

## DISPLAY PANEL FOR A GAMING APPARATUS

### BACKGROUND

[0001] This patent is directed to a casino gaming apparatus, which could be either an individual gaming unit or a casino gaming system having a plurality of gaming units, each gaming unit including multiple display panels made up of a single, subdivided display.

[0002] Conventional casino gaming units often included multiple display panels for displaying a variety of images. The gaming unit consisted of three separate display panels: the top glass, the bottom (or "belly") glass, and the primary display. The top glass and the belly glass were typically static images that provided game instructions, game information, images to attract players to the game, or images otherwise associated with the games that could be played on the gaming unit. The primary display has included active images that may vary as part of a player-attract sequence or as part of the game play. Mechanical moving parts were often used to display a variety of images as part of the game play. For example, in a convention slot machine, the primary display was a "reel glass" having multiple spinning reels with various images on each reel. A front panel was part of the game unit housing and included a control panel. The front panel was sometimes designed to correspond to the game of the gaming unit.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0003] In one aspect, the invention is directed to a gaming apparatus that may include a housing, a display unit capable of generating video images, a value input device, and a controller operatively coupled to the display unit and the value input device. The housing may include a first and a second opening. The display unit may be positioned relative to the housing so that a first portion of the display unit is visible through the first opening and the second portion of the display unit is visible through the second opening. The controller may comprise a processor and a memory, and may be programmed to allow a person to make a wager, to cause a first video image to be generated on the first portion of the display unit and a second video image to be generated on the second portion of the display unit, and to determine an outcome of the game and a value payout associated with the outcome of the game.

[0004] At least one of the first and second video images may represent one of the following games: video poker, video blackjack, video slots, video keno and video bingo, in which case the at least one video image may comprise an image of at least five playing cards if the game comprises video poker; the at least one video image may comprise an image of a plurality of simulated slot machine reels if the game comprises video slots; the at least one video image may comprise an image of a plurality of playing cards if the game comprises video blackjack; the at least one video image may comprise an image of a plurality of keno numbers if the game comprises video keno, and the at least one video image may comprise an image of a bingo grid if the game comprises video bingo.

[0005] The housing may include a first housing and a second housing. The housing may also include a main housing portion and a panel coupled to the main housing portion. The panel may be removably coupled to the main

housing portion. The panel may include the value input device and/or an input control panel. A transparent material may be disposed over an opening of the housing. The display unit may be a flat panel display. The first and/or second video images may represent a bonus game, a payout table, game information, game instructions and/or an attraction sequence. Also, the first and/or second video images may be a static video image and/or an active video image.

[0006] Additional aspects of the invention will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art in view of the detailed description of various embodiments, which is made with reference to the drawings, a brief description of which is provided below.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0007] FIG. 1 is a block diagram of an embodiment of a gaming system in accordance with the invention;

[0008] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of an embodiment of one of the gaming units shown schematically in FIG. 1 in accordance with the invention;

[0009] FIG. 3 is a side view of the gaming unit of FIG. 2 with a partial cutaway of the housing;

[0010] FIG. 4 illustrates an embodiment of a control panel for a gaming unit;

[0011] FIG. 5 is a block diagram of the electronic components of the gaming unit of FIG. 2;

[0012] FIG. 6 is a flowchart of an embodiment of a main routine that may be performed during operation of one or more of the gaming units;

[0013] FIG. 7 is a flowchart of an alternative embodiment of a main routine that may be performed during operation of one or more of the gaming units;

[0014] FIG. 8 is an illustration of an embodiment of a visual display that may be displayed during performance of a video poker routine of FIG. 10;

[0015] FIG. 9 is an illustration of an embodiment of a visual display that may be displayed during performance of a video blackjack routine of FIG. 11;

[0016] FIG. 10 is a flowchart of an embodiment of a video poker routine that may be performed by one or more of the gaming units;

[0017] FIG. 11 is a flowchart of an embodiment of a video blackjack routine that may be performed by one or more of the gaming units;

[0018] FIG. 12 is an illustration of an embodiment of a visual display that may be displayed during performance of a video slots routine of FIG. 14;

[0019] FIG. 13 is an illustration of an embodiment of a visual display that may be displayed during performance of a video keno routine of FIG. 15;

[0020] FIG. 14 is a flowchart of an embodiment of a slots routine that may be performed by one or more of the gaming units;

[0021] FIG. 15 is a flowchart of an embodiment of a video keno routine that may be performed by one or more of the gaming units;