

A “NEW” HISTORIC ROLLER COASTER FOR BAY BEACH

By Mayor Jim Schmitt

One of the most notable attractions in the City of Green Bay is Bay Beach Amusement Park. As the 9th oldest amusement park in the United States, Bay Beach has a rich history and has served as an affordable recreational destination for countless area families and visitors. The widely recognized historic pavilion, various amenities and 17 nostalgic rides make it a unique asset to our community. As affordable as Bay Beach is, the park is also a significant revenue generator for the City of Green Bay. In 2009 alone close to one million people visited the park amounting to \$1.6 million in revenue from ride ticket sales and concessions. In the same year, the cost of operating Bay Beach was just over \$800,000. The remaining revenue is used to pay for other city services with a portion allocated to a Bay Beach development fund.

Recognizing the future potential of Bay Beach and the need to expand, I along with members of the City Council and Park Department staff worked over many years to develop what is known as the Bay Beach Master Plan. In 2008, the City of Green Bay adopted the plan which included the addition of a family-friendly wooden roller coaster. We now have an opportunity to build a wooden roller coaster in the coming year at no cost to taxpayers. Originally constructed in 1923 by renowned wooden coaster designer John Miller, the Zippin Pippin is the second oldest wooden roller coaster in the United States. This classic wooden coaster design and unique history makes it a natural fit for Bay Beach. After much discussion and research, the City is pursuing the purchase of the legal rights to the historically significant design concept, the Zippin Pippin name, the decorative fixtures and equipment along with the mystique that Elvis Presley once considered this his favorite ride. This newly built roller coaster in Green Bay will be designed to meet all current safety standards and constructed entirely of new lumber. The cost of the roller coaster will be paid for by a combination of private donations and ticket sale revenue from the ride itself, not taxpayers. In fact, the addition of the Zippin Pippin will not only generate revenue from its own ticket sales but will also boost ticket sales for existing rides and increase concession sales.

Put simply, the rebirth of the Zippin Pippin wooden coaster at Bay Beach will serve as a key attraction, enticing even more visitors to the area and ensuring future generations will continue to enjoy the amusement park and the historic roller coaster for years to come.