



GREAT PARK BALLOON: Just inside a berm that will house the Great Park Balloon, workers lay the ground work for a series of winches that will hold the balloon in place.

PAUL E. RODRIGUEZ, THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

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Thursday, June 7, 2007

Great Park balloon pumping up

Crews are working 7 days a week on the Great Park icon.

By **SONYA SMITH**
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

IRVINE – The first construction project at the Great Park is under way.

Crews are working seven days a week to get the balloon attraction ready in time. The orange, 72-foot-wide, tethered balloon will carry 25 to 30 passengers 500 feet up in the air beginning July 14.

The concrete and asphalt have been demolished from the site and crews are busy at work on the foundations. Some workers use bulldozers, tape measures and levels to move dirt around for a 12-foot high berm that will surround the balloon on the ground. Others are installing rebar underground for the balloon's winching system, which will raise, lower and secure the balloon to the ground.

And just to make sure everything goes according to plan, designers from Ken Smith's team, managers from construction management firm Bovis Lend Lease and managers from Cal-Pac Engineering Co. meet every morning to review completed and upcoming work.

VIDEO: To watch a video of crews constructing the balloon's foundation, go to www.ocregister.com/greatpark.

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Balloon on its way, day by day

Crews work seven days a week to get the Great Park balloon launched on July 14.

BY SONYA SMITH IRVINE WORLD NEWS

The first Great Park construction project is under way. Crews are working seven days a week to get the passenger balloon attraction ready in time to take passengers 500 feet in the air starting July 14. The concrete and asphalt

have been demolished from the balloon site and crews are busy at work on the foundations. Some workers use bulldozers, tape measures and levels to move dirt around to build the 12-foot high berm that will surround the balloon on the ground. Other workers install rebar for the underground vault to house the balloon's winching system that will raise and lower the balloon.

And just to make sure everything goes to plan, designers from Ken Smith's team, managers from construction management firm Bovis Lend Lease and managers from Cal-Pac Engineering Co. meet every morning to review completed and coming work.

But officials, designers and workers alike await the balloon's launch with excitement.

Great Park Design Team CEO Ben Martin called the balloon launch the convergence of "luck and opportunity." Just the launching of the balloon, he said will be a success.

"This will be the first tangible thing to see after a year of work (by the studio)," Martin said.

MORE ONLINE

To watch a video of crews building the balloon's foundation, go to www.ocregister.com/greatpark.