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## LAKELAND CITY commission

# City Hopes Impact-Fee Cuts Nurture Growth

**Program approved Monday will offer discounts for job-creating businesses.**

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THE LEDGER

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LAKELAND | The city of Lakeland wants to give businesses a break on impact fees to attract new growth and jobs to the area.

The Economic Development Impact Fee Mitigation program will cut non-utility impact fees for businesses that build new facilities and pay workers at least \$19.18 per hour or an average annual salary of \$39,898 - amounting to 115 percent of the average local wage.

Qualifying companies must create between 10 and 50 new jobs to receive the lowest impact fee discount of 50 percent. Businesses that create between 51 and 100 new jobs will get a 70 percent reduction, with a 90 percent discount for adding more than 100 jobs.

Lakeland city commissioners unanimously approved the proposal on Monday.

"We are very excited about this program and we hope that it becomes a valuable catalyst within our economic development toolbox that will foster a business to relocate or expand to Lakeland," said Mayor Gow Fields in a prepared statement.

Officials said the fee program is designed for new businesses and companies that are expanding.

Also eligible for the 50 percent discount are developers who build new industrial facilities 70,000 square feet or larger to attract new businesses. Jason Willey, economic development coordinator for Lakeland, said the non-utility (transportation, law enforcement, fire) impact fees on a new, 100,000-square-foot manufacturing facility would come to \$94,500, or \$47,250 with the discount.

A new distribution center of the same size would pay \$162,000 in non-utility fees, or \$81,000 with the discount.

Willey said city officials hope the program will both attract new business and stimulate construction activity among developers.

"It boils down to jobs, jobs, jobs," he said.

To qualify for the program, a company must submit an application and a \$500 administrative review fee, and must also have a letter of recommendation from the Lakeland Economic Development Council.

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