

## Front Porch “MARKET POTENTIAL”

It is impossible to ‘sell’ or market Florida and any of the communities that make up this state without knowing its unique characteristics. Countless community revitalization and business development decisions are based on factors ranging from socio-economic conditions and geographic location to business perceptions and the overall economic climate. Just as every business must devise effective marketing strategies, so too must Florida’s Front Porch communities.

The Office of Urban Opportunity remains steadfast in its goal to identify and maximize the “market potential” of the designated Front Porch Florida (FPF) communities. To accomplish this objective, we are pleased to announce the launching of a new market study project that will be completed by May 2007. Through the systematic gathering, recording and analyzing of data, this process will yield information that may determine additional pathways for enhanced community preservation and revitalization in these distinctive areas of the state.

The market research process is complex, yet designed to supply each Front Porch Florida community with the traditional tools required to effectively market it for the purpose of increasing business investment and job growth opportunities. The research steps will include a statistical analysis with city and county market profiles to present the basis of the preliminary research; local site visits and personal interviews with interested private sector entities, city and/or county government officials; meetings with applicable Regional Planning Councils, as well as other organizations with similar goals to discuss and determine the following:

- ✓ Unique characteristics and market conditions within the designated FPF communities that focuses on community preservation and revitalization;
- ✓ Development trends and recommendations for FPF alignment with city and county growth management strategies; and,
- ✓ Overall marketability of the FPF community by identifying challenges and opportunities for business investment.

A comprehensive business development survey has been designed to evaluate the perceptions and opinions of Florida and in particular, the Front Porch Florida communities. The perception survey will be conducted via personal interview, telephone and direct mail to the appropriate Economic Development Councils. Local economic development practitioners and city and county officials will be surveyed to capture a regional perspective on development plans. Nationwide, professional site selection consultants and real estate executives will be asked to participate. Some key decision makers of the nation’s top minority firms who are charged with business development will be polled as well.

Each community can benefit from the survey and the market specific research findings. In addition, communities will receive a customized marketing plan that could serve as a guidepost for disseminating useful information about your Front Porch organization to the decision makers of future community and business development projects.

The final published market study report will contain industry-wide accepted community and economic development facts and figures, Geographic Information System (GIS)

data in the form of digitized maps and tables for planning and decision-making, and other visuals formatted and suitable for print and/or electronic viewing. A web-based portal allowing public access to the market study reports for each Front Porch Florida community will be available on the Dept. of Community Affairs, Office of Urban Opportunity official website.

Market research is not an exact science. However, in the case of this project, we desire to provide you with an objective measure of viable community preservation and revitalization conditions; why and where businesses want to invest, expand or relocate, and what Front Porch Florida communities can do to increase and reach their **market potential**.

*Karema Tyms Harris has nearly 20 years of diversified experience in the execution of marketing, promotions and communication strategies. She is the Senior VP for ADG Business and Governmental Consultants with management responsibility for client strategic planning and marketing communications.*

*Ms. Harris' prior business experience included employment with Enterprise Florida, Inc. as an International Trade Manager and the Florida Department of Commerce where she served as a Business and Industry Development Representative responsible for domestic and international projects. Her wealth of economic development experience has benefited many of ADG's business and governmental clients in the areas of business development, intergovernmental relations and the design/implementation of initiatives that promote job creation, rural and urban development.*