

Paramount Canada's Wonderland Adding New Rides and Attractions

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In time for the 2003 season, Paramount Canada's Wonderland, Maple, will introduce three new attractions — the Sledge Hammer, a SpongeBob SquarePants 4D attraction and Nickelodeon Central — in addition to 10 new live shows.

SpongeBob SquarePants will theme the park's all-new deep-sea 3D motion simulator movie ride at the Paramount Action F/X Theatre, while for younger children, the park will premiere Nickelodeon Central, an all-new themed area, with three new rides and a host of Nickelodeon characters.

"We wanted to install something for every part of our demographic," said Kris Williams, manager of PR and special events.

Appealing to the teens and adults will be the Huss Sledge Hammer. Company name for the ride is Jump2, basically a supersized version of the original Jump ride.

According to Williams, the projected installation date for the ride is mid-March. The Sledge Hammer will include eight gondolas that will hold six passengers each for an approximate hourly capacity 48 patrons.

"We open a little later in the season than most parks, so a March installation is perfectly OK," said Williams.

To date, the electrical for the ride has been installed and the concrete poured.

The 300-plus acre site in was selected for its proximity to Toronto. The area's large population base and easy accessibility, particularly via Highways 401 and 400, were two other factors determining this site.

In total, the park boasts 200 attractions, 65 rides, a variety of roller coasters, Splash Works (the 20-acre waterpark), games and a host live shows.

New to the show lineup this year will be 10 new productions, which have been created to help keep the locals interested in the park.

One-third of the attendance at Paramount Canada's Wonderland comes from season pass holders and 70% of the attendance comes from within an hour's drive of the park.

According to Williams, in order to bring in nearly three million people a year, park management must create a need for guests to come back on multiple visits.

"We have a tremendous regional focus with a concentrated market," said Williams. "We must speak to the focus of our demographics in order to maintain a competitive edge."

According to Williams, new rides and attractions are necessary, but the park's major commitment to special events and festivals is what racks up those multiple visits.

Variety shows this year will include "Legends Alive!," May 31-June 22 at the Paramount Theatre; "Gossamer Magic," June 28-July 18 at the Paramount Theatre; "Street Shift," July 19-Aug. 8 at the International Showplace; and "Chinese Acrobats," Aug. 9-29 at the Paramount Theatre.

Also new to the park will be a host of children shows, including "Franklin The Turtle," May 4-25 at the International Showplace; "Yvette & Her Puppet Friends," May 4-25 (weekends), May 25-June 27 (daily) and Sept. 6 to Oct. 12 (weekends) at the Playhouse Theatre; "Mona The Vampire," June 28-July 18 at the Playhouse Theatre; "Wimzie's House," July 19-Aug. 8 at the Playhouse Theatre; and "Little Bear," Aug. 9-Sept. 1 at the Playhouse Theatre.

Paramount Canada's Wonderland is operated by Paramount Parks and is a unit of Viacom Inc. The company currently owns and operates four additional theme parks in the U.S.