

# Little wagon, big changes

## *Radio Flyer updates classic for 21st century*

The little red wagon has been a part of our lives for more than 90 years.

Now, Chicago-based Radio Flyer (RadioFlyer.com) aims to design wagons in the 21st century that reflect our lives and the new technology that's a part of them.

The latest concept,



**Anna Marie Kukec**  
*e-buzz*

Cloud 9, offers padded seats, air-filled tires with ball bearings, a speedometer — and an iPod connection.

"We spend a lot of time doing research and what parents do with our wagons and their kids," said Robert Pasin, the company's chief executive officer and grandson of its founder. "Parents often use our wagons to take their children to the park or to the zoo, and that wagon also contains all of their gear. So wouldn't it be cool if they're walking to that park and listening to music?"

The iPod connection could be for the parent ... or the child, Pasin said. "This product is a prototype, like a concept car,"



IMAGES COURTESY OF RADIO FLYER

**Radio Flyer has a prototype of its classic wagon that includes an iPod connection.**

So it likely won't be available until next year.

Radio Flyer's other products include classic wagons, scooters and bouncing horses and range in price from \$70 to \$150. The Ultimate Family Wagon, at the high end, offers a canopy and a flip-and-fold seat that can turn into a tray table.

Radio Flyer also aims to bolster its growth this year with a new lineup of products for the holiday season that are designed and developed by its 100 workers in Chicago and

in China; it also wants to hire about 15 new employees here.

Despite the financial crisis, privately held Radio Flyer still aims to have at least a 15-percent increase in sales this year.

"Even during the more economically challenging times, we still do well," Pasin said. "People will still buy toys and will go to the brands they know and trust. And the Radio Flyer is a touchstone of people's childhoods."

Even if it comes with an iPod connection.



**The Streak-o-Lite of the 1930s was Radio Flyer's first specialty wagon modeled after the popular Zephyr train, and a precursor to the iconic red wagon we know today.**