

Vegas-style casinos could

pop up

in Sunshine State soon

By

[STEVE LITZ](#)

Updated 7:30 AM EST, Wed, Jan 12, 2011

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Gambling on Miami Beach Idea Brewing Again - NBC Miami

Written by Administrator

Wednesday, 12 January 2011 06:28 -

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The idea of gambling in a Vegas-style casino on [Miami Beach](#) is brewing -- again.

[Florida Governor Rick Scott](#) recently met with a mega casino owner in Las Vegas, and on Tuesday two major gaming companies asked lawmakers in [Tallahassee](#) to change [Florida](#) laws to permit Vegas-style casinos in the Sunshine State.

Gambling executives say casinos would bring thousands of jobs to Florida, and that is exactly the bet Governor Scott is looking for. He's promised to create 700,000 jobs over the next seven years.

When asked about casino gambling, the Governor doesn't voice strong opposition.

"We already have gaming in the state and I'm fine with what they're doing," Scott said at recent news conference in the state capitol. "I'm not taking any position that I want to expand gaming or make any changes."

Bringing casino gambling to Miami Beach is not a new idea. Back in the 1990's, a developer had a grandiose plan to build a destination casino on [South Beach](#), near Southpoint Park. The area is now occupied by towering condominiums.

Voters rejected a statewide referendum in 1994 that would have allowed casino gambling in Florida.

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Miami Beach Vice Mayor Michael Gongora said residents are not interested in more commotion on the beach.

"We already have a number of special events, from the South Beach Food and Wine Festival to the movie festivals, to the sports games," he said. "I think people in Miami Beach feel the casinos would push us one step over the line."

Revenues from gambling could help heal Florida's economic woes. Right now the state collects some \$400 million from gambling every year. Over the next five years, gambling should generate about \$1 billion for the state.

The next legislative session starts in March. That may also be the start of the political debate on whether or not casino gambling should come to the Sunshine State and South Beach.

First Published: Jan 11, 2011 6:22 PM EST

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