



# GEORGIA Amusement JOURNAL

Dedicated to serving the Georgia COAM industry  
Endorsed by the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association  
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## Expo experience bigger, better

### SAEE features trade show, top awards

By Paul Tash

Georgia Amusement Journal

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

The Southern Amusement & Entertainment Expo Aug. 20-22 in Duluth attracted a record number of attendees and exhibitors, said Christina Kaiser, executive director of the Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association (GAMOA).

The trade show featured a wide variety of vendors, including several that debuted new products and services at the show. GAMOA also honored several members of the industry during its traditional awards banquet, as well as two legislators most responsible for the new COAM legislation passed earlier this year.

"The Expo trade show and awards banquet were very well attended," Kaiser said.

Next year is already looking promising. Kaiser said several exhibitors are requesting larger

See EXPO Page 8



**INDUSTRY ICON** Mike Macke, above in white suit, stands with GAMOA President Shawn Fellows after receiving GAMOA's Lifetime Achievement Award at the Southern Amusement &



Paul Tash photos

Entertainment Expo Aug. 21 in Duluth. Nick Damani, above right, receives the Operator of the Year award from GAMOA attorney and lobbyist Les Schneider.

### Magical evening nets \$237,000 for charity

By Paul Tash, Georgia Amusement Journal

In what's become a highlight of the Southern Amusement & Entertainment Expo, dozens and dozens of individuals and companies in the Georgia COAM industry displayed remarkable generosity last month to provide magical vacations for seriously ill children in Georgia.

The Georgia Amusement and Music Operators As-

sociation (GAMOA) held the fundraising event for Bert's Big Adventure for the fourth year in a row following the awards banquet Aug. 21 in Duluth. Bert's Big Adventure sends chronically and terminally ill children and their families to Disney World for a free, five-day dream vacation.

A video produced by Bert's Big Adventure kicked

See CHARITY Page 6



## EasyLinx wins Cutting Edge Award

By Paul Tash

Georgia Amusement Journal

EasyLinx, a new player in the Georgia COAM industry that provides full-service management systems for gaming operators and distributors, recently received the Cutting Edge Award at the Southern Amusement & Entertainment Expo (SAEE) for its unique redemption terminal system.

"Georgia is turning into one of the most important gaming markets for EasyLinx," said Mosart Sebben, CEO



and founder of EasyLinx. "Our solution directly aligns with Georgia's demands for new technologies to provide secure gaming standards, simplified operations, while improving player experience."

The Georgia Amusement and Music Operators Association (GAMOA) presents the Cutting Edge Award each year at the SAEE to the company it feels developed the best new technology for the Georgia COAM market over

See EASYLINX Page 11



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# Journal Opinion

## Time to embrace this new era of data

### Earle G. Hall, Axes CEO

In the good old days, life was pretty simple. You placed a few machines in your corner store or gas station, and people just played them. Astute operators recognize that those days are long gone.

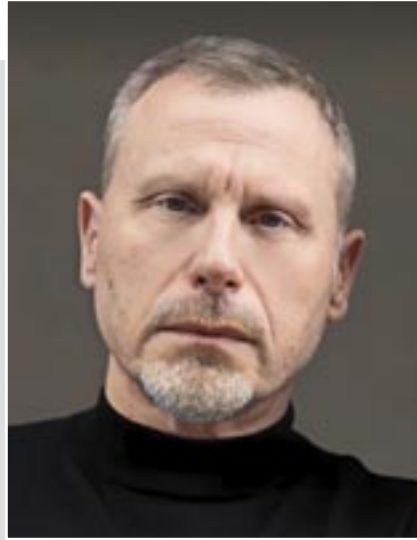
As our industry evolves, players want more complex games that resemble the modern Las Vegas casinos. Technology is stepping in to reduce fraud and theft and to improve accountability.

I'm often asked about the factors that differentiate one property from another, or one route from another. What sets them apart? The answer might not surprise you, but if it does, it's time to start taking the necessary steps to ensure you've created the maximum value for your investment.

If you remember the good old days, we could always say that a market would generate an average amount of revenue per machine. We knew the opportunities and risks of each market based on legalities and estimated revenue. In today's data-rich world, believe it or not, revenue alone is not enough.

The quantity and quality of your data are the keys to prov-

ing your organization's sustainability and growth. It's the quality of your data that will distinguish you from your competitors. The more you know about your players – their habits, behaviors, likes, and dis-



Earle G. Hall

likes – the more it's reflected in your revenue. Your ability to track and explain the ebb and flow of traffic, number of visits, time spent on devices, and how often a player cashes in during their session is crucial. This data determines your ability to explain your value, the player journey, and the overall worth of your business.

Whether your players are anonymous or KYC (Know Your

Client), being able to mine data on their behavior and habits allows you to demonstrate the value of your organization. In today's world, this is a more critical factor than any other in your business.

The more you know about your players – their habits, behaviors, likes and dislikes – the more it's reflected in your revenues.

Gaming machines come and go. Once a theme becomes popular in one location, it quickly spreads elsewhere, canceling out any temporary competitive advantage you may have had. However, being able to describe your player attributes – whether you know who they are or not – empowers you to understand their habits. It also enhances your ability to create marketing programs fo-

cused on quantitative engagement and loyalty.

Data is the foundation of any gaming organization today. "Fine-grained data" describes how much information you have, how often you receive it, and how detailed it is. The more fine-grained your data, the more valuable your organization becomes. By integrating the right technologies, it doesn't matter if the player is anonymous or KYC; you can extract the same level of data intelligence to fuel revenue growth while decreasing costs.

The call to action is clear: embrace this new era of data. Building your business now requires more than cash flow and games. It demands an understanding of how to create a data strategy to maximize every dollar of your hard-earned money and work.

Earle G. Hall, CEO@AXES.ai  
Keynote Speaker | TEDx (2x) | Veteran | Co-Chairman, AI and Cybersecurity Policy Committee, Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce | Emeritus Board Member, Government Blockchain Association | Newfoundlander

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## COAM calendar

### — REPORTING DATES —

**Sept. 20:** Each monthly report should be submitted by Location License Holders in electronic format via the [www.gacoam.com](http://www.gacoam.com) website as required by the GLC by the 20th of each following month.

### — MEETINGS/OTHER —

**Sept. 26:** GAMOA Annual Meeting, Westin Atlanta Gwinnet, Duluth  
**Oct. 1:** COAM Advisory Board, GA Lottery headquarters, Atlanta  
**Oct. 7-10:** Global Gaming Expo (G2E), Venetian Expo, Las Vegas

### 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](mailto:paul@tashcommunications.com). The Journal reserves the right not to print letters it finds objectionable.

# Journal Opinion

## AMOA back on the Hill, then On the Road

**Lori Schneider**  
**AMOA Executive VP**

AMOA's legislative team was back in DC Sept. 10-11 to meet with federal agencies and Congressional offices to continue its work on fair access to banking. The team also discussed the potential impact that tax reform will have on small business in 2025.

**AMOA's On the Road**

AMOA's On the Road program, this year titled "Powering Connections: Energize Your Network," is set for Oct. 24-25 in Itasca, IL.

The popular event will provide presentations on a variety of timely industry-related topics, including:

- "Dominate Your Competition," featuring keynote speaker Tony Leone, creator and CEO of Whole Brain Selling
  - "Navigating the Interview," moderated by longtime AMOA-Notre Dame program HR expert Bob Abel
  - Diversify into Retail Sales
  - High-Performing Arcades ... The Street Footprint
  - What's Hot in Redemption
  - Optimizing Connectivity
  - What's New and How to Get More Out of Your ATMs
- This year's AMOA On the



**Lori Schneider**

AMOA's On the Road program, titled "Powering Connections: Energize Your Network," is Oct. 24-25 in Itasca, IL.

Road program also features two factory tours – Stern Pinball and The Really Big Crane Company; legislative luncheon and election preview from AMOA legislative counsel (DGA Group); and the Associate Member Product Spotlight event. Program details are available at amoa.com.

The event will be held at the Westin Chicago Northwest. In addition, AMOA's On Campus

program will be held Oct. 24-26 at the same location. Highlights include:

- "Management Matters: Preventing Employee Legal Challenges" – Robert Abel, R. E. Abel & Associates – Thursday, Oct. 24, 9 a.m. to noon.
- "Contracts and Agreements" – Paul Jenson, Partner, Taft Law – Saturday, Oct. 26, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.

**Tech School lineup**

The AMOA Regional Tech School has one last stop scheduled for 2024: Embassy Suites Orlando Airport in Orlando, FL, Dec. 10-11.

The one-and-a-half day school features tech sessions by both TouchTunes and AMI on the jukebox, as well as sessions on pinball, cranes, ATMs, payment systems and more. Be sure to visit amoa.com for a full synopsis on each tech session and registration information.

**State Council meeting**

The meeting is set for Jan. 23-25, 2025, in the Marriott San Antonio Riverwalk, San Antonio, TX. Details and registration opening in early October.

**Amusement Expo**

AEI returns to Las Vegas March 17-20, 2025.

Education Program – March 17-18, Westgate Las Vegas

Trade Show – March 19-20, Las Vegas Convention Center, South Hall.

For more information, visit [www.amusementexpo.org](http://www.amusementexpo.org).

Be sure to engage with AMOA at [www.amoa.com](http://www.amoa.com) for details on these and many other AMOA programs.

COIN OPERATED AMUSEMENT MACHINE  
 LOCATION SWEEP AND MASTER PUSH CALENDAR

**JULY-DEC 2024**

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

\*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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# Charity

from Page 1

off the event and showed how funds raised by GAMOA last year specifically benefited families this year. Kristin Klingshirn, an Atlanta radio personality who chairs Bert's board of directors, introduced the video.

GAMOA members and friends then began pledging donations and challenging others to match. Paul Patel, who emceed the charitable event, offered his dress jacket and a very nice watch he was wearing for bid. In the end, this year's pledges, along with proceeds from the Ginger Foshee Casino Night that capped the evening, totaled about \$237,000 for Bert's Big Adventure.

"Every year when I come to this event, I say to myself, 'if we walk out with \$10,000 today, we can take one more kid (to Disney World),' said an emotional Molly Parrish-Darby, executive director of Bert's Big Adventure. "This is so much more."

"We're not trying to cure any diseases," she said. "We're just try-

ing to make (children's) lives a little bit sweeter while they're with us, and with this money we can accomplish that."

"Thank you, thank you, thank you. I don't know what else to say, but thank you. You're amazing."



GAMOA President Shawn Fellows praised Bert's Big Adventure for "all the amazing work they do

and the children and families they've helped for over 20 years now."

"It's an amazing organization."



Paul Tash photos



**PAUL PATEL**, above, introduces Molly Parrish-Darby, executive director of Bert's Big Adventure, at a fundraising effort for the group after the SAAE awards banquet last month. At left, blackjack players await cards at the Ginger Foshee Casino Night that also raised funds for Bert's Big Adventure. Two of those players are Mike Patel, far right, and Kyle Shepherd, on his right. Patel is GAMOA's vice president, and Shepherd serves as GAMOA's secretary.



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# Expo

from Page 1

booths for the 2025 Expo, which again is scheduled for the sparkling Gas South Convention Center.

“We’ll be looking for a larger space (at the Gas South facility),” she said, to accommodate a growing demand for exhibition space.

In addition, Kaiser said representatives from several companies not exhibiting were “walking the Expo floor” this year to get a feel for it.

“Hopefully, some of the companies will exhibit at next year’s Expo,” she said.

The inaugural “education day,” which kicked off Expo activities Aug. 20 and featured a panel discussion on card systems and other technology and a presentation on what gaming looks like across the country, “went extremely well,” she said.

“The room was full for both of them,” Kaiser said. “We’ll try to expand on that next year.”

At the conclusion of the awards banquet Aug. 21, the Georgia COAM industry again went over the top for its favorite charity and raised a breath-taking \$237,000 for Bert’s Big Adventure (see story on Page 1). The non-profit organization sends chronically and terminally ill children and their families to Disney World for a “magical” five-day vacation, all expenses paid. Proceeds from the Ginger Foshee Casino Night at the end of the night also benefitted the charity.

## Lifetime achievement

GAMOA recognized industry pioneer Mike Macke of Primero Games with its Lifetime Achievement Award and named longtime operator Nick Damani of the Ultra Group as the organization’s 2024 Coin Operator of the Year. EasyLinx earned the Cutting Edge Award, while Junior Harvell of Prestige Gaming Solutions/Fish Game Kings received the Marshall Hartmann Technician of the Year Award, presented by Goldfinger.

In introducing Macke as the Lifetime Achievement winner, Fellows said Macke’s industry contributions in 40-plus years have been “broad and profound,” including “conceptualizing and introducing the nudge game that is the foundation to every game you find in Georgia today.”

“Tonight we celebrate the remarkable journey of a true industry pioneer,” Fellows said. “A man whose name is synonymous with gaming and innovation, especially



Paul Tash photos

**JUNIOR HARVELL**, above, accepts the Marshall Hartmann Technician of the Year award at the SAE banquet last month. At left is Daniel Hartmann, who presented the award. Harvell works for Prestige Gaming Solutions/Fish Game Kings. Below, Rep. Alan Powell, GAMOA President Shawn Fellows and Sen. Clint Dixon after GAMOA honored the two legislators for their efforts to pass HB 353.



in the realm of redemption games. He’s fondly known and sometimes referred to as ‘the father of COAM.’”

While designing, manufacturing and distributing “ground-breaking gaming equipment,” Macke “has demonstrated an uncanny ability to transfer an idea into a reality,” Fellows added.

“An industry pioneer, successful self-made business man, serial entrepreneur, his legacy is one of continued growth, innovation, and excellence.”

Macke accepted the award following a lengthy ovation.

“Wow, this is quite an honor,” he said. “It’s humbling.”

Dressed impeccably, as usual, in a white pinstriped suit, pink shirt and bolo tie, Macke mentioned how he started with Mike Pace in 1980, a partnership that led to the

development of the iconic Little Casino game.

“We didn’t know a damn thing about this business,” he said, “but somehow we figured out how to do it.”

Macke touched on a few highlights along his professional journey, including the passage of the first redemption bill in Georgia decades ago, which several other states emulated.

“It became kind of a big thing,” he said. “We didn’t really understand what redemption was, but we knew what we wanted to run. We wanted to run fast equipment. That’s how we figured out how to do it.”

## Operator of the Year

In presenting the Operator of the Year award to Damani, GAMOA attorney and lobbyist Les

Schneider said he is “an operator who has supported the association through thick and thin through his time, money and shrewd analysis of our COAM industry.”

Damani built his business from the ground up, Schneider said, not by acquisition, “but by developing customer relations with location licenses.”

“His humble beginnings created a person who appreciated hard work and the loyalty of friends and family,” Schneider said. “His charitable contributions and special kindnesses are often done in an anonymous, humble and often secretive way.”

Schneider added that Damani is always “a source of solid advice and information, and he knows how to separate the wheat from the chaff.”

An emotional Damani accepted the award after a standing ovation.

“Thank you so much,” he said.

Look for features on Macke and Damani in upcoming issues of the Georgia Amusement Journal.

GAMOA also honored Rep. Alan Powell (R-Hartwell) and Sen. Clint Dixon (R-Gwinnett) for their work on passing House Bill 353, which is expected to generate further COAM growth.

Powell the banquet crowd that “things are changing” for the good for the COAM industry, thanks to HB353.

“It’s going to enhance your business,” he said. “This industry is going to do very well for years to come.”

Dixon agreed, noting that the COAM industry is “employing thousands of Georgians.”

“You are the only growing part of the Lottery,” he said, adding that the industry plays “a vital role” in the state’s education system by contributing “tens of millions of dollars” to its pre-K and Hope Scholarship programs.

Accepting the Cutting Edge Award for EasyLinx was CEO Mosart Sebben. The award recognized an innovative terminal solution that handles fully secure TITO and TICO environments, “giving customers alternatives to adapt to operational needs,” Sebben told the Journal (see story on Page 1).

Fellows earlier in the evening praised all the product developers in the Georgia market.

“We really appreciate you all continuing to develop products that meet the needs of a changing market,” he said. “I think it was very evident this year as you walked the  
(Continued on next page)



(Continued from previous page) trade show floor the overwhelming number of kiosks and fintech providers who are all here now ultimately because of the legislation sponsored by Rep. Powell and carried in the Senate by Sen. Dixon. Thank you for all your hard work.”

Goldfinger’s Daniel Hartmann presented the Marshall Hartmann Technician of the Year Award to

all the COAM technicians “for all the hard work to keep this entire industry going.”

Another industry leader addressing the banquet audience was AMOA President Bob Burnham, operator of Paradise Distributing based in Wyoming.

“I’m really passionate about the AMOA,” he said.

The organization “is very involved on a national level,” he said, working on such issues as the Safe Banking Act that addresses the closing of bank accounts. Burnham urged operators who have had bank accounts closed “due to ATM issues” to contact AMOA Executive Vice President Director Lori Schneider

(Lori@amoa.com) and let her know.

“We have a trip to Washington, DC, (later this fall), and we’re going to be bringing that up to a lot of representatives and senators,” he said.

Burham also noted the several AMOA past presidents in the audience, calling them “amazing friends.”

“I appreciate you all,” he said.

# Southern AMUSEMENT & ENTERTAINMENT EXPO

Junior Harvell, who works for Prestige Gaming Solutions/Fish Game Kings. The award also earned Harvell a \$2,000 check.

“This was a difficult decision,” Hartmann said before presenting the award. “We had the most applicants we’ve ever had for this award this year.”

Hartmann said the award recognizes not only the recipient, but

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Paul Tash photo

**MOZART SEBBEN**, CEO of EasyLinx, accepts the Cutting Edge Award from GAMOA Secretary Kyle Shepherd during the SAE awards banquet Aug. 21.

## EasyLinx

from Page 1

the last year. EasyLinx won out over several other companies that presented for the award.

“In partnership with GeWeTe (a Merkur company), EasyLinx presented an innovative solution that handles fully secure TITO and TICO environments, giving customers alternatives to adapt to operational needs,” Sebben said. “GeWeTe redemption terminals offer player functions not known to this industry, like the ability to purchase a TITO ticket using a debit card.”

The terminal also provides several other features, such as TITO ticket redemption and multiple payment methods.

“Winning the 2024 Cutting Edge Award clearly shows that our innovative solution is well accepted

by the market, and this is a great opportunity to help improve gaming standards across the state,” Sebben said. “By making technology accessible and providing qualified services, we are committed to set new standards to further enhance gaming in Georgia.”

EasyLinx is the “brains” for easy connectivity and smart management, he said, adding that the “hybrid solution” combines the best of cloud and local servers. Other features include:

- Uninterrupted TITO / TICO operation, even when the internet is down or unstable.
- Automatic data redundancy and backup.
- Automatic cloud consolidation of multi-site data for easy management reporting.
- Asset management.

EasyLinx integrates securely with any gaming device (both SAS and non-SAS protocols), Sebben added.

## Connect, power up machines, GLC says

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.

## Renew licenses this month to keep operating machines

**Georgia Amusement Journal** Monday, Sept. 30, is the last day to renew a Class A or Class B location license or a Class A or Class B master license for the 2025 licensing period, which runs July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025.

If holders of a 2024 COAM license fail to renew their license, or their license application is not approved on or before this date, the person or entity will no longer be allowed to operate COAMs.

The application process opened May 15 for the 2025 licensing period on the Georgia Lottery Corp.’s COAM website at [www.gacoam.com](http://www.gacoam.com). Class B licensees this year can apply for a multi-year license that allows them to extend their license for an additional one or two years upon renewal or issuance. The multi-year license option was part of a legislative package passed during this year’s General Assembly.

To begin the multi-year application process, licensees must have already submitted their 2025 application online. The Multiple Year License Application is available for each license type under the Documents/Forms section of the website.

Licensees who are applying for just the 2025 licensing year are not required to use the Multiple Year License Application.

The COAM Division emailed several reminders to 2024 licensees to renew for the 2025 year. Following are the important dates for licensees to remember.

Master licensees can play an important role in helping their locations through the licensing process by reminding them to:

- Pay their taxes and other state financial obligations.
- Apply for correct license (Class B).
- Pay attention to licensing deadlines.
- List all the officers and shareholders are listed on the license application.
- Take time to enter information correctly.

The Lottery is not accepting any new Class B Master License applications. New Class B Master Licenses are only available through an auction process for prequalified participants.

More licensing information is available on the COAM website, [www.gacoam.com](http://www.gacoam.com).

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# G2E returns to Venetian Expo Oct. 7-10

Registration remains open for G2E 2024, gaming’s premier global event, scheduled for Oct. 7-10 at The Venetian Expo in Las Vegas.

"This year's expo will feature the latest advancements in the gaming industry alongside value-driving innovations to the expo itself, once again making G2E 2024 the platform for the global gaming industry to convene, connect, and get business done," said Korbi Carrison, G2E's event vice president at RX.

Supported by the Association of Gaming Equipment Manufacturers (AGEM), G2E 2024 will highlight the continued evolution of every aspect of the industry – from traditional and online gaming to digital payments and new technologies.

"G2E will both reflect gaming’s continued momentum and be the catalyst for further industry growth," said Maureen Beddis, American Gaming Association senior vice president. "We eagerly anticipate hosting the global gaming community in Las Vegas this October, where we'll spotlight the

games, solutions, and ideas that will shape gaming’s future and make G2E the industry’s can’t-miss event of the year."

G2E 2024 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, all in one place.

G2E’s 2024 education program will offer insights from gaming’s top leaders and experts, featuring more than 95 sessions and 300-plus speakers. Content partners for this year’s program include Global

Gaming Women, Indian Gaming Association, International Association of Gaming Advisors, NEXT.io, and more.

With featured show areas dedicated to bringing the gaming industry together,

G2E offers an unparalleled opportunity to connect with your peers, find new business partners, and discover the latest technologies. Experience these featured areas and more at

### G2E:

#### iGAMING ZONE

– Navigate the G2E show floor with ease and discover online gaming solutions in this designated area. Attendees can start in the iGaming Zone and then explore more iGaming technologies at other suppliers throughout the show floor.

**THE LAB** – As the launching pad for emerging trends for the en-

tire gaming ecosystem, the evolved destination formerly known as The Innovation Lab, 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.

#### NEW EXHIBITOR ZONE –

The New Exhibitor Zone is a dedicated area for first- and second-time G2E exhibitors. This is the perfect area to check out new exhibitors to G2E that you haven’t been able to meet in year’s past.

G2E will donate \$25 of every all-access education pass purchased and \$50 for every booth sold to the International Center for Responsible Gaming (ICRG), G2E’s charitable partner. ICRG’s mission is to help individuals and families affected by gambling disorder and to prevent the onset of gambling problems through scientific research and evidence-based educational programming on gambling disorders and responsible gambling.



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# Retail Matters

## Convenience ‘perception’ changing

*Report details ways to leverage change for success*

**Angela Hanson**

**Convenience Store News**

The times, they are a-changing. This old Bob Dylan lyric is becoming increasingly relevant to retail in general and to the convenience store channel in particular as consumers change their priorities, their shopping habits and their expectations from the stores they visit.

One of the biggest areas of change is how consumers perceive convenience, according to customer experience solutions provider Intouch Insight, whose "2024 Convenience Store Trends Report" revealed key details about what is shifting that perception and how operators can leverage change to power the next era of c-stores.

Perception of new technologies is the first of three notable shifts retailers should pay attention to, according to Intouch Insight

President and CEO Cameron Watt, who discussed key insights of the report with Convenience Store News. He noted that examining data through the lens of age difference reveals how these perceptions differ among age groups – for example, more than 40% of study respondents aged 18-24 said they would choose a location with an electric vehicle (EV) charging station over one without, compared to just 6% of those aged 65-74. Similar differences were seen for newer technologies such as self-checkout.

"Retailers need to understand the make-up of their customer demographic in addition to analysis around market and competition to understand best what technologies they should consider in their stores and when they should be adopted," Watt said. A second major shift is

occurring in how consumers perceive convenience stores, with the rising view of them as quality meal destinations demonstrating the need to elevate both offerings and environment.



Watt also highlighted the shifting perception of the importance of cleanliness and store ambiance. Intouch Insight observed a 10 point increase in the percentage of shoppers who view these attributes as crucial factors in their choice of convenience store.

### Improve in-store experience

The continued growth in food options at c-stores comes with what looks like a dilemma. Made-to-order food is popular with consumers, 93% of whom have tried it at a c-store. However, made-to-order inherently requires more preparation time than grab-and-go

food, which clashes with a common definition of convenience: the ability to get in and out of a store as quickly as possible.

However, it's often not a deal-breaker. Consumers who gravitate toward higher quality, freshly prepared meals are more willing to wait to get them.

**Other factors that make customers more willing to wait for made-to-order food include:**

1. **Perceived Value:** Customers are more likely to wait if they believe the food offers good value for the price. Still, only 62% of consumers feel this is the case for made-to-order c-store food, leaving room for improvement.

2. **Experience as a Destination:** C-stores are increasingly becoming destinations themselves and customers are willing to spend more time in-store.

3. **Enhanced Experience:** Creating a comfortable in-store dining area can encourage customers to wait and enjoy their meals on-site.



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