




PREPARING FOR OPENING DAY

the Morey Way

BY ALISON HELLER

As the sun slowly breaks through the seemingly eternal grey of winter, Wildwood residents rub their eyes and roll up their sleeves in anticipation of another wild season. Neon lights buzz then flare up island-wide. Ice cream trucks dust off their coolers and test their familiar jingles. Slowly, hotel pools all over town are prepped for cannonballs and splashing with refreshing chlorinated water.

At Morey's Piers, all levels of staff anticipate opening day. The Events Team began planning as soon as last season ended. They spent the off-season researching, planning and marketing. The Wild Half, a new half marathon event that takes runners 13.1 miles along the boardwalk and through the island to a beach finish, has been nearly two years in the making.

"It takes a lot of coordination. The Wild Half runs through four cities and we needed approvals from five different municipalities, but we did it! Everyone is excited and ready to showcase the Wildwoods in a whole new way," said Nick Lassar, Beach Sports Manager.

Morey's Piers also hosts the Beach Blast Soccer and Beach Lacrosse Tournaments.

"With close to 20,000 people at the first soccer tournament alone, you can imagine how much planning it takes to organize and pull together all the resources to make it happen," Lassar said.

The Maintenance Department gets busy reassembling the rides. Freshly painted carousel horses leave their winter stables and are bridled back on their rotating platform. The Giant Wheel, which looks like a wide mouth missing a few teeth over the winter, regains a refurbished grin.

With the arrival of "it", a new ride that will send guests spinning, swinging and soaring over 65 feet into the Wildwood sky, the maintenance crew has manuals to memorize and parts to assemble. Before "it" is ready for its maiden spin, they'll know every piece of the ride inside and out and ensure it passes all inspections and meets the safety regulations.

Ghost Ship Manager Terry O'Brien anticipates a more fully immersive experience for those brave enough to enter the



Ignus Fatuus. With new visual affects, some physical changes to the ship itself, and the help of award-winning costume and make-up designers Keith Lambert and Ruby Muro, the Ghost Ship may be more about survival than entertainment.

"We will not be feeding our actors very much, so they should be in much fouler moods this season. In fact, 'acting' may be too strong a term for what they'll be doing. 'Dying to escape' may sum it up better," said O'Brien of his nearly undead crew.

Back at the waterparks, it requires 1.5 million gallons of water to ready all the slides and the thousand-foot stretch of each lazy river.

"It takes almost a month to fill all the pools at both beachfront waterparks. The rivers alone take two or three days each to fill," said George Rohman, Operations Manager at Ocean Oasis Waterpark and Beach Club. "And, of course, there are several hundred inner-tubes to inflate-and no, we don't blow them up ourselves, fortunately! We use an air compressor."

Then there are the lounge chairs, trashcans and umbrellas to be cleaned, filtration and chemical treatment systems to be brought on line and, of course, thorough safety inspections before permits can be issued and the parks are ready for the public to enjoy.

Maggie Warner, Operations Manager of Raging Waters Waterpark looks forward to filling the roster with a new and diverse team of lifeguards, guest services associates and park services staff.

"As long as Mother Nature does her part this summer, we vow to do our part in creating a fun and unique experience in an exceptionally clean and safe environment," said Warner.

The entire staff at Morey's is excited for an incredible 2011 season packed with old traditions and new additions.

"I'm looking forward to seeing the boardwalk full of lights, sounds and people," said Lassar. "It's been a long winter!"

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