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WORLD FENCE NEWS

NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF FENCING, ACCESS CONTROL AND SECURITY • JUNE 2008

Inside Mall of America

Custom fence protects public from mechanical workings of theme park roller coasters

When the world-famous 4.2 million-square-foot Mall of America® in Bloomington, Minn. (near Minneapolis) announced the addition of the Nickelodeon® Universe theme park, "We never would have imagined the opportunity our company would have to take part in the construction," said Brandon Block, estimator and project manager for Century Fence Company of nearby Forest Lake, Minn. "It was

"Nickelodeon had designers who were interested in seeing any and all types of decorative fence. Their main concern was that it blended into the rest of the park's theme, especially the color."

***— Brandon Block
Century Fence Company***

an honor to be chosen as the fence supplier, but it wasn't an easy process by any means," Block added.

The Nickelodeon Universe park covers some seven acres, and includes more than 30 rides and attractions, nine restaurants, and numerous entertainment and shopping venues.

Century Fence's involvement started with a call from the general contractor, PCL Construction of Burnsville, Minn., in late 2007.

"They were looking for a 'custom' fence that would protect the public from the workings of the mechanical portions of the new roller coasters, the SpongeBob SquarePants® Rock Bottom Plunge (a unique vertical lift ride that features intense loops, spirals and 90-degree turns) and the Avatar Airbender (a free-fall experience). Trying to cram two huge roller coasters into an existing space didn't leave a lot of room for the public, and the proper shielding and protection barriers were critical," said Troy Adams, head construction superintendent. "At one point you could almost hit your head on the bottom of the coaster track," Adams

added. There were no specifications for the fence other than it "not be chain link," Block noted.

"Nickelodeon had designers who were interested in seeing any and all types of decorative fence. Their main concern was that it blended into the rest of the park's theme, especially the color," he said.

"It took nearly two months of presenting materials options, sending samples and searching suppliers to come up with the final product. After all was said and done, the customer chose Deacero® brand wire fence for its simplicity and good looks," said Block.

"The order was soon placed and the clock was running."

The project involved a total of 940 lineal feet of 6-foot high Deacero non-climbable welded wire fencing. The fencing is constructed of 6-ga. wire, which is Class 1 galvanized prior to powder coating. The panels were mounted on matching Sapphire Blue 2-1/4 in. square posts.

Most of the posts were bolted to concrete curbs using deck mount
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The owners of the new Nickelodeon Universe theme park in Mall of America were looking for a "custom" fence that would protect the public from the workings of the mechanical portions of the new roller coasters, the SpongeBob SquarePants Rock Bottom Plunge (a unique vertical lift ride that features intense loops, spirals and 90-degree turns) and the Avatar Airbender (a free-fall experience). Trying to cram two huge roller coasters into an existing space didn't leave a lot of room for the public, and providing the proper shielding and protection barriers was critical, according to Century Fence Company, which furnished design and installation services for the fence project.

(Century Fence Company photos)



Mall of America theme park

continued from page 1

castings and four drop-in anchors per post. In addition, six factory-built matching gates were installed, secured with locksets.

The Deacero architectural welded wire product is designed for numerous commercial, industrial, residential and in-

“We had a Feb. 29, 2008 completion date come hell or high water. We made a commitment to the general contractor and to the mall, and we pulled out all the stops to get this project done.”
– Don Witte

stitutional applications, and is intended to provide perimeter security while having the ability to either accent the property or blend into the background for an unobtrusive look.

According to Don Witte, Century Fence’s operations manager, “We had a Feb. 29, 2008 completion date come hell or high water. We made a commitment to the general contractor and to the mall, and we pulled out all the stops to get this project done.”

“The order was handed off to Dwayne Wright, Century Fence’s purchasing manager. His job was to verify all field dimensions with the help of superintendent Troy Adams, get the right materials ordered as soon as possible, and make sure we stayed on schedule,” said Witte.

“The turn-around time on special order materials is always a critical factor, and this material was no exception,” he commented.

The Deacero fence materials were to be shipped from the company’s Mexico manufacturing facility following the custom powder coating process. The Nickelodeon design team required that the color of the fence match the color of the roller coaster support structure.

“We were a bit nervous that when the shipment was opened for the first time the color wouldn’t match, because there was no room for error,” said Witte.

The color issue aside, timing was still the most important factor. The shipment was in transit, only to be stopped by the U.S. Customs Service at the Texas border.

This delayed receiving the materials for nearly a week, he added.

“Once it was on the way, it got as far

as Iowa when the truck hit a freak winter storm which paralyzed the interstate highway and further delayed the shipment by two more days. Time was running out, and even if all went well from this point forward, the material would be installed as it was being unloaded from the truck!

“Fortunately it finally did arrive, in the ‘Nick’ of time, so to speak. The color matched perfectly and the installation went as well as could be expected,” said Witte.

“Our installers did a phenomenal job,” Adams commented. “They ended up working for eight days in a row from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. after the mall closed to minimize the disruption to the public.”

The crew consisted of John Winslow, Andy Paul and Josh Basting, with help from superintendents Tom Nelson and Nathan Horner.

“We weren’t sure how this big puzzle of parts was going to fit together,” added Adams, “but we figured it out pretty quick and got it done on schedule.”

“I give a lot of credit to our entire Century Fence team for the work they did on this project,” said Witte.

“Some jobs require a tremendous amount of personal effort, and this project is a tribute to their dedication and professionalism. And when they take their kids to the mall they can say, ‘Hey, I built that.’”

Century Fence Company was founded in 1917 as a metal brokerage business and has evolved into one of the Midwest’s largest fence companies, with offices in Forest Lake, Minn. and Waukesha, Wis.

It provides installation and design services for commercial fences and gates to a wide variety of companies in the Midwest. Project types include athletic, security, decorative, correctional, construction and utility.

The firm’s range of operations covers Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Northern Illinois, the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, South Dakota and North Dakota.

The company also provides pavement marking services.

If anyone wishes to contact Century Fence Company, they may be reached at 800-328-9558, 651-464-7373 or fax 651-464-7377. Or visit the web site at www.centuryfence.com.

For more information on the Deacero products mentioned in this story, call 800-DEACERO, or visit the web site www.deacerofence.com.



Involved in the Mall of America Nickelodeon Universe theme park project were, above, left to right, Tom Nelson, construction superintendent; Dwayne Wright, purchasing agent; Troy Adams, head construction superintendent; Brandon Block, estimator/project manager; and Don Witte, operations manager. In photo below right are, left to right, Joshua Basting, Jon Winslow and Andy Paul. Below left, welded wire panels protect the public from coming in close contact with the mechanical workings of the roller coasters. The Nickelodeon design team required that the color of the fence match that of the roller coaster support structure.

(Century Fence Company photos)



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