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Business

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ECONOMY ROUNDUP

■ **Most small-business owners** feel credit relief is critical to their survival, but 60.2 percent don't think it will come in time.

The management consulting firm George S. May International poll of 750 small business owners across the U.S. showed the top three expectations from the new administration as being credit relief (35.1 percent), affordable health care for employees (32.6 percent) and tax rebates or incentives (32.3 percent).

In addition to late credit relief, 53.7 percent of respondents believe health care costs will rise in 2009, while 29.6 percent said health care costs will stay the same, and 16.7 percent believe costs will decrease.

■ **Despite the slowing economy**, U.S. Internet advertising revenue rose in the third quarter, according to an analysis released Thursday.

The report from the Interactive Advertising Bureau and PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP said that online advertising revenue totaled almost \$5.9 billion in the third quarter, up 11 percent from the same period last year. It marked a 2 percent rise from the second quarter.

■ **New claims for unemployment benefits** jumped last week to a 16-year high, providing more evidence of a rapidly weakening job market expected to get even worse next year.

The government said new applications for jobless benefits rose to a seasonally adjusted 542,000 from a downwardly revised figure of 515,000 in the previous week, the highest level of claims since July 1992.

The four-week average of claims, which smooths out fluctuations, was even worse: It rose to 506,500, the highest in more than 25 years.

■ **The economy's health worsened in October** as stocks, building permits and consumer expectations all fell.

The New York-based Conference Board said its monthly forecast of economic activity declined 0.8 percent in October. Over the last seven months, the index declined at a 4.7 percent annual rate, faster than any decline since 2001.