



FUBA

Florida United Businesses Association

issues

OUR BUSINESS IS SMALL BUSINESS

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ATTENTION STATE-LICENSED CONTRACTORS: NEW EDUCATION REQUIREMENT

The continuing education requirements for certain contractors licensed by the state Construction Industry Licensing Board have been revised. Effective November 15, 2007, all general, building, residential, roofing, specialty structure, and glass and glazing contractors must complete 1 hour of continuing education related to wind mitigation methodologies as part of the 14 hours that are currently required. Enforcement of the new 1 hour requirement will begin with the expiration of certificated licenses on August 31, 2008, and the expiration of registered licenses on August 31, 2009. Those licensees not in compliance with all continuing education requirements by the expiration date of their licenses may face non-renewal of their state contractor's license. Please note: this only affects contractors with a state license in one of the categories above. If you do not have a state license, this does not apply to you.

TAX UPDATE

The Florida Taxation and Budget Reform Commission (TBRC) meets every 10 years to examine the state's budget and revenue needs. The TBRC recently approved a proposed constitutional Amendment 5, which will be on the November ballot. This is a good news/bad news situation: if approved by the voters, Amendment 5 will eliminate approximately 25% of a business's total property tax bill. However, in return, the

proposal would also require the Legislature to increase the state sales tax rate by at least 1% and probably force them to begin taxing many things are currently tax-exempt today.

The end result may be that Florida would begin taxing the services that businesses provide, which would force many small businesses to begin charging and collecting the sales tax on the services it provides its customers. Businesses that could be affected by this change include insurance agents, tax professionals, those in the construction industry, and many others. FUBA is concerned about this prospect and encourages you to educate yourself about how the proposed amendment would affect your business. Please watch for additional information about this proposed Amendment 5 in future editions of ISSUES.

NEW DOMESTIC SECURITY ALERT SYSTEM FOR FLORIDA BUSINESSES

Two minutes. That's all it takes to sign up for a new anti-terror program designed to bolster the ability of Florida's businesses to protect themselves and their communities against potential threats. Launched by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), *BusinessSafe*, allows any business of any type or size to register to receive timely electronic alerts on domestic security-related issues affecting their industry.

Alerts will be sent on an as needed basis and will include domestic security-related breaking news, possible threats, suspicious activity, and specific preparedness and prevention techniques. The program also provides businesses with sector

specific safety tips that highlight ways to identify suspicious activity and better protect assets. Businesses are encouraged to pass on unusual activity through an online reporting form. *BusinessSafe* is available at no charge to businesses or individuals.

“*BusinessSafe* creates a two-way communication highway that can be accessed and traveled by every single business in Florida,” said FDLE Commissioner Gerald Bailey. “With the click of a mouse, we can directly connect with businesses ranging from restaurants to retailers to service industry providers.”

The Florida United Businesses Association (FUBA) joined state officials for the announcement of the program in early May. “FUBA is looking forward to teaming up with the FDLE in an effort to alert the business community to potential threats to our state,” said Lance Lozano Chief Operating Officer. “We are proud that FUBA members will be some of the first participants in the *BusinessSafe* program in Florida.”

Today’s work force is a busy, bustling world. But take just two minutes to register for the alerts. It’s a safety investment you’ll be glad you made. To access *BusinessSafe*, go to FDLE’s Web site at www.fdle.state.fl.us and click on the “*BusinessSafe*” icon.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

In last month’s edition of this newsletter, we told you about bills that were approved by the Florida Legislature and that are now awaiting action by the Governor. This month, we summarize some of the many business-related bills that failed this year. **The bills below did not receive approval from the Legislature this year.**

TAXES:

Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday (Senate Bill 2094 by Webster and House Bill 893 by Coley). This is the first time in 4 years that Florida will not have a tax holiday for back-to-school shoppers. In prior years, for 11 days each

August, Florida would suspend the sales tax on books, clothing, and other back-to-school items. Due to budget constraints, the Legislature did not approve a tax holiday this year.

Hurricane Sales Tax Holiday (Senate Bill 86 by Baker and House Bill 111 by Nehr).

These bills would have exempted certain hurricane-related supplies, such as generators, weather radios, and batteries, from the state sales tax from June 1st through June 12th.

INSURANCE:

Commercial Property Insurance (Senate bill 1422 by Bennett and House Bill 1001 by Richter).

These bills would have allowed businesses to buy a commercial property insurance policy that would be exempt from assessments from the Citizens Property Insurance Corporation.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION:

Alternative Base Period (Senate Bill 2706 by Hill and House Bill 1057 by Soto).

These bills would have changed the way unemployment benefits are calculated and allowed more workers to qualify for benefits. Also, the bill would have given unemployment benefits to employees who quit their jobs due to an experience with domestic violence.

REGULATION:

Recycling (Senate Bill 692 by Jones and House Bill 301 by Long).

These bills would have required all businesses in Florida to collect and recycle aluminum, glass and plastic beverage containers.

Mandatory Employee Sick Leave (Senate Bill 152 by Wilson).

This bill would have created the "Healthy Workers, Healthy Families Act." It would have required large employers to provide 1 hour of paid sick leave for every 40 hours worked. It would have required small business to provide 1 hour of paid sick leave for every 80 hours worked.