



David Capilouto, regional vice president of Betson Gaming, received GAMOA's Lifetime Achievement Award during the Southern Amusement & Entertainment Expo awards banquet. *Paul Tash photos*

Record turnout for SAEЕ convention celebrates...

‘AN INDUSTRY THAT IS THRIVING’

By Paul Tash
Georgia Amusement Journal

As Georgia’s COAM industry continues to grow, so does its signature event.

The Southern Amusement & Entertainment Expo (SAEE), Aug. 18-20 in Duluth, GA, attracted a record number of attendees and exhibitors to the Gas South Convention Center, said Christina Kaiser, executive director of the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association (GAMOA).

The Expo featured a wide variety

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COVERAGE
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Dan Fiechtner of Compu-Sports, left, accepts GAMOA's Operator of the Year Award from Shawn Fellows at SAEЕ awards banquet Aug. 19. Fellows is past president of GAMOA, while current President Mike Patel is in the background.

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Inamax to launch Titan-specific gift card

By Paul Tash
Georgia Amusement Journal

As the Georgia COAM industry enters into a new era of gift card redemption, Inamax continues to be a driving force in the marketplace with the coming launch of its Titan One Card, a new two-in-one card integrated with its long-recognized Titan system.

“We are excited because the Titan One Card is simple to explain but powerful in its impact,” said Ray Cosentino, chief operating officer for Inamax. “First, it



The Titan One Card simplifies the player and retail experience.

continues to serve as a player card within the Titan environment, including replay functionality. Second, it can serve as a location-specific gift card. That means the

player does not need one card for play and a separate card for lawful purchases at the location – the experience is brought together on one familiar card.”

As the industry is changing, Cosentino said, its customers need solutions that are “practical, compliant, and easy for their teams and players to use.” Inamax recognized an opportunity to build on the trusted Titan platform “instead of forcing operators to bolt together separate systems.”

“Our developers understood

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Ryken launches reimagined security dashboard

Georgia Amusement Journal

Ryken Security, a leading provider of real-time asset protection and analytics for the coin-operated amusement machine (COAM) industry, recently announced the launch of its latest product offering — a fully re-engineered version of its flagship monitoring and security dashboard.

Built in close collaboration with COAM operators, route managers, and industry leaders, this latest offering introduces a new generation of tools designed to identify risk, protect against theft and profit loss, and deliver actionable insight into gaming machine activity, a Ryken news release said.

“The upgraded platform reflects Ryken Security’s commitment to building technology for the COAM industry rather than adapting generic IoT tools to fit it,” the release said. “Every feature in this new offering was shaped by direct feedback from the operators who rely on it every day, resulting in a solution purpose-built for the realities of managing distributed, high-value gaming equipment.”

Ryken Security has proudly served the COAM industry since 2024, but the technology behind it draws on far deeper roots. The company’s engineering foundation comes from more than 25 years of experience in the automotive IoT (Internet of Things) space, where its underlying technology has been used to monitor more than 5 million connected assets for security, compliance, and operational intelligence, the release said.



“That depth of experience in large-scale, real-time asset monitoring gives Ryken Security a distinct advantage in an industry where uptime, accuracy, and reliability directly affect the bottom line,” the release said.

- Here’s what’s new in the dashboard:
- Real-time visibility into gaming machine activity, cash flow, and location — all from a single, intuitive dashboard
 - Advanced risk identification tools that flag suspicious activity, tampering, and anomalies before they become losses
 - Actionable analytics that help operators spot underperforming machines, optimize placement, and protect revenue
 - A streamlined, intuitive interface built for fast adoption, with no steep learning curve for route teams or operators
 - No cumbersome Wi-Fi connection required

Working with operators

Ryken Security worked extensively with industry partners throughout development to ensure that they addressed the specific operational and security challenges facing COAM operators today — from multi-location cash accountability to theft deterrence and

machine-level performance tracking. “Ryken Security’s latest offering is intuitive, easy to use, and provides real-time insight into gaming machine activity,” said David Meyer, president of Ryken Security. “We built this platform to give operators the clarity and control they need to protect their business, without adding complexity to their day-to-day operations.”

According to Meyer, the collaborative development process was central to the platform’s design philosophy.

“We’ve worked extensively with industry partners to build a customized solution for this industry,” Meyer added. “This new offering isn’t a generic tracking tool retrofitted for gaming machines — it’s a purpose-built solution shaped by the people who operate and manage this equipment every day.”

Ryken Security operates as a technology company grounded in scale, the release said. Its underlying platform architecture has been proven across millions of connected devices in the automotive sector, giving COAM operators access to enterprise-grade reliability and security infrastructure that has been tested well beyond the gaming industry alone.

“This new offering brings that same rigor to COAM asset protection, combined with features designed specifically for the way gaming machine operators run their businesses,” the release said.

For more information, contact Heidi Seeley, Ryken’s director of operations, at **888-937-2243** or **hseeley@rykensecurity.com**.

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Primero acquires Win Systems gaming division

Georgia Amusement Journal

Primero Games LLC, a provider of gaming content, technology and products, announced Sept. 9 the acquisition of the Gaming Division of Win Systems, including its Gold Club electronic-roulette business.

The acquisition expands Primo's international presence and product portfolio, adding established slot and electronic-roulette products, manufacturing capabilities and gaming operations across Latin America and the Caribbean. Financial terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

The acquired operations have an installed base of more than 3,000 gaming positions in Mexico, Peru, Colombia, Puerto Rico, and Panama. Primo will support

existing customers and products while introducing additional Primo game content, platform technology and development resources.

"This is an important step forward in executing Primo's growth strategy to build a diversified, global gaming

company," said Mike Macke, Chairman of Primo Games. "Primo has

built its reputation by creating compelling game content and developing innovative technology that helps operators deliver consistent revenue via engaging player experiences."

"We are excited to welcome Eric Benchimol, Dario Zutel, and the talented WSG team to Primo," Macke added. "By combining Primo's content and

development expertise with WSG's products, operations and customer relationships, we can deliver more products, more content and greater value to customers across a wider range of gaming markets."

"This combination makes both businesses stronger," said Eric Benchimol, CEO of Win Systems. "Pairing our installed base, manufacturing operations and market knowledge with Primo's game library and development engine means we can bring more, and better, products to our customers faster than either company could alone. The team is energized, and we're looking forward to getting to work as part of Primo."

"This transaction marks an exciting new chapter for our Gaming Division," said Dario Zutel, executive chairman of Win Systems. "We are confident that Primo Games is the right partner to build on what we have achieved

and drive the business into its next stage of international growth."

Building international scale

Primo has an established presence in U.S. gaming markets, with a portfolio that includes game content, online gaming solutions, redemption kiosks, and a mature omnichannel gaming platform. The WSG acquisition adds established products, manufacturing capabilities and long-standing customer relationships in international markets.

The WSG teams and infrastructure will continue to support customers in Mexico, Peru, Colombia, Puerto Rico, Panama and many other countries around the world. Primo and WSG are committed to providing continuity for every customer as Primo invests in the business and introduces additional products, content and technology.



Betson Southeast shows off new Georgia location

Georgia Amusement Journal

Betson Southeast recently hosted an open house at its new Georgia location, welcoming customers, manufacturers, and industry partners from across the Southeast. The event gave attendees an opportunity to tour the new facility, reconnect with colleagues, and see the latest products and solutions available from Betson and its manufacturing partners.

Throughout the day, guests

enjoyed lunch while exploring a variety of amusement games, gaming equipment, and cashless payment solutions. Live product demonstrations and conversations with manufacturer representatives gave operators the opportunity to experience new offerings firsthand and discuss ideas for their businesses.



"We were excited to welcome everyone to our new location," said Jeff Capilouto, general manager of Betson Southeast. "The open house was a great opportunity to showcase our expanded facility, spend time with our customers and partners, and thank them for their continued support." More than 70 attendees

representing operators, manufacturers, and industry partners participated in the event, enjoying product demonstrations, networking, and discussions about new opportunities across the industry. The new location provides Betson Southeast with additional warehouse capacity and showroom space, allowing the team to better support customers throughout the region with local inventory, sales, and service.

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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

Sept. 28-Oct. 1: Global Gaming Expo (G2E), Venetian, Las Vegas

Oct. 6: COAM Advisory Board, Lottery headquarters, Atlanta

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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LET THE EXPO BEGIN!

Members of the GAMOA board of directors opened the trade show floor at SAEE last month in Duluth with the traditional ribbon-cutting. They are, from left, Sam Westgate, Treasurer Kyle Shepherd, Alan Joseph, Paul Patel, Secretary Mark Brooks, Ryan O'Donnell, President Mike Patel, Vice President Salim Khambawala, Tim Case, Arif Alibhoy, and Executive Director Christina Kaiser.



Paul Tash photo



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An advertisement for NextGen Gaming. The background is a light blue gradient. In the foreground, there are several gaming machines and a redemption kiosk. The machines have large screens displaying various games, including "OFFSHORE ANGLER" and "FUSION". The redemption kiosk is a tall, dark grey machine with a screen and a coin slot. The text "NEXTGEN GAMING" is prominently displayed in a large, bold, white font with a blue outline. Below it, the text "Cabinets | Redemption Kiosks | Chairs" is in a smaller, blue font. To the right of the machines, there is a list of features: "Complete Redemption Solution", "Real-Time Insights", "Remote Access", and "Secure Transactions". At the bottom right, the contact information is listed: "678-373-1033", "NextGenGaming.net", "1665 Lakes Pkwy., Suite 116", and "Lawrenceville GA 30043".

COAM highlights key issues at Expo

Don't forget: Deadline to license machines Sept. 28

By Paul Tash
Georgia Amusement Journal

Mike Parham, senior vice president of the Georgia Lottery's COAM Division, delivered a comprehensive briefing on regulatory requirements, revenue statistics, and compliance expectations for master and location licensees during an industry presentation on Aug. 20 as part of the Southern Amusement & Entertainment Expo.

The presentation covered licensing renewals, financial performance, equipment management, and enforcement actions, with Parham emphasizing the importance of adherence to established procedures to ensure smooth operations across Georgia's growing COAM ecosystem.

Among the most pressing issues addressed was the upcoming Sept. 28 deadline for license renewals for the 2027 licensing period, which runs July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027.

"Starting September 29th, machines belonging to licensees who have not renewed will be disabled," Parham said. "We will reach out to the master, and they will have 10 business days to remove those machines from the store."

Historically, the disabling of machines prompts rapid responses from licensees seeking to resolve outstanding compliance issues.

"It's amazing how people will start responding to things when you cut off their machines," he said.

According to Parham, about 3 to 4 percent of locations are typically disabled, representing around 1,600 machines last year — though many of these are eventually restored once licensees address their application issues.

New redemption rules, few issues

Parham also discussed the overhaul of redemption regulations that took effect July 1.

Legislation passed in 2024 required that on and after July 1, 2026, only gift cards (reloadable and non-reloadable), Lottery products and replays will be allowed for Class B redemption. Following an extensive educational campaign preceding the redemption changes, industry implementation has been efficient and nearly problem-free — a stark contrast to earlier predictions of widespread disruption.

The industry response surprised officials overseeing the transition.

"I have not gotten very many calls at all about this," Parham said.

However, the few inquiries that have come through reveal an unexpected complication: Banking partners are questioning the large volumes of money flowing through customer accounts. When store owners explain that the activity is related to gift card redemptions and Lottery product sales, banks are requesting documentation to justify those transaction flows.

Data analysis since July 1 has revealed an interesting redemption trend. When comparing instant Lottery ticket activations from the first



Mike Parham, senior vice president of the Georgia Lottery's COAM Division

six weeks following the rule change to the same period last year, only one week showed increased activation numbers. Parham said the numbers suggest that rather than driving customers toward lottery products, the redemption changes are steering redemptions toward gift cards instead.

Parham also reviewed some gift card operational guidelines and common compliance violations at the meeting.

"Retailers have discretion to offer gift cards, lottery or both," Parham said. "It is completely their option."

Gift cards may only be loaded with COAM winnings from the location where prizes were won, he added.

"They can't go across the street and buy a Chick-fil-A card, get \$20 loaded on that card, bring it back over to their store to give it away as a prize."

Gift card vendors may establish activation parameters or limits on cards, Parham noted. If a location reaches its limit, customers can wait until the time period passes, return the next day, or contact the gift card company directly.

"That is something that they will have to contact the gift card vendor to discuss with them," he said. "You're not responsible for that."

Critical EFT procedures

The presentation emphasized that incomplete or inaccurate electronic funds transfer (EFT) forms create bottlenecks in the payment process.

"If there is a blank on that form, something is not filled out," Parham said. "That's going to put a halt on the EFT process. And if that's not done, the license is not approved."

Masters changing EFT accounts face particular risks if they prematurely close old accounts.

"If they are a current licensee and they're changing EFT accounts, this information for the new account has to be 100 percent correct," Parham stressed. "If something on that form does not match what is on their application ... that's going to put a halt on the EFT process."

The solution is straightforward.

"If you're a master and you are changing your EFT account, please do not close your old account until that new one is clear by us," he said.

Equipment returns, COAM Verifier

A major focus of the presentation involved

the amnesty equipment-return program and new invoicing procedures that began Sept.

1. Starting that date, unreturned equipment is being invoiced directly to master license holders, with payment due immediately.

"This equipment is very expensive," Parham said. "Very important you return it."

Parham described finding Intralot site controllers listed for sale on eBay with official Georgia stickers still attached.

"We can read the serial numbers on those," he said. "We're going to find out whose serial numbers those are. And guess what? They're probably going to get a citation. We will start involving law enforcement when our equipment that we ultimately pay for ends up not getting returned to us."

Masters are now required to report stolen or missing equipment promptly, ideally within 24 to 48 hours, to prevent penalties and facilitate replacement equipment processing.

Parham also urged industry technicians to use Bally's Intralot COAM Verifier tool.

"The COAM Verifier is basically a window based tool used by technicians out in the field," Parham said. "It enables technicians to verify machine status, meter accuracy and operational functionality on site."

Critical procedures for hard resets and machine decommissioning require coordination with Bally's Intralot and proper documentation. Failure to follow these procedures can result in fines up to \$50,000.

"If you follow these steps carefully, you will be good to go," Parham said.

Inspectors prioritize education

Inspectors verify multiple compliance elements during location visits, including license display, machine counts, prize redemption procedures, signage, and ownership documentation. Parham emphasized that inspectors prioritize education and customer service over citations.

"I have to say probably this group of inspectors, our group of inspectors are probably the best at working with customers I've ever seen," Parham said.

Data shows the Lottery issued only 300-400 citations annually over the past decade while issuing significantly more warnings. Parham attributed this to the inspection team's emphasis on compliance assistance.

Common violations include improper cash payouts, violations of the 50 percent rule, poor record-keeping, and undisclosed ownership arrangements. Parham stressed that many violations stem from inadequate business practices rather than intentional misconduct.

Parham also noted that locations must comply with both state and local government licensing requirements. Once they receive their state approval, location owners often forget to check with local governments about the potential for local ordinances that apply.

Parham said regulatory compliance remains the division's top priority, even as it balances revenue generation and industry growth.

The message to masters and location licensees was clear: understand the requirements, follow the procedures, and maintain detailed documentation. Compliance prevents penalties, keeps machines connected, and ensures the revenue that benefits both operators and Georgia's education system.





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Convention

from Page 1

of vendors, including several that debuted new products and services. GAMOA also honored several industry members during its traditional awards banquet.

“The Expo and awards banquet were very well attended,” Kaiser said.

The Expo agenda also featured two education days, one dedicated to amusement operators of family entertainment centers and the other to skill gaming operators and manufacturers, as well as a presentation by the Georgia Lottery Corp.’s COAM Division, which concluded the Expo.

“The interest in the Expo continues to grow,” Kaiser said.

One of the Expo’s highlights is the GAMOA Awards Banquet. GAMOA President Mike Patel emceed the affair and said that while operators in the room are competitive throughout the year, “we are one big family here.”

“We are here tonight to celebrate not only COAM in Georgia, but skill gaming across the United States – an industry that is thriving,” Patel said.

Georgia’s COAM industry is also known for how impressively it gives back. Over the last five years, association members at the Expo have raised over \$1 million for their charity of choice, Bert’s Big Adventure, which sends chronically and terminally ill children and their families to Disney World for a “magical” five-day vacation, all expenses paid. GAMOA’s charity of choice this year was St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, and GAMOA raised \$200,000 for the hospital.

Patel pointed out that operators provide even more throughout the year.

“Each one of you gives to your local community,” he said, “for everything under the sun.”

Additionally, through its COAM taxes, the industry contributed over \$210 million last year toward the Hope Scholarship, “putting thousands and thousands of kids through college every year and making their lives better, some of whom might not have had the opportunity to go to college.”

“I can’t think of a better industry to be part of,” Patel said. “So, tonight, we are going to celebrate not only the COAM industry, but all of you being part of it.”



Paul Tash photos

Butch Foshee, right, holds the inaugural Integrity Award sponsored by Pace-O- Matic. Mike Pace, left, presented the award to Foshee at the SAE awards banquet last month.



Other GAMOA award recipients are Rich Winley, above left, of Payline showing the Cutting Edge Award with presenter Ryan O'Donnell, and Marshall Haff, above right, of Skill Master Pro with the Technician of the Year award. Daniel Hartmann presented the technician on behalf of Goldfinger.

GAMOA honors several

GAMOA recognized Betson Southeast’s David Capilouto with its Lifetime Achievement Award and named Dan Fiechtner with Compu-Sports as its 2026 Operator of the Year. Payline earned GAMOA’s Cutting Edge Award, while Marshall Haff of Skill Master Pro received the Marshall Hartmann Technician of the Year Award, presented by Goldfinger. In addition, longtime operator Butch Foshee received the new Integrity Award, presented by Pace-O-Matic.

In presenting the Lifetime Achievement Award, GAMOA attorney and lobbyist Les Schneider said Capilouto grew up in a family with entrepreneurial roots in the amusement industry “that stretch back nearly a century.” A tiny local company that distributed juke boxes and amusement games throughout the region “evolved through decades of growth, innovation and family leadership into one of the most respected names in the

industry” and became a cornerstone of the southeastern coin-operated entertainment industry.

Capilouto grew up “witnessing firsthand the values of those family companies — hard work, integrity, loyalty, a relentless commitment to customer service and a real love affair with the COAM industry,” Schneider said.

Shawn Fellows, who presented the Operator of the Year Award, said recipient Dan Fiechtner is someone “who’s never met a stranger – he remembers your name, he asks about your family, he laughs easily, and within a few minutes you feel like you’ve known this man for years.”

“He’s also a man of high standards,” Fellows said. “He believes things should be done the right way, always. He’s meticulous, organized, competitive, and not particularly impressed by excesses.”

“He genuinely cares about people,” Fellows said, adding that some of Fiechtner’s employees have been with him for decades. Fiechtner’s compassion extends beyond his business, Fellows added, as he supports a variety of causes from his church to

elementary schools to youth sports and organizations connected to his employees and their families.

“I am shocked and honored to be recognized by the GAMOA organization,” Fiechtner said upon receiving the award. “I wouldn’t be standing here tonight if it wasn’t for the staff and the team that we have. We are family.”

“Nobody works for you; they work with you,” he added.

Mike Pace, chairman of Pace-O-Matic, this year created the Integrity Award to recognize individuals who didn’t just succeed in the COAM industry, but “helped make it legitimate, stable and worthy of public trust,” he said.

In presenting the award, Pace said that when award recipient Foshee became GAMOA president in 2007, the industry existed “under real uncertainty about the future of amusement machines.” In addition, “the operator community was fragmented” and lacked cohesion and unity, he said, making it difficult “to speak with one voice to legislators and regulators.”

“Butch helped change that,” Pace said. “He led the conversations inside GAMOA about embracing state regulation,

rather than remaining in that uncertain environment.”

Foshee led a small group of industry leaders who developed a legislative framework that ultimately became the 2013 law regulating COAMs in Georgia.

“That is integrity,” Pace said. “The willingness to do the hard, unglamorous work to establish rules, grow an organization and build trust.”

In accepting the award, Foshee said that although he’s been out of the COAM business for three years, “it’s still in my heart.”

“I love this industry,” he said. Foshee acknowledged the many people who helped bring regulation and stability to the COAM market, and he urged those in the industry to keep finding “common ground” with each other because “you all are eating off the same plate.”

Foshee also received GAMOA’s Lifetime Achievement Award in 2023. Daniel Hartmann presented the Marshall Hartmann Technician of the Year Award, presented by Goldfinger, to Marshall Haff of Skill Master Pro. The award also earned Haff a \$2,000 check.

“There are a lot of fantastic, hard-working technicians in this industry,” Hartmann said. “It was a difficult decision.”

Accepting the Cutting Edge Award was Rich Winley, founder of Payline. The innovative kiosks operate directly on the Axes Intelligent Management System to provide live transaction tracking and auditing and also issue secure reloadable or non-reloadable Visa gift cards.

GAMOA also recognized Sam Westgate for his induction earlier this year into the Amusement Hall of Fame. “Sam is one of the most accomplished and knowledgeable people in the amusement industry,” Patel said.

Organizing team, dignitaries

Earlier in the evening, Patel recognized several groups and individuals, including the GAMOA team that organized the Expo, especially Kaiser and the organization’s executive committee — Salim Khambawala, Kyle Shepherd, Mark Brooks, and Fellows. Patel also recognized state Sen. Clint Dixon and Rep. Derrick McCollum, who attended the banquet; former GAMOA presidents Gaines Butler, Foshee, and Fellows; and former past presidents of the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) at the banquet, Butler and Greg Trent. AMOA is GAMOA’s national parent organization.

Current AMOA President Tommy Hendley, an amusement operator serving locations across North Carolina and South Carolina, also addressed the crowd briefly.

“You know, last year was my first year coming to this show, and it was amazing,” he said, “but this year, it was even better. You guys do an amazing job.”

View of American gaming? More acceptance than ever.

By Paul Tash Georgia Amusement Journal

The gaming industry has undergone a seismic transformation over the past three decades, and the pace of change shows no signs of slowing. At the Southern Amusement & Entertainment Expo last month, Paul T. Jensen, chair of Taft Law’s national gaming practice, delivered a comprehensive overview of where the industry stands and where it’s headed — with particular emphasis on distributed gaming, the segment reshaping how states approach legalization.

“I have practiced in this space for more than 25 years and have seen this industry grow tremendously and evolve over that period of time,” Jensen said, setting the stage for a presentation that would touch on everything from sports wagering to skill games to the emerging threat of unregulated prediction markets.

The numbers tell a compelling story. Gaming participation among Americans has climbed to 57 percent in 2025, up from the 40-percent range when Jensen first began tracking the statistic. Even more striking: 62 percent of Americans now view gambling as acceptable — an all-time high — and 78 percent believe the gaming industry positively impacts the U.S. economy.

What’s particularly notable is the bipartisan acceptance. “Fifty-six percent of Democrats, 58 percent of Republicans and 60 percent of independents gamble,” Jensen noted, emphasizing that gaming has transcended political divisions in ways few other industries have.

The economic argument is equally compelling. Gaming creates jobs that cannot be outsourced, revitalizes struggling communities, and generates substantial tax revenue for states, he said. Last year alone, commercial gaming produced nearly \$79 billion in revenue – a 9.1 percent increase over the previous year, and created almost \$18 billion in gaming tax revenue.

Sports wagering explosion

Perhaps no segment better illustrates gaming’s rapid evolution than sports wagering. In 2018, only Nevada had legalized it. Today, 39 states plus Washington, D.C. have done so — an “unbelievably rapid growth in any aspect of legislation,” Jensen said.

However, the growth has plateaued. For the first time since 2018, no new states legalized sports wagering in 2025 or 2026. The low-hanging fruit has been picked, Jensen said, and remaining holdouts face specific challenges, including Texas’s biennial legislature, California’s constitutional amendment requirement, and Georgia’s persistent concerns about social costs.

Regarding iGaming, Jensen said its growth remains sluggish – despite predictions that online casino gaming would spread rapidly – with only eight states legalizing it.

“Why hasn’t it grown more quickly?” Jensen asked rhetorically. The answer involves mixed industry support, casino concerns about

cannibalization, and legitimate worries about responsible gambling enforcement in home settings.

Distributed gaming momentum

The real story, however, lies in distributed gaming – those low-stakes gaming devices in bars, restaurants, and truck stops. This segment is experiencing unprecedented legislative momentum, and for good reason, he said.

“Distributed gaming bills support small business,” Jensen said, and the revenue implications are staggering. Illinois, where distributed gaming has generated substantial tax revenue, provides compelling evidence. Municipalities have funded fire trucks, police cars, and new municipal employees through gaming tax revenue.

The political calculus favors expansion, too. Unlike casinos that benefit only host communities, distributed gaming spreads tax revenue across multiple jurisdictions, he said. Additionally, legalizing distributed gaming allows states to regulate and tax behavior that already exists in gray markets, eliminating unregulated competition.

State-by-state reality check

Chicago’s recent decision to legalize video gaming terminals represents the only genuine “green opportunity” for distributed gaming expansion currently, he said, though implementation has proven messy with the mayor and aldermen at loggerheads.

Pennsylvania faces a critical moment following its Supreme Court ruling in August that skill games are illegal slot machines, with a 120-day stay providing legislators time to act.

Missouri has passed distributed gaming bills through its House twice, though Senate resistance persists. Jensen gave it a “50-50 shot” for 2027, and in gaming legislation, that’s optimistic.

Ohio, North Carolina, Virginia, and Indiana all represent potential future markets, he said, though each faces distinct hurdles, including casino opposition, tribal sovereignty concerns, regulatory gaps, and lingering scandal-related political caution.

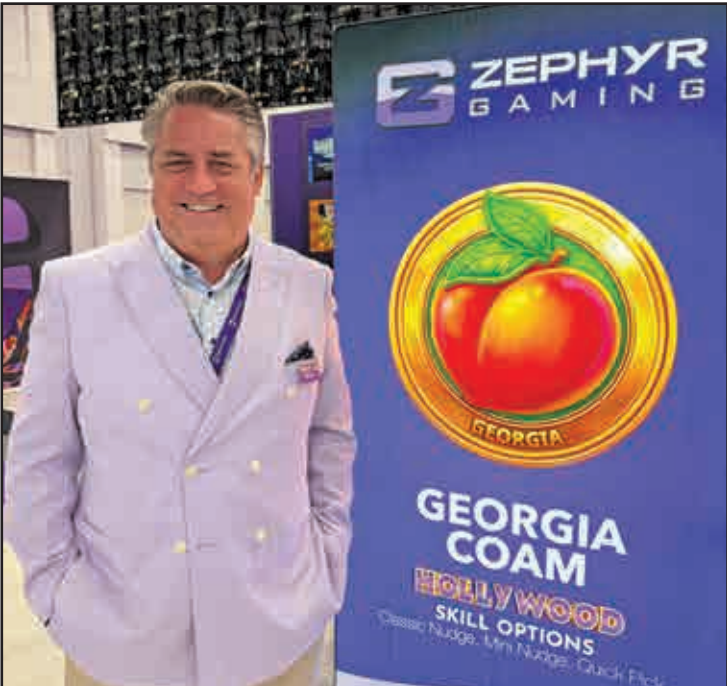
The broader landscape

Looming over all legislative discussions is the prediction market phenomenon – trading on binary outcomes that some argue is financial-derivative trading while others see as unlicensed gambling. This federal-state regulatory showdown will likely influence gaming legislation for years.

Similarly, the estimated \$54 billion annual grey gaming market represents both a threat and an opportunity, he said. Regulated markets can replace this unregulated activity while generating substantial tax revenue.

Jensen concluded that gaming’s trajectory is clear: continued expansion, shifting to convenience gaming over destination gaming, and increasing regulatory sophistication. For states on the fence, the question isn’t whether distributed gaming will ultimately spread, it’s whether they’ll be early adopters or late followers.





Transitioning into a new brand is not for the faint of heart, but COO Greg Hammond of Zephyr Gaming has done just that, ushering in Zephyr Gaming and saying goodbye to Bad Dog Games.



Bob Perez, president of Intuitive Financial Services, is all smiles on the SAAE trade show floor. IFS was the 2025 recipient of GAMOA's Cutting Edge Award.



Evgeny Bronnikov, CEO of Jenka Lab, was demonstrating the manufacturer's new Aurora Gold machine that features 30 games in one board, which had just been approved for the Georgia market. "It's good to go," Bronnikov said.



Easylinx founder Mozart Sebben, left, and Gabriel Celli, business development manager, said they were pleased with the traffic at SAAE. Easylinx was the 2024 recipient of GAMOA's Cutting Edge Award.



Betson Gaming, the exclusive distributor of Light & Wonder games in Georgia, takes their role in the Georgia market seriously with some of the company's top brass visiting at SAAE. From left are Jeff Capilouto, gaming general manager for Betson Enterprises; Bob Geschine, Betson Enterprises president; Nina Bryon, director of financial services for Betson Gaming; David Capilouto, regional vice president of Betson Gaming; Todd Cravens, president of Betson Gaming; and Rick Murphy, regional sales representative for Betson Gaming.



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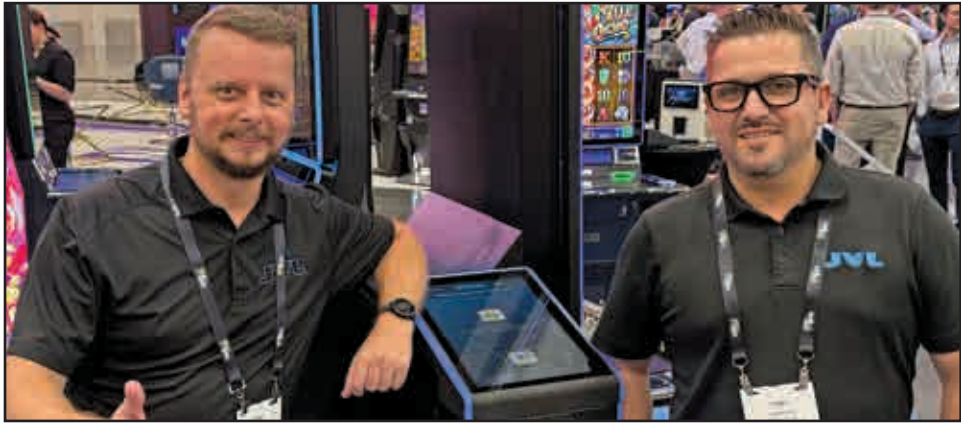
Photos by Paul Tash | Georgia Amusement Journal



Brooks Lee, chief route officer for Banilla Games (left), and Banilla's founder and CEO Garrett Blackwelder were on hand to show the Skyriser Lux, the latest evolution in the Skyriser series.



Operator Malik Sawja, left, talks with InComm Payment's Camille Kearns, director of account management, and Jason Hall and Adam Harlow, directors of product management, at InComm's busy booth.



JVL Systems' product manager Andrei Klimovich, left, and operations manager Felipe Miranda were fired up to handle business at the JVL booth.



The Expo is always a busy time for Skill Master Pro, the exclusive distributor for Aristocrat in Georgia. Taking time out for a photo, from left, are Marshall Haff, warehouse manager who was named GAMOA's 2026 Technician of the Year; CFO Afshaad Patel; CEO Adam Foust; and Kristina McDaniel, director of business development.



IGT is launching a Georgia-specific edition of its iconic Wheel of Fortune game in the Georgia market through its exclusive distributor, Southern Gaming Solutions. SGS President and CEO Angela Whitman and COO Bobby Walker helped debut the new machine.



Skyline, the exclusive distributor for Novomatic games in Georgia, was well represented at SAAE. From left are CEO Sasa Trifkovic; President Brittany Patete; Colton Sceviour, commercial development; and Miro Ristic and Bojan Knezevic.

Protecting equipment: 44 years of industry wisdom

By Paul Tash
Georgia Amusement Journal

Jim Beck, founder of Really Killer Systems (RKS), has spent over four decades protecting arcade and COAM operators from their most persistent threats: lightning damage and equipment fraud.

During a presentation for technicians and location owners at the Southern Amusement & Entertainment Expo last month, Beck shared insights from decades of field experience. Beck’s journey began in 1984 when he joined Greater Southern Distributing as a field technician.

“Today is my 44th year in the industry,” Beck said, reflecting on his first day at an arcade in Georgia.

That longevity informs every recommendation he makes.

Equipment every technician needs

Beck stressed the importance of several essential tools, including a multimeter and an output tester.

“This one thing right here is going to save you so many down machines,” he said, explaining that the output tester reveals open grounds and reverse wiring that can destroy equipment. He

illustrated the danger with a cautionary tale about a manufacturer, whose techs felt a “tingle” when touching the ground – a sign they had reversed neutral and ground wiring in their cabinet construction.

Beck emphasized to technicians not to combine surge protectors with battery backups – a mistake that can defeat both systems’ protection

“Pick one or the other. Do battery backups or spike protectors,” he said. “Don’t blend the two.”

Battery backups also prevent machines from entering endless boot loops after power failures, a hidden benefit many operators overlook.



Battery backups, fraud prevention

Perhaps Beck’s most dramatic warnings concerned electromagnetic pulse (EMP) and electrostatic discharge (ESD) devices that criminals use to induce false credits. Modern devices are increasingly sophisticated.

“They’ve got thin curved wires that they put down the button holes” to infiltrate metal cabinets, he said. His solution is practical: ferrite bead RF chokes on external harnesses.

“Any harness that leaves an external device – your dollar bill acceptor harness, your control panel harness – you want to clamp this little



Jim Beck, founder of Really Killer Systems.

shell around the harness nearest the device,” he explained.

Training and vigilance

Beck encouraged location operators to train cashiers to spot fraud vouchers using odd-dollar values and to check cash-out history through admin menus.

“If the thing’s got tamper tickets coming out, don’t honor the next one,” he said.

Beck’s core message remains unchanged after four decades: proper grounding, quality equipment, professional electrical service, and ongoing vigilance protect both arcade operators and their customers.

“You’re better off spending the money to ensure that customers are safe,” he said.

Expert: Be cautious, prepared when entering grey market

By Paul Tash
Georgia Amusement Journal

At the Southern Amusement & Entertainment Expo, attorney Tom Fricke delivered a sobering reality check to the unlicensed “grey” gaming industry: the legal landscape varies wildly by state, and what works in Georgia may land you in prison elsewhere.

Fricke, a specialist in gaming law, spent 50 minutes walking operators through the treacherous maze of state and federal regulations governing skill games, sweepstakes, and similar operations. His central message was stark: ignorance is no defense, and neither is hope.

The crux of the legal problem lies in how different states define gambling. While the successful Georgia COAM market thrives under state law that defines and regulates skill games, “there is no skill in a Georgia game that could pass the skill test in any other state,” Fricke said. This fundamental incompatibility creates a false sense of security for manufacturers and operators eyeing expansion.

The burden of proof typically falls on the state to prove that chance affects outcomes, but states define this burden differently. Pennsylvania, for instance, requires that “skill predominate over chance” – a standard

illustrated by the case of Pace-O-Matic, which won in Pennsylvania with a “follow me” feature in its “Dragon’s Ascent” game that combined a chance element with a skill-based game.

Yet even favorable precedent provides little comfort. Fricke pointed to South Carolina’s rejection of “Dragon’s Ascent.” The game was killed at trial, on appeal, and at the state Supreme Court level. The

lesson: “The law is only trustworthy up to a point,” he said.

Fricke identified a cluster of states where gaming operations face severe legal jeopardy. Tennessee presents particular peril, he said. The state passed a law stating that “if the Attorney General sends you a civil investigative demand, you must turn over the entirety of your gaming business for examination by the cops.” Operators have only 10 days to comply.



Tom Fricke, specialist in gaming law.

The defense arsenal

For those operating in gray areas, Fricke recommended a three-part defense strategy: counsel opinions, expert analysis from independent testing laboratories, and simulations demonstrating skill predominance.

However, he cautioned against overreliance on expert testimony. Experts “cannot testify about the ultimate outcome of the litigation” or whether a device is lawful – they can only answer factual questions posed by counsel.

Fricke emphasized that sophisticated legal defense requires preparation before, not after, law enforcement arrives. But perhaps his most practical advice was this: hire competent legal counsel who understands both criminal defense and unlicensed gaming. The confluence of these two specialties is rare, but increasingly necessary, he said.

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Paul Tash photo

GAMOA hosted a social last month to kick off the Southern Amusement & Entertainment Expo at Dave and Busters. Among those attending were, from left, Rory Siggins, Mitchell Foy, Elian Lopez, GAMOA Executive Director Christina Kaiser, and Michael Frazzitta.

Registration still open for G2E 2026 in Las Vegas

Georgia Amusement Journal

Registration is still open for G2E 2026, gaming’s premier global event, scheduled for Sept. 28-Oct. 1 at The Venetian Expo in Las Vegas.

G2E 2026 will reflect the industry’s growth with a wide range of offerings. More than 350 exhibitors and participating companies will show off the latest gaming technologies and solutions from around the world.

G2E’s 2026 education program will offer insights from gaming’s top leaders and experts, featuring more than 95 sessions and 300-plus speakers.

“With featured show areas dedicated to bringing the gaming industry together, G2E offers an unparalleled opportunity to connect with peers, find new business partners, and discover the latest technologies,” according to G2E.

Those show areas include:

The Strip: From dynamic showcases and interactive activations to exclusive networking opportunities, this area is the

centerpiece of G2E.

Business Solutions and Tech Zone:

This area brings together practical solutions designed for the realities of modern gaming businesses. Built for leaders across marketing, IT, operations, finance, HR, and digital, the zone showcases technologies that help integrated resorts operate smarter, move faster, and deliver more personalized guest experiences.

The Lab: Formerly known as The Innovation Lab, this area will serve as a hub for thought leadership and networking opportunities that explore the future of gaming.

Networking Lounge: Check out the expanded G2E Networking Lounge, featuring themed meetups and events for the G2E community to engage and connect.

“G2E 2026 delivers a focused program for professionals across the legal, regulated gaming industry, bringing together the education, innovations, and strategic connections needed to navigate change, evaluate new opportunities, and drive business success,” G2E said.



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Inamax

from Page 1

the operational needs because Titan has been serving this industry for years,” he said.

A ‘game-changer’

Cosentino called the card a “game-changer” because it connects the player experience with the retail experience in a single, location-centered system. The card supports replay, but it also extends value into lawful purchases at the issuing location.

“That creates greater convenience for the player, more engagement for the location, and a more integrated operating environment for the customer,” he said. “It is not merely a new piece of plastic — it is a better use of the Titan ecosystem.”

“This isn’t just about convenience,” added Nick Damani, president and co-founder of Inamax. “It keeps your players coming back to the location being a location-specific card. This is about building the future of gaming interaction. By merging fintech with amusement, we’re creating a powerful personal ecosystem for every player where their Titan One Card becomes their portal to rewards, engagement, and the full Inamax experience.”

The underlying need for a simple card solution is industry-wide, Cosentino said.

“Players want simplicity,” he said. “Location owners want useful, legally compliant redemption options. Operators want dependable integration and accountability.”

The Titan One Card shows what is possible when the player-card function and the location-specific gift card function are designed together, Cosentino said. Existing customers receive the immediate benefit, and prospective customers now have a compelling reason to consider the Titan platform, he added.

Ease of use benefits players

Players will enjoy the ease of use the card provides, Cosentino said. The card remains the player’s Titan player card and can be used for replay according to the approved Titan workflow. When eligible value is placed on the gift card function, the player may present that same card at the issuing location to purchase goods or services the player is legally permitted to purchase. The POS recognizes and processes the appropriate function, making the experience straightforward for the player and the location.

Cosentino emphasized that the card is not cash and must not be exchanged for cash, change, or currency.

“That distinction is essential,” he said.



Ray Cosentino, chief operating officer for Inamax.

The **Titan One Card** gives one card two meaningful purposes: replay and lawful, location-specific purchasing power. It is a value-added innovation for our existing customers, a game changer for the COAM industry, and a clear invitation to prospective customers to see what the legendary Titan platform can now deliver.

“The value is used through the permitted card process — for lawful purchases and, through the player card function, for eligible replay — not as a cash substitute.”

Cosentino also said the location-specific aspect of the card has important benefits for the location. It encourages repeat visits, supports merchandise and service sales, and gives the location a direct role in the player relationship.

“The location gains a practical redemption tool, a stronger customer-retention opportunity, and a more unified checkout experience,” he said.

Instead of treating player activity and retail activity as unrelated events, Titan One Card

connects them at the Titan POS. That can improve convenience, reduce confusion, and create more opportunities for lawful in-store purchases, he said.

‘Real purchasing utility’

“The player gets real purchasing utility, while the location retains the economic activity created by that value,” he said.

The player also benefits because the card provides “convenience and choice,” Cosentino said. The player has one familiar card, not multiple disconnected instruments. The same card can support replay and can carry location-specific gift card value for lawful purchases.

“That makes the value more useful and the overall experience easier to understand,” he said.

Inamax will work with customers on implementation, training, and applicable operating procedures, Cosentino said, but store employees shouldn’t have much trouble understanding the card use.

“We designed the experience around the Titan POS workflow so the employee can recognize the card, process an eligible purchase, and follow clear prompts,” he said. “Good technology should make the transaction easier, not add another complicated layer at the counter.”

Inamax understands the realities of a busy COAM location. The product comes from years of industry experience, not from an outside vendor trying to learn the business after the fact, he said.

Existing customers first to benefit

Existing Inamax customers are the first beneficiaries of this innovation, Cosentino added. At the same time, potential customers who want to take advantage of the Titan One Card, Titan POS, and the broader Titan ecosystem should contact Inamax.

“We welcome the opportunity to demonstrate how the technology can fit their locations and operations,” he said. “I would ask them to compare the complete experience — not just the card. Look at integration, ease of use, support, reporting, location value, and player convenience.”

The Titan One Card is an important step in the continuing evolution of Titan, Cosentino said. Once the player, the location, and the POS are connected through one well-designed platform, he said, “the opportunities for improved service, loyalty, reporting, and future features become much greater.”

“We will continue developing responsibly around customer needs and regulatory requirements,” he said.

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GEORGIA Amusement JOURNAL

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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05-Jul-26	11-Jul-26	15-Jul-26	21-Jul-26
12-Jul-26	18-Jul-26	22-Jul-26	28-Jul-26
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*
30-Aug-26	05-Sep-26	09-Sep-26	15-Sep-26
06-Sep-26	12-Sep-26	16-Sep-26	22-Sep-26
13-Sep-26	19-Sep-26	23-Sep-26	29-Sep-26
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

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