

Some reminisce as Hamel's park sells rides

SHREVEPORT (AP) — The Hamel's Park auction was one Michelle Hollenshead just had to attend, even though she had no intention of buying anything. "We're just out here reminiscing," said Hollenshead, who worked at the amusement park the summer she was 15. Most everything, save a log flume ride, was put up for bid Monday. More than 100 bidders from the industry purchase relics from Hamel's past. A top seller was the 210-meter-long roller coaster, which sold for \$175,000. Owner Milton Hamel decided to put his inventory up for sale when current leaseholder Steve Vander Vorste, who has been operating the park, said he would not be renewing his option. Hamel has drawn up future plans for the park that include the addition of batting cages, bumper boats and miniature golf. The plan also shows room for some professional buildings near the park entrance and development of 48 residential lots, some lakefront, on adjoining property. Wayne Leatherman of Branson USA, a newly opened amusement park in Branson, Mo., purchased several rides. He doubts that Hamel's will ever reopen. High labor and other operational costs often leave little for small operations to reinvest in their parks. And it's the updating of the parks that keeps drawing visitors every year, he said.

Branson USA purchasing "several rides"

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