

[0033] In another embodiment, the celebration graphic may be interactive in that the player can terminate the celebration graphic before the end of the graphic. Optionally, the player can mute the music or dialogue that is also presented with the celebration graphic.

[0034] In another embodiment, the celebration graphic is generic to the gaming machine. For instance, the celebration graphic may flash on the display screen, "Congratulations! You've won 10 credits!" and have a graphical depiction of floating balloons, streamers, and sound makers. The complexity of the celebration graphic increases with more graphical features and sounds for larger winning combinations. Furthermore, the duration of the celebration graphic may be longer for higher winning combinations.

[0035] In another embodiment, the celebration graphic corresponds to the theme of the game. In one example, the theme of a gaming machine is "Gold Rush." For a small winning combination, the celebration screen may show a character finding a small amount of gold. The character may then briefly dance, holler or hum a tune. For a large winning combination, the celebration graphic may show a character finding a large amount of gold, and, then the character may start singing and dancing for a longer amount of time. As those skilled in the art will appreciate, the elaborate nature of the graphic depends upon the amount of the winning outcome.

[0036] In an alternative embodiment, the celebration graphic may be based on such factors as time, date, weather, etc. For example, if a player is playing a game on July 4th, the celebration graphic presented might be fireworks. As those skilled in the art will appreciate, the firework themed graphics may vary in complexity to correspond to the win amount. Optionally, in another embodiment, the celebration graphic incorporates features of current weather conditions. For example, if the weather is raining, the celebration graphic could include an animated rainfall. Alternatively, the time of day may be incorporated into the celebration graphic. For example, in the morning, the celebration graphic could include an animated display of the sun rising.

[0037] In one embodiment, the gaming machine comprises more than one display. Referring now to FIG. 6, the gaming machine 100 comprises a first display 102 and a second display 104. In another embodiment, the first display 102 of the gaming machine 100 displays mechanical reels (not shown). The second display 104 presents a celebration graphic upon the occurrence of a winning combination. Alternatively, in one embodiment, the celebration graphics are presented only on the first display 102. In another embodiment, the celebration graphics are only presented on the second display 104. In yet another embodiment, the celebration graphics are presented on both the first and second displays 102 and 104. Optionally, in an alternate embodiment, a gaming machine may have more than two displays (not shown) and celebration graphics may be presented on any combination of the displays.

[0038] Additionally, various embodiments of the gaming machines include a microprocessor for determining whether a prize is to be awarded based upon the outcome of the game (not shown). The microprocessor also determines whether a triggering event is present to initiate the presentation of a celebration graphic.

[0039] Optionally, another embodiment provides a method for celebrating winning symbol combinations for a

game on a gaming machine. The method comprises beginning play of the game on the gaming machine. At the prompt of a user, one or more symbols are presented on a gaming machine display. Next, it is determined whether the combination of presented symbols matches predetermined winning symbol combinations. The winning symbol combinations have varying values. A memory storing a hierarchy of celebration graphics is accessed and the celebration graphic that corresponds to the value of the winning symbol combination is retrieved. The retrieved celebration graphic is then presented on the display to celebrate the winning symbol combination.

[0040] The various embodiments described above are provided by way of illustration only and should not be construed to limit the invention. Those skilled in the art will readily recognize various modifications and changes that may be made to the claimed invention without following the example embodiments and applications illustrated and described herein, and without departing from the true spirit and scope of the claimed invention, which is set forth in the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A gaming machine, comprising:

a game having one or more winning combinations of symbols, wherein the winning combinations have varying values;

a display for displaying the game; and

a memory storing a plurality of varying celebration graphics, wherein the occurrence of a winning combination triggers the presentation, on the display, of a particular celebration graphic depending upon the value of the winning combination.

2. The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the values of the one or more winning combinations are categorized into a plurality of levels, and a particular celebration graphic is associated with each level.

3. The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the varying values of the winning combinations range from a predetermined minimum value to a predetermined maximum value.

4. The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the amount of time the celebration graphic is presented on the display depends on the value of the winning combination.

5. The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the varying celebration graphics comprise animated graphics and the duration of the presented animated graphic depends on the value of the winning combination.

6. The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the presentation of the particular celebration graphic includes sound.

7. The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the plurality of celebration graphics have varying degrees of complexity that correspond to the values of the winning combinations.

8. The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein one or more of the plurality of celebration graphics is a user-interactive graphic.

9. The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein the game has a theme and the celebration graphics correspond to the theme of the game.

10. The gaming machine of claim 1, further comprising a secondary display, wherein the triggered celebration graphic is presented on the secondary display.