

Impact fees on the rise

Reflecting return of development

Alyssa LaRenzie
Alarenzie@forsythnews.com
August 3, 2013

The annual impact fee program update reflected the trend that Forsyth County has been seeing — development is returning.

Impact fees are charged to developers to offset the effects of building, and those funds support public facility projects.

The county collected about \$3.4 million from the program in 2012, according to a presentation given at the county commission meeting Thursday.

That's an increase of about 79 percent from the revenue in 2011, which totaled about \$1.9 million.

"It's great that the numbers are coming up so much," said Commissioner Cindy Jones Mills.

Nearly \$4 million was spent in 2012, going toward the new fire station in Ducktown, the soon-to-open Post Road library, two green space parks and two recreation centers, said Jamie Payne, assistant director of finance.

The funds stay within the service area collected, divided by north and south in the county for the fire, library and E-911 impact fees.

Fees are also collected countywide for parks and recreation, as well as administrative needs for the program.

About \$5.3 million is available for projects, of which about \$2.1 million is dedicated for parks and recreation.

According to Payne's report, upcoming impact fee projects include: fire stations; the Sharon Forks library expansion; Matt Community Park; Lanierland Park and improvements to the E-911 radio systems.

The impact fee update, along with the short-term work program plan, will be transmitted to the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission for review.

After it's returned, the report will next be sent to the state Department of Community Affairs before final adoption by the commission.

The report is required for the county to maintain its qualified local government status.

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