

Fun, Fast, and Thrilling

Coney Island gets a new look with help of 50-ton Terex truck crane



You could almost call it a daredevil act: Facing tight deadlines, high winds, and frigid temperatures, Superior Crane Rental Inc. brought in three cranes for the installation of more than 20 new thrill rides at Coney Island. Helping to put a new face on the iconic American amusement park, Superior utilized the heft of a 50-ton truck crane over two off-seasons to handle unwieldy ride components.

Long a part of treasured Americana, historic Coney Island, in Brooklyn, N.Y., once attracted visitors from around the world. A lack of park investment in recent decades eroded its nostalgic luster and visitor numbers. To counteract this trend, New York City officials rezoned adjoining property for the construction of two new theme parks within Coney Island—Luna Park and Scream Zone—over two off-seasons from 2009 to 2011.

Extremely tight timelines to construct more than 20 new rides meant long days for many dedicated contractors working on the project to ensure the theme parks opened on schedule. The list of contractors included Norwood, N.J.-based Superior. “We were at the site seven days a week, 12 to 20 hours per day,” said Brian Marcason, Superior’s vice president. “The parks had to be complete in just 100 days, and we had our cranes on site for one and a half months to construct Luna Park and about two and a half months for Scream Zone.”

To meet these tight deadlines, Superior used three cranes for the construction of Luna Park and two for assembling Scream Zone’s four rides, which included the first new roller coasters at Coney Island since 1927. The company relied on its Terex T-550-1 truck crane to bear the brunt of the heavy lifting.

Picking up the pieces

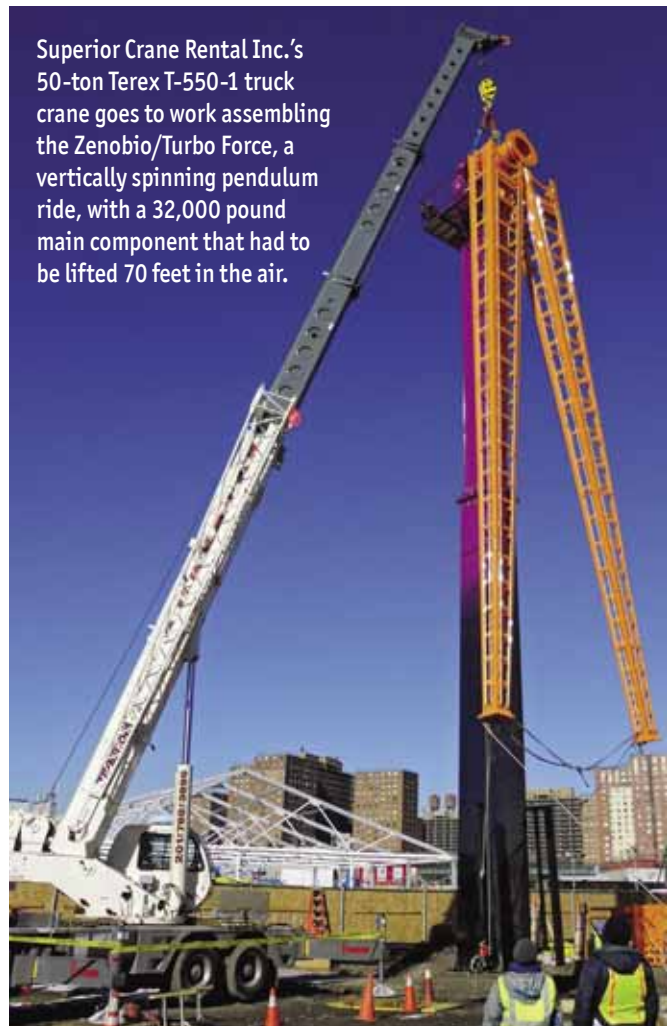
Ride components originated from amusement-park ride manufacturer Zamperla’s factory in Italy, which meant volumes of container traffic during the first part of construction. “The T-550-1 was running continuously,” commented Marcason. “For the roller coasters alone, we unloaded 26 sea containers and other heavy components.”

Like a jigsaw puzzle, each new rollercoaster came with numerous track sections that had to be put together. The T-550-1 lifted and held in place hundreds of track pieces, ranging in size from 5,000 to 15,000 pounds, while crew members secured each segment.

Powering the park’s new Steeplechase rollercoaster, named after an older theme park at Coney Island that no longer exists, a 41,000-pound motor was picked and set into place by the T-550-1 truck crane. Marginal ground conditions and an extremely tight jobsite made this a complex lift. Trenches completely surrounded the T-550-1, limiting the crane’s mobility, and crews had to set the crane on steel plates for solid footing. The machine’s 110-foot main boom and 50-ton capacity proved to be great assets in positioning the 18.6-ton motor in place.

“The T-550 has a superior lift chart throughout its range and out-picks other crane designs by up to 4,000 pounds in some

Superior Crane Rental Inc.’s 50-ton Terex T-550-1 truck crane goes to work assembling the Zenobio/Turbo Force, a vertically spinning pendulum ride, with a 32,000 pound main component that had to be lifted 70 feet in the air.



instances,” said Marcason.

Towering over the Scream Zone, the Turbo Force ride spins thrill-seekers head over heels at heights reaching 132 feet. Constructing the ride also created a buzz among workers, as the T-550-1 was called on to lift a 32,000-pound main component 70 feet in the air.

While Steeplechase and Turbo Force tested the crane’s strength, constructing Scream Zone’s Sling Shot ride tested the operator’s finesse. While the ride’s anchors weighed a mere 4,000 pounds each, they topped out at 140 feet high. The winter’s seashore winds made a difficult lift even more of a challenge. “We were dealing with winds during the worst winter in recent history, and many of the guys were betting against us positioning the anchors,” recalled Marcason. However, the T-550-1, equipped with its offset two-stage jib, gave operators up to 170 feet of height to work with. “The crane set both with no problem,” he added.

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