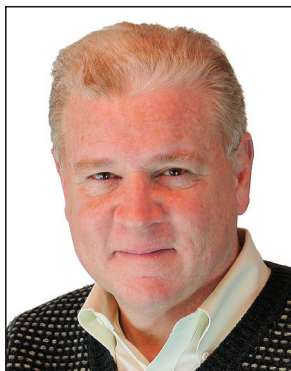


The Trade Show Season Is Here!



George McAuliffe

You can read about it and get an overview from friends. But only by being at the trade shows will you truly understand the need to be there in person.

Fun Expo and the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) International Expo, joined for the second year by the Las Vegas Souvenir and Resort Gift Show, is set to open in Las Vegas, Nev., later this month, a “must attend” both for newer entrants to the industry and for established operations.

The seminar program starts Sept. 24 and the exhibit floor is open from Thursday, Sept. 27 through Saturday, Sept. 29. Then the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) show will be held Nov. 12-16.

Many in the industry have said they don't like the shows so close together in the fall. While I understand the desire for one less trip by attendees and one less expense line for manufacturers' trade show budgets, the system as is can provide some value.

AMOA-Fun Expo is a much more tightly focused show on games and family entertainment centers (FEC) operations. The IAAPA show is much broader extending its hub to amusement and water parks, with a truly international group of exhibitors and attendees. Products range from FECs to world-class attractions. Often, game and FEC operators will get their first look at new product at the AMOA-Fun Expo, digest what they've learned, allow more performance data to develop, and make their final buying decisions at IAAPA.

KNOWLEDGE IS PROFIT

There will be plenty of products on display in the exhibits opening Thursday to help FEC and game operators make some money. Wise operators rank knowledge, expertise, and new ideas right up there with product when it comes to profit generators.

These operators look forward to the shows as much for the seminar pro-

grams as they do for the trade show itself. The International Association of the Leisure and Entertainment Industry (IALEI: www.ialei.com) has always been about education for the industry. The association conceived and began the seminar program for Fun Expo early in the show's history. That program has developed an excellent reputation in the years since.

This year's program should set new standards of excellence. Listening to its customers, the Fun Expo Fun Academy managers have provided several “modules” of up to five hours for in depth examination of major subjects like Redemption, Group Sales and Parties, and Laser Tag.

There are another 28, 90-minute seminars on key FEC Management subjects like marketing, FEC Best Practices, Risk Management, and many others. For “developers” (those new to the FEC industry), or for established facilities with new key staff, don't miss the excellent “Rookies & Newcomers” module, a two day examination of all the issues and practices needed to operate FECs at the highest level. Phil DeAngelo, Vice President of Business Development for United Skates of America has developed this program over many years. It always receives rave reviews. Attendees can register for the show at (www.funexpo.com) and click on Fun Academy to review the entire educational program.

I'll be moderating the panel on redemption titled Redemption In Depth-the World's Greatest Interactive Redemption Learning Experience, which is scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 25, from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Redemption Plus is sponsoring the seminar along with Embed Systems, a premier supplier of debit card and redemption management systems.

The panel will include experienced operators Michael Getlan and Frank

Seninsky, and Redemption Plus Vice President Sales Doug Stokes. We'll be emphasizing interactivity to ensure that we deliver the knowledge the audience wants, but will also cover game selection, prize selection, game percentaging (payouts and markups), redemption

roughly half the price. (Attendees can see Virtual Bowling in action at Game-Works on the Las Vegas strip where it has been doing tremendous business since early in the summer). Pinnacle also worked with Brunswick on the Virtual Bowling release.

AND A LOT MORE

Parts, operating equipment, debit cards and redemption management systems, and, of course, redemption and crane merchandise will fill out the trade floor. On the Fun Expo side expect a huge variety of components and programs for FECs.

In this article I can only provide a surface look at a few products. Only by walking the exhibit floor at the shows will you be able to seek out the products for you and your customers will you get the full value. I hope to see you at the show. Come to our redemption seminar if you can or stop by and say hello; I'll be in the Redemption Plus booth throughout the show. Have fun in Vegas. ▲

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center management, layout and design issues with a comprehensive approach to the profitable operation of redemption. So plan on coming to the show a couple of days early to join the seminars (and have some fun in Vegas). The IAAPA show also has a full schedule of seminars beginning November 12.

GAMES

There will be plenty of products on display from game manufacturers. The Amusement Showcase International 2007 in the spring was noted for its optimistic crowd excited about the promise of new games and cranes on display. The Industry now has the summer season behind us during which we tested the earnings potential of those titles. At AMOA-Fun Expo we'll get another look at many of those success stories as well as new releases.

Some of the exciting product on display will include:

Benchmark Games: Benchmark will be showing its ever popular Slam-a-Winner and Wheel Deal redemption pieces as well as Greased Lightning, an innovative wall-mounted target game, and Four Jackpots and Pop for Gold.

Betson/Raw Thrills: Betson plans to unveil its Tournament System for Big Buck Hunter Pro and will be showing its driving simulator hits The Fast and the Furious DRIFT and SuperBikes.

Betson has also entered into an agreement with Brunswick and is representing Virtual Bowling, a bowling game with the look and feel of regulation bowling in half the space and at

Family Fun Companies: The company is expected to show Triple Spin, which I believe was first shown at ASI. Family fun's four-player Soccer Fortune and Basketball Fortune are top earning pieces, which we expect to see as well.

ICE Games: ICE will have its usual extensive lineup led by the hit Deal or No Deal, which debuted last spring.

LAI Games: It will be showing Super Strike, which was shown as a prototype at ASI. Super Strike is a string bowler with a basic 11-foot lane and lane extension, overhead monitors, and ticket redemption capability. Also look for Match Makers, billed as a "relationship compatibility and romance advice game," LAI Games' 21st century version of the timeless novelty genre.

Sega USA: You'll see the Initial D4 driver, the newest in the Initial D series, featuring a new card reader and player card which stores 100+ games. Sega is also expected to show Let's Go Jungle Standard version with a 32-inch monitor, a long awaited, more widely affordable version of its Let's Go Jungle attraction. Speaking of attractions, Sega will also show a two-car version of Out-run 2 Special Attraction.

Skee-Ball: Don't miss its extensive line of tried and true earners including Spin n Win, Super Shot Basketball, and, of course, Skee-Ball in several models.

Smart Industries: We expect Smart to lead with its extensive line of cranes in many sizes and configurations, an array of redemption pieces, and photo booths.

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