
LEE COUNTY VOTES TO PROVIDE GARTNER INC. WITH INCENTIVES TO HIRE 400 EMPLOYEES



A unanimous vote was taken on Tuesday by the Lee County Commission to provide Gartner Inc. with \$1.48 million so the **technology company can bring 400 jobs to the region** by 2019 and build a \$20 million office, according to News-Press.com.

The money will be taken from the general fund of the county, which is typically made up of property taxes. It is money previously designated by the county commissioners for the stimulation of the county's economy. The state of Florida will pay an additional \$3.47 million in incentives.

Gartner operates its headquarters in Stamford, Connecticut. It has offices throughout the world and had \$1.6 billion in revenue back in 2012. The compensation package per employee will be an average of \$63,000.

Brian Hamman, a county commissioner, said that he received a guarantee that local contractors would be hired to build the new office for the company. He received this guarantee prior to the vote.

"I wanted to make sure that when they do build the new building, they use local works and stimulate the economy," Hamman said.

The FGCU Regional Economic Research Institute projected that the project will bring in \$808,000 in sales tax and \$658,000 in annual property tax revenue by 2020. This would mean \$152 million annually when the construction and hiring is done.

This is the second time that the commissioners have provided Gartner with an incentive so it would expand its company in Florida. Back in 2011, the company agreed to an incentive plan that said it would add 400 jobs, which would bring a total of 746 jobs by 2015. Lee County provided \$1.4 million in incentives and Florida provided \$3.7 million in the deal. These expansions are still being completed and will be done prior to the new incentives taking place.

Chris Lafond, the executive vice president and chief financial officer of the company said that there are 600 employees at its location on Gateway Boulevard in Fort Myers. Lafond said that number will hit 1,150 by 2023.

"We are going to continue to grow and it is important to know that we are hiring now and we are going to be hiring for some time," Lafond said.

Gartner first came to Lee County in 1998. Lafond said that he was part of the original group in Florida, but returned to headquarters in 2002.

"We sell our services to companies that are buying technology and making technology decisions," Lafond said. "We have been successful in attracting good quality candidates for the positions we have and we expect that will continue."

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