

Rock 'n' roll theme park proposed for Eloy

Ronald J. Hansen
The Arizona Republic
Nov. 7, 2007 01:24 PM

A Phoenix-based investment team said today it wants to build a 240-acre rock 'n' roll theme park in Pinal County intended to rival Orlando's Disney World complex and the Busch Gardens amusement parks across the country.

The \$800 million project, which is proposed to include a luxury hotel and retail space, would be known as Decades Music Theme Park. One of the consultants for the project was a project manager of Disney's Epcot Center.

Key state lawmakers seem intrigued by the proposal, said Kevin DeMenna, a lobbyist who is pushing for legislation that would help provide bond funding for the park.

Jason Rose, another lobbyist working for the project, declined to identify the private investors who intend to help support Decades.

The park would be located in Eloy, with roller coasters and other rock-themed rides divided into sections associated with music through the decades, starting in the 1950s.

With the state's usual tourism base and with residents of Phoenix and Tucson nearby, Decades could attract at least 5.4 million visitors annually, according to Peter Alexander, the Epcot project manager and a consultant who worked on other parks, including Disneyland and the Six Flags chain.

Eloy is roughly 65 miles from downtown Phoenix and 60 miles from downtown Tucson.

"It's the only large metropolitan market . . . that doesn't have a theme park," Alexander said of the Phoenix area. "Obviously, it's the perception that it's too hot here."

But the heat index in the area averages 93 degrees in July compared with 92 in Orlando, Fla., home to Disney World, Alexander said. And Orlando was a small, sleepy town before the park opened there, he added.

Arizona's theme-park laws would have to be rewritten to allow Pinal County to establish a locally controlled district with bonding authority, DeMenna said.

If approved, it would allow the park's builders access to a \$1 billion state fund for theme park construction, he said. Sales taxes that could reach 9 percent at the park would help repay the project's construction costs.

Martin West, the creative director of Decades, said he first envisioned a rock-themed amusement park more than a decade ago.

He and Alexander publicly discussed the proposed theme park a day after Mesa voters easily approved a land sale that helps clear the way for Waveyard, a water-sports resort planned for that city.

Next spring, Myrtle Beach, S.C., expects to open Hard Rock Park, a 140-acre, \$400 million rock 'n' roll theme park after years of planning and construction.

Like the Decades plan, that park is divided into different sections based on genres of music. Decades is positioned as the West Coast counterbalance to that rock-themed park, which is owned by another investment group.

Decades' design plans include an 850-room luxury hotel on the park's grounds as well as at least 120,000 square feet of retail space.

West envisions an amphitheater similar to the former Compton Terrace in Phoenix and a 55,000-seat indoor concert hall.

Attractions could include an MTV logo in the center of the park intended to resemble the Arc de Triomphe in Paris and busts of rock legends reminiscent of Mount Rushmore.

Rose said licensing agreements with the various musical artists are among the details that need to be worked out if the state provides help with the legislation.

Reach the reporter at ron.hansen@arizonarepublic.com.

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Karl

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Posted Nov-07
1:48 PM

Now all of the millions of visitors to Eloy will have something to do, lol.

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No way it would be financially successful.

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Posted Nov-07
1:54 PM

Theme parks have to be able to make their money in summer, when kids are out of school and parents are taking their kids on vacation.

3

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Heat index is only 93.... bah! Heat index is a measure of the skins' temperature assuming normal persperation.

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He're a clue... pavement and ride seats don't sweat!

Posted Nov-07
1:55 PM

Let's come up with an index that measures the temperature of the roller coaster's seat when you sit down on it after it has been sitting in the AZ sun for a few minutes.

In Orlando, the air temp may be 85, but with 90% humidity the sweat doesn't evaporate well, so the body cools itself as if it is 82 out. But the coaster seat is still 90 degrees or so when you sit down.

In AZ, it may be 110, but with low humidity, your sweat evaporates quickly so you cool down as if it were only 93.... But when you sit down on that roller coaster seat, it will be hot enough to fry an egg on it!!!

Anyone ever been to Castles and Coasters in the middle of summer? I'm a hard core theme park enthusiest, having been to Orlando and all of the TX parks in the middle of summer. Less than an hour at Castles and Coasters in July and I was heading for the exit.

Self Correction:

Katoxic

In Orlando, the air temp may be 85, but with 90% humidity the sweat doesn't evaporate well, so the body cools itself as if it is 82 out.

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Meant "cools itself as if it is 92 out".

4


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Posted Nov-07
1:55 PM

that would be cool for the town of Eloy!! Now they all wont have to work in Tucson, Phoenix, or the gas stations in that small small town lol!!

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Remember Legend City also, but this thing isnt going to attract 5 million visitors a year. You are joking. This kind of project wont make it, I bet its closed in 2 years, leaving Eloy holding the tab for tax breaks and other incentives that were offered.

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Posted Nov-07 2:15 PM

Wow, Darrell, nice job there. However, I still think it would be cool. Darrell, we'll just go in the fall and spring since we live here, so no worries man. Plus, let people go burn themselves, just have something on the ticket purchase that says they're not responsible for burns, then no lawsuits and AZ makes lots of \$\$\$\$!!!!

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It is over 90 degrees 300 days of the year- how could anyone make money at a theme park with that kind of weather?

Posted Nov-07 2:24 PM

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Love to see it happen but Legend City never made it with a half a dozen different owners. I worked 3 summers at LC (what a GREAT job) Problem is locals will go about once, once a season tops. Eloy is not a "destination" city

Posted Nov-07 2:33 PM

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You'll tear down the Flying J Truck Stop over my dead body!

Posted Nov-07 2:35 PM

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They could have indoor rollercoaster's, like space mountain Aerosmiths Rockin Rollercoaster at Disney MGM. Think outside the box Hummmmm?

Posted Nov-07 2:40 PM

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