

Think Lee County business court for greater efficiency

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Florida Trend magazine recently chose Lee County as its featured Florida community.

The November 2013 article showcases the efforts of community leaders to draw attention to the benefits of operating a business in our area and to encourage businesses to relocate here.

Lee County and local business leaders have spent a great deal of time and public funds in the past few years in this endeavor. The results are now paying off — major national and international companies are relocating their businesses to Lee County.

I suggest that an additional tool be considered to attract these companies: A dedicated business court that would specialize and handle only business related legal matters.

The business court concept has been a growing trend globally.

In Florida, business court programs have been developed in Orlando, Miami, Tampa and Fort Lauderdale and have reaped benefits for those areas. According to an article from the Judicial Studies Institute Journal, “Commercial Courts: A Twenty First Century Necessity”, a county that has a business court provides a strong inducement for national and international companies to relocate to that particular area.

The following factors have been identified in a number of studies, and show the benefits of a Business Court:

- **Expertise.** A business court that handles strictly business related matters develops expertise, experience and knowledge in those areas.
- **Efficiency.** A business court develops a judiciary whose sole responsibilities are business related matters with the result that judicial functions are performed more rapidly and efficiently. A cost savings to the taxpayer.
- **Resource availability.** By being more efficient in handling business related cases, business courts free up additional time for judges to handle other court-related needs, providing better service for everyone who utilizes the court system.
- **Stability.** There would be more consistency and predictability based upon a judge’s prior rulings on business related legal issues.
- **Recruitment.** As important as the above factors are to provide an immediate benefit to our community, it has been shown that a business court can result in businesses being recruited to an area since they know that a specialized court is in place to resolve business disputes.

Lee County has spent a great deal of money targeting certain businesses and providing public fund to encourage businesses to relocate to our community. Some of those investments have proven to be effective (Hertz) and some have not (VR Labs). The investment in a business court would provide

immediate benefits and eliminate some of the risk of distributing public funds to start-up companies.

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