









GEORGIA Bedicated to serving the Georgia COAM industry Endorsed by the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association paul@tashcommunications.com (406) 491-0100 A Tash Communications publication December 2022 Vol. 6, Number 8

COAM industry will miss Ralston

Former speaker 'guiding force' in legislature

By Paul Tash Georgia Amusement Journal

Describing him as one of the state's "greatest leaders" who "authentically cared" about all people, representatives of the COAM and convenience store industries expressed sorrow and profound respect for former Georgia House Speaker David Ralston.

Ralston died Nov. 16 at age 68. Ralston, a Republican from Blue Ridge, was first elected to the Georgia House of Representatives in 2002. Prior to that, Ralston served in the Georgia State Senate from 1992 to 1998.

Ralston was elected by members of the Georgia House to serve as the 73rd speaker in 2010. He was the longest-tenured house speaker in the country before his death. He was the second-longest-serving speaker in the state's history. Ralston didn't seek another nomination as House Speaker for the upcoming legislative session, citing a "health challenge."

Sheila Humberstone, a lobbyist for the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association (GAMOA), said Georgia lost more



FORMER SPEAKER

of the House David Ralston, who died last month at age 68, was a caring, invested, and respected leader who valued those in the COAM business, industry representatives said.

than a legislative leader with Ralston's passing.

"He was a statesman in a world that desperately needs more leaders like him," she said. "Speaker Ralston certainly fulfilled the Oxford Languages definition of statesman, 'a skilled, experienced, and respected political leader,' but he was so much more. While he was among the most powerful people in

the state, he authentically cared about people, all people, black and white, rural and urban, male and female, rich and poor, educated and uneducated."

Ralston, she said, made time for everybody and "was a "moderating and guiding force" in the General Assembly, she said.

Ralston took time to understand all industries in Georgia including

the COAM industry, Humberstone added.

"He recognized and valued us as small-business people and was proud of our financial support of the Lottery for Education Fund. I will be eternally grateful for his leadership, his mentorship, and his friendship."

Les Schneider, an attorney and

See RALSTON Page 10



AEI returns to Las Vegas March 27-30

Registration is now open for the Amusement Expo International (AEI), the industry's most influential conference and trade show dedicated specifically to the amusement entertainment industry, set for March 27-30 at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

The theme this year is "Roaring '20s: The Future is Back." AEI is the only conference and trade show sponsored by the industry's leading professional associations: The American Amusement Machine Association

(AAMA) and Amusement & Music Operators Association (AMOA), who represent this multi-billion-dollar industry. The dual sponsorship ensures both exhibitors and attendees alike are given top-tier access to the latest innovations, decision makers and leaders representing the out-of-home entertainment business.

Featured exhibit areas in the Las Vegas Convention Center will include:

See SHOW Page 9









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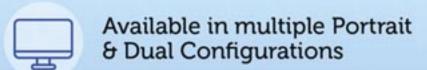
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Journal Opinion

GACS reflects and looks forward

By Sharon Shuford **GACS Membership**

For the Georgia Association of Convenience Stores (GACS), the year 2022 was rewarding, crazy busy, and full of firsts. Here are some 2022 highlights in which GACS:

- Welcomed more than 30 new members;
- Testified before members of the Georgia General Assembly multiple times on several issues, including electric-vehicle charging, coin-operated amusement machines, and ADA and vaping issues.
- · Gave a number of press interviews with local and national press;
- Tracked more than 100 pieces of legislation during the 2022 session;
- Attended multiple fundraisers and dinners:
 - · Provided food and such in

the House ante room for 40 days for 180 legislators;

Participated in EV study



Sharon Shuford

Aits 50th year next year, it's planning to celebrate in true GACS fashion with plenty of networking, fun, and surprises.

committee meetings and attended in person or virtually every COAM board meeting;

 Awarded more than \$17,000 in scholarships to

s GACS enters

member employees;

Produced five publications

and five events, including the

magazine, a directory, a golf tournament, a bowling tournament, and a legislative dinner;

 Hosted several signature events, including its annual convention with a record-breaking eight education sessions, including a Young Professionals session:

- Celebrated the 20th annual Southern Convenience Store & Petroleum Show in style in Macon (see photos with this article);
- Hosted five Lunch & Learn meetings and three InStore events with legislative officials;
- · Reached historic levels of sponsorship, changing the program to be an annual association sponsorship rather than a single event sponsor program;
- · And introduced new member benefit programs. To learn more about these and other activities visit www.gacs.com.

50th anniversary next year

As GACS enters its 50th

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This publication endorsed by the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association

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/OTHER —

Jan. 17: COAM Advisory Board, Lottery headquarters, Atlanta March 27-30: Amusement Expo, Las Vegas Convention Center April 18: COAM Advisory Board, Lottery headquarters, Atlanta

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



GACS MEMBERS and other industry retailers, petroleum marketers, owners, operators, managers, employees, and industry suppliers gathered at The Centreplex in Macon, GA, Nov. 9-10 for

the Southern Convenience Store & Petroleum Show. The annual event is one of the southeast's largest, most important annual industry trade shows.



50th year

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year next year, it's planning to celebrate in true GACS fashion with plenty of networking, lots of fun, and a few surprises. A change is coming in the GACS event schedule, as well, including moving the convention to August.

Jan. 24 – GACS Annual Legislative Day at the Capitol

April 20 – GACS PAC Golf Tournament, Flat Creek Country Club, Peachtree City

May 17-18 – **NEW DATES** – Southern Convenience Store & Petroleum Show, The Centreplex, Macon

Aug. 18-20 – **NEW DATES** – GACS Annual Convention, Omni Amelia Island Plantation

Nov. 8 – GACS PAC Sporting Clay Competition, Meadows Gun Club, Newnan

Lunch & Learn - planned for

February, June, September, October, November and December. Locations to be announced.

InStore – planned for September, October, November and December. Locations to be announced.



Gratitude to sponsors

GACS extends a huge thank you to its sponsors. This has been a record-breaking sponsorship year. GACS appreciates each of its sponsors and their contributions. For information about any of these programs, or to join GACS or purchase a sponsorship, contact GACS at 770-736-9723 or email Sharon@gacs.com.



Retail Matters

Plan now to benefit from EV expansion

Angela Hanson Convenience Store News

The rise of electric vehicles (EV) not only provides a way for drivers to travel more sustainably, it could enable convenience store operators to get a competitive edge against nearby dollar stores, supermarkets with fuel stations and smaller-format food sellers, as well as provide an additional source of revenue.

However, EV investments are significant and can easily reach \$10,000 per charging station for purchasing and installing a charger, preparing the infrastructure and connecting a charger to the grid. By educating themselves on these challenges, retailers can better prepare to take advantage of future opportunities in EV, according to the recent webinar "How Will EV Charging Disrupt Convenience Retail?" hosted by Convenience Store News and sponsored by Diebold Nixdorf.

EVs experienced a spike in demand in 2022 compared to 2021, but also faced challenges, such as

problems in the supply chain delaying delivery and increased cost of battery components. Despite this, even if the market for EVs slows down next year and people call them a temporary fad, "That's absolutely not true," said John Eichberger, executive director for the Fuels Institute. "They're going to continue to grow."

The increase in the number of available models, particularly utility vehicles, is important to American drivers, according to Eichberger.

"I think there's huge opportunities," he said, noting that while the future will likely hold stops and starts, long-term growth will occur, which presents more opportunities for retailers.

In Europe, the categorization of EV drivers is shifting from early adopters to early majority, said Joe Fahrney, vice president at eMobility Shoals. Range anxiety remains "a hindering factor for EV adoption," though, which makes uptime and reliability more and more important

if EV charging stations are included at c-stores.

Catering to EV drivers will involve new strategies and likely new formats, according to Eichberger, who advised retailers to think specifically about who their customers are and what they need. Early EV chargers were often placed where a site's power came in, far away from the store, but the industry's mindset is shifting to one that recognizes the benefit of treating EV drivers as valuable customers, just like they treat their fuel customers.

As a result, retailers should consider new possibilities, such as placing a canopy over the charging stations, adding amenities, giving EV drivers the ability to pre-order food or request curbside delivery so they can enjoy snacks while charging and other ideas.

Success step by step

Key initial steps include selecting a site and then working with the local utility to understand power and ability at the site. Operators should also ask if utilities have any EV programs in the market.

It's important to understand the utility power and capacity available at the site, something that can be done in partnership with an engineer of record. Selecting an engineering firm is a key aspect of the early process, according to Robert Krause, head of EV charging at Diebold Nixdorf. Firms will help with the initial site survey, site layout and site design, as well as engineer drawings and construction drawings, the local permitting process and more.

"Initial planning is extremely important and a foundational part as you start to look at where you want to deploy your EV charging infrastructure," he said.

Krause advised that operators select a charging speed that fits their customer profile. Customers who only plan to be in the store for a few minutes want a faster charging speed than customers who plan to stay for half an hour or more.



Retail Matters

Parker's debuts new store prototype

Convenience Store News

Parker's opened the doors to a new prototype convenience store recently.

Inspired by Southern vernacular architecture, the Parker's Kitchen at DeRenne Avenue and White Bluff Road in Savannah features a bright, inviting store design that has a modern, contemporary glass-front look, according to the convenience retailer.

It also boasts an expanded retail footprint, an optimized layout for higher operational efficiency and a lime-washed brick exterior.

Parker's new prototype incorporates an existing 60-foot metal globe that previously served as a natural gas storage tank for Savannah Gas Co. in the 1950s. The giant globe anchors the parcel at one of Savannah's most high-traffic intersections.

"We're absolutely thrilled to open our newest Parker's Kitchen location at the corner of DeRenne and White Bluff in Savannah," said Parker's founder and CEO Greg Parker. "We listened to the public throughout the planning process and are incredibly honored to de-



velop this underutilized site and to preserve the globe, which is an iconic landmark for many Savannah residents."

The newest Parker's kitchen is the company's 72nd c-store. Its offerings include an indoor dining area with popular grab-and-go selections and a hot bar with signature items like Parker's never-frozen, antibiotic-free, double-breaded Southern Fried Chicken Tenders, mac 'n' cheese and jalapeño cornbread.

Other highlights include the Parker's Kitchen Spicy Chicken Tender Sandwich, fresh-made salads, gourmet coffee, freshly brewed sweet tea, lemonade, 28degree beer, fountain drinks with Chewy Ice and a wide range of convenience items.

The store also has a complete menu of breakfast offerings ranging from egg casserole to sausage, egg and cheese biscuits.

Parker's also offers unleaded, diesel and marine fuel outside the store.

The Parker Cos., parent company to the Parker's and Parker's Kitchen brands, serves as the de-

veloper for the site, while fellow Savannah-based company The Pinyan Co. served as the lead contractor for site construction. A new Chick-fil-A and Starbucks are currently under construction at the 3.4-acre commercial site and are slated to open in mid to late 2023.

Headquartered in Savannah, Parker's owns and operates c-stores throughout coastal Georgia and South Carolina.







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THE AMUSEMENT Expo International returns to the Las Vegas Convention Center March 27-30.

Show

from Page 1

- Coin-operated amusement games, music, and ATMs
- Family Entertainment Centers (FEC)
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 - Bulk vending
 - Laser tag
- Professional service providers and suppliers.

AEI also offers added value to attendees and exhibitors through its partnership with the National Bulk Vendors Association and the Laser Tag Convention that continues to strengthen opportunities for all in attendance. These events naturally complement each other and deliver an even stronger platform for attendees and exhibitors.

AEI provides an engaging platform for connections between suppliers, distributors, operators, and buyers with conference programs that offer a clear roadmap for a successful future. The three actionpacked days will include over 25 informative sessions.

The event is the industry's largest of the year, and attendees will find plenty of opportunities in every area of the industry and lots of ways to connect and share ideas with the best and most creative leaders in the industry.

For more information go to www.amusementexpo.org.





Ralston

from Page 1

lobbyist for GAMOA, had a tremendous amount of respect for Ralston.

"It hurts my heart that David Ralston has passed," Schneider said. "I have worked at the Capitol and have known four speakers of the Georgia House. Of these folks, Tom Murphy and David Ralston shared a love of the institution of the State House and protected its reputation and its members. They cared for House members and were selfless in many ways."

Ralston, he added, was a man who shunned watching TV and preferred to read nonfiction,



File pho

whether a biography or a specific historical event.

"Sharing a book and a discussion with David about politics or history was a wonderful and worth-

while pleasure for me," Schneider said.

Ralston leaves a void "that must be filled by people of good character and strong commitment to the state of Georgia," he added.

Angela Holland, executive director for the Georgia Association of Convenience Stores, called Ralston "one of the greatest leaders our state has ever seen and a steadfast friend to the convenience store industry."

"In an arena where not everyone is always nice to each other, the speaker was exceptionally cordial and kind to everyone," she said. "He seemed to remember and know everyone by name."

Ralston, she added, "always made me feel special."

"I've spent hours reading through all the Facebook posts of friends who knew him and all of them feel the exact same way. Thank you, Speaker Ralston, for your service to this state, for your friendship to me and my association, your dedication and passion to make Georgia the best place to live for all 11 million of us."

State Rep. Jon Burns is likely to be the next speaker of the Georgia House after Republicans nominated Burns in mid-November. The Georgia House will elect a new speaker when the 2023-2024 legislative session begins Jan. 9. The speaker is tasked with presiding over floor sessions, assigning bills

FORMER SPEAKER of the House David Ralston ad-

dresses the floor during the

last legislative session.

Ralston's wife, Sheree Ralston, announced Nov. 30 she's running to fill his vacant seat.

to committees and calling matters

for debate.

"I'm running to complete the unfinished work of my husband, David Ralston, specifically as it relates to mental health reform and advancing and protecting the interests of Georgia's 7th House District," Sheree Ralston said in a statement. "David was our champion and voice at the Capitol, and, if elected, that's what I intend to be as well."

Sheree Ralston, of Blue Ridge, is currently the executive director of the Fannin County Development Authority.

The 7th House District seat consists of Fannin, Gilmer and a portion of Dawson counties.

COIN OPERATED AMUSEMENT MACHINE LOCATION SWEEP AND MASTER PUSH CALENDAR

OCT-DEC 2022

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

*Indicates sweep or push date has been changed to accommodate holiday Note: Holidays on a Thursday and Friday may delay the availability of the Location Period Accounting Report on the following Monday

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