



GEORGIA Amusement JOURNAL

Dedicated to serving the Georgia COAM industry
Endorsed by the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association
paul@tashcommunications.com (406) 491-0100



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Gift card details emerging

Expanded pilot program gaining momentum

By Paul Tash, Georgia Amusement Journal

Georgia COAM regulators discussed emerging details of the expanding gift-card program, including increasing the maximum amount of the card to \$1,000 from \$500, at a presentation Aug. 25 during the Southern Amusement & Entertainment Expo in Duluth.

John Heinen, COAM senior vice president, provided more specifics about the gift-card program that potentially can grow from about 130 locations that participated in the initial pilot program to over 6,200 locations in the expanded version.

“That’s a huge lift folks,” he said. “We ask for a little patience. That’s going to be a big project for us.”

The expanded gift-card program was developed over the last several months with the continued input of the COAM Advisory Board, master license holders, location license holders and other industry stakeholders.

“From the Lottery standpoint, we wanted to get this program to market as quickly as we could, but as responsibly as we could,” Heinen said.

Intralot is the Lottery’s overall product supplier and operator, while InComm, an Atlanta-based payment

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GAMOA in Vegas



Paul Tash photos

LUCKY FORTUNE representatives at the reception were (above, left to right, Arte Cole and Shaneel Lalani.

MEMBERS and guests of the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association gathered for a reception sponsored by the COAM industry Oct. 12 during the Global Gaming Expo in Las Vegas. Members of the GAMOA board in attendance were (top, left to right) Treasurer Salim Khambawala, Vice President Mike Patel, and President Shawn Fellows. Others at the reception included (above, left to right) Dylan Waddle of m3t and Andrew Moseley, Peach Tree Distributing.



Crowds return to G2E

The Global Gaming Expo (G2E) 2022 – presented by the American Gaming Association (AGA) and organized by RX – returned to Las Vegas Oct. 10-13 for an in-person event, highlighting the casino gaming industry’s strength and dynamic future.

Nearly 25,000 global gaming professionals, suppliers and operators – including many from the Georgia COAM industry – gathered at The Venetian Expo for four days of product exhibitions and debuts, networking

events, keynotes and education sessions. The attendance is nearly double G2E 2021’s 13,000 and just shy of 2019’s total of about 27,000.

“Our industry is experiencing record-setting growth because of the innovation and technology that is fueling

See G2E Page 6



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Journal Opinion

Top 10 reasons to attend the Show

**By Sharon Shuford
GACS Membership**

Once each year the Georgia Association of Convenience Stores brings suppliers and retailers together under one roof for what is one of the largest and most comprehensive C-Store industry events in the southeast: The Southern Convenience Store and Petroleum Show.

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

This year the Show takes place in Macon, GA, at the Macon Centreplex, on Thursday, Nov. 10.

Why should you attend? Here are the top 10 compelling reasons not to miss this year's The Show:

#10. The Show is open and free to all retailers in the Southeast, including petroleum marketers, store owners, operators, supervisors, managers and employees. You do not have to be a GACS member to attend!

#9. The Show will be open all day on Nov. 10, from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m., providing ample time to visit the nearly 200 vendors participating.

#8. Before this year's Show



Sharon Shuford



opens, GACS is offering a free seminar to attendees titled "Human Resources: Human Needs." Instead of settling for a body, forward-thinking retailers are once again aspiring to hire – and keep – the best talent available. Two successful human resources professionals, Karen Malloy with Kum & Go and Kelsey Ryan with Love's Travel Stops, will share how their organizations are creatively overcoming some of the biggest

Preregistration for the Show is strongly encouraged to avoid long check-in lines, and admission is by badge only.

hiring challenges the industry has ever faced. This session is free and open to all attendees.

#7. GACS will host the GACS PAC Bowling Blast at Pin Strikes in Macon Wednesday evening. This three-game tournament brings more fun and networking time to the Show's schedule. For registration information visit

www.gacs.com/events.

#6. GACS is celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Show. A few surprises are in store to mark this special occasion.

#5. GACS will continue to follow CDC guidelines and safety protocols.

#4. The Show is conveniently located at The Macon Centreplex, 200 Coliseum

Drive, Macon, GA. Visit Macon will be on hand to share info about what to do and see while in Macon for attendees with some extra time.

#3. You may still be able to reserve a booth, but only a few spots are left. Contact Kevin in the GACS office at 770-736-9723 or visit showinfo@gacs.com or www.gacs.com/events for booth contract information, to reserve your booth, or learn more about benefits of exhibiting at the Show.

#2. Retailers who want to register can do so online at www.gacs.com. Just click the link to the Show. GACS encourages everyone to visit the new website. Pre-registration for the Show is strongly encouraged to avoid long check-in lines, and admission is by badge only.

#1. Still the number one reason to attend: The Show is perhaps the best opportunity of the year to connect with retailers and suppliers, over a full day in November, under one roof. It's not to be missed!

Show attendance is free for retailers, including the morning seminar. Attendees must pre-register or register on site and pick up badges by 2 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 10.

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Georgia Amusement Journal Business and News Office:
P.O. Box 4307, Butte, MT 59702

• TEL: 406-491-0100 • E-MAIL: paul@tashcommunications.com

Paul Tash, *Editor/Publisher*
paul@tashcommunications.com
Phone: 406-491-0100

Ad Production • paul@tashcommunications.com

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COAM calendar

— REPORTING DATES —

Oct. 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 —

Oct. 18: COAM Advisory Board, Lottery headquarters, Atlanta
Oct. 27: GAMOA meeting, Al-Noor Banquet Hall, Norcross
Nov. 9: Southern Convenience Store and Petroleum Show, The Centreplex, Macon

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

Jukebox Jams should be a hit Nov. 23

Lori Schneider

AMOA Executive Director

The AMOA Jukebox Jams program is a great way for operators to promote the jukebox during the month of November with National Jukebox Day taking place on Thanksgiving Eve, Wednesday, Nov. 23, the biggest bar night of the year!

Coasters with QR codes leading patrons to the location's respective jukebox app are available for purchase at www.amoa.com/jukeboxjams while supplies last. You'll also have access to other resources on AMOA's website to help promote jukebox play throughout the month.

Legislative advocacy

AMOA made its first trek to Capitol Hill Sept. 29 to meet with Congressional leaders face-to-face for the first time since pre-COVID. The following issues were on the agenda:

Payment Choice Act – As previously reported, the Payment Choice Act passed through the House twice earlier this summer – once as stand-alone legislation and once as an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The bipartisan legislation was later introduced in the Senate as S. 4497 The Payment Choice Act. During our visit, we strongly encouraged key Senate offices to consider adding it to their NDAA legislation before the end of this Congress. We also began laying the groundwork for getting this legislation over the line in the 118th Congress.

Inflation and labor shortages – Our meetings included lawmakers on both sides, most of whom lead or serve on Small Business and Banking/Financial Committees. Members of the AMOA delegation provided con-



Lori Schneider

Coasters with QR codes leading patrons to the location's respective jukebox app are available for purchase

cise examples of how inflation and labor shortages are impacting the route operator.

Fair access to banking – We continue to push for the Safe Banking Act, which includes language stating that a bank cannot close a customer's account unless they can provide the customer with a written reason, and that reason must prove wrong-doing.

The next AMOA delegation is slated to visit D.C. in February.

Amusement Expo

Amusement Expo International (AEI) last month announced a major expansion of the core categories represented on its exhibit floor and educational program when the Billiard & Home Leisure Expo (BCA Expo) makes its debut as a new member of AEI's colocation family in 2023.

For the past 40 years, the BCA Expo has served as the premier show for everything from billiards to barstools, cues to casual furniture, Ping Pong to shuffleboard, and much more. Owned and operated by the Billiard Congress of America (BCA), the annual BCA Expo will unite with AEI for the first time during its March 27-30, 2023, event at the Las Vegas

Convention Center. President. "We're excited to add BCA Expo to the AEI colocation family. With the addition of BCA, attendees already operating retail locations will have the opportunity to get even more business done while in Vegas. The expanded exhibit hall provides new opportunities for everyone."

The addition of billiard and leisure sports products significantly expands AEI's offerings under one roof. Originally created as an event for buyers and sellers of amusement, music, and games – the coin-op business – AEI has broadened its reach in recent years via colocations and alliances with related industry segments including Family Entertainment Centers (FEC), bulk vending, laser tag, virtual reality, Foundations Entertainment University, and now Billiard and Leisure Sports. Simultaneously, AEI has put greater emphasis on the development of a top-quality educational program for attendees and exhibitors.

GACS

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For assistance, please contact Show Admin at ShowInfo@gacs.com or 770-736-9723 for information.

Here's the complete schedule:

Wednesday, Nov. 9
8 a.m.-5 p.m. – Exhibitor setup
6-9 p.m. – Bowling Blast

Thursday, Nov. 10
8 a.m.-9 a.m. – Seminar "Human Resources: Human Needs"
9 a.m.- 4 p.m. – Trade Show floor open



Paul Tash photo

THE GEORGIA COAM industry’s reception Oct. 12 during the Global Gaming Expo in Las Vegas at the Chateau rooftop nightclub featured a violin-playing DJ.

G2E

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our world-class entertainment offerings,” said AGA President and CEO Bill Miller. “After leading the return of tradeshows to Las Vegas last year, G2E 2022’s pre-pandemic atmosphere is a milestone for our industry and a testament to our collective excitement around gaming’s future.”

The 22nd edition of G2E, this year’s show featured more than 350 exhibitors and participating companies spread across 252,000 square feet, up 42 percent com-

pared to 2021. G2E education featured six dynamic keynote conversations and more than 80 education sessions on the latest industry trends and ideas.

“It was fantastic to bring the full global gaming community back together to reconnect and drive business,” said Korbi Carrison, G2E’s event vice president. “The energy and excitement at this year’s show announced that gaming is all the way back and made it the most impactful G2E yet.”

G2E 2023 will return to Las Vegas on October 9-12, 2023, at The Venetian Expo.



The SHOW: Twenty Years Strong.

Join us in Macon at The Centreplex, on November 10, 2022, for **The SHOW – The Southern Convenience Store & Petroleum Show!**

Retailers, petroleum marketers, convenience store owners, operators, supervisors, and managers are continuously looking for new ways to improve their businesses – from food service to fuel, novelties to snacks, COAM games to lottery ticket sales, and everything in between. The SHOW provides an outlet for C-Store vendors to showcase their products and services, and for C-Store decision makers to view new products and services.

So join us in Macon. Exhibitor set up is November 9; contact GACS at 770-736-9723 to find out if booth space is still available if you are interested in exhibiting.

The SHOW is free for retailers; advance registration is strongly recommended. To register or for more information visit www.gacs.com.



the Southern Convenience Store & Petroleum Show



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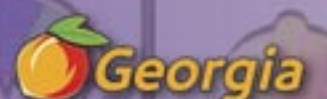
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HOLLYWOOD



Cards

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technology company, is managing the gift-card pilot program for Intralot. InComm officials also took part in the presentation at the Expo Aug. 25. InComm and Intralot will soon open an online portal where licensees can apply for the program. Locations that are already participating in the pilot program won't have to reapply.

The Lottery's COAM Division started the first phase of implementation in July when it sent out an email to all the enabled masters that have current licenses and invited them to participate in the gift-card project. A second email invite has also been recently sent.

After a master licensee accepts the email invitation to participate, InComm will provide the paperwork and other specifics for masters to participate. Master licensees can then begin procuring gift-card contracts between their location licensees and InComm.

"Right now, there are about 180 approved," said COAM vice president Mike Parham at the Aug. 25 presentation. "If you have not signed up for the program, expect another email inviting you. We just want to make sure we give you every opportunity to take part in

this gift card program if you're a Master License Holder."

Heinen pledged "equitable distribution" of the cards among interested Master License Holders (MLHs), and he urged larger MLHs to limit participation initially to "your best (20 or so) locations" to ensure enough cards and necessary point-of-sale equipment are available in the early stages of the program.

The expanded pilot program's biggest change from the initial program is the use of master license holders as ticket resellers who will manage the program. They will provide installation and service for the necessary equipment, distribute the gift cards to their locations, and train the Location License Holders (LLHs) on how to use the equipment and activate the cards. InComm will provide training for master licensees.

Though locations are not required to use the Lottery's pilot gift-card program to use gift cards provided by secondary vendors, such as W.L. Petrey, they won't receive the benefits available through the program. For example, the master and location license holders participating in the pilot program will each receive 12.5 cents for every card activated.

"We want to reward you for your work," he said.



If licensees "go outside the confines of that model," Heinen said, "that money would not be available to you."

In response to a question asking if retailers will be allowed to provide kiosks and other technology to make gift-card redemption more streamlined for the clerk and the player, Heinen answered, "absolutely."

"We love that idea," he said. "It's part of the prize-redemption process. We know there's innovation out there, and we're excited to see what it is."

Here are other aspects of the expanded pilot program:

- Locations aren't required to participate in the program.
- Only Lottery-branded gift cards can be used (not a restaurant or other retail gift card). The extended program will use up the remaining inventory of the current grey Visa gift card, and then provide a new MasterCard gift card branded with the COAM logo and the Georgia Lottery Corp. name at

the top (see inset).

- The card will have a \$20 minimum load and a \$1,000 maximum (double the amount allowed in the initial program), and each card has a \$2 activation fee.

- The gift card can't be used at ATMs, nor can it be used to redeem for alcohol, tobacco, or firearms, which follows current restrictions. It can be used anywhere MasterCard or Visa is accepted.

- Players must be 18 or older to use the gift card.

- All location licensees wishing to participate will need to have a valid 2023 license.

- The cards are for Class B redemption only.

- Though signage at locations will state the program is for a "limited time," Lottery officials say the pilot program will likely take a year or more.

- Master licensees are prohibited from buying cards for location licensees, which would be a form of illegal inducement.

- Signage for locations to promote the gift cards will be provided by the Lottery on the COAM website at www.gacoam.com.

- A frequently-asked-questions document on the program is also available on the website.

Industry representatives have said the gift card would provide
(Continued on next page)

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(Continued from previous page) convenient and easy non-cash redemption and would stimulate further growth by attracting new players, generating new locations, and marketing the COAM product more efficiently. That growth will in turn provide even larger industry

contributions to the state’s HOPE and Pre-K education programs. “This is a work in progress,” Heinen said.

The initial gift-card pilot program launched in late November 2020 and ran through June 2021. Participation in the program was

limited to about 330 COAM locations who were invited to join the pilot program. Ultimately, only about 130 locations participated.

A data and analytics firm hired by the GLC provided a report in October 2021 that analyzed, among other things, the impact the COAM gift cards in the pilot program had on the sale of existing lottery products. Though the report found the gift cards did have some impact on the sale of existing lottery products, industry representatives noted the 130 participating locations represented only about 2 percent of all locations in the market and didn’t provide enough information for a solid analysis of the gift card.

Lottery officials ultimately agreed to expand the program to obtain additional data. The pilot program’s extension will likely continue for about a year, Heinen said. The program then should provide plenty of information to determine not only the viability of the card but also gauge the interest locations have in offering it.

COAM reminders

Earlier in the presentation, COAM regulators provided licensees some operational reminders.

Regarding licensing deadlines, Parham said licensees “have got it figured out the last few years,” saying the Lottery has received a “very minimal” number of renewals that miss the June 30 deadline. Licensees can still apply for renewals past that date (they had through Sept. 28 this year), but they incur a \$1,000 late fee beginning July 1.

Parham reminded licensees they can check the status of their renewal online at

www.gacoam.com and see what action, if any, still needs to be taken.

“Please make sure your (locations) check their status on our website,” he urged master licensees.

He added that Lottery provides a list of locations on the COAM website that have applied for Class B renewal but haven’t received their license.

Parham also noted that the COAM Division is dealing with some redemption issues. A few locations reportedly aren’t redeeming for the full amount due or are charging an extra fee.

“That is all completely inappropriate,” he said, and urged master licensees to remind their locations to “redeem appropriately.”

Parham also reminded location licensees they are required to report monthly. That requirement, he said, can also be done on the website.

Chris Boncek, senior COAM operations specialist, emphasized the importance of decommissioning machines correctly. The COAM Division details the decommissioning procedure and the hard-reset procedure on its website as “quick guides.”

“There is a decommissioning process that needs to be followed each and every time,” he said.

He also urged licensees to use player card systems developed by an approved manufacturer to ensure they receive proper technical support for those systems.

In addition, Heinen reported that the Georgia Lottery has contributed \$25.3 billion toward education since the Lottery’s inception in 1992.

“I want to thank you for your partnership,” Heinen said.

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