

allow small businesses to send out unsolicited commercial faxes under "an established business relationship (EBR)."

The U.S. House passed the EBR Bill (H.R. 4600) last July and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce is urging the Senate to approve the legislation currently being blocked by Sen. Boxer. Though it is still possible – but unlikely – that the Senate could act on this piece of legislation during the lame-duck session, the FCC has extended the stay on its written regulation until June 30, 2005, the final day of the current fiscal year.

According to the national chamber's research and projections, after the first year of such a proposed new law, annual costs to the average small business per year for additional paperwork would cost in the neighborhood of \$3,000.

More than 27 hours of staff time will be needed to obtain the initial written consent from customers and another 20 hours each year to keep those forms current, the chamber learned after surveying its members.

fewer employees, while nearly three-quarters have fewer than 20 employees. The businesses surveyed spanned all industries including manufacturing, construction, retail industries and trade associations/chambers of commerce.

Small business members of the U.S. Chamber have reported that the FCC proposal would create delays in completing projects, resulting in the loss of current and potential customers.

Last August, the U.S. Chamber filed comments urging the commissioners to reconsider the rule based on the negative impact it would have on small businesses. Thanks to strong efforts at the grassroots level, implementation of the do-not-fax rule was delayed until January 1, 2005 but the debate continues and Members of the commission are currently reviewing comments on the proposed rule.

Despite the proliferation of emails today, faxes remain an important part of business communications, especially for small businesses. Currently, businesses are

specifically requested by customers cannot be faxed without this burdensome process, said a U.S. Chamber representative.

If the new FCC rule goes into effect on Jan. 1, 2005, recent reports indicate that two-thirds of small business owners during the first year alone will be required to obtain written consent from an average of 100 separate fax numbers. A survey of small businesses revealed that the new FCC rules regarding faxed information would cost each business about \$5,000 in the first year and an additional \$3,000 each year thereafter.

It is also estimated that it will cost each business 27 hours of staff time to obtain the initial written consent and an additional 20 hours of staff time each year to keep those forms current. The FCC's proposed rule would restrict the sending of commercial faxes, including those between preexisting customers, without the recipient's prior consent.

Of the 1,735 businesses that responded in the survey, 95 percent are businesses with fewer than 100 employees while nearly three quar-



Sodding of 85 acres at Laughlin Ranch Golf Course is expected to be completed in six weeks. For purposes of comparison, a mere 1.5 acre of sod will cover an entire football field. More than 300 semi trucks are rolling into Bullhead City from Casa Grande, Ariz., where sod was custom grown on 1-2 inches of special sand. (Photo by Orchid Comitz)

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