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## Number of haunted destinations is frightening

### TRAVEL

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» On Long Beach Island, clam industry important to both visitors and residents

By **John Seewer**

ASSOCIATED PRESS ▪ Sunday October 4, 2009 7:08 AM

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TOLEDO -- The towering stone walls of the Gothic prison are scary enough in the daytime.



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evening and 50 demons  
and devils breaking out  
of rusted cells, and it  
becomes the perfect  
setting for a haunted house.

Ronald Adams spooks visitors to the USS  
Nightmare in Newport, Ky.

"You can't get any more creepy than this," said Myron St. John, who's in  
charge of terrorizing the former Ohio State Reformatory in Mansfield.  
"It's like doing a haunted house on a \$20 million movie set."

Not even Hollywood can match the haunted houses.

Big-budget special effects, elaborate sets and exotic locations are turning  
what once were neighborhood haunts into weekend destinations for those  
who love to scream.

In New Orleans, there's an old mortuary surrounded by cemeteries and  
the city's iconic aboveground tombs.

Old Tucson Studios in Arizona transforms from a movie set for Westerns  
to the spooky town of Nightfall where a haunted mine and heckling  
gargoyles are certain to startle and delight in the desert.

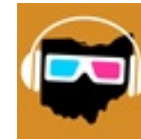
And there's a pair of haunted houses in Kansas City, Mo., that end with  
terrifying slides, one dropping visitors five floors into a devil's arms.

"For us, it's a true theatrical production, but the applause comes in the  
form of screams," said Amber Arnett-Bequeaith, whose family operates  
four haunted houses in Kansas City.

Within the past five years, haunted houses have become much more  
elaborate with technological innovations, said Billy Messina, co-owner of



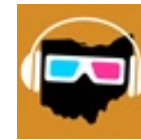
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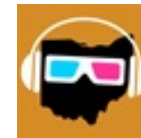
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SCREENED & HEARD

Pedro the Lion's David Bazan to  
perform at Gateway Film  
Center tonight

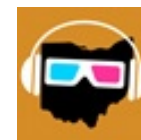
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sold out. Check Gateway FilmCenter.com...



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## OTHER TRAVEL FEATURES

- Ohio Division of Travel
- U.S. State Department of Travel
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Netherworld in Norcross, Ga., near Atlanta.

It's not unusual to find people designing the attractions who have worked in movies with special effects and costumes.

"We have giant animatronic monsters that are 20 feet tall," he said.

"People are used to seeing this at the movies. They want to see it here."

Some of the most popular haunted houses partner with hotels to offer packages that include tickets. Others offer the chance to bypass the lines, which can grow to two hours on busy weekend nights in October.

"Haunted house fans are like roller-coaster fans; they will travel," said Sean Kelley, program director of the haunted house at Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia.

More than 100,000 people visit the shuttered prison each fall.

"When you walk into the old cellblocks, you really feel it," Kelley said.

"You see furniture tipped over on its side, the graffiti. You really get the sense that the people just left."

Near the end, those brave enough to enter are given flashlights, and they must find their way out -- with a few surprises along the way.

Money raised helps pay for preservation of the prison, which was closed in 1971.

Waverly Hills Sanatorium in Louisville, Ky., is another place that relies on its past to frighten visitors. Perched atop a hill, it operated as a tuberculosis hospital until 1961.

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The haunted house tour includes a trip through the "body chute," an underground tunnel used to transport bodies out of the building.

Another haunted house with an unusual story is the USS Nightmare, in Newport, Ky.

The dilapidated 1934 steamboat sits on the Ohio River across from downtown Cincinnati.

The massive steam engines and generators are part of the show.

### **If you go Haunted Houses**

Haunted houses are big entertainment across the country.

For more information on the haunts mentioned in the story:

- Ohio State Reformatory: Mansfield, [www.mrps.org](http://www.mrps.org)
- The Haunted Mortuary: New Orleans, [www.thehauntedmortuary.net](http://www.thehauntedmortuary.net)
- Old Tucson Studios: Tucson, Ariz., [www.oldtucson.com](http://www.oldtucson.com)
- Edge Of Hell: Kansas City, Mo., [www.edgeofhell.com](http://www.edgeofhell.com)
- Eastern State Penitentiary: Philadelphia, [www.easternstate.org](http://www.easternstate.org)
- Waverly Hills Sanatorium: Louisville, Ky., [www.thereal](http://www.thereal)

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