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Westlake council OKs incentive program with Marriott Solana

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WESTLAKE -- To generate new business and maintain group sales, the Westlake Town Council on Monday approved its third economic development agreement with Marriott Solana, funding part of a shuttle bus service and a group incentive program.

The vote was 3-0. Two council members were absent.

The vote approved \$70,000 toward the shuttle bus service, an increase of \$10,000 over last year's agreement, to help cover higher costs.

The second part of the agreement gives the hotel \$40,000 to help fund the group business incentive program, which is also a \$10,000 increase over last year's agreement.

Modeled after a program in Addison, the program allows the Marriott Solana to discount room rates or services to generate new group business and under certain circumstances, to maintain group business.

Unlike the two previous agreements, the new plan creates a two-tier approach. Businesses that book a minimum of \$30,000 in room revenue per program could be eligible for \$5,000 in group incentive funds. Groups booking a minimum of \$15,000 in room revenue could be eligible for \$2,500 in incentive funds.

John Klukan, general manager for Marriott Solana, said the programs are bringing in new business and helping the hotel recover from an industrywide slump.

"We've brought [new business] in on the incentive program," Klukan said. "We're trying to create repeat customers."

Town Manager Tom Brymer said contributing to the programs is a return on investment.

Westlake collected more than \$500,000 in hotel occupancy tax revenue from Marriott Solana for fiscal 2011, up from \$457,693 in fiscal 2010.

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