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along the river have closed and though two are still functioning, they are expected to close as the water rises.

The casinos have yet to receive much damage. Mississippi law approved riverboat gambling in 1990, with the first casino opening in August 1992. All casinos must be floating but permanently moored to a dock. "To date, there's very minimal damage on the casino floors because most of them are floating or they've been protected," Godfrey said. However, structural damage is possible if the water continues to rise and access to the casinos has been cut off as roads and parking lots are flooded. Some casino hotels are on land and "have some water in them, but there are also hotels on the dry side," or the East side, of the river, Godfrey added.

Repairs are just one of many costs for casinos. Godfrey said that "gaming taxes alone brings in \$12-13 million a month, for local and state taxes," so the longer floods force doors to stay closed, the more money that is forfeited. The state is losing revenue from the approximately 6,600 casino hotel rooms and 13,000 employees temporarily out of work.

There is no estimate on when casinos will reopen because, as Godfrey put it, "we've got to let the water go up and go down – we're just waiting." Until the waters recede, entertainment acts at the casino venues have been canceled or postponed. Country artist Tracy Lawrence was scheduled to play Millennium Theatre at the Gold Strike Casino in Tunica, Miss., May 21, but with severe flooding in Tunica, it is unlikely that the casino will be accessible in time for the show.

Louisiana riverboat casinos have made plans to shut down if flooding poses

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