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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

Files: Sharpton taxes overdue

NEW YORK (AP) — Big corporations give him money. Presidential candidates seek his endorsement. He has influential friends in Congress and the governor's mansion.

Rev. Al Sharpton has emerged over the past decade as perhaps the nation's most prominent civil rights leader, a status that was demonstrated when he led protests against police brutality that briefly shut down six of Manhattan's major bridges and tunnels.

But he still carries baggage from his early days as a fire-breathing agitator: Government records obtained by The Associated Press indicate that Sharpton and his business entities owe nearly \$1.5 million in overdue taxes and associated penalties.

Now the U.S. attorney is investigating his nonprofit group, a probe that an undeterred Sharpton brushes off as the kind of annoyance that civil rights figures have come to expect from the government.

"Whatever retaliation they do on me, we never stop," he told the AP. "I think that that is why they try to intimidate us."

Over the past year, Sharpton's lawyers and the staff of his nonprofit group, the National Action Network, have been negotiating with the federal government over the size of his debt, which they dispute. The group has also been trying to pay off tens of thousands of dollars it owes for failing to properly maintain workers compensation and unemployment insurance.

Charles King, the organization's interim executive director, said both Sharpton and the group he leads were unprepared for their rise in stature in recent years and had trouble dealing with big jumps in donations and income.

"The infrastructure was trying to keep up with that pace, and it was not a perfect fit," he said. "The National Action Network may not have been perfect, but nothing was going on that was untoward."

(See Sharpton, Page 11)

Program for free meds

By Parker Philpot
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Far too often and far too sadly, it happens. A patient walks out of the doctor's office building and tosses a crumpled paper to the ground. But it's not just litter. It's a prescription for medicine. Medicine the patient cannot afford to buy.

A Las Vegas-based company, The Medicine Cabinet USA, is clearing the path for patients to get prescriptions at no cost. Free medications, regardless of cost, are supplied to patients by various pharmaceutical manufacturers on an ongoing basis, according to Janice Brooks, company founder.

Brooks tallies the savings for hundreds of program members at over \$2.5 million since 2003. Best of all, she says, is the company's capacity to serve thousands more local and out-of-area clients in the five-year-old, fee-based, privately operated program.

The company offers a solution for working families, the underemployed and those without jobs who have no coverage for medications, provided they qualify, enroll in the paid membership program and comply with supplier terms, Brooks said. In some instances, the company



Sentinel-Voice photos by Parker Philpot

Above, Janice Brooks shows drug companies' prices and explains her company's free medications assistance program. Right, Wrapped vehicle that travels around town with "Free Medications" message.



can even help clients who have coverage but fall into a so-called "gap" or "donut hole" where medications are not covered, such as during waiting periods or when caps and limits no longer provide medication coverage.

Nevada has more than

700,000 uninsured residents, and the alarming statistic Brooks cites does not include senior citizens and undocumented immigrants. Her mission is "to provide sources for prescription medications at free or low cost to individuals who have no pre-

scription drug coverage and do not have government or private resources available to them."

Income is a prime consideration, but in most cases, the ceiling for household income is about twice the federally (See Prescriptions, Page 2)

NYPD disciplines White cop who stopped Black superior

NEW YORK (AP) — A White police officer was disciplined for acting "in a discourteous manner" when he confronted a Black motorist who turned out to be one of the highest-ranking commanders in the New York City Police Department, an agency spokesman said Saturday.

Chief Douglas Zeigler, the head of the NYPD's Community Affairs Bureau and the highest uniformed Black officer on the force, was off duty and sitting in his department-issued sport utility vehicle on a street in the borough of Queens on May 2 when two White police officers approached.

The encounter turned testy, and one of the officers tried to wrest open Zeigler's door, even after the three-star chief had identified himself, police spokesman Paul Browne said.

"He dealt with the chief in a discourteous manner, which is unacceptable," he said.



NYPD Chief Douglas Zeigler

He did not provide details of why the officers decided to question Zeigler. The *New York Daily News* reported Saturday that Zeigler was parked near a fire hydrant and that one of the plainclothed officers spotted Zeigler's service weapon inside the vehicle. Browne said he could not confirm whether the officers saw a gun.

He did not specify what discipline was taken by the department. The *News* said the officer was stripped of his gun and badge and placed on modified duty Friday.

The incident was reported as police are being criticized for stopping and frisking record numbers of pedestrians — about 145,000 in the first quarter of this year. The majority were Black or Hispanic.

Zeigler has headed the Community Affairs Bureau since January 2006. His wife, Neldra Zeigler, is the NYPD's deputy commissioner

for equal employment opportunity.

Rev. Al Sharpton, who has been leading demonstrations in the city to protest the acquittal of three police officers in the shooting death of an unarmed man as he left his bachelor party, took note of the Zeigler incident while speaking at his weekly rally in Harlem.

"You can't make this stuff up!" Sharpton said. "The problem isn't that they didn't recognize him. It is that they don't recognize our rights!"

Also, a New York man has filed a lawsuit claiming that he was taunted and falsely arrested by police officers after they learned that he had the same name as a West African immigrant shot to death by other officers in 1999.

Amadou Diallo said a group of officers (See Discipline, Page 3)