



'Kindness is free' - Page 5

GEORGIA Amusement JOURNAL

Dedicated to serving the Georgia COAM industry
Endorsed by the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association
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Primero on campus

Project aids students, industry

By Paul Tash

Georgia Amusement Journal

Primero Games has partnered with Georgia College in Milledgeville to provide a real-world experience for a capstone class of seniors.

"Our marketing and art department is working with the students in a project that's focusing on marketing strategies, research, situation analysis, goal-setting, planning and creation stages," said Meredith Lawrence, marketing specialist for Primero.

Groups of the students are working on marketing ideas to pitch to Primero at the end of semester and must check in each week on their progress. The semester-long project started in January and runs until May.

"They are learning about the amusement industry and learning how to create content for target audiences," Lawrence added.



Photos courtesy of Primero

PRIMERO'S Meredith Lawrence as a proud 2019 graduate, right, of Georgia College, above.

The project is especially exciting for Lawrence, who is a 2019 graduate of Georgia College.

"It's been a great opportunity to work with students from my old college," she said.

The Georgia College project isn't the only relationship Primero has with college students in the state. The gaming company regularly attends job fairs and works in other ways to attract talent to the state's



gaming industry.

"We are trying to increase our relationships with colleges throughout Georgia to find talented students to help improve the industry by helping train future graphic artists, engineers, and others," Lawrence said.

TRENDING

Frictionless technology among top focal points for convenience stores

By Don Longo

Convenience Store News

As we proceed through the early months of 2022, *Convenience Store News* interviewed some of the major technology companies in the industry to find out what key trends they expect to affect convenience retailing in the year ahead.

Frictionless checkout continues to be a focal point among both retailers and suppliers. "Anything you can do to take friction out of the experience is valuable," said Jeff Bradbury, senior marketing director for Hughes Network Systems.

Several different types of frictionless technology are in use by retailers today. The Amazon Go model uses a phone app in conjunction with cameras and shelf sensors. Other solutions utilize RFID tags, some of which allow the customer to pre-order on their phone either in-store or before entering the store. What type is "right" depends upon the particular retailer.

"Whatever way they choose, it should be a reflection of the brand," Bradbury said. "Amazon's solution is very elegant. 7-Eleven's is simple and direct. Each is equally relevant to that particular brand's customer-facing experience."

Brands are taking on technology so that it appropriately reflects the brand's

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Industry gathers for Amusement Expo

By Paul Tash, Georgia Amusement Journal

Amusement industry representatives, including many from Georgia, have gathered in Las Vegas for the 2022 Amusement Expo International, the industry's most influential conference and trade show dedicated specifically to the amusement entertainment industry.

The Expo runs March 14-17 at the Las Vegas Convention Center. The Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association (GAMOA) is hosting a social for Georgia operators and others in Las Vegas for the Expo Wednesday, March 16, at the Lily Lounge in the Bellagio Resort

at 9 p.m. to celebrate the association's 40th anniversary. Diamond sponsors of the social are Banilla Games, Southern Gaming Solutions and IGT, Primero Games, Jenka Labs, Ivey Promotions, Betson-Goldfinger, FishGameKings and Omega Games. Other sponsors include Bad Dog Games, Elite Manufacturing Technologies, Phantom Monitors, JVL and Innovative Technologies.

The Expo features several exhibit areas, including:
• Coin-operated amusements, music, games, and

See EXPO Page 3



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Expo

from Page 1

ATMs.

• Family Entertainment Centers (FEC).

- Virtual Reality.
- Bulk vending.
- Laser tag.
- Professional service providers and suppliers.

The Expo begins with an education day March 14 that offers dozens of seminars and workshops. Operator-focused sessions include:

- Pinball 3.0: Build a pinball community with tournaments and other engaging events.
- The ever-evolving world of cashless.
- Diversification: A necessary key for today’s route operations.
- Legalized gaming 2022: What you need to know.
- ATM route operations 2022.
- Attract people to your games.
- Crypto-currency and coin-op: Putting the pieces together.
- And the ever-popular operator round tables.

“AEI provides an engaging platform for connections between suppliers, distributors, operators, and buyers with conference programs that offer a clear roadmap

for a successful future,” said AMOA Executive Director Lori Schneider.

AEI also brings a huge added value to attendees and exhibitors with our collocating partnership with the VR Summit, National Bulk Vendors Association and The Laser Tag Convention, which continues to strengthen opportunities for all in attendance. These events



naturally complement each other and deliver an even stronger platform for attendees and exhibitors.

The Laser Tag Convention – The Laser Tag Convention is the only convention with the laser tag operator in mind. The Laser Tag Convention offers seminars for both the current laser tag operator and developing entrepreneurs in two separate tracks. This way all attendees can get a full education series that is geared specifically to

meet their operational and developmental needs.

National Bulk Vendors Association (NBVA) – The National Bulk Vendors Association is a national not-for-profit trade association comprised of the manufacturers, distributors and operators of bulk vending machines and products. The NBVA has represented the bulk vending industry

since 1950. Our members extend beyond the borders of the United States and represent a great majority of the volume of the bulk vending business done in the United States. While our membership is about 300 companies, there are thousands of small operators on a full or part-time basis.

The VR Summit – The biggest dedicated location-based virtual reality conference in America expands to two days this year. Key

topics will include:

- What is the Metaverse, and how will it impact location-based entertainment?
- Virtual Reality and Esports: How to turn your VR games into an event business that drives more traffic, revenue, and profits.
- The Great Resignation and how VR manufacturers are responding with unattended attractions.

Come to the VR Summit and leave feeling like an expert, energized and informed for 2022 and beyond.

Attendees will find plenty of opportunities in every area of the industry and lots of ways to connect and share ideas with the best and most creative leaders in the industry. Masks are no longer required inside public places, including casinos.

AEI is the only conference and trade show sponsored by the industry’s leading professional associations: The American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) and Amusement & Music Operators Association (AMOA), who represent this multi-billion-dollar industry. This ensures both exhibitors and attendees alike are given top-tier access to connect to the latest innovations, decision makers and leaders representing the out-of-home entertainment business.

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Journal Opinion

Kindness is free to give ... pass it on

**By Shawn Fellows
GAMOA President**

As the world around us continues to change at the speed of light, we often find ourselves so busy we lose track of the hours of the day and sometimes the days of the week. It's nice to have a surprise call from an old customer or friendly competitor that just asks, "How are you doing these days?" It amazes me at times how we all get so caught up in our own little worlds or series of events that we fail at the little things – things that can make someone's day a little brighter or maybe give them a reason to push through a difficult challenge.

I was brutally reminded a few weeks ago how quickly things can change. While attending an industry dinner with folks from around the world, when suddenly out of nowhere, one of the guests politely excused themselves. As the rest of us at the table continued our conversations, we quickly realized that our friend was distraught and visibly upset over the context of the phone call that had so abruptly taken her away from the table. We discovered later that Russia had just bombed the Ukraine while we were having dinner, laughing, and enjoying our meals, and her mother had called to share the news

about their homeland, Ukraine. Can you image the feeling that must have consumed my friend? Can you take a minute and image the horror she must have felt as they could not locate family members back



Shawn Fellows

home, her grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins? Imagine the terror she must have felt hearing her own mother in tears weeping from the fear of the unknown.

This is not a political story or one that you need to pick sides. It's only a story about how the events of that night made me stop and reflect on the little things we all take for granted. We are truly blessed to live in a

country where our children do not live in fear each night as they go to sleep – what will the dark bring? My heart goes out to all those impacted by war. I pray for those in the way of danger and for those who would

tomorrow or even the rest of today. Everything you know and love could change in the blink of an eye. Beyond your loved ones I would challenge each of you to complete a simple task for the next month and see what impact you may have on a stranger and more importantly on YOU!

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." – Aesop, the ancient Greek storyteller.

As you go about your day and open dozens of doors at various businesses, restaurants, and c-stores, take the time to open the door for the next person, smile, and offer a kind word. "Have a nice day" can go a long way. Do one small, kind thing each day for someone and notice the impact it has on you.

"Kindness is free to give and priceless to receive" – unknown author

Be kind! Be the person you want your children to grow up to become. Be the person that makes a difference. I promise, this challenge will make you see the world through a different lens. Many of you already do this, so thank you for taking the time to let your fellow humans know that you care and, most importantly, that they matter.

Do one small, kind thing each day for someone and notice the impact it has on you.



stand and fight for the weak, the young, the old, the sick, those brave men and women that put their lives on the line daily to protect their lands, their families, and their way of life. It is truly

unimaginable to me that in 2022 that we as humans still resort to war.

If you haven't taken inventory lately of your friends and family close and far, think about doing so. We are not promised

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COAM calendar

— REPORTING DATES —

March 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 —

March 15-17: Amusement Expo International, Las Vegas
April 19: COAM Advisory Board, Lottery headquarters, Atlanta
Aug. 24-25: Southern Amusement & Entertainment Expo, Gas South Convention 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 Convention offers ‘New Bearings’

**By Sharon Shuford
GACS Membership**

The theme of this year’s GACS Annual Convention, “New Bearings,” aptly reflects where we are today and will likely be tomorrow. We’re going through a sea change, and business and personal landscapes are clearly different.

Conversations now are about the “new normal,” the “uncertain future,” and “the changed world around us.” The convenience-store world is certainly different. Stores not only remained open during the pandemic, but they also responded well to the challenges in myriad ways, including physical adjustments and strengthened service to their communities.

These changes are likely to remain as the industry navigates the next few years. “New Bearings” speaks to just that: not only the convention’s location (in the mountains), but also where we are in our lives and livelihoods. The program content will help attendees navigate many of the changes and shifts they are experiencing, including human resource issues, marketing to a new generation of shoppers, succession planning, and pivoting toward the new future.

GACS President Angela Holland said the convention will feature several “amazing” speakers, including keynote speaker Mitch Vandiver, whose theme will be “Adapting and Moving Forward.”

“Mitch Vandiver is a terrific storyteller who can captivate and motivate his audiences to embrace the future,” Holland said.

GACS is also bringing back Ben Scellick and Terry McKenna to lead two interactive workshops.

Convention program

The 2022 convention indeed will take place June 5-7 at the Omni Grove Park in Asheville, NC. It will be a special opportunity to connect with the C-Store community and GACS members. Below are some of the



Sharon Shuford

The program content will help attendees navigate many of the changes and shifts they are experiencing.

highlights planned for attendees.

The schedule features four speakers and two workshops. Topics are wide ranging, covering many of the issues members have identified as critical to business success:

- Keynote speaker Mitch Vandiver, President Strategies, Inc. is an experienced advisor specializing in privately held and multi-generational family businesses. He sees behind the curtain and understands the lifecycles of an industry and how to pivot to the next phase and embrace the future. His will be a positive, enlightening perspective to open the session.



Mitch Vandiver

- Dylan Gamboa is senior vice president of Petroleum Distribution and Retail for iRely, a global leader in digital transformation with wide ranging industry experience including M&A strategies, will share his perspectives on “Succession Planning.”

- Mike Lawshe, president/CEO of Paragon Solutions, brings more than three decades of targeted industry experience. The company is one of the leading design firms in the industry. He will discuss “Designing the Store for the Next Generation Shopper.”

- Mark Lotstein, founder and president of ROG Consulting, brings a wealth of experience in the petroleum industry working on HR and work force issues. His look at Building Employee Value will focus on the practical side.

- Terry McKenna, owner and founder of Employee Performance Strategies, will lead an interactive workshop on HR

on the “get better” part of the equation. His presentation called “Market Trends: Where we are and what’s being predicted” is not to be missed.

The legislative panel is again on the schedule because activity at the Capitol is so important to the livelihoods of everyone in the industry.

Time is also built into the schedule for a round of golf, zip-lining, and a brewery tour. Tuesday’s exhibitor showcase will feature tabletop exhibits where retailers can learn about the latest products and services.

Also on the program:

- A Young Professionals workshop with Ben Scellick.
- A \$5K Draw Down on Sunday night.
- Monday evening dinner and games.
- Tuesday closing luncheon, awards, and celebration.

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Trends

from Page 1

promise. "You're going to see more digital capabilities presented in ways that reinforce the brand's premise," the Hughes executive noted.

Speaking about the recent NRF Show, held in January, Bradbury said he was impressed with the amount of robotics on display. "There were at least 10 full demos of robotics in action and several more exhibitors than I recall seeing in the past," he said. "The sheer volume on display reflects the market recognition that robotic automation for fulfillment and other retail uses is going to grow very, very quickly in the near future."

The implications are huge for retailers as robotics promise to improve timeliness of delivery, offer flexibility, and reduce costs. Labor will be able to be redeployed to other more customer-facing uses.

The other technology trend that could be very important to c-stores is micro-fulfillment centers. "Robotic automation and micro-fulfillment are very powerful technology solutions for c-stores," Bradbury stated.

Of course, a store needs a digi-

tal infrastructure that can support all this technology. "Retailers want near-perfect inventory visibility, an order process that works efficiently, in-store capabilities, and a fulfillment engine," he explained.

The store's digital infrastructure needs to support onsite processing, automation for robotics, cloud information sharing, and e-commerce systems to track orders, third-party delivery vendors, and onsite for curbside operations.

"You can't build a mansion on a crumbling foundation," Bradbury pointed out.

Checkout changes

David Wilkinson, president and general manager of NCR Retail, told *CSNews* that the current labor crisis is accelerating change in the world of checkouts.

"Every 1-percent shift to self-checkout is \$1 million in labor expense that could go back into the store for other purposes," he said.

NCR is No. 1 in installed self-checkout globally, according to Wilkinson. Retailers have reported up to a 90 percent customer adoption rate for self-checkout, according to NCR stats. Retailers can reduce their labor by 20-30 percent, yielding millions in cost savings when self-checkout usage exceeds 80 percent of customers.

The world is quickly giving the choice to the customer. "I think soon, it won't matter what type of checkout you have. It will be whatever the customer chooses. Self-checkout, mobile or app-enabled in your car," said Wilkinson.

In fact, the other big retail area that he says will be changed by technology is payments — specifically, cryptocurrency. He pointed to NCR's recent purchase of LibertyX, a cryptocurrency software provider. This acquisition accelerates NCR's ability to rapidly deliver a complete digital currency solution to its customers, including the ability to buy and sell cryptocurrency, conduct cross-border remittance, and accept digital currency payments across digital and physical channels.

The LibertyX digital currency solution runs on ATMs, kiosks and point-of-sale systems today. LibertyX partners with ATM operators, such as NCR's Cardtronics, which owns and manages the ATMs and the Allpoint network in the United States at locations like convenience stores, pharmacies and supermarkets.

Moving forward, NCR will utilize its Pay360 platform to offer the LibertyX capabilities as part of its solutions for banks, retailers and restaurants. NCR Pay360 provides

financial institutions a secure way to enable cash-in and cash-out transactions from their mobile banking app, website, or even customer service centers.

"For young people in particular, bitcoin is just becoming another form of payment," said Wilkinson. "As we become an ever-more-digital economy, we are creating some very creative opportunities for us with new services for consumers and retailers."

Chain challenges

Retailer-supplier collaboration, especially around supply chain challenges, is one of the most important trends in retail technology today, according to Patrick O'Mara, senior solution principal at RELEX Solutions.

Earlier this year, the provider of unified retail planning solutions partnered with Sheetz Inc. to help the large Mid-Atlantic convenience store chain position itself for store growth, supply chain growth, and dynamic product marketing opportunities.

One of the goals of the partnership is to enable Sheetz to unify aspects of its demand planning processes to ensure an efficient flow of products from suppliers to its stores. Sheetz sought a reliable

(Continued on Page 9)

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(Continued from Page 8)
 solution with advanced functionality that could support demand planning across its supply chain network within a single system, according to O'Mara.

"By partnering with RELEX, our corporate demand planners have the ability to improve processes that support our distribution and inventory management strategies," Bill Ruggles, director of procurement for Sheetz, said in a statement. "RELEX will ultimately help ensure Sheetz customers have what they want, when they want it, 24/7/365."

O'Mara also cited RELEX's relationship with Kum & Go LC, the Des Moines, Iowa-based chain, as an example of the push by c-stores to maximize their store assortments.

"You're going to see greater supplier-retailer collaboration in the next few years using planograms as a base and then maximizing them for a more localized assortment by store," he said. "Store-specific planning is an important part of the future."

Labor shortage

Labor and the supply chain are the two biggest issues facing retailers today, said Suresh Menon, senior vice president and general manager for Zebra Technologies.

"Our mission is to enable our customers to ensure that every asset and every worker is visible, connected and optimized," he noted, pointing to the company's task management capabilities, mobile handheld communications, labor schedule forecasting and business solutions as key technologies aimed at addressing these challenges.

"The labor shortage is going to be here for a while. The expectations of new entrants to the workforce are changing. Things like employee engagement apps can help. Employees can take control of their own schedule."

Additional features like gamification can make it fun for employees to stay engaged and track their own compliance with certain work tasks, he added.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is also one of the biggest technology trends to watch at retail, according to Menon. With Reflexis and Antuit.ai, Zebra is bringing together a common platform using AI for use by everyone from inventory to workforce management. Retailers will have the ability to not just accurately predict demand, but also shape demand, such as recommending promotion strategies to drive sales, he said.

GACS offers webinar for telehealth program

The demand for telehealth solutions has grown significantly over the last two years. The Georgia Association of Convenience Stores (GACS) and Teladoc Health has teamed up to provide an industry-leading virtual care option available for all GACS members to provide to their employees. This new offering is called HealthiestYou Complete, and an informational webinar for GACS members is scheduled for March 24 at 11 a.m. EDT.

HealthiestYou offers a great mix of telehealth solutions to care for a wide range of health care options. From basic medical needs for issues such as a common cold to connecting with a psychologist with a major depression episode, HealthiestYou Complete can be the virtual front door for your employees.

All services are provided on an unlimited basis with \$0 visit fees.

This program covers the primary employee plus his/her spouse, domestic partner, and household dependents. Part-time and 1099 employees can also be covered.

Register for this GACS Vendor Spotlight Webinar at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2716975017111837963>.

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

A second informational webinar is planned for May 19 at 2 p.m. if you can't attend this month's offering.

Call the GACS office at (770) 736-9723 for more information.



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16-Jan-22	22-Jan-22	26-Jan-22	01-Feb-22
23-Jan-22	29-Jan-22	02-Feb-22	08-Feb-22
30-Jan-22	05-Feb-22	09-Feb-22	15-Feb-22
06-Feb-22	12-Feb-22	16-Feb-22	23-Feb-22*
13-Feb-22	19-Feb-22	23-Feb-22	01-Mar-22
20-Feb-22	26-Feb-22	02-Mar-22	08-Mar-22
27-Feb-22	05-Mar-22	09-Mar-22	15-Mar-22
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20-Mar-22	26-Mar-22	30-Mar-22	05-Apr-22
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17-Apr-22	23-Apr-22	27-Apr-22	03-May-22
24-Apr-22	30-Apr-22	04-May-22	10-May-22
01-May-22	07-May-22	11-May-22	17-May-22
08-May-22	14-May-22	18-May-22	24-May-22
15-May-22	21-May-22	25-May-22	01-Jun-22*
22-May-22	28-May-22	01-Jun-22	07-Jun-22
29-May-22	04-Jun-22	08-Jun-22	14-Jun-22
05-Jun-22	11-Jun-22	15-Jun-22	22-Jun-22*
12-Jun-22	18-Jun-22	22-Jun-22	28-Jun-22
19-Jun-22	25-Jun-22	29-Jun-22	06-Jul-21*

*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

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.

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.

Decommissioned COAM(s) now can be removed from the location. It is imperative MLHs follow all operational and technical procedures in order to ensure accurate reporting of financial data to the Central Accounting System.

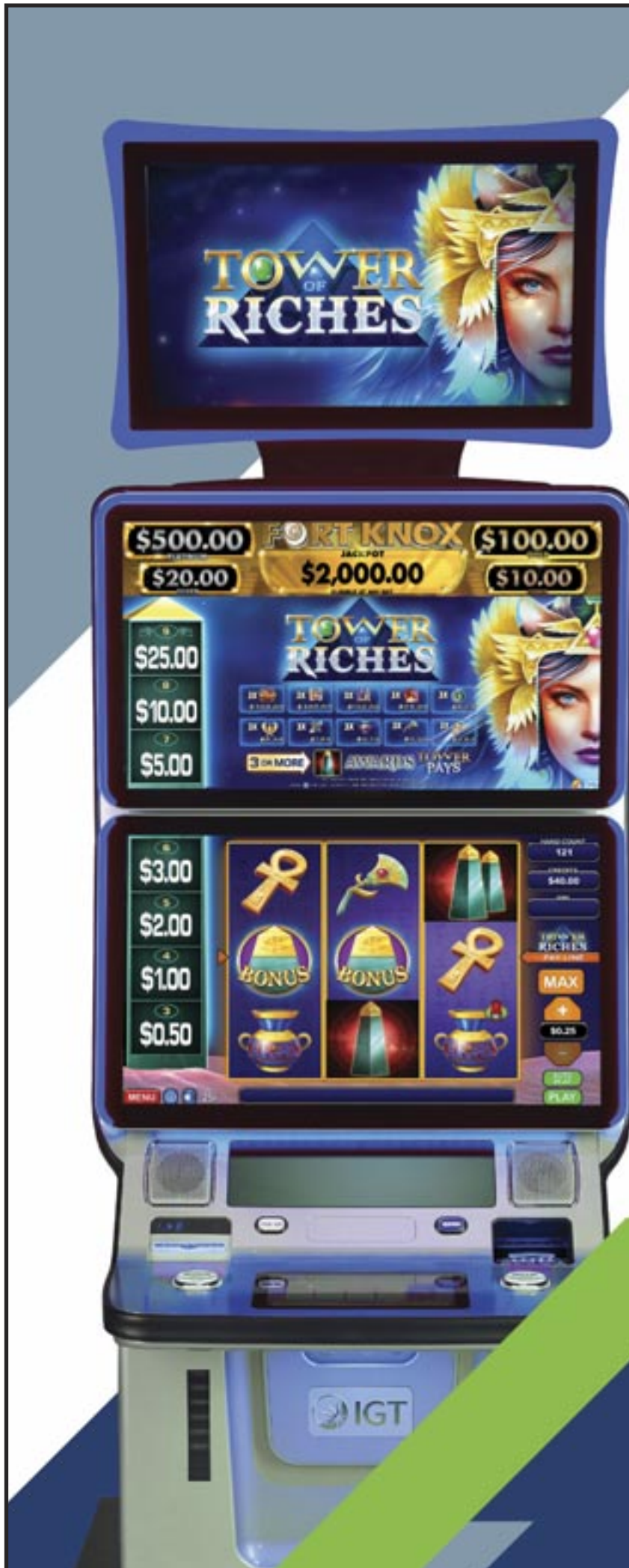
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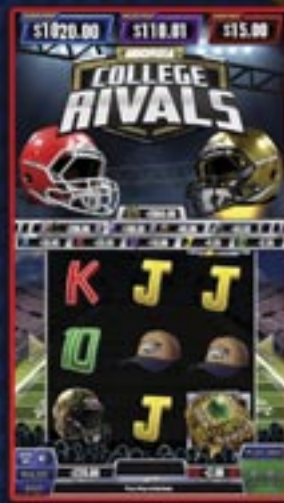
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