



36 YEARS OF FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT

1973 – Park opens March 31 under leadership of real estate developer/entrepreneur E. Pat Hall

1974 – More than 986,000 guests visit the park in its second year of operation

1975 – Carowinds is purchased for \$16 million by Family Leisure Centers, Inc., a joint venture of the Taft Broadcasting Company and the Kroger Company. Hanna-Barbera® Land and the Paladium also are introduced as the park's largest additions for the season.

1976 – The coaster Thunder Road is created and named after Robert Mitchum's "Thunder Road," a Carolina story depicting the speed and excitement in the old moonshine running days.

1977 – "White Lightnin'" strikes the Carolinas with a rollercoaster-type train which catapults daring guests from zero to more than 53 mph. in just 180 feet. The coaster was removed from the park in 1987.

1978 – Carowinds supports the athletes of the U.S. Olympic teams by donating \$1 to the Olympic Fund for every discount coupon received through Belk department stores.

1979 – A \$3 million expansion adds the county fair area, which contains four new rides. Also, a 1923 antique carousel built by the Philadelphia Toboggan Company travels from Evansville, Ind., and makes its new home in Hanna-Barbera® Land.

1980 – The revolutionary design of Carolina Cyclone makes it the only rollercoaster in the world that turns riders upside down four times.

1981 – "Rip Roarin Rapids" is introduced offering guests a wet and cool attraction.

1982 – Surf's up at the new 700,000-gallon wave pool featuring 25,500 square feet of swimming area and man-made waves three to five feet high.

1983 – Celebrating its 10th anniversary, Carowinds provides the magic of an old-fashioned Christmas during Winterfest. The centerpiece of this winter celebration was the illumination of the 340-foot tall Skytower Christmas tree, a tradition that continues today.

1984 – Taft Broadcasting Company's Amusement Park Groups acquire two-thirds ownership of Taft's theme parks, including Carowinds, and form Kings Entertainment Company. Smurf Island is introduced at the park.

1985 – A new motion illusion attraction called Blackbeard’s Revenge gives guests a pirate ship ride with the Carolina’s infamous pirate Blackbeard.

1986 – The 360-degree looping Viking ship, Frenzoid, makes its home in the completely renovated County Fair section of the park.

1987 – In its 15th anniversary season, Carowinds expands Hanna-Barbera® Land with additional rides, live shows and a Baby Care Center.

1988 – The park’s new family water attraction, WhiteWater falls, plunges guests down a 45-foot waterfall.

1989 – The addition of Rip Tide Reef, a six-acre water park, makes Carowinds the only theme park in the country to offer guests a full water park experience within a major theme park at no extra cost.

1990 – Gauntlet riders enjoy the panoramic view of the park as well as the breathtaking 360-degree loops and controlled free-falls.

1991 – Through a \$4 million expansion project, the Paladium becomes a stand-alone concert facility– separate from the theme park – with a seating capacity of 13,000.

1992 –Paramount Communications Inc. purchases Kings Entertainment Company and forms Paramount Parks which includes Carowinds. Vortex, a state-of-the-art, stand-up rollercoaster, opens.

1993 – The park introduces themes from motion pictures and television shows in attractions such as DAYS OF THUNDER® and the Paramount Walk of Fame. The park’s name officially becomes Paramount’s Carowinds.

1994 – WAYNE’S WORLD™, a high-energy, three-acre addition to the park, re-creates the Hollywood set popularized in the Paramount motion picture of the same name. The Hurler, a new wooden rollercoaster, is the highlight of the area.

1995 – Animation Station introduces an interactive experience for kids featuring The Power Station, a challenging three-story climbing structure, and Kids’ Studio, an outdoor amphitheatre for children’s shows. Also, daring guests unearth the wonders of flight as they embark on the exhilarating Xtreme Skyflyer.

1996 – DROP ZONE Stunt Tower® provides daring riders a 160-foot free-fall at 56 mph. The park also entertains more than 1.8 million guests, making it one of the most popular attractions in the Carolinas.

1997 – In its 25th anniversary season, Paramount’s Carowinds undergoes a \$7 million water park expansion of WaterWorks and now includes 12 acres of family water attractions.

1998 – ZOOM ZONE opens in Animation Station. The expansion adds three new attractions – Taxi Jam, Chopper Chase and Road Rally – and 3.5 acres to the existing area of Animation Station.

1999 – TOP GUN®: The Jet Coaster, a 62 mph., inverted rollercoaster, opens to the public. The state-of-the-art jet coaster includes six stomach-swirling inversions with floorless cars suspended below a steel track. The \$10.5 million investment is the largest in the park's history.

2000 – Paramount's Carowinds becomes the first theme park in the world to have an attraction that combines water play experience with the adventure of a suspended coaster. The Nickelodeon™ Flying Super Saturator takes riders along a 1,087-foot suspended track while dodging a gauntlet of gushing geysers and rain curtains. Scarowinds, the park's haunted Halloween attraction, also opens for the first time in October.

2001 – Paramount's Carowinds introduces three all-new attractions appealing to all ages. Scooby-Doo's™ Haunted Mansion is an interactive ghost-busting experience through an old southern plantation with America's favorite cartoon canine. Pipeline Peak opens with the world's tallest enclosed body slide, and 7th Portal™ becomes the park's first 3-D attraction.

2002 – Ricochet™, the park's 11th rollercoaster takes guests on a wild ride as they drop, spin, twist and curl through the park's first "fast track" coaster. Carolina Boardwalk opens and takes guests on a walk through the famous beaches of the Carolinas.

2003 – Nickelodeon™ Central, a themed area based on characters and shows from the number one kids entertainment brand in the world, debuts at the park. The area included three new attractions - Rugrats™ Runaway Reptar™, The Wild Thornberrys™ River Adventure and Rocket Power™: Air Time.

2004 – The first flying roller coaster in the Carolinas, Borg™ Assimilator, makes its debut and becomes the tallest roller coaster in the park. Guests fly facedown, suspended below the track in a superhero-like flying position and race toward the ground at speeds of up to 50 mph.

2005 – Nickelodeon™ Central grows to become five times larger than before. The 15-acre Nickelodeon playground is loaded with more than 20 attractions, including new rides Danny Phantom's™ Flyers, the Flying Dutchman's Revenge and Little Bill's™ Cruisers.

2006 – Cedar Fair, L.P. Purchases Carowinds on July 1, and the park becomes one of the 12 amusement parks in the newly-named Cedar Fair Entertainment Company. The water park expands and becomes Boomerang Bay – a 16-acre, Australian-themed experience featuring new attractions Kookaburra Bay (heated lagoon) and Platypus Plunge (kids' water slide).

2007 – The first season under Cedar Fair brings the return of an ice show (Endless Summer) to the Carowinds theatre and the Southern Star (formerly Frenzoid) back to County Fair.

2008 – Boomerang Bay water park expands again with the addition of Bondi Beach, a 600,000-gallon wave pool. The park also adds a new swing ride called Yo Yo, to the county fair section park.