By BOBBY LAMB

The Downtown Development Foundation, formerly the Riverside Association, is serving as the fund-raising arm of the DDD and as a body through which the DDD can expand its base of volunteers. The foundation meets this month to outline ways to raise funds. It also may become a mechanism for obtaining government grants, said Scott Crawford, chairman of both the foundation and the DDD's administrative committee.

The DDD board is using the city-parish personnel office in a local and national search for a staff director. The office is screening applications through Jan. 31. The DDD will start reviewing top candidates after Jan. 15. If a suitable candidate is not found, management consultant Clev Franklin will be hired to intensify the search. The DDD also is hunting for office space in the "heart" of downtown, Rhorer said.

A database being designed for the DDD will allow it to keep detailed information on the downtown area, such as availability of office space, Rhorer said. The information could be used to answer inquiries and recruit businesses to the downtown area.

The DDD will use city-sponsored studies in targeting businesses for recruitment and developing plans for aesthetic improvements.

A $60,000 contract has been proposed to the Metro Council to update a 1983 planning study on downtown. The DDD and City-Parish division of community and economic development have entered into a letter of agreement to help oversee the project.

The proposed contract with Caplinger Group Inc., the original contractor on the Baton Rouge 2000 study, was hotly debated by the council in December and will be heard again Jan. 14.

The study will be a step of Baton Rouge 2000, in regard to downtown economic development.