

[back to article](#)



# Building still lagging

## Lowering the road impact fee has not increased permits

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OCALA - There's been no rush on permits in the month since the Marion County Commission temporarily lopped \$4,000 off the road impact fee for new single-family homes.

Since the lower fee took effect May 21, until Monday, the Marion County Building Department has issued 81 single-family home permits, Interim Building Director John Schulkers said.

"We have not really seen an appreciable increase," Schulkers said.

For all of May, the county's Building Department issued 71 single-family home permits, which is the lowest number in years. By comparison, in May 2006, when the building boom was on, the county issued 596 permits for single-family homes.

Through the end of May, the county's Building Department had issued 786 single-family home permits so far in the 2007-08 fiscal year. During the building boom of the 2005-06 fiscal year, the department issued 6,355 single-family home permits.

County Commissioner Stan McClain, a home builder, said that frenzy a few years back led in part to the current doldrums.

"Again, the inventory is still an issue and it will be until we get some of that old inventory off the books," McClain said.

Back on May 20, the County Commission decided to cut road impact fees on new residential and commercial construction by two-thirds for 90 days. That vote reduced the road impact fee on a new home from \$6,107 to \$2,015 for three months. After that, the road impact fee on a new home will go back up to \$6,099, while the road impact fee on most commercial development will drop even further.

Since the reduction, 28 permits, about one-third of the total issued, are for Pulte

Homes' Del Webb Stonecreek retirement and golf club community. Jay Thompson, Pulte's Ocala division president, said that number is Pulte's regular production schedule and not any permitting binge sparked by the lower impact fee. Thompson said Pulte pulls permits for about 30 new homes a month in Stonecreek and, inside the city of Ocala, about 15 a month for Fore Ranch.

Located at the northern edge of On Top of the World along the State Road 200 corridor, Stonecreek is expected to have 4,000 homes at build-out. Right now about 500 have been built and sold, said Melissa Segarra, Pulte's marketing coordinator.

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