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GOLDEN TICKET  
BONUS ISSUE

10 YEARS OF SERVICE

# AMUSEMENT TODAY

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## Amusement Today's 2007 Golden Ticket Awards

Tim Baldwin

*Amusement Today*

Often called "The Oscars of the Amusement Industry," this year marks the 10th annual Golden Ticket Awards.

Today, more than ever, amusement parks, theme parks, and waterparks are all looking to adapt to the changing challenges in marketing to the public's quest for entertainment. As the culture, economy, and growth of countries around the world evolve, so must the industry. Parks are looking to hone and fine-tune the essentials in creating a great guest experience. The Golden Ticket Awards pause to acknowledge the Best of the Best, as determined by park enthusiasts from around the globe.

Enthusiasts of our industry spend the bulk of their vacation time and hard-earned cash to travel across the country and around the world to experience all there is to see in this wonderful industry. Challenged with the daunting task of rating each park for its best qualities, this panel of experts forms a collective voice that no amount of research can truly surpass. Year after year, *Amusement Today* is indebted to the hundreds of fans that contribute their insights



Host Park

2007 Golden Ticket Awards  
September 5, 2007

and expertise. Our staff, along with parks around the world, thank each of these aficionados for their time and support.

As the general public refines their tastes for their entertainment dollar, each park must seek out to exceed their expectations. In so doing, the task of finding the Best of the Best becomes a greater challenge for our experienced panel. The harder it is for them to pinpoint

the cream of the crop, the clearer sign it is that the industry is indeed moving forward in the right direction in meeting and excelling in customer satisfaction.

*Amusement Today* salutes all the parks around the world that strive each day to bring smiles to those that visit their facility, whether they be four years old, or 84...continue to take us to greater heights.



AT PHOTO/TIM BALDWIN

Cedar Point makes it a complete decade of winning *Amusement Today's* Best Park category.

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# AMUSEMENT TODAY

All about the **BUSINESS** of FUN!

**Gary Slade**

Publisher and Editor-in-Chief  
gslade@amusementtoday.com



## EDITORIAL

### Promotion & competition

A common question arises each year about the Golden Ticket Awards balloting. How do I get my park to win a Golden Ticket?

Ask any of the winning parks and they will be the first to tell you it's through hard work, dedication to what they do, and promotion.

They promote to their own staff how important the GT Award is to the park and promote their park to the public that they are the Best of the Best. They also promote their facility to the various enthusiasts' clubs and organizations, who are in many cases, the word-of-mouth for this industry. Check out any Web-based newsgroup or chat room and you'll quickly see how fast word-of-mouth via the Web can spread.

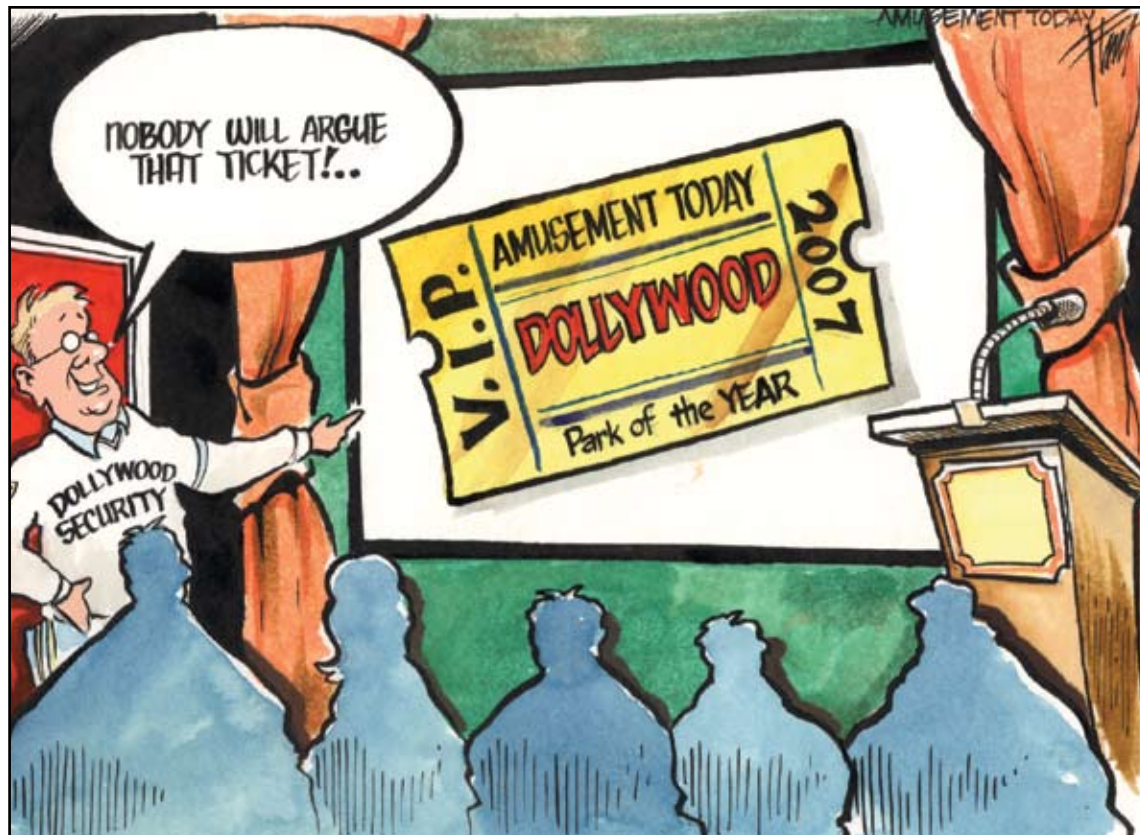
Competition is a good thing also. *Amusement Today* sees many parks coming on strong in several categories which will force even more competition among the parks in our industry. Win or lose, the park guest is the ultimate winner.

Observations by the AT staff and calls made to the AT offices on 2006 parks indicate these facilities may be poised for striking Gold very soon:

- **Cleanest Park:** look for Morey's Piers and Michigan's Adventure to challenge.
- **Friendliest Park:** Six Flags Great Adventure has made a huge turnaround here.
- **Best Landscaping in an Amusement Park;** Busch Gardens Europe has had a lock on this for years, but don't rule out sister park SeaWorld San Antonio from challenging from within.
- **Best Shows:** Dollywood is getting ever closer to unseating reigning champ Six Flags Fiesta Texas.
- **Best Wooden Coaster:** Don't be surprised to see Six Flags Great Adventure's Intamin-built El Toro to continue to climb in the rankings.

The bottom line is don't rest on your past success, push your staff to continue to be the Best of the Best.

—Gary Slade



**Tim Baldwin**

### The passion of the enthusiast

Both celebrated and tolerated by the amusement industry, the passion of the park enthusiast is as deep as any hobbyist-type organization, but somehow has its own special qualities. Not just a pastime of gathering collectibles around the house, the drive behind amusement park fans finds them traveling to the furthest corners of our great planet to find and cherish everything the industry has to offer. I'm proud to be among this elite group of people.

As a whole, enthusiasts contribute much to the industry. Nowhere will you find a group of people with an assemblage of historical data, photos, artifacts, and park collections, often with the intent of preserving what we so dearly treasure within this industry. Quite often it is easy to forget all the memories and accomplishments of our past as we strive to move forward. Thankfully, the enthusiasts are there to remind us what has made this industry so special for more than a century.

In many respects, no one knows this in-



**Baldwin**

dustry better. They see it all and are quite often the biggest untapped source of information of what's out there in the world of amusement parks - the good and the bad. Lucky for *Amusement Today*, hundreds of dedicated fans are willing to share their opinions with us each year. The Golden Ticket Awards just couldn't happen without

the time and money invested by parks' greatest fans. This publication will remain indebted to them for their insight and expertise.

It's impossible for every enthusiast to visit every park every year. If it were, I'd abandon my career to be on the bus, plane, and each roller coaster right along with them. But with our panel of experts residing all over the nation and in the countries beyond, I know as I tabulate each point that we are slowly, but surely, seeing the Best of the Best. Worthy contenders gain new exposure each season, waiting to be noticed. Take heart, the enthusiasts will find you. I know I can't wait to get to each and every park myself.

On behalf of park fans everywhere, we thank the industry for making life better.

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# A new category added to 2007 park winners

*Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk joins Cedar Point, Schlitterbahn, Legoland and SeaWorld Orlando as Best Parks*

**Tim Baldwin**  
Amusement Today

Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk has not only captured the nostalgic ambience of a traditional seaside amusement park, but they have also taken grasp of AT's newest category, Best Seaside Park.

Charles Canfield, president of the Beach Boardwalk beams of taking this inaugural accolade, "We're very honored to be recognized as the Best Seaside Amusement Park. The Golden Ticket Award is really a great tribute to all of our

dedicated employees, past and present, especially during our centennial year."

Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk celebrates its 100th anniversary this season. In the same year that Henry Ford created his first Model T and color photography was invented, so also did Fred Swanton of the newly formed Santa Cruz Beach Company start construction on a new casino in 1907. One hundred years later, the Boardwalk is teeming with families enjoying a day on the colorful rides, the bright sand, or on a scenic sky



ride above the shore.

Other finalists in this category are Pleasure Beach Blackpool in England: Morey's Piers in New Jersey; Belmont Park at Mission Beach, California; and Kemah Boardwalk in Texas.

Belmont Park shares similar qualities with its California cousin as both boast a 1920s Prior and Church wooden

coaster named Giant Dipper. Morey's Piers is in the developing stage of adding another wooden coaster in future years and Kemah Boardwalk was finishing testing on its new Boardwalk Bullet wooden coaster as this issue went to press. Blackpool relocated a suspended looping coaster by Vekoma this season to increase their coaster count to twelve.

Cedar Point makes a clean sweep, pulling in a tenth-year-in-a-row nab of Best Park. The resort boasts numerous hotel properties, a waterpark, and

the largest collection of rides in one of the biggest parks operating on Planet Earth.

John Hildebrandt, vice president and general manager of Cedar Point exclaims, "Ten years makes a statement. We're very proud of the award, especially since it's voted on by people who are knowledgeable about amusement parks, people who walk the midways and ride our rides." Hildebrandt confides, "I have the Golden Ticket Award for Best Park in my office. I look at it every day. It's

► See PARKS, page 10



PHOTO COURTESY SANTA CRUZ BEACH BOARDWALK

Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, celebrating its 100th anniversary this season, is top pick in our newest category, Best Seaside Park.



PHOTO COURTESY SCHLITTERBAHN

Schlitterbahn's unmatched mix of attractions and riverside setting keep it the favorite among Golden Ticket voters.



PHOTO COURTESY LEGOLAND

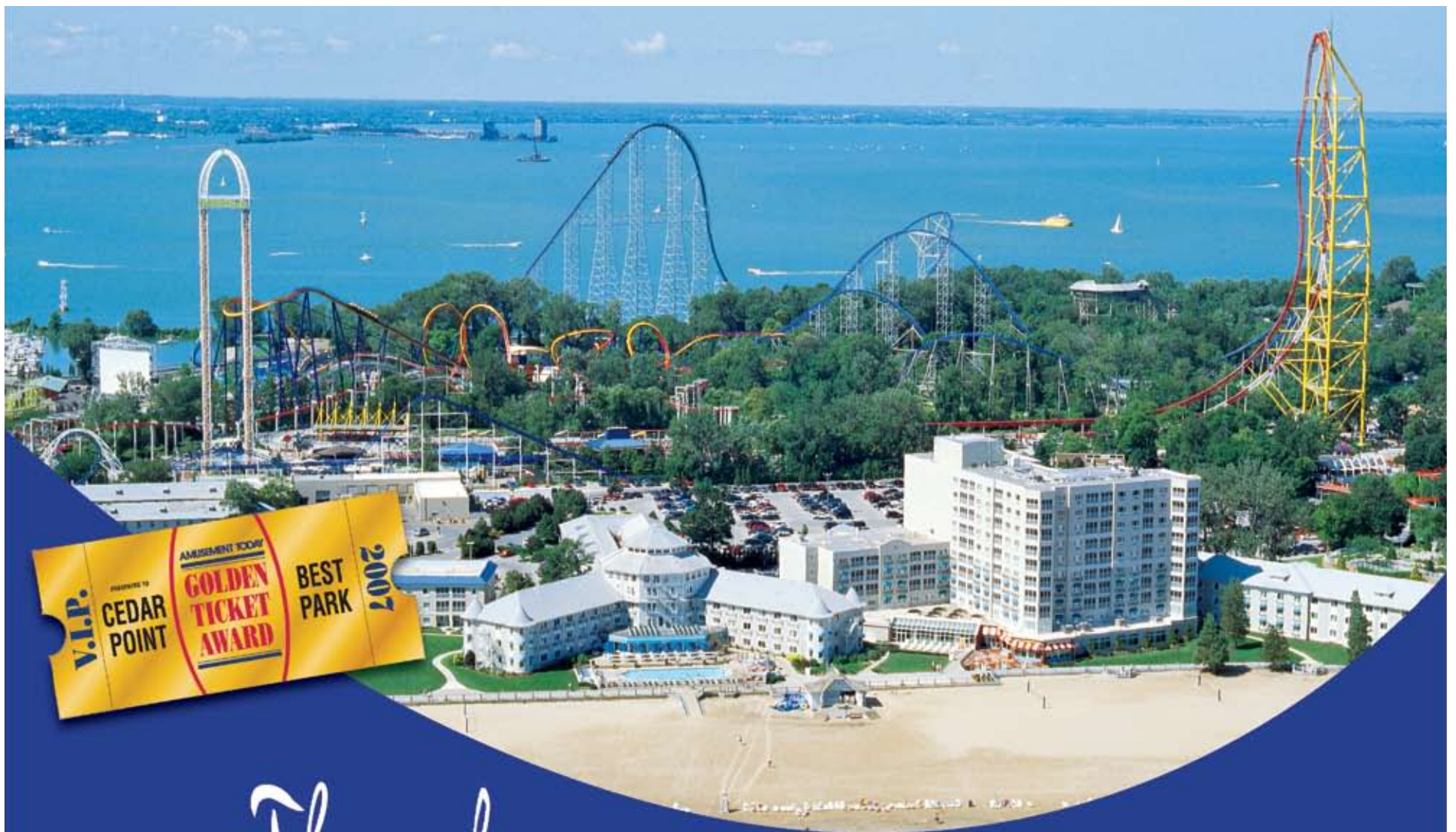
Legoland features coasters, exhibits, and attractions suited to the young set and their families. It is voted Best Children's Park.



PHOTO COURTESY SEAWORLD

The No. 1 Marine Life Park, SeaWorld Orlando, offers guests water rides, roller coasters, beautiful landscaping, shows, animals, and of course, Shamu.





Thanks for your support in  
the Golden Ticket Awards!



  
**Cedar Fair**  
Entertainment Company.



# BEST Steel Roller Coasters



**2** Millennium Force® Cedar Point



**13** Maverick™ Cedar Point



**5** Magnum Cedar Point



**19** Raptor® Cedar Point



**9** Top Thrill Dragster™ Cedar Point



**20** Steel Force Dorney Park

# BEST Wooden Roller Coasters



**6** Shivering Timbers Michigan's Adventure



**8** Beast Kings Island



**17** GhostRider Knott's Berry Farm

# BEST Indoor Waterpark



**3** Castaway Bay



**24** Xcelerator Knott's Berry Farm

# BEST New Ride for 2007



**4** Renegade Valleyfair

# BEST Outdoor Night Show Production



**5** Cedar Point

# BEST Kids' Area



**3** Carowinds



**4** Knott's Berry Farm



# Cedar Point

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# Soak City

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# Knott's Berry Farm

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Palm Springs • Soakcityusa.com

# Kings Island

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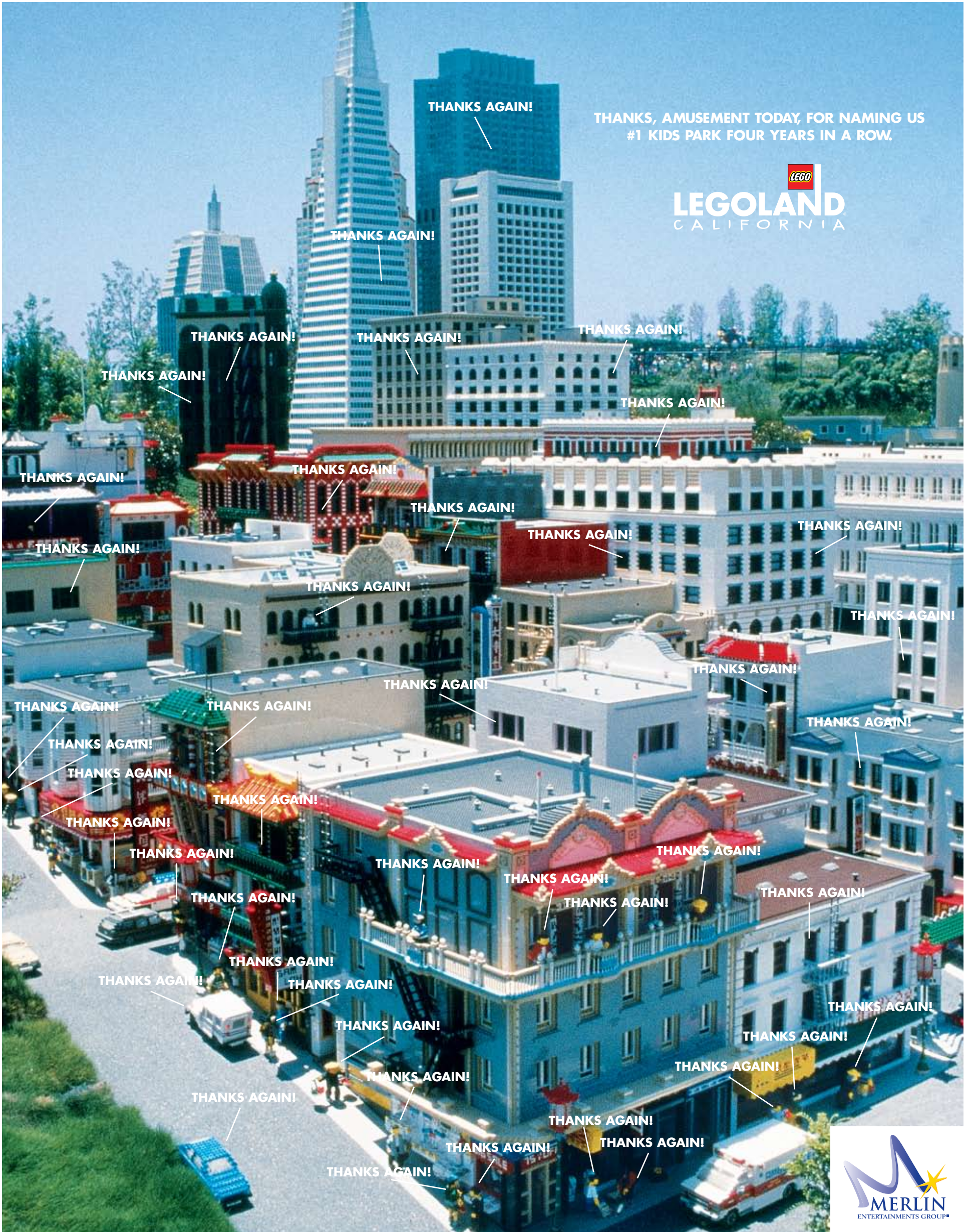
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has never been  
so colorful.*

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MILLIONS OF MEMORIES



Thanks for making our 100th anniversary truly golden.



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





**Congratulations  
Santa Cruz and  
Holiday World.  
*We want a rematch.***

**Congratulations to our colleagues on being voted the best by Amusement Today.**

**They deserve recognition for a job well done.**

**In the spirit of American competition, we have a bold statement to make for 2008:  
Visit us and we're betting we'll earn your vote for Best Seaside Park and Cleanest Park.**

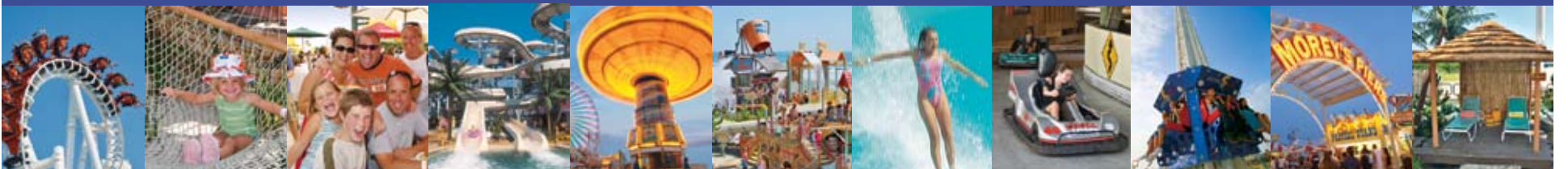
**Seeing is believing, so we invite you to take advantage of a special invitation.**

**Check out our website early next year for details.**

**[www.MoreysPiers.com](http://www.MoreysPiers.com)**



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## ►PARKS

Continued from page 3

right next to the picture of my wife and sons. My plan is to keep looking at it for a long time to come."

In addition to Cedar Point, Best Park finalists include Knoebels, Pennsylvania; Islands of Adventure, Orlando; Holiday World, Indiana; while Disneyland, California, and Pleasure Beach Blackpool, tie for fifth.

Terri Adams, Chief Operating Officer of Schlitterbahn Waterparks, responds to winning Best Waterpark for the 10th year, "Every August we cross our fingers, hold our breath, and wait for the Golden Ticket results. Our team goes to great lengths to make sure we are offering the best schlitterrific experience imaginable and we take great pride in earning the Golden Ticket distinction." Adams beams, "We love sharing the news with our park team, our community and our guests, especially this year since we've achieved this honor for ten consecutive years."

Other finalists include



PHOTO COURTESY MOREY'S PIERS/DAN FEICHT

**Morey's invested a quarter-million dollars to update lighting on the Ferris wheel to help make the night special.**

Splashin' Safari, Indiana in second; Blizzard Beach, Orlando, in third; and a tie between Typhoon Lagoon, Orlando, and Noah's Ark, Wisconsin, at fourth.

SeaWorld Orlando nabs the award for Best Marine Life Park, a category introduced last year. The Orlando park features three roller coasters, numerous shows, a sky tower, a heavily themed water flume, gorgeous gardens, many animals, and of course, the amazing Shamu.

On the heels of the Orlan-

do property are the two sister SeaWorld parks located in San Antonio and San Diego. The Texas facility makes an 11 percent gain on its Orlando brethren this year. The newly named Six Flags Discovery Kingdom takes fourth, and Marineland in Canada takes fifth.

Best Children's Park is taken again by Legoland California. This beautifully landscaped park is bustling with families enjoying attractions geared toward a younger age. Family style coasters,



PHOTO BY MARK ROSENZWEIG

**Idlewild's unique setting and kid-friendly rides make for a great place for family visits and our No. 2 Children's Park.**

Lego exhibits and interactive attractions have made this a popular spot with those 12 and under and our young-at-heart voters.

The second place finalist in this category is Idlewild, tucked away in Pennsylvania. Attractions such as Mr. Rogers Trolley and the many larger-than-life storybook scenes all complement the mix of rides, activities and fun suitable for families with younger children.

Farup Sommerland in Denmark is a new player in

this category. Many of our voters recently traveled to this European treasure only to be delighted by countless bouncy, jumpy, crawling, giggle-inducing activities. Throw in some family coasters, water rides, and unique flat rides, and Farup Sommerland makes a great spot for adults in Denmark to become kids again.

Tied with Farup Sommerland for third is Pennsylvania's Sesame Place. Memphis Kiddie Park in the Cleveland area finishes the top five.

# #2 Best Children's Park



**Thank you Amusement Today for your Golden Ticket Votes!**  
[www.idlewild.com](http://www.idlewild.com)





# Park and Ride Winners

Ranked by percentage of votes cast



BEST NEW RIDE FOR 2007 (Amusement Park)			BEST NEW RIDE FOR 2007 (Waterpark)		
Maverick	Cedar Point	42%	Bakuli	Splashin' Safari	40%
Mystery Mine	Dollywood	23%	Deluge	Six Flags Kentucky Kingdom	30%
Griffon	Busch Gardens Europe	17%	Brainwash	Wet'n Wild Orlando	11%
Renegade	Valleyfair!	5%	East Coast Waterworks	Hersheypark/Boardwalk	6%
Troy	Toverland	3%	Poseidon's Rage	Mt. Olympus	3%
BEST PARK			BEST FOOD		
Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	33%	Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.	25%
Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.	10%	Epcot	Orlando, Fla.	15%
Islands of Adventure	Orlando, Fla.	9%	Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	14%
Holiday World	Santa Claus, Ind.	7%	Busch Gardens Europe	Williamsburg, Va.	11%
Disneyland	Anaheim, Calif.	(tie) 6%	Silver Dollar City	Branson, Mo.	9%
Pleasure Beach Blackpool	Blackpool, England	(tie) 6%	BEST WATER RIDE (Park)		
Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	5%	Dudley Do-Right's Ripsaw Falls	Islands of Adventure	26%
Busch Gardens Europe	Williamsburg, Va.	4.5%	Valhalla	Pleasure Beach Blackpool	17%
Europa Park	Rust, Germany	4%	Splash Mountain	Magic Kingdom	8%
Magic Kingdom	Orlando, Fla.	(tie) 3%	Popeye and Bluto's...Barges	Islands of Adventure	6%
Tokyo DisneySea	Tokyo, Japan	(tie) 3%	Journey to Atlantis	SeaWorld Orlando	5%
BEST WATERPARK			BEST WATERPARK RIDE		
Schlitterbahn	New Braunfels, Texas	45%	Master Blaster	Schlitterbahn	32%
Splashin' Safari	Santa Claus, Ind.	23%	Deluge	Six Flags Kentucky Kingdom	10%
Blizzard Beach	Orlando, Fla.	9%	Zoombabwe	Splashin' Safari	8%
Noah's Ark	Wisconsin Dells, Wis.	(tie) 4%	Bakuli	Splashin' Safari	(tie) 7%
Typhoon Lagoon	Orlando, Fla.	(tie) 4%	Summit Plummet	Blizzard Beach	(tie) 7%
BEST CHILDREN'S PARK			BEST KIDS' AREA		
Legoland California	Carlsbad, Calif.	51%	Kings Island	Kings Mills, Ohio	54%
Idlewild	Ligonier, Pa.	15%	Islands of Adventure	Orlando, Fla.	10%
Farup Sommerland	Saltum, Denmark	(tie) 7%	Carowinds	Charlotte, N.C.	5%
Sesame Place	Langhorne, Pa.	(tie) 7%	Idlewild	Ligonier, Pa.	(tie) 4%
Memphis Kiddie Park	Cleveland, Ohio	5%	Knott's Berry Farm	Buena Park, Calif.	(tie) 4%
BEST MARINE LIFE PARK			BEST LANDSCAPING (Park)		
SeaWorld Orlando	Orlando, Fla.	57%	Busch Gardens Europe	Williamsburg, Va.	43%
SeaWorld San Antonio	San Antonio, Texas	26%	Gilroy Gardens	Gilroy, Calif.	16%
SeaWorld San Diego	San Diego, Calif.	8%	Efteling	Kaatsheuvel, The Netherlands	10%
Six Flags Discovery Kingdom	Vallejo, Calif.	6%	Epcot	Orlando, Fla.	(tie) 5%
Marineland	Ontario, Canada	3%	Busch Gardens Africa	Tampa, Fla.	(tie) 5%
BEST SEASIDE PARK			BEST LANDSCAPING (Waterpark)		
Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk	Santa Cruz, Calif.	49%	Schlitterbahn	New Braunfels, Texas	36%
Pleasure Beach Blackpool	Blackpool, England	21%	Typhoon Lagoon	Orlando, Fla.	18%
Morey's Piers	Wildwood, N.J.	12%	Blizzard Beach	Orlando, Fla.	15%
Belmont Park	San Diego, Calif.	4%	Splashin' Safari	Santa Claus, Ind.	9%
Kemah Boardwalk	Kemah, Texas	3%	Dollywood's Splash Country	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	3%
FRIENDLIEST PARK			BEST OUTDOOR NIGHT PRODUCTION		
Holiday World	Santa Claus, Ind.	48%	Epcot	Orlando, Fla.	37%
Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	20%	Six Flags Fiesta Texas	San Antonio, Texas	16%
Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.	5%	Disneyland	Anaheim, Calif.	13%
Silver Dollar City	Branson, Mo.	4%	Disney-MGM	Orlando, Fla.	11%
Disneyland	Anaheim, Calif.	(tie) 3%	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	7%
Beech Bend	Bowling Green, Ky.	(tie) 3%	BEST DARK RIDE		
CLEANEST PARK			Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man	Islands of Adventure	37%
Holiday World	Santa Claus, Ind.	49%	Haunted Mansion	Knoebels Amusement Resort	20%
Busch Gardens Europe	Williamsburg, Va.	14%	Twilight Zone Tower of Terror	Disney-MGM	7%
Disneyland	Anaheim, Calif.	(tie) 6%	Indiana Jones...Forbidden Eye	Disneyland	5%
Magic Kingdom	Orlando, Fla.	(tie) 6%	Pirates of the Caribbean	Disneyland	4%
Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	4%	BEST HALLOWEEN EVENT		
BEST SHOWS			Knott's Berry Farm	Buena Park, Calif.	26%
Six Flags Fiesta Texas	San Antonio, Texas	29%	Universal Orlando	Orlando, Fla.	25%
Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	27%	Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	11%
Busch Gardens Europe	Williamsburg, Va.	(tie) 8%	Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.	9%
Silver Dollar City	Branson, Mo.	(tie) 8%	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	7%
Disney-MGM	Orlando, Fla.	6%			



# Courteous staff, landscaping and food add to guest experience

## *Holiday World, Busch Gardens Europe, Schlitterbahn, Knoebels all repeat winners*



**Tim Baldwin**

*Amusement Today*

It's certainly debatable that a park experience is all about the rides. But with further examination, it takes more on the part of the park to truly create a day that surpasses the expectations of the guest.

Courteous employees can help bring the message of "welcome" home to each guest and family. Holiday World has had a long lock on this category. *AT* asked Will Koch, president and general manager, what the park does to get their hosts and hostesses to be so friendly. "We send Pat Koch into the park," he smiles.

"We also respect them, listen to them, give them the tools they need to do their jobs, ask them to perform at a high level and expect them to perform at a high level," Koch continues. "Lead by example." Those final words may just be the key to Holiday World's winning formula. All these attributes can easily transfer to the park's win of Cleanest, along with Friendliest.

Other finalists in the



PHOTO COURTESY HOLIDAY WORLD

**A commitment to cleanliness has become well-known to Holiday World's employees and guests.**

Friendliest Park category are Dollywood in a strong second place, along with Knoebels, Silver Dollar City, Disneyland, and Beech Bend.

For Cleanest Park, Busch Gardens Europe, Disneyland, Magic Kingdom, and Dollywood, take second through fifth respectively.

Beautiful foliage can be appreciated by every age. Two Busch properties are finalists, with Williamsburg being top pick again. Others include Gilroy Gardens, Efteling, and Epcot.

Making their waterparks look beautiful, Schlitterbahn, Typhoon Lagoon, Blizzard Beach, Splashin' Safari, and

Dollywood's Splash Country get top nods from our voters.

A day in a park can't be accomplished without stopping to eat. Often this is a treat, while at some parks it's a chore, usually due to slow lines or high cost.

Knoebels has long found favor with park visitors for both taste, price, and quality. The Best Food Golden Ticket stays firmly in their hands.

Other finalists include the vast offerings by Epcot's World Showcase, Dollywood's and Silver Dollar City's home cookin', and Busch Gardens Europe's quality meals.

All these ingredients help make each visit more special.



PHOTO COURTESY HOLIDAY WORLD

**Friendly faces and smiles are shared between Holiday World staff and their visitors.**



PHOTO COURTESY KNOEBELS

**Value, flavor and satisfaction is a Knoebels winning formula for Best Food.**



PHOTO COURTESY BUSCH GARDENS

**Visitors to Busch Gardens Europe are always taken back by the park's beautiful landscaping.**



PHOTO COURTESY SCHLITTERBAHN

**Schlitterbahn in New Braunfels treats tubers to a beautiful and shady atmosphere.**





# Thank you, Amusement Today

**I**t takes 4,500 cubic yards of mulch (enough to cover 35 football fields), 150,000 annuals, 80,000 tulips, 4,000 chrysanthemums and 700 “container” gardens. Not to mention more than two dozen landscape artists who spend six hours every day pruning, planting and weeding (all by hand). And did we mention the tens of thousands of beneficial bugs, like ladybugs, that are released into the park every year to help keep our gardens pristine?

As you can tell, we’re quite proud of our landscaping excellence. And we’re honored that you recognized our efforts.



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# Thank You Amusement Today

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## TOP WOODEN ROLLER COASTERS



THE VOYAGE

THE RAVEN

THE LEGEND

## TOP WATERPARK



SPLASHIN' SAFARI

## TOP WATERPARK RIDES



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# It's Showtime!

***Six Flags Fiesta Texas takes Best Show category; Epcot's Illumination wins Best Outdoor Night Show Production; Knott's Berry Farm takes back Best Halloween Event***

**Tim Baldwin**  
*Amusement Today*

In a hard fought duel with Dollywood, Six Flags Fiesta Texas retains its grasp on the Golden Ticket for Best Shows.

Many people know that Fiesta Texas was built in 1992 by Opryland folk with an emphasis on shows. Over the years and through the changing hands of ownership, the park struck a balance of lively shows, thrilling rides, and waterpark fun. It became clear to the new owners that the history of show quality needed to be maintained. Our voters agree that it has.

"To retain this prestigious accomplishment for nine years is obviously quite a feat!" says Martin Bozer, park president and general manager. "I am constantly amazed that each year our entertainment cast seems to outperform productions from even the prior year." In acknowledging the park's commitment to shows, Bozer adds, "We're well aware our guests visit us not only for thrilling rides, but the best, most innovative, cutting-edge show product...and we intend to continue that tradition."

One of Fiesta Texas' newest bragging rights is their major Halloween production, Monster Mash Bash. For those special nights, close to 30 musicians, singers, and dancers captivate audiences of between four and five thousand people with an elaborate, rocking concert production. It is the highlight of any guest who visits during the park's annual Fright Fest.

Dollywood came in at a close second to Fiesta Texas this year. Shared with Dolly Parton's love for performing, a full day's line up of shows during a visit to Dollywood awaits each guest. Pete Owens, public relations manager for Dollywood, explains, "When Dolly Parton is the owner of your theme park, the commitment to high quality show product is extremely important. Large production shows are who we are and what we're about."

That commitment to show quality is shared by sister park Silver Dollar City in Branson, which holds the number four spot with our panel, with Busch Gardens Europe and Disney-MGM completing our top five finalists for Best



Shows.

If ducking into a show can rejuvenate the soul from the summer heat or miles of walking, a nighttime show production can be the proverbial icing on the cake to a

great day in the park.

Epcot's Illuminations continues to dazzle our panel. Filled with lasers, lights, fire, projections, and more, this finale completes a day at Epcot and remains a must-see for any visitor.

Fiesta Texas' long-loved Lone Star Spectacular comes in second, while Disney on both coasts take the third and fourth place spot with Fantasmic!, and Cedar Point's Hot

Summer Lights completes the top five.

Halloween is big business for parks these days. In a voting tug-of-war, Knott's Berry Farm and Universal go after it again, with Knott's "eek"-ing out the win for 2007.

Kennywood's Phantom Fright Nights takes third with its park-wide Halloween makeover, and Knoebels and Cedar Point round out the finalists with their festivals.



PHOTO COURTESY SIX FLAGS FIESTA TEXAS

**Six Flags Fiesta Texas' dedication for outstanding show talent takes the Golden Ticket.**



PHOTO COURTESY KNOTT'S BERRY FARM

**Everybody scream!! Knott's Scary Farm has been giving fun-lovers the shivers for 35 years.**



PHOTO COURTESY WDW RESORT

**Illuminations: Reflections of Earth is a must-see for every Epcot visitor.**



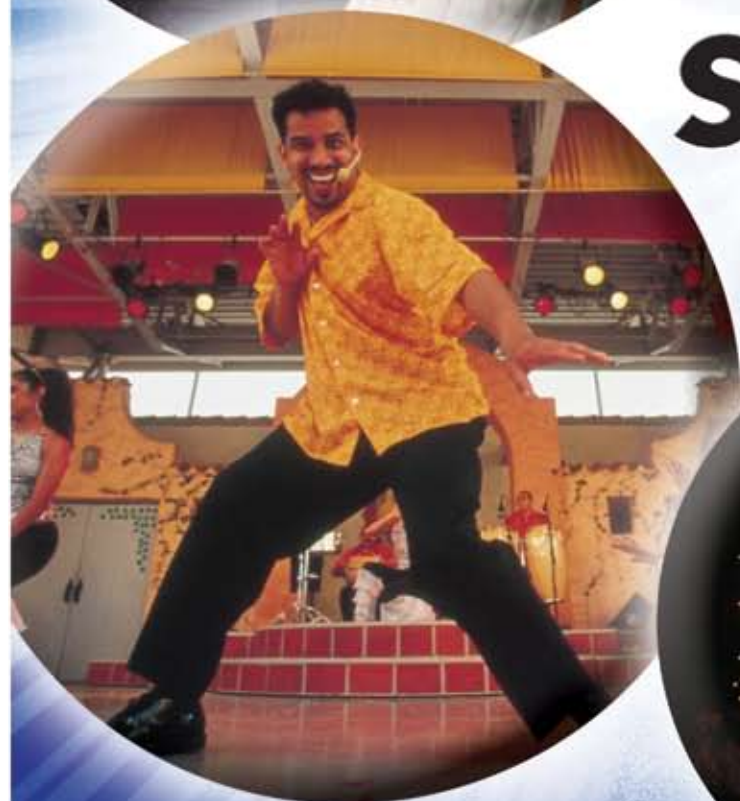
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We just can't make up our minds what to say  
about winning two Golden Ticket Awards.

BEST OUTDOOR NIGHT SHOW PRODUCTION  
*IllumiNations: Reflections of Earth at Epcot®*

BEST INDOOR ROLLER COASTER  
*Rock 'n' Roller Coaster® Starring Aerosmith at Disney-MGM Studios*

Thanks, *Amusement Today!*

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**Knott's**  
**SCARY FARM®**  
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# ***Halloween Haunt***

***the biggest, the scariest and again, the best.***



***Thanks, Amusement Today,***  
***for voting Knott's Halloween Haunt the "Best Halloween Event"***  
***and for ranking HalloWeekends at Cedar Point in the top 5.***

**This year, the screams will be heard from more Cedar Fair parks:**  
***Halloween Haunt at Kings Island, Halloween Haunt at Kings Dominion,***  
***Carowinds: Scarowinds' Halloween Haunt, Valleyfair!: The Haunt at Valleyscare,***  
***Halloween Haunt at Canada's Wonderland, Halloween Haunt at Worlds of Fun,***  
***HalloWeekends at Cedar Point***



# Go for a ride!

## Universal's IOA takes top honors in Dark Ride and Water Ride; Schlitterbahn boasts Best Waterpark Ride; Kings Island keeps record with Best Kids' Area

Outside of roller coasters, the two favorite categories for our panel to vote for are Best Water Ride and Best Dark Ride. These two categories list more nominees than any other category in our Park and Ride Winner list. Such rides are so ingrained into a classic park experience, it is no wonder that our experts have found favorites around the world.

Maintaining its dominance of Best Dark Ride is Islands of Adventure's Amazing Adventures of Spider-Man. This multi-sensory ride takes riders through a breathless escapade that involves physical stunts within the vehicle, three-dimensional visuals, pyrotechnics, and illusory effects such as a disorienting multi-story fall from a sky scraper. Spider-Man has captured this billing every year *Amusement Today* has featured the category in the Golden Ticket Awards.



Another fan favorite is Knoebels' Haunted Mansion. More of a traditional dark ride, Knoebels keeps their version in top form with classic and newer stunts to keep guests laughing and screaming.

Other favorites include Disney's Twilight Zone Tower of Terror in Orlando and the adventurous In-

diana Jones and the Temple of the Forbidden Eye at Disneyland in California. Disneyland's Pirates of the Caribbean rounds out the top five for 2007. These three Disney attractions are known for their elaborate sets and amazing theming. Ironically, as dark rides go, this Disney trio ranges from its most thrilling to the rather genteel.

Once again, IOA also finds Dudley Do-Right's Ripsaw Falls taking Best Water Ride. Built by Mack and saturated with tongue-in-cheek theming, corny jokes, and splashy effects, Universal has a real crowd pleaser when it comes to cooling people off with this attraction. Guests might find simply listening to the comical sounds surrounding the ride to be totally entertaining. Riders enjoy a humorous storyline as their log trav-

► See RIDES, page 20



PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSAL STUDIOS ORLANDO

Like the movies, Spider-Man brings in thousands of thrill-seekers for the top-rated Best Dark Ride.



PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSAL STUDIOS ORLANDO

Dudley-Do Right's Ripsaw Falls keeps Islands of Adventure guests laughing, screaming, and cooled off.



PHOTO COURTESY SCHLITTERBAHN

Schlitterbahn's Master Blaster maintains a top rating for Best Waterpark Ride for 2007.



PHOTO COURTESY SFKK/DAN FEIGHT

Kentucky Kingdom's new Deluge features brand new magnetic technology to propel riders uphill and the new ride into second place.





## ►RIDES

Continued from page 19

els through a cartoon-inspired landscape.

Other finalists include Blackpool's Valhalla, also built by Mack. Valhalla takes riders through a dark thematic experience indoors which includes numerous effects and a wet outcome. (Rain capes are for sale prior to boarding.)

Rounding out the top five finalists are three attractions from Orlando - Splash Mountain at the Magic Kingdom, IOA's Jurassic Park River Adventure, and SeaWorld's Journey to Atlantis. All three of these attractions boast extensive theming and numerous visuals, not to mention thrilling drops located for park guests to enjoy being spectators.

In the waterpark division, Best Waterpark Ride sees a new player making a charge against long-standing champion Master



PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSAL STUDIOS ORLANDO

### The whimsical world of Dr. Seuss comes to life in the children-friendly area at Islands of Adventure.

Blaster, Schlitterbahn's massive uphill water coaster. Coming in second to Master Blaster this year is the new-for-2007 Deluge at Six Flags Kentucky Kingdom. Deluge's unique electro-magnetic uphill sections make this water coaster unique to anything else ever built.

Jay Thomas, president of Kentucky Kingdom says, "Deluge has become a crowd favorite. Our park guests have repeatedly remarked how much they enjoy this family water ride. It's the perfect blend of thrills and chills and we could not be hap-

pier with this innovative water coaster designed specifically for us by ProSlide."

Still, remaining at the top of the list is Schlitterbahn's Master Blaster, the park's signature attraction.

Scott Connor, enthusiast and frequent visitor to Schlitterbahn says, "Master Blaster has such an imposing presence when you enter the park. Sometimes it's fun to just watch people riding it, listening to them scream." Connor adds, "It's always where I start when I visit Schlitterbahn. It's the wild-



AT PHOTO/TIM BALDWIN

### Kings Islands' No. 1 Kids' area features three coasters and numerous rides for kids and families.

est kick-in-the pants waterslide you'll ever ride. And the wettest, too! A total blast!"

Finishing up the category is Splashin' Safari's multi-person dark mammoth slide Zoomba-bwe, built by ProSlide, in third; as well as Splashin' Safari's new Bakuli tying with Disney's Summit Plummet at Blizzard Beach in fourth place.

KingsIsland has maintained its proven formula for Best Kids' Area. Fueled by Nickelodeon characters and Hanna-Barbera classics, the area features three coasters that parents can ride

with their children, as well as a log flume themed to The Wild Thornberrys and many ride selections scaled down just for the younger ones.

Dr. Seuss comes to life at Islands of Adventure. This children's area based on the many wacky books of this beloved author rates second with our panel, treasured for its creativity.

Completing the top five in our Golden Ticket category are Carowinds in third and a tie for fourth between Idlewild and Knott's Berry Farm.

—Tim Baldwin

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## 2007 WINNERS

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**Cedar Point**

**Disney - MGM Studios**

**Dollywood**

**Epcot**

**Milton S. Hershey - Hersheypark**

**Holiday World & Splashin' Safari**

**Kings Island**

**Knoebels Amusement Resort**

**Knott's Berry Farm**

**Legoland California**

**National Ticket Company**

**Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk**

**Schlitterbahn**

**SeaWorld Orlando**

**Six Flags Fiesta Texas**

**Six Flags New England**

**Universal's Islands of Adventure**

**World Waterpark**

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Three-year format awards

<b>BEST CAROUSEL</b>		
Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.	40%
Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk	Santa Cruz, Calif.	18%
Six Flags Over Georgia	Atlanta, Ga.	8%
Islands of Adventure	Orlando, Fla.	5%
Six Flags Great America	Gurnee, Ill.	4%

<b>BEST INDOOR ROLLER COASTER</b>		
Rock 'n' Roller Coaster	Disney-MGM	17%
Revenge of the Mummy	Universal Studios Florida	(tie) 16%
Space Mountain	Disneyland	(tie) 16%
Space Mountain	Magic Kingdom	13%
Exterminator	Kennywood	8%

<b>BEST INDOOR WATERPARK</b>		
World Waterpark	West Edmonton, Alberta, Canada	18%
Schlitterbahn Galveston	Galveston, Texas	12%
Castaway Bay	Sandusky, Ohio	(tie) 10%
Kalahari	Sandusky, Ohio	(tie) 10%
Great Wolf Lodge	Sandusky, Ohio	(tie) 6%
Kalahari	Wisconsin Dells, Wis.	(tie) 6%
Splash Landings/Alton Towers	Staffordshire, England	(tie) 6%

Certain Golden Ticket Awards get a rotating format

Each year, a few categories go into a rotation while newer ones are introduced. The 2007 edition sees the return of three categories not seen since 2004.

It is often said that if the roller coaster is the King of the Midway, then a carousel is its heart. Carousels are treasured for various aspects including nostalgia, beauty, and creativity. Our finalists for Best Carousel exemplify these attributes. Knoebels and Santa Cruz both offer guests the opportunity to reach out and grab the brass ring in a throwback to yesteryear. Knoebels takes top prize in this category. Atlanta's gorgeous preservation of Riverview's majestic carousel brings it in third, Islands of Adventure showcases a touch of whimsy with their Car-o-Suessel in fourth place, and Six Flags Great America's double decker rounds out the top five.

Roller coasters are always the favorite cat-

egory for our voters. This year, indoor favorites receive their own category and it was a four-way battle for top billing. Just edging out a first place win was Disney-MGM's Aerosmith-charged Rock 'n' Roller Coaster. Barely behind that ranking was a tie for second with Revenge of the Mummy on the Florida coast and Space Mountain on the California coast. Florida's Space Mountain follows and Kennywood's rat-themed Exterminator rounds out the five finalists.

One of our more challenging categories is one of the industry's fastest growing products - indoor waterparks. West Edmonton Mall's famous World Waterpark rises to the top of this category. The new Schlitterbahn Galveston comes in second with its convertible capabilities. Many ties for third and fifth showcase properties in Sandusky, Ohio; Wisconsin Dells, and England.

—Tim Baldwin



PHOTO COURTESY KNOEBELS

Knoebels' Grand Carousel allows guests to grab for the brass ring.



PHOTO COURTESY WDW RESORT

Fueled by an Aerosmith soundtrack, Disney's Rock 'n' Roller Coaster creates a concert atmosphere indoors.



AT PHOTO/TIM BALDWIN

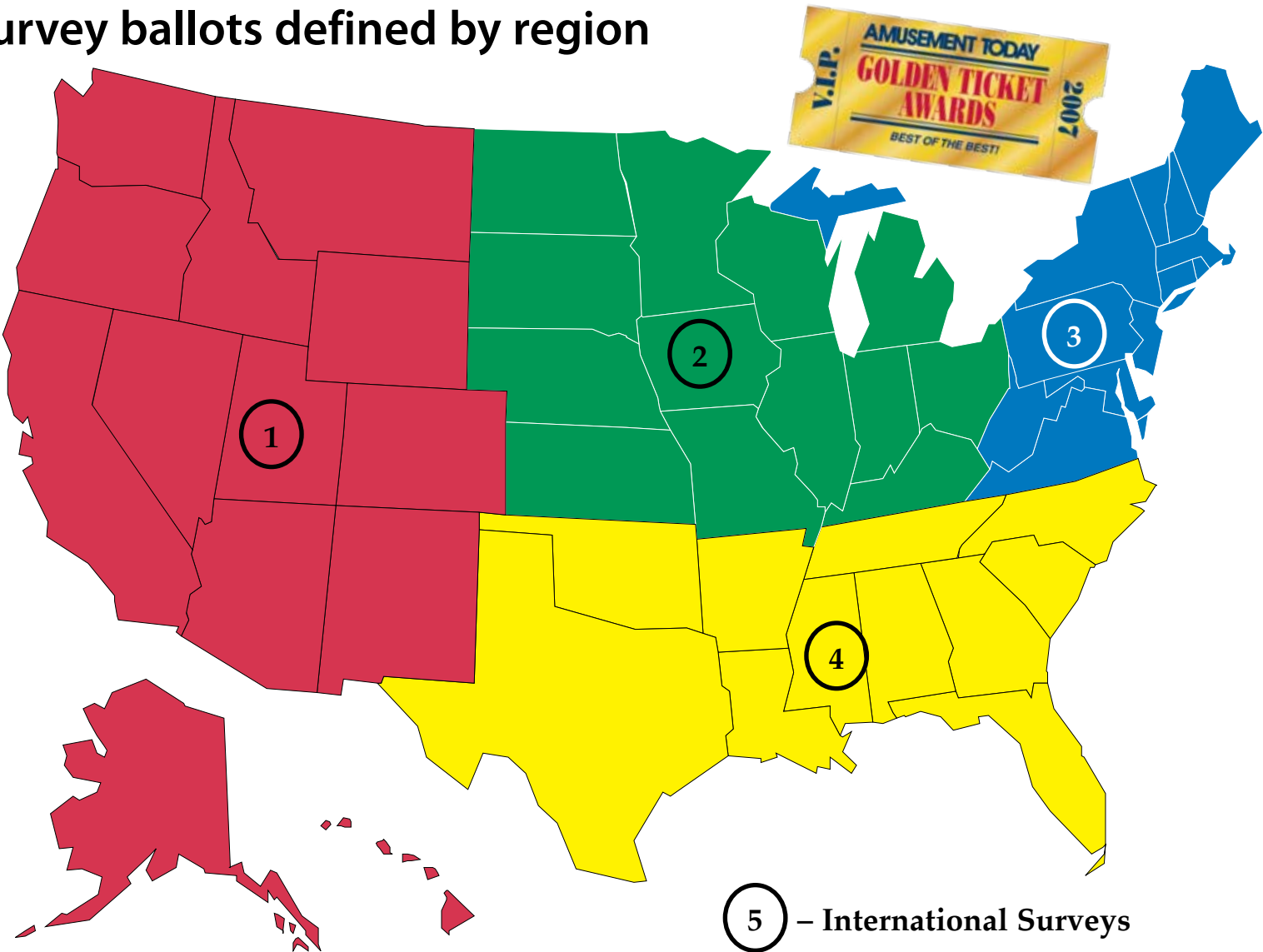
World Waterpark at West Edmonton Mall delivers splashy fun year round.

Golden Ticket survey ballots defined by region

From its inception in 1998, *Amusement Today* has continued to seek out the well-traveled enthusiast and park aficionado. In an effort to keep the Golden Ticket Award survey balanced and as fair as possible, the United States is divided into four geographical regions and an equal number of survey ballots were sent to each region. In addition, several international participants also took the survey.

*Amusement Today* is extremely indebted to the hundreds of kind people who took the time, effort, and thought into completing the survey and returning it to *AT*. Their expertise is not only appreciated, but also their kindness.

Any well-traveled enthusiasts who wish to be considered for the 2008 survey can contact us by email at [tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com](mailto:tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com) or by postal mail. *Amusement Today* is eagerly interested in expanding our international participants.





# World Waterpark

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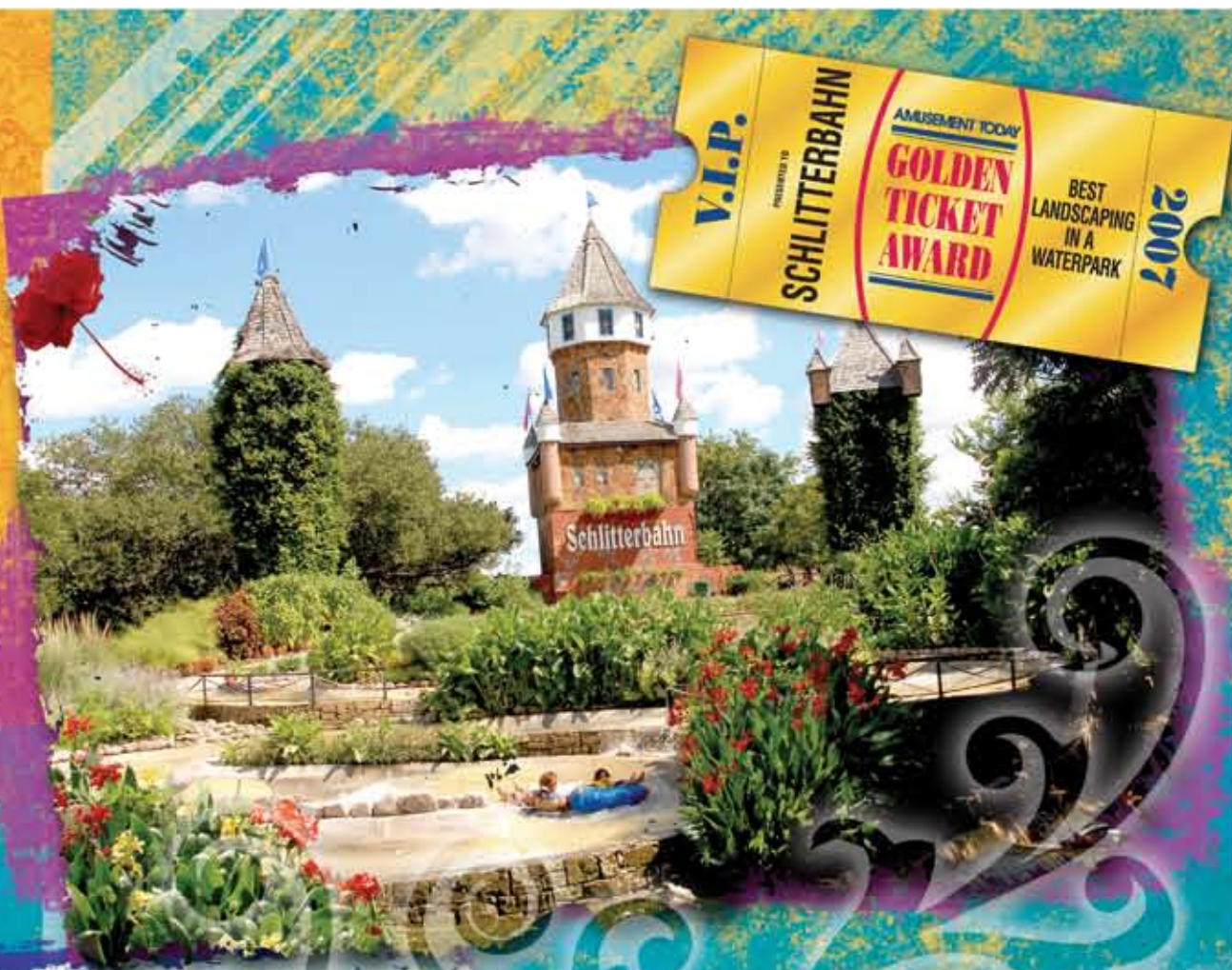
*New Braunfels, Texas*



The Schlitterbahn family would like to sincerely thank Amusement Today, Golden Ticket voters, park guests and our dedicated team for all of their support and friendship in helping us become the world's best waterpark ten years in a row!



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# 2007 Best New Rides go to Cedar Point, Splashin' Safari

**Tim Baldwin**  
Amusement Today

Even before the year officially begins, a "buzz" centers around what new rides are opening for the upcoming season. Once announcements are made, mental plans are made to travel to the must-get-to attractions debuting ahead.

The sought-after rides usually have a unique edge to them. It may be height, novelty, theming, or the first of its kind.

Roller coasters are the biggest draw for an amusement park. Guests immediately identify with what a coaster is and what thrills they might experience. Our top two contenders this year are Maverick at Cedar Point and Mystery Mine at Dollywood.

Contrary to Cedar Point's protocol of building the tallest and fastest of whichever type they've purchased, 2007 saw the park going in a whole new direction. Maverick scarcely tops out over 100 feet, but if that sounds rather tame, think again. An LSM-powered lift



PHOTO COURTESY DAN FEICHT

**Cedar Point's new Maverick takes thrill-seekers on a 70 mph launched and looping wild ride.**

whisks short trains to its apex only to have riders plunged at a beyond-vertical 95-degree angle. What follows is chaos on rails as Maverick darts and dashes close to the ground on a runaway excursion complete with negative-g hills, smooth inversions, and enough directional changes to make anyone lost. Midway through the ride, buckaroos are blasted at 70 mph from a railroad tunnel to complete a second half of wild maneuvers.

Mystery Mine, Dollywood's thematic masterpiece was the first U.S. Eurofighter style coaster from Gerstlauer. Not to be content with such a simple bragging right, the Tennessee themer invested over \$10 million in theming, making it a stunning work of art even to those guests not brave enough to dare a spin.

Pete Owens, public relations manager, says, "It's our own version of Tower of Terror!" While journeying



PHOTO COURTESY HOLIDAY WORLD/DAN FEICHT

**Groups of four at a time swirl down Bakuli, a massive bowl ride, new at Splashin' Safari.**

through the involved storyline, coaster riders climb two vertical lifts, are surprised by two 95-degree drops, and zip through some wild acrobatics.

Our other coaster finalists include Busch Gardens' new Griffon, which brings the floorless aspect to its amazing ten-across seating. Griffon is a 200 feet diving coaster from B&M. Great Coasters International round out the top five with Valleyfair's Renegade,

featuring an S-shaped first drop and Troy, their largest project to date tucked away over in The Netherlands.

In the waterpark scene, Holiday World's capture of enthusiasts let them experience the new Bakuli, a massive four-person behemoth bowl from ProSlide. Bakuli follows Holiday World's trend of adding attractions that have a high capacity, therefore reducing their guests' wait time

► See **NEW RIDES**, page 27

## CONGRATULATIONS DOLLYWOOD® & HERSCHEND FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT!®

**2007 Golden Ticket Award Winner  
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MYSTERY MINE®**

Forrec is proud to have played a key role in the design of Mystery Mine®, Dollywood's® stunning new dark ride attraction.



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## ►NEW RIDES

Continued from page 26

in line. Cleverly, Bakuli has an observation platform built right above the bowl to allow friends and family to wave and take pictures.

Six Flags Kentucky Kingdom's Deluge wowed those who had a chance to ride it with its unique technology. Almost by mysterious force, electromagnetic power took riders up and down over waterslide hills. The colorful new attraction offers big drops, high capacity, and four person in-line seating that gives the back rider pops of



AT PHOTO/SCOTT RUTHERFORD

**Dollywood's new Mystery Mine allows guests to experience several surprises during its storyline.**

airtime.

Coming in third place is Wet'n Wild's new Brain Wash, a ProSlide Tornado with a twist. Totally unique is its enclosure of the funnel, packed with sound and visual images to make a signature experi-

ence compared with similar installations.

Fourth place goes to East Coast Waterworks, part of Hersheypark's new section, The Boardwalk. This giant interactive playstructure has a capacity for 1,000 people.



PHOTO COURTESY SFKK/DAN FEIGHT

**Deluge at Six Flags Kentucky Kingdom uses LIM technology to give a roller coaster style ride.**

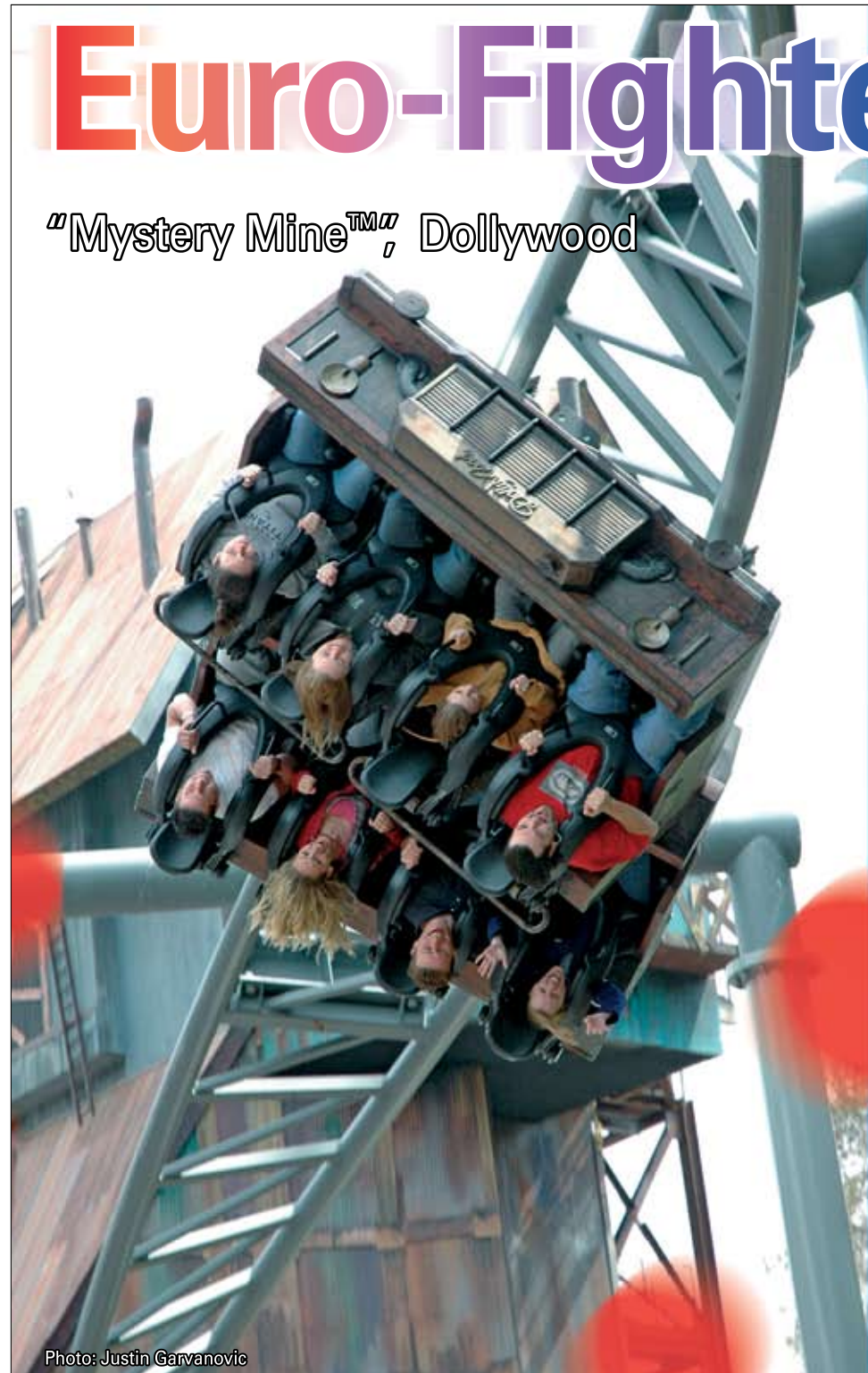
Mt. Olympus Water and Theme Park rounds out the top five with Poseidon's Rage, their new wave pool designed to generate nine-foot waves. Built by White-water, Poseidon's Rage is the second wave pool Mt. Olym-

pus offers its guests, coming in at a price tag of \$7 million. The park has the capability of adjusting the wave height to create actual surfing competition when swimmers have been cleared. Radical dude!

► **MORE FINALISTS, page 30**

# Euro-Fighter

"Mystery Mine™", Dollywood



Do you dare to enter the "Mystery Mine™"? Gerstlauer Amusement Rides GmbH presents with the newest version of the popular Euro-Fighter roller coaster a unique combination of an exhilarating roller coaster ride and fascinating dark ride passages.

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Experience this amazing adventure now - the "Mystery Mine™" opened on Friday, the 13<sup>th</sup> April 2007.



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AT PHOTO/GARY SLADE

Griffon combined two aspects of B&M's catalog - the diving machine and the floorless coaster, all within a 200-ft. drop.



PHOTO COURTESY TERRY LIND

GCII's Renegade sports an S-shaped first drop not seen in any of their previous designs. The coaster debuted at Valleyfair this season.



PHOTO COURTESY RENE SEBASTIAN

Troy, built at Toverland in the Netherlands, is GCII's biggest project to date. Its July opening still attracted voters under the wire.



PHOTO COURTESY WET'N WILD

While ProSlide's Tornado funnels are seen throughout the industry, no one matches Wet'n Wild for their high-tech visuals placed inside.



PHOTO COURTESY HERSHEY PARK

East Coast Waterworks is one of the most dramatic new components to Hersheypark's new Boardwalk section.



PHOTO COURTESY MT. OLYMPUS

Poseidon's Rage, Mt. Olympus' new wave pool is the second largest wave pool in the nation, capable of generating nine-foot waves.

Poseidon's Rage placed #5 for "Best New Waterpark Ride in 2007"

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# Park, individual, supplier each recipients of 2007 Publisher's Pick



PHOTO COURTESY DOLLYWOOD

Natural landscaping aids in the beauty that is Dollywood, a theme park that steps back in time to themes without cartoons or movies.

## Carefully thought out theming makes Dollywood special

Since 1986, visitors from around the world have become well acquainted with the Dollywood name and experience. However, the entertainment park actually traces its roots back to 1961 when Rebel Railroad first opened on the site that, over time, expanded and grew into Dollywood.

Rebel Railroad was a small-scale attraction operated by the Robbins Brothers from neighboring North Carolina. The five-mile long Rebel Railroad featured a coal-fired steam train named Klondike Katie, a general store, a blacksmith shop and a saloon for visitors to enjoy. The Robbins Brothers had created a winning formula.

That formula led to ownerships by Art Modell of the Cleveland Browns, then to Jack and Pete Herschend of Silver Dollar City fame. In 1986, the Herschend brothers soon welcomed a much-loved and recognizable East Tennessee superstar to the park when Dolly Parton joined the family in the theme park business, lending not only her childhood memories for future ride development, but her name as well, for the park's rebranding into Dollywood.

Today, Dollywood's carefully thought out theming of everything from rides to its buildings and shops make this theme park a special park to visit. No cartoon or movie themes are needed here to tell a story or entertain its guests. After all, isn't that the purpose of the theme park, to entertain its guests through theming? Dollywood does it right, and for that, they are selected as AT's **Park of the Year**.



Dolly Parton



PHOTO COURTESY HERSEYPARK

The Milton Hershey School is a private, coeducational home and school for children from families in financial and social need.

## Milton S. Hershey, the man behind a town, park and school

From the moment he laid out his community, Milton S. Hershey planned to build a park, making an early commitment to create a more pleasant environment for workers and residents than the typical factory town of the time.

Even though Hershey's Mennonite mother thought his idea was frivolous, he proceeded to survey a site along Spring Creek in 1903. On April 24, 1907, Hershey Park opened; a baseball game was played on the athletic field. Milton Hershey and his wife, Catherine, watched the game from the grandstand.

Hershey Park's original appeal was its simplicity. An ideal spot for picnicking, boating and canoeing, the park was landscaped with graceful trees and wooded groves that provided a shady retreat for thousands of people without being crowded. The park's first ride, a merry-go-round opened on July 4, 1908.

His vision for the town did not stop with the park. Unable to have children of his own, Milton Hershey established the Milton Hershey School Trust, whose sole beneficiary is the 1909-founded Milton Hershey School, a private, coeducational home and school for 1,600 children from families in financial and social need. All expenses for the children are provided free of charge to enrolled students.

Today, as Hersheypark and the Hershey's Chocolate Kiss celebrates its 100th anniversaries, AT salutes our **Person of the Year**, Milton S. Hershey.



Milton Hershey



PHOTO COURTESY NATIONAL TICKET

National Ticket Company celebrates its 100th anniversary this year thanks to the hard work and dedication of its entire staff, shown here.

## 100 years strong, National Ticket Co. not slowing down

After 100 years, paper tickets are still selling strong.

But that's not keeping National Ticket Company from sitting still as the company celebrates its 100th anniversary this year.

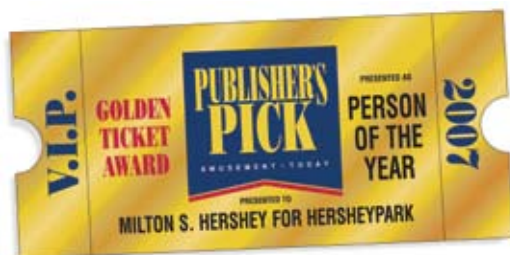
The company is in the early stages of getting into the radio frequency identification technology called RFID. They are already offering wristbands and soon will be offering paper and plastic cards.

Still yet, the tradition and achievements remain strong in a company that was founded in 1907 by brothers Alphonsus E., William A. and John J. Conway along with a local clothing merchant Nicholas R. Ludes in Shamokin, Pa. The four were equal partners in the company. Today, offspring of the original founders still work for the company.

In 1938, National Ticket became the first company in the area to provide life insurance coverage for its workers. Five years later it added health and accident coverage. The company has also rewarded employees for their loyalty and hard work with benefits, competitive wages and annual celebrations which started in the mid-1930s.

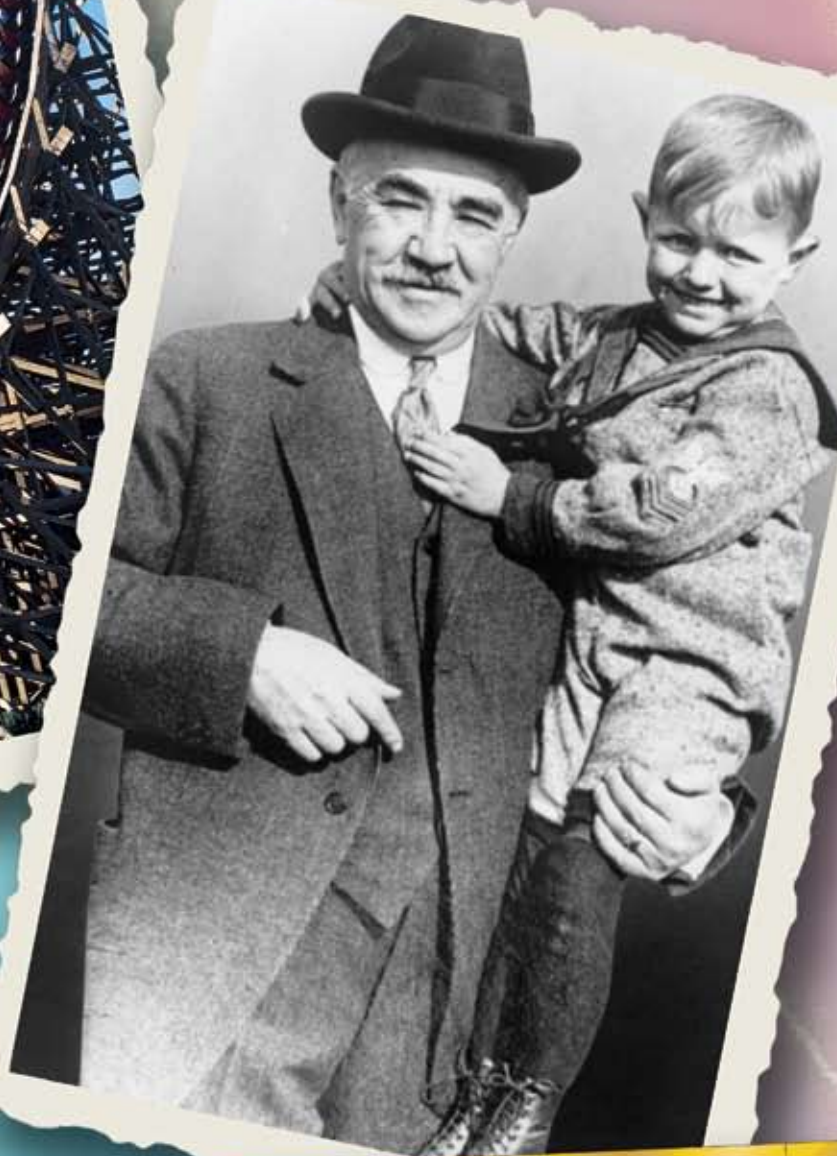
With a worldwide customer base in excess of 5,000 customers, National Ticket Company continues to meet the needs of its long time amusement and entertainment customers, and new ones as well.

Congratulations to National Ticket Company on 100 years of outstanding ticketing service, AT's choice for **Supplier of the Year**.





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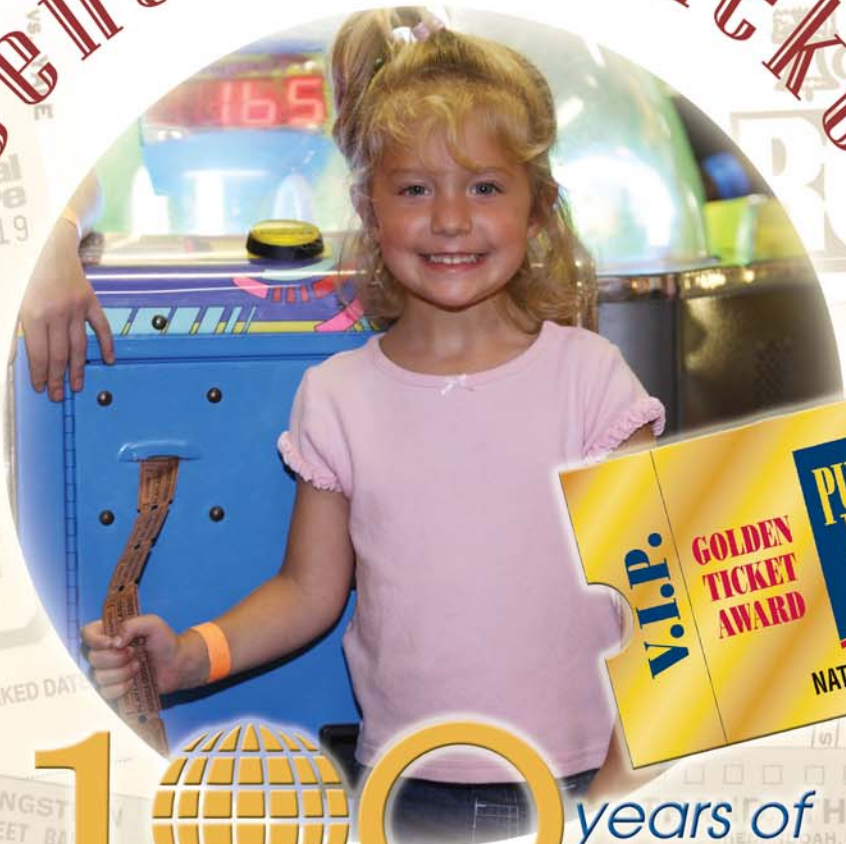
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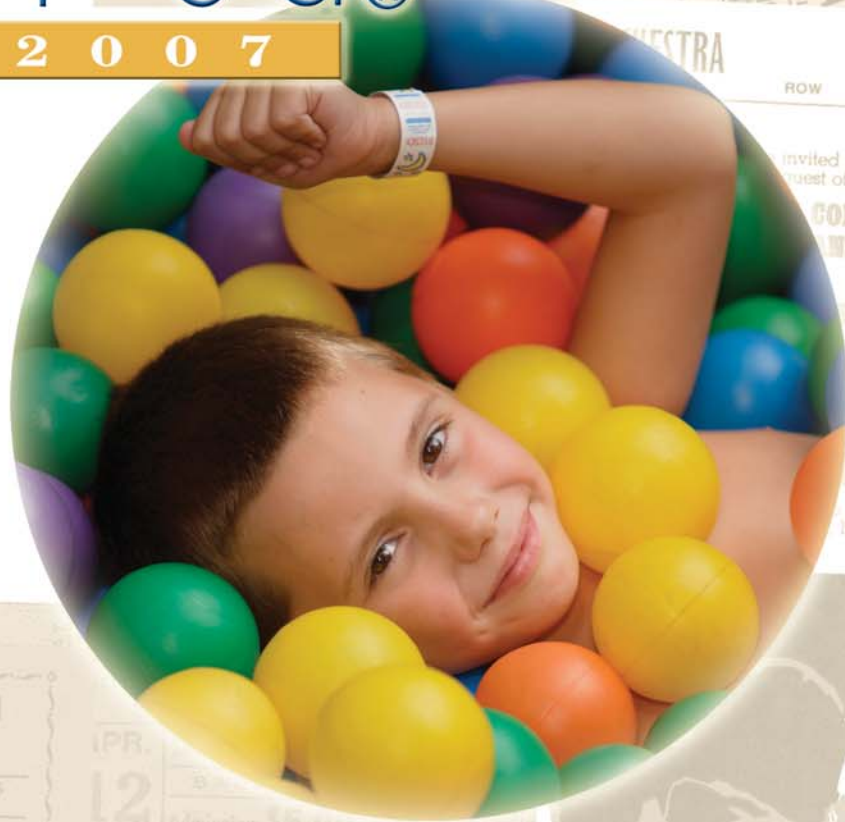
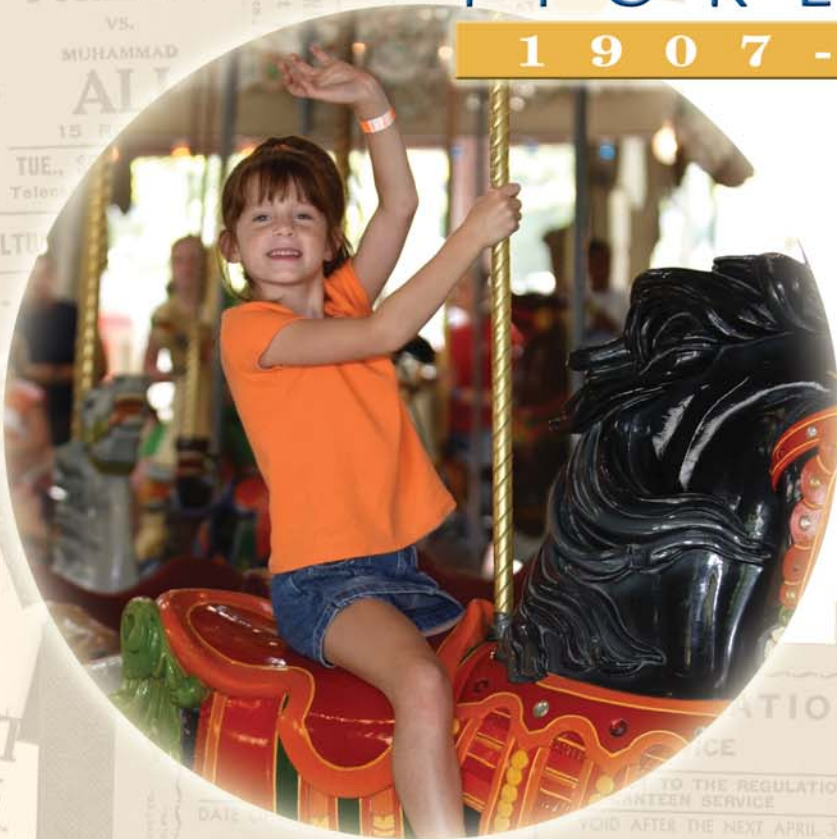
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# Hold On!

## Six Flags New England's Superman repeats as Best Steel Coaster



PHOTO COURTESY SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND

**Superman Ride of Steel at Six Flags New England shows its strength by holding on to the No. 1 position on our charts.**

**Tim Baldwin**  
Amusement Today

There was a time when steel coasters were a rarity. Today, they outnumber wooden coasters almost ten-to-one.

Returning as our top performer, Superman Ride of Steel at Six Flags New England soars to the top of the list. Built by Intamin and known for an amazing amount of negative-g's, Superman is many a thrill-seeker's true hero.

Also by Intamin, Cedar Point's famous Millennium Force, the first coaster to top 300 feet, easily takes the number two spot.

Climbing a notch, Six Flags Great Adventure finds Nitro moving upward into the third place position this year. Built by B&M, Nitro climbs to a height of 230 feet.

Nitro's cousin, Apollo's Chariot, also built by B&M, raises a notch on our charts, as well. Coming in at fourth place, Busch Gardens Europe's hyper coaster is a fan favorite at this wonderfully themed park.

Magnum XL-200 completes our top five. Magnum has enjoyed an immense pop-



ularity since its debut in 1989, breaking the 200-foot barrier for the first time. Its creation caused American Coaster Enthusiasts to coin the term, "hyper coaster" for a ride of this statistical dimension. Magnum started a wave of such coasters built throughout the world in the 1990s.

Expedition GeForce is the highest rated coaster in all of Europe. Built by Intamin and cherished for its delicious airtime, Expedition GeForce finds its home at Holiday Park in Germany.

Featured in our top ten are Phantom's Revenge at Kennywood, Goliath at Six Flags over Georgia, Top Thrill Dragster from Cedar Point, and Montu at Busch Gardens Africa.

Three new-for-2007 coasters fought their way onto the charts this year. The highest performer is Maverick, Intamin's launched 95-degree coaster at Cedar Point. Operating with six trains, Maverick makes for a scenic "wow"

for spectators as riders dive over a lagoon between shooting geysers. Maverick's impressive debut is at number 14. Griffon, the new floorless coaster from B&M charts at number 27 for Busch Gardens Europe, and Mystery Mine, Dollywood's amazing Gerstlauer coaster paired with Forrec's outstanding theming, appears at the number 47 position.

Seven international coasters find places on our charts this year. Along with Expedition GeForce in the top ten, the lists include: Alton Tower's Nemesis (No. 14), England; Walabi's Goliath (No. 29) Belgium; La Ronde's Goliath (No. 37), Canada; Blackpool's Big One (No. 44), England; Galaxyland's Mindbender (No. 48), Canada; and Miribilandia's Katun (No. 50), Italy.

The oldest coasters on our steel list are a pair of Schwarzkopfs built in 1978. Mind Bender at Six Flags Over Georgia and Shock Wave at Six Flags Over Texas have not lost their fan base, spotlighting that excellence never truly goes out of style. Both celebrate 30th anniversaries in 2008.



AT PHOTO/TIM BALDWIN



AT PHOTO/GARY SLADE



PHOTO COURTESY BUSCH GARDENS EUROPE



AT PHOTO/TIM BALDWIN

**The top five features Millennium Force at Cedar Point, Nitro at Six Flags Great Adventure, Apollo's Chariot at Busch Gardens Europe, and Magnum at Cedar Point. Intamin and B&M both boast two coasters in the top five, as well as a historical favorite by Arrow.**



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# The List

## 2007 TOP 50 STEEL ROLLER COASTERS

RANK	NAME	PARK	LOCATION	YEAR	SUPPLIER	POINTS
1	Superman Ride of Steel	Six Flags New England	Agawam, Mass.	2000	Intamin	1181
2	Millennium Force	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	2000	Intamin	1083
3	Nitro	Six Flags Great Adventure	Jackson, N.J.	2001	B & M	733
4	Apollo's Chariot	Busch Gardens Europe	Williamsburg, Va.	1999	B & M	616
5	Magnum XL-200	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	1989	Arrow	589
6	Expedition Ge-Force	Holiday Park	Hassloch, Germany	2001	Intamin	542
7	Phantom's Revenge	Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	2001	Morgan/Arrow	439
8	Goliath	Six Flags Over Georgia	Atlanta, Ga.	2006	B & M	392
9	Top Thrill Dragster	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	2003	Intamin	372
10	Montu	Busch Gardens Africa	Tampa, Fla.	1996	B & M	309
11	Ride of Steel	Darien Lake	Darien Center, N.Y.	1999	Intamin	255
12	Raging Bull	Six Flags Great America	Gurnee, Ill.	1999	B & M	249
13	Maverick	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	2007	Intamin	220
14 (tie)	Nemesis	Alton Towers	Staffordshire, England	1994	B & M	219
14 (tie)	Superman Ride of Steel	Six Flags America	Largo, Md.	2000	Intamin	219
16	SheiKra	Busch Gardens Africa	Tampa, Fla.	2005	B & M	208
17	X	Six Flags Magic Mountain	Valencia, Calif.	2002	Arrow	198
18	Alpengeist	Busch Gardens Europe	Williamsburg, Va.	1997	B & M	183
19	Raptor	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	1994	B & M	170
20	Steel Force	Dorney Park	Allentown, Pa.	1997	Morgan	167
21	Kumba	Busch Gardens Africa	Tampa, Fla.	1993	B & M	165
22	Mind Bender	Six Flags Over Georgia	Atlanta, Ga.	1978	Schwarzkopf	149
23	Dueling Dragons	Islands of Adventure	Orlando, Fla.	1999	B & M	140
24 (tie)	Goliath	Six Flags Magic Mountain	Valencia, Calif.	2000	Giovanola	130
24 (tie)	Xcelerator	Knott's Berry Farm	Buena Park, Calif.	2002	Intamin	130



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# The List

## 2007 TOP 50 STEEL ROLLER COASTERS



RANK	NAME	PARK	LOCATION	YEAR	SUPPLIER	POINTS
26	Titan	Six Flags Over Texas	Arlington, Texas	2001	Giovanola	119
27	Griffon	Busch Gardens Europe	Williamsburg, Va.	2007	B & M	106
28	Volcano	Kings Dominion	Doswell, Va.	1998	Intamin	104
29	Goliath	Walabi World	Flevo, The Netherlands	2002	Intamin	95
30	Incredible Hulk Coaster	Islands of Adventure	Orlando, Fla.	1999	B & M	89
31	Kingda Ka	Six Flags Great Adventure	Jackson, N.J.	2005	Intamin	87
32 (tie)	Big Bad Wolf	Busch Gardens Europe	Williamsburg, Va.	1984	Arrow	84
32 (tie)	Expedition Everest	Disney's Animal Kingdom	Orlando, Fla.	2006	Vekoma/WED Imag.	84
32 (tie)	PowderKeg	Silver Dollar City	Branson, Mo.	2005	S & S	84
35	Shock Wave	Six Flags Over Texas	Arlington, Texas	1978	Schwarzkopf	81
36	Superman Krypton Coaster	Six Flags Fiesta Texas	San Antonio, Texas	2000	B & M	80
37	Goliath	La Ronde	Montreal, Quebec, Canada	2006	B & M	76
38	Storm Runner	Hersheypark	Hershey, Pa.	2004	Intamin	75
39	Mamba	Worlds of Fun	Kansas City, Mo.	1998	Morgan	66
40	Kraken	SeaWorld Orlando	Orlando, Fla.	2000	B & M	64
41 (tie)	Tatsu	Six Flags Magic Mountain	Valencia, Calif.	2006	B & M	63
41 (tie)	Top Gun the Jet Coaster	Carowinds	Charlotte, N.C.	1999	B & M	63
43	Medusa	Six Flags Great Adventure	Jackson, N.J.	1999	B & M	57
44	The Big One	Pleasure Beach Blackpool	Blackpool, England	1994	Arrow	56
45	Revenge of the Mummy	Universal Studios Florida	Orlando, Fla.	2004	Premier/Universal	49
46	Steel Eel	SeaWorld San Antonio	San Antonio, Texas	1999	Morgan	47
47	Mystery Mine	Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	2007	Gerstlauer/Forrec	45
48	Mindbender	Galaxyland	Edmonton, Alberta, Canada	1985	Schwarzkopf	43
49	California Screamin'	Disney's California Adventure	Anaheim, Calif.	2001	Intamin	42
50	Katun	Mirabilandia	Savio, Italy	2000	B & M	41



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# The tradition of wood!

## *Holiday World's Voyage takes over new spot as Best Wooden Coaster*

**Tim Baldwin**  
*Amusement Today*

According to the online census of American Coaster Enthusiasts this summer, there were 180 wooden coasters in the world. To make it onto our chart of top 50 can sometimes be an aggressive struggle, particularly at the lower end where just a matter of points, or even a single point, can help a coaster jockey for position.

Points were not a problem for the new number one wooden roller coaster. The Voyage at Holiday World triggers an upset in our entire top five listing. Ironically, Dollywood's venerable Thunderhead garnered even more points this year than it did last year in the number one spot, but The Voyage came on by storm, setting a record for the number of points ever tabulated for a roller coaster in Golden Ticket history.

Paula Werne, Holiday World's director of public relations, recalls General Manager Will Koch's impression on the Voyage project. "Will had such a gleam in his eye during the entire design and construction. Once in a while he'd whisper to me, 'I really think this will



AT PHOTO/TIM BALDWIN

**The Voyage at Holiday World sets an *Amusement Today* record for the most points ever cast for a roller coaster.**

be the greatest wooden coaster ever built.' Over the months Will's whisper grew a little louder," Werne jokes. "After he took his first ride, he wrote for the HoliBlog: 'It was everything I'd dreamed of. The Gravity Group outdid themselves in maximizing every moment. I

think it's safe to say that a new era in wooden roller coasters has begun.'

"We knew the coaster enthusiasts would love it, but wondered if The Voyage might be 'too much' for the general public," states Werne. "On opening day last year, we knew

beyond a shadow of a doubt that The Voyage was a great fit for our park and our family audience." As the anchor to the park's new Thanksgiving section, Werne says, "All it took was spending a bit of time in the Thanksgiving plaza, watching the children dashing off The



Voyage and queuing up again shouting "That was great!"

In a strong second position, Thunderhead, built by Great Coasters International, rates highly among coaster fans. Debuting its opening year of 2004 in the top ten, Thunderhead has held the top two positions every year since.

Knoebels' Phoenix has consistently held a top five position in the Golden Tickets. This year, it climbs to number three, its highest placement ever. What makes this an even greater achievement is that the woodie could have easily been lost to the wrecking ball if the park had not stepped in and saved it from Playland in San Antonio in the 1980s. The Phoenix stands as one of the greatest preservation stories within the industry.

BoulderDash, nestled into the rocky slopes of Lake Compounce races into the number four slot. Many of our voters commented to AT staff at how

► See **WOOD**, page 40



PHOTO COURTESY JOEL STYER



PHOTO COURTESY KNOEBELS



PHOTO COURTESY LAKE COMPOUNCE



AT PHOTO/GARY SLADE

**Left to right, holding positions in the list of top five wooden coasters are Thunderhead at Dollywood, Phoenix at Knoebels, Boulder Dash at Lake Compounce, and Hades at Mt. Olympus Water and Theme Park.**



# THANK YOU

FOR VOTING THE VOYAGE AS THE WORLD'S #1 WOODEN COASTER!



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## ►WOOD

Continued from page 38

much smoother the ride is running this year with some significant track work in place. BoulderDash could just find itself climbing back higher on the chart in the years ahead.

The top five is closed out with Hades, rated as The Best New Ride in 2005. Known for its riotous underground tunnels, Mt. Olympus' Gravity Group creation maintains its placement firmly at the top of the charts.

Charging into the top ten is Six Flags Great Adventure's El Toro. With a late June debut in 2006, the monumental woodie made it to the AT charts last year in the top twenty. This year, the Intamin-built coaster more than doubled its points, landing at the number nine position. This coaster is one to watch.

Of all the racing coasters

► See WOOD, page 44



AT PHOTO/TIM BALDWIN

The ultra-smooth El Toro at Great Adventure lays claim to wild drops, extreme air time, and twisting curves.



PHOTO COURTESY JOEL STYER

Lightning Racer is the top rated racing coaster, still performing wonderfully in the top ten.

**THE VOYAGE  
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Top Ten Wooden Roller Coasters according  
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# The List

## 2007 TOP 50 WOODEN ROLLER COASTERS

RANK	NAME	PARK	LOCATION	YEAR	SUPPLIER	POINTS
1	The Voyage	Holiday World	Santa Claus, Ind.	2006	Gravity Group	1240
2	Thunderhead	Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	2004	GCII	932
3	Phoenix	Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.	1985	Dinn/PTC-Schmeck	844
4	BoulderDash	Lake Compounce	Bristol, Conn.	2000	CCI	740
5	Hades	Mt. Olympus Theme Park	Wisconsin Dells, Wis.	2005	Gravity Group	702
6	Shivering Timbers	Michigan's Adventure	Muskegon, Mich.	1998	CCI	550
7	Raven	Holiday World	Santa Claus, Ind.	1995	CCI	548
8	The Beast	Kings Island	Kings Mills, Ohio	1979	KECO	506
9	El Toro	Six Flags Great Adventure	Jackson, N.J.	2006	Intamin	494
10	Lightning Racer	Hersheypark	Hershey, Pa.	2000	GCII	402
11	The Legend	Holiday World	Santa Claus, Ind.	2000	CCI	358
12	Avalanche	Timber Falls	Wisconsin Dells, Wis.	2004	S & S	313
13	Kentucky Rumbler	Beech Bend Amusement Park	Bowling Green, Ky.	2006	GCII	308
14	Cyclone	Astroland (Coney Island)	Brooklyn, N.Y.	1927	Keenan/Baker	257
15	Balder	Liseberg	Gothenburg, Sweden	2003	Intamin	193
16	Tremors	Silverwood	Athol, Idaho	1999	CCI	188
17	GhostRider	Knott's Berry Farm	Buena Park, Calif.	1998	CCI	176
18	Ozark Wildcat	Celebration City	Branson, Mo.	2003	GCII	170
19	Comet	The Great Escape	Lake George, N.Y.	1994	Schmeck/PTC	169
20	Texas Giant	Six Flags Over Texas	Arlington, Texas	1990	Dinn/Summers	164
21	Thunderbolt	Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	1968	Vettel/Miller	149
22	Giant Dipper	Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk	Santa Cruz, Calif.	1924	Prior & Church/Looff	137
23	Colossos	Heide Park	Soltau, Germany	2001	Intamin	136
24	Cornball Express	Indiana Beach	Monticello, Ind.	2001	CCI	134
25	Megafobia	Oakwood Leisure Park	Pembrokeshire, Wales	1996	CCI	121

**dan feicht**  
PHOTOGRAPHER

www.danfeicht.com

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Voted The Number One Wooden Roller Coaster  
Congratulations Holiday World





# The List



## 2007 TOP 50 WOODEN ROLLER COASTERS

RANK	NAME	PARK	LOCATION	YEAR	SUPPLIER	POINTS
26	Tonnerre de Zeus	Parc Asterix	Plailly, France	1997	CCI	112
27	Rampage	Alabama Adventure	Bossemer, Ala.	1998	CCI	93
28	Grand National	Pleasure Beach Blackpool	Blackpool, England	1935	Paige	88
29	Coaster	Playland	Vancouver, British Columbia	1958	Phare	87
30	Twister	Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.	1999	Fetterman/Knoebels	86
31	Thunderbird	PowerPark	Alaharma, Finland	2006	GCII	76
32	The Boss	Six Flags St. Louis	Eureka, Mo.	2000	CCI	74
33	Jack Rabbit	Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	1921	Miller/PTC	71
34	Aska	Nara Dreamland	Nara, Japan	1998	Intamin	68
35	New Mexico Rattler	Cliff's Amusement Park	Albuquerque, N.M.	2002	Cliff's	64
36	Timber Terror	Silverwood	Athol, Idaho	1996	CCI	61
37	Viper	Six Flags Great America	Gurnee, Ill.	1995	Starkey/Six Flags	58
38	Wildcat	Hersheypark	Hershey, Pa.	1996	GCII	57
39	Mean Streak	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	1991	Dinn/Summers	54
40 (tie)	Gwazi	Busch Gardens Africa	Tampa, Fla.	1999	GCII	51
40 (tie)	Hurricane	Boomers	Dania Beach, Fla.	2000	Coaster Works	51
42	Roar	Six Flags America	Largo, Md.	1998	GCII	47
43	Georgia Cyclone	Six Flags Over Georgia	Atlanta, Ga.	1990	Dinn/Summers	46
44	Great Am. Scream Machine	Six Flags Over Georgia	Atlanta, Ga.	1973	Allen/PTC	45
45	Racer	Kings Island	Kings Mills, Ohio	1972	Allen/PTC	44
46	Big Dipper	Geauga Lake	Aurora, Ohio	1925	Miller	42
47	Roar	Six Flags Discovery Kingdom	Vallejo, Calif.	1999	GCII	38
48	Blue Streak	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	1964	Hoover/PTC	35
49 (tie)	Racer	Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	1927	Miller/PTC	34
49 (tie)	Thunder Coaster	Tusenfyrd	Vintebro, Norway	2001	Vekoma	34



**Congratulations to Dollywood for Mystery Mine — One of the BEST NEW RIDES of 2007**






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## 80 years old and still going!



AT PHOTO/TIM BALDWIN

Coney Island's classic 1927 Cyclone is the oldest roller coaster appearing on our charts. As Coney Island faces an uncertain future of redevelopment, the ride's landmark status helps keep it running for years to come.



### ►WOOD

Continued from page 40

in the world, the highest rated one is Hersheypark's Lightning Racer. Built by GCII, this engineering masterpiece dazzles riders with its neck-and-neck race to the finish. Lightning Racer still resides in the top ten.

Of our list of 50, it is a testimonial to our panel that nine countries outside the U.S. are represented on the charts: Balder (No. 15), Sweden; Colossos (No. 23) Germany; Megafobia (No. 25), Wales; Tonnerre de Zeus (No. 26), France; Grand National (No. 28), England; Coaster (No. 29), Canada; Thunderbird (No. 31), Finland; Aska, currently silent, (No. 34), Japan; and Thunder Coaster (No. 49), Norway. Of note, currently Aska is not operating awaiting an uncertain fate. Many of its fans didn't give up on it.

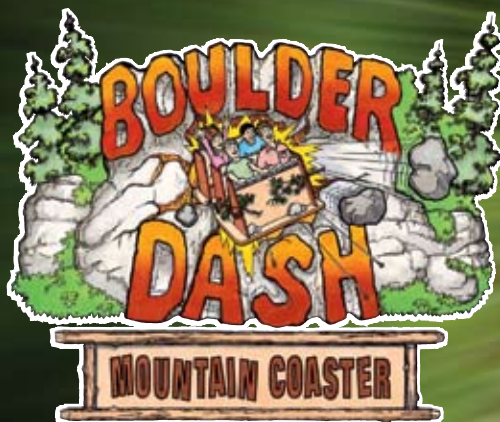


AT PHOTO/TIM BALDWIN



PHOTO COURTESY JOEL STYER

Two big climbers on the charts are Liseberg's Balder, jumping up an amazing 12 positions, and Beech Bend's Kentucky Rumbler, which inches its way toward the top 10.



**Boulder Dash  
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# Class of 2006

## *A look back at last year's Golden Ticket Award winners*

Did you forget who won Golden Tickets in 2006? In all, 26 Golden Tickets were awarded to 15 parks and two different individuals.

Here is a quick recap:

- **Busch Gardens Europe:** Best Landscaping (Amusement Park)
- **Cedar Point:** Best Park, Best Capacity
- **Dollywood:** Best Wooden Coaster
- **Epcot - Walt Disney World:** Best Outdoor Night Show Production
- **Holiday World & Splashin' Safari:** Friendliest Park, Cleanest Park, Best New Ride in 2006 (Amusement Park), Best New Ride in 2006 (Waterpark)
- **Knoebels Amusement Resort:** Best Food
- **Legoland California:** Best Children's Park
- **Paramount's Kings Island:** Best Kid's Area, Best Concert Venue
- **Schlitterbahn Waterpark:** Best Waterpark, Best Waterpark Ride, Best Landscaping (Waterpark)
- **SeaWorld Orlando:** Best Marine Life Park
- **Six Flags Fiesta Texas:** Best Shows
- **Six Flags New England:** Best Steel Coaster
- **State Fair of Texas:** Publisher's Pick (Park of the Year)
- **Pat Thomson, Western Playland:** Publisher's Pick, (Person of the Year)
- **Universal's Islands of Adventure:** Best Water Ride, Best Dark Ride, Best Theming of an Attraction
- **Universal Orlando:** Best Halloween Event
- **WHR Inc/Bill Robinson:** Publisher's Pick (Supplier of the Year).

— Gary Slade



PHOTO COURTESY S. MADONNA HORCHER

Seen here, award winners are shown at the 2006 Golden Ticket Awards, hosted by Holiday World. In total Amusement Today presented 26 Golden Tickets to 15 parks and two individuals.

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**Hades placed #5 in Top 10  
Wooden Roller Coasters in 2007!**



# International parks and coasters make impact on survey



**Tim Baldwin**  
Amusement Today

It's a fact that the majority of our panel of experts is based in the U.S. Thankfully, Golden Ticket participants do come from around the world, but even more important is the fact that our hundreds of voters also travel the globe. Their expertise is shown in the recognition of parks in 13 different countries outside of the U.S. on our international poll.

Often, parks around the world experience additional exposure to our voters when international tours of parks are sponsored by enthusiast organizations and thrill-seeker businesses.

In addition to the nine countries mentioned on our wooden coasters and five countries mentioned on the steel



AT PHOTO/TIM BALDWIN

**Thunderbird at PowerPark in Finland showcases GCII's designs from around the world.**

lists, voters have paid notice to these parks around the globe:

- Efteling, The Netherlands, for beautiful landscaping.
- Europa Park, Germany, for its excellence as a top park.
- Farup Sommerland, Denmark, for its family accomplishments as a kids' park.
- Marineland, Canada, for being a finalist in the Best

Marine Life Park category.

- Pleasure Beach Blackpool, England, for being a top park, seaside park, and water rides.
- Tokyo DisneySea, Japan, and its beautiful park setting and attractions as a top park.
- Toverland, The Netherlands with its new-for-2007 coaster.
- World Waterpark, Can-



AT PHOTO/GARY SLADE

**Expedition GeForce is Europe's highest rated roller coaster and continues to be a top ten contender.**

ada, rating as our top pick on indoor waterparks.

These international parks have coasters that appear on our lists:

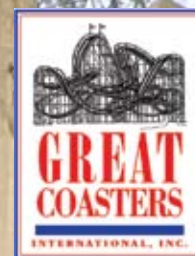
- Alton Towers, England,
- Galaxyland, Canada,
- Heide Park, Germany,
- Holiday Park, Germany,
- La Ronde, Canada,
- Liseberg, Sweden,

- Mirabilandia, Italy,
- Nara Dreamland, Japan,
- Oakwood Leisure Park, Wales,
- Parc Asterix, France,
- Playland, Canada,
- Pleasure Beach Blackpool, England,
- PowerPark, Finland,
- Tusenfryd, Norway,
- Walabi World, Belgium.

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# Congratulations

## 2007 Golden Ticket Award Winners!



Give Kids The World Village (GKTW) is a 70-acre, non-profit resort that creates magical memories for children with life-threatening illnesses and their families. GKTW provides accommodations at its whimsical resort donated attractions tickets, meals and more for a week-long, cost-free fantasy vacation. With the help of many generous individuals, corporations, and partnering wish-granting organizations, Give Kids The World has welcomed over 75,000 families from all 50 states and more than 50 countries.

For more information, please contact us at:

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**SPLASH COUNTRY**  
WATER ADVENTURE PARK

## **Congratulates All of the 2007 Golden Ticket Nominees and Winners!**

It was a very special honor for all of us at Dollywood to host the 2007 Golden Tickets. We sincerely appreciate being named the Publisher's Pick for Park of the Year and share the honor with all of our hosts who spend everyday providing true Southern hospitality and unique experiences for our guests.

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