

Hard Rock casino starts internet gambling days after opening

Written by Administrator

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ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — New Jersey's thriving internet gambling market has grown a bit bigger.

The Hard Rock casino in Atlantic City went live with its internet gambling operation on Tuesday afternoon, five days after its brick-and-mortar casino opened its doors.

David Rebeck, director of the state Division of Gaming Enforcement, told The Associated Press the casino's equipment and systems passed all the necessary tests, and were cleared for full operation as of noon.

"Our online gaming team has done an amazing job launching one of the most dynamic online gaming experiences in the industry," said Matt Harkness, Hard Rock's Atlantic City president. "We're excited to extend the Hard Rock brand beyond the Boardwalk and let casino players (play) across the Garden State."

The site, www.hardrockcasino.com, became the 26th legal internet gambling site in New

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Jersey.

And another one might not be far behind. The Ocean Resort Casino, which also opened its doors last Thursday, the same day as Hard Rock, is preparing to offer internet gambling as well.

Rebuck said Ocean Resort's internet gambling operation is still in its testing phase with state gambling regulators.

Six casino licensees operate internet gambling in New Jersey: Borgata, Golden Nugget, Hard Rock, Resorts and Tropicana, and Caesars Interactive-NJ, which includes Caesars and Harrah's. Other gambling companies that partner with Atlantic City casinos also are approved for internet gambling in the state.

Internet gambling began in New Jersey in Nov. 2013 and has been growing steadily.

Last year, internet gambling brought in \$245 million for Atlantic City's casinos, or roughly 10 percent of their total revenue.

Combined with sports betting, which just began last month in New Jersey, the casinos have two new revenue sources they lacked during a brutal two-year stretch in which five of the city's 12 casinos shut down. Two of them, Revel and the Trump Taj Mahal, reopened last week as Ocean Resort and the Hard Rock, respectively.

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