

Puy du Fou reveals plans for Crimea theme park

Following reports that a Puy du Fou theme park coming to Russia could be in serious jeopardy thanks to EU/US sanctions, Puy du Fou founder and French politician Philippe de Villiers met with Russian President Vladimir Putin to sign deals to bring Puy du Fou not only to Moscow, but also to the disputed Crimea region on the Russia/Ukraine border.

Plans for the historical theme park in Moscow have been in the works for some time, however the new Crimea plans are bound to raise eyebrows in the heavily disputed region.

Crimea – recently annexed by Russia from the Ukraine,



Philippe de Villiers with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Crimea

leading to the 2014 dispute over sovereignty and control of the peninsula – will be home to one of the two historical theme

parks, although any plans will come up against strict anti-Russian import sanctions put in place by the EU/US as a result of

the Crimea dispute and Putin's support of Ukrainian rebels on the Russia/Ukraine border.

"The sanctions are acts of war," said de Villiers speaking to *Libération*. "Cooperating is an act of peace. We are here to carry out an act of peace."

Billionaire Konstantin Malofeev has already given financial backing to the Moscow and Crimea projects, with the aim of opening both by 2017, though sanctions have been placed directly against the businessman, which is likely to hamper or slow plans as Puy du Fou looks to launch its brand on an international scale.

More: http://lei.sr?a=p5d3h_A

Photo: The Presidential Press and Information Office

Theme park operator agrees deal with Tesla

Electric car manufacturer Tesla has signed a deal with Chinese theme park operator Haichang Holdings to build charging stations at all of its locations, with the potential of Tesla-themed events to be held in future.

The two companies signed a memorandum of co-operation on Monday (25 August) and now Haichang will identify sites to develop supercharger stations for Tesla's electric vehicles, later looking to organise "cultural activities or events with the theme of vehicles," at the operator's attractions.

More: http://lei.sr?a=K5d3M_A

SeaWorld shares plummet in wake of Blackfish doc

The effects of the documentary *Blackfish* are plain to see for SeaWorld, as shares in the company have tumbled 33 per cent since the controversial film's release.

SeaWorld has suffered severe backlash from the documentary film, which recounted the violent behaviour of an orca "driven to madness" in captivity, leading to the death of trainer Dawn Brancheau in 2010.

Shares fell 33 per cent after a 6-7 per cent decline in revenue for the company was forecast, with falling attendances and major sponsors and supporters distancing themselves from the company – driven in part by the negative press generated by the documentary – a major factor in the significant drop.



SeaWorld shares dropped 33 per cent

In the wake of the documentary, legislation has been proposed for California, which would mean SeaWorld would no longer be able to have orca shows in that state.

Continued on back cover

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AM2 is published fortnightly by The Leisure Media Company Limited, Portmill House, Portmill Lane, Hitchin, Herts SG5 1DJ, UK and is distributed in the USA by SPP, 75 Aberdeen Road, Emigsville, PA 17318-0437. Periodicals postage paid @ Manchester, PA POSTMASTER Send US address changes to Spa Opportunities, c/o PO Box 437, Emigsville, PA 17318-0437. The views expressed in print are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the publisher The Leisure Media Company Limited. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recorded or otherwise without the prior permission of the copyright holder. Printed by Preview Cromatic Ltd. ©Cybertrek Ltd 2014 ISSN Print: 2055-8171 Digital: 2055-818X

New Zealand's answer to Eden Project could be built in Christchurch's 'Red Zone'

An area in Christchurch, New Zealand – decimated by an earthquake in 2011 – could be about to get a major new attraction inspired and backed by the UK's Eden Project.

The scheme, proposed by the Water For Life Trust, has been modelled on the Eden project in Cornwall, England, which uses a large area of land converted into a sustainable, green, nature-focused tourist attraction and research centre.

The Eden Project houses the world's largest biodome rainforest and also has gardens, art displays, music events, an ice rink, restaurants and cafés, attracting more



The Eden project has proved highly successful in England

than a million visitors a year.

The proposed attraction, tentatively named 'Eden NZ: Mountains to Sea – Ki Uta Ki Tai' could be built in the 'Red Zone' – a public exclusion area in the Christchurch Central City implemented

after the 22 February 2011 Christchurch earthquake – which still has many buildings cordoned off because they have been deemed unstable by the local authorities.

More: http://lei.sr?a=V2K3w_A

Greensboro Science Center to revamp museum and zoo in US\$25m expansion

Greensboro Science Center in North Carolina, US is about to undergo a massive US\$25m (£18.6m, £15m) expansion, renovating its indoor museum and doubling the size of its outdoor zoo.

The centre, which houses the museum, planetarium, zoo and aquarium, welcomed more than 430,000 visitors through its doors last year, with predictions of tipping half a million by the end of 2014.

Renovations on the museum will start in 2015, modernising parts of the museum last worked on in the 1970s. The three areas to be developed will be Prehistoric Passages: Realm of Dragons,



The revamp will include an app-friendly dinosaur area

Wunderworld: Denizens of the Dark and the SciPlayBay.

The renovations will take place over two years at a cost of US\$6m (£4.5m, £3.6m).

The Discovery Zoo will double in size – from 12 to 24

acres – costing an estimated US\$10m (£7.5m, £6m), while construction will be funded by a combination of private donors and a US\$20m (£14.9m, £11.9m) bond.

More: http://lei.sr?a=Q7t9n_A

US aquarium files lawsuit to import 18 wild belugas

The Georgia Aquarium in Atlanta is seeking federal permission to bring 18 beluga whales, captured last year off the coast of Russia, to the US at a time when pressure to end the captivity of cetaceans is at an all-time high.

In September 2013, the Georgia Aquarium sued the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) fisheries service for the right to acquire the beluga whales, which were captured in the Sea of Okhotsk and are currently under the care of a Russian team.

Lawyers for both sides argued their case on 20 August, though a final ruling could be as far as two months away.

The US government is contending that bringing the captured whales to the US violates the Marine Mammal Protection Act, depleting the known wild beluga whale population even more, while the aquarium disputes the allegations and is demanding NOAA Fisheries hand over more internal documents to show how the government made its decision.



Georgia Aquarium wants to add to the four beluga whales it already has in captivity

In March 2013, Georgia Aquarium received a green light on the decision to bring in the whales, though in September later that year, the government denied the application.

"If they change their minds, we are entitled to look at why," said aquarium attorney Daniel Diffley. "We believe the decision is arbitrary." *More: http://lei.sr?a=R8X4a_A*

Nigerian President looks to heritage to kickstart country's tourism industry

Nigeria's President Goodluck Jonathan has said a new heritage project will overhaul the country's global image and boost revenues from tourism and culture.

The scheme, *Nigeria, Our Heritage Project*, will celebrate the cultural inheritance and economic endowment of Nigeria. Speaking at the launch of the project in Washington DC, US, the President expressed his regret that Nigeria has "come under a global media conspiracy that brought humiliation for the country."

The President continued: "The project is a message to every Nigerian that we have a duty to ensure that Nigeria



Goodluck Jonathan wants to improve the image of Nigeria

is not only what it should be but what others see it as. We have to be holistic in the way we look at things, especially our culture."

Edem Duke, tourism minister for the country,

expressed optimism for increased partnership with Nigerian companies, the media and government in a bid to revamp Nigeria as an "investment destination."

More: http://lei.sr?a=k7S7w_A



The museum has been closed since 2003

Iraq's national museum reopens to the public

Troubled Iraq's national museum has reopened two renovated halls for exhibition, more than a decade after they were subject to mass looting and destruction during the US/Iraq conflict.

The halls are displaying more than 500 artefacts dating back as far as 312BC, much of which has been retrieved following the looting of more than 15,000 objects of historical importance from the museum over a three-day period at the height of the 2003 US-led invasion.

More: http://lei.sr?a=N5a3W_A

US\$30m waterpark planned for upstate New York

Plans are afoot to develop a US\$30m (€22.7m, £18.1m) waterpark in Antwerp, upstate New York, after the proposed project gained preliminary approval from the town's planning board.

Creating an estimated 300 jobs, the 20 acre (80,900sq m) waterpark will feature a range of waterslides and water-themed attractions including a wave pool and lazy river, in addition to dry activities to make the attraction a year-round amenity.

Developer Cliffside Waterpark Entertainment Group – comprised of siblings Alan Taylor and Connie Mahar – wants to include indoor water attractions, though they would come after the initial opening.

Cliffside Waterpark is working with WhiteWater West on the development of the park and the project is being financed through a combination of funding. This is coming from the Watertown Small Business Development Center, WhiteWater West and a GoFundMe crowdsourcing project seeking US\$5m (€3.7m, £3m) – which will also



The attraction will be fully-developed over a period of four to seven years

pre-sell tickets for the park's first season.

The waterpark's developers are hoping to open the attraction by August 2015 at the latest, with wet rides being added to the

indoor area in year two and a further 20 acres of wet rides to be installed outside in 2019 and top open later that year.

More: http://lei.sr?a=E5Y2T_A



The trains date back to as far as 1878

Cuba celebrates heritage with grand rail exhibition

A large exhibition on Cuba's rail heritage is set to open, following an eight-year project to repair and restore 40 locomotives. The open air exhibition will take place at the country's National Railroad Museum.

Steam locomotives and Cuba share a rich history, with the country's engines the first to appear in Latin America.

A workshop in Havana, tasked with repairing and restoring the steam locomotives, first opened in 2007 – becoming a popular tourist attraction in its own right.

More: http://lei.sr?a=q8e9E_A

Giant turtle invades Sydney harbour as part of underwater art installation

A giant inflatable turtle the size of a house has been installed in Australia's Sydney Harbour to mark the launch of an underwater art exhibition at the city's aquarium.

The 15m (49ft) long turtle is covered in a black and white coral reef pattern, with organisers looking to raise awareness of the Great Barrier Reef, which is deteriorating at a rapid rate thanks to a combination of pollution and seabed dredging.

This year, the Undersea Art Exhibition – held at the waterside Sea Life Sydney Aquarium – will display a collection of paintings by Australian artist BJ Price, who last year held an



The giant turtle follows a large rubber duck visiting in 2013

underwater art exhibition in the Great Barrier Reef, with this year's installation running until 11 September.

Sydney is currently seeing returns on the commitment it's made to public art in

recent years, announcing details of three prestigious works to launch by architect Junya Ishigami, artist Tracey Emin and artist Hany Armanious.

More: http://lei.sr?a=X8q4P_A

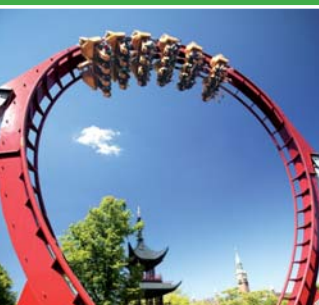
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VR gaming museum launches on Oculus Rift

A museum dedicated to video games has been made available in a fully immersive virtual world using the Oculus Rift headset technology.

Initially released in beta format in June by indie game developer Thiago Alcantara, *Museum of Games* pays tribute to a large array of videogames and videogame characters, allowing users to tour a large viewing gallery featuring framed posters of classic game covers and a range of character models from said games.

The software is free to download from the Oculus VR forums and is compatible with the Oculus VR headset. The free-to-use museum features hundreds of classic and popular video game franchises including *Sonic the Hedgehog*, *Half-Life*, *Mario*, *Mortal Kombat* and *Tomb Raider* to name a few.

An upgraded sequel of the first version of the game has now launched based around the same concept, but this time including support for the second development kit (DK2) of Oculus Rift, allowing players to inspect exhibits using positional tracking.



Characters such as Mario and Lara Croft are included in the virtual reality museum

The VR museum also features 76 new character models in a new “wing” of the facility, which also showcases a variety of classic weapons and accessories from video

game history across three different new areas, with new models featuring franchises such as *Resident Evil*, *Duke Nukem* and *Rayman*.

More: http://lei.sr?a=M9S9t_A



The building is designed by Shigeru Ban

Aspen Art Museum opens doors to public

The new home for the Aspen Art Museum (AAM) – designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Shigeru Ban – opened to the public on 9 August.

The 33,000sq ft (10,058sq m) museum and gallery is the new home of the art museum, which had outgrown its old place of residence.

The museum features a public rooftop space and provides almost triple the previous exhibition space. Externally, the building's facade is draped over the glass in the form of wooden cladding.

More: http://lei.sr?a=9f6T8_A

Whale shark pod becomes popular eco-tourist attraction in the Maldives

A pod of whale sharks based in the Maldives is proving to be a hugely popular tourist attraction, with the creatures living in one of the country's 26 natural atolls – accounting for 3 per cent of all global tourism devoted to sharks.

The whale sharks are certainly an impressive sight. Reaching lengths of at least 40ft (12.2m), the gentle giants feed on shrimp-like plankton and are popular subjects of observation among divers and snorkelers.

In 2013, south Ari atoll, located in the west of the country, attracted 78,000 overseas tourists – just under a tenth of the country's annual visitor numbers – coming for



The whales sharks account for a tenth of Maldives tourism

the specific purpose of whale shark excursions, generating a direct income of MVR142.2m (US\$9.3m, €7m, £5.6m) for Maldives tour operators.

Between 18 and 29 whale sharks are thought to be

inhabiting the zone, with fresh talks underway between local communities and tourism industry representatives – following the rejection of a 2009 management plan.

More: http://lei.sr?a=a8r5k_A

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of museum work from displays and showcases to exhibition design, lighting to retail, merchandising to ticketing, and insurance to collections management. The exhibition will feature a number of MP workshops, giving visitors a chance to hear from leading museum professionals about the latest practice across all areas of the museum sector.

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The rides will open at Six Flags Over Texas and St. Louis

Justice League recruits Alterface for dark ride project

The 'Justice League: Battle For Metropolis' rides feature super-heroes from the DC universe such as Superman and Batman, and Alterface will provide its interactive shooting system, 3D media, motion-based vehicles, lifelike animatronics and special effects as part of a new project. Alterface's 'Eagle Eye' dark ride monitoring and auto-diagnostic tool will also be used.

The Belgium-based company was selected by project lead Sally Corporation, and the team will also include North Hollywood-based company Pure Imagination, which will provide 3D graphics, and Oceaneering, which will provide motion-based vehicles.

The Justice League rides are scheduled to open in 2015.



Iplayco's new site is cleaner and more functional for users

Iplayco unveils fresh and functional website

International Play Company (Iplayco) has launched an innovative new website.

Aiming to create a clean, modern look with user-friendly functionalities, the www.iplayco.com website adds a library of new designs, product information and videos, and gives users the ability to share information across social networking sites.

The website features an 'Add to My Brochure' function, which enables users to save their viewed designs and gain access to a library of innovative designs when interacting with Iplayco sales representatives.

Other features of the new site include updated customer installations, quick access translation into dozens of different languages and social media integration.



A simulation theatre includes an earthquake simulator

Tennessee discovery centre benefits from Electrosonic AV

Electrosonic has provided audio-visual equipment for a range of exhibit galleries at Discovery Park of America.

A 'Regional History' gallery includes a simulation theatre which gives visitors the chance to experience an earthquake along the New Madrid fault, which formed in the area about 200 years ago. Electrosonic installed

270° wraparound screens and five ceiling-mounted Christie DS+6K-M projectors to deliver the visuals, which were sourced from a 7thSense server. Special effects audio and tremors simulate the earthquake for the standing audience.

In the 'Native Americans' gallery, Electrosonic installed four 46-inch LCD monitors for a holographic exhibit.



KidSteam designs and creates pedal-powered "kiddie rides"

Paragon Entertainment wins KidSteam licensing rights

Paragon Entertainment's licensing division has secured the exclusive rights to represent US attractions company KidSteam in Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

Texas-based KidSteam designs and creates interactive and fun attractions including 'Kiddie Rides', which are pedal-powered trains and tracks. Intended

for children aged four and up, multiple trains can be added to the track layout depending on the customer's specification.

Paragon CEO Mark Pyrah said: "From an operator's point of view, it can be installed into any size of site, from a location as small as 15ft in diameter with no power required, creating a product that is great fun for all the family."

US\$257,000 granted for native heritage training

The Institute of Museum and Library Services has given out more than US\$257,000 (€193,000, £156,000) to go towards training workshops for museums in the US with links to Native Americans and Native Hawaiians as part of a larger US\$925,000 (€695,000, £556,000) grant scheme designed to protect native cultural heritage across the US.

The Native American/Native Hawaiian Museum Services (NANH) programme supports Native American tribes and organisations that primarily serve and represent Native Hawaiians. The grants – which range anywhere from US\$5,000 (€3,700, £3,000) to US\$50,000 (€37,500, £30,000) – are intended to provide opportunities to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge through exhibitions, educational services and programming, professional development and collections stewardship.

The state of Alaska gained the largest net amount, with US\$86,000 (€64,600, £51,600) to go towards a new exhibit and training



The grant scheme is designed to protect native cultural heritage in the US

workshops for the region's small museums. US\$47,900 (€36,000, £28,700) will go to the Chilkat Indian Village in Haines for training from the Alaska State Museum in best practices

for curating exhibits. Staff will train tribal members in professional collection handling, interpretation and exhibit installation.

More: http://lei.sr?a=r7m6s_A



The institute looks at ancient architecture

Architectural institute set up in Forbidden City

The Palace Museum – housed in Beijing's Forbidden City – is to set up an architectural institute equipped for research, training and restoration on China's ancient architecture.

The new unit will operate as a scientific base and will be devoted to multiple fields, with training including the inheritance and development of traditional architectural skills, the adoption of modern technologies in relation to ancient architecture and the training of professionals for curation, restoration and investigation.

More: http://lei.sr?a=c4r9U_A

UK trainers lend expertise to UAE's Al Ain Zoo to run training scheme

Al Ain Zoo in the UAE, is hosting two UK trainers from Durrell Conservation Academy (DCA) in Jersey, UK, to oversee a joint development and training programme for all of the zoo's senior keepers.

The training scheme will teach the keepers to better understand the basic principles of taxonomy, animal husbandry and healthcare for all of the zoo's animals.

They will also learn more on animal hygiene, sanitation, good enclosure design, biosecurity, sensible work practices and correct food preparation and handling, in order to minimize infectious diseases while also learning how to identify



The zoo's keepers will receive further animal welfare training

health issues early on through regular monitoring.

"Al Ain Zoo has a strong partnership with DCA to assist us in the training of our staff in animal management best practice, wildlife conser-

vation and sustainability, which is invaluable to the success of wildlife conservation at a global level," said Al Ain Zoo director general Ghanim Mubarak Al Hajeri.

More: http://lei.sr?a=j3U5z_A

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Dianne Eade, Newquay Zoo
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Location: Castelnovo del Garda, Italy

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Company: York's CHOCOLATE Story
Location: York

■ Visitor Experience Manager

Company: National Trust
Location: Shrewsbury, Shropshire, United Kingdom

■ General Manager - Visitor centre

Company: St John The Baptist Cathedral
Location: Norwich, United Kingdom

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Under pressure SeaWorld to expand orca habitats at parks across the US

Continued from front cover

As a reaction to lagging attendance, tumbling shares and a backlash of negative publicity in the wake of the controversial documentary *Blackfish*, SeaWorld has announced multi-million dollar expansion plans for its habitats housing killer whales.

The park's significant drop in share value has seemingly been the final straw for the operator, with plans revealed to upgrade the orca tanks at three SeaWorld theme parks, starting in San Diego, with the new enclosures almost doubling in size.

SeaWorld would not reveal exact expansion



SeaWorld says the work will cost 'several hundred million dollars'

costs, but did say the work would cost "several hundred million dollars".

The San Diego facility, which will start construction in 2015 and be completed in 2018, will include an innovative new

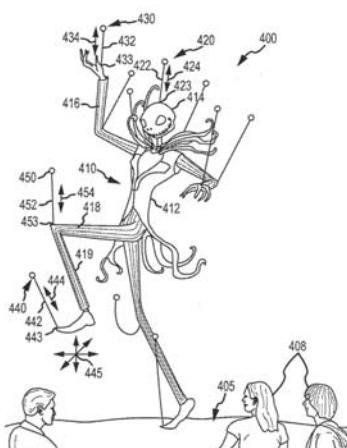
"water treadmill" – a system which allows the whales to swim against a current, allowing more exercise while opening the door for research into how they burn energy.

More: http://lei.sr?a=u2P4H_A

Disney planning drone technology for use in entertainment at theme parks

A number of patents, recently filed by Disney, suggest the company plans to use drone technology for entertainment purposes in its theme parks, with the advanced tech potentially able to fill the sky with a giant screen or bring marionettes to life using the devices.

Three patents filed by Disney suggest that among other things, larger-than-life puppets could be mounted with rods to fly through the air, bringing characters such as Jack Skellington (pictured) to life with greater control than previous airbourne characters which have simply been filled with hot air.



The patent features a marionette version Jack Skellington

The drones could also produce an aerial display based on the floating pixel, or "fixel", potentially turning the sky into a screen for which Disney could display anything it so desired.

According to the Disney patent, the drone technology application could also be used in the entertainment industry, "where it is desirable to provide an aerial display."

More: http://lei.sr?a=d6s7q_A

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Association of American Zoos & Aquariums

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Association of Art Museum Directors

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Association of Independent Museums (AIM)

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