

# Smoking ban blamed for casino layoffs

More than 300 workers at Casino Windsor are being laid off due to a slowdown that owners blame on a provincewide smoking ban and the strong Canadian dollar.

Revenue at the casino is down by 20 to 30 per cent, according to spokeswoman Holly Ward.

Casino officials blame the provincial smoking ban that came into effect May 31 for a drop in customer traffic.

They also say fewer American tourists are crossing the border due to uncertainty over passport controls and the surging value of the Canadian dollar.

Renovations at the casino are also believed to be driving customers away. The casino is building a new sports lounge and café as part of a \$ 400-million expansion.

Layoff notices have gone out to 297 unionized and 32 non-union staff. The majority of layoffs are of employees working at the gaming tables or in the food and beverage areas.

Ward said some of the workers will be recalled once renovations are complete and business picks up. The expansion is expected to be finished by the end of the year.