

East St. Louis casino blames smoke ban for revenue decline

East St. Louis, Illinois – The Casino Queen in East St. Louis is reporting that its business is down, and executives are blaming Illinois' smoking ban.

Initially, the USD 92 million new casino, which opened last summer, saw revenues increase from the smaller boat, but business has declined since January 1st when the state's ban on smoking in public places took effect.

Casino manager Tom Monaghan says the drop in business has been devastating. He says because of the smoking ban, he fears gamblers are going to new nearby competing casinos across the river in Missouri, where gamblers still can smoke.

Monaghan says February's revenues bottomed out at USD 14 million, and March is projected to be the same.

The Smoke Free Illinois Act bans smoking in all public buildings in the state of Illinois, including restaurants and taverns or where ever food and beverages are served.