## Mogul to Black Press: Make your self famous

By Hazel Trice Edney Special to Sentinel-Voice

LAS VEGAS (NNPA) -Representatives from among more than 200 Black publishers crowded into the Luxor Hotel ballroom in Las Vegas to hear a basic message: How to "champion" the Black Press of America.

The speaker, William "Dollar Bill" Waller, talking straight from his own success, looked into the eager faces around the room and observed an absence: "The one thing that's missing in this room is a brand," he said.

"You guys have to begin to think branding."

Waller, the chief operating

officer of Lloyd Price Icon Food Brands, Inc., which has branded a line of food products called "Lawdy Miss Clawdy," drew from his own 30 years of experience.

In just a few years, he has taken the title of a song that has been performed repeatedly by dozens of artists since 1954 - without changing the rhythm or melody and transitioned it into the largest African-Americanowned food company in the nation, selling sweet potatoflavored cookies and des-

Waller is convinced that the National Newspaper Publishers Association - a fed-



NNPA supporters and members listen intently to dialogue about growth and image enhancement during a conference.

eration of newspapers with a common reputation for fighting injustice - could do the same with its long-standing

reports for sales and editorial departments.

your bottom line," NNPA Chairman John

B. Smith Sr., told the publishers. "And for

those of you who are already doing well,

it will show us how to do even better col-

lectively." Among the figures in the re-

port, which lists incomes as well as expen-

ditures, are these economic strengths: To-

tal earned income among African-Ameri-

cans has risen from \$719 billion in 2005

to \$744.1 billion in 2006, a 3.5 percent

increase. It also shows a nearly 90 percent

increase in earned income among African-

Americans over the past decade, from \$392

It also reports that African-Americans

spend \$3.5

billion on

consumer

electronics a

year, among

the highest

level of ex-

penditures.

cludes \$1

billion on

VCRs and

in-

That

"This data will help you to improve

mission. "You have to start doing what the hip-hoppers are do-

ing - collaboration," he told the audience. "You never made rock stars out of your writers and your editors. They should all be celebrities... Instead of making everybody else fa-

mous, make your own self fa-

mous," Waller stressed. Waller's message on "branding" echoed a sermon that had been earlier preached to the publishers, who were gathered for their winter conference workshops, by Rev. Dr. Welton T. Smith III, pastor of the Greater Evergreen MissionBible reference to "carry your own corner" from Mark 2:1-12.

In its 181st year, Black newspapers, like other publications, are surviving, but amidst a struggling industry. Comparing his cookie products, Waller says the Black Press must embrace its strength, its uniqueness in mission, as its brand.

"Everybody's got sweet potato this and sweet potato that. But, nobody's got 'Lawdy Miss Clawdy," he

The Lawdy Miss Clawdy success story debuted in the Black Press last June when the Washington Informer first published the feature story. The NNPA News Service then picked up the story and distributed it across the wire July 1.

The article's author, Mary Wells, described how now-55-year music icon and brand namesake Lloyd Price, who authored the theme song, used his life and business acumen to transform his music career into a "wildly successful and growing food company."

"In 1952, as a 17-year-old

ary Baptist Church in his lad from Kenner, La., [Price] wrote and sang his way to stardom and music history when he sang about the strong attitude, grace and beauty of a Southern Louisiana Cajun Queen in the tune 'Lawdy Miss Clawdy.'

> The song became the Song of the Year and stayed on top of the music charts for seven consecutive weeks after music producer Dave Bartholomew and Fats Domino saw a special talent in Price and teamed to coproduce the song.

> Many music historians say that Price's song helped give birth to the Rock 'n' Roll era, the article states.

The Informer's advertising director, Ron Burke, noted that 7-Eleven corporate heads saw the initial article about Price's products. They were impressed and decided to make the unique brand availabe in their stores.

distributed samples of the sweet potatoflavored cookies and other products to the publishers. They will soon be sold in China and Puerto Rico, he

"That shows the power of the Black Press," he said.

## Consumer report lifts power of Black Press

By Hazel Trice Edney Special to Sentinel-Voice

LAS VEGAS (NNPA) - Black consumers, with an annual worth of nearly \$750 billion in buying power, are disrespected on a daily basis by merchants across the nation.

Now, Black-owned newspapers — that regularly endure discrimination in ad sales and publish weekly news stories of racial profiling, false accusations and disparate arrests of customers in retail stores, shops and businesses - have a new tool by which to empower those local and national reports of injustices by disclosing the worth of African-American consumers.

"Every time you do a story about a gro-

cer who disrespected a customer and that customer calls and says, 'They do this stuff all the time. ...And that customer calls and says, 'I want

"Give yourself some power by giving your readers their power."

billion in 1997.

- Ken Smikle President, Target Market News televisions,

you to write them up because I'm going to sue them,' when you do the story, just put in, 'According to Target Market News, Black Households in Philadelphia [for examplel spent \$25 million on tires, on gasoline, on groceries," said Ken Smikle, president of Target Market News, which annually releases "The Buying Power of Black America."

Smikle encouraged Black publishers convening in Las Vegas for the winter conference. "Put the number in there so that people will get a sense of their value and their power. Nobody else is going to do this. And if you do it, I guarantee you that you will have power unimagined."

The meeting room at the Luxor Hotel, packed with member publishers of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, the Black Press of America, responded with excitement, some ordering two of the

related equipment.

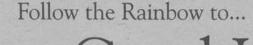
The figures also show Black women spending \$143 million on shoes annually while men spend \$139 million. They spend even more for their children; the report shows \$251 million for girls' footwear and \$269 million for boys.

Parents in the audience, including Washington Informer Publisher Denise Rolark Barnes, who has two sons, concluded that the purchase of pricey athletic shoes might account for the higher dollar amount spent on boys footwear.

"Every shoe manufacturer in the world, from Nike to Florsheim, should be doing business with us," Smikle said.

The report, available for order at www.targetmarketnews.com, lists annual purchases of everything from wigs and hair care products to groceries and condi-

(See Consumers, Page 4)



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