

Silver Dollar City Closes Historic Ride - Promises A Reimagined Fire In The Hole When Park Opens For 2024

by Bradley Piros, Reporter
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BRANSON, Mo. - When the lights went out at one of the Midwest's premier amusement parks for the season, a beloved ride closed with it.

Silver Dollar City announced earlier in February 2023 that this season would be Fire In The Hole's last. So, on Dec. 30, 2023, the park's final day of operations, people flocked to Branson from all over the country to get their last rides.

Fire In The Hole was a favorite to many guests because of its family-oriented nature. It wasn't meant to be a thrill ride. It was meant to be something the entire family could get on and enjoy. It had been since its opening back in 1972.

During its 54 years in operation, it's estimated that over 25 million riders have ridden.

The indoor coaster had a fun storyline, and was a good "warm-up" coaster for kids just getting into thrill rides.

According to a release put out from Silver Dollar City, the ride's storyline was modeled after the real-life mining town, Marmaros, that was located atop Marvel Cave and home to residents of long-ago Ozarks.

"The attraction, novel in its introduction in 1972, has fire-brigade themed trains that twist, turn and drop into a burning town where riders are the volunteer firefighters, saving the citizens and battling the flames before getting soaked themselves," the release says.

But it's not all bad news.

While many will miss the ride and wished the original would have just been repaired and stayed in operation, that just wasn't the case.

Silver Dollar City decided to go out with the old and in with the new.

Over the past couple of years, the park had been building a giant structure behind 'Fireman's Landing' - the park's kiddie area.

During its construction, people assumed it was going to be a ride to replace Fire In The Hole. What people didn't expect was for the ride to make a return, but completely reimagined.

The park made it official back in August that the brand-new Fire In The Hole ride would be opening with the park in 2024. The \$30 million ride, the park's largest investment, will be the center of the newly incorporated Fire District.

The park announced an additional \$30 million investment toward new guest experiences and improvements, hinting at further development in the next five years, another press release read.

“Signifying our biggest investment in a single attraction, Fire In The Hole continues Silver Dollar City’s strategic, multi-phased growth plan offering families opportunities to play and stay together in the heart of the Ozarks,” said Brad Thomas, President of the Silver Dollar City Company in the August announcement.

“Spurring the creation of The Fire District, the custom-designed Fire In The Hole makes history as the Heartland’s largest indoor coaster. As the District’s anchor attraction, it will be a favorite rite of passage for families where one generation introduces the next generation to this adventure and where the heroes of today spark the heroes of tomorrow.”

The new ride, being built by rollercoaster manufacture Rocky Mountain Construction, will pay complete homage to its roots. RMC also designed and built one of Silver Dollar City's star attractions, Outlaw Run in 2013.

“Like Silver Dollar City, Rocky Mountain Construction is committed to creating custom-built ride experiences that haven’t been done before,” said Darren Torr, President of RMC in the August statement.

“We loved the challenge of engineering, fabricating, and installing the one-of-a-kind Fire In The Hole, creating a new ride experience while honoring a legendary coaster. It feels fondly familiar, yet it will be daringly different.”

The new ride is set to have a similar storyline and ride layout to the original and promises to deliver family fun for generations to come.

Silver Dollar City opens on Saturday, March 9.