

Golden Tickets Come to Dollywood

After 2 years topping the wood coaster list, on September 5, 2007, **Dollywood** hosted *Amusement Today's* annual announcement of the winners of its prestigious 2007 Golden Ticket Awards.

This is the 10th annual year for *Amusement Today's* coveted awards which become the subject of much discussion by park aficionados around the world.

"We applaud this year's class of Golden Ticket Award winners and finalists for their achievements," says Gary Slade, publisher and editor-in-chief of *Amusement Today*. "When we began this survey 10 years ago, I never would have dreamed it would become such an anticipated and big sensation."

Personally chosen by Slade, the Publisher's Pick Awards are presented in three categories: Park, Individual and Supplier. Respectively, the 2007 recipients are **Dollywood**, Pigeon Forge, Tenn., for its continuous commitment to excellence and genuine

hospitality; the late Milton S. Hershey, **Hersheypark**, Hershey, Penn., for his fortitude, vision and compassion; and National Ticket Co., Shamokin, Penn., for 100 years of outstanding ticketing service in the amusement industry.

For the third consecutive year, *Amusement Today* recognized college students who plan to pursue a career in the amusement industry win employees of **Dollywood** and **Dollywood's Splash Country**, as well as **Lake Winnepesaukah**, Chattanooga, Tenn.; and Ripley Entertainment, Gatlinburg, Tenn., as Ms. and Mr. Golden Tickets. These individuals exemplify the spirit and integrity of the amusement park industry by promoting the cornerstones of safety, service, courtesy and cleanliness at the highest level, while consistently exceeding job expectations. This annual designation is to promote education in the field of hospitality and amusement, as well as to spotlight future leaders in the amusement industry.



Where did the Southeast Region place in the top 10 Golden Tickets?

#2 Best New Ride of 2007 (Amusement Park)

Mystery Mine (Dollywood)

#2 Best Wood Coaster

Thunderhead (Dollywood)

#2 Friendliest Park Staff

Dollywood

#2 Best Shows

Dollywood

#3 Best Carousel

Riverview Carousel (Six Flags Over Georgia)

#3 Best Food

Dollywood

#3 Best Kids Area

Carowinds

#5 Cleanest Park

Dollywood

#5 Best Landscaping (Waterpark)

Dollywood's Splash Country

#8 Best Steel Coaster

Goliath (Six Flags Over Georgia)

Full listing at www.AmusementToday.com

Remembering the 1996 Olympics in 2008

You now have a year to do this, go find your 1996 Atlanta Olympics t-shirts, hats, etc. to get ready for June's Coaster Con when the ACE world comes to Atlanta.

Even if you don't plan on attending the Con, you can help spread some true Southern hospitality by joining the Region as hospitality ambassa-

dors during Con registration and check-in, along with volunteering for other activities.

Plus, one morning we'll be hosting one of the most popular Con activities, the *Midway Olympics*. We'll need volunteers to help register the teams, lead the games, and tabulate the results. Of course for this activity we should wear our treasured 1996

Olympic Games wear to remind everyone that this is a world-class Region.

So this Winter go into the closet and find that old 1996 Atlanta shirt, hat or other accessory. And thanks in advance for hosting the friendliest Con ever next year.



2008 ACE Southeast Regional Events Planned

The ACE Southeast 2008 Regional Event Calendar has been announced. Bringing back the old favorites along with hopes for a few new ones (including Ghost Town in the Sky and Hard Rock Park) there will be more reasons to get together for fun next year.

Saturday, January 12; *Coca-Cola Snow Mountain Stone Mountain Park*, Atlanta, GA, (with a possible informal get together at the new *World of Coca-Cola* in the morning)

Saturday, March 29; *Spring Fling* at **Six Flags Over Georgia**, Atlanta, GA

Saturday, June 14 (Coaster Con XXXI eve); *Rip Roarin' Rampage* at **Alabama Adventure**, Bessemer, AL

June 15 - 20; *Coaster Con XXXI* starting at *Six Flags Over Georgia*

Sunday, June 22; *ACE Day* at **Ghost Town in the Sky** in Maggie Valley, NC*

*This and other events are tentatively scheduled pending the final schedule for Coaster Con XXXI and park availability. As always, do not make concrete plans until the event flyer is published for these or any other ACE events as things are subject to change.

And next year we'll also be hosting *Coasterfest* at **Dollywood** on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, and the *Carolina Coaster Classic* at **Carowinds** on a date to be determined later.

So there will be plenty of opportunities next year to attend a Regional event. But why wait? 2007's *Coasterfest* at **Dollywood** is next month (event details on page 5).

SPRING FLING

Rip Roarin'
Rampage

Carolina Coaster Classic

Coasterfest

Thomas Town to Arrive at SFOG

The big news for 2008 at **Six Flags Over Georgia** (besides the departure of *Deja'Vu* (see page 1)) is that *Thomas the Tank Engine*, that cheeky, fussy, true blue engine who proudly wears the "#1" on his side, will be rolling into the Southeast's largest theme park for the start of the '08 season.



The *Thomas the Tank Engine* attraction is a replica of Thomas with two passenger cars, Annie and Clarabelle, which welcomes as many as 30 passengers at a time to see all the *Thomas Town* sights. All Aboard!

At a cost of \$2.5 million, this exciting play area is designed to entertain children of all ages, offering kids a train ride through Thomas' mythical home on the Island of Sodor. Sir Topham Hatt, Controller of the Railway, will also be on hand

to pose for photos and greet visitors. A *Thomas & Friends* store located within the play area will feature an assortment of merchandise, including the popular *Thomas & Friends* die cast trains; adult and children's apparel; storybooks; and other specialty items.

Melinda Ashcraft, Park President of Six Flags Over Georgia said of the new area, "parents and children alike will revel in the chance to spend time on *Thomas the Tank Engine*, and find everything from the ride to favorite characters to photos and merchandise, a unique opportunity that's only available at Six Flags."

With the promise of an opening at the beginning of the 2008 Season the final location is still to be decided and may be where the *Free Fall* attraction formerly stood.

CAROWINDS CLEARANCE

Visitors enjoying the *Carolina Coaster Classic* got an extra-special treat from the park—dirt cheap prices on the remainder of the Paramount-logged items. T-shirts, hats, sweatshirts, Winterfest jackets, and more were all priced at 2 for \$5. Look for plenty of Southeast members sporting **Paramount Carowinds** clothing for years to come.

