

# Small Business Summit: An Overwhelming Success



**Commissioner Addie L. Greene (left) presents the Small Business Summit Proclamation to Hazel Oxendine, Director of the County's Office of Small Business Assistance, whose office planned and organized the overwhelmingly successful meeting for small business owners and entrepreneurs.**

The County's Office of Small Business Assistance held its first Small Business Summit on Saturday, February 14, 2004 from 8:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. at the Convention Center. The theme for the Summit was "How to Do Business with Palm Beach County and the Scripps Research Institute."

The Summit was attended by more than 450 small business owners

and entrepreneurs from all over the County. Also in attendance were representatives from various County departments that contract and purchase services and supplies from small businesses in addition to representatives from the School District of Palm Beach County, the South Florida Water Management District, the City of West Palm Beach and the State of Florida Office of Supplier Diversity. Special guests included Thomas Gilmartin, Director of Procurement, and Ben Morris, Vice President of Facilities, both of Scripps Research Institute.

The primary emphasis of the Summit was to underscore the County's outreach to small and minority-owned businesses.

Following up on this theme, Mr. Morris said, "Throughout the process, we want to get to know who the local vendors are. We want to make sure we have local participation."

During the morning's agenda, Verdenia Baker, the Deputy County Administrator, served as the mistress of ceremonies and acknowledged that Palm Beach County was a great place to do business. She cited that West Palm Beach was ranked fifth in the nation of large metropolitan areas in a survey conducted by Inc. magazine as the best places in America for entrepreneurs to do business.



**Verdenia Baker, Deputy County Administrator, addresses a ballroom full of interested attendees at the Small Business Summit.**



**Attendees at the Small Business Summit were able to visit with the many purchasers of services and supplies by viewing their displays and talking to procurement representatives at their tables.**