

Masks, plexi-glass shields and an ongoing pandemic haven't done much to dampen the hopes of Illinois gamblers looking to score a few bucks.

The state's 10 casinos are limited to half capacity in the age of COVID-19, but they still raked in about three-quarters of the cash they did for a comparable period last year, before the virus slashed admissions.

And the looming specter of the coronavirus certainly hasn't scared off bettors from returning to the thousands of slot machines that have been turned back on at bars, gas stations and other establishments — and which have gobbled up 24% more dollars than they did last July.

That's according to the latest revenue reports from the Illinois Gaming Board, the regulator that issued guidelines for gambling operations to resume July 1 with health precautions in place following an unprecedented three-month shutdown under Gov. J.B. Pritzker's stay-at-home order.

The casinos racked up about \$82.6 million as people made more than 483,000 trips through their turnstiles during the first month back.

That's down about 29% compared to July 2019, when the house won about \$115.8 million with almost double the admissions: about 931,000.

The 50% capacity limit set by the Gaming Board hasn't been an issue for most casinos, and they've had only a handful of issues with customers refusing to wear face coverings, according to Illinois Casino Gaming Association executive director Tom Swoik.

Illinois casino revenue down, but video slots trending up in first month back from coronavirus shutdown

Written by Administrator

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