



Casinos see 12th decline in a row

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August was the 12th consecutive month gamblers wagered less at Coast casinos than the previous year.

Gross casino revenue was \$96.4 million, down 11 percent compared with \$111.5 million in August 2008 and 10 percent below July's winnings, according to figures released Tuesday by the Mississippi State Tax Commission.

Revenue at Mississippi's 30 casinos dropped 14 percent in August compared with 2008 and 9 percent compared with July.

PDF: [Gaming gross revenues report](#)

STORY: [Coast casino revenue](#)

Gross casino revenue is the amount won by the casinos on the gambling floor and doesn't account for revenue from hotel rooms, restaurants and other amenities.

"We're still significantly down from the prior year," said Scott King, director of research and policy at the Gulf Coast Business Council.

Hurricanes Gustav and Ike were a one-two punch in September 2008, and the Coast hasn't regained its positive numbers.

For the first eight months of 2009 revenue is down \$112 million compared with 2008.

King said the next few months will tell if the worst is over.

Significant and sustained year-over-year slides in revenue started in November and December.

The highest revenues are generally from January through August.

"The season's wrapping up now," King said.

It will be the Carnival season before the casinos will see if the prime business picks up again.

Mississippi's downturn isn't as bad as in some states.

Nevada's casino winnings were \$818 million in June, a 14 percent drop and the lowest monthly revenues since July 2004.

It was Nevada's 18th straight monthly decline.

In Atlantic City in August, revenues slid 16 percent compared to August 2008.

For the first eight months of 2009, the New Jersey casinos won \$2.7 billion, or 15 percent less than 2008.

Louisiana's casinos reported revenues were down 10 percent to \$139 million in August.

According to the American Gaming Association, results of a 2009 public-opinion poll by VP Communications and national pollster Peter Hart show consumers are cutting back on gambling at about the same rate as they are other activities, including going out to dinner and taking weekend trips.