

24 Ziplines Open in USA in 2010

New, Less Expensive Way to Add the WOW Factor to Resorts & Parks

By Jeff Coy and Amanda McDaniel

May 2010 --- The most exciting distance between two points is a zip line.

Originally built to transport mining materials and people across deep canyons and wide rivers, a zip line is a cable strung between two trees or poles. Using a pulley, gravity does most of the work to zip the payload from point A to point B. There are over 10,000 ziplines worldwide --- if you count all the summer camps and backyard versions. Commercial ziplines number about 300 worldwide with 100 located in the USA. But today, ziplines are used mostly by nature lovers and thrill seekers.



In 2010, 24 new commercial zip lines will open in the USA

Growth of Ziplines in the USA

In the midst of the banking industry crisis and the great worldwide recession, resort owners were looking for new, less expensive ways to add the WOW factor to their resorts. In the last decade it was the indoor waterpark that could cost \$20 million. More recently, resort owners were expanding their “dry-side” with indoor family entertainment centers that typically cost \$5 to \$10 million.

Today, the new WOW factor is the less expensive zipline that is exploding onto the scene. For \$250,000 to \$1,500,000 a resort or attraction owner can add a zipline, increase attendance, increase revenues and capture the emerging adventure sports market.

Ziplines That Opened in 2009

In 2009, several major resorts and attractions added ziplines:

- Dollywood Theme Park in Pigeon TN added the SkyZip, powered by Skyline Eco-Adventures. It's a 1 & ½ hour tour using 5 ziplines that cross from point to point high

above the ground. For \$40, you can fly like an eagle over Dollywood, the first theme park in the USA to introduce a station to station zipline tour. Not ready for the big leap, you can practice on the Flying Squirrel line which is 100 feet long and only 11 feet above the ground. The zipline tour is open everyday March through December. For more information, call Dollywood SkyZip at 865-428-9488 or go to www.dollywood.com/land/SkyZip. Skyline Eco-Adventures, based in Hawaii, is one of the first zipline developers to operate in the USA with more than one-million person crossings. To reach Skyline Eco-Adventures, call 808-878-8400 or go to www.zipline.com.

- Big Sky Ski Resort in Montana opened 3 ziplines, longest being 525 feet, that run 60 feet above the ground at speeds up to 25 mph. For more, call sales & marketing at 800-548-4487 or go to www.bigskyresort.com.

- Boyne USA opened ziplines at its two Michigan ski resorts --- Boyne Highlands and Boyne Mountain. Both offer 5 separate ziplines, the longest being 500 feet. At Boyne Mountain, the entire course touts over 2500 feet of ziplines and drops over 24 stories. In addition Boyne Mountain has an 88,000 sf indoor waterpark. "Boyne's waterpark, Avalanche Bay, has one of those surfing machines," says Jodi Evenson, a resident of Holland MI. "Let's try it," she said. After trying her skills on the surfing simulator, she moved over to the Downhill Mat Racer and the Super G water slide. Now, the Evenson family and others can race down the ski slopes using a new zipline that operates year round. To watch a video, click this link:



<http://www.boyne.com/Winter/Snowsports/Ziplines.html#videos>. For more information, call Steve Kircher at 231-549-6005 or go to www.boyne.com.

- In Wisconsin Dells WI, the waterpark capital of the world, the Wilderness Resort opened 5 ziplines and 6 platform towers. Duration is about 2 hours, height above ground is 55 feet, maximum speed is 25 mph, longest run is 914 feet and the total length is 2500 feet. The designer-builder is Experience Based Learning (EBL), one of the premier builder/operators in the USA. To reserve your zipline tour at Wilderness, call 800-867-9453. To reach EBL, go to www.eblcanopytours.com.

History of the Zipline

The British and US navies used ziplines, along with ropes, to train sailors. Ziplines were often part of rock climbing and challenge (rope) courses used by behavioral scientists and experiential educators to teach motor skills, confidence and self-reliance to the physically and mentally challenged. In fact, ziplines grew out of the ropes courses that became popular in the 1960s.

Scientists studying the rain forests of Costa Rica used ziplines to get a close-up view of the forest canopy during the 1990s. Treetop canopy tours exploded after a 1992 movie *Medicine Man* starring Sean Connery. Commercial zipline designers, builders and educators emerged in 1996 to develop safer, higher, longer, faster ziplines than ever before.

Types of Ziplines

Zip lines make it possible to spend hours in the treetops, learning about the environment and experiencing the beauty of the forest canopy. But we all know the real attraction: it's the speed and the thrill of the zip. So, several types of ziplines have emerged:

- **Canopy tours** --- a series of ziplines from tree to tree connecting platforms where you can rest. Usually found in forest preserves, national & state forests and near rivers and canyons. May include sky bridges, rappelling and short walks.
- **Zip line tours** --- same as a canopy tour, except no trees. Poles and towers are built to connect the ziplines.
- **Zip line in a ropes course** --- many challenge courses have a thrilling finish using a fast zipline from, let's say, 50 feet to the ground as a confidence builder.
- **Zip Ride** --- a newer, higher, longer, faster version that is built for speed and adventure sports enthusiasts. On a level with skydiving and whitewater rafting. Usually found at resorts and near other attractions.

What's Opening in 2010?

Here is a list of 24 zipline facilities with 134 separate ziplines that have already opened in 2010 or are expected to open yet this year.

Commercial Ziplines Opening in USA in 2010							
Name	City	ST	Open	Number Ziplines	Height In Feet	Longest In Feet	Total Length
Umauma Falls Zipline Experience	Hilo-Hakalau	HI	201001	8		808	
Zip Isle Zip Line Adventures at WBG	Hilo-Honomu	HI	201001	7	100	1100	
Zoomair Adventure Central Florida Zoo	Sanford	FL	201002	10	60	500	
Plumtree Canopy Tours Toe River Lodge	Plumtree	NC	201003	11	60		
Chattooga Ridge Canopy Tours	Long Creek	SC	201003	10	60		
Zipline Eco-Tour at Santa Catalina Island	Santa Catalina	CA	201004	5	440	1100	3671
North Georgia Canopy Tours	Lula	GA	201004	21	70		
Kentucky Zipline Adventure Tours	Clay City	KY	201004	6		1500	10560
Branson Zipline Tours at Wolfe Creek	Branson	MO	201004				5280
Navitat Canopy Adventures	Barnardsville	NC	201004	10	200	1100	
Gravity Trails	Ellison Bay	WI	201004	3	15		

Zipline at Glenwood Canyon Resort	Glenwood Springs	CO	201005	6	30	350	
Tamarack Resort Canopy Zipline	Tamarack	ID	201005	8	200	800	4425
Eagle Falls Lodge & Zipline	Parkers Lake	KY	201005	1		250	250
Go Ape! Rock Creek Regional Park	Rockville	MD	201005	5	40	340	2000
Kalahari's Safari Outdoor Adventure Park	Sandusky	OH	201005	4	60	400	1200
Adventure Mtn Challenge at Dollywood	Pigeon Forge	TN	201005				
Bigfoot Zipline Tours at Dells Army Ducks	Wisconsin Dells	WI	201005	6	100	1300	5000
WonderWorks Zip Broadway at the Beach	Myrtle Beach	SC	201006	1	50	500	1000
Radical Ropes Adventure Park	Myrtle Beach	SC	201006	1	50	600	
Tree Frog Canopy Tours	Loudonville	OH	201007				
NY Zipline Adventure Hunter Mtn Resort	Hunter	NY	201007	11	600	650	3880
Mike Goril's Lake Geneva Canopy Tours	Lake Geneva	WI	201009				
Zipline & Ropes Course at Louisville Zoo	Louisville	KY	201012				
Totals	24			134	133	753	37266

Source: Jeff Coy, JLC Hospitality Consulting

Of the 24 ziplines opening in 2010, 7 were part of ski resorts, waterpark resorts or conference resorts that have tapped the trend of adventure sports blending with lodging, recreation and entertainment facilities. The ziplines average 133 feet in height above ground. The average longest segment is 753 feet. Total length of the ziplines opening in 2010 is more than 7 miles.

In January 2010, **Umauma Falls Zipline Experience** opened a new zipline park in Hakalau on the Big Island of Hawaii. You start off nice and easy, then you ride a dual track (side by side) zipline. Facilities include 8 ziplines, the longest being 808 feet. Experience Based Learning is the designer-builder. Since 1996, EBL has been part of over 50 zipline projects worldwide --- becoming one of the leading designers, installers and managers of ziplines and canopy tours. EBL installations include: Berkshire East MA, Scream Time in Boone NC, Tamarack Resort ID, ZipIdaho, ZipFlorida and the Wilderness Resort & Waterpark in Wisconsin Dells WI. To reach EBL, call 815-637-2969 or go to www.ebl.org.

In January, **Zip Isle Zipline Adventures** opened 7 ziplines at the World Botanical Gardens in Honomu on the Big Island of Hawaii. Seven (7) ziplines reach heights of 100 feet with the longest zip being 1100 feet. Zip Isle is designed for passive gravity braking, which does not require the guest to brake by hand. Designer-builder is Experience Based Learning. Facility owner is the World Botanical Gardens. Manager is Ziplsle Hawaiian Adventures. For info, call 888-947-4753 or go to www.ziplisle.com.



In February, Acrobranche opened its **Zoomair Adventure Park at the Central Florida Zoo in Orlando-Sanford FL** with 10 ziplines. Heights reach 60 feet and the longest segment is 500 feet. Zoomair offers 4 different courses through the park for people of different heights and age. Adult rides range from \$23 to \$40. The park also offers team building and night adventures. In Orlando, get on I-4 eastbound to Exit 104, then left off

the exit ramp onto Hwy 17-92. Zoomair is 1/8th mile ahead on the right. For more info, call 407-330-0767 or go to www.zoomair.us.

In March 2010, **Plumtree Canopy Tours** opened 11 ziplines at the Toe River Lodge in Plumtree NC. The canopy tour lasts about 3 hours and includes 4 sky bridges. Zipline heights reach 60 feet above the ground. In addition, there are 4 sky bridges, 4 challenge courses and water rafting. Designer-builder is Adventure America Zipline, which also owns or manages three other zipline canopy tours in the Southeast: Nantahala Gorge NC, Chattooga Ridge SC and Pigeon River TN. For more about Plumtree, go to www.wildwater rafting.com/plumtree or call 866-319-8870. To reach Adventure America Zipline Canopy Tours, go to www.wildwater rafting.com/aazct.php.

Becky & Jack Wise opened **Chattooga Ridge Canopy Tours in Long Creek SC** in March 2010. On 9 acres, their 3-hour canopy tour features 10 ziplines with heights reaching 60 feet. Adult rides cost \$69. Designer-builder is Adventure America Zipline. For more, call 866-319-8870 or go to www.wildwater rafting.com/chazio.

The **Zipline Eco-Tour at Santa Catalina Island CA** opened in April 2010 with a 2-hour zipline tour that features 5 ziplines with heights up to 440 feet. The longest zip is 1100 feet and the total length of the course is 3671 feet. This incredible experience will change your idea of what a zipline tour should be. You start at Hog's Back gate, high in the hills above Avalon and you descend at speeds up to 45 miles per hour through Descanso Canyon to the beach. Along the way, at each station, you will learn about wildlife and history of the area. Capacity is 300 people per day at \$93 per person. Stay at the 71-room Pavilion Hotel. The zipline is owned by the Santa Catalina Island Company. Located off the coast of southern California, Catalina Island is a popular destination known as a retreat for Hollywood celebrities and for an array of outdoor activities. There's Sea Trek Underwater Adventures along with hiking, biking, buffalo safaris, fishing, boating, kayaking, snorkeling, golfing and beach hopping. The Santa Catalina Island Company operates much of the lodging, dining and tours options on the island. For more, call 800-626-1496 or go to www.discovercatalina.com.

Kentucky Zipline Adventure Tours in Clay City KY opened in April with a zipline and canopy tour on 200 acres. Facilities include 6 ziplines, longest being 1500 feet. The state Tourism Development Finance Authority made a \$250,000 loan to Kentucky Zipline Adventures to construct the zipline canopy tour. "This loan will allow us to create 15 to 18 job opportunities and help bring more visitors to Powell County," according to Randy Farwell, one of six owners in the project. Farwell is also a co-owner with Bradd Morse of Canopy Tours Inc, the firm that constructed the ziplines. Canopy Tours Inc has 25 years experience in the field and has projects in New Hampshire, New York and Jamaica. For more, call 606-683-9884 or go to www.kentuckyzips.com.

In April 2010, **Branson Zipline Tours at Wolfe Creek Preserve** opened a 4-course zipline tour on US Hwy 65 just north of Branson MO. The total zip cable runs more than 5280 feet. The tours include 2 sky bridges and last from 30 minutes to 2 & ½ hours. Adult prices for the course tours range from \$39 to \$129. "We have provided the most

immersive experience possible for our guests while trying to protect the natural beauty of the land. We went to the extra expense of bringing helicopters to lower the poles for our bridges and zipline towers rather using the cheaper method of bulldozing our way through the property,” according to general manager Emma Hamilton. Call Emma at 417-616-5156 or toll free 800-712-4654 or go to www.bransonzipline.com.

Kirk & Leah Watkins opened their **North Georgia Canopy Tours in Lulu GA** in April 2010. On 136 acres, two (2) different tours total 21 ziplines reaching 70 feet off the ground. There’s the Ozark Explorer Canopy Tour and the Blue Streak Fast Line. Zip riders reach speeds up to 30 mph and must maneuver 2 sky bridges during the 2 to 3-hour course. Adult tickets range from \$69 to \$89. The designer-builder of the canopy tour is Bonsai Design of Grand Junction CO, a leader in the industry. Talk to Kirk & Leah by calling 770-869-7272 or going to www.northgeorgiacanopytours.com. If you want to build a zipline, contact Bonsai Design by dialing 970-255-7393 and asking for John Walker or by emailing john@bonsai-design.com.

Navitat Canopy Adventures of Bernardsville, just north of Asheville NC, opened its zipline canopy tour on 240 acres in April 2010. The tour includes 10 ziplines, reaching heights up to 200 feet above the ground and reaching lengths of 1100 feet long. Riders reach speeds of 30 mph during the 3 & ½ hour tour. Adult rides range from \$75 to \$85. The ownership group is a Navitat-Bonsai partnership of Ken Stamps, Dylan Burt and John Watkins. The project cost \$1.4 million to construct. “You can soar like an eagle,” according to Stamps. There are so many ways to experience the sensation of flight here. We want folks to learn about the history of this area, but we know what the main attraction will be.” The designer-builder is Bonsai Design of Grand Junction CO. For more information, call 828-626-3700 or go to www.navitat.com. You can reach Bonsai Design at www.bonsai-design.com.

Gravity Trails of Ellison Bay in Door County WI opened in April 2010. On 50 acres, there are 3 ziplines that hover about 15 feet off the ground --- great for beginners and small children. There’s also a ropes course, and they plan to build a second intermediate zipline this year. Adult prices are \$45. For more information, call 920-854-9292 or go to www.gravitytrails.com.

Zipline at Glenwood Canyon Resort opened during May 2010 in Glenwood Springs CO. There’s a zipline tour, a zip ride and a ropes course with zipline. “There are 6 separate ziplines, the longest being 350 feet, that run 30 feet above the ground,” according to zipline co-owner Jeff Hale. “Our ziplines provide the thrill of crossing the canyon and the Colorado River. The force of gravity will zip you down the cable, high above the river, to the landing platform on the other side. A zip back across on a second set of cables complete an exciting roundtrip zip.” Zip tickets run \$59 to \$79 for adults. Glenwood Canyon Resort offers 14 resort cabins, 10 camper cabins, 40 RV sites and 28 tent sites. The resort offers fishing, mountain bikes and whitewater kayaking. Kevin Schneider is the resort owner. Get off I-70 Exit 119 and go 1 & ½ miles east of Glenwood Springs. For more, call 800-958-6737 or go to www.glenwoodcanyonzipline.com or www.glenwoodcanyonresort.com.

Tamarack Resort Canopy Zipline in Tamarack CO opened during May 2010.

Accommodations include the Lodge at Osprey Meadows, townhomes cottages and chalets. Facilities include 8 ziplines 200 feet above the ground. The longest segment is 800 feet. Total length of the zipline course is 4425 feet. Facility owner is Randy Hall. Zipline designer-builder is Experience Based Learning LLC. 208-325-1006 or go to www.tamarackzipline.com.

Eagle Falls Lodge at Parkers Lake KY recently opened its zip ride on 50 acres. The zip ride is 250 feet long and costs \$10 for three rides. To learn more, call 606-376-7080 or go to www.stayateaglefalls.com.

Go Ape! at Rock Creek Regional Park in Rockville MD is the first entry into the USA for UK-based Go Ape! Obstacle Courses. Affectionately called the Wise Gorillas, Dan & Jenny D'Agostino are the new facility owners. On 6 acres, they provide a zipline tour, a zip ride and a ropes course with zipline. There are 5 ziplines total at heights of 40 feet above ground. The longest segment is 340 feet with a total length of 2000 feet. The tour takes 2 & ½ to 3 hours to complete. Capacity is about 450 people per day at adult prices of \$55 per person. US residents Dan and Jenny were living in London, England, on corporate assignments. Both were considering a career change and moving back to their hometown of Washington DC when they discovered the Go Ape! Team and wanted to help bring the concept to America. Now, Go Ape! is actively looking for sites to develop courses all over the US. To talk with Dan & Jenny, dial 888-520-7322. If you want to build a Go Ape! course, email businessdevelopment@goape.com.

Kalahari Waterpark Resort owner Todd Nelson opened his 77,000 sf Safari Outdoor Adventure Park in Sandusky OH during May 2010. The park features 4 separate ziplines running about 50 feet above the ground and across the outdoor waterpark. The ziplines longest segment is 400 feet and its total length is 1200 feet. The 3-story ropes course, themed to resemble an African tree house village with thatched huts, spans more than 750 feet of rope and includes 48 challenge elements. Two 32-foot climbing walls feature auto belaying and race timers for competitive adventures.

The African-themed adventure park also provides close-up encounters with giraffes, zebras and other African animals. Admission to the adventure park costs \$19.95 for overnight resort guests. Complimentary outdoor and indoor waterpark passes are included for all overnight resort guests. Individual attraction pricing is also available: \$10 for ziplines, \$7 for the ropes course, \$5 for the climbing walls and \$5 for the animal park

Since opening in May 2005, Kalahari has made a number of expansions totaling \$77 million. In June 2006, the resort opened its outdoor waterpark. The conference center followed. After that, Kalahari more than doubled the size of its indoor waterpark, making it the largest of its kind in the USA at 173,000 sf. The resort has 884 rooms and suites. For more, call 877-525-2427 or go to www.kalahariresorts.com.

Adventure Mountain Challenge Course at Dollywood in Pigeon Forge TN opened in May 2010. Combined with SkyZip, a five zipline tour that opened last year, Dollywood now has one of the best adventure parks in the USA. For more about Adventure Mountain, call 865-428-9488 or go to www.dollywood.com.

Bigfoot Zipline at the Dells Army Ducks in Wisconsin Dells WI opened during May 2010. On 30 acres, the 1 & ½ hour zipline tour features 6 separate ziplines running 100 feet above ground. The longest zip length is 1300 feet and the total length of zipline is 5000 feet. At the end, zip riders can reach speeds of 50 mph. 608-254-5555 or go to www.bigfootzip.com.

WonderWorks Zip at Broadway at the Beach in Myrtle Beach SC is scheduled to open June 2010. The WonderWorks zipline will take participants soaring 50 feet above water on a course that travels 1000 feet between towers. Featuring a constant tension, the dual line course assures participants of a smooth ride. The 23-acre site also features a 3-level (40 feet tall) ropes course with 3000 ropes and 33 challenge elements. In spring of 2011, WonderWorks will open its 50,000 sf children's science museum on the site of the former Crab House Restaurant, which will be demolished. Broadway at the Beach is owned by Burroughs & Chapin Company. The zip ride is designed and managed by WonderWorks. For more, email general partner Robin Turner at sales@wonderworksonline.com or go to www.wonderworksonline.com.

Radical Ropes Adventure Park in Myrtle Beach SC is expected to open in June 2010 with a zip ride and ropes course with zip on 6 acres. Facilities include a zip ride that runs 600 feet 50 feet above the ground. Adult rides cost \$20. Course designer-builder is Experiential Systems of Chicago Il. Owner is Buddy Lindsay, who also owns the nearby Hampton Inn. Reach Buddy at 877-946-6400.

Tree Frog Canopy Tours at Mohican Wilderness in Loudonville OH is expected to open in July 2010 with a zipline canopy tour on its 600 acres in the Kenhurst Valley. The 2 & ½ to 3-hour tour includes ziplines, sky bridges and rappel --- a must for both nature lovers and adrenaline junkies in southeastern Ohio. Ten lodging units are available at the Mohican River Inn. Get on the Wally Road Scenic Byway, a 10.4 mile green corridor that follows the Mohican State Scenic River. For more, call 800-228-5118 or 419-994-1200 or go to www.treefrogcanopytours.com.

NY Zipline Adventure Tours is expected to open at Hunter Mountain Resort in Hunter NY during July 2010. A Mid-Mountain canopy tour and a Top of the Mountain tour comprise 11 ziplines running a total of 3880 feet at 600 feet above the ground. Six ziplines will open in July and 5 more will open later in the Fall. Riders reach speeds of 50 mph at times. The tours last from 2 to 3 hours. Adult prices range from \$29 to \$129 for different courses. The resort owner is Hunter Mountain's Paul Slutzky. The zip facility is owned and operated by NYZAT, a division of Zipline Adventure



Tours LLC. The designer-builder of the zip facility is Canopy Tours Inc. They have other ziplines in Lincoln NH, Clay City KY and Jamaica. For more about zips at Hunter Mountain NY, call 800-486-8376 or go to www.ziplinewyork.com or www.zipsny.com.

Lake Geneva Canopy Tours in beautiful Lake Geneva WI is scheduled to open in September 2010. Situated on almost 100 heavily-wooded acres, this Eco-Adventure is sure to thrill even the most hard-core adventure enthusiast. Located at the intersection of County Roads H & NN. Mike Goril is part-owner and general manager. For more information, call Mike at 847-967-9787.

The Indoor Ropes & Zipline Course at the Louisville Zoo KY is under construction. The designer-builder is Jim Liggett of Ropes Courses Inc of Allegan MI. For more, call the zoo at 502-459-2181 or go to www.louisvillezoo.org. To reach Ropes Courses Inc, email jim@ropescoursesinc.com or dial 269-673-0016.

Ziplines In Development for USA

Here are zipline projects we identified in the planning stages:

- Zip Ride at Caloosahatchee Regional Park in Florida
- John Walker Bonsai Design Project in Montana
- John Walker Bonsai Design Project in Utah
- John Walker Bonsai Design Project in Macon or Jackson GA
- John Walker Bonsai Design Project in Burnsville NC
- Zipline near Canyon Crest Event Center in Twin Falls ID
- Powered Zipline at Evel Knievel Jump Site in Twin Falls ID
- Ropes Course at Orange Beach AL

A worldwide database of commercial ziplines and canopy tours is maintained by JLC Hospitality Consulting of Phoenix-Cave Creek AZ. They track the growth of the industry and have a profile on facilities open, under construction and in the planning stages. If you are aware of any projects we missed, please let us know via email to jeffcoy@jeffcoy.com.

What's It Cost to Construct a Zipline?

It cost \$250,000 to build Kentucky Zipline Adventures which opened in April 2010. Co-owner Randy Farwell got a loan from the Kentucky Tourism Finance Authority to build 6 ziplines, the longest being 1500 feet. Canopy Tours Inc of New Hampshire was the designer and builder.

It cost \$350,000 to build the Zipline Safari, which opened in January 2009 in Forever Florida, a wildlife attraction near St Cloud-Holopaw FL. The course consists of 7 ziplines, 9 platforms built 55 feet up from the ground and 2 sky bridges to cross. The longest zip segment is 750 feet. Designed for flat land by Experience Based Learning

(EBL), the canopy tour costs \$85. Florida Forever built the course to promote eco-tourism.

It cost Dan & Jenny D'Agostino \$500,000 to build Go Ape! at Rockville MD, the first Go Ape! franchise in the USA, which opened in April 2010. For the money, they got a zipline tour that includes 5 separate ziplines that run 40 feet above the ground. Longest segment is 340 feet and the total length of the zip course is 2000 feet. The tour lasts from 2 & ½ to 3 hours. Capacity is 450 per day at \$55. Go Ape! is based in the UK.

It cost Jay Bialsky & Randy Farwell \$1,000,000 to build the zipline adventures which is scheduled to open in July 2010 at Hunter Mountain Resort in Hunter NY. What did they get for a million dollars? Three (3) separate ziplines, 3 towers, 2 side by side cables for racing, several sky bridges and challenge elements and a total of 3880 feet of ziplines. Zip riders can reach up to 50 mph. Prices range from \$29 to \$129. Hunter Mountain Ski Resort receives 300,000 winter visitors and only 80,000 summer visitors, but the new zipline canopy tour is expected to generate 30,000 to 60,000 additional visitors over the next three years.

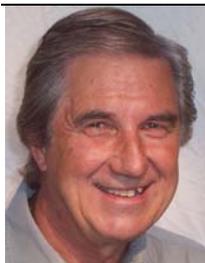
It cost Kirk & Leah Watkins \$1,000,000 to build 21 ziplines at the North Georgia Canopy Tours. That includes two tours that last 2 to 3 hours, 2 sky bridges, 21 separate ziplines that run up to 70 feet above the ground. Riders can reach 30 mph at a ticket price that ranges from \$69 to \$89 person. The facility just opened in Lulu GA in April 2010. Bonsai Design of Grand Junction CO was the designer-builder.

It cost \$1,000,000 to build the zip ride on Santa Catalina Island, which opened in April 2010. It has 5 separate ziplines, longest being 1100 feet, and runs 3671 feet from the hill at Hog's Back down to the beach.

Is There a Zipline in Your Future?

You want to build a zipline canopy tour for nature lovers? Or a zip ride for the thrill seekers? Hire a pro to study the demand for lodging and adventure sports in your market. The total cost of your project will depend upon its economic feasibility. Plan on a budget of \$250,000 to \$1,000,000 for the typical zipline facility. Of course, it's easy to spend more than that --- if you want the highest, longest, fastest one in the world.

But for many resort owners looking for a new WOW factor, the zipline is a relatively low cost addition that can have a rapid return on investment.



Jeff Coy is president and Amanda McDaniel is research director of JLC Hospitality Consulting based in Phoenix-Cave Creek AZ. Coy is certified by the International Society of Hospitality Consultants (ISHC). For more about market research, economic feasibility and design-development services for all kinds of resorts, adventure parks and sports facilities, you can reach him at 480-488-3382 or email jeffcoy@jeffcoy.com or go to www.jeffcoy.com.