

Into the LightmosFEAR:

A Halloween Attraction for Six Flags New England

"After a quick six months of design and build utilizing 50 LED panels, 80 LED wands, a custom rope light sculpture, and a complete control system covering an entire roller coaster at Six Flags New England with a Halloween light show utilizing eight different songs and more than 10,000 cues, Techni-lux is proud to present LightmosFEAR."

In recent years, many theme parks have taken up Halloween in a big way, creating a variety of attractions and events to draw attendees in the off-season month of October. This fall, Agawam, Massachusetts-based Six Flags New England came up with LightmosFear, a lighting event that featured plenty of special effects. The words in the preceding graph are those of Tony Hansen, of Orlando-

based Techni-Lux, the company that provided design services and gear.

Hansen says that the park celebrates Halloween every year and was looking for something new for 2013; also, management wanted to literally shed light on one of the park's darker corners, which happened to be near the park's Pandemonium roller-coaster. "We decided that the entire coaster would become our canvas," he says.

One particularly attention-getting feature was Mayor Slayer, a fiendish, serial-killer type of character whose face adorned the fence outside the coaster. "Our art department created the giant head," says Hansen. "We had a metal shop bend it all up for us, and then we covered it with rope light. It's about 14' tall. We have three mouth positions outlined in rope light

and two positions for each eye. That way, we can make the mouth move and the eyes blink. We can also illuminate just the eyes and mouth, leaving off the rest; the hat is also wired separately so it can be turned off. We kind of had Marilyn Manson in mind when we designed it; it's cued to [the Alice Cooper song] 'Feed My Frankenstein' among others." Surrounding Mayor Slayer is a series of 1m and .5m wands that the company is now bringing to market as Techni-Lux DMX Wand LED Tubes.

In addition, says Hansen, "There are 50 Ultra Panel 36 Color panels on select columns all across the coaster. The park built very nice custom mounts for the panels; generally, roller-coaster manufacturers don't want you attaching anything to their ride,"



because of the vibrations caused during the course of a normal working day. In this case, he adds, "each panel is on its own independent foundation," thus solving the problem.

The show that Hansen programmed is quite kinetic. "This is the third coaster we've lit in this park, but this is the first that we've done with this level of programming and animation," he says. "The other coasters simply change color." For Pandemonium, there is an intricately cued show. "You can't see the whole show from any one vantage point," says Hansen, adding, "we treat the main coaster almost as a separate

entity from Mayor Slayer.

The show is programmed using the ShowCAD Artist show control system. "We can do video and graphic overlays on the panels and wands," he says. "Artist does all the pixel-mapping. For example, when we do the song, 'Thriller,' the word 'thriller' scrolls across the wands."

Hansen adds that conception and design of the project took about four months plus 80 hours of programming time split between Techni-Lux's office and the park. The latter time was more than a little bit spooky, he adds. "The park shut down on Labor Day and

stayed closed until Halloween. I was working in a closed theme park, and snow was threatened for the last few days. A veteran's cemetery is right next door, and every day at noon, it plays 'Taps.' It also plays 'Taps' at midnight—in a pitch-black park."

The biggest challenge, he says, was working around a live roller-coaster. "As we got close to opening, I couldn't so much as reach into the fence to touch a light without getting in trouble. You can't be within 12' of an active car." Also, nothing can be hung so that a guest on the ride can reach out and touch it.

In any case, LightmosFear proved popular; with the system in place, Hansen says the coaster will be lit all year, but they'll save the scary stuff for October. ☺

For more images from LightmosFEAR, visit LSA's digital edition at www.lightingandsoundamerica.com/LSADigitalEdition.

Photo Courtesy of Tony Hansen

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