



Bob-O's in San Antonio pursued a recent game room remodel that involved opening up the space and bringing in 40 location owned-games. The FEC previously worked with a route operator, but now buys games itself.



Less Is More

Texas FEC Removes Walls To Redesign Game Room & Double Earnings

By TRACY SARRIS

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Celebrating its 10-year anniversary this past July 4th, Bob-O's Family Fun Center is a five-acre indoor/outdoor family entertainment complex located in El Paso, Texas, that grosses about \$2.2 million annually. A recent

game room remodel, coupled with a decision to buy new games directly, has doubled the facility's previous revenue.

The outdoor attractions include a wheelchair-friendly, 18-hole miniature golf course, baseball and softball batting cages, an old style western train, kiddie rides, go-karts and bumper boats.

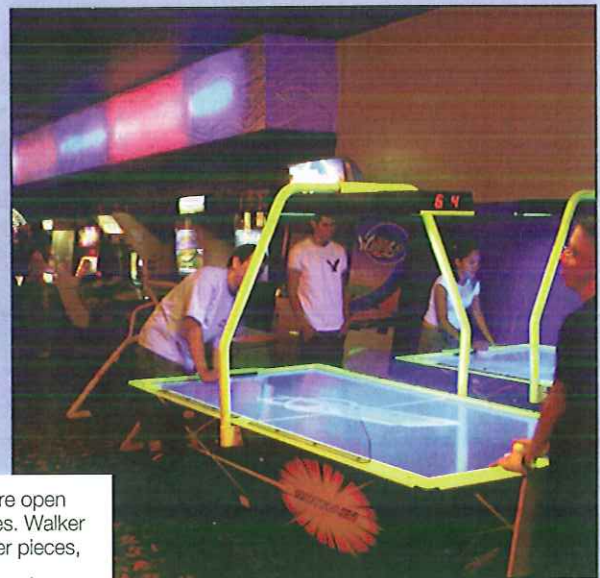
Inside the 13,000-sq.-ft. entertainment facility, patrons find a two-story laser tag arena, a 2,400-sq.-ft. game zone and

redemption prize center and a snack bar. About 1,000 guests visit the center on an average Saturday.

Owner Bobby Walker believes in the need to reinvest in his facility in order to keep it profitable and competitive in the market. New carpeting, paint, upgrading attractions and replacing parts/games as necessary have all been worthwhile investments. Walker's largest return came recently when he made the decision to re-



Before: Owner Bobby Walker agreed to a game room redesign to create a more open and brightly lit space, contrasting the previous space shown in these pictures. Walker also ended his relationship with a third party operator, and opted to bring in newer pieces, which he plans to own and service himself.





Bob-O's game zone redesign included the removal of 42 feet of walls and 98 feet of display shelving around the perimeter in order to give the area a more open feeling.



Rhode Island Novelty spent a full day reorganizing and setting up the redesigned redemption counter at Bob-O's.



Approximately 1,000 people visit the Bob-O's FEC each Saturday. The game room measures 2,400 square feet, including the redemption prize center and a snack bar.

design his game zone and directly purchased 40 new and refurbished redemption and arcade games.

"I was always hesitant to make the transition to owning my own games," explained Walker. "I didn't know if I could keep them running and if the transition would be smooth. In less than five months, due to the changes we made, the games are already paying for themselves."

Since opening, Bob-O's was set up on a revenue share basis with a local route operator who equipped the location with 48 arcade and redemption games. Unfortunately, the operator was unable to keep new or quality games in the location and this was reflected in declining game room revenues. Walker decided it was time to consider other options, which led him to Amusement Entertainment Management (AEM) and Frank Seninsky.

Walker agreed to a partial re-design of the game zone area that included the removal of 42 feet of walls and 98 feet of display shelving around the perimeter in order to give the game zone an open feel-

ing. The electrical needs were mapped out and the layout of the games was adjusted to allow guests to flow in and around the games, utilizing six different entry and exit ways. Rhode Island Novelty spent a full day reor-

ganizing and setting up the redesigned redemption counter and, after delivering and setting up the new games, the Alpha-Omega Sales (AOS) team provided the technical training on game operations and maintenance. According to Walker, the transition was very smooth and his technicians have been able to handle any challenges that arise due to the training and continued support and guidance that has been provided by Alpha-Omega.

In just two weeks after the opening of the new game zone, Bob-O's surpassed their largest collection since opening nine years earlier. In three weeks, the game revenues increased by 100 percent and have been holding strong ever since.

"Game revenues have doubled since making the suggested changes," Walker said. "Joseph Camarota and his Alpha-Omega team did a fantastic job with set-up and continue to work with us to analyze weekly ticket payouts, making sure they are not too high or too low, as well as providing unlimited service and support

whenever we need it."

When asked about any plans for future expansion or redesign, Walker commented that they are somewhat limited on space to expand or add any new attractions, although they do have some space in the game zone that they will most likely utilize for a few more pieces. He will, however, continue to upgrade and refurbish all of their attractions as needed and feels that this is the only way to keep things current and guests coming back.

"Taking the steps to owning our own games and redesigning the game zone was the best investment we could have made," Walker said in closing. "It is not always about the number of games you have in your facility, but more so the location, condition, type and variety that contribute to the whole mix. We now earn more revenue with fewer games and keep 100% of the profit."

Visit www.bobosfun.com to learn more about this family entertainment center.

Tracy Sarris is the chief marketing officer of Amusement Entertainment Management (AEM). AEM offers a full range of consulting services, including early-stage feasibility analysis, business plan development, funding assistance, and conceptual design and layout services. They assist clients with the design and development of new-age bowling venues, family entertainment centers, waterparks and amusement parks on a worldwide basis as well as "hands on" attention to employee training and technical support. For more information, log on to www.AEM.LLC.com.