



**R. BAKER & Son**

# OUTRIGGER

Rigging, Dismantling & Demolition News from R. BAKER & SON



## R. Baker & Son Takes Down World's Tallest Roller Coaster

### Saying Goodbye to a Thrill-Seeking Legend

When Kingda Ka opened in May 2005 at Six Flags Great Adventure in Jackson, New Jersey, it became an instant legend—towering at 456 feet and launching riders from zero to 128 mph in just 3.5 seconds. For nearly 20 years, it held the titles of world's tallest roller coaster and North America's fastest, delivering adrenaline-pumping thrills to millions of visitors. After its final run in November 2024, Six Flags retired the aging attraction, marking the end of an era.



### R. Baker & Son Steps Up to the Challenge

Six Flags selected R. Baker & Son to safely dismantle one of the world's most famous roller coasters based on our extensive experience with specialty rigging and complex dismantling projects. To handle the massive vertical tower, we partnered with Controlled Demolition Inc. (CDI), explosives felling specialists we'd successfully collaborated with on another Six Flags project just weeks earlier.



### Breaking Down a Giant: Phase by Phase

The demolition kicked off in January 2025. Before toppling the tower, our crews systematically dismantled the extensive track system using excavators with specialized shears, grapples, and hydraulic hammers, along with cranes and manlifts for elevated sections. This careful removal cleared the critical fall zone where the 456-foot tower would eventually land. An average of 10-15 R. Baker & Son crew members worked on site, coordinating closely with CDI's engineering team throughout the multi-week process.



### The Technical Challenge Behind the Spectacle

Kingda Ka's unique triangular design—supported by two front tubular legs and one rear tubular leg—meant the tower could only safely fall in one direction: straight down the narrow track corridor our crews had cleared. CDI designed reinforcements including concrete infill and specialized bracing to manage the immense compressive forces during collapse, then strategically placed explosives at 36 locations with charges timed to detonate over a precise 4.9-second sequence.



*R. Baker & Son holds the distinction of being the oldest and largest Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) Rigging, Dismantling & Demolition Contractor in North America*



## A Perfect Execution

When demolition day arrived in late February 2025, months of meticulous planning came down to a few dramatic seconds. The tower fell in a single, controlled forward motion, collapsing precisely along the cleared path without affecting any surrounding structures.

"Watching that tower come down exactly as designed was incredible, but what really mattered to us was that we completed the job with zero injuries, zero incidents, and zero impact on anything beyond our work zone," said the Bakers. "That's the standard we hold ourselves to on every project."

Following the implosion, our crews returned to complete site restoration and cleanup work through April 2025, leaving the area ready for Six Flags' future development plans.

From start to finish, safety drives every decision we make. On a project like this—working at extreme heights, handling a famous structure in a public venue, coordinating implosion work—there's no room for shortcuts or second chances. Our crews understand that reputation is built one safe, successful project at a time.

The dismantling of Kingda Ka joins a growing portfolio of high-profile demolition projects that demonstrate our capabilities in specialty rigging, structural dismantling, and complex implosion work throughout the Mid-Atlantic region and beyond.



## Aerial Rigging: When Helicopters Replace Traditional Cranes



In situations where traditional perimeter cranes prove impractical—due to limited site access or budget limitations—aerial rigging with helicopters presents a powerful solution. This specialized method requires expert personnel, detailed planning protocols, and extensive pre-flight preparation. Teams must precisely calculate each load's weight, physical dimensions, configuration, and balance points. Comprehensive safety evaluations help identify risks such as overhead power lines, existing infrastructure, active cranes, and any unstable debris within approach or staging areas. Proper authorization from the FAA and applicable regulatory bodies is mandatory before operations begin.

Different helicopter models accommodate varying payload capacities. The Erickson S-64 Aircrane stands out with its industry-leading 25,000-pound lifting capability. What sets this aircraft apart is its rear-facing cockpit configuration, which enables the aft pilot to maintain complete operational control while maintaining direct sightlines for ultra-precise positioning—achieving accuracy within millimeters. The integrated anti-rotation rigging technology stabilizes suspended loads, preventing unwanted spinning or oscillation caused by downwash from the rotors. While the S-64 excels in heavy construction lifts, it also plays vital roles in wildfire suppression, emergency relief operations, and commercial logging activities.



## Industrial Plant Relocations on the Rise

According to the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM), the U.S. Treasury, and the Dodge Construction Network, industrial plant relocations and construction in the United States have more than doubled since 2021. This surge is driven by the CHIPS Act, the Inflation Reduction Act, and a broader push for reshoring, along with cost reduction, proximity to markets, and technological advances.

For over 90 years, R. Baker & Son All Industrial Services has provided complete turn-key solutions for industrial and commercial plant relocations—from dismantlement and planning to rigging, moving, reinstallation, and start-up. With extensive experience and cutting-edge equipment, R. Baker & Son handles your relocation project quickly, seamlessly, and safely. Visit our website for more info.

## Safer at Work Than at Home: America's Workplace Safety Paradox

Each day, millions of Americans diligently follow workplace safety procedures—wearing hardhats, gloves, and goggles, using equipment properly, and practicing safe lifting techniques. For most workers, safety comes as second nature—until the workday ends.

While workplace injury rates have declined significantly in recent decades, non-occupational injuries tell a different story. Preventable injury-related deaths in the U.S. reached over 227,000 in 2023, with home and community injuries consistently outnumbering workplace injuries by a significant margin.



Ladders are especially dangerous at home. Approximately 161,000 people seek emergency treatment for ladder-related injuries annually, with an estimated 97% occurring in non-occupational settings. More than 300 ladder-related fatalities happen each year, most from falls of 10 feet or less—often during routine tasks like cleaning gutters or changing lightbulbs.

So why do so many of us who wouldn't dream of ignoring safety procedures on the job readily use old, wobbly ladders or attempt risky home repairs without proper equipment when we're off the clock? It's time we bring the same safety-first mindset home.



## Quality Award Winner

Congratulations to Steve Kirka, this quarter's recipient of the R. Baker & Son Quality Award. This program was established to recognize individuals for their outstanding achievements in safety, project execution, and customer satisfaction, and for their continuing dedication to R. Baker & Son's growth and success.

**Thank You, Steve Kirka for a job well done!**