it all, you persevered. Everyone worked together to put on a great fair, even if it was a bit different than it had been.

So, you will go forward. Still dealing with uncertainty, but with the knowledge and pride that you can do more than you imagined possible. I hope that you continue to lean on each other and the team here at the Association and continue to #GrowFairStrong!

Opinions expressed on this page are those of the columnist(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.

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Your Amusement Industry NEWS Leader

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2 MINUTE DRILL



AT: Janice Witherow

Ed Hodgdon, Hodgdon Consulting, LLC

After spending more than 20 years with **Funtown Splashtown USA**, **Ed Hodgdon** decided to branch out and recently started his own marketing, advertising and PR business, appropriately called **Hodgdon Consulting**. Ed is also an active member of **NEAAPA**, where he serves as secretary and lobbies for a focus on advocacy. He was honored for these leadership efforts with a 2020 Golden Ticket Award in the category of "Industry Leader: Association." Known for being tech savvy, his high energy and having a stellar work ethic, Ed is sure to succeed as a new entrepreneur.

Title: Creative Director, Hodgdon Consulting, LLC; Secretary at NEAAPA and Marketing Manager, Ride Entertainment.

Number of years in the industry: 23.

Best thing about the industry: How it is constantly evolving, growing and changing.

Favorite amusement ride: Astrosphere at Funtown Splashtown USA.

If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be ... Still working in marketing and PR somewhere.

Biggest challenge facing our industry: Keeping up with proposed state and federal regulations. We need to do a better job telling our story at all levels of government.

The thing I like most about amusement/water park season is ... Visiting NEAAPA members.

Favorite flavor of ice cream: Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough.

When I want to really chill out, I ... Play video games.

The celebrity I would most like to live next door to would have to be ... Captain Lee Rosbach from *Below Deck*.

The first thing I do when I get home from work is ... Close the door to my office in the house so I can separate from work.

When I was 10 years old, I wanted to be ... A teacher, because I thought they got summers off like their students did.

The coolest show on television right now is ... All the different international iterations of *RuPaul's Drag Race* reality show.

If I were to set a Guinness World Record, it would be for ... How many consecutive days I go to Starbucks. When I go into stores near our house, I feel like Norm from *Cheers*.



Ed Hodgdon has enjoyed a more-than-20-year career within the amusement industry and has recently started his own marketing firm, Hodgdon Consulting.
COURTESY ED HODGDON

My all-time favorite country song is ... "Friends in Low Places" by Garth Brooks.

The last time I laughed out loud was ... Probably at something that I said, because it didn't come out right.

Dream vacation: A European cruise, going from Greece to Scandinavia stopping at the different ports along the way.

You are going to the moon. The three things you would take on the Space Shuttle are ... iPhone, a Comfy and a bottle of wine.

The errand I most dread to run: I don't mind running errands ... weird I know.

Take your pick – skydiving or hot air balloon ride: I haven't done either, but I think I would prefer skydiving.

The most underrated professional athlete is ... Any female athlete.

Favorite rainy day activity: Watching a movie I haven't seen in a while.

The last item I purchased online was ... Morning Recovery for IAAPA.

People usually say I remind them of ... They say I look like Alton Brown from *The Food Network*.

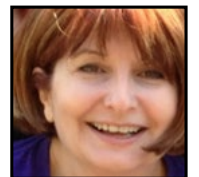
THE INDUSTRY SEEN

Christmas is bigger in Texas



AUSTIN, Texas — 2021 will see the debut of Texas Winter Park, a winter theme park experience that will include several rides, attractions, movies and food trucks. Among the attractions will be a custom-designed bounce house which is the tallest Christmas tree inflatable in the world (inset). The Christmas tree stands 55 feet tall, making it the same size as State Fair of Texas icon Big Tex. 45-year-old CEO Phillis Rand (above) has plans for two additional phases to come for Texas Winter Park, including a collection of eclectic inflatable attractions.
COURTESY TEXAS WINTER PARK

Reflections ON FUN



AT: Lottie Minick

Thank you

As *Amusement Today* brings this column to a close, I wanted to say "Thank you" to **Gary Slade** for the opportunity to write *Reflections on Fun*. To **Hardy Haberman**, when I saw the penguins with roller skates on their little feet flying down the hill in front of my games — in 1975 at **Seven Seas** — I knew you and **Weldon Middlebrook** were the culprits, but I never dreamed where this story would lead ... convincing Gary to make this column a reality.

I'm embarking on a new adventure. A while back, **Robby Bell III** was pursuing property in the Tulsa area for his park and he asked my husband, **Bob Minick**, to come and walk several sites with him. When Bob came home, he said all had good qualities but Robby and he both agreed that the Broken Arrow property was outstanding. On November 4, Robby Bell announced to the world "Bell's is Back in BA" and the feedback from Oklahoma — as well as surrounding states — has been incredible (see story, page 53).

With **Rich Poling** having **Minick Associates** Bell's designs piling up, I simply appeared on **Sally** and **Bob Bell's** front porch. I would not leave until my chosen family said: "Yes, of course you're going to be right in the middle of this most incredible adventure." Thank you, I'm back in the world I know and love with those I love.

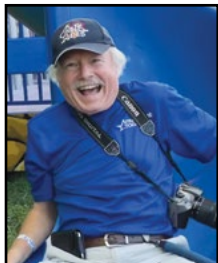
All four Bell generations are the truest showmen and beloved here. They are giving me the opportunity to continue my husband's legacy of bringing wonderful memories to people who may never know who we are.

Thank you to Gary and my wonderful friends. I so enjoyed turning your stories into my column. And, of course, I thank my readers. This has been my pleasure.

Amusement TODAY

ANNUAL HOLIDAY COOKING GUIDE

Amusement Today began a tradition of industry professionals sharing recipes in 2005. For the 17th annual contributions, we turned the tables to our own staff. Here, the AT team shares some of their favorites.



B. Derek Shaw

Mom's Pork and Sauerkraut recipe

Many folks start the New Year with a pork and sauerkraut meal on January 1. It is thought to provide good health and happiness in the upcoming year. My Mom tweaked the recipe to include barley. The addition of that grain made the meal less sour and added more to the overall flavor. As it is being prepared, the option of adding Kielbasa links and/or hot dogs gives family or guests more meat options when enjoying. Bon appetit!

Ingredients:

- Two bags of sauerkraut (or two large cans or jars)
- One small pork loin roast
- ½ cup barley
- Kielbasa [optional]
- Beef hot dogs [optional]
- Buns

Directions:

Put sauerkraut in bottom of crock pot; add pork roast. Cook on high for 2 hours. Meanwhile, cut kielbasa in bun-sized lengths and put in saucepan after piercing casings in several places with fork. Cover with water then bring to boil and turn to low and simmer for 2 - 3 hours. Make barley according to package directions. Use 1/2 cup and measure out prior to cooking.

After pork roast cooks for 2 hours on high, add cooked and drained barley and drained Kielbasa to crockpot. Turn crockpot to low and stir gently combining cooked barley and cooked kielbasa into sauerkraut and partially cooked pork roast. Cook a minimum of 6 hours more. Add all beef hot dogs and cook for at least an additional 2 hours, turn to warm and leave crockpot on throughout party allowing guests to self-serve.

Provide rolls for sandwiches. (Mashed potatoes are a great side dish along with your choice of vegetables.)



John W.C. Robinson

Apple Cinnamon Cider

Ingredients:

- 1 gallon apple cider • 1 gallon apple juice
- 5 cinnamon sticks • 3 cups of sugar
- 1 liter of Everclear (or 151-proof rum or vodka)

Directions: In a large pot (set to medium-high heat, combine the juice, cider and cinnamon sticks. Gradually heat, but do not bring to boil! As mixture heats, stir in sugar (add a cup about every 5 minutes). Remove pot from heat and allow to cool to room temperature. Once cooled, stir in Everclear. Refrigerate complete mixture for at least 24 hours.

Serve cold. Or, for holiday party events/parties, pour the refrigerated mixture into a large crock pot set to warm or low. As cider warms, it tastes delicious and will fill the air with a wonderful cinnamon and apple scent.

Jeffrey Seifert



Pork Chops with Peaches

We really enjoy grilled pork chops. On occasion, you just crave something different or the weather might not be conducive for grilling. This is a nice alternative.

Ingredients:

- 4 pork chops (I like to use thick, boneless loin chops)
- Flour or cornstarch for dusting
- 1 Tablespoon cornstarch
- ½ yellow onion sliced
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ginger – freshly grated is even better
- 2 teaspoon soy sauce
- ½ cup cider vinegar
- ½ cup water
- 1 can peaches in light syrup or natural juice, drained – reserve liquid
- Olive or vegetable oil

Directions:

- Dust the pork chops in flour or cornstarch then brown with a little oil in a heavy skillet.
- Remove the chops, then lightly sauté the onion in the same pan.
- Drain any grease from the pan
- Add the water, vinegar, liquid from the peaches and soy sauce to the pan and mix, add the sauteed onions then place the pork chops on top.
- Sprinkle the chops with the brown sugar, ginger, a little salt and pepper.
- Simmer 45 minutes until the chops are fork tender, check the liquid and add more water as needed. Don't let the pan boil dry.
- Add the peaches on top of the chops, simmer an additional 10 minutes.
- Mix the cornstarch with 2 tablespoons of water. Slowly add to the liquid in the pan to thicken.

Tim Baldwin



Tortilla Soup

During the Texas summer heat, one isn't really inclined to think "soup." Once fall temperatures arrive, I always look forward to the first pot of tortilla soup for the season. There are countless variations of tortilla soup, but I found this one to be better than any restaurant's version.

- Ingredients:** • 1 pound chicken, diced • 1 chopped onion
- 1 jalapeno, seeded and chopped • 4 garlic cloves, minced
 - 2 large carrots, diced • 2 ribs of celery, diced
 - 1 teaspoon cumin • 1 teaspoon chili powder
 - 1 teaspoon lemon pepper • 1 teaspoon salt (I find this optional)
 - 3 teaspoons hot sauce • ½ cup flour • 1 14 oz. can diced tomatoes
 - 4 cans chicken broth (or homemade equivalent)

Directions: Spray large pot with cooking spray. Sauté chicken and veggies; simmer for five minutes. Add spices. Stir. Add flour and hot sauce. Stir evenly. Add tomatoes and broth. Cook on low heat for one hour. Enjoy with broken tortilla chips placed on top. (8 servings)

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Sue Nichols

Whoopie Pies

The recipe for whoopie pies has its origins with the Amish, and in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, it is not uncommon to find roadside farm stands offering these desserts. Whoopie Pies are a big deal in the state.

Ingredients (Cake):

- 1 cup shortening
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 eggs and 3 egg yolks
- 1 cup hot water
- 2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 cup cocoa
- 4 cups of flour
- 1 cup of milk

Ingredients (icing, for centers):

- ½ cup shortening
- 3 egg whites & vanilla flavoring
- 4 Tablespoon flour
- 1 pound powdered sugar

OR

- 1 cup shortening
- 1 lb powdered sugar
- 4 Tablespoons of flour
- 4 Tablespoons of butter
- 4 Tablespoons of milk
- vanilla flavoring

NOTE: You can add flavors such as mint and food coloring too for icing.

Directions:

Mix shortening, sugar and eggs until light. Add baking powder, salt and milk. Mix together. Add hot water, baking soda and cocoa together; mix well. Add flour. Drop on greased cookie sheet by teaspoon. Bake at 375 degrees for 10-12 minutes.



Pam Sherborne



Chocolate Meringue Pie

A favorite recipe of mine was ironically found written with a Sharpie on the back side of a cabinet door in a kitchen of a neighbor who had passed away. I guess it was a favorite of hers as well, which made it very special when I tried it..

Ingredients:

- 5 Tablespoons cocoa (heaping)
- 5 Tablespoons self-rising flour (heaping)
- 1 ¾ cups sugar
- 3 eggs (separated)
- 2 cups 2% milk
- 1 Tablespoon vanilla
- 1 Tablespoon butter (melted)

Directions (Pie): Mix dry ingredients. Mix egg yolks and milk and add to dry ingredients. Add vanilla and butter and cook in heavy pan until thickened. Remove from heat and add vanilla and butter. Use a 10-inch deep dish pie shell (or use homemade crust).

Directions (Meringue): Beat egg whites for 5 minutes. Add sugar and vanilla and beat 5 more minutes. Spread onto pie. Bake at 350 degrees until brown (approx. 25 minutes).

Ingredients (Meringue):

- 3 egg whites
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 Tablespoon vanilla



Janice Witherow



Mini Bacon and Egg Bakes

Growing up in Santa Claus, Ind., my family obviously has several Christmas traditions. Food is a big part of that. We love making Christmas cookies and going to early Mass on Christmas Eve and then enjoying a lasagna dinner. On Christmas morning, breakfast is a treat, and this simple recipe always does the trick.

Ingredients:

- 12 slices of bacon
- 9 eggs
- 1/3 cup milk
- 2 to 3 cups chopped fresh spinach
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ¾ cup shredded white cheddar cheese
- 1 Roma tomato, cut into 12 slices

Directions:

•Coat twelve 2 ½-inch muffin cups with nonstick cooking spray. In a large skillet, cook bacon 5 to 7 minutes or until cooked through but still pliable and just starting to brown, turning occasionally. Drain on paper towels.
 •When cool enough to handle, wrap one slice of bacon around the inside of each muffin cup.
 •In a large bowl, whisk together eggs, milk, spinach, garlic, cheese, ½ tsp. salt and ¼ tsp. black pepper. Divide egg mixture among cups. Cover; chill overnight.
 •Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Uncover muffin cups. Top each with a tomato slice.
 •Bake 25 minutes or until eggs are puffed and set. Let cool in cups 5 minutes. Loosen sides, remove from cups. Serve warm (12 servings).

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PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► Parks prepare to host holiday events — page 14 / Attendance up at Arizona State Fair — page 24

Gerstlauer, Ride Entertainment bring one-of-a-kind coaster to Texas

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

AUSTIN, Texas — What started with intentions of a simple kiddie park has since grown into a full-fledged amusement park in the past 16 months. **Circuit of the Americas** is a nationally recognized racetrack. Set on 1,500 acres in the rolling hills just a few miles from the state capitol, the venue plays host to massive events that include racing, action sports and music. It was built in 2012. In the center is a 2.41-mile racetrack that was designed to challenge the world's most exacting competitors while providing thrilling entertainment for audiences.

But there is a lot of space.

Owner **Bobby Epstein** has begun growing the property. Currently, **COTA Karting** allows competitors to take the wheel of white-knuckle go-karts that range in skill levels and reach speeds up to 55 mph. Also located in this recreational area is a **Soaring Eagle** zipline. During the Christmas holidays, part of the venue is transformed into **Peppermint Parkway**. At that event, guests enjoy lighted displays and a lap on the famous racetrack in their own cars.

Familiar with **Kiddie Park** in San Antonio, Epstein wanted a children's park as another offering at the site. Since those original thoughts, it has grown into **COTALand**. While some of the rides on property are available during **Peppermint Parkway**, the actual opening of the amusement park is projected for late spring of 2022. However, plans have now been announced for further development later in that season.

Placing itself on the coaster map, **COTALand** will be introducing **Palindrome**, a forward-backward shuttle coaster.



The reverse point (above) features an uncommon shape called a "hop stall." The steep plunge off the lift will feature a twisted first drop (below left). Riders will see spectators below while going both forward and backward (below right). COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT



Palindrome will be a one-of-a-kind roller coaster supplied by **Gerstlauer**. Designed specifically for the site, the unique coaster has many signature attributes.

"There were some specific elements we wanted for the ride, and after presenting that to the manufacturers, the challenge coming out of COVID

was the timeframe for people to design something specifically for us," said **Matt Hughey**, senior manager for **COTALand** and **COTA Karting**. "Several had designs of things they had built — the engineering was done — but where we wanted the ride, a cookie-cutter coaster wasn't going to fit."

One very specific element involves a roadway within **Circuit of the Americas**. Not only will the coaster track soar over the road, but riders will travel over it upside down in a zero-G stall.

"Our owner wanted that element," said Hughey. "He wanted it to go across the road.

We think in the future we might expand the park in that direction. He wanted something already in place when we head that way in future years."

Other elements include a twisting vertical dive, a high-speed inline twist, a flipped

► See TEXAS, page 11

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► **TEXAS**

Continued from page 10

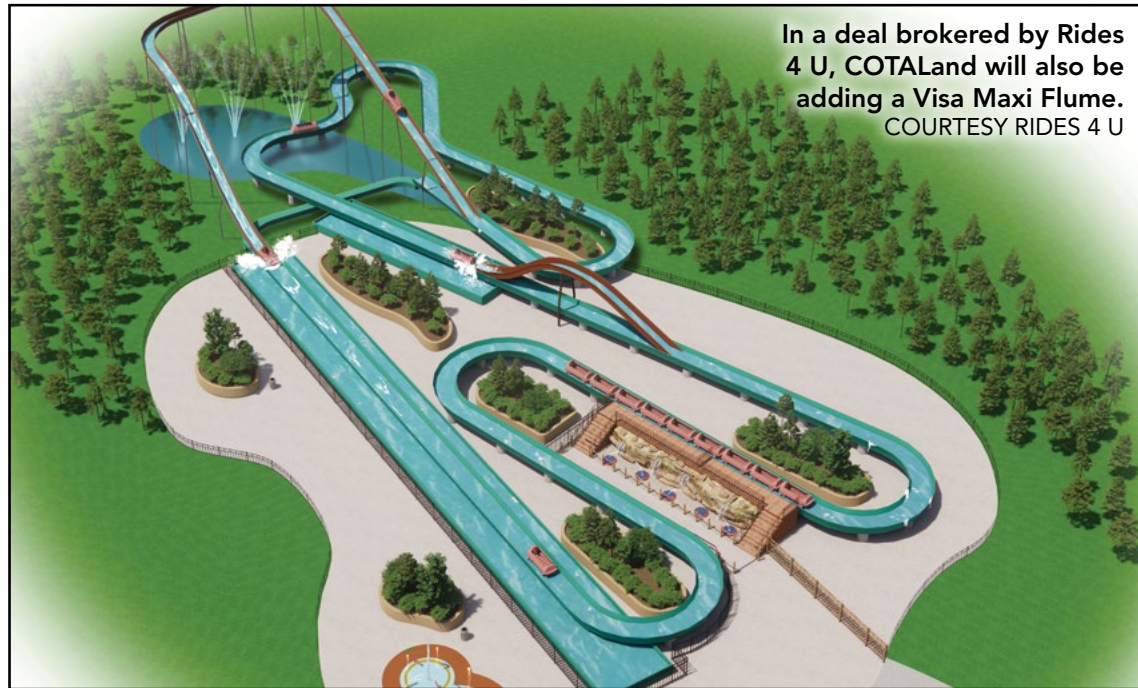
wave turn and a reverse spike with an hourglass-shaped contour (called a “hop stall”).

After riders rush through the track and all its maneuvers, a moment of weightlessness on the reverse spike send vehicles back over the entire course. The forward/backward nature of the experience is what prompted the name *Palindrome*.

“Gerstlauer took our ideas and supplied a design and worked with the timeframe in which we wanted to do it,” said Hughey.

The 95-foot-tall vertical lift will offer an uncommon roller coaster experience to that region of Texas, as well as command attention to those in the park. Track length is 1,230 feet but will be traveled in both directions for a combined length of 2,080 feet traversed. Top speed is 51 mph and riders will feel positive and negative G forces of -1 Gs to 4.5 Gs.

“When we were brain-



In a deal brokered by Rides 4 U, COTALand will also be adding a Visa Maxi Flume. COURTESY RIDES 4 U

storming, I showed [Epstein] different elements from other rides. He liked the vertical lift because of the height and presence of it,” Hughey told *Amusement Today*. “With the footprint in which we wanted to put the ride, we knew a standard lift and standard ride

wouldn’t work with that footprint. The vertical lift allowed us to hop across the road.”

Two trains, each consisting of three rows of four passengers, will operate on *Palindrome*.

The first construction meeting took place the week prior to the IAAPA Expo. Hughey hopes,

assuming ground samples can be analyzed in a timely fashion, holes will be drilled in the winter timeframe. *Peppermint Parkway* takes place in the area over the Christmas holidays, so COTALand is avoiding construction until the new year. Other challenges come from

national events held at Circuit of the Americas. A huge NASCAR race in March and others in June will affect construction.

Ride Entertainment will be responsible for the erection of the coaster.

“We felt at the end of the day, they represent Gerstlauer here in the United States, and they have built numerous Gerstlauer coasters ... for our first coaster of that magnitude, we wanted it to be done correctly,” Hughey said in reference to selecting Ride Entertainment.

Three other coasters will be at the park. Two children’s coasters, a Big Apple brokered through **Ride Trader LLC** and a brand new Skyflyer micro coaster from **SBF Visa**, are already in place. A historic **Schwarzkopf Wildcat** has been refurbished and is nearing completion of its construction.

Other rides being added to the park’s lineup will be a flume ride from **Visa** and a Skyblazer swinging pendulum ride with a unique twist from **U.S. Thrill Rides**; it is the first of its kind in North America.

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Park Post-its



AT: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

On November 1, the Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, Planning Commission approved a 20-acre site plan for what's being called a family attraction at **Dollywood**.

No announcement has been made by Dollywood officials on exactly what is planned.

According to a news article that ran on the local CBS affiliate in Knoxville, Tennessee, the planning commission approved the site plan, which includes a track, load station, maintenance building and food area.

The article quoted **Wes Ramey**, Dollywood spokesman, as saying: "We have not made an announcement regarding an attraction for 2023. If we have details to share, we will make sure everyone is aware when we are ready to announce them."

Joyland Amusement Park, Lubbock, Texas, has been hit again. First came a 2019 pandemic, creating shutdowns and then labor shortages. Then came a storm in July 2020 that was so strong it caused the park to close for two weeks.

At the end of October this year, the park was hit by three individuals who decided to have fun at the expense of the family-owned and family-operated amusement park.

A morning crew found the damage done by the vandals. Fortunately, security cameras should give them a clue as to the suspects.

David Dean, the park's president and owner, found a train out of place and a broken mirror near the front entrance. But the more he walked into the park, the more vandalism he found.

His team found bars torn off a ride and the train track's wires ripped out of the ground. Covers had been taken off some of the water rides.

Preliminary estimates of the damage could run into the thousands.

Fun Spot, Kissimmee, Florida, has announced the opening of their Dynamite Shack Saloon.

The new snacks and beverage concession has it all. Located across from the park's Mine Blower roller coaster, the concession is offering draft, domestic or premium beer choices and mixed drinks.

Coming soon will be a signature TNT drink served in a collectible souvenir cup.

Zoo Miami in Miami, Florida, broke its all-time attendance record by welcoming more than one million guests in 2021.

The zoo will have a lot to celebrate in

the new year. Guests can expect music, giveaways, surprises and other special activities.

There are big plans for 2022, including the opening of a new sea turtle hospital to heal and nurture turtles so that they can return to the wild. In addition, plans are still underway to replace the current animal hospital, which opened in 1986, with a new one.

Cedar Fair Entertainment Co., the parent company of **Cedar Point** park, Sandusky, Ohio, has reached a \$100-million, 20-year public investment deal with the Lake Erie city of Sandusky.

Starting in January, the City of Sandusky will increase its admissions tax from Cedar Point from 4% to 8%, or about \$2 more per \$50 ticket. An 8% parking tax will also go into effect.

The tax increases will raise \$4.5 million to \$5 million a year, or roughly \$100 million over 20 years.

The city's agreement includes a new causeway, water taxi and other improvements that will be funded by the tax increases. Cedar Fair also agreed to maintain a corporate presence in Sandusky, although it's unclear whether that presence includes company headquarters.

The City Commission unanimously approved the deal last month.

SeaWorld, located along Australia's Gold Coast, celebrated its 50th anniversary last month. The park, which started out as the **Surfer's Paradise Ski Gardens** in another location, has prospered into a crucial piece of the city's tourism heart over the last five decades.

Not only has the park marked the 50-year milestone, it also has welcomed more than 50 million visitors and saved more than 10,000 animals through its rescue teams.

A new jaguar catwalk, called the Pantera Walk, has opened at the **San Antonio Zoo**, San Antonio, Texas. The skywalk allows the zoo's jaguars to roam above the exhibit and visitors below.

It is part of the zoo's new realm called Neotropical. The Neotropical areas include South America, Central America, the Caribbean, the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico, the southern region of Florida and a small portion of South Texas.

The exhibit has been designed to feel like a "remote fishing village" that encompasses features of the Americas and pre-Hispanic cultures.

The zoo broke ground on the skywalk in April, which zoo officials boast is the first of its kind in the U.S.

The design for a new children's museum was officially approved unanimously by the Twin Falls, Idaho, city council last month.

The approved plan shows the building will contain 14,000-square-feet of which 8,200 square-feet will be the exhibit galleries. Over 1,900 square-feet will be designated for visitor services. Also in the design is a rooftop garden and skylight and a grand staircase.

The museum is to be built in the downtown area of the city.

No other information has been released.



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Holiday merriment unfolds in parks across the country in 2021

AT: Pam Sherborne

psherborne@amusementtoday.com

UNITED STATES — It is the season to be merry and management and owners of the country's theme and amusement parks have ramped up holiday celebratory plans as the industry becomes more optimistic and ready to participate in widespread celebrations.

It is certainly a time to be merry.

Universal Orlando Resort's holidays celebration invites guests to experience even more wondrous holiday offerings during the festive season, including the popular return of its Universal's Holiday Tour, an exclusive guided tour of Universal Studios Florida and **Universal's Islands of Adventure**.

Like all of the celebrations in the following sampling, select dates and times exist.

Universal Studios events in Florida began on Nov. 21, and will run through Jan. 2.

Universal Studios Hollywood, Universal City, California, has brought back many favorites during its holiday festivities. Some of those include Christmas in The Wizarding World of Harry Potter and Grinchmas. This holiday party began Nov. 26 and runs through Jan. 2.

Holidays at **Disneyland Resort**, Anaheim, California, and **Walt Disney World**, Orlando, Florida, are running Nov. 12-Jan. 9. The fascination and excitement are not disappointing guests.

Six Flags parks also are rolling out the red carpet this year to not only Santa and Mrs. Claus but also to guests eager to celebrate Holiday in the Park this season. Guests to one of Six Flags parks that are presenting the holiday extravaganzas should expect millions of twinkling lights, carolers, dancers, seasonal food and beverage and new shows like the Oh What Fun! A Holiday Light Spectacular at **Six Flags Over Georgia**, Austell, during its celebration set for Nov. 20-Jan. 2.

There will be plenty of rides and attractions available as well.

Six Flags Great Adventure, Jackson, New Jersey, is offering its holiday celebrations Nov. 13-Jan. 9, 2022. Guests have the option to either visit the park in a traditional way during the holidays, riding rides, seeing shows and more, or participate in the park's drive-through experience.

Six Flags Magic Mountain, Valencia, California, began its Holiday in the Park on Nov. 20. It will run through Jan. 2. New this year are Holly Rock, a travel



New this year for the Six Flags Magic Mountain, Valencia, California, holiday celebration is the Peppermint Path (above). During the holiday festivities, Knotts Berry Farm, Buena Park, Calif., becomes Knotts Merry Farm. Snoopy and his gang are not only part of the live performances during the celebrations but are often seen throughout the park (below). COURTESY SIX FLAGS MAGIC MOUNTAIN; KNOTT'S BERRY FARM

back to the 1950s, and the Peppermint Path.

Six Flags Great America, Gurnee, Illinois, and **Six Flags New England**, Agawam, Massachusetts, also are presenting both a traditional experience as well as a drive-through. Dates for the Illinois park are Nov. 26-Dec. 30. Dates for Six Flags New England are Nov. 26 through Jan. 2.

Six Flags Darien Lake, Corfu, New York, is hosting Magic Lights Nov. 19 through Jan. 2, which is only a drive-through event.

Six Flags Over Texas, Arlington, Texas, added a selection of new shows for its Christmas celebration this year. Each night, millions of lights are illuminated at once by Santa in a magical moment. Children have an opportunity to meet Santa, rides are open. In addition, a new lighted 70-foot tree has been added to the entrance plaza.

Six Flags Fiesta Texas, San Antonio, and **Frontier City**, Oklahoma City, began Holiday in the Park events Nov. 20. **Six Flags Discovery Kingdom**, Vallejo, California, started Nov. 26. All run through Jan. 2.

Knoebels Amusement Resort, Elysburg, Pennsylvania, also began its holiday celebration, Joy Through the Grove, on Nov. 26. It will run through Jan. 6.

The event offers a drive-through featuring a wondrous Christmas light display. It be-



gins near Impulse roller coaster, travels down the park's main boulevard, and, then, throughout much of the campground.

There also are fresh cut Christmas trees at Knoebels Christmas Village at Three Ponds Golf Course.

Christmas Village also includes photos with Santa, grab and go Knoebels treats, fire pit s'mores making and a Knoebels gift shop with something

for everyone.

Holiday festivities at **Hersheypark**, Hershey, Pennsylvania, began Nov. 12 and is running, select dates, through Jan. 2.

Halls have been decked at Hersheypark with more than five million twinkling lights in hopes to make every guest merry. Rides will be open and Santa will be on hand.

Officials at parks under the Cedar Fair Entertainment um-

brella, have spent weeks decking the halls with millions of lights, creating themed areas as well as experimenting with the best holiday food and beverages.

And, across the country, they also have prepped Snoopy and his gang and laid out miles of garland.

Many have even expanded their offerings during the Win-

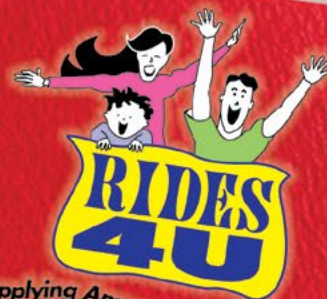
► See HOLIDAYS, page 16

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Silver Dollar City, Branson, Missouri, began its An Old Time Christmas on Nov. 6. New this year is a brand new Broadway-style production called Home for Christmas. COURTESY SILVER DOLLAR CITY

► HOLIDAYS

Continued from page 14

terFest festivities. One of those parks is **Canada Wonderland**, Vaughan, Ontario. Celebrations there began Nov. 13 and are running through Dec. 31. The park expanded the North Pole themed area to allow for more live entertainment, more decor, an ice wine bar and a LED-lit tunnel called Northern Starlight.

Kings Dominion, Doswell, Virginia, began WinterFest on Nov. 20. It will run through Jan. 9. Kings Dominion is presenting an all-new WinterFest Wonderland Parade as is **Kings Island**, Mason, Ohio. The latter began its festivities on Nov. 26 and will run through Dec. 31.

The Cedar Fair park **Knott's Berry Farms**, Buena Park, California, turns into Knott's Merry Farms during the holidays. WinterFest dates there are Nov. 19-Jan. 2.

Carowinds, Charlotte, North Carolina, kicked off its WinterFest on Nov. 13. It will run through Jan. 9.

Herschend Family Entertainment park properties love the holidays and it is spectacularly obvious. With millions and millions of lights, along with holiday music and shows, food and beverage, guests are

prepared to be amazed on the ground and in the air while riding some of the rides that will remain open.

Dollywood, Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, kicked off its Smoky Mountain Christmas holiday celebration on Nov. 6. It will run through Jan. 2.

Herschend's **Silver Dollar City**, Branson, Missouri, began its An Old Time Christmas on Nov. 6. It runs through Dec. 30. Park officials there have said they will have 6.5 million lights for guests and a brand new Broadway-style production called Home for Christmas.

Wild Adventures, Valdosta, Georgia, will not be left out of holiday celebrations. That park will kick off its Wild Adventures Christmas on Dec. 4. It will run through Jan. 2 with millions of lights and a 120-foot-tall Christmas tree with lights that twinkle to music.

Dutch Winter Wonderland, the holiday celebration at **Dutch Wonderland**, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, a **Palace Entertainment** property, is a fun, winter wonderland event featuring themed rides, special entertainment, warm holiday drinks and The Royal Lights Show. The Winter Wonderland runs Nov.

► See HOLIDAYS, page 18

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► **HOLIDAYS**

Continued from page 16

20-Jan. 2.

Another Palace Entertainment property, **Kennywood**, West Mifflin, Pennsylvania, is in its 10th season of its Holiday Lights seasonal celebrations. The event kicked off Nov. 20 and runs through Jan. 2, with festive shows, fun family rides and hundreds of thousands of lights.

Lake Compounce, Bristol, Connecticut, kicks off its holiday season Nov. 26 and runs through Jan. 1.

SeaWorld Parks and Entertainment properties have held very successful holiday celebrations in the past and 2021 should be no different. **SeaWorld San Antonio**, Texas, **SeaWorld Orlando**, Florida, and **SeaWorld San Diego**, California, are all offering some of its traditional entertainment including Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer and Sesame Street characters as well as new shows.

SeaWorld Parks and Entertainments also is the umbrella company for **Busch Gardens Tampa Bay**, Florida, and **Busch Gardens Williamsburg**, Virginia. Both parks began their holiday celebration, Christmas Town, on Nov. 12, running through Jan. 2.



RWS Entertainment Group partnered with Give Kids The World Village to produce its second annual Night of a Million Lights holiday lights spectacular (above). SeaWorld San Antonio has a unique way to celebrate the holidays with its live shows. Some of those ways include having seals do the performing (inset). AT/TIM BALDWIN; COURTESY, SEAWORLD

Night of a Million Lights at Give Kids the World Village, (GKTW) Kissimmee, Florida, has returned running Nov. 12-Jan. 2. Open to the public, this event debuted last year. Right out of the gate, it was named by *USA Today* the "Number One Thing To Do In December In Orlando."

The event fully immerses guests into a holiday lights spec-

tacular. With dancing lights, a sparkling tree trail, music and treats, there is something for everyone. New this year is the tram ride through lighted scenes.

Give Kids the World is an 89-acre resort, that provides critically ill children and their families from around the world with magical weeklong wish vacations at no cost.



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Multiple industry veterans team, create immersive Escape Theory

CRAWFORDVILLE, Fla. — With over 80 years of combined experience in family entertainment, **Escape Theory** is the creation of industry veterans unifying their efforts. **Keith Padgett** of **Art-FX Studios**, **Jeff Willy** of **Laser Force**, **Doug Hummel** of **Alpha North**, and **Noah Kline** have combined experience and knowledge to create immersive escape attractions in **Escape Theory**.

Since coming together in 2019 — and through the pandemic — **Escape Theory** has grown to feature locations encompassing five time zones. **Escape Theory's** rooms are highly immersive and feature hand-crafted theme fabrication as well as interactive, automated puzzle designs.

“Our escape rooms transport players to the other worlds

with movie-quality set pieces, professional sound design, and next-generation puzzle tech,” commented **Escape Theory** founder, **Jeff Willy**. “You won’t find a room full of padlocks and paper clues here.”

Collectively, **Escape Theory's** locations boast a five-star average Google review with more than 1,500 reviews in total and feature six custom escape themes with three more themes already announced as coming soon.

At **IAAPA Expo 2021**, the company introduced innovative 30-minute experiences which were designed to complement family entertainment centers, existing escape locations, bars and other tourist attractions. These 30-minute experiences feature the same quality interactive elements and over-the-

top theming as the one-hour escape themes but are designed to fit into smaller spaces and have a higher throughput.

Escape Theory welcomed operators to visit the newest 30-minute escape experience, **Hotel Hell'en'** during the expo. In this escape, guests are immersed into a deeply paranormal and decrepit hotel room where their group has 30 minutes to escape before the hotel keeper makes them a “permanent resident.”

“The proven return-on-investment and revenue-per-square-foot of the **Escape Theory** rooms rival any anchor attraction you could operate. **Escape Theory** boasts fully turnkey, industry leading puzzle designs with theme park quality theming,” offered **Willy**.

•art-fxstudios.com



In **Hotel Hell'en'**, guests check in but they don't always check out. In this escape experience from **Art-FX Studios**, players are immersed into a deeply paranormal and decrepit hotel room where they have 30 minutes to escape before the hotel keeper makes them a permanent resident.

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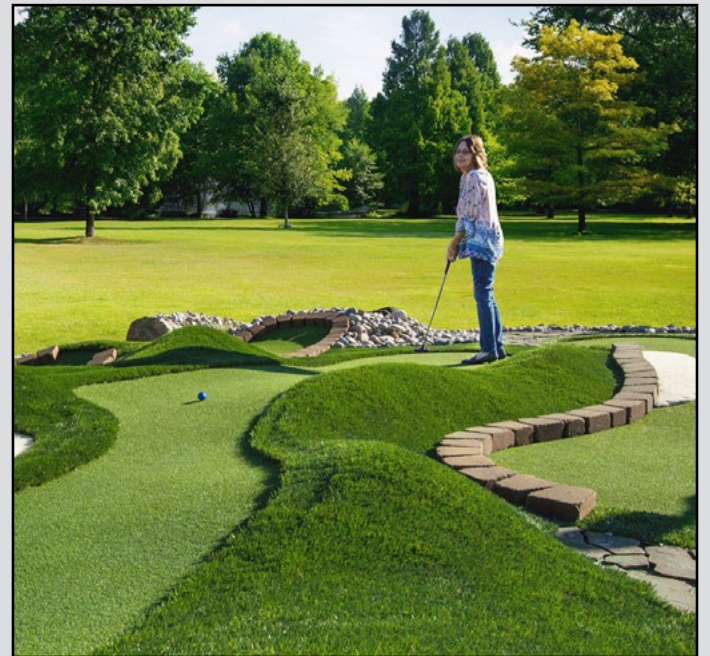
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AGS putting course boosts guest spending

Adventure Golf & Sports has introduced **Bunkers & Bumps**, a new style of putting course that it is offering to entertainment venues such as **FECs**. This new style of putting course is styled as a miniaturized real golf course but only putting the ball with enhanced topography, artificial putting and rough turf, along with faux sand bunkers protecting or challenging certain shot. An 18-hole **Bunkers & Bumps** course can fit in a 12,000-square-foot space and a nine-hole course will fit in a 6,000-square-foot space.

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Semnox granted U.S. patent for Radian smart wristband

Semnox's RFID enabled Radian smart wristband was recently granted a U.S. patent. The technology has multiple planned uses for the family entertainment center industry. COURTESY SEMNOX



BULGARIA — Semnox Solutions announced its newest wearable technology — Radian Smart Wristband — has been awarded a U.S. patent for its feature-rich innovation.

"The Radian wristband is a game changer for the entertainment industry with its functionality and easy-to-implement features," stated a Semnox representative in a recent release.

The Radian Wristband is an RFID enabled, rechargeable device which can alert the wearer with system-controlled time-based events through dynamic light patterns, haptic touch/vibration and sound.

The potential for this new solution is huge. Some initial implementation examples include notifying guests and staff at trampoline parks, soft play areas, laser tag arenas and skating rinks about status of player activity time. The tech can also be used to notify patrons of a restaurant when their food is ready to pickup or notifying party guests when it is time to cut the cake or begin their next planned activity.

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FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL

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

Scene75 Columbus, located in Dublin, Ohio, received international recognition from the **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA)** when receiving the Brass Ring Award for the Top Family Entertainment Center of the World.

The **Scene75 Cincinnati** location previously won the same award in 2016, while the chain's Dayton, Ohio location has been nominated for the award twice.

"It is an incredible honor to win this award not only once, but twice. It's ultimately a reflection of the Scene75 culture," stated **Jonah Sandler**, chief entertainment officer and founder of Scene75 Entertainment states. "Since our doors opened in Dayton in 2012, we have always had the goal to pursue excellence and create lasting memories with our guests. We are not willing to settle for the ordinary; we want guests' experiences at Scene75 to be extraordinary. This mentality applies not only to our entertainment experience, but also our dedication to safety since our inception and especially during the pandemic."

Earlier in 2021, Scene75 Entertainment Centers received the Publisher's Pick: Turnstile Award during the 2021 Golden Ticket Awards presented by *Amusement Today*.

Launch Entertainment announced the opening of a new location in Woburn, Massachusetts, set to open in Summer 2022. It will be the fourth Launch Entertainment location for multi-unit franchise owner **Ryan Debin**.

Debin is a lifelong entrepreneur with more than a dozen franchise locations across two brands, including four Launch Entertainment locations in Norwood, Framingham, Westborough, and now Woburn, Massachusetts

"I invest in brands that are fun and fulfilling," says Debin. "I'm in the business of putting smiles on faces. Owning Launch Entertainment Centers is rewarding because you bring people together while creating jobs for hardworking people in the community."

Founded in 2012 by **Rob and Erin Arnold**, Launch Entertainment started as an indoor trampoline park for kids. The company has evolved into a differentiated family entertainment center experience with a wide variety of attractions and amenities for all ages including XP Arena, ninja course, laser tag, trampolines, Krave Restaurant, beverage service and more.

Chuck E. Cheese, often considered the most popular family entertainment center in the world, opened its doors for the first time in Manama, Bahrain's Seef Mall.

Rapidly expanding across the Middle East, Chuck E. Cheese has quickly made a lasting impact in each market through its unique value proposition in gameplay with

its innovative Play Pass technology. Offering All You Can Play games through time-based play is unlike any competitor in the surrounding area and allows families to play more games and win more prizes. Boasting more than 2 billion gameplays annually with over 35,000 arcade-style games world-wide, Chuck E. Cheese is an undisputed leader in game sourcing and knowledge.

The new location holds a seating capacity for over 300 guests and more than 70 games making for a safe, clean and spacious place for family fun.

"We are pleased to push forward with our international expansion plans and believe working with the **Masbi Group** team will create the perfect opportunity to successfully build and grow our portfolio across the GCC," said **Arun Barnes**, Chuck E. Cheese's COO and SVP of international. "This effort adds to our presence across other areas of the Middle East and we're looking forward to bringing joy and lifelong memories to more guests, which is a privilege that we pride ourselves on," he added.

Less than three months after **Snapology**, a leading children's STEAM franchise, was acquired by franchise growth-focused platform company **Unleashed Brands**, the companies have already rolled out a new model that will offer franchisees the option to add efficiently-designed Snapology locations inside busy **Urban Air Adventure Parks** across the country. The move allows franchisees to serve more families in their communities by helping kids learn, play and grow.

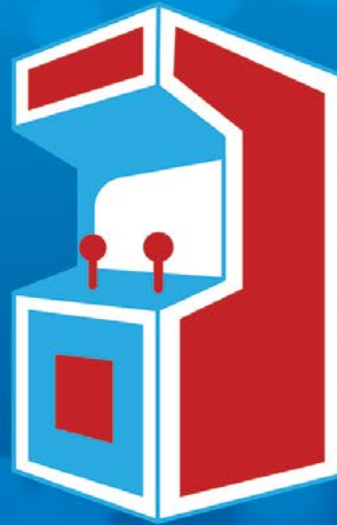
Snapology encourages social skills and teamwork by teaching science, technology, engineering, art, math and literacy concepts in a fun way. The brand uses research-based curriculum, designed to be inclusive to all learning abilities with a hands-on teaching approach that uses Lego bricks and other building toys, along with coding, video game design and robotics that encourages the perfect mix of play, academic enrichment and social development.

"Our new model gives franchisees the tremendous opportunity to put two category-leading brands in one space to encourage kids to learn, play and grow inside four walls," said **Josh Wall**, chief growth officer for Unleashed Brands. "We're excited this new opportunity gives Urban Air operators more exposure to families and helps fill even more dayparts."

Soap Lake, Washington, is delighted to have its longtime roller skating rink reopening after years of sitting dormant. Bought by **Chuck Walsh**, the building is breathing again as crews overhaul and modernize the historic site.

Walsh bought the building on August 8, 2021, and reopened it as **Hollywood-Roll** on Oct. 30.

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Almost 1.6 million attend Arizona State Fair; way up from 2019

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

PHOENIX, Ariz. — When the final day ended, 1,589,951 people came in record turnout to the **Arizona State Fair** during its 2021 22-day life throughout October. 1,262,868 visited over an 18-day period in 2019, the last time the fair was held, also a record attendance up until then. This was the first time in many years, the fair ran 22 days.

“We could feel the community wanting to get out and have fun,” said **Wanell Costello**, executive director. “We wanted to be that place for families and friends to gather safely. Seeing the smiles and hearing the laughter made it all worthwhile.” The 2021 theme was “Draw Outside the Lines.”

“The weather was outstanding, warm temps the first 3 weeks, turned to cooler days and nights toward the end of the fair, which is typical Arizona State Fair weather!” said **Chris Lopez**, vice president of Laveen, Arizona based **Ray Cammack Shows (RCS)**.

The show brought in a total of 57 rides, 23 were kiddie ones. There were 42 games and 22 food stands. This year the equipment was cut back prior to opening to allow for covid compliance.

New rides for that spot included **Winky the Whale (Zamperla)**, **Liberty Wheel (Lamberink)** and **New York New York funhouse (Gosetto)**. The most popular rides included **La Grande XL wheel (Bussink)**, **SkyRide (Yan)** and **Wild River (hydroslide) (Reverchon)**.

“The record attendance is



what has been seen industry wide, it was nice to see our customers and fellow Arizonians back out, enjoying themselves safely. It’s so nice to hear them thank us, and say things like ‘we have waited so long to do this’ that little bit of normalcy in all of our lives has been missed,” said Lopez

Marketing Specialist **Brianda Martinez** was asked about their experience with the carnival provider. “We have a great relationship with RCS. [This is] nearly [a] 30-year partnership.”

Lopez was asked about RCS working with the fair. “The Arizona State Fair is our home state fair, it’s always such a pleasure working with the entire staff and board, like all of RCS events we consider them family and for nearly 30 years now [we] love ending our season with them and all of our friends and family members there, we love to give back and represent our home state and fellow Zonie guests!” He went on to say, “We look forward to 2022 and serving all of fairs and customers in a huge way.”

One of the special promotions the fair offered was **We Care Wednesdays**. For a donation of 10 canned food items, attendees received, in exchange, one admission ticket. This benefited **St Mary’s Food Bank**.



For the first time in a long time, the fair ran 22 days, compared to the last fair held in 2019, when it had an 18-day run. RCS provided 57 rides, of which 23 were kiddie. RCS has been providing the carnival midway for the Arizona State Fair for nearly 30 years.
COURTESY STEFAN HINZ

Martinez talked about the media mix used for the fair this year. “With a limited budget, we split it between digital marketing (Facebook, IG, Google, YouTube, Spotify, Pandora) and traditional media (TV, Radio) with some spending in OTT and outdoor billboards. We opted out of newspapers and other printed media.”

Some of the tasty new food offerings available this year



were **Dole Whip** watermelon taco, **Hot Cheeto** cheeseburger, **pickle dog**, **cotton candy burrito**, **banana creme funnel cake** and **pastrami fries**

When asked about what sets the Arizona State Fair apart from others, Martinez said, “Our fair is the largest and longest running event in Arizona held in the same

place for over a century.”

There were no major concerts in the **Arizona Veterans Memorial Coliseum** at this year’s fair due to pandemic-related cancellations by many artists. However, there were other offerings. “We had quite the schedule in the grandstand. Two weekends of monster trucks, figure 8 racing, rodeo and quarter midget racing. Our tribute band concert series had everyone dancing every night at the fair,” said Martinez. Both the tribute bands and grandstand series were free with admission.

“We were grateful to open the gates this year after two years and able to continue the annual tradition the Arizona State Fair is for many people,” said Martinez.

The Arizona State Fair was first held in 1884 as a territory fair, before it became a state. As of press time, the dates for the 140th annual fair had not been finalized.

•azstatefair.com



There were 42 games and 22 food stands. This year the equipment was cut back prior to opening to allow for covid compliance. The Arizona State Fair is the final spot for RCS each season. They open again in March for the **Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo**. COURTESY STEFAN HINZ

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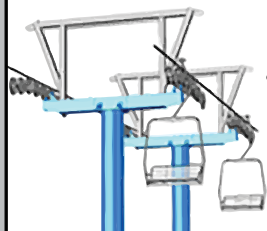


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MIDWAYSCENE

AT: B. Derek Shaw

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Amusement Today has been running a regular feature called "On the Midway" since earlier this year. The features and images were from fairs and carnivals visited during staff travels. AT is putting the call out for additional carnivals and midway providers to share their stories.

Midway providers, showmen and concessionaires are encouraged to send AT three or four photos taken at one location this season. Please provide background information on the event, along with details on the photos themselves and, please, identify personnel seen in any photographs. Suggested photos include an overview of the ride midway, closeups of a new rides or attractions and photos of key personnel.

Items can be sent to bdshaw@amusementtoday.com. Unless otherwise noted, all photos will be credited to the respective carnival operation.

There's a change of the guard at the **Flathead**, Kalispell, Montana **County Fairgrounds**, after 11-years with **Mark Campbell**, who served as manager, retired November 29. The county commissioners hired board chair, **Sam Nunnally**, as the new manager of the grounds, home to the **Northwest Montana Fair**.

"We are very excited to have Sam join the team. His passion for the fair and the people who participate in the many events and activities was obvious throughout the selection process," Flathead County Administrator **Pete Melnick** told the **Flathead Beacon** newspaper. "This will drive him to continue providing an outstanding experience for all the guests."

Nunnally's experience includes numerous information technology positions the past 23 years with **Logan Health**. He also has spent 10 years serving on the fair board. "I have experience learning from one of the best fair managers in the business. I also think I can bring a different perspective after seeing what Mark's been able to do with our fair," said Nunnally.

In early November, **Monterey County Fair**, California named **Chris Garmon** as the new deputy manager under the direction of fair CEO, **Kelly Violini**.

"We're so excited to have someone of Chris's experience and expertise on our team," Violini told the **Monterey Herald**. "He's been involved with fairs from a very young age, which continues to this day, and has worked with several major fairs in California and is very active in **California Farm Bureau**. We're fortunate to have him and look forward to working with him."

As a youngster, for fair projects, Garmon, raised market goats and cattle on his family ranch in Santa Paula. Later he was a volunteer on the **Ventura County**, California, **Junior Fair Board** serving for seven years. He then moved

into clerking livestock shows and later become the advisor for the Junior Fair Board. Garmon then became the livestock superintendent from 2011-2016. He left the Ventura County Fair in 2016 to become the deputy manager at the **Kern County Fair** in Bakersfield.

Garmon has also worked with several other fairs around the state, including the **Nevada County Fair**, **The Big Fresno Fair** and the **Yuba-Sutter Fair**.

Brown County commissioners recently hired **Rachel Kippley** as the new **Brown County Fair**, Aberdeen, South Dakota, fair manager and parks assistant superintendent. She replaces **Sonje Oban** and **McKenzie Bierman**, two fair office staff, who served as interim co-managers following the dismissal of **Derek Ricci** in January of this year.

Kippley has served as a county commissioner the past nine years, with eight of those as a **Brown County Fair Board** liaison. She told the **Aberdeen News** she was first interested in the position about 10 years ago. Her and her family have been involved in the fair for many years, helping with the watermelon feed, root beer float feed and maze.

"It was time for a change," said Kippley of her decision to apply to be fair manager.

The inaugural 3-day **Williamson County Fair and Rodeo**, Taylor, Texas, came to life October 21-23. **Scott Heselmeyer**, president of the **Williamson County Fair Association** presented the idea for the fair and rodeo to the county commissioners two years ago.

"So much focus gets put on the urbanization and the growth that's going on in Williamson County," Heselmeyer told the **Texas Standard**. "We forget that fully half of the county is still rural. And much of the county is still engaged in agriculture and still involved in things like rodeo and livestock. It's a good reminder that those things are still important here in Williamson County."

In 2019, the Commissioners Court agreed on a deal with the Williamson County Fair Association to support the event — offering \$100,000, with the condition those funds would be repaid within four years. After the money was secured, plans quickly got underway.

The **Williamson County Expo Center**, built in the past decade, provided a place to hold the rodeo that ran Friday and Saturday evenings. **Moore's Greater Shows**, Lyford, Texas was the carnival provider to the first-time fair and rodeo. In addition to rides, there were games, pig races, a petting zoo, food and nightly entertainment.

"All of those things come together in one place for a big family-friendly environment to really celebrate the agricultural heritage of our county, and we have not had that all in one event before," said Heselmeyer.

Modified MAAFS Convention held on the Frederick Fairgrounds

AT: B. Derek Shaw
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FREDERICK, Md. — More than 100 members and associate members of the Maryland Association of Agricultural Fairs & Shows, Inc. (MAAFS) attended the annual convention held at the Frederick Fairgrounds. There were 18 who participated virtually. Normally, the event is a three-day event the first weekend in November, but conventioners spent one condensed day this year with workshops, educational sessions and trade show all held in the same room including meals. Concurrent sessions were held in "break-out" areas throughout the building. There were six trade show vendors. The convention has been held annually since 1984 when MAAFS was chartered.

"This one was a little more difficult than in years past as we had to shrink it down and make it both virtual as well as live," said Sue Sullivan, 2021 MAAFS president with the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair. "We had to contact people that will make the event more informative for our fairs and shows, so they can get an education out of



Above left are some of the folks involved with the convention: (l to r) R2-D2, Bob Fogle, MAAFS past president and Glade Valley Community Show; Sue Sullivan, MAAFS president and Montgomery County Agricultural Fair and Jill Albanese, keynote speaker and director of competitive exhibits, Wisconsin State Fair. One of the highlights was a roundtable on working with commercial vendors (above right). AT/B. DEREK SHAW

what other people from around the country are doing with their fairs and shows."

Fifteen of the 27 member fairs/shows were represented. The Great Frederick Fair had 14 attendees, while the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair had the second highest with 11.

The theme was "May the Fairs Be with You," playing ode to the *Star Wars* franchise. Sullivan, dressed as Princess Leia, with R2D2 by her side, welcomed all from "a galaxy,

far, far away." Even the workshop rooms had names like Chewbacca, Endor, Naboo and Tatooine. After dinner, the communications awards were presented in the Boba Fett area.

Workshop topics included homeland security, dealing with PETA and HSUS, competitive exhibits, marketing and PR, carnival food, fair park beautification, state update and ag education. Andy Cashman, Maryland State Fair and William Herrera, Montgomery County Agricultural



Fair, co-hosted a lively roundtable on working with commercial vendors. There were some in-person presentations, however most were done via video calls. Other fairs that assisted with presentations included the Red River Valley Fair, Fargo, North Dakota; Wisconsin State Fair, West Allis; Erie County Fair, Hamburg, New York; Ohio State Fair, Columbus and Linn County Fair, Central City, Iowa.

Winners of communication awards were announced with the

small fair communication award going to the Harford County Fair, while the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair took home the award for fairs with 75,000 or more in attendance and the overall communications winner went to the Great Frederick Fair.

Sullivan summed up her work with putting on the convention: "A good start back after COVID. I've enjoyed doing it!"

The 2022 dates are November 4-6, with location to be announced. •maafs.com

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Long running tradition, The Great Frederick Fair has successful run

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

FREDERICK, Md. — “The weather was beautiful for eight of the nine days. Mid-week, on Wednesday, we had some rain,” said **Karen Crum Nicklas**, general manager, **The Great Frederick Fair**.

Attendance clocked in at 240,000, which is “average/up a little more on gate admission this year,” said Nicklas. The fair used the theme “Farm Fresh Fun: Lettuce Turnip the Beet!”

Reithoffer Shows, Inc. (Orange Unit) brought in 38 rides with 17 being kiddie ones. They had 13 food joints, along with 34 games. Their new rides to that spot were **The Beast (Technical Park)** and the **Magic Maze (Owens.)** The top four grossing rides were: **The Beast, Dutch Wheel (Kroon), Rampage (Interpark)** and **Freak Out (KMG.)** Ride midway revenue was up from previous years. The day after the fair closed, Reithoffer Shows stayed there as a still date, on Sunday, September 26, offering rides, food and games. This came about when the **Cleveland County Fair, Shelby, North Carolina**, their next spot, canceled for a second year in a row, due to a marked rise in COVID-19 cases.

“Our grosses are all up at our fairs and still dates,” said **Suzi Reithoffer Blake**, office manager for the unit, reflecting on the season. “We believe that people just want to get out of the house after the

year we just had. We found that people were nicer also. No complaints. We also had decent weather all year.”

When asked about COVID 19 practices, Reithoffer Blake said, “COVID was very challenging this year and we had to find ways to make the public feel safe. We had hand sanitizing stations throughout our fair and at every food stand. Some fairs like the Great Frederick Fair didn’t want any of our signage dealing with COVID. Other fairs like the **State Fair of West Virginia** wanted it all. We have a system of spraying down the rides before we open. It sanitizes for three months. But we do it [at] every spot before we open. We also had disinfecting spray that the employees were required to wipe the rides down with every 30 minutes, along with social distancing marks on the ground. In the beginning of our season, we required all employees to wear masks as mandated by each state. As the year went along, most states rescinded that requirement.”

“As always, working with the Great Frederick Fair is a pleasure. Great fair and great people. We look forward to coming there every year,” said Reithoffer Blake.

Nicklas had a similar sentiment as well when asked about the carnival provider. “Excellent, [we have an] over-25-year partnership with Reithoffer Shows,” she said.

Special promotions included an advanced sale Jack Pass which offered



Some of the 38-ride midway as seen from the Dutch Wheel. Directly in front is the new, **The Beast** thrill ride, waiting to load more passengers (above). New to the Great Frederick Fair was **Magic Maze**, a two-story mirror maze on the bottom and various fun mirrors on the second level with the exit via a circular slide (below). AT/B. DEREK SHAW

one admission and one ride wristband, good any one day. There was also an advanced gate admission savings of \$2.00 when done online. In addition, there were senior citizen and military appreciation days, Lunch Brunch offering free admission Monday through Thursday from 11 to 2 and a Fair Friday promotion.

Nicklas explained what makes their fair special: “The people/community. We are an agriculture fair and very much a tradition/community event.”

The media mix utilized radio, social media, web, local magazines and other streams. There was an advertising budget for radio.

New this year was **Kid Zone**, a space created between vendors and the track that



was previously unused. Activities included grain bin basketball, duck races, tic tac toe, corn bin and remote-control car races. Add to that, regularly scheduled performances from a one-man band, various strolling acts, hot dog pig races, magic and hypnotist shows and a science show.

Grandstand entertainment included **Toby Mac** with **Ryan Stevenson, Rodney Atkins** and **Shenandoah, Marshall Tucker Band** and **Outlaws, ZZ Top, Whiskey Myers & the Steel Woods**

and **Jon Pardi** with **Drew Parker**. Add to that a tractor/truck pull along with a demolition derby.

“We were very grateful to be able to host our annual fair after only hosting a youth livestock show in 2020 in the midst of the pandemic,” said Nicklas. “It was a blessing to have smiling, happy fairgoers back on our grounds and to be able to provide the community with a fun, safe event!”

Next year’s fair takes place September 16–24, 2022. thegreatfrederickfair.com

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Suzi Reithoffer Blake and Patrick Reithoffer are a few of the fourth-generation family members involved in the operation of the orange unit. AT/B. DEREK SHAW

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WATER PARKS & RECREATION

▶ Festival of Lanterns at Cowabunga Bay — page 32 / Aquatica replacing Dolphin Plunge — page 34

Multiple upgrades and a new slide in store for Adventure Island

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

TAMPA, Florida — Adventure Island, the Sea World Parks & Entertainment water park located across the street from Busch Gardens, has announced multiple upgrades for the 2022 season as well as two new attractions.

Rapids Racer, a dueling waterslide from ProSlide Technologies seems similar to the Riptide Race slide which opened at Aquatica Orlando last year and will debut at Aquatica San Antonio next year. As with Riptide Race, Rapids Racer will feature multiple RallyPoints, a patented ride component that utilizes low divider walls and a U-shaped flume. Specially designed fiberglass keeps the two tube chutes as close together as possible and the RallyPoints allow riders to see and hear their competition multiple times throughout the ride.

Rapids Racer will introduce a new element — the world's first dueling saucers. Guests onboard two-passenger rafts will dispatch simultaneously then race through tunnels, turns and more. Midway through the ride, the thrill seekers will split and encounter the dueling saucer sections before returning back to parallel tube chutes.

The second new attraction



Although similar in appearance to racing slides at the Aquatica parks, Adventure Island's Rapids Racer will implement a thrilling new feature — the world's first dueling saucer sections. COURTESY ADVENTURE ISLAND

is an enhancement to an existing product. Riders will enjoy water, light and sound as they splash through the ride to the beat of music. Formerly the ProSlide Dark Mammoth Wahoo Run, Wahoo Remix will be Adventure Island's first waterslide to feature synchronized light and sound elements, delivering an all-new, high energy, family raft

ride experience with ultimate party vibes. Enclosed tunnels that were once dark will now glow and groove as riders zoom through more than 600 feet of fun.

"The all-new Rapids Racer and new enhancements to another fan-favorite attraction with Wahoo Remix will elevate the Adventure Island guest experience in an

unprecedented way in 2022," said Neal Thurman, park president of Busch Gardens Tampa and Adventure Island. "With recently announced year-round operations, it's going to be a momentous year for water park fans, as our guests can now splash in the sun and take on thrills from January to December."

As mentioned, the park had previously announced that it would stay open all year round. Although the climate is mostly warm all year, the park has installed heaters to keep the lazy river, pools and waterslides at a comfortable temperature even during the occasional cold snap. Throughout the peak season the park is open every day, but in the off-season the park will be closed a few days out of the week. Guests are advised to consult the website calendar for days of operation.

Some of the enhancements for the new season have already opened. The park's Hang Ten Tiki Bar, located between the soon-

to-be-constructed Rapids Racer and the existing Wahoo Remix, opened in September as the water park's first full-service bar. Hang Ten features an impressive array of signature cocktails including the Hang Ten daquiri, Surfin' Strawberry Margarita, Paradise Passion Fruit Mojito and Mahalo Mule. Frozen drinks such as Island Lava Flow and Caribbean Corkscrew can be made with or without alcohol. The bar also offers rum and beer tasting flights allowing guests to sample from a selection of more than 20 international and local Florida-distilled rums, or from a selection of local craft brews. Other non-alcoholic drinks and juices are also available, and many come with or can be purchased with a souvenir tiki cup.

Along with delectable drinks, Hang Ten Tiki Bar also serves up Island light bites, including the Tiki Man soft pretzel, empanadas and local Gulf smoked fish dip with pineapple relish.

Another attraction that opened ahead of the 2022 season is Virtual Snorkeling. The DIVR+ system from California-based Ballast VR gives guests the opportunity to grab a snorkel and dive into an underwater virtual reality experience. The VR Snorkeling experience at Adventure Island offers three virtual excursions to transport guests from the park's Paradise Lagoon to vibrant oceans, deep space or a realm of fantasy filled with dragons. This upgrade experience suspends participants in the pool for five-minute adventures complete with video, audio and sensory elements, including synchronized bubble and jet effects.

Adventure Island opened in June 1980 as a Busch Entertainment Corporation park to complement the Busch Gardens Tampa theme park across the street. Opened when standalone water parks were still in their infancy, it has been popular with central Florida residents and tourists for more than four decades.



The former Wahoo Run Dark Mammoth waterslide will become Wahoo Remix with the addition of light and sound. COURTESY ADVENTURE ISLAND



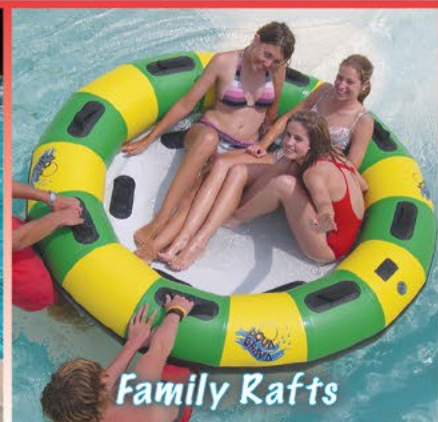
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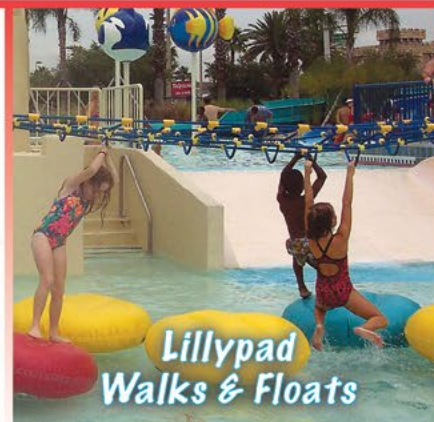
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Cowabunga Bay illuminates off-season with Festival of Lanterns

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

HENDERSON, Nev. — Once the summer season is over, water parks tend to rehab equipment and use the long off-season to winterize and do maintenance. **Cowabunga Bay** is doing something different — generating revenue.

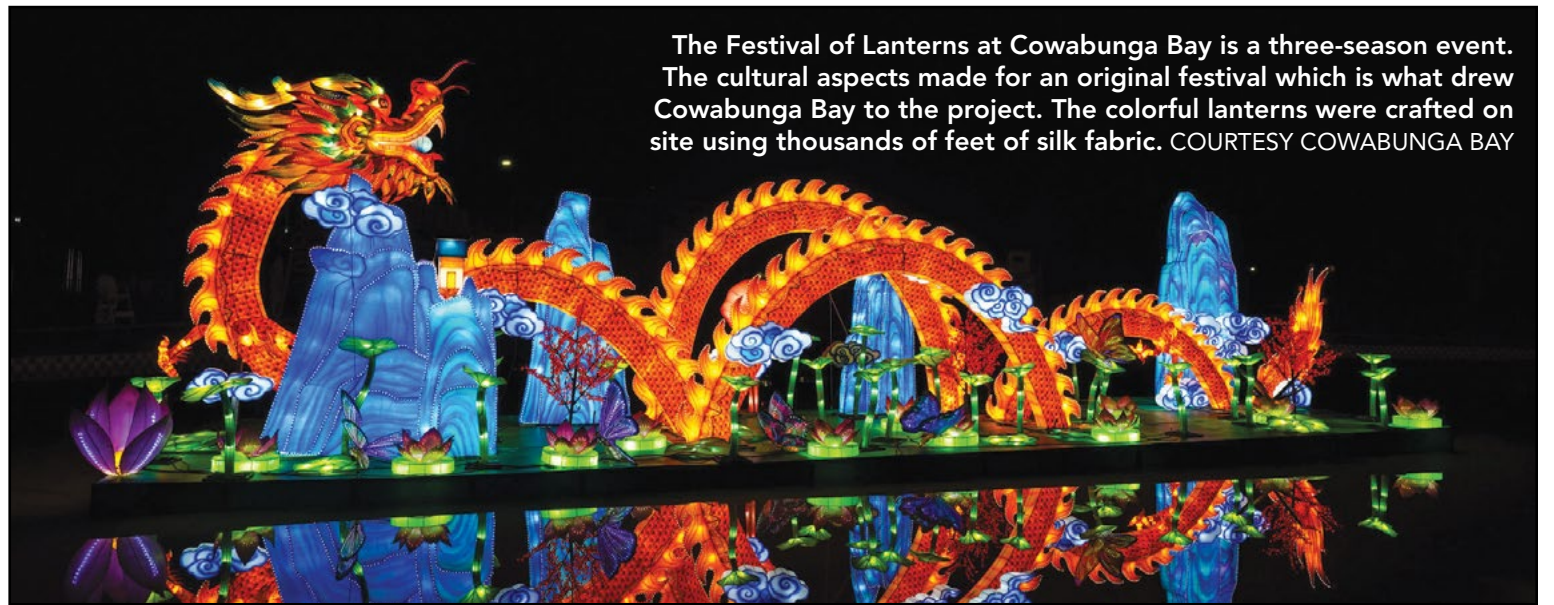
In the works for several months, the Nevada water park debuted its Festival of Lanterns on November 5.

“This is a wonderful opportunity for the community to experience a unique excursion that is the only one of its kind west of the Mississippi,” said Cowabunga Bay Owner **Shane Huish**. “We have partnered with **Zigong Lantern Group**, the premier leader in the world of Lantern Arts, to bring this enchanted experience to Cowabunga Bay for everyone to enjoy.”

Lantern festivals, which date back more than 2,000 years, feature gorgeous, hand-crafted lanterns displaying the creativity and amazing engineering feats of skilled artists. A team of 25 artisans has sculpted, assembled and illuminated these works of art on site at Cowabunga Bay. Larger-than-life illuminated masterpieces have now come to life from thousands of feet of silk fabric. A colorful 26-foot tall dancing lion greets guests as they enter the park and entices them to wander through a gallery of spectacular lanterns before arriving at the foot of the Asian Tower, what the park terms as “a two-story dazzling magnum opus.”

“The Chinese group contacted us because they were interested in having a presence in Vegas,” Huish told *Amusement Today*. “We were a big location with adequate parking and they [met] with us.”

Among the displays are underwater scenes, a lush



The Festival of Lanterns at Cowabunga Bay is a three-season event. The cultural aspects made for an original festival which is what drew Cowabunga Bay to the project. The colorful lanterns were crafted on site using thousands of feet of silk fabric. COURTESY COWABUNGA BAY



jungle, numerous animals and landmarks of the world. In all, hundreds of handmade lanterns that are custom and unique to Cowabunga Bay make up 19 scenes of illuminated art.

“I guess we’re the first park to pull the trigger and actually do it,” said Huish. “We’re always trying to find things to do in the off-season and create unique experiences. We’ve done Christmas events in the past, but that was normally just lights in the trees and stuff like that. We wanted to do something that would make us original.”

In an interesting turn of marketing, the Festival of Lanterns will contain

three unique celebrations. Throughout November, the Fall Harvest featured autumn décor, a petting zoo, hay maze and a farmers’ market. Giant jack-o-lanterns lit up the night. Once the festival transitions into its December mode, Christmas décor takes over and free pictures with Santa, Candyland, carolers and a spectacular 20-foot tall Christmas tree are some of the activities and backdrops to the festival. Once January arrives, the Festival of Lanterns takes on a new feel as Lunar New Year showcases a magnificent Chinese wonderland. Daring acrobats will perform, fountains of sparkles will entertain and a majestic 45-foot-long dragon king emerging from Cowabunga Bay’s wave pool is sure to be memorable.

“When they approached us, we were concerned people would only come for Christmas,” Huish noted. “We had to figure out how to get people interested in November and January. We came up with fall, Christmas and Chinese New Year. Although the lanterns will stay the same, we are taking the initiative to transform the park.”

The change of seasons not only encourages repeat ticket sales, but other revenue streams are certain to come into play, particularly food. A fall har-



vest menu featured turkey legs and grilled corn on the cob, homemade tomato basil soup, and grilled cheese and turkey cranberry sliders on a sweet Hawaiian roll. Funnel cakes with pumpkin spice maple syrup and Thanksgiving margaritas made sure all tastes were addressed. The Christmas menu features chili on a cornbread waffle, scrumptious Monte Cristo sandwiches, chicken with cranberry barbeque sauce and gingerbread. Holiday cocktails feature Christmas citrus drinks and festive mojitos. Chinese cuisine is set to transport guests to the Orient during the Lunar New Year celebration.

A separate market offers specialized popcorns, fudge and candy, along with holiday gifts. The artistic team brought over simple souvenirs authentic from China. Light-up whirly toys also sell themselves during the night festival.

In setting up the event, the park orchestrates a general flow, but with the self-guided nature, there are places at the side for visitors to stop and engage with entertainment and activities, take pictures, buy food and drink or peruse souvenirs. As for the illuminated lanterns themselves, the artisans took care of that in its entirety.

“It’s a very simple con-

tract,” explained Huish. “They provide all the art and lanterns; we provide the property, staff the park and do the food.”

The arrangement with Zigong Lantern Group is a revenue share on ticket sales. Tickets are \$25.95 for adults and \$21.95 for children 12 and under. Season pass holders receive 50 percent off admission as well as discounts on food and beverages. The Festival of Lanterns opens at 5 p.m. each day.

“We started talking with them back in February before the water park season even began,” said Huish. “We were excited. Artists began showing up in August. Our season was winding down. Construction of the lanterns began in September.”

The concepts for the sculptural lanterns were developed in partnership between Cowabunga Bay and Zigong Lantern Group. Each work of art was built and created onsite.

Weather permitting, the three festivals will add more than 75 operational dates to Cowabunga Bay’s calendar. As the festival is an evening attraction, off-season maintenance and other work can take place during the day. Select dates run from November 5 to February 13, with daily operation from November 24 to January 9. Parking is free.



Meng Liu of Zigong Lantern Group and Shane Huish, owner of Cowabunga Bay host the ribbon-cutting. COURTESY COWABUNGA BAY



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As the name implies, guests on the new Reef Plunge at Aquatica Orlando, will plunge right through the reef at the front of the park which houses vibrant fish and marine mammals including the last remaining Commerson's dolphins in the U.S. COURTESY AQUATICA

Aquatica to replace iconic Dolphin Plunge attraction

AT: Jeffrey Seifert
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

ORLANDO — Aquatica water park announced in November a new body slide attraction for 2022 called Reef Plunge. Guests will slide through eye-catching translucent cutouts and rings, and twist and turn through more than 330 feet of fiberglass, zooming past a vibrant array of marine life in the new dynamic habitat. Commerson's dolphins, leopard sharks, sardines, and a variety of other cold-water fish will call Reef Plunge home. Guests will dive into the fun of Reef Plunge launching spring of 2022. Supplied by WhiteWater West, the park confirmed the new experience will replace the existing Dolphin Plunge attraction — one of the most popular slides in the park.

"2022 is going to be an exciting year for Aquatica Orlando. Aquatica was voted the number one waterpark in the USA [USA Today 10best Readers' Choice Awards] because guests love our year-round operations, one-of-a-kind attractions and laid-back beach vibe," said Park President Kyle Miller. "We are thrilled to announce that the country's best waterpark is adding new enhancements for an even greater guest experience and we cannot wait to unveil Reef Plunge next spring."

The original attraction — actually a pair of slides — opened with the park in 2008. The slides pass through the pool at the front of the park that houses the dolphin exhibit. It is one of the first things guests see when they enter and it is currently the only place in the United States where the cute, black and white, quick-moving Commerson's dolphins can be seen in captivity.

In addition to the new slide, enhancements to the park include the addition of more than 1,000 loungers and beach chairs with increased shade for comfort and two food and beverage additions: a quick-service pizza place and a brand-new beach bar in addition to upgrades to the popular Banana Beach Cookout. Multiple attractions will also receive upgrades, including enhancements to several waterslides.

The attraction's new name might also reflect changes that may be coming soon. Although the Commerson's dolphins are extremely popular, SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment announced a few years ago that the dolphins will not be replaced once they pass away. These dolphins were originally on display at SeaWorld San Diego and SeaWorld Ohio. Four were moved here when the water park opened. The remaining dolphins were transferred from San Diego in 2016.

Attempts to breed this species of dolphin have not been very successful and SeaWorld will no longer take animals from the wild. These last remaining Commerson's dolphins in North America will likely die off in the next few years. The rare dolphins are known to be in captivity in Japan, but any trade or purchase from Japan is extremely unlikely. What will take their place in the reef is unknown at this time, but there are plenty of interesting fish and/or marine mammals that can be placed in the reef tank.



NEWS SPLASH

AT: Jeffrey L. Seifert
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The Ashland Salvation Army Ray & Joan Kroc Corps Community Center in Ashland, Ohio, will open an indoor water park and fitness center this month. Prior to the official opening, the facility allowed residents to preview the center during a series of open houses that started November 15.

The water park includes a lazy river, two slides, basketball hoops, tipping buckets, a lily pad/net water cross and a small water play structure. The pools will be kept at a warm 82 degrees and the deepest section is only 4 feet 6 inches.

Construction started in May 2020 with Simonson Construction leading the project. Ashland-based water play company Rain Drop Products also contributed to the project along with subcontractor High Tech Pools, a pool construction company.

The total cost of the project was roughly \$7.7 million. Most of the funding was provided by a \$7.2 million gift from the Joan B. Kroc Foundation. Local support dollars contributed the remaining \$500,000.

The Holland Aquatic Center in Holland, Michigan, is expected to reopen on January 31, following a year-long expansion and update. Funded by a \$26.3 million voter-approved bond, the expansion includes a warm-water leisure pool, a new six-lane lap pool, an updated and expanded children's play area, a new climate-controlled walking and jogging track, steam room, sauna, a new fitness space and a group fitness classroom. The children's play area will feature a zero-entry wading pool, a lazy river and a larger water slide.

The original 1968 pool was renovated and reconditioned. The old locker rooms were remodeled and updated to create a more efficient locker room experience and given a brighter, more modern look.

Prior to the rebuild, one of the biggest challenges facing the facility was being able to hold simultaneous programming. Previously, when a swim meet was held, recreational users were not able to use the facility's other designated areas. These community members are the people who pay for the facility through taxes, and the center hosts about 30 meets each year.

The new space needed to be able to welcome guests, hold swim meets, and run normal programming all at the same. With community growth, there also needed to be additional space for expanded programming and visitors. When the renovated aquatic center opens, there will be room for both athletics and everyday use, so the center will no longer be closed to recreational users — meeting the aquatic center's vision of "every age, every family, every day."

The pool authority hopes the family-friendly features, including a family changing room and locker room and swim and play areas tailored for young children, older kids and adults, will draw an intergenerational mix of users.

"We'll have new people coming into the facility that wouldn't have come in for les-

sons," said Executive Director Jack Huisingsh.

The Bathurst Aqua Park, an inflatable obstacle course in Bathurst, New South Wales, Australia, opened a week earlier than anticipated. Thanks to a quicker setup of the inflatable equipment, opening day took place on November 13, in time for the Aussie summer season. The park operated weekends only initially, but is scheduled to go daily on December 17 when schools break for summer.

The park last operated in 2018. Since then new equipment has been added to the layout. The massive park has multiple courses of varying skill levels to appeal to just about everyone. As with most facilities of this type, timed sessions are sold and the number of guests per session is limited to 200 people. Sessions start at the top of each hour and last 50 minutes. Guests can purchase multiple sessions or an all-day pass, but they are required to take a break between sessions.

In November city commissioners in Great Falls, Montana, accepted a proposal from Swank Enterprises to build a new recreation center at the city's Lion's Park. The Aim High Big Sky indoor aquatic center will be built on a 10-acre parcel land right outside of Malmstrom Air Force Base.

This new facility will accommodate the training and fitness needs of airmen and their families. It will also strengthen community ties with the City of Great Falls, as local families are welcome too.

Although the \$20,472,200 bid for the construction of the center was the lowest of four, it is still more than \$470,000 over the project's authorized budget. The funding was split with half provided by a Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP) grant and the other half by the city park district. With construction costs rising, council members argued it is better to accept the bid, get started on construction, and work on additional funding later.

The center will have a lap pool, therapeutic pool, recreational pool for community and service member families, general open fitness areas, an indoor gym space, drop-off child care, classrooms and ancillary support facilities. The city has been without an indoor facility since 2018 when the 50-year-old Morony Natatorium was forced to close after structural issues were determined to be too severe to repair.

It's badly needed in the community," said city commissioner Mary Moe. "Many people were very upset when we had to close the Nat. This is an excellent replacement for that, and it also has the value of strengthening our relationship with Malmstrom, which is so critically important to the economy of the community."

The 40th Helicopter Squadron and 120th Airlift Wing both require water rescue/survival training to maintain flying mission qualifications. The lack of an indoor pool leads to spending \$52,000 annually in order to send personnel to other locations to complete the required training.

San Antonio to welcome industry for 2022 Golden Ticket Awards

Following the return of the Golden Ticket Awards voting in 2021, *Amusement Today* is already busy planning the Networking Event of the Year in San Antonio next September. The 2022 Golden Ticket Awards will welcome the industry in grand fashion, as the live ceremony and networking opportunities return. The host parks will be **Morgan's Wonderland** and **Six Flags Fiesta Texas**. These two unique properties are sure to be inspiring and informative — in addition to a lot of fun.

Morgan's Wonderland took national attention in 2010 by being the world's first ultra-accessible theme park opened to visitors of all abilities. The heart behind the park's mission is not to be only accessible for those with physical or cognitive disabilities but to inspire all

people to play together. In 2017, **Morgan's Inspiration Island** became a fully inclusive water park next door.

The opening reception on Friday evening, September 9, will let attendees see all that is special about the park.

Six Flags Fiesta Texas opened in 1992 in a particularly atypical setting. Using the cliff walls of a former rock quarry as a backdrop, the park has unique themes based on the cultures and music found in Texas. The park will be celebrating a 30th anniversary in 2022. Among all the year-long festivities will be the debut of Dr. Diabolical's Cliffhanger, a new **Bolliger & Mabillard** dive coaster.

In addition to many behind-the-scenes opportunities, attendees will also experience the park's award-winning entertainment and hospitality. The

Golden Ticket Awards ceremony will take place in the park's grand Zaragoza Theater, with an evening social to cap off the night.

Accommodations for the event will be the **JW Marriott San Antonio Hill Country Resort & Spa**. The resort boasts two championship golf courses, a water park, lounge pools and much more — with more expansion on the way.

The official dates of the Golden Ticket Awards networking event are September 9 and 10, 2022. *Amusement Today* will sponsor a golf tournament prior to the event. The possibilities to be entertained and to enjoy relaxing moments are endless in San Antonio. Make plans to be a part of this incredible networking event.

Amusement Today to offer limited print editions, subscriptions

ARLINGTON, Texas — *Amusement Today* Publisher Gary Slade has announced that beginning with the January 2022 issue, the trade publication will resume printed editions, but in limited quantity.

AT paid subscribers that were still owed mailed editions, after printing was suspended in April 2020 due to the COVID pandemic, will once again be mailed issues. One change to the printed copy will be the size, as the issue will now appear in a 9 by 12 inch format — slightly larger than a typical magazine size. All paid subscriptions will be credited for missing issues. Ending dates for subscriptions will be extended to end with either the June or December issues in the year the individual's subscription expires. Renewals will be sent in advance of the expiration date.

Readers who have received a complimentary printed copy in the past will now be asked to subscribe for the print issues due to the increase in paper, printing and postage.

Subscriptions will be made available to readers, but will only be available for signup at the various industry trade shows, safety seminars and other events. All print subscriptions will be sent via first class U.S. mail.

Free digital subscriptions to *Amusement Today* monthly editions will continue to be offered.

To subscribe to the electronic edition visit: amusementtoday.com/subscribe.

To view the current digital edition visit: amusementtoday.com/digital.

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Morgan's Wonderland and Six Flags Fiesta Texas
San Antonio, Texas
Details coming soon to GoldenTicketAwards.com



BUSINESS & NEWSMAKERS

► **Women of Influence: Jessica Underberg — page 40 / World Waterpark Show recap — page 44**

IAFE set to bring attendees, exhibitors together live in San Antonio

AT: Pam Sherborne
 psherborne@amusementtoday.com

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — Officials of the **International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE)** were excited in early fall about the way the **2021 IAFE Convention and Trade Show** was shaping up.

They were expecting over 200 firms exhibiting in almost 400 booths in the **Henry Gonzalez Convention Center**, San Antonio, Texas. They also were expecting a great attendance as it seems people are ready to get back and shake hands. The event started Nov. 28 and will run through Dec. 1.

The theme this year is **Grow Fair Strong**.

"We are so looking forward to meeting again in person," said Marla Calico, IAFE president and CEO, as planning was well underway. "We've heard from members eager to see one another at the convention, to build upon the friendships and networks, many of which were strengthened through the many online meetings and calls our association hosted in the last year."

The convention portion of the annual event is including an abundance of educational sessions and workshops. Offerings include courses in IAFE's Institute of Fair Management (IFM) that are open to all attendees. The IFM institute was created by IAFE to enhance the professional development of the employees and volunteers of member fairs and expositions by providing education and training.

The educational program also tracks in specific areas of the fair industry so that



Planners of the **2021 IAFE Trade Show** were expecting to host at least 200 exhibiting firms to include manufacturers, talent agencies, equipment manufacturers, entertainers, ticket companies and much more. The trade show dates were set for **Nov. 29 and Nov. 30**. COURTESY IAFE

attendees may select their workshops. Tracks include Marketing and Sponsorship, Agriculture, Commercial Exhibits and Concessions, Facilities and Operations, Entertainment and Ticketing and Professional Development.

Some specific topics for the sessions include Real World Board & Staff Communications, Tech Tools Everyone Should Have in Their Toolbox, The Art of Networking — Making Impactful Connections, Maximizing Ticketless Transactions for Profit & Guest ROI, the Fair of the Future — Entertainment in Five Years, The Ever-Changing Landscape of Commercial Exhibits and How Covid Procedures Changed the Perception of Value.

Others include: A Single Event — A Year's Worth of Engagement, Metrics That Matter, Cultivating Creativity — Growing Fair Strong Ideas, Sales Strategies — How to Successfully Pitch a Sponsorship to the Right Partner and "Prepare2Respond" — New Online Training for Emergency Response in Animal Exhibits.

The IAFE Young Professional's Initiative (YPI) steering committee has been very active to create special events for the association's young professionals.

The keynote address by **Paul Mobley**, an award-winning photographer, was set to be held 9:30–11:45 a.m., Tues-

► See IAFE, page 39

Keynote speaker: **Paul Mobley**

Paul Mobley is an award-winning photographer who has traveled the world over to capture and celebrate humanity. Firmly grounded by his Midwestern roots, Mobley's early training as a photographer began at **Detroit's Center for Creative Studies**, Detroit, Michigan, and continued in the New York studios of such leading photographers as **Annie Leibovitz, Steve Steigman** and **David Langley**,



Paul Mobley

where he apprenticed for many years before embarking on his own career. Since then, Mobley has successfully worked with a broad range of corporate advertising and editorial clients including **American Express, Sony, Max Factor, Microsoft** and many others.

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Breman Mega Wheels builds Skyviews of America observation wheel

GENEMUIDEN, The Netherlands — **Breman Mega Wheels B.V.** announced it has completed the order to build and supply a **Bussink R80XL** giant observation wheel for **Skyviews America LLC**. The wheel was manufactured by **Breman Machinery B.V.** in Genemuiden, the Netherlands and is installed for operation at New Jersey's **American Dream Mall**.

Breman Mega Wheels has supplied high precision parts for Bussink giant observation wheels and towers since 1995. The company's CEO, **Henk Breman**: "We have always been very impressed by the extremely high quality standards of Bussink."

"It was a logical decision to choose the Bussink R80XL for this prestigious and iconic project," said Skyviews of America CEO **Guy Leavitt**.

Skyviews of America has obtained a long-term lease to operate the wheel at the American Dream Mall in Meadowlands.

Ray Cammack Shows (RCS) — also owned by Guy and **Charlene Leavitt** — has already successfully operated several Bussink giant observation wheels since 1985. RCS has operated midways at some of the country's largest fairs for more than 40 years.

"Especially because Breman Mega Wheels is carrying out the complete Bussink R80XL production, I have a lot of confidence that the product is built to the state-of-the-art high level of quality that the customers in the American Dream Mall expect from us," said Guy Leavitt. "Our wheel is the sixth Bussink R80XL produced globally."

The Bussink R80XL is the world's largest transportable and series-produced giant observation wheel. It was designed and developed over five years by some of the most experienced and qualified designers and engineers available in the industry.

The Bussink R80XL is equipped with 27 luxury and spacious Zeppelin cabins, which are fully climate controlled and can hold up to 16 passengers each. The wheel itself rotates nonstop, with one rotation taking approximately 20 to 30 minutes. The attraction features a maximum capacity of 1600 passengers per hour.

The wheel is equipped with a **Siemens** drive and control system which delivers a safe, comfortable and reliable operation. The total weight of the wheel is more than 1.6 million pounds.

The wheel as Skyviews of America provides a vision of the Manhattan skyline from approximately 300 feet at its highest point. The attraction is scheduled to open in late 2021.



The giant observation wheel at Skyviews of America will stand more than 300 feet tall.

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International Association of Fairs and Expositions 2021 convention

EXHIBITOR LISTING

Absolute Marketing	249		Powers Great American Midways	636	
Adam Calvert Music, LLC	226		Price Chopper Wristbands	745	
Agri-cadabra	729	The Fun Connection	808	Priefert Complex Designs	708
Aim High Canines	814	FunTagg	208	Protect the Harvest	512
Aloompa & CUE Audio	641	Fusion Talent Group	700, 702, 704	Purina Pro Plan Performance Team/Ulimate Air Dog	346, 348
Amusement Today	514	G.L. Berg Entertainment	308	R.J. Thomas Mfg. Co./Pilot Rock	209
Andy Rotz Entertainment	217	Globe of Death Squad	818	Rachel Bell Entertainment	703
Animal Show & Encounters by Cool Zoo	216, 218, 220	Grand Illusions by the Blooms/DinosaurXperience	206	Regalia Manufacturing Co.	436
Apache Trolleys	349	Great American Entertainment Company LLC	707, 709	RegistrationMax LLC	718
Aquatic Acrobatic Show LLC	746	GT Grandstands	809	Reithoffer Shows, Inc.	714
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Bear Hollow Wood Carvers	340	Heath Tarlin Entertainment	517	Saffire	629, 631
The Benjamin Jackson Hypnotist Show	643	Highway 96	730	Sandscapes	306
Beyond Spots & Dots	326	Hillbilly Bob/Farmer Bob	553	Schooley Mitchell	229
The Birdman - World Class Bird Shows	728	HomeTown Mobility	316	Schultz Industries, Inc.dba Sturdisteel Company	413
Black Walnut Productions	307	Hot Glass Academy	247	Scootaround Wheelchair & Scooter Rentals	716
Bleacher Rentals	815	Hotel California	415	See Tickets	816
Bohm's Family Entertainment	817	Hypnotist Tina Marie	737	Sensational Murcias	837
Brave Enough Artist Agency	647, 649	IG Presents	719, 721	Shawnee LED & Signs	652, 654
Bryan Jackson Stunt Shows	846	Interactive Marketing Promotions	342	ShoWorks Software (Gladstone Inc.)	417, 520
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Canine Stars Stunt Dog Show	549	J International & Robocars	824, 826	Southern Bleacher Company Inc.	332
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CarnivalWarehouse.com Inc.	347	JKJ Workforce Agency, Inc	205	Spectrum Weather and Specialty Insurance, Inc.	314
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CEW Enterprises/Sport Fence International	639	Jurassic Kingdom Dinosaur Show	748	Star Attractions	500
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Cultivate Agency	712	Lady Houdini Escape Show	642	Tunnel to Towers Foundation	215
Dale Jones Entertainment	805	Living Zultar	438	Twelve Stage Management	504
The Dennis Lee Show	637	Liz Gregory Talent Agency and Gregory Prod.	309	Tyler Chase	231
dfest®	437, 439	Magic Money	224	Uncommon USA	725
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Dominguez Attractions	848	Moto Xtreme Circus	802	Vital Theatre Company, Inc.	552
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EMC Tickets	315	National Recreation Systems, a Playcore Company	405	Vortex Insurance Agency	726
EPIC Arts Management	515	National Tractor Pullers Association	732	Watershow Productions Inc.	345
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2021 Institute of Fair Management courses

#111

Consumer Protection Program
8:30 a.m.–1 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 2,
created by IAFE with Stephen Neal,
Technical Solutions International

#112

Emergency Planning
1–4:30 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 28,
Presented by Matt Bruskotter

#113

Insurance Basics
12–1:30 p.m., Monday, Nov. 29,
Presented by Ryan Wilkerson,
Haas and Wilkerson Insurance

#142

Principles of Food and Beverage
10:15 a.m.–12:15 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 28,
Presented by Rey O'Day, NICA

#222

Sponsorship II
8–9:30 a.m., Sunday, Nov. 28,
Presented by Jen Puente, Wisconsin State Fair

#300

Event Management
9–11 a.m., Wed., Dec. 1,
Presented by Matt Daly,
South Florida Fair and Palm Beach County Expositions

IAFE

Continued from page 36

day, Nov. 30.

The IAFE decided to bring back Networking Circles where each registered attendee is assigned to a networking circle. The Networking Circles are smaller groups of people who have similar job duties. Special dates and times were to be set for each group to meet just for conversation during the convention and trade show.

With a new two-day format, the IAFE Trade Show showcases ribbon and award manufacturers, talent agencies, equipment manufacturers, entertainers, ticket companies and much more. Days and times of the trade show were set for 1:30–6 p.m., Monday, Nov. 29, and 2–6 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 30.

IAFE is implementing a new program at this year's trade show called Verified Buyers. The new program is including a Verified Buyers Breakfast as well as appointments set between participants and exhibitors. Event planners hoped this will help those who are shopping for



The 2021 IAFE Convention and Trade Show dates were set for Nov. 28 – Dec. 1, at the Henry Gonzalez Convention Center, San Antonio, Texas. In early fall, event planners were excited with how the event was taking shape. Here is a photo from the 2019 event, pre-pandemic. Attendees should expect to be required to wear masks in the public spaces this year. COURTESY IAFE

particular products to meet the exhibitors that have them.

The 2021 Trade Show also is featuring Beyond the Booth Showcasing stages located in the back left and back right of the trade show floor. A total of 19 live performances/presentations were planned on these stages over the two-day trade show.

And while the 2021 is happening, attendees may look forward to meeting again in 2022. The 2022 event has been set for Nov. 27-30 at the Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis, Indiana.

The IAFE convention will be located in a different city each year 2022 through 2025.

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Women INFLUENCE

A view from the top...

The Erie County Fair, Hamburg, New York, is one of the largest county fairs in North America. Founded in 1820, it is also one of the oldest.

Held annually each August, the Erie County Fair features over 266 acres and the fairgrounds are home to a variety of top events and attractions in the area.

Jessica Underberg is the fair's first female CEO and general manager and the youngest of either title on record.

Accomplishments and affiliations...

- 2019 International Association of Fairs & Expositions (IAFE) Chair, youngest to date
- 2011 New York State Association of Agricultural Fairs President, youngest to date
- Awarded Buffalo's (New York) Business First "40 under 40" class of 2014
- Awarded 2011 IAFE Rising Star Award
- Co-chair of IAFE's Young Professionals Initiative, inaugural year (2009)

Rooted in the Erie County Fair

HAMBURG, New York — Jessica Underberg doesn't pay much attention to the fact that she is the first woman to serve as CEO and fair manager of the Erie County Fair, Hamburg, New York, founded in 1820.

She also doesn't pay much attention to the fact that when she was named CEO and fair manager in 2017, she was the youngest person named to that position on record.

It all looks the same to her.

"As long as we pick up the rope and pull it in the same direction," she said. "I really have to hand it to the fair board, though. They were the ones that took that leap in 2017 when they named me the CEO."

They could have said something different to the then assistant manager of the fair. But they had already taken a leap when she was named the assistant manager in November 2010. There had never been an assistant manager before her. She was the first.

When she was named assistant manager, she was already working for the Erie County Fair. She started while she was in college working part time. That was in 1996.

She attended Canisius College, Buffalo, New York, where she first declared her major as accounting, but later switched to social sciences. She graduated in 1998 with no real plans as to what she really wanted to do.

"One day I was making maple syrup with a friend of mine," Underberg said. "His wife worked at the fair. He told me that his wife said the fair was looking for some help and wanted to know if I knew anyone that might be interested. I told him that I might be interested."

That conversation over maple syrup was actually a turning point for Underberg. She went to work at the

Erie County Fair in the competitive exhibit office. When she wasn't needed there, she worked in the front office.

It is important to note here that Underberg had already developed a deep love for the fair that began when she was just a child.

She grew up about 20 minutes from the Erie County Fair. Her parents, Jennie and Joe Gernatt, had and still have a dairy farm there. She and her siblings were part of the 4-H and FFA. She showed beef cattle and hogs at the fair and won Master Showmen in the beef show in 1992.

As the oldest of six children, four boys and two girls, Underberg said she knew how to cook a pot of spaghetti for a crew when she was 10 years old.

But cooking was just part of her farm life.

"We all went to the barn, everyday," she said. "My mom and the rest of us would go right alongside my dad."

She feels this upbringing gave her a different perspective of life that comes only with that experience. She feels that led her to not pay much attention to whether she was a female or male, young or old, tall or short. Everyone is the same. It is all about doing the job.

"There are many things that I grew to learn," she said. "I learned you can work and be miserable or you can work and have fun. Either way, the work has to be done. And it is much easier to do the job the right way the first time.

"I remember one time my father made me re-clean a heifer pen five times," she said. "I was just being lazy."

Underberg has always carried these messages with her. She has passed them on to her employees as well as to her own children.

And, she has learned on the job. She discovered the importance of

Jessica Underberg

CEO and Fair Manager
Erie County Fair
Hamburg, New York



having people believe in you.

"Denny Lang was the one that hired me for assistant manager," she said. "He pushed me and believed in me when I didn't really believe in myself. He mentored me."

Lang retired at the end of September 2017 and Underberg took over October 1.

She has given back as well. She has pushed some of her young staff and mentored them.

"Aside from the pride I take with the successes of my own children, seeing my staff go above and beyond is the best I can be," she said.

In the time that Underberg has been in management at the fair, the number of events there has surged. In 2010, the fairgrounds opened the Sportsplex, a year-round facility for equine shows as well as other livestock shows. This brought in many events. In addition, there is a gaming center on the property.

"We are busy all the time," she said. "For me, though, the fair has always been a part of my life."

Underberg has gone from being a child on the fairgrounds to having full responsibility of what goes on

there. But, the plain-spoken, yet direct-spoken, Underberg seems to take this in stride. She has now shared her fair management and agricultural experiences on a world stage as the chair of the International Association of Fairs and Expositions, traveling to places like Scotland and Australia.

She has given her all to the fair.

And she definitely walks the walk. She lives on eight acres of land about 15 to 20 minutes from the fair gates in a community called Springville. She is about the same distance from her parents.

She lives there with her husband, Mark, a USDA meat inspector working on the Canadian and U.S. border. He commutes 55 miles each way to work, 110 miles a day.

She lives there with her daughters, Lily, 17 years old, and Ella, 16 years old. The girls are members of the 4-H and FFA, just like their mother. Lily shows hogs. Ella shows market lambs. Both are community minded and participate in school activities as well as outside activities such as Karate. Both are black belts.

"This is home," she said. It always has been.

—Pam Sherborne

Cincinnati-area youths learn industry secrets as part of Coaster Camp

MASON, Ohio — Roller coasters and amusement parks have captured the imaginations of youth throughout their entire history. However, very few ever learn the secrets of how attractions work, what roles theming and marketing can play, as well as the effort required to make it all come together. **Michael Graham** of **The Gravity Group** and his wife **Corrie** — a teacher at **Mars Hill Academy** in Mason, Ohio — decided to pull the curtain back on some of the mystery.

The inaugural Coaster Camp at Mars Hill Academy let some young minds explore what goes into the creation of modern roller coaster from multiple angles. The five-day event hosted fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grade students and exposed them to the dynamics and history of coasters. The Grahams taught the students all days, with Michael detailing the steps in planning, designing and building a modern coaster.

An early highlight of the camp was a field trip and tour of The Gravity Group factory where the students could see multiple elements from coaster and train design firsthand. **Mark Rosenzweig** of **3dx** joined the camp for a day to detail the values and uses for theming on modern attractions. **John Robinson** of *Amusement Today* spoke during one of the sessions, showcasing the range of marketing techniques available for attractions and how they can set the stage for what guests will expect from attractions.

The 20 students were broken up into teams to build their own coaster creations — using a **CoasterDynamix** kit — where they were confronted with the realities of following engineering plans, proper construction as well as the importance of double-checking and testing throughout the process. The teams used craft items and Lego blocks from home to make their coasters unique with some theming.

The camp concluded with each team presenting their coaster designs — complete with theming and a planned marketing campaign — to a panel of experts (including their parents). On the final day, the group journeyed to **Kings Island** where the Grahams used the time walking around the park or waiting in queues to point out features of the park's rides and coasters that had been discussed during the week's camp, giving the kids some real-world examples from a park that is in their own backyard.

—John W.C. Robinson



A classroom at Mars Hill Academy in Mason, Ohio, was home to the school's first-ever Coaster Camp. The event was taught by Michael and Corrie (far right) Graham and welcomed 20 students from the Cincinnati-area. COURTESY MICHAEL GRAHAM



Guest speakers showcased aspects that go into roller coasters besides construction and engineering. Mark Rosenzweig of 3dx (above left) discussed the benefits that theming and immersion can bring to rides. John Robinson of *Amusement Today* (above right) spoke on various methods marketing campaigns can showcase and build anticipation for an attraction. COURTESY MICHAEL GRAHAM



Camp attendees used Coaster Dynamix to build their own coasters. They used Legos and craft materials to add unique theming to their rides to create one-of-a-kind experiences such as Fire & Ice (above) and Lost In Space (below). COURTESY MICHAEL GRAHAM



A highlight of Coaster Camp was a tour of The Gravity Group headquarters. Michael Graham (far right) explained some behind-the-scenes processes in the creation of coasters during the tour. COURTESY MICHAEL GRAHAM



Campers took their creations through several test runs to ensure a smooth ride and tweak problematic areas. COURTESY MICHAEL GRAHAM



The final day of Coaster Camp was a trip to Kings Island for attendees to not only have fun, but see real-world examples of what they had learned. COURTESY MICHAEL GRAHAM

OBITUARIES

Former Pennsylvania Showmen's Association director passes away

DANIELSVILLE, Pa. — Joseph Shea, 66, of Danielsville passed on October 27, 2021, surrounded by his loving family at Johns Hopkins University Hospital following a courageous battle with cancer. He was the son of Alma M. Shea and the late Lawrence G. Shea, Sr. He was the loving husband of Karen Michael-Shea.

Shea graduated from Bethlehem Catholic High School. He went on to work at Bethlehem Steel in the Coke Plant. Shea was past director and member of the Pennsylvania State Showmen's Association. He enjoyed sports, especially golf, but he mostly loved being surrounded by his family and grandchildren. He cherished being "Pop-Pop" to the kids and they always raised his spirits. Shea had a big heart, quiet demeanor, and an easy-going nature. His dedication to our Blessed Mother was a source of peace during his journey.

He will be remembered by his wife of 21 years, Karen; children, Sean Shea (Jennifer) and Coleen Shea (Sean Watson); mother, Alma Shea; siblings, Lawrence Shea, Jr. (Debbi), Mary Majewski (John), Annemarie John (Skip) and Patrick Shea; step children, Veronica Lefurgy (Michael) and Dawn Gutkowski (Jim), Walter Roberts, Jr. and Andrew Roberts (Brittany Herbst); 18 grandchildren, one great-grandson and many nieces and nephews.



Joseph Shea

ON THE MOVE

McGowan Allied Specialty Insurance has announced the hiring of **Tom Jones** as the manager of loss control services (MASI).

In his new role with MASI, Jones will be responsible for all aspects of loss control services. He will also be charged with building improved client services through new training and customer relations, reporting to **Drew Tewksbury**, director of sales and marketing.



Jones

Jones has over 40 years of experience in the amusement industry with a career that spanned **Funtime, Inc.**, **Six Flags** and **Cedar Fair**. He's been a third-party inspector for the last 14 years.

"We are thrilled to have Tom join our McGowan Allied team," said Tewksbury. "His operational, educational, and inspection experience is unmatched. His addition to our team will help McGowan Allied continue to be industry 'Thought Leaders' in the areas of risk management and loss control, further bringing greater value and service to our clients in the amusement industry."

Valtech, a global company focused on customer experience transformation, announced award winning design leader **Seth Jablon** will be the company's first vice president, executive creative director for Valtech in North America. Jablon brings more than 15 years of experience leading a wide range of engagements spanning product and service design, brand identity, campaign storytelling and brand activations.

"Valtech's expertise bridging the physical/digital in retail and theme park environments is what really excited me," explained Jablon.

"There's a race to innovate the customer experience that's being fueled by the consumer and our fast-changing world, and Valtech is at the forefront."

An agency veteran, Jablon has led teams at **R/GA**, **TBWA\Chiat\Day**, **VSA Partners**, **DigitasLBi** and at **LiveArea** where he served as the group creative director of the New York office.



Jablon

Evolv Technology, a leader in weapons detection security screening, announced the appointment of **Mario Ramos** to chief financial officer effective November 1, 2021. Ramos will assume global responsibility for the Company's accounting, finance, risk compliance, information technology and investor relations functions.

Ramos joins **Evolv Technology** from **Edelman Financial Engines** where he served as executive vice president, chief financial officer and chief risk officer. Ramos will succeed **Peter Faubert**, who is transitioning to serve as the senior vice president of strategic finance.

"We are delighted to welcome Mario to the management team," said **Peter George**, chief executive officer of Evolv Technology. "Mario brings over 20 years of executive experience building and leading high-growth companies. I believe Mario's financial and strategic leadership will be instrumental in supporting the company's next stage of growth."



Ramos

Cedar Point featured on Food Network's Dinner Impossible

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

SANDUSKY, Ohio — When the *Food Network* debut its season premiere of *Dinner Impossible* in late September, **Cedar Point** received a lot of flattering exposure. Not only was the park featured for an entire hour-long episode, but the park's 150th anniversary played a big part in the show's storyline. Filmed in mid-June when the summer season — and anniversary fanfare — was just beginning, the episode featured an entertaining balance of cooking challenges and showcasing the park.

"The producers were looking for interesting locations in the Midwest, and we were one of the locations they reached out to," said Director of Communications **Tony Clark**, Cedar Point. Once we had a few conversations about the production, the opportunities available and the significance of our postponed 150th anniversary, they were all in."

The challenge of the episode was to feed 150 people with three dishes inspired by rides at Cedar Point. The park made all rides available. As the film shoot took place in actual real time of the challenge, filming of the on-air celebrities planning, cooking and riding occurred in the same day. The three rides selected by the network were **Valravn (Bolliger & Mabillard** dive coaster), the **Kiddy Kingdom Carousel (1924 Denztel)** and **Frontier Fling (Skycoaster)**. From

those, the chefs were challenged to create three dishes based on those rides using the ingredients that the park's kitchens had on hand.

"My favorite part of the filming was watching our food and beverage team shine," said Clark. "We continue to elevate our dining experiences in the park, so this was a great opportunity to showcase their abilities. A lot of that talent was utilized behind the scenes with **Chris Near**, our VP of food and beverage leading the team, but our pastry specialist, **Chef Elka Kanuk** and Executive Chef **RJ Sinwald** were both featured on-camera assisting the hosts. We're all pretty amped for our culinary future, and the show was a great boost for the team and what they're capable of."

The Cedar Point resort is a 364-acre destination. Although the park is massive in size, producers selected attractions that were closer to the kitchen site rather than the far ends of the park. The final selections offered a variety of the park's strengths: a world-class lineup of coasters, family attractions and big thrills.

When *Amusement Today* asked about interaction with guests, Clark said, "A lot of the filming took place in our main kitchen, so that part was behind the scenes. But when we were in the park, they couldn't miss us — we were zooming down the midways with carts, cameras and on-air talent. So many guests recognized **Chef Robert Irvine** from his shows and previous work, so



After navigating park-related challenges, the *Dinner Impossible* team fed 150 Cedar Point fans incredible dishes. Inset, famous chef **Robert Irvine** (center) poses with Cedar Point's **Tony Clark** (second from left) and his fellow *Dinner Impossible* team. COURTESY CEDAR POINT



they were taking pictures of us moving around; Chef Irvine even stopped to take photos with guests. He's a great guy."

Once the episode aired, Cedar Point was delighted with the end result.

"When we're in the moment during filming and running all over the place, it's hard to get a sense of what the finished product will look like," said Clark. "I was so proud of how the show came together, and that's thanks to the hard

work of our entire park team. It takes so many disciplines to ensure smooth filming, including rides, procurement, park services, security and more. I know in my heart that they all believe in doing our best, together. On top of that, we all had a lot of fun doing it!"

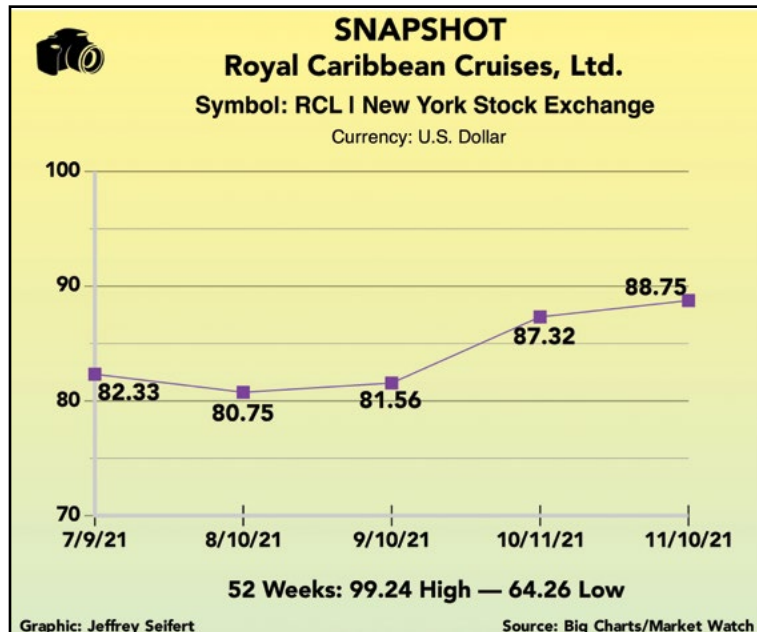
The episode is available On Demand.

MARKET WATCH

COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 11/10/21	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	139.46	146.80	54.75
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	47.47	52.50	32.35
Comcast Corp./NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	54.17	61.80	47.25
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	174.45	203.02	134.1
Dubai Parks & Resorts	DXBE:UH	DFM	0.08	0.13	0.07
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	51.81	56.07	27.01
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	JP:9010	TYO	4940.00	6500.00	4205.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	2.48	2.80	0.39
Leofoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	18.45	22.80	14.50
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	46.06	51.17	23.25
Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd.	RCL	NYSE	88.75	99.24	64.26
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	JP:6357	TYO	820.00	922.00	569.00
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	64.64	70.48	25.12
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	42.01	51.75	26.82
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	848.00	944.00	672.00

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

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



DIESEL PRICES

Region (U.S)	As of 11/8/21	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$3.712	\$1.262
Midwest	\$3.633	\$1.372
Gulf Coast	\$3.482	\$1.350
Mountain	\$3.833	\$1.461
West Coast	\$3.974	\$1.402
California	\$4.701	\$1.464

CURRENCY
On 11/11/21 \$1 USD =

0.8660	EURO
0.7406	GBP (British Pound)
113.36	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9142	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.3590	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.2445	CAD (Canadian Dollar)

BUSINESS WATCH

Cedar Fair announces its third quarter

SANDUSKY, Ohio — On November 3, **Cedar Fair Entertainment Company** announced results for its third quarter ended Sept. 26, 2021, and more recent performance trends through Oct. 31, 2021.

“The strong demand and consumer spending trends we previously reported through Labor Day weekend continued in September and October, as our parks hosted their very popular Halloween events,” said Cedar Fair President and CEO **Richard A. Zimmerman**. “Since the end of the second quarter, revenues have outpaced the record revenues of the comparable 18-week period in 2019 by 12%, or more than \$104 million, driven primarily by record levels of guest spending.”

For the third quarter ending Sept. 26, 2021, net revenues totaled \$753 million versus \$87 million for the third quarter of 2020. The increase in net revenues was attributable to a 674 operating day increase in the period, resulting in a 9.5 million visit gain in attendance. In-park per capita spending in the 2021 third quarter totaled a record \$64.26, driven by increases in guest spending, particularly for admissions and extra-charge attractions. Out-of-park revenues increased \$54 million due to the earlier opening of the parks and resort properties.

“Cedar Fair’s outstanding results clearly reflect the dedication of our incredible team. I couldn’t be prouder of how the team delivered, especially considering the very unique and difficult challenges we’ve overcome,” added Zimmerman.

SeaWorld third quarter shows increase

ORLANDO — **SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.** reported financial results for the third quarter and first nine months of fiscal year 2021.

In the third quarter of 2021, the company hosted approximately 7.2 million guests, generated total revenues of \$521.2 million, net income of \$102.1 million and adjusted EBITDA of \$265.3 million. Attendance declined 0.9 million guests when compared to the third quarter of 2019 primarily due to reduced international visitation and group-related attendance. Attendance was also impacted by an unfavorable calendar shift and weather during the quarter. The increase in total revenue of \$47.5 million compared to the third quarter of 2019 was primarily a result of increases in admission per capita (defined as admissions revenue divided by total attendance) and in-park per capita spending (defined as food, merchandise and other revenue divided by total attendance) partially offset by the decline in attendance.

“During the quarter, we took advantage of our improved financial performance and favorable market conditions to refinance our debt which allowed us to reduce our overall debt, meaningfully reduce our go forward interest expense, push out maturities and increase our access to liquidity from revolving commitments,” said **Marc Swanson**, chief executive officer of SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc. “We also resumed our share repurchase activities and opportunistically repurchased 1.53 million shares during the quarter.”

Disney's fourth quarter misses expectations

BURBANK, Calif — **The Walt Disney Company** posted quarterly results that missed Wall Street's expectations as the media giant saw a more marked-than-expected slowdown in **Disney+** streaming subscribers, with consumer mobility picking up and virus-related disruptions weighing on show production. Shares fell more than 3% in late trading following the results.

Though overall revenue remains below what it was before the COVID-19 pandemic, the theme parks division of The Walt Disney Company has doubled its revenue from the fourth quarter of 2020 to 2021. Vaccinations and a rise in consumer mobility have strongly aided other parts of Disney's sprawling entertainment empire. Disney's theme parks have seen a pick-up in attendance as 2021 progressed, aided by pent-up consumer demand for live events. At the end of the quarter in October 2020, Disney Parks, Experiences, and Products had made \$2,733,000 in revenue, while it has made \$5,450,000 in revenue this quarter for a 99% change.

Disney Parks, Experiences and Products revenues for the quarter increased to \$5.5 billion compared to \$2.7 billion in the prior-year quarter. Segment operating results increased \$1.6 billion to income of \$640 million. Operating income for the quarter reflected increases at our domestic and international parks and experiences businesses, partially offset by a decrease at our consumer products business.

WWA welcomes return of networking opportunities for industry

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — After two years, it felt particularly nice to see water park professionals once again face to face, or in some cases, face to mask. Close to 1,400 attendees enjoyed quality time in educational classes, networking opportunities or checking out the latest products or innovations on the trade show floor at the 41st Annual World Waterpark Association Symposium and Trade Show. The four-day symposium took place October 19-22, two of which included the trade show exhibition hall.

"I think what we hear from first-time attendees, which almost every year is a significant number, they had no idea there was such a depth of resources available to them," said WWA President **Rick Root**. "The spirit of help is there and all they have to do is tap into it. They are especially surprised how much they learn in the hallways and at the social events, not just the formal sessions they knew they were coming for but the informal gatherings."

"I think it is so exciting to be back on the floor," said **Shane Huish**, owner of **Cowabunga Bay**. "It feels good to get caught up with everybody. We've basically gone two years without any social contact. This is the most social I've ever been on the trade show floor, bumping into people I haven't seen in years."

Education, of course, is key to the symposium. More than 120 speakers shared best practices on topics that meant the most to attend-



Accepting Golden Ticket wins from AT's Tim Baldwin (left) and Jeffrey Seifert (second from right) are ProSlide's Jeff Janovich and Markus Esnard (far right). AT/FILE

ees. These included hiring and recruitment, operational safety, new revenue streams and maintenance.

"I always find it helpful. It's always good to hear how other operators solve problems that I have," said **Huish**. "That's not reinventing the wheel. 'Oh, yeah. We had that problem last year. That's how you fixed it? We have that problem too. Great! We'll do that this year.'"

"It was well attended," said **Cindee Huddy**, **International Ride Training**, following her session as an instructor. "We got a lot of good feedback. We spoke on step-by-step procedures and how important each of those steps is. We had a lot of people say they wanted to go back and make sure they were following ASTM F24, F24-F770 and F24-2376 and using it as a checklist to make sure they're following manufacturers' [guidelines] in their SOPs. We got a lot of questions during the class, and they were sharing some best practices with others."

Long-time career professionals also find the show invaluable.

"What 2020 and 2021 clearly showed us is that you're never past the point to where you're going to have to learn new stuff," **Root** told *Amusement Today*. "Whether it is pandemic response initially, how to roll back your



Brilliant colors from WhiteWater West illustrate continual advancements in the industry. COURTESY WHITEWATER WEST

business to pre-pandemic levels, addressing persistent staffing shortages or supply chain issues or marketing challenges ... it doesn't matter if you've been here the last five years or 10 years, we have challenges that are new, and people need to come together and learn how to address them."

The trade show floor served as the location for lunch both days, and with 100,000 square feet of space and 200 companies, new ideas and innovations were easy to discover.

"I am very excited to see the resiliency of the industry. To see everyone and hear their stories and how they want to approach 2022 is very optimistic," said **Markus Esnard**, marketing coordi-

nator, **ProSlide Technology**. "As everybody knows, **Rick Hunter** is the energy behind ProSlide, and to see him the past two days is uplifting. He was so exciting; he energized all of us. This industry is prevailing, and we are going to come out of this stronger than ever."

ProSlide was pleased to talk about its latest innovations such as the **Mammoth Blast**, a bigger version of **The Rocket Blast**. The **Adventure Tower** in **Atlantis Dubai** was also noted.

"The WWA Show in San Antonio was a super reminder of how great this water park industry is and how important we are to each other in this WWA community," said **Hunter**. "It was a beautiful coming together

of our water park friends and partners who showed their purposeful intention of getting right back into new water park projects and making things happen."

Andrew Mowatt, executive vice president, global key accounts, **WhiteWater West**, agreed that reconnecting was an uplift. "Coincidentally, coming down from Canada, we connected through Denver. **Rick Hunter** and **Jeff Janovich** from ProSlide were connecting there as well. We're all standing there at the gate, and rather than being competitors, it was wonderful to see each other and compare what we've all been through as companies."

Mowatt was optimistic with the foot traffic and found customers were serious about business.

"2019 was a record year for us," he said. "There were a lot of [projects from 2020] that were put on hold, and we've helped clients get through all that. One of my favorites was **Tsunami Surge** that opened at **Six Flags Great America**. It's a fantastic ride. But talking with our customers this year, the No. 1 problem they are experiencing is staffing. So we've talked about how we can reconfigure a play structure to need less guards. We're paying attention to that in terms of how we design things."

Mowatt was excited about changes in the water park industry such as advancements in brighter colors and resin transfer molding with closed molds. Attractions now can have a whole new look with bold colors, textures and translucents.

"This is a small tight-knit community. This is a show where you network; this is a show where you re-establish relationships," said **Mark Williams**, president, **Rain Drop Products**. "My goal is to convey what I think is the future of children's aquatic play. The world of children's aquatic play is merging with the decorative fountain industry. We're being asked to provide fun, playful environments in the daytime, and then to develop 'the Bellagio' at night. It's a good fit."

► See WWA, page 45

WWA 2020/2021 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES

Jim Basala

Deep River Waterpark (2020)



Jim Dunn

Aquatic Development Group (2020)



Richard "RAC" Carroll
Ellis & Associates (2021)



Randall Neuman

Neuman Pools Inc. (2021)



General sessions accommodated hundreds of people, including distanced seating if desired (above). Education sessions (below) occurred for four full days. AT/TIM BALDWIN

► **WWA**
Continued from page 44

Rain Drop has created artistic, sculptural play pieces that become inviting spaces in the evening for a completely new atmosphere. Williams also believes that “inclusivity” has become a mantra for the company.

“I see it as an undeveloped area in our world,” Williams said. “The fact that I go to bed at night knowing I am creating spaces that children of all abilities can play at ... it’s a fun way to make money. It’s a niche I care deeply about.”

Two general sessions showcased the awards program, Hall of Fame inductees, the introduction of new board members and a keynote speaker, **Mark Rucker**, whose career included **Walt Disney Parks and Resorts** and **Great Wolf Resorts**.

“I think it is important to think about history and how it shapes you,” Rucker said to the audience. “Surround yourself with open, honest



people who will help you in varied aspects of life and leadership.”

A highlight of the week was the Annual Reunion Party. **Six Flags Fiesta Texas** was the host park and pulled out all the stops. Food and drink, haunted houses, roller coasters and rides and lighted tours of the water park offered countless opportunities to network and simply have fun. It was a resounding success.

“As an opportunity to touch base with clients, share

knowledge and showcase the latest projects happening within our industry, the WWA show is an excellent venue,” said **Jim Dunn, Aquatic Development Group**.

“Members interacting with members is the name of the game at the WWA Show,” said **Aleatha Ezra**, director of park member development, WWA. “This show remains the once-a-year opportunity for water park owners and operators to sit in a room together to share ideas, compare notes and ask for help with challenges. They come to this show to create connections.”

“I think the No. 1 takeaway is how happy all of our attendees — park operators and suppliers — are to be back together in person,” Root told AT. “It’s been two years and too long.”

•wwashow.org



Attendees had a ball at the Annual Reunion Party, hosted by Six Flags Fiesta Texas. AT/TIM BALDWIN



Bill Kirby prepared fresh pretzels for attendees at the Ben’s Soft Pretzels booth. AT/TIM BALDWIN

WWA Trade Show offers new tastes and tempting revenue options

The convention made for engaging opportunities to see what possibilities are available to park operators. That included food. While strolling the trade show hall, attendees were able to sample sweets and baked goods. They ranged from famous staples like **Dippin’ Dots** to **Chica Boom** sangria and margaritas.

“First day traffic alone fulfilled our expectations,” said **Bill Kirby, Hershey’s Ice Cream**. “The quality of attendees was definitely better than other shows we’ve attended.”

Brian Krider of **Ben’s Soft Pretzels** was rolling out fresh dough and baking hot pretzels for attendees. “The amount of conversations and discussions we’ve had have been great,” he told *Amusement Today*. “We’re currently in three water parks, **Splashin’ Safari** and two **Typhoon Texas** locations. All of our products are made fresh at the location. It’s all baked fresh from scratch. We have two business models, a licensing model and an operator model. We’re not in every mall. We’re in high-end venues. The water park and amusement industry are in need of a fresh product, and that’s where we can help.”

Russ Warner, president of **Alligator Ice**, was offering marvelous slushies to operators and onlookers. “The quality of leads is outstanding,” he said regarding the foot traffic at the show. “Alligator Ice is a premium slush. We’re about the quality of the product. Not all slushes are created the same.”

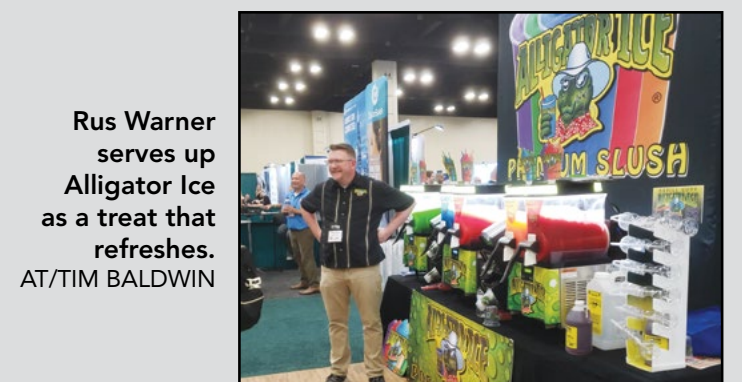
“We do a lot of municipalities. Our largest park is **Margaritaville** in Georgia,” said **Matt Heuser**, vice president. “We’re fairly new to this channel, but we’re in about 15 water parks.”

While convenience stores are a stronghold for Alligator Ice, the company feels water parks have an advantage of volume, as well as a draw for its premium product.

A big hit at the trade show was **Waffle Cabin**. Most attendees had not experienced its scrumptious Liège waffles before. Aside from warm deliciousness, the company offered numerous business opportunities that included a low investment and various options that fit each location: truck or trailer, build out, physical cabins or tents. It was the first time for the company to exhibit at the trade show.

“The response has been very positive,” said **Peter Creyf**, founder (although he enjoys calling himself head dishwasher). “As always, the proof is in the pudding afterwards. We were operating at a ski resort, **Camelback**, in the wintertime. Because it is a water park in the summertime, (**Camel Beach**) they opened their Waffle Cabin in the summer, and it was a great success. That led us here. We thought we should build on this success.”

—Tim Baldwin



Rus Warner serves up Alligator Ice as a treat that refreshes. AT/TIM BALDWIN

SAFETY, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

► Pennsylvania Ride Safety Seminar recap — page 50 / ASTM signs memorandum with Mexico — page 52

January begins industry safety seminars, return to in-person format

AT: Pam Sherborne

psherborne@amusementtoday.com

UNITED STATES — Industry safety seminars to raise the level of safety awareness will begin kicking off in January.

And there is literally something for every aspect of the industry, whether it be in operations, maintenance, management or human resources.

Participants earn certifications and, in many cases, continuing education units (CEUs).

What follows is a sampling of what is coming up.

AIMS International

A new program will debut during **AIMS International 2022 Safety Seminar** set for Jan. 9-14 at the **Galveston Island Convention Center**, Galveston, Texas.

The new program is being presented at the 2022 seminar along with other AIMS programming.

Called the Academy of Amusement Risk Management, Safety and Security, with the acronym AARMSS, the new two-year program was created in response to a recognized need in the amusement industry for specific and in-depth safety education and certification.

Executive Director **MJ Brewer** said about 300 hours of content will be presented this year. The organization is expecting about 500 attendees.

Attendees build their own schedule, choosing to best suit their needs and desired outcome. AIMS offers certifications levels in maintenance, operations, inspection and aquatics.

Following up on last year,



The 2022 AIMS International Safety Seminar is set for Jan. 9-14, Galveston, Texas. Planners are expecting a large turnout as it seems people are ready to connect live. This is a photo taken during the 2019 seminar, pre-pandemic. The Galveston Island Convention Center is keeping up with CDC guidelines. As of mid-November, attendees should expect to wear face coverings. COURTESY AIMS INTERNATIONAL

Ellis and Associates will present that same portion live in January.

"We also have partnered with **International Ride Training** for the first time to present the ride operations training," Brewer said. "We are working with the **Outdoor Amusement Business Association (OABA)** to help us with our carnival track. We are very excited about all three of these agencies coming together to enhance our content."

NAARSO

This nonprofit organization is presenting its **35th Annual Safety Seminar** in hybrid format. The live seminar is set for Jan. 15-21

at the **Doubletree**, Orlando, Florida. The hands-on portion of the live seminar in 2022 will take place at **SeaWorld Orlando**.

NAARSO also has put together a virtual alternative for those individuals who may still not be traveling due to the COVID-19 pandemic or for those who don't have the time during their offseason to attend. That virtual seminar runs Jan. 15-21, 2022, with access to classes until Feb. 28, 2022. The virtual seminar includes 40 hours of online instruction.

NAARSO also has their 14th annual Mid-Atlantic/East Coast regionalized NAARSO safety school, being conducted online and in

person, March 8-10, Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino, Atlantic City, New Jersey.

NAARSO, dedicated to industry safety, administers three industry certifications, the Inspector Certification, Operations Certification and Aquatic Certification. There are specific levels that can be achieved in each category.

Additional training offered on select days during the seminar include Train the Trainer and Specialty Education.

Northwest Showmen's Club

This nonprofit association is presenting its **41st Annual Safety Seminar** Feb. 21-25. Two days of the seminar will be held at **Oaks Amusement Park**,

Portland, Oregon, for hands-on training, and three days will be held at **Funtastic Shows** campus, also in Portland.

Northwestern Showmen's Club was established over 40 years ago to promote continuing education by amusement industry professionals and to raise the level of safety awareness within the industry.

The **NWSC Safety Seminar** is aligned with **Portland Community College** for accreditation in their Continuing Education Program providing two CEUs for participation and completion of the seminar.

► See SEMINARS, page 47

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There is always a hands-on component to the NAARSO Annual Safety Seminar. This photo was taken when the attendees had a hands-on in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The hands-on portion of the 2022 event will be held at SeaWorld Orlando. COURTESY NAARSO

► **SEMINARS**
Continued from page 46

The seminar also offers NARRSO and/or AIMS testing for attendees on the last day of the event.

International Ride Training
This company offers a variety of services including the **International Ride Operator Certification (iROC)** training program.

Called Ride Camp, the three-day training program

will be held this year Feb. 8-11 at Carowinds located in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Ride Camp is defined as a "train the trainer" program. There are CEU awarded credits for instructor, trainer and operator levels.

Other services by International Ride Training include being a full-service provider of training, standard operating

► See SEMINARS, page 48

ASTM International presents F24 awards to long-standing members



WEST CONSHOHOCKEN, Pa — ASTM International presented its Distinguished Service Award to James Barrow (above middle) in recognition of his outstanding participation and leadership in the development of ASTM F2959 Aerial Adventure standard, his loyal service as the F24.30 subcommittee vice chair and for his steadfast sincerity and utmost dedication to the safety of all participants in the adventure park industry. ASTM also presented its Award of Appreciation to Roger Berry (second from right) in recognition of his twenty-three years of dedicated service and leadership to Committee F24; notably as the subcommittee chairman for F24.10. COURTESY ASTM INTERNATIONAL

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SEMINARS

Continued from page 47

procedure development and operational consulting for owners/operators of amusement rides and devices and water slides worldwide.

Midwest Safety and Operations Conference

The spring 2022 Midwest Safety and Operations Conference is set for Feb. 28 to March 2 at the **Kalahari Resort**, Sandusky, Ohio.

The seminar is presented by the **Greater Ohio Showmen's Association**, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the improvement and perpetuation of the outdoor amusement business in the State of Ohio.

Pennsylvania Amusement Ride Safety Seminar

This seminar series is designed to offer specialized presentations covering various amusement rides and devices regulated under the Pennsylvania Amusement Ride Safety Act and the New Jersey Carnival and Amusement Rides Safety Act.

Three seminars are presented throughout the year. There was an April 2021 event and a November 2021 event. The next seminar will be held March 1-3 at the **Red Lion Hotel and Conference Center**, Harrisburg - Hershey, Pennsylvania.

Presentations will be made for inspector licenses in inflatables, haunted attractions, go karts, waterslides and extreme sports for independent and/or insurance inspectors. There are two levels.

These presentations are approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Ride and Measurement Standards and accepted by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs for the Recognized Certified Maintenance Technician (RCMT) program.

Tests are administered for all license classifications. The program also fulfills the CEU requirements set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture - Ride & Measurement Standards for all classes of renewals.

Phil Slaggert is the presenter of the seminars.

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AARMSS to debut at the 2022 AIMS International Safety Seminar

In response to a recognized need in the amusement industry for specific and in-depth safety education and certification, **AIMS International** has created the Academy of Amusement Risk Management, Safety and Security (AARMSS). This structured certification program is designed to develop the safety, security and risk managers of today and tomorrow.

AARMS courses are unique to the Academy and cannot be found anywhere else in the AIMS International Safety Seminar nor at any other amusement industry educational seminar. Courses will be taught by subject matter experts from both within the industry as well as professionals from outside agencies which specialize in the course topics. The customized AARMSS curriculum is specifically designed to educate and equip the students with the knowledge and skills needed to



effectively manage an amusement industry safety, security and risk management program. Academy courses will take place each year exclusively at the AIMS International Safety Seminar.

Year one of the program will focus on the disciplines of Safety and Security and the second-year agenda will concentrate on

Emergency Management and Risk Management. Prior to the first year, successful completion of an OSHA 10 class is required, and between the first and second years, solo work and independent study by the students will be required to help promote understanding of the pillars of the program. These will include, but will not be limited to, select FEMA Emergency Management Institute courses and Academy webinar classes. Program requirements must be completed within three years of enrollment in the program. In-person participation in the courses offered at the Academy, which is offered only at the AIMS International Safety Seminar, will be required. Course work must be completed within 3 years of starting the program. The program enrollment will be limited to 25 students per year.

The curriculum for the program is based upon the four pillars of

study listed below.

- Safety (year one)
- Security (year one)
- Emergency Management (year two)
- Risk Management (year two)

Successful program candidates will be awarded one of two certificates; Certified Amusement Safety & Security Associate (CASSA) or Certified Amusement Safety and Security Professional (CASSP).

As part of the selection process, candidates must complete an application, show proof of their eligibility and participate in an admissions interview conducted by AARMSS faculty. Applications must be submitted in advance of the seminar start date. Interested candidates may complete an application at aimsintl.org/education/aarmss and email it to certs@aimsintl.org.

Space for this AIMS page is provided courtesy of *Amusement Today* as a corporate partner of AIMS Intl. Content is provided by AT & AIMS.



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Fall Pennsylvania Ride Safety Seminar draws nearly 250 attendees

AT: B. Derek Shaw
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Offered semi-annually each spring and fall, the Pennsylvania Ride Safety Seminar trains and tests hundreds of amusement ride operators in Pennsylvania and many other states. During November 2-4, 234 people and 45 instructors from various amusement operations received ride safety training and testing conducted by third-party operator **Slaggert Risk Management** for the **Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture**, Bureau of Ride and Measurements Standards. Participants and instructors came primarily from Pennsylvania; however, there were also attendees from Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Maryland, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Ohio and Virginia.

The fall session offered a total of 137 different course options. Seminar participants selected the specialty courses they felt were beneficial for their abilities, career path, job description and employer benefit. Some of the course areas included inflatables; proper anchoring, staking and securement; emergency planning; rigging safety; log out/tag out; hydraulics; out of production rides; threat analysis; mechanical bulls and surf simulators; pneumatics; climbing walls and much more. Weather's Impact on Outdoor Events was Tuesday



Trooper Megan Ammerman with the Pennsylvania State Police gave two presentations on active shooters (above). Each was well attended by many of the 234 inspectors. Getting together at lunch were some of the carnival operators (l to r): Richard Harris and Allen Bartlebaugh, Bartlebaugh Amusements; Tom Garbrick, Garbrick Amusements and Joey Benner, Sunshine Shows (below). AT/B. DEREK SHAW

morning's opening session.

"We have a nice selection of training," said **Joe Filoramo**, amusement ride safety supervisor.

The electrical session was different from previous ones. "I've been wanting us to do a basic, laymen's term, electrical class, because people just think that electricity is over their head, it's magic, they're afraid of it and they don't look at anything electrical," said Filoramo. "There [are] very simple, elementary things that you could observe or use some very basic testing devices to detect a problem. **Randall [Arndt]** — he's one of our

QA inspectors — put most of it together. We showed some slides, with some outrageous problems we've found over the years and some lessons learned from those problems."

Some of the participating parks included **Kennywood Entertainment, Sesame Place, Lakemont Park, Waldameer Park, Idlewild Park and Dutch Wonderland**. Carnival operators that sent attendees included **A.E.B. Amusements, Bartlebaugh Amusements, C&L Shows, Tropical Amusements and Garbrick Amusements**. Representatives from **Great**



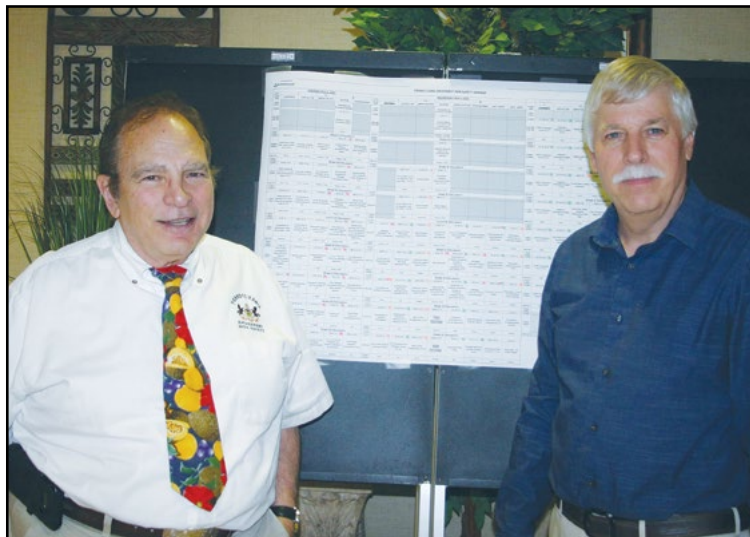
Wolf Lodge and Kalahari Resorts were a couple of the water parks that attended.

The instructors and staff are all volunteers with a wide spectrum of specialties that

impact the amusement industry, from all across the country. Testing was provided for Class 1 and 2 ride inspectors, general qualified inspectors and specialized inspectors. The Pennsylvania certification is recognized in many states across the country, including RCMT (Recognized Certified Maintenance Technician), the program in place in New Jersey.

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture has inspected and registered amusement rides under the Amusement Ride Safety Act since 1984 and regularly participates in education and outreach seminars that include classes and hands-on demonstrations. The next Pennsylvania Ride Safety Seminar is scheduled for March 1 - 3 at the Red Lion Hotel and Conference Center, Harrisburg, just off I-283 on Lindle Road.

•paridesafety.com



Joe Filoramo, amusement ride safety supervisor for the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Ride and Measurements Standards, and Phil Slaggert, ride safety seminar coordinator, stand in front of the extensive class schedule for the three-day training (above left). Participants had 137 different courses to choose from, selecting ones they felt were beneficial for their abilities, career path, job description and employer benefit. Leonard Adams III, an amusement ride inspector for the Commonwealth, did a two-part presentation on amusement ride inspections (above right). In addition to Pennsylvania, ride inspectors came from 10 other states. AT/B. DEREK SHAW





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ASTM International signs Memorandum of Understanding with Mexico's DGN

WEST CONSHOHOCKEN, Pa. — The signing of a new Memorandum of Understanding between **ASTM International** and the national standards body of Mexico illustrates the close relationship that exists between these organizations, as well as with ASTM International's committee on amusement rides and devices (F24) and the **International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA)**.

ASTM International and Mexico's national standards body, **Dirección General de Normas (DGN)**, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Oct. 29. DGN, part of Mexico's Ministry of Economy, coordinates the development of standards and regulations and promotes standardization use in Mexico.

F24 works in close coordination with IAAPA staff and its members to ensure global awareness of industry safety standards. This collaboration and outreach has resulted in the global use and acceptance of the F24 standards as the most current, comprehensive technical safety standards



ASTM INTERNATIONAL

for the amusement industry. Through these relationships came the opportunity for IAAPA staff to assist ASTM International with DGN's agreement to sign an MOU.

Paulina Reyes, vice president and executive director, IAAPA, served as the master of ceremonies for the MoU signing. "Safety has always been the global attractions industry's number-one priority. IAAPA has worked tirelessly throughout Latin America to communicate the value and importance of consistent safety standards to governments and operators," said Reyes.

Noting the organizations' commitment to safety, Reyes said: "This is an important step for everyone involved in the attractions industry. As an advocate for industry safety, and as a member of the ASTM-F24 executive committee, I am very proud to represent the Mexican attractions industry and be part of this crucial step. We are ready for the work to begin."

Kathie Morgan, president, ASTM International, and **Alfonso Guati Rojo Sánchez**, general director of standards in Mexico's Ministry of Economy, signed the MoU.

"I am so proud of the collaboration between IAAPA, ASTM, and DGN which will result in the use of the most robust safety standards for the amusement industry, directly benefiting parks and attractions within Mexico," noted **Franceen Gonzales**, chair of F24.

"On behalf of ASTM International, I am honored and pleased to participate in this virtual ceremony for the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between ASTM and DGN," commented Morgan. "It is yet another step in ASTM International's work in Mexico and Latin America, which began in earnest when the late Luis Ordóñez became a member of the ASTM's

Board of Directors in the early 2000s and ASTM held its very first international Board meeting in Mexico City in 2002."

"To sign this MoU is for us a historical moment," Guati remarked at the ceremony. "It's very relevant in the evolution of the processes of implementation of the Quality Infrastructure in Mexico. It's very important to set these kind of agreements in order to disseminate and share information and train ourselves in the best way possible on high quality standards that are prepared around the world to be able to improve our systems."

"I am convinced that the signing this agreement today is just the starting point so we can develop and benefit from each other," Guati added. "Acknowledging all of the prior conversations that have made this MoU agreement a reality, the next phase is going to be the most exciting and interesting one, where each one of us will get this agreement going to maximize the benefits for the users, which will receive the best services out of this agreement."

The meeting was attended by the Head of the Unit of Regulations, Competitiveness and Competition of the Ministry of Economy, **Jesús Cantú Escalante**, who welcomed the participants and celebrated the adoption of the memorandum of understanding between DGN and ASTM International.

ASTM currently has almost 200 members from Mexico participating in the work of our technical committees as well as 45 companies participating in Proficiency Testing Programs. In addition, ASTM has more than 350 student members in Mexico, from 15 university campuses.

"Working together, ASTM, DGN, and developers of technical requirements in Mexico will be even better able to support innovation, competitiveness, sustainability, and climate resilience, through standards that reflect technical quality, market relevance, and suitability to the task at hand," said Morgan. "The opportunity to help foster innovation, promote safety, and support economic growth in North America is a great opportunity for all of us."

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BREAKING NEWS

After absence, Bell's Amusement Park announces a comeback in Oklahoma

AT: Tim Baldwin
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

BROKEN ARROW, Okla. — On November 4, an announcement came that many Oklahomans had been eagerly anticipating. **Bell's Amusement Park**, a staple in Tulsa for more than five decades, confirmed it was coming back. Forced to close in 2006 after 56 years of operation, residents in northeast Oklahoma continued to feel its loss. Since then, the Bell family did not give up on finding a new location.

Third-generation owner **Robbie Bell** said at the announcement, "In the fall of 2017, I asked a dear friend of mine where he thought we should relocate the park. We agreed northeast Oklahoma was filled with wonderful communities and wonderful people. He said Broken Arrow without question was the place to go."

The process was started in 2018. Broken Arrow is a city of almost 100,000 people. It is located less than 20 miles from downtown Tulsa.

"My father looked at six locations in Broken Arrow. It so happens his favorite location is the one we're at today," Bell said at the announcement from the site location.

"This property is unique. It has no utilities; it is basically untouched. It has been allowed to grow wild. As a result we have a beautiful piece of property to work with," Bell said. "I don't know how many trees are on the land, but we're going to try to keep every single one of them. We're going to try to keep the topography of the property as original as possible. The property has a massive creek running through the middle of it.



Zingo was a John Allen wooden coaster that opened in 1968. The ride has become synonymous with Bell's. AT/GARY SLADE

At times it can be as wide as 80 or 90 feet. It can be as deep as 20 feet. Along with the city, we are going to improve that creek, beautify it and make it a functioning attraction and mitigate flood issues in the area at the same time."

"I'm super excited about this," echoed Mayor **Debra Wimpee**. "Economic development — that's exactly what this is. It's going to generate jobs; it will generate quality of life. It is new and exciting for the city of Broken Arrow and exactly the direction our city needs to be going in."

"I cannot express how happy we are to be in Broken Arrow," said Bell. "Everyone at the city level has worked so hard with us over the past several years."

Bell said plans included the return of Bell's Amusement Park favorites such as Zingo (a 1968 **John Allen** wooden roller coaster), the log ride, Phantasmagoria (dark ride) and Himalaya.

When the Tulsa State Fairgrounds chose to not renew the lease for 10 acres of property on which Bell's original location operated, the park was forced to close and remove all its assets. That 2006 decision was shrouded in much controversy. The new location for Bell's Amusement

Park will be ten times the size of that property at 102 acres.

"We had so many restraints on us when we were at the fairgrounds, mainly space, but many others," said Bell. "We were hamstrung when it came to putting in some of the things we wanted to do. We will now have the freedom and tools to put in an entertainment facility that will be second to none to this region of the United States."

This larger plot of land will allow four planned components. Along with the return of the amusement park, a separate kiddie park is envisioned, a 24-acre water park (twice the size of the one built at the fairgrounds) and an indoor facility that will specialize in virtual reality and a wide range of go-karts. The availability of space allows Bell to envision like he never could before.

"We will be able to put in new roller coasters and exciting rides we could not when we were at the fairgrounds," he said.

A longer season is another benefit to the new property. Expectations are to operate from March to the end of the year.

"We'll be able to have Halloween and Christmas, things we weren't able to do at the old location," said Bell.



The park's log ride was one of two originally built for the 1964-1965 New York World's Fair. AT/GARY SLADE

CALENDAR

2022 AIMS International Safety Seminar

January 9 – 14, 2022

Galveston, Texas

aimsintl.org/aims-international-safety-seminar

IAAPA FEC Summit

January 23 – 25, 2022

Scottsdale, Arizona

iaapa.org

International Independent Showman's Association Super Extravaganza and Trade Show

February 15 – 18, 2022

Gibsonton, Florida

gibtownshowmensclub.com

Pennsylvania Amusement Ride Safety Seminar

March 1 – 3, 2022

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

paridesafety.com

Mid-Atlantic/East Coast NAARSO Safety School

March 8 – 10, 2022

Atlantic City, New Jersey

njamusements.com/naarso.php

NJAA Annual Trade Show and NAARSO

March 9 – 10, 2022

Atlantic City, New Jersey

njamusements.com/expo.php

Amusement Expo International

March 15 – 17, 2022

Las Vegas, Nevada

amusementexpo.org

BPAA International Bowl Expo

June 26 – 30, 2022

Las Vegas, Nevada

bpaa.com/bowlexpo

2022 Golden Ticket Awards

September 9 – 10, 2022

Morgan's Wonderland and Six Flags Fiesta Texas

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IAAPA Expo Europe

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Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree in an engineering or technical field preferred.
- Minimum 3 years of experience in the amusement industry
- Mechanical, electrical, hydraulic, pneumatic, and controls knowledge overseeing assembly and/or installation of quality specialized products preferred
 - Ability to travel 60-70% of the year, potentially more, and for extended periods.
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