

AREA 254

BRINGS FUN

TO KILLEEN, TX

with Seamless Tech Integration

By Stephanie Davis



Jim Lewis, co-founder of AREA 254 in Killeen, TX, wanted to create a business that wasn't just profitable—it had to be fun. "There's nothing more fun than a family entertainment center," he said. His vision came to life on December 26, 2023, when AREA 254 opened its doors, transforming a former trampoline park into a vibrant entertainment hub.

An hour's drive from Austin, AREA 254 has quickly become a local favorite thanks to its diverse activities. The center boasts ten lanes, a two-story laser tag arena, bumper cars, roller skating, karaoke rooms, and an arcade with over 100 games, and unique attractions like Krazy Darts. Guests can pour themselves a cold one from a self-pour beer and wine wall, which adds a modern twist to this unique entertainment experience.

"We've had an incredible response from the community," Jim shared. "People love what we've brought to the area, and it's rewarding to see families and friends come together here."

Behind the scenes, smart technology keeps the fun flowing smoothly. For Jim and his team, choosing the right partners was key to a smooth launch. After extensive research, AREA 254 opted to work with Brunswick Bowling and Intercard. "When we heard about the integration between Brunswick's Sync system and Intercard's cashless solutions, we knew we had to move forward with both," said Jim.

The center opened with six Sync kiosks—a decision that has improved operations and elevated the guest experience. "It's been a game-changer for us," Jim remarked. "Guests can do everything they need—book a lane, order food, and load a game card—all at the kiosk. That means less waiting and more playing."

The self-service approach offers a clear advantage in a fast-paced and sometimes noisy FEC like AREA 254. "It can be hard to hear at the counter when things get busy," Jim explained. "The kiosks eliminate communication issues and reduce ordering mistakes because guests can see exactly what they're getting on the screen before paying."

Staff Loves It, Too!

AREA 254's tech-forward approach is good for guests and a definite win for the staff, too. "The kiosks take care of the transactional stuff, so our team can focus on what really matters: making sure guests have an amazing time," Jim shared. The kiosks are there when needed but allow staff to focus on more pressing things instead of managing long lines."

Tips!

One tip Jim emphasized is the importance of understanding guest traffic patterns. "We've relocated our kiosks several times to find the best spots," he said. "You need to put them where your guests naturally gather."



To help guests navigate the new technology, AREA 254 uses digital signage to direct them to kiosks or counters as needed. On weekends, a dedicated greeter helps answer questions and guide visitors. "The kiosks save us enough on labor costs that we can afford to have a greeter," Jim added. "It's a small touch, but it makes guests feel welcome and sets the tone for a friendly experience."

From planning to launch, Brunswick and Intercard provided vital support to ensure the technology worked seamlessly from day one. "Sometimes working with big companies can be tough, but our experience has been excellent," said Jim. "Brunswick walked us through the best practices, and their customer service has been fantastic."

The ongoing support didn't end at installation. "Brunswick's developers even reached out afterward to see how things were going and to ask if we had any suggestions," Jim said. "It's great to work with a company always looking to improve and innovate."

A Bright Future Ahead

For Jim, the decision to invest in multiple kiosks was an easy one. "They've made life so much easier for our staff and enhanced the guest experience in ways we couldn't have imagined," he said. His advice for other operators? "Get on board with Sync kiosks. They're worth every penny."

Looking ahead, Jim is excited about what's next for AREA 254. "It's so gratifying to stand in the middle of the center, surrounded by the sounds of people laughing and having fun," he said. "This business is everything I hoped it would be—and more."

With a strong start and smart technology in place, AREA 254 is poised to become a staple in Killeen's entertainment landscape for years to come. ●