



JUDGES' COMMENTS:

"Such creative uses to grow and draw customers on a tight budget."

BEST PUBLIC WATERPARK (Class 13)

Wet Zone Waterpark, Rowlett, Texas

It's tough to keep a waterpark exciting and fresh when there's no approval to expand or add rides. But the Wet Zone Waterpark in Rowlett, Texas found a way.

"We got creative with theming," Director Tony Bates says. "The theming was nothing in comparison with the cost of getting a new slide."

From a classic, typical waterpark came a jungle odyssey complete with thatched roofs, rope netting, jungle animals and cabanas that can be rented out for an additional fee. The park hired a professional painter from Canada to airbrush the walls and paint scenes around the park.

With the new theme came a new concessions area. The original food and beverage division had been contracted out, but the park finally made a decision to turn it in-house. "We really revamped it, starting from scratch," Bates says. The menu was completely changed, and grilled items were added.

The park also offers special events throughout the summer to entice visitors. Starting with the Summer Kick-Off, the schedule includes volleyball tournaments, movie nights, Battle of the Bands, dance parties and youth nights. Wrapping it all up is the Back to School Bash. These events are attracting a wider audience that includes teens and young adults who traditionally didn't come to the family-oriented park.

As if that weren't enough, Wet Zone even provides swim time for families with special needs children on Saturday mornings, and there are adaptive aquatics swim lessons for kids and adults. That's something money just can't buy. — *Rin-rin Yu*



FACILITY HIGHLIGHTS: Geared toward family • Hosts a variety of special events • Operates a swim team and adaptive aquatics program

FEATURES: 1 lazy river • 4 water slides • 2 water playgrounds • 2 water toys

PROGRAMMING: Learn-to-swim • Lifesaving • Water aerobics • Competitive swimming