

# Local & Business

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## Captiva wants bed tax

### Funds to help pay for beach project

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In a time of economic uncertainty, the board of the Captiva Erosion Prevention District has come up with a way to increase funds for beach renourishment projects: Raise the island's bed tax.

Lee County collects a 5-percent tax on accommodations rented for six months or less to help pro-

mote tourism. The erosion district wants to bump Captiva's bed tax up 1 percent, with the extra money used only for Captiva beach projects.

The district's board, made up of five Captiva residents, wants the county to write an ordinance stating an increase in Captiva's bed tax would be used for Captiva projects, said district chairman Mike Mullins.

"Our concern is where money for our projects will come from," Mullins said. "We get money from the feds and the state, but the state treasury is in bad shape, and the federal government is looking for areas to save money."

Captiva's beaches need to be renourished about every eight years, and a 1-percent bed-tax increase would raise \$3 million to \$4 million during the eight

years between renourishment projects, he said.

"Our next nourishment project will be in 2013, and we have to start planning to have the money in hand," Mullins said. "We can't assess property owners until the numbers are in, which will be 2014, so, by law, we have to borrow."

Captiva's next nourishment project should cost \$15 million to \$20 million, Mullins said.

None of the county's other beach communities is considering a bed-tax

increase.

"Obviously, it will be interesting to see how it plays out for Captiva," said John Gucciardo, special projects coordinator for Bonita Springs. "But we have nothing like that planned."

County officials have not discussed Captiva's bed tax with the erosion district.

"Obviously, we will have to take a look at this proposal," said Tamara Pigott,

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