

GREENSBORO ECHO

May 2006 3rd Edition

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22nd Juneteenth Day Celebration set for June 3, 2006

The Winston County Voters League is in full planning mode for the 22nd Annual Juneteenth Day Festival set for June 3, 2006 at Dean Park on HWY 15 S in the Center Ridge Community from 11:00 A.M. until 5:00P.M. League members have sponsored the event since 1984 when it was first held on the League grounds on Vance Street.

Juneteenth Day celebrates the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, but it was not until June 19, 1865 that Black slaves in Galveston, Texas and several other states heard the news they were free. The name "Juneteenth" is a shortened version of that date. It is as significant to African Americans as the 4th of July is to other Americans of European heritage and is celebrated in many states. Juneteenth celebrates and encourages self-development and respect of all cultures.

All activities of Juneteenth Day are open to the public and Dean Park has proven to be an ideal location. It is a great way to welcome the summer with the entire family from babies to grandparents. Elected officials

and candidates for office are all welcome. Bring a chair or just come in cool, comfortable clothes to meet, greet and eat with old and new acquaintances.

The League is encouraging groups or individuals to reserve a booth to showcase your favorite foods, crafts, arts or other specialty. In addition, entertainment is always a big part of the scheduled events and singers, poets, rappers, choirs, praise dancers and musicians are welcome to perform.

The festival includes the 3rd consecutive appearance of the Buffalo Soldiers Motorcycle Group. They are a popular attraction to the festival with their gleaming, roaring motorcycles.

A number of games for children including balloon and bean toss, sack races, ball games and face painting will be provided throughout the day. The League is hoping to have a "dunking booth" and volunteers brave enough to be "sitting ducks" for this event.

Another popular activity is the Cake Walk with many chances to win a delicious cake for only .50. Young and old alike

seem to enjoy this yearly event. Contact the League's oldest member, Betsy Eichelberger, at 773-3238 if you would like to donate a cake. Mrs. Eichelberger is also our contact person for the Health Fair volunteers who provide blood pressure checks and other healthy tidbits of information for festival goers.

Past food, favorites have included barbeque pork/beef ribs and chicken, fried fish, hamburgers, hot dogs, home made ice cream, snow cones, roasted corn, candied apples, nachos and assorted baked goods. One unusual food presentation has been Pig Feet Sandwiches. Booth choices for food are limited only by the imagination of the vendor.

For information on food and craft booths, contact Janice Hopkins at 773-7743. For entertainment, contact Dean Miller at 773-5130. For any other information, suggestions or offers to assist, contact League President Calvin Hampton at 773-6220 or Claudell Weaver, Press Relations at 773-9414.

Join the League for a fun-filled family affair at Dean Park and help celebrate the 22nd Annual Juneteenth Day Festival on June 3, 2006.

WINSTON COUNTY SELF HELP COOPERATIVE... "Saving Rural America"

Excuse Me!

By Evelyn C. Dixon

"Could you come over here for a moment? I have something important to talk to you about." That is what Mr. Frank Taylor from the Winston County Self Help Group, out of Louisville, Mississippi and Mr. Arthur Phalo, US Forest Service, said to every one passing by the US Forest Service booth at the National Conference of Black Mayors, Inc. 32nd Annual Convention held in Memphis, Tennessee on April 26-30, 2006. This year's theme was 'Building America: New Markets, New

Strategies, and New Solutions.' Some people were perplexed as to why they were being called over, while most thought the visit with Mr. Phalo was informative and worthwhile. Mr. Taylor discussed the importance of agriculture in this country, and the importance of saving rural America while explaining his connection with the USDA Forest Service. The Forest Service is known for passing out tree seedlings to event attendees. This year's tree seedlings were Pin Oak provided by the Arkansas Forestry Commission and Loblolly Pine provided by Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Forestry Division.

This year's "Unsung Heroes Award" was given to Afemo and Elisabeth Omilami the son-in-law and daughter of the late Rev. Hosea William. They both have careers in acting, but put it second to fulfilling her parents dream of helping the homeless. Both find happiness in doing the work that Lord has given them.

I also had the pleasure of working the conference with students from Jacob Creek Job Corp, and other USDA Forest Service employees. Although my experience with this conference is limited, through observation I found that many of the Mayors that visited the booth, left with an impression of how they can work with the programs and services offered in some fashion. All staff was passionate about helping minority landowners to become better informed of the programs and services available to them through the USDA.

For more information about USDA Forest Service Cooperative Forestry efforts, contact Arthur Phalo at 404/347-7239.

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The Honorable Dr. Willie W. Herenton welcomed the National Conference of Black Mayors and attendees from across the nation to his great state of Tennessee and to the historic city of Memphis, home of the **Blues**. Mayor Herenton elected in 1991 as the first African American Mayor in Memphis and presently serving his fourth consecutive term. In keeping with the theme, he shared how Memphis has changed over the last 15 years, emphasizing lower crime rates, better schools and downtown economy on the rise. Mayor Herenton inherited a \$3.5 million dollars deficit in 1991, as an effort to turn it around he formed new partnerships resulting in a reserve of \$69 million.

There were more than 400 people in attendance at this year's conference despite facing low budgets and other financial restraints. However, several Mayors from southern states of Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama and Georgia were absent still trying to recover from the devastation Hurricane Katrina brought, making this year's attendance lower than usual.

The conference brought in celebrity and well-known presenters to educate them about successes, failures, and struggles. Also discussed were ways they can collaborate and create new partnerships.

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