

Over the hills and through the woods, this is no ride to grandma's

Ridin' The Rails at WISP

On The New Mountain Coaster

Written by **Lori Epp** Photography by **Lance C. Bell**



DEEP CREEK LAKE

has established Western Maryland as a premiere adventure destination resort within the Eastern United States in the summer of 2007. Two new features that are only the 2nd of their kind on the East Coast opened in the Summer of 2007 on Wisp Mountain. The first is the recirculating whitewater course opened by Adventure Sports Center International located atop Wisp Mountain. The second feature is the Mountain Coaster at Wisp Resort that debuted on Thursday, August 30, just in time for the Labor Day Weekend. The Mountain Coaster is only the 4th of its kind in North America.

The purchase agreement signed in March 2007 with Wiegand of Germany included the materials, delivery and installation of the Mountain Coaster. The first crate arrived from overseas in early May and once Garrett County Planning and Zoning Committee approved plans, construction began. Wiegand sent representatives to work alongside and assist Wisp Resort employees on the construction and establish operating procedures for the Mountain Coaster. After construction was complete, the inspection process began with TUV Industrie Service of Germany. After the German inspection passed, the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulations, who work closely with Wisp Resort and their chairlift inspections, gave approval to open the Mountain Coaster to the general public. Chairlifts and the Mountain Coaster are both unique installations for the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulations to inspect since these amusement features are the only one of their kind in Maryland.



The Mountain Coaster at Wisp Resort is a gravitational hybrid of an Alpine Slide and a Roller Coaster boasting a 1,300 foot uphill track while twisting, turning, dipping and rolling for 3,500 feet downhill over 350 vertical feet on the eastern side of Wisp Mountain. Guests ride in 'coaster carts' that hold up to two riders and regulate their own speed with a set of handbrakes on the side of each cart. A centrifugal braking system restricts the coaster cart's downhill speed at 26 mph. Other safety features include 3 track surveillance cameras, track netting and fencing, 5-6 trackside staff members to monitor cart activity and a planned lighting system for nighttime and year-round operation. Children must be a minimum age of 3 years old and a minimum height of 37" in order to be able to ride as a front seat passenger. Children must be at least 8 years old, a minimum height of 51" and are able to exhibit the ability to operate the brake levers safely in order to ride alone in a coaster cart. Children under the age of 8 are only permitted to ride as a front seat passenger and only if accompanied by a rider who is at least 16 years old and is able to exhibit the ability to operate cart controls and seat belt.

Guests have been asked to describe their Mountain Coaster experience and even as the level of thrill differs, each explains with a smile on their face. Once aboard the coaster cart, a motorized pulley carries the cart uphill while the rider relaxes and takes in views of Deep Creek Lake and Garrett County below. As the cart crests the track, and the rider releases the automatic-brakes, gravity pulls the cart into the first turn among the woods of Wisp Mountain. The rider has enough time to catch their breath and prepare for the second turn that is just inside the treeline of

Chairlift #1. Skiers, snowboarders and summer chairlift riders will be entertained by coaster-goers on turn #2. The grade percent increases and the third and final turn, just above Boulder Ski Trail, is the most thrilling turn and brings out smiles, laughs and screams from most riders. After a few rollers on a straight-away, riders enter the first of two back to back corkscrews. The Mountain Coaster track finishes with more rollers, dips and turns to bring the carts back to the loading area with riders grinning and laughing.

Mountain Coaster Rates Summer 2007

1 Ride: \$9.50 single rider, \$15 double riders
3 Ride Pack: \$25 single rider, \$40 double riders
10 Ride Pack: \$75 single rider, \$130 double rider

Operating Hours Summer 2007

Thursdays & Fridays: 1 pm – 6 pm
Saturdays & Sundays: 10 am – 6 pm

The Mountain Coaster will be transformed into a Haunted Coaster this autumn season to give guests an extra thrill. The Haunted Coaster experience will include a haunted trail, bonfire and a screamin' coaster ride. Visit wispresort.com or call 301.387.4911 for Haunted Coaster rates and operating times. All Aboard!

