

Casino jobs drop in Colorado, rise nationally

Commercial casino jobs increased 3.2 percent nationally in 2006, but employment at Colorado's casinos dropped 2.5 percent, according to a study to be released today by the American Gaming Association.

Colorado's 46 casinos had 7,829 workers in 2006, down from 8,029 in 2005. Nationally, there were 366,197 casino jobs in 2006, up from 354,924 the previous year.

Lois Rice, executive director of the Colorado Gaming Association, couldn't pinpoint the reason for the drop in the state – where commercial casinos are legal in Black Hawk, Cripple Creek and Central City.

„I can only attribute it perhaps to some casino closures over the last year,“ Rice said.

Scarlet's Casino in Central City closed in September. It had about 300 slot machines, four table games and 50 employees.

Revenue at the state's casinos grew 3.5 percent in 2006 to USD 782.1 million from USD 755.5 million, according to the study.

„That's been fairly typical the last few years that we've seen an increase in the 3 to 4 percent range,“ Rice said.

Nationwide, casino revenue increased by 6.8 percent to USD 32.4 billion.

Employees at Colorado's casinos earned USD 295.4 million, which includes tips and benefits. The Colorado gaming industry contributed USD 108.4 million in tax revenue, the study states.

For the first time, the annual study included a special

section about sports betting, which, in the United States, is legal only in Nevada. In 2006, gamblers wagered more than USD 2.4 billion on sports, up 7.6 percent from 2005. Football accounted for 47 percent of the total amount bet. The Super Bowl alone generated USD 93 million in bets.