

# Pennsylvania rink boosts summer profits with outdoor attractions

By Diane Walker

It started in 1987 when Gary Seibert opened Kid Sports. Kid Sports was started with children in mind. Gary wanted to provide entertainment and sports for children, and he owned locations all over the world. He was a

A new activity that has been added is the bumper boats. In a big, four-foot deep pool, there are ten electric bumper boats. Once the boat drivers get going, they can bump into other boats and they also have squirters that add to the fun.

Seibert's newest addition to the Center is Chip- It Golf, which he is in the



Chip-it golf at Ozzy's Family Fun Center in Leesport, Pa.

Seibert can pass on is for rink/fun center owners to think out of the box. "They must look at what they have and see what they can do with it. If they have a parking lot, then in the summer they can add a bounce house or inflatable slides. On certain nights, they can hold a battle of bands event or a car show. They just have to think," stressed Seibert.

He feels that all rinks should keep a database of families that come in during the winter, and that includes children who came in for birthday parties. Rink owners need to come up with summer activities and then go to those existing customers letting them know of the upcoming events or programs. Seibert feels that with the proper planning a summer camp program is no-brainer. The owners need to offer the right hours and can go to local colleges and hire education or physical education majors and have lesson plans and fun activities. Parents will love that.

Seibert invites people to look at his website, [www.playozzys.com](http://www.playozzys.com), to see what he has been able to do. He wants to help people go out of the box and even has a training program and lesson plans for summer camps and information for owners to market their program

during the summer and telemarketed the community for a variety of categories. After the votes were tallied, Ozzy's won in the family fun category! This is impressive considering all of the entertainment venues they were up against. It shows that when you give the community what they want, the community gives back.

### "Think out of the box"

One of the best pieces of advice

## BEYOND ROLLER SKATING

consultant showing fun centers how to set up multi-dimensional businesses, not just roller-skating. Tiring of the constant travel, he sold the rights to the locations and they are now franchises; although he is still in contact with them as a consultant.

It was in 2003 when a local banker bought Ozzy's and asked Seibert to "fix it." Ozzy's, located in Leesport, Pa. - five miles from Reading - was originally built as a go-kart track and a rink was added eight years later. The previous owner kept adding a variety of activities but the operation became too much for him to operate. "People can build fun centers, and do a good job at that, but you also need to know how to run the operation," said Seibert, who is now the vice president of operations for Ozzy's Sports Fun Center.

process of patenting. No one else in the country has this activity. Gary has gutted his batting cages and installed turf where you would have previously batted. He has built stations in the cages simulating a golf course situation where the golfer may have to chip up, down or sideways. "Any golfer will tell you that it's the short game that can make or break your game. Now golfers have someplace to go and practice that short game," Seibert said.

Another huge summer draw for Ozzy's is their summer camp program. What eight, nine or ten-year-old wants to tell their friends that they have to go to day care during summer break? Now they don't have to; they can go to summer camp at Ozzy's. The Fun Center has a 'club house' or room that holds 75 campers. The camp is held for 11 weeks to help working parents find a safe, fun place for their children to go in the summer. Drop off can be as early as 7:30 a.m. and pick up can be 6:00 p.m. The camp is filled to capacity every year.

Parents know that each week is a different theme and there are lesson plans made up. The campers are put into groups and depending on the age group, there is one counselor for ten to 12 campers. Every day there is a different activity, craft or recreation activity and they follow along with the theme of the week. Each Tuesday the campers go to a pool for swimming and on Thursday s there is a field trip that coincides with the theme. The field trip could be to a zoo, a water park or science related.

"There is an enormous market these days for day care. The summer camp is not day care but it has comparable cost and in some cases it is less than day care."

Ozzy's also has an outdoor picnic pavilion that can hold 600 to 700 people and company picnics are very popular. The outdoor stage has summer concerts and other entertainment. "A lot of places have indoor activities with air conditioning but it is important to bring space outdoors and use what you have to the best of your ability," added Seibert.

### The award goes to....

For the second time since Seibert took over Ozzy's, they were awarded the "Peoples' Choice Award," in Birch County. An independent agency was brought in

### The possibilities are endless

Once Seibert took over Ozzy's, he added - and continues to add - activities. "We have something for every age group. We are completely multi-dimensional," said Seibert. Ozzy's has so many fun activities that patrons are kept busy year round, even in the summer, which is known for slow months for most rinks.

There are three outdoor activities



Bumper Boats at Ozzy's Family Fun Center in Leesport, Pa.

that you can't help but have fun doing. The 18-hole miniature golf course is open when the weather permits. There is a go-kart track with 18 cars. Every safety measure Seibert could think of has been taken: curbing on the inside and outside of the track, traffic lights, automatic shut-offs in the car so that if a car has a problem, all of the cars can be automatically turned off, and a PA system with programmed messages.

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