

METRO

NDAY, JUNE 1, 2003 ♦ THE TAMPA TRIBUNE ♦ TBO.com

6 ♦ METRO ♦ SUNDAY, JUNE 1.

COUNTY LOBBYISTS

Continued From Page 1



Pressman
One of many lobbyists who properly logged his visit, in his case on behalf of American Ambulance.

"When you say more confidence, I guess that — that word I don't understand," Norman said at a workshop Tuesday on the issue. Norman is a paid lobbyist in Tallahassee for the Salvation Army.

Norman said most commissioners have been elected numerous times. So, voter confidence must exist, he said.

Even so, commissioners are eventually likely to approve more lobbying restrictions or risk being viewed by critics as too secretive.

"I think we'll eventually pull something together," said

But last week, for the first time since lobbying regulations were last tightened in 1996, Hillsborough commissioners started discussing how lobbyists should be tracked so the public can know who is trying to influence whom. And in coming weeks, they expect to stiffen the rules that guide when and how lobbyists meet with public officials.

"The citizens have a right to know who is influencing commissioners," Castor said. Last fall, she campaigned hard on a pledge to make the county's lobbying restrictions more like those in Tallahassee. In the state Capitol, lobbyists must be registered, and their affiliations are posted on the state's Web site.

man and Scott. He recently li

County Weighs Lobby Reform

By TED BYRD
tbyrd@tampatrib.com

TAMPA — So far this year, lobbyists have logged in 103 times to visit privately with Hillsborough County commissioners, each time trying to persuade public officials to take actions that might benefit private interests.

Todd Pressman stopped in Feb. 27, for example, to the second floor of the Fred B. Karl County Center to see Jim Norman, Tom Scott and Kathy Castor on behalf of American Ambulance Co., which was looking to expand. No records were kept of exactly what was said.

business," Coley
you talk about a
year contract,
\$300 [million] or
"Weaver makes
business. His firm
is statewide and
in 200 Florida
cities. He said the
personal."

ter of getting a
is important to a
he said. "What
fiction tick. Who
ection, and what
to run on?"

Weaver define a
ey help mobilize
me on issues."

rd can be reached
'9.