

LIGHT Comments on December DGE Report

For immediate release

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Comments from Jane Bokunewicz, faculty director of the Lloyd D. Levenson Institute of Gaming, Hospitality and Tourism (LIGHT), Stockton University School of Business, on the December 2021 numbers released today by the Division of Gaming Enforcement:

Atlantic City's casinos came into 2021 with nearly 6 months experience of operating under pandemic conditions. The health and safety protocols implemented in 2020 and refined throughout 2021 helped support a return to in-person play for casino patrons and improve brick-and-mortar gaming revenues especially in the third quarter. These protocols were not enough to wholly overcome the impacts of the pandemic, but succeeded in bringing year-end brick and mortar gaming revenues to within 5% of year-end 2019 totals.

Atlantic City's casino industry, like the region's gaming hospitality and tourism businesses overall, has proven resilient, but still vulnerable to fluctuations in COVID-19 infection rates and caseloads. In some months of 2021, like this past December, brick-and-mortar gaming revenues surpassed 2019 levels, in others revenues lingered behind.

Even as other sectors of the gaming business, internet gaming especially, show significant and steady revenue growth, coronavirus surges and waves like the Delta and Omicron variants continue to prove an obstacle to sustained recovery for Atlantic City's brick-and-mortar casino operations. While months like December 2021 are encouraging they are not yet the norm. We likely will not see a full recovery of the industry until pandemic conditions stabilize.

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