

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

June 18, 2009

As my term as OCMA's President comes to a close, I hope to have achieved the main goal I set; namely, to uphold and continue the proud tradition of OCMA's past presidents in leading one of the top trade associations in the country. It seems that every year our industry faces more and more challenges. Well, 2008-2009 was no different!

With the full implementation of Ohio's total smoking ban in year three, it is, by all accounts, one of the most negative issues to ever hit our industry. A recent economic impact study conducted by The Ohio State University and funded by an anti-smoking group stated there have been "no identifiable negative impacts to the smoking ban". Hello! Did any OCMA member receive a survey or receive a phone call from this survey group? What planet are they living on? The pre-ban statement of, "non-smokers will make up the difference in business if smokers don't frequent the new non-smoking establishments", did NOT happen. That is just one example of what we, as a trade association, are constantly up against.

Even though the recent past has been difficult (bad economy, government regulations, etc.) there are signs of recovery out there. During our regional meetings conducted over this past fall and winter, I was proud of the fact that I met many of you. The input we received during those meetings has assisted us in developing a strategy that will benefit each one of YOU. I thank you for attending those meetings and for continuing to be active in the association by "answering the call" when asked.

Since our last Annual Meeting, we have been very active concerning a number of issues. Some of them include:

- SB 120 (Schuler, R-Cincinnati) has been introduced which would exempt the following entities from Ohio's smoking ban: private clubs, family owned businesses with a liquor permit, outdoor patios with no temporary wall or roof requirement. Although this bill has an uphill climb, there is hope that legislators will see how a properly crafted exemption will benefit the hospitality industry by putting more people to work.
- The Ohio Lottery's Keno game has not been as successful as hoped (primarily because we were not involved in helping them secure market penetration in the bars). Furthermore, we continue to foster a working relationship with the Ohio Lottery as they plan on introducing a self-serve Keno machine this summer in bars. Current total number of Keno locations is approximately 1,100 (their goal was 2,000).
- Securing specific language in the state budget (to offset the November informal interim Attorney General opinion that stated fuel cards were not a legal prize unless they are located at a gas station) that would specifically allow "\$10 fuel cards" as a redemption prize for video games at any type of location.

(continued on next page)

- OCMA created a sample “Location Contract” that helps ensure that your accounts are protected from any type of future electronic gaming equipment being operated without your participation. If you have yet to secure your copy, please contact the OCMA Office for information on how to receive a copy.
- The Ohio General Assembly is poised to once again strengthen the state’s DUI laws (HB78) that would require first-time OVI offenders and other OVI offenders to use a certified ignition interlock device and to wear a continuous alcohol monitor if the offender tampers with or otherwise violates an ignition interlock device.
- OCMA updated our 1993 “VLT Economic Impact Study” to reflect the current economy. We have used these statistics from the University of Cincinnati to continue to educate our elected officials on our position that, “IF the state of Ohio plans on expanding gaming, the small business coin machine operators should be involved in a public-private partnership with the state.”
- OCMA’s dart and pool tournaments were a mixed bag in 2009. The dart tournament experienced a large decrease in players, while the pool tournament experienced a modest drop in attendance. This obviously had a negative impact on OCMA’s “bottom line” which we plan on addressing for both tournaments in 2010.

So, as you can see, your officers, directors and staff have spent countless hours furthering the many causes and programs that OCMA continues to promote/advance on your behalf. It is up to all of us to change the public debate when it comes to many of these issues.

Finally, I thank each of you again for your support during my two years as OCMA President. It has truly been an honor. And, most importantly, thanks for joining us at this 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. Your attendance here today shows your commitment to YOUR trade association. We’re certain you will continue to find value in its programs and services.

Sincerely,

*Mike*

Michael Fowler  
OCMA President