

Tourist Attractions & Parks

WORLD'S LARGEST PUBLICATION FOR MANAGEMENT OF LEISURE FACILITIES, ATTRACTIONS, ENTERTAINMENT AND AMUSEMENT CENTERS

BUSINESS STRATEGIES

The New Year is Off to a Positive Start

Two thousand and nine ended with a very positive and upbeat IAAPA Show. Heading into the fourth quarter, expectations for the IAAPA Show in Las Vegas were low, but everything fell into place at the right time and expectations were exceeded. Two weeks before IAAPA, Las Vegas hotel rates dropped and airlines offered special deals. Many parks (including international organizations) took advantage of this opportunity and headed to IAAPA. Overlapping with the Global Gaming Expo (G2E) also helped as gaming and amusements have always worked well together. Many attendees sporting G2E

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badges could be seen wandering through the IAAPA aisles and picking up our industry magazines.

On the product side, we were happy to see Creative Works' "Lazer Frenzy" win the best new attraction award, as this attraction/coin-op game is a proven revenue generator with a very high return on investment that exceeds a 2:1 ratio (annual revenue: purchase cost). In the video game sector, "Terminator Salvation" by Raw Thrills/Betson was the center of attention. It was noted that there were less free food offerings than usual, but this was expected due to cost cutbacks in all sectors of the economy in 2009. Las Vegas is an expensive place for exhibitors, so many of the medium and small companies

bought fewer booths. The football field layout on two floors was a bit confusing. A square layout would work better the next time IAAPA is back in Las Vegas.

Most Americans feel that 2010 should be a better year than 2009 as we are entering a long-term climb back. The natural tendency is to hold back and remain cautious, but our industry suppliers are very competitive and are making deals to jumpstart our industry so we can be ahead of the curve. Christmas shopping started earlier in 2009 as retailers needed to extend the buying season. "Black Friday"

(the shopping day after Thanksgiving) had an average family spend of approximately \$324 as compared to the 2008 amount of \$352 (down about 7 percent). The good news is there were more shoppers,

so every statistic you read always has more components to take into account. Again, our take is that people are spending more on the latest electronic gadgets. This is a huge opportunity for our industry.

Merchandise dispensing machines are the top performing sector heading into 2010. For the past six months, merchandisers with high-end electronic products are among the top earning games. "The Redemption Report" for Sept.-Oct. had three merchandisers in the Top 10 earning games. The manufacturers have kept the prices reasonable (in the \$6,000 range) and games such as "Barber Cut Lite," "Winner's Cube," "Amazing Road Trip," and "Stacker"

can be placed in just about any high-trafficked area.

There are several industry shows taking place in the first quarter:

ATEI and EAG Expo take place at the same time (different locations) January 26-28 in London. This is another example of gaming and amusements overlapping.

February has three overlapping shows: NICA (food concession show) opens Monday night, February 8 in Tampa; IISF (carnival show) opens Tuesday, Feb. 9 in Gibsonton (south of Tampa); and the American Rental Association show opens on Wednesday, Feb. 10 in Orlando. One could easily visit all three shows as the cities are close by each other and that is the reason why they have been staged to overlap.

ASI/AMOA/Fun Expo takes place March 10-12 in Las Vegas.

RAAPA (Russia) takes place March 17-19 in Moscow. Russia is an emerging market for leisure entertainment.

Finally, the trend of all aspects of the leisure

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industry adding family entertainment attractions and games is continuing. Our industry has a good entry foothold and we see a huge opportunity for growth, albeit a slow, but steady growth with many caution signs to navigate. ☞

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12 Elkins Road, East Brunswick, NJ 08816
 Contact Frank Seninsky or Jerry Merola at (732) 254-3773, e-mail us at
 Fseninsky@aol.com, Profitwizz@aol.com, or visit our website at AEMLLC.com

Frank Seninsky is president of the Alpha-Omega Group of companies, which includes a consulting agency, Amusement Entertainment Management, LLC (AEM) and a nationwide revenue sharing equipment provider, Alpha-BET Entertainment; all are headquartered in East Brunswick, New Jersey. During his 38 years in the leisure entertainment industry, Seninsky has presented nearly 300 seminars and penned more than 1200 articles. He has served as president of the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) and is a past president of the International Association for the Leisure & Entertainment Industry (IALEI).

Alpha-Omega President Frank Seninsky possesses extensive business and engineering credentials. He worked toward an MBA degree at Newark College of Engineering, now New Jersey Institute of Technology, and completed a multi-year Executive Development Program under the aegis of Notre Dame University's School of Business (1986-1990). He graduated Summa Cum Laude from Stevens Institute of Technology with a B.E. in Engineering & Computers in 1971.

Contact information: Phone (732) 254-3773, Fax (732) 254-6223, e-mail: fseninsky@aol.com Website: www.AEMLLC.com

