

'Doc' Jones
tribute
- Page 3

GEORGIA Amusement JOURNAL

Dedicated to serving the Georgia COAM industry
Endorsed by the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association
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Gift card pilot gains steam

1,000 cards
activated
by early Feb.

By Paul Tash

Georgia Amusement Journal

Georgia Lottery officials remain "laser focused" on implementing the gift card pilot program for the COAM industry, with over 1,000 cards activated in about 80 locations across the state at the Georgia Amusement Journal's press time.

"Our entire COAM staff is working hard to make the gift card pilot a successful launch in terms of participation and data

gathering," COAM Senior Vice President John Heinen told the Journal.

"Our staff has been laser focused on working

with Intralot and InComm to deliver the best product we can in record time for an initiative of this nature."

HEINEN

See CARD Page 11



GAJ file photo

ANGELA WHITMAN, left, and Amber Carter of Southern Gaming Solutions talk to Hemal Patel of Atlanta Game World at the Southern Amusement &

Entertainment Expo last year. Patel is a master licensee who has locations that are participating in the gift card pilot program.

Study panel supports gift card

By Paul Tash

Georgia Amusement Journal

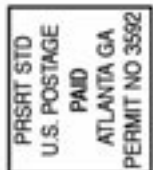
A gift card program for redemption, longer contracts between master and location licensees, and longer licensing periods for all licensees are some of the recommendations of a legislative study committee created to review aspects of the coin-operated amusement machine (COAM) industry in Georgia.

While the Senate COAM Study Committee did not propose any specific legislation, it did offer several

recommendations and encouraged the Georgia Lottery Corp. to "look for ways to increase revenue" from the COAM industry. The committee, which met thrice in the fall of 2020 – Sept. 23, Oct. 22, and Nov. 12 – also supported "a competitive market that encourages continued innovation and investments in games, services, and new product development."

The study committee specifically called for implementation of a gift card program. The Georgia Lottery

See STUDY Page 11



Mike Macke purchases Primero Games

Industry legend Mike Macke purchased the COAM manufacturer Primero Games from Kelly Macke at the end of 2020. The leadership transition points to a pivotal new direction for the company.

Macke's 40 years of experience include becoming one of the largest operators in the Southeast and extensive knowledge of game design and

production. His roots in the industry date back to 1980, when the first company he was involved in created the hit countertop bar game Little Casino.

From founding Cadillac Jack, a former manufacturer that transformed Class II gaming and thrived in the Mexican market, to inventing the "nudge," Macke's contributions have

consistently driven the amusement business forward.

"One of the exciting things about me getting back involved in the company is that now I can step forward and put the same influence on game design and changes that need to be made that I did a long time ago," he says.

See more on the Primero transition on Pages 8-9.



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'Doc' Jones remembered for Lucky Coin family

Longtime COAM owner and operator Richard "Doc" Jones of Tucker, GA, died Jan. 23. He was 80.

Jones founded Lucky Coin, Inc., in 1994. Lucky Coin began as a small family business and though it has grown substantially since Jones bought his first 12 machines, the business focus is still on the family.

"Doc always made relationships a priority," said his grandson, Kyle Shepherd, who is chief operating officer for Lucky Coin. "He taught us a whole bunch of things during his time here with us, but the most important things we learned just by watching. We did not always realize it at the time but watching him interact with people was sometimes as close to magic as you could get. Even the people who did not like him wanted to be near him, and they were usually better off for it. Relationships are what made him tick and he was great at them."

Shepherd is part of three family generations that have worked at Lucky Coin, including Jones' wife, Carlene, and several other family members. His son-in-law, Barry Shepherd, joined Lucky Coin in 1998. Grandsons Kyle and Curtis Shepherd started working full time at Lucky Coin in 2010 and stepped into leadership roles a few years later.

Kyle Shepherd added that when people partner with Lucky Coin, "you become part of our family."

"This principal was one of Doc's core beliefs and he lived it every day. Lucky Coin will honor his legacy by continuing to build our family of locations using the same principles that he used when he founded his company almost 30 years ago."

Doc Jones was born in Scottdale, GA, March 12, 1940, to Lewis and Minnie Lee Jones. At a very young age he learned to work hard to support himself and provide for his family by taking any job he could. He worked in construction for many years and was always looking for additional ways to make a living. Over the years he ventured into bar ownership (The Cockin Robin), car lots, commercial real estate, and the stock market (including purchasing Yahoo stock, which he thought was Yoo-hoo – the chocolate drink). His largest investment was in people.



JONES



Photo courtesy of Lucky Coin

CELEBRATING Lucky Coin's 25th anniversary in 2019 were (back row) Chris Langley, Homer Williams, and Alan Weiss; (middle row) Jackie Shepherd; (front row) Kyle Shepherd, Carlene Jones, Doc Jones, and Barry Shepherd.

He was loved and admired for his giving spirit and always being willing to help someone in need.

Jones also enjoyed gambling. His love of cards, such as poker or blackjack or shooting craps, was a passion that lasted throughout his lifetime. Other hobbies included mowing his lawn, spoiling his dogs, buying lottery tickets and

spending time with his great grandchildren. He liked seafood, red trucks, red flowers, John Wayne movies, and *Wheel of Fortune*.

He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Carlene Jones; two daughters and their spouses, Sandra and Hal Peters, Jackie and Barry Shepherd; five grandchildren, Ashley Shepherd, Kyle Shepherd (Pam),

Curtis Shepherd (Karen), Brooke Murdoch, and Andrew Peters; six great grandchildren, Casey, Sawyer, Charley, Dawson, Charlotte, and Sadie.

He was preceded in death by sisters, Lillian (Louie) Cash, Grace (Harvey) Morgan, Mildred (Jimmy) McDade; and brothers Bud, Hubert and Fred.

COIN OPERATED AMUSEMENT MACHINE LOCATION SWEEP AND MASTER PUSH CALENDAR 2021							
ACCOUNTING WEEK START	ACCOUNTING WEEK END	LOCATION SWEEP DATE	MASTER PUSH DATE	ACCOUNTING WEEK START	ACCOUNTING WEEK END	LOCATION SWEEP DATE	MASTER PUSH DATE
27-Dec-20	02-Jan-21	06-Jan-21	12-Jan-21	27-Jun-21	03-Jul-21	07-Jul-21	13-Jul-21
03-Jan-21	09-Jan-21	13-Jan-21	20-Jan-21*	04-Jul-21	10-Jul-21	14-Jul-21	20-Jul-21
10-Jan-21	16-Jan-21	20-Jan-21	26-Jan-21	11-Jul-21	17-Jul-21	21-Jul-21	27-Jul-21
17-Jan-21	23-Jan-21	27-Jan-21	02-Feb-21	18-Jul-21	24-Jul-21	28-Jul-21	03-Aug-21
24-Jan-21	30-Jan-21	03-Feb-21	09-Feb-21	25-Jul-21	31-Jul-21	04-Aug-21	10-Aug-21
31-Jan-21	06-Feb-21	10-Feb-21	17-Feb-21*	01-Aug-21	07-Aug-21	11-Aug-21	17-Aug-21
07-Feb-21	13-Feb-21	17-Feb-21	23-Feb-21	08-Aug-21	14-Aug-21	18-Aug-21	24-Aug-21
14-Feb-21	20-Feb-21	24-Feb-21	02-Mar-21	15-Aug-21	21-Aug-21	25-Aug-21	31-Aug-21
21-Feb-21	27-Feb-21	03-Mar-21	09-Mar-21	22-Aug-21	28-Aug-21	01-Sep-21	08-Sep-21*
28-Feb-21	06-Mar-21	10-Mar-21	16-Mar-21	29-Aug-21	04-Sep-21	08-Sep-21	14-Sep-21
07-Mar-21	13-Mar-21	17-Mar-21	23-Mar-21	05-Sep-21	11-Sep-21	15-Sep-21	21-Sep-21
14-Mar-21	20-Mar-21	24-Mar-21	30-Mar-21	12-Sep-21	18-Sep-21	22-Sep-21	28-Sep-21
21-Mar-21	27-Mar-21	31-Mar-21	06-Apr-21	19-Sep-21	25-Sep-21	29-Sep-21	05-Oct-21
28-Mar-21	03-Apr-21	07-Apr-21	13-Apr-21	26-Sep-21	02-Oct-21	06-Oct-21	13-Oct-21*
04-Apr-21	10-Apr-21	14-Apr-21	20-Apr-21	03-Oct-21	09-Oct-21	13-Oct-21	19-Oct-21
11-Apr-21	17-Apr-21	21-Apr-21	27-Apr-21	10-Oct-21	16-Oct-21	20-Oct-21	26-Oct-21
18-Apr-21	24-Apr-21	28-Apr-21	04-May-21	17-Oct-21	23-Oct-21	27-Oct-21	02-Nov-21
25-Apr-21	01-May-21	05-May-21	11-May-21	24-Oct-21	30-Oct-21	03-Nov-21	09-Nov-21
02-May-21	08-May-21	12-May-21	18-May-21	31-Oct-21	06-Nov-21	10-Nov-21	16-Nov-21
09-May-21	15-May-21	19-May-21	25-May-21	07-Nov-21	13-Nov-21	17-Nov-21	23-Nov-21
16-May-21	22-May-21	26-May-21	02-Jun-21*	14-Nov-21	20-Nov-21	24-Nov-21	01-Dec-21*
23-May-21	29-May-21	02-Jun-21	08-Jun-21	21-Nov-21	27-Nov-21	01-Dec-21	07-Dec-21
30-May-21	05-Jun-21	09-Jun-21	15-Jun-21	28-Nov-21	04-Dec-21	08-Dec-21	14-Dec-21
06-Jun-21	12-Jun-21	16-Jun-21	22-Jun-21	05-Dec-21	11-Dec-21	15-Dec-21	21-Dec-21
13-Jun-21	19-Jun-21	23-Jun-21	29-Jun-21	12-Dec-21	18-Dec-21	22-Dec-21	29-Dec-21*
20-Jun-21	26-Jun-21	30-Jun-21	07-Jul-21*	19-Dec-21	25-Dec-21	29-Dec-21	05-Jan-22*

*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

Journal Opinion

COAM industry's future strong

**By Shawn Fellows
GAMOA President**

For almost 40 years now, the Georgia Amusement & Music Operators Association (GAMOA) has worked diligently to protect and improve the COAM industry in Georgia. We proudly serve the men and women of the COAM industry by providing a singular voice at the local and state level.

Day in and day out, GAMOA continues to educate stakeholders across the state about the many benefits of COAM. Beyond the advocacy work, our team of experts often provide the only defense against those who seek to destroy the COAM industry while vilifying the hard-working folks that make up the industry.

The challenges that we faced in 2020 were unparalleled in recent times. We had to navigate economic, social, and physical setbacks with little to no preparation. For our industry, we experienced shutdowns across the state from one day to, in some cases, many months. Small business owners across the country watched their hard work and dreams fade away almost overnight. Thankfully, our leadership in Georgia, led by Gov. Kemp, saw it fit to allow small businesses to open as soon as possible and with specific guidelines to protect the citizens of this great state. Through this leadership, Georgia's small businesses were able to provide needed products and services. The local convenience stores remained open and

often provided the only source of goods and services to their perspective communities. GAMOA would like to thank Gov. Kemp for his leadership during these challenging times. While the pandemic is not over, we are overcoming the many setbacks that it has left in its path. We will prevail a stronger community and a stronger state because

members of GAMOA seek to maintain a healthy and harmonious relationship with all sectors of the COAM industry who share common goals. Developing goals that will aid in the growth and expansion of the industry while maintaining positive regulations has been the focus of GAMOA leadership for decades.

We are excited about the possibilities that lie ahead. Recently the Georgia Lottery Corp. began testing a Lottery-issued gift card that will be offered at more than 300 pilot locations currently utilizing COAMs. At these pilot locations, a player can receive a gift card from the successful play of the COAM and or lottery tickets along with other lawful merchandise.

It is the belief of GAMOA that a gift-card program will open the door for many new retail locations to embrace COAMs. This will not only add more revenue to Hope and Pre-K education pro-

grams directly from the COAMs but increase the number of traditional lottery retailers and the volume of lottery tickets purchased every day across the state.

Your support is needed to help the lobbyists and attorneys that are fighting across the state to keep our business viable and defend the legality of our industry. GAMOA dues are utilized to help fund the many initiatives

See FELLOWS Page 7



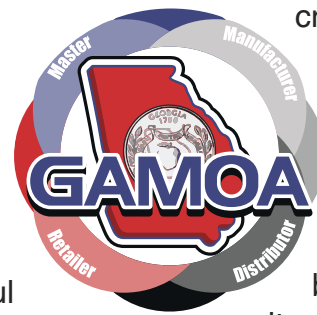
Shawn Fellows

It is the belief of GAMOA that a gift card program will open the door for many new retail locations to embrace COAMs.

our leaders illustrated such courage.

Common goals

As we look forward in 2021, GAMOA will continue to work with all stakeholders to find fair and practical methods to advance the COAM industry through balanced and thoughtful policies. Our goal is to work directly with regulators and retail location associations to further develop these policies. The



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COAM calendar

— REPORTING DATES —

Feb. 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 —

April 13: COAM Advisory Board (GLC headquarters or conference call to be determined)
April 21: GACSPAC Golf Tournament, Stone Mountain, GA
June 13-15: GACS annual convention, Omni Amelia Island Plantation, Amelia Island, FL
Aug. 25-26: Southern Amusement & Entertainment Expo, Infinite Energy Center, Duluth, GA

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 announces new member benefits

**By Sharon Shuford
GACS Membership**

As of Feb. 1, all GACS member companies can participate in a new insurance health care program, HealthiestYou.

HealthiestYou is a high-quality, virtual care solution designed to serve the unique needs of small businesses and their employees by connecting individuals to physicians and providers for a wide range of daily and chronic needs.

At its core, HealthiestYou provides unlimited access to general medical physicians to address common conditions, such as colds, flu, sinus infections, and so forth, at a \$0 visit fee. The intuitive, easy-to-use platform makes finding what you need a snap. It can be accessed through a mobile application, online portal, or 800 phone number. HealthiestYou can be a virtual front door to address any medical uncertainty that arises to ensure you are receiving quality clinical care in an efficient, convenient, and cost-effective way.

HealthiestYou covers the entire family (primary employee plus household dependents). The program is a perfect addi-

tion to offer in conjunction with traditional health insurance for full-time and part-time associates, or it can be offered as a single benefit to employees based on their individual health



Sharon Shuford

care needs. Either way, HealthiestYou is a great way to simplify your life with virtual healthcare.

Alcohol delivery training

With the passage of House Bill 879 last summer, which permitted home delivery of alcohol under a strict regulatory scheme, GACS moved quickly to partner with TSC Associates to develop and deliver an Alco-

hol Delivery Training Program.

Among the regulatory requirements that must be met before a business can deliver alcohol is a certificate of training for alcohol delivery sales required by the

The presentation ... includes animations, videos and pop quizzes that focus on key points and issues.

Georgia Department of Revenue. The training course must be approved by DOR.

The course under development by TSC Associates meets all of the requirements designated by the DOR and has received approval.

Currently, it is being posted to the internet, where members will be able to access it on demand.

The PowerPoint-based presentation includes a voice-over, which will help students fully understand all of the material being presented. It includes animations, videos and pop quizzes that focus on key points and issues. A final exam is administered online to measure comprehension of the material presented.

Upon completing and passing the exam, a student will receive a Certificate of Completion. The training takes just a couple of hours. And online also means “on demand” – available when the student has time to complete the course, whether from a home or office computer.



GACS anticipates the course will be available to members before the end of the first

quarter 2021 and will make an announcement about accessing it very soon.

AMOA efforts include legislative advocacy

**By Lori Schneider
AMOA Executive VP**

The AMOA is scheduled to conduct its second AMOA Virtual Day on the Hill, orchestrated by AMOA legislative DC-based firm Dentons, on Thursday, Feb. 18. The day consists of multiple visits, via Zoom, to congressional offices both on the House and Senate side. Topics to be addressed include:

1. COVID relief/stimulus
2. Banking issues
3. Payment Choice Act/cash at retail

Members who participate are able to engage in the full day of meetings or jump in and out as their schedule allowed.

While AMOA looks forward to returning to Capitol Hill for in-person visits later this fall or next year, the virtual visits provide



Lori Schneider

AMOA members now have access to a bill-tracking tool that provides the ability to research, monitor and follow legislation

the opportunity for greater member representation and participation.

AMOA bill-tracking tool – AMOA members now have access to a bill-tracking tool that provides the ability for members to research, monitor and follow legislation important to their businesses.

Members can learn more at www.amoa.com/bill-tracker-tool.

COVID-19 vaccine eligibility for

ATM operators – At the beginning of the pandemic, the financial services sector, which includes ATM operators, were deemed part of the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce.

Although it is unclear whether ATM workers qualify for inclusion in the 1b Essential Frontline Worker categorization, after being classified as part of the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce back in March, we believe ATM operators should be eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine when group 1b vaccination begins.

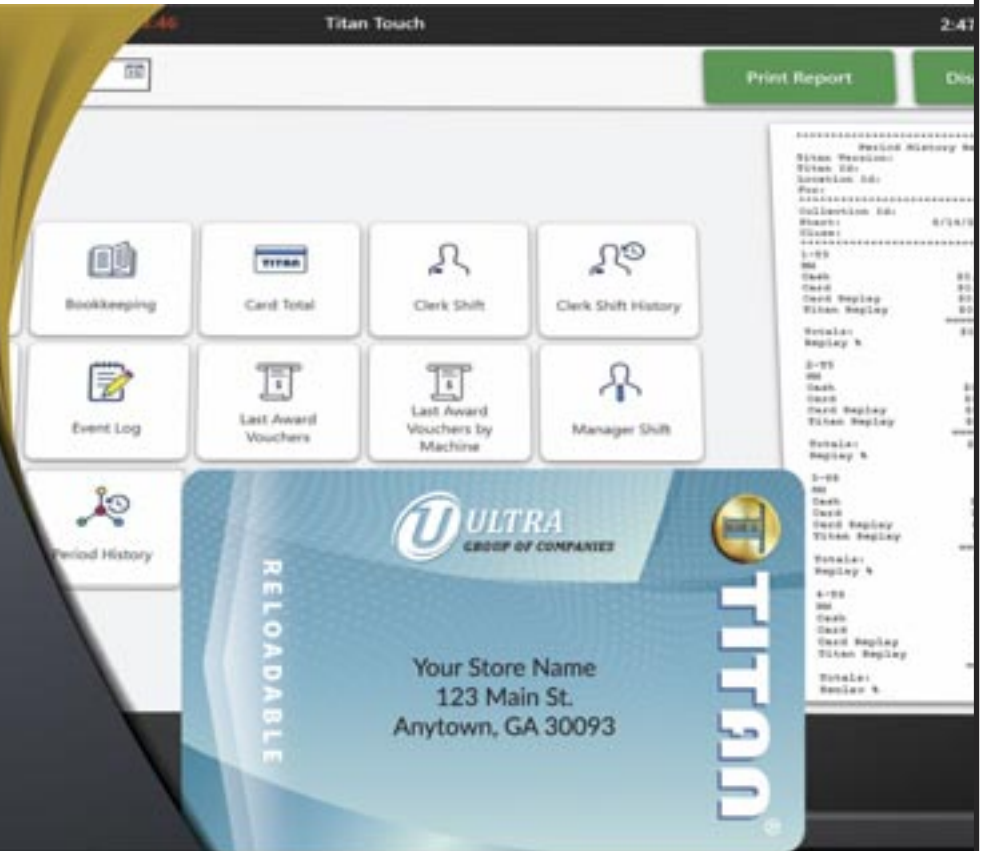
OCC pauses publication of Fair Access Rule – AMOA was pleased last November when the OCC proposed a rule preventing big banks from denying loans and other services to entire industries and perfectly legal businesses. AMOA filed the following during the comment period after announcement of the proposed rule:





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- ✓ Compliance records for GLC's 50/50 rule
- ✓ Real time text/e-mail notifications include: estimated GLC deposits, game machine issues, and stringing alerts
- ✓ Potential Tax Savings

Redeem Award Credits															
Available Award Credit: \$140.00															
	Summary														
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Lottery	\$25.00														
Gas	\$32.75														
Total:	\$107.75														
Redeem															

Ease of Use for Operators and Staff

- ✓ Cards only work in your store, with your games
- ✓ Reduces risk of improper redemptions/fraud/theft
- ✓ Combined card reader and bill acceptor
- ✓ Operator can apply credits to Titan card (tracks replays for sales tax savings) or choose to print a ticket

Improves Player Loyalty and Store Profitability

- ✓ Free Player Cards customized with your location name and address
- ✓ Credits transferable between games at same location
- ✓ Player controls credits to save or use as needed for merchandise/gas/lottery tickets/continued replays with no expiration date
- ✓ Faster gameplay

World Class Technology and Customer Support

- ✓ Industry leading cashless solution
- ✓ Titan Touch - exclusively on Ultra Games
- ✓ In-house development and technical support
- ✓ An ethical partner you can trust



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sales@ultragroupinc.com

Fellows

from Page 4

currently underway by GAMOA. Over 80 percent of the dues raised each year are allocated

towards funding both advocacy and litigation.

GAMOA and the longevity of this industry rely on your support and participation. Due to the pandemic, we will not be performing an in-person meet-

ing at this time. Therefore, our board members will be reaching out to you to educate you on GAMOA, the legislative session and the current state of the industry. We greatly appreciate your support and look forward

to speaking with you in the weeks to come.

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

Schneider

from Page 5

"Small business owners need access to banking services and should not be excluded from financial institutions based upon their industry or means of currency. Banks should not treat legal and transparent businesses differently based upon subjective or political reasons. While this rule is a positive step in ending unfair and illegal bank discrimination, we would also encourage the OCC to review and update the bank examiner language to more modern standards, especially as it pertains to independent, non-bank ATMs and the services they provide. The current language is archaic and implies that independent, non-bank ATMs are money laundering devices. This is certainly not the case, and we hope that further rules may be issued to modernize the language and acknowledge the legitimate and important resource independent, non-bank ATMs provide citi-

zens in communities across the nation."

Although the rule was finalized by the OCC on Jan. 14, as anticipated, the rule has been paused by the new administration until further review by the next Comptroller of the Cur-



rency.

AMOA continues working with our champions on Capitol Hill in monitoring and making sure the new rule moves forward.

In addition, AMOA continues to adapt to the challenges the pandemic has placed on conducting its in-person programs for 2021. Following are new dates for programs typically conducted during the first quarter.

AMOA State Council Meeting – The meeting has been postponed until Thursday, April

22, to Saturday, April 24, at the Sheraton Mesa in Mesa, AZ. The theme of the meeting is "2021: Re-Assessing the Landscape."

Amusement Expo International – The dates of the 2021 Amusement Expo International (AEI) have been shifted one day forward to allow exhibitors showing at both Bowl Expo in Louisville, KY and AEI in Las Vegas time to get their booths shipped.

Amusement Expo International will now be June 29-July 1, 2021 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Education Day will take place Tuesday, June 29, at the Westgate Las Vegas, and the trade show takes place Wednesday, June 30, through Thursday, July 1, in the North Hall of the Las Vegas Convention Center. Visit www.amusementexpo.org for up-to-date information.

Membership – The AMOA 2021 membership cycle continues with a "pay what you can" approach ... pay full/pay half/pay zero. Whether you're a

member renewing or a member joining our mission, we encourage you to stay engaged to access goods and services regardless of your ability to pay. If you've never been a member of AMOA, now is the perfect time to take AMOA for a test drive!

Education – AMOA offers new and ongoing On-Demand education to its members. All sessions are recorded and available online exclusively for AMOA members to access at their leisure.

For more information on these and other AMOA programs and services, visit www.amoa.com or contact AMOA at info@amoa.com or (815) 893-6010.

AMOA is a national trade association representing the interests of operators, distributors, manufacturers and suppliers in the amusement entertainment industry. GAMOA is an active participant in the AMOA State Council. Visit www.amoa.com.

We are committed to the health and safety of our employees and customers.

To ensure your comfort and safety, we are committed to the following:

- ✦ All games are regularly cleaned and sanitized to CDC standards.
- ✦ CDC approved sanitizers are used on all high touch point areas including: Touchscreens, Joysticks, Buttons, Trackballs, Control Panel areas and any other surfaces used to play the game.
- ✦ We recommend washing your hands with soap and water or using hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol when you finish playing.



We thank you for your business and hope you enjoy your play!

AMOA HAS CREATED items to assist operators in relaying a message of safety to its customers, including a poster (left) and a sticker (below right), that are available from the organization.

We Take Your Safety Seriously.

This machine is cleaned regularly according to CDC standards.

Thank you for your business.

The Change of Leadership at Primero

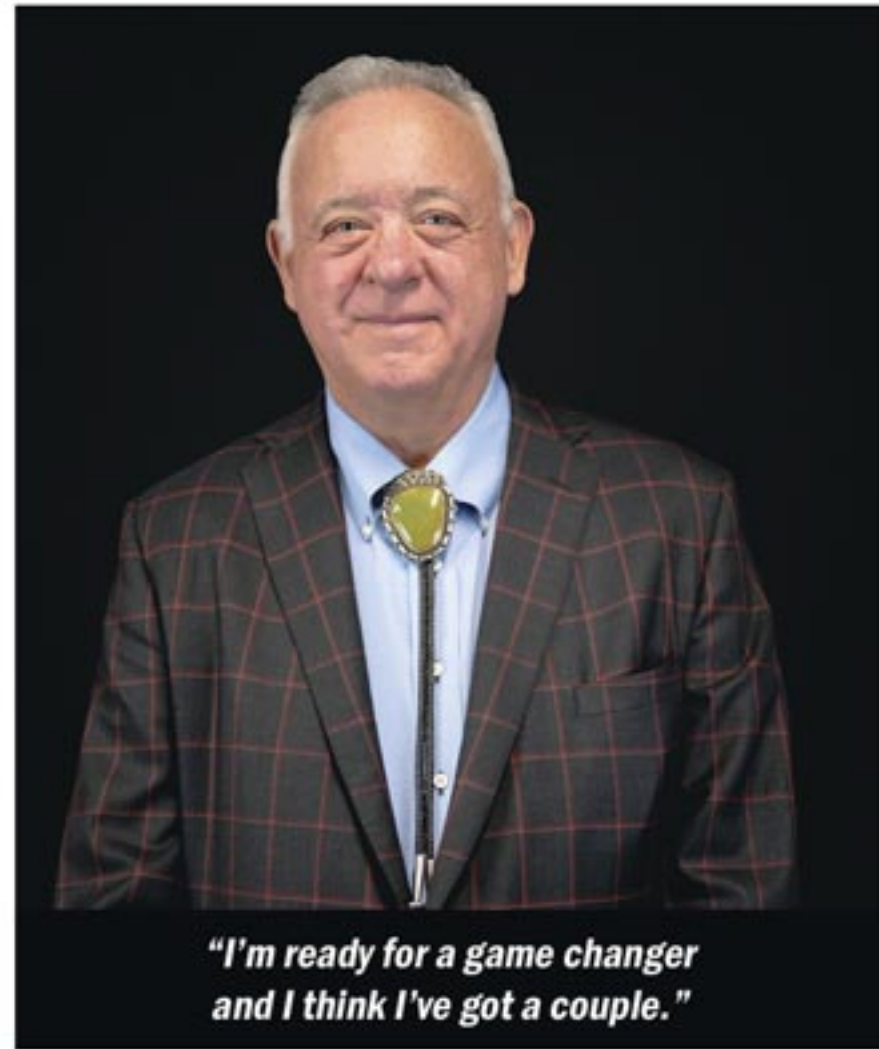
Primero Games is now helmed by a new owner.

By Alexandra McCray

Industry legend Mike Macke bought the COAM manufacturer from Kelly Macke, at the end of 2020. The leadership transition points to a pivotal new direction for the company.

Macke's 40 years of experience include becoming one of the largest operators in the Southeast and extensive knowledge of game design and production. His roots in the industry date back to 1980, when the first company he was involved in created the hit countertop bar game Little Casino. Revolutionary concepts such as that would become Macke's trademark.

From founding Cadillac Jack, a former manufacturer that transformed Class II gaming and thrived in the Mexican market, to inventing the "nudge," Macke's contributions have consistently driven the amusement business forward. He is even familiar with redesigning game cabinets to improve the experience for the player and/or the operator for service. And Macke is eager to use his unique insight across various areas of the industry to guide Primero into the future. "One of the exciting things about me getting back involved in the company is that now I can step forward and put the same influence on game design and changes that need to be made that I did a long time ago," he says.



"I'm ready for a game changer and I think I've got a couple."



Mike Macke with his dog Amber

"There is data now that tells us the behavior of the game. We can identify what kind of player someone is and how they play," Macke explains. He adds that understanding those features allows the professionals at Primero to design games that fit the player experience.

The company already has multiple new products it plans to roll out soon in Georgia. Among them is the manufacturer's introduction of the ticket-in, ticket-out (TITO) feature to the state. Primero also plans to release new pull-tab content for different markets. "Some of the new projects we are releasing provide new interactive and entertaining experiences for the players. "I'm ready for a game changer and I think I've got a couple," says Macke. Additionally, Macke's vision is to take his innovative approach to game design and his unmatched understanding of player habits back into Class II and Class III markets.

Throughout his career, Macke has also been heavily involved with legislation and played an integral role in helping to get the law passed that opened the doors for the machines used today that qualify as Class B to enter the Georgia market.

He notes that a deep understanding of the Georgia gaming sector has been integral to his 25 years of success in the state. Knowing the nuances of the market and the players in it is something Macke says sets him and Primero apart and is something that the company will continue to utilize.



Greg Gronau, CEO



Outside of groundbreaking launches, one of Macke's intentions for Primero is growth through acquisitions. Heftier investments in research and development will be a priority for the business as well. Macke's current and continued focus, however, is on connecting with customers and ensuring that the company's tagline of "Trust & Value" is at the center of all that it does.



The owner has a truly open-door policy and invites customers to share their needs and feedback with him. Understanding what it is like to be both an operator and a manufacturer, Macke knows a steady flow of communication between the two is needed for both parties to prosper. He and his team emphasize that the company's ultimate goal is to create products that genuinely fit a need and bring added value. Customer interaction is not only appreciated and important to them but is desired.

Macke believes his presence and supervision will further instill confidence in the Primero brand. Now and in the future, customers can expect a spirit of flexibility and the forward-thinking attitude he is known for.

In a sense, Primero has been primed for this transition as new executives with notable backgrounds in the gaming industry have been brought on board within the past two years. Additions to the company include Chief Executive Officer Greg Gronau, Chief Technology Officer Jared Torres, and National Sales & Marketing Manager Michael "Smitty" Smith. Most of the new leaders have worked with Macke in one way or another at some point in time. As the former CEO of Cadillac Jack, Gronau spent three years with Macke. Together, they grew the company from roughly \$20 million in profits to \$80 million. They plan to do the same with Primero.

Acquiring the company is not all that is new for Macke. Outside of being a gaming industry innovator, longtime beekeeper and trout farm owner, he has also become a high-profile philanthropist. Macke has upheld his family's multigenerational tradition of supporting the Tellus Science Museum in Cartersville, Georgia. His gift of \$750,000 in late 2019 was not only Macke's most generous but is also the largest donation the museum has ever received from an individual. "It's just something I've always wanted to do. My family was involved in that museum a long time ago," says Macke. As a gesture of gratitude, the museum's Great Hall is now named the "Michael Mayo Macke Great Hall." Moving forward, Macke plans to increase his charitable efforts to give back to the community and the amusement industry as a whole.



Greg Gronau
CEO



Jared Torres
CTO



Victor Kannan
CFO



Barry Rutherford
Bus. Development



Mark Jefferson
CLO



"Smitty" Michael Smith
NSM & MM



Sales Team
(Smitty, Kristina McDaniel, Randy Young, and Steve Roger)



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Card

from Page 1

The gift card pilot program was launched in late November with plans to test the card in nearly 330 locations with coin-operated amusement machines in 195 cities over a 4-6 month period. The locations invited to join the pilot program were selected to represent the industry as a whole in terms of various sales categories and trade styles. Intralot is the Lottery's overall product supplier and operator, while InComm, an Atlanta-based payment technology company, is managing the gift card pilot program.

Heinen said that as of early February, over 150 of those locations have responded to the Lottery's invitation to join the pilot program, and contracts have been sent to them so that they can participate. Of the locations that have received contracts, over half currently have a POS (point-of-sale) system installed and cards in stock to award players when they win a COAM prize.

Over 1,000 cards have been activated as of early February, Heinen said, with total redemptions on gift cards exceeding \$182,000.

"We expect these numbers to increase as we work with the industry to increase participation and awareness," he said.

Representatives of Georgia's

COAM industry have said gift-card redemption would stimulate further growth by attracting new players, generating new locations and marketing the COAM product more efficiently. That growth will in turn provide even larger industry contributions to the state's HOPE

In addition, the Division has reviewed the POS system provided by InComm and made suggestions to make it easier for the store clerk to activate the COAM gift cards for prize redemption.

"InComm has been extremely receptive of our suggestions and

The primary cards are Visa with a secondary inventory of MasterCard cards available if licensees run out. The pilot program guidelines include:

- Locations must use the designated card issued by Lottery, which has a specific sticker on the front of the package.
- Licensees do not need a separate ACH bank account – their existing business account is sufficient.
- Players must be 18 years old to use the card.
- Funds will be available on the cards following a one-hour delay required to help avoid any fraud during authorization.
- The minimum amount that can be loaded onto the card is \$20, and they have a maximum limit of \$500.
- The funds received do not expire, but the cards themselves do – players must call the number or go to the website listed on the card for a replacement if expiration is imminent.
- The cards are not able to be used for alcohol, tobacco or firearms to be consistent with redemption laws.
- Gift cards cannot be used at ATMs.
- Funds cannot be transferred to other locations.
- The cards are not currently reloadable, nor are they for sale – they can only be used to redeem COAM winnings.



Photo courtesy of GLC

THE GEORGIA LOTTERY is supplying a decal sticker promoting the use of gift cards for redemption during a pilot program for the cards underway in the Georgia market.

and Pre-K education programs. A working group comprised of regulators and industry leaders is involved in the card's development.

COAM Division staff, Heinen added, will be contacting invited location license holders and their master license holders who have not responded to the Lottery's invitation to participate or who have been slow to activate cards for prizes.

has already implemented many improvements," he said.

Heinen also said compliance inspectors are delivering marketing signage and decals to place directly on the COAMs to increase player awareness.

The COAM Division will be reviewing data collected and analyzed by an outside consulting firm to decide if the program is viable for statewide implementation following the pilot program.

Study

from Page 1

Corp. is currently instituting a pilot program for a gift card as a potential innovation to COAM redemption (see related story on Page 1). Under the pilot program, players winning on Class B machines may receive a gift card uniquely identified as a Georgia Lottery product that can be utilized at the location and other participating locations. The pilot program will involve between 100 and 300 locations and last about four to six months.

Shawn Fellows, president of the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association, said GAMOA "welcomes every opportunity to work with stakeholders to advance and improve the regulatory structure that exists within the state related to the COAM industry."

The prevailing idea established during the Senate Study Committee, Fellows said, was a need for a gift card and how the card can be used to expand the industry, both in size and contribution to the Hope and Pre-K educational programs as part of the state's lottery.

"We look forward to continued collaboration among the Georgia Lottery Corp., GAMOA and the retailers to develop solutions to complex issues that will face our industry in the months and years to come."

Following are the committee's specific recommendations:

Contracts

- Allow for longer contractual periods between master license holders and location licensees.
- Provide for continuity of contracts to help reduce number of ownership change applications made to the Georgia Lottery Corporation each year.

Gift cards

- Support the implementation of the Georgia Lottery Gift Card Pilot Program in an effort to make informed decisions about potential uses and limitations of a similar permanent program.

Inducements

- Continue the prohibition and disfavored treatment of inducements.
- Provide criminal penalties for unlawful inducements.

Veterans and fraternal organizations

- Provide an exemption from the gross retail receipts rule to veteran organizations and fraternal organizations.

Enhanced scrutiny

- Require greater financial and security background information when master license holders initially apply for and renew their license (in order to aid the Georgia Lottery Corp. in its administration and enforcement of laws).
- Change to a three-year license period which would be administered on a rolling basis so that one third of the industry would be up for renewal each year.
- Provide greater transparency by master licensees in the initial application for and renewal of master licenses in order to aid Georgia Lottery Corporation in its administration and enforcement of laws and regulations prohibiting inducements and other unfair methods of competition.

Enforcement

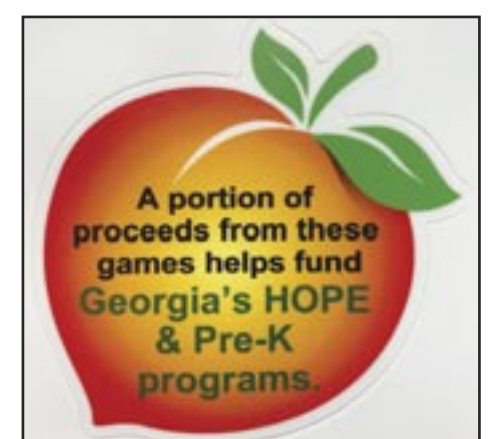
- Where practical, help local governments to enforce regulations on the local level.

Innovation

- Support a competitive market that encourages continued innovation and investments in games, services, and new product development.
- Encourage future legislation that includes the ability to address and correct problems at any location without unfairly affecting other locations.

Revenue shares

- While the stakeholders in the industry "effectively represented their desire to maximize recovery," the committee did not make any recommended legislation, but did agree that the "Georgia Lottery Corp. should look for ways to increase its revenue."



Retail Matters

Marathon completes Speedway sale

Melissa Kress

Convenience Store News

As businesses, and the country as a whole, grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic, Marathon Petroleum Corp. (MPC) is staying focused on the things it can control.

"The unprecedented challenges this year created by the COVID pandemic accelerated the need for us to act swiftly and decisively to change how we conduct our business," Michael J. Hennigan, president and CEO, explained during the company's fourth-quarter 2020 earnings call, held Feb. 2.

While the pandemic is beyond MPC's control, Hennigan said, the company is focused on three key initiatives around aspects of the business within its control:

1. Strengthening the competitive position of its assets;
2. Improving commercial performance; and
3. Lowering MPC's cost structure.

"During the year, we've been faced with many tough decisions, but our team continues to make tangible progress on all three initiatives in ways we believe will drive stronger through-cycle earnings and position the company for long-term success," he said.

Some of the actions MPC took during the fourth quarter included:

- Progressing the sale of its retail subsidiary – Enon, Ohio-



based Speedway LLC – to Irving, Texas-based 7-Eleven Inc.;

- Advancing its investments in renewables, including ramping up production at its Dickinson, N.D., renewable fuels facility and progressing plans to convert its Martinez, Calif., refinery into a renewable fuels facility;
- Expanding its commercial focus; and
- Exercising strict discipline on how capital and expense dollars are spent.

"No matter what lies ahead, we are setting the company on a path to drive stronger through-cycle earnings and position the company for longer-term success," Hennigan said.

Speedway sale

In August, MPC reached an agreement to sell the Speedway chain to 7-Eleven for \$21 billion. The deal for the 3,900 Speedway convenience stores also includes a

15-year fuel supply agreement for about 7.7 billion gallons per year associated with the Speedway business, as Convenience Store News previously reported.

"We remain committed to use the sale proceeds to strengthen the balance sheet and return capital to MPC shareholders," Hennigan said, adding that an important priority for MPC "is to defend a solid investment-grade credit profile."

The \$21 billion purchase price is broken into about \$4.5 billion in taxes and \$16.5 billion in net proceeds, according to the company.

At the time the sale was announced, MPC said it was eyeing a first-quarter 2021 closing date. While the timing of the deal's closing is dependent on the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) process, MPC continues to target the closing for the end of the first quarter of 2021, the chief executive reported during the Feb. 2 earnings call.

"During the quarter, we responded to the second request from the FTC, and continue to support 7-Eleven in its efforts to secure anti-trust clearance," Hennigan said. "Our interactions with 7-Eleven and our interactions with the FTC have gone well."

"Within the scope of what we can control, we are finalizing transition service agreements with 7-Eleven and we expect to have them completed by the end of February."

Based in Findlay, MPC is an integrated downstream energy company that operates the nation's largest refining system. MPC's marketing system includes branded locations across the United States, including Marathon-brand retail outlets. Speedway LLC, an MPC subsidiary, owns and operates retail convenience stores across the U.S. MPC also owns the general partner and majority limited partner interest in MPLX LP, a midstream company.

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Retail Matters

C-store suppliers exude optimism

Convenience Store News

The supplier community is riding a wave of optimism into 2021, according to the latest NACS Supplier Member Pulse Survey.

The survey found that suppliers who sell through convenience stores saw their sales in the channel grow in 2020, with nearly twice as many reporting an increase than a decrease (50 percent vs. 28 percent).

The results mirror what NACS retailer members reported in a similar survey in January, with 59 percent of retailers reporting a sales increase, compared to 30 percent who saw sales decline (in-store sales only), as Convenience Store News previously reported.

More significantly, NACS pointed out, supplier members said they are increasing their emphasis on the convenience channel in 2021. Specifically, 63 percent said they will boost their investment in the channel – including 18 percent who will significantly increase their investment – compared to 10 percent who said they will decrease their convenience retail investment.

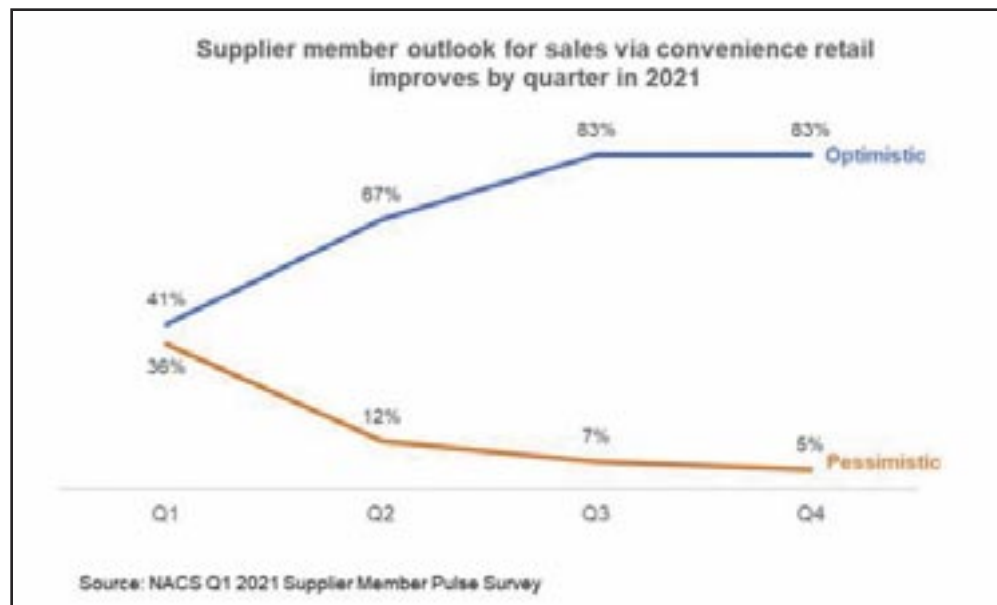
In addition, they said that product innovation will be their top investment in the channel, ahead of growing their sales forces and advertising, among others.

"Our industry continues to find success in very challenging times because our supplier partners truly are partners, and our close working relationships – and alignment on strategies and attitudes – are important and we together redefine how we provide convenience to customers every single day," said NACS Chairman Kevin Smartt, CEO and president of Kwik Chek Food Stores in Bonham, Texas.

As for primary drivers for growing 2020 sales, survey respondents cited:

- New relationships with retailers (57 percent);
- Increasing the number of SKUs in the channel (32 percent) and;
- Increasing the quantity of existing SKUs in the channel (24 percent).

Suppliers also said that they



will continue these efforts in 2021. Nearly two-thirds will seek to form new relationships with retailers, one-third will add more SKUs in the channel and one quarter will increase the amount of existing SKUs.

"The challenges and change that we and our convenience retailer partners have experienced over the past year have been seismic," said Rick Brindle, chairman of the NACS Supplier Board and vice president of industry development for Mondelez International. "What hasn't changed is our collective commitment to each other and the consumers we both serve."

Suppliers also noted issues for the convenience retail industry to address, led by keeping up with shopper preferences (55 percent), introducing new products (49 percent), meeting demand for pickup or delivery (38 percent).

Foodservice offering (45 percent) and food safety (33 percent) were also top priorities expressed by suppliers.

As for the 2021 outlook, suppliers are more optimistic than pessimistic about their sales in the convenience retailing channel for the first quarter (41 percent vs. 36 percent), and their optimism grows significantly for the ensuing three quarters, peaking at 83 percent of suppliers expressing optimism about fourth-quarter sales, compared to only 5 percent who are pessimistic.

The NACS Supplier Member Pulse Survey was fielded Jan. 27-Feb. 5 by NACS Research and

complements six-plus years of Retailer Pulse Surveys. A total of 109 companies participated.

The survey's findings are somewhat in line with the 2021 Convenience Store News Forecast Study. Although only 54 percent of convenience channel suppliers said they have a positive view on the U.S. economy for the year ahead, suppliers are more bullish about the convenience channel than any of the other retail channels they serve. Specifically, 71 percent rate business conditions in the convenience channel positively, placing it ahead of grocery (62 percent), mass merchandisers (47 percent), dollar stores (46 percent), and drugstores (43 percent).

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