

Charlotte-Gastonia MBDC Observes Minority Enterprise Development Week

By Jalyne Strong
Post Staff Writer

When President Reagan proclaimed the week of October 7-13 as Minority Enterprise Development Week, he remarked, "The nation's 600,000 minority-owned businesses reveal the true meaning of entrepreneurship. They have emerged as a dynamic force in the marketplace, bringing innovative products and services to our economy, and constituting the principal source for jobs and training of thousands of American workers."

"Owning your own business gives one the feeling of being a valuable part of the community," agrees Archie Nance of the Charlotte-Gastonia Minority Business Development Center. The Charlotte-Gastonia MBDC is an affiliate of the National Minority Business Development Agency. In Charlotte Minority Enterprise Development Week was observed October 1-5.

During the week the Charlotte-Gastonia MBDC coordinated functions which called attention to and praised area minority-owned businesses. The week also was an effort to publicize the services of the Charlotte-Gastonia MBDC.

This organization, located at 230 South Tryon, Suite 230, is involved in aiding already established minority-owned businesses and assisting aspiring minority entrepreneurs.

Managed by English Bradshaw, the Charlotte-Gastonia MBDC employs Archie Nance, coordinator of construction services; Robert Sampson, coordinator of financial services; and Barbara Moody, secretary. They provide services to minority-owned businesses through a cost-sharing agreement, with 90 percent of their services subsidized by the Department of Commerce, leaving 10 percent to be paid by the minority businessperson.

The low cost of obtaining assistance through the Charlotte-Gastonia MBDC enables the minority entrepreneur access to valuable information necessary to establish or continue a successful venture. Comments Nance, "Many people have good ideas for businesses but they lack resources and the know-how for operation."

"We'll supply the expertise from starting up point zero and continue to whatever capacity is needed," explains Nance. Start up expertise includes financial planning, securing funds, marketing and other technicalities.

Once a business is established, the Charlotte-Gastonia MBDC "builds bridges between the business owner



English Bradshaw
...MBDC director

and the marketplace." For example, the organization is functional as a liaison for business owners to obtain the tremendous amount of work generated through government contracts.

"We'll keep an on-going relationship with clients," assures Nance, "assisting in a company's growth and expansion."

The Charlotte-Gastonia MBDC has met the demands of area minority merchants with much success. Since taking over management in February, 1984, English Bradshaw has boosted the rating of the organization from number 86 to 24 out of 100 Business Development Centers nationwide. In this rating of performance percentages, the Centers are ranked on the amount of dollars generated by businesses they've helped establish.

The Charlotte-Gastonia office can handle any venture within a 50 mile radius of the city. They also have a Rural Assistance program.

If you are a member of a minority, e.g., Black, Female, Asian, etc., have a developed idea

for a business and a workable plan, the Charlotte-Gastonia MBDC can guide you to owning your own enterprise. "If there is a need for your services," concludes Nance, "anytime is a good time to start a business."

Local Students

Two students from Charlotte - Scott McGowan Adams and Laurie Ann Conder - are among the 1124 students enrolled for fall semester classes at Anderson College.

The enrollment represents students from 16 states - 1023 from South Carolina - and 11 foreign countries. The number of returning sophomores is 424 this year compared to 358 last year, an increase of 20 percent.



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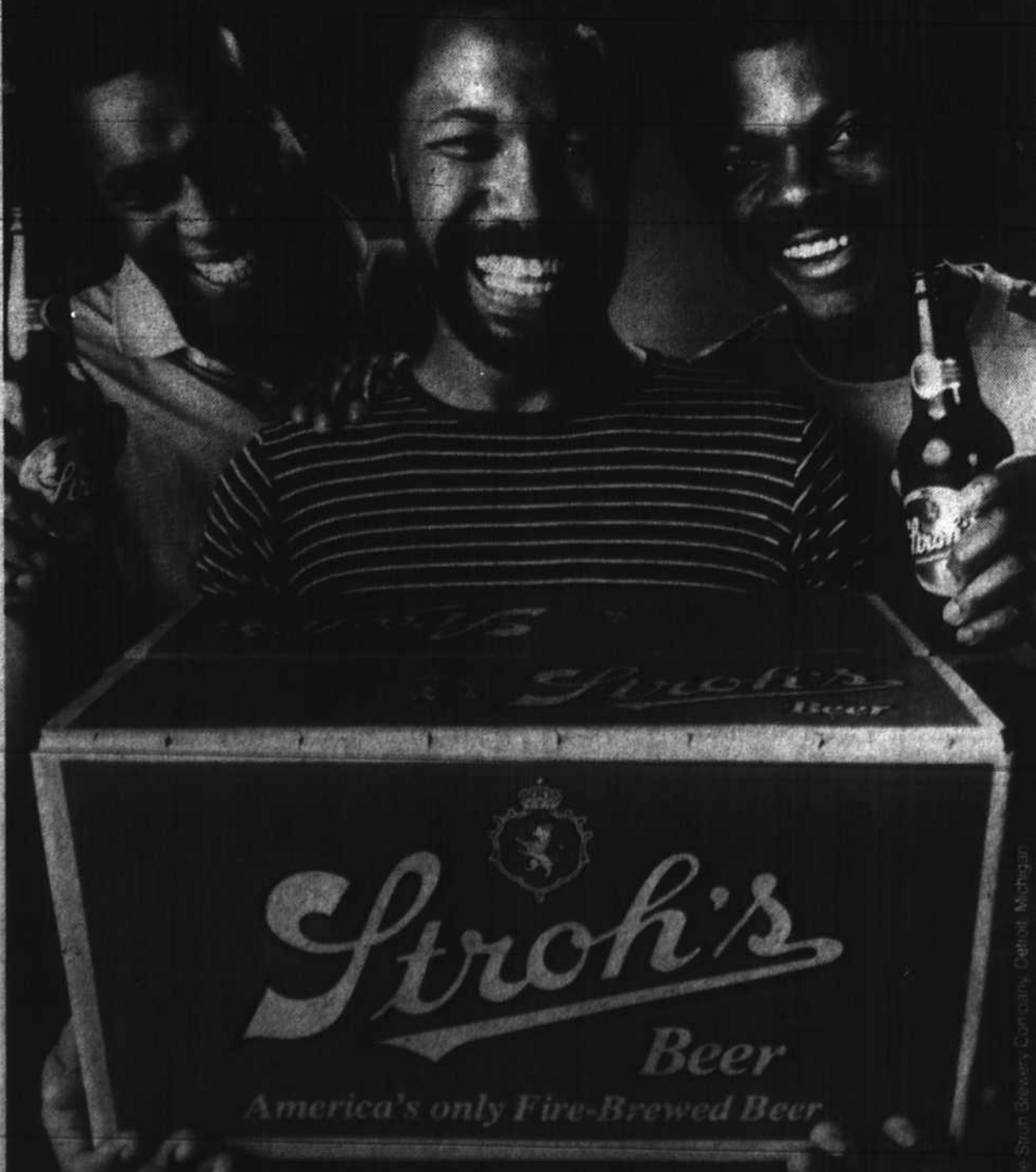
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