

## Making It Easier To Find Public Parking & Major Attractions

Late last month, the Parking & Traffic Committee and the Downtown Advisory Board ( i.e. Marketing Committee) of the Pensacola Downtown Improvement Board (DIB) jointly started the process of developing a consistent and recognizable signage system to direct users of downtown to off-street public parking as well as the major tourism/visitor attractions in downtown. The purpose of this multi-month effort is to assist tourists, visitors, and residents in locating public parking and the most visited attractions with little or no difficulty. Over the next several months, field surveys of the directional, parking, and tourism signage that currently exist in downtown will be done to inventory and map what exist and where. Many meetings will be held with representatives of the major downtown attractions, public officials, and downtown stakeholders to explain the process and to receive feedback on the various steps necessary to create a series of uniform ( in color, design, placement, content, and scale) signage that will accomplish the intended purposes.

It is anticipated that the development of this new program for vehicular and pedestrian directional signage will take most of the year. When completed, the product of the effort will include agreement on: where new wayfinding signs will be located, what they will look like, what attractions and public parking locations will be included on the new signs, and how the production and installation of the signs will be funded. With the end product from this effort, the DIB will be able to bid the production and installation of the signage by the end of this year. Assuming all necessary governmental approvals can be obtained within the projected timeline, installation of new signage could occur early in 2010.

The new wayfinding signage will include a vehicular as well as a pedestrian component. The vehicular signage will have a limited number of attractions appearing on it and will start at every major arterial entry portal coming into downtown. By following the uniquely colored and designed signs, vehicles will ultimately pass most of the off-street public parking locations as well as all (limited number) of the attractions appearing on the signage. The program envisions a matrix of signs where, regardless of which major roadway brings someone into downtown, drivers will be able to find all of the attractions listed on the signage and most major public parking facilities – if they just keep following the directional signage. The pedestrian signage will start from each major attraction and direct users of the sidewalks to other points of interest (and maybe certain types of tourism oriented businesses) located within a limited number of blocks from that major attraction. Pedestrian and vehicular wayfinding signage would reinforce each other such that visitors and tourists would begin to recognize and seek out the signage to find the way between attractions or around downtown.

In addition to improving the quality of our streetscape appearance and the ease of navigating the downtown, this anticipated new wayfinding system will reduce the clutter of existing signage.