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VIRTUAL REALITY AND INTERACTIVITY ENHANCE HAUNTED ATTRACTIONS FOR 2016 ***Haunted Attractions Using Virtual Reality and Blackouts to Raise the Fear Factor***

WINNETKA, Ill., Sept. 14, 2016 – As haunted attractions across the country turn down the lights to prepare for the 2016 “Haunting Season,” they are using technology to turn up the scares according to the [Haunted Attraction Association](#) (HAA). Beyond virtual reality and blackout experiences, the trend of interactivity continues to evolve in order to meet consumer demands in 2016.

The HAA, the only official association of the haunted attraction industry, is seeing technology play a major role this season. “Last year our attractions used technologies in ways like never before. In 2016, our members have raised the bar and outdone themselves yet again,” said John Eslich, President of HAA. “Guests are not only having the chance to interact with the attractions, but now they’re also the leaders of their own destiny – whether it’s breaking out of an escape room, navigating a blackout maze or surviving the night at an outdoor sleepover – the guest is in full control...that is, until fear takes over. We’re proud that our members are again pushing the envelope to continually enhance the guest experience.”

Below is a sampling of what’s trending in terror throughout the country in 2016:

TAKING IT TO A NEW DIMENSION

The combination of technological enhancements and the trend of interactivity have led to the birth of a new trend for 2016 – the rise of virtual reality (VR) experiences at haunted attractions.

[Creepy Hollow Haunted House](#) located right outside Houston, Texas, has developed a Virtual Reality Zombie First Person Shooter Game where guests are locked into a protection rig and wear a VR headset, which simulates being in the middle of a large dark area where all they have is a pistol and a flashlight. Participants can hear zombies coming from all directions and must use the light to find them before they get eaten.

This year, a VR haunted house is joining the lineup of extreme attractions offered at [Fear Factory](#), located in Salt Lake City. Within the VR experience participants can slay zombies, tour a haunted house and be scared in ways they didn’t think possible.

[Lake EERIE Fear Fest](#) at Ghostly Manor Thrill Center in Sandusky, Ohio is home to five haunted house including “The Haunted Mine Ride” at the XD 4D Motion Theater. Using VR technology, the activation transports riders to a roller coaster with 4D effects that elevate the experience to the next level.

BE A PART OF YOUR SCARE

Interactivity continues to be a leading trend amongst haunts from coast to coast.

Brand new for 2016, guests to [Terror Behind the Walls](#) at Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia will have the chance to take interactivity to the next level by taking The Hex Challenge. Six new secret rooms are being opened and will be scattered throughout the penitentiary complex where visitors will be challenged to step further into the story, to become part of the action, to take on challenges and ultimately, to escape the massive haunted prison. A secret room will be included in each of the facility’s six haunted attractions.

[Derailed Haunted House](#) in Ramer, Tennessee is taking it to the next level in 2016 with the addition of the Gantom Torch – a new technology that will allow users to control the colors, flickers and strobe lighting they experience. The power enhances the interactive experience for guests and allows them to maximize the scares.

[Shocktoberfest](#) in Sinking Spring, Pennsylvania celebrates its 25th anniversary with eight killer experiences including the new Ground Assault: Zombie Laser Tag. Guests will be given a state-of-the-art laser gun to shoot escaping Zombies and the perpetrators trying to release them.

For those that would prefer to do the haunting as opposed to being spooked, [The ExFEARience at Eastwood Field](#) in Niles, Ohio has introduced the “Scarecade” for 2016. Visitors who may be too scared to enter the haunt or just enjoy scaring others can work with the attraction to scare their family and friends.

ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE DARK?

“People naturally feel uneasy in the dark,” says Eslich. “Our members like to capitalize on that and push it to extremes.”

At “The Basement” at the [Scarehouse](#) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, guests 18 years and older must sign a waiver before entering into this dark world. Patrons will be touched, restrained and blindfolded while being tormented and challenged.

The masterminds behind the [Wisconsin Fear Grounds](#) will add to the scares this year with a new outdoor event that will allow guests to experience 13 hours of fear. “Night Terrors: 13 Hours of FEAR!” will take place October 8th and be the only overnight haunting experience in Wisconsin. The Fear Grounds will provide tents for fear-seekers to sleep in and the nights’ activities will include a fright trail through the woods, a scavenger hunt, bon fire ghost stories and scary movies played on a large inflatable screen. Tickets cost \$85 per person based on double occupancy.

[Nashville Nightmare](#) in Nashville, Tennessee is introducing Night Terrors Haunted House, an industrial horror complex, where Necro-Toxins are pumped into visitor’s systems as they travel through dark tunnels and sewers while encountering nightmarish creatures.

At the [Walk of Nightmares](#) in Walkerton, Indiana patrons are given just a flashlight before being sent out on what seems like a simple walk in the woods. The flashlights will be the only form of light and based on where the light is shined, patrons will spot different spirits, zombies and ghosts lurking in the woods. The walks take place October 28th and 29th and cost \$10 per person.

Following an impressive 2015 debut, the 2016 [Field of Screams](#) Extreme Blackout Event in Pennsylvania will take place on Friday, November 11. The lights will be turned down and the intensity level cranked way up. Participants will be physically restrained, isolated, tortured, misdirected, and disoriented by lights, sounds, and special effects.

About The Haunted Attraction Association

The Haunted Attraction Association, the only official association in the haunt industry, serves as the voice of the haunted attraction industry. Our mission is to promote our worldwide network of haunted attractions including Haunted Houses, Haunted Hayrides, Scream Parks, Mega-Haunts, Halloween Festivals, Haunted Outdoor Trails, Corn Mazes, and Amusement Park Halloween Events. In addition our goal is to protect our customers through education and networking of our members. Visit www.hauntedattractionassociation.com or call [888-320-8494](tel:888-320-8494).

Like the Facebook page at www.facebook.com/hauntedattractionassociation and follow HAA on Twitter to see the Official Halloween Countdown at <https://twitter.com/HAAHaunts>.