

# AMUSEMENT TODAY

SEPTEMBER  
2006

B

*All about the BUSINESS of FUN!*

## Amusement Today's 2006 Golden Ticket Awards

**Tim Baldwin**  
*Amusement Today*

They are the biggest fans and harshest critics. Both loved and tolerated at the same time, the amusement park enthusiast embraces our industry with a passion and devotion that cannot be matched. They are the well-traveled connoisseur, as testified by finalists in ten international countries outside of the U.S. on our charts.

When placed together, this community of park fans forms a voice no outside marketing can obtain. It is their collective experience that enables *Amusement Today* to honor the Best of the Best. Originated in 1998, the Golden Ticket Awards by *Amusement Today* have since been labeled the "Oscars of the Amusement Industry." We at *AT* stand humbled and are indebted to the hundreds of amusement

park aficionados that share their thoughts and insights.

While an honor to be selected to be on our panel of experts, it is also a challenge for the visitor and enthusiast to assess the countless positive attributes of each park and narrow the top performers down into a single answer. Hundreds and hundreds of coasters are ridden, several outfits are drenched, and many a tasty meal have been devoured with their hard-earned cash.

Such a challenge is a good thing. More than just a matter of adding capital and machinery, today's parks are focusing on the various qualities of a guest's satisfactory experience and evaluating how they can surpass those expectations. When determining the Best of the Best, a more difficult challenge for our panel means our industry is continuing to head in the right direction.



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**Host Park**  
**2006 Golden Ticket Awards**  
**August 27, 2006**

**THE PHOENIX**  
**VOTED # 5**  
**TOP WOODEN**  
**ROLLER COASTER**

*Thank You for*  
**ANOTHER GREAT YEAR!**

**2006 WINNER**  
**BEST**  
**AMUSEMENT PARK**  
**FOOD**



# A new category added to 2006 park winners

*SeaWorld Orlando joins Cedar Point, Schlitterbahn and Legoland as Best Parks*

SeaWorld Orlando clearly swam away with *Amusement Today's* newest category in the Golden Ticket park division. Added this year was Best Marine Life Park. With 65 percent of the vote, the Orlando themer was able to capture this inaugural Golden Ticket.

Sister parks SeaWorld San Antonio and SeaWorld San Diego take the second and third

place wins. Rounding out the finalists were Marineland in Canada and Six Flags Marine World in California.

Best Park is taken by Cedar Point for the 9th straight year. The massive amusement resort complex in Sandusky, Ohio continues to rate as a top destination. John Hildebrandt, general manager for Cedar Point, says, "The best part of the job is being able to walk the park. It's a special time. I love to talk to the guests and the employees, as well." Hildebrandt continues, "People tell you wonderful stories. We're very multi-generational. Fathers taking their kids remember coming to Cedar



Point as a kid."

A 9th annual win is also shared by Schlitterbahn for Best Waterpark. Once an undiscovered gem, the New Braunfels waterpark is now a statewide treasure that has helped revolutionize the industry while still maintaining its home grown roots.

Jeffrey Siebert, director of communications for Schlitterbahn, is a new trans-

plant to the New Braunfels area. While Schlitterbahn has a loyal fan base, Siebert can relate to the first time visitor.

"It is surprising just how much there is to do in a day," Siebert continues, "My family can go into one area and stay there for a long time because we like doing those attractions over and over. We can spend a whole day and only cover a third of what Schlitterbahn has to offer."

With a vast variety of areas and attractions, high tech innovations nestle in nicely among toddler-sized fare. "People are so passionate about their favorite attractions," Siebert adds.

Best Children's Park is a repeat win for Legoland in Carlsbad, California. Specifically geared toward the younger set, interactive attractions and an atypical blend of amusement rides make this Lego-branded park a unique find. Also appreciated is that parents and their children can ride almost all of the rides together. John Jakobsen, general manager of Legoland California, says, "We are only seven years old, but have added twelve new attractions in the last two-and-a-half years alone. We are continuing to find ways to create new and exciting experiences for our guests." *-Tim Baldwin*



PHOTO COURTESY CEDAR POINT

The Cedar Point skyline is packed with plenty of rides and attractions. This destination/resort has been voted Best Park for nine years straight.



PHOTO COURTESY SCHLITTERBAHN

Schlitterbahn holds onto its title as king of the waterparks. It has been voted Best Waterpark for nine seasons in a row.



PHOTO COURTESY LEGOLAND

2006 is Legoland California's third consecutive win for Best Children's Park. Unique interactive family fun makes Legoland the Best of the Best.



PHOTO COURTESY SEAWORLD ORLANDO

SeaWorld Orlando takes the top spot as it takes the debut Golden Ticket for Best Marine Life Park. Shamu seems pleased.

# Cedar Fair Entertainment Company

**FUN** from Coast to Coast!

<p>SANDUSKY, OH cedarpoint.com</p>	<p>MUSKEGON, MI miadventure.com</p>	<p>BUENA PARK, CA knotts.com</p>	<p>SHAKOPEE, MN valleyfair.com</p>	<p>KANSAS CITY, MO worldsoffun.com</p>	<p>GILROY, CA bonfantegardens.com</p>
<p>SANDUSKY, OH cedarpoint.com</p>	<p>AURORA, OH geaugalake.com</p>	<p>ORANGE COUNTY SAN DIEGO PALM SPRINGS soakcityusa.com</p>	<p>ALLENTOWN, PA dorneypark.com</p>	<p>KANSAS CITY, MO worldsoffun.com</p>	<p>LAS VEGAS, NV startrekexp.com</p>
<p>VAUGHAN, ON canadas-wonderland.com</p>	<p>CHARLOTTE, NC carowinds.com</p>	<p>DOSWELL, VA kingsdominion.com</p>	<p>KINGS MILLS, OH pki.com</p>	<p>SANTA CLARA, CA pgathrills.com</p>	



# Thanks for your support



**1** Best Amusement Park  
CEDAR POINT

**1** Best Capacity  
CEDAR POINT



**3** Friendliest Employees  
CEDAR POINT



**4** Best Outdoor Night Show Production  
CEDAR POINT



Cedar Fair  
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Sandusky, OH 44870-5259  
(419) 627-2233

[cedarfair.com](http://cedarfair.com)

# in the Golden Ticket Awards

**Top Steel Roller Coasters**



**2** Millennium Force®  
Cedar Point



**3** Magnum  
Cedar Point



**10** Top Thrill Dragster™  
Cedar Point



**14** Raptor®  
Cedar Point



**15** Steel Force  
Dorney Park & Wildwater Kingdom



**26** Mamba  
Worlds of Fun

**Top Wooden Roller Coasters**



**6** Shivering Timbers  
Michigan's Adventure



**8** The Beast  
Kings Island



**12** GhostRider  
Knott's Berry Farm



**Best Kids' Area**  
KINGS ISLAND

**1**

**Best Kids' Area**



**3** CAROWINDS

**Best Kids' Area**



**4** KINGS DOMINION

**Best Park Concert Venue**



**1** KINGS ISLAND

**Best Halloween Event**



**2** KNOTT'S BERRY FARM

**Best Landscaping**



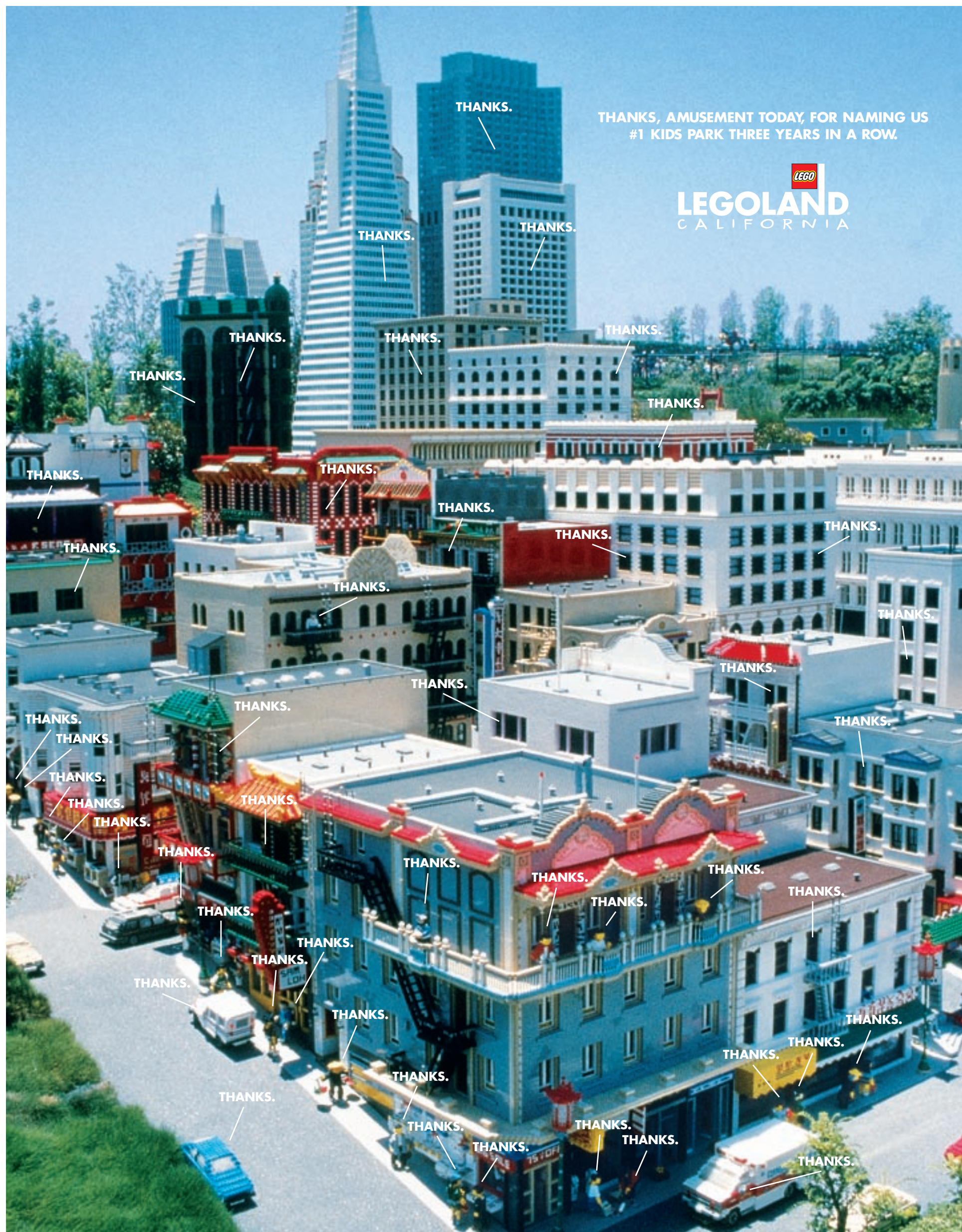
**3** BONFANTE GARDENS

**Best Waterpark Landscaping**



**5** KINGS ISLAND





THANKS.

THANKS, AMUSEMENT TODAY, FOR NAMING US  
#1 KIDS PARK THREE YEARS IN A ROW.



THANKS.

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COME. EXPERIENCE. BELIEVE.

AT THE HEART OF EVERY BEING IS A SPIRIT OF WONDER AND CURIOSITY.  
FEEL THAT SPIRIT SOAR IN OUR ALL-NEW, VISUALLY STUNNING SHAMU® SHOW.

SHAMU'S NEW SHOW...NOW OPEN





# Thank you, Amusement Today

It takes 6,000 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.



The Worlds of  
**Busch  
GARDENS.  
EUROPE**  
WILLIAMSBURG, VA



# Thank You Amusement Today!



**#1 for Family Fun**

1 (877) Go Family holidayworld.com  
Jct. Ind. 162 & 245 Santa Claus, Ind.



# Courteous staff, landscaping and food add to guest experience

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

Her name tag says “Queen of Clean” due to a flattering magazine article in the past, but if she had to take on an official title of Holiday World and Splashin’ Safari, Pat Koch says it would be Director of Values. These core values are obviously taken seriously by park employees as witnessed by the continual wins of Cleanest and Friendliest Golden Tickets categories. Apparently the guests see it as well. Pat Koch recalls talking with former employees that have grown and gone on to careers in their own lives.

“They tell me that they find themselves frequently picking up trash when they go somewhere.” Koch also knows that their employees identify with these standards. “People have told me they have left a job because it didn’t have our same values that they had experienced while working at Holiday World.”

In the Cleanest category, Busch Gardens Europe placed second, and three Disney parks—the original in California and two parks at the Walt Disney World complex—complete the top five.

Other high ranking parks in the Friendliest category are Dollywood, which nabs a second place spot, followed by Cedar Point, Knoebels, and Magic Kingdom respectively.

Repeat winners are also found with the Best Landscaping category. So often guests find themselves



PHOTO COURTESY HOLIDAY WORLD & SPLASHIN’ SAFARI  
Thanks to dedicated staff Holiday World is spotless.

enjoying their day simply by being in a beautiful environment. *Amusement Today* has often heard guests comment that they just enjoy walking around a park. Busch Gardens in Williamsburg, Virginia continues its stronghold on Best Landscaping in an amusement park. Donnie Mills, general manager of Busch Gardens Europe, praises the parks’ workers for its accolades. “We are dedicated to excellence and credit our success to our hard-working team members,” Mills states.

Efteling, located in The Netherlands, still has an impressive presence on our charts at second place. Bonfante Gardens, Busch’s sister park in Tampa, and Dollywood round out the top five.

Best Landscaping in a

Waterpark goes once again to Schlitterbahn in New Braunfels. Xeriscaping brings in natural vegetation native to Texas to complement the beauty of the Comal River ambience. Walt Disney World’s Blizzard Beach and Typhoon Lagoon boast the Disney touch to battle for second and third place. Splashin’ Safari and Boomerang Bay at Kings Island close out the category.

Let’s eat! Good food at a good price places Knoebels firmly at the top once again in the Best Food category. Variety and quality speak to the other finalists in the category—Epcot, Dollywood, Busch Gardens Europe, and Silver Dollar City.

—Tim Baldwin



PHOTO COURTESY HOLIDAY WORLD & SPLASHIN’ SAFARI  
Holiday World takes great pride in making certain guests feel right at home.



Knoebels’ delicious, affordable food puts a smile on everyone’s face.  
PHOTO COURTESY KNOEBELS / DAN FEIGHT



PHOTO COURTESY BUSCH GARDENS EUROPE  
Guests at Busch Gardens are mesmerized by beautiful, thematic landscapes rich with details of authentic European botanical gardens.



PHOTO COURTESY SCHLITTERBAHN  
Lush foliage and playful topiaries enhance the scenic beauty of the original Schlitterbahn waterpark in New Braunfels, Texas.

# Park, individual, supplier each recipients of 2006 Publisher’s Pick

## The granddaddy of all fairs, The State Fair of Texas celebrates 120 years , plans for bigger future

For 120 years, The State Fair of Texas has made its home in Dallas, Texas. The Dallas State Fair and Exposition, to which the present State Fair of Texas traces its origin, was chartered as a private corporation on Jan. 30, 1886, by a group of Dallas businessmen. In 1904, the Texas State Fair sold its property to the City of Dallas under an agreement that set aside a period each fall to hold the annual exposition.

The reorganized fair prospered, establishing new records for receipts and attendance as 300,000 people streamed through the gates in 1905. Automobile races and stunt flying exhibitions became top attractions. Attendance topped the 1 million mark in 1916. The 1920’s brought significant development and increased activity to the fairgrounds.

In 1930 the fair constructed the football stadium now know as The Cotton Bowl. In 1934, the fair park grounds were selected as the central exposition site for the proposed Texas Centennial celebration and construction began on a \$25 million project that transformed the existing fairgrounds into a masterpiece of art and imagination. The 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition attracted more than 6 million people during its six-month run.

Following the Centennial, the fair’s success continued with numerous marquee rides and coasters including the Triple Track Racer and later the Comet coaster. Most famous was perhaps the 1950’s addition of the fair’s mascot, Big Tex, a talking 52-foot tall cowboy.

But to guests making their annual visit to the Texas fair, two things stand out. A Fletcher’s corny dog is a must have and the Texas Star is a must do. Opening in 1985, the 212-foot-tall Ferris wheel was the tallest wheel in North America.

Today, the 24-day fair draws more than 3 million guests and looks more like a park than a fair. That success is from the creative mind of fair president Errol McKoy, a longtime amusement industry veteran who started with Six Flags Over Texas.

Under McKoy’s watchful eye, the fair now features more than 300 exhibitors, 200 food vendors, 70 rides, livestock competitions, creative arts contests, football and first-class entertainment. His theme park roots are seen throughout the grounds in signage, lighting, the 2,000-plus trash cans and now with the planting of flowers that is second only to Disney’s Epcot for number of flowers planted. The future looks even brighter with a sky ride, looping coaster, observation tower and more planned in the next few years.

Congratulations to the State Fair of Texas on your 120 outstanding years!



PHOTO COURTESY TEXAS STATE FAIR  
Each fall the State Fair of Texas super midway features more than 70 thrilling rides.



PHOTO COURTESY WESTERN PLAYLAND  
The new Western Playland opened this season in time for the July 4 holiday.

## Unable to expand, Pat Thomson did what many said couldn’t be done, moves Western Playland to new site

El Paso’s amusement park since 1960, Western Playland is still El Paso’s fun park, but it’s no longer in Texas. It’s now across the state line in Sunland Park, New Mexico.

After 46 years of operation, Western Playland is set up for business on a new 25-acre site, west of town in a growing entertainment district that features a casino and a horse-race track across the highway. Park owner Pat Thomson has the family-gearred park positioned for success and growth for years to come.

But the path to the future has had as many ups and downs as a roller coaster ride. And it’s a roller coaster, that was never built, causing all the problems.

Park founders, Leo Hines and Wally Thompson were ready to retire. Son Pat, who started working at the park at the age of 12, was the natural choice to take over the park. As a result, he took over the park in 1998 as president and part owner. His management style led to much success in the park overseeing the installation of several new rides. But one new ride Pat wanted, he could never get—a roller coaster.

Because Western Playland was located in a county park, Ascarate Park, it paid lease money to the county for the land as well as a percentage of the ticket sales. The amusement park was the lifeline of the county park. The worn out baseball fields and other park amenities never drew in the visitors like Western Playland did.

The first attempt to add a coaster was in 1990 when a deal had been reached to move an Arrow loop and corkscrew coaster to the park, but the county would not allow it. In 2000, Pat thought he would try to build a new \$2 million wooden coaster on 1.5-acres of unused land next to park. On paper it looked good. The park would finally get its new signature ride and the county would get more money from the park on land rental and the increased ticket revenues.

Once again, the county commissioners said no. That turned out to be the last straw for Pat, who then spent the next several years searching for a way out. He wanted out of the county park and out of his lease. He found the right opportunity and quickly took advantage, making plans to move the park.

On July 1, the new 23 ride facility opened to the joys of the El Paso faithful. Two new rides, a Miler family coaster and a Larson Flying Scooter give the guests the new rides they wanted, at least until that signature roller coaster arrives. And when it does, this time, Pat Thomson won’t have to get permission from the county.

For his continued efforts, we salute Pat Thomson as AT’s Person of the Year.

## Bill Robinson’s marketing success outlasts many parks, celebrates 45 years in business

Success brings longevity. That’s certainly the case for William H. “Bill” Robinson and his advertising and marketing firm WHR Inc. Celebrating 45 years in the business this year is proof this Cincinnati-Ohio-based firm is doing it right.

Bill’s roots in the amusement industry began in April, 1962 when he took a job as a ride operator in Kiddieland at LeSourdsville Lake / Americana Amusement Park near Middletown, Ohio. Little did this young man realize the path he had just chosen.

During his 21 years at the family-owned park, he headed nearly every department at one time or another, from group sales to operations to marketing. Those marketing efforts opened the door for him to start an in-house advertising agency in 1977.

In 1983 Bill left Americana, and along with a partner, started the marketing consulting group—Adelman, Robinson & Associates, Inc.—to provide a variety of marketing services to amusement parks, waterparks and others in the industry. In 1991, his partner left the industry, and Bill formed his own company William H. Robinson, Inc.

During the past 42 years, Bill has served two terms as a member of the IAAPA Board of Directors. As a member of IAAPA’s Public Relations Committee (1981-1986) he wrote the popular column Promotions Corner in the associations *Funworld* magazine. He has also served as chairman of the Promotions and Advertising Scrapbook Committee, and in 1986, he named, formed and co-chaired the first IAAPA Brass Ring Awards.

Since 1974, Bill has received six service awards from IAAPA for work in the amusement industry. His clients have taken home the brass time and time again, winning more than 100 IAAPA Brass Ring Awards. They have also been repeat recipients of the Wave Review Awards from the WWA and the Golden Token Awards from IALEI. Bill and his associates have also received advertising industry awards for creative and production excellence including the CLIO, ADDY and TELLY awards to name a few.

To date Bill has been assisted more than 50 amusement parks and related facilities with their development of advertising and marketing campaigns, as well as their group sales efforts.

From the Benson’s, Hamel’s and Americana’s of our past to Bill’s current list of Indiana Beach, Lake Winnepesaukah and Knight’s Action Park, we know those parks are like Allstate, they’re in good hands.

Congratulations Bill Robinson on “supplying” our industry with 45 years of outstanding work!



PHOTO COURTESY WHR INC.  
The group sales force at Americana Amusement Park in 1976 included l to r: Tom Moulton, Ron Berni, Guy Sutton, Uncle Freddy the Fun Bear, Frank Silvani and William Robinson.



# WILLIAM H. ROBINSON, INC.

## The Big Idea People!

A Creative Services Company Serving the Amusement, Water Park & Support Industry for 45 Years!

*Congratulations Bill!*  
*Over 45 Years of*  
*"Big Ideas"*  
*and*  
*Big Results!*



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# Big Thanks

from the Big Guy!



# STATE FAIR OF TEXAS®

NAMED  
**"Park of the Year"**





# Park and Ride Winners

Ranked by percentage of votes cast

## BEST PARK

Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	37%
Pleasure Beach Blackpool	Blackpool, England	10%
Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.	8%
Islands of Adventure	Orlando, Fla.	7%
Disneyland	Anaheim, Calif.	(tie) 6%
Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	(tie) 6%
Europa Park	Rust, Germany	(tie) 5%
Holiday World	Santa Claus, Ind.	(tie) 5%
Busch Gardens Europe	Williamsburg, Va.	4%
Magic Kingdom	Orlando, Fla.	3%

## BEST WATERPARK

Schlitterbahn	New Braunfels, Texas	52%
Splashin’ Safari	Santa Claus, Ind.	22%
Blizzard Beach	Orlando, Fla.	6%
Noah’s Ark	Wisconsin Dells, Wis.	5%
Typhoon Lagoon	Orlando, Fla.	4%

## BEST CHILDREN’S PARK

Legoland California	Carlsbad, Calif.	43%
Idlewild	Ligonier, Pa.	15%
Memphis Kiddie Park	Cleveland, Ohio	(tie) 8%
Sesame Place	Langhorne, Pa.	(tie) 8%
Kiddieland	Chicago, Ill.	6%

## BEST MARINE LIFE PARK

SeaWorld Orlando	Orlando, Fla.	65%
SeaWorld San Antonio	San Antonio, Texas	15%
SeaWorld San Diego	San Diego, Calif.	8%
Marineland	Niagara Falls, Ontario	(tie) 6%
Six Flags Marine World	Vallejo, Calif.	(tie) 6%

## FRIENDLIEST PARK

Holiday World	Santa Claus, Ind.	44%
Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	20%
Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	11%
Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.	(tie) 5%
Magic Kingdom	Orlando, Fla.	(tie) 5%

## CLEANEST PARK

Holiday World	Santa Claus, Ind.	46%
Busch Gardens Europe	Williamsburg, Va.	10%
Disneyland	Anaheim, Calif.	9%
Magic Kingdom	Orlando, Fla.	7%
Epcot	Orlando, Fla.	5%

## BEST SHOWS

Six Flags Fiesta Texas	San Antonio, Texas	28%
Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	21%
Busch Gardens Europe	Williamsburg, Va.	10%
Silver Dollar City	Branson, Mo.	6%
Disney-MGM	Orlando, Fla.	5%

## BEST FOOD

Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.	24%
Epcot	Orlando, Fla.	17%
Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	10%
Busch Gardens Europe	Williamsburg, Va.	(tie) 9%
Silver Dollar City	Branson, Mo.	(tie) 9%

## BEST WATER RIDE (Park)

Dudley Do-Rights’ Ripsaw Falls	Islands of Adventure	25%
Valhalla	Pleasure Beach Blackpool	18%
Mountain Slidewinder	Dollywood	9%
Splash Mountain	Magic Kingdom	8%
Journey to Atlantis	SeaWorld Orlando	8%

# The Best New Rides of 2006

## BEST NEW RIDE FOR 2006 (Amusement Park)

Voyage	Holiday World	50%
Expedition Everest	Disney’s Animal Kingdom	16%
El Toro	Six Flags Great Adventure	8%
Goliath	Six Flags Over Georgia	7%
Kentucky Rumbler	Beech Bend Amusement Park	4%

## BEST NEW RIDE FOR 2006 (Waterpark)

Bahari River	Splashin’ Safari	32%
Time Warp	Noah’s Ark	(tie) 15%
Tornado	Six Flags Great America	(tie) 15%
Fire Tower Falls	Dolly’s Splash Country	9%

## BEST WATERPARK RIDE

Master Blaster	Schlitterbahn	34%
Zinga	Splashin’ Safari	13%
Zoombabwe	Splashin’ Safari	7%
Typhoon	Six Flags New England	6%
Black Anaconda	Noah’s Ark	(tie) 4%
Summit Plummet	Blizzard Beach	(tie) 4%

## BEST KIDS’ AREA

Paramount’s Kings Island	Kings Mills, Ohio	53%
Islands of Adventure	Orlando, Fla.	11%
Paramount’s Carowinds	Charolotte, N.C.	6%
Paramount’s Kings Dominion	Doswell, Va.	5%
Idlewild	Ligonier, Pa.	4%

## BEST LANDSCAPING (Park)

Busch Gardens Europe	Williamsburg, Va.	44%
Efteling	Kaatsheuvel, The Netherlands	14%
Bonfante Gardens	Gilroy, Calif.	8%
Busch Gardens Africa	Tampa, Fla.	6%
Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	4%

## BEST LANDSCAPING (Waterpark)

Schlitterbahn	New Braunfels, Texas	29%
Blizzard Beach	Orlando, Fla.	20%
Typhoon Lagoon	Orlando, Fla.	17%
Splashin’ Safari	Santa Claus, Ind.	8%
Boomerang Bay/PKI	Kings Mills, Ohio	4%

## BEST OUTDOOR NIGHT PRODUCTION

Epcot	Orlando, Fla.	31%
Six Flags Fiesta Texas	San Antonio, Texas	22%
Disneyland	Anaheim, Calif.	14%
Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	(tie) 10%
Disney-MGM	Orlando, Fla.	(tie) 10%

## BEST DARK RIDE

Amazing Adventures of Spiderman	Islands of Adventure	35%
Haunted Mansion	Knoebels Amusement Resort	15%
Twilight Zone Tower of Terror	Disney-MGM	7%
Indiana Jones...Forbidden Eye	Disneyland	6%
Haunted Mansion	Magic Kingdom	5%

## BEST HALLOWEEN EVENT

Universal Orlando	Orlando, Fla.	23%
Knott’s Berry Farm	Buena Park, Calif.	22%
Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	13%
Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.	11%
Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	9%

# Three-year format awards

<b>BEST CAPACITY</b>		
Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	42%
Magic Kingdom	Orlando, Fla.	14%
Disneyland	Anaheim, Calif.	9%
Holiday World	Santa Claus, Ind.	(tie) 4%
Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.	(tie) 4%

<b>BEST THEMING OF AN ATTRACTION</b>		
Dueling Dragons	Islands of Adventure	22%
Expedition Everest	Disney’s Animal Kingdom	18%
Twilight Zone Tower of Terror	Disney-MGM	11%
Indiana Jones...Forbidden Eye	Disneyland	7%
Revenge of the Mummy	Universal Studios Orlando	6%

<b>BEST PARK CONCERT VENUE</b>		
Paramount’s Kings Island	Kings Mills, Ohio	13%
Six Flags Fiesta Texas	San Antonio, Texas	12%
Hersheypark	Hershey, Pa.	11%
Six Flags Darien Lake	Darien Center, N.Y.	10%
Universal Orlando	Orlando, Fla.	6%



PHOTO COURTESY CEDAR POINT  
Moving guests quickly through queue lines is one of Cedar Point’s award-winning specialties.



PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSAL’S ISLANDS OF ADVENTURE  
Dueling Dragons, IOA’s “king of the castle,” retains the title for best themed attraction.



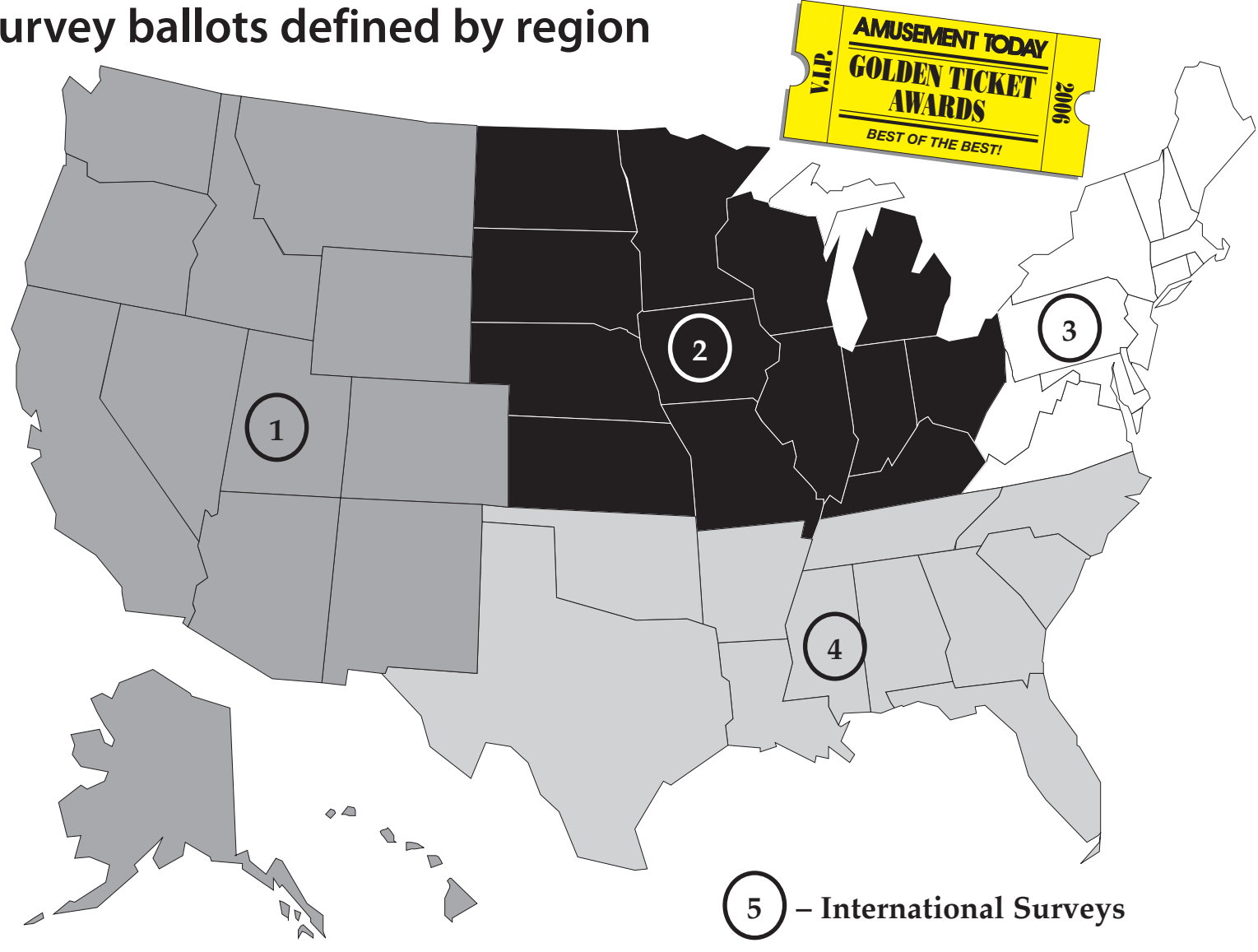
PHOTO COURTESY PARAMOUNT’S KINGS ISLAND  
Top honor for park concert venue went to PKI’s massive TimberWolf Amphitheatre.

# 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. Your expertise is not only appreciated, but also your kindness.

Any well-traveled enthusiasts who wish to be considered for the 2007 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 intenational participants.



5 – International Surveys



# It's Show time!

***Six Flags Fiesta Texas takes Best Show category; Epcot's Illuminations wins Best Outdoor Night Production; Universal Orlando puts on ghoul make-up to win Best Halloween Event***

Shows can often be a simple place to duck out of a rainstorm or just to take a break from the heat. But quite often, they are an integral part of a guest's experience and many parks take particular pride in showcasing some first class entertainment.

For the last eight years, Six Flags Fiesta Texas has taken

the category of Best Shows and keeps the historical foundation upon which the park was built continually at the forefront. Adopting the tagline, "Come for the Rides, Stay for the Shows," Fiesta Texas believes its many shows cater to each and every member of the family. Martin Bozer, general manager for Fiesta Texas



states, "We do realize you just can't become comfortable with this acknowledgement,

so we consistently look for new and innovative ways to dazzle our guests and present an unparalleled quality of show productions."

Other finalists include a strong second place showing by Dollywood. The top five are completed by Busch Gardens Europe, Silver Dollar City, and Disney-MGM of the Walt Disney World Resort.

Many parks offer an outdoor extravaganza to close out a day's experience that quite often becomes a grand finale. Disney parks take three of the top five, with Epcot's Illuminations: Reflections of Earth claiming top prize. Brad Rex, vice president of Epcot, says, "Illuminations is a source of great pride for all of us at Walt Disney World Resort. On behalf of the terrific cast members at Epcot, we are indeed grateful for the industry recognition as represented in this Golden Ticket Award." Fantasmic on both coasts place Disneyland and Disney-MGM as finalists, with Disneyland providing an additional fireworks celebration at closing time.

Six Flags Fiesta Texas' extremely popular Lone Star Spectacular with a cliff wall as its backdrop takes runner up in the category, and Cedar Point's Summertime Spectacular rounds out the finalists in 4th position.

Introduced as a new category for *AT* last year, Best Halloween Event is a production all its own. In 2005 it was one of the closest races on the Golden Tickets. This year was no different with just one percentage point separating second place from top bill. In a flip-flop of last year, Universal's Halloween Horror Nights overtook Knott's Halloween Haunt for the 2006 Ticket. This year will be the 16th year for Halloween Horror Nights. Jim Timon, senior vice president of entertainment for Universal Orlando, says, "Our scream team of designers has created a twisted 'Sweet 16' celebration that will not be for the faint-of-heart."

The Halloween category also sees Kennywood, Knoebels, and Cedar Point as top five finalists.

—Tim Baldwin



PHOTO COURTESY SIX FLAGS FIESTA TEXAS

**This Broadway caliber rock 'n' roll stage production is one of several hit shows that garnered Six Flags Fiesta Texas the Best Show win for an unprecedented 8th year in a row.**



PHOTO COURTESY EPCOT

**Illuminations takes the ticket for Best Outdoor Night Show Production at Disney's Epcot.**



PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSAL ORLANDO

**Universal's annual Halloween Horror Nights killed the competition to take the top honor in the Best Halloween Event category.**





# It's Ride time!

## Best Dark Ride; Best Water Ride; Best Waterpark Ride and Best Kid's Area winners announced

Go for a ride! Riding is the favorite activity at virtually any park a guest might visit. Our panel of experts have ridden countless unique and beloved favorites from around the world. Among their favorites are those found in *AT's* Best Dark Ride category. Votes cast range from Rehobeth Beach to Tokyo. In a repeat win from previous years, IOA's Amazing Adventures of Spiderman has captivated our panel. Knoebel's traditional Haunted Mansion dark ride, always well-maintained, rates highly as well. Disney closes out the top five with Florida's Twilight Zone Tower of Terror, Disneyland's Indiana Jones and the Temple of the Forbidden Eye, and Haunted Mansion at the Magic Kingdom.

Heat waves in 2006 made water rides in parks extremely popular ways to cool off. An annual battle between our two top contenders sees a switch once again. Dudley Do-Right's Ripsaw Falls reclaims the title for Best Water Ride in an amusement



park. Placing second is last year's victor, Valhalla at Pleasure Beach Blackpool. Rising in the ranks is the hootin' and hollerin' Mountain Slidewinder at Dollywood. Splash Mountain at the Magic Kindgom and Journey to Atlantis at SeaWorld Orlando put a Floridian hold on closing out the category.

Master Blaster maintains its dominance as Best Waterpark Ride. Schlitterbahn's masterpiece opened in 1996. Splashin' Safari's double "z"s, Zinga and Zoombabwe, take the next two spots. Two uphill coasters by ProSlide complete the category with Typhoon at Six Flags New England's Hurricane Harbor and Black Anaconda at Noah's Ark in Wisconsin Dells.

The Paramount chain continues to showcase the formula for kids' areas. Three Paramount parks appear in the top five with Kings Island continuing to seize the Golden Ticket for Best Kids' Area. Sister parks Carowinds and Kings Dominion place third and fourth respectively. Islands of Adventure continues to delight audiences with its Seuss Landing with a second place win. Idlewild, a top competitor in the Best Children's Park, also wins high marks with its dedicated kids' area to round out the top five.

—Tim Baldwin



It's nice to get an award everyone looks up to.

Thanks *Amusement Today* for the **Best Outdoor Night Show Production** award for IllumiNations: Reflections of Earth—Epcot®

Walt Disney World®



PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSAL'S ISLANDS OF ADVENTURE  
IOA's Amazing Adventures of Spiderman hangs onto its title as Best Dark Ride for the sixth consecutive year.



PHOTO COURTESY UNIVERSAL'S ISLANDS OF ADVENTURE  
IOA's Dudley Do-Right's Ripsaw Falls splashes back into the number one spot for Best Park Water Ride.



PHOTO COURTESY SCHLITTERBAHN  
The Best Waterpark Ride ticket goes to MasterBlaster. Schitterbahn's beloved water attraction has won this award eight out of nine years since the Golden Ticket Awards debuted in 1998.



PHOTO COURTESY PARAMOUNT'S KINGS ISLAND  
Another sixth time recipient, Paramount's Kings Island keeps the winning streak going for Best Kid's Area.



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# Hold on tight and scream!

## *Six Flags New England reclaims Top Steel Coaster spot in survey*

Hold on tight, its a long way up. The 2006 roller coaster charts offer the latest surprise in the war of steel.

Since the debut of our top two steel coasters in 2000, they have battled annually with each claiming top prize at some point. Year after year, the competition heats up, often coming down to the final day of tabulation to determine a victor.

Superman Ride of Steel at Six Flags New England has enthralled coaster fanatics for years with the abundance of wild airtime, or negative g's, experienced on its amazing layout. In 2003, it took the Golden Ticket for No. 1 Steel Coaster after a two-year run by Millennium Force at Cedar Point. Following that, Millennium Force took it back for the last two years. In a virtual steel wrestling match, our voters have rated Superman the No. 1 Steel Coaster once again in 2006. Millennium Force places at No. 2 poised to do battle in the next season.

With its debut in 1989, Magnum XL-200 was the first coaster to break the 200-foot barrier. Now, Cedar Point has four coasters over 200 feet, but Magnum's legion of fans have



PHOTO COURTESY SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND

**Superman Ride of Steel stands high above the banks of the Connecticut River at Six Flags New England. It also stands high above all other steel roller coasters—in the Number 1 position.**

not forgotten it. It rates No. 3 on this year's charts.

Magnum birthed a genre of hyper coasters and two by B&M round out the top five. Six Flags Great Adventure features Nitro, while Busch Gardens Europe

in Williamsburg reaches for the sky with Apollo's Chariot.

The highest rated international coaster continues to be Expedition Ge-Force at Holiday Park in Hassloch, Germany. Like our top two coasters, it is also built by

Intamin.

What started as a mega coaster with four inversions in 1990, Kennywood's Steel Phantom, saw a re-emergence by being transformed by Morgan Manufacturing in 2001 into Phantom's Revenge.



With the removal of the inversions and a concentration on speed and drops, Phantom's Revenge climbs even higher this year into the No. 7 spot.

B&M set the coaster world on fire with the introduction of the inverted coaster in the 1990s. Since then, dozens have appeared worldwide. The highest one on our charts is Montu, landing in the top ten at No. 8.

The only new-for-2006 steel coaster to land in *AT*'s top ten list this year is Goliath at Six Flags Over Georgia. Receiving rave reviews, this graceful beauty is also a creation of B&M.

No single park can claim to have two steel coasters in the Golden Ticket top ten, except for Cedar Point, which can actually boast three. Top Thrill Dragster, a record setter when it opened in 2003 for breaking the 400-foot barrier, completes our top ten. Dragster is a project by Intamin.

—Tim Baldwin



PHOTO COURTESY ACE / HOWARD GILLOOLY



AT PHOTO / GARY SLADE



AT PHOTO / GARY SLADE



PHOTO COURTESY ACE / JOE SCHWARTZ

**Rounding out the Top 5 on the Best Steel Coasters list are (left to right): No. 2-Cedar Point's 310-foot tall speed demon, Millennium Force; No. 3-the world's first coaster to break the 200-foot height level, Magnum XL-200, also at Cedar Point; No. 4-The always intense B&M Nitro at Six Flags Great Adventure; and No. 5-Apollo's Chariot, another dynamic B&M thriller, at Busch Gardens Europe. Congratulations to all of the winners.**

# SIX FLAGS NEW ENGLAND'S SUPERMAN RIDE OF STEEL WINS ANOTHER GOLDEN TICKET



*Thank you Amusement Today for honoring SUPERMAN Ride Of Steel as the best steel coaster!*



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# The List

## 2006 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	1129
2	Millennium Force	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	2000	Intamin	1052
3	Magnum XL-200	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	1989	Arrow	663
4	Nitro	Six Flags Great Adventure	Jackson, N.J.	2001	B & M	615
5	Apollo's Chariot	Busch Gardens Europe	Williamsburg, Va.	1999	B & M	610
6	Expedition Ge-Force	Holiday Park	Hassloch, Germany	2001	Intamin	500
7	Phantom's Revenge	Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	2001	Morgan/Arrow	446
8	Montu	Busch Gardens Africa	Tampa, Fla.	1996	B & M	388
9	Goliath	Six Flags Over Georgia	Atlanta, Ga.	2006	B & M	354
10	Top Thrill Dragster	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	2003	Intamin	333
11	Raging Bull	Six Flags Great America	Gurnee, Ill.	1999	B & M	319
12	Superman Ride of Steel	Six Flags Darien Lake	Darien Center, N.Y.	1999	Intamin	304
13	SheiKra	Busch Gardens Africa	Tampa, Fla.	2005	B & M	237
14	Raptor	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	1994	B & M	219
15	Steel Force	Dorney Park	Allentown, Pa.	1997	Morgan	214
16	Nemesis	Alton Towers	Staffordshire, England	1994	B & M	212
17	Alpengeist	Busch Gardens Europe	Williamsburg, Va.	1997	B & M	206
18	Dueling Dragons	Islands of Adventure	Orlando, Fla.	1999	B & M	204
19	Mind Bender	Six Flags Over Georgia	Atlanta, Ga.	1978	Schwarzkopf	182
20	X	Six Flags Magic Mountain	Valencia, Calif.	2002	Arrow	181
21 (tie)	Incredible Hulk Coaster	Islands of Adventure	Orlando, Fla.	1999	B & M	157
21 (tie)	Kumba	Busch Gardens Africa	Tampa, Fla.	1993	B & M	157
23	Superman Ride of Steel	Six Flags America	Largo, Md.	2000	Intamin	156
24	Goliath	Six Flags Magic Mountain	Valencia, Calif.	2000	Giovanola	155
25	Volcano	Paramount's Kings Dominion	Doswell, Va.	1998	Intamin	110



# The List

## 2006 TOP 50 STEEL ROLLER COASTERS

RANK	NAME	PARK	LOCATION	YEAR	SUPPLIER	POINTS
26	Mamba	Worlds of Fun	Kansas City, Mo.	1998	Morgan	102
27	Titan	Six Flags Over Texas	Arlington, Texas	2001	Giovanola	98
28	Kingda Ka	Six Flags Great Adventure	Jackson, N.J.	2005	Intamin	88
29	Goliath	Walabi World	Flevo, The Netherlands	2002	Intamin	83
30	Big Bad Wolf	Busch Gardens Europe	Williamsburg, Va.	1984	Arrow	79
31	Expedition Everest	Disney's Animal Kingdom	Orlando, Fla.	2006	Vekoma/WED Imag.	77
32	Top Gun The Jet Coaster	Paramount Carowinds	Charlotte, N.C.	1999	B & M	74
33	Superman Krypton Coaster	Six Flags Fiesta Texas	San Antonio, Texas	2000	B & M	72
34	Euro-Mir	Europa Park	Rust, Germany	2002	B & M	71
35	Xcelerator	Knott's Berry Farm	Buena Park, Calif.	2002	Intamin	68
36	Shock Wave	Six Flags Over Texas	Arlington, Texas	1978	Schwarzkopf	62
37	Goliath	La Ronde	Montreal, Quebec, Canada	2006	B & M	59
38	Riddler's Revenge	Six Flags Magic Mountain	Valencia, Calif.	1998	B & M	58
39	Storm Runner	Hersheypark	Hershey, Pa.	2004	Intamin	57
40 (tie)	Talon	Dorney Park	Allentown, Pa.	2001	B & M	56
40 (tie)	Tatsu	Six Flags Magic Mountain	Valencia, Calif.	2006	B & M	56
42 (tie)	The Big One	Pleasure Beach Blackpool	Blackpool, England	1994	Arrow	51
42 (tie)	Dominator	Geauga Lake	Aurora, Ohio	2000	B & M	51
44	Mindbender	Galaxyland	Edmonton, Alberta, Canada	1985	Schwarzkopf	48
45 (tie)	Desperado	Buffalo Bill's Casino	Primm, Nev.	1993	Arrow	47
45 (tie)	Kraken	SeaWorld Orlando	Orlando, Fla.	2000	B & M	47
45 (tie)	Medusa	Six Flags Great Adventure	Jackson, N.J.	1999	B & M	47
48	PowderKeg	Silver Dollar City	Branson, Mo.	2005	S & S	45
49 (tie)	Air	Alton Towers	Staffordshire, England	2002	B & M	43
49 (tie)	Superman Ultimate Flight	Six Flags Great America	Gurnee, Ill.	2003	B & M	43



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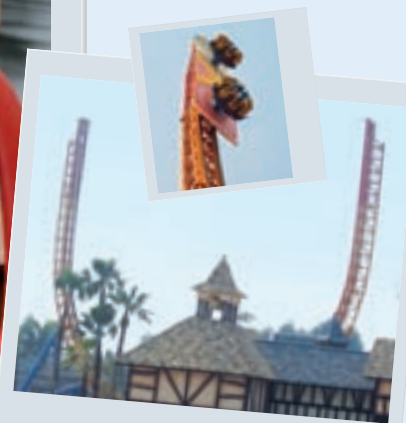


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## Clickety clack!

### Dollywood's Thunderhead repeats as winner of Best Wooden Coaster

Those who listen to fathers talk to their children at amusement parks might commonly hear them speak about the "clickety clack" of a roller coaster. While many steel coasters are now the high-profile showpieces to several parks, that inescapable nostalgic ambience of a wooden coaster never goes out of style. The sights, sounds, and smell of an authentic wooden coaster have mesmerized parkgoers for over a century.

Dollywood holds on tight with its second year win. Thunderhead roared onto the scene in 2004 and reached the top of the chart last year.

Hot on its heels is Holiday World's new Voyage, which made the highest debut of any roller coaster in the history of the Golden Ticket Awards. Voyage also took the Golden Ticket for Best New Ride of 2006. Next year we could see a hard fought battle between the top two champs.

Amazingly, even with hundreds and hundreds of points, *Amusement Today* has seen a tie as high as third place. BoulderDash at Lake Compounce and Hades at Mount Olympus share this upper tier spot. BoulderDash was a previous No. 1 place holder two years ago, and Hades took Best New Ride of 2005 last year. It would appear that 2007



PHOTO COURTESY JOEL STYER

**The Best Wooden Coaster of 2005 is also the Best Wooden Coaster of 2006. Designed and constructed by Great Coasters International, Dollywood's sensational Thunderhead wooden twister continues to be a fan favorite.**

could have more than one major competition on its hands.

Phoenix, with roots dating back to the 1940s, was relocated to Knoebels in 1985, and since then, there was no turning back. The legendary classic by Herbert Schmeck is often said

to be the quintessential roller coaster ride.

Shivering Timbers maintains its top ten performance, even with newer brethren squeezing into a place or two. It has brought in crowds at Michigan's Adventure since its

debut in 1998.

Out-distanced by Voyage, but not forgotten is another pair of woodies at Holiday World. The park's original wooden gem, Raven, put the park on enthusiasts' radar screens, which was followed by Legend



five years later to give the park a solid one-two punch. With Voyage, Holiday World can not only boast being the only park to have two wooden coasters in the top ten, but now an incredible three.

At No. 8, Kings Islands' Beast still maintains a foothold on the top ten. It has held the record for world's longest wooden coaster since its debut in 1979.

Bookending the top ten is another creation by Great Coasters International and is the highest rated racing coaster on our charts - Hersheypark's Lightning Racer. Its intertwined layout and racing action has often been viewed as a masterpiece of engineering.

Othernew-for-2006 woodies are Intamin's El Toro debuting at No. 13 and GCII's Kentucky Rumbler tying at No. 20.

A sheer testament to the expertise of the panel can be found with coasters listed No. 23-30. There you will find eight coasters from eight different countries on those consecutive listings.

—Tim Baldwin



PHOTO COURTESY HOLIDAY WORLD / DAN FEIGHT



PHOTO COURTESY LAKE COMPOUNCE



AT PHOTO / GARY SLADE



PHOTO COURTESY JOEL STYER

**Rounding out the Top 5 on the Best Wooden Coasters list are (left to right): Making an impressive debut at No. 2, The Voyage at Holiday World is grabbing the attention of seasoned riders; Tied in the No. 3 spot are Boulder Dash, the terrain gripping mountain coaster at Lake Compounce, and Hades at Mt. Olympus Water & Theme Park, with its wild layout and thrilling underground tunnels; and No. 5-Phoenix, Knoebel's air-time extravaganza.**





# The List

## 2006 TOP 50 WOODEN ROLLER COASTERS

RANK	NAME	PARK	LOCATION	YEAR	SUPPLIER	POINTS
1	Thunderhead	Dollywood	Pigeon Forge, Tenn.	2004	GCII	904
2	The Voyage	Holiday World	Santa Claus, Ind.	2006	Gravity Group	844
3 (tie)	BouderDash	Lake Compounce	Bristol, Conn.	2000	CCI	746
3 (tie)	Hades	Mt. Olympus Theme Park	Wisconsin Dells, Wis.	2005	Gravity Group	746
5	Phoenix	Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.	1985	Dinn/PTC-Schmeck	720
6	Shivering Timbers	Michigan's Adventure	Muskegon, Mich.	1998	CCI	696
7	Raven	Holiday World	Santa Claus, Ind.	1995	CCI	624
8	The Beast	Paramount's Kings Island	Kings Mills, Ohio	1979	KECO	431
9	Legend	Holiday World	Santa Claus, Ind.	2000	CCI	420
10	Lightning Racer	Hersheypark	Hershey, Pa.	2000	GCII	385
11	Avalanche	Timber Falls	Wisconsin Dells, Wis.	2004	S & S	286
12	GhostRider	Knott's Berry Farm	Buena Park, Calif.	1998	CCI	279
13	El Toro	Six Flags Great Adventure	Jackson, N.J.	2006	Intamin	218
14	Texas Giant	Six Flags Over Texas	Arlington, Texas	1991	Dinn/Summers	211
15	Rampage	Alabama Adventure	Bessemer, Ala.	1998	CCI	209
16	Cyclone	Astroland (Coney Island)	Brooklyn, N.Y.	1927	Keenen/Baker	208
17	Tremors	Silverwood	Athol, Idaho	1999	CCI	196
18	Cornball Express	Indiana Beach	Monticillo, Ind.	2001	CCI	167
19	Thunderbolt	Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	1968	Vettel/Miller	163
20 (tie)	Kentucky Rumbler	Beech Bend Amusement Park	Bowling Green, Ky.	2006	GCII	160
20 (tie)	Ozark Wildcat	Celebration City	Branson, Mo.	2003	GCII	160
22	Comet	The Great Escape	Lake George, N.Y.	1994	Schmeck/PTC	155
23	Colossos	Heide Park	Soltau, Germany	2001	Intamin	154
24	Megafovia	Oakwood Leisure Park	Pembrokeshire, Wales	1996	CCI	153
25	Aska	Nara Dreamland	Nara, Japan	1998	Intamin	148



# The List

## 2006 TOP 50 WOODEN ROLLER COASTERS

RANK	NAME	PARK	LOCATION	YEAR	SUPPLIER	POINTS
26	Grand National	Pleasure Beach Blackpool	Blackpool, England	1935	Paige	146
27	Balder	Liseberg	Gothenberg, Sweden	2003	Intamin	135
28	Coaster	Playland	Vancouver, British Columbia	1958	Phare	130
29	Twister	Knoebels Amusement Resort	Elysburg, Pa.	1999	Fetterman/Knoebels	115
30	Tonnerre de Zeus	Parc Asterix	Plailly, France	1997	CCI	112
31	Georgia Cyclone	Six Flags Over Georgia	Atlanta, Ga.	1990	Dinn/Summers	108
32	Viper	Six Flags Great America	Gurnee, Ill.	1995	Starkey/Six Flags	103
33	The Boss	Six Flags St. Louis	Eureka, Mo.	2000	CCI	92
34	Giant Dipper	Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk	Santa Cruz, Calif.	1924	Prior & Church/Looff	86
35	Silver Comet	Martin's Fantasy Island	Grand Island, N.Y.	1999	CCI	77
36	New Mexico Rattler	Cliff's Amusement Park	Albuquerque, N.M.	2002	Cliff's	76
37	Jack Rabbit	Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	1921	Miller/PTC	70
38	Blue Streak	Cedar Point	Sandusky, Ohio	1964	Hoover/PTC	63
39	Roar	Six Flags America	Largo, Md.	1998	GCII	57
40	Great Am. Scream Machine	Six Flags Over Georgia	Atlanta, Ga.	1973	Allen/PTC	54
41 (tie)	Grizzly	Paramount's Kings Dominion	Doswell, Va.	1982	Summers/KECO	52
41 (tie)	Timber Terror	Silverwood	Athol, Idaho	1996	CCI	52
43 (tie)	Racer	Kennywood	West Mifflin, Pa.	1927	Miller/PTC	49
43 (tie)	Wildcat	Hersheypark	Hershey, Pa.	1996	GCII	49
45	Hurricane	Boomers	Dania Beach, Fla.	2000	Coaster Works	47
46	Gwazi	Busch Gardens Africa	Tampa, Fla.	1999	GCII	46
47	Thunder Coaster	Tusenfryd	Vintebro, Norway	2001	Vekoma	40
48	Son of Beast	Paramount's Kings Island	Kings Mills, Ohio	2000	Stengel/RCCA	36
49	Timberwolf	Worlds of Fun	Kansas City, Mo.	1989	Dinn/Summers	35
50	Cyclone	Lakeside Park	Denver, Colo.	1940	Vettel	33

# AMUSEMENT TODAY

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Their ability to shine on a season-to-season basis has made them "The Best of the Best" for nine years in row, the entire lifespan of the Golden Ticket Awards. They have not been unseated from their respective category.

- Who are they?
- Busch Gardens Europe, Best Landscaping
  - Cedar Point, Best Amusement/ Theme Park
  - Holiday World, Friendliest Park
  - Schlitterbahn, Best Waterpark

The survey participants have voted these four parks in as the very best at what they do for nine consecutive years. For that, *Amusement Today* says congratulations on an outstanding job. From your management team to your seasonal staffer, you have managed to carry on the tradition of being the best.

Other parks worth mentioning for their outstanding yearly contributions include:

- Schlitterbahn, Best Waterpark Ride (8 years)
  - Six Flags Fiesta Texas, Best Shows (8 years)
- and,
- Cedar Point, Best Capacity & Best Steel Coaster (7 years)
  - Holiday World, Cleanest Park, (7 years)
  - Knoebels Amusement Resort, Best Food (7 years)

Since its beginning in 1998, *Amusement Today* has presented a total of 169 Golden Ticket Awards, including this year's class of winners.

Congratulations to all the winners, from the one-time winners to the repeat performers. Keep up the great work!

—Gary Slade

Wooden Wonders

Year after year, the Best Wooden Coaster surveys rank several fan-favorites consistently in the Top 10. The Beast at Paramount's Kings Island takes riders on a long journey through the woods; Shivering Timber's at Michigan's Adventure offers a lengthy out-and back experience; Lightning Racer at Hersheypark is a racing and dueling coaster built exclusively for fun.



AT PHOTO / GARY SLADE



PHOTO COURTESY PARAMOUNT'S KINGS ISLAND

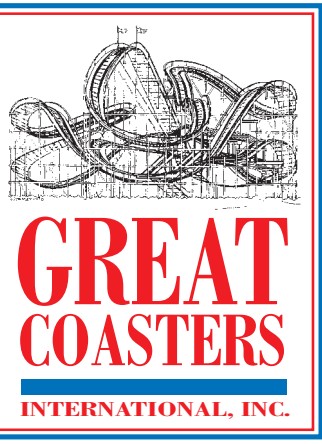


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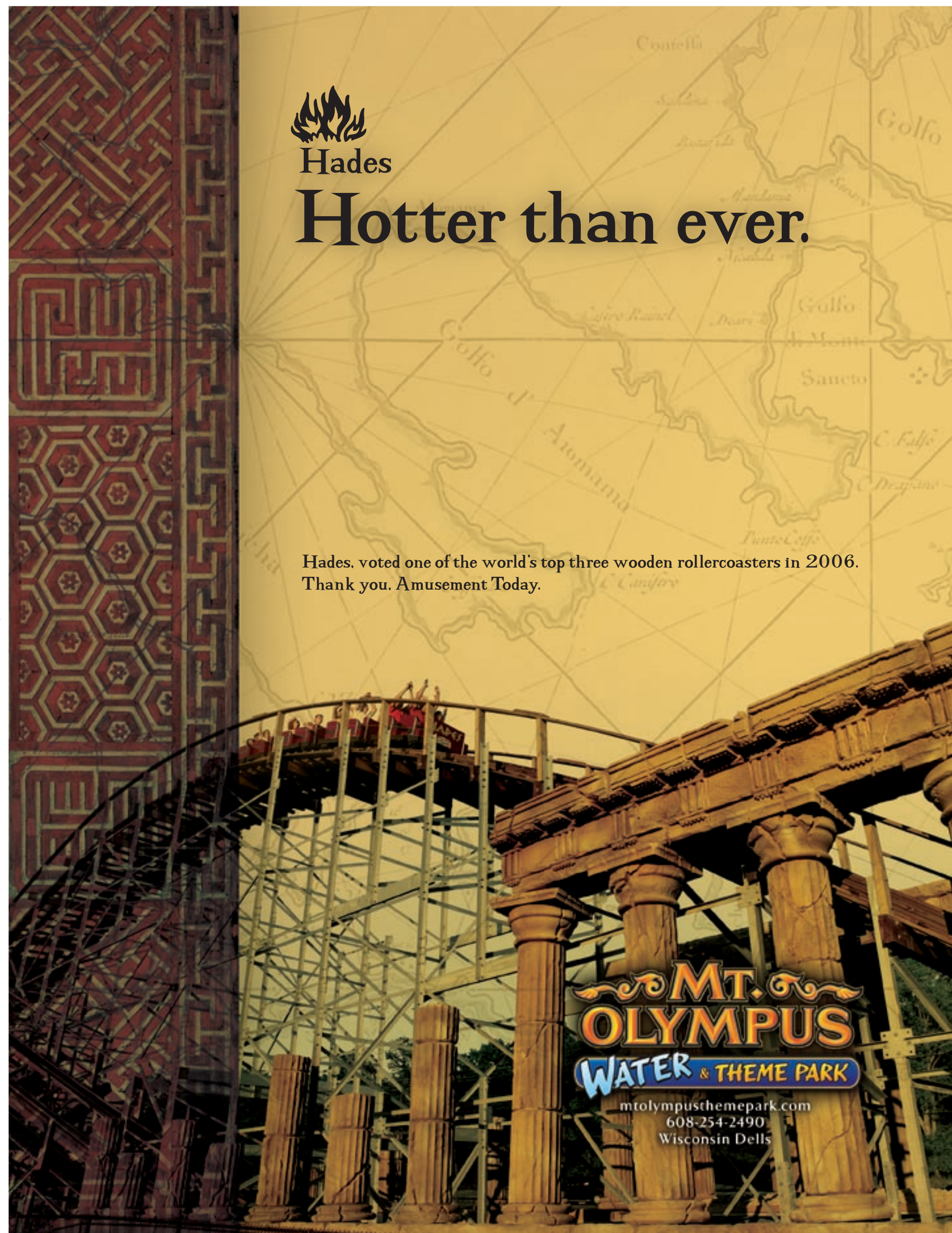
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Hades

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Thank you, Amusement Today.





# Class of 2005 - A look back at last year's Golden Ticket Winners

## 2005's Golden Ticket Winners

Did you forget who won Golden Tickets in 2005? In all, 25 Golden Tickets were awarded to 16 different parks and two different individuals.

Here is a quick recap:

- Blackpool Pleasure Beach, Best Water Ride
- Busch Gardens Williamsburg, Best Landscaping (Amusement Park)
- Cedar Point Amusement Park, Best Park, Best Souvenirs, Best Games Area, Best Steel Coaster
- Disneyland, Publisher's Pick (Park of the Year)
- Dollywood, Best Wooden Coaster
- Epcot - Walt Disney World, Best Outdoor Night Show Production
- Holiday World & Splashin' Safari, Friendliest Park, Cleanest Park
- Knoebels Amusement Resort, Best Food
- Knott's Berry Farm, Best Halloween Event
- Nick Laskaris (Mt. Olympus Park), Publisher's Pick (Person of the Year)
- Legoland California, Best Children's Park
- Mt. Olympus Water & Theme Park, Best New Ride 2005 in an Amusement Park, Best Place to Ride Go-Karts
- Noah's Ark Waterpark, Best New Ride 2005 in a Waterpark
- Paramount's Kings Island, Best Kid's Area
- Schlitterbahn Waterpark, Best Waterpark, Best Waterpark Ride, Best Landscaping in a Waterpark
- Six Flags Fiesta Texas, Best Shows
- Universal's Islands of Adventure, Best Dark Ride
- Werner Stengel, Publisher's Pick (Supplier of the Year)



AT PHOTO / STACEY CHILDRESS

The 2005 Golden Ticket Award attendees: (back row l to r) Rusty Razor, SeaWorld San Antonio; Nick Laskaris, Mt. Olympus Water & Theme Park; Gary Henry, Schlitterbahn; Maureen Kaiser, Paramount's Kings Island; (middle row l to r) Becky Phelps, Disneyland; Rebecca Godsil, Walt Disney World; Adam Sandy, Ride Entertainment Systems; Jane Cooper, IAAPA; Gina Kellogg, World Waterpark Association; Terri Adams, Schlitterbahn; Pat Koch, Holiday World; Carole Sanderson, ACE; David Blazer, Six Flags Fiesta Texas; Barbara Joines, Dollywood; Jack Falfas, Cedar Fair; (front row l to r) Dick Knoebel, Knoebel's Amusement Resort; John Hildebrant, Cedar Point; Tim Baldwin, Amusement Today; Harold Hudson, Gary Slade, Amusement Today; and Dick Kinzel, Cedar Fair.



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Top Ten Wooden Roller Coasters  
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# 2006 Best New Rides swept by Holiday World & Splashin’ Safari



On the waterpark side, it was a quieter year than most. Attractions debuted here and there, but captured less of the attention of our panel this season. Holiday World and Splashin’ Safari’s new Bahari River added needed capacity to the waterpark. This second lazy river made several advancements over the park’s original, including interactive water elements and larger size. Bahari River took Best New Ride in a Waterpark.

Noah’s Ark took this category last year, but their new Time Warp, an enclosed and themed behemoth bowl by ProSlide, grabbed a second place tie with Six Flags Great America’s Tornado, also by ProSlide. Dolly’s Splash Country was the remaining finalist with Fire Tower Falls.

While waterparks may have had a quieter year for



PHOTO COURTESY HOLIDAY WORLD & SPLASHIN’ SAFARI  
**Splashin’ Safari guests love to chill out in Bahari River. Beat the heat in the Best New Ride in a Waterpark.**

Best New Ride category, the amusement park scenario was anything but. Holiday World’s The Voyage made a triumphant surge to dominate the category.

*Amusement Today* asked Holiday World’s matriarch, Pat Koch, as to which came first, the new coaster or the new Thanksgiving section. Koch paused before replying. “We knew we had to increase

capacity and we needed space—so the section came first.” Koch said several ideas were discussed before adopting the Thanksgiving themed area, and it also seemed like an opportunity to add a dark ride, something she had wanted at the park for a long time. The Thanksgiving section let the park incorporate one, but didn’t have to make it scary.

Still, it is The Voyage that



PHOTO COURTESY HOLIDAY WORLD & SPLASHIN’ SAFARI / DAN FEICHT  
**Holiday World’s debut of The Voyage rolls in as this year’s Best New Ride in an Amusement Park.**

is the anchor to the new section and it has taken our panel on a thrilling journey they are still raving about. The Voyage, debuting at No. 2 on our wooden list, easily claimed Best New Ride for 2006. “A wooden coaster is considered a family ride,” Koch adds. “It’s a good anchor to the section.” The new thriller was designed by Gravity Group, which also designed last year’s top pick

in this category, Hades at Mt. Olympus.

Two wooden and two steel coasters complete this category. Disney’s Expedition Everest takes the No. 2 spot, followed by El Toro at Six Flags Great Adventure. Our last two finalists are Goliath at Six Flags Over Georgia and Kentucky Rumbler at Beech Bend in Bowling Green.

—Tim Baldwin



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Thank You



for your hospitality in hosting the  
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### 2006 WINNERS

**Busch Gardens Europe**  
**Cedar Point**  
**Dollywood**  
**Epcot (Walt Disney World)**  
**Holiday World & Splashin’ Safari**  
**Knoebels Amusement Resort**  
**Legoland California**  
**Paramount’s Kings Island**  
**Pat Thomson**  
**Schlitterbahn**  
**SeaWorld Orlando**  
**Six Flags Fiesta Texas**  
**Six Flags New England**  
**State Fair of Texas**  
**Universal’s Islands of Adventure**  
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Holiday World & Splashin' Safari

# CONGRATULATES

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# THANK YOU!

It is a tremendous honor to receive the 2006 Best New Rides Golden Ticket Awards for The Voyage and Bahari River, here at Holiday World & Splashin' Safari. We are also proud that you, Amusement Today survey participants, voted us the Cleanest Park for the 7th consecutive year, and the Friendliest Park Staff for the 9th consecutive year! We could not have accomplished this incredible achievement without our outstanding employees. They are the heart and soul of this business, and without them we would not be able to say we're #1 for Family Fun!



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