

Is Nevada still the national leader in gaming regulation?

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Sun

By the end of this week, Nevada is expected to be the first state in the nation to have regulations in place for Internet poker play.

It's historic. It's indicative of the state's leadership role in the gaming industry.

And some say it will be a big step toward bringing new technology companies to the state.

Of course, it would be much more meaningful if online poker play weren't against the law in the United States. Federal law enforcement officers haven't been picking on players who participate in online card games. But they have clamped down on banks that handle the financial transactions and operators of poker websites.

Nevada and other states are gearing up to regulate it only if and when federal lawmakers approve legislation removing those barriers.

In the weeks leading up to consideration of the new regulations, Nevada has received lots of attention for its leadership role. A recent Internet gambling conference in Las Vegas referred to Nevada as "the gold standard of gaming regulation."

But is it?

Since Nevada legalized casino gambling in 1931, 21 states have followed suit, with most of them joining the club between 1989 and 2008. Not only is Nevada the oldest commercial casino jurisdiction in the country – New Jersey, at No. 2, first

legalized gaming operations in 1976 – it's also the largest by far, with 256 casinos and gross gaming revenue of \$10.4 billion in the 2010 fiscal year.

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