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EXPANSION PLAN

Tricorp Amusements Leads Gameroom Renaissance

By NICK MONTANO

The amusement business is intensifying for one of the nation's largest operating companies. Five or six years ago, Tricorp Amusements Inc. did 80% of its business in movie theaters. It was a solid business, and remains so today, in a market that serves

hundreds of theaters with some 6,000 amusement pieces in more than 20 states along the East Coast.

Today, theaters represent just 60% of Tricorp's business, as a more diverse clientele seeks to complement its main business with high-tech amusements and merchandising services. From skating rinks (ice and wheels) and bowling alleys to all kinds of recreational facilities

through new restaurants, demand for innovative amusement services appears to be on the rise. In some cases, amusement's auxiliary income is once again becoming important to a business's bottom line.

Providing good equipment, service and accountability is how Tricorp captured the movie theater business in the mid-1980s. That's what clients want now, but at a much higher level. Today's



MANAGEMENT TEAM: Chuck Peitz (center), who founded Tricorp in 1979, is joined by his new management team in the gameroom at Sahara Sam's Oasis. After two decades with Betson Enterprises, the nation's largest amusement machine

distributor, Joe Ingui (right) joined Tricorp as vice-president of new business development in late 2013. Rocky LaPenta, hired by Tricorp in 2003 as a route collector, was recently promoted to executive vice-president of operations.

clients are more demanding in what they want from an operator.

“As an outside service provider, our value goes beyond the games,” said Tricorp president and chief executive Chuck Peitz. “It’s about integrating with our client’s business.”

Integration involves the planning and design of a modern gameroom layout that makes amusement machines and merchandise a meaningful part of the location it serves. Successfully integrated, one of Tricorp’s gamerooms can often generate enough revenue to cover 30% of a client’s occupancy cost.

“We want to be a relevant component to a client’s main business,” Peitz said. “You can’t be just a ‘game guy’ any more.”

Because of its ability to invest and integrate, Tricorp has become the sought-after vendor in the emerging trampoline park sector. “Trampoline” is a growing national entertainment and fitness trend, and there are more than 200 parks now operating in the U.S. with total annual revenue of \$300 million, according to industry sources. In its market from Maine to Florida, Tricorp’s amusement programs are proving to be a practical fusion for the parks.



PLUSH PASS: Tricorp’s Joe Ingui inspects plush quality before product is loaded in machines.

“We work very closely with our clients by integrating the gamerooms within their party packages,” explained Joe Ingui, Tricorp’s executive vice-president of business development.

Ingui observed that the company has completed almost a dozen new gameroom installations in the first half of 2014. A 40-unit attraction, incorporating a debit card system, at Pennsylv-

nia’s Giggleberry Fair is the most recent, opening on Aug. 1. In July, a 3,600-sq.-ft. entertainment center with 45 games opened at Barrett’s Ale House in Fall River, MA.

At 4,800 square feet, the Thunderzone FEC in Douglasville, GA, is one Tricorp’s largest installations. It opened in June, has 60 pieces and features Tricorp’s first bumper cars ride. Thunderzone is a 60,000-sq.-ft. facility specializing in bowling and laser tag. Tricorp gamerooms at Dover Bowl (Dover, NH), Grotto Pizza (Lewes, DE) and two Launch Trampoline Parks (Harford, CT, and Norwood, MA) also opened this year.

For Ingui, two new gamerooms in West Berlin, NJ, outside Philadelphia, demonstrate how Tricorp is meeting the needs of larger amusement clients. One installation, which opened in March, is a prominent and seamless component of Sahara Sam’s Oasis, New Jersey’s only year-round indoor waterpark. Another gameroom is anchored to the adjacent Diggerland USA – a new theme park that lets kids (and adults) move some earth with real excavating equipment, modified for safety – opened on June 14.

The neighboring parks are managed



DIG IT! Diggerland USA president Ilya Girlya (second from left) looks over gameroom installation with (from left) Tricorp’s Joe Ingui, Chuck Peitz and Rocky LaPenta. The park and gameroom, called the Excavation Center Arcade, opened in June.



PRIZE CHESTS: Crane merchandise is a major, and costly, attraction in all Tricorp gamerooms. This summer, Minions from “Despicable Me” are the hot items, along with Smurfs and Sesame Street plush. Tricorp also offers a few play-till-you win machines on its arcade menu: knobby balls go for \$2 and ducks for \$1.



UNDER CONSTRUCTION: At left, one of Diggerland’s rides is pictured during the park’s final preparation period in May. At right, Tricorp’s Excavation Center Arcade is central component of the park. The arcade pavilion is 3,000 square feet.



GETTING ONLINE: Embed’s Eric Glasgow (left) and Tricorp supervisor David Stahley ready the Embed POS system at Diggerland USA.

by the Girlya family, owners of Sambe Construction & H2O Entertainment Group. Ilya Girlya, who is president and chief executive of both Sarah Sam's and Diggerland USA, said his facilities require exciting, high-energy amusement products. "Tricorp has the higher-end and extreme games we felt our locations warranted," he said.

At Sahara Sam's Oasis, named after Sambe patriarch Sam Girlya, the redemption counters are run by the location's own employees. They use Tricorp's Embed POS and card system to manage redemption transactions; Tricorp now employs Embed's multifunction payment cards for its new and best locations. For its first summer season at Sam's, the operation hired local part-timers to keep the cranes clean, filled and working, and keep an eye on all other equipment.

The indoor waterpark, which features a retractable roof, opened in 2009. It hosts some 6,000 to 7,000 guests over a summer weekend. Guest volume decreases off season, but remains steady

over the weekends.

Not unlike the Jersey Shore resorts and amusement parks, Diggerland's business is concentrated in the 12-week span between Memorial Day and Labor Day, giving Tricorp little time to work its amusement magic. The gameroom is situated in its own air-conditioned pavillion. The main attractions are merchandisers and redemption, accounting for 30% and 50% of all games, respectively. The newest videogames in deluxe, large-screen cabinets make up the remainder.

Tricorp started in 1979, when video games were booming. However, it was a difficult time for any amusement startup, especially in the Northeast where the prized tavern accounts and street locations were controlled by established operators. Chuck Peitz saw an opportunity that few operators would pursue: installing banks of 20 or more games to theaters, roller rinks and similar locations with transient customers. National Amusements, headquartered

in Dedham, MA, was the company's first theater account.

Tricorp Amusements Inc. is headquartered in Somerset, NJ, and maintains regional branches in Boston, Atlanta, Fredericksburg, VA, and Coconut Creek, FL. The company's new website can be found at tricorpamusements.com.

Tricorp's H1 2014 Installations*

- » The Alley (Oakland, MD)
- » Barrett's Ale House (Fall River, MA)
- » Burholme Golf & Family Fun Center (Philadelphia)
- » Diggerland USA (W. Berlin, NJ)
- » Dover Bowl (Dover, NH)
- » Grotto Pizza (Lewes, DE)
- » Kidz@Play (Lithonia, GA)
- » Quinnz Pinz (Middletown, NY)
- » Rebounderz Trampoline Park (Edison, NJ)
- » Sahara Sam's Oasis (W. Belin, NJ)
- » Stratosphere Trampoline Park (Wilmington, DE)
- » Thunderzone FEC (Douglasville, GA)

*Large-scale gameroom formats, most of which include a debit card system. In August, Tricorp is expected to complete installations at Sky Zone trampoline parks in Syracuse, NY, and Rochester, NY.



REDEEM HERE: The well-stocked redemption counter at Sahara Sam's Oasis is among the waterpark's top attractions.



REGULATED: At Sahara Sam's and Diggerland USA in West Berlin, NJ, Tricorp's cranes, merchandisers and ticket redemption units have been approved as "games of skill" by New Jersey's Legalized Games of Chance Division. An LGCD approval is required for the operation of skill prize games, and only at locations licensed by the state (and local government) as amusement parks.



FUN AND WORK: Pictured, from left, are Tricorp employees, and amusement enthusiasts, Tim Wright, Melchi Fuster, Kyle Urritia and Kevin Piles who helped set up Diggerland's brand new gameroom.



INTERACTIVITY: High-tech simulators are among the offerings in Sahara Sam's amusement arcade.

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