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Kings Island keeps memories and excitement of old steam trains alive

KINGS ISLAND, Ohio – Many people today have never been on a train. And still fewer people have been on a real steam train. That's why Kings Island's re-creation of the railroad of the late 1800's appeals to guests of all ages.

Kings Island's two locomotives have been at the park since it opened in 1972 and are full scale replicas of the famous 1800's locomotive known as *The General*, which was the subject of the Great Locomotive Chase of the American Civil War (*The General* is preserved at the Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History in Kennesaw, Georgia). Although Kings Island's engines are fired by propane rather than coal, they are in fact real authentic steam engines. The only thing Kings Island's railroad lacks is the coal smoke and soot. The 400-foot gallon boilers on each engine make them real steam-spitting locomotives.

Each of the two engines pulls six coaches and when both trains are filled to capacity, 960 guests can be on rail at one time. More than 5,400 guests may ride on the train each hour.

Soon after the trains pull out of the "old" depot on the 36-inch gauge track, they pass over a 65-foot natural ravine on a steel and wood trestle. The track winds around through several fields, stopping at Boomerang Bay. After dropping off and pickup up guests at the 15-acre waterpark, the trains then loop around through woods and back into the depot. A round trip on the train covers 1¼ miles of track.

Kings Island is owned and operated by Cedar Fair Entertainment Company, a publicly traded partnership that is listed for trading on The New York Stock Exchange under the symbol "FUN." In addition to Kings Island, Cedar Fair owns and operates ten other amusement parks, six water parks, one indoor water park resort and five hotels. Cedar Fair also operates the Gilroy Gardens Family Theme Park in Gilroy, Calif. under a management contract.

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