

The Mighty Thomas Carnival

Thomas Carnival: Phone: 512-282-4442 Fax: 512-282-4444
Local Numbers: 869-5259, 869-5260

The Mighty Thomas Carnival returns to the 2009 MontanaFair at Me-traPark in Billings August 7th-15th for it's 30th year in a row! A fam-ily-owned company in its 82nd consecutive year of operation, Thomas Carnival brings an array of colorful and clean rides, fun games and mouth-watering food to over 40 different fairs and events in 10 states annually. Founded in 1928 in Lennox, South Dakota by Art B. Thomas five generations ago, the carnival is now based out of Austin, Texas. The schedule begins each year in early February in Laredo, Texas, with the carnival moving north as the months pass to escape the scorching sum-mer heat of the southwest. By June, Thomas Carnival is busy serving county fairs and events in the Minnesota-North Dakota-South Dakota region where the carnival has its roots and the weather is milder. Each August now for the past 30 years, Thomas Carnival has returned to Bill-ings to provide the midway for MontanaFair.

Some of the attractions to look forward to in 2009:

The **Super Shot**- The smash hit of the 2008 fair returns for an encore performance. A 90-foot tall tower that lifts passengers slowly to the top, then sends them back to earth in a breathtaking freefall, this ride is as much fun to watch as it is to ride.

The **Century Wheel**- The centerpiece of the carnival midway, this family ride is great for getting a panoramic view of the entire Metrapark fair-grounds.

The **Zipper**- The perennial favorite for thrill-seeking youngsters and a few brave old-timers alike, this carnival classic is sure to leave you exhilarated after spinning you around on three different axes. For best results, enjoy the fair food after you get on this ride.

The **Barnyard**- A brand new family ride appearing at MontanaFair for the first time, this farm-themed attraction is great fun for all ages.

The **Pharaoh's Fury**- This Egyptian-themed ride features a swinging boat that gives the sensation of weightlessness as it reaches the peak of its swing. Probably the closest thing to being an astronaut most of us will ever experience.

The **Tilt-a-Whirl, Spider, Cliffhanger, Crystal Lil's House of Mirrors, Arabian Daze, Dizzy Dragons, Moby Dick, Cobra Coaster**, and many others back by popular demand.

Also included in the Thomas Carnival midway is a full lineup of games,

including the ever-popular bust-a-balloon and ring toss, as well as a complete menu of delicious carnival treats like corn dogs, funnel cakes, cotton candy, and sno kones. Visit www.montanafair.com to learn more about carnival ride specials and discounts.

Thomas Carnival operations also include generators and wire, light towers, benches, rest and shade areas, trucks and trailers, mainte-nance shops, laundry and uniform facilities, offices, and living quarters in addition to the rides, games, and food concessions seen by the public on the midway.

An independent audit of Thomas Carnival conducted by an outside evaluation team yielded membership to the prestigious OABA Circle of Excellence, a handful of elite carnival midways that are recognized as being the best in the industry. In addition, Thomas Carnival contractors were evaluated and admitted into this esteemed association, including Atkins Enterprises (Paul & Erica Atkins), Midway Food Company (Tom & Margaret Atkins), Wink Enterprises (Dave & Dianna Winkey), RJC Concessions (Robert & Leann Simard), Louis & Claire Concessions (Brandon & Katherine Petree), Midwest Concessions (Dennis & Della Bossman), and the Big Circus Sideshow (James Zajicek).

Thomas Carnival owners Tom & Margaret Atkins and John & Carolyn Hanschen have a long history in the industry. Tom, president and gen-eral manager, is a graduate of South Dakota State University, where he majored in zoology. He has served the show for over 40 years, and is a leader in the carnival industry. He is a past president and trustee of the Showmen's League of American, the carnival industry's frat-ernal organization; and is also past president and trustee of the Outdoor Amusement Business Association, the industry's trade organization. Margaret and Carolyn are daughters of Bernard and Marvis Thomas, previous company owners. Bernard passed away in 2007 and Marvis currently resides in Austin, Texas. John joined the company over 30 seasons back, and is a graduate of Macalester College, St. Paul, with a major in economics and business. He was elected Showmen's League president in 1999, and also served as the chairman of the OABA in 2007.

For more information, visit www.thomascarnival.com or www.montanafair.com.

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