

Bumper Cars



A view of the RDC bumper cars at Central Park Funland. RDC has loyal clientele in 44 states and 28 foreign countries.

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A Bump Up For Business

The Benefits of Bumper Cars

By Hilary Danailova

Before Central Park Funland installed new bumper cars at its Fredericksburg, Va., entertainment center, laser tag was the most popular activity, said Technical Director **Donny Fisk**. “Now bumpers cars are the number one attraction in the park,” Fisk noted. “And for the younger kids in particular, it’s just fantastic.”

That’s because unlike the older models, Central Park’s new cars — from Independence, Oregon-based Ride Development Company (RDC) — feature easy-to-handle joysticks on each side rather than a clumsy steering wheel. Riders can back up and maneuver comfortably, improving the experience and allowing young children to navigate with ease.

Facilities around the country say RDC bumper cars are a draw for patrons, giving them a fun, safe, all-ages-friendly indoor alternative to mini-golf and bowling. “We wanted another attraction for birthday

parties especially, another activity while they’re here,” said **Scott Peltz**, general manager of Milpitas Golf and in Milpitas, Calif., explaining why the facility added RDC cars last spring. “For teenagers on a weekend night, it’s something else to do after they’re done playing mini-golf or laser tag.”

Peltz said Milpitas Golf and let patrons know about the bumper cars via its email mailing list, as well as putting action pictures on social media. “It just looks new and shiny and more fun,” said Peltz of the new attraction. “We’ve got music playing, lights flashing. It adds a party atmosphere.”

RDC General Manager **Tami Dean** said the bumper car company’s dedicated clientele — in 44 states and 28 foreign countries — appreciates their reliable, low-maintenance product. She credited RDC’s 30 years of engineering and design experience with perfecting the

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cars' durable tubing and built-to-last, heavy steel frame construction.

"Our clients have repeatedly told us that our bumper cars have had a direct effect on increasing their revenue stream," said Dean. "Since bumper cars are enjoyed by all age groups, owners see the appeal and return on investment of our cars, which reduces the investment risk."

That has certainly proven to be the case at Central Park Funland, where RDC bumper cars have attracted new audiences to the 20-year-old facility, Fisk said. To promote the attraction, Central Park Funland arranged a sponsorship with the local radio station; B101.5, whose mascot is a bee, named the cars Buzzy Spinout and has its DJs do a shout-out at commercial breaks.

"They've also made the music and programmed the sound system for us," explained Fisk. "So as soon as we hit the start button for the bumper cars, a DJ comes on and does a little spiel through our speaker system about Buzzy Spinout." A light show coordinates with the music, a fog machine spews fake steam out of the cars, and the ride operator honks a horn, adding to the excitement.

Flashing lights are enhanced with mirrors around the bumper car area at Play Staytion, a year-old entertainment center in Asheville, N.C. "Little kids like the lighting, and the mirrors reflecting the lights makes it a fun visual experience," explained Play Staytion Owner **Russ Roberson**.



Guests enjoying the bumper cars at Central Park Funland in Fredericksburg, Va. The center's Ride Development Company (RDC) bumper cars are the most popular attraction.

Roberson installed six RDC bumper cars a few months after opening the 6,000-square-foot facility, alongside 36 holes of mini-golf, go-karts, batting cages and a large arcade. "Bumper cars are great for kids that can't drive go-karts because of the state height requirements," Roberson explained. "So it gives them an extra attraction."

Roberson said adults also enjoy the modern features on RDC cars, such as the joy sticks and the ability to spin. And he is impressed with the brand's reliability: "We haven't had one minute of trouble with these bumper cars," Roberson added. "They are really good quality."



At Central Park Funland, the RDC bumper cars feature easy-to-handle joysticks rather than steering wheels.

At Camelot Golfland in Anaheim, Calif., General Manager **Mauricio Ceron** installed RDC bumper cars last Memorial Day to enhance his group revenue. "Being an indoor attraction, it helps a lot with birthday parties," Ceron said. To ensure the cars would be a hit, Ceron installed them strategically in a high-foot-traffic area where "it's very visible," he explained. The facility also advertised on its website and Facebook page.

In Mesa, Ariz., RDC bumper cars replaced a toddler play area that

wasn't generating revenue for Mesa Golf and Sunsplash, said the facility's General Manager **Tony Hacker**. "With that relatively small footprint, we were able to put in our bumper cars," noted Hacker, who said the location was strategically adjacent to mini-golf and the arcade. "It gives us another attraction to add to our overall package of fun and entertainment."


To promote the new bumper cars, Mesa Golf and Sunsplash opted for the additional lighting, which draws attention to the attraction. Hacker also said that having employees ride the cars has helped encourage hesitant riders. "People might wonder, 'Is it easy to do?' Then they see our employees enjoying the cars and think, 'Gee, it looks like a lot of fun,'" he explained.

Mesa Golf and Sunsplash advertises the new attraction on its social media sites, as well as encouraging employees to upsell rides at the ticket window. But ultimately, Hacker added, bumper cars are a natural fit with a family-friendly lineup that also includes bumper boats




Facility officials around the country said RDC bumper cars are a draw for patrons. In this photo, a woman is shown enjoying a ride at Central Park Funland.

and laser tag. "It's an opportunity to get in there together with other family members and take out some fun frustrations," the general manager said of the new cars. "And they get to see each other's smiles right up close." ✪




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