

# Internet gaming helps Atlantic City casinos offset revenue losses in September

David Danzis

ATLANTIC CITY — Total gaming revenue for the city's nine casinos was up 3% in September compared to last year, ending a six-month streak of decreases because of business impacts related to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

However, the year-over-year increase is due entirely to internet casino revenue, based on data released Thursday by the state Division of Gaming Enforcement.

A 113% increase in online gaming revenue year-over-year helped cushion losses from slot machines (-9.6%), table games (-28.7%) and sports betting (-23.5%).

Given the state's COVID-19 travel restrictions and casino capacity limitations, the nearly \$291.7 million in total gaming revenue reported by the gambling parlors last month was cause for measured optimism.

"For the sixth month in a row, internet gaming win more than doubled compared to last year. Casino gaming taxes grew more than 16% compared to last September, providing needed funds for programs that aid New Jersey's senior citizens and disabled residents," said Casino Control Commission Chairman James Plousis. "These results were promising in the midst of continuing travel advisories that decrease visits from out of state, as well as restrictions on capacity, amenities, and entertainment that have made 2020 not reasonably comparable to last year."

Atlantic City's nine casinos closed on March 16 by order of Gov. Phil Murphy to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. Murphy permitted the casinos to reopen July 2.

Year-to-date, Atlantic City's casinos have reported slightly more than \$1.8 billion in total gaming revenue, a steep decline from the nearly \$2.5 billion through the first nine months of 2019. Casino win — combined revenue from slots and table games — is down 49.7% through the same period.

September was the first month since reopening that casino restaurants and bars were permitted to resume indoor service.

"The combination of Labor Day weekend and the return of indoor dining afforded us the opportunity in September to continue the momentum created here at Ocean," said Terry Glebocki, CEO of Ocean Casino Resort, the only property in the city to report an increase in brick-and-mortar revenue last month. "Our guests have enjoyed dining again at their favorite restaurants within our casino resort and our year-over-year gaming revenue growth of nearly 27% is indicative of the successes we have achieved."