

Insight: Weiss wants New Jersey to stay focused on innovation

New Jersey wants to be the centre of iGaming innovation in the US and is keen to hear the industry's thoughts on the future of the sector at GiGse Totally Gaming later this month.

Eric Weiss, chief of technical services bureau and slot laboratory at the New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement (NJDGE), has been part of the team that has launched iGaming in the US state over the last 18 months.

New Jersey introduced iGaming in November 2013 with an initial six casinos, and that number has now risen to 10.

Moreover, the NJDGE's 'New Jersey First' initiative aims to adopt and enact new gambling products before other states, although the state also sees itself as a pioneer in iGaming regulation in the US.

"Our approach is simple," said Weiss, who has been with the NJDGE since 1991. "We challenged the industry to innovate and to bring their products to New Jersey.

"Whether it is a social gaming approach, tournament or games purely based upon skill, the Division is prepared to accept new products and to evaluate them for suitability. We have demonstrated that regulating the internet can be done effectively and with a high degree of integrity.

"Additionally, the National Council of Legislators from Gaming States (NCLGS) has set up policy parameters for internet gaming. The New Jersey model of regulation is consistent with those policies making it easy for any state wishing to enter into the online market to comply with the NCLGS policy

recommendations.”

The US state generated total online gaming win of \$122.9m (€104.4m) during 2014, its first full calendar year of regulated internet gambling.

However, Weiss acknowledged that the industry needs to stay on the cusp of innovation.

“The challenge is to reach the millennials, who are currently avoiding the casino floor in favour of bars and nightclubs,” Weiss added.

“These individuals have grown up with their mobile devices and seem to find slot machines unappealing.

“I believe that the race is on to determine how to reach those individuals and to compete for their entertainment dollar. We believe that the skill-based initiative provides an excellent opportunity for vendors to reach that demographic.”

Weiss and NJDGE deputy director George Rover are inviting interested parties from the industry to express their thoughts on what is working and what can be improved during a gathering at GiGse on Monday, April 20 at 12.30pm.

Weiss said: “As regulators, we value the ability to interact directly with the industry and we frequently meet with stakeholders in order to solicit feedback on our regulations and processes.

“At GiGse we want to hear the thoughts of vendors, affiliates and licensees on what is working and what can be improved.

“The meeting will be a good forum for interested parties to ask questions about our skill-based initiative, our testing, monitoring and licensing process.”

GiGse will take place at the Hyatt Regency in San Francisco from April 20-22. Visit www.gigse.com for further information.