

BESI Quietly Goes About Business Of Serving Community

By Loretta Richardson
Post Staff Writer

According to the Bankers Educational Society Inc., (BESI) regional head, James Moore BESI is probably Charlotte's best kept secret. And he's right. While the organization has been in existence for 12 years, it has quietly gone about the business of keeping member black bankers in management up-to-date in the changing world of banking and better communicating the services of the bank to the black community.

The enormity of BESI's task is undertaken by 21 members. Each first Tuesday of the month BESI members meet to plan its agenda and put its objectives into practice. Taking priority on BESI's agenda is its mentor program at Johnson C. Smith University.

"Smith recently instituted a Banking and Finance Program and BESI is instrumental in helping them set their curriculum. Members of our group were matched with Smith students who were interested in a banking career. We helped them with their homework and gave them exposure to the world of banking. Out of the 14 students who were involved in the banking and finance program, there were 12 seniors. Nine of those seniors were placed in the job market," boasted Moore.

But BESI's work did not stop there. Members of the organization were also concerned that many recruiters had negative attitudes about recruiting at Smith. BESI was soon to change that.

"We not only changed the attitudes of some recruiters, we also got some recruiters who had never gone to Smith to go and we've gotten institutions to donate to the banking and finance program,"

Davis After Every Vote

Continued From Page 1A

If no one receives more than 50 percent of the vote, the second-place finisher can call for another election with the first-place candidate.

Davis said he is after every vote, and is taking nothing—especially black support—lightly.

"We're not taking the black vote lightly," he informed. "We'll be out in Piedmont Courts, Earl Village, Derita and Hidden Valley, which is crucial to election."

The white vote is important too, Davis said, adding that his campaign workers are canvassing neighborhoods such as Elizabeth, Chantilly and Plaza-Midwood.

"Some people don't think we can do well there, but I'm going in there," Davis remarked. "If we can get some support, then our chances are really good."

Recard Wants Cross-Section Support

Continued From Page 1A

fective. No campaign should stop doing that no matter how many times you run for office."

Appealing to all District 3 voters instead of a targeted group, Recard said, should be beneficial on primary day.

"I expect a cross-section of people to vote for me," he related. "I was well known throughout my precinct long before I was chairman."

Since no public survey has been done to gauge the race, it's difficult to tell who has the upper hand less than a week before voters go to the polls.

"I know if you go to someone in the election process, someone is going to be the favorite and someone is the underdog," Recard said. "But we'll find out on election day."

CMSMDC Celebrates

Continued from Page 1A

where 388 person gathered. Guest speakers for the occasion were former NBA star, Oscar "Big O" Robertson and James M. O'Neal, senior vice president for Frito-Lay.

"Interfacing with minority vendors at the shows helps us establish a partnership," says Virginia Gregory, Frito-Lay Purchasing specialist. "We try and offer educational programs to help their businesses grow and it allows us to put something back into communities."

commented Moore.

Going beyond J. C. Smith's boundaries, BESI will soon be introducing the mentor program to minority students at Davidson and UNCC. Just recently, one of BESI members, Elsie Heckstall completed a presentation on BESI at Winthrop College.

A new program BESI implemented this year was an oratorical contest. Held in February in recognition of Black History Month, the contest offers three scholarships to the top finalists. Unlike the mentor program which is only open to banking and business majors, the oratorical contest is open to banking and business majors, the oratorical contest is open to all Smith undergraduates.

Still another program that Moore speaks highly of is the Church/Organization Program. Moore explained this program works in two phases. "In the first part of the program we (BESI members) bring in an accountant from H&R Block to talk about tax forms and later someone from the organization comes in to talk about different banking services. Mirion

White is chairman of this program. Persons interested in this service should contact Mirion at United Carolina Bank-Providence Rd.

There are other areas where BESI members' influence is being felt. Presently, two members, Titus Ivory and Walt Denning are involved in the City Business Development. In the near future BESI members will be joining the board of SOSID (Show Our Strength In Dollars).

It is Moore's feeling that a good knowledge of banking services is an area where many blacks fall short. "There are many reasons why that's so. For one thing I don't think that a lot of blacks ask questions. We don't educate ourselves. And secondly, there's not that many blacks in managerial positions that we can go to for help."

Although Moore is not particularly concerned with the modest number his group represents, he does feel that more bankers should be involved in BESI. "Because Charlotte is a banking area, we should have two to three times

more members than we do. At one of our meetings we always ask prospective members two questions: "Is it important to remain educated as a manager and is it important to get information to your community? We feel that if "nos" are the responses that follows, then the person echoing those responses has some serious problems. It is only as a united entity can we make an impact on the Charlotte community."

This month, when BESI meets the guest speaker will be Steve Matthews, banking and finance columnist at the Charlotte Observer. Also at the October 6 meet, which will be held at Johnson C. Smith at 6 p.m., BESI will hold its Fall Reception. In November, Madine Fails of the Urban League will be the guest speaker.

Soon to start is BESI's Ambassador's Campaign. Members of the organization will be getting the word out to civic groups and community organizations concerning BESI's existence. Also, the Black Professional Forum, in the works by BESI will focus on networking with other black enterprises.

"With this program, everybody will know who everybody else is," confirmed Moore. Shelly Anderson chairs this program.

In April of 1988 the 80 to 100 members of the Southern, Central, Triangle and Eastern Regions of BESI will meet in Charlotte for its annual convention. The conven-

tion, to be held at the Marriott Executive Park has adopted as its theme: "Encouraged, But Not Satisfied". The chosen theme says a lot about the organization. Moore concluded by saying, "While we feel we are accomplishments and achievements are great, we can't rest on our laurels."



Pictured above are members of the BESI Southern Region at this year's conference in North Myrtle Beach.

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