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On Friday night, June 15, Nik Wallenda became the first person to tightwire walk directly over Niagara Falls, slowly and carefully following the steel thread through gusting winds and heavy mist, which tremendously complicated the daring stunt.

Wallenda, the seventh-generation member of the Flying Wallendas circus troupe to enter the risky profession, walked 1,800 feet from the U.S. to Canada, 200 of those feet directly above the thunderous Niagara River's Horseshoe Falls.



Wallenda was the first to cross the gorge since 1896. But while his 19th-century predecessors took it to crazy extremes — walking blindfolded, or manacled, or backward — they were not directly over the falls. Wallenda was the first to do that — although ABC required that he wear a safety harness.

But while everyone except those gathered on the U.S. and Canadian sides where Wallenda entered and exited the tightwire had to be content to view the feat live on ABC Television and affiliates, some were more fortunate — such as Mark Fox and the crew of veteran Niagara Falls, N.Y. contractor Fox Fence, Inc.

Fox Fence was contracted to install approximately 2,000 lineal feet of 6-foot high temporary chain link fence

Niagara Falls fence company enjoys brush with fame as contractor on historic Wallenda tightwire spectacle

panels for crowd control and to cordon off the areas where the 2 inch diameter cable would be secured after being positioned over the falls by a Hughes MD-500 helicopter.

So not only did Fox Fence personnel have ringside seats to the intense preparation for the walk, they also had the honor of actually helping make the historic event happen.

"The hardest part was dealing

with the tourists as we were installing the fence," said Mark, who supervised the project. "It was very interesting, as we were the first ones on site Monday morning, and as the day progressed, truck after truck of equipment arrived to string the cable across the falls, as well as to deliver media equipment. (A rope was first fed across the gorge with a helicopter and then the cable was pulled



across on that, Mark noted.)

"Media crews from around the world brought in massive amounts of equipment. We got an additional job to secure the media equipment, as the tourists just wander everywhere and had to be kept away from the equipment. We worked directly for Nik. He is a hands-on type of guy who manages every detail of set up and financing himself."

Prior to Nik Wallenda performing his daring — some called it crazy — traverse of Niagara Falls (left), well over a year was spent planning and practicing for the walk, and designing the tightwire structure. An important element in the installation was shielding the construction crews and equipment from wandering tourists (and vice versa), and that is where Fox Fence came in. The veteran Niagara Falls fence contractor installed and then rapidly removed about 2,000 lineal feet of temporary chain link fence panels, working directly under Nik Wallenda. In far left photo, Fox Fence's Chuck Brolinski, Bill Fox and Mark Fox with Niagara Falls in the background. (Fox Fence, Inc. photos)

The event took place on a Friday evening, and the park needed to be restored by Saturday. "By the time our first crew arrived early Saturday morning, the cable was already down and everyone was moving out. Nik was even there Saturday morning helping with the cleanup. He autographed one of the signs that we had on the fence that is hanging in our office," said Mark.

"He is a very down to earth person; he even went around and shook hands and thanked the crew for their help in making the event happen.

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“He commented that the walk is the easy part and the hard part is the preparations and details of making that happen,” said Mark. “But when I looked across that wire over Niagara Falls and 200 feet over the Niagara Gorge with the mist raining down, I found that pretty hard to believe!”

In the end, Mark said, “It was an interesting job with media from around the world watching. We had people from around the country calling to tell us they saw our crews on television!”

Fox Fence has operated in the western part of New York State from its home base in Niagara Falls since 1975. The company was founded by Michael J. Fox that year, and in 1977 it moved to a larger location. In June of 1989 Fox Fence moved again, this time to its present location on Lockport Road. A large retail space was added, along with an expanded selection of fencing. If Fox Fence has a specialty, it would be custom Red Cedar fencing, but they also sell and install a variety of other products including wood, ornamental aluminum, PVC, chain link, guard rails and power gate operators for residential, commercial and industrial customers.

Some long-time readers might remember that Mark’s fully equipped Ford F-550 Super Duty was the win-



Shown above is a portion of the approximately 2,000 lineal feet of temporary fence that Fox Fence provided to separate spectators from construction crews and equipment. Below, Bill Fox, left, and Mike Schinzel pose with the actual cable on which Wallenda would walk.



ner of *World Fence News*’s 1998 Fence Truck of the Year Contest, something that he remains proud of to this day. As a matter of fact, even after all these years, the big Ford probably would have been on the Niagara Falls job, but it was in service at another location!

For more information on Fox Fence and its services, check them out on the web at www.foxfence.com.



Above left, John White transports a load of temporary fence panels, with the falls and the towers of Niagara Falls, Ontario in the background. Above right, Nik Wallenda autographed this Fox Fence sign as a token of his appreciation. Below, White guides panels into position while Bill Fox provides guidance.



(Fox Fence, Inc. photos)

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