

Louisiana casino revenue down 12.6 percent in May

Written by Administrator

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NEW ORLEANS — Winnings from gamblers at Louisiana's state-licensed casinos fell 12.6 percent last month from May 2015, the fifth straight month that revenue has fallen, state police reported.

The state's 15 riverboats, four racetrack slots casinos and Harrah's New Orleans brought in nearly \$207.4 million, a decrease from May 2015's \$237.1 million.

Video poker revenue was also down in May.

The 13,203 video poker machines across the state brought in nearly \$47.7 million. That was a 7.3 percent decrease from May 2015, when 14,359 machines at truck stops, bars, restaurants and off-track betting parlors brought in \$51.4 million.

"The losses in May could be from a calendar issue," said Joe Weinert, a casino analyst with Spectrum Gaming Group in Linwood, New Jersey. "There were more weekend days in May 2015 than this year."

Weinert said Mississippi's Gulf Coast market could also be affecting the Louisiana casinos.

"The Coast casinos are being marketed as a tourist destination," he said. "The newly opened Scarlet Pearl in D'Iberville has enhanced the Gulf Coast market."

Lake Charles, the state's largest casino market, saw its winnings drop by 16.5 percent. The three riverboats and slots at Delta Downs brought in \$69.7 million, compared with \$83.4 million the year before.

Shreveport-Bossier City was down 13.4 percent, with the six riverboat casinos and the slots at Harrah's racetrack bringing in \$57.8 million.

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The Baton Rouge casino market saw its winnings fall by 9 percent in May. The three riverboat casinos brought in \$23.1 million in May, compared with nearly \$25.4 million in winnings during May 2015

The New Orleans casino market saw its winnings fall by 6.8 percent in May, with gambling establishments bringing in more than \$49.4 million during the month. That compares with \$53 million in winnings during May 2015.

The Fair Grounds was the only gambling venue in the state to bring in more money than in May 2015. The slots at the track brought in \$3.6 million in May, a 5.9 percent increase from \$3.4 million.

Winnings at Harrah's, the state's only land based casino, dropped by 3.5 percent to nearly \$23.3 million from \$24.1 million. The casino has been hit hard by the New Orleans smoking ban, which forces gamblers to leave slot machines and table games for a cigarette. But winnings at New Orleans area riverboats also were down 11.6 percent to \$22.5 million.

The Opelousas market was a big loser. The slots casino at Evangeline Downs fell 14.5 percent from May 2015 to \$7.3 million.

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