



OSCEOLA NEWS-GAZETTE

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September 13, 2005

St. Cloud wants to lead Florida



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NEWEST NEWS

- 1 County may decide fate of center Monday
- 2 About the Projects
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- First set of grads walk down aisle Sunday
- 4 Hopper, mayor spar over St. Cloud project
- 5 Crossing guard injured in accident ready to return

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CALENDAR

May						
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Editorial: Taming growth

13 May 2005

Could it be that the message finally got through?

The state Legislature, in the waning hours of its session, approved a \$1.5 billion measure to fund roads and schools being strained under the state's high growth rate.

For the past several years, government and community leaders have trotted off to Tallahassee looking for help to meet the demand for services brought on by the flood of people relocating to the area.

Officials have had some successes, gaining additional allocations to help build more classrooms in a county where the equivalent of a classroom a day is added to the school district rolls.

What separates the action taken by the Legislature last week from previous efforts is that the money appropriated is recurring. That's funding that the school district can count on each year. The \$13 million is enough for a new school.

The Legislature also approved increased funding for transportation. The bill calls for \$300 million to spend in Central Florida in counties that match the state's commitment.

With this kind of capital infusion, it is an opportune time for Central Florida government and business officials to take a step back and look at their transportation network. Continuing to build more and more roads is not the answer to the area's transportation problem. More, and better, mass transportation alternatives need to be explored.

With the state dedicating \$13 million annually to improve schools, there will likely be some pressure for the Osceola County Commission and Osceola County School Board to reduce the highest school impact fees in the state. Builders will argue that the \$9,708 fee approved in December 2003 should be reduced.

An examination is warranted, but the county and the district should not give away the store. It makes no sense to take one step forward with the infusion of state dollars and two steps backward by dramatically slicing school impact fees.

Credit the Osceola Lobbying Effort for helping move these issues forward.

The effort on the part of the Legislature will not totally tame the growth monster, but it does give a great deal of breathing room for area officials to continue the fight.

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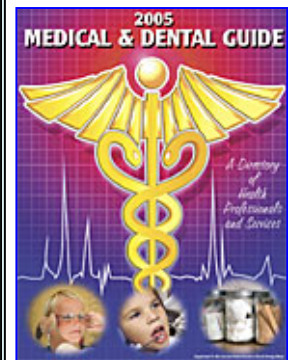
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Community Appreciation Day



News-Gazette Photo/
Martin Maddock
Members of the Kissimmee Police Department's SWAT team demonstrated how they respond to a

Osceola Shopper

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▼ CALENDAR EVENTS

- 05/26 Paso Fino Horse Show
- 07/04 Fourth of July Celebration
- 10/09 Viva Osceola
- 12/10 Holiday Extravaganza

hostage situation during Community Appreciation Day April 30. The city police and fire departments hosted the event to demonstrate their appreciation to the local citizens for all their support throughout the year.

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