



Brittany Patete

Market updates

Novomatic's new games explosive

By Paul Tash
Georgia Amusement Journal

Just nine months after its Georgia debut, Novomatic, distributed by Skyline Unlimited, has announced its new exciting game suite coming in 2026 called Rocket Rush.

Skyline Unlimited has been the exclusive distributor in the Georgia COAM market for Novomatic since March. In an Amusement Journal feature on the debut in March, Skyline President Brittany Patete said the partnership's mission "is to bring the most entertaining route-market gaming



experiences" to Georgia, and Rocket Rush is a prime example, she said this month.

"Novomatic's games have been captivating route gaming players all over the world," Patete said.

Novomatic offers unique features within their game mechanics, and this new four-pot Rocket Rush game offering will be the reason "Novomatic continues to gain market share," she said. Players want to play mechanics – like pots and lock-and-spin, "and they are going to love this new game

See **ROCKET** Page 18

Villari, Eskew join Bad Dog

Georgia Amusement Journal

Bad Dog Games, an innovation leader of technology and game content for the land-based route-gaming industry, this month announced two key appointments to its sales and operations teams.

Bad Dog Games has named David Villari as vice president of sales. With extensive experience in route operations, skill gaming systems, and regulatory markets across multiple jurisdictions, Villari will lead all commercial strategy, route-operator partnerships, and market expansion.

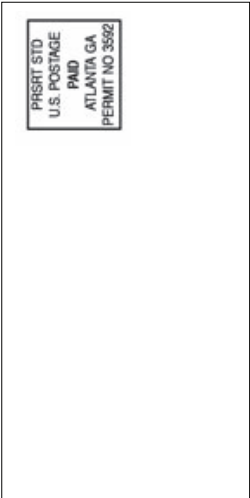


See **BAD DOG** Page 11



Justin Eskew

David Villari



Registration now open for AEI in Vegas

Georgia Amusement Journal

Amusement Expo International (AEI), the premier gathering for the global amusement, attractions, and location-based entertainment industries, returns to the Las Vegas Convention Center March 16–19 for four days of trend-setting innovation, education, and hands-on discovery.

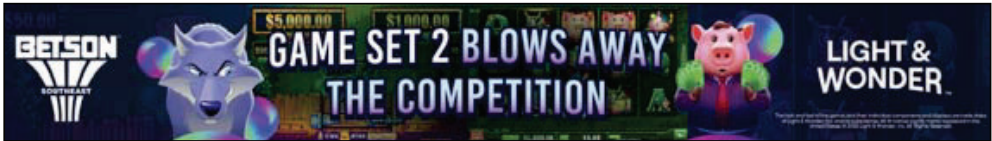
Registration is now open for the event, which brings together thousands of operators, developers, manufacturers, and visionaries seeking to shape the next generation

of interactive entertainment.

Education Days: March 16–17

The first two days of AEI 2026 will focus on industry-leading education, delivering deep insights tailored to the evolving needs of entertainment operators and creators. This year's program is designed to equip businesses with the strategies, knowledge, and tools necessary to thrive in a rapidly changing marketplace.

See **EXPO** Page 14



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Journal Opinion

C-store show moving to Columbus

Angela Holland
GACS President

Big changes are coming to the annual Southern Convenience Store and Petroleum Show, managed by the Georgia Association of Convenience Stores (GACS).

Held for the last several years in Macon, The Show is moving to Columbus, GA, and the city's Convention and Trade Center. In addition, The Show is changing the date from its more traditional May dates to Oct. 22.

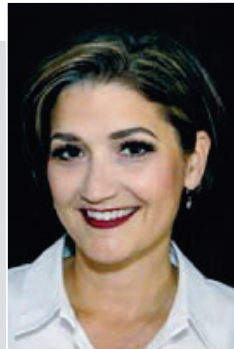
Early bird registration with discounted fees is open now, but expires Jan. 31. Visit www.gacs.com to register.

The Show provides store owners, operators, and buyers information about the newest ways to improve their businesses – from food service to fuel, novelties to snacks, and everything in between.

Scholarships available

We're excited to announce that the GACS scholarship application process for the 2026-27 academic year is now open through Jan. 31. Winners will be selected by an independent committee and announced by the end of April. Checks will be disbursed in May.

Since 2004, GACS has



Angela Holland

Early Bird registration with discounted fees is open now, but expires Jan. 31.



proudly awarded scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,000 to eligible employees whose membership is in good standing and their children. We encourage all who qualify to apply and take advantage of this great opportunity!

Only one completed application is required to be eligible, and only one scholarship will be awarded per applicant. Winners must enroll as full-time students

in the fall of 2026. Eligible institutions include four-year and two-year colleges or universities, as well as technical, vocational, and certificate programs.

To be considered for a GACS Scholarship, applicants must:

- Be a current high school senior or college freshman, sophomore, or junior.

- Be an employee of a GACS member company or a dependent child of a GACS member company employee.

- Have at least one year of continuous service (as of Jan. 1, 2026) at a GACS member company.

• Be employed (or have a parent/guardian employed) at a GACS member company at the time of award announcements (end of April 2026).

Here are the scholarships:

\$2,000 Brittany Schmeelk Scholarship

\$2,000 Jim Tudor Scholarship

\$2,000 Hayes Bryan Scholarship

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\$2,000 Susie Q Foods Scholarship – sponsored by Susie Q's Foods

\$1,500 B Average Scholarships

– Two scholarships

\$1,500 Grady Lewis Memorial

Scholarship – sponsored by Friendly Express

\$1,000 Business School Student Scholarship

\$1,000 Circle K Scholarships –

Two scholarships sponsored by Circle K

\$1,000 Flowers Bakeries Group Scholarships – Two scholarships sponsored by Flowers Bakeries Group

\$1,000 Nancy Bivings Scholarship

\$1,000 Nomination-Based Scholarships – Two scholarships

\$1,000 Outstanding Academic Merit Scholarship

\$1,000 Outstanding Volunteerism Scholarship

\$1,000 Outstanding Extracurricular Activity, Arts, and/or Sports Scholarship

\$1,000 Supplier Appreciation Scholarship – anonymous donor

Contact Nancy at nmcpherson@gacs.com to get the process started.

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COAM calendar

Jan. 20: Gross retail receipts for October, November and December 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/OTHER —

Jan. 21: COAM Advisory Board, GLC headquarters, Atlanta

Feb. 12: GAMOA meeting, Crowne Plaza Atlanta NE, Norcross

March 16-19: Amusement Expo International, Las Vegas, Las Vegas Convention Center

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.

Journal Opinion

AMOA members get AEI party, breakfast

Lori Schneider

AMOA Executive Director

Registration is now open for the Amusement Expo International to be held March 16-19 in Las Vegas at the Las Vegas Convention Center.

Current AMOA members who register receive two free trade show badges and are invited to attend the AMOA After Party at the Jewel Nightclub on Wednesday, March 18, from 9 p.m. to midnight and the AMOA member breakfast on Thursday, March 19, at Resorts World.

Resorts World is the new AEI headquarter hotel in 2026! Visit www.amusementexpo.org for additional details and make hotel reservations today!

State Council Meeting

The AMOA State Council Meeting is conducted each year to provide states with the oppor-



Lori Schneider

tunity to come together to collaborate and share valuable information on legislative and other activity occurring in their respective areas of the country.

This year the State Council

Resorts World is the new headquarter hotel in 2026. Make your hotel reservations today!



Meeting is Jan. 28-30 in Orlando, FL.

Invited attendees include state association executives, state association volunteer leadership and industry partners.

Here are some of the topics to be discussed at the 2026 gathering:

- National Legislative Update – John Russell, DGA Group
- Strategies for Getting Ahead of Issues
- Top Tips to Fortify and Build Your Legislative Relationships
- Empowering States with Ideas for Member Engagement
- Open Forum – Ask your questions and gather feedback
- Gaming Update from Paul Jensen, Taft Law

Program details are available at amoa.com or by emailing Lori Schneider at lori@amoa.com.

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... and more!

New CEO Fernandez ‘excited’ to lead IGT

By Rege Behe, CDC Gaming

IGT announced Dec. 4 that Hector Fernandez has joined the company as CEO. Fernandez previously was CEO of Aristocrat Gaming.

Fernandez will assume the role of CEO of the combined IGT-Everi enterprise and oversee the gaming business unit after regulatory approvals.

“Led by Hector and a talented team of leaders from across the legacy IGT Gaming & Digital and Everi businesses, as well as key new hires from inside and outside the industry, we believe the combined enterprise will accelerate growth, enhance product and content innovation, and become an even stronger partner to its customers,” Apollo Partner and IGT Board Chair Daniel Cohen said in a statement. “Hector shares our commitment to fostering a high-performing, people-first culture, and we are confident he will lead this team to new heights.”

Fernandez brings a track record in gaming and technology to IGT. Fernandez has been recognized for leadership in strategic initiatives that propelled market share, revenue growth and increased profitability.

He is based in Las Vegas, home of IGT’s global headquarters.

“I’m honored and excited to lead IGT into its next chapter,” said Fer-



HECTOR FERNANDEZ

nandez. “This is a company with strong talent, deep industry relationships, and significant potential. As we bring together the legacy IGT and Everi teams, in partnership with Apollo, we have an opportunity to evolve how we operate, innovate, and deliver for our customers. I’m looking forward to working with our teams around the world to define what’s next for IGT.”

IGT also announced that Nick Khin, who previously served as interim enterprise CEO and CEO of the gaming business unit, will step down and transition into a role as a strategic advisor to the senior leadership team and board.

“Nick has contributed greatly to IGT’s progress over the past 12 years,” said Fernandez. “His leadership through this transition period has been invaluable to the organization, and I want to thank him for his dedication and impact. We appreciate his continued guidance as we move into this next chapter.”

IGT’s Digital business unit will continue to be led by Gil Rotem and IGT’s FinTech business unit will continue to be led by Darren Simmons.



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Bad Dog

from Page 1

sion initiatives. Villari has extensive sales experience in the Georgia COAM market, most recently with Ryken Security and previous to that with Banilla Games.

“David’s joining Bad Dog is strong sign of our commitment to our customers and the route market,” said Greg Hammond, COO of Bad Dog Games. “As regulated skill gaming continues to grow and modernize, David’s deep understanding of the route model and operator needs will be invaluable.”

The company also announced Justin Eskew as its new director of operations. In this role, Eskew will lead operational planning, deployment coordination, customer support infrastructure, and compliance-driven operational processes across the company’s expanding footprint.

“Justin’s operational discipline and hands-on industry experience will help us optimize delivery, improve customer responsiveness, and support our operating partners more effectively than ever,” Hammond said.

Eskew also has experience in the Georgia COAM industry, most recently working with Bravery Gaming.

About Bad Dog Games

Bad Dog Games delivers innovative game content and technology for land-based route gaming operators. The company delivers on innovation, exceptional player experiences and enhanced location profitability by focusing on affordability, reliability, and performance.

Accel expands NV footprint with Dynasty Games buy

Accel Entertainment announced in early December that its subsidiary, Century Gaming Technologies Nevada, has acquired the route-operation assets of Dynasty Games. Financial details of the transaction weren’t disclosed, but they’re expected to be accretive to Accel’s 2026 financial results.

Accel, a locals-focused gaming operator, said the acquisition expands Accel’s northern Nevada platform with 20 new active locations, two additional locations pending regulatory approval, and about 123 electronic gaming terminals.

The transaction is expected to leverage Accel’s operational expertise, data analytics, and Gamblers Bonus loyalty program to enhance customer engagement and drive incremental growth over the coming years, the company said.

As of Sept. 30, Accel’s existing Nevada operations serviced 370 locations, with 2,757 gaming terminals.

“This strategic and accretive acquisition marks an important milestone in our Nevada growth strategy,” said Andy Rubenstein, CEO of Accel Entertainment. “Dynasty Games has built a trusted reputation rooted in integrity and long-term

relationships and we’re excited to build on that legacy while expanding Accel’s best-in-class route operations across northern Nevada.”

Rubenstein said the transaction strengthens Accel’s Nevada market presence, establishing new operations in Gardnerville, Verdi, Dayton, Fernley, Stagecoach, and Sun Valley. Combined with its existing footprint in Reno, Sparks, Carson City, Elko, Wells, Spring Creek, and Carlin, “Accel now operates the most comprehensive and scaled route coverage in the state, a competitive advantage expected to drive continued growth and new-location development,” Rubenstein said.

After more than 30 years serving northern Nevada’s gaming community, Roger Fuller, owner of Dynasty Games, said it was important to find a partner who values relationships and integrity as much as results.

“Century Gaming Technologies has earned a strong reputation through its emphasis on customer care, and I’m excited to see our locations and customers benefit from Accel’s experience and dedication to the local market,” Fuller said.

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Expo

from Page 1

Attendees can expect:

- Breakout tracks dedicated to arcade operations, FEC strategy, VR and immersive attractions, business management, cashless systems, and player engagement.

- Expert-led sessions featuring analysts, operators, and technologists who will explore new revenue models, data-driven decision making, safety and compliance updates, and the adoption of emerging technologies.

- Interactive workshops that allow participants to collaborate on real-world challenges, discuss best practices, and test solutions alongside peers.

- Forward-looking discussions on consumer behavior, including the growing demand for experiential entertainment and trends impacting game design, prize redemption, and guest expectations.

These education days have become a cornerstone of the expo, offering a rare opportunity for professionals to learn directly from leaders shaping the industry's future.



Trade Show: March 18–19

When the show floor opens March 18, the Las Vegas Convention Center transforms into a vibrant, high-energy landscape of innovation-in-action. The two-day trade show remains the heartbeat of AEI, where attendees can experience firsthand the products and technologies that will influence en-

tertainment venues in the coming year.

Highlights include:

- Unveiling of next-generation attractions, from cutting-edge arcade games and redemption machines to fully immersive VR and mixed-reality experiences.

- Live demonstrations by manufacturers and developers showcas-

ing gameplay, guest interaction, software tools, and operational systems.

- Debuts of cashless platforms, prize systems, and operational technology designed to improve efficiency, enhance guest experiences, and boost profitability.

- Hands-on testing opportunities, giving attendees a true feel for game mechanics, prize pathways, durability, interface design, and entertainment value.

- International exhibitor participation, bringing global perspectives on innovation, amusement trends, and market opportunity.

The trade show floor not only serves as a marketplace but also as a collaborative hub where conversations spark new partnerships, ideas, and business ventures.

Connect and grow

Throughout the week, AEI offers numerous opportunities for networking – from evening receptions and industry meet-ups to informal gatherings that foster discussion and idea exchange. These connections, often sparked on the show floor or during an education session, continue to drive innovation long after the Expo concludes.

For more information visit www.amusementexpo.org/2026.

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Online form manages service calls

Georgia Amusement Journal

At a GAMOA meeting during the Southern Amusement & Entertainment Expo in August, Shayne Heap, Intralot's senior service manager in Georgia, highlighted a new online form to streamline the process of scheduling appointments and to address inefficiencies in tracking appointments that were previously managed through email.

"This is this is the form we created to make our process of scheduling appointments easier for everyone involved in the process," Heap said at the time.

Instructions on how to fill out the seven-question form is now available on the GA COAM Division website at www.gacoam.com. The document provides step-by-step instructions for Master License Holders (MLHs) to submit an online appointment request through the Intralot system for Class B COAM services. It also outlines the required procedures before, during, and after scheduling an installation to ensure compliance and avoid delays or cancellation fees. Here are those step-by-step instructions:

1. Monitor iGEM System:

Master License Holders (MLHs) must regularly check the Intralot iGEM System at www.gacoamrpt.com for newly added Location License Holder (LLH) information.

2. Verify LLH information:

Confirm that the LLH information appears in the iGEM System before requesting an appointment.

3. 4. Complete Intralot Appointment Request Form:

Access and complete the online Intralot Appointment Request Form using the noted link.

Choose the appropriate request type:

- New Install
- Change Owner
- Change of Master/New Install
- Change of Master/Asset Purchase
- Warehouse Decommission (only)
- Migration

5. Submit the form:

Click "Submit" to send the request to Intralot. A confirmation message will appear on the screen indicating successful submission.

6. Email confirmation:

The MLH will receive a confirmation email with the subject line "Appointment Request Received." Intralot will respond within 48 business hours with a scheduled installation date and time.

Intralot Appointment Request Form

This form is used to request service from an Intralot Technician. Please fill in the required information below and a representative will respond within 24 business hours.

When you submit this form, it will not automatically collect your details like name and email address unless you provide it yourself.

* Required

1. Intralot is no longer requiring the attachment of the L and/or B License for an appointment request. However, the requirement has not changed, and the L License must still be posted for the public to see at the time of service. If the license is not displayed when the Intralot Technician arrives, the appointment will be canceled and a Missed Appointment Fee of \$150 will be assessed. A new appointment will not be scheduled until the fee is paid in full. *

☐ I understand and agree.

2. Requestor (First Name and Last Name) *

Enter your answer

3. Email (correspondence for this appointment will be to this email) *

Enter your answer

4. Contact Phone Number (xxx-xxx-xxxx) *

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5. Location License Number Requesting Service *

The value must be a number

6. Type of Service Requested *

Select your answer

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Enter your answer

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Submit

Never give out your password. [Report abuse](#)

TO FILL OUT this online request form, go to www.gacoam.com and click on the Documents tab.

7. Appointment scheduling:

The MLH will receive an appointment email with the subject line "Intralot Service Appointment Schedule – (LLH Number)" with the scheduled installation date and time.

8. MLH follow-up responsibilities:

Once the installation appointment is scheduled, the MLH must complete the following actions to ensure a successful installation and avoid delays or fees:

- The original Location (L) License and a copy of the Master (B)

License must be posted on-site at the time of installation. Failure to provide these documents will result in a \$150 cancellation fee, payable before the appointment can be rescheduled.

- Cancellations must be submitted to Intralot at least 24 hours in advance to avoid the \$150 cancellation fee. The appointment must be confirmed within 24 hours of scheduling. Unconfirmed appointments will be canceled and filled by another request.

- All games must be set up and operational prior to the appointment date/time to avoid cancellation.

- The location must be open to the public and have inventory available for sale at the time of installation. Intralot cannot complete installations at unopened locations or those lacking inventory.

- Please ensure the correct game titles and versions are on-site and ready upon arrival.

9. Installation timeline:

Intralot will complete the installation within 10 business days of the originally scheduled installation date. Installation dates may change based on MLH or LLH availability.

Rocket

from Page 1

suite,” she said.

“With over 400 machines now live in the Georgia COAM market, Novomatic is here to stay,” she said.

Rocket Rush is loaded with boost bonuses and random rocket explosions that can trigger one to four pots at any time, Patete said. Rocket Rush’s bonuses are called Cash Boost, Spin Boost, Double Boost and Win Boost, and they provide “fun and exciting” bonus features, she added, including instant rewards (Cash Boost), extra spins (Spin Boost), double-up fea-



ture (Double Boost) and “super-charged wins” (Win Boost).

The games debut on Novomatic’s Black Edition 2 cabinet that

provides myriad features to showcase the new games, including a high-performance sound system, ambient lighting, and a “robust” Cobra board, Patete said.



Novomatic still targeting Ainsworth

Ben Blaschke

Inside Asian Gaming

Austrian gaming giant Novomatic AG has again extended its offer to acquire from other shareholders all shares it doesn’t already own in Australian slot machine supplier Ainsworth Game Technology (AGT).

A letter provided to the Australian Securities Exchange by Novomatic’s legal representatives in its takeover bid shows that the

company has extended the offer period by almost two months until Jan. 30, 2026. The offer, already extended once previously, had been due to expire Dec. 3, 2025.

Novomatic first revealed in April its intention to pursue a full takeover of AGT by way of a Scheme of Arrangement but was forced to pursue an alternative route after it became apparent that the scheme would be blocked by a group of shareholders led by


Kjerulf Ainsworth, son of company founder Len Ainsworth.

Since then, the offer has seen Novomatic increase its holding in AGT from 52.9% to around 61.5%. Kjerulf Ainsworth has also been looking to increase his stake, albeit at a smaller rate, via a proportional takeover bid that if fully accepted would see his interest in the company grow from 7.27% to 9.9%.

Ainsworth is offering AU \$1.30 per share while Novomatic has val-

ued AGT shares at AU \$1.00 per share, representing a total consideration of AU \$158.6 million (US \$104.3 million) should it succeed in full acquisition.

It’s been a busy few months for AGT, which also saw CEO Harald Neumann tender his resignation after the Nevada Gaming Control Board opted against renewing his license in the state.



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☐ Level 3 Membership Parts & Service \$1,000 GA License # _____

☐ Level 4 Membership Distributor or Manufacturer \$2,000 GA License # _____

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

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Decommission COAMs correctly

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.

Keep COAMs connected

To ensure accurate reporting of financial data to the Central Accounting System, the Georgia Lottery Corporation (GLC) says it is imperative the Location License Holders (LLHs) ensure all equipment remains connected to the site controller and powered up at all times.

The GLC maintains a record of those LLHs that are repeat offenders of failing to ensure the continuous connectivity and operation of Class B COAMs.

Failure to comply with these procedures may result in fines up to \$50,000, suspension and/or revocation of the license.

COIN OPERATED AMUSEMENT MACHINE LOCATION SWEEP AND MASTER PUSH CALENDAR



JULY-DEC 2025



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

*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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