



## PLAYLAND WOODEN COASTER TURNS 60 THIS YEAR

### *THE LEGEND OF PLAYLAND'S MOST ICONIC RIDE*

**For Immediate Release**

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**Vancouver, B.C.** – Sixty years ago, as the legend goes, a group of engineers from the province of British Columbia came out to inspect the nearly complete Playland Wooden Coaster. According to the story, the “experts” laughingly told the men who designed and built the Coaster that their \$200,000 project was a fool's game.

The engineers were unanimous - there is no way that a roller coaster train would be able to make it around their frighteningly dense collection of snakey dips, bends and curves powered only by gravity after the first hill.

They were so sure, they took builder Walker LeRoy's \$100 bet (a lofty sum in 1958). LeRoy then strapped a plank to the wheels of an unfinished train and cranked up the 1923 Westinghouse motor. Holding only a piece of rope, with nothing but his grip to keep him from getting whipped up and off the wood into the wild blue yonder, LeRoy set off to prove them wrong. Ninety seconds later, LeRoy's train, with him miraculously still on it, had shown the engineers what the Coaster was all about. He collected his hundred bucks, and the legacy of the Playland Wooden Coaster had begun.

The legendary coaster has shaken nerves, rattled brains and caused the odd tears ever since.

### **COASTER FAST FACTS**

- The Playland Wooden Coaster was built throughout 1957 and early 1958
- Opened in 1958
- The Coaster was designed by Carl Phare
- Head of construction was Walker LeRoy
- Each train is made up of eight two-person cars (total capacity per train: 16)
- Maximum speed of trains - 45 mph
- Maximum track height - 75 feet at highest point (1st hill)
- Track length is 5/8th of a mile

- Ride time is 90 seconds
- Coaster rides an average of 1/2 million guests annually
- Number of trains – 3 (maximum of two run at any given time)
- The Coaster is powered by a 75 hp electric motor which lifts the 16-passenger specially designed train up the first hill. Once each train passes over the first hill it is driven through a series of climbs, dips, banks, horseshoe turns and a classic reverse curve only by the law of gravity.
- Original cost of construction: \$200,000
- Built from Douglas fir
- Listed as an American Coaster Enthusiasts (ACE) – “Coaster Classic”

**Unique Features:**

- Entire ride is momentum driven after first hill
- Lap bar safety system (no overhead seat restraints)
- Considered to be a "living" (wooden) Coaster (rather than steel)

Playland One Day admission passes are currently [available online](#) and will give families and thrill seekers unlimited access to over 35 rides, attractions, and an assortment of games.

For more information, including ticket prices and hours of operation throughout the summer, please visit: [www.pne.ca](http://www.pne.ca).

**About the PNE:**

Owned by the City of Vancouver, the Pacific National Exhibition (PNE) is a healthy and vibrant non-profit organization dedicated to providing over 3 million visitors a year with first-class cultural, sporting and family entertainment events. Founded in 1910, the PNE operates from a 114-acre site at Hastings Park, a multi-facility venue in Vancouver where the organization operates four activity streams: an annual 15-day Fair, Playland Amusement Park, maintenance and care of the Hastings Park site and management of the site’s year-round facilities. These facilities are utilized to celebrate a variety of hockey, amateur sporting, music, community, social, cultural and commercial events throughout the year.

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