

with each such resizing being used and/or stored separately. Such different versions might be desirable, for example, where one gaming jurisdiction limits the minimum size of a ghost region but another does not. In such a gaming system, the sizing or resizing of visible reel symbols and/or entire reel strips can be done before or after a download from a remote host to a given gaming machine.

**[0074]** Such resizing can be done by a network component, such as at the remote host, or within an individual gaming machine. Accordingly, a simulated reel configurator may be located at the remote host, or elsewhere within the gaming system and outside of an individual gaming machine. Such a remotely located reel configurator could be beneficial to an overall system, particularly where such a system might have gaming machines that are not equipped with reel configurators themselves. For example, where it is desirable for a system gaming machine to provide a reel-type game having reels with blanks that are minimized, a reel configurator on the network could provide appropriate reel symbol resizing where the gaming machine is not equipped to do such resizing itself.

**[0075]** In some embodiments, reel configurators can be located both within individual gaming machines, as detailed above, and also on one or more system components, such as at a remote host. Whether a reel configurator is located on a system component or within a gaming machine, it is preferable that such a reel configurator be able to take an input of an existing or preset virtual reel and reconfigure that existing or preset virtual reel such that its visible reel symbols are resized into adjacent blank regions. A resultant “reconfigured” or “resized” virtual reel can then be used by one or more system gaming machines, and can also be stored for future use. Such storage might be on a system storage component, such as database **70**, and/or at a local gaming machine storage device, such as at configurator memory **146**. Thus, where a preset virtual reel or reel strip has preset dimensions for each reel stop, visible reel symbol, blank, and respective locations thereof, the reel configurator would be adapted to read these dimensions and locations, and resize the various existing visible reel strips accordingly.

**[0076]** In a particular illustrative example, an existing virtual gaming reel may have 17 reel stops, numbered sequentially. Out of these 17 reel stops, reel stop positions **4**, **7**, **11**, **13** and **16** have blank reel stops. Upon receiving the file or files for this existing virtual gaming reel, a reel configurator can automatically determine that blanks exist at the five given positions, and can then set about to reconfigure the visible reel symbols at all reel positions adjacent thereto—notably those symbols at reel stop positions **3**, **5**, **6**, **10**, **12**, **14**, **15** and **17**. As will be readily appreciated, all of the reel symbols in this example will only be resized in one direction into an adjacent blank, with the exception of the reel symbol at reel stop position **12**, which will be stretched in both directions. It will also be readily appreciated that this is only one illustrative example, and that the possible variations and combinations regarding the number of reel stops, the number of blanks and the locations of those blanks are virtually limitless. It is to be understood that the present invention contemplates the resizing of reel symbols for any and all such alternative reel configurations.

**[0077]** Turning now to FIG. **7**, an exemplary processor-based gaming machine having a multi-layer display according to one embodiment of the present invention is illustrated in partial perspective and cut-away view. Although the vari-

ous visible reel symbol resizing machines, devices, systems and methods set forth herein can be used on any type of reel-based gaming machine, it is specifically contemplated that such devices and techniques can be applied to a gaming machine having a multi-layer display, such as multi-layer display gaming machine **200**.

**[0078]** Such layered displays in a gaming machine can include those that are from or similar to, for example, that which is commercially available from Pure Depth of Redwood City, Calif. The Pure Depth technology incorporates two or more LCD displays into a physical unit, where each LCD display is separately addressable to provide separate or coordinated images between the LCDs. Many Pure Depth display systems include a high-brightened backlight, a rear image panel, such an active matrix color LCD, a diffuser, a refractor, and a front image plane; these devices are laminated to form a stack. The LCDs in these units are stacked at set distances, such as distance “D.” As well as the binocular depth cue, Pure Depth units feature intrinsic motion parallax, where the x and y distance changes between objects displayed on different video planes depending on viewing angle. In addition, separate focal planes may literally be brought in and out of focus depending on the focal length of the lens in the viewer’s eye.

**[0079]** The layered display devices **218a**, **218c**, which may be layered LCD devices, for example, may be used in a variety of manners to output games on a gaming machine. In some cases, video data and images displayed on the display devices **218a** and **218c** are positioned such that the images do not overlap (that is, the images are not superimposed). In other instances, the images overlap. It should also be appreciated that the images displayed on the display screen can fade-in fade out, pulsate, move between screens, and perform other inter-screen graphics to create additional affects, if desired. Additional layers of display devices may also be introduced, although the present description will continue with just two layered display devices for purposes of simplicity here.

**[0080]** In a specific embodiment, display devices **218a** and **218c** display co-acting or overlapping images to a person or viewer **1** looking at the display devices at a front display screen **226** and along a line-of-sight **2**. For example, front display device **218a** may display paylines in transparent portions that illuminate winning combinations of reels disposed on display device **218c**. With respect to further examples, it is again noted that external loading and changing of simulated reel games can be had with gaming machine **200**, such as described above with respect to wager-based gaming system **50**. This can permit a casino or gaming establishment to change video on each of the layered display devices, and their transparency, without physically altering the gaming machine or requiring maintenance. Thus, the number of virtual slot reels may be changed from 3 to 5 to 9, or some other number. In this case, each display device **218a**, **218c** can change the position of its viewing window for viewing of the different number of virtual slot reels. Symbols on each virtual slot reel may also be changed. Also, a pay table shown on front display device **218a** may be changed at will, in addition to changing whether a bonus or progressive game is shown on the back display device **218c**, for example. This permits the same gaming machine **200** to play new games simply by downloading data onto the machine.

**[0081]** As will be readily appreciated, the layered display devices **218a**, **218c** may be used in a wide variety of manners