

AMUSEMENT TODAY™

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The New Texas Giant - an old legend reborn

Rocky Mountain Const., Ride Centerline and Gerstlauer supply new hybrid coaster to Six Flags Over Texas

STORY: Tim Baldwin
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ARLINGTON, Texas — In 1990, wooden coasters were making a strong resurgence, thanks to the partnership of Charles Dinn working alongside Curtis Summers. A new team made the old nostalgic attraction available and affordable. Within this new rise of woodies was Texas Giant, one of four Dinn/Summers coasters for that season. In true Texas fashion, it was big — to be exact, the tallest wooden roller coaster in the world. It was huge news for the park and an attraction that was bringing worldwide attention. It's popularity endured for many years. The Giant topped many enthusiasts' favorite lists, and various polls at the time found Texas Giant at the top. In fact, when *Amusement Today* introduced the Golden Ticket Awards in 1998, Texas Giant reigned at the top of the chart for two years.

But as time has shown, mammoth wooden coasters have come with more than their share of headaches. With great size came great maintenance. Rabid fans soon became guests who would skip their rides on the mega-woodies as the ride experience became vigorously

rugged. The monstrous woodies of that era have either undergone continual change and modification, or have been lost completely. After 20 operating seasons, Six Flags Over Texas knew they had to address the situation head on. Even though the park had invested in more than 1,200 feet of trackwork for the 2009 season, admittedly making the Giant more rideable that season, the decision was made for a more permanent solution. It was announced in the spring of that year that the gigantic woodie would run its last ride as Fright Fest came to a close. With fanfare and fireworks, Texas Giant became silent at the close of 2009 and did not operate at all in 2010 as a new transformation took place.

Reports had previously indicated that the Giant might come down and be replaced with another coaster within the system. When directly asked how close Texas Giant came to being torn down, Steve Martindale, park president of Six Flags Over Texas, replied "Never." Martindale admits he could never picture the park without it. "It's too much of an institution to this park and this clientele that there is no way we could have just taken it out."

Changes

Over the course of the past two years, details had been revealed in small increments. Now, opened to the public officially on April 22, the New Texas Giant is unleashed, and

▶COMING IN JUNE

A look at the in-house theming effort given to the New Texas Giant

the transformation is nothing short of extraordinary.

The track changing from a wood bed to all steel has accomplished the goal of the park, and that was to deliver a super smooth ride. New wood has been incorporated not only to increase the height of the ride by 10 feet — now 153 — but also to create a whole new layout using existing structure. Steel supports have also been added to secure some of the more dramatic banking.

Previously, Texas Giant had a lot of flex in the structure, so much so that guests often noticed the sway. So how does new steel track work with a wooden structure? Ride Centerline engineer Alan Schilke says, "I look at the steel track as a giant steel brace holding the wood structure together. It's not relying on the structure to hold itself together." He continues, "Six Flags wanted us to start with the drop. And we went from there. Six Flags didn't really give us restrictions."

Amusement Today asked Six Flags why they opted for the new Iron Horse track over a new wooden track proposal. Mike Sossamon, the park's director of maintenance and construction responded, "We knew we had an opportunity to

▶ See GIANT, page 5



After a 17 month make-over, the New Texas Giant has returned to Six Flags Over Texas, taller, steeper and faster than ever before. The steel tracked, wooden structured hybrid coaster officially opened on April 22.
AT / GARY SLADE



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FASTFACTS

This month SeaWorld San Antonio is retiring its massive Arrow-built log flume. AT looks back at the five longest flumes produced by Arrow Development/Dynamics:

1. 2,370 feet, Cedar Point Hydro Flume, closed 2005
2. 2,349 feet, Blackpool Pleasure Beach, closed 2006
3. 2,304 feet, Six Flags Magic Mountain, operating
4. 2,300 feet, SeaWorld San Antonio, closing May 13
5. 2,182 feet, Ontario Place, operating

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EDITORIAL: Gary Slade, gslade@amusementtoday.com

Texas Giant reclassified



Slade

Wood, steel or hybrid?

That's the debate Six Flags Over Texas has caused with the opening of the New Texas Giant. Following 17 months of re-construction, the original 1990-built Texas Giant wooden coaster, has been transformed into a hybrid that blurs the lines of classification.

The coaster now features an all-new steel track system called Iron Horse Track (think I-beam), all new profile and new trains. The Giant's traditional wooden structure remains, and that's where the debate begins.

The park is marketing the ride as having a record-breaking steepest drop (79-degrees) and a record-breaking bank (115-degrees) for a wooden coaster. Yet the new steel track does not mount to any traditional wood track bed/stack. Steel beams of track mount to steel legs which then mount to steel plates that are bolted to the wooden ledger. Only from the ledger down, does the New Texas Giant resemble a traditional wooden coaster.

Across the way in the same park, their historic Arrow-built mine train has steel tubular rails mounted to a wooden structure made up of telephone pole supports and railroad crossties, creating a wooden structure. The mine train has never been listed or marketed as a wooden coaster, but always as a steel coaster.

Amusement Today contacted some of our competing trade publications as well as numerous coaster clubs and industry historians for their take on this new debate. All agreed with our assessment, the New Texas Giant is a steel coaster, NOT a wooden coaster. *AT* has also made it known the New Texas Giant will be placed in the Steel Coaster category for voting in the upcoming 2011 Golden Ticket survey.

The New Texas Giant is a truly outstanding coaster that delivers an ultra-smooth, fast and fun ride. Parks around the country will soon be calling Rocky Mountain Construction to get in line for this new breed of coaster that does live up to all the hype—yes, it's that good.

Call the New Texas Giant a steel coaster, or call it a hybrid, but don't disrupt history by calling it a wooden coaster.

—Gary Slade

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

CARTOON: Bubba Flint



EDITORIAL: Scott Rutherford, srutherford@amusementtoday.com

Wood or steel: the coaster debate heats up, lines blur



Rutherford

Wooden coasters and steel coasters: The distinct differences between these two have for the most part been fairly clear-cut... until now. The New Texas Giant at Six Flags Over Texas is causing quite a stir since the park has decided to still refer to its revamped signature attraction as a 'wooden' roller coaster.

The typical park guest will accept this definition with little thought; it's the thrill that matters to them. But the coaster and park enthusiast sect—the purists—see it as something very different. Not bad. Just different.

No wooden coaster is fashioned purely of wood. Along with the strap steel attached to the top laminates that makes contact with the load-bearing running wheels, there are plenty of other metal components required to make it a viable operating system. There are several coasters that might cause confusion: Cedar Point's Gemini features a wooden structure with tubular steel running rails, which makes it a *steel* coaster. On the other hand is The Great Escape's historically significant Comet that has a galvanized steel structure topped with laminated wooden tracks. There's no

argument that the Comet is a *wooden* coaster. And then we have the recent rash of prefab hybrids that use a laser-cut, glued form of wooden track that bolts together and offers a ride experience much like that of a steel coaster. Examples include Heide Park's Colossus and Six Flags Great Adventure's El Toro. Though these rides mimic their steel brethren, their track is *still* wood. In the same vein is Rocky Mountain Construction's new Topper Track, which tosses yet another wrench into the mix. Even here though, it's just a little extra steel atop traditional wooden laminates in high-stress areas.

So that leads us back to the New Texas Giant. In its previous incarnation, it was a bona fide, once-top-rated wooden coaster. But its new Iron Horse steel box beam track system is the deal breaker. Though much of this ride's structure remains that of wooden trestles, its day as a true 'wooden' coaster are long gone.

I am very much a traditionalist, and at the end of the day, I feel that the *track* determines the nature of the coaster. If a ride sports a main track made of steel, whether it is tubular or flat, it's a steel coaster. If it has a wooden track topped with a steel running surface, it's a 'wooden' coaster. Period.

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Disney breaks ground on Shanghi park

SHANGHAI—The Walt Disney Company and Shanghai Shendi Group, its joint venture partner in China, have broken ground on the Shanghai Disney Resort following approval from the Chinese central government in Beijing. Both companies marked the start of construction on the first Disney resort in mainland China at a groundbreaking ceremony held on April 8.

"Today marks a significant milestone in the history of The Walt Disney Company," said Robert A. Iger, president and CEO of The Walt Disney Company. "Our Shanghai resort will be a world-class family vacation destination that combines classic Disney characters and storytelling with the uniqueness and beauty of China. Working with our Chinese partners, the Shanghai Disney Resort will be both authentically Disney and distinctly Chinese."

The Shanghai Disney Resort will be home to a Magic Kingdom-style park that will blend classic Disney storytelling and characters with all-new attractions and experiences tailored specifically for the people of China. The park will feature several themed lands complete with exciting, iconic Disney attractions and experiences.

The new Shanghai Disney Resort is slated to open in approximately five years.

Heide-Park adds Germany's first B&M dive coaster

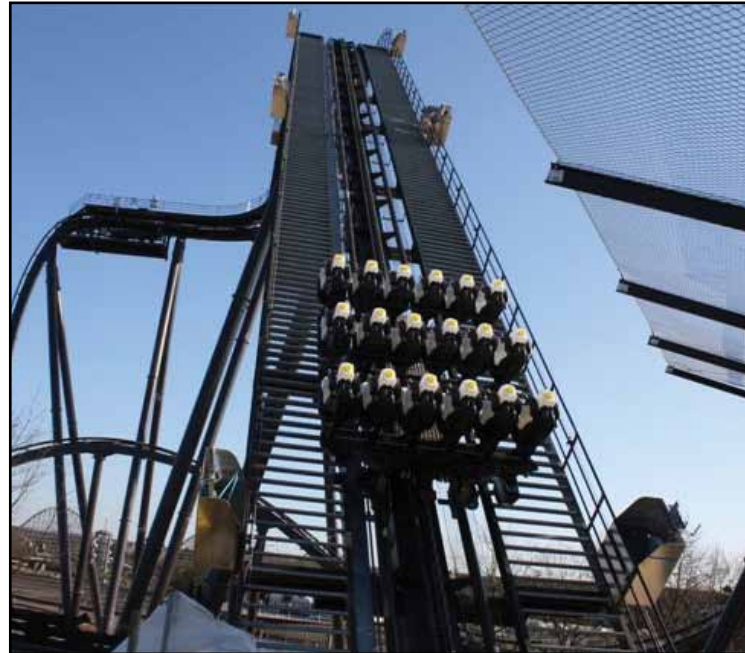
STORY: Andrew Mellor
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GERMANY—Germany's Heide-Park, part of the Merlin Entertainments Group, unveiled its latest major ride on April 16 when the new dive coaster Krake opened to visitors.

Situated in the Pirate Bay area of the park, the new thriller comes from Swiss coaster



specialist Bolliger & Mabillard and represents an investment of €12 million (U.S. \$17 million). In one of three floorless vehicles, each with three rows of six seats, the attraction takes riders high above the park lake for an adrenalin pumping experience. Once at the highest point of 41 meters (134.5 feet) the rider vehicles are held for a few fearful seconds as riders look down at the wreck



Riders on Krake will be taken up to a height of 41 meters (134.5 feet) before plummeting vertically to earth. Among the features of the Krake track is an Immelmann curve.
COURTESY HEIDE-PARK

of a ship in the clutches of the beast Kraken before being released to plummet vertically down into the dark mouth of the "beast." From there guests speed along the remainder of the 476 meter (1,562 feet) long track through a splash zone,

Immelmann and camelback features before returning to the station.

Heavily themed in a sea monster and shipwreck style setting, Krake also features fog and water effects and the whole attraction covers an

area of 10,000 square meters (107,639 square feet). The ride itself provides a similar experience to the likes of Oblivion at the U.K.'s Alton Towers Resort and Sheikra at Busch Gardens Tampa in Florida.

Merlin growth continues alongside international expansion

STORY: Andrew Mellor
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UNITED KINGDOM—Europe's leading and the world's second largest visitor attraction operator Merlin Entertainments has announced its financial results for the year to December 25, 2010, which show continued strong growth coupled to further expansion of its impressive portfolio of global visitor attractions.

The total number of visitors to the group's venues increased to 41 million, a rise of 2.5 million (6.5 percent), while group revenue was up 4.1 percent to £800.8 million (U.S. \$1.37 billion). Underlying group EBITDA (Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization) was up 8.5 percent to £255.8 million (U.S. \$415.5 million).



Capital investment of £103.8 million (U.S. \$168.5 million) during the year was funded from operating cash flow and the group reported strong and resilient growth against a tough economic background. This performance was driven by strong trading within the existing estate while international growth came from three new openings on three continents.

Notable highlights of the year also

included the acquisition of Cypress Gardens, near Orlando, Fla., which is currently being transformed into Legoland Florida for opening in October this year, and the operating contract for the U.K.'s iconic Blackpool Tower Complex in the northwest of England. More recently, Merlin has also acquired the Sydney Attractions Group and Kelly Tarlton's Underwater World, bringing several attractions in Australia and New Zealand into its portfolio.

"We are delighted to report another year of strong performance from Merlin Entertainments," said Chief Executive Nick Varney, "with growth coming from all parts of our unique business. During 2010 we significantly extended our geographic footprint, while delivering fur-

► See MERLIN, page 12

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ACE donates \$5,000 to city of Green Bay for preservation

GREEN BAY, Wisc. — The American Coaster Enthusiasts (ACE) recently donated \$5,000 to provide support and assistance to the city of Green Bay and their efforts to reconstruct Zippin Pippin at Bay Beach Amusement Park. Zippin Pippin was purchased from the city of Memphis last year and is currently being reconstructed at the Green Bay park.

"Preservation of classic rides is what ACE stands for," says Howard Gillooly, ACE preservation director. Gillooly added, "What Green Bay is doing is remarkable, and ACE is proud to be a supporter of this project." Upon receiving the donation, Bill Landvatter, Green Bay's director of parks, recreation and forestry, noted, "This was truly unexpected and brightened my day." Landvatter went on to tell ACE, "Thanks so much for all you do to keep some of the truly unique treasures of our country."

Zippin Pippin formerly stood at Libertyland in Memphis, Tennessee. Originally known as Pippin when it opened in 1923, the ride utilized parts from a previous coaster located at nearby East End Park. When Zippin Pippin closed in 2005, it was the fifth oldest coaster in the United States.

SeaWorld San Antonio retires Arrow log flume

Former Boardwalk & Baseball flume was Arrow's fourth-longest

SAN ANTONIO—After 20 years of chills and thrills at SeaWorld San Antonio, the log flume ride, Texas Splashdown, will make its final splash on Friday, May 13, and SeaWorld is inviting guests to experience it one last time before the ride closes.

Added in spring 1991 as one of the nation's largest water flume rides, Texas Splashdown became the park's first thrill ride. The 75-foot tall log flume ride is located between the park's Steel Eel and The Great White roller coasters. Four-passenger boats transport guests through a twisting, turning half-mile route that includes two exciting plunges: the first is a 65 foot drop and the second is a 75 foot camelback drop that reaches speeds of up to 35 miles per hour. Overall ride time is estimated at six minutes.

According to AT research files on Arrow, the 2,300 foot long flume was the fourth longest flume built by Arrow (Development) Dynamics. It originally opened in 1987 at Florida's Boardwalk & Baseball before being moved to Texas. Of the top five longest flumes, only Six Flags Magic Mountain at 2,304 feet and Ontario Place at 2,182 feet remain in operation today.

"Since Texas Splashdown debuted more than 20 years ago, it has been enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of SeaWorld guests," said Dan Decker, SeaWorld San Antonio's park president. "The ride has had a great run of

service."

While SeaWorld is not making any immediate announcements for a replacement attraction, its closing allows the park to plan for new entertainment experiences, whether it's a ride, show, animal encounter or other attraction.

Amusement Today asked Decker what effect the ride's closing will have on its guests during the hot Texas summers.

"Texas heat is always a big factor for us and our guest surveys tell us they want to stay cool, stay shaded and have more water options," Decker said. "We added water this year with the opening of Sesame Street Bay of Play and we'll certainly be considering all options for another family attraction in our upcoming three-year expansion plans."

The flume is being retired and is not being put up for sale. Once SeaWorld has removed requested flume parts from the ride for use at its sister parks, the flume will take about 60 days to dismantle. No announcement has been made yet as to what ride or attraction will take its place in upcoming years.

—Compiled by AT Staff



DECKER



SeaWorld San Antonio will retire Texas Splashdown on May 13. When it originally opened, the ride was the fourth largest built by Arrow. AT / GARY SLADE



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WATERPARKS & RESORTS

INDOOR FACILITIES AQUATIC CENTERS RECREATION SUPPLIERS

Waterplay structures, thrill slides popular in 2011

STORY: Pam Sherborne
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More and more waterparks seem to be installing children's play structures for the 2011 season, but that isn't all they are doing.

AT's 2011 Waterpark Roundup continues:

Ocean Breeze Waterpark, Virginia Beach, Va.

In March, AT passed along the announcement of new ownership of this Virginia Beach waterpark. Now, that new ownership (Kieran Burke and Gary Story, owners of Nashville Shores and both former Six Flag executives) has announced some of the new plans for renovations and improvements that are scheduled to be complete when the park opens its 2011 season on May 27.

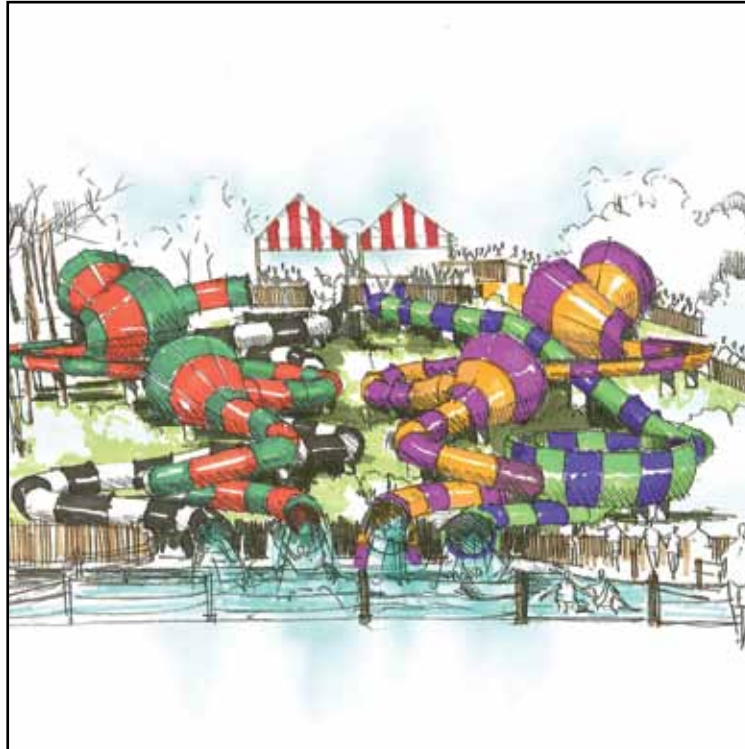
2011 WATERPARK ROUNDUP

One new slide attraction, called Neptune's Revenge, is actually a four-slide complex from ProSlide Technology, Ottawa, Canada.

All entry points to the slide start at the top and riders are able to choose which descent. Riders will grab a one- or two-person tube, then maneuver through dark, enclosed serpentine tunnels, multiple open and closed funnels and high-speed drops. Two slides incorporate Topsy-Turvey funnel flumes, and a third slide features a section known as the Bulletbowl.

The slide complex is known as ProSlide's Mach 4. Ocean Breeze management is boasting that the closest similar slide to this one is in New York and Iowa, and that the Ocean Breeze version is the only one in the country to contain two Topsy-Turvey flumes. All others have one.

The children's play area is also being upgraded with a new play structure that will be packed with interactive features like sprayers, a slide and a large tipping bucket on top.



The new owners of Ocean Breeze Waterpark, Virginia (Va.) Beach, have announced some of the improvements that will be made to that park for this season. Among them are a new attraction that combines four different slides. The equipment for the installation is being supplied by ProSlide Technology Inc. COURTESY OCEAN BREEZE

Whitewater West Industries, B.C., Can., is the supplier for what the park will call Hook's Lagoon.

Other improvements include enhancements to the million-gallon Runaway Bay Wave Pool and numerous aesthetic and architectural renovations throughout the park to create a Caribbean theme. Six more private cabanas are being added.

This multi-million dollar facelift for 2011 is only the start of new things to come for Ocean Breeze, according to the owners.

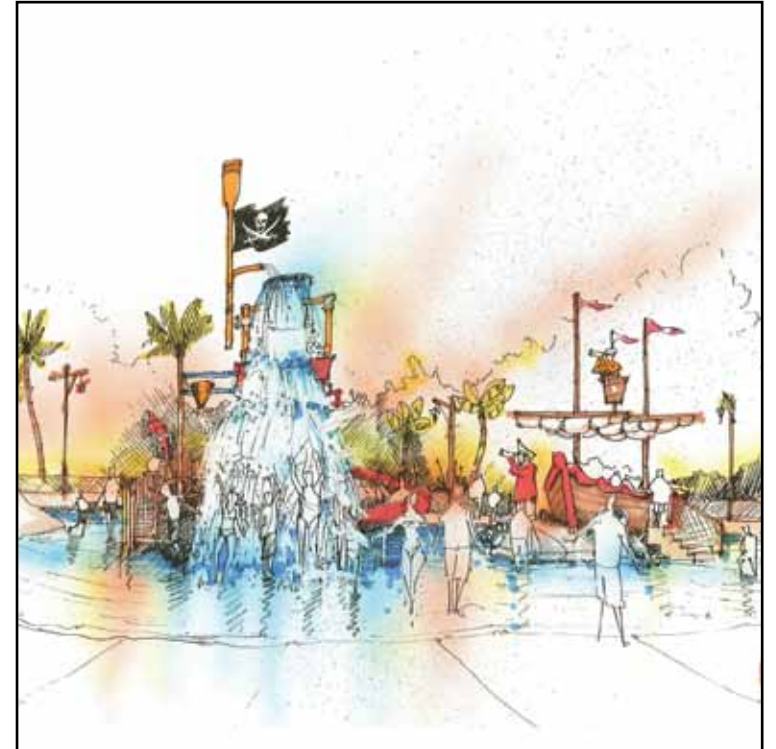
Splashwater Kingdom, Canton, Texas and Splashwater Kingdom, Shreveport, La.

Johnny Blevins, owner of these two waterparks, has new additions going into each park for this season.

For the Canton facility, Blevins, along with his son, Brett, came up with an idea of a volcano slide. Working with his engineers, the team created the ride that will have two slides that drop down into a pool of water. The equipment

for the new attraction was supplied by Fibrart S.A. de C.V., Jalisco, Mexico.

"At the top, there will be sprays of water to simulate the spraying of lava and we are using equipment to add some turbulence to the splash pool,"



Ocean Breeze's new play structure for the 2011 season is being called Hook's Lagoon. Manufactured by Whitewater West Industries, the structure will include interactive features and a tipping bucket on top. COURTESY OCEAN BREEZE

said Marci Blevins, Johnny Blevins' wife. "We are adding red LED lights to the water to make it look more like lava."

The new attraction is located in the Paradise Island area of the waterpark.

In February 2010, the

Blevins family bought Water Town USA, Shreveport, La., and reopened it as another Splash Kingdom Waterpark on Memorial Day last year.

Marci Blevins said the first thing they did to the Shreveport park after purchasing it was refurbish all the slides and "really the whole park." They also added a children's castle for a toddler play area.

Those improvements were completed for the opening of the 2010 season.

"This year we are adding a new slide tower for the children's area," she said, adding Fibrart is also supplying the equipment for this new attraction.

There are now a total of 12 attractions in the Canton park and 15 in the Shreveport park.

Mulligan's Family Fun Center, Murrieta, Calif.

The Mulligan Family Fun Center is adding another way for its patrons to have fun. Now, along with the miniature golf, go-karts, arcade, and Lazer Tag, park management is working on the first phase

► See PARKS, page 26



Construction of the new volcano slide attraction at Splash Kingdom, Canton, Texas, is scheduled for completion at the first of May. Waterpark owner Johnny Blevins and his son, Brett, designed the attraction and worked with his engineers to create it. The equipment came from Fibrart S.A. de C.V., Jalisco, Mexico. COURTESY SPLASH KINGDOM

Have waterpark news of interest? E-mail it to gslade@amusementtoday.com.



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BRIEF

DAFE names top Disney attractions

VIENNA, Ohio—The Haunted Mansion and Disney's Magic Kingdom topped the Darkride and Funhouse Enthusiasts' 2011 member's survey which this year asked members of the international club to name their favorite Disney attractions. A variety of rides and attractions from Disney parks around the world received votes with the following being the Top Ten Favorites:

- No. 10, Expedition Everest, Disney's Animal Kingdom, Orlando, Fla.;
 - No. 9, Splash Mountain, Magic Kingdom, Orlando, Fla.;
 - No. 8, Indiana Jones - Temple of the Forbidden Eye, Disneyland, Anaheim, Calif.;
 - No. 7, Space Mountain, Magic Kingdom, Orlando, Fla.;
 - No. 6, Dinosaur, Disney's Animal Kingdom, Orlando, Fla.;
 - No. 5, Haunted Mansion, Disneyland, Anaheim, Calif.;
 - No. 4, Pirates of the Caribbean, Disneyland, Anaheim, Calif.;
 - No. 3, Pirates of the Caribbean, Magic Kingdom, Orlando, Fla.;
 - No. 2, Twilight Zone Tower of Terror, Disney's Hollywood Studios, Orlando, Fla., and
 - No. 1, Haunted Mansion, Magic Kingdom, Orlando, Fla.
- www.dafe.org.

NEAAPA spring meeting attendees honor Hall of Fame inductees, attend sessions and network

STORY: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Members of the New England Association Amusement Parks & Attractions honored two new additions to the organizations Hall of Fame during this spring's 85th Annual Meeting held here, March 29-30.

The induction was just one of the highlights during the annual meeting. The event is packed with educational sessions, receptions and plenty of opportunities to network with colleagues.

"We had over 125 members at our meeting this year," said Alan Ramsay, NEAAPA secretary and with CLM Entertainment, Cumberland, R.I. "That is about average for



Fred L. Markey
NEAAPA 2011
Hall of Fame

us. We have between 108-110 business members."

Inducted into the Hall of Fame this spring were the late Fred L. Markey, president,



Kate (Horner) Wall
NEAAPA 2011
Hall of Fame

Dodgem Corporation, Warwick, R.I., and Kate (Horner) Wall, formerly with Lake Compounce, Bristol, Conn., and Riverside Park, New

York, N.Y.

The spring meeting, held at the Renaissance Hotel, kicked off with early March 29 with registration and educational sessions. Sessions presented throughout the meeting were: "Don't be Thrown for a Loop: Overcoming Legal Issues Unique to the Amusement Industry," presented by Erik Beard, Day Pitney, LLP; "Strengthening Your Brand in Today's Marketplace," presented by Dorothy Lewis, Fun Station Associates; "Fast Track to Group Sales," by Sheryl Bindelglass, Sherylgolf; "Do You Hear What I Hear?" by Steve McPherson, CPP, CFI; "ASTM International & The Amusement Industry," by Len Morrissey, ASTM F24

▶ See NEAAPA, page 35

Europa Park introduces coaster-inspired FoodLoop restaurant



For the 2011 season, Europa-Park introduced its new FoodLoop restaurant. Thomas Mack, head of hotels and gastronomy, demonstrates the concept, which features a roller coaster-inspired tubular track system that delivers food and drink to individual guests' tables. COURTESY EUROPA PARK

GERMANY—Europa-Park kicked off the 2011 season with the final component to its popular Europa-Park Historama attraction that opened last summer. More than 35 years of Germany's biggest theme park's history is highlighted within the park's landmark gold-and-blue pyramid. And with the construction of FoodLoop, the re-design of this park favorite is now complete. The innovative concept offers themed cuisine of the highest order. With 215 seats on two floors and an unimpeded sight line over the park, the FoodLoop constitutes yet another highlight in Europa-Park's varied culinary offerings.

When entering the new restaurant, visitors will find more than just food. Shiny steel tubular tracks wind

down from the upper floor and through the room to reach each table. Cooking pots and bottles rush through tight bends and head directly towards the loop on an intricate track layout and then to each table.

FoodLoop offers 130 seats on the first floor and 65 seats on the second. Additionally, a showman wagon, which has been turned into a coffee bar, also seats 20 guests. Each table is equipped with three modern touchscreens that allow guests to order numerous dishes and drinks. When the order is complete, a vertical lift transports the pots and bottles upwards so that they can speed down elaborate tracks and reach their corresponding table.

▶ See FOODLOOP, page 35

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Updates to the AIMS certification program

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Each year the AIMS certification committee and staff review and evaluate input from the industry



KING

in relationship to the AIMS certification program. Modifications and additions to the program are implemented at the annual AIMS Safety Seminar. This year's seminar is to be held at the Doubletree by Hilton Orlando at SeaWorld November 9-15, 2011.

Classes will be held from Thursday, Nov. 10 through Monday, Nov. 14. All AIMS certification testing will take place on Sunday evening, Nov. 13. Results from testing will be available to students when they turn in their CEU sign-off sheet on Tuesday at the AIMS booth during the IAAPA Attractions Expo. All certificates of completion, CEU certificates, certification certificates and cards will be issued on Tuesday, Nov. 15.

A big change for 2011 is that all qualifying documentation and applications for testing must be submitted to the AIMS office by Nov. 1. This new deadline will help insure accuracy in preparing tests and allow sufficient time to confirm one's qualifications. No one will be permitted to sit for an exam if their paperwork is incomplete. It is also our goal to alleviate long waiting times at registration.

AIMS will be introducing the Level III Professional Ride Inspector (PRI) certification in November. To qualify to sit for this exam one must provide the following:

- Proof of a high school education or equivalent.

- Certificates showing 12 Continuing Education Units (CEU) from attending amusement industry or other applicable seminars or education.

- Proof of 120 months of experience in the area of amusement ride inspection.

- Documentation of passing an eye exam within six months prior to taking the PRI exam. Detailed requirements for this eye exam are explained on the Inspector application available through the AIMS website.

- Copy of a current AIMS Level II Certified Ride Inspector (CRI) certification.

Along with the Inspector Level III certification test, we will be offering the AIMS Inspector Level I and II as well as Operations Level I and II, Maintenance Level I and II and the Aquatics Operations Level I. Please visit our website at www.aimsintl.org to view the entire AIMS Certification Program.

Those planning to take an AIMS certification test should send all completed applications, along with supporting documentation to: AIMS International, Ltd., 3026 South Orange, Santa Ana, Calif. 92707. Documents can also be faxed to the AIMS office at (714) 276-9666 or emailed to certs@aimsintl.org. Please remember the Nov. 1 deadline.

A list of AIMS certificate holders is available on our website at www.aimsintl.org. If you have any questions regarding this list of certificate holders please email the certification office at certs@aimsintl.org.

We look forward to seeing you in November and hope you have a safe and prosperous summer!

AIMS member spotlight

Editor's note: This is the second in a series of articles to appear in AIMS News & Notes that spotlights an AIMS member who has been active in the annual AIMS Safety Seminar. To suggest a future spotlight on an AIMS member contact Steve Laycock at:

steve.laycock@rides.com

Bobby Park

Associate Safety

Engineer, QSI;

State of California DOSH

Bobby Park, has worked for two different owner/operators in the amusement industry, first at Sea World in San Diego and later with Bell's Amusement Park in Tulsa, Oklahoma. His hands-on knowledge of amusement rides gave him a good background when he went back to his home state of California to become a state ride inspector. Although he is a dedicated family man he regularly spends one week a year of his own time at the AIMS Safety Seminar. This time is spent continuing his educational activities to sharpen his knowledge and abilities so he can better perform his job functions. In November of 2010 Bobby was an attendee at the AIMS Safety Seminar in Orlando, Florida.



PARK

Here he takes a few minutes to answer questions for *AIMS News & Notes*.

How did you get started in the amusement business?

"It started with SeaWorld in San Diego as a summer job. I was a technician working on arcade equipment and remote control boats and trucks."

What did you do before you were in the amusement business?

"As a teenager while in high school I worked at the local Burger King where I was the head French fry cook."

What do you do in your free time?

"My free time is spent with my family where my time is dedicated to being a good dad to my children and a good husband to my wife. I enjoy my free time, being with my family and involved in their many activities."

What do you currently do in the amusement industry?

"I am currently an inspector with Division of Occupational Safety & Health (DOSH) for the state of California. My principle function is to inspect rides at fixed locations."

What is so special about working for DOSH?

"We help the owner/operator maintain and operate their rides to be in compliance with industry standards such as ASTM, American Welding Society (AWS), American Society of Nonde-

structive Testing (ASNT), California Electrical Code (CEC) and applicable California regulations. We provide an extra set of eyes to see potential problems and strive to keep the rides as safe as possible. I believe in safety and it gives me a good feeling to know that I am helping owner/operators to provide a safe fun experience to the general public."

Which amusement rides that you work on gives you the least amount of trouble?

"I actually see the fewest issues with some of the older style rides such as the Bradley & Kay 'Huff N Puff' and the Allan Herschell 'Helicopter' ride."

How long have you worked at your present organization?

"I have been in the amusement industry for the past 20 years but with the current organization for the last 10 years."

Tell us one thing you have learned from the AIMS Safety Seminar.

"There are a number of things I could mention, but the most impressive thing is just the amount of time that is spent in designing rides that provide a thrill while keeping the forces on the passengers and ride at an acceptable level."

What was your favorite class at the AIMS Safety Seminar and why?

"I need to pick two."

"1. One was the Metallurgy Class with Cindy Emerick who has a degree in metallurgy. She was very effective in explaining the processes and elements involved in developing alloys and analysis for amusement rides without losing the class in technical jargon."

"2. Another favorite was the Visual Inspection Class with Jeff Abendshien. This class outlined different facets in the inspection process. One method he used was an exercise in visual inspection which identified differences among individuals that presented a sound philosophy to visual inspection."

Why should someone attend the AIMS Safety Seminar?

"To enhance their knowledge base, expand in areas they may not be as familiar with, build on their skill set, networking, developing relationships with others related to their work and most of all to provide a safe and enjoyable experience for our guests. There are many classes directly related to the core disciplines of the amusement industry that help develop the individual. There were more classes I wanted to take, just not enough hours in the day."

In general, how was your overall experience at the AIMS Safety Seminar and how prepared were your instructors?

"This past year's seminar was excellent! I always learn something at the seminar and this year was no exception. I found the instructors to be well prepared in their fields and being able to network with your peers and develop those relationships enhances the purpose of attending, even long after the seminar is over."



MIDWAY

CARNIVALS

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BRIEF

Kalamazoo fairgrounds getting a face lift

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—A \$3.6 million construction project began in late March at the Kalamazoo County Expo Center and Fairgrounds that will add nearly 35,000-square-feet to the Expo Center, demolish the horse track around the grandstand and do some electrical upgrades.

According to a report on MLive.com, the construction is set to be complete by Sept. 1, 2011, which would mean that it would still be going on during the fair, set this year for Aug. 8-18.

Earlier in March, the Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners voted to issue bonds to pay for the construction over the next 15 years.

In making the proposal in 2010, Parks Director David Rachowicz explained that these were changes that needed to take place to attract new events. He said that the demolition of the horse track could make room for more vendor space. The horse track was used for harness racing during the fair.

He was quoted last year in a story from MLive.com, saying: "Horsing racing for one day with 20 spectators is not a good use for that property."

Wade Shows, Livonia, is the carnival midway provider.

2011 Houston Livestock Show a record breaker

STORY: Pam Sherborne
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

HOUSTON, Texas—The 79th edition of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, with volunteer help and a lot of enthusiastic fans, ended on a record-breaking run this year, with 2,262,834 in total attendance during the March 1-20 run.

The record total also included a single-day record of 150,948 the final Saturday of the fair. That broke the record set in 2003.

Some other numbers for Houston included a total attendance of 1,255,323 for the paid rodeo and headliner concerts, which are just under 9,000 from the record number of 1,264,074, set in 2010. Five 2011 RodeoHouston performances landed in the list of the Show's Top 20 paid rodeo attendance records. Those

2011 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Fun Facts by the numbers

- More than 187,000 stuffed animals were won at the games on the midway.
- More than 20,000 young cowboys and cowgirls took a ride on the pony rides.
- More than 23,000 people visited the butterfly house.
- More than 9,000 children rolled around the water in giant bubbles.

Top 5 rides on Midway

The 68-ride midway was provided by Ray Cammack Shows, Laveen, Ariz. and selected independents

1. **Windstorm**, manufactured by SDC (owned by Steve VanderVorste)
2. **Skyride**, Dopplemyer
3. **G Force**, KMG
4. **Hi-Miler Coaster**, Carl Miler
5. **Wave**, SDC

were Brad Paisley, with an attendance of 73,825, who took over the third spot in the top 20, while Miranda Lambert, attendance 73,811, and La Arrolladorra Banda El Limon and La Leyenda, 73,469, took

over the top third and fourth spots, respectively.

"There are so many variables regarding attendance, from the weather to the economy, but we continue to excel by creating an exciting, inno-

vative, fun, affordable place for friends and families to enjoy," said Skip Wagner, president of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, in announcing the record attendance. "With the help of the more than 24,000 show volunteers, we are able to continue to be the largest livestock show, richest regular-season rodeo and offer the best entertainment option around."

This year, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo hosted 2,291 international guests from 61 countries, including large delegations from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and Venezuela. Several guests came from as far away as Thailand and Kyrgyzstan.

Other highlights include a record 244,184 people visiting the World's Championship Bar-B-Que Contest to help

► See HOUSTON, page 42



Left, the Hi-Miler Coaster, manufactured by Carl Miler, came in fourth in the top five rides on the midway of Ray Cammack Shows, Laveen, Ariz., who provided the carnival for the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo with 68 rides and 34 games this year. Right, independent ride operator Steve VanderVorste booked his Windstorm in with RCS this year at Houston where it ranked in the top five for rides on the midway. COURTESY JASON KNUTSON

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JUNE

21-24

Asian Attractions Expo, Resorts World Sentosa, Singapore
 •www.iaapa.org

SEPTEMBER

16 & 17

2011 Golden Ticket Awards, Holiday World, Santa Claus, Ind.
 •www.GoldenTicketAwards.com

27-29

Euro Attractions Show, The Olympia, London, England
 •www.euroattractionsshow.com

OCTOBER

3-7

World Waterpark Association's 31st Annual Symposium (3-7)
 & Trade Show (5 & 6), New Orleans, La.
 •www.waterparks.org

NOVEMBER

9-15

2011 AIMS Safety Seminar, Orlando, Fla.
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15-18

IAAPA Attractions Expo, Orlando, Fla.
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