

Scioto Downs Casino wins big

Scioto Downs Casino and Racetrack, Columbus, Ohio



For more than 50 years, the Scioto Downs facility in Columbus, Ohio has showcased the thrill of harness horse racing. Today, the excitement outdoors echoes inside – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week – with simulcast races from across the country, live entertainment, a choice of dining experiences, and now, a new “racino.”

Owned by MTR Gaming Group, Inc., the new 117,000-square-foot gaming center’s estimated cost totaled more than \$150 million and was built on a rapid, two-part schedule. The doors opened on June 1, 2012, just six months after the start of construction. The second phase was completed two months later in August. The facility ushered in a new era of gaming in Ohio. Scioto Downs as the first of Ohio’s racetracks to include video lottery terminals (VLTs).

Products in use

- Rockfon® Magna T-cell™

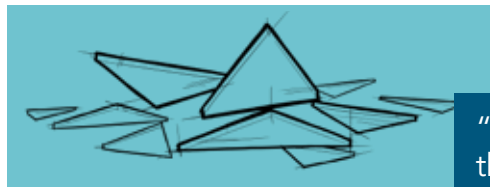
Throughout the large, newly constructed facility, ceiling systems helps focus the visitors' attention on the fun and not on the building systems and components that make the casino run smoothly. High above the games and players, the Rockfon Magna T-cell ceiling system's open cell design masks the vast stretch of ceiling with staggered elevations, while complementing the gaming area's interior finishes.

To ensure the Magna T-cell system met the building team's criteria, Rockfon's team worked with its distributor, United Building Materials, to provide a mock-up. SOSH Architects and Tandem Las Vegas approved the mock-up and Gilbane Building Company approved Valley Interior Systems as the installing contractor. In total, Valley Interior Systems installed 50,300 square feet of Magna T-cell systems.

Visual variety

"There is nothing typical about this building," emphasizes Paulynn Aguilar interior designer and project manager at Tandem Las Vegas. Tandem specializes in hospitality and gaming interior design and partnered with Scioto Downs' architect-of-record SOSH Architects.

"With 28 feet of ceiling height, we needed to create a more intimate experience for the gaming customers, while concealing the ductwork, pipes and electrical wiring," Aguilar continues. "We're from Vegas and have done a lot of these projects. With such a large volume of space to work with, you don't want just a flat ceiling and we were tired of seeing the same, standard grid systems of repeating 2-by-2 squares. We wanted to see something different, something customized."



"We were able to match the color scheme really well by finishing the Magna T-cell in a custom tan color. Although it's high in the air, you can still see that it matches the walls and décor."

She says, "We created two different custom cell patterns. The concept is based on a window pattern of larger and smaller openings. It's almost like a brick pattern. We also used layering, overlapping these custom-patterned cell unit modules, to add to the visual interest. With most ceiling systems you to pick standard finishes in white, black or some basic, neutral color. We chose a warm, creamy color that matches the finishes throughout the interior."

"We were able to match the color scheme really well by finishing the Magna T-cell in a custom tan color. Although it's high in the air, you can still see that it matches the walls and décor. The ceiling system is installed at different levels, almost like clouds, to break up the sizeable, uniform space," describes Jeremy Perchinsky, Rockfon's sales representative. "Because it's an open cell system, you can see through it, so the plumbing and electrical systems above it are painted black."

Complementing the ceiling's tan tone and accentuating the vibrancy at eye level, Tandem also selected bright colors reminiscent of racing flags and jockeys' uniforms. Aguilar elaborates, "Bright colors also help hide wear and tear, which is one reason they work well for carpets. We took our cues from Scioto Downs' racetrack facilities' American mid-century architectural style, which is very geometric and angular. We incorporated the existing chevron style of the roof into the gaming area's carpet. The carpet also provides some acoustic absorption, but in a casino, you want to hear noise and excitement." For this reason, she explains, sound control was not a performance requirement for the ceiling.



Strong performance, strong value

One of the determining priorities was the ceiling systems' load bearing capacity, notes Aguliar. "As we were deciding on the best ceiling system manufacturer, we learned that we had a weight issue. We needed a ceiling suspension system that could handle all of the speakers, cameras and lights that a space like this requires. The density of these suspended systems also varies from area to area, depending on whether we're over a gaming area or an open walkway."

According to both Tandem and SOSH, Rockfon's competitors could not provide a ceiling system to support the fixtures' weight and placement. Dan Iversen, senior project architect with SOSH, says, "[They] provided a cost-effective, modular design that supported the fixtures and matched the finishes."

"The ceiling system covers a very large area at an economical price without disturbing the mechanicals, lighting and security cameras and allowing for access to the plenum," adds Perchinsky.

Aguliar agrees, "[The Magna T-cell] system did exactly what we needed it to do. It handles the weight load. It looks good. It met the accelerated schedule and the budget conscious bottom-line. Overall, it was a good group of people working together, trying to beat a deadline."

Tight timing, close coordination

Located adjacent to the existing, historic harness-racing grandstand and facilities, the newly constructed casino's tight schedule required careful coordination with the racetrack's personnel and the many tradespeople working on site.

Gilbane Building Company managed more than 22 different subcontractors who had up to 165 people on site at any time working two shifts and six days per week. During the first phase, the construction team built the 90,000-square-foot gaming center, elaborate center bar, high limit gaming area, "grab and go" food service, retail space and back-of-house offices.

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After the first phase was completed, Valley Interior Systems built a temporary wall system between the occupied space to minimize disruption to the patrons as construction continued throughout the second phase. The second phase added 27,000 square feet to house a sports bar, 300-seat buffet, kitchen and other support services.

"The owners wanted the property opened as soon as possible," says Gilbane Building Company's Bob Fenlon. "We worked very closely together with Valley Interior Systems to manage the speed and quality of the project. After learning that the initial specified system couldn't handle any of the necessary loading elements, we were happy that [the] ceiling system did everything we needed it to do in supporting the lights, camera, diffusers, etc."

"[Rockfon's team] did an excellent job producing and delivering the material in a timely manner, which was faster and quicker than we thought. The project was extremely fast track. We had about a third of the time as would be typical for this type of job. What normally would take six months was condensed into two," says United Building Materials' Jason Krise.

The casino's first-phase timeline also meant that the majority of construction occurred during the winter months. When possible, building systems and components were fabricated and assembled in the manufacturers' and installers' shops.

"We prefabricated all of our drywall and soffits off site and put our best guys on site to install the ceiling," remembers Jeremy Turi, Valley Interior Systems' project manager. "First, they laid out the system on the floor. Then, they assembled it into the big floating pods. The ceiling elevations vary from 15 to 22 feet, so they installed all of it off of 28-foot lifts. It was a challenge to begin, but once the first pod was assembled, the next ones were much faster. We were installing the last of the ceiling system as the slots were being put on the floor. Overall, it went well."

Krise reiterates that timely shipments and staging were critical to the project's successful completion. "[Rockfon's team] sent what was needed first and followed with additional material. It worked out very well. They went above and beyond to make sure it was correct and the color matched the surroundings."



Enhanced experience, big payouts

Colorful carpet fabricated in Ireland, handcrafted lighting and marble flooring are among the casino's finishes. "We have custom bases on all the VLTs to match the wood grain on them and the color on the walls matches the machines, too," said Troy Buswell, vice president and general manager of Scioto Downs. "So guests know where aisles are, they can look to the custom ceiling and they'll feel comfortable and know where they are. It's all to enhance their experience."

"This has every bit the ambiance and feel you get when you go to Las Vegas," Scioto Downs' director of marketing, Mark Newsome, told in the Newark Advocate.

As a licensed retailer for the Ohio Lottery Commission, Scioto Downs offers more than 2,200 VLT. Similar to a video slot machine, VLTs in Ohio operate using a random number generator for games, such as Goldfish, Jackpot Party, Grease, Sex and the City, Cash Spin, Wheel of Fortune, Quick Hits, Hot Hot Penny, Tarzan, Mr. Cashman and many others.

Ohio Lottery regulations require the VLTs to pay out a minimum of 85% of the take from customers. The terminals at Scioto Downs are estimated to generate more than \$10 million in monthly revenue, of which \$3 million per month is designated for the state's K-12 education system.

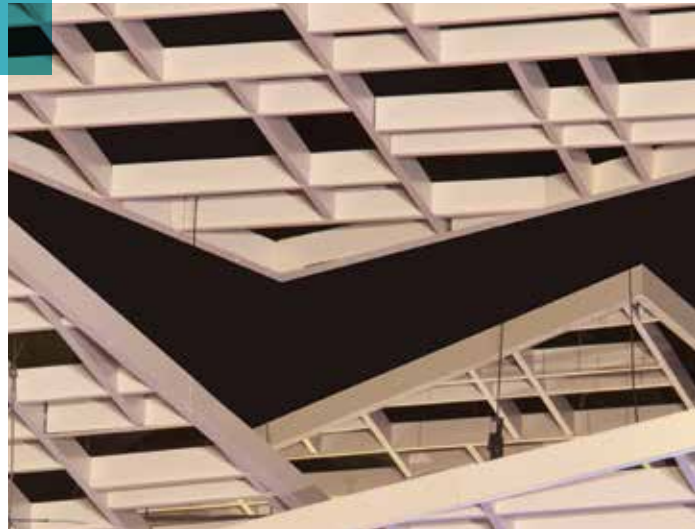
High praise

During the final week of the casino's construction, Jeffrey Dahl, MTR Gaming Group's president and CEO, praised their collaboration and skills saying: "Next week's opening of Scioto Downs will be the culmination of an extensive effort and we want to thank the design and construction crews as well as our MTR Gaming team members for completing the project on schedule and within budget."

Dahl also highlighted the economic and employment benefits to the area: "We've added approximately 700 new jobs to the community, and are keenly focused on delivering to metro

Columbus an exciting new gaming experience at Scioto Downs. This is truly an extraordinary gaming facility, of which the entire MTR team is very proud."

Pete Rose, Cincinnati Reds' Major League Baseball player and manager, and many other Columbus dignitaries joined Dahl at Scioto Downs' celebratory ribbon-cutting event in June 2012. As Scioto Downs' website states, "We're proud of our illustrious past, and looking forward to an exciting future. No other night spot in Columbus offers fine dining with the added thrill of top harness racing action right in front of you."



Facts

- All drywall and soffits were prefabricated off site
- The ceiling elevations vary from 15 to 22 feet
- The project added approximately 700 new jobs to the community

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