

NEWS BRIEFS

NEVADA WILL OPEN ONLY U.S. TOURISM OFFICE IN CHINA

The Nevada Commission on Tourism will officially open Nevada's first tourism office in Beijing June 11, becoming the only U.S. state tourism department to be represented in the People's Republic of China. Lt. Gov. Lorraine Hunt will lead a delegation of Nevada tourism and hotel industry representatives to China to celebrate the opening of the new office and conduct a tourism-building mission with Chinese government and tourism officials and airline representatives. "Opening the only U.S. state tourism office in China is a big step forward for Nevada because it establishes our presence in this country of 1.4 billion people, enables us to build tourism with this highly lucrative market and demonstrates to the Chinese people our state's intense interest in having them visit," Hunt said. Nevada is the only U.S. state to obtain the required certification by the China National Tourism Administration to operate an office in China, an achievement that took many months to accomplish. The agency usually certifies only national tourism offices, not those of individual states or provinces, but since the United States has no national tourism office, Nevada was able to get the permit.

REP. LEE, COALITION HEADED TO JAMAICA FOR TRADE CONFERENCE

The International Trade Forum slated for Sept. 23-26 in Jamaica will host 150 Black business owners. The delegation will be led by Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas, Texas Rep. Senfronia Thompson, Houston City Council members and various civilians, business owners and philanthropists. The forum is being organized by the International Trade Network of Houston, whose mission is to assist minority business owners break into the global trade industry. Jamaican Prime Minister P.J. Patterson will address the attendees, as will U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica Sue Cobb. Entities scheduled to be present include the Department of Commerce's Commercial Services division, the Jamaica Promotions Corp., and others. Those interested in more information on the event can call Gersham Fulcott, chairman of the Jamaica Trade Committee at (713) 785-0096 or e-mail him at gfulcott@houstoncitizenschamber.com.

NAACP EXEC NAMED TO MAGAZINE'S 'TOP UNDER-40' ACHIEVERS LIST

Roslyn Brock, vice chair of the national board of directors for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, was recently named one of the nation's top 40 achievers under 40 years old by New York City-based Network Journal magazine. Brock, who is director of system fund development for Bon Secours Health System, has been vice chair of the NAACP national board since 2001. She is also a member of the NAACP Special Contributions Fund board of trustees. Brock will receive her award during a June 17 ceremony. The event will recognize 40 individuals under age 40 who have achieved significant levels of success and made substantial contributions in their communities. A special June issue of the Network Journal will feature honorees.

ZANZIBAR TOUGHENS LAWS ON HOMOSEXUALS

A mood of conservatism may be creeping over the traditionally tolerant island of Zanzibar. Legislators there have passed a bill that adds new penalties for gay sex. While homosexuality was generally frowned upon here as in most African societies, such behavior was tolerated and generally overlooked. Once the new law is approved by the island's president, Amani Karume, gay sex acts will be punishable by up to five years in prison, while gay partners who celebrate a "marriage" will face up to seven years behind bars. Homosexuality was already illegal, but the penalties were toughened after two gay men outraged conservative opinion by publicly celebrating their "marriage" at one of the island's hotels last year. Until now, Zanzibar, the Indian Ocean island 40 kilometers off the Tanzanian coast, was known for a thriving, if covert, gay scene and culture. Some of the men involved are married, and many do not regard themselves as homosexual, even if they have boyfriends. Contrary to earlier press reports, men convicted of gay sex will not risk being jailed for life. Still, the crackdown has caused dismay among members and activists of the gay community.

Wilder assails impact of at-large vote

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) - Former Gov. L. Douglas Wilder, who is seeking to become mayor, on Friday assailed a congressman who said Richmond's pending switch to an at-large mayoral election could dilute Black voting strength.

Rep. Robert C. Scott apparently believes the people of Richmond "are obviously too stupid, too dumb or too racist to elect their own mayor," said Wilder, who, like Scott, is a Black Democrat.

"Race won't be a barrier to anyone elected under this plan. Nobody!" Wilder said.

The mayor is now appointed by city council mem-

bers, who are elected from wards within the city. The change to at-large elections, coupled with the strengthening of the mayor's executive powers, received 80 percent support in a city vote and was approved by the General Assembly and Gov. Mark R. Warner.

It is now being reviewed by the U.S. Justice Department, and if it is approved, residents will elect a mayor on the November ballot.

Scott, Virginia's only Black congressman, said he believes the election plan is illegal under federal civil rights law, even if the majority approved it. "The fact that it passed doesn't trump the

Voting Rights Act," he told the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

Opponents of a popularly elected mayor have argued that a White candidate would draw contributions from the primarily White development crowd. They argue that would give the candidate a wide funding edge over any Black prospect even though the city has a majority Black population, and the city council has six Black and three White members.

Wilder, who was the nation's first and only elected Black governor, was among the early supporters last year of an at-large mayor proposal, saying a strong elected leader

is needed to address problems with crime and city schools. Wilder noted that Scott lives in Newport News, a city that does have at-large elections for mayor.

Under the Richmond plan, the position of city manager would be eliminated. The mayor would be the chief executive officer of the city with the power to appoint a chief administrative officer under him.

Wilder, 73, was born and raised in Richmond but now lives in a nearby rural county. He would have to establish residency in Richmond by early August to qualify for the ballot. He was governor from 1990 to 1994.

Fort Worth greenlights slavery resolution

Special to Sentinel-Voice from Final Call

FORT WORTH (NNPA)-Community leaders gained momentum in the reparations movement as Fort Worth City Council passed a resolution that calls for the House of Representatives to establish a national commission to study the issue of reparations for slavery.

The resolution, HR 40 or House Bill 40, is sponsored by Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.)

The city of Fort Worth now joins legislation that has been endorsed by officials in several cities, including Dallas, Detroit, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Cleveland and Chicago. Houston remains one of the only major cities in Texas that has not passed such a resolution.

"This completely places a large burden on Mayor Bill White and the city council of Houston, now that Fort Worth has passed their resolution. But we won't quit until we see victory here as well," said Kofi Taharka, National Black United Front (NBUF) Houston chairman and a member of the Houston umbrella reparations group, the Local Action Committee (LAC).

The resolution passed 6-3 with dissenting members voicing concerns that it made no sense.

"I will not support this because I don't think we can solve anything by going back to the past. I mean, what about the women who suffered for hundreds of years, including receiving low pay for the same work a man does? Do we go back and

address that?" said Council Member Becky Haskin. City Council members Ralph McCloud and Frank Moss sponsored the resolution.

"With this win, we will use it to continue momentum and gather thousands of signatures for the NDABA campaign," said Bryan Muhammad, executive director and president of Tarrant County POWER (People Organized Working for Equal Rights Representation and Reparations), the group who lead the reparations resolution issue.

Michael Bell, spokesperson for the Tarrant County Local Organizing Committee, speaking to the press after the resolution passage said, "Fort Worth can claim its position among dozens of cities across this nation who

are saying that it's time now for us to repair the damage done to African people in this country. The brutal slavery conditions reaped upon fellow human beings was wrong and that debt must be paid."

"This is not an old movement. Callie House did the first organized movement for reparation compensation for African-Americans as she worked to get slave pensions for the newly freed Blacks during the mid-1800s. We appreciate the council assisting in bringing us closer to closure on this extremely important issue," said Thomas Muhammad, founder of Africans & African-Americans for Enslavement Reparations.

Those interested in more information, call POWER (817) 247-0538.

Catholic University declines to accept NAACP chapter

WASHINGTON (AP) - The president of the NAACP is criticizing a decision by Catholic University of America not to recognize a chapter of the civil rights group on campus. "It is outright discrimination and intolerance all rolled into one," NAACP President Kweisi Mfume said Friday, just outside the campus and surrounded by about 20 activists and student chapter leaders from other universities.

He said it was the first time in decades that a university had not allowed a student chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He threatened to sue if the group was unable to come to an agreement with the Roman Catholic university.

The university rejected a student's attempt to start a

chapter in April on the ground that the campus already had two groups that represent Black students: the Black Organization of Students at Catholic University of America and Minority Voices, an umbrella group for minority organizations.

"He did not demonstrate in the view of university officials ... that this chapter of the NAACP would fill a need that isn't already being met by organizations in existence," said Victor Nakas, university spokesman.

William Jawando, 21, who tried to start the chapter, dismissed the school's reasoning, saying there are no civil rights groups on campus.

"I think they're scared of the NAACP name and protests," said Jawando, a recent undergraduate, who will attend the university's law school in the fall.

School administrators also raised concern about the group's support of the April 25 "March for Women's Lives," an abortion rights rally. Nakas said student groups are not allowed to advocate positions that are

contrary to the teachings of the church — which opposes abortion. But he said that was not the main reason for rejecting the NAACP chapter.

Official NAACP policy does not take a side in the (See NAACP, Page 12)

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