

# Report: Casinos contribute USD 1 billion to state economy

Des Moines (AP) – The gambling industry brought USD 1 billion to Iowa in 2007, according to a state report.

The Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission report shows the 17 riverboat and racetrack gambling facilities – regulated by the state – provided salaries, wages and employee benefits last year, totaling almost USD 280 million, according to a copyright article in The Des Moines Register.

Casinos and racetracks in Iowa employ about 10,000, industry officials said.

In addition, the gambling industry spent USD 294 million on equipment, supplies and services. Gambling businesses also paid USD 351 million in state, federal and local taxes and fees.

„We think this is a very strong indicator of how the gaming industry is part of Iowa’s economy,“ said Wes Ehrecke, president of the Iowa Gaming Association, a casino industry group. „It is certainly adding value to the state’s entertainment and tourism industry.“

Ehrecke said 90.4 percent of money spent on supplies, equipment and services went to Iowa-based vendors. State law mandates casinos purchase a „substantial“ amount of goods and services from Iowa companies.

The gambling businesses also gave USD 80 million to nonprofit groups and local governments through charitable donations and contributions.

State regulators used financial information from casinos and

racetracks in compiling the economic benefit report. The 2007 report included records from four new casinos for the first time, according to Jack Ketterer, administrator of the state gaming commission.

Ketterer said there's potential that the financial impact will grow this year. That is because records used in the report from the Isle Casino in Waterloo only included operations from the first six months after it opened in June, he said.

Information from the state's three American Indian casinos are not included in the report.