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(54) **GAMING MACHINE AND METHOD HAVING A MULTIPLE-PROGRESSIVE WHEEL COMPONENT**

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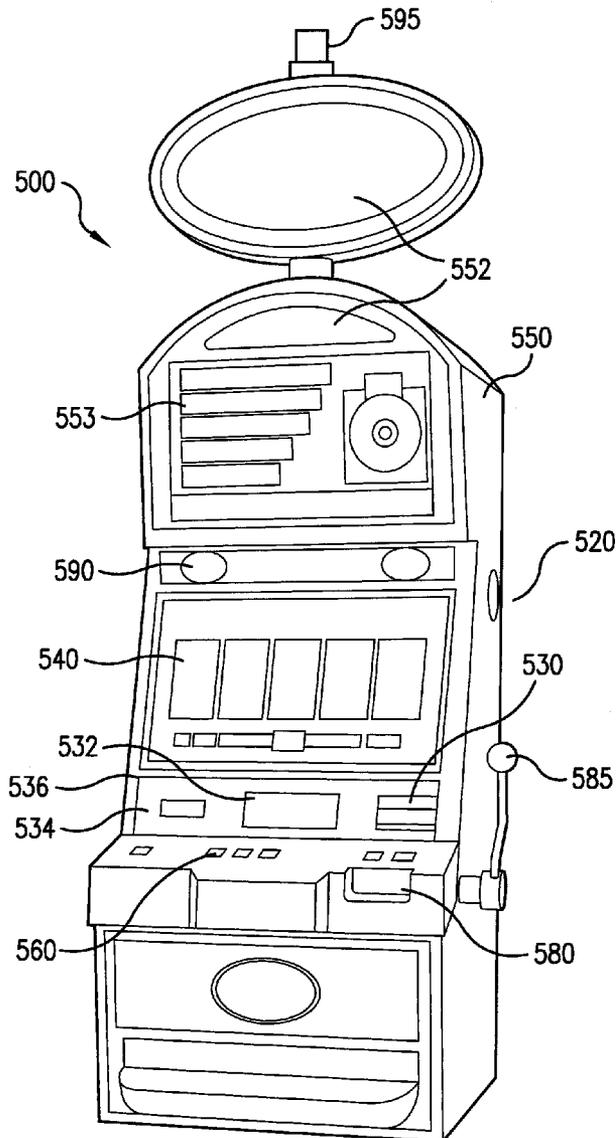
(52) **U.S. Cl.** ..... **463/20; 463/42**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

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Disclosed are a gaming machine and associated method including a multiple-progressive wheel component. A player may win more than one wheel-based progressive award during play of a single game.

(21) Appl. No.: **11/871,309**



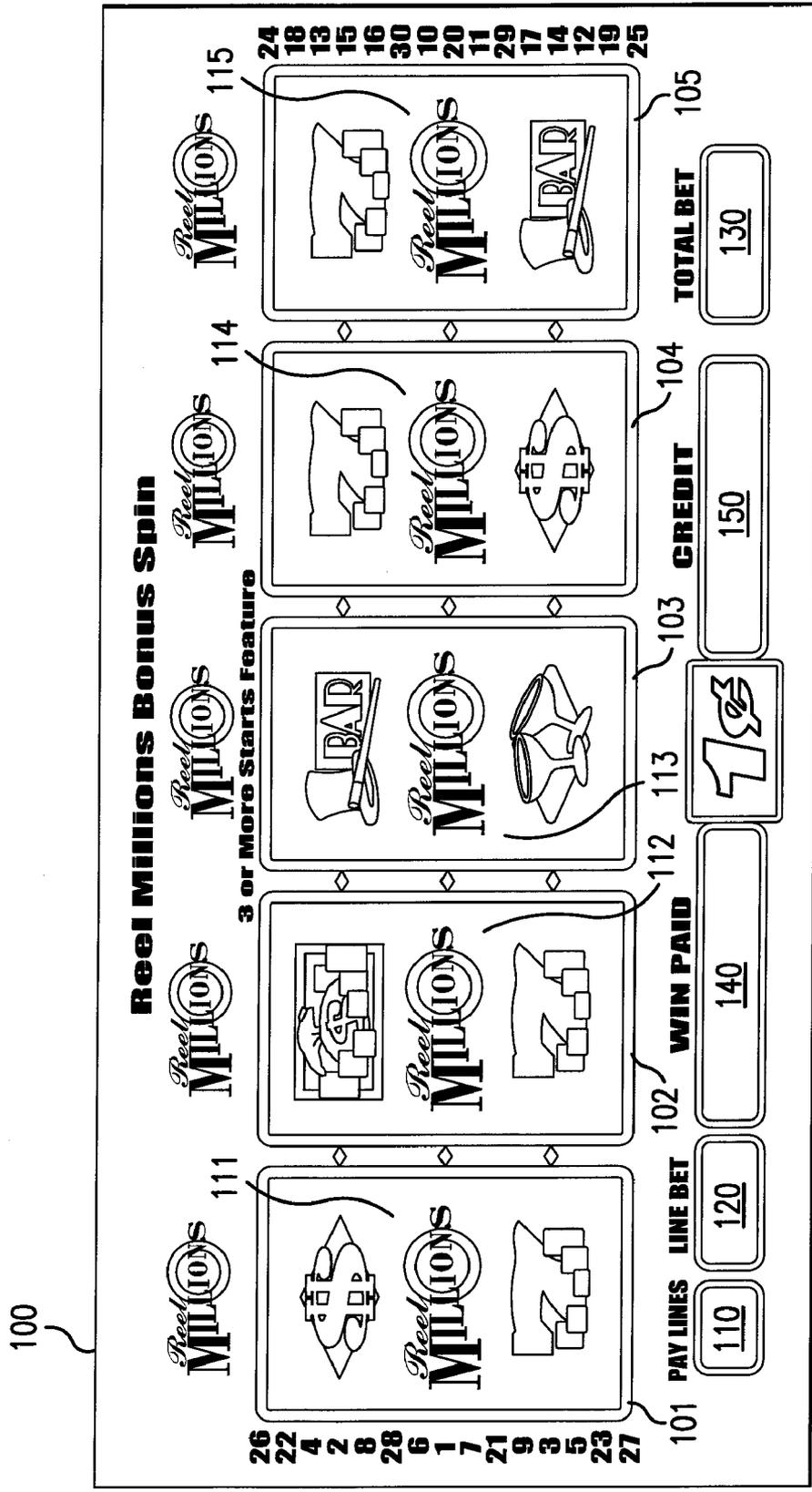


FIG. 1

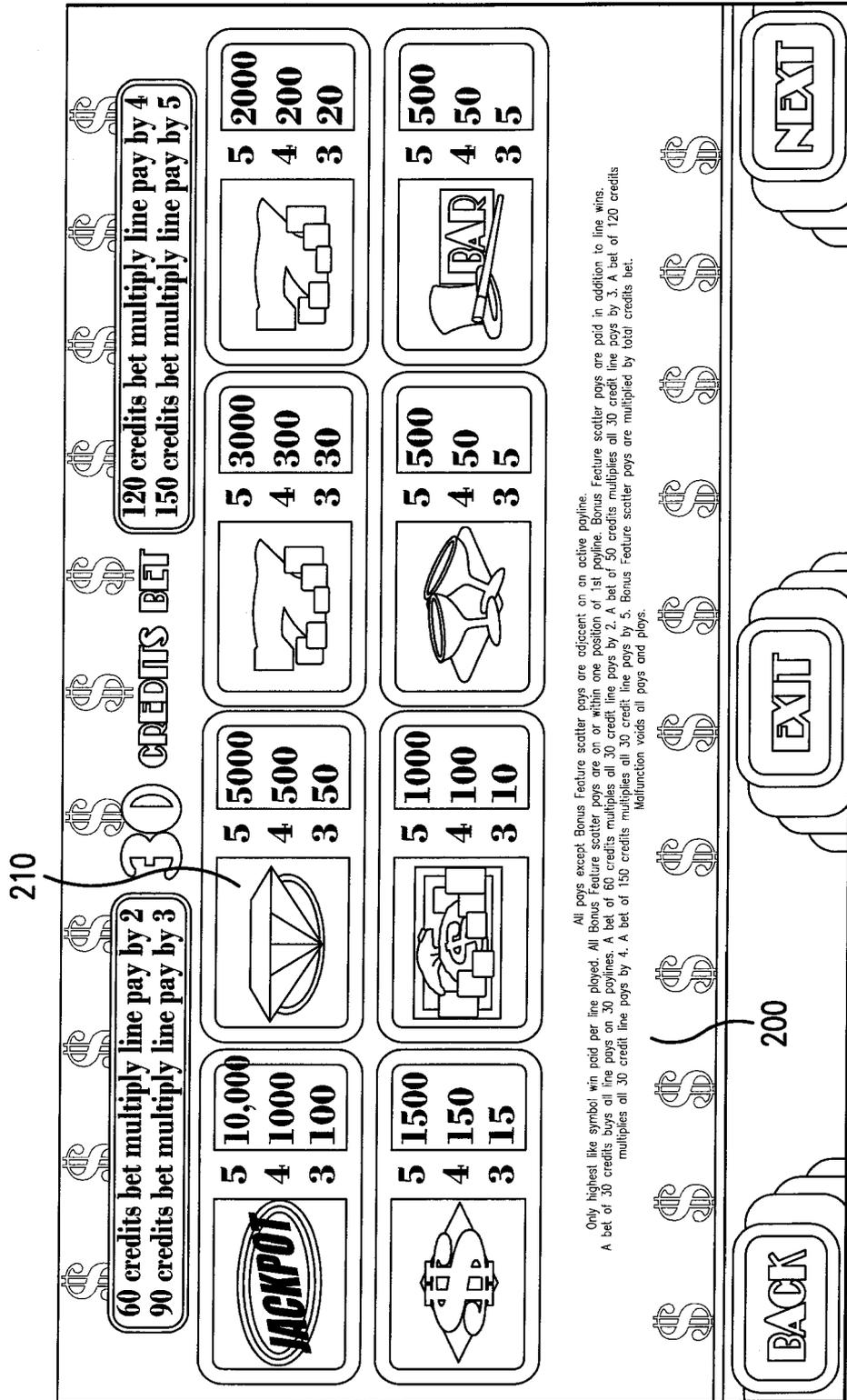


FIG. 2

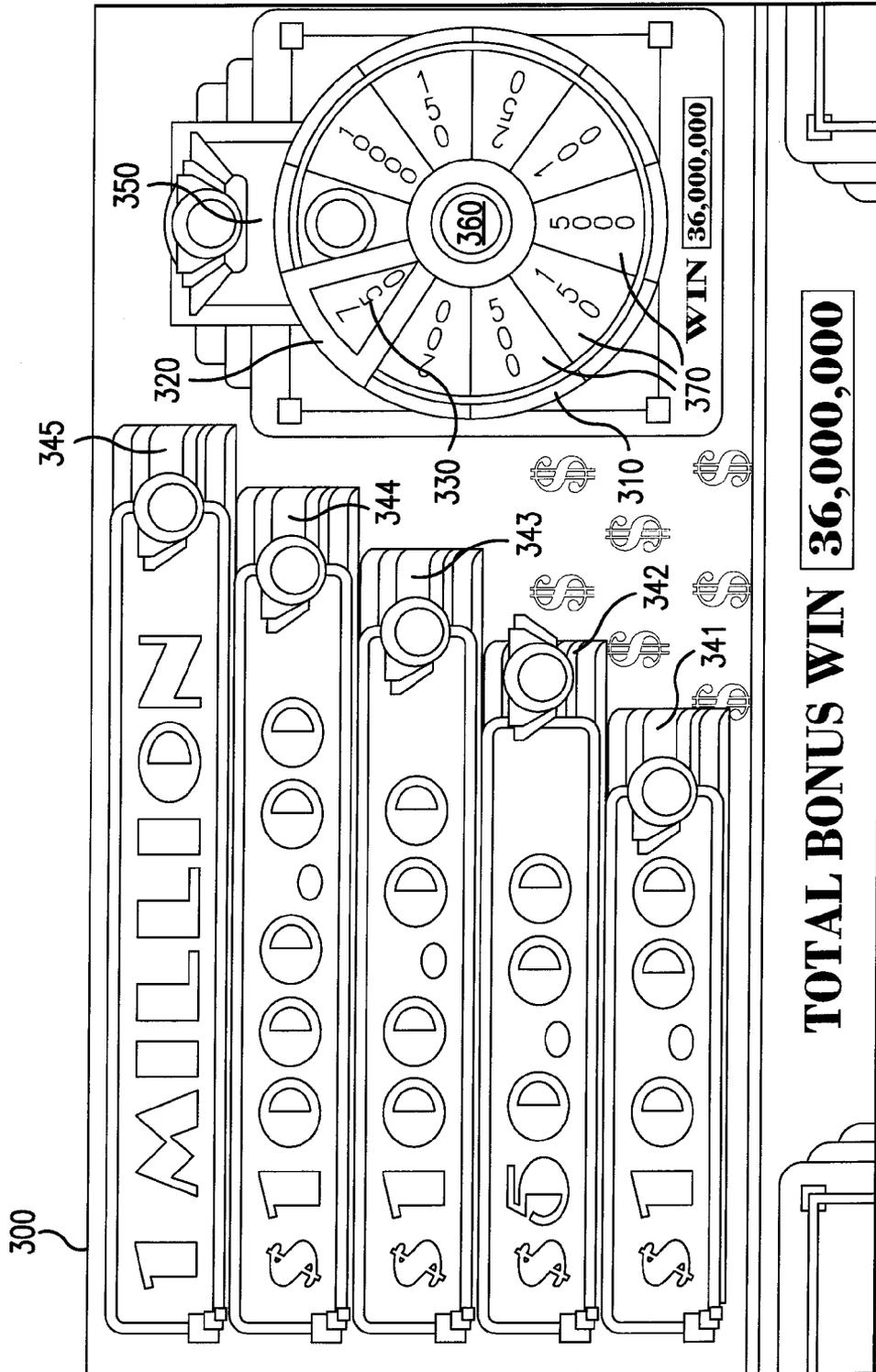


FIG. 3

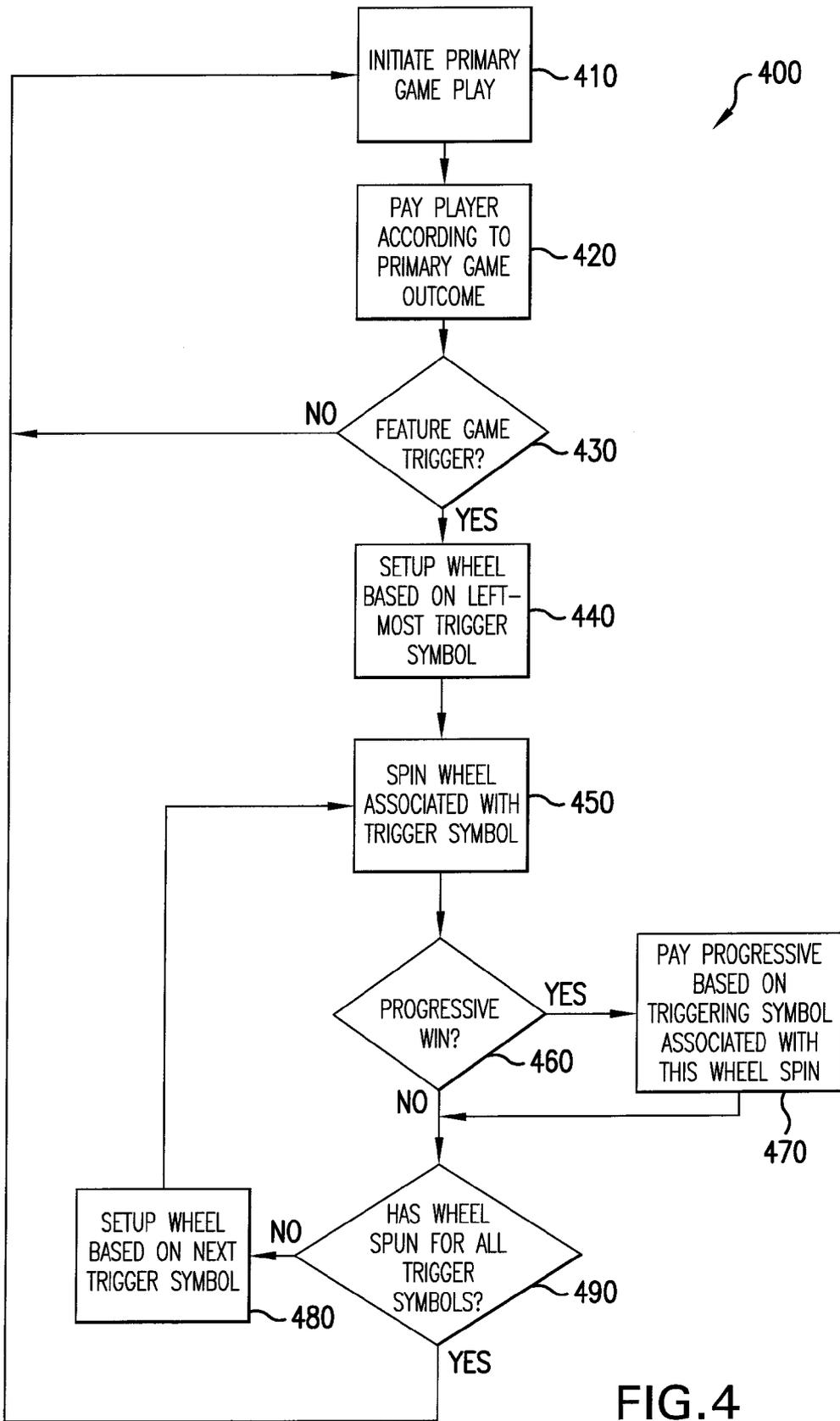


FIG. 4

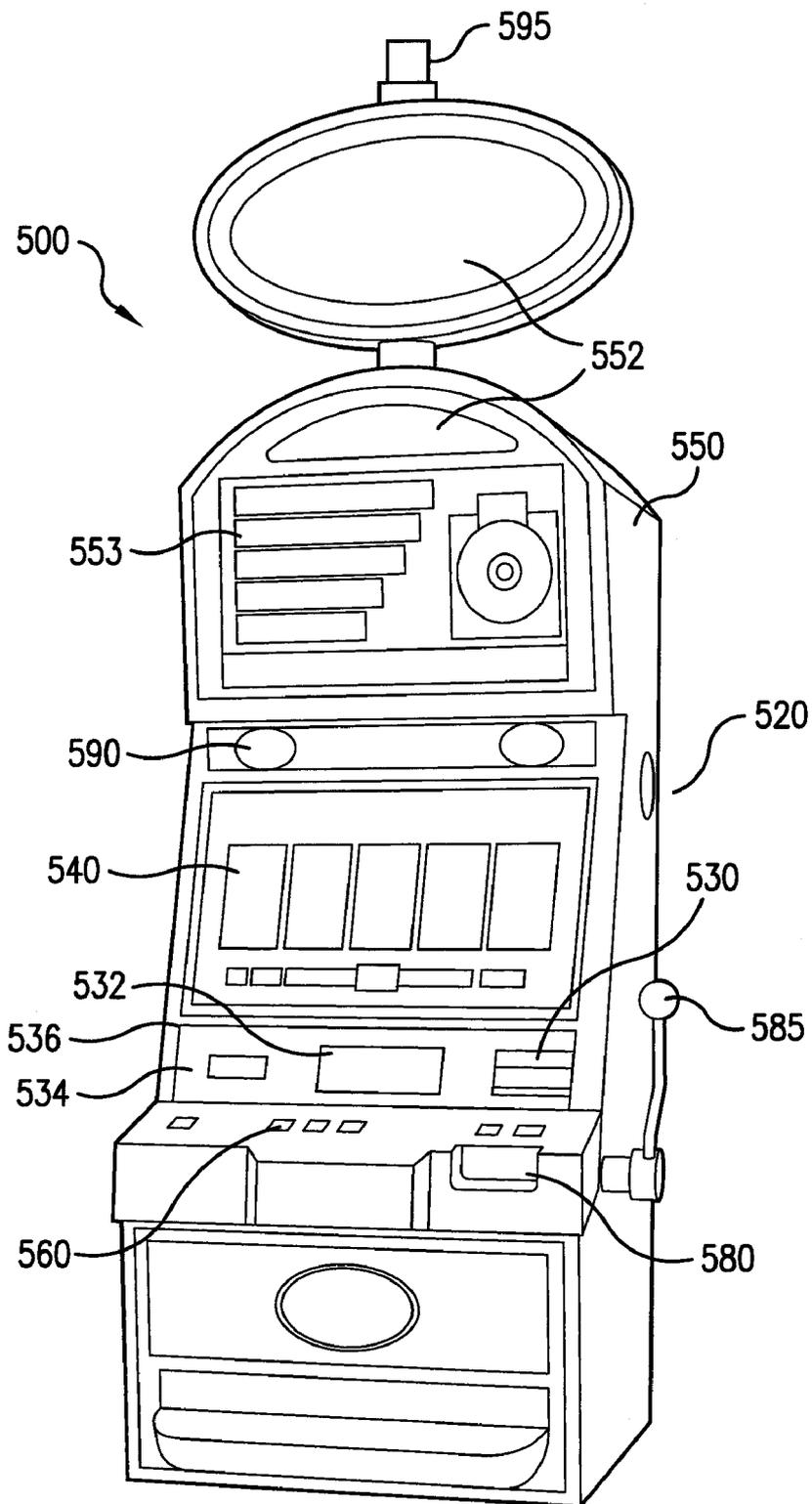


FIG. 5

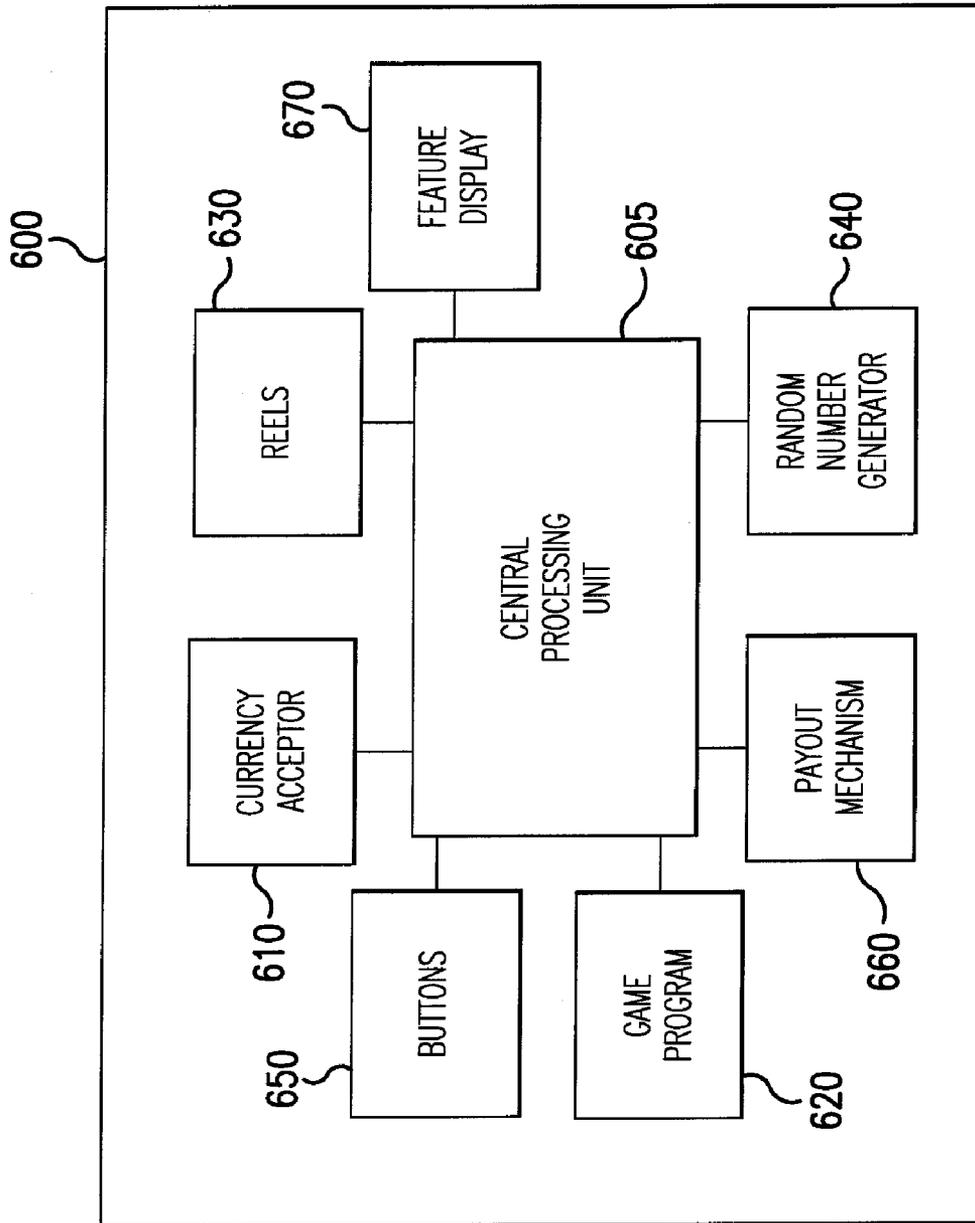


FIG. 6

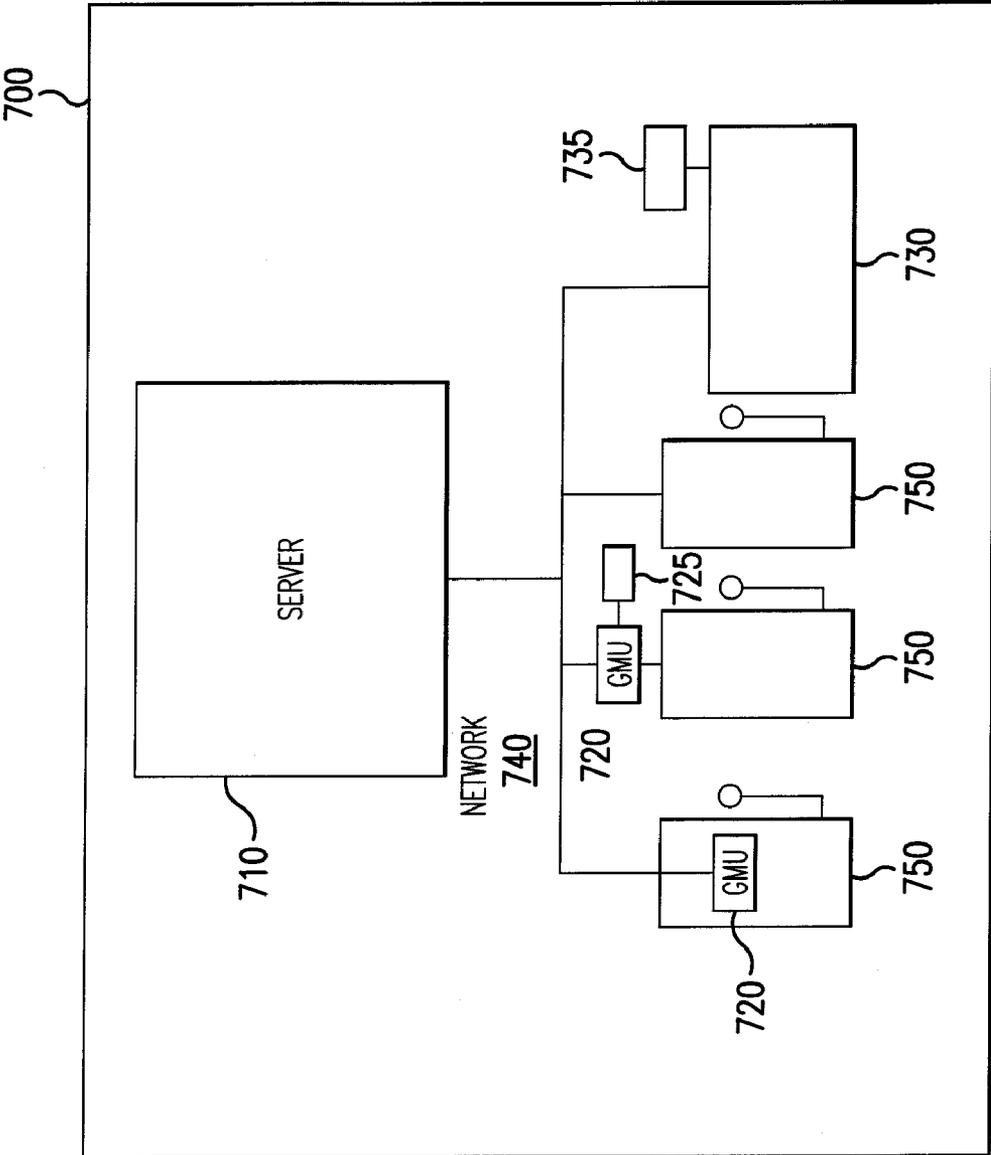


FIG.7

**GAMING MACHINE AND METHOD HAVING  
A MULTIPLE-PROGRESSIVE WHEEL  
COMPONENT**

**RELATED APPLICATIONS**

**[0001]** This application claims priority from provisional application 60/865,641 filed on Nov. 13, 2006.

**[0002]** This application is also related to U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/871,280 entitled "GAME AND METHOD HAVING A MULTIPLE PROGRESSIVE WHEEL COMPONENT," filed on Oct. 12, 2007 which claims priority from provisional application 60/865,641 filed on Nov. 13, 2006.

**[0003]** This application is also related to U.S. patent application nn/nmn,nnn entitled "NETWORKED GAMING SYSTEM AND METHOD WITH A MULTIPLE PROGRESSIVE WHEEL GAME," filed on Oct. 12, 2007 which claims priority from provisional application 60/865,641 filed on Nov. 13, 2006.

**[0004]** All of the above referenced applications are hereby incorporated by reference in their entireties for all purposes.

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**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

**[0006]** 1. Field of the Invention

**[0007]** The present invention is directed to gaming machines and methods and, more particularly, to gaming machines and methods that have a multiple-progressive wheel component.

**[0008]** 2. Description of the Related Art

**[0009]** In the prior art, various types of gaming machines have been developed with different features to captivate and maintain player interest. In general, a gaming machine allows a player to play a game in exchange for a wager. Depending on the outcome of the game, the player may be entitled to an award which is paid to the player by the gaming machine, normally in the form of currency or game credits. Gaming machines may include flashing displays, lighted displays, or sound effects to capture a player's interest in a gaming device.

**[0010]** Another important feature of maintaining player interest in a gaming machine includes providing the player with many opportunities to win awards, such as cash or prizes. For example, in some slot machines, the display windows show more than one adjacent symbol on each reel, thereby allowing for multiple-line betting. Some gaming machines offer a player the opportunity to win millions of dollars by providing progressive jackpots. Additionally, feature games of various types have been employed to reward players above the amounts normally awarded on a standard game pay schedule. Generally, such feature games are triggered by predetermined events such as one or more appearances of certain combinations of indicia in a primary game. In order to stimulate interest, feature games are typically set to occur at a gaming machine on a statistical cycle based upon the number of primary game plays.

**[0011]** While gaming machines including feature games have been very successful, there remains a need for games that provide a player with enhanced excitement and increased opportunity of winning

**SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

**[0012]** In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, a gaming machine includes a processor operatively coupled to a set of player-operable controls and a first game and a second game operable by the processor in accordance with the player-operable controls. Each game has a set of possible outcomes. Upon a triggering event, the second game, which includes a wheel, is activatable over a sequence of one or more plays to determine at least one of the set of second game outcomes. The second game includes a plurality of progressive awards. Each progressive award is associated with a separate aspect of the triggering event.

**[0013]** In accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, a method of operating a game comprising a first game and a second game includes the steps of accepting a wager from a player and initiating play of the first game according to the wager. The method further includes the steps of, upon a triggering event associated with the game, initiating play of the second game and, for each of a plurality of progressive awards, determining a second game outcome and displaying the second game outcome to the player on a display including a wheel. In the event one or more of the second game outcomes results in the winning of a progressive award, the method further comprises the steps of awarding each of the won progressive awards to the player.

**[0014]** In accordance with another embodiment of the present invention, a method of operating a game includes the steps of accepting a wager from a player and initiating play of the game according to the wager. The method further includes the steps of, for each of a plurality of progressive awards, determining a game outcome and displaying the game outcome to the player on a display comprising a wheel. In the event one or more of the game outcomes results in the winning of a progressive award, the method also includes the steps of awarding each of the won progressive awards to the player.

**[0015]** Features and advantages will become apparent from the following detailed description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, which illustrate by way of example, the features of the various embodiments.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

**[0016]** FIG. 1 provides an overview of a game of one embodiment of the invention.

**[0017]** FIG. 2 is a display image associated with a help screen of one embodiment of the invention.

**[0018]** FIG. 3 is a display image associated with a feature screen of one embodiment of the invention.

**[0019]** FIG. 4 is a functional block diagram depicting the steps associated with carrying out a method in accordance of one aspect of the invention.

**[0020]** FIG. 5 is a perspective view of a gaming machine in accordance with one aspect of the present invention.

**[0021]** FIG. 6 is a block diagram of the physical and logical components of the gaming machine of FIG. 5.

[0022] FIG. 7 is a schematic block diagram showing the hardware elements of a networked gaming system in accordance with one aspect of the present invention.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0023] Various embodiments are directed to a game and method for playing a game, wherein the game includes a multiple-progressive wheel component. Embodiments of the game and method are illustrated and described herein, by way of example only, and not by way of limitation. Referring now to the drawings, and more particularly to FIGS. 1-7, there are shown illustrative examples of a game and a method for playing a game in accordance with various aspects of the invention.

[0024] Turning now to FIG. 1, in accordance with one aspect of the invention, the Reel Millions primary game 100 is implemented using five spinning reels 101-105. Each of 20 pay line patterns (not shown) passes through one indicium on each of the five reels. The number of pay lines and their patterns are by way of example only and may vary. The player selects the number of played pay lines and the number of credits or coins wagered on each line using touch screen controls or gaming device control buttons. The player's selections are displayed on PAY LINES meter 110, LINE BET meter 120 and TOTAL BET meter 130 located adjacent to the reels. WIN PAID meter 140 and CREDIT meter 150 provide the player with information about the amount paid by the last game played and the total number of credits available for play. The player may collect the balance of his credits by pressing a COLLECT button (not shown).

[0025] The player initiates game play by pressing a SPIN button (not shown). In some embodiments, the player may simultaneously select all pay lines at the maximum number of coins or credits allowed per line by pressing a MAX BET button. Buttons (see FIG. 4, 460) on gaming machine 400 (FIG. 4) or touch screen buttons (not shown) may be used to perform the actions described here without deviating from the scope of the invention. Reels 101-105 are made to spin and stop in their predetermined stop positions and then indicate whether the stop positions of the reels resulted in a winning game outcome.

[0026] Winning outcomes may be indicated on a pay table. In accordance with one embodiment, part of a pay table 200 is shown in FIG. 2. The pay table may be accessible through a HELP/PAYS or similar button. In alternate embodiments, the pay table may be presented on a second video or printed display attached to the gaming device (i.e. display 453 or "pay glass" 452, FIG. 4). A winning combination, for example, could be three or more symbols adjacent to one another on an active pay line. For each winning combination, the game device awards the player the award in the pay table, adjusted as necessary based on the number of credits wagered on the pay line on which the win occurred. For example, three DIAMOND symbols 210 adjacent to one another from left-to-right on an active pay line would pay 50 times the player's wager. In some embodiments, video representations of pay tables may factor in the amount of the player's wager and no additional award adjustment is required.

[0027] In various embodiments, winning combinations may be evaluated across adjacent reels from left-to-right, from right-to-left or both. Additional winning combinations may be awarded when certain indicia do not necessarily accumulate adjacently on a pay line, but rather, appear anywhere on the reels (i.e., "scatter pays"). In addition, "wild" indicia

may be used to complete winning combinations. Some "wild" indicia may also cause completed winning combinations to be result in pay amounts in excess of the normal winning combination by way of multiplication or addition, for example, a wild doubler symbol may be used.

[0028] Various primary game outcomes may be utilized to trigger the play of the feature game, including, but not limited to, awarding bonus play when certain symbols appear on a pay line, when certain symbols are scattered, when no symbols of a certain type appear, when a certain winning combination occurs or, regardless of the visible symbols, at random or fixed intervals. In the Reel Millions embodiment, the appearance of three or more REEL MILLION\$ trigger symbols scattered on the reels trigger the feature game. In one embodiment, a wager of a certain amount may also be required in order to trigger the feature game. For example, the player may be required to play the maximum wager in order to be eligible. The feature game provides the player with from three to five random spins of a feature wheel pointer based on the number of REEL MILLION\$ symbols triggering the feature. In the example of FIG. 1, a REEL MILLION\$ symbol 111-115 appears on each of the reels 101-105, signifying that five spins of the pointer will occur during play of the feature game with each spin and its potential award associated with a different one of the triggering symbols. Thus, each spin of the wheel provides the opportunity for the player to win a different progressive prize. Up to five progressives may be won during play of a single feature game.

[0029] As shown in FIG. 3, game display 300 presents a wheel game comprising a video representation of a wheel 310 and a pointer 320. Wheel 310 is a fixed illustration of a wheel that includes payout indicators 330 on the face thereof. Pointer 320 is located in proximity to wheel 310 so as to rotate about the illustration of wheel 310. During play of the secondary game, pointer 320 moves in a circular motion around the central axis of stationary wheel 310 and eventually comes to a stop in front of a payout indicator 330, thereby indicating a payout on wheel 310 which the player has won. Alternatively, pointer 320 is fixed and the wheel 310 spins. Various award values are identified on the payout indicators, e.g., "1000", "150", "250", "100", "5000", "PROGRESSIVE," etc. In one embodiment, the award values are changed depending on the particular spin of the wheel and one of the progressive values 341-345 is associated with "PROGRESSIVE" payout indicator 350. In some embodiments, a separate wheel is provided for each wheel spin. For example, five wheels may be dedicated to the presentation of the secondary game, each of the five wheels associated with one of the progressive values 341-345.

[0030] Conventionally, payout indicator 330 is identified by gaming software operating on or in conjunction with the gaming machine through a random generator, such as a random number generator. The random generator assists in avoiding potential defective mechanical components that may drive an unlikely number of wins or losses. In one embodiment, prior to identifying payout indicator 330, the rate of speed of the spinning portion of the wheel is adjusted to slow down to give an illusion of a free spinning device in order to build excitement and enjoyment of the player as the moment of selection builds.

[0031] In one embodiment, game display 300 includes a stationary wheel 310 having a physical pointer 320. The pointer may or may not be illuminated. Additionally, lights (not shown) are placed about the axis of wheel 310. In this and

other similar embodiments, the lights may be selectively turned on and off to simulate a pointer until a selected payout indicator **320** is illuminated to identify the winning selection. The lights may be conventionally controlled by circuitry tied to the gaming machine processor and software. The lights may sequentially turn on and off to give the illusion of spinning or may randomly turn on and off until the selection is made in accordance with a conventional random number generator (not shown). Additionally, the lights may include a pointer light that is a different color from the other lights. For example, the lights may be blue and the pointer light may be red. The blue lights may remain on while the red light (which may be comprised of several consecutive lights) may be sequentially turned on and off to give the illusion of a spinning red light which ultimately will stop adjacent to the selected payout indicator **320**. It may further be appreciated that the lights may comprise light emitting diodes (LEDs) with red-green-blue or similar coloring which can be activated according to an algorithm or pattern to cause particular visual affects that generate excitement or entertainment to a player.

**[0032]** Optionally, in an alternate embodiment, wheel **310** in game display **300** includes a moving wheel face **360** having multiple wheel segments **370** wherein separate prize amounts are indicated on each wheel segment **370**. One or more fixed pointers (not shown) are located in proximity to wheel **310** so as to be adjacent to a unique wheel segment **370** when the wheel face is in a stationary mode, for example, at the conclusion of a wheel spin, in order to indicate a winning outcome.

**[0033]** A logical flow diagram generally depicting the steps associated with a method **400** for carrying out a game having a multiple-progressive wheel component, in accordance with one aspect of the invention, is presented in FIG. **4**. In one example implementation, a gaming program executable on a gaming processor may be prepared in accordance with conventional programming techniques and software to produced the desired affect as described by the blocks and flow paths in the flow diagram and tables below. In another example implementation, the desired effect as described by the flow diagram and tables below may be produced by utilizing an electro-mechanical apparatus, such as one using spinning reels together with a spinning wheel which may be implemented together with a random number generator configured in accordance with conventional mathematical modelling methods. The order of actions as shown in FIG. **4** is only illustrative, and should not be considered limiting. For example, the order of the actions may be changed, additional steps may be added or some steps may be removed without deviating from the scope and spirit of the invention.

**[0034]** First at block **410**, primary game play is initiated. The player places a wager and starts the game, whereby each reel then spins or displays a representation of a slot machine reel spin before stopping with particular indicia displayed to the player. A win occurs if a series of indicia (BAR, BAR, BAR, for example) appears on one or more pay lines or scattered, as described above. The player is paid for any winning symbol combinations at block **420**. At block **430**, the indicia on the reels are examined to determine the existence of a combination predetermined to be a feature game trigger. For example, three or more REEL MILLION\$ symbols appearing simultaneously on the reels may be considered a feature game trigger. Each of the trigger symbols may be associated

with a corresponding progressive award, which may be named, as shown in TABLE 1.

TABLE 1

Reel Symbol	Progressive Values	Jackpot Name
REEL MILLION\$ on Reel #5	\$1 Million	Pearl Jackpot
REEL MILLION\$ on Reel #4	\$1,000	Topaz Jackpot
REEL MILLION\$ on Reel #3	\$ 100	Ruby Jackpot
REEL MILLION\$ on Reel #2	\$ 50	Sapphire Jackpot
REEL MILLION\$ on Reel #1	\$ 10	Emerald Jackpot

**[0035]** If the displayed indicia do not correspond to a feature game trigger, for example, three or more REEL MILLION\$ symbols, processing resumes at block **410** with play of another iteration of the primary game. Otherwise, the feature game is played at blocks **440-490**.

**[0036]** At block **440**, the wheel is setup with prizes associated with the first trigger symbol. At block **450**, a random location is selected and the pointer of the wheel is then spun (or a simulated video spin occurs) and stopped at the pre-selected location with one of the prizes indicated by the pointer.

**[0037]** At block **460**, a determination is made whether the prize adjacent to the fixed pointer corresponds to a progressive award. If so, the player is awarded the progressive prize associated with the trigger symbol for this spin of the wheel at block **470**.

**[0038]** At block **470**, it is determined whether any wheel pointer spins remain to be performed. For example, at the start of the feature game, it may have been determined that three wheel spins would be performed because three triggering symbols were displayed. It will be appreciated that the number of wheel spins may vary based on the number of displayed triggering symbol or according to any other criteria. If the predetermined number of wheel spins has not been completed, flow proceeds to block **480**, where the wheel is setup with prizes associated with the next trigger symbol. For example, the amount of the progressive prize available on this spin of the wheel may be highlighted and other prize values associated with the various segments on the wheel may change. In some embodiments, the values on the wheel remain fixed from spin to spin.

**[0039]** If all wheel spins have been performed, the feature game is complete and the next primary game play is initiated at block **410**. If all wheel spins have not yet been performed, processing returns to block **450** for another cycle of wheel spin and potential progressive award payment.

**[0040]** In accordance with one embodiment, FIG. **5** illustrates a gaming machine **500** including cabinet housing **520**, primary game display **540**, player-activated buttons **560**, player tracking panel **536**, bill/voucher acceptor **580** and one or more speakers **590**. Cabinet housing **520** is a self-standing unit that is generally rectangular in shape and may be manufactured with reinforced steel or other rigid materials which are resistant to tampering and vandalism. Cabinet housing **520** houses a processor, circuitry, and software (not shown) for receiving signals from player-activated buttons **560**, operating the games, and transmitting signals to the respective displays and speakers. Any shaped cabinet may be implemented with any embodiment of gaming machine **500** so long as it provides access to a player for playing a game. For example, cabinet **520** may comprise a slant-top, bar-top, or table-top style cabinet. The operation of gaming machine **500** is described more fully below.

[0041] The plurality of player-activated buttons 560 may be used for various functions such as, but not limited to, selecting a wager denomination, selecting a game to be played, selecting a wager amount per game, initiating a game, or cashing out money from gaming machine 500. Buttons 560 function as input mechanisms and may include mechanical buttons, electromechanical buttons or touch screen buttons. Optionally, a handle 585 may be rotated by a player to initiate a game.

[0042] In other embodiments, buttons 560 may be replaced with various other input mechanisms known in the art such as, but not limited to, a touch screen system, touch pad, track ball, mouse, switches, toggle switches, or other input means used to accept player input. For example, one input means is a universal button module as disclosed in U.S. application Ser. No. 11/106,212, entitled "Universal Button Module," filed on Apr. 14, 2005, which is hereby incorporated by reference. Generally, the universal button module provides a dynamic button system adaptable for use with various games and capable of adjusting to gaming systems having frequent game changes. More particularly, the universal button module may be used in connection with playing a game on a gaming machine and may be used for such functions as selecting the number of credits to bet per hand.

[0043] Cabinet housing 520 may optionally include top box 550 which contains "top glass" 552 comprising advertising or payout information related to the game or games available on gaming machine 500. Player tracking panel 536 includes player tracking card reader 534 and player tracking display 532. Voucher printer 530 may be integrated into player tracking panel 536 or installed elsewhere in cabinet housing 520 or top box 550.

[0044] Game display 540 presents a game of chance wherein a player receives one or more outcomes from a set of potential outcomes. For example, one such game of chance is a video slot machine game, an example of which is entitled Reel Millions, described above. In other aspects of the invention, gaming machine 500 may present a video or mechanical reel slot machine, a video keno game, a lottery game, a bingo game, a Class II bingo game, a roulette game, a craps game, a blackjack game, a mechanical or video representation of a wheel game or the like.

[0045] Mechanical or video/mechanical embodiments may include game displays such as mechanical reels, one or more wheels, or dice as required to present the game to the player. In video/mechanical or pure video embodiments, game display 540 is, typically, a CRT or a flat-panel display in the form of, but not limited to, liquid crystal, plasma, electroluminescent, vacuum fluorescent, field emission, or any other type of panel display known or developed in the art. Game display 540 may be mounted in either a "portrait" or "landscape" orientation and be of standard or "widescreen" dimensions (i.e., a ratio of one dimension to another of at least 16×9). For example, a widescreen display may be 32 inches wide by 18 inches tall. A widescreen display in a "portrait" orientation may be 32 inches tall by 18 inches wide. Additionally, game display 540 preferably includes a touch screen or touch glass system (not shown) and presents player interfaces such as, but not limited to, credit meter (not shown), win meter (not shown) and touch screen buttons (not shown).

[0046] Game display 540 may also present information such as, but not limited to, player information, advertisements and casino promotions, graphic displays, news and sports updates, or even offer an alternate game. This information

may be generated through a host computer networked with gaming machine 500 on its own initiative or it may be obtained by request of the player using either one or more of the plurality of player-activated buttons 560; the game display itself, if game display 540 comprises a touch screen or similar technology; buttons (not shown) mounted about game display 540 which may permit selections such as those found on an ATM machine, where legends on the screen are associated with respective selecting buttons; or any player input device that offers the required functionality.

[0047] Cabinet housing 520 incorporates an electromechanical game display 540 comprising stepper motor-driven reels. However, in various embodiments, cabinet housing 520 or top box 550 may house one or more additional displays 553 or components used for various purposes including additional game play screens, animated "top glass," progressive meters or mechanical or electromechanical devices (not shown) such as, but not limited to, wheels, pointers or reels. The additional displays may or may not include a touch screen or touch glass system. An example of a touch glass system is disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 6,942,571, entitled "Gaming Device with Direction and Speed Control of Mechanical Reels Using Touch Screen," which is hereby incorporated by reference.

[0048] Depending upon the occurrence of a winning outcome, a celebration sequence may be displayed on display 553 or a horn or other sounds may be emitted through speakers 590. A light 595 may be flashed in order to develop a sense of fanfare around a winning player and to alert casino floor personnel that a large win has occurred so that they may congratulate the winner, notify the winner of the payout, pay the winner, and/or reset gaming machine 500.

[0049] In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, FIG. 6 is a block diagram showing the interconnection 600 of physical and logical components of gaming machine 500. Currency acceptor 610 is typically connected to a conventional central processing unit ("CPU") 505, such as an Intel Pentium microprocessor mounted on a gaming motherboard, by a serial connection such as RS-232 or USB. The gaming motherboard may be mounted with other conventional components, such as are found on conventional personal computer motherboards, and loaded with a gaming machine operating system (OS), such as an Alpha OS installed within a Bally S9000, M9000 or CineVision™ slot machine. CPU 605 executes game program 620 that causes reels 630 to display a game. In one embodiment, game program 620 is a game entitled Reel Millions.

[0050] When a player has inserted a form of currency such as, for example and without limitation, paper currency, coins or tokens, cashless tickets or vouchers, electronic funds transfers or the like into currency acceptor 610, a signal is sent to CPU 605 which, in turn, assigns an appropriate number of credits for play. The player may further control the operation of the gaming machine, for example, to select the amount to wager via electromechanical or touchscreen buttons 650. The game starts in response to the player pushing one of buttons 650 or an alternate start mechanism such as a handle or touchscreen icon (not shown). Random number generator 640 responds to instructions from CPU 605 to provide a display of randomly selected indicia on reels 630. In some embodiments, random generator 640 may be physically separate from gaming machine 500; for example, it may be part of a central determination host system (not shown) which provides random game outcomes to CPU 605. Thereafter, the player may or may not interact with the game through elec-

tromechanical or touchscreen buttons **650** to change the displayed indicia. Finally, CPU **605** under control of game program **620** compares the final display of indicia to a pay table. The set of possible game outcomes may include a subset of outcomes related to the triggering of a feature game. In the event the displayed outcome is a member of this subset, CPU **605**, under control of game program **620**, may cause feature game play to be presented on feature display **670**.

**[0051]** In one embodiment, reels **630** are electromechanical reels. Game program **600** includes reel spinning firmware to provide proper signals for driving multiple stepper motors (not shown), which, in turn, spin the reels **630**. Preferably, the motors are driven using a “full step” excitation sequence in which a single motor step is preformed by changing the excitation on one of the two-phase inputs in a specified sequence. The sequence determines whether the direction implemented is forward or reverse. The reel drive pulse trains go through three distinct stages: acceleration, steady state, and deceleration. During acceleration, reels **630** are driven with a pulse frequency that is less than the maximum “start/stop” frequency. Typically, if a motor is attempted to be started with a high frequency pulse, the motor loses synchronization and slips. Therefore, preferably the drive frequency is incrementally increased until the steady state drive frequency is reached. At steady state, reels **630** are driven for a specified number of steps at the maximum drive frequency before going to the deceleration phase. During deceleration, the process is reversed and the drive frequency decreased until the stopping frequency is reached. Preferably, this procedure helps to prevent reels **630** from slipping past the proper stop position on deceleration. Finally, at the stopping point, the motor excitation signals are held constant.

**[0052]** In one embodiment, the primary game reels are not used for the feature play; instead, a wheel or other feature display **670** is used to present the feature game outcomes. The feature display may be an electromechanical device, may present the feature on a video display or both.

**[0053]** Predetermined payout amounts for certain outcomes, including feature game outcomes, are stored as part of game program **620**. Such payout amounts are, in response to instructions from CPU **605**, provided to the player in the form of coins, credits or currency via payout mechanism **660**, which may be one or more of a credit meter, a coin hopper, a voucher printer, an electronic funds transfer protocol or any other payout means known or developed in the art.

**[0054]** In various embodiments of gaming machine **500**, game program **620** is stored in a memory device (not shown) connected to or mounted on the gaming motherboard. By way of example, but not by limitation, such memory devices include external memory devices, hard drives, CD-ROMs, DVDs, and flash memory cards. In an alternative embodiment, the game programs are stored in a remote storage device. In one embodiment, the remote storage device is housed in a remote server. The gaming machine may access the remote storage device via a network connection, including but not limited to, a local area network connection, a TCP/IP connection, a wireless connection, or any other means for operatively networking components together. Optionally, other data including graphics, sound files and other media data for use with gaming machine **500** are stored in the same or a separate memory device (not shown). Some or all of game program **620** and its associated data may be loaded from one memory device into another, for example, from flash memory to random access memory (RAM).

**[0055]** Referring to FIG. 7, in accordance with one aspect of the invention, gaming system **700** includes host computer or server **710**, gaming machines **750**, and network **740** connecting gaming machines **750** to server **710**. Additionally, gaming display computer **730** is shown connected to network **740**. Server **710** may be selected from a variety of conventionally available servers. The type of server used is generally determined by the platform and software requirements of the gaming system. Examples of suitable servers are an IBM RS6000-based server, an IBM AS/400-based server or a Microsoft Windows-based server, but it should be appreciated that any suitable server may be used. It may also be appreciated that server **710** may be configured as a single “logical” server that comprises multiple physical servers. Gaming machines **750** operate similar to conventional peripheral networked terminals. Gaming machines **750** have a player interface such as a display, a card reader, and selection buttons through which gaming machines **750** interact with a player playing a wagering game having a multiple-progressive wheel game in accordance with various embodiments of the invention. The player interface is used for making choices such as the amount of a bet or the number of lines to bet. Gaming machines **750** also provide information to server **710** concerning activity on gaming machines **750** and provide a communication portal for players with server **710**. For example, the player interface may be used for selecting different server-related menu options such as, but not limited to, transferring a specified number of credits from a player account onto the credit meter of the gaming machine, or for transferring credits from the gaming machine to a central player account.

**[0056]** In various embodiments, any of the gaming machines **750** may be a mechanical reel spinning slot machine, video slot machine, video poker machine, keno machine, video blackjack machine, or a gaming machine offering one or more of the above described primary games including a multiple-progressive wheel game. Alternately, gaming machines **750** may provide a multiple-progressive wheel game as one of a set of multiple primary games selected for play by a random number generator. Networking components (not shown) facilitate communications across network **740** between the system server **710** and game management units **720** and/or gaming display control computers **730** that control displays for carousels of gaming machines. Game management units (GMU's) **720** connect gaming machines to networking components and may be installed in the gaming machine cabinet or external to the gaming machine. The function of the GMU is similar to the function of a network interface card connected to a desktop personal computer (PC) and it may contain tracking software which provides notification to the casino of certain events on a gaming machine **750**, including wins. Depending upon the casino management system, payouts on large wins at gaming machines **750** may be made directly to a player account managed by the host computer; in which case, the player is notified by way of the GMU at gaming machine **750** that the player's account has been credited.

**[0057]** Some GMU's have much greater capability and can perform such tasks as presenting and playing a game having a multiple-progressive wheel component using a display **725** operatively connected to GMU **720**. In one embodiment, GMU **720** is a separate component located outside the gaming machine. Alternatively, in another embodiment, the GMU **720** is located within the gaming machine. Optionally, in an

alternative embodiment, one or more gaming machines **750** connect directly to the network and are not connected to a GMU **720**. Displays related to games offering a multiple-progressive wheel game on gaming machines **750** or GMU displays **725** may also be presented on gaming display **735** by gaming display control computer **730**. An example of a display control computer is disclosed in U.S. application Ser. No. 11/463,793, entitled "Reconfigurable Gaming Display and System," filed on Aug. 10, 2006, which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

**[0058]** A gaming system of the type described above also allows a plurality of games in accordance with the various embodiments of the invention to be linked under the control of server **710** for cooperative or competitive play in a particular area, carousel, casino or between casinos located in geographically separate areas.

**[0059]** One will appreciate that a gaming system may also comprise other types of components, and the above illustrations are meant only as examples and not as limitations to the types of components or games having a multiple-progressive wheel game. Additionally, it may further be appreciated that each of the games could be operated on a remote host computer such that a player initiates play with the host computer over a network via the player interface and gaming machine **750** operates the respective gaming and video displays in conjunction with the game whose play is controlled by the remote computer. In another example, the host computer provides a progressive controller which controls one or more progressive pools associated with networked games having multiple-progressive wheel games.

**[0060]** The various embodiments described above are provided by way of illustration only and should not be construed to limit the claimed invention. For example, a game in accordance with one or more aspects of the invention may be one of a set of primary games randomly selected for play following initiation of play by the player. For example, U.S. application Ser. No. 11/428,220, entitled "Multiple Primary Games Triggered by Random Number Generator," filed on Jun. 30, 2006, hereby incorporated in by reference its entirety, discloses a gaming machine including at least two distinct primary games. After receiving a wager, the gaming machine determines which primary game to activate. The selected primary game is activated and a game outcome is presented to the player on a game display. A payout may be awarded according to the game outcome. The availability of one or more of the games may be restricted based on the size of the wager. In another embodiment, a game in accordance with one or more aspects of the invention may be associated with a table game such a poker or blackjack. For example, a player may receive a chance to win a plurality of wheel-based progressives based on cards received during play of the table game, each spin of the wheel associated with one of the received cards and providing an opportunity to win a different progressive with each spin.

**[0061]** 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:

**1.** A gaming machine comprising:

a processor operatively coupled to a set of player-operable controls;

a first game and a second game operable by the processor in accordance with the player-operable controls, each game having a set of possible outcomes;

upon a triggering event, the second game comprising a first wheel activatable over a sequence of one or more plays to determine at least one of the set of second game outcomes; and

a plurality of progressive awards, each progressive award associated with a separate aspect of the triggering event.

**2.** The gaming machine of claim **1** further comprising a wager input mechanism operatively coupled to the processor, wherein play of the second game is restricted by an amount of a wager placed through the wager input mechanism.

**3.** The gaming machine of claim **1** wherein the player interacts with the second game through the player-operable controls following the occurrence of the triggering event.

**4.** The gaming machine of claim **1** wherein the first game comprises at least one of a slot machine game, a poker game, a keno game, a blackjack game, a bingo game, a roulette game and a wheel game.

**5.** The gaming machine of claim **1** further comprising a video display operatively coupled to the processor.

**6.** The gaming machine of claim **5** wherein the video display is a wide-screen display.

**7.** The gaming machine of claim **1** further comprising a cabinet enclosing the processor.

**8.** The gaming machine of claim **7** wherein the cabinet is one of a bar-top cabinet, a slant-top cabinet, an upright cabinet or a table-top cabinet.

**9.** The gaming machine of claim **1** further comprising a memory operatively coupled to the processor.

**10.** The gaming machine of claim **9** wherein the memory comprises at least one of a hard drive, a CDRom, a DVD or a flash memory.

**11.** The gaming machine of claim **1** wherein the first wheel is a video representation of a wheel.

**12.** The gaming machine of claim **1** wherein the first wheel is an electromechanical wheel.

**13.** The gaming machine of claim **1** wherein the first wheel is stationary.

**14.** The gaming machine of claim **1** wherein the first wheel is movable.

**15.** The gaming machine of claim **1** wherein the first wheel comprises a moving pointer.

**16.** The gaming machine of claim **1** wherein the first wheel comprises a stationary pointer.

**17.** The gaming machine of claim **1** further comprising a second wheel.

**18.** The gaming machine of claim **17** wherein the second wheel is stationary.

**19.** The gaming machine of claim **17** wherein the second wheel is movable.

**20.** The gaming machine of claim **17** wherein the second wheel comprises a moving pointer.

**21.** The gaming machine of claim **17** wherein the second wheel comprises a stationary pointer.

**22.** A method of operating a gaming machine played by a player, the method including the steps of:

accepting a wager from a wager-input mechanism;

initiating play of a first game according to the wager; upon a triggering event associated with the game, initiating play of a second game;

for each of a plurality of progressive awards associated with the second game, determining a second game outcome;  
displaying each second game outcome to the player on a display, the display comprising a wheel; and  
in the event one or more of the displayed second game outcomes results in the winning of a progressive award, paying each of the won progressive awards.

**23.** The method of claim **22** wherein the triggering event comprises a predefined one of a set of possible first game outcomes.

**24.** The method of claim **22** further comprising the step of restricting play of the second game based on the amount of the wager.

**25.** The method of claim **22** wherein all of the progressive awards are won during a single play of the second game.

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