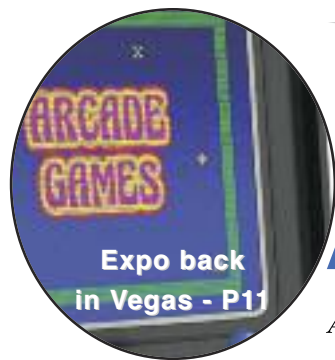


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Lottery leader

GLC's Alford retiring, Corbin chosen as next CEO

By Paul Tash

Georgia Amusement Journal

Georgia Lottery Corp. President and CEO Debbie Alford, who oversaw the transition of the state's COAM industry into a regulated environment after the General Assembly passed the regulation law in 2013, is retiring effective Jan. 1.

Gov. Nathan Deal has nominated Gretchen Corbin, the commissioner of the state's technical college system, to replace Alford.

Corbin was previously commissioner of the state's Department of Community Affairs. Corbin is expected to take over Jan. 1, pending ap-

proval by the GLC Board of Directors.

Alford "brought stability and predictability to our industry in Georgia while also creating a partnership with us that will benefit education programs for decades to come," said president of the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association (see related story on Page 4).

"Alford's leadership led to a smooth transition after our partnership with the state became law. This took vision and hard work, but Alford delivered a system

that gave our industry clear guidelines for operating, set up enforcement mechanisms and increased



GRETCHEN CORBIN



Paul Tash photo

COAM PRESIDENT and CEO Debbie Alford appears at the COAM Advisory Board at its meeting Oct. 11 at the Georgia Lottery Corp. headquarters in downtown Atlanta. Alford is retiring this month.

lottery revenues dramatically."

Alford was Deal's budget director before being chosen to lead the lottery in 2012, which raises more than \$1 billion a year for college scholarship and prekindergarten programs.

During Alford's tenure, lottery profits going toward education continued to rise, and in 2016 the total hit \$1 billion for the first time.

"The critical programs funded

See LOTTERY Page 8

Master licensees, GLC meet to discuss standards

Industry provides input on state's evolving plan

By Paul Tash

Georgia Amusement Journal

Master licensees met with a team from the Georgia Lottery Corp.'s COAM Division Dec. 7 to discuss a proposal to adopt a GLI 23-based standard for machine development and operation in the Georgia market.

The meeting was the third the Lottery has had with the industry to get the its input on a machine standard for Georgia. One meeting was held in August with game manufacturers and one in October with industry attorneys. A fourth meeting with location licensees is planned, as well.



SHAWN FELLOWS

and Music Operators Association (GAMOA) said during the Dec. 14 association meeting the COAM industry and the GLC are working to-

Though the Lottery has developed an eight-page working proposal, details have not been released to the public.

Shawn Fellows, president of the Georgia Amusement

together to develop standards that will work for the Georgia market.

"It was a healthy dialogue," Fellows said. "(The proposal) will continue to evolve."

He said the Lottery understands the industry's concern about potential costs of the new regulations. Adopting standards from traditional gaming markets to an amusement market can be "cost-prohibitive," he added, and regulators have been reminded repeatedly "to keep that in mind" throughout the process.

And that process needs to "substantiate the need" for new standards with an "ultimate goal in mind," he

See STANDARDS Page 8



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Specifics for two updated rules released

The Georgia Lottery Corp.'s COAM Division recently released two updated rules, one clarifying the procedure to purchase COAM equipment from licensed manufacturers and distributors, and the other prohibiting locations that have sexually explicit exhibits or shows from offering COAMs.

Regarding equipment procurement, under the Required Activities portion of the COAM law, Section 26 now reads: "A Master Licensee shall only purchase Class B COAMs or major components or parts of Class B COAMs from a Distributor or a Manufacturer that holds a valid COAM license. Major components or parts of Class B COAMs shall include, but not be limited to, motherboard, game board, software, meter, bill acceptor, locks or COAM cabinet.

Nothing in this subdivision is intended to

prohibit a manufacturer or distributor that does not hold a valid COAM license from selling or supplying Class B COAMs or major components or parts of Class B COAMs directly to a Manufacturer that holds a valid COAM license, provided such unlicensed manufacturer or distributor does not sell or supply Class B COAMs or major components or parts of Class B COAMs directly to a Distributor or Master Licensee."

Regarding sexually explicit exhibits, under the Applications Requirements portion of the COAM law, Section 6 (K) now reads:

"None of the applicant's proposed locations for a Location License is an establishment featuring entertainment which would not be consistent with the dignity of the State of Georgia, the GLC, and the citizens they serve; and, specifically, the Location Licensee is not in the busi-

ness of conducting or allowing to be conducted on its premises at any proposed location, shows and exhibits in which sexually explicit nude portions of the human body are displayed, nor does the applicant's business, at any proposed locations, derive fifteen (15) percent or more of its gross income from the selling or loaning for monetary consideration pictures, photographs, drawings, sculptures, motion picture films, books, pamphlets, magazines, printed matter however reproduced, sound recordings or similar visual representations or images of a person or portion of the human body which depicts sexually explicit nudity, sexual conduct, or sado-masochistic abuse or explicit and detailed verbal descriptions or narrative accounts of sexual excitement, sexual conduct, or sadomasochistic abuse."

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Journal Opinion

Alford leaves strong GLC legacy

By Shawn Fellows
GAMOA President

Debbie Alford's tenure as the head of the Georgia Lottery brought stability and predictability to our industry in Georgia while also creating a partnership with us that will benefit education programs for decades to come.

In November, Alford announced her retirement, and Gov. Nathan Deal announced Gretchen Corbin, the former commissioner of the Technical College System of Georgia, as the new executive director of the Lottery.

Alford leaves the post with a record of achievement that took our Georgia Lottery to new heights, setting records for new revenue and for contributions to the HOPE and Pre-K programs.

From GAMOA's point of view, Alford's leadership led to a smooth transition after our partnership with the state became law. This took vision and hard work, but Alford delivered a system that gave our industry clear guidelines for operating, set up enforcement mechanisms and increased lottery revenues dramatically.

Without doubt, this transition isn't fully complete and there's much room for growth and development in our partnership.

Moving forward, we'll work with lottery officials to see us not just as an industry to be regulated but as an industry to promote. It's a win for all involved.

But we can't lose sight of the fact that those improvements



Shawn Fellows

will build off of the solid foundation that Alford helped build. Revenues from COAMs alone have provided more than \$100 million to education programs since 2014, and we're set to provide at least \$50 million annually – and that's a bare minimum.

The incorporation of the COAM industry into the Lottery is just one of many successes that Alford will leave as her legacy.

During her time as executive director, gross sales rose 15.7

percent, to \$4.5 billion from \$3.9 billion. This led to an 18.7 percent increase in returns to lottery-funded education programs, to \$1.1 billion from \$927.5 million. The total given to Pre-K and HOPE topped \$5 billion over her five years at the helm.

The incorporation of the COAM industry into the Lottery is just one of many successes that Alford will leave as her legacy.

the best in the world. We're No. 3 in total per capita sales globally, and we're No. 4 nationally in total per capita returns to beneficiaries.

The Georgia Lottery hasn't shied away from innovation and new ideas. COAMs are one example of finding new sources of revenue, but it's not the only one. In 2012, the lottery became one of three states to launch an internet sales channel, bringing in \$100 million since its inception and providing \$31 million for education.

All told, the lottery raises \$3 million a day in Georgia to give back to deserving students and their families.

We're proud of the role we play in that total, and we appreciate the great working relationship we've enjoyed with Debbie Alford, who has given her entire career to serving the people of Georgia.

As we look to the future and all the progress we hope to achieve alongside the new executive director, we also pause to appreciate a job well done.

GAMOA's mission: "To Promote and Serve Georgia's Coin Operated Amusement and Music Industry."

It's little wonder that the Georgia Lottery ranks among



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COAM calendar

— REPORTING DATES —

Dec. 20: Each monthly report should be submitted by Location License Holders in electronic format via the www.gacoam.com website as required by the GLC by the 20th of each following month.

— MEETINGS —

Jan. 17: COAM Advisory Board, Atlanta, GLC office
Jan. 18: Banilla Games seminar, Atlanta, Marriott Gateway
Feb. 22: GAMOA meeting, McDonough, Moose Lodge
Feb. 28: Amusement Expo, Las Vegas, Convention Center

Write us

The *Georgia Amusement Journal* welcomes letters to the editor. Letters must include the writer's name and address. The word limit is 300. Mail to Georgia Amusement Journal, P.O. Box 4307, Butte MT 59702, or you can email us at paul@tashcommunications.com. The *Journal* reserves the right not to print letters it finds objectionable.

Journal Opinion

Bank account closures remain an issue

Lori Schneider
AMOA Executive Director

Immediately following the Thanksgiving holiday, AMOA was back at work in Washington, D.C. on Tuesday, Nov. 28, when a team of AMOA representatives along with AAMA representatives visited 16 different congressional offices on Capitol Hill to address the continuation of bank account closures taking place since the Department of Justice issued its guidance ending Operation Choke Point back in August. Tax reform favorable for small business was also addressed during the visits.

With the focus having now moved to addressing the account closure issue with federal bank regulators, another positive step was made when the Financial Institution Customer Protection Act (H.R. 2706) passed the House of Representatives on Tuesday, Dec. 12. While the vote was not unanimous ... the vote was overwhelmingly bipartisan 395 to 2.

This bill specifies that a federal banking agency may not request or order a depository institution to terminate a customer account unless: (1) the agency has a material reason for doing so, and (2) that reason is not based solely on reputation risk.

In addition, the bill amends the Financial Institutions Reform, Recovery, and Enforcement Act of 1989 to: (1) apply civil penalties to specified violations by a financial institution against an unaffiliated third person, and (2) modify provisions related to administrative subpoenas.

AMOA congratulates Rep. Blaine Luetkemeyer on the passage of this bill and encourages the Senate to take similar action in this session of the legislature.

While this is another positive step forward, AMOA recognizes there is still a long road ahead of us in resolving this critical issue.

After conducting follow-up with congressional offices from our recent visit to Capitol Hill Tuesday, Nov. 28, it's been recommended that those AMOA members who have experienced an account closure

be held January 25-27 in San Diego, California at the San Diego Marriott Mission Valley. The annual AMOA State Council Meeting is one of the most productive meetings on the industry calendar.

• Member engagement
 Each state is invited to send two leaders from their state, typically this includes a hired executive director, if the state has one, and the state association's president or another state association leader.

In addition to its state meeting, AMOA is hard at work on putting the finishing touches to the AAMA/AMOA Amusement Expo International which begins with Expo Education Day on Tuesday, Feb. 27, at the Westgate Las Vegas followed by a two-day trade show on Wednesday, Feb. 28, and Thursday, March 1, at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

Keynote speaker Meagan Johnson will be kicking off Expo Education Day. Johnson, known as a "Generational Humorist," has an outspoken, take-no-prisoners Gen X attitude and challenges audiences to think differently and act decisively when dealing with multiple generations within the workplace.

For more AMOA information, contact the AMOA Headquarters at 1-815-893-6010 or info@amoa.com.



Lori Schneider

While this is another positive step, AMOA recognizes there is a long road ahead of us in resolving this critical issue.

and/or received an extensive questionnaire from their banking institution in 2017, file a complaint with the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency.

As we look to 2018, AMOA will be hosting its annual State Council Meeting at the end of January. The 2018 meeting will

The 2018 program will feature an update from AMOA's legislative counsel Denton's along with sessions concentrated on the following areas:

- Gaming
- Legislation affecting ATM operators
- Taxes, Licenses and Fees

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Tech Tips

Adjusting the door on a Unified cabinet

Do you have a location that is having problems closing the main door without having to lift up on the door or having to put extra pressure on it to ensure the door closes properly? If this is the case, the door is probably out of alignment and needs to be adjusted. Fortunately, it's a pretty simple fix.

Here are few reasons why the door is not closing easily.

- 1) The machine has been damaged
- 2) The bolts that mount the machine to the base need to be adjusted
- 3) The most common reason, the door hinge needs to be adjusted

Today's tip covers the simple adjustment of the door hinge.

1) The first thing you want to do is to turn off the machine you are working on.

2) Once off, you will want to open the main door on the cabinet and find the hinge that holds the door to the machine. It will look like Figure 1:

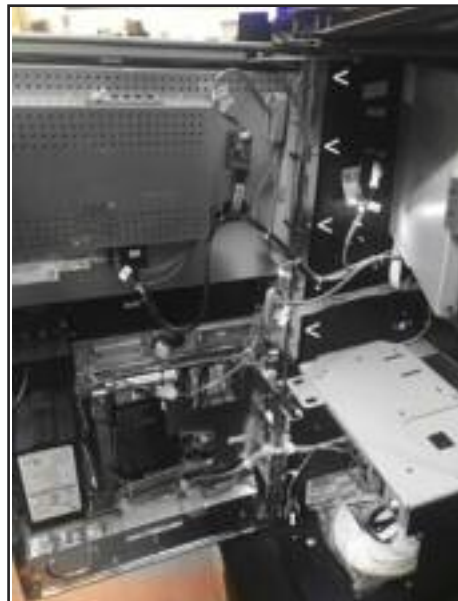


FIGURE 1

To adjust the door, first make sure that all the nuts are tight on the machine side of the hinge. Once this is done, you will need a Phillips screw driver. Loosen all the screws that are on the door side of the hinge, do not remove them only loosen. About 8 screws mount the door to the hinge on the left



FIGURE 2

side (door side) of the hinge.

Once you have all the screws loosened, lift up on the front corner of the door from underneath – this will be the corner away from hinge. As you lift, tighten down the screws on the hinge starting at the top and working your way down. See Figure 2. Once all the screws

are tightened, check to ensure that the door closes as it should. This should solve any issue you have with the door closing without much effort.

Occasionally, but rarely, the machine side nuts will need to be adjusted using the same method.

Southern Gaming Solutions offers free training and certification classes on its Prodigy Vu Unified gaming machines. This is a hands-on certification class that trains technicians how to remove and replace most parts on the unified cabinet. The class also covers programming the back office for connection with Intralot as well as programming for game play.

If you are interested in attending one of the certification classes, contact SGS office for times and dates for upcoming classes. Make sure that your tech brings their tools as they will be removing and replacing the parts in the training class.

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Banilla Games hosting workshop Jan. 18

Game manufacturer Banilla Games will host its second annual Workshop and Technicians Appreciation Day Thursday, Jan. 18, from 10-2 at the Marriott Gateway Center in Atlanta.

The free event is open to all COAM operators and technicians, Banilla's Michael "Smitty" Smith said. It features an "informative session for operators to gain knowledge to help them

grow their route," he said. It also provides an opportunity for technicians "to put their hands on the equipment" and receive specialized training from event co-sponsors VSR Industries, Goldfinger and CPI/MEI, he said.

"And it's a day of appreciation for technicians for all they do for our industry," Smith said.

Attendees will be eligible for \$30,000 in prizes donated by the manufacturers, and six \$500 raffles will be held for technicians only, he said.

Lunch and refreshments will also be served.

"It's not a selling situation," he added.

For more information, contact Banilla at (252) 329-7977.



LES SCHNEIDER, legal counsel for the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association, discusses some legislative matters at the association's meeting Dec. 14 in McDonough. At right, Chris



Paul Tash photos

Anulewicz, an attorney for the Balch & Bingham law firm in Atlanta, updates the GAMOA membership on some industry-related legal issues. For more on the meeting, see Page 10.

Standards

from Page 1

added. The standards should "create solutions to existing problems," he said, not just develop "rules for rules sake."

With all that, Fellows said, new machine standards are potentially beneficial.

If developed correctly, he said, the new standards could "create more stability for us and for consumers."

Developing new standards provides "a unique opportunity" for the industry, based on its "healthy relationship and collaboration with the Lottery."

The GLI 23 standard, developed by the global Gaming Laboratories International for video lottery terminals, identifies standards for development and testing processes to ensure consistently fair and secure play. COAM Senior Vice President John Heinen has said the GLC would use GLI 23 standards only "as a starting point" to develop Georgia-specific regulations.

"Nothing is imminent," Fellows told GAMOA members. "The process is continuing with continued input from the industry."

Chris Boncek, COAM operations specialist for GLC, is facilitating the meetings to discuss the standards.

Lottery

from Page 1

by the Georgia Lottery, including the HOPE Scholarship and Georgia Pre-K, help millions of children across the state earn a quality education from start to finish," Deal said in a press release. "Debbie's leadership helped to secure the largest funding transfers on record in the 24-year history of the lottery, providing more students with a strong foundation for continued success both in the classroom and the future workforce."

"I am confident that the incoming leadership at the Georgia Lottery, as well as TCSG, will continue to do exceptional work in connecting students throughout Georgia with the resources and support needed to reach their fullest potential."

Corbin is currently commis-

sioner of the technical college system and served previously as commissioner of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and as a deputy commissioner with the state Department of Economic Development.

Corbin sits on the Georgia Tech Manufacturing Institute External Advisory Board, the University of Georgia (UGA) Board of Visitors and the Fanning Advisory Board for the J. W. Fanning Institute for Leadership Development at UGA. She served as president and chair of Leadership Georgia. Corbin is a Rotary International Paul Harris Fellow and has been named one of the "100 Most Influential Georgians" by Georgia Trend Magazine for four consecutive years.

She is a graduate of Clemson University and the University of Oklahoma Economic Development Institute. Corbin and her husband, David, have two children and reside in Rome.





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GAMOA members discuss variety of topics

By Paul Tash

Georgia Amusement Journal

Members of the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association (GAMOA) discussed the ongoing development of new machine standards and reviewed an association budget for 2018 during its membership meeting Dec. 14 in McDonough.

GAMOA President Shawn Fellows told members that master licensees met with a team from the Georgia Lottery Corp.'s COAM Division Dec. 7 to discuss a proposal to adopt new standards for machine development and operation in the Georgia market. He said the development of new standards provides "a unique opportunity" for the industry, based on its "healthy relationship and collaboration with the Lottery." (See related story on Page 1)

"The industry continues to move in a positive direction," Fellows said. "Regulatory changes are coming ... as we progress (toward) a more stable industry."

In other action, executive committee members provided a budget review for next year, and then held a question-and-answer session about expected 2018 expenditures. Membership was receptive to the budget plan.

The GAMOA board also encouraged members to recruit other master licensees to join the organization. GAMOA members already represent an impressive 80 percent of the 22,000 machines in the field, but GAMOA leaders said more members mean even more strength.

Treasurer Steve Walton stressed the importance of getting "our locations involved in our association," as well. GAMOA member Jas Bajwa suggested offering locations some benefits, such as offering better technology to run machines on less electricity to save them money.

In other business, Les Schneider, legal counsel for GAMOA, said he and lobbyist Sheila Humberstone will be closely "monitoring" the upcoming legislative session for potential dangers, as well as "opportunities" to improve the COAM industry, he told GAMOA members. The 2018 General Assembly session begins Monday, Jan. 8.

He said issues involving casino legalization, fantasy sports legalization, and local-ordinance authority to ban COAMs to come up. And Fellows emphasized the importance of GAMOA members knowing their local legislators, so they can explain industry issues and concerns to them.

Also, GAMOA is looking for members to run for three open board positions in elections next April. Those interested are encouraged to contact Christina at the GAMOA office, (770) 408-0384 or christina@gamoa.org.

Meeting sponsors

The Dec. 14 meeting was sponsored by Pace-o-Matic, Smart Software, and Surfnote Technologies, and representatives of the three companies were given an opportunity to speak about their products at the start of the meeting.

Pace-O-Matic's Bob Kulp showed off two of his company's new offerings available soon in Georgia – the Lucky Eddie wheel machine and a progressive machine.

The Lucky Eddie game has "a great price," Kulp said. "I'm very proud of that product."

The progressive machine has seven games that contribute to the prize, Kulp said, adding that the numbers progress "right in front of you ... for added excitement."

Sam Westgate and Nate McQuillen reviewed Smart's all-in-one service management software. The product includes client/employee organization, inventory/equipment tracking, route optimization, real-time notifications, streamline billing and invoicing, Quickbooks integration, mobile access, and more.

"It's very affordable," McQuillen said. "Free on-line demos are available."

Surfnote's Bil Liusian said the gaming manufacturer's new VLTEE cabinets are "specially designed" to comply with any future changes in regulations and feature the company's proprietary card-scan system. They come with a 90-day free trial, and a upgrade special.

"Upgrade for free by the end of the year," Liusian said.



Paul Tash photos

BOB KULP, account executive for Pace-o-Matic, describes the new Lucky Eddie game at the GAMOA meeting Dec. 14.



SAM WESTGATE and Nate McQuillen of Smart Software, middle photo, discussed their company's product line at the GAMOA meeting. Surfnote Technology's Bil Liusian, left in bottom photo, poses with Jose Corniel of Double-Down Gaming, center, and Surfnote technician Shawn Wright, following the meeting. Smart Software, Surfnote, and Pace-o-Matic sponsored the meeting.

Amusement Expo returns to Vegas

Generational expert, 'humorist' to headline '18 Expo

With so many generations in the workplace today, there has never been a greater opportunity for collaboration. At the same time, there has never been a greater opportunity for conflict.

So says Meagan Johnson, who will lead off Expo Education Day at next year's AAMA/AMOA Amusement Expo on Feb. 27, 2018 at the Westgate Las Vegas Hotel & Resort Casino.

Johnson, known as a "Generational Humorist," has an outspoken, take-no-prisoners Gen X attitude and challenges audiences to think differently and act decisively when dealing with multiple generations.

After working several years in a sales environment, she became discouraged when she experienced the negative perceptions about Generation X, the 50 million people born between 1965 and 1980. A Gen X'er herself, she began to research companies large and small to better understand how multiple generations could work together and be successful.

She and her Dad, professional speaker Larry

Johnson, are co-authors of the best-selling book: "Generations, Inc.: From Boomers to Linksters, Managing the Friction Between Generations at Work."

"Whether it's with our kids, parents or work colleagues, we have all experienced what we used to call the generation gap," said Lori Schneider, executive vice president of the Amusement & Music Operators Association (AMOA), one of two industry trade groups that co-owns the Amusement Expo. "That gap seems to be widening, with more communication breakdowns and conflict, so this is a timely, key topic to address."

For the past 20 years, Johnson has entertained and educated thousands of audience members, and she has written about and been quoted extensively on a variety of generational topics.

"Every generation gets a negative label when it enters the workplace," Johnson notes. "For example, Baby Boomers were called trouble-making hippies when they first went to work. Once we take time to understand the motivations and

mindset of each generation, then working with them, communicating with them and managing them becomes a more successful effort."

Set to address business owners and managers in the amusement, family entertainment center and related industries at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, February 27 at the Westgate Hotel in Las Vegas, Johnson's topic will be entitled: "Zap the Gap!"

"When we show up at the office, factory, warehouse or route each day, we bring our unique perspectives and personalities with us," said Pete Gustafson, executive vice president of the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA), the trade association that co-owns the show. "If we can gain a greater understanding of, and appreciation for, the traits that define the different generations we interact with, it will be tremendously useful. It promises to be a great way to launch our 2018 Expo Education Day."

For more information about the 2018 Expo, visit: www.amusementexpo.org or contact W.T. Glasgow, Inc., the show management firm for the Amusement Expo, at 708-226-1300.



Amusement Expo photo

Next year's Expo to highlight virtual reality goods, services

The AAMA/AMOA Amusement Expo International is broadening its product focus at next year's conference and trade show by including the burgeoning virtual reality (VR) marketplace as an area for expansion and growth.

The Amusement Expo, which features the complete range of equipment for the out-of-home entertainment industry, has embraced aligned segments such as bulk vending and laser tag via collocated events in recent years and now, plans to engage in the VR space.

For example, the 2018 Amusement Expo will start with a day-long educational program on

Tuesday, Feb. 27, and as part of that, a series of separate sessions will concentrate on various components of the rapidly-emerging VR business model.

Companies making/supplying equipment and services in the VR attractions space are also being identified and pursued as potential exhibitors. The aim is to expose attendees to opportunities in the VR marketplace and offer VR exhibitors the chance to connect with future customers.

The annual Amusement Expo serves as the primary venue for buyers and sellers of everything from digital jukeboxes and video

games to cranes and merchandisers. About 3,000 decision-makers attended the 2017 event in Dallas, and more are expected when the show returns to Las Vegas next spring.

According to a recent report, "Global Virtual Reality Market (Hardware and Software) and Forecast to 2020," the virtual reality industry is on the verge of becoming mainstream and could rise to be a more than \$40 billion market by 2020. The study noted head-mounted displays represent the largest segment of the VR hardware market, while video game applications garnered to biggest share of

the VR software market.

The new VR program adds an exciting element to the already-developed core of coin-op, FEC, bulk vending and laser tag areas to be prominently featured on the exhibit floor during the Amusement Expo trade show set for Wednesday, Feb. 28, and Thursday, March 1, in South Hall 1 of the Las Vegas Convention Center.

Makers or marketers of VR goods and services are encouraged to exhibit at the 2018 Amusement Expo. For more information, contact Brian Glasgow at 708-226-1300 or brian@wtglasgow.com, or visit www.amusementexpo.org.

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Retail Matters

Seven ways to improve c-store profitability

By Lexy Garrett, Sageworks

When a convenience store becomes more profitable, it is able to expand its offerings and, in turn, attract more customers. Taking some simple steps to improve profitability in a c-store may give a store an edge against competitors and help make it more successful.

Here are seven suggestions for improving profitability:

1. Replace old lighting

Consider using T8 lighting rather than T12 lighting to conserve energy and also provide a more pleasant experience for customers. T8 lighting is more efficient than its predecessor, so it can help save money.

2. Watch that thermostat

During the summer, increasing the standard temperature in a c-store by 1 to 2 degrees can save a lot in energy costs. Conversely, during the winter, decrease the standard temperature by 1 to 2 degrees. This will save money without having a big impact on the comfort of customers.

3. Use chain store marketing

Consider taking advantage when restaurant chains are advertising limited-time offers, such as a specialized chicken sandwich or meatball sub, by offering a similar product. Your cus-



tomers will likely have seen the chain's advertising, so the product will be on their mind, and they might be primed to purchase it at your store if you promote it.

4. Discounts for paying with cash

Consider offering a several-cent discount on each gallon of gas when customers pay with cash. This small discount could make each transaction more profitable by avoiding credit/debit card fees. It also may make more customers likely to choose a certain gas station because of the opportunity to get a discount, and it could bring more footsteps into the store where food and drink sales could benefit.

5. Opening and closing

Consider writing up a procedure list to post behind the counter that thoroughly describes every step involved in opening and closing. This helps to avoid simple but sometimes costly mistakes that employees may make.

6. Move cash from the register

Emphasize to employees the importance of moving cash from the register to the designated safe. This way, in the case of a robbery, the store loses less money. Consider posting a sign about having limited cash in the registers. This also deters theft.

7. Chip readers

Consider installing credit/debit card chip readers at your gas station rather than the standard card sliders. Investing in the chip reader will return the liability of any fraudulent transactions back to the bank. Also, chip readers may make customers feel more confident in their security while paying at the pump.

Lexy Garrett is a marketing manager at Sageworks, a financial information company that provides financial analysis and cash flow applications to business owners and their accountants.

Retailers taking on customer loyalty programs

By Danielle Romano, CS News

Whether you are a consumer or a convenience, drug or mass retailer, chances are that you've encountered the Plenti program at one time or another.

Known as the first coalition program in the United States for rewards, Plenti allows multiple brands – Exxon, Mobil, Rite-Aid, AT&T and Macy's, to name a few – to reward customers with points that are redeemable at these locations, as well as other retailers.

However, as retailers like AT&T and Macy's announce their departure from Plenti to build standalone loyalty programs and create a one-to-one relationship, questions have risen about what this "catch-all" rewards program means.

"Is it still beneficial to have this kind of coalition loyalty program, or is there possibly a better way for retailers to be able to market their loyalty program and generate even more loyalty with their brand and their consumers?" posed Kimberly Otocky, content marketing specialist at Paytronix Systems Inc., a provider of reward program solutions to restaurants and retailers.

In a recent webinar entitled "Before, During and After: Managing Your Digital Engagement

Throughout the Customer Journey," *Convenience Store News* and Paytronix looked to answer this question, as well as provide convenience store retailers with strategies to execute a successful loyalty rewards program.

According to Otocky, companies are looking to take back ownership of the customer experience and create a one-on-one relationship that allows customers to engage with their brand and sustains the longevity of brand loyalty.

"It's really, really beneficial for brands to take back all of their loyalty programs and run it in-house. Instead of having that blanket program, they're really able to make that connection with their customers that consumers today are expecting," Otocky explained.

It's a "difficult ask" of retailers to give up control of the customer experience in today's retail environment, "where experience matters more than convenience," noted fellow webinar presenter Joel Udwin, mobile product manager at Paytronix.

Putting himself in consumers' shoes, Udwin said people typically don't think about their experience with a brand as a journey, but rather as a cyclical experience. He pre-

sented the "Before, During and After Customer Experience Loop," a format he says was introduced by Google Inc. This loop represents what barriers a c-store retailer may face when curating, implementing and executing a loyalty program.

These barriers include:

- **Online ordering:** exists in the "before" phase.
- **Payment:** exists in the "during" phase.
- **Service:** exists in the "during" phase.
- **Irrelevant messaging:** exists in the "after" phase.
- **Loyalty operations:** exists in all three phases.

To identify and determine which barrier(s) to tackle, Udwin presented the "Loyalty Impact Model," which is an equation for c-store retailers to utilize:

Loyalty Impact = the number of customers enrolled in a rewards program X the percentage of customers who are active in the program X the change in spend between customers enrolled in the program vs. customers who are not in the program.

"These are important frames of reference because when you're solving these problems, you want to push down on one, two or all three

of these levers," Udwin explained.

Technology can play a key role in the way c-store retailers overcome the barriers outlined above:

Online Ordering – Create a borderless guest experience by entering the ecommerce space. "We need to take advantage of the physical proximity we have to customers and bring the fight to Amazon."

Payments – Consider accepting e-payments. "What's cool in this area is the ability to simultaneously identify guests, so you can communicate to them more effectively."

Service – Incentivizing customers allows them to identify themselves so that c-store retailers can track information. Udwin suggests printing QR codes on receipts that allow customers to go online and earn points, while retailers learn who their customers are.

Irrelevant Messaging – Two key areas that exist are receipts at the pump that give context of where customers are with a brand, and managing brand content via the mobile app.

Loyalty Operations – Prevalence of registration and login of website, mobile app, etc. Paytronix has found that paginated forms increase conversions into a loyalty program.

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27-Aug-17	02-Sep-17	06-Sep-17	12-Sep-17
03-Sep-17	09-Sep-17	13-Sep-17	19-Sep-17
10-Sep-17	16-Sep-17	20-Sep-17	26-Sep-17
17-Sep-17	23-Sep-17	27-Sep-17	03-Oct-17
24-Sep-17	30-Sep-17	04-Oct-17	11-Oct-17*
01-Oct-17	07-Oct-17	11-Oct-17	17-Oct-17
08-Oct-17	14-Oct-17	18-Oct-17	24-Oct-17
15-Oct-17	21-Oct-17	25-Oct-17	31-Oct-17
22-Oct-17	28-Oct-17	01-Nov-17	07-Nov-17
29-Oct-17	04-Nov-17	08-Nov-17	15-Nov-17*
05-Nov-17	11-Nov-17	15-Nov-17	21-Nov-17
12-Nov-17	18-Nov-17	22-Nov-17	29-Nov-17*
19-Nov-17	25-Nov-17	29-Nov-17	05-Dec-17
26-Nov-17	02-Dec-17	06-Dec-17	12-Dec-17
03-Dec-17	09-Dec-17	13-Dec-17	19-Dec-17
10-Dec-17	16-Dec-17	20-Dec-17	27-Dec-17*
17-Dec-17	23-Dec-17	27-Dec-17	03-Jan-18*
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Business Phone _____ Fax _____

Cell _____ Email _____

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