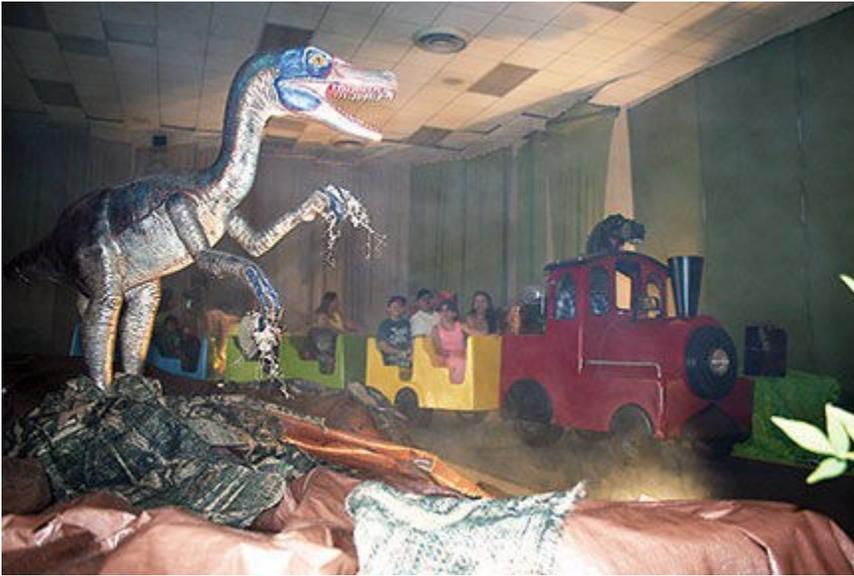




Land of dinosaurs gets 'Wow!' effect



Posted: Tuesday, August 5, 2014
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The town of Yucca Valley Recreation Department staff combined forces with the museum to create a Jurassic Park-like train ride through a spooky dinosaur world with lots of scary dinosaurs.

Kids explored a prehistoric landscape and learned about dinosaurs at a Family Fun Day created by town and Hi-Desert Nature Museum staff Saturday.

Children could make dinosaur arts and crafts, get their faces painted and have photos taken in a booth where they pretended they were driving for their lives in a Jeep being chased by a Tyrannosaurus rex.

Champion dog groomer Sandy Hartness of Yucca Valley gave her white standard poodle named Crush a dinosaur hairdo for the event. Crush was friendly with all the kids and was rewarded with many pettings.

A dinosaur-fact scavenger hunt gave kids an educational activity, and they also enjoyed playing in the interactive dinosaur exhibit where they dressed up as oviraptors — dinosaurs that look like birds.

All these activities were great, but the real “wow” effect was the train ride through a dinosaur world.

The town recreation department and museum staff teamed up to turn the Yucca Room of the community center into a Jurassic Park-like ride.

Huge dinosaurs with gaping maws and flying pterodactyls leaned over the train route through a foggy jungle past a glowing waterfall and a lava-leaking volcano.

“We wanted to do a bigger event with a larger impact,” recreation leader Ashlie Richardson said. “So we teamed up with the museum to create this dinosaur world. We wanted to bring some theme-park kind of fun up here.”

The train was a colorful carnival-style vehicle brought from Pomona by train engineer Freddie Gonzalez.

Hanna Jackson, 4, of Morongo Valley, said the train ride was, “Awesome!”