

Nev., N.J. casinos link progressive slots

By Wayne Parry, AP

ATLANTIC CITY — A long-planned initiative to create bigger jackpots by linking casino slot machines in New Jersey and Nevada is up and running.

The New Jersey Gaming Enforcement Division says the progressive slots system links 100 machines in Atlantic City with 600 in Nevada. The progressive jackpots grow in size as more gamblers play them.

“The division is pleased to have been at the forefront of passing regulations and reaching out to other jurisdictions to enable this expanded gaming opportunity for Atlantic City,” said director David Rebuck. “Much like multi-state lotteries, this new technology and cooperative regulatory agreements will allow combined progressive jackpots to grow, which should be very appealing to players looking for the opportunity to play for huge jackpots.”

The system quietly went live Wednesday afternoon, and was announced by regulators Thursday morning.

Slot machines account for about two-thirds of the revenue won by Atlantic City’s casinos.

It is the second multi-state system linking New Jersey slot machines with those in other states. Earlier this year, the state approved a compact with South Dakota. The two interstate slot systems are not connected with each other, though.

New Jersey casino regulators have been working on the plan for at least two years, and they are still looking for other states to participate in an expanded multi-state slots system.

It is one of many things the state is trying as it tries to reverse Atlantic City's eight-year casino revenue decline, brought on by increased competition in neighboring states. New Jersey also legalized Internet gambling and tried unsuccessfully to overturn a federal ban on sports betting, among other initiatives.

The interstate concept is also a key to New Jersey's plans for Internet gambling. The state plans currently limits Internet gambling to people physically present in New Jersey, but the law allows it to enter into compacts with other states or countries where Internet gambling is legal.

Division spokeswoman Kerry Langan says all 11 Atlantic City casinos are participating, including the three that are shutting down within the next few weeks: Revel, Showboat and Trump Plaza.