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## Impact fees bring \$12.5 million

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CHARLES TOWN, W.VA. — It's been four years since Jefferson County implemented the first impact fee ordinance in West Virginia.

The Jefferson County Commission learned Thursday morning that it has paid off.

F. Mark Schiavone, director of the county's impact fee program, told the five board members the county is \$12.5 million richer than it was before the fees took effect.

The first one, paid by a developer in January 2004, bought a new cruiser for the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department, Schiavone said.

The program distributes proceeds to the Jefferson County Board of Education, sheriff's department, the Jefferson County Parks and Recreation Commission, and the county's volunteer fire and EMS departments.

The school board, which received the lion's share of \$11.5 million, spent more than \$8 million on the new Washington High School and put more than \$3 million toward the cost of a new elementary school to be built on Job Corps Road, Schiavone said.

The sheriff's department spent its \$143,000 share on new police cruisers.

The parks and recreation commission spent \$300,000 to expand its land holdings and \$170,000 on equipment and improvements.

The remaining \$171,000 was shared by the Bakerton, Friendship and Shepherdstown fire departments.

The fees are collected on new single-family homes (\$13,070), multifamily apartments (7,594), townhomes and duplexes (\$9,868).

Impact fees on commercial property can run up to \$2,479 per 1,000 square feet of construction in projects that generate heavy traffic like shopping centers. Projects like industrial buildings, which generate very little traffic, can cost as little as \$195 per 1,000 square feet, Schiavone said.

The law provides for automatic annual inflationary increases. On Thursday, Schiavone recommended to cancel any increases this year, "in the interest of fairness in the current economic conditions,"

If not blocked by the commissioners, the fees for new single-family homes would jump to \$13,940, he

said.

The state requires countywide zoning be in effect before impact fees can be established. When Jefferson County put its fees in place, it was the only county in West Virginia that met that requirement.

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