

1. Africa Agri-Business Initiative: We are looking for people and companies with expertise in agriculture (farming) who are willing to apply those skills to nations on the African continent. A big focus is on **cotton** as we center on overcoming the great obstacles put in place through the Third Country Fabric Exemption (AGOA) which has allowed exploitation of African cotton farmers to the benefit of Chinese and Indian cotton. Much of this cotton may very well be “conflict cotton” via Chinese prisoners performing slave labor. Most cotton farmers in Africa are now out of business and we want to resurrect this important sector. People interested in the initiative should contact Charles DeBow at cdebow@nationalbcc.org

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2. Welcome to our new Chapters: A strong and sincere welcome to our new chapters located in Ohio, Connecticut, Indiana, Georgia, Wisconsin, New York and Michigan. Our growth is in a nonstop mode!

3. Building Better Business Partnerships Act of 2012: Congresspersons Bobby Schilling (R-IL) and Judy Chu (D-CA) have introduced H.R. 3985. This bill will enhance the current Mentor/Protégé Program and gives the Small Business Administration’s Administrator more authority. We support this and encourage you to support it via communicating with your local congresspersons.

4. Congressional Hearings: On March 20 NBCC President/CEO Harry C. Alford delivered Congressional Testimony to the Senate Environmental and Public Works Committee (subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety). The testimony concerned our opposition to the EPA’s MATS Ruling which will kill jobs, shut down some utility plants and further increase our energy costs. A copy of the testimony is [here](#). We are fighting for Black business owners at the highest levels of government.

5. Congressman Rush Works for Africa and Us: Congresspersons Bobby Rush (D-IL) and Chris Smith (D-NJ) have introduced the **In
creasing American Jobs through Greater Exports to
Africa
Act of 2012**

. This bill, H.R. 4221, is a serious approach to increasing trade activity between American and African business owners. This is a great improvement over the African Growth and Opportunity

Act. The NBCC pledges its full support for this bill and will work tirelessly until its passage. Let's all join in this noble project. Read about it [here](#)

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6. Conway is in Shanghai: We thank our member Conway Jones for sending us a picture of him from the Park Hyatt Hotel in [Shanghai, China](#). The NBCC is actively doing business around the world.

7. Southwest Airlines is Growing: Southwest Airlines is requesting support letters from organizations by Monday, March 26th in its quest to begin nonstop service from Reagan National Airport to Austin, TX. Those wishing to participate should contact Kay DeBow at kdebow@nationalbcc.org

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8. Lake County Black Chamber of Commerce Walks the Walk: We want to congratulate Rev. Gass and the members of the Lake County Black Chamber of Commerce (Illinois) and On-Call Surgical for its success in beginning an export venture in Cameroon, Africa. It shows us just how profitable doing trade in Africa can be for both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. [Article is here.](#)

9. Patrick Lozes is our Hero: NBCC board member Patrick Lozes (French Diaspora Black Chamber of Commerce) has redrawn from his candidacy for President of France on his diversity platform. We are very proud of his performance and the gains made for the Diaspora within the nation of France. Here is the latest communication from our dear friend Patrick: "Dear Kay,

Thank you for your message. Very much appreciated. A lot has been done during this campaign for which you helped so much by being present in person. Everybody recalls Harry's speech in Paris. I have not been very available in the past months and I have appreciated your patience. I am now back to business. Yes let's regroup, let's reinvigorate! I confirm I will be attending Atlanta next July.
All the best

Patrick”

10. 84 Lumber Watch: We have been receiving complaints from various contractors about predatory practices of the company known as 84 Lumber. If there are other complaints we, indeed, want to know about them. All chambers should inquire amongst their members and report any such activity to the national office.

11. Get a Deal on your Hotel Room: Fabulous room rates are available at the Four Seasons Hotel Atlanta for July 19-21, where we will be discussing *Good Policy Leads to a Great Economy!* The rooms range from \$145-165 per night plus tax. Go to www.nbccconvention.org

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12. Small Business Administration Survey: It will take just 5 minutes of your time. [Click now!](#)