



WATER WORLD'S 10-YEAR EXPANSION JOURNEY

Wows Thrill Seekers And Drives Double Digit Growth

By David Gorman

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"The late owner, Paul Nelson, always saw Waldameer and Water World as belonging to the Erie community. We still strive to be accessible to all families, with free parking and free admission to Waldameer. It's part of who we are."



wooden roller coasters in the world. Summer 2014 marks Waldameer's 128th season in operation. Comparatively, Water World is a spring chicken with merely 38 years of providing family fun to the Northeastern Pennsylvania region.

Rocket Blast is the crown jewel of Water World's decade-long expansion that began in 2013 with the addition of the 500,000-gallon Giant Wave Pool, designed by Aquatic Development Group. The wave pool, constructed by USA, Inc., features waves up to four feet and accommodates 1,000 guests. The wave pool capacity was the biggest draw for management, as it could alleviate overcrowding, which was a concern that began in 2013 with the addition of the 500,000-gallon Giant Wave Pool, designed by Aquatic Development Group. The wave pool, constructed by USA, Inc., features waves up to four feet and accommodates 1,000 guests. The wave pool capacity was the biggest draw for management, as it could alleviate overcrowding, which was a concern that began in 2013 with the addition of the 500,000-gallon Giant Wave Pool, designed by Aquatic Development Group.

"Seabree is a similar size park to us, and we liked their wave pool design, which is essentially two sections. It can be topped off down the middle and operated at half size on slow days, saving electricity and labor," said Steve Gorman.

Admission passes for Water World doubled in 2015, the year the wave pool was added. Growth has steadily increased since, with the exception of 2014 due to Covid. In 2023, Water World pass sales were 60% higher than in 2015, for an average increase of 4% per year. Since Water World's expansion began, season passes to Waldameer & Water World have increased 50%.

Surrounding the Giant Wave Pool are 1,000 lounge chairs, plus beach toys, umbrellas, and free clamshell cabanas available for rent. Guests receive cabana and umbrella passes for the day with a 15% discount for season passholders. Each rental comes with delivery food service from the Waterside Grill. When guests are hungry for children drinks, personal pizzas, or Toppin' Dots, they simply raise their flag, and an employee arrives to take their order.

Another concession option is the Sundae Cafe, where guests can enjoy large-portioned burgers and burgers. The fan favorite offering, however, is the natural cut fries with cheese sauce or gravy. With the Giant Wave Pools success, Water World expanded the

The Battle of Lake Erie water play structure is the park's pride in its history.

Kid Zone with a Pottery-Baked-O's water play structure featuring a local historical theme. The play structure, named, Battle of Lake Erie, references a famous naval battle that occurred during the War of 1812. After the structure is a ship modeled after the U.S.S. Brig Niagara, from which a tipping bucket pours 400 gallons of water onto guests. The theme continues with two crew's tents, cannons, and stations where guests can play educational mini-records during the War of 1812. The Battle of Lake Erie is an example of how Water World showcases local pride in its city.

Management's guiding principle has always been positively contributing to the Erie community. In the off-season, the Barber National Institute, a local nonprofit supporting children and adults with intellectual disabilities, hosts its annual Boat on the Bay five-mile obstacle course race at the waterpark. Participants navigate the course on the beaches if nearby Presque Isle State

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Waldameer

ERIE, PA
Water World



When the Rocket Blast water coaster opened at Water World in 2013, management did not expect to get a call that it had won the World Waterpark Association's Leading Edge Award and Amusement Today's Golden Ticket Award. At \$6.9 million, Rocket Blast was the most expensive single waterpark attraction in the history of Water World, which sits on the shore of Lake Erie in Erie, Pennsylvania. However, the investment was well worth it.

"Rocket Blast has proven to be very popular and high capacity. Thrill seekers flock to it when the gates open each day," said President Steve Gorman.

As an older, established waterpark, space for expansion is limited at Water World. However, Providence Inc. designed Rocket Blast to intermingle with these existing slide complexes and two buildings, which was not a simple task. Gorman credits the design team at Providence for their ingenuity.

Water World is a 6.5-acre waterpark with 115 employees during the summer season, which runs from May to September, and an attendance of 300,000. The waterpark is connected to Waldameer, a 17-acre traditional, family-focused amusement park with classic and thrill rides, including the Ravine Flyer 2, one of the top-rated

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 Chemicals/containers: Blue-White, Madras Commercial Metals, BEC
 Sinks system: SR Scales
 Slide system: Slide Conveyors by WaterWorld, USA Slide
 Administration: C&E Caddies
 Food/Equipment: Carlie Food Service
 Uniforms: LifeGuard Store



KIDZ ZONE

Waldameer Park and Water World

220 Peninsula Drive, Erie, PA 16505
www.waldameer.com
 Owner: Lane Nelson
 Admission prices: \$52.00 for All Day Ride and Slide pass
 Dates open: April 27 to September 2
 Size/Area: ~50
 Number of employees: Year-round: 25; Seasonal: 650
 Clientele (percent local vs. tourist): 80% local
 Future expansion plans: Nebular ride
 Planned manufacturer: Zamperla
 Unique park programs: Free parking, free admission into the amusement park
 Staff retention programs or in-service programs: End-of-season bonus, returning employee bonus

WALDAMEER CONVEYORS (PAGE 36) Waters and grandparents!) and follows a group of kid detectives solving a mystery at Water World. The book allows guests a chance to relive their summer fun in the cold Erie water. The Water Park Windsor will well succeed Christmas time.

Operational efficiencies and cost savings are also top of mind when managing the park. One of the most impactful operational decisions Waldameer and Water World made was to move to a cardless system for its park spending. With the integration of a cardless system, provided by CORE Business, management decided to market the Wally Card, their in-park debit card, rather than have new water world money center waterfalls. VP of Operations Brian Gorman says transferring unspent unreturned money at the end of the guests' day to a Wally Card is an efficient way of handling their prefer to avoid. In addition to moving to park spending and making transactions quicker to process, implementing a cardless system has uncovered areas of loss or mismanagement of cash that were not previously apparent.

The last decade of expansion has resulted in Water World becoming a regional tourist destination. For the last three summers, Water World has seen the highest number of admission passes. Costs can purchase all-day ride and slide passes for both Waldameer and Water World, but the number of Water World guests still is much higher than before the Giant Wave Pool, Battle of Lake Erie, Rocket Blast, and other attractions were added.

Looking toward the future, Steve Gorman reports that design ideas are in progress for more family water attractions and food venues. Management will use the tried-and-true method that has been key to Water World's success: researching and "test driving" new attractions where they're already operating, consulting with the leadership of other waterparks, and keeping the customer in mind.

"We want to ensure that we offer something for everyone in the family—from child to grandparent," Gorman said. With this service-oriented mindset, Water World will be drawing customers for many years to come.

DAVID GORMAN IS THE AUTHOR OF THE WALDAMEER MYSTERY FILES SERIES FOR CHILDREN AGES 8-12. THE WATER PARK WINDSOR IS ABOUT KIDS SOLVING A MYSTERY IN WATER WORLD. FIND HIM AT DAVID@WATERBOOKS.COM.