Dec. 12, 2006, 4:57 p.m. EST

Raft of new licensing, sponsor deals for Six Flags

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By William Spain, MarketWatch

CHICAGO (MarketWatch) -- Six Flags has signed a wide variety of licensing and sponsorship deals that will bring attractions themed around some of the most popular family entertainment brands to its chain of amusement parks in coming years, the company announced early Tuesday.

Among the high-powered brands coming to a Six Flags SIX -1.70% near you is Thomas & Friends, of "Thomas the Tank Engine" fame. The company intends to build special Thomas & Friends playlands in several parks next year that will include attractions and rides featuring the main character and his pals from the Island of Sodor -- a first of its kind deal in the U.S.

Six Flags has also signed up the Wiggles, children's entertainers, and will set up "Wiggles World" areas in its parks over the next five years. And it has expanded an agreement with skateboard pro Tony Hawk to introduce themed family spinning coasters in 2007.

In addition, MTV's 24-hour college network will bring "emerging artists bubbling up on the college music scene to five Six Flags parks for branded concerts during summer 2007," the company said, with the Viacom VIA -3.37% unit putting "its marketing resources behind" them.

Six Flags added that it has two new "corporate alliance partners": Cold Stone Creamery and Heinz . The former will open and operate ice cream stores in the parks; offer in-store promotional offers; and name a flavor after Six Flags. Meanwhile, Heinz' flagship brand will be the 'Official Ketchup of Six Flags Theme Parks,' and the companies will work together on co-branded marketing promotions.

"This will be the first year we're able to put our 'family-friendly' stamp on a full Six Flags season, from preparation to execution," said Six Flags chief executive Mark Shapiro in the announcement. "Our plans to diversify the family entertainment experience are well underway and that strategy will permeate the entire company."

Last year, Shapiro, backed by Washington Redskins owner and Six Flags shareholder Dan Snyder, ousted the company's former CEO Kieran Burke and added three hand-picked members to the company's board: politician Jack Kemp, Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein and advertising executive Michael Kassan.

Shares of Six Flags were down 6% at $5.26, still ahead of its 52-week crater of $4.53 in August but less than half the nearly $12 it was trading for in February.

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ADD TO WATCHLIST SIX

Six Flags Entertainment Corp.

US : U.S.: NYSE

$ **38.78**

-0.67 -1.70%

Volume: 510

April 10, 2014

P/E Ratio

30.18

Dividend Yield

4.85%

Market Cap

$3.74 billion

Rev. per Employee

$584,174

ADD TO WATCHLIST VIA

Viacom Inc. Cl A

US : U.S.: Nasdaq

$ **83.14**

-2.90 -3.37%

Volume: 14,580

April 10, 2014

P/E Ratio

15.84

Dividend Yield

1.44%

Market Cap

$37.63 billion

Rev. per Employee

$1.37M

William Spain is a MarketWatch staff writer in Chicago.

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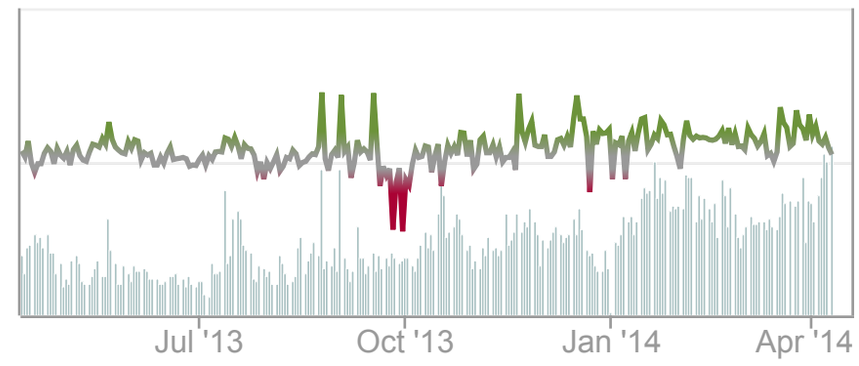

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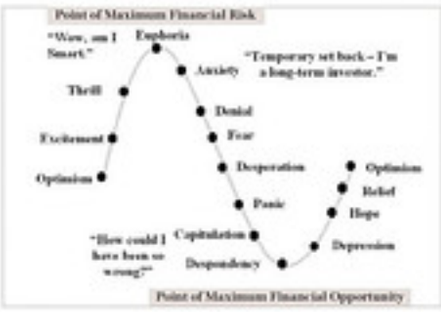

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