

Did Smoking Ban Really Affect Deadwood Profits?

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DEADWOOD, SD - The South Dakota Commission on Gaming has released the numbers from January of this year, and they're up nearly 15 percent from last year. In fact, this January's numbers are nearly even with the totals from before the smoking ban went into effect.

Before the smoking ban went into effect, the atmosphere was much different inside Saloon No. 10.

"There was a haze that you would have to fight your way through every Friday and Saturday night. With that being gone, it's just easier to come down and have fun," Saloon No. 10 part-owner Louie Lalonde said.

"It's cleaner. It smells better; your clothes don't stink as bad if you're not a smoker," gambler Kassie Inlow said.

Inlow is visiting the Hills from Brookings. Being a smoker herself, she admits that the ban did take some getting used to.

"Beer and cigarettes usually go hand in hand. So at first it was, but now you go outside and it's more comfortable for a lot more people, I think," Inlow said.

And although some casino owners still claim that the smoking ban was behind last year's down numbers, Lalonde has a different opinion.

"In the long run, it has definitely increased our traffic with people who don't smoke. Believe it or not, when the smoking ban went into effect my numbers went up," Lalonde said.

She believes that last year's drop in revenue was really about the nation's down economy. But as the country continues to rebound, Lalonde is confident that even more people will come back to Deadwood.

"People are coming around. I think that they're ready to have fun," Lalonde said.