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# RINKSIDER

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May-June 2009

Power up your novelties.....p. 11  
From 'Glow Skate' sessions to birthday goody bags and all sorts of promotions in-between, novelty items are always top of mind for one Illinois couple. They prove that a few well-placed freebies creates a need among other skaters and an increase in novelty sales.

From snack bar to pizzeria.....p. 15  
One Texas rink operator expands his snack bar/birthday party area, adds a pizza oven, and voila! Instant Pizzeria - and instant increase in business. A second oven is now in the works.

Pump up the Jam.....p. 21  
Take your jam moves to Texas this July for the seventh annual Jamskating Nationals. With a live online broadcast and a few event changes, the World Skating Association is ready to roll. Registration through July 1 and tickets available online at [www.wsaevents.com](http://www.wsaevents.com).

## Dreamland Skating Center's renovations lead to novelty, redemption success

By Dionne Obeso

**D**reamland Skating Center, Inc. is located in beautiful Pensacola Beach, Fla., a military base town that nevertheless boasts plenty of young families looking for some wholesome entertainment in their off time. The rink is a large facility, measuring 40,000 sq. ft., and was built in 1976. Robert Bentley purchased the rink in 2004 and completed a total remodel of the building, which now includes laser tag, a game area, a redemption center and novelty shop, and ten separate birthday party rooms, in addition to the 210 ft. by 110 ft. rink floor.

The Dreamland Skating Center features the familiar recreational skating sessions as well as a speed team known as Emerald Coast Speed Club. For the most part, however, the skate center caters to the many young families in the surrounding areas. Their activities and renovations have been designed to better serve and better



The updated skate floor at Dreamland Skating Center, Pensacola, Beach, Fla. caters to young families, a speed team and school groups.

attract their school age demographic.

The latest renovation to Dreamland came in the form of a brand new look for their redemption and prize area, which has grown to 18 ft. in length. "It comes out approximately six feet from the back wall, and

it includes a back wall display, three 6 foot glass displays and one 4 foot with a back of slat board which is approximately six foot tall and 14 foot wide," said Bentley. This "redemption island" con-



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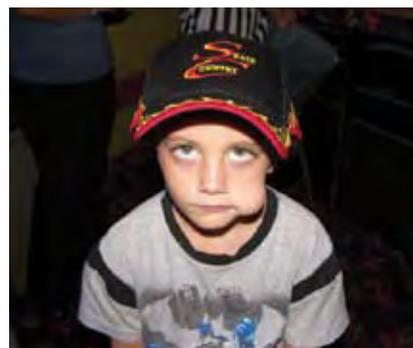
## What recession? Some skating centers are not just surviving – they're thriving!

By Dionne Obeso

**W**ith Wall Street in free fall and gloom and doom headlines every day, The Rinksider talked with the operators of three roller skating centers to find out how the recession was affecting them. All were seeing evidence of economic trauma around them, but their rinks were going strong as of March. Spread across the country from New Hampshire to Iowa to Arizona, their responses were pretty close to unanimous when it comes to the skating business: Recession? What recession?

At Roller Skate Newington, in Newington, N.H., perched right on the Maine/New Hamp-

shire line, business has been slow for several years. But when interviewed, owner Michael



This young skater is contributing to Skate Country's sales growth in 2009.

Faulkingham was feeling optimistic.

In New Hampshire, Maine and Massachusetts, schools are closed a week in the midwinter. Although the Maine break brought in about the same amount of business as last year, "The New Hampshire week did really well, better than the last four or five years," said Faulkingham. He tried newspaper ads last fall, then a direct mail campaign, and he's tried radio advertising, but nothing seemed to pay off. Then he decided to re-vamp his website. "I've been putting some coupons on the website, and that's worked out better than anything else," said Faulkingham. "In some of these sessions, we've had 60 coupons

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# Advertiser SPOTLIGHT

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Dale Hanson, president of RC Sports, Inc., told The RINKSIDER, "Our goal at RC Sports is to help you put fun on people's feet! Call us anytime, we love to talk to our customers!"

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## Redemption Success (cont'd from page 1)

tains age appropriate toys, small games, and other items to attract the school age children who are the primary customers of the stuff shop/redemption counter. "The Stuff Shop includes most all popular items, including glow products. It also has a small skate display on one end of it.

"We are very fortunate to have 87 schools (elementary, middle and high schools) and two colleges (West Florida and Pensacola Jr. College) in the area," said Bentley, adding that their primary market is the seven to 10 year age range. With this many kids around, the better the display and the more selling area you have, the better the sales begin to look.

"We just recently converted the Stuff Shop to a Stuff Shop Extreme, which has a bigger and brighter display area including the back wall. We moved this from an island stuff shop which had 3 sides and which was not able to keep up with the demand. We took the existing display cases and moved them to the new location, put in a back display wall, and redid the old area to make room for games. The cost of the remodel was very minimal, running only about \$300 for the slat wall and labor to move it," Bentley said.

For such a low expenditure, the change has been highly valuable. Bentley

said, "We paid for the cost of the remodel during the very first session open after the remodel. Our hope was to raise the per person expenditures in the stuff shop area. The new design has successfully raised the amount of money spent by about \$0.80 per person."

Bentley advised that other rinks take similar steps to draw customers



Dreamland's recent renovation included an "Extreme" Stuff Shop upgrade.

into the novelty and redemption areas and to bring their attention to each and every item possible. The large displays on the wall highlight some of the more expensive items, and the sales are showing the benefits of the remodel in a big way.

"The advice I would give other rink operators is to do something similar; I just wish we had redone ours sooner. Do not wait; do it now. You're leaving money in the kids' pockets." Money that, experience has shown, those same kids are happy to spend in your rink.

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