

Real Stories from Real Restaurants Across New Mexico

- 1) "I have always been open for 28 years, 7am-9pm. Now, I do not have the staff for those hours, and I am even closing on Wednesdays. Hours have been 7-5 because of lack of staff. Food costs are out of sight and NOW we get hit with the Mandatory sick leave." **Pat A Martin – Lincoln County Grill – Ruidoso, NM**
- 2) "Enough local restaurants closed that created less competition and sales increased in 2022." **Robert Gontram – 5 Star Burgers – Taos, NM**
- 3) "Hard to hire staff. No one wants to work. We are constantly getting vandalized costing us lots of money." **Rudy M. Guerrero – Papa Felipe’s Mexican Restaurant – Albuquerque, NM**
- 4) "Our hotel managed to remain open throughout the pandemic. In March 2020, we attempted to jump through the many hoops of the various Executive Orders but were unsuccessful for the restaurant. We closed the restaurant for a year and a half and laid off our workers. We are attempting to build the restaurant business back and are currently open for Friday and Saturday nights. Our operation has lost 50% of it’s revenue but the expenses keep going up." **Keith Barras – The Eklund, historic hotel & restaurant – Clayton, NM**
- 5) "I can only say that we have been more fortunate than many of our compadres in the food service business. As we move out of the pandemic, the prolonged aftermath is proving to be just as difficult or more so than the pandemic itself. The shortage of employees, inflation, constant supply chain issues, high taxes, extra government programs to comply with, the constant, painful pinprick expenses of cleaning up after break-ins and vandalism is frankly exhausting. I believe many people have moved out of New Mexico for better-run states with more opportunities. If I didn’t know better, I would say that our legislature, mayor and governor are trying to kill off all local businesses!" **Jean Bernstein – Flying Star Cafes – Albuquerque, NM**
- 6) "I have tried my hardest during pandemic and after to keep my business afloat as well as help team members feel like they have a place to continue to work and feel confident that nothing is going to happen with their employment (especially with the ups and downs that we have had). It has become increasingly harder to do business with increased cost of goods, increased cost of labor, and just the uncertainty of what may come next. The increased cost of goods does not just affect our industry as we have seen increases from everyone that provides a service to keep the business running clean, efficiently, and effectively (hoods, carpets, insurance, pest service, etc). Combine that with minimum wage increases, remember that these wage increases truly do require a larger increase in pay in order to stay competitive to not only get, but retain workforce (which has to come with a larger increase in productivity from a highly inexperienced and unmotivated incoming workforce). Not to forget the newest hit with HWA (not denying a need for this program, but the timing is off completely. The last-minute definition in rules with the implementation time of less than 1 month from the final rulings makes it

complicated and messy. With this program alone, I am looking at an increase of a minimum of approximately \$30k that needs to be budgeted, where does this money come from when we don't already have it planned? Increase prices, again? Impose a surcharge? Eliminate positions?) Businesses can get creative, but on a whim is tough, dollars have to be sat on and rolled over from year to year, makes a large impact to the bottom line in everyday operations for an already tight business/industry that is still trying to recover and get a handle on things." **Russell Hernandez – Salud! De Mesilla – Mesilla, NM**

- 7) "In 2020 we shut down for half a year in order to save the planet. In order to survive we took on \$600,000 in debt because we took on a maximum SBA loan, and mortgaged the property when we didn't get the RRF. Meanwhile the two restaurants down the road got \$400,00 in RRF. How can I compete with that? Its just a miserable place to be. Meanwhile I have employed a great team that have worked for me for 30 years." **Andrew Skotting Segal – Chocolate Maven Bakery – Santa Fe. NM**
- 8) "In the last 2.5 years we have worked hard to mitigate the spread of COVID. We reduced hours and workers on kitchen shifts and we did our part. We did not shutdown a single day and we had zero work related covid illnesses. The price of everything went up in 2020 and it has not stopped. Supply chains have wrecked a lot of our inventory and budget. Inflation /gas has added to our budget and while paper good are dropping in cost, so many other things are jumping even higher. I know this is nothing new." **Landall Goolsby – Sweetwater's at Landalls – Portales, NM**
- 9) "In the past year as we are trying to recover prices on food, supplies, and labor have increased dramatically. Crime and homelessness have become a big problem." **Marie Emily Coleman – Church Street Café – Albuquerque, NM**
- 10) "Lack of being able to hire and keep staff is hurting our business. it makes it very difficult to maintain normal hours. and we have had to turn away business do to not enough staff." **Ralph Servidio – Babes Sports Page Restaurant and Bar – Hobbs, NM**
- 11) "Lack of staffing has made us cut our deli hours from 7 am - 8 pm back to 7 am to 2 pm. We lose approximately \$1,000/day in sales." **Michael Romero – Michael's Mini Mart – Velarde, NM**
- 12) "Living in a rural area is difficult enough to get employees and now it's more difficult. Have to make cuts to survive." **Wendel Cebada – Food for the Sol – Cuba, NM**
- 13) "My burger 21 has lost money since the day the pandemic started. We are located in Uptown, which prohibits drive-thrus (which are the restaurants that made \$ during the pandemic.) We had to rely on 3rd party purveyors, who charge 25% in fees, more then restaurants make in profit (avg restaurant is 5% to 10%) . My landlord would not work with me on rent reductions. Now, no one working in Uptown and our night business has dried up. (People pick up dinner on their way home from work.) I continue to lose money on a daily basis. The landlord won't work with me on lease. I owe the bank

\$300,000 in loans as this restaurant opened in 10/18. Lease and loans are personally guaranteed, so if I close I lose my house and any savings I may have." **Christine Zalesiak – The Melting Pot – Albuquerque, NM**

14) "Our current employees are working longer shifts and owners are having to work shifts which takes away from their duties to properly run the business. The wages increase has affected us with higher payroll and now costs of goods are higher. We have been hit hard in all aspects now that the state has required small business to pay sick leave, when we can't fully staff as it is. It feels like small business is a thing of the past especially restaurants." **Shelly Quartiere – Colfax Tavern & Diner – Maxwell, NM**

15) "People do not want to work in restaurants any longer and our state continue to do everything they can to shut us down. first wages going up yearly, now sick pay. i have to pay someone to take care of that because the state requires it or i get fined? I am on the edge of giving up , closing and letting 65 employees go. Then this state can take care of them since they do nothing positive to help out restaurants. I have worked in restaurants for over fifty years and nothing is fun about it any longer. every day is stressful. Health inspections, fire inspections, grease trap inspections, building department inspections, insurance inspections, to name a few." **John Silva – Three Rivers Brewery – Farmington, NM**

16) "Restaurant has been burglarized staffing, inflation and crime are our biggest issues right now. We are down to hiring the dregs of our community. We've had two staff members overdose on heroin while on the job. We need work force members, people who know how to communicate with the public. Bring on immigrants!" **Matt S DiGregory – Home on the Range – Albuquerque, NM**

17) "We applied on the day that the RRF was available and it sat in limbo until ultimately being told they were out of money. We fought tooth and nail by ourselves to not go under." **Jeff Trent – O'Niell's – Albuquerque, NM**

18) "We had a rough year. First year of pandemic was a boom-drive-thru was a savior. This last year we lost almost what we made in the previous year." **Tom Martin – Taco Box – Portales, NM**

19) "We had no patio at our main restaurant so we did what we could to pay bills. From delivering casseroles in a two-county area and setting up farmers markets in our barn to help farming neighbors and arts and crafts owners to be able to make a bit of money to get buy. Our community suffered the loss of nearly 300 families who moved to other states where their children could go to school and play sports. We saw employees quit that will never come back because they find it easier to get aid than get up and work." **Janie – Trinity Hotel / Balzano Vineyards – Carlsbad, NM**

20) "business has dropped, people do not want to work." **Walden Minoli – Gecos Bar & Tapas – Albuquerque, NM**

