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## TDC Saves \$5,000 By Inhouse Work



Levy County Tourist Development Council Executive Director Tisha Whitehurst tells the County Commission on Tuesday (Oct. 16) that she is seeking only \$20,000 this year rather than the \$25,000 she requested the previous budget year. The members of the Tourist Development Council reduced the requested funds, she said, because through her work and the work of Administrative Assistant Catrina Sistrunk, they can complete some of what is needed for digital marketing inhouse. The TDC members unanimously approved the budget for the digital marketing plan, Whitehurst said. On a motion by County Commissioner Mike Joyner, seconded by County Commissioner Rock Meeks, the complete plan for digital marketing for the TDC was approved by the County Commission 5-0. This includes all social media, newsletters, etc., and reaches out worldwide through the Internet to attract people to events in Levy County.

*Photo by Jeff M. Hardison © Oct. 17, 2018 at 5:28 p.m.*

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## Business sees Levy County welcomes it

Nature Coast  
Business  
Development  
Council  
Executive  
Director David  
Pieklik



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## Story and Photo

By Jeff M. Hardison © Oct. 17, 2018 at 3:28 p.m.

**BRONSON** – During the regular meeting of the Levy County Board of County Commissioners Tuesday (Oct. 16), the five elected leaders heard from Nature Coast Business Development Council Executive Director David Pieklik as he presented a report on progress in business from August through December.

Pieklik told them that in the seven years he has served the county he is seeing historic levels of business interest and incentives applications, with roughly five pending their review.

Some projects are closer to being a relative certainty in contrast with some others.

“We went for two years and saw one,” Pieklik said. “Now, we see five.”

This is the first time he has seen two projects go to the state’s qualified target industry status for Levy County in one month, and this is a positive indicator for the businesses and for the county, he said.

He let the County Commission know that he intends to remain open and honest with them. If he sees the county as giving an incentive to a project that shows little hope of success, then he will let them know that.

Incentives to attract business can generate community opposition, and the County Commission could look at a potential financial commitment of several hundred thousand dollars.

These are great jobs, he told the County Commission, but the question will come up as to how much the county is able and willing to contribute to attract that company to Levy County.

“While we all want good quality, high wage jobs,” Pieklik told HardisonInk.com after the meeting, “we also can’t overstretch ourselves. So, we will move forward carefully considering these projects and the (probable) return on investment.

“These companies should feel welcome and proud to call us home,” he added, “but at the end of the day, the community needs to get what it needs most.”

Pieklik has been directly responsible for bringing new business to Levy County as well as helping existing business expand.

He told the County Commission that part of his success is the welcome mat the county has put out for new business.

“Everybody that I have talked to who is outside of the area,” Pieklik told the County Commission, “that was considering Marion County, or other counties in the region has said ‘We don’t get the same feeling (there) that we get here (in Levy County).’

“Not that we are going to get every single one of those projects,” he continued, “but that is huge for you all; and it is a testament to the community.”