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Minnesota Casinos

By Adel Awwad

Minnesota casinos are located in the "Land of 10,000 Lakes," a Northern state known for its natural beauty, cultural attractions, and a prosperous economy. Minnesota, ranked as the "Most Livable State" in the United States, has a population of over 5,000,000 people and an area of 79,610 square miles. The capital of Minnesota, St. Paul, with a population of approximately 280,000, is located adjacent to Minneapolis on the Mississippi River. The two cities are often referred to as the "Twin Cities" of Minnesota.

There are a number of Minnesota casinos scattered throughout the state, either located on Native American Tribal land or under Native American jurisdiction. Minnesota has 22 tribal-state regulations for Minnesota casinos, which allow blackjack, slots, craps, and other video gaming machines, while separate tribal agreements allow poker and bingo. The Mystic Lake Casino, in Prior Lake, is the largest in Minnesota, with 125,000 square feet, 4,000 slots, 84 table games, four restaurants, and a hotel. The Treasure Island Resort and Casino, in Welch, is another large casino, with 116,000 square feet of gambling area, 2,500 slots, 44 table games, seven restaurants, and a small hotel.

Another popular Minnesota casino is Jackpot Junction, in Morton, with 80,000 square feet, 1,650 slots, 28 table games, with blackjack and poker, as well as nine restaurants and two hotels. In addition, Minnesota casinos include the Grand Casino Hinckley, with 54,800 square feet, 2,170 slots, 47 table games, six restaurants, and four hotels; and the Grande Casino Mille Lacs, in Onamia, with 54,800 square feet, 1,885 slots, 24 table games, five restaurants, and two hotels.

Some of the smaller Minnesota casinos include the Fortune Bay Resort Casino, in Tower, with 50,000 square feet, 686 slots, and 12 table games; the Northern Lights Casino, in Walker, with 40,000 square feet, 950 slots, and 12 table games; and the Fond-du-Luth Casino, in Duluth, with 20,000 square feet, 745 slots, and four table games. The Prairie Edge Casino Resort, a smaller casino in Granite Falls, has 27,000 square feet, 660 slots, and six table games.

Minnesota casinos do not provide any revenue in the form of taxes to the state of Minnesota. There are some fees, however, that compensate the state to some extent for inspections and other items in the tribal agreements. Minnesota is rich in natural attractions, a land of "sky-tinted" waters, with an

economy that might be well be enhanced with the expansion and introduction of more casinos in the future.

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Online Gambling And Legislation

By Adel Awwad

With more than a trillion dollars changing hands around the world on online casinos alone, sooner rather than later legislation will step in to exercise some form of control in the casino industry. Those measures to control casinos and gambling during the early years worked as the casino had a physical location. Today however casinos have moved online with no real physical location. The question arises how legal are these online casinos?

Gambling legislation has not changed much since Congress passed the Wire Act in 1961. The Wire Act states that "Whoever being engaged in the business of betting or wagering knowingly uses a wire communication facility for the transmission in interstate or foreign commerce of bets or wagers or information assisting in the placing of bets or wagers on any sporting event or contest, or for the transmission of a wire communication which entitles the recipient to receive money or credit as a result of bets or wagers, or for information assisting in the placing of bets or wagers, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than two years, or both." This however only covered sports betting and not casinos. There was also no Internet or Internet casinos during that time.

During 1998 both MasterCard and Visa sued Cynthia Haines for money she lost while gambling on an online casino. She had lost more than US\$70,000 to an online casino and could not settle her account with the plaintiffs. She filed a counterclaim well within the state laws of California which prohibited credit card loans for gambling be it online casinos or bricks and mortar casinos. That case was settled out of court. Many states have now enacted their own legislation however casinos have moved their gambling operations off shore to casino friendly countries.

Gambling has increased drastically with the advent of the Internet and online casinos. With huge profits and vested interest in casinos there are also very strong lobbyists in government to keep gambling unimpeded. The Internet Gambling Prohibition Act which was defeated in 2000 shows how much vested interest there is in the casino and gaming industry. Cyberspace is the last frontier when it comes to laws governing casinos. Only time will tell how legislation will catch-up with online casinos and gambling websites.

Adel Awwad is the webmaster of Online Casinos – Copyright © 2005

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