

# Employers to be hit with big fee jump for unemployment

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**PASCO COUNTY (Bay News 9)** -- Owning a small business can be difficult and starting soon local entrepreneurs will be dishing out a lot more cash to the government.

The annual fee employers pay to fund unemployment benefits is about to go up drastically.

The fee is jumping from \$8.40 per employee to \$100.30.

"That'll have a huge burden on the small business man and woman -- any business in the state of Florida -- who are struggling right now," said state Sen. Mike Fasano.

The state is out of unemployment money according to the Florida Department of Revenue. It's trying to recoup lost dollars that were given to people needing extended unemployment pay.

"The state of Florida has to guarantee, and we do guarantee, anyone who loses their job through no fault of their own will get 26 weeks of unemployment compensation," Fasano said.

While it's good for those without work, Eddie Santangelo, the co-owner of Mezzaluna Pizzeria in downtown New Port Richey, is concerned it could force other businesses like his, to let go of even more people.

"Salaries don't go up, but everything else goes up," Santangelo said. "If taxes go up, I will have to eliminate some of my staff."

The Florida Department of Revenue is expected to announce the increase on Dec. 1, and the increase should go into effect at the first of the year.

According to the Agency for Workforce Innovation, Florida started borrowing unemployment money from the feds back in August.

So far that loan is more than \$550 million.

<http://www.baynews9.com/content/36/2009/11/17/548174.html?>

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