

Dear Herald opinion page



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Recently, Rock Hill city residential development utility fee increases. If officials have blamed new residential growth for the proposed tax and new residential growth really does not pay for itself, why then does the City of Rock Hill continue to require new developments to be annexed into the city? According to city officials, these new developments do not generate enough property tax revenue to cover the cost of expanding city departments such as planning, economic development, fire and police. If a private sector business tried to operate this way they would be bankrupt in a very short period of time.

In reality, many studies show that new growth actually does pay for itself and the City of Rock Hill already has the means to make this happen. The city's utility rates are based on a cost to serve model. Rock Hill has the right to provide utility services (water, sewer, electricity) to new developments that locate outside the city limits without annexing them and to charge them a higher rate than city residents. If city officials would provide utility services without annexing, the city council would be able to lower utility rates for existing city residents, hold down tax rates by generating a profit from the utility systems, decrease the need for expanding other city services, and continue to generate additional revenue from local option taxes such as the prepared food tax.

Let's not blame newcomers for the city's fiscal issues that were created long before their arrival.

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*REBIC is a regional, non-profit public-affairs organization that represents the Home Builders Association of York County and the Piedmont Regional Realtors Association.