

Ghost Town marketing efforts are going strong

by BETH PLEMING

As Ghost Town in the sky gears up for another season, park officials said they are counting on a strong marketing campaign to help ensure a successful first season.

Part of that campaign, said Julie Dion, vice president of sales and marketing, includes a newly designed two-tiered pricing structure for ticket sales and a first-time-season pass option.

Season passes, daily admission tickets and gift certificates are currently available at the Ghost Town Welcome Center, located in the A-frame building at the park's entrance on Soco Road, along with an elaborate selection of Ghost Town memorabilia.

Ghost Town is offering two types of daily admission tickets.

The Frontier ticket, which includes unlimited access to all rides and shows, is \$26.99 for adults and \$18.00 for children ages 3 through 10.

The Heritage ticket includes a chair lift or incline railway ride and access to the Heritage Town Square—featuring a museum showcasing 40 years worth of Ghost Town memorabilia along with arts and crafts from local artists.

Season passes are available for unlimited access to the park, and park officials said they are in the process of adding other local incentives for season pass cardholders which may include discounts to area business, restaurants and retail outlets.

"We're hoping to draw Asheville residents," said Vice President of Sales and Marketing Julie Dion, adding the plan is to market the park as an "affordable weekend getaway."

Season passes are \$69 for adults and \$49 for children through May 31, 2007. Starting June 1, the cost will increase by \$10.

Partnerships are also a "marketing first" for Ghost Town, Dion said.

Over 25 preferred lodging partnerships are already in place, Dion said, adding partnerships are also available to restaurants and other nearby attractions.

In September, Ghost Town launched the "early bird" accommodation ticket sales program to area hotel and motel operators, a program that allows accommodation owners to sell discounted admission tickets and to provide guests with accommodation/attraction packages.

Furthermore, Ghost Town is offering Lodging operators the opportunity to become "preferred lodging partners." Lodging partners are promoted on the park's Web site, which also provides a link to businesses' individual sites.

"We are also in the process of solidifying a strong and aggressive partnership with Ingles Supermarkets," Dion said. "Ingles has agreed to sell our tickets in all of their 200 stores— all of which are within 250 miles of the area, to provide in-store displays, conduct a register-to-win Ghost Town season pass contest in each store and to promote the park via direct mail to all Ingles Advantage Cardholders— which includes over 1 million people."

Partnership information is available on the park's new Web site: ghosttowninthesky.com along with additional information about the park.

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