

See Rock City Business Timeline

Special Events listed in red

Dec. 6, 1924 – Garnet Carter and his father, James Inman Carter, bought 300 acres atop Lookout Mountain for their Fairyland development (and 10 acres for their home site). Garnet and Frieda set aside their own personal estate and created Rock City Gardens. Prices were \$27.60 per foot but later went up to \$50 per foot Feb. 1 of the following year.

1928 - Garnet Carter creates Tom Thumb Golf, the first miniature golf course. This was an international fad from 1928-1929. He sells all American rights for Tom Thumb in 1930.

May 21, 1932 - Rock City Gardens opens to the public, founded by Garnet and Frieda Carter

1950-1970 - E.Y. Chapin III (Bill's father) serves as president of Rock City Gardens

July 21, 1954 - Garnet Carter dies in his mountaintop home. The Washington Post and the New York Times noted his death.

1970 – 1985 - E.Y. Chapin, IV (Bill's brother, "Chape") serves as president of Rock City Gardens

1985 - William Chapin (Bill) purchases Rock City from his father, became president in 1986

Under Bill's tenure:

1992 – Cliff Terrace Restaurant and gift shop opens

December 1992 - purchased Confederama (opened in 1958), changed name to Battles for Chattanooga Electric Map and Museum in May 1994, moved up the mountain May 1997. Digital map presentation created in May 2016.

1995 – Enchanted Garden of Lights inaugural event; partnership with Ronald McDonald House Charities of Greater Chattanooga; 2021 Event of the Year by Southeast Tourism Society and in 2000

June 1999 – Rock City purchased Grandview, a 1928 home adjacent to its property

2000 - Rock City makes improvements including: 130 additional parking places; remodeled restaurant (Big Rock Café) to better accommodate groups and parties; revival of old Fire Station to Cornerstone Station on Rock City property; restoration of the original 1951 Chevrolet fire engine for the Fairyland Fire Protection Agency

August 2000 – Jack Steiner, Sr. (Ruby Falls president) and Bill Chapin partner in R&R Hospitality, a billboard company. March 14, 2018 – SRC sells partial ownership of R&R Hospitality to Ruby Falls.

February 14, 2002 – When a historic barn is scheduled to be demolished, Rock City decides to dismantle the historic “birdhouse barn” in Dalton, Georgia and move it to Blowing Spring Farm – future site of the Enchanted MAiZE – where it will be used as a gift shop and food concession area.

Spring/Summer 2002 - **Rock City plants Rock City’s Enchanted MAiZE at Blowing Springs Farm in Flintstone, Georgia, as a fall attraction. (Also did a haunt, Blowing Screams Farm for a few years until 2015); partnered with Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts; The MAiZE a 2005 Event of the Year by Southeast Tourism Society**

2002 – Rock City also purchases Chanticleer Inn on Lookout Mountain and completes renovation of rooms

November 2004 – Rock City contracts with the Incline Railway to manage their ticketing and concessions

2005 – Rock City completes million-dollar renovations including a new entry plaza and ticketing area, the Gardens Gateway and the Critter Classroom

2006 – Rock City and Ruby Falls combine marketing efforts with joint marketing team at R&R Marketing. October 2018 – Rock City and Ruby Falls separate R&R Marketing, with each attraction attaining their own marketing teams.

January 2006: Peregrine falcons Garnet and Frieda, first peregrines to be released from Rock City in new hacking program. June 2020 – latest peregrine falcon release to date, brother/sister pair. This is the eighth pair of birds and tenth peregrine release from the hacking site, bringing the total number of birds released to 18 since 2006.

2006 – Rock City opens new group pavilion

May 19-21, 2007 – Rock City’s 75th Anniversary celebration weekend: new Starbucks is unveiled

October 2007 – Rock City’s inaugural Rocktoberfest event – a celebration of Rock City’s German heritage through Frieda Utermoehlen Carter; partnership with CHI Memorial Foundation (formerly MaryEllen Locher Foundation & Scenic City Survivors)

March 2008 – Rock City’s inaugural Shamrock City event – an Irish festival; partnership with MDA

April 2009 – Rock City’s first EarthDayz event; partnership with Orange Grove

May 16-24, 2009 – Rock City’s inaugural Southern Blooms Festival; partnership with Partnership for Families, Children & Adults Supervised Visitation Center

March 2013 – Susan Harris becomes president. She is promoted to chief operating officer in 2016.

2013 – Café 7 opened at Cliff Terrace. Outdoor dining with a modern twist – and a seven-state view

December 2013 – See Rock City Inc. acquires Clumpies Ice Cream Company

March 28, 2014 – Fairytale Nights annual event opens (ran for five seasons); partnered with Emily's Power for a Cure

December 6, 2016 – SRC purchases Sky Harbor Bavarian Inn

May 18, 2018 – Clumpies opens third year-round shop on the Southside

June 4-5, 2018 – Lookout Mountain RiverView Inn (formerly Sky Harbor) Open House for the public

April 2019 – Starbucks expansion - reopens with doubled space and larger menu offerings

February 2020 – The Charles H. Coolidge National Medal of Honor Heritage Center opens in Chattanooga, See Rock City Inc. to run ticketing and concessions

July 1, 2020 - Susan P. Harris elected to serve SRC Inc. as the President and Chief Executive Officer. Bill Chapin continues as Chairman of the Board. She is the first woman and first person outside of the Chapin and Carter families to hold this position.

July 2020 – Hall of the Mountain King renovation completed and reopened

March 2021 – Rock City partners with Creative Discovery Museum to run their retail and café

July 2021 – SRC Inc. announces purchase of GOOD DOG restaurant in Chattanooga

October 6, 2021 – GOOD DOG is reopened as a SRC Inc. business

March 2022 – Doug Chapin, Bill's son, purchases remaining company shares of SRC Inc. making him the fifth-generation owner and fourth-generation leader. Doug assumes the role of President & CEO, and Chairman of the Board. Bill Chapin retires.

Just a small sampling of Awards:

September 9, 2010 – Rock City is Travel Attraction of the Year, Southeast Tourism Society (STS) Shining Example Award; And again: 4/24/18

2014 – Rock City listed on National Register of Historic Places

2017 – CEO Bill Chapin recipient of the Tom Kilgore Lifetime Achievement Award at the Georgia Governor's Tourism Conference on Jekyll Island

3/20/19 – Bill Chapin wins Dorothy Hardman Spirit of STS award

6/18 Susan Harris Greater Chattanooga Hospitality Association Tourism GM of the Year; 9/18 Susan Harris named Tourism Manager of the Year at Tennessee Hospitality & Tourism Association/Governor's Conference