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PACIFIC PARK® EMBELLISHES HISTORICAL SANTA MONICA PIER

Its Journey To Present Day Success Represents Eventful Milestones

SANTA MONICA, Calif., --- Pacific Park has made its mark on the famous Santa Monica Pier as the West Coast's premier oceanfront family amusement park. The two-acre park is one of the top entertainment destinations in the country and features thrilling rides and games, special attractions, fun fare and specialty retail shops.

Pacific Park is known nationwide as the amusement park to unveil the world's first solar-powered Ferris wheel, the Pacific Wheel. The nine-story Pacific Wheel lifts riders more than 130 feet above the Pacific Ocean. When the sun is shining, the system operates with more than 71,000-kilowatt hours of renewable photovoltaic (PV) power from the sun's rays, and on cloudy days the Pacific Wheel is powered from conventional energy sources.

On May 22, 2008, Pacific Park introduced an all-new \$1.5 million Pacific Wheel Ferris wheel featuring more than 160,000 energy-efficient LED lights that provide higher energy savings while complementing the solar-power application.

Since the opening of Pacific Park on the Santa Monica Pier on May 26, 1996, the Pier has attracted more than 8 million visitors each year. However, prior to the Park's opening, the Santa Monica Pier overcame a rough journey to reach its present day landmark status as one of the famous must-see entertainment destinations in the nation. Today, it is one of the area's premier local and tourist attractions in greater Los Angeles.

The Santa Monica Pier, which debuted on California Admission Day on September 9, 1909, is credited with assisting in the city of Santa Monica's growth and development.

Upon its opening, the Pier became an instant success and attracted thousands of visitors by its unique oceanfront views. The Pier also intrigued notable entrepreneurs such as Charles Looff who built Coney Island's first carousel in Brooklyn, New York, and saw the potential of the Santa Monica Pier as a landmark attraction. He began constructing his own pleasure pier in 1916.

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Upon completion, Looff's Pier featured the monumental Hippodrome building, which housed a succession of vintage merry-go-rounds, Wurlitzer organs, the Blue Streak Racer wooden roller coaster, Whip and Aerospace thrill rides and a funhouse.

Looff's Pier flourished in the 1920s and in 1924 La Monica Ballroom opened to become the site of many first-time national radio and television broadcasts.

However, the 1930s brought change when the Santa Monica Pier was confronted with severe weather patterns and new entertainment trends. As a result, the Blue Streak roller coaster was torn down in 1930, and the La Monica Ballroom eventually closed its doors.

While the Municipal Pier continued to be owned and operated by the City of Santa Monica, the Looff pleasure pier had a succession of owners. In 1953 it was taken over by the City, which leased it to a private operator.

The popularity of the Piers continued to deteriorate, and finally, in the early 1970s, the Santa Monica City Council ordered the demolition of both Piers.

In response to the Council's decision, Santa Monica residents joined together to fight for the survival of the Piers. They developed a "Save Our Pier Forever" campaign which resulted in the City creating the Pier Restoration Corporation to provide Pier management and oversee restoration efforts. Additionally, in 1975, the Hippodrome building and carousel were designated a Los Angeles County historical landmark by the U.S. government.

Improvements continued when in 1988, The Santa Monica City Council adopted the Santa Monica Pier Development Program, which ordered the building of a new concrete substructure to add strength and stability to the Pier. The program also added a variety of retail, dining and entertainment attractions as well as a police substation and the world-class Pacific Park amusement park.

Today, Pacific Park on the Santa Monica Pier, LA's only admission free amusement park, offers 12 amusement rides, 14 midway games, oceanfront food plaza and beachside retail shops. Signature rides and attractions include the *Pacific Wheel*, the world's first solar-powered Ferris wheel; The *West Coaster*, a steel roller coaster that races 55 feet above the Santa Monica Bay; and *Inkie's Air Lift Balloon Ride*, the high-flying, family-sharing kids' ride. Prices and operating hours are subject to change. Parking is available along the Pier. For additional information and hours of operation, call 310-260-8744, visit www.pacpark.com, follow on Twitter: @pacpark and Like at Facebook: facebook.com/pacificpark.

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