

Lottery eyes gift card rule changes



Joe Kim, general counsel for the Georgia Lottery Corp., describes proposed rule changes regarding gift cards during the COAM Advisory Board meeting Oct. 6 in Atlanta. *Paul Tash photo*

Proposed alterations aim to clarify cash restrictions

By Paul Tash
Georgia Amusement Journal

The Georgia Lottery Corp. is preparing proposed rule changes to clarify that COAM gift cards cannot be used at ATMs or through services that facilitate cash exchanges, Lottery attorney Joe Kim told the COAM Advisory Board at its quarterly meeting Oct. 6.

“The statute says that the card cannot be exchanged for cash,” Kim said, explaining that the Lottery’s proposal is intended to reflect the existing law.

The rules draft has not entered the formal public-comment process. Kim said the Lottery Board in mid-October will consider approving it for public comment, which would trigger a 30-day period for feedback. The agency has established an email channel for comments and will accept input even before the formal comment period begins.

The proposed rule change prompted questions

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Primero’s ‘Grand Shamrock’ a win for players, operators

By Paul Tash
Georgia Amusement Journal

Primero recently launched its new “Grand Shamrock Pots O’ Plenty” game suite for the Georgia COAM market, showcasing it at G2E in Las Vegas last month on the RainMaker cabinet.

“Grand Shamrock has been performing very well in Georgia since its late-summer release, with its multi-faceted wheel bonus capturing players’ attention,” said Enock Etienne, director of

Game Design and Development for Primero. “The combination of exciting bonus features and multiple opportunities to win keeps players engaged, and that translates into stronger performance for operators.”

Powered by Primero’s Hurricane platform, Grand Shamrock was developed with a focus on delivering an engaging player experience that translates into strong performance for

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Paul Tash photo
Enock Etienne, lead game designer for Primero Games, shows the “Grand Shamrock” game at G2E last month in Las Vegas.

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Goldfinger to open new Alpharetta facility

Georgia Amusement Journal

Goldfinger is bringing its “gold standard” service to Georgia with the grand opening of its new sales and service facility in Alpharetta on Thursday, Nov. 12.

The new location represents an expansion of the company's commitment to serving the COAM industry with convenient, localized access to products, customer support, and repair services, the monitor-manufacturing firm said.

The new facility is designed to give customers throughout the region a convenient destination for purchasing products, arranging local pickup and drop-off, and obtaining on-site technical support.

The announcement reflects Goldfinger's response to customer demand for a local presence in Georgia, bringing sales, product availability, and service capabilities together under one roof.

“You asked. We listened,” the company states in its grand opening announcement, emphasizing its commitment to making it easier for customers to access the products and services they need to support their businesses.

Facility's service areas

The Alpharetta location will offer three primary service areas designed to meet the needs of amusement operators and other industry customers:

1. On-site sales and showroom:

The new facility will feature an on-site sales and showroom area where customers can view products and speak directly with Goldfinger's team.

The showroom will provide customers with an opportunity to explore available products, ask questions, and receive assistance in identifying solutions for their business needs. By offering a local, in-person sales experience, Goldfinger aims to strengthen customer relationships and simplify the purchasing process.

2. Local product pickup and drop-off: The Alpharetta

facility will also serve as a local product pickup and drop-off point, giving customers an alternative to having every order shipped directly to their business.

This service is intended to make product collection and delivery more convenient for customers in Georgia and surrounding areas. Having a local facility can help streamline product handoffs and provide an additional option for customers coordinating equipment and supply needs.

3. On-site RMA and repair

services: A third major feature will be on-site return merchandise authorization (RMA) and repair support. The company identifies this service as a local resource for customers who need assistance with product returns, repairs, and related service needs.

By establishing a physical service location in Alpharetta, Goldfinger will provide customers a local point of contact for coordinating repair requests and RMAs, helping bring sales and after-sales support closer to the businesses it serves.

Goldfinger is inviting customers and industry contacts to connect with the company around the

Grand opening details

Event: Goldfinger's grand opening of its Georgia facility

Date: Thursday, Nov. 12

Location: 1005 Union Center Drive,
Suite B, Alpharetta, GA

Featured services: On-site sales and showroom, local product pickup and drop-off, and on-site RMA and repair support.

RSVP and directions: Scan the QR code featured in Goldfinger's ad in this issue.

Questions: Chuckhickerson@goldfingerinc.com

Website:
www.goldfingermonitors.com

opening of its new Georgia location and explore the convenience of having sales, pickup, and service resources available locally.

With the Alpharetta facility, Goldfinger is positioning itself to deliver a more accessible, locally supported customer experience in Georgia while continuing its commitment to serving the coin-operated amusement industry.

GAMOA celebrates industry in Las Vegas



The Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association (GAMOA) hosted a social for members and friends at the Ghostbar rooftop bar in the Palms Casino Resort during G2E last month in Las Vegas. With the spectacular Vegas skyline in the background, several GAMOA board members took time for a photo. They are, from left, board member Sam Westgate, Executive Director Christina Kaiser, Vice President Salim Khambawala, President Mike Patel, new board member Yash Patel, and Secretary Kyle Shepherd.



Paul Tash photo

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Georgia Amusement Journal Business and News Office:
P.O. Box 4307, Butte, MT 59702
PHONE: 406-491-0100
E-MAIL: paul@tashcommunications.com

Paul Tash, Editor/Publisher
paul@tashcommunications.com; 406-491-0100

Ad Production: paul@tashcommunications.com

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COAM calendar

UPCOMING

Oct 20: Gross retail receipts for July, August and September are due. The gross retail receipts must be submitted electronically through the COAM website at www.gacoam.com. Failure to report on time may result in penalties.

MEETINGS & MORE

Oct. 22: GAMOA membership meeting, Crowne Plaza Atlanta in Norcross, GA

Nov. 12: Goldfinger grand opening, Alpharetta

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 email paul@tashcommunications.com. The Journal reserves the right not to print letters it finds objectionable.

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Gift cards

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about whether gift card use can be controlled after a customer leaves a business with the card, with one board member saying that scenario seemed difficult to monitor. Kim responded that the agency must address the statutory restriction, even if it can't control every subsequent use.

The gift-card clarification is part of a broader set of draft rule revisions presented to the advisory board "as a courtesy," Kim said, noting that the responsibility to approve the rule revisions rests with the Lottery Board.

Many of the proposed changes are "cleanup" in nature, such as removing language that repeats statutory provisions, Kim said. Repeating a statute in agency rules can create conflicts if the law changes but the rule does not, he said.

Acting Chairman Shawn Fellows thanked the team for its work and encouraged board members and industry participants to submit feedback.

Intralot reports improvements

Shayne Heap, senior service manager in Georgia for Bally's Intralot, reported improvements in call-center and field-service performance. Intralot's overall service-level rate was 96.2 percent for the quarter. Heap said the company made staffing and process changes after missing service targets on a few high-volume Sundays in August.

The call center handled 18,562 calls, while average handling time fell to 9 minutes and 47 seconds from just over 10 minutes, Heap said. He also reported increased participation in post-call surveys and asked masters to encourage technicians to complete them so Intralot can gather more feedback.

Heap said the company wanted more technicians to complete the survey, which takes about two minutes. More responses, he said, would help Intralot continue improving the quality of its service and understand how callers experience the support process.

Field-service teams completed 1,321 service requests since the prior advisory meeting, with 98 percent compliance and an average turnaround of about 4.2 days. That was down from about 5.4 days in July. Heap credited new technicians in the Albany and Savannah markets with helping reduce delays.

Heap also reminded licensees to make sure they're using the Bally's Intralot-branded web form for appointment scheduling, which recently replaced the original form. Heap said the online appointment form improves confirmation clarity and reduces missed appointments.

Fellows praised the company's progress, citing a "dramatic improvement over last year." He said industry feedback reflected better call and response times and singled out the technical escalation team for helping masters resolve location and commissioning issues.

Heap said technicians continued to face challenges with COAM verifiers and RS232 testing during game commissioning. Intralot offered to train technicians on the tools, either at its warehouse or in the field, to help improve commissioning and decommissioning.

The company also reported providing training at the Southern Amusement & Entertainment Expo in August. In addition, the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association (GAMOA) is sponsoring another technician training event scheduled for Nov. 5 at Bally's Intralot's warehouse in Duluth.

Application renewals "consistent"

COAM Division Vice President Mike Parham provided some application renewal statistics for the recently concluded 2027 licensing period, which runs July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027.

The renewal rate for all Class A and Class B licenses was 94.3 percent, just slightly below the 95.5 percent rate last year. Parham attributed the small decline in the overall percentage to a five percent decline in Class A license renewals to 86 percent this year from 91 percent last year. In addition, the manufacturers' renewal decreased to 89 percent from 91 percent. All other license groups renewed at the same rate as last year or slightly better, he said.

All in all, he said, the 2027 renewals were "pretty consistent" with previous years.

Parham added that 294 locations did not meet the Sept. 28 application renewal deadline for the 2027 licensing period and had their COAMs disabled on Sept. 29. The total number of machines disabled was 1,643, Parham said.

Disabling the machines usually "gets their attention," he added, and after the Lottery's persistent communication with the locations and the notification of their master licensees, 125 of those locations with disabled machines had already "resolved their issues," renewed their license, and were up and running.

Parham said many more affected locations are actively working to renew, "so that's good to see."

Parham also noted that the revenue per machine per day was \$101.93 in the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2027, which ended Sept. 30. That amount is about four dollars less than last year, he said, even though Georgia's COAM revenue increased about one percent in that time. The reason, he said, is that the number of machines has grown by four percent over the past year, so the money "is spread out" over more machines.

"I totally expect that (per-machine revenue) number to go up," he added, especially in March, April and May.

Parham provided some licensing statistics. The numbers of enabled licenses as of Oct. 4 were:

- Class A master licenses – 338
- Class A location licenses – 2,264
- Class B master licenses – 196
- Class B location licenses – 7,624
- Manufacturers licenses – 33
- Distributors licenses – 8

The board also asked about an Aug. 28 system outage that disabled a number of machines. Parham said the affected machines were brought back online within two to three hours. The agency and Intralot strengthened internal procedures and added a system safeguard intended to alert staff if a similar event occurs.

Compliance activity increases

Andrew Phippen, the COAM Division's compliance director, reported 2,847 inspections, 112 citations and 444 warnings in the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2027. He said warnings had increased as inspectors worked with retailers to meet the requirements of new redemption options.

"Because of the new redemption rules that are in law, we wanted to make sure we're out there speaking to the retailers and making sure that they're compliant," Phippen said. He added that most of the industry adjusted quickly to the new redemption rules.

Phippen also reported 11 enforcement actions involving agencies during the quarter and said a Georgia Sheriffs' Association grant supported additional inspection work.

The division received about 500 community complaints, he added, including reports of cash payouts and players not receiving redemption payments. Phippen said inspectors were generally able to resolve complaints by explaining the issue to the retailer or master.



COAM Division Vice President Mike Parham, left, reviews COAM statistics during the COAM Advisory Board meeting earlier this month in downtown Atlanta as board Vice Chairman Shawn Fellows listens. *Paul Tash photos*

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Adam Foust CEO
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Primero

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operators.
“Putting players first is how we deliver value to operators,” Etienne explained. “That means finding the right balance between game math, volatility, bonus frequency and entertainment. Every feature should have a purpose, creating an experience that captures players’ interest and keeps them coming back.

Ultimately, that’s what drives player engagement and stronger performance for operators.”
One of the game’s most distinctive features is the giant prize wheel bonus, which is integrated across all six games in the suite, regardless of theme. Anticipation builds as players collect coins to fill three bonus pots, triggering the wheel bonus and unlocking prize boosters, win multipliers and extra pointers to the wheel.
“Each bonus brings something different to the experience, giving players more excitement and more

reasons to keep playing,” Etienne added. “That variety is important because it helps maintain player interest over time, which is ultimately what operators are looking for – games that attract players and encourage repeat play.”
The six-game suite includes “Wild Destiny Panda,” “Buffalo Blazing Plains,” “Bubblegum Bonanza Hold & Spin,” “Blue Diamond,” “Zeus Reels of Thunder,” and “Midnight at the Moulin Hold & Spin.”
Grand Shamrock was showcased at G2E on Primero’s RainMaker cabinet, designed to deliver an

immersive player experience with a stunning 43-inch curved display, dynamic LCD button deck with promotional flexibility, premium audio and a built-in charging station.
“The success of Grand Shamrock really reflects the talent and collaboration behind it,” Etienne said. “From our game design and development teams to the marketing team bringing it to market, everyone has played a part in creating a game that delivers an entertaining experience for players and real value for our operators.”



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PA operators remove skill-game machines

Georgia Amusement Journal

Pennsylvania businesses and nonprofits faced an Oct. 13 deadline to shut down and remove skill-game terminals after lawmakers failed to create a regulatory system before a state Supreme Court stay expired.

The deadline followed the court’s June ruling that skill games are slot machines under state law and are illegal unless licensed. The justices delayed enforcement for 120 days to give lawmakers time to act, then rejected requests to extend the deadline. Beginning Oct. 14, an estimated 70,000 terminals statewide became illegal.

Pennsylvania State Police warned that games still operating after the deadline could be seized immediately and that business owners could face criminal prosecution. Operators and locations spent the preceding weeks taking machines out of service.

“With the deadline to shut down skill games nearly here, Pace-O-Matic is complying with the law,” the company said in a statement. “Our message to operators and locations has been clear and consistent: follow the law, rely on accurate information and take the necessary steps to ensure games are not available for play.”

Based in Duluth, Georgia, Pace-O-Matic develops skill-game software and terminals for the Pennsylvania market and also operates in other states, including Kansas, Texas and Wyoming.

Joe Rocca, owner of Rite Touch Distribution

in Pittsburgh, said leasing terminals to customers or selling them to distributors accounted for 99 percent of his business. The remaining work outside Pennsylvania was “not enough to sustain the business,” he said. Rocca expected to have 1,000 terminals after completing removals from local businesses.

“It will cripple the industry forever,” Rocca told CDC Gaming in an interview Oct. 13. “All of this equipment will end up in landfills or on the used markets.”

The machines operated for a decade without a comprehensive statewide regulatory system. Casino operators and the American Gaming Association argued that the terminals were unregulated gambling devices that exploited distinctions in the law and avoided consumer protections and taxes.

Jeff Morris, vice president of public affairs and government relations for Penn Entertainment, said the company welcomed the end of an industry it considers illegal. Rocca agreed the terminals needed regulation and said he understood casino operators’ concerns about locations that resembled mini-casinos.

Supporters counter that the games provide important supplemental income for small businesses, bars, taverns and nonprofits. Rocca said machine revenue helps VFWs and similar organizations keep prices low.

According to the Independent Fiscal Office, each terminal can generate \$47,000 annually.

“The loss of skill-gaming revenue will have real and immediate consequences for

American Legions, VFWs, volunteer fire companies, emergency-service organizations, fraternal clubs, and small businesses across Pennsylvania,” Pace-O-Matic said.

Legislative deadline missed

Lawmakers did not regulate the games through Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro’s budget proposal, which would have expanded the regulation and taxation of video gaming terminals to include skill games. Licensed establishments could have hosted up to five machines, taxed at 52 percent of gross revenue. The Independent Fiscal Office estimated the plan would raise \$487 million in fiscal year 2026-27.

Proposed legislation in both the state House and Senate stalled. Those measures sought to impose a \$500 monthly fee on each terminal and cap the statewide market at 50,000 machines. The structure was projected to generate \$300 million annually in state tax revenue.

“We urge lawmakers to ... pass legislation that responsibly regulates and taxes skill games while protecting the organizations, businesses, and communities that, for a decade, have come to count on this revenue,” Pace-O-Matic said. “We remain hopeful that lawmakers will reach a reasonable, commonsense legislative solution,” the company said. “This is no longer about what might happen. Communities across Pennsylvania are now facing the consequences.”

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GeWeTe demonstrates expertise at expos

Georgia Amusement Journal

With both the Southern Amusement & Entertainment Expo (SAEE) in Georgia in August and the giant Global Gaming Expo (G2E) in Las Vegas last month, GeWeTe once again demonstrated its position as a global leader in the gaming kiosk industry.

“We had the pleasure of meeting numerous customers, partners, and industry professionals, sharing insights, discussing new opportunities, and strengthening valuable relationships,” said Francois Remy, North America sales director for the company. “We continue to innovate and build strong partnerships to provide the gaming industry with the most advanced, reliable, and innovative solutions.”

With more than 33 years of experience in manufacturing cash-handling systems and kiosks, GeWeTe has developed extensive expertise and a proven ability to deliver solutions that combine adaptability, durability, and reliability, Remy said.

“We look forward to continuing these conversations and meeting our customers and business partners at the next GAMOA meeting on Oct. 22,” he added.



Ready to discuss GeWeTe’s innovative kiosk solutions at its booth last month at G2E in Las Vegas were, left to right, Francois Remy (sales North America), Dennys Noriega (sales Latam), CEO Aristidis Tsikouras and Mark Edmunston (sales UK). *GeWeTe photo*



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Keep COAMs connected to ensure financial reporting

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.

Proper procedure for the decommission of COAMs

The proper procedure to decommission coin-operated amusement machines (COAMs) can be found on the COAM Division website, www.gacoam.com. The COAM decommission procedure should be followed when there is:

- A change of master, change of ownership, or cancellation letter received by GLC;
- A COAM game board swapped out with a different game;
- A COAM malfunction.

To proceed with the decommissioning:

1. Call Intralot before disconnecting the COAMs from a location and removing those COAMs. The Master License Holder (MLH) needs to contact the Intralot Hotline at 877-261-6242 to properly decommission COAMs. The COAMs must be connected to the site controller at this time.
2. Intralot will let you know when the COAMs are decommissioned. The Intralot representative will perform steps on the Intralot system that prepares the COAMs for the decommission. Once the steps are complete, Intralot will notify the MLH the machines have been decommissioned.
3. Disconnect decommissioned COAMs from the site controller.



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19-Jul-26	25-Jul-26	29-Jul-26	04-Aug-26
26-Jul-26	01-Aug-26	05-Aug-26	11-Aug-26
02-Aug-26	08-Aug-26	12-Aug-26	18-Aug-26
09-Aug-26	15-Aug-26	19-Aug-26	25-Aug-26
16-Aug-26	22-Aug-26	26-Aug-26	01-Sep-26
23-Aug-26	29-Aug-26	02-Sep-26	09-Sep-26*
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20-Sep-26	26-Sep-26	30-Sep-26	06-Oct-26
27-Sep-26	03-Oct-26	07-Oct-26	14-Oct-26*
04-Oct-26	10-Oct-26	14-Oct-26	20-Oct-26
11-Oct-26	17-Oct-26	21-Oct-26	27-Oct-26
18-Oct-26	24-Oct-26	28-Oct-26	03-Nov-26
25-Oct-26	31-Oct-26	04-Nov-26	10-Nov-26
01-Nov-26	07-Nov-26	12-Nov-26*	18-Nov-26*
08-Nov-26	14-Nov-26	18-Nov-26	24-Nov-26
15-Nov-26	21-Nov-26	25-Nov-26	02-Dec-26
22-Nov-26	28-Nov-26	02-Dec-26	08-Dec-26
29-Nov-26	05-Dec-26	09-Dec-26	15-Dec-26
06-Dec-26	12-Dec-26	16-Dec-26	22-Dec-26
13-Dec-26	19-Dec-26	23-Dec-26	30-Dec-26*
20-Dec-26	26-Dec-26	30-Dec-26	07-Jan-27*

*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

TO REPORT

FRAUD, ABUSE OR CASH PAYOUTS

related to the operation of coin operated amusement machines,

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