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National Black Theatre

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THE CHRONICLE

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Painting the city purple and black

2017 National Black Theatre Festival comes next week

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

With the countdown until the 2017 National Black Theatre Festival (NBTF) set at four days, the North Carolina Black Repertory Company (NCBRC), and the city of Winston-Salem are preparing for one of the biggest festivals in history. According to the Southeast Tourism Society, the NBTF is one of the top 20 events in the South. And every two years the festival is held, it seems to get bigger.

Over the weekend thousands of theater enthusiasts, and dozens of well-known celebrities will descend on what has become known as "black theater holy ground," for eight days filled with plays, live performances, educational seminars, star-studded events, and other exciting events for everyone to enjoy.

Star comedian Sinbad will kick things off with the Pre-Festival Comedy Event on Saturday, July 29, at the Fairground Annex. The festival will officially begin with the Opening Night Awards Gala on Monday, July 31 inside the newly renovated Salem Ball Room of The Benton (formerly the Benton Convention Center).

Since the first festival held in 1989, the awards gala has been known as the most popular event. In 2015, more than 2,000 filed into the ballroom to get to see some of the biggest names in television, film, and theater. Earlier this year, Anna Maria Horsford and Obba Babatundé were announced as the celebrity co-chairs. The duo currently star on the day-time soap opera "The Bold and the Beautiful."

Other celebrities expected to be in the city throughout the week include Louis Gossett Jr., Lamman Rucker, Ron

See NBTF on A5



A Visit Winston-Salem sign welcomes those in town for the National Black Theatre Festival.

Photo by Nikki Baldwin

Winston prepares for visitors for NBTF

BY NIKKI BALDWIN
FOR THE CHRONICLE

The Winston-Salem area is gearing up for visitors who will be attending the National Black Theatre Festival (NBTF). The festival, which will be July 31 - Aug. 5, attracts individuals who have a love for the performance arts by providing festivalgoers with plays, celebrity appearances, vendor's markets and events that showcase the Winston-Salem area.

The visitors that will be in town for the eight days of festivities will get to explore the innovation, cuisine, local businesses and arts that Winston-Salem has to offer. Visitors can expect a great reception upon arriving to Winston-Salem with festival-themed incentives such as special coupon codes, drink specials and dining incentives.

Richard Geiger, president of Visit Winston-Salem, reached out to hospitality and tourism partners to aide in providing visitors with a warm welcome.

"We encourage any attractions, dining establishments, and retailers to warmly welcome out-of-town guests into Winston-Salem. This helps to show solidarity throughout the hospitality community in appreciation of these events that have chosen Winston-Salem as their host city, staying overnight in our hotels and spending dollars to help boost our local economy. We have collected responses from more than 15 NBTF 'special offers' especially for theatre-goers. We will print and distribute at NBTF host hotels, our Visit Winston-Salem guest information tables, and online through VisitWinstonSalem.com and our social media sites," said Geiger.

To help prepare for the visitors' arrival for the festival,

See Visitors on A5



Photo by Tevin Stinson

On Saturday, July 22, the local branch of the NAACP hosted a membership drive and community day which featured free food, health screenings, and other activities.

Local NAACP connects with community

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

When Rev. Alvin Carlisle took the reins of the Winston-Salem NAACP Branch late last year, he vowed to build a relationship between the organization and the community it serves. And last weekend he did just that

when he invited residents to a membership drive and community day on Saturday, July 22.

The event featured free food, vendors and free health screenings from the Winston-Salem State University Rams Know H.O.W. Mobile Unit.

Cancer Services Inc., United Health Centers, and

See NAACP on A3

Redistricting hearing starts today in Triad

BY CASH MICHAELS
FOR THE CHRONICLE

GREENSBORO — Today in a U.S. Middle District courtroom before a special three-judge federal District Court panel, arguments began to determine when legislative districts that were originally racially gerrymandered in the 2011 redistricting by the Republican-led N.C. General Assembly will be redrawn, and if special elections can be held before the 2018 mid-term elections.

All briefs in the case were filed on Friday, July 21.

Both sides — plaintiffs (attorneys for Sandra Little Covington and others) and defendants (lawyers for the Republican-led N.C. General Assembly and the state Board of Elections) were scheduled to be given 90 minutes to present testimony by way of witnesses, and supporting evidence, to convince the court of the best remedy available.

Plaintiffs have filed a brief saying, in essence, that the moment the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed in June the three-judge panel's August 2016 ruling that 28 of 100 legislative districts were unconstitutional because of racial gerrymandering, the Republican-led N.C. General Assembly had no authority to override Gov. Cooper's vetoes because lawmakers were elected illegally, and cannot have that authority until all districts are redrawn, declared legal by the court, and special elections held.

Plaintiffs say state lawmakers can redraw the districts when they reconvene during their upcoming Aug. 3 special session, which starts next week. New maps could be enacted by Aug. 11, with a candidate-filing period

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