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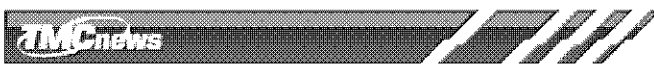
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[February 28, 2009]

Impact fees ongoing subject of debate

(The Sun (Yuma, AZ) Via Acquire Media NewsEdge) Feb. 28--The debate over the city of Yuma's impact or development fees has heated up again.

City officials defend the fees assessed on new development, saying that "growth needs to pay for growth." Business leaders, on the other hand, say that during the economic downturn the fees are yet another obstacle to any growth occurring.

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The city adopted its development fee program in late 2005, assessing fees on all new development projects that add capacity for eight categories of city services. Those categories include parks and recreation, arts and culture, sanitation, police, fire, general government, public works and transportation.

A formula was developed through a consultant's study of how much impact a development project might be expected to have on each category. For example, it was expected that a new single-family home would have more impact on parks than a shopping center, but create less demand on police and fire services and roads than a business would.

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"With new homes, there would be kids who would use the parks, the pools and soccer fields," said Jennifer Albers, city of Yuma senior planner. Therefore, homes are assessed a higher development fee to go toward the city's deficiency of parks and recreation.

A new business wouldn't be assessed a parks and recreation development fee, but would pay higher fees for police, fire and roads.

At the time the development fees were adopted and again when they were revised in 2007, they were hotly debated.

The fees came about to replace the city's pro-rata fees, whereby a developer was assessed for the cost of extending infrastructure across an undeveloped area to reach his project, then being reimbursed as other development filled in, said Bob Stull, deputy city

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Dialer	"The developers said that was unfair," he said. Other issues were that the pro rata fees usually applied only to small areas and didn't contribute to the cost of new parks or need for increased police and fire services.
DID/DDI	
e911	
Ethernet Extender	The development fees "were started at the developers' request," Stull said. "They didn't want to pay for the infrastructure to benefit someone else." Another issue about that time, said John Weil, general counsel for Halls Construction, is that the federal government cut back on community grants to pay for new infrastructure so states began authorizing the impact fees.
Fax	
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HD Conference	
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Headsets	At the time the city adopted the fees, they were set at 70 percent of the maximum amount allowed under state law, as recommended by a citizen's advisory committee.
Hosted Call Center	
Hosted Contact Center	The fees were revised in 2007 to reflect rising costs, Albers said. There also was considerable pressure from the public that developers should pay the full cost of their projects' impact on the community.
Hosted PBX	
IP Fax	
IP Phone System	Throughout the process, the development community cautioned that high fees would slow or even halt growth and make economic development difficult.
IVR	
Mobile Management	
Mobile Unified Communications	Given today's economic climate, that has come true, some say.
Mobile Video	Ken Rosevear, executive director of the Yuma County Chamber of Commerce, has mounted a campaign seeking a year's moratorium on the fees in an effort to jumpstart the local economy.
NAT Traversal	
NEBS	
Open Source CRM	Julie Engel, head of Greater Yuma Economic Development Corp., said she supports development fees that "are fair and reasonable that keep us competitive." However, she said, she believes that the city's development fees, combined with its connection fees for sewer and water, "are excessive. I don't think we're competitive right now. Absolutely, we've lost projects because of the impact fees combined with capacity fees. There are too many variables stifling development right now, but the fees are an obstacle." She also expressed concern that the impact fees might not be going to the city projects they were meant to fund.
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SIP	Weil echoed that concern. "The city is sitting on the money," he said. "They're collecting the fees, then the developers are having to do the infrastructure anyway. The developers wouldn't be opposed if the money went to pay for the infrastructure that benefits their community ... like streets and parks." He continued, "Developers feel like the fees have become a revenue stream for the city's favorite projects all over the city. We don't feel we should be paying into a bottomless pit that doesn't address the needs of the developers."
SIP Trunking	While Weil deals primarily with residential development, he said his larger concern is the impact of the fees on commercial development.
Softswitch	
Speech Recognition and Text to Speech	"We have a totally stagnant economy," he said. "If we could spur commercial development, that would bring prosperity and create jobs and people could afford to buy houses." The city's position is that it's only fair that developers be assessed for the impact of their projects on the community and the growth they bring.
Telecom Expense Management	
Telemarketing Software	
Unified Communications	
Virtual Call Center	
Virtual PBX	
Voice Broadcast	
Voice and Video IP Communication	"They (the fees) go for the cost of growth and providing services for that new growth," said city spokesman Greg Hyland. "If we waive the fees, we need to make up for them somewhere else." That "somewhere else" would be all city taxpayers, he said.
Voice Management	
Voice Over IP	-- Impact fees are assessed for the following categories: --Parks and recreation -- Art and culture facilities -- Sanitation --Police --Fire and emergency medical service --General government --Public works --Transportation -- IMPACT FEE SCHEDULE Residential -- Single family house -- \$5,920 --Multifamily dwellings -- \$4,446 --Other types of housing, such as recreational vehicles -- \$3,397 Nonresidential --Retail -- ranges from \$5,391 to \$3,869 per square foot -- Office and institutional -- ranges from \$3,613 to \$2,058 per square foot --Light industrial -- \$1,295 --Warehousing -- \$850 --Manufacturing -- \$813 --Hotels -- \$766 per room -- IMPACT FEE FACTOIDS In fiscal year 2007-08, a total of \$3.2 million was collected in impact fees among the eight categories. With carry-over revenue, interest and other fund sources, the city had a total of \$9.3 million.
Voice Peering	
Voice Replacement	
VoIP Contact Center	
VoIP Developer	
VoIP Monitoring	
VoIP Robustness Testing	
VoIP Test Solutions	
Web Meeting	
Webcasting	Expenditures for the fiscal year 2007-08 included: --Purchase of 120 acres for the proposed

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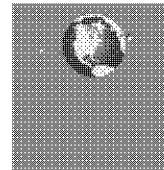
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