

### BNAE and AiSolve champion VR

BANDAI NAMCO and AiSolve took some booth space at the recent DEAL Show in Dubai to showcase their latest VR developments.

BNAE's James Anderson told *InterGame* that the decision was taken to show off the prototypes for VR driving title *Rodent Rage* and the new *We Bare Bears* game for the *We Play VR* platform to collect player and operator feedback.

"We took a booth quite late on for a couple of our new games we're really encouraged by. The *Rodent Rage* prototype was ready and, because we're looking to launch later on this year, we're looking for that all-important feedback. It's had a great response so far. The game is linkable for up to four units. Players select a character from the screen and then race through the VR woodland world on a motion base, collecting power ups and weapons as they go along. The AI software on it makes the racing close and fun. The two we had at DEAL were the only examples of the game in existence globally."

The stand also showcased AiSolve's first third-party licensed game. In Cartoon Networks' *We Bare Bears Food Truck Rush*, players become one of the bears from the hugely popular show and drive around town making different orders for people.

The slapstick cartoon humour gameplay involves cooking up food and serving as many hungry customers as possible before the clock runs out.

Players work together inside the *WePlayVR* arena to complete complex orders and avoid mishaps.



AiSolve CEO Devi Kolli, BNAE's James Anderson and Peter Lamberti, head of engineering for AiSolve, with the *Rodent Rage* prototype

### Fabyland and Xtreme Zone open at Mall of Muscat

TWO new FEC locations have been opened in the Mall of Muscat, Oman, by Saudi operating giant Al Othaim.

The latest Fabyland and Xtreme Zone venues are part of Othaim's ambitious expansion plans over the next two years and are two of the most eagerly awaited and largest entertainment destinations in the Omani capital.

At the new Mall of Muscat in the heart of the city, both leisure destinations promise to provide innovative adventure play, along with the latest equipment including video, redemption and novelty machines.

Spread over 45,000sq.ft, Fabyland has been hailed as a futuristic family entertainment destination designed to offer a wide variety of rides and games catering to children of all age groups.

The rides and attractions include a carousel, Twist and Drop, bumper cars, Race Coaster and Speedway along with mini teacups and mini tagada rides. The *Cyber Jumper* and *Wave Rider* complete the rides offering. The centre also boasts a 5D theatre along with *Happy and Family Swing*.

The expansive Xtreme Zone is spread over 30,000sq.ft and features a dedicated trampoline area spread over 15,000sq.ft, with multiple activities including a ninja course, basketball area and foam pit along with more than 50 interconnected trampoline pads. *Active Climb* is an interactive climbing zone that engages both children and adults as they scale walls.

Commenting on the launch of the facilities, Fahad Al-Othaim, vice chairman, Al-Othaim Leisure and Tourism said: "The addition of Fabyland and Xtreme Zone will uplift the entertainment quotient within the sultanate. Both entertainment centres feature a wide range of thrilling rides and attractions for all age groups that have been designed for not only extreme amusement but also dedicated to fitness and recreation."

The dedicated party rooms at both venues will facilitate a launch offer of discounted rates for school parties.

## ■ COLUMN

### The French connection

One last push should see legal change in France to open the market for redemption machines, writes Euromat president **Jason Frost**

IN the past year, Euromat has been working with its French member, AFOR, and the manufacturing industry (including Sega, BANDAI NAMCO, Elaut, Bulldog Games, Adrenaline Amusements, Andamiro, ICE, Raw Thrills and Bay Tek), to build support for an amendment to the Loi PACTE to liberalise rules for redemption machines.

Our amendment was debated on the floor of the National Assembly in March but, despite support from a number of MPs, it was rejected on technical grounds. This was due to the fact that the amendment was combined with changes to gambling laws, which the Senate and Assembly decided was not appropriate, given that redemption machines are not related to gambling, in many ways a welcome rationale for rejection.

However, the rejection of this amendment is not the end of the road for reform. Our collective efforts to get this through have created a coalition of willing MPs prepared to support a separate bill on the same subject. It was heartening in the debate that considered our amendment that there was no argument made against the essence of the proposal. The campaign has helped us to secure supporters, develop an evidence base and achieve national media coverage.

Where does this leave us? I am optimistic: there is a proposal for a bill ready and we just need to build enough support before the end of the year to ensure that the government prioritises the legislation. Changing the law in France will mean not just a new and substantial European market for

the coin-op industry but a precedent for other European countries where regulation is currently uncertain or overly restrictive. Municipal elections in May of this year are an opportunity to mobilise operators in France to send a strong message to their local politicians: relaxing rules on redemption will help to bring new jobs and economic benefits to France.

The next 12 months promises to be a busy period of political engagement and campaigning, but the industry is ready for it.

