



GEORGIA Amusement JOURNAL

Dedicated to serving the Georgia COAM industry
Endorsed by the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association
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License renewals go well

Revenue strong, board also told

By Paul Tash

Georgia Amusement Journal

Lottery officials announced strong revenue growth for the COAM industry for the first quarter of 2020 and reported that license renewals this year went “smoother” than ever before during a COAM Advisory Board meeting Oct. 22 in Atlanta.

Meanwhile, momentum toward a much-supported gift-card redemption option, which seemed to be somewhat of a priority following a board meeting in August, has slowed.

John Heinen, senior vice president of the Georgia Lottery’s COAM Division, said the Lottery overall enjoyed a record-breaking quarter, as did the COAM industry specifically. The average revenue per machine per

See REVENUES Page 6



Paul Tash photo

CHRIS POPE discusses a point during the COAM Advisory Board meeting Oct. 22 at the Georgia Lottery Corp. headquarters in Atlanta,

while GLC President and CEO Gretchen Corbin listens. Pope was filling in for chairman Gus Makris.



Shawn Fellows

GAMOA talks insurance, FSDs

By Jorie Tash

Georgia Amusement Journal

The Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association (GAMOA) discussed the industry’s growing revenues, health insurance opportunities, lowered security deposits and more over lunch at the Oct. 24 membership meeting in Lilburn, sponsored by game manufacturer Zydexo (see related story on Page 9).

GAMOA President Shawn Fellows expressed gratitude to those companies that sponsored a social for representatives of the Georgia COAM industry during the Global Gaming Expo (G2E) that took place in Las Vegas in mid-October (see related story on Page 4). He also thanked GAMOA board member Mike Patel for his work in organizing the social, which attracted nearly 200.

See MEETING Page 3

December GAMOA meeting to focus on card systems

By Paul Tash, Georgia Amusement Journal

The December meeting of the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association (GAMOA) will focus on the benefits of the many card-reader systems available in Georgia’s coin-operated amusement machine (COAM) market.

The meeting will feature a panel discussion with the leaders in the technology of card-reader systems in Georgia. The panel will answer questions licensees have about the many different systems available and how the systems can improve operating efficiencies and simplify reporting, including sales tax requirements.

“This will be a very informative meeting,” said GAMOA Executive Director Christina Kaiser, “so bring your technicians to learn, also.”

The meeting is set for Dec. 12 at the Pleasant Hill Event Center

See CARDS Page 3



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Meeting

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“It was a great event,” Fellows said. “It was a huge success.”

Fellows also briefed GAMOA members on some positive revenue numbers that came from the COAM Advisory Board meeting held two days earlier. The average earnings per machine per day has grown from about \$89 to \$96.

“That’s substantial growth over one year,” Fellows said.

He also told GAMOA members that COAM contributions to the HOPE and Pre-K scholarship funds are on track to break the current record, set last fiscal year.

Further, Fellows informed members that from the 2,590 inspections carried out by COAM’s compliance officials in the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2020, only 40 citations were reported.

“That’s an incredibly low number (of citations),” he said, especially so since the number of inspections actually increased since last year.

Fellows commended members on the strides they’ve made in educating themselves and location licensees on regulatory standards.

On that note, Fellows also informed attendees that workshops will be held for master licensees in the near future to further improve compliance efforts and grow their businesses more effectively. The dates and locations for those will be announced soon.

Some more good news from Fellows: the Financial Security Deposits (FSDs) required from new licensees have now been capped at \$2,500, “a substantial reduction” from earlier FSDs, said Fellows.

The lower FSD “should really help facilitate the growth of new (location) licensees,” he said, and could especially encourage those who had expressed interest in becoming a licensee in the past but were leery of the potentially high FSD costs.

“You should be proud of the work you’ve done to reduce or eliminate FSDs,” he said, and specifically thanked Hemal Patel, a GAMOA member who sits on the COAM Advisory Board, for his work on the matter.

Max Rudisser, a representative of GAMOA’s new preferred health insurance provider, National General Benefits Solutions, also spoke at the meeting to share some information on the insurance program. Some members have enjoyed savings up to 30 percent or more by joining National General.

“Our niche is small groups up to 50,” said Rudisser. “We look at them all individually to guarantee a fair rate.”

He encouraged GAMOA members to send their information to



Paul Tash photo

MAX RUDISSLER, a representative of National General Benefits Solutions, gives GAMOA members an outline of benefits they can receive for their health insurance.

Phil Vance for a quote.

“It’s a no-hassle process,” he said. “We’ll just see if it fits.”

“I strongly suggest you look into it,” said Fellows, who added that master licensees should encourage their locations to do so, as well.

“Go through GAMOA’s website,” he said. “It’s like a discount coupon for being a member.”

GAMOA members were encouraged to check for cheaper rates every six months or so to ensure they’re getting the best deal and the best coverage.

Fellows also touched base with members on the potential for gift card redemption, an option that has been discussed in general terms at recent COAM Advisory Board meetings. Industry representatives feel a gift card would have a positive impact on business and on contributions to HOPE/Pre-K education programs.

“Opportunities (from cards) are enormous,” said GAMOA attorney Les Schneider, and could be “a key component to helping the industry improve.”

He urged members “to provide feedback” and any documentation to support gift-card redemption to him, Fellows, or GAMOA lobbyist Sheila Humberstone.

Schneider also discussed upcoming legislation that could affect the industry and asked members to provide input “to help guide” legislative effort.

“We want to hear from you,” he said, “so we’re prepared for any legislative scenario.”

He also urged industry members, large and small, to get to know their local legislators and educate them about industry issues.

“Contact them and tell them about your industry,” he said. “Talk about what you do and what you do for small business.”

“It makes a huge difference,” he added.

Elected officials for specific districts can be found by going to www.commoncause.org/find-your-representative, typing in one’s home or business address, and filtering by the “State” button.

Cards

from Page 1

in Lilburn, beginning with a product expo at 11 a.m. featuring products from Axes, Betson, Primero Games, SGS, Surfnote, and Zy-

dexo. Lunch with vegetarian options will be served.

Those attending should register with the GAMOA office so it can get a food count by contacting Kaiser at christina@gamoa.org or (707) 408-0384. As always, the meeting is free and open to all COAM operators.

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.



2019 COAM location sweep and master push calendar



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

Las Vegas social a hit for GA reps

About 200 representatives of the Georgia COAM industry gathered in Las Vegas last month for a social during the Global Gaming Expo (G2E).

The Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association (GAMOA) organized the event, which was sponsored by six companies involved in the Georgia COAM industry – Southern Gaming Solutions, Banilla Games, Primero, Trestle, Goldfinger and Betson Imperial. The Southern Expo Social was held in the Alibi Lounge in the Aria Resort and Casino on the Vegas strip.



Sponsors deemed the social a major success, providing attendees a chance to network and socialize in a unique setting.

"The support at the Vegas social was spectacular," said Lee Hunter, of Southern Gaming Solutions. "The attendance by so many of the Georgia operators proves the tremendous commitment to the growth of the COAM industry in the state. We truly enjoy these events and time to network with our industry customers."

"It certainly was a pleasure for the whole Banilla team to be a part of that event," added Michael "Smitty" Smith, national sales manager for Banilla Games. "It was a great opportunity for a lot of the stakeholders in this industry to be in the same room in a relaxed atmosphere. I hope that it also shows the commitment of Banilla Games to the future success of this market."

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



Paul Tash photo

ALAN JOSEPH, left, and his wife Dawn, right, flank Robert AbouJaoude from Betson Imperial during a social in Las Vegas last month that was organized by GAMOA and sponsored by six Georgia COAM companies. Betson was one of the sponsors of the party, which was attended by about 200 folks.



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COAM calendar

— REPORTING DATES —

Nov. 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 —

Dec. 12: GAMOA membership meeting, Pleasant Hill Event Center, Lilburn

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

AMOA's State Council meeting in Tampa

By **Lori Schneider**
AMOA Executive VP

Registration is now open to state leaders who plan on attending the 2020 AMOA State Council Meeting at the Renaissance Tampa International Plaza Hotel in Tampa, FL, beginning Thursday, Feb. 13 and running through Saturday, Feb. 15.

This year's meeting, which will have the theme "2020 ... States Working Forward," describes the content shared throughout the one and a half-day program. The annual gathering provides state leaders the opportunity to come together each year to collaborate and share valuable information on legislative affairs and other activity occurring in their respective state. In addition to the informative general sessions,



Lori Schneider

The annual AMOA event is open to state association leaders across the country.

The annual AMOA event is open to state association executives and state association leaders across the country. Representatives from states currently without a state association are encouraged to attend as well.

Sponsorships are also available for this important industry event.

Any questions regarding the 2020 AMOA State Council Meeting can be directed to AMOA Executive Vice President Lori Schneider at lori@amoa.com or by visiting amoa.com.



participants also engage in topic-focused roundtable discussions.

The AMOA State Council Meeting is another prime example of how AMOA continues Building Engagement in Real Life for the amusement and location-based entertainment industry.

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

Recent SNAP changes impact c-store retailers

By **Sharon Shuford**
GACS Membership Strategy

Changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) were the subject of the GACS Lunch & Learn Oct. 15 in Jackson, GA.

Linda Sung-Lee, senior program analyst for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, talked about what is new with SNAP and what it means for convenience stores.

Modifications to the SNAP program fall into four key areas:

- Updates to eligibility criteria;
- Streamlined services for multi-store owners (MSOs);
- Improved access to training and information on the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) website;
- And improvements to the customer service experience with the agency.

Eligibility criteria were changed to ensure that retailers participating in SNAP are stocked with staple foods. Retailers may be eligible under criterion A or B. For criterion A, retailers now must carry three stocking units of three staple food varieties in each of the four staple food categories. For two of the categories, there must be at least one perishable variety. Most stores are authorized under this criterion. Information about eligible items can be found on the FNS website.

For Criterion B, which is usually used

when stores do not carry all four staples (such as butcher shops and other specialty stores), the store must have more than 50 percent of its total gross retail sales from the

offering a similar service to owners with two to nine stores.

New training and resources available on the FNS website include a 20-page training guide, as well as a 17-minute YouTube video. New employees and employees whose training needs to be refreshed can use these resources to fulfill program training requirements.

Other resources include information about what SNAP can buy, what items are not eligible for SNAP purchases, and how a retailer can protect a store's SNAP eligibility.

With the holidays just around the corner, questions were asked about holiday and seasonal gift items. Sung-Lee said that gift baskets and seasonal items are



Sharon Shuford

Holiday baskets containing any amount of alcohol, tobacco, or pet food may not be purchased with SNAP.

sale of staple foods. Basing this criterion on percentage rather than specific dollar figures enables retailers to protect proprietary sales information.

The agency's new streamlined service for MSOs, retailers who own 10 or more stores, enables

retailers to consolidate store records, provide ownership information only one time, provide store information on spreadsheets, and, importantly, gives the retailers a single point of contact at FNS for all of their stores.

When asked by an attendee whether this service would be available to multi-store owners who do not have 10 stores, Sung-Lee indicated the department is looking into

not eligible for purchase with SNAP if the value of the non-food part of the item accounts for more than 50 percent of the purchase. Holiday baskets containing any amount of alcohol, tobacco, or pet food may not be purchased with SNAP.

Contacting FNS can be done on the web at www.fns.usda.gov/snap/ or by calling the Retailer Service Center at 1-877-823-4369.

GACS is planning to add more Lunch & Learn programs for 2020, bringing the total number of events across the state to 10. New locations will be added as well, tentatively in Athens, Atlanta, Macon and Rockmart.

For information about attending or sponsoring a program, contact Sharon Shuford at the GACS office, sshuford@gacs.com.





Paul Tash photo

JOHN HEINEN, senior vice president of the Georgia Lottery Corp.'s COAM Division, shares a laugh with the COAM Advisory Board last

month in Atlanta. Sitting on his right is Mike Parham, vice president of the COAM Division.

Revenues

from Page 1

day totaled an all-time high of \$95.59 in the first quarter, which ended Sept. 30, compared to \$89.91 in last year's first quarter.

In addition, he said, the number of machines in the marketplace has increased to 22,926 in 4,668 locations in Georgia.

"Play is up, revenues are up," he said. "That is great news."

Mike Parham, vice president of the COAM Division, added that COAM license renewal "went much smoother" this year.

The division "streamlined" its renewal process this year, he added, which also allowed renewals to happen "much quicker."

Communication regarding renewals from a variety of sources was also much improved this year,

he added, which also helped the process.

Even inspectors were reminding licensees to renew, Parham said, while he and his staff made personal calls when necessary to get licensees to renew. In addition, attorney Julie Barker told the board even the legal staff "made a real effort" to help licensing applicants "resolve issues" to help the process along in some cases.

All the effort has paid off. As of Oct. 19, Parham said, 99 percent of Class B licensees had renewed, and as had 93 percent of Class A licensees.

"Those are very good numbers," he said.

Though the renewal process went well, the Lottery is looking to do even better, Parham said.

"We're open to any suggestions to improve," he said.

Chris Pope, acting chair for the board in the absence of Gus

Makris, praised the effort by COAM regulators to help the licensing effort.

"I appreciate ... when government acts that way," he said, noting it helps licensees negotiate the "learning curve" that can exist in renewing.

Citation decline

Parham also provided other statistics for Georgia's COAMs. As of June 20, the GLC had enabled:

- 2,275 Class A location licenses;
- 4,819 Class B location licenses;
- 284 Class A master licenses;
- 185 Class B master licenses;
- 20 manufacturer licenses;
- And two distributors licenses.

In another report, COAM's lead investigator Tony Williams reported that the COAM Division increased inspections to 2,590 in the first quarter, with just 40 citations issued. Despite increasing the number of inspections, Williams said fewer citations and fewer warnings were issued than the previous quarter.

"Our hope is, that means that everybody is getting it," he said.

In other business, Heinen agreed to work with the industry and the Department of Revenue to expedite tax-clearance letters, so COAM operations can get up and running sooner.

Gretchen Corbin, president and CEO for the Georgia Lottery Corporation, who sits on the COAM Advisory Board, reiterated the pledge to work with the DOR to facilitate tax-clearance efforts.

"We want to be the best partners as possible," she said.

Pope again thanked the Lottery for that help.

"I'm glad we're in a state that is business friendly," he said.

On another matter, Heinen an-

nounced that the division has set the Financial Security Deposit (FSD) in all cases at \$2,500. The Lottery requires an FSD from location licensees in some instances, such as a lower credit score or delinquent payment history with GLC. Higher, fluctuating FSDs had been required in the past. Industry reps had been urging the division to lower or eliminate the FSD, saying its hindering industry growth. The new FSD guidelines require \$2,500 when circumstances call for it.

"We're only looking at the applicant," Heinen said. "If there's no issues, there's no FSD."

Board member Hemal Patel, who has been a proponent of lowering FSDs and simplifying the FSD requirement, expressed gratitude for the new guidelines that provide a "consistent process." The new FSD guidelines are available on the COAM Division website in its Documents section.

Gift card stall

Regarding gift cards, Heinen said the division has put its initial push "on hold." No discussion followed that announcement. The industry had been charged with providing documentation to help support the need for gift card redemption, and industry reps after the meeting said they are still committed to gathering that information.

Corbin closed the meeting with some news that the COAM industry set a record revenue mark for the first quarter at \$22.5 million and had some praise for those who helped make it happen.

"I want to thank the masters and locations for all the work they do on a daily basis," she said. "I appreciate our COAM team and look forward ... to improving and improving."

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Zydexo makes moves to push growth

By Jorie Tash

Georgia Amusement Journal

Gaming manufacturer Zydexo sponsored GAMOA's October membership meeting, and the company brought along some impressive additions to their existing lineup.

"We continue to aggressively grow," said Zydexo owner Alex Mithani, "and we've got some of the slickest-looking products out there."

Regarding Zydexo's award-winning Eclipse cabinets, Mithani said the company has redesigned it by cutting the screen size to create "a more comfortable environment." Zydexo won the Innovative Product of the Year Award at Southern Amusement and Entertainment Expo in September 2018 for its Eclipse machine.

"We changed the style and content," he said, to make the top-of-the-line product's attributes more accessible to buyers and players alike. The redesigned cabinets will save buyers thousands of dollars, he said.

All Zydexo products feature a wide variety of content, interactive bonuses and an immersive playing experience, he said.

Mithani also introduced the Konnect Cashless and Route/Local



Paul Tash photo

ALEX MITHANI, owner of Zydexo, explains some benefits of the Ignite amusement machine to

Bobby Kim of Laves Amusement during a GAMOA meeting Oct. 24 in Lilburn.

tion Management System to GAMOA attendees, a product that performs auto-accounting, stores data from all machines connected to the system, and performs credit transfers between terminals, eliminating the need to cash out in between.

"We felt there was a growing need for a hybrid cashless system," said Mithani, adding that the product also has the ability to put player winnings onto cards to enable them to play with credits.

The Konnect also has available add-ons, such as a Slot Machine Interface Board (SMIB) that connects the system to non-Zydexo games, a Cloud Reporting Service that enables licensees to review reports from all locations at any time, and a Cloud Route Management Service that allows route operators to turn machines on or off remotely, among other offerings to increase the machine's capabilities.

Perhaps most notable, the Konnect links to machines through a

central hub, so individual machines are easily taken offline for maintenance or shut down entirely without affecting other machines.

Zydexo is currently offering a variety of discounts. Those interested in purchasing from Zydexo can email sales@coam.com or call 770-203-0401. Those who have questions about the product line-up or capabilities, pricing models, or desire any other information from the team should email info@zydexo.com.



UNITY
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Industry Meeting
Card Reader Panel Discussion
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Sponsored by:

Lucky Bucks grows into new facility

Master licensee consolidates in Norcross

By Paul Tash

Georgia Amusement Journal

Continuing to grow its footprint in Georgia's Coin-Operated Amusement Machine (COAM) market, Lucky Bucks Gaming Group recently moved into a new, state-of-the-art facility in Norcross.

The new 11,000-square-foot facility represents “the next stage” for the growing company, said Jamie Boyden, director of business development for Lucky Bucks, a master license holder. The facility consolidates business operations under one roof from a couple of different business locations previously.

“The facility brings our team together,” he said, “as we continue to build our brand.”

Lucky Bucks is Georgia's largest route operator and provides skill-based machines developed by a variety of top manufacturers, including Banilla, Zydexo, Primero and IGT (through Southern Gaming Solutions) to over 300 locations.

Boyden said the company took its time to design efficient and effective floor space. The complex includes plenty of office space, a conference room, and breakroom, but it also includes such special amenities as a designated office for visitors to use and a designated compliance office.

Another space, just past the waiting room through a security door, is set up like a retail location, where engineers can test machines, card systems and other peripherals. The room also acts as a training facility for location licensees.

In addition, the facility boasts a warehouse in the rear specifically designed for efficient work flow for such tasks as changing out machines. A large monitor provides technician schedules, a machine deployment schedule, and even a daily inspirational or humorous quote or two.

The new facility is helping the company “streamline its efforts and internal processes,” said Anil Damani, Lucky Bucks CEO.

“It's been a good move,” Damani said. “It's going to be a game changer.”

Tony Kassam, the company's director of operations, said customers have been impressed.

“The feedback we've received has been great,” he said. “This is what a gaming company should look like.”



Paul Tash photos

JAMIE BOYDEN, director of business development for Lucky Bucks Gaming Group, stands in a room designed to simulate an actual retail location,

one of several amenities in a new, 11,000-square-foot facility the master licensee moved into last April in Norcross.



TAUHEEDA DEWITT, the company's compliance specialist, sits at her desk in the designated compliance office. Below, a warehouse in the rear is designed for efficient work flow for such tasks as changing out machines.





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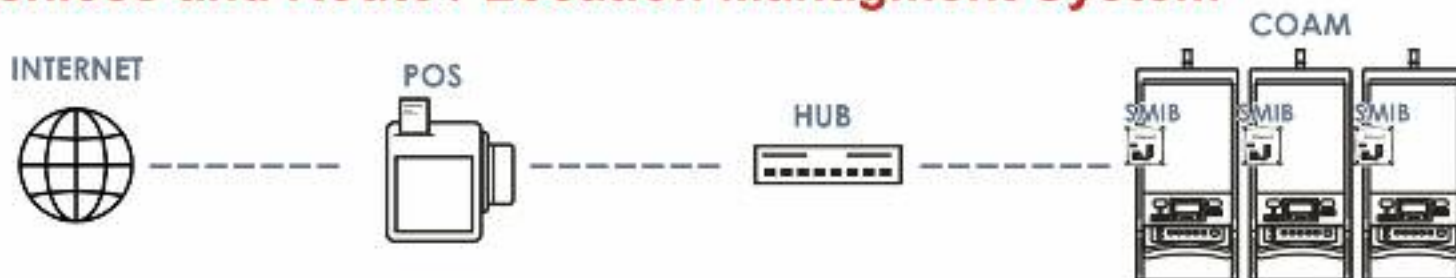


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BUSINESS FOR SALE

HOT DIGGITY DOGS for sale!

Hot Diggity Dogs, a restaurant in Thomasville, GA, has been in business for over four years. In addition to the restaurant, it offers Lottery products and six COAM machines (buyer would need to hold or obtain a location license and assume the contract with the master licensee to run the COAMs). The building is 1,800 sf and can be subdivided for a second business that could include additional COAM machines. Long-term leasing is available at \$1,000 per month. Call (843) 458-2163 and leave a message for Reggie.



Membership Application

Operators, Locations, Manufactures, Distributors & Suppliers

Company Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Main Contact _____
 Business Phone _____ Fax _____
 Cell _____ Email _____
 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
 Level 2 Membership Plush & Bulk \$500
 Level 3 Membership Parts & Service \$1,000 GA License # _____
 Level 4 Membership Distributor or Manufacturer \$2,000 GA License # _____

Total Membership Fees (Checked Category Above) \$ _____ Check Enclosed
Credit Card Number _____ **Exp** _____ **CID** _____
E-Check Account Number _____ **Routing Number** _____

Please make checks payable to GAMOA and mail this form with your check to:

GAMOA
 2095 HWY 211 NW • STE 2-F PMB 163
 Braselton, GA 30517

Join Online at www.gamoa.org/register.

If you have any questions, please call the GAMOA office at 770.408.0384 or email christina@gamoa.org.

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