

Things haven't changed much in commercial gambling the past year, the head of the casino industry's top trade group said

Tuesday.

Frank Fahrenkopf, chief executive of the American Gaming Association, said gambling revenue in commercial U.S. casinos rose 1.3 percent in the third quarter to just over \$8 billion. That's about \$100 million more than casinos took in during the same period last year.

"The impact of the recession has been deeper and the recovery slower than nearly everyone predicted," Fahrenkopf said. "Consumer discretionary spending has been significantly depressed throughout most of the year, which means that the gaming industry, and others like it, have continued to struggle."

Fahrenkopf said revenues have been almost flat all year.

Companies that have a strong foothold in Asia have fared better than those that don't, he said. The Chinese enclave of Macau is the world's top gambling market, and Fahrenkopf said Singapore might soon surpass Las Vegas despite having far fewer casinos.

Fahrenkopf spoke at the Global Gaming Expo in Las Vegas. The four-day expo and conference gathers casino executives and managers with vendors of everything from slot machines to uniforms for cocktail waitresses.

Organizers say attendance is up this year, though it was down heavily last year.

Larry Pacey, chief innovation officer at WMS Industries Inc., said casinos need to be convinced that what they're buying will improve their business, make them different from competitors and

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make their systems more efficient.

"They don't have to reach into their wallet and buy more slot machines unless there's a compelling reason," Pacey said.

WMS has been pushing advances to its networked games that allow multiple systems to talk with one another and play many games on a single machine. New deals will allow WMS systems to fully integrate with others sold by Konami Gaming Inc. and International Game Technology, making it easier for casinos to pick what they like and make them work together.

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