

Watt

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ple to fill two schools.
Watt is joining officials at the Bureau of the Census to kick off a major publicity campaign to get citizens interested in being counted.

Sue Hardy, the regional director for the bureau, joined Watt at the news conference.

She emphasized that all information that citizens submit on census forms is confidential.

The census questionnaire, which is the first method the bureau uses to obtain census information, is a form mailed to households that asks what many would consider personal questions — from the number of people residing in a particular dwelling to income information.

Such delicate questions have been credited with contributing to undercounts, since many people simply do not respond to the forms.

Hardy, though, said all the information on the form is highly important and that people should not only answer the personal questions, but respond to all questions on the form.

Census 2000 offices already have sprung up in Greensboro, Durham and Charlotte. Hardy

said Winston-Salem will have its own office by the fall. The actual count does not begin until April 2000, but Watt and Hardy say it is never too early to get the word out about the importance of the census.

The Bureau of the Census is working on developing "complete the census" committees in towns and cities across the nation. People from all walks of life in the communities will sit on the committees, as well as representatives from police departments, local governments and other agencies. The idea, Hardy said, is to have the committees drum up support for the 2000 census among groups of people who may be unresponsive to other census promotional campaigns.

"People tend to believe the people they know from everyday life," Hardy said.

In order to spread the word, the Bureau of the Census is also working on partnerships with schools, businesses and the religious community. An all-out media blitz is also in the works.

The census has another important date before its spring 2000 kick-off. Congress will allocate money for the census in its upcoming budget. Watt warned that adequate funding is needed for the bureau so that a thorough count can be done.

"We need to be turning up the political pressure on our representatives in Washington," Watt said.

Congress has been abuzz with census talk for sometime now. President Bill Clinton, and many congressional Democrats, had advocated that a statistical sampling method be used for the 2000 census. Statistical sampling involves experts making scientific guesses about the number of people who live in a certain area. Democrats argued that sampling would eliminate the problem of undercounting.

But Republicans in the House and Senate balked at the idea, saying that a traditional head count was the best way to gauge the U.S. population.

But Watt said Republican apprehension about sampling — and the more accurate population figures it would have yielded for minorities — was purely political.

"It could result in them losing some seats in the redistricting that will follow the 2000 census," he said.

Ultimately, the Supreme Court limited the use of sampling in the 2000 census, although Watt said he hopes that Congress will pass a bill so that it can be used to count those who have consistently dodged other census efforts.

"We can't just ignore those

people...As hard as we have tried (with a head count), we still have not been able to count every person in the United States," Watt said.

Getting groups of people who have been historically indifferent to the government to embrace the census could be a massive undertaking in itself.

As Watt pointed out, the undercounting of minorities is not something that started in 1970, 1980 or 1990. Watt talked about the 1940 census. The census was taken just before the second World War began, but when black men began to register for the draft, the first flaws in the census were discovered, Watt said.

Thirteen percent more African American men showed up to register than the census indicated existed in United States, Watt said.

"Men showed up to register for the draft that the 1940 census did not even indicate," he said.

And, seemingly, African Americans have been shortchanged ever since — literally.

The federal government doles out almost \$2 billion based on census information, Watt said. It is money that Watt said he wants to keep here in North Carolina.

"This is not about politics as much as it is about money," he said.

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Wellman

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atives and for use of an ESR credit card to purchase tires for her car.

According to the statement, the board had approved repayment of expenses on a monthly basis.

Robinson, who has fought against city funding of non-profits, said his questioning was based on allegations lodged by "people within the organization."

"The cover-up caucus wants to prevent citizens from knowing how their money is being spent," he said.

Robinson said since most citizens find out about the budget through the televised hearing, he thought it appropriate to ask "tough" questions.

Wellman said she was "surprised" by Robinson's line of questioning.

"It was quite surprising," she said. "I was quite disappointed that he didn't ask about our programs or services."

According to receipts obtained by The Chronicle, Wellman reimbursed ESR for the costs of the tires two days after the meeting.

The purchase of the Piedmont Club membership was OK'd by

ESR's board. Wellman and board members say the membership is used mainly for business purposes.

Officials for the organization say club memberships like the one purchased by ESR are not uncommon.

"Certainly membership at The Piedmont Club is not unusual," said Laura Elliott, chair of ESR's Communications and Marketing Committee. "The membership allows her to meet with city leaders and people who want to make donations to the organization. We do not all of our funding from the city, and we rely on donations from other resources."

Alderman Vivian Burke, who along with Alderman Nelson Malloy voted for ESR's request, said she will ask officials with the city manager's office to find out what other agency directors have memberships to the club. She said it was unfair for Wellman to be criticized for her membership when no other agency directors were asked about their affiliation with such clubs.

Wellman said the board's vote of confidence was "comforting."

"It really pleases me greatly," she said. "It's encouraging to know that the board is supportive."

**NOTICE OF A CITIZEN INFORMATIONAL
WORKSHOP FOR REPLACEMENT OF BRIDGE
NO. 207 OVER PATTERSON AVENUE ON OAK
SUMMIT ROAD (SR 1686) IN WINSTON-SALEM**

Project 8.2624001 B-3171 Forsyth County

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) will hold the above Citizens Informational Workshop on June 15, 1999, between the hours of 4:00 PM and 7:00 PM at the North Forsyth High School Cafeteria on Hanes Mill Road.

NCDOT is considering three alternatives to replace Bridge No. 207 over Patterson Avenue on Oak Summit Road in Winston-Salem. The preferred alternative being considered would replace the bridge at the existing location and traffic would be detoured on-site during construction. The other alternatives being considered would be staged construction. Comments received from the public at this workshop will be used in the preparation of the *Categorical Exclusion* being developed for this project.

NCDOT representatives will be available at the workshop to answer questions and receive comments relative to the proposed project. Information at the workshop will be general in nature, no detailed designs are available. Interested individuals may attend at their convenience during the above-stated hours. Anyone desiring additional information may contact Ms. Nancy Campanella, Project Development Engineer, at P.O. Box 25201, Raleigh, NC 27611, or call 919-738-7844, ext. 262.

In order to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, NCDOT will provide auxiliary aids and services for disabled persons who wish to attend the workshop. To receive special services, please contact Ms. Campanella at the above address or fax 919-733-9794 prior to the date of the workshop.

Briefs

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Mfume declines run for Baltimore mayor

BALTIMORE — Kweisi Mfume, NAACP president and CEO, recently announced that he will remain with the organization and not run for mayor of Baltimore.

"Yesterday, for the first time in weeks, I awakened with absolute clarity about my future and my work. I know that my job is to finish the work I have begun to help create a more just and humane society for all people. The plethora of inequities and disparate treatment in our society cries out for advocates of social justice from all races to get involved and to stay involved. I cannot walk away from that fight at this time," said Mfume during the news conference at the NAACP headquarters in Baltimore. "As such, I am not — nor will I — be a candidate for mayor."



Mfume

Mfume said he was forced to revisit the idea of running for mayor after more than 200 Baltimoreans formed a draft committee to encourage him to change his mind. — *National Newspaper Publishers Association*

NAACP backs H.R. 40 for slavery reparations

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The NAACP has strongly endorsed H.R. 40, a bill in the U.S. House of Representatives that would provide reparations for America's enslavement of blacks, and has placed it at the top of its 1999-2000 agenda.

"We need to be pushing the issue, starting a grassroots movement, leading an education and information campaign, and it will happen," said Marie Davis, San Mateo County, Calif., NAACP president and leading spokesperson on the issue.

"The 'Reparations Act' would establish a commission to review the institution of slavery, the resulting racial and economic discrimination against African Americans, and the impact of these forces on living African Americans. The bill would also acknowledge the fundamental injustice, cruelty, brutality and inhumanity of slavery in the United States and the 13 colonies between 1619 and 1865," stated a release from NAACP President Kweisi Mfume and Washington Bureau Chief Hilary Shelton. — *National Newspaper Publishers Association*

Trafficking of young Nigerian girls thrives

BENIN, Nigeria — Forty-seven Nigerian girls between 15 and 20 years old were recently deported from Italy at the direction of Omonoba Erediewa, the traditional ruler of Benin Kingdom. Most of them were from Benin, in the midwestern Edo State.

Many of these young girls are used in prostitution and drug trafficking rings. Often from poor homes, the girls are lured by the prospects of earning huge sums of money.

"The syndicates issue them with forged traveling documents on the pretext that they will offer them lucrative jobs. The girls are subsequently forced into various illicit activities, such as slavery, sex-hawking, advance fee fraud and the drug business," said Giovanni Germano, Italian ambassador to Nigeria.

"The lure to them has been 98 naira to the dollar. This is what makes them travel abroad to constitute a nuisance to themselves and the country," said Alhaji Ilavbare, chairman of Oredo Local Government in Edo.

He called on the government to improve the economy to discourage young Nigerians from running abroad, and also appealed to parents to educate their children. — *Toye Olori for IPS*

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