

Wave of the future

Technology helps Zoom Flume visitors beat the heat

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EAST DURHAM — The Riptide Cove Wave Pool, which debuted this summer has been a success, according to park General Manager Ed Kerrigan.

Kerrigan said "99.9 percent" of the feedback has been positive.

"People really love it," he said, adding that the pool and nice weather have drawn more people to the park than in years past. "It has been a great addition to the park."

The 16,000-square-foot pool is the first commercial pool built by American Wave Machines, Inc. with PerfectSwell, a pneumatic system that generates waves that behave like wind-generated ocean swells, according to a company press release.

The company advertises that the system alternatively reduces rip currents and energy buildup while creating breaking waves that have the same profile advance as ocean waves.

AWM developed the PerfectSwell in cooperation with Flometrics Inc., according to the release.

Kerrigan said air pushed through a series of valves into different chambers creates an endless combination of different types of waves.

The pool's maximum depth is four feet and the tallest waves reach a height of two feet, he said.

Kerrigan said the shallow depth helps keep visitors safe: older technology for wave pools require pool depths of at least eight feet.

"Because it is only four feet deep it is much safer than most pools," he said.

The pool's floor is also lined with vinyl to decrease skin



Children enjoy the Zoom Flume's new wave pool, which debuted this season. Photo by Claude Haton

scrapes common with concrete pool floors. This, too, has won rave reviews from visitors, he said.

And the 21 lifeguards on duty at the pool — five guards are on duty at all times — received additional training beyond that required for other attractions at the park through the American Red Cross and taught by Cairo Ambulance Chief Reay Mahler, he said.

The addition created 30 new jobs, Kerrigan said, adding that the park hires all local employees.

Kerrigan said several local contractors, including Kurt and Mert Excavation, Borweigan Excavation and Holdridge Electricians as well as GNH Lumber, were used for the project. The full project, which will include the currently unfinished bathrooms and locker rooms, will cost "well over \$1 million," according to Kerrigan. Work began in September of 2008, he said.

Kerrigan said he plans to add some slides and increase food services in the wave pool area. The park's entranceway will be reconstructed to accommodate the number of people who come to the park.

The park closes this year on September 6.