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Orlando Builder Restores Gatorland to Its Pre-Fire Grandeur

D&D Construction Services Completes New Retail Store and Famous Gator-Mouth Entrance for Memorial Weekend Opening

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ORLANDO (May 19, 2008) – Central Florida builder D&D Construction Services of Orlando is proud to announce the completion of its work for Gatorland, one of Florida’s first and most popular attractions.

The theme park will unveil the new \$4 million, 19,000-square-foot space during Memorial Day weekend, the official start of the summer tourism season. As General Contractor of the project, D&D Construction Services was responsible for building Gatorland’s new state-of-the-art meeting and event space, a covered admissions pavilion that incorporates its infamous “toothy” entrance, a classroom, and a cleverly designed retail area. The construction company completed the project three weeks early and significantly under budget.

“Since the day after the fire, D&D construction has literally moved mountains to expedite our successful recovery. As construction managers, they oversaw even the smallest detail to bring this \$4 million project in under budget and ahead of schedule,” said Mark McHugh, President & CEO, Gatorland.

Designed to showcase the history and unique culture of Gatorland, the new retail area offers visitors a modern shopping experience that complements the theme park’s natural beauty. From the full-wall graphics pulled from the Gatorland photo archives, to the replica of the observation tower full of cuddly plush gators, and the buckets that hang from the ceiling as lights, the new addition is sure to be a crowd favorite.

Daryl and Darand Williams, father and son owners of D&D Construction Services, stepped in to offer their services on the afternoon of Nov. 6, 2006 after an early morning fire destroyed Gatorland’s gift shop and damaged its signature gator-mouth entrance and admissions area. With the Thanksgiving weekend quickly approaching, the company’s most urgent order of business was to build a temporary park entrance in anticipation of the holiday

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crowds. Within nine days, D&D Construction Services had completed the temporary entrance and Gatorland was back in business — in plenty of time for its Thanksgiving visitors.

In January 2007, when Gatorland was ready to begin rebuilding its permanent structure, D&D Construction Services was once again selected as the General Contractor.

Partnering with Gatorland and Lighthouse Creative, the company spent 10 months in the creative design process before breaking ground on Oct. 15, 2007. Making the new design blend in with the existing 40- and 50-year old structures, including decades-old plumbing and wiring was challenging, but especially after the devastating fire, safety was the contractor's primary concern.

“We are proud to partner with Gatorland not only to rebuild the park to its full functionality, but also to provide them with a beautiful, more expansive space to take them into their next 60 years of business, without sacrificing the charm, character and integrity that has made the park a Florida favorite for the past 60 years,” said Darand Williams, owner of D&D Construction Services.

Perhaps even more challenging was the constant “supervision” of the construction team by the park's *real* bosses — the alligators. For six months, the crew worked within five feet of hundreds of live gators. Before long, however, the intimidation turned into a sort of affection. The crew even began naming the gators.

“I can't say that we've ever been so closely supervised by so many sets of watchful eyes,” joked Williams. “As we jack hammered, bull dozed and sawed each day, they would join in our ‘symphony’ of sorts — bellowing and splashing as we worked. We're proud to pay homage to our new gator friends — Larry, Moe, Curly and all the others — through this incredible new environment we built for them.”

D&D Construction Services has worked for The Disney Company on various projects for nearly 20 years and has completed more than 1,000 contracts in its almost 25-year history. Its most recent projects include the expansion of the Four Points by Sheraton Sebring, Chateau Élan, in Sebring, Fla. and the completion of a four-story, 55,000-square-foot Residence Inn by Marriott also located in Sebring, Fla.

The company was founded in 1985 by Daryl Williams, who later involved his son, Darand. The third generation in a family of construction experts, Daryl Williams drew on the experiences of his father, who worked side by side with his grandfather, to learn the tricks of the trade. Otis Williams worked in construction during World War II and built some of the first cloverleaf highways in Los Angeles as well as the original Skyway Bridge in St. Petersburg, Fla. After many years of traveling between large construction projects, the family settled into agriculture and real estate development, and later drew these experiences into a Commercial General Contractor business, with headquarters in Ocoee, Fla., outside Orlando.

Founded in 1985, D&D Construction Services is a full-service general contracting firm specializing in the hospitality industry. The company, whose motto is “Building Together, Building Better,” provides a range of services including pre-construction, construction management, general contracting or development needs. D&D Construction Services handles all aspects of property construction from project costing, planning, design-build, construction management, and property development. The company was most recently lauded for the on-time, on-budget, less than one-year completion of a four-story, 55,000-square-foot Residence Inn by Marriott located in Sebring, Fla. D&D Construction Services’ work can be found throughout Florida and Alabama.

Gatorland is a 110-acre theme park and wildlife preserve, combining “Old Florida” charm with exciting, new exhibits and entertainment. The park opened as a roadside attraction in 1949. Today, it provides affordable-priced family fun with thousands of alligators, crocodiles, aviary, breeding marsh with observation tower, petting zoo, nature walk, educational wildlife programs, gift shop, Florida’s best train-ride, restaurant, and much more. One-of-A-Kind reptilian shows include: the Gator Wrestlin’ Show, Gator Jumperoo and the Up-close Encounters Show. To find out more about “Orlando’s only Theme Park with Bite and Attitude,” visit us online at: gatorland.com or call **1-800-393-JAWS**.

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