



GEORGIA Amusement JOURNAL

Dedicated to serving the Georgia COAM industry
Endorsed by the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association
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A Tash Communications publication

February 2025

Vol. 8, Number 10

GA market continues to attract

NextGen seeks new legacy in manufacturing

By Paul Tash

Georgia Amusement Journal

The partners at NextGen Gaming, a Georgia-based gaming manufacturer, say their company provides a unique blend of experience and service to its customers in Georgia's COAM market.

The partners at NextGen Gaming have built a legacy of entrepreneurship, leading ventures across retail, commercial real estate, family entertainment, and cutting-edge software and app development. With over a decade of hands-on experience in the gaming industry, they possess a deep understanding of both operations and innovation. Leveraging this expertise, NextGen took a bold step into manufacturing last year, driven by a commitment to shaping the future of gaming.

"Now we're leading the way in manufacturing," said Nasir Bhamani, a partner at NextGen Gaming who is representing the leadership team and reaffirming the company's commitment to innovation, quality, and industry excellence. "Our experience on the operations side sets us apart. We've



Photo courtesy of NextGen Gaming

NASIR BHAMANI, one of the partners in NextGen Gaming, said the company is leveraging its experience in both operations and innovation for its move into manufacturing.

taken what we've learned in the field – what route operators need and what technicians require, and applied it to our manufacturing process to create better products.

"We're continuously evolving, ensuring that we offer high-quality products that meet industry demands in both performance and

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C3 Gaming, long a dream, now a reality

By Paul Tash

Georgia Amusement Journal

One of Georgia's newest skill game providers, C3 Gaming is a dream come true for founder and CEO Cesar Neira, who started in the gaming industry 23 years ago as a technician in Las Vegas.

"It's been a dream of mine to have my own product," Neira told the Georgia Amusement Journal recently. "It's exciting. To see the game in the first location was incredible."

Neira said C3 Gaming, based in Stone Mountain, seeks to develop skill games that "excite, entertain, and retain customers."

"Our investment in the best and newest technology allows us to provide operators with solid and reliable equipment that will help to grow their business," he said.

The company recently released a five-game suite called Emerald 1 on its dual monitor cabinet Atlas. A new 43-inch Odyssey cabinet is expected to debut later this year, Neira said, and C3 Gaming will have other new products on display

See **C3 GAMING** Page 13



Amusement Expo to power up in Vegas

Georgia Amusement Journal Amusement Expo International (AEI), the amusement industry's biggest event of the year, is ready to roll March 17-20 in Las Vegas.

"You'll gain hands-on experience with the latest entertainment technology – including virtual reality – and have an opportunity to dive into the latest information to build your busi-

ness with informative educational sessions," said Lori Schneider, executive director of the Amusement & Music Operators Association. AMOA co-hosts the expo, the theme of which this year is "Power Up," with the American Amusement Machine Association.

AMOA members who have renewed their membership for 2025 can

register for two free badges to the AEI trade show.

"So be sure to renew your 2025 membership today," Schneider said. "Not a member? Be sure to join AMOA and receive all the annual benefits, plus your two free AEI trade show badges."

AMOA members are also invited

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Journal Opinion

AMOA in D.C. to oppose de-banking

**Lori Schneider,
AMOA Executive Director**

The 2025 legislative session is already proving to be an active one for AMOA as the “de-banking” issue is currently under the spotlight in Washington, D.C.

On Wednesday, Feb. 5, the Senate Banking Committee conducted a hearing on de-banking, and even though the initial focus was on big tech and crypto, it was evident there was strong bi-partisan concern over how widespread the de-banking issue has been on certain industries and small businesses as well. In fact, many members during the hearing referred to the issue as Operation Chokepoint 2.0.

AMOA will be returning to the Hill to meet with legislators March 4. However, we’ve already been conducting several Zoom calls in February with Senate Banking leadership staff.

Please read any AMOA email requests to take legislative action and support our industry. Fair access to banking is extremely crucial to operators across the country, and we need to make sure legislators hear our message.



Lori Schneider

Please read any AMOA email requests to take legislative action and support our industry.

State Council meeting

Thank you to our 2025 AMOA State Council Meeting attendees in San Antonio, TX, Jan. 23-25.

Although the weather didn’t cooperate, the networking and exchange of information between states provided value to all who attended. Next year’s event will take place in Orlando.

Upcoming dates

Amusement Expo International March 17-20 – Westgate and Las Vegas Convention Center



Photo courtesy of AMOA

AMOA'S STATE COUNCIL meeting was well attended Jan. 23-25 in San Antonio.

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Reprints of articles and back issues are available at a cost of \$20. If you wish to begin receiving the Georgia Amusement Journal, send your name, mailing address, telephone number and \$60 for a year’s subscription to Georgia Amusement Journal, P.O. Box 4307, Butte, MT 59702.

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This publication endorsed by the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association

COAM calendar

April 20: Gross retail receipts for January, February and March are due. The gross retail receipts must be submitted electronically through the COAM website at www.gacoam.com. Failure to report on time may result in penalties.

— MEETINGS/OTHER —

- Feb. 18:** COAM Advisory Board, GA Lottery headquarters, downtown Atlanta
- Feb. 20:** GAMOA membership meeting, Hilton Atlanta Northeast, Peachtree Corners
- May 15:** GACS Southern Convenience Store and Petroleum Show, Macon, The Centreplex

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

Exhibitors, plan now for The Show

Sharon Shuford GACS Membership

The Southern Convenience Store and Petroleum Show, now in its 23rd year, returns to Macon with the theme “Unlock What’s In Store.”

The theme reflects the main purpose of The Show: to provide store owners, operators, and buyers information about the newest ways to improve their businesses – from food service to fuel, novelties to snacks, and everything in between. The Show’s theme also reflects GACS’ commitment to always look to the future of the industry, including the ever-present impacts of legislative activity on the convenience business.

The date is May 15, and the location is The Centreplex in Macon.

The Show provides an opportunity for c-store suppliers to showcase their products and services and for retail decision-makers to learn about what’s new in the industry.

Here are the top 10 things exhibitors can do to prepare:

10. Visit www.gacs.com/events for information about The Southern Convenience Store & Petroleum



Sharon Shuford

This is your opportunity to show store owners, buyers and operators new ways to improve their businesses.

Show and to obtain a booth.

9. Join GACS to save \$500 on your booth.

8. Purchase an ad in the Trade Show Guide distributed to every retailer who attends The Show. Rates start at \$300 for a half-page ad and \$500 for a full-page ad for members.

7. Book your hotel room at the Macon Marriott – GACS special pricing of \$159/night expires on April 26. Visit www.gacs.com to book your room.

6. Increase your visibility



and become a GACS sponsor. Sponsorships start at just \$1,000 annually.

5. Get your “stuff” together: Booth décor, product samples and booth staff (up to four included with your booth). Remember, no goodie bags – these are handed out at the registration desks.

4. Order electrical, water,

internet and other services using the Exhibitor Services Kit sent to each exhibitor when space is reserved using the GACS exhibit contract form. Ship materials using the forms in the Exhibitor Services Kit.

3. Set up your booth Wednesday, May 14, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

2. Attend the pre-Show cocktail reception on May 14 from 4-6 p.m.

1. Enjoy yourself exhibiting at the Show on May 15 from 9 a.m. until closing! Exhibits should be manned during show hours. Remember, this is your opportunity to show store owners, buyers and operators new ways to improve their businesses. They are there to engage with you.

Show schedule

Wednesday, May 14

8 am-5 pm – Exhibitor setup

2-5 pm – Registration open

4-6 pm – Cocktail reception

Thursday, May 15

8-9 am – Department of Agriculture’s “All About Hemp” presentation

8 am-3 pm – Registration open

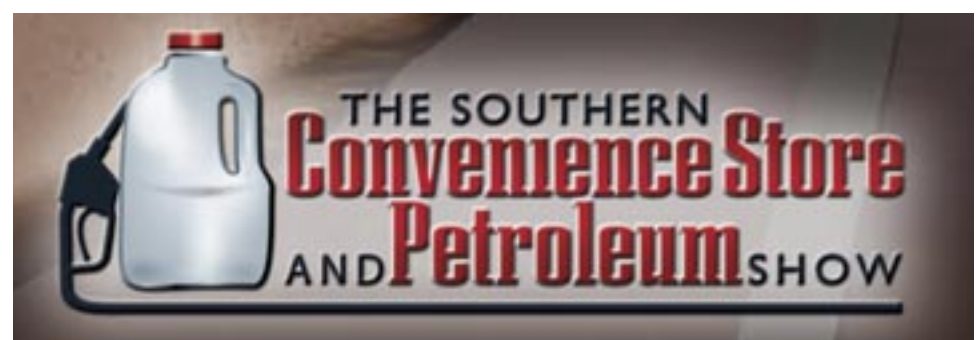
9 am-4 pm – Trade show floor open



Photos courtesy of GACS



LAST YEAR’S Southern Convenience Store and Petroleum Show, sponsored by GACS, was a hit for both exhibitors and attendees (above). GACS President Angela Holland and Brian Wiegert, vice president of Underwriting for PMMIC (left), share a laugh during booth set-up before last year’s Show.



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Expo

from Page 1

to the AMOA member after-party on Wednesday night, March 19, at the Jewel nightclub in the Aria.

AEI25's Education Conference will be held at the Westgate Hotel March 17-18, and the Expo follows on March 19-20 at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

"AEI is recognized as one of the most engaging and inspiring events of the year," AEI media information said. "As one of the fastest-growing trade shows in the country, it's well organized, packed with educational content, and provides plenty of access to leading experts in the industry."

Surround yourself with industry experts and hear success stories that can significantly boost your business and inspire new perspectives on games and entertainment. AEI delivers a powerful dynamic setting – fast-paced and fun-filled – to help turn your company into a thriving business."

The popular trade show will feature vendors showcasing amusements and games, music and jukeboxes, bulk vending and merchandising, ATMs and cashless solutions, professional services and more.



Booth reservations for this year's event have already surpassed last year's total. The trade show floor promises to showcase cutting-edge technology, personalized experiences, and innovative systems designed to meet evolving consumer demands.

Exclusive experiences

AEI's unique combination of features sets this award-winning event apart from many others, ensuring an unmatched experience for all. Attendees can expect:

- Exclusive opportunities to immerse yourself in the latest one-of-a-kind games coming into the market
- Relevant, actionable insights for your business – not broad, general information
- Access to speakers for more meaningful discussions
- Practical strategies you can

immediately apply to your business

- Focused learning for all levels of your business

Educational opportunities

AEI25's Education Conference has established itself as a crucial training platform for professionals in the out-of-home entertainment industry. This comprehensive event caters to a diverse range of market sectors, including route operators, location-based entertainment venues, family entertainment centers, arcades, recreation centers, and so much more. Topics include:

- Human Resources: Learn how to build strong, creative teams that drive success in this competitive and unique industry.
- AI: One of AEI's most popular topics covering the latest developments in artificial intelligence as well as the trends and initiatives that are shaping the game industry.

• Arcade: Arcades are experiencing an incredible revival fueled by nostalgia and innovation. Hear about the latest in profit for play.

• The Future of Location-Based Amusements: Learn what key trends are shaping an industry evolving in response to changing consumer preferences and advancement in game technology.

The Education Conference also offers a fun and informative learning opportunities that include:

- Engaging speaker presentations from industry experts.
- Informative breakout sessions.
- Keynote luncheon.
- Hands-on workshops.
- Peer-to-peer networking.
- Panel discussions on critical industry topics.

"By attending this powerhouse conference, participants can ensure they remain competitive and innovative in this competitive industry," AEI media information said.

Hotel options expand

AEI has also expanded its hotel options for AEI25. Now, in addition to the Westgate Hotel, a limited number of rooms will be available at the popular Resorts World. For more information, visit www.amusementexpo.org.

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Betson to host seminars on Light & Wonder

Betson Southeast will hold training sessions for technicians on Light & Wonder COAMs Feb. 18 and 19 at its new facility in Kennesaw.

Calling it a “must-attend event for field support and in-house technicians,” Betson said participants

will learn how to configure Georgia COAM ArgOS software with step-by-step guidance on installation, system setup, and game configuration. They will “gain the



skills to make EGMs operational and ready for gameplay,” Betson said.

The sessions start at 10 a.m., and each ses-

sion is limited to 32 students. Lunch will be provided.

The facility’s address is 3380 Town Point Drive, Suite 200, in Kennesaw. Those interested in attending should RSVP to Rick Murphy at 770-316-0945 or rmurphy@betson.com.

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855-5BADDOG



C3 Gaming

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at the Southern Amusement and Entertainment Expo in Duluth in August.

The cabinets, built by Cadrex, are “high-quality, made-in-America products that are sleek, secure and reliable, which make them great for any location,” Neira said. All C3 Gaming cabinets feature a NV200 bill acceptor and Pyramid or Nanoptix Paycheck 4 printers.

C3’s goal, Neira said, is to provide “a great game at a modest price point” that gives master licensees “the opportunity for maximum profit.”

A technician first

Unable to find a career that inspired him in his native Chicago, Neira moved to Las Vegas in 2002. He earned an ITT electronic engineering degree and went to work for a bill acceptor manufacturer that provided product to the gaming industry as a technician repairing bill acceptors and other machine parts. He soon discovered a passion for the gaming world and went all in.

“I kept working my way up,” he said.

Neira’s initial exposure in the Georgia COAM market came about 15 years ago as a salesman selling bill acceptors, and he began building relationships with master licensees. He then started a few machine routes, saving money along the way with the idea of creating a company to develop his own games. He moved to Georgia four years ago.

In 2023, Neira formed C3 Gaming (named after himself, his son Christopher and his grandson Cesar), hired a team of engineers, and embarked on his dream.

“It was a two-year project,” he said, “and a great learning experience.”

C3 Gaming is now up and running, ready to compete in Georgia’s ever-growing COAM industry.

“As a locally owned skill game manufacturer, we know the Georgia market,” he said, “and we know Georgia operators expect superior communication, state-of-the-art equipment, quality customer service, and above all, integrity. We look forward to serving the Georgia market and our customers for years to come.”

While Cadrex manufacturers its cabinets, C3 Gaming “does the final assembly here,” Neira said, including installing the logic boards and other finishing work “to get them out the door.” He said the company also provides “board-only solutions” to customers.



Photo courtesy of C3 Gaming



GAMING

Neira said Georgia was a logical market for him to launch his company and products.

“I felt like it was a great place for somebody to introduce a new platform,” he said. “The Georgia COAM market is more of a community than a global gaming environment,” he said. “You can talk to every single one of your customers.”

“I feel like I’m among friends.”

Customer service

He said building relationships is the key to success, and providing strong technical support and customer service is vital to building those relationships.

“Coming from the technician’s background,” he said, “helping customers resolve problems ... is something that’s always stuck with me.”

“We have a great product and want to stand behind it,” he said. “We expect operators to be satisfied with our products. We make it a priority to provide prompt and thorough support.”

Neira said C3 Gaming is looking forward not only to becoming a part of the Georgia COAM market, but to becoming part of the community “by giving back where they can,” he said.

“One thing I want to do is figure out ways to put money back into the Atlanta-metro community,” he said. “It’s a goal of mine.”

Neira wants to do more than “write checks,” he said. He wants to participate in charities and possibly even invest in small-business startups.

“A lot of people have stood by me on my journey,” he said. “I want to give back.”

Emerald’s titles

Emerald I is a five-game suite by C3 Gaming – featured in a dual-monitor cabinet – with titles *Secret Treasure of Cleopatra*, *Lucky Disco Ball*, *Happy Chicken Coop*, *Aussie’s Fortune*, and *Thunderbolt Vortex Bonus*.

Secret Treasure of Cleopatra is a “hot swap” style five-line skill game with ancient Egyptian-

CESAR NEIRA stands next to one of the newest products in the Georgia COAM market – the Emerald 1 game suite and the Atlas dual monitor cabinet – in C3 Gaming’s facility in Stone Mountain.

themed game play and exciting bonuses and jackpots.

Lucky Disco Ball is a three-line skill game with a Disco Ball Draw multiplier. The game provides the sights and sounds of a disco with two-time and 10-time bonuses.

Happy Chicken Coop is a three-line skill game with a Chicken Coop Bonus round offering additional multipliers. Find the chicken that lays the golden egg, but beware of the pesky fox.

Aussie’s Fortune is a three-line game with an Australian outback theme. It features the Aussie Fortune Pick and reveal bonus and 20x-your-bet bonus feature.

Thunderbolt Vortex Bonus is another “hot swap” five-line skill game with five electrifying bonus rounds and fast-paced game play and entertaining graphics.

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NextGen

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value."

The company is based in Lawrenceville, where its main office and warehouse is located. It also has a warehouse in the Northeast.

Bhamani said NextGen is thrilled to be a part of the growing Georgia COAM market.

"Georgia has become a leader in COAM gaming, setting the bar for how the industry should operate," he said. "The market has grown tremendously over the years, and it's still expanding, creating exciting opportunities for operators, manufacturers, and everyone involved in the industry."

NextGen is now focused on bringing the best gaming equipment to the COAM market, Bhamani said. Its comprehensive product line includes premium metal cabinets, TiTo (Ticket In, Ticket Out) system kiosks, top-end monitors, ergonomic chairs, and essential parts and supplies to fully equip gaming businesses.

"We have product ready to ship," he said.

NextGen Gaming, Bhamani



added, provides "operator-focused designs."

"True reliability in gaming comes from a combination of innovation and precision," he said. "Our PCAP monitors, advanced logic box design, and premium metal cabinets with enhanced security are engineered to meet the highest industry standards. With casino-grade bill validators, sleek aesthetics, and cutting-edge technology, we create products designed with operators in mind – prioritizing functionality, ease of use, and enhanced player engagement. The result is a seamless ex-

perience that maximizes uptime and drives operator profitability."

Service 'anytime'

The cabinets are designed to provide "easy access for techs" to help them provide efficient maintenance and repair. In fact, Bhamani said, NextGen prides itself on service.

"You can call us anytime," he said. "Our team is always on call. We know how important it is."

NextGen also provides delivery options to its customers, Bhamani said, "so if they can't pick it up,

we'll ship it there."

"It doesn't matter where it is," he said.

Bhamani said NextGen is currently developing a new dispensing kiosk that will be ready by the important July 1, 2026, date, when only gift cards, replays and Lottery products will be allowed as legal forms of redemption for Class B machines.

"We're committed to bringing the right products to the market, whether in Georgia or beyond," he said. "As regulations evolve, we're ensuring that operators have the best and most reliable equipment to stay ahead of industry changes."

NextGen Gaming also provides cash redemption kiosks to other markets, and Bhamani said the company will continue "to reach outside Georgia," as well. While NextGen has an established presence in other regions, such as the Northeast, Southeast, Midwest, and Mountain West, its primary focus remains on expanding within the Georgia market, "because we are from here."

NextGen Gaming will be showing some of its products at the Amusement Expo International in Las Vegas next month in booth 1803.

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Retail Matters

Fresh food continues as c-store trend

By **Tammy Mastrobert**
Convenience Store News

Many of the consumer trends that have been going strong over the past couple of years are expected to continue through 2025, with some new ones added into the mix.

Freshly made, high-quality food is important to consumers today and with many convenience store operators stepping up their foodservice offerings, c-stores are becoming more on par with quick-service restaurants (QSRs), according to Sarah Becket, director of marketing at Intouch Insight, a provider of customer experience solutions for multilocation businesses.

In a third-party delivery survey that compared 300 made-to-order food orders from restaurants and 300 made-to-order food orders from c-stores, Intouch Insight found that convenience stores are very much equal to their restaurant counterparts — but there is still work to be done.

"C-stores are still playing

catchup with delivery because they have not been doing it as long, but 56% of respondents see c-stores as a viable option for food over QSRs," Becket said, pointing out that while c-stores were 43 seconds faster on average for delivery, satisfaction with speed of service was only 88% for convenience vs. 94% for restaurants.

"Even though they were faster, the perception is that they should be even faster because consumers have the idea that c-stores should be quick," she explained.

Transaction time when it comes to foodservice is becoming more important in-store as well, as consumers will often purchase grab-and-go over waiting for food to be made, noted Steve Morris, president of Retail Management Inc.

Technology trends

Transaction time is also dictating what technology solutions are being embraced by c-store operators. Consumers, especially the younger generations, are looking for digital, self-checkout and fric-

tionless interactions, and are willing to pay a premium for services like delivery because they are convenient, according to Becket.

"You have to understand the customer and what they want, and then you can understand what technology is needed to support an optimal customer journey," she told Convenience Store News.

In fact, Intouch Insight's "2024 Convenience Store Trends Report" found that 46% of North American customers prefer self-checkout for reasons including speed, avoiding employee interaction and the ability to pack their own bags. Above all else, though, speed is the No. 1 motivator, reported by 85% of those surveyed.

"We will see self-checkout continue to emerge as a solution to speed of checkout," echoed Michael Jaszczyk, CEO and chief digital transformation officer at GK Software SE, a provider of cloud services for retail. He also noted that consumers are looking for more mobile services, especially when it comes to foodservice.

Along with using technology to enhance the customer-facing experience, c-store operators are looking for technology to enhance their backend, too. These days, nearly every c-store operator is talking about how to harness artificial intelligence (AI) in the near future.

While smaller retailers may not think AI is for them, Morris said that's a misconception as there are actually options available for operators of all sizes, including using AI for payroll, workforce optimization and even optimizing the roller grill to manage waste.

Trends for the shelves

When it comes to product trends, some top-selling categories have experienced a slowdown in sales, while others have seen rebounds expected to continue through 2025.

Enhanced water, and water overall, continues to do well in the packaged beverages category, along with energy drinks, which have "found their way again," Morris reported.



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Decommission COAMs correctly

The proper procedure to decommission coin-operated amusement machines (COAMs) can be found on the COAM Division website, www.gacoam.com. The COAM decommission procedure should be followed when there is:

- A change of master, change of ownership, or cancellation letter received by GLC;
- A COAM game board swapped out with a different game;
- A COAM malfunction.

To proceed with the decommissioning:

1. Call Intralot before disconnecting the COAMs from a location and removing those COAMs. The Master License Holder (MLH) needs to contact the Intralot Hotline at 877-261-6242 to properly decommission COAMs. The COAMs must be connected to the site controller at this time.

2. Intralot will let you know when the COAMs are decommissioned. The Intralot representative will perform steps on the Intralot system that prepares the COAMs for the decommission. Once the steps are complete, Intralot will notify the MLH the machines have been decommissioned.

3. Disconnect decommissioned COAMs from the site controller.

Keep COAMs connected

To ensure accurate reporting of financial data to the Central Accounting System, the Georgia Lottery Corporation (GLC) says it is imperative the Location License Holders (LLHs) ensure all equipment remains connected to the site controller and powered up at all times.

The GLC maintains a record of those LLHs that are repeat offenders of failing to ensure the continuous connectivity and operation of Class B COAMs.

Failure to comply with these procedures may result in fines up to \$50,000, suspension and/or revocation of the license.

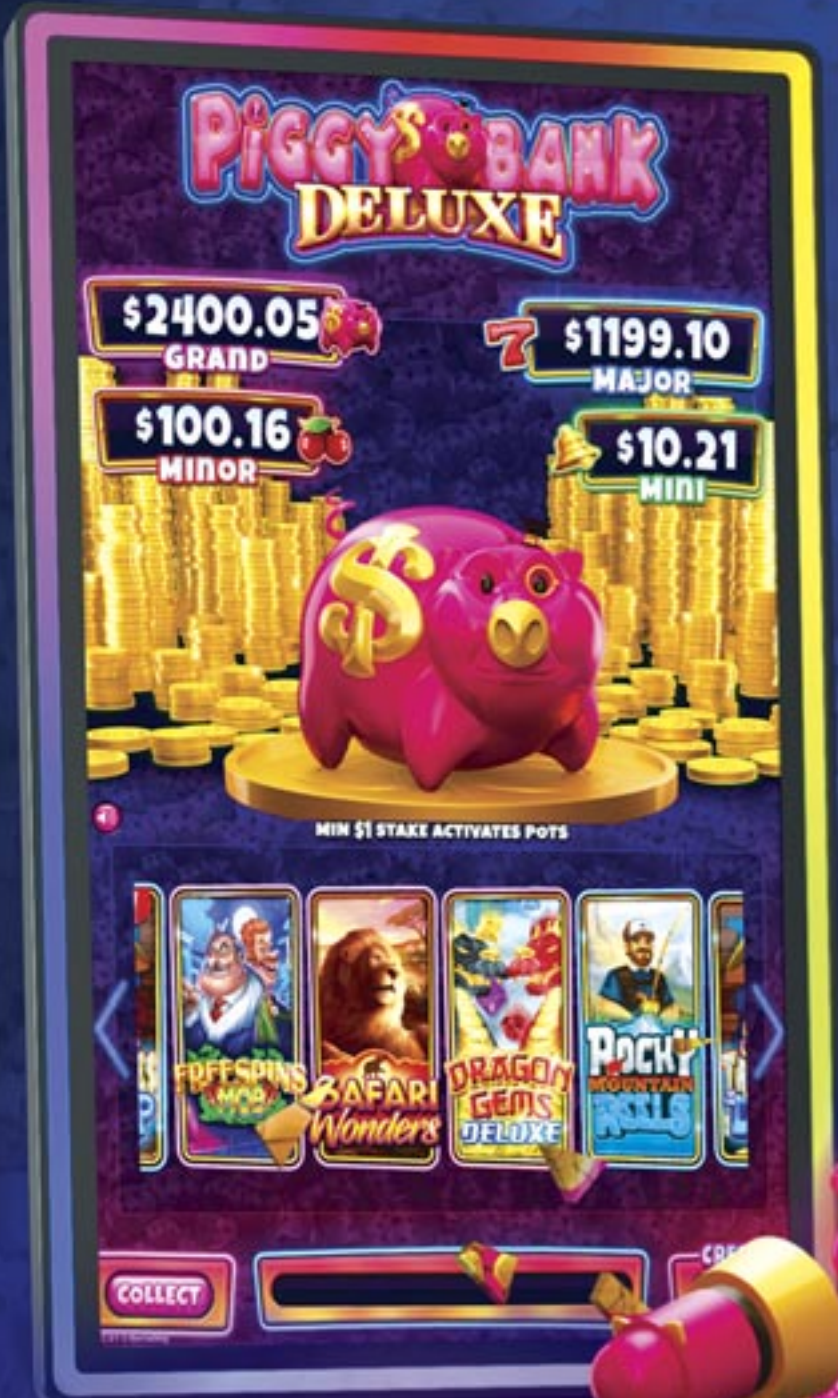
COIN OPERATED AMUSEMENT MACHINE LOCATION SWEEP AND MASTER PUSH CALENDAR



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

*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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