

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Construction Contract Awarded for Tampa Bay History Center

The Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners voted today to approve the contract with Walbridge Aldinger Company for construction of the Tampa Bay History Center for \$19,476,526.00. The Commission also approved an agreement with the History Center whereby the Center will provide \$4.5 million in privately-raised funding for additional exhibit space and sustainable design elements.

“The signing of this contract exemplifies the value of partnering public and private interests to enable major museum initiatives,” said C.J. Roberts, president and CEO of the Tampa Bay History Center. “There is tremendous enthusiasm and support for the new museum in this community.”

The Commission is a key partner in this project, contributing \$17 million for construction of the facility. The new 60,000 square foot museum will be the first Hillsborough County-owned “green”, LEED-certified building and will be located on a 2.5 acre tract in Cotanchobee-Ft. Brooke Park. This site, adjacent to the St. Pete Times Forum, was secured by the City of Tampa through a grant from the Florida Communities Trust.

“This has been a long road, and great leadership by the History Center Board and citizens has made me and others a believer in the project,” said Commission Chairman Jim Norman. “They’ve rolled up their sleeves to come up with private funding and have a solid business plan.”

When the History Center went before the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners in 1998 to ask for \$17 million in CIT funds, it pledged to present a sound business plan and to raise a permanent endowment of at least \$11 million from private donors. The City and County formally signed the agreements to build the History Center in 2004. Since then, the private initiative has evolved into an even more substantial capital campaign, with a current goal of raising nearly \$32 million, which the Center is well on the way to securing.

Walbridge Aldinger, one of the top 50 construction organizations in the country, joins museum architect E. Verner Johnson & Associates and noted exhibit designers Christopher Chadbourne & Associates to complete the team for the delivery of the long-awaited regional history museum. The facility is scheduled to open in December 2008.