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### 32 Year In Review

*Play Meter* compiled a history, in photos, of highlights from each issue of 2010.

### 40 Anniversary: Firestone Financial

Firestone Financial celebrates nearly half a century of service in the financial marketplace.

### 50 Redemption Formula

Jim Chapman and Richard Oltmann offer four tips for boosting your redemption income with fun ideas and promotional suggestions.

### 64 News Feature: Club Lucky

Club Lucky recently hosted its second annual Preferred Vendor Event in Wisconsin. *Play Meter* has news and photos from the event.

### 66 **Open Houses**

Open houses across the United States reported strong attendance and rising sales orders.

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### On the cover

VendEver, makers of Cotton Candy Factory, produce a product that is sweet, nostalgic, and always a favorite.



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# **EDITORIAL**



BONNIE THEARD Editor

We want to hear from you about any of the articles in this issue or topics you'd like to see. E-mail: (editorial@playmeter.net) he end of the year is a time to take stock, reflect, and plan for the future. Those reflections turn first to a high point for the industry in terms of humanitarian aid.

The industry stepped up to the plate to lend assistance following the devastating earthquake in Haiti in January. Special thanks are extended to The Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) Coin-Op Cares and the American Amusement Machine Charitable Foundation (AAMCF), which raised \$15,000; TouchTunes Interactive Networks, which raised \$50,000; David Goldfarb of Prime-Time Amusements, who traveled to Haiti to deliver medical supplies and food; and all the industry members who contributed time and funds to organizations that helped the citizens of Haiti.

Also noteworthy, a Golden Tee LIVE Players Charity Championship (PCC) raised \$75,000 for Salute Inc., a Chicago-area organization dedicated to helping our military veterans and their families. In addition, the monies raised from ads in *Play Meter's* July issue congratulating Incredible Technologies on its 25th anniversary were also donated to Salute Inc.

Another high point: the inaugural Amusement Expo, a combination of the AMOA International Expo in the fall and the Amusement Showcase International (ASI) in the spring into one big show. As AMOA President Gary Brewer said, "If we put our hearts and minds to it, there is so much we can accomplish." All the groundwork laid by AAMA and AMOA is paving the way for a highly anticipated Amusement Expo in 2011.

For a walk through 2010, turn to page 32 for our special seven-page "Year in Review" for highlights of the major events of the year.

Low points also come to mind. You know things are tough when operators start writing in the margins of the Equipment Poll ballot. From the Midwest comes: "Business is so terrible, how do you give a good score for anything?"

Then there was the operator who saved up 11 of the postage paid envelopes we include in our Equipment Poll mailing for no-cost returns, and sent back seven with old Equipment Poll ballots not filled out, plus four envelopes filled with junk mail that he/she must have received at home.

Obviously, the operator was upset about the economy and decided to vent frustration in this manner. Too bad the operator did not fill out those polls and send them in to help us compile helpful information for the industry, or send a letter to the editor.

This month in "FEC Report," columnist Alan Ramsay discusses loyalty. I have a perfect story about actions that contribute to developing loyalty. Ramsay said, "Loyal staff members and guests are like the bread and butter of a home cooked meal; they are the foundation for growth and success."

When was the last time you got something for free, totally unsolicited? When traveling from New Orleans to Chicago recently for the christening of my grandson, my evening flight was delayed, and then cancelled after the aircraft had sat on the tarmac for an hour.

Upon disembarking, passengers were told to call a customer care number to reschedule a flight. As I was dialing the number given, another announcement came: If you did not have a connecting flight, and Chicago was your destination, the flight coming in from Chicago at 10 p.m. would take on passengers and fly right back to Chicago. That meant a three-and-a-half hour wait, but it was better than going up the next day and missing so much time with the grandkids.

Long story short, I received an e-mail from the airline apologizing for the inconvenience of the delay and awarding me extra frequent flyer miles as compensation. I was speechless. What a good will gesture and excellent customer service.  $\blacktriangle$ 

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# **COVER STORY**

# The sweet life at



The international team at VendEver.

### By Bonnie Theard

hanks to VendEver LLC, fresh cotton candy can be a year-round treat. You don't have to wait for a carnival, a traveling circus, or a visit to a major theme park to indulge in this perennial favorite associated with good times.

Operators gain the extra benefit of a new revenue stream that comes with VendEver's Cotton Candy Factory because it opens new doors of opportunity for machine placement. That's a win-win situation in today's economy.

The company recently announced the launch of a program with The Pelican Group for custom designed yellow cabinet Cotton Candy Factory machines with special features to be placed in Regal Cinemas across the country.

VendEver has showcased the Cotton Candy Factory at numerous trade shows in the last year, most recently at the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) Expo in Orlando, where it was well received.

Brian Duke, President of VendEver, never tires of seeing the expressions on the faces of trade show attendees and their families as they sample the cotton candy and are pleasantly surprised to find that it is dry to the touch and consistent from one serving to the next. He said it is not uncommon for families to want to take their picture by the machine because it is unique.

In fact, that's where the company name originated: The machine vends a reliable product forever, the realization of a lofty endeavor. VendEver is a play on the word "endeavor" and coined by Duke's wife, Emi.

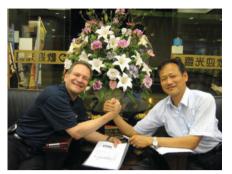
### **EXPERIENCE**

While VendEver is only one year old, the names and the experience behind VendEver and the Cotton Candy Factory are well known in the amusement industry. The Cotton Candy Factory is truly an international partnership involving Taiwan, Mexico, and the U.S.

The machine concept originated

# **COVER STORY**

"We make the Cotton Candy Factory profitable for the operator but a good purchase for consumers at a \$2 vend."



Brian Duke (I) of VendEver and Chiming Tsai of Feiloli Electronic Co. of Taiwan.



Brian Duke presents fresh cotton candy to attendees at the Amusement Expo in March.



From left: Light Chen, Ivan Ding, and Abbey Lu of Feiloli; Brian Duke and Vaughn Williamson of VendEver.



with Feiloli Electronic Co. Ltd., a manufacturing firm in Taiwan that has a long history of producing coin-op equipment. Feiloli President Chiming Tsai and his partner, I-Chiang Yang, were developing the machine long before VendEver became involved. Jose Martinez Canseco of Oportumex, a customer of Duke's and an operator of coin-op equipment in large retail locations in Mexico, saw the potential of the machine. After working with Duke, he knew he had found the ideal person to bring the product to the market.

> Duke has been in the industry for 30 years. He immediately brought fellow 30-year industry veteran Vaughn Williamson on board to serve as Vice President. VendEver recently added Sean Domino as Technical Services Manager of the company's 24/7 support. Canseco is Chairman and head of the Board of Directors of both VendEver LLC and VendEver Services Inc.

> Duke explained: "This is a coming together of skill sets, representing the best of three different worlds. Now we are reaping the benefits of all our hard work. We are moving at light speed; we're like a speedboat."

He added, "Vaughn deserves credit for implementing changes in the machine to make it appealing to both the amusement and vending sides of the industry. Jose heads the investor group. Sean brings 11 years of technical experience to the fold. Without everyone working together as a team, it would not have happened. Catina Ford, our Office Manager and my right hand, is more like a Mom to all of us. She keeps our company running smoothly in all the other areas of office management, like sales processing and administration. But her favorite line is 'Clean it Up and KEEP it clean!' Believe me, we ALL listen."

VendEver officially incorporated in January 2010 and established an office in Las Vegas with a sales staff and service and technical support. Accounting, Financial, and even Spanish speaking services for Latin America customers, headed by Mauricio Urena, are located in Mexico.

### **KEYS TO SUCCESS**

Duke attributes the success of the Cotton Candy Factory to a number of factors, not the least of which is its simplicity. "A good technician can open the machine and understand how it works without a manual," he said. "We use standard parts like optic sensors that are well known in the industry. I believe in the KISS rule: Keep it simple stupid.

"Feiloli designed the machine for simple operation. The company has made a firm commitment to the Cotton Candy Factory and has increased At the NAMA OneShow in April, (I-r): Brian Duke and Vaughn Williamson of VendEver with Jose Martinez Canseco and Dario Martinez Canseco of Opportumex.



Cotton Candy Factory units ready to ship.





Catina Ford, Office Manager.



At Feiloli headquarters in Taiwan, (I-r): Jose Martinez Canseco, Chiming Tsai, and Brian Duke.

production from original plans to now produce 500 units per month. Feiloli has customers around the world, such as United Distributing in the U.K."

Duke continued, "I have been searching for 10 years to find something that could easily go into new locations, something that would fill a void in the marketplace. I've found a machine that is a home run for operators and distributors."

The features of the machine reveal

the reason for Duke's enthusiasm: no sticky mess, simple to operate and maintain, automatic self-cleaning and climate control, electronic coin mechanism, ICT bill acceptor, and 24/7 support. The large, eight-mm tube-like paper stick provides more surface area for the cotton candy.

VendEver offers a standard model, which accepts exact change, and will introduce a deluxe model, which will have more vending capabilities including credit card acceptance, space for a hopper and changer, and the ability to add a recycler (VendEver will install a CoinCo recycler, or the operator can choose to install his own).

"This is the best thing I've been associated with in my 30-year industry career," said Duke. That's a big statement from someone associated with such memorable games as Super Mario from his tenure with Nintendo and Street Fighter II from his days with Capcom.

### **BROAD APPEAL**

According to Duke, the Cotton Candy Factory defies the normal buying cycle; it's not tied to any season: "We expect customers to continue buying the machine throughout the winter. It's refreshing to have a product that appeals to both amusement and vending operators. Our product is a hybrid and appeals to a broad market."

Cotton Candy Factory produces cotton candy in 10 flavors; the most popular are vanilla pink, blue raspberry or blueberry, and bubble gum. Fruit flavors include orange, sassy apple, lemon, grape, cherry, strawberry, and pina colada.

VendEver recommends that operators use the correct sugar in the machine, which happens to be the most economical: Walmart brand sugar, which has the perfect granular structure. A fine sugar is not suitable for the machine.

Duke said the whole key is to produce fluffy, non-sticky cotton candy.



The Feiloli and VendEver booth at the GTI Expo 2010.

Watching it being made is a really cool thing, but if the product comes out oddly shaped or tasting funny, customers are not going to come back. Our stainless steel bowl shapes the cotton candy perfectly. The spin head is pre-heated to immediately cook the sugar. The goal is to produce consistently perfect cotton candy each and every time, produced in a controlled environment.

Weight-conscious customers need not worry: The cotton candy from the Cotton Candy Factory uses only 25 grams of sugar (four teaspoons) for a finished product that is only 70 calories per serving (close to 22 grams of sugar). It's 100 percent natural with no preservatives when just using regular white sugar and compares well to some items considered to be healthy but that actually have more calories, such as granola bars, Snickers, or energy drinks.

Duke often hears people say, "I haven't had cotton candy in years and I don't remember it being like this." He replied, "That's because it wasn't like this. The beauty of the product is that VendEver has taken something that normally requires an attendant and produces a quality product that is light, fluffy, and airy, like puffed rice."

### **ON THE HORIZON**

What's new on the horizon at VendEver? Duke said, "No one wants to be a one product manufacturer, but at the same time there are so many things that can be done with the existing machine to make it even better. We're working on a variety of possibilities. We are also looking at other machines that are compatible, that vend different items or do something unique that is exciting like the Cotton Candy Factory."

Duke also said the company wants to make any improvements or changes retrofit-able; he envisions enhancements that can be added as a kit to existing machines.

One such enhancement is the MDB (multi-data bus, the vending equivalent to the JAMMA harness), which will allow for credit card acceptance or change making capability that makes it even more convenient for customers to get cotton candy. Another possibility is having advertising space on the paper stick, or customization with the name of the location.

### **CALLING CARD**

Duke said he wears his Cotton Candy Factory shirt whenever he travels. People notice it and tell him they used to love cotton candy. They are blown away by the idea of something robotic making it right before their eyes.

The way Duke sees it the Cotton Candy Factory benefits the entire coinop food chain: Distributors are looking for something appealing to sell, operators want to offer locations something different, and consumers want a good experience.

Duke said, "We make the Cotton Candy Factory profitable for the operator but a good purchase for consumers at a \$2 vend. It can go into bowling centers, movie theaters, super markets, almost anywhere."

In conclusion, Duke said, "You are only as good as your product and the support behind it. We're building for the future. We think of our customers as our partners, and their satisfaction is our priority." For more information, call (888)586-5368; Web (www. vendever.com). ▲



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# **HUGE ARCADE GAME AUCTION**

# Saturday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010



413 N. Indiana Ave Auburn, Indiana 46706 Bidding starts at 10 am, preview at 8:30 am or by appointment prior to day of sale.



This sale will feature several newly uncovered from the warehouse items that will bring lots of attention! These have been in storage for several years and just brought out for this sale. There will be several rotary merchandisers from the 20's and 30's, as well as card vendors, National KO Boxing Champs (20's), 1963 Sega Punching Bag (works), 1950 Love-O-Meter, and many more antique classics! Along with these offerings, there will be over 160 other more current video/redemption games, from 1-2 player driving sims, to 1-2 player gun games, over 25 Pinballs, plush/candy cranes, classic video's including Ms. Pac and Galaga, CD jukeboxes, including a beautiful Rowe Bubbler 100 CD, neon signs, and a nice collection of redemption equipment. Some other units will be a Shoot this-Win this. Hoop It Up, Bee Panic, Spin to Win Twin, Six-gun Select, NASCAR Deluxe Simulator, 4 Player Stock Car Challenge 2. We will also have wholesale redemption prizes and candy for purchase for your routes. A complete listing of games can be found by going to www.jerniganauctions.com or www.auctionzip.com. There will also be hotel and travel info on the Jernigan Auction site. This will also be simulcast live on www.bidspotter.com and available for you to bid that way.



### **TERMS & CONDITIONS**

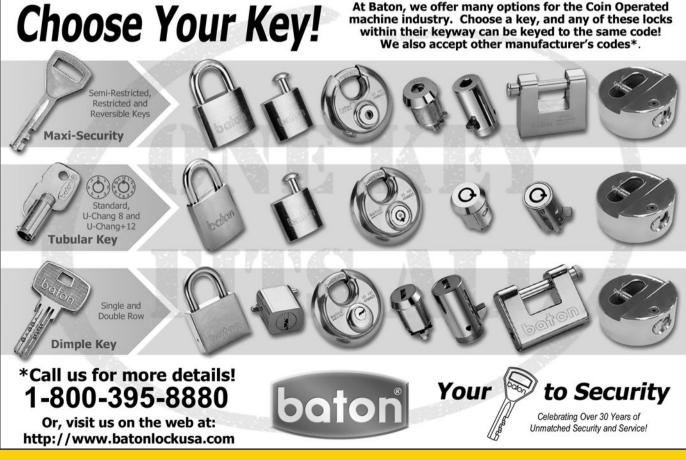
Full payment for purchases due day of auction. Cash, all major credit cards, cashier's check or business check with a current bank letter of guarantee. Sales tax will be collected IN 7% unless you provide a current copy of your sales and use tax permit. 10% buyers premium on site, 13% internet and a 3% reduction for cash payment. Inspect all equipment and games before you bid. All equipment and <sup>games</sup> sold on an as is basis, with no warranties, implied or otherwise.

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• FRIDAY, DEC. 10TH, 5-9 PM & SATURDAY, DEC. 11TH, 8-11 AM - Purchase selected games at the "BUY NOW" sticker price. No bidding - play it - purchase it - take it home now.

• **SATURDAY, DEC. 11th, DOORS OPEN AT 8 AM** - Beginning at 10 a.m., additional games and equipment will be sold at public auction to the highest bidder. At 11:30 a.m. all remaining games from the "Buy Now" sale will be sold at auction to the highest bidder.

JANUARY 8TH, 2011 - KINGSPORT, TN MEADOWVIEW CONFERENCE RESORT & CONVENTION CENTER 1901 MEADOWVIEW PARKWAY, KINGSPORT, TN 37660 MEADOWVIEW MARRIOTT— 423-578-6600

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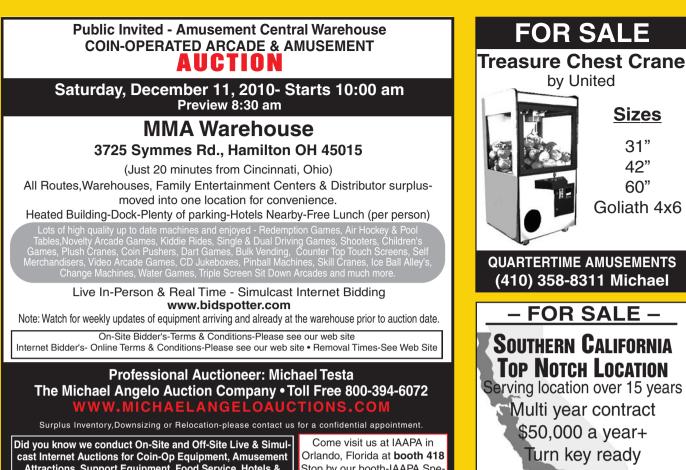
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