

## Gambling revenue falls at Potawatomi Bingo Casino

Written by Administrator

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Gambling revenue at Potawatomi Bingo Casino fell by nearly 1.3% last year, as the nation's first off-reservation casino continues to experience the industry trend of flat growth, figures released Monday show.

Gamblers at the casino at 1721 Canal St. lost nearly \$363 million in the 12-month period that ended June 30 [compared with the \\$368 million that gamblers](#) left on the tables or in the slot machines the previous year. As a result, the payments the Potawatomi tribe makes to the city and county also fell.

"The rest of the country is also pretty lackluster," said Michael Paladino, an analyst who follows the casino industry for Fitch Ratings. "It's been relatively mundane, especially for the regionals."

The estimate of the off-reservation casino's net win is based on the annual payment that the Potawatomi tribe makes to the City of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County. Each body receives 1.5% of the casino's annual net win. The city and county each received \$5.44 million from the Potawatomi this year, the tribe said. Last year, each government received \$5.51 million from the Potawatomi, records show. The tribe paid the city and county \$5.47 million in 2011.

The net win estimates are based on figures before the tribe pays its state casino fee of about \$30 million.

The Potawatomi net win had been increasing steadily until 2008-'09. Since then revenue has remained flat, with the tribe bringing in about \$360 million annually from gamblers. The revenue has been enough to support payments of about \$70,000 annually to the tribe's approximately 1,500 members.

The casino is continuing [construction of an adjoining hotel](#) scheduled to open next year.

Nationally, Paladino noted that the casino business has improved on the Las Vegas strip but has been flat or down in regional markets and Atlantic City.

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"You still have a consumer that is very careful about their spending," Paladino said. "Many markets are seeing a point of saturation. Some new casinos are not growing the market — they're just cannibalizing the existing market."

The Potawatomi and some other casinos are keeping a close watch on proposals to open new off-reservation casinos in Wisconsin. Furthest along the lengthy approval process is the Menominee, which has been trying to open a casino in Kenosha since the 1990s. Other tribes are seeking permission to open casinos in Beloit and Lafayette County.

Each of the applications is pending with the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. Even if one wins federal approval, Gov. Scott Walker has veto power over any off-reservation casino proposal in Wisconsin. Walker has said he would approve off-reservation sites only if every other state tribe agrees to it — a policy that effectively gives [each of Wisconsin's 11 tribes veto power over new competitors](#).

For years, the Potawatomi has been waging an expensive campaign to block a Kenosha casino. In an unusual move, the Potawatomi issued a news release Monday disclosing the amounts paid to the city and county.

Ken Walsh, a lobbyist for the tribe, said the release of the figures showing the payments to local governments were unrelated to the tribe's opposition to the Menominee Kenosha proposal.

The Potawatomi has said that if the Kenosha casino is allowed to open, the new competition could cut its business by about one-third and that the payments to local governments would fall by about the same amount.

"It speaks to the significant impact that a Kenosha casino would have on Milwaukee," Walsh said.

**Read more** <http://news.google.com/news/url?sa=t&fd=R&usg=AFQjCNG8ZgoBQu-7>

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