



GEORGIA Amusement JOURNAL

Dedicated to serving the Georgia COAM industry
Endorsed by the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association
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Retailers urged to review guide

LLH Guide available online at gacoam.com

By Paul Tash

Georgia Amusement Journal

As Georgia's COAM industry last year celebrated the 10th anniversary of the legislation that created a regulated market in the state, both regulators and industry representatives continue to discuss ways to enhance education efforts for licensees about COAM regulations and procedures.

For example, COAM Division Vice President Mike Parham in a COAM Advisory Board meeting in October discussed a plan to develop a video of training sessions designed to educate location licensees on a variety of activities, including how to keep the necessary records, pull an invoice report, and report gross business receipts online.

Board member CB Yadav suggested that more training for location licenses on what they are

required to provide during inspections would be helpful. Many location licensees, he said, "don't have much background" in business regulation.

Gretchen Corbin, president and CEO of the Georgia Lottery, said the potential for location training has been discussed, including the possibility of an "online tutorial." She noted, however, that some educational material is already available for retailers.



The most important educational piece now available is the Location License Holder (LLH) Guide. Corbin and John Heinen, COAM senior vice president, urged location licensees to review the LLH Guide that is available for download from the COAM website (www.gacoam.com).

"We tried to make it as short and user-friendly as we can," Heinen said at the October Advisory Board meeting. "This is a complicated industry. There's a lot to it."

The LLH Guide explains COAM regulations and provides answers to many questions current

See GUIDE Page 3



CSN photos

CSN recognizes top products of '23

Convenience Store News

The Convenience Store News Best New Products Awards program recognizes the marketers that introduce the most innovative, high-quality products each year into the convenience channel that meet consumers' evolving needs and fit a convenience store's value proposition.

A panel of consumers

judged submitted products on value, convenience, appearance and packaging, along with attributes such as taste and ingredients for edible items. Based on their ratings, 33 products that were new to convenience store shelves in 2023 have been selected for recognition in this year's competition. Following are some of those top products.

See PRODUCTS Page 10



Amusement Expo March 18-21 in Vegas

Georgia Amusement Journal

Registration is now open for the amusement industry's biggest event of the year – the Amusement Expo International, set for March 18-21 at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

"Filled with innovative exhibitors, inspiring programming and exceptional networking opportunities, AEI is a once-a-year opportunity to experience the best in the out-of-home entertainment industry and find the products and connections necessary to grow and thrive," AEI media information said. "AEI offers the best value for business

owners by including five additional co-locating shows with registration."

The popular trade show March 20 and 21 will feature vendors showcasing amusements and games, music and jukeboxes, bulk vending and merchandising, ATMs and cashless solutions, professional services and more.

Valuable education

AEI attendees can learn from industry leaders who will share their valuable insight into how they were able

See AEI Page 3



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Guide

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and potential location licensees may have about COAMs. Parham led the charge in developing the guide, which was originally released in June 2019.

The 44-page document is divided into nine main sections, as highlighted in the following Table of Contents:

1. “General Information” (includes “Benefits of Becoming a Location Licensee Holder,” “Owning and Operating COAMs,” and “Types of Location Licenses”);
2. “Applying for a Location License” (includes “Tips to Ensure a Successful Application for a Location License,” “Checking License Status on COAM Website” and COAM-required “Electronic Funds Transfer Authorized Account”);
3. “Location License Holder Procedures” (includes “Selecting a Master License Holder,” “Written Contracts” and several sections on reporting requirements);
4. “Enforcement and Compliance” (includes “Prizes for COAM Redemption,” “Class B Master License Holder Interest in a Class B Location” and “Penalties for COAM Violations”);
5. “Abbreviations/Acronyms/Definitions;”
6. “Important Recurring Licensing Year Dates;”
7. “Location License Fees;”
8. “Quick Reference Contact List, and;”
9. “Location License Holder Checklist.”

Several other pertinent documents for location and master licensees are available on the COAM website, as well, including those that explain SAS requirements, the gross retail receipts rule, Financial Security Deposit (FSD) guidelines and decommission procedures. Several COAM forms are available, including a 50% gross calculation worksheet, an arbitration form, and a COAM master licensee affidavit.

Other items licensees can review or download include the COAM Sweep and Push Calendar for 2024 (also available monthly in the Georgia Amusement Journal), a gift card decal template, a FAQ on the gift card pilot program, and approved lists of master and location licensees, distributors and manufacturers.

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AEI

from Page 1

to achieve and sustain success.

“Discover industry best practices, fresh ideas, and realistic solutions to common challenges in the amusement and entertainment industry during Amusement Expo International’s education program,” AEI said. “Here’s the chance to take a deep dive into important topics that will help operators better run their business and get ahead of the game.”

AEI’s education sessions provide exclusive access to a full agenda of hot topics led by leading experts in the amusement and entertainment industry. Each session will provide solid takeaways and new strategies for such pressing challenges as:

- People Management ... Keys to Creating a Highly Effective Team
- Food and Beverage Concepts for FECs
- The Power of Connecting Games
- Live! Game Room Design
- Marketing Trends for FECs
- Cashless Options for Your Street Locations
- AI 101: A Beginner's Primer for the Amusement Industry
- Advanced Arcade Operations:



Games, Card Systems, and Redemption

- ATM Update 2024 ... What You Need to Know
- Industry Round Tables

VR Summit

The popular VR Summit is conducted during AEI’s education conference and trade show. The summit will feature Bob Cooney, a leading expert in location-based virtual reality. The VR Summit is a special interactive program within AEI’s education conference, available to AEI registrants and limited to only 500 people.

Herm Edwards keynote

Former NFL coach Herm Edwards will be AEI’s keynote speaker for 2024. In his address, Edwards will shine a spotlight on how small accomplishments help execute vision in tackling everyday goals. As an ESPN football analyst and former NFL and college head coach, Edwards will take attendees

through his unique football journey as a player and coach to uncover the life lessons learned along the way.

“To better understand your team’s roles and responsibilities, you will experience a “Huddle” to emphasize teamwork, communication and collaboration required to execute a successful game plan for your business,” AEI said.

Cashless payment

Looking for payment solutions that help increase profits? Or perhaps you’re looking for another source of passive income. From cashless systems to ATMs, they both have their benefits. And as the marketplace continues to demand convenience, companies featuring both will be on display and have the latest products and answers to build your business.

Game room design

Innovation continues to reshape the way customers experience classic and modern amusements. Live! Game Room Design is one of a host of sessions featured during AEI’s informative educational program March 18 and 19. Learn how to integrate traditional and digital arcade games, as well as other attractions that cater to diverse age groups.

AEI is all about presenting fun-filled attractions that optimize the guest experience and increase revenue. Visit AmusementExpo.org regularly for updated information and “start an exciting journey into the dynamic realm of immersive entertainment and lucrative possibilities, shaped by cutting-edge technologies and the soaring popularity of out-of-home experiences at this year’s Amusement Expo International.”



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Journal Opinion

Register now for The Show in May

**By Sharon Shuford
GACS Membership**

This year the Southern Convenience Store and Petroleum Show returns to the Centreplex in Macon, GA, May 16 for its 22nd year. The Show will feature a theme titled “The Power of Partnership,” which reflects the strength of partnerships between retailers and suppliers forged by The Show.

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

Retailers, petroleum marketers, convenience store owners, operators, supervisors, and managers attend The Show because they find, under one roof, new ways to improve their businesses – from food service to fuel, novelties to snacks, COAM games to lottery ticket sales, and everything in between.

Join The Show

Suppliers can visit www.gacs.com/events for booth contract information, to reserve a booth, or learn more about sponsorships at The Show. For exhibitors GACS is offering an “Early Bird” discount until Jan. 31. After that date, regular pricing will apply.



Sharon Shuford



Show attendance is free for retailers, including the seminar. Pre-registration is strongly encouraged at www.gacs.com to avoid long check in lines. Admission is by badge only. Attendees must pre-register or register on site and pick up badges by 2 p.m. on May 16. For information about convenient hotels and special rates, visit www.gacs.com or contact the GACS office.

Seminar for attendees
Before The Show floor

The speaker is Jessica Lamb from Atlanta Redemption Ink, which strives to transform painful reminders of the past into symbols of hope.

opens, GACS sponsors a seminar free for attendees. The speaker this year is Jessica Lamb from Atlanta Redemption Ink, which strives to transform painful reminders of the past into symbols of hope.

Lamb is a nationally recognized survivor who has built a national network of service providers to support survivors of commercial sexual exploitation, former gang members, and overcomers of self-harm and addiction. Her work is known in the anti-trafficking and tattoo industry across the United States.

Show schedule
Wednesday, May 15
8 a.m.- 5 p.m. – Exhibitor

setup
2-5 p.m. – Show registration open
4-6 p.m. – Cocktail reception

Thursday, May 16
8-9 a.m. – Speaker Jessica Lamb
8 a.m.-3:00 pm – Show registration open
9 a.m.-4 p.m. – Trade show floor open

Scholarships available

GACS is accepting online applications through Jan. 31 for scholarship awards for the 2024-25 school year. GACS has moved up the application submissions so that applicants will be notified in April if they’ve received a scholarship award.

Education scholarships are an exciting opportunity for all GACS members. As part of their membership investment with GACS, their employees and their children are eligible for scholarship awards from the GACS Education Foundation. Over \$20,000 is scheduled to be awarded for the 2024-25 school year.

Awards range from \$1,000 to \$2,000. Those interested are encouraged to visit the website www.gacs.com/scholarships or call (770) 736-9723 for more information.

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COAM calendar

— REPORTING DATES —

Jan. 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. 16: COAM Advisory Board, Lottery headquarters, Atlanta
Feb. 22: GAMOA meeting, Crowne Plaza, Norcross
March 18-21: Amusement Expo, Las Vegas Convention Center
April 16: 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

Bank-account closures remain a problem

By Lori Schneider

AMOA Executive Director

As recently reported, an increase in bank-account closures has been reported around the country, primarily from big banks similar to the ones in the beginning days of account closures. Please alert me at the AMOA office at lori@amoa.com should you run into issues with access to banking. Most recent examples are extremely beneficial to provide to lawmakers.

AMOA will be back in Washington, D.C., in early March visiting with lawmakers on these and other issues.



Lori Schneider

Most recent examples of bank-account closures are extremely beneficial to provide to lawmakers.

ing events and informal opportunities abound, giving you a chance to trade professional tips with experts just like you from around the world!

In addition, former NFL coach and ESPN pro football analyst Herm Edwards will keynote the Amusement Expo International this year.

AMOA members who have renewed their membership for 2024 can register for two free badges to the AEI trade show so be sure to renew your 2024 membership today. Not a member? Be sure to join AMOA and receive all the annual benefits plus your two free AEI trade show badges.

AMOA On Campus

May 4-6 – University of Notre Dame.

Visit www.amoa.com to learn more about the many other AMOA member programs and services.

Amusement Expo International

Why attend AEI at the Westgate Las Vegas and Las Vegas Convention Center March 18-21? You will get hands-on experience with the best entertainment technology – including virtual reality – and have an opportu-

nity to dive into the latest information to build your business with informative educational sessions. This, combined with the networking benefits of meeting with industry leaders shaping the future of our industry, make AEI a wise investment for growing your business.

AEI features:

- Two days of valuable insights in our education sessions (March 18 and 19) at the Westgate;
- Two days of innovation and fun on our trade show floor (March 20 and 21) in the convention center;
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Products

from Page 1

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES:

CHELADAS – Bud Light Chelada Tajin Chile Limon, Anheuser-Busch. Anheuser-Busch introduced an innovative canned version of a popular Mexican beer cocktail. A chelada is a way to serve beer in Mexico by combining light beer, fresh lime juice and a pinch of salt in a glass. This version is bursting with flavor and mildly spicy with Tajin and lemon citrus added to the mix. Our testers liked the taste and called it a refreshing summer drink.

ALTERNATIVE SNACKS:

BARS – Chex Mix Peanut Butter Chocolate Bars, General Mills. Chex Mix Peanut Butter Chocolate Bars are a delicious combination of Chex pieces, pretzels, peanut butter

and chocolate. They are a chewy on-the-go bar perfect for after school or as a quick snack, each one individually wrapped. Our judges cited the right combination of textures and crunch. Additional high marks were given for smart packaging.



these are infused with a flavorful juice blend, resulting in a unique, flavor-packed fruit snack. They could be a great add-on to foodservice cold cases in convenience stores.

CANDY – Twizzlers Gummies, The Hershey Co. Twizzlers Gummies are a new twist on an all-time favorite. A variety of colorful, smooth and chewy

gummy pieces come packaged in an eye-catching 7-ounce bag. Their tasty flavor combinations include grape and cherry, lemonade and cherry, and peach and cherry. According to our panelists, each bag contains approximately 35 “nice and soft pieces with great flavor.” The gummy category is outpacing the sweets category, The Hershey Co. noted, and Twizzlers Gummies have successfully reached a younger, incremental consumer.

EDIBLE GROCERY – Cucumber Chili Lime Beer Salt, Twang Partners LLC. Dressing beer with salt is a long-time tradition that originally came from Mexico. Cucumber Chili Lime Beer Salt from Twang gives consumers the opportunity to add Latino flavor to their favorite beer or hard seltzer. This niche item is a great add-on to an alcoholic beverage sale, and a cross-cultural item. The beer salt is available for merchandising on the front counter and on eye-catching clip strips on cooler doors.

ALTERNATIVE SNACKS:

FRUIT – Cranberry Sweeties, Oh Snap! Pickling LLC. Consumers are continuously looking for new healthy snacks to try. Packaged for on-the-go consumption, Cranberry Sweeties fill the better-for-you niche. Unlike common cranberries,

FOODSERVICE: BREAKFAST – Jimmy Dean Sausage, Egg & Cheese Roll-Up, Tyson Foods. Tyson Foods introduces a new way to eat breakfast. At just 3.5 inches long, the Jimmy Dean Sausage, Egg & Cheese Roll-Up is easy to hold and does not fall apart while being consumed. Made with a flaky biscuit, the roll-up contains a mix of Jimmy Dean breakfast sausage, real eggs and cheese. It offers quick heating and a four-hour hold time. Our panelists gave it high marks for flavor, portability and convenience.

FOODSERVICE: LUNCH

– Chester’s New Everything Fried Chicken Sandwich, Chester’s Chicken. The public’s enthusiasm for a good chicken sandwich has not slowed down. Chester’s New Everything Fried Chicken Sandwich is a marinated and double-breaded whole breast filet that is topped with Chester’s tangy sauce and crunchy crinkle-cut dill pickles, and served on a Martin potato roll. Chester’s relaunched this fan favorite with some tweaks and the result is a juicier, more flavorful version of the original. Our testers agreed it is moist and flavorful.

FOODSERVICE: SNACK – Cheesy Pull Apart Flatbread, Rich Products Corp. This cheesy flatbread is easy to bake and pull apart along precut impressions to separate into soft, individual sticks or serve as a shareable snack that consumers pull apart themselves. It is ideal for c-stores that want to serve a delicious, fresh-baked snack but are challenged by limited labor and space. Topped with mozzarella, **(Continued on next page)**

COIN OPERATED AMUSEMENT MACHINE LOCATION SWEEP AND MASTER PUSH CALENDAR					
COAM		JAN-JUNE 2024		COAM	
ACCOUNTING WEEK START	ACCOUNTING WEEK END	LOCATION SWEEP DATE	MASTER PUSH DATE		
31-Dec-23	06-Jan-24	10-Jan-24	17-Jan-24*		
07-Jan-24	13-Jan-24	17-Jan-24	23-Jan-24		
14-Jan-24	20-Jan-24	24-Jan-24	30-Jan-24		
21-Jan-24	27-Jan-24	31-Jan-24	06-Feb-24		
28-Jan-24	03-Feb-24	07-Feb-24	13-Feb-24		
04-Feb-24	10-Feb-24	14-Feb-24	21-Feb-24*		
11-Feb-24	17-Feb-24	21-Feb-24	27-Feb-24		
18-Feb-24	24-Feb-24	28-Feb-24	05-Mar-24		
25-Feb-24	02-Mar-24	06-Mar-24	12-Mar-24		
03-Mar-24	09-Mar-24	13-Mar-24	19-Mar-24		
10-Mar-24	16-Mar-24	20-Mar-24	26-Mar-24		
17-Mar-24	23-Mar-24	27-Mar-24	02-Apr-24		
24-Mar-24	30-Mar-24	03-Apr-24	09-Apr-24		
31-Mar-24	06-Apr-24	10-Apr-24	16-Apr-24		
07-Apr-24	13-Apr-24	17-Apr-24	23-Apr-24		
14-Apr-24	20-Apr-24	24-Apr-24	30-Apr-24		
21-Apr-24	27-Apr-24	01-May-24	07-May-24		
28-Apr-24	04-May-24	08-May-24	14-May-24		
05-May-24	11-May-24	15-May-24	21-May-24		
12-May-24	18-May-24	22-May-24	29-May-24*		
19-May-24	25-May-24	29-May-24	04-Jun-24		
26-May-24	01-Jun-24	05-Jun-24	11-Jun-24		
02-Jun-24	08-Jun-24	12-Jun-24	18-Jun-24		
09-Jun-24	15-Jun-24	20-Jun-24*	26-Jun-24*		
16-Jun-24	22-Jun-24	26-Jun-24	02-Jul-24		
23-Jun-24	29-Jun-24	03-Jul-24	09-Jul-24		

*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

GAJ

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(Continued from previous page) cheddar, provolone, parmesan, Romano and asiago cheeses, and sprinkled with Italian herbs, the flatbread can be paired with dipping sauces. Our testers felt that the taste of this product is a cut above traditional c-store fare.

FROZEN NOVELTIES – M&M’S Cookies and Cream Ice Cream Cookie Sandwich, Mars Wrigley. The M&M’S Cookies and Cream Ice Cream Cookie Sandwich delivers a multitexture taste experience that leans into indulgence. The treat combines M&M’S chocolate candies, baked chocolate cookies, cookie pieces and 100 percent real, creamy and rich ice cream. The cookie sandwich brings the ice cream parlor right to a consumer’s own freezer. Judges noted that the sandwich has a great crunch and is the perfect size for a quick treat.

GENERAL MERCHANDISE – BIC Djeep Lighter, BIC USA Inc. Djeep lighters are unique in form and function with their rectangular tank that boasts up to 3,500 lights. The product comes in distinctive contemporary designs and embossed wraps that provide an appealing tactile quality. Djeep lighters enable consumers to trade up when purchasing a lighter. Our testers loved their rectangular shape and cool designs, along with their long-lasting lights.

PACKAGED BEVERAGES: ENHANCED WATER – Vitaminwater Zero Sugar With Love, The Coca-Cola Co. Boasting a dynamic flavor, Vitaminwater Zero Sugar With Love is the first of its kind and aims to appeal to teens and adults looking for new experiences and sensations to liven up their day. The raspberry and chocolate flavored beverage is nutrient rich, zero sugar and electrolyte enhanced, making it perfect for on-the-go hydration. Our panelists liked the raspberry mashup and said they would welcome more flavors of zero sugar Vitaminwater.

PACKAGED BEVERAGES: CARBONATED SOFT DRINKS – Coca-Cola Move/Zero Sugar Move, The Coca-Cola Co. Generation Z is a must-win audience for c-stores, and this limited-edition carbonated soft drink delivers bold flavors and the excitement of discovery in partnership with Grammy-award-winning artist Rosalia. Embracing the contrasts of her personality through packaging and taste, Coca-Cola created this unique flavor, which is a mixture of Coke with vanilla flavors and a bit of muskiness. Coca-Cola Move leverages cultural macro trends and is a triple threat with its bold taste,

interactive experiences and connection to music. The beverage received high marks from our panelists for its packaging and trend-forward taste.

PACKAGED SWEET SNACKS: DOUGHNUTS – Lemon Cheese Cake Donuts, Bon Appetit. Bon Appetit seeks to bring new customers into the packaged sweet snacks category who are looking for new flavor profiles. This Lemon Cheese Cake variety fills the niche for a new and unique flavor in the doughnut segment. Valued priced, the six-pack of mini doughnuts is an impulse item that can be grabbed to savor with your morning coffee. Our panelists scored the lemon flavor highest, but also liked the blueberry version.

PACKAGED SWEET SNACKS: OVERALL – Kazbars, Hostess Brands Inc. Kazbars is not a candy bar, nor is it a piece of

cake, but rather it’s a multitextured stacked bar. The new Hostess innovation combines layers of soft chocolate cake, crème, candy crunch and caramel. The bars are covered in a rich chocolate-flavored coating and topped with a drizzle. Our testers said they were “decadent” and liked the Kazbars so much that they asked for seconds.

SALTY SNACKS: TORTILLA CHIPS – Chipoy’s Spicy Ranch, Chipoy’s. Consumers are looking for fewer ingredients in their products, but not wanting to lose the taste and crunch that salty snacks provide. Chipoy’s is able to deliver this with its authentic Mexican rolled corn tortilla chips. The spicy ranch variety has a nice garlic and onion flavor. Our panelists were quick to enjoy the spice and crunch, and wanted to know more about the brand.

SALTY SNACKS: OVERALL – Old El Paso Fiesta Twists

Queso, General Mills. The Old El Paso brand, famous for its tasty salsa, has ventured into the salty snacks market. Old El Paso Fiesta Twists Queso are loaded with the smooth taste of queso cheese and the salty flavor of corn chips. They are rather light and airy for a corn chip, according to our testers, and the twist is not too tight.

OVERALL INNOVATION – Reese’s Dipped Animal Crackers, The Hershey Co. Reese’s is a top brand in the c-store market, so it makes sense that the company came out with the cool combo of Reese’s Dipped Animal Crackers. Each 4.25-ounce bag features 13 different animal shapes. These bite-sized animal crackers are covered in peanut butter candy and dipped in milk chocolate to give consumers the delicious Reese’s taste in every bite. Dipped snacks of all sorts have been trending over the past year, and our testers said this one is irresistible.



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