

BUSINESS

Blacks should use windfall to improve lot

By James Clingman
Special to Sentinel-Voice

I know most of us are just sitting by the window looking for the mailman and hoping this is the day he (or she) will bring our check.

Which check? You know, the one we are getting from Uncle Sam.

Yes, those \$300, \$500 and \$600 checks will be flowing in a few days.

And before I go further, let me share with you what the government is saying about these retroactive tax payouts. The strategy embedded in the payouts is for consumers to run out and put that money back into the economy to give it a boost.

Now, with that said, I am suggesting that we—Black people—do just that and a little more.

Here's the plan. When we get our checks, let's see if we

can spend a portion of it on Black-owned businesses and boost our own economy.

Then, let's take the rest of it and do one (or more) of the following:

- * Start a common fund with other brothers and sisters in your city and grow it on a regular basis by depositing a few dollars each week; and/or

- * Donate some of your windfall to your church's scholarship fund and create an endowment for the future of your children.

Folks, this is what some people call "found money." No, it's not a great deal of money on an individual basis, but if we blend that money with a spoonful of trust and a dash of love, we will have the start of a real meal we can sit on our own table. These few hundreds of dollars in our hands can be the beginning

of many of the things we discuss so often—if we would only use them collectively in some manner.

Government economic motives aside, if we use this money—along with other dollars we have in our possession—to uplift ourselves, we will have put it to good use.

If we simply do what the government thinks we will do with it—that is, spend it on things everyone except Black people produce—we will have done nothing but played into their hands once again.

Every week or two, Black people repeat the same cycle of earning money and returning it to those from whom we earn it. The establishment will always have what it wants and needs because it has a built-in mechanism that never allows it to lose any of its

money. The Black economy is nearing \$600 billion and certain merchants are just salivating at the thought of getting their hands on it and creating an economic future for their children.

We must use our annual income, and any other funds we have, to create wealth for our children and ourselves rather than give it away to others in exchange for their products and services, especially when there are Black people who produce the same things and provide the same services.

So when you get your "found money," please consider doing something positive with it. Don't simply return it to someone else's economy; use it to help build your own economy. Give \$100 to the Visions 2000 Project (1-800-777-1028) and become a founding spon-

sor of an economic movement that is currently investing in Black-owned hotels across this country. Visions 2000 is also planning to build and create investment opportunities in Black-owned hotels as well. You can be a part of this movement with an initial investment of \$100.00.

Buy MATAH products (1-800-977-6282) instead of many of those you currently use. Tell me. Do you get a 100 percent money back guarantee on every item you purchase at your local Walgreens, CVS, Rite-Aid, Kroger, etc.? You do when you buy MATAH products.

Do your local stores return any of the profits for the items you purchase back to you or your people? MATAH does.

Do your local stores offer opportunities for wider distribution and increased shelf

space for Black-manufactured products? MATAH offers Black-manufactured, Black-distributed, Black-warehoused, and Black-managed products to anyone throughout the United States. Doesn't it make more sense to purchase MATAH products instead of those you normally purchase while at the same time empowering ourselves and securing our children's future?

Those are just two ways you can get involved in our economic freedom. Those are just two ways we can improve our economic position in this country and finally take some control over our dollars and our economy.

It all starts with Black consciousness and redirecting our spending toward one another. Let's take this windfall of a few hundred dollars and get busy!

African-American man designs new voting system

Congressman Bob Clement sees it as remedy to 2000 election fiasco

By Hazel Trice Edney
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON-- When Athan L. Gibbs Sr. watched the unfolding of the November 7 election fiasco, he couldn't believe his eyes.

He said he was baffled by the fact that there was "no way to audit" election results.

So Gibbs, an accountant and auditor with 29 years of experience, put his expertise to work.

The result is a computerized machine called the TruVote Voter Validation System that gives a receipt with a voter verification number to show proof of voting, a

published count of all votes cast, and touchscreen voting with sound, photos and animated instructions.

The machine would also provide easy computerized canvassing and auditing, Gibbs said, while maintaining "absolute anonymity and confidentiality" for the voter.

"I am extremely impressed with his ideas for election reform," said Rep. Bob Clement (D-Tenn.), who held a press conference recently to demonstrate the voting machine in his Capitol Hill office. He said he has known Gibbs, a native of Shelby County, Tenn., for



Athan L. Gibbs Sr. with his new voting machine.

years and believes "the method is well thought-out and worthy of further consideration by election officials."

Congress is now considering election reform bills that could result in national standards for voting machines. Before the Gibbs design can be used by any state or locality, it must first be federally certified.

Gibbs said officials in Jacksonville and Memphis, Tenn., have already expressed interest in his design, which he estimates would cost less than \$3,000 per unit. Machines currently used cost about \$5,000 per unit, he said.

He said taxpayers could help to pay for the machines

by checking an optional box on their annual federal tax forms to donate three dollars towards the purchase.

If the Gibbs design is sanctioned by Congress, it could be likened to a poetic justice of sorts given reports that more African-American votes were undercounted than any other racial or historically oppressed group in the last election, which took more than a month to certify and ended with a still controversial decision by the U. S. Supreme Court that many African-Americans still view as unfair. Black voters supported Vice President Al Gore of then Texas Gov. George Bush 9-1.

NYC sued for harassment

NEW YORK (AP) - The federal government has sued the city, saying it did not do enough to protect women in its welfare program from sexual and racial harassment, including harassment by supervisors.

The suit claims four women were harassed and the city did not respond adequately to their complaints. The New York Times reported recently. The suit seeks compensatory damages and asks the city to halt the improper conduct.

Employment law experts said it's unusual for the federal government to file such complaints. The government sued only after efforts to negotiate failed, the newspaper said.

The suit charges three women were sexually harassed, with two claiming supervisors touched them improperly. The fourth woman, who is black, said she saw racial caricatures and a noose hanging in a window of a building she was assigned to paint.

City officials denied that Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's administration has permitted harassment in the program, under which welfare recipients work for their benefits.

Urban League

(Continued from Page 1)

Blacks between 25 and 34, and 49 percent of those polled between 18 and 24, have been racially profiled—stopped by police because they were Black.

Six out of 10 Blacks polled believe that economic opportunity should be the focus of civil rights organizations.

The telephone survey was conducted using 800 homes. Thirty eight percent of those polled were under 35.

National Urban League President Hugh Price wrote in the overview that this year's "State of Black America" report shows there

are not significant gaps on specific issues between Blacks of different ages and socio-economic standings.

"The old saying that if we don't all hang together, we'll surely hang separately is still apt," wrote Price. "It applies to those African-Americans who are under 35 and have trod a golden path through college and graduate school into well-paying jobs as much as it did to Black Americans of previous eras."

The study is the second one released within a year by a national Black organization studying generational differences among African-Ameri-

cans.

The "State of Black America" comes months after a report by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies showed that young African-Americans were found to be less likely to vote, less affiliated with either political party but equally as concerned with social and political issues as their elder counterparts.

The center's study, entitled "The Political Perspectives Of Young African Americans," was a national opinion poll conducted by the center, a nonpartisan social and political think that has

examined Black political trends for over 30 years.

It found that while young Blacks are more educated and enjoy more economic mobility, they are not as strong in partisan support of the Democratic Party. These young Blacks, particularly Black males, do not consider the political process a viable road to community or personal empowerment, and are therefore less likely to vote.

"The growth in the number of independents among young African-Americans represents a cause for concern," wrote Joint Center senior analyst (See Urban League, Pg 13)