

Nevada continues to grant online gaming licenses

By Steve Green, Las Vegas Sun

The Nevada Gaming Commission last week issued licenses for three more companies to compete in the state's new intrastate online poker industry.

The Commission, meeting in Las Vegas, approved licenses for MGM Resorts International and lesser-known companies Z4Poker LLC of Las Vegas and CAMS LLC of Los Angeles.

The applications had received initial recommendations Nov. 1 from the State Gaming Control Board.

The poker approved is not video poker, but players competing against each other like they do in physical casino poker rooms.

MGM Resorts plans to put up a play-for-fun site in the coming months. This would be in addition to the myVEGAS social media site it's using in partnership with myVEGAS developer Playstudios.

Both MGM Resorts and Boyd Gaming are partnering for real-money poker with bwin.party digital entertainment plc, which may be considered for licensure in Nevada next year. If bwin is approved, MGM Resorts and Boyd could choose to go live with real-money play.

Gaming commissioners commented today that they still need to consider the bwin application and that their approvals for MGM Resorts and earlier for Boyd are independent of the upcoming examination of bwin, a big offshore poker operator known for the PartyPoker, PartyCasino, World Poker Tour and other brands.

Z4Poker is developing a poker system while also working on potential bingo and keno systems that might be offered around the country should online gaming be approved in various states.

CAMS has systems to manage online player accounts and verify the age, location and identity of players, while also preventing problems like money laundering and problem gambling.

CAMS hopes to serve the poker and lottery industries.

“Your business is important to us. The issues you deal with are important to [gaming] providers and to us,” Commissioner Randolph Townsend told CAMS officials during a discussion on maintaining the integrity of online gaming by preventing cheating and other problems.

“This is where the wise guys are going to cause the hiccup,” added Commissioner Tony Alamo.

With testing of poker systems still under way, Nevada poker applicants approved earlier this year were Boyd, Station Casinos LLC and the founding Fertitta family’s Ultimate Gaming-Ultimate Poker brand, the Golden Nugget with casinos in Las Vegas and Laughlin, South Point Poker, Global Cash Access Holdings and Bally Technologies.

Also approved were SHFL entertainment (formerly Shuffle Master), American Casino and Entertainment Properties, PokerTrip Enterprises, NetEffect Networks, International Game Technology, Monarch Interactive and WMS Industries.