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GEORGIA Amusement JOURNAL

Dedicated to serving the Georgia COAM industry
Endorsed by the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association
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COAM revenue breaks record

Advisory panel gets updates from Lottery

By Paul Tash

Georgia Amusement Journal

Coin-Operated Amusement Machine (COAM) industry enjoyed its highest grossing day ever March 1, earning \$4.3 million that day to easily break the record set March 2, 2018, of \$3.6 million, the COAM Advisory Board was told at its most recent meeting April 16.

John Heinen, president of the Georgia Lottery Corp.'s COAM Division, reported to the board the industry's "impressive" growth is also apparent in the daily per-machine average revenue, which has increased to nearly \$95, from \$89



Paul Tash photo

GUS MAKRIS, chairman of the COAM Advisory Board, and **Gretchen Corbin**, president and CEO of the Georgia Lottery Corp., listen to discussion during last month's board meeting in Atlanta.

the year previous. He said about 4,600 locations in the state put about 22,300 amusement machines in play for their patrons.

In other news, the COAM Division is putting the finishing touches

on a location-licensee guide that should be released in May. The guide will be "another tool" current and potential location licensees can use to understand the COAM industry and their role in it. The

guide will detail COAM regulations, outline the procedure to become a licensee, and provide tips for licensees to be successful and information on a variety of other

See **BOARD** Page 14

GAMOA members hear renewal info

By Jorie Tash

Georgia Amusement Journal

The Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association (GAMOA) discussed a variety of topics, including the upcoming license renewal season, at its meeting April 18 in Lilburn.

Several regulators from the Georgia Lottery Corp. updated GAMOA members on their activi-

ties. Many who spoke at the meeting, which was sponsored by Southern Gaming Solutions and Surfnote Technologies, focused on helping attendees get ahead of license renewals before the fast-approaching deadline, which is June 30. A \$1,000 late fee will be assessed on renewals not completed by June 30, and Class B licensees who have not completed their renewal by Sept.

28 will lose COAM operation privileges.

Mike Parham, vice president of the GLC's COAM Division, encouraged Master License Holders (MLHs) to "reach out to their location licensees and let them know how to make the process easier." He urged them not to "wait until the last minute," so application errors can be

See **LICENSES** Page 9



Journal looking forward to Year Three

By Paul Tash, Georgia Amusement Journal

As Year Three of the *Georgia Amusement Journal* begins with the May issue, the monthly trade journal looks forward to serving the state's coin-operated amusement machine industry with continued enthusiasm, unwavering dedication, and a growing expertise.

That statement is an easy one to make, considering the tremendously positive response and encouragement the *Journal* has received in its first two years. The Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association

(GAMOA) has been a *Journal* advocate from the start.

"GAMOA has found the *Georgia Amusement Journal* to be a great resource for our members and non-members over the past year," Fellows said. "When industry news needs to be delivered to the entire industry GAMOA relies heavily on the trade journal for its independent and comprehensive reporting."

Whether GAMOA utilizes the *Journal* to post important dates or a call to action, he added, "the

See **JOURNAL** Page 3



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Journal

from Page 1

statewide distribution and ability to reach all licensees within the COAM industry is one of our most valuable tools.”

Additionally, he said, coverage on the convenience store industry and how various changes within that industry may impact the COAM industry “is very helpful.”

The *Journal* is mailed free of charge to about 8,000 recipients, including Class A and B master and location licensees, vendors, regulators, and others. With the endorsement of GAMOA, the *Journal* works diligently to provide industry-related news and features to help all licensees navigate state regulation and run their businesses more effectively and efficiently.

The *Journal* has provided regular coverage of the GAMOA membership meetings and COAM Advisory Board meetings, as well as the successful retail seminars in Marietta, Savannah and Macon. The publication has also featured stories on industry leaders, including Georgia’s own Emily Dunn, who currently is serving as president of the national Amusement and Music Operators Association.

In addition, the *Journal* regularly introduces new companies in the Georgia market place, as well

as new products and services by the many successful firms already established here.

Wherever an industry-related event occurred in the last year, the *Journal* was there covering it – the Georgia Association of Convenience Stores (GACS) convention last June in North Carolina, GAMOA’s first Southern Amusement & Entertainment Expo in September in Atlanta, the Global

dous support of its advertisers. We thank all of them for recognizing its growing value as the outlet for companies to promote their products and services to those in the COAM industry.

“I believe the *Georgia Amusement Journal* has done an excellent job reaching out to our customers and end-users of our product in the state of Georgia,” said Michael “Smitty” Smith, national sales

ers, distributors, and suppliers of COAM products about how successful their marketing campaigns have been and what a great resource the trade journal has been to them,” he said. “I would strongly encourage anyone that is a Master Licensee to utilize the statewide courage of the *Journal* to reach potential retail partners.”

A unique incentive is now available for a wide variety of companies involved in the COAM and/or convenience store industries to advertise in both the *Georgia Amusement Journal* and *GACS Today*, the convenience

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Gaming Expo in Las Vegas in October and the Amusement Expo in Las Vegas in March.

Journal readers can count on coverage of all those events, and even more, again in the coming year.

The *Journal* relishes its role as the industry’s voice and takes every opportunity to highlight the benefits the COAM industry provides for the Georgia economy, and especially for state education through its funding of the Hope Scholarship and Pre-K program.

The *Georgia Amusement Journal* is able to perform its industry role thanks solely to the advertising dollars it receives. An independent publication, the *Journal* receives no funding from any association and survives on the tremen-

ous support of its advertisers. We thank all of them for recognizing its growing value as the outlet for companies to promote their products and services to those in the COAM industry.

manager of Banilla Games, a regular advertiser. “We have supported the trade journal through our advertising dollars and feel it has been more than worth the expenditure.”

Terri Spivey of Diamond Amusement, another *Journal* advertiser, said the *Georgia Amusement Journal* “is a great resource for all things COAM.”

“In addition,” she said, “Diamond Amusements finds the *Journal* to be one of our best marketing tools and a powerful showcase for our advertisement. I would recommend it to anyone in the COAM industry.”

Fellows also recommends advertising in the *Journal*.

“Over the past year I have heard from all of the manufactur-

stores’ trade journal. Advertisers currently running in *GACS Today* can run their first ad in the *Journal* at half off, with additional discounts available for additional advertising. In addition, *Journal* advertisers are eligible for volume-based discounts in *GACS Today*. This is a cost-effective way to reach the right audience in the two related industries. It’s a value-added benefit for both *GACS Today* and *Journal* advertisers.

Finally, I’d like to thank the many dozens of individuals who continually provide the *Journal* staff their expertise in understanding Georgia’s unique COAM industry. You all are greatly appreciated. And to our readers, please enjoy the *Journal* today, and long into the future.

Connect, power up machines

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.



2019 COAM location sweep and master push calendar

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

*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

Join GAMOA, get team of experts

**By Shawn Fellows
GAMOA President**

Are you a large publicly traded corporation? Do you have your own team of lobbyists and attorneys? Do you have more than 30 years experience in the COAM industry? Do you have a team of professionals that are dedicated to not only protecting your business, but also advancing your initiatives in a thoughtful and productive way?

If you answered NO to any of these questions, then you need GAMOA. That's right – GAMOA. The Georgia Amusement Music Operators Association (GAMOA) provides its members with these benefits. For more than 35 years now, GAMOA has been the single source of these resources and has provided expertise in all things COAM. Furthermore, GAMOA has been able to protect the COAM industry by creating a competitive, but fair business environment, supporting numerous bills and helping to stabilize the industry while providing needed funding for educational programs such as the Hope Scholarship and Pre-K Program.

What does it mean to be a member of GAMOA?

As a member, you are afforded countless networking opportunities with industry leaders, manufacturers, distributors, state regulators and a team of lobbyists and attorneys. In addition, our members are kept informed through our website, text-messaging blasts,

bi-monthly meetings and an annual Expo.

At our bi-monthly meetings, members are educated and informed on changes within the industry. They are also given the opportunity to interact with regulators, preview new products before they hit the market and hear from our professional teams on the state of the industry and what to expect



Shawn Fellows

Our members are kept informed through our website, text-messaging blasts, bi-monthly meetings, and an annual Expo.

in the months to come.

Every bi-monthly meeting includes a period of Q&A where our members get a chance to bring up ideas and suggestions on issues that are impacting their individual businesses. Prior to each of these bi-monthly meetings, the Board of Directors meets to manage the business of GAMOA. The Board of Directors meetings are open to all members upon request. Simply request the date you wish to attend, and we will save you a seat.

At GAMOA, your voice counts, and we

want to hear from you. If you have a suggestion and cannot attend the next scheduled meeting, you can always email anyone on the Board. All contact information is posted on the website.

How does GAMOA operate?

Our members are governed by a Board of Directors comprised of 13 members who have been elected by the membership. Each April at the annual meeting, four to five board of directors are elected for a three-year term. These directors donate their time and often their staff's time to help at numerous GAMOA events held throughout the state.

The Board of Directors then elects an Executive Committee to oversee the day-to-day operations of GAMOA, along with directing the hired staff, which include the executive director, lobbyists, attorneys and a public relations group. Executive Committee members serve two-year terms and cannot serve for more than two consecutive terms. The Executive Committee is made up of five officers in total: President, vice president, treasurer, secretary and past president.

No one on the Board of Directors or Executive Committee is paid for their time. They serve our members and the COAM industry with a sense of pride driven from a passion to help contribute to the success of our industry. Think of it this way. You have

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COAM calendar

— REPORTING DATES —

- May 1:** The COAM licensing application (www.gacoam.com) opens for the 2019 licensing period (07/01/2018 - 06/30/2019) for the following:
- Master Class A - NEW and RENEWAL
 - Master Class B - RENEWAL
 - Location Class A - NEW and RENEWAL
 - Location Class B - NEW and RENEWAL
 - Manufacturers, Distributors - NEW and RENEWAL
- May 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.
- July 1:** Date a \$1,000 late fee will be assessed to Location Class A and Class B licenses, Master Class A and Class B licenses, and Manufacturer and Distributor licenses that have not RENEWED for the 2019 licensing period (07/01/2018 – 06/30/2019).

— MEETINGS/OTHER —

- June 6:** Primero learning session, Primero office, Duluth
- June 20:** GAMOA meeting, site TBD
- June 23-25:** GACS Convention, The Omni, Amelia Island, FL

Journal Opinion

Make plans for '20 Expo in New Orleans

By Lori Schneider
AMOA Executive VP

After a record-breaking 2019 Amusement Expo International March 26-28 in Las Vegas, the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) has now turned its focus to the 2020 show, which will be conducted March 9-11 in New Orleans where the head-quarter hotel will be the Hilton New Orleans Riverside. AEI education will take place on Monday, March 9, followed by the two-day trade show Tuesday, March 10, and Wednesday, March 11, at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. Details on the 2020 event will be available later this summer.

Legislative Advocacy – Last month, AMOA was back to work in our nation's capital April 30 continuing to fight the bank account closure issue, which continues to negatively impact

our industry. With the 116th Congress now in session, the AMOA delegation had a productive day visiting with key staff of



Lori Schneider

ranking congressional members serving on the House Financial Services Committee and the Senate Banking Committee.

Education – In early May, Class XVIII, Session IV of the

AMOA On Campus Education Program was conducted at the University of Notre Dame in Notre Dame, IN, where eight

Education will take place March 9, followed by the trade show March 10 and 11 at the Ernest Morial Convention Center.

participants were awarded their certificate of completion. Session topics included change management, building a high performing team, insuring your business wisely among others.

The AMOA On Campus Education Program with the Notre Dame experience is a two-year program comprised of four sessions, two in the fall (held in conjunction with AMOA On the Road Education) and two in the spring (held at the University of Notre Dame). Registration is now being accepted for Class XIX, Session IV taking place this Fall in the Chicagoland area.

For more information on AMOA programs, contact AMOA Executive Vice President Lori Schneider, lori@amoa.com, or visit www.amoa.com.

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.

Georgia COAM reps among AMOA leadership

New officers and directors for the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) began their terms following its annual membership meeting and Expo in Las Vegas in April, including several with Georgia ties.

AMOA officers for the upcoming year are:

- President Emily Dunn of Tom's Amusement, Blue Ridge, GA;
- First Vice President Greg Trent of Beyer & Brown, South Daytona, FL;
- Treasurer Chi Babich of Game Exchange of Colorado, Denver, CO;
- And Secretary Sam Westgate of J & J Ventures, Effingham, IL.

The new directors, consisting of eight operators and distributors from around the country, are:

- Chuck Brooks, All Star Amusement Games, Lake City, FL;
- Shawn Dean, Dean Superior Vending, Minneapolis, MN;
- Jeff Douglas, Operators Dist. Inc., Archdale, NC;
- Andy Dunford, Venco Business Solutions, Bland, VA;
- Ryan Harris, Ellis Amusements Inc., Meridian, ID;
- Joe Jacobson, Amusement Devices, Inc., Menasha, WI;
- Aaron Ramos, ECS Inc. DBA Camden Amusement, Cedar Rapids, IA;
- And Greg Young, Pinnacle Amusements, Covington, LA.



GAMOA photo

FORMER AMOA President Gaines Butler, left, joins Director Chuck Brooks, President Emily Dunn, and Secretary Sam Westgate for a photo at the recent Amusement Expo in Las Vegas.

rior Vending, Minneapolis, MN;

- Jeff Douglas, Operators Dist. Inc., Archdale, NC;
- Andy Dunford, Venco Business Solutions, Bland, VA;
- Ryan Harris, Ellis Amusements Inc., Meridian, ID;
- Joe Jacobson, Amusement Devices, Inc., Menasha, WI;
- Aaron Ramos, ECS Inc. DBA Camden Amusement, Cedar Rapids, IA;
- And Greg Young, Pinnacle Amusements, Covington, LA.

AMOA officers and directors whose terms will expire at the close of the show were sincerely thanked and recognized for their dedication and service to the association and the industry. They will now join the illustrious AMOA Heart & Soul, which consists of the generations of men and women that have served on the AMOA Board of Directors since 1948.

The AMOA is a national trade association dedicated to serving owner operators, distributors, manufacturers and suppliers within the amusement entertainment industry throughout North America. The organization supports industry growth and its membership through programs that include representation in government and legislative affairs, industry education, outreach and training initiatives, membership cost saving benefits, and professional development programs.

For more information about the AMOA, visit www.amoa.com

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 Amuse-

ment 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

A great staff is an enthusiastic staff

By **Beth Standlee**
CEO, TrainerTainment

I had breakfast with a friend of mine at a 50-year-old restaurant near downtown Fort Worth. That establishment may have the best example of a business that exudes a best “culture of service” I’ve ever seen.

Was it a five-star place? No. Look it up. The Ol’ South Pancake House: It’s what you would think, except bigger! They had lots of seats and plenty of staff. When we arrived, they found us a table (booth) as quickly as possible. There was a slight wait, but the host was so pleasant. She seemed glad to see us.

Neither of us had ever been to this location, but honestly, it felt like we were part of the family. Once seated, we were greeted by the BEST server I’ve ever had. The only way I can describe Jennifer is that she was genuinely joyful to serve our breakfast. She smiled. She verbalized how happy she was we were there. She was interested in us having the best thing for breakfast based on dietary needs and desire.

Staff enthusiasm

Listen, I don’t know how to tell you to help your staff get enthusiastic about the choices your guests make, but I can tell you as a guest, I LOVE it! The word that comes to mind about this server is “authentic.” She wasn’t faking it. She was happy and joyful. She had a genuine desire to serve, and it showed.

Maybe that’s the interview question we

need to ask prospective current employees: “how would you rate yourself on a scale of 1-10 when it comes to serving others, with 1 being I’m a help-yourself-kind-of-person and 10 representing a burning desire to serve

what, the place was full of Jennifers. Every server was fully engaged when they were with a table.

We even noticed a cranky couple at a table near us. Their server seemed to make

it her mission to lighten up this meal for Mr. and Mrs. Cranky – and it worked. It may have had something to do with the fact that when she delivered breakfast, she did so with an enthusiastic “incoming!” and served them the eggs and bacon in a royal sweeping style.

You had to laugh. You have to get happy, even when you are cranky! It’s bacon and eggs for crying out loud, and to me, it looks super important to

the folks at the Ol’ South Pancake House for it to be a meaningful and fun part of each of their customer’s day.

That’s a culture! They all believe what they are doing is important, and they are consistently delivering honest and genuine service at a level I haven’t seen in a while!

Beth Standlee is founder and CEO of TrainerTainment, a sales-training company that helps grow people and as result grow businesses. She will lead a seminar during the Southern Amusement and Entertainment Expo, sponsored by GAMOA, in Atlanta in September.



Beth Standlee

She wasn’t faking it. She was happy and joyful. She had a genuine desire to serve, and it showed.

others?” Then I would ask for an example of a time when they exhibited that kind of service.

A spirit of service

Back to Jennifer. She was friendly and tuned into the fact that my friend and I were going to visit a while. She never interrupted inappropriately, yet tended to our every need.

At one point during breakfast, my friend said, “Jennifer makes me want to ask her for one more thing, just so she’ll come back to the table!” I’m telling you, this woman was gifted with a “service spirit.” I know that may sound “woo-woo,” but it was just awesome!

We got to looking around, and you know

Fellows

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an entire team of highly dedicated professionals, along with industry experts, that are working for you. They work tirelessly to protect your business and provide for a better tomorrow, all for the cost of membership.

Regardless what that cost may be to your individual company, I challenge you to find a better return on investment than GAMOA. Throughout the year at various meetings and through individual calls with members, the board will compile all of the input from our members to help guide the initiatives that will be taken up by GAMOA. The board will then vote on the initiatives and determine the priority. Once approved by the board, the work is then distributed among the professional staff or taken on directly by a board member.

Litigation and legislative initiatives are presented to our members and voted on by the members for approval, which is even more reason to make sure you attend each of the bi-monthly meetings.

As the current president of GAMOA, I will tell you that in my own personal experience, there simply isn’t a better group of industry leaders than those here in Georgia. I was first exposed to GAMOA in my early 20s when the meetings were heard in a distributor’s warehouse and maybe two dozen people were present. Now almost 30 years later, I have been on the Board of Directors six times, served as vice president under three different presidents and headed the legislative committee. I have attended numerous AMOA events and talked with literally hundreds of operators from across the country. I have

served on committees and boards for other trade associations in surrounding states, and none of them are as effective, focused, driven or as capable as GAMOA.

You are blessed to be a Master License Holder in Georgia, and you owe it to GAMOA. Without GAMOA, you would have been out of business in 2013, and your business would have no value. You don’t have to believe me – just look at the neighboring states or ask a sales rep from one of the manufacturers here in Georgia how often they sell anything to other markets.

So, you can see that as Master Licensees or a Location Licensees in Georgia you are very lucky to have this amazing opportunity to be a part of the COAM Industry. If you think this is through dumb luck, that the stars aligned magically and you just woke up with this golden opportunity, you must be

dreaming. On the other hand, if you are someone with a more realistic outlook, then you will recognize that it was the sacrifice, dedication and pure determination of dozens of industry people over the last three decades that has created this unique business opportunity for you.

If you are a member of GAMOA, you are aware of these facts, and thank you for your support. If you are not a member, go back and try to answer those questions. Dig deep and ask yourself, “why haven’t you joined?” I will make you this promise. There has not been another trade association in the country that has accomplished more than GAMOA, and you are here today because of GAMOA.

Our slogan is UNITY – One Industry One Voice. Through our Board of Directors, we proudly serve the men and

See UNITY Page 9



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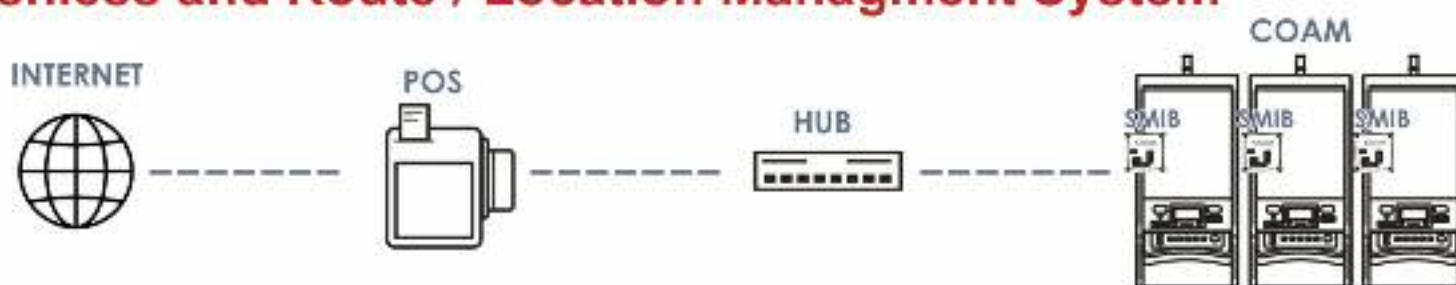


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Licenses

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spotted and fixed by the deadline and COAM representatives have at least two weeks for any necessary inspections. The COAM Division will also be sending out weekly reminder emails that include tips to help the process go smoothly until the final renewal day.

To help applications move through the COAM approval procedure as quickly and painlessly as possible, Parham provided several tips to follow. For example, licensees should make sure the personal information they put on their applications is “true and correct.” Master licensees are also encouraged to inform potential location licensees that they can’t apply for COAMs if they have a felony on their record or if they owe any back taxes.

“Make sure they have their ducks in a row,” Parham said.

Licensees should also refrain from calling the COAM Division to check on applications, as their progress can be monitored online, and from showing up at the division without an appointment, Parham added.

When revenue numbers were discussed during the February GAMOA meeting, Parham said the COAM industry had the potential in March to break the single-day earning record of \$3.6 million, set March 2 of last year, and he proved prophetic: revenues totaled \$4.3 million on March 1 of this year, an increase of almost 20 percent over the previous high.

“I’m amazed how the numbers keep going up,” Parham told GAMOA members, and then en-



Paul Tash photo

GAMOA BOARD MEMBERS Allen George, Salim Khambawala and Michael “Smitty” Smith enjoy a reception April 18 in Lilburn, the night before the board meeting.

couraged them to “get those (machines) that aren’t performing out,” to sustain the upward revenue trend.

The number of locations throughout the state remained steady at about 4,600 with about 22,300 Class B machines in those locations, he said.

Parham urged licensees to move the machines “to the front of the store” to increase play.

“These are legitimate machines ... in a legitimate industry,” he said.

In related news greeted appreciatively by GAMOA members, Parham said the Lottery will soon launch a new marketing effort featuring new decals to be placed on machines that highlight the fact that COAM revenue supports the popular Hope and Pre-K scholarship funds. The decals could lead to increased play, he added, by educating those patronizing convenience stores and other machine

locations that machine play benefits state education programs.

The COAM Division is also developing a new guide that will provide location licensees “good information” about entering and thriving in the COAM industry, Parham said. The guide, which should be out sometime in May, will discuss COAM regulations and provide answers to many questions current and potential location licensees may have about hosting the machines.

Tony Williams, the COAM Division’s lead investigator, also reported that the division’s new pre-licensing inspections continue to be beneficial. The inspections are “one of the best things we do,” he said, and improve compliance by checking COAM requirements early in the licensing process.

“Investigators will work with the licensee as best they can.”

In other business, President Shawn Fellows encouraged li-

licensees to sign up for GAMOA’s new text alert system on its website, www.gamoa.org. He said the text notifications have already proven to be “a great tool” for the association to communicate to licensees about COAM issues. For example, he said, the alerts worked well in providing up-to-date information during a recent intermittent, statewide power outage that affected site controllers.

Attendees were also reminded to empty their cash boxes daily to protect themselves from break-ins. A few weeks after the meeting, a convenience store in Atlanta lost almost \$8,000 after a player broke into a gaming machine and stole all its cash.

In other news, GAMOA membership approved its Board of Directors for the upcoming year. The current lineup of elected directors, who are serving staggered three-year terms, is Jamie Boyden of Lucky Bucks, Bunty Doshi of United Gaming, Chuck Brooks of Allstar Amusement, Shawn Fellows of Diamond Amusement (president), Adam Foust of Elite Amusement (vice president), Allen George of Southeast Billiards and Games, Salim Khambawala of Dixie Amusement, Vijay Kumar of Infinity Amusement, Weyman Moon of Mims Entertainment (secretary), Jane Park of Laves Amusement, Mike Patel of Ultimate Amusement (treasurer), Paul Patel of Encore Amusement of Georgia, and Angela Whitman of Midtown Vending. In addition, Directors Robert Aboujaoude of Betson Southeast and Michael Smith of Banilla Games are appointed by the president, while AJ Patel of Albany Amusement is an ex-officio director.

Unity

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women of the COAM industry by providing educational seminars, networking opportunities, advocacy and strategic and legal support. GAMOA has shaped the future that will benefit not only you and your family, but thousands of Georgia’s kids who benefit each year from the more than \$50 million transferred from COAM machines each year to education.

We are proud of our accomplishments, and we look forward to serving each of you for decades to come.

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



Paul Tash photo

SHAWN FELLOWS, GAMOA president, leads a discussion during the group’s membership meet-

ing April 18 in Lilburn. The association’s next meeting is scheduled for June 20.

Retail Matters

Powell to chair industries panel

Georgia Association of C-Stores

Many of you may already know former convenience store owner Alan Powell, a longtime legislator. If you don't, you'll have some additional opportunities to meet him now in his new position. Rep. Powell, R-Hartwell, has been chosen as chairman of the House Regulated Industries Committee. Historically, this committee has heard and vetted alcohol, tobacco, lottery and coin-operated amusement game legislation.

He chaired his first Regulated Industries meeting Feb. 5 announcing the alcohol-tobacco, occupational-professional, regulatory and lottery oversight-gaming subcommittees and chairs.

We were able to spend a few minutes with Chairman Powell, and he was very gracious to do a quick Q & A.

Q: Your biography on the House webpage indicated you are self-employed; what is your profession?

A: I'm a real estate broker with Red Clay Properties. We have branches in Commerce, Braselton and Hartwell. But I've owned several types of businesses through the years.

Q: You recently served as Chairman of Public Safety, and now Chairman of Regulated Industries, do you think this Chairmanship will be different?

A: I've held several chairmanships in my career. I've chaired Governmental Affairs, Rules, Spe-



GACS photo

REP. ALAN POWELL, chairman of the House Regulated Industries Committee, stands with GACS President Angela Holland.

cial Rules, Motor Vehicles. I've had all kinds of assignments in 30 years. I don't think it'll be any different. The first committee to which I was appointed was the House Industry Committee, and Sonny Watson was my chairman. He trained me on how to be a chairman. (The House Industry Committee was disbanded and divided in 2003. Much of the legisla-

tion was moved to Regulated Industries Committee)

Alcohol bills generally are high profile bills and even the slightest change creates interesting debate. As such, we asked Chairman Powell a short series of "controversial" legislation questions.

Q: Do you expect any challenges or controversial legislation this year?

A: Well, that depends on how you define controversy.

Q: How do you define controversy?

A: We will take care of the people's business and any bill that's put in, we will dispatch it.

Q: Do you prefer controversial legislation?

A: Not really, but if it's there, we will deal with it.

Q: Let's back up to explore one of those businesses you've owned through the years ... Tell me more about your convenience store business.

A: Right out of college, I opened a convenience store. And had up to 3 convenience stores at one time. I enjoyed running them, but over time, just got too old to stand up all day on those hard-concrete floors. Still own the buildings and lease them out now. And have great tenants!

Q: Of all the businesses you've owned, which business was your favorite?

A: That's an easy answer, the ones that made money.

Q: How do you feel about coin operated amusement machines (COAM)?

A: I have no problem with them.

Q: What are your thoughts on a gaming redemption gift card?

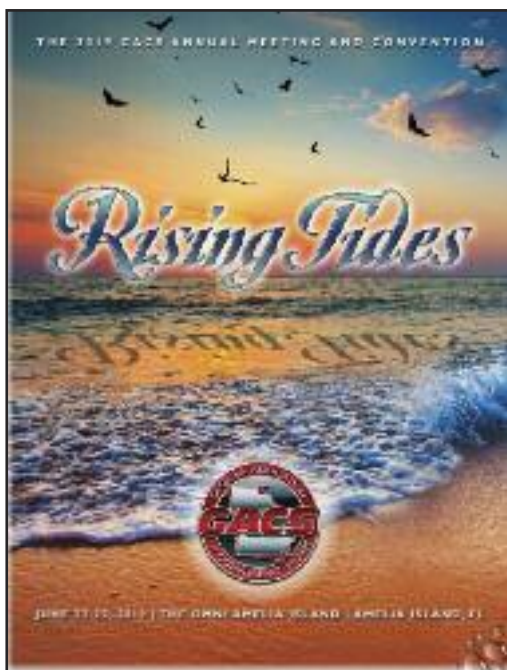
A: I have no problem with it. I think it would bring revenue to the state and put businesses that have game machines on a level playing field.

GACS convention coming June 23-25

The Georgia Association of Convenience Stores will host its 2019 Annual Convention June 23-25 on Amelia Island in Florida. The convention "will bring together C-Store retailers and suppliers who share a common mission – advancing the success of the C-Store industry – for two and a half days of engaging activities and fun," GACS said.

The 2019 Convention will support the three pillars of GACS:

Advocacy. Political engagement is at the core of GACS' mission. GACS is inviting legislators and regulators to join the convention education faculty. Attendees will hear from a panel



marijuana market changes, are on the program. Also, a fundraiser will be conducted during the

convention to support the GACS Education Foundation.

of legislators, who will discuss current issues affecting the C-Store industry. The Silent Auction on Sunday supports the GACS PAC.

Learning. Education is a key part of what GACS does. Monday morning will be all about trends that impact the industry. Four experts, speaking on topics ranging from demographic and consumer purchasing trends, to tobacco and

convention to support the GACS Education Foundation.

Networking. Creating opportunities to spend time together, learn from one another and share stories, is one of the things GACS does best. Focus in Five, a new member event launched in 2018, is on the Sunday schedule. Monday, there's golf and fishing.

Eighty-eight percent of 2018 convention attendees rated the convention very good to excellent in the post-convention survey, GACS said. Nearly 90 percent plan to attend again in 2019, a strong testament to the value attendees place on the convention.

The 2019 GACS Annual Convention will be held at the Omni Amelia Island Hotel June 23-25. Registration fees start at just \$295 for members or \$365 for nonmembers. For more information, visit www.gacs.com/events.

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 Secondary Contact _____
 Business Phone _____ Fax _____
 Cell _____ Email _____

Amusement Operators Membership: (Class A Master License Holders)

- Amusement Operator 1-9 Employees \$350 GA MLH # _____
- Amusement Operator 10+ Employees \$500 GA MLH # _____

Amusement Operators Membership: (Class B or Class A & B Master License Holders)

- Amusement Operator 1 – 20 Decals \$1,000 GA MLH # _____
 - Amusement Operator 21+ Decals (\$52/Decal) \$ _____ GA MLH # _____
- 21+ Decals One-time Payment Quarterly Monthly Number of Decals _____
 Quarterly & monthly payments due the by the 5th of each month.

Location Membership: (Location License Holders)

- Location License Membership (1-4 Locations) \$100 GA LLH # _____
- Maximum Location License Membership (5+ Locations) \$500 GA LLH # _____

Associate Membership: (Manufacturers, Distributors, Supplies, Affiliated Associations & Industries)

- Level 1 Membership Professional Services \$250
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Board

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pertinent topics.

“A lot of work went into that,” Heinen said.

COAM's lead investigator Tony Williams told the Board the agency's pre-licensing inspections “have been very successful.” The inspections, he said, gives “us an opportunity to go over the laws” and “clear up a lot of misconceptions on the law.”

Investigators are looking to ensure potential licensees understand and are equipped to follow the basics of the COAM law, including the requirement that they have enough merchandise for sale to comply with the 50/50 rule.

“COAMs have to be secondary,” he said.

The pre-inspections have been “a great game-changer,” Heinen added, and have been successful flagging potential licensees pitching bogus businesses – “flower shops that don't sell flowers.”

“Those aren't the people the industry wants,” he said.

In other Board discussion, member Hemal Petal brought up the possibility of lowering the \$2,500 Financial Security Deposit (FSD) required of new operators in some cases or allowing other alternatives, such as a bonding option.

New licensees, he said, already face heavy start-up costs and could “utilize that money to reinvest in their business.” Lowering the required deposit, or finding another solution, could help “increase the

number of machines” and in turn “increase revenue for the state” and its Hope Scholarship and Pre-K education programs.

Julie Barker, the COAM Division's attorney, said the state is wary of bonds, stating “the difficulty to get money from bond companies.” However, regulators agreed to continue discussion on options for the security deposits.

Promotional stickers

On another topic, Heinen said the Lottery's marketing department is developing decals and signs to be placed on machines that let players and potential players know that revenue derived from COAMs help fund the state's educational programs. Regulators and industry representatives hope the information will promote some growth in

machine play.

In other business, Barker told the board the GLC is proposing three minor COAM rule changes. One affects the assignment or transfer of contract agreements between master and location licensees, and would acquire new information, including the unique identification of COAMs being transferred and proof of valid licenses, in those contract agreement procedures.

Another clarifies language regulating the arbitration process to ensure parties follow the 14-calendar day requirement to begin arbitration following payment to the arbitration firm.

The third clarifies language regulating the decommission procedure by removing outdated references.

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