



# PRESS RELEASE



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## TEA's Thea Awards Honor Outstanding Achievement In The Creation of Compelling Places and Experiences

ORLANDO USA Nov. 13, 2007 - "Recognizing excellence in the creation of compelling educational, historical and entertainment projects, the TEA's Thea Awards once again reinforce the value of experience design and themed entertainment approaches to engaging people worldwide," said TEA International Board President **Craig Hanna**, of Thinkwell Design & Production as he announced the recipients of the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Thea Awards. Judging of the international awards is made by TEA's prestigious Thea Awards Nominating Committee, with final approval by the TEA's International Board of Directors. "These awards recognize large and small accomplishments, bringing to life ancient myths and the latest in scientific discoveries, helping people experience a space shuttle launch or a walk with prehistoric creatures," said Hanna. "These outstanding achievements demonstrate the power that storytelling, architecture, technology and experience design can have on the guest and visitor experience." The official presentation of the awards will be made March 8, 2008 at **TEA's 14<sup>th</sup> Thea Awards Gala**, sponsored by **Economics Research Associates**, a very special black tie evening for the industry at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim, California.

### The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Thea Awards have singled out for recognition:

- Seven outstanding educational or heritage projects
- Three outstanding projects in theme parks
- Two event spectaculars
- An outstanding application of theater technology
- An attraction in an historic motion picture palace
- An arena-sized traveling dinosaur show
- A military application of Experience design
- One Lifetime Achiever
- One Classic Attraction
- Four outstanding achievements accomplished on limited budgets
- Five recipients are international, 12 are from North America

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## **Recipients:**

**Thea Lifetime Achievement Award: Jack Rouse**, Jack Rouse Associates

**Thea Classic Award: SeaWorld**, San Diego, CA

**Thea Awards for Outstanding Achievement (AOA)**

**Attraction: Shuttle Launch Experience**, Kennedy Space Center Visitor Center, FL

**Attraction Limited Budget: Awakening of the Temple** Lobby Show, Aztec on the River, San Antonio, TX

**Attraction Rehab: Finding Nemo Submarine Voyage**, Disneyland, Anaheim, CA

**Exhibit: Noah's Ark**, Skirball Community Center, Los Angeles, CA

**Museum: Donald W. Reynolds Education Center**, Mount Vernon, VA

**Heritage Center: The Generations Center**, Western Wall, Jerusalem, Israel

**Exhibit Limited Budget: Cleveland Avenue Time Machine Experience**, at Troy

University's Rosa Parks Museum

**Traveling Exhibit Limited Budget: CSI: The Experience**, Fort Worth Museum of Science & History, Fort Worth, TX

**Science Center Limited Budget: Cosmos at the Castle**, Black Rock Castle, Cork, Ireland

**Event Spectacular: Songs of the Sea**, Sentosa, Singapore

**Live Touring Event: Walking with Dinosaurs**, WWT-Rex Pty. Ltd., Australia

**Event Spectacular: Peter Pan's Neverland**, Universal Studios Japan

**Technical Achievement: KA Floating Stages**, Las Vegas, NV

**Themed Training Experience: Battle Stations 21**, Great Lakes Naval Station, IL

**Interactive Adventure: Kim Possible World Showcase Playtest**, Epcot, Walt Disney World, Orlando, FL

## **Details**

**Jack Rouse**, Jack Rouse Associates, Cincinnati, OH

Jack's formation of the firm that bears his name (with colleagues Keith James and Amy Merrell), in 1987 is a milestone in a multi-faceted career that spans more than 30 years. Jack Rouse Associates has become one of the most recognized global names in experience design, serving a variety of industries: museums, zoos, sports facilities, theme parks, entertainment complexes, cultural venues, community developments and corporate environments. With Jack's guidance, JRA has become one of the most respected and creative firms in the world. Jack Rouse is also a much sought after lecturer, panel member and charette participant. He understands not only the mission and messages of his clients, but also the business principles essential for their success.

**Thea Classic Award: Sea World**, San Diego, CA

Sea World San Diego opened in 1964 on 22 acres on Mission Bay Park with 45 employees, several dolphins, sea lions, and two seawater aquariums. It attracted more than 400,000 visitors in its first year. Today's annual attendance exceeds 4.2 million and the park has now spread out over more than 189 acres. It is the home of more than 20,000 animals, including 16 species of marine mammals, 430 species of fish, and 100 species of birds. Sea World is known for spectacular animal shows, interactive attractions, aquariums, adventure rides, and outstanding dining facilities. Current owners and operators Anheuser Busch Companies, Inc. purchased the park in 1989.

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### **Awards for Outstanding Achievement**

#### **Attraction: Shuttle Launch Experience, Kennedy Space Center Visitors Center Kennedy Space Center, Florida**

A hallmark of the Kennedy Space Center has always been to uphold scholarship through visual communication excellence. The Shuttle Launch Experience begins with this tradition and virtually takes off from there! After a pre-flight briefing, guests board a unique shuttle simulator module that adds a new dimension to the kinetics of motion simulation. The experience is pushed over the top by maximizing the power of suggestion, sensory effects and great storytelling to delivering the heart pounding impression of the journey into space that is experienced by the astronauts. The result leaves guests “wowed” without the usual effects of nausea induced by traditional simulation used to achieve a launch sensation. The kinetic journey is climaxed by a spectacular “Earth reveal,” as the entire ceiling of the shuttle module opens to an encompassing “orbital view” of planet Earth.

#### **Attraction Limited Budget: “Awakening of the Temple” Lobby Show, Aztec on the River, San Antonio, Texas**

“Awakening of the Temple” is a show presented in the lobby of the Aztec on the River, a restored 1926-era exotic themed motion picture palace in San Antonio Texas. The 10-minute special effects show dramatically tells the story of an ancient Aztec legend with animation and animatronics, lighting effects, surround sound, and simulated smoke and fire. The show awakens the spirit of Xochitl, who tells modern mortals of ancient Aztec mysteries, while highlighting the architectural, artistic and historical integrity of the building. The show’s climax features a seven-foot-long feathered serpent rising out of the temple floor to tower above the audience.

#### **Attraction Rehab: Finding Nemo Submarine Voyage, Disneyland Park, Anaheim, California**

One of the most technologically complex attractions ever built at a Disney park, “Finding Nemo Submarine Voyage” is a 12-minute journey in 52-foot long submerged vessels that were originally placed in service at Disneyland in 1959. In this state-of-the-art renovation, Disney Imagineers have created a new undersea world in which visitors embark on an expedition of colorful reefs, ancient ruins, massive whales, and an erupting volcano. They come face-to-face with Bruce the Shark, Gill, Peach, Crush, and other memorable characters from the Disney-Pixar Academy Award winning Animated Feature while venturing on an aquatic quest with Marlin and Dory to find Nemo. In refurbishing a Disneyland Classic, WDI has employed new technology and immersive storytelling to create a new one-of-a-kind adventure for future generations. “Finding Nemo Submarine Voyage” is groundbreaking in its application of new technology, combining popular animated film characters and storytelling for a crowd-pleasing underwater experience.

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**Exhibit: Noah's Ark**, at the Skirball Cultural Center, Los Angeles, California

Noah's Ark at the Skirball allows guest to *walk through* and *take part in* the Noak's Ark story: interacting with fanciful animal sculptures, helping to construct the ark, helping the animals board the ark, creating the sounds and effects of the storm, sharing the voyage aboard the ark and arriving at a better world. Upon entering the galleries, visitors are welcomed into a pre-flood zone, offering hands-on opportunities to make thunder, rain and wind using low-tech, mechanical sound devices, and invented instruments. Visitors begin to meet pairs of life-size animal puppets from the five continents, all creatively crafted from recycled materials – or, in many cases, everyday objects such as bottle caps, bicycle parts, baseball mitts, croquet balls, mop heads, and rear-view mirrors – 186 species in all.

**Museum: Donald W. Reynolds Education Center**, Mount Vernon, Virginia

Housed in a tasteful, partially underground structure, this lively and experiential telling of the George Washington story reveals Washington's life and character through a series of 16 exhibit galleries and theaters covering 17,000 sq. feet. Different areas appeal to specific visitor segments. For example, "A 40 Year Romance" set in a colonial parlor with a fireplace tells the story of George and Martha's marriage and touches the emotions. "Washington and Religion" is shown in a chapel-like setting with pews and stained glass, and speaks to the leader's spirituality. Forensic studies were undertaken to reconstruct Washington's likeness and present the man in three compellingly lifelike, lifesize figures at different stages of his life. "The Revolutionary War Theater" takes visitors inside the key battles of the war using 4-D effects including crossing the Delaware with fog and snow. "A Leaders Smile" displays Washington's actual dentures and explains the sad story of this dentally challenged President. The new center is an expansion of the interpretive areas within George Washington's Mt. Vernon Estate & Gardens, the prestigious 50-acre complex on the site of George and Martha Washington's former home.

**Heritage Center: The Generations Center**, The Western Wall, Jerusalem, Israel

The experience is built on two levels. The first encompasses seven scenes: "Our forefathers and the twelve tribes," "A people and its homeland," "The destruction," "Yearning for Zion," "The Holocaust," "The Resurrection," and "The Memorial wall for IDF soldiers who fell in the battle for Jerusalem." The second level is a "Hall of Light," theatrically using light beams choreographed to cause visitors to introspectively "search their inner selves," inspiring a form of meditation. Seated around "The Wall of Light" in the second level, the designers' objective is to show the audience that "we are all links in one chain," with Jerusalem itself as a concept and abstract symbol: "A Link to the Generations."

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**Exhibit on a Limited Budget: Cleveland Avenue Time Machine Experience, at Troy University's Rosa Parks Museum, Montgomery, Alabama**

To embark on the Cleveland Avenue Time Machine experience, museum visitors board a vehicle reminiscent of a 1950's Montgomery city bus surrounded by retro-futuristic time travel devices, lighting, audio and fog effects. The driver of the bus is a robot, Mr. Rivets, who welcomes and instructs passengers to take their seats. The multi-sensory guest experience is delivered from every direction through an enveloping seven-projector video production. The first of six "time jumps" sweeps visitors from today to a bus stop in downtown Montgomery, Alabama on the night of December 1, 1955 where they meet a charismatic African-American woman who will be their time travel guide. Then, among other things, the time travelers learn about "Jim Crow," "Dred Scott," "Harriet Tubman," the hopefulness of African Americans during Civil War Reconstruction and the failed doctrine of "Separate But Equal." The experience concludes with guests being invited into the museum proper to learn more about the impact of the bus boycott.

**Traveling Exhibit, Limited Budget: CSI: THE EXPERIENCE, Fort Worth Museum of Science and History, Ft. Worth, Texas**

"CSI: The Experience" is a 6,500 sq. ft. traveling exhibit which challenges visitors to choose from three different crime stories. As "Crime Scene Investigators" they solve crimes through observation, investigation, and the application of actual forensic science techniques. Visitors are briefed by CSI star Gil Grissom, who advises them to notice and record everything in the "case file" and to use all the available analytical resources provided to develop their full report at the finish of the exhibit. Throughout their investigation, visitors are assisted by CSI cast members and real forensic scientists in cleverly integrated media programs. State of the art computer interactives, realistic sets, and real evidence such as hair, fiber, bullets, and insects provide visitors a broad spectrum of elements to analyze and evaluate. The conclusion of each investigation employs an interactive kiosk with logic tree programming, high definition media, crime scene reenactments, and thought-provoking questions that simulate the real life challenges of Crime Scene Investigators.

**Science Center, Limited Budget: Cosmos at the Castle, Cork City, Ireland**

The guest experience begins with large format, HD presentations that are touch sensitive and allow guests to learn as much, or little, about various evolutionary and cosmological subjects as they desire. The key points of cosmology, astronomy and the evolution of life are summarized in sixteen animated presentations. Next are interactive role-playing exhibits that allow visitors to express views about space exploration, and the religious, philosophical and cultural challenges posed by the existence, or lack of,

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alien life and intelligence. Guests can also access the on-site radio telescope and send their own multimedia impression of life on earth to the planet of their choice. Ireland's first fully interactive cinema, The Comet Chaser Space Mission, concludes a visit. Through various large-format interactive screens, guests, track, monitor and probe a deadly comet heading toward Earth. As a group, they must determine the threat the comet poses and form a plan to either divert the comet, or melt it with a thermal explosion.

**Event Spectacular: Songs of the Sea, Sentosa Island, Singapore**

A new nighttime multimedia show is the centerpiece of a new venue at Siloso Beach on Sentosa Island. The show is designed around a 120m long kelong (fishing village). The story begins with Li, a young man with a charming voice, singing by the sea with his friends when he is stunned by the sudden vision of a beautiful sleeping princess.

Guided by a group of mischievous sea creatures, Li learns she is under a spell of an enchanted village. Can Li help to break the spell and set her free? Technical elements include 69 water jets to create a central 40m water screen flanked by two smaller water screens. Flames leap up to 20m, and a pyrotechnic display and lasers using the latest diode technology enhance the action. The 25-minute show runs twice nightly to an audience capacity of 2,500, in an open-air amphitheater.

**Live Touring Show: Walking with Dinosaurs. The Live Experience, Australia**

Fifteen roaring, snarling "live" dinosaurs mesmerize the audience and fill the arena floor. The creatures are as awe-inspiring in this performance as they were when they first walked the earth. With tour dates in Sydney, Las Vegas, Portland, Detroit, Columbus, Sacramento and Little Rock, this arena-filling show features 10 species, from the agile Utahraptor and the king of terror, Tyrannosaurus Rex, to the 45-foot tall Brachiosaurus - 75 feet from nose to tail. The audience journeys back in time for a Jurassic experience to see how these monsters looked in their prime. Computer hardware and software has been adapted from film animatronics. The skeletal structure, sculpting and skinning of the creatures is created with such precision the dinosaurs move, contract and stretch in the same manner that muscle, fat and skin moves on real creatures. The talent and technique of the puppeteers during the show is as much a part of the whole experience as they manipulate the hydraulics in the large creatures.

**Event Spectacular: Peter Pan's Neverland, Universal Studios Japan, Osaka, Japan**

"Peter Pan's Neverland" is an original, Broadway-style musical that takes place nightly on the big lagoon at Universal Studios. Three enormous floating stages represent London, Neverland and Captain Hook's Ship. Commissioned from the original J.M. Barrie book, this production features an all-new script, score and original songs. A cast of 37 keeps the stages alive with excitement. With a 20-minute running time, this is a fast-paced, shorthand version of "Pan" -- but that's precisely what gives the show its

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vibrant, near-lunatic pace. This is the most marvelously bizarre version of “Peter Pan” ever to grace the stage. Characters come and go without warning. Performers leap all over the floating stages, bouncing on hidden trampolines. Pyrotechnic accents burst throughout the show. But the “high” point comes when Peter and Wendy soar nearly 100 feet in the air, thanks to the world’s highest free-standing flying tower. And when Peter brings Tinkerbell back to life and soars high over the lagoon, there’s not a dry eye in the house.

**Technology: KA Floating Stage, Cirque du Soleil, Las Vegas, Nevada**

KA at the MGM in Las Vegas is a gravity-defying theatrical production by Cirque du Soleil. The technology utilized for the “performing stages” sets a new standard for technical theater. The two main stages are fully articulated and create the sense that they are performers in the production, complete with their own “personalities.” The KA stages are both unique in their form, motion capabilities and size. The “Sand Cliff Deck” is a 50’ x 25’ stage that is actuated by a hydraulic gantry lift. The stage can be rotated 360 degrees, tilt from flat to 100 degrees (10 degrees beyond vertical) and track the deck up and down vertically, 70 feet. All three axes of motion can function at the same time, thus creating a virtually limitless pallet of motions and “personalities” for this truly awe-inspiring moving stage. The Tatami deck is a second animated stage that is 30’x 30’ in size. This 75,000 pound automated stage is capable of gracefully moving toward the audience, for a distance of over 45 feet, using 100 Hp electric motors.

**Themed Training Experience: Battle Stations 21, Navy Recruit Training Command Great Lakes, Illinois**

Battle Stations 21, located at the Navy Recruit Training command north of Chicago, is the final training step in what is now the Navy’s only boot camp. Recruits must spend a challenging 12-hour test on board this simulated ship, which includes 17 discreet naval experiences. Entering the building, which is essentially a soundstage, recruits experience a 5/8-scale destroyer anchored at a Navy dock at night. The simulation is complete right down to the smell of saltwater and grease wafting over the sea breeze as seagulls cry overhead, and the sounds of dock workers and machinery in the background. A wave machine creates chop on the surface of the water which laps against the ship and creates reflections on the boat’s hull. A helicopter flies somewhere overhead. The most intense simulated experiences that test the recruits inside the ship are those under “General Quarters” when the ship comes under attack at about 2:00 am. The floor shakes, claxons wail, lights dim and flicker, compartments flood, fire and smoke break out, electrical wires spark, water pipes spray, wounded sailors moan (actually dummies with MP3 players inside), a torpedo destroys one floor which has collapsed down onto another. This outstanding application of the Experience Industry’s expertise, in addition to creating an exceptional visitor experience, has also opened the door to an entirely new, and potentially high-volume business sector.

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**Interactive Adventure: Kim Possible World Showcase Adventure Playtest**  
Epcot, Walt Disney World, Florida

The Kim Possible World Showcase Adventure is an interactive adventure game for guests visiting the Epcot theme park, developed by Disney Imagineering's R&D Team. Using wireless, cellphone-like "Kimmunicator" handsets, guests control special effects installations throughout the World Showcase to defeat super-villains from the "Kim Possible" television series. The Kimmunicator is also the interface for controlling numerous game installations, special effects, secret panels, etc. hidden over the length and breadth of the UK and France pavilions at Epcot. Suddenly, with minimal investment and without reducing the adult appeal of World Showcase, Kim Possible achieves an intense additional dimension of interest and involvement from kids and families. This opens new ways to repurpose existing thematic investments.

**About TEA**

The TEA (formerly Themed Entertainment Association) is a nonprofit organization representing some 6,500 creative specialists, from architects to designers, technical specialists to master planners, scenic fabricators to artists, and builders to feasibility analysts working in nearly 500 firms in 39 different countries. TEA is an international nonprofit organization founded in 1991. It is dedicated to connecting organizations seeking to engage, enchant, educate and entertain their guests and visitors with the creators of compelling places and experiences worldwide. Its members have conceived, designed, fabricated and produced highly successful experience-based museum exhibits, science center interactives, corporate visitor centers, live events and live performance venues, themed entertainment and retail centers, casinos and resorts, themed restaurants, aquariums, zoos, heritage centers, theme parks and more. For more information, visit [www.TEAConnect.org](http://www.TEAConnect.org).

**About the Thea Awards**

Like the TEA, the Thea Awards were created to bring recognition to achievement, talent and personal excellence within the themed entertainment industry. From a modest beginning in 1994, the Thea Awards have become internationally recognized as a symbol of excellence. The public is welcome to attend the black tie 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Thea Awards Gala, which will be held March 8, 2008 at the Disneyland Hotel. Tickets may be ordered online at [www.TEAConnect.org](http://www.TEAConnect.org), then click on the Thea Award icon. The name of the award is a play on three words: the first is "Thea," the Greek goddess from whom all light emanates. Thea was the mother of Helios (the sun), Eos (the dawn), and Selene (the moon). The second key word is "Theater," a word derived from the goddess Thea. The third word, of course, is TEA, the name of our association.

**About Economics Research Associates**

Economics Research Associates is an international consulting firm focused on economic analysis for the entertainment and leisure industry, real estate development, public-policy analysis, tourism, and economic development. Since its founding in 1958, ERA has completed over 15,000 assignments yielding unmatched experience in land use economics. In the process, the firm has made important contributions to some of the world's most innovative and successful development projects. Their projects span the globe and range from repositioning single land uses to New Towns planned over 30 years. In broad terms, ERA assists private developers and public agencies in assessing the future economics and outcomes of real estate projects and economic development plans. ERA offers a diverse array of economic analysis and tools to answer complex problems. Website: [www.econres.com](http://www.econres.com).

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