13 Things You Didn’t Know About Navy Pier’s New Ferris Wheel

1. Nearly 16 million people have experienced the Ferris wheel since it opened in 1995.

2. Dutch Wheels based in Vlodrop, Netherlands is the designer of the new wheel.

   Dutch Wheels is a global leader in standalone giant wheels. Ferris wheels designed by Dutch Wheels can be found in well-known tourist locations throughout the Americas, Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Dutch Wheels designs, manufactures, and sells wheels to leisure developments in tourist areas while working with local entrepreneurs, local authorities, real estate developers and architects.

3. Dutch Wheels is the manufacturer of Navy Pier’s current Ferris wheel.

   Dutch Wheels is a member of the Vekoma Rides Company which manufactured Navy Pier’s current Ferris wheel in the 90’s.

4. Navy Pier’s new Ferris wheel is 196 feet high and has 42 gondolas.

   The current Ferris wheel stands at 147 feet high and has 40 gondolas.

5. The new wheel is the same model as the Hong Kong Observation Wheel.
The Hong Kong Observation Wheel opened in December 2014 and was structurally strengthened for the typhoon winds in Hong Kong. The Navy Pier Ferris Wheel benefited from the additional structural strength because of Chicago’s harsh weather conditions.

6. **The gondolas will be climate controlled and have a higher passenger capacity.**

The gondolas are closed, air conditioned and have special Low-e High Tech safety glass to ensure an optimum climate inside. Each gondola seats up to eight adults and two children. The wheel can hold a maximum load of 414 passengers at once.

7. **The gondolas will be colored ‘Navy Pier blue.’**

The current Ferris wheel gondolas are red, but the new Ferris wheel will match Navy Pier’s signature blue color.

8. **The gondolas will have a multimedia entertainment system.**

Inside each gondola, there is an entertainment system with interactive video screens that will play interesting facts during the ride.

9. **The new Navy Pier Ferris Wheel will be equipped with individual seats.**

The current Ferris wheel has bench seats which have been used in previous Ferris wheel models and in most giant wheels throughout the world. But the new Navy Pier Ferris Wheel will have individual seating.

10. **The new wheel will operate using the start/stop system.**

The current wheel uses the continuous rotation system, but the start/stop system is more efficient. The start/stop system will stop the wheel seven times to load six gondolas which then lets the wheel operator set a number of rotations for the wheel. Typically, three rotations is the accepted number. This system creates a better experience during the loading sequence because the wheel will stop, giving riders time to experience the height and the view.
11. The approximate weight of the new wheel is 992,080 pounds.
   The current wheel weighs 485,000 pounds.

12. The wheel will contain more than 10,000 bolts to connect all components.

13. The Navy Pier Ferris Wheel will be in the top six tallest Ferris wheels in the United States when it is completed.