

# Nevada casinos win for March down

CARSON CITY, Nev. (AP) – Nevada casinos won \$ 1.05 billion from gamblers in March for a slight 0.8 percent decline compared with the same month a year ago, the state Gaming Control Board reported Thursday.

Blackjack action, up 6.4 percent, was the big factor in a gain of 3.7 percent in all live games combined. The win from slot machines was down 2.9 percent in the same period.

Gov. Jim Gibbons said that despite the slight decline in casino winnings, ,general economic conditions in Nevada's gaming and tourism industry remain strong.'

The statewide win of \$ 1.05 billion was the amount left in casino coffers after gamblers wagered a near-record \$ 15 billion during March. That included \$ 12.5 billion bet in slot machine games and the rest on table games.

Resorts on the Las Vegas Strip reported a 0.5 percent slump while downtown Las Vegas casinos were down 7 percent. That's the tenth straight monthly decline for the downtown clubs.

Decreases also were reported for casinos in North Las Vegas, the Boulder Strip, Mesquite and Stateline, on Lake Tahoe's south shore.

Markets that showed increases included Reno and Sparks, Elko County, North Lake Tahoe, the Carson Valley-Carson City area, Laughlin and casinos outside of Las Vegas listed in a ,balance of county' category.

The state collected \$ 92.1 million in percentage fees based on the March win. That was down 0.8 percent compared with the fees collected for the same month in 2006.

Compared with the state Economic Forum's prediction, the combined percentage fee collections of \$ 680.6 million so far this fiscal year are 1.6 percent, or \$ 11.2 million, below the forum's forecast.

,Win' is a gross figure, with no operating costs or other expenses deducted. It represents casino revenue only – not hotel, restaurant or bar revenues.

A breakdown of the statewide win showed that slots accounted for about \$ 709 million of the total. That included \$ 302.9 million won by multidenomination slots, down 0.6 percent. Penny slots were second with a win of \$ 132 million, up 24 percent.

Live games, including poker, accounted for the balance of the \$ 1.05 billion March total. That included \$ 128.8 million won on blackjack tables, up 6.4 percent, \$ 36 million on baccarat, down 1 percent; \$ 39.6 million on craps tables, down 9 percent, \$ 33 million on roulette, up 20 percent, and \$ 10.1 million on sports pools, down 26.6 percent. Poker games won \$ 15.2 million, up 7.8 percent.

(This version CORRECTS percentage drops for Las Vegas Strip, downtown Vegas.)

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