

New downtown Visitor & Information Center opens

By Tracy Soutbers
Business To Business
Contributing Writer

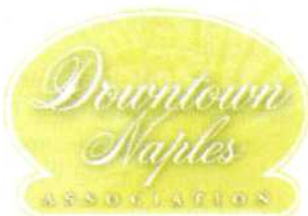
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Downtown Naples will welcome an estimated 100,000 visitors in 2007 with open arms and open doors, and the new Downtown Naples Visitor & Information Center, opening Jan. 8, will also welcome them.

The 1,100-square-foot facility, located at 800 Fifth Ave. South, suite 103, is a one-stop resource for visitors, residents and newcomers seeking information about businesses, services, restaurants and attractions throughout the area. In addition to offering brochures, maps, and event calendars, the Visitor & Information Center will be staffed with full time representatives to answer questions and provide concierge services. The center also will house the



Downtown Naples Association's administrative offices.

The new Visitor & Information Center is a result of frequent requests from both merchants and visitors, according to Diana Kelly, executive director for the Downtown Naples Association.

"Fifth Avenue South is Naples' most renowned and recognized street, so it makes complete sense to house this community resource in the heart of Naples," Kelly said.

Its historical significance and often-cited revitalization in the mid-1990s has made Fifth Ave. South synonymous with "downtown Naples." This

designation became official in October, when tenants along this street, collectively known as the Fifth Avenue South Association, voted to rename themselves the Downtown Naples Association.

In addition to a new moniker, the organization's geographic boundaries expanded in November with the inclusion of the Bayfront and 41-10 Associations. This increased the Downtown Naples Association to more than 200 members in a five-mile area, and combined historic and modern landmarks, including Fifth Ave. South, Crayton Cove, Tin City, Bayfront, Renaissance Village, and portions of U.S. 41 and 10th Street. Although not a part of the merger, the group is also working closely with the Third Street South Association on numerous issues.

"The merging of these three associations is a significant step towards establishing a

'downtown district,'" Kelly said. "What we already have here is an inspiration to other developments in Naples, but nothing compares to the real thing."

A new logo and advertising campaign for the Downtown Naples Association has been created and will be used to promote the area's merchants and events.

Kelly will continue to serve as executive director of the expanded Downtown Naples Association, overseeing its growth, vitality and community impact, as well as the Downtown Visitor and Information Center.

For additional information call 239- 435-3742, or go to www.fifthavenuesouth.com. **BtoB**

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