

For Immediate Release

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Secretary Cobb Selects New Main Street Communities

Tallahassee, FL – Secretary of State Sue M. Cobb today announced the designation of Lincoln Park in Fort Pierce, and Newberry, as the newest Florida Main Street communities. Designation brings with it three years of intensive training and technical assistance from the Florida Department of State’s Florida Main Street Program to support local revitalization and historic preservation efforts in each community’s traditional commercial area.

“I am pleased to welcome Lincoln Park and Newberry into the Florida Main Street network of communities,” said Secretary Cobb. “This important program encourages economic development of Florida’s traditional commercial corridors within the context of historic preservation. Its efforts foster a return to community self-reliance, emphasizing the traditional assets of downtown—local ownership, personal service, and a sense of community. The diversity among the Florida Main Street communities reflects our continuing efforts to make this program inclusive and to provide opportunities for a wide variety of participants.”

Secretary Cobb’s designation was based on the August 24 recommendation of the eight-member ad hoc Florida Main Street Advisory Committee. Organizations represented on the Advisory Committee included: 1000 Friends of Florida, Waterfronts Florida, Florida Division of Historical Resources, Florida League of Cities, Florida Redevelopment Association, Florida Trust for Historic Preservation, Melbourne Main Street (a local Main Street program), and the National Main Street Center (Washington, D.C.).

Lincoln Park and Newberry join more than 80 communities across the state that have received historic preservation and downtown revitalization assistance from Florida Main

Street since the program was initiated by the Department of State in 1985. Statistics provided by local Main Street programs reflect the positive change that has occurred in local program areas over the past 21 years. Public and private reinvestment in local program areas has exceeded \$1.2 billion. New construction and rehabilitation projects (many projects involving historic buildings) total more than 9,500. In addition, there have been more than 3,600 business starts and expansions, and more than 11,100 new jobs created.

Lincoln Park (population 37,515)—Lincoln Park is an urban district within Fort Pierce. Development during the first decade of the 20th century saw the expansion of the city north towards Edgartown's Avenue D. During segregation, Avenue D became an important African-American commercial and entertainment district, and the heart of the Lincoln Park area. In the 1920s and 1930s, Lincoln Park boasted successful restaurants, cleaners, grocers, barbershops, and a movie theatre. The now-famous Florida Highwaymen painters worked in Lincoln Park during the 1950s and 1960s. Although in recent decades Lincoln Park has suffered the same fate as so many of Florida's historic commercial districts, community volunteers and agencies are now committed to revitalizing the area just as Main Street Fort Pierce has done in Downtown Fort Pierce. The local program will be administered initially by the Lincoln Park Business Association.

Newberry (population 3,316)—Newberry's history can be traced back to the 1880s, when a narrow vein of hard-rock phosphate was discovered in the area. Soon thereafter, phosphate processing plants and railroads covered the surrounding countryside. In 1893, Henry Plant extended his Savannah, Florida and Western Railroad from High Springs to Archer. Newberry was established the following year as a railroad stop and trading center at mid-point. The town prospered along with the mines and by 1907 it contained livery stables, restaurants, boarding houses, hotels, pharmacies, general stores, saloons, and theaters. As the phosphate industry waned, the land boom of the 1920s brought tourists through Newberry on their way south to Miami and Tampa. By the mid-twentieth century, agriculture (primarily the watermelon) dominated the local economy. Today Newberry is well positioned, both geographically and economically, to take advantage of Alachua County's westward growth. The local program will be administered by the Newberry Main Street Organization.

Florida Main Street is a technical assistance program administered by the Bureau of Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resources, Florida Department of State. The Bureau conducts statewide programs aimed at identifying, evaluating, and preserving Florida's historic resources. Main Street, with its emphasis on preservation, is an effective strategy in achieving these goals in Florida's historic retail districts. For more about

Florida Main Street and other programs conducted by the Division of Historical Resources, visit www.flheritage.com.