BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 21, 2003

TO: Leon County Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Parwez Alam, County Administrator

SUBJECT: Status of Reciprocal Partnership with the State of Florida

This memorandum is to apprize you that as of March 1, 2003 the State of Florida Office of Supplier Diversity discontinued the Minority Women Business Enterprise (M/WBE) Certification Reciprocal Partnership Process with the reciprocal partner agencies, including Leon County. The reciprocal process was in effect since 1989. It enabled M/WBE's to go to one of the partners to be certified as an M/WBE. That certification was then accepted by the other partners, without the need for duplicate certification.

The State is going to a new "One-Way Certification Program". This one-way certification will become part of the State's eProcurement System. Under this one-way certification, M/WBE's will self-certify and within 25 days provide the appropriate documentation. Under State Statute 287 for eligibility of M/WBE's, all items pertaining to the M/WBE status must show proof of the eligibility before a certification can be granted.

The discontinuation of the reciprocal process puts us in the position of not having a formalized comprehensive data base that houses the online directory of all M/WBE's in Florida. The State supported the reciprocal process by hosting the database of certified M/WBE's. The M/WBE's in the database could have been certified by the State or by any reciprocal partner. Presently, within the State's database, certified and self-certified M/WBE's, whose certification has not been reviewed and proven, are housed in this online directory.

To help remedy the situation, our M/WBE office and the City of Tallahassee's MBE Office have commenced meetings to go through the process of forming a consortium for the Board's consideration at a later date. It is our hope that partners of this consortium will be the City of Tallahassee, Leon County School Board and Leon County, and that it will serve in the same capacity as the reciprocal partnerships have in the past with the State. Staff has also had preliminary concept meetings with the vendor who developed and maintained the statewide reciprocal database, as well as the system currently utilized by the City.

Staff plans to bring an agenda item sometime in April to the Board to approve the consortium and a formalized database.

PA/AMS/aMs