

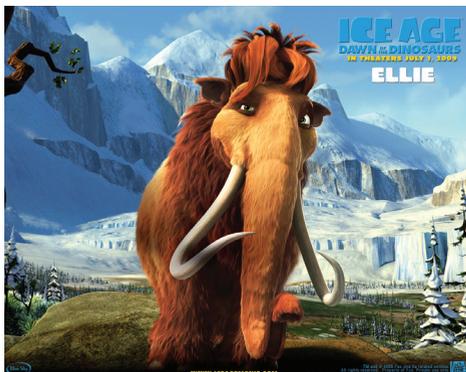
# HOT SPOT

By Art Snyder

It's always a great time to operate a rink when you have opportunity knocking at your door. Especially when the knockees are Disney, 20th Century Fox, MoonPie and Jelly Belly, as well as Pixar and SoBe Lifewater, among other contenders. All the informative details are below.

## Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs

With dust settled and receipts tallied, *Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs* was easily the top animated film for 2009, in an impressive year of Hollywood releases that saw record-setting studio profits month after month. Ticket sales for 20th Century Fox's *Ice Age* totaled almost a billion dollars, and that staggering volume saw two other animated films follow in its tracks last year, Pixar studio's *Up* and DreamWorks' *Monsters vs. Aliens*. Adjusted for ticket-price inflation, *Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs* is in third place in overall income, behind the two animated features that busted the billion-



dollar threshold: *Shrek 2*, from DreamWorks, and Pixar's *Finding Nemo*.

As 2010 unfolds, you can count on licensed merchandise reflecting all of these hit films to offer solid sales prospects, whether this means *Ice Age* candy in your vending areas or *Up* DVDs in your redemption area, for example. These and other licensed

products should boost the fun quotient in after-school sessions and birthday parties alike, not to mention open and family sessions over weekends. And similar licensed items are perfect for session prize-drawings and other give-away opportunities almost every day of the week. Think outside the box, too, with this animation merchandise. School fund-raisers for food pantries and other charity drives look more exciting to students when you can offer *Ice Age* or *Shrek 2* fountain beverages to participants, or give away a DVD of choice at a drawing.

The animation crystal ball has other rink-friendly news, too. A fourth

additionally to be working on their own animation projects, and budgets already are bankrolled to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. Bottom line: Turn to Hollywood for rink opportunities that should continue at a gangbuster pace into 2011 and beyond. And be sure to cultivate a good relationship with any cinemas in your area that have showcased (and that will showcase) animated feature films. Profits await.

## Toy Story 3

Summer should be a great time for rinks this year with *Toy Story 3* scheduled for release on June 18. This computer-animated 3-D film has two powerhouse marketing machines behind it: Pixar Animation Studios and Walt Disney Pictures. Actors Tom Hanks and Tim Allen are both set to reprise their voice roles as *Toy Story* characters Woody and Buzz. *Toy Story 3* continues primarily as a 3-D film, to take advantage of that eye-popping format that began in earnest last year. Overall, your rink can position itself for favorable results with any number of tie-ins and rink-suitable merchandise under the *Toy Story 3* banner. If an Imax theater serves your market — *Toy Story 3* will

company has introduced Sport Beans® “energized” jelly beans. This new jelly bean variety is available in a familiar pouch bag, and Sport Beans® are spe-



cially formulated to take advantage of consumer enthusiasm for energy and sports-refueling snacks, candies and beverages. Sport Beans® can be vended or retailed over the counter, and since they are available in a range of familiar flavors, they should see high demand as both a featured item and a regularly offered snack. The basic Sport Beans™ flavors are Berry, Orange, Lemon Lime and Fruit Punch. Intensely flavored Sport Beans™ are named Extreme Sport Beans™, and they are in Cherry and Watermelon varieties. Be sure to stock all of these Jelly Belly® Sport Beans®, and see about extra promotions of them during school and hockey sessions.

## Twilight time

Imax venues are gearing up this year for what's expected to be yet another phenomenon in *The Twilight Saga*. Summit Entertainment has announced that *The Twilight Saga: Eclipse*, the next installment in the *Twilight* series from author Stephenie Meyer, will be featured at Imax venues this year (it'll be screened at other theaters, as well). The movie is scheduled for release on June 30. *Eclipse* marks the debut of any *Twilight* film in the Imax format, and excitement should run higher than ever. See about cross-coupons and ticket drawings during your teen sessions before *Eclipse* is released this summer, and poll *Twilight* fans on your staff for other ideas, promotions and related rink hoopla that'll put some zip into your redemption offerings that key on *Eclipse* and other installments of the book and its filmed varieties.

## SoBe Lifewater, Twilight partnership

At any rink session where you find *Twilight* fans, be sure to promote with extra signage and voice announcements that you have a special on SoBe Lifewater. The drink is a Pepsi brand, and it's available in several flavors, including Acai Fruit Punch and Mango Melon. Pepsi has partnered with the marketing arm of the *Twilight* films to have SoBe Lifewater as “the *Twilight* beverage.” The *Twilight* Saga actress

Animated films, Jelly Belly® Sport Beans® are hot this winter

installment in the *Ice Age* animation franchise is under way, to help keep the series top-rated with schoolchildren (and younger fans). The director of the first *Ice Age* film is developing *The Leaf Men*, another animation film with a good pre-release “buzz,” and you can mark your April calendar for the debut of a promising 3-D film, *Rio*. It's the story of an exotic macaw that travels from Minnesota to Brazil to see about

rumors of another macaw. The director of *Rio* is Carlos Saldanha, whose admirable track record includes directing *Ice Age: Dawn of the Dinosaurs*. Further on the animation horizon is a sequel to the 2006 hit *Happy Feet*. With the dollarful success of animated and 3-D films in the last five years, studios like Sony, Universal and Warner Brothers are said

be released in Imax format, as well as 3-D and 2-D formats, based on the type of screen a venue has — contact the Imax theater and talk to the manager about some couponing ideas you can develop. If you have some *Toy Story 3* tickets to promote during rink sessions from Memorial Day to June 17, you could do a great favor for your customers, your rink and the contributing theater by getting the word out about *Toy Story 3*. Remember those day-care sessions, and see what you can do with any students and their schools in summer session in your area, too.

## Jelly Belly® Sport Beans®

Jelly Belly® candy has established itself as one of the top grab-'n'-go sweets among almost all segments of consumers under the age of 18, so it's almost a natural that the confectionary