Keeping Motorola Inc., at all costs

By SYDNEY FREEDBERG
Times Staff Writer

PLANTATION — A decade ago, when Motorola Inc. asked for $2 million in incentives to create 1,000 new jobs here, imagine Mayor Frank Volpi said the city would do “everything we can short of breaking ground” to help.

He was exaggerating, but not by much.

For more than 30 years, taxpayers have been sending incentives on the electronics giant.

Major, county commissioners and governors reduced taxes and rebate deals. They let Motorola pump metal into a garage. They helped build a day care center and exercise room. And when the company began laying off workers, they paid for new jobs anyway.

What did taxpayers get in return?

They got a lot of tax revenue, to be sure, although the state and the company both say there is no way to know how much.

They also got substantial unpaid, unpaid for the children of their crowded schools.

They got jobs, too, but not as many as predicted.

In fact, employment has declined in recent months at the big plant in Plantation, which now faces an uncertain future.

Meanwhile, a Motorola factory in nearby Pompano Beach was demolished last year, and the company, once one of Florida’s largest high-tech employers, has slashed its state work force by a high of 4,300 to 1,600.

The Motorola story highlights the photo above.

Missions accomplished: Craft, comet collide

Comet Tempel 1, left, is shown in 60-second frames before the 11:52 a.m. collision Monday with NASA’s Deep Impact probe. At right is the comet 12 seconds after impact; the image was taken by a flyby spacecraft stationed 5,300 miles from the comet at the time of the collision.

Camerons on a flyby spacecraft confirm Deep Impact’s bull’s-eye mission in a design mission to gain insight into the composition of the solar system.

Washington Post

PASSAIC, Calif. — NASA’s Deep Impact spacecraft completed a 12-minute journey to smash into early Monday, sending an into the comet to vaporize itself in a spectacular display of glory.

Scientists and engineers at NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory cheered as images taken by a second flyby spacecraft stationed nearby confirmed that the “impactor” had scored a bull’s-eye, smashing into comet Tempel 1 at its know site at 11:52 a.m. EDT, snapping a column of debris that 10 to the

The spacecraft, stationed 5,300 miles from the comet at impact, used two cameras and an infrared spectrometer to record the event and its aftermath for 13 minutes, then turned away in “shield mode” as the comet passed on the 110-mile-wide, traveling at a relative speed of 25,000 miles an hour.

Tribe faulted for not warning its casino patrons

A judge says few know that state legal protections don’t apply there.

By JEFF TESTERMAN
Times Staff Writer

TAMPA — For more than 20 years, patrons of the Seminole Tribe of Florida who were wounded while visiting for their lucky number to come out right have filed lawsuits, and the tribe has repeatedly refused to pay.

And for more than 20 years, judges around the state have thrown out the suits, altering their interpretation of the law over time and allowing the tribe to escape responsibility for the injuries it caused.

The Seminole Tribe of Florida, in one of the latest of these lawsuits, has been faulted for not warning patrons of the risk of injury.

Referring to the Seminole-Hialeah’s casino, the

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Motorola was the "genesis of sprawl," says Lee Hiller, a former Plantation council member.

HELP FROM THE GOVERNORS

The plant has received considerable help from state government officials.

LAWTON CHILES (1991-95) promised to provide a "green belt" around the plant that would protect a wetland area and a water filtration system from pollution.

JIM BUNN (1993-95) gave the plant tax relief and a $100,000 grant to build a wastewater treatment plant.

The state has also provided $2 million in interest-free loans to the plant.

A second factory

Motorola was building a second factory next to the first one.

A change of heart

After about three months, the state changed its mind and decided to let the plant go.

Motorola responded that it had helped saved the state money.

Motorola's decision to build a second factory was a significant economic boost for the state.
After O'Connor, doors opened for women in U.S. judiciary

When President Ronald Reagan took the historic step of nominating Sandra Day O'Connor to the Supreme Court in 1981, he had not a lot of choice. The bench, one seat had to be filled.

The pool of well-qualified women justices was nonexistent at the time," said Daniel Schelke, a law professor at the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis, who served as a law clerk for Justice Antonin Scalia.

"They had to reach for O'Connor. She wasn't the most high court in Arizona. She was an in the middle-level appellate court. But there another number of reasons, including keeping with the spirit of the program, which is in place on appeal, and to bring in a broad perspective," he added.

The consensus among observers is that O'Connor's appointment was a turning point for women in the judiciary.

"She was a woman who had led a life that included raising children, stopping poverty in a while, serving as the Senate, and it was a Catalyst, a woman," said James P. Gillis, MD.

"To the profession," Kramer said, "you're definitely well into the mainstream. You're the chair of law firms, they've already been in the legal field for a long time.

"The number of prominent conservative Republicans who have been appointed, you know, at a time when women have been so few, it's been a great vehicle for getting there."