

# PRESS RELEASE

2315 Beach Blvd., St. 203, Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Julie Dion  
PHONE: (904) 249-9784  
FAX: (904) 246-0536  
EMAIL: [juliedion@comcast.net](mailto:juliedion@comcast.net)  
[www.ghosttowninthesky.com](http://www.ghosttowninthesky.com)



## GHOST TOWN TO RE-OPEN

**JACKSONVILLE BEACH** - One of North Carolina's oldest family theme parks will awaken from five-year hibernation next week when Maggie Valley's Ghost Town in the Sky will open to the public for a one-day special event. The event is being held to announce officially the re-opening of the popular attraction in May 2007.

On Monday, August 21, a major announcement about future plans for Ghost Town will be made at 2:15 p.m. in the Silver Dollar Saloon. All media is welcome to enjoy the entertainment, including live music, clogging, dancing and staged gunfights reminiscent of the Ghost Town of yesteryear will highlight the event. Refreshments and a food concession will be available. The Maggie Valley Visitor's Bureau and Town of Maggie Valley are entertainment sponsors and the Haywood County Tourism Development Authority is sponsoring transportation. Children are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Transportation to the top of the 4,000 ft. Ghost Town Peak for the event will be provided by buses and vans. Media wishing to participate will park at the Ghost Town entrance parking lot and board buses and vans there beginning at 12 noon.

Under new ownership Ghost Town will feature many of the original attractions, classic amusements, and live-action shows that made the 99-acre theme park such a success for 40 years while providing great family entertainment to millions of guests. Over \$4 million will be spent preparing for the re-grand opening and refurbishment of the park. The initial investment will include a new chair lift and a restored incline railway, expanded and improved facilities for group outings, special performances, additional historical and heritage-themed exhibits, and a wider variety of restaurants and concessions.

The re-opening of Ghost Town will create 285 full and part-time park-related jobs in addition to those from refurbishment and construction activities. Revived attention to Maggie Valley, Haywood County and WNC through Ghost Town's aggressive local and regional marketing plans will further boost the region as a travel destination. Long-term development plans to the property include the addition of a water park, retail outlets, condominiums and potential home sites.

Ghost Town's new owners will operate under Ghost Town Partners LLC. The corporate officers' combined experience, expertise, proven track record and strong work ethic in tourism and family entertainment should

ensure the success and growth of Ghost Town for decades to come. Officers are Allen and Carol Harper, owners of the Bryson City-based Great Smoky Mountains Railroad and Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad in Colorado; Hank Woodburn of Jacksonville Beach, FL, founder and president of Adventure Landing, which owns and operates nine family entertainment centers in New York (3), Texas (1), Florida (2), and North Carolina (3) and venture capitalist Peter Hairston of Miami.

The Harpers have extensive experience in amusements, scenic railroads and real estate development. Their railroads are among the nation's top five scenic railroads in ridership. Woodburn has over thirty years of experience developing, owning and operating award-winning family amusement properties, including a water park. Recently, his Adventure Landing properties were recognized by the International Association of Amusement Parks & Attractions for the TOP FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTERS OF THE WORLD award. Hairston has been a principal investor in amusement, travel and leisure companies for many years with an extensive background in corporate finance.

"This is the right group at the right time for Ghost Town and the region," said David Huskins, Managing Director of Smoky Mountain Host, the lead regional tourism marketing and development organization for Southwestern North Carolina. "They have been diligent, resourceful, committed and patient throughout the acquisition process," said Huskins, who first encouraged Allen Harper to consider buying the park in 2002, the year after it closed. Harper with Huskins facilitating helped assemble the current ownership team, which began serious negotiations with park owner R.B. Coburn in September 2005.

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