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### Can break on fees breathe life into Lake's sagging economy?

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TAVARES — Clermont chiropractor Joseph Bandur wants to expand his practice.

To help him do so, the doctor asked Lake County to defer more than \$13,000 in impact fees — a charge the government levies on new businesses to offset their burden on roads and other infrastructure.

Commissioners are likely to approve the request, which has been endorsed by county staffers. They noted in a written recommendation to the commission that "any (new) job in the current economy is a benefit."

"The county is trying to be business-friendly," Commissioner Jimmy Conner said. "It shows we're trying to work with businesspeople during difficult economic times."

The county recently considered suspending its impact fees. Such a moratorium might help kick-start a stagnant local economy, which includes a double-digit unemployment rate.

"Our economy needs all the help it can get right now," Commissioner Linda Stewart said after a recent board meeting.

But impact-fee moratoriums set by five other counties, including Brevard, resulted in no increase in commercial or residential construction activity, board Chairman Welton Cadwell pointed out.

Lake has five types of impact fees to help pay for new roads, schools, fire services, libraries and parks, despite once being a battleground over school-impact fees.

"Times are different," said Conner, who served 12 years on the Lake County School Board.

In the case of the Clermont Neurological & Chiropractic Center, the county isn't forgiving impact fees but would delay the business' payment of them. Ordinarily the fees are due when a developer obtains

permits for a project.

The chiropractor would be required to pay when he's ready to move into new offices.

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