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Minority Contractors Set Meeting

Minority contractors from across the nation will join government officials and others at the Capital Hilton Hotel in Washington, D.C. this month for the first annual convention of the Associated Minority Contractors of America.

The three-day conference kicks off April 27 with a general session at the hotel, followed by a visit to capitol where the conveners will have a chance to meet with the congressional black caucus, as well as legislators from their respective congressional districts.

May Is Senior Citizen Month

May is National Senior Citizens Month, and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Council on Aging (COA) is planning and coordinating a wide range of events for the observance in this area.

Citizen Month

- A senior citizen camping weekend at McDowell Park May 4-6. A free pre-retirement planning session May 3 at the Chamber of Commerce from 12 noon to 1 P.M. A Senior Citizens Speak-out and Mini-conference with Dr. E. Palmore, professor of medical sociology for the Duke University Center for the Study of Aging and Human Development. The conference is May 9, beginning at 9:30 A.M., at Christ Episcopal Church, 1412 Providence Rd. Girl Scout visits to elderly persons who are shut-ins. The selection and presentation of the Outstanding Senior Citizen Award at an 11:30 A.M. luncheon at the Holiday Inn North on May 22. Nomination forms for the Outstanding Senior Citizen Award are available at all branches of the Public Library and at the COA Office, 316 E. Morehead St. The deadline for submitting applications is Thursday, May 3.

Established by the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners, the COA serves as a clearinghouse for information about services to the elderly and helps to coordinate those services. It also serves as the official advisory body to both the Board of County Commissioners and the City Council.

For more information, contact the Council on Aging Office at 374-3200.



POPULAR CELESTE MARTIN ...Albemarle JHS student

Celeste Martin Is Beauty Of Week

Our beauty for this week is 15 year-old Celeste Martin, a ninth grader at Albemarle Junior High School. Celeste's hobbies are roller skating, shopping and playing tennis. She considers herself to be a friendly and conversive person. Language arts, math and social studies are Celeste's favorite school subjects.

Next year, Celeste will be attending Independence Senior High where she plans to try out for cheerleading and take driver's education. What she anticipates most is getting out earlier

Competency Test Will Be Given

The North Carolina Competency Test will be given on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 1 and 2 to those students who failed the initial test in November. The makeup test will be the same one administered to over 81 thousand eleventh grade students during the first test. Ninety percent of the students who took the reading portion of the test in November passed it, which means over 8 thousand did not. Over 11 thousand students failed the math portion of the test. Since November, those students have been involved in remediation programs in their schools. The remediation efforts are designed to aid the students having problems in some of the areas covered by the test.

Every public school in the state had students who failed one or more of the tests. Dare County had the fewest number, only 2 of 139 who took the test. The Competency Testing program was legislated by the 1977 General Assembly. The tests are basic skills tests of reading and mathematics designed to measure minimum competency, not ideal achievement. The law provides that passing the tests is a requirement for receiving a high school diploma. Students who are unable to take the makeup test during the first two days of May will be allowed to take it

New FMHA Program To Aid Low Income, Minority People

Hunt To Sign Fair Housing Agreement

Governor Jim Hunt will sign an agreement on Thursday making North Carolina the first state in the nation to participate in the New Horizons Fair Housing Program, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of Voluntary Compliance.

The signing of this agreement shows our strong commitment to making fair housing possible for all North Carolinians," said Governor Hunt. North Carolina's voluntary agreement with HUD is an attempt to carry out the Fair Housing Law of 1968 which states that persons may not be denied freedom of choice in housing because of age, race, sex, national origin, religion or handicap.

The Task Force will develop plans which may include educational activities, such as workshops to increase the awareness of the public and of the housing-related industry to the Fair Housing Law. The Fair Housing Task Force will meet sometime within the next three months.



Uchuru Sasa members are planning Community Forum on Africa for Tues. May 1, at the YWCA. Row 1: Karen Moss (11), Hedona Todd (1), Willette Thomas (8). Row 2: Miranda Thomas (7), Shirree Thomas (10) and Khadijah Abdullah (7). The girls made their own uniforms out of African cloth as part of their African studies program. (photo by Eileen Hanson)

Youth Group To Sponsor Community Forum On Africa

The girls are planning the program as part of their study of African life and culture. According to Khadijah Abdullah, the group's leader who started the program in February, the purpose of Uchuru Sasa is to regain the knowledge of African and Afro-American culture and history, in order to give youths in Charlotte a positive foundation. Oswald Ndanga of Zimbabwe will be the special guest speaker. He is a member of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) which is fighting for the independence of the Southern African country also known as Rhodesia.

Program Gets \$2.5 Million

From Congress

WASHINGTON, D.C.--Details of a new program to make housing more easily available to low-income and minority people and to reduce delinquency among borrowers were announced today by Alex Mercure, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Rural Development.

Known as the technical and supervisory assistance program, it is designed to: --Help low-income and minority borrowers who may be behind on payments plan and manage family finances in such a way as to catch up and stay current. --Help new borrowers set up plans to avoid falling behind on payments. --Locate people who are eligible for the agency's various housing programs but who may not be aware of their eligibility. --Assist them in applying for loans or grants. The assistance will be provided through grants to community-based organizations and other local nonprofit groups. Under the law authorizing the program, preference will go to private nonprofit groups that are sponsored by public organizations.

The Farmers Home Administration will work with these groups as they counsel and assist the low-income and minority families for whom the program was created. It was authorized several years ago, but was not funded by Congress until this year when \$2.5 million was appropriated. "Now our state directors can use this technical and supervisory assistance to more effectively deliver our housing resources to the places where they have found the greatest need," Mercure said. "This complements our existing programs and will make them available to more needy people."

Plan Progressing

To Convert

Barringer Hotel

On Thursday, April 19 Charlotte Mayor Kenneth R. Harris signed papers transferring ownership of the Barringer Hotel (also known as the Cavalier Inn) to the City of Charlotte. The building and land was purchased from CB Holding Corporation for \$850,000. The City purchased the structure at the request of the Charlotte Housing Authority and will hold the building in reserve for up to 18 months while federal funding is arranged. The Authority, which will buy the hotel from the City, plans to convert it into housing for the elderly and handicapped. Present plans call for 190 units, 140 one-bedroom units and 50 efficiencies. The project will be developed similar to the Strawn and Edwin Towers sites with the Housing Authority providing management and maintenance services. Once funding is secured, 18-20 months will be needed for architectural and construction activities. The first two floors of the Barringer will be renovated to the original style and elegance of the building. The furniture on these floors has been retained by the City. This area will be used for a Senior Center and will provide office space for agencies serving elderly persons.

SRC Report Reviews

Few Blacks In Southern Governments

by Sherleen McKoy Post Staff Writer

In a report released recently by the Southern Regional Council (SRC) in Atlanta, it was discovered that fifteen years after the passage of the civil rights acts, most decision-making boards in 10 Southern states remain segregated with no black members and half with no women members.

In a study entitled, "The Segregated Governments of the South," the civil rights research organization examined 146 appointive boards and commissions with more than 1,100 members and found that three out of five boards in the South have no Blacks. Only twelve percent of all board members surveyed are female and 51 percent of all of the boards in the region have no female members. "As in the past," noted Steve Suits, SRC executive director and author of the report, "it remains a Southern fact of life that the color of skin and gender tell more about who is exercising the decision-making powers in Southern governments than do any other factors." The report surveyed commi-



Fred Alexander ...State Senator

sions in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. Alabama has the worst record in excluding Blacks--only two there serve on boards. Thirteen of the 15 boards surveyed in Alabama have no Black members. Mississippi and Arkansas have only six percent Black membership on state boards and nine of the boards have no Blacks. Black population in each of the three states exceeds 20 percent. Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennes-

see scored little better in the survey. Only Florida has a majority of the surveyed boards integrated. "Yet, the fact that 43 percent of the commissions surveyed in Florida have no Black members," commented Suits, "certainly constitutes no monument to progress and is only an embarrassing statement of just how few decision-making boards in the region are integrated."

In North Carolina, Blacks were not on 56 percent of the boards surveyed and constituted only 11 percent of the 159 positions surveyed. Women were not on 38 percent of the boards and represented only 23 percent of all board members. While the state's record was not impressive, North Carolina's state boards and commissions had more females than any other Southern state. The survey does not include many advisory boards which make up the largest number of boards and commissions in Southern states; nor does it include boards of trustees of colleges and universities. It does examine commissions that "require the appointment of citizens who will hold the public trust and exercise independent, statutory authority."

The agencies surveyed carry on much of the daily operation of state governments. Blacks and females are found largely on boards in only two fields, criminal justice and human services. Blacks are found least and excluded most on boards regulating private enterprise such as pollution control boards and dairy commissions.

The Southern Regional Council is asking Southern governors to make an immediate inventory of all vacancies on state boards, establish advisory boards to assist in identifying potential Black and female appointees, and appoint Blacks and women in large numbers. Other state groups throughout the South are also asking Southern governors to fill more decision-making positions with Blacks and women. Boards and Commissions could be the best opportunities for involvement of Blacks in state government, the SRC report noted.

A 35-year-old, non-profit organization, the Southern Regional Council promotes equal opportunity in the South. Its members reside throughout the region and its offices are located in Atlanta.



A GOSSIPER: One who can give you all the details without knowing any of the facts.