

## GROWTH

# Lee County wants \$28 million for upgrades to water plant

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One of Lee County's highest-growth areas needs more water and the Lee County Board of Commissioners is hoping for some help from the state to provide it.

The board voted 5-0 Tuesday morning to approve the county's application for the state revolving fund to add 2 million gallons per day of water capacity to the Three Oaks Wastewater Treatment Plant. Located near Gulf Coast Town Center and Florida Gulf Coast University, the plant has a capacity of 4 million gallons per day.

Lee County Public Utilities Director Pam Keyes said the plant was slated to treat six-million gallons per day, but the water quality did not meet expectations. "So with the additional treatment components, we'll be able to increase the capacity," Keyes said. "This is a high-growth area so it's important for us to be able cover future growth and future demand."

Instead of getting the \$28 million from a bank or bonding out the project, the county will take advantage of the state revolving fund's low interest rates.

"This is 1 percent, where if we went to a bank or bonded it out, it'd be 3, 4 percent. So this is a very good deal for us," Keyes said.

The project will not result in a rate increase for Lee County customers. The loan will be paid back over the course of 20 years at about \$1.6 million per year. The county has already spent about \$1.6 million in design costs.



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