

# Aerie's Alpine Coaster Debuts On Grafton Riverfront

by Stephanie Tate

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ALTON - Enjoy a thrill ride like no other in Illinois when Aerie's Resort in Grafton celebrates the Grand Opening of the Aerie's Alpine Coaster, 600 Timber Ridge Rd., Grafton at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Oct. 11.

Aerie's will host a ribbon cutting for the much-anticipated Alpine Coaster which officially opened for business Sept. 29. State and local officials will be on hand to commemorate the opening of the only Alpine Coaster ride in Illinois.

“This is truly an attraction like no other in Illinois,” JD Lorton, Director of Operations for Aerie’s Resort noted. “We have worked to build the coaster with the help of Wiegand Sports USA during the winter and now we have a world-class attraction open in Grafton that will give visitors and residents alike year-round fun.”

Riders board a two-person coaster sled and fly down the Aerie’s limestone bluff on over 3,000 feet of a stainless-steel rail system. The natural landscape of the river bluff was maintained to provide a one-of-a-kind experience for riders. The ride includes cruising through seasonal foliage, skimming along limestone outcroppings and twisting and turning around natural formation in the landscape at speeds of up to 28 miles per hour. At the end of the line, a cable system pulls the sled and rider up 875 feet, returning to the starting point. The ride features seven hairpin turns, eight waves and twists.

“The experience is better and better each time you ride it,” Lorton noted.

Aerie’s partners with Wiegand Sports to build and design the coaster. Wiegand is the market leader in the mountain coaster industry with over 270 installations worldwide.

“With the opening of the new Alpine Coaster at Aerie’s Resort, we anticipate thousands of new visitors will flock to the Great Rivers & Routes region of southwest Illinois to explore all Aerie’s – and the region – has to offer,” Cory Jobe, President/CEO of the Great Rivers & Routes Region of Southwest Illinois said. “This is a major addition to the already strong slate of attractions available at Aerie’s and in our region.

The Aerie’s Alpine Coaster will be open year-round. Tickets are \$18 per person or three rides for \$36. Children can also ride the coaster with an adult - certain height restrictions apply - for an additional \$10 per ticket.