



Atlantic City tourism district should focus on reducing crime, poll says

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By **MaryAnn Spoto/The Star-Ledger**

TRENTON — A new poll shows Atlantic City still suffers from the perception of being crime-ridden.

Two-thirds of respondents to a Stockton-Zogby poll said they think crime reduction should be the top priority in the new tourism district established by Gov. Chris Christie.

The poll, commissioned by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy from May 4 to 7, gave the 400 respondents five specific options of what they would like to see as the top priority for the district.

Sharon Schulman, Hughes Center executive director, said 67.3 percent wanted crime reduction, followed by 31.7 percent for clean boardwalk and streets and 1 percent for more attractions on the boardwalk. There were no responses for the suggestions of improving the downtown area or building more casinos or gaming establishments.

In an effort to boost the ailing casino revenues, the tourism district was carved out of the city to be run by the state.

Hughes Center executive director Sharon Schulman said the poll, conducted in the newly reconfigured 1st legislative district, means although law enforcement statistics show crime is decreasing in that area, the tourism district is going to have to deal with the perception of crime.

"If the locals perceive that crime is a problem, then the perception is probably out there for other people," Schulman said.



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Atlantic City's skyline is shown in this 2010 file photo.

The poll has a five-point margin of error.

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