

THE ROLE OF ENTERTAINMENT IN SHOPPING CENTERS & MALLS

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Ever since the mid-1950's, when the suburban enclosed mall model first evolved, entertainment has always been some part of the mix. It might only be music, a central mall court with a periodic fashion or other shows, seasonal decorations or a visit by the Easter Bunny and Santa Claus. Back in the 1950s through the 1970s, away-from-home dedicated entertainment center venues where not a part of the suburban scene, so were rarely found in shopping centers and malls, unless at a tourist location.

West Edmonton Mall in Alberta, Canada changed all that when it opened in 1981 with *Fantasyland*, subsequently renamed *Galaxyland*. With 26 rides and attractions, in 400,000 square feet, including *Mindbender*, the world's tallest and longest indoor roller coaster, *Galaxyland* is, reportedly, the world's largest indoor amusement park. Later entertainment additions to the mall include *World Waterpark*, *Deep Sea Adventure*, *Ice Palace* and *Ed's Recreation Center* with bowling, a music stage, game room and restaurant.



World Waterpark, West Edmonton Mall

Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota followed in 1992 with the largest indoor amusement center in the U.S. with 292,000 square feet. First known as *Knott's Camp Snoopy*, it was then renamed *Camp Snoopy*, then *The Park at MOA*, and in March 2008, rebranded as *Nickelodeon Universe*. The mall's entertainment attractions also include *Underwater Adventures Aquarium*, cinemas, *NASCAR Silicon Motor Speedway*, *Moose Mountain Miniature Golf* and a casino.

One other North American mall has an indoor amusement park, *Les Galeries de la Capitale* in Quebec, Canada with its *Mega Parc*, reportedly the 2nd largest indoor amusement park in America.