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Companies seek tax breaks

County to consider abatements for 3 businesses seeking to expand

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FLORIDA TODAY*

Despite the economic downturn, a trio of companies hopes to hire 67 new workers and invest \$36 million in new construction and equipment in Brevard County.

They are eyeing potential sites in Titusville, West Melbourne and Melbourne.

Today, the Brevard County Commission will consider tax abatement packages for these prospective expanding companies.

The highest-profile project is NewSpace Center, LLC, a New Port Richey corporation that wants to build its research headquarters on 40 acres of Space Coast Regional Airport property off State Road 407 in Titusville.

Included in the plans: The NewSpace Pavilion, featuring a replica of a Mars settlement and space-themed displays.

Open to the public, this facility would showcase "real space tourism hardware, launch vehicles and infrastructure from the world's most innovative and cutting-edge commercial space companies," according to an executive summary.

"It will serve as an interactive development, business, museum and education forum with over 30,000 square feet dedicated to humans living and working in space," the summary continues.

Estimated NewSpace Center costs are \$25 million for construction and \$5.5 million for other items, Economic Development Commission of Florida's Space Coast records show. The company projects a \$1 million payroll, consisting of 25 workers with average salaries of \$40,000.

County commissioners will consider granting a 10-year tax abatement totaling \$1.3 million.

On a smaller scale, the commission may grant a 10-year, \$45,886 tax abatement for LS Enterprises, Ltd. This business proposes to manufacture 4,000 aluminum cases per year for professional music and emergency management vendors, county records show.

LS Enterprises would move to West Melbourne from the United Kingdom and invest \$1 million in an industrial park near the Melbourne International Airport. The company plans to hire a dozen workers with average salaries of \$56,800, according to an Economic Development Commission report.

The third tax abatement candidate is United Service Source, Inc., located on Ellis Road in Melbourne. The commercial communication networking firm proposes a 17,000-square-foot expansion for a new technical operations center, office space and parking.

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USSI's payroll would increase from 110 to 140 workers within 18 months. Average salary for the new hires is estimated at \$42,000, records show.

This \$2.5 million expansion also calls for \$1.8 million in new tangible personal property. The company was founded with four workers in 1985.

Today, commissioners are expected to schedule a July 7 public hearing on a proposed USSI tax abatement. The Brevard County Property Appraiser's Office will calculate an abatement amount prior to that date.

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