

# Leaders encourage trade between Brazil, U.S. black businesses

**Special to Sentinel-Voice**

Members of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Inc., recently visited Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Brasilia and Vitoria, Brazil, meeting newly elected President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and talking up economic commerce between Brazilians of African descent and U.S. black business proprietors.

During the six-day trip, CBCF brass met with da Silva's cabinet, toured various areas and brainstormed on international business and trade partnerships.

Already in the works is a project developed by Essence Magazine cofounder



The people in the photo traveled to Brazil to explore trade options between Afro-Brazilians and African-Americans (L-R): Melvin Spence, Sergio Habersfeld, Mark Smith, Rep. William Jefferson (D-LA), Hon. Benedita da Silva, Rep. Phil English (R-PA); Mark Catania and Weldon J. Rougeau.

Clarence Smith to establish an airline between Miami and Salvador, Bahia in northeast Brazil. Bahia is a hotbed of Afro-Brazilian culture.

"Brazil's economy is impressive, outweighing that of all other South American countries," CBCF Chairman William Jefferson said.

"It has an extensive network of well-developed agricultural, mining and manufacturing outlets.

"That's why it is important for us to recognize the tremendous benefits of connecting their goods and services providers to American outlets and exposing African-American businesses to their consumers."

## Minority travel guide series launched

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Washington, DC - Maryland-based publisher Orb Communications launched a new travel guide for racial/ethnic minorities titled the "Ethnic Traveler."

The guide is the first in a planned series of minority-interest travel guides slated for release into the U.S. book market. The first guide focuses on cultural-based leisure and tourism activities available in Washington, D.C. for the \$30 billion African-American travel market.

According to Christopher Redwood, president of Orb Communications, "comprehensive leisure travel information tailored to minorities is very limited in most travel guides currently on the market. With the Ethnic Traveler series, travel information tailored to minorities will be accessible more than ever before."

Washington, D.C. remains a popular US destination for African-American travelers. In 1991, Washington, DC became one of the eight top US destinations for 51 percent of all African-American travelers.

The African-American experience, deeply rooted in Washington, D.C., serves as a magnet for blacks. Black mathematician and astronomer Benjamin Banneker helped interpret and complete the plans for the city,

which is also the historical focal point of the Civil Rights movement and is currently one of the few cities with a large African-American population (60 percent 23,000) according to the 2000 U.S. Census.

Other top destinations for blacks, according to the Travel Industry Association of America, are Florida, Georgia, Texas and Virginia. In the upcoming months, the Ethnic Traveler series will focus on these popular destinations to highlight why blacks are flocking to these areas.

In 2000, blacks spent \$47 million on books, dining, entertainment, gifts, furnishings, personal care services, pet services, transportation, travel and lodging. On average, blacks \$407 per person per trip excluding transportation to and from their destination.

Blacks, Asian Americans and Latin Americans are among the fastest growing population groups in the United States, according to the Selig Center for Economic Growth, and will represent an increasing percentage of all travelers. Subsequent Ethnic Traveler guides will highlight cultural-based leisure and tourism activities for these specific groups in U.S. cities with large racial/ethnic markets including California, Texas and Florida for Latin Americans and California, New Jersey and New York for Asian Americans.

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## Federal judges: Ohio ruling on redistricting not discriminatory

*Republican-dominated board upholds 2001 plan*

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) - The state board that redrew Ohio's legislative districts for the 2002 election did not discriminate against minorities, three federal judges ruled Friday.

The panel unanimously upheld the plan approved in 2001 by the State Apportionment Board, dominated 4-1 by Republicans.

Legislative Democrats had sued the board, claiming it drew lines that suppressed the election of blacks in Ohio, particularly in four urban counties.

The Democrats failed to prove that the plan was based on race, the judges said. Lloyd Pierre-Louis, who represented the Democrats, said an appeal was likely.

The board, made up of the governor,

auditor, secretary of state and a legislator from each party, is required to redraw districts every 10 years based on changes found in the census.

Ohio law states the board must use the U.S. and Ohio constitutions and the federal Voting Rights Act as guidelines.

Republican consultant Scott Borgemenke drew the new lines in consultation with Floyd Johnson, the state redistricting director for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

"It's hard for one to say we were discriminating against African-Americans when Scott was listening to and taking recommendations from Mr. Johnson," said N. Victor Goodman, the board's attorney.