

UNDERTOW

In for a Wild Ride

BOARDWALK PUTTING FINISHING TOUCHES ON NEW ROLLER COASTER



KEVIN JOHNSON/SENTINEL

Two girls riding the Sky Glider glide past the Undertow roller coaster construction site at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk on Wednesday afternoon. Officials hope to open the roller coaster in July, but no opening date has been set.

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SANTA CRUZ — A new \$6 million roller coaster looks ready to roll at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, but it won't open until July at the earliest.

The Undertow will be the only roller coaster in Northern California with cars that spin, Boardwalk spokesman Kris Reyes said. Yet it still needs some behind-the-scenes work such as a platform for the ride operator, a place for riders to wait in line and other features.

Boardwalk officials said they haven't set a launch date.

"We're confident it will open this summer," Reyes said Tuesday. "It looks a lot more finished than it is because the track is done."

Like all new roller coasters in the state, it also needs to be inspected by the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health.

The Undertow, built in Germany, will have individual cars rather than a train like traditional roller coasters such as the Giant Dipper.

Each car holds four riders with seats that face outward. The car spins and the ride is different for each seat depending on the weight of the car.

"I've ridden this exact coaster at a park in Utah and it's really a great ride," Reyes said. "It's really thrilling. People of all ages will like it. You're getting a new ride every time."

The turquoise and yellow Undertow replaces the Hurricane roller coaster, which raised the pulse of riders at the Boardwalk for 20 years. That coaster was retired on Labor Day 2012.

Boardwalk leaders said they try to introduce a new ride every year, but it hasn't been as common to replace big roller coasters such as the Hurricane.

The last major ride to open at the Boardwalk was the revamp of the Haunted Castle in 2010.

Reyes said amusement park fans who want to know when the Undertow will open should "like" the Boardwalk's page on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/SantaCruzBeachBoardwalk>.



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Workers continue construction on the Undertow roller coaster at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk on Wednesday.