



OCMA - STRAIGHT TALK

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Coin-Op: America's Largest Invisible Industry

**By Sean Richards
OCMA President**

According to a recent report published in "Play Meter" magazine, our industry generated \$8.8 billion dollars in 2004, serving close to a quarter million locations with almost 2 million pieces of equipment. Yet, our industry is largely unknown to a sizeable portion of society.

Well known author (and former Harvard University President) Derek Bok said "If you think education is expensive, try ignorance." If we continue to allow the general public to remain ignorant of our industry it will be extremely expensive to all of our businesses, maybe even lethal! With every level of government having shortfalls in their current budgets, non-smoking advocates beating their drums louder and louder, and ever increasing calls for video game restrictions, we could find ourselves legislated out of business.

In order to avoid being taxed and legislated out of business we must make sure our voices are heard. How can this be accomplished? EVERY operator needs to become an active campaigner for our industry. Your participation in the OCMA is only the first step. A rapport needs to be established with your state and local government officials so that they understand what our industry contributes to Ohio's economy and the devastating effects that smoking bans, and other restrictive legislation have - and will continue to have - on our industry.

Further, if you know a fellow operator who is not a member of the OCMA you should encourage them to join, even if they are one of your competitors. The bigger our organization becomes the easier it will be to communicate our needs and protect our interests.

Albert Einstein said "Problems cannot be solved at the same level of awareness that created them." If as a group we seek to resolve the problems caused by legislation we must raise society's awareness and understanding of our industry.

SERVICE

INTEGRITY

DEPENDABILITY

The Latest Coin-Op News At Home and Across the Nation

OHIO

Cincinnati

Recently a group of area bar and restaurant owners—the Greater Cincinnati Hospitality Coalition—held a press conference to underscore the economic impact they believe a smoking ban would have on their businesses.

Fairfield

City Council is divided on whether the government should regulate a personal freedom to protect the right of the public to avoid hazardous second-hand smoke. As currently written, the Fairfield Clean Indoor Air Act (drafted by the City Law Director) prohibits smoking in “enclosed areas of public assembly” where seating for more than 10 people has been provided, unless the establishment carries a liquor license, is a retail tobacco store or is a private residence not used as a child or adult day care facility.

Violation of the act would be followed by a warning for the business owner and patron on the first offense, a \$150 fine on the second violation and a \$500 fine on the third offense.

Granville, Heath and Newark Look at Regional Ban

Granville and Heath councils have introduced proposed bans on smoking inside public places. Newark is expected to follow suit later this month.

Granville Council will host its second public hearing on February 16th, and could vote on the measure that night. Passage of the ban would affect six restaurants and bars that now allow smoking in at least part of the establishment. Five others don't allow smoking and another will join the list when the Granville Inn bans smoking in its tavern on February 11.

Heath City Council has hosted a public hearing on its proposed smoking ban, but has tabled further discussion until after the appointment of a new council member.

Newark will probably hold three public hearings on the issue as soon as the ordinance is ready according to Mayor Bain.

All three ordinances, if passed, would eliminate smoking in all indoor public places, including restaurants, bowling centers, and fraternal organizations in the communities. The three communities have agreed that legislation must be passed by all three or none will become law.

MICHIGAN

Okemos, MI

Four employees of a health care company have been fired for refusing to take a nicotine test to determine if they smoked cigarettes. The company adopted a policy that allows employees to be fired if they smoke, even if the smoking happens after business hours or at home. The company had offered its workers smoking

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cessation classes and support groups for the 15 months preceding the terminations and 18-20 of the company's 200 workers quit smoking.

Michigan Players File Suit Against I.T.

A lawsuit has been launched against Incredible Technologies by two Michigan men, alleging their **Hole-N-Win** feature violates Michigan's gambling and contest disclosure laws.

The two men are trying to stop the contests from being operated in Michigan and are also seeking monetary damages.

Scott Morrison, I.T. Marketing VP has acknowledged the suit, but for legal reasons has opted to not comment at this time.

At present, the Michigan court has not heard the case, nor made any determinations as to its merits.

KENTUCKY

Kentucky Governor Ernie Fletcher stated that he will lead a new campaign to eliminate illegal video gambling machines in the state, including VLTs, slot games and video poker in truck stops and other street locations. In citing his belief that illegal machines take millions in illicit profits each year, the Governor ordered state police and liquor control agencies to find and seize the devices. According to TV stations WKYT, Fletcher has also stated his intent to introduce new legislation designed to remove the machines.

ILLINOIS - Illinois Sees Drastic Tax Proposals

A \$200 per machine tax on coin-op music and game equipment as well as a two percent hike in the hotel tax and food and beverage tax has been introduced in Cook County (which includes Chicago and surrounding cities and villages). This is a double whammy for coin-machine operators because Chicago already has game fees that range from \$150 to \$225. Plus, there is a state license fee of \$30 per game as well as the jukebox license fee already in place.

A coalition of affected industries has been formed to contact the Cook County Commissioners and explain the devastating effect these taxes would have on the business community. The county is looking for \$125 million in tax revenues. Illinois Coin Machine Operators Association (ICOMA) Executive Director Adonna Jerman said "We think this will devastate the coin-op industry. The city of Chicago allows only four pieces of coin-op equipment in any given location (1 jukebox and 3 other pieces). If enacted it will hurt operators, distributors and manufacturers in addition to having a snowball effect on the local economy".

MINNESOTA - Smoking Ban Affects MOMA Dart Tourney

Duluth, MN city officials obtained a court injunction to evict MOMA's (Minnesota Operators of Music and Amusement) annual dart tourney from the Duluth Entertainment Convention **Continued on Page 4**

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Center after players violated the city's smoking ban. This was midway through the tournament and after Center executive Dan Russell and MOMA agreed to pay city fines so the dart players could smoke. The city council gave MOMA dart players the choice to pack up and leave or stop smoking. Since the tournament was well underway, the demands were met.

Russell had entered into a contract with MOMA that allowed the dart players to smoke at the tournament. Council's action came after a broader smoking crackdown at Duluth businesses. According to the Duluth Tribune, Russell had stated "the dart tournament is a very large piece of business for the community with a significant economic impact, and this (Jan. 13-16) is the slowest and coldest week-end of the year. Dart players are what's keeping Duluth hopping this week-end".

MOMA Executive Director Hy Sandler stated that the coin drop was expected to be greater this year with more players attending, but some left early in disgust due to Council actions. The 2006 Tourney will be held in Minneapolis.

WEST VIRGINIA - Gamblers Get Help From WVA/LVLOA

The West Virginia Amusement Operators and Limited Video Lottery Operators Association and the Problem Gamblers Help Network of West Virginia have announced they will be working together to offer assistance to those who may have a gambling addiction.

WVA and LVLOA plan to donate resources to the West Virginia Council on Problem Gambling. Over the next year the two groups will be financially supporting problem gambling outreach programs across the state. These funds will be in addition to the one million dollars already allocated to the Problem Gamblers Network of West Virginia by the Limited Video Lottery Act of 2000.

CONNECTICUT - Point & Shoot Videos May Be Banned

A bill has been introduced in the Connecticut Senate that attempts to ban the use of point-and-shoot video games in locations where coin-op games are available for children to play. The legislature had previously made an attempt to restrict access to such games but it was vetoed by the Governor.

OVERSEAS

Vienna, Austria - For the first time in its 70-year history, Vienna's Opera Ball will outlaw smoking at its annual event. The organizers, taking pity on their tobacco-addicted guests, will hand out nicotine gum and cigarette-shaped inhalers at the cloak room for those who need a nicotine fix.

Havana, Cuba - Beginning February 7th the Cuban government will ban smoking in all restaurants, except in designated areas, and cigarette machines will be removed. The law will suspend sales of cigarettes to children under the age of 16 and at stores less than 100 yards from schools. Tobacco is the island's third largest export - worth about \$200 million a year.

Tax Law Change May Affect YOUR 2004 Taxes

Businesses should be aware of a change regarding the expense deductions for certain sport utility vehicles (SUVs) placed in service after October 22, 2004. You may have heard about the "Hummer Credit". Well, that's not really a credit at all. The old law did allow a first year expenses deduction of up to \$100,000 for certain vehicles placed in service before October 23. Under the new law, however, business can now generally take a first-year deduction of no more than \$25,000 for an SUV. (The business would depreciate the remaining cost.)

Tips for a Healthy 2005

1. Get a handle on your health. Make a resolution to schedule a check-up, tests, and vaccines.
2. Improve your eating habits. Avoid fatty foods, load up on fruits and vegetables and limit your alcohol intake.
3. Get physical. Physical activity reduces your risk of heart attack and makes your heart stronger. A more active lifestyle can control your weight and blood pressure, too. Check with your doctor before starting an exercise program.
4. Know your family health history. Did your father or mother die of a heart attack or suffer from heart disease? If so, you are more likely to be at risk and should be aware of how to control risk factors.
5. Know your body. What is your blood pressure? What is your cholesterol level? Make sure these indicators are within the normal limits. If not, take the appropriate action to get these within healthier levels.
6. Have your blood sugar tested. Diabetes and increased blood sugar can be a factor in the onset of heart disease, especially if you are 50-100 pounds overweight. Talk to your doctor.
7. Manage stress and keep your cool. List the top five things that cause you stress. There should be some stressors on your list that you can change. Choose one or two things to work on.
8. Take Time out for yourself every day. Relax for 15 minutes or more a day throughout the year. Time alone can help clarify your thoughts and invigorate your sense of self.

2005 Membership Roll of Honor Report #3



Since our January issue of **Straight Talk**, no additional members have paid their 2005 Membership Dues.

We want to take this time to remind all members that **"Dues are due no later than March 31st"**. **Any members who have not paid their membership dues will not be permitted to have their teams participate in the Dart and/or Pool tournaments.**

Also, please note that all league fees must be paid prior to the start of the tournament.

IDENTITY THEFT PREVENTION FOR YOUR PC

Use passwords. Do not use automatic login features. Use a program to prompt you to change your password regularly.

Don't save important personal data on your computer. Save it to a floppy disk and keep the disk secure.

Use the latest protection software and a personal firewall to secure your PC when online.

Do not open files or click on links sent to you from people you do not know. Do not follow the advice of e-mails from sources you do not know.

If you receive unsolicited e-mails, don't reply to them requesting that your name be removed from the mailing list. Delete the e-mail, and remove it and any attachments from your deleted file storage.

Conduct transactions only with secure websites. A good indication of a secure website is the presence of the small padlock symbol.

For internet transactions, create a separate account with a low credit limit so, if the account is misused, the loss will be minimized.

Wipe your hard drive before you dispose of an old laptop or PC. Use a program that wipes your entire hard drive, making all files unrecoverable.

Don't use public computers to access your private information. Pass words, credit card numbers and

AMOA Smoking Ban Initiative Sub-Committee Update

The Sub-Committee has been gathering data on smoking ban legislation and the effects on coin machine operations. The group will make a presentation on this matter at the Council of Affiliated States Meeting in Florida (February 17-19).

As a part of this effort, AMOA has asked operators and associations to share their information with the Committee even if they were unsuccessful in their efforts to prevent bans.

Two Tribes Pursuing Cleveland Casino

Mayor Jane Campbell has already said she wants a casino in Cleveland, now, so does the Eastern Shawnee tribe. Tribe representatives met with the Mayor earlier this month for more than an hour to examine the various ways to deliver a casino to the cash-strapped city. Campbell has also met with Terry Casey, a consultant with the Oklahoma-based Eastern Shawnee tribe that is pushing to open a number of casinos statewide.

A Sandusky-area contingent, purporting links with the Wyandot tribe, has also talked to Campbell. The contingent included the Greg Hill, President of Sawmill Creek Resort in Huron. Hill stated that the contingent was trying to find out what some of the city's interests are. On the other hand, Casey pitched a tribal casino as an alternative to the Mayor's effort to land a casino by statewide referendum.

Campbell has already met a half dozen times with Cuyahoga County Commissioner Peter Lawson Jones, Joe Roman of the Greater Cleveland Partnership and Ernie Novak, board chairman of the Convention and Visitor Bureau of Greater Cleveland to discuss the idea.

Poker Players Robbed at Gunpoint

Buckeye Lake officials report that two masked robbers intruded into a Buckeye Lake poker game, demanding cash and personal belongings from the players at gunpoint. The two entered the home through a sliding glass door, and one of them flashed a small-caliber handgun. They took all of the money off the table and then demanded that everyone empty their pockets. The robbers made off with several wallets and cell phones in addition to the money. No one was injured. This was the second reported poker game robbery in the county and law enforcement is wondering if this is just the beginning based on the new popularity of poker caused by TV Texas Hold'em tournaments.

In other news, Minnesota is looking at passing legislation that would add Texas Hold'em to the list of legal card games for privately organized tournaments in that state.. For now, however, regulators are not wavering from their current hard line on Texas Hold'em tournaments.

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Mark Your Calendar

March 3-5	ASI Expo Chicago
April 1-3	OCMA Dart & Foosball Tournaments Canton Civic Center
April 21-24	OCMA Team Pool Tournament Canton Civic Center
May 26-Jun 4	VNEA Pool Tourney Las Vegas
August 11	OCMA Golf Tourney Annual Dinner Columbus
August 12	OCMA Annual Meeting Wingate Inn—Columbus
Sept. 15-17	AMOA Expo Las Vegas



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