

Atlantic City casino revenue on pace for worst year in two decades

By **The Associated Press**

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ATLANTIC CITY — This year is shaping up to be the worst for the Atlantic City casino industry in the last 22 years.

Figures released Wednesday by the state Division of Gaming Enforcement show the city's 12 casinos are on a pace that would see them take in less than \$3 billion from gamblers for the first time since 1991.

For the first six months of the year, the casinos won \$1.38 billion, down 10.7 percent from the same period last year.

The casinos' revenue fell 12.6 percent in June, to \$240.2 million, and every one of the casinos posted a monthly revenue decline.

Table games revenue was \$61.1 million, down 16.3 percent from a year ago, while slot revenue was \$179.1 million, down 11.2 percent from last June.

While a good performance in the prime months of July and August could still boost the industry past the \$3 billion mark by the end of the year, the first-half numbers are concerning. Last year, Atlantic City's casinos took in just over \$3 billion, down from a high of \$5.2 billion in 2006.

That was just before Pennsylvania started opening the casinos that have badly cut into Atlantic City's business.

Trump Plaza Hotel and Casino, which was struggling even before a proposed sale to a California company fell through this year, had the biggest drop, a 23.6 percent decrease to \$6.9 million for the month.

The formerly smoke-free Revel Casino-Hotel didn't get much of a bounce from its first full month of letting gamblers smoke. It was down 22.6 percent to \$11.5 million. Caesars Atlantic City was down 19.3 percent to \$25.7 million; Bally's Atlantic City was down 18.4 percent to \$21.8 million; and the Showboat Casino Hotel was down 17.7 percent to \$16.9 million.

The Trump Taj Mahal Casino Resort was down 15.1 percent to \$21.7 million; Harrah's Resort Atlantic City was down 9.5 percent to \$30.1 million; the Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa was down 8.9 percent to \$48.5 million; and the Tropicana Casino and Resort was down 5.5 percent to \$21 million.

The Golden Nugget Atlantic City was down 5.2 percent to \$10.6 million; the Atlantic Club Casino Hotel was down 4.8 percent to \$13 million; and Resorts Casino Hotel,

buoyed by its new Margaritaville complex, was down half of 1 percent for the month, to \$12 million.

The Atlantic Club is locked in a bitter battle with the parent company of the PokerStars gambling website, which had agreed to buy the casino last winter for the fire-sale price of \$15 million. The casino canceled the deal this year and has been improving its financial performance after having been nursed through the slow winter months by \$11 million in payments from The Rational Group, its would-be buyer.

PokerStars has since paired with Resorts to offer Internet gambling once it becomes legal in New Jersey this year.

"We are extremely pleased with June's performance," said Michael Frawley, the Atlantic Club's chief operating officer. "The Atlantic Club continues to significantly outperform the Atlantic City market and our prior-year profitability numbers. The 'best deal' in Atlantic City continues to resonate with our guests and our year-to-date results are clear evidence of that."

The calendar was not a friend to the casinos last month; June 2013 had one fewer Friday than did June 2012. Nor was the weather — it rained 15 out of 30 days in June.

http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2013/07/atlantic_city_casino_revenue_down_126_percent_in_june.html#incart_m-rpt-1