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Spanish Fork impact fees increase as city anticipates record year for building

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JEREMY DUDA - Daily Herald

Spanish Fork city officials are expecting record numbers of new homes to start going up this year, and the cost of building those homes just went up.

Impact fees are rising by as much as \$676 to cover the cost of the increased services and infrastructure that will be needed for thousands of newcomers.

Based on the permits issued last year, Mayor Joe Thomas said Spanish Fork's population could increase by about 33 percent.

"Our population right now is 30,000. With the permits we've issued, our population goes to 40,000," he said. "The requests are nonstop."

And that's just the permits issued last year. In 2007, Spanish Fork estimates that it will issue about 750 building permits, an increase of more than 150 from 2006, according to finance director Kent Clark.

"We're thinking it's going to be our biggest year in the history of our city," Clark said.

Because different parts of town have different requirements for stormwater drainage, the increase in impact fees depends on the area where the building permit is issued. The largest increase in impact fees is in southeast Spanish Fork, where fees will rise to \$9,630, an increase of \$676. Incoming residents to the northeast part of town will see impact fees increase \$344 to \$9,758, while fees in the Westfields area will jump \$494 to \$8,473.

The impact fees were raised to cover the costs of electric and sewer infrastructure, the city's pressurized irrigation system and parks and recreation projects.

"There's a lot more things we have to buy now, providing to make sure we keep the same level of service," Clark said. "We're doing more water lines, we're doing more sewer, more everything."

The City Council recently approved the purchase of 46.9 acres for a future park. The \$2.1 million land buy will be paid for with money from impact fees. Impact fees are also paying for several new baseball fields the city is working on, according to assistant city manager Seth Perrins.

"Any new construction like that we can pay for by using that impact fee money," Perrins said.

Impact fees could have seen a quadruple-digit increase were it not for a decrease in the water impact fee. Due to the recent completion of a water storage tank project, that fee went down to \$807, a decrease of \$645. The city studies its impact fees every 12-18 months, and the fees are adjusted, or not, depending on need.

Thomas said the most pressing need facing Spanish Fork, as well as its neighbors in south Utah County, is sewer. To alleviate increased demands on the cities' sewer systems, Thomas said there is some discussion about a possible regional wastewater treatment plant.

"It's going to be an issue for everybody because it's going to be the limit to our growth," Thomas said.

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