

# Atlantic City forum to focus on expansion of gaming

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ATLANTIC CITY — It seems there's no shortage of places these days on the East Coast where you can play cards, roll the dice or pull the slots.

Pennsylvania has been opening new slot parlors, West Virginia is looking to add table games and New York continues to debate plans for an American Indian casino in the Catskills. In Maryland, the idea of racetrack slots is being discussed to revive the horseracing industry. Casino proponents in Rhode Island and Massachusetts also want in on the game. And the list goes on.

The tremendous growth of casino gambling from Maine to Florida will be one of the hot topics Tuesday at the East Coast Gaming Congress. Now entering its 11th year, the annual gathering of industry professionals is expected to attract about 500 attendees to the Atlantic City Convention Center for a daylong program of speeches and debate.

The event features a panel discussion by casino CEOs, presentations by three of the largest American Indian-gaming operators on the East Coast and a look at the “new” Atlantic City by industry and government officials overseeing the resort's redevelopment.

Another panel discussion will include four leading Wall Street casino analysts. New Jersey Transportation Commissioner Kris Kolluri will deliver the keynote luncheon address, replacing Gov. Jon S. Corzine, who was severely injured in an automobile accident April 12 and remains hospitalized.

Welcoming remarks are scheduled from Atlantic City Mayor Bob Levy, New Jersey Casino Control Commission Chair Linda M. Kassekert and state Assemblyman Jeff Van Drew, a Cape May County Democrat who chairs the Assembly's Tourism and Gaming Committee.

The convention is being held at a time when at least four new Atlantic City casinos are on the drawing board. Three existing casinos have launched expansion projects that will add 2,500 new hotel rooms next year, and the Atlantic City Hilton Casino Resort is discussing a \$1 billion makeover to transform it into a megaresort.

“Everybody has talked about how Atlantic City has evolved from being a daytripper market for granddads and grandmoms,” said gaming attorney Lloyd D. Levenson, whose Atlantic City law firm Cooper Levenson is one of the organizers of the Gaming Congress.

In addition to highlighting Atlantic City's transformation into a major casino hub, industry officials will discuss how the growth of gaming in Pennsylvania, New York and other surrounding states has put competitive pressure on the resort.

“Because of the expansion and all of the competition that results from it, the question is, can everyone continue to be successful as the expansion continues?” Levenson said. “It's all of those competitive issues and the ways the whole industry will stay healthy despite the expansion.”

For more information on the conference, including registration, visit [www.eastcoastgamingcongress.com](http://www.eastcoastgamingcongress.com)