

Downtown authority to launch marketing initiative in fall

By JACQUELYN WEINER

Downtown Miami businesses can expect a marketing boost from upcoming advertising and discount-card campaigns spearheaded by the Downtown Development Authority.

The programs, set to launch in October, aim to unite advertising among downtown businesses to promote the district, said Robert Geitner, the authority's senior manager for market-

ing and communications.

While other areas such as the Coconut Grove Business Improvement District have sponsored area marketing campaigns, "this is a completely new program for downtown," Mr. Geitner said.

The total budget for the advertising, to be handled by outside firm IGT Media Holdings Inc., amounts to \$150,000 from the authority and another \$100,000 in contributions from private businesses, he said.

Of the authority's portion, \$100,000

is to go toward advertisements, \$40,000 to the card program and \$10,000 for additional services as needed, Deputy Director Meredith Nation said at the authority's board meeting this month.

The cooperative advertising program aims to give businesses that would not normally invest in advertisements an opportunity to market themselves, Mr. Geitner said.

"It make advertising for the small businesses more affordable," he said.

Ads are to encompass various media, including billboards and print ads.

Also aimed at boosting business downtown are plans to create the DWNTWNR Card, a consumer loyalty and discount card, Mr. Geitner said, adding the authority is anticipating a minimum of 2,500 cardholders, he said.

Both projects are in preliminary stages, although Mr. Geitner said he hopes a media marketing plan will be put together within weeks.