



## County To Pay 1st Incentive For Expansion

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ODESSA - A turbine generator manufacturer has scored \$57,000 in incentives to bring new jobs to Pasco County.

Turbine Diagnostic Services officials plan to move the bulk of the company's operations to a 30,000-square-foot building leased at Success Drive. Initially, the company planned to build a 10,000-square-foot building and had approval to be reimbursed for construction impact fees.

"The owner wants some kind of recognition of creating new jobs in Pasco," John Walsh, vice president of the Pasco Economic Development Council, told county commissioners last week.

Businesses that create jobs in Pasco County are eligible for incentives such as impact fee reimbursements. Turbine Diagnostic will be the first company to be rewarded for expanding in the county.

County commission Chairman Ted Schrader objected to the payout because it will come from a \$2 million reserve account set aside for economic development incentives. The account, created after Pasco lost out to the city of Tampa in a bid for an H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center pharmaceutical partnership, was intended to draw in big companies with high-paying jobs.

"I'm a little concerned if we change policy and start tapping into that \$2 million," Schrader said. "If you do that, before you know it, you're down to \$1 million. ...We didn't set it aside to attract the old guys. We set it aside to attract the one big player."

Commissioner Michael Cox, who sits on the economic council, said the investment will pay off in the long run by bringing more jobs to Pasco. Turbine Diagnostic officials promise to keep 18 full-time and 15 temporary employees here and create seven full-time jobs with an average annual salary of \$80,000.

Turbine Diagnostics has a machine shop and storage facility in Brooksville and an office in Tampa. The Odessa headquarters houses a new manufacturing facility for digital steam and gas turbine generators.

"We're geared toward new businesses," Cox said. "One thing we're lacking is to help businesses already here to expand."

Commissioner Jack Mariano agreed, saying it is better to take from the economic development reserve fund than the general fund supported by property taxes. County officials in coming months must cut an estimated \$22 million from the budget.

Cox said after the meeting that if a big company woos Pasco, officials will scramble to find incentive money.

"Let's face it: If a big company comes in, it will require money, and we'll find a way to get it."

Cox said after the meeting the residual benefits of a company expanding in Pasco are difficult to measure.

"The bottom line is we're trying to bring jobs to the county," he said.

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