

CIAA proves profitable to city and league

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proving to be a win-win for Charlotte and the league. For the city, Newman said hotel sales are starting to spill over into other counties. "This is a success for the region already," he said.

During a press conference Wednesday morning, Mayor



McCrory

Pat McCrory said bringing the CIAA to Charlotte means great basketball and a chance to fill up hotels and restaurants.

"This is now a cultural event," said Kerry, referring to several events that will be going on during the tournament such as the Dead Sea Scrolls event at Discovery Place.

"This is a giant step up," he added. The tournament will generate \$2 million in scholarship money for the 12 member schools' general scholarship fund, a first in league history, according to Kerry.

"Will this be the best CIAA tournament? Absolutely," he

said. "People are coming from far and wide because this is the event to be at. Charlotte really got it."

The CIAA should draw over 110,000 fans to Charlotte and is expected to have an economic impact of over \$12 million.

Kerry said the league has signed three-year deals with UPN, ESPN and CBS Radio. In the past, he said the league had only been able to secure a one-year deal.

Bank of America has also signed on as a three-year sponsor, said Kerry.

"ESPN is going to air more of the games," he said.

Last year, ESPN Classic aired the games, but this year the tournament will be featured on ESPN2 and ESPN Classic.

"One thing that we've done this year that we haven't done in previous years is open up some of our private parties to the public," Kerry said. "You can buy tickets to some of the events and the major event will be the Apollo sponsored by Coca-Cola."

At that talent show, soul legend Patti LaBelle will be the featured act.

Also new this year:

- The Fanfare at the Charlotte Convention

Center. Kerry said the center will be transformed into a market place and a place where fans without tickets can watch the games. The convention center will be

open to the public.

• Single game tickets are available for the games on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. The tickets are \$10 and \$15.

• The CIAA is seeking over 400 fans to act as uptown ambassadors. To volunteer, log on to www.ciaatournament.org or call (704) 335-3211 or (704) 335-3216.

Tepid support for law

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Americans the right to vote, stipulating that the "right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."

As put forth in the Introduction to Federal Voting Rights Laws by the U.S. Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act forbids states from denying or preventing blacks from voting through the discriminatory usage of literacy tests, or other ploys such as poll taxes, on a national basis. Section 5 of the Act "contained special enforcement provisions targeted at those areas of the country where Congress believed the potential for discrimination to be the greatest."

Section 5 applies to all or parts of the following states: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas and Virginia. Although the voting rights set forth by the Fifteenth Amendment and Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act are permanent, Congress must reauthorize Section 5 by the end of 2007.

As reaffirmed by the U.S. Justice Department's Civil Rights Division (Voting Section), the above-mentioned states under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act are prohibited from enacting any changes to their voting laws unless these proposed changes are first submitted to the Justice Department or a federal court for review to ensure that they would not serve a "discriminatory purpose" or have a retrogressive, "discriminatory effect" on minority voters.

In turn, the U.S. Justice Department could enjoin the state from carrying out the proposed voting rule change if it finds it to be discriminatory, or, issue a "pre-clearance" notice essentially giving its "blessing" to the particular voting rule change, finding it to be in compliance with the provisions and intent of the Voting Rights Act.

For years, a team of civil rights lawyers as well as other analysts on staff would meticulously examine whether newly proposed state voting laws would abridge the voting rights of minorities. Their recommendations, which held considerable sway, were then forwarded on to senior Justice Department officials. But not anymore it appears.

From secret memos uncovered by the Washington Post this past year it was revealed that in two highly controversial voting rights cases involving voter ID cards in Georgia and redistricting in Texas, recommendations by career civil rights lawyers within the Justice Department were summarily bypassed by political appointees of the Bush administration and a "pre-clearance" to proceed was issued to Georgia and Texas.

In the Georgia voter ID case, a 51-page memo drawn up by a team of Justice Department attorneys and civil rights analysts in the Voting Rights Section recommended rejecting Georgia's new voter identification law. Four out of the five team members endorsed the memo saying that they arrived at their conclusion based on the fact it was more than likely to discriminate against black voters, ultimately diluting their overall vote totals. The program mandated that voters produce one of six state-sanctioned photo IDs as proof of identification before being allowed to vote, whereas before voters were allowed to provide any of 17 different forms of identification, including Social Security cards and birth certificates.

Now, voters without a driver's license, state ID or other photo identification will be obliged to purchase a \$20 picture ID card that can only be obtained from 59 out of the state's total 159 motor vehicle department offices.

Proponents of the Georgia's voter ID law say it will cut down on voter fraud. Opponents vehemently disagree. They assert that voter fraud is not the issue, and instead this is a well-orchestrated ploy by Bush administration appointees and the GOP in conjunction with the Georgia State Legislature to suppress the voting power of blacks and the poor who are more likely to turn out in large numbers to vote Democratic.

Staff attorneys working in the Civil Rights Division also complained that administration appointee and higher-ups at the Justice Department were "blind-sided" by data offered by Georgia's Motor Vehicle Department and other state agencies to bolster their arguments favoring voter IDs were full of errors and discrepancies.

BPC to hold elections

The Black Political Caucus of Charlotte-Mecklenburg will hold elections at its monthly meeting Sunday.

Officer ballots will be cast

at 6 p.m. at Memorial Presbyterian Church, 2600 Beatties Ford Road.

Herbert L. White



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