

Falls puts visitors in the movies



JULY 12, 2004

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NEWS NIAGARA BUREAU

NIAGARA FALLS – Visitors here may be accustomed to the peaceful sounds of nature, but promoters of “Movie Magic: The Science Behind the Movies” hope the booming rock music and sounds effects of the interactive , educational show will be a box office hit this summer.

Not the usual atmosphere at Niagara Falls?

That’s ok, said Leonard Lipes, vice president of productions for Mad Science, the Montreal – based entertainment company that teamed up with the Buffalo – based Delaware North Co. to bring in a test run for the show.

“We know we can’t compete with the falls,” he said. “We’re not trying to.”

Although the movie opened earlier last week in the Visitors Center’s Festival theatre, local business owners and residents came out Friday for an official opening.

Niagara Falls was an obvious choice to pitch the attraction mainly because of it’s lack of childrens programming, Lipes said. If this ventures succeeds, Lipes said he will team up with the parks on on additional attractions.

“Every age group and category is being reached out to (through this attraction), and that’s what tourism is all about,” said Trudy J. Christman, a member of the Pine Avenue Business Association who attended the Friday viewing.

The show includes a movie set complete with an industrial – strength fan, a snowmaker, video cameras and a green screen.

The show’s plot is comedic, and the two main characters – an “odd couple” played by improvisational actors from Toronto – get the audience involved in making their own movie, with children from the audience creating effects and playing characters from “Legally Blonde,” “Agent Cody Banks” and “Rocky”.

Dante Maynard, a 7-year old from Brandywine, Md, played Cody Banks. With the help of “green screen” technology – in which a subject is photographed in front of a green screen – and digital editing, the Mad Science crew was able to make him appear to be snowboarding through the Alps on a jet – powered board.

“It’s something ew, different and exciting,” said Dante’s mother, Vondella Maynard, who said her family stopped at the center and had not made it to the falls yet.

“It’s a great family show”, said Edward J. Rutkowski, assistant deputy commissioner for state parks in the Western district. “Most attractions (at state parks) have visual presentation, but this is the first one that combines interaction.

Rutkowski brought two of his grandchildren, one of whom was picked to play Elle Woods, the main character in the movie “Legally Blonde.”

“She hasn’t stopped talking about it,”he said.

The show will be offered five times a day – with the first show at 11:30 a.m. and the last at 6:45 p.m. – until Labor Day

The cost is \$6 per person and free for children under 5.

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