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Hillsborough tax collector: Some double-billed on tax payments

By [MIKE SALINERO](#) | The Tampa Tribune

An unknown number of Hillsborough County residents were double-billed for their property taxes this week due to a California company's computer malfunction.

R.T. Lawrence, a California company that processes online payments for Hillsborough Tax Collector Doug Belden's office, also handles Charlotte County's on-line tax collections. The company's computer system apparently debited some Hillsborough residents' accounts for Charlotte tax payments.

Larry Tong, director of operations for R.T. Lawrence, said today the company was working with banks to rectify the problem and restore any overdrafts. Tong said any problems with the accounts should be resolved today.

"We guarantee 100 percent that these problems will be fixed," he said.

Tong said he did not know exactly how many taxpayers were double-billed. The company was still trying to figure out what went wrong this afternoon.

A caller to The Tampa Tribune this morning said his bank account had been debited \$10,000 twice - once for his Hillsborough County tax payment and again for Charlotte County. The man did not give his name, but his information was confirmed by Brenden Chiaramonte, Belden's administrative assistant.

Belden shut down the on-line payment function on his office's Web site after callers notified the tax collectors' office about the billing problems.

"We want to make sure that this is fixed so we don't keep adding people to the issue," Chiaramonte said.

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