

BUSINESS FOCUS

Briefs

Black Chamber making plans for Black Business Street Festival

The Winston-Salem Black Chamber of Commerce is making plans for its first Black Business Street Festival, to be held Sept. 21 on Highland Avenue between East Fifth Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. There will be food and entertainment. Vendor space is available to chamber and nonchamber members. For more information contact Hobart Jones Sr. at 978-0062 or Miriam McCarter at 724-0334.

Judge rules against Liberty Life for basing premiums on race

COLUMBIA, S.C. - A judge has ruled against a South Carolina life insurance company, saying it illegally charged black customers more than whites for similar policies 40 years ago.

Liberty Life Insurance Co. was contesting state penalties imposed in December by the state Insurance Department, which said the disparity was in violation of South Carolina law and the state constitution.

In his ruling Friday, Chief Administrative Law Judge Marvin Kittrell wrote, "It is difficult to believe the Legislature intended to allow whites and African-Americans to be divided into separate classes for purposes of setting insurance rates based upon nothing more than their skin color."

The Greenville-based company was given a \$2 million fine by the state Insurance Department and suspended from selling life insurance in the state for one year.

The request for a hearing automatically delayed the Insurance Department's penalties. Now, any penalties will be determined by the court later.

Liberty Life's black customers paid up to one-third more for burial insurance policies than white people, Insurance Department Director Ernst Csiszar said.

The department issued the fines because people still were in possession of race-based policies.

Liberty Life said it charged black customers more for insurance only because blacks had shorter life expectancies than whites when the policies were sold years ago. The rates have been the same for about four decades, Liberty spokesman Jim Phillips said Friday.

Phillips said his company was disappointed with the ruling but optimistic the case would be resolved soon.

Hampton to finance hotel

Hampton University has announced plans to finance the construction of a beach hotel in Virginia.

The Hilton Garden Inn will be funded with the university's endowment fund and will be part of the business and residential complex known as Town Center.

"It's a very good business deal," Hampton University President William R. Harvey told reporters. "This public-private partnership is good. It's a quality firm, quality university, a very progressive city like Virginia Beach and a well-known brand such as Hilton."

The university will lend approximately \$18 million to Chesapeake-based developers Armada/Hoffler to build the inn. The university will break ground on the hotel next month.

Taco Bell settles discrimination suit

CULLMAN, Ala. (AP) - A federal judge has approved settlement of a lawsuit filed by members of an extended black family who said they were denied service at a Taco Bell restaurant in Cullman.

U.S. District Judge Lynwood Smith Jr. approved the \$160,000 settlement, which ends the suit filed by members of a St. Louis family. Family members were returning to Missouri from a family reunion in Montgomery when they stopped at the Cullman Taco Bell on July 5, 1998.

The federal lawsuit claimed that most of the family members went into the restaurant but were not served.

The lawyer for the family members, David Cutchen, declined to discuss the settlement, saying the terms were confidential. Efforts to reach a Taco Bell attorney were unsuccessful.

Filings in Birmingham's U.S. District Court said if the case had gone to trial, Taco Bell would have shown that the Cullman restaurant had not received any racial discrimination complaints before or after the one filed by the St. Louis family members.

In their filings, Taco Bell attorneys said that on the day the black family members visited the restaurant, there was only one working cash register. Taco Bell also noted that a white customer who entered the store as the plaintiffs were leaving also received extremely poor service.

But the family members, who were riding in a chartered bus, said in their filings that they would have presented evidence they were forced to wait about 15 minutes after requesting service. While they said they were not subjected to racial slurs or epithets and were not asked to leave the restaurant, they said white customers were served immediately before they entered the restaurant and immediately after they left.

Golf tournament raises \$150,000

The 11th annual Lowes Foods Golf Tournament raised \$150,000 for the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina. Over the course of 11 years, Lowes Foods has presented nearly \$1.5 million to the food bank through the tournament.

"Our employees take great pride in being able to support the food bank in this way," said Lowes Foods President Curtis Oldenkamp. "The tournament gives us an opportunity to have some fun while raising money for a great cause, and increasing awareness of the critical service the food bank provides."

Nearly 600 golfers played in the Aug. 13 tournament at Tanglewood Park, which attracted 113 sponsors, including T.W. Garner, Edens & Avant, Pepsi and S&H Greenpoints.

The Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina collects and distributes food and grocery products to more than 400 agencies with 580 programs that feed the poor and needy in 18 counties. Since opening in 1982, the food bank has distributed nearly 55 million pounds of food and grocery products.

Gettin' Paid

Magazine ranks top black celebrity endorsers

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

NEW YORK - Golf great Tiger Woods tops the Black Enterprise editors' list of biggest and most-influential celebrity endorsers, as announced in the September issue. Woods, with an estimated \$54 million a year in endorsement earnings, ranks No. 1 on the list of notables, which also includes grand slam sisters Venus and Serena Williams, basketball legend Michael Jordan, and L.A. Lakers MVP center Shaquille O'Neal, the cover subject of this issue.

Powerhouse endorsers like Woods can deliver a product message successfully to urban markets while also drawing general audiences because of their extraordinary celebrity.

It is estimated that, by 2006, the buying power of affluent African-Americans will reach \$292.4 billion, with the entire African-American market totaling \$682.5 billion. Advertisers seeking a piece of this multibillion-dollar pie often turn to the power of celebrity to generate huge revenues, with the added benefit of mass-market appeal.

BE culled information from various sources to determine the list. The top five most influential celebrity players are:

1. Tiger Woods - Sports superstar takes endorsement deal making into the next stratosphere. Woods has re-energized the game of golf and the sales of its products. His lucrative



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endorsement deals include top-notch brands such as Nike, Titleist, Buick, American Express and Rolex.

2. Venus Williams - She received a \$40 million contract from Reebok, the largest ever paid to a female athlete.

3. Michael Jordan - He is a savvy businessman who has maintained his marketing appeal without overexposure or blurring brands. Jordan averages \$40 million a year from product endorsements.



Tiger Woods is the top African-American celebrity endorser according to a new list released by Black Enterprise.

4. Shaquille O'Neal - Current deals include Swatch, Nestle's Crunch, Starter, Radio Shack and Burger King.

5. Allen Iverson - Even with his current legal issues, Iverson remains popular with youths and retains a \$100 million lifetime Reebok deal.

The People's Choice: BE also asked readers to make their own celebrity selections. The editors received 1,000 responses to a survey gauging the credibility of black celebrity endorsers on consumer buying habits, which was

posted on <http://www.blackenterprise.com/>. The survey listed 20 African-American celebrities with current endorsement deals. Basketball hero Michael Jordan soared as the people's No. 1 choice, followed by Revlon spokeswoman Halle Berry in the No. 2 slot. Other favorites of BE readers included Tom Joyner (No. 3), funnyman Cedric the Entertainer (No. 7) and soul songstress Mary J. Blige (No. 9).

The September issue of Black Enterprise arrived on newsstands Aug. 27.



A New Gig

CAT-TV6 announced this week that it is hiring Reynard "Rennie" Corley, far left in picture, as its new part-time executive director. In the position, which has just been formed, Corley will help coordinate fund raising and community outreach efforts for the public access station. Corley has 40 years of broadcasting experience, including stints at WXII as general manager and president.

Wilson takes job at FTCC

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Van C. Wilson will become vice president of student development services at Forsyth Technical Community College effective Sept. 1, announced Dr. Gary Green, president of the college. Wilson's appointment was approved by the Forsyth Tech board of trustees Aug. 15.

"I am thrilled to have someone with Van's experience and knowledge of the community on our executive team," Green said.

Wilson most recently served as executive director of enrollment management at Winston-Salem State University. Under his leadership, the enrollment management area recruited the largest freshman class in the history of the university.

Wilson holds a bachelor of arts in chemistry with a minor in biology and a master's in public affairs, public affairs/management from Western Carolina University in Cullowhee.

As vice president for student development services, he will oversee enrollment management, including recruiting/minority services, student data support services, admissions and records; special services/testing/ADA; and counseling and retention services, including the employment assistance center, student activities and the Shugart Women's Center at Forsyth Tech.

Ad Council takes MLK project

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Washington, D.C., Martin Luther King Jr. National Memorial Project Foundation announced last week that The Advertising Council will create a national public service advertising campaign to support the development of the memorial.

Peggy Conlon, president and CEO of The Advertising Council, noted: "The Ad Council's Proposals Review Committee voted unanimously to approve the proposal. We share the firm belief that a national public service campaign can help realize the important goal of erecting a monument to Dr. King on the Mall in our nation's capital."

Harry Johnson, president of the foundation and 31st president of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., commented: "This partnership brings

us one step closer to our goal of breaking ground on the memorial by November 2003. This campaign will help us educate all Americans about the importance of this memorial and the opportunity to support the creation of an historic new addition to our monumental core."

The Martin Luther King Jr. National Memorial will be the first on the National Mall to honor an African-American individual. The site has been approved by the National Capital Planning Commission and will be located along the Tidal Basin, near monuments to Washington, Lincoln and Jefferson.

The design, which has won initial approval from the Fine Arts Commission, was selected through a competition that elicited more than 900 designs from 52 countries. The foundation has until November 2003 to raise the necessary funds that will

enable the building of this national memorial.

The public service campaign developed by The Advertising Council and its selected advertising agency partner will launch in early 2003. The Washington, D.C., Martin Luther King Jr. National Memorial is only the second in the history of the Ad Council to be promoted through a national public service campaign. The first was the World War II Memorial, which was featured in a series of highly successful ads starring Tom Hanks.

The Ad Council is a private, non-profit organization with a 60-year history of marshaling volunteer talent from the advertising and media industries to deliver critical messages to the American public. The Ad Council has produced thousands of public service campaigns that address the most pressing social issues of the day.

M&F increasing financial literacy for students

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

DURHAM - M&F Bank recently announced the launch of a companywide initiative focused on increasing the level of financial literacy among citizens of the bank's markets.

In conjunction with their own industry knowledge and experience, M&F Bank staff will employ a combination of modular curricula developed by experts at the FDIC and American Banker's Association during the no-fee workshop-style presentations. M&F Bank staffers have effectively tailored curricula to fit the specific needs of schools, universities, church congregations and community-based organizations.

The initiative begins with group presentations to incoming freshmen at N.C. Central University, Saint Augustine's College, Shaw University, Johnson C. Smith University and Winston-Salem State University



over the next two weeks. "We see this as a way to provide a meaningful service to people in the markets we serve, and to demonstrate our commitment to supporting community develop-

ment. The more people know about personal financial management the better they are able to provide for their own futures," said Lee Johnson Jr., president and CEO of M&F Bank.

Studies conducted by the JumpStart Coalition for Personal Financial Literacy found that states with high numbers of adults declaring personal bankruptcy also have high numbers of 12th-graders who are illiterate when it comes to personal financial management." According to Johnson, "This finding illustrates clearly that the need to educate consumers about the importance of personal financial management has never been greater. As a community bank and a corporate citizen, we believe we have an obligation to give something back, and our initiative to enhance financial literacy in our markets represents a real investment of time, energy and resources by M&F Bank. In the long run, there are tangible benefits to be realized by the whole community as consumers become better equipped to make more astute financial decisions."