

Epic Comic Con coming to Showboat in June

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ATLANTIC CITY — A new comics and pop culture convention is coming to the Showboat.

Altered Reality Entertainment, which puts on comic-cons in Rhode Island, Connecticut, upstate New York and Colorado, will bring Epic Comic Con to the hotel June 21-23.

Comic conventions allow fans and families to interact with the stars of genre movies and TV shows past and present, talk with comic creators, dress up as their favorite characters and browse through longbox after longbox of comics and related memorabilia.

So far, confirmed guests include TV's Incredible Hulk Lou Ferrigno, former MTV star Bam Margera and three of the original Mighty Morphin Power Rangers.

From the comics world, the show is expected to include Graham Nolan, who co-created the Batman villain Bane; Mike Zeck, who created Spider-Man's infamous black costume; and Ron Marz, who wrote memorable runs of "Silver Surfer" and "Green Lantern" in the 1990s.

Other offerings will include a tattoo pavilion and Geek Speed Dating, according to [the show's website](#).

Altered Reality expects to make an announcement regarding a major guest this coming week, said spokeswoman Susan Soares.

Epic is Atlantic City's fourth comic con in five years, following last year's Garden State Comic Fest at the Showboat; 2017's Atlantic City Fan Xpo, intended to run all summer long at the Showboat but which shuttered after three weeks; and the Atlantic City Boardwalk Con, which ran in 2015 and 2016 at the Atlantic City Convention Center.

Asked what Tower Investments, the company that owns the Showboat, is looking for in a con, Chief Operating Officer Brandon Dixon said, "We are looking for creative event planners that are excited to be in Atlantic City and are happy to leverage their own resources, not just the resources of the city."

Dixon added Altered Reality is already in talks to bring the show back next year.

Soares projected attendance for the Atlantic City show at about 15,000, while Dixon held to a more conservative 7,000. By comparison, last year's Garden State Comic Fest drew 5,500 people over two days in April.

"Our goal is to make this a show that builds every year," Dixon said.

Altered Reality's flagship show, Rhode Island Comic Con, draws 90,000 people every November, Soares said, with an economic impact to the city of Providence of \$4.2 million. Guests at that show have included Meat Loaf, Kiefer Sutherland, Ice-T and actors from AMC's "The Walking Dead." The company is in expansion mode, having launched Empire State Comic Con last year in Albany, New York.

Soares said Altered Reality is planning outreach to local businesses and schools to generate interest in the show and a relationship with the community, efforts that should begin after the second Empire State con wraps in April.

“We don’t just come in and produce an event and leave, like the circus,” Soares said.