

DIB PRIORITIES REAFFIRMED

For FY 2009, the identified goals of the Pensacola Downtown Improvement Board (DIB) remain unchanged from the prior year. The board of directors recently reviewed, debated, and then reaffirmed the same four “priorities” for the agency to spend its time, resources, and efforts to advance in furthering of its stated mission. The four priorities for FY 2009, identified in order of importance, are: 1.) continuing the implementation of the Downtown Retail Strategy, 2. increasing visits to downtown by tourists and other non-residents, 3. increase residential offerings and occupancies, and 4.) increasing community awareness about the value of a vibrant downtown.

The top priority, “continuing the implementation of the Downtown Retail Strategy” is the second installment in what was proposed as a four year implementation process. Included in the planned activities for this priority, or ancillary to it, are such high profile efforts as: continued implementation of the Comprehensive Downtown Parking Management Strategy inclusive of the development of a wayfinding program for the major attractions and public parking facilities, the establishment of an ongoing valet program for patrons visiting downtown businesses, an enhanced parking validation program for customers, expansion of the Palafox Market, greater promotion of Downtown Event Calendars and the many activities happening in the downtown, new marketing materials to assist in the recruitment of quality retailers, focused retail recruitment, and an extension of hours for quality downtown retailers.

The priority of “increasing visits to downtown by tourists and non-resident visitors” will include expanded marketing partnerships with the beaches of Northwest Florida and South Alabama, marketing of a new ferry service based in downtown, establishment of historic walking trails through the core of downtown as well as in the Seville and Belmont-DeVilliers districts, and promotion and/or presentation of a limited number of unique special events that attract targeted visitors from outside the area.

The goal of “increasing residential offerings and occupancies” will be advanced in part by bringing experienced national housing developers together with local housing developers to address the needs for more rental, mixed income, and workforce housing in the downtown. Downtown Living experiences and offerings will also be promoted at major downtown festivals; and the new Employer Assisted Housing Program will open the doors to downtown residential addresses for more employees of downtown businesses.

The fourth priority of “increasing community awareness about the value of downtown” will continue to rely on outreach and communication with other community based groups and assisting the start-up of a new broad-based non-profit intent on bringing support to a limited number of downtown-oriented public policy issues. Another major objective for this priority will include active participation in the updating of the CRA Plan.

Through the further focusing of its efforts and resources on the advancement of these four goals during the coming year, the DIB expects to further the economic success and

sustainability of downtown for the next year and for years to come. The FY 2009 DIB Program of Work prescribes over 80 specific objectives to achieve advancement of the four identified priorities. A full copy of the 2009 Program of Work can be found online at www.downtownpensacola.com.

Franklin D. Kimbrough
Executive Director
Pensacola Downtown Improvement Board