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By JOAN GALLER
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BENSALEM, Pa. — Parx Casino, which

opened gaming tables at the local race track last July with help from “Sex and The City” hottie “Mr. Big,” is doing “very well” and likely cutting into the profits of Atlantic City — as gambling executives in Jersey had feared.

Since actor Chris Noth — aka Big, the prime romantic interest on the hit TV series-turned-movie — [cut the ceremonial ribbon](#) , surrounded by excited female patrons, Parx Casino has succeeded in attracting more gamblers and money away from Atlantic City.

Just how much impact Parx Casino is having can't be determined from its July-November 2010 figures as posted by the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board.

Parx Casino spokesperson Carrie Nork Minelli declined to provide figures on the casino's revenues. “We don't talk about numbers, only what's reported to the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board,” she said. “We are doing very well and have been since we opened our doors a year ago, Dec. 18, 2009.”

Parx Casino started with slots machine and electronic table games and added live table games last July after state legislation was passed to allow this expansion.

Of the 10 casinos listed on the regulatory board's website, Parx tops them all with \$6.681 million gross revenues reported for November.

Conveniently located 20 minutes north of center city Philadelphia and just one hour by car from Atlantic City, Parx Casino is a 260,000-square-foot gaming and entertainment destination in Bensalem.

The gaming area covers more than 160,000 square feet and offers more than 3,500 slot machines, 57 live table games (blackjack, roulette, three-card poker, mini-baccarat and craps) and 170 electronic table games. Another 30 poker tables were added this fall in a new poker room.

The Parx Casino includes several restaurants and a sports bar. Frequent gamers can sign up for the Xclub and be rewarded with free valet parking, complimentary drink service and more.

Pennsy's casinos logged their best-ever month for gross slots revenue in July, or \$211.1 million, of which \$116 million was state taxes. Officials credited the revenue spike to the new gaming

tables, even without tallies for their total wins.

Pennsylvania began stealing Atlantic City's customers and revenues back in 2006, when the first of the Keystone State's eight slots casinos opened. Competition from gaming venues in New York and Delaware has also hurt New Jersey.

Atlantic City, long considered the nation's second major gambling mecca behind iconic Las Vegas, saw its gaming revenues peak at \$5.2 billion in 2006, but by late 2009, they had plunged to \$3.9 billion, and nearly 9,000 casino workers lost their jobs.

Figures for November provided by the New Jersey Casino Control Commission show a 12.5 percent drop compared to November 2009.

The Garden State's 11 casinos "won" \$182.2 million at the slot machines, an 11.9 percent decline, while table game revenues hit \$79.5 million, a 14 percent decrease. Over the first 11 months of 2010, Atlantic City casinos won \$3.3 billion, down 9.3 percent from the same period last year.

"The combined impact of the economy and increased competition continue to depress (Atlantic City) gaming revenues," said Commission Chair Linda M. Kassekert. "People continue to spend time and money in Atlantic City, but they are looking for things other than just gaming."

The casino hotels are generating increases in hotel revenue, and food and beverage revenue, with luxury tax receipts for the first nine months of 2010 up by more than 13 percent, Kassekert added.

Earlier this year, Gov. Chris Christie declared "Atlantic City is dying" and proposed a state takeover of services in the blighted casino district.

Atlantic City's figures during this four-year period mirror U.S. statistics which recorded \$34.13 billion in gambling revenues nationwide in 2006 compared to \$30.74 billion last year.

Pennsylvania lawmakers passed legislation a year ago to allow slots casinos to install table games in hopes of generating more income as the recession continues to ravage tax collection. The law saved nearly 1,000 state workers' jobs targeted for layoff and authorized a third casino resort license in 2017.

Pennsy's table games are taxed at 16 percent of gross revenue; two percent goes to counties and municipalities.

Larger casinos initially paid a \$16.5 million licensing fee and resort casinos paid \$7.5 million, but those fees increased last June 1.

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