

OPINIONS

Our Views

Weekend wrap-up

■ The Space Coast needs jobs, and no area needs them more than Titusville, which is taking the brunt of the post-shuttle layoffs.

That's why the County Commission did the smart thing this week in creating a North Brevard Economic Development Zone that will use financial incentives to lure new companies.

Under the plan, revenue generated through incremental property tax increases resulting from new construction would go toward attracting businesses in the zone. After five years, property taxes from all its eligible properties would go toward the fund.

The idea came from Commissioner Robin Fisher, who pointed to the success of a similar plan in Fort Myers and Lee County that can serve as a template.

There, Lee County-approved fiscal incentives have attracted an insurance company with plans to create 125 jobs and allowed a biopharmaceutical company based there to broaden relationships with leading cancer research centers.

■ The next step is for Brevard commissioners to establish a governing board for the zone that would draw up an operating plan and administer it.

■ They should follow the Fort Myers-Lee County lead that focuses on companies that create at least 75 new, full-time jobs with a three-year period with higher-paying salaries. The firms must also make a capital investment equal to or greater than their incentive award.

We'll be watching the zone closely to see how it develops.