ROLLER SKATING INDUSTRY FACTS & STATISTICS

A Belgian inventor introduced the first recorded roller skate in 1760. The first patent ever taken out on a roller skate was in 1819 for an inline skate. In 1863, a Massachusetts businessman invented the first roller skate that allowed skaters to turn. Within 20 years, roller skating had become a popular pastime for men and women, with people participating in speed, dance and figure skating contests, and roller polo.

With the 1970s came significant improvements in the roller skating industry. Skating floors improved, resulting in easier maintenance, and plastic wheels enabled smoother skating. Music and lighting systems at skating centers were also modernized. By 1977, disco’s popularity spread to rinks, and another big skating boom exploded, especially among adults.

After the disco boom, roller skating among adults began to diminish, although the industry remained a consistent source of indoor entertainment for children – especially between the ages of 7-14 year olds. Today, 73 percent of individuals who skate indoors are between the ages of five and 15. Even with changing times, kids view roller skating as a fun activity where they can listen to popular music, hang out with friends, and play games.

- Roller skating centers host 23 million visits per year from kids in grades fifth through seventh and 18 million visits annually by kindergarteners through fourth graders.

- A National Sporting Goods Association report revealed that over 2.5 million individuals participate in roller hockey. Other roller skating team sports like rollerball have also increased in popularity.

- An American Sports Data survey revealed 10.8 million people roller skate (traditional quad skating). Another 29 million inline skate.

- Most skating center facilities range anywhere from under 14,000 square feet to more than 21,000 square feet.

- Birthday parties are very popular at skating centers. Members of the Roller Skating Association (RSA) host about 47,000 parties each month or 564,000 parties each year nationwide. The average RSA member rink hosts anywhere between 20 and 40 birthday parties per month with 11-15 children attending each party. Many of the larger skating centers host 50 or more parties every week.

- More than 20 percent of indoor skaters skate between 31 and 99 times per year, while 12 percent go at least 100 times per year, according to a study conducted by the Matrix Group.

- Participants in the Matrix Group’s survey ranked the following reasons as to why they go skating: It is fun (94%); My friends go (82%); I like the music (82%); I want to get out of the house (79%); I meet new people (70%); and, It is a healthy activity (67%).