

1. **Rescue in Nashville:** FEMA is on the case in response to the recent flooding. The Tennessee Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) meeting will be on Thursday, May 20, 10AM to 2PM at the Nashville American Red Cross auditorium, 2201 Charlotte Ave. Participants will learn about current and long-term recovery resources and volunteer opportunities to assist in the recovery from the floods. Also, information about accessing contracts can be received. So far 36,000 victims have been served and \$110 million in grants have been placed. SBA loans for housing recovery and other assistance are available but you must get your application in the process. Contracting, such as debris removal, is being let by state agencies that will be reimbursed by the feds. All chamber members and sister organizations are encouraged to attend this meeting. No press please.

2. **Marching Towards Progress at HUD:** It was at our 6th Annual Convention in New Orleans (1998) that the Section 3 Director, the late Delores Southerland, announced to us that only 4 HUD grant recipients were in compliance of Section 3 of the HUD Act (business and employment program). The other 5,500+ grantees were not. We resolved to change this tragedy and have been prodding along ever since. Today, 4600 grantees at least send in their annual reports. There has been much improvement thanks to Alfair Development (Jacksonville, FL), Bill Kovacs and Adrian Busby at the US Chamber of Commerce, Congresswomen Yvette Clarke and Nydia Velazquez, Arness Dancy of the Englewood Black Chamber of Commerce, Larry Ivory of the Illinois Black Chamber of Commerce, Arnold Baker of the New Orleans Regional Black Chamber of Commerce, Sherrie Gilchrist of the Tennessee Multi-Cultural Chamber of Commerce (NBCC Chair) and many others who have fought for business development and job creation via HUD funding. Let us not omit the great efforts of the Philadelphia Housing Authority which has proven that you can be successful with Section 3. The PHA has the national model. It is the 4th largest housing authority in the nation and is located in a heavily union city. Still, it has trained hundreds of residents, placed them in permanent jobs and tracks their progress via an alumni association. Executive Director Carl E. Greene is a role model for HUD grant recipients and his record must be emulated. There are 904 remaining grantees that are recalcitrant and we must deal with them. Entities like Detroit, Birmingham, San Francisco, Charlotte and others need to be forced into compliance. How can they ignore this great program as their unemployment levels soar to record highs? Don't they care? See if your city, county, state or housing authority is on the noncompliance list. We have them posted on our website.

3. Time for the Black Farmers to Become Whole: It was the 1990's and our Black farmers became too tired of being victimized by their federal government because of the color of their skin. President Clinton and the Department of Agriculture said "prove it". They proved it with a Disparity Study that was the largest I have ever seen. It was so ugly that the Department of Agriculture ordered the Disparity Study to stop before full completion. The President and Secretary of Agriculture settled – so to speak. It was settled but our farmers have yet to be paid by their reneging federal government. It is kind of like old Indian treaties. So here we are through President Clinton and President Bush and now President Obama and the same jive is happening. Our farmers are due over \$1 billion and the same racist activity refuses to move aside. **PRESIDENT OBAMA, PAY OUR FARMERS NOW!!!**

4. Diversifying Lacrosse: The great game of Lacrosse (invented by the Algonquin Indian nation) is starting to spread in urban areas. Harry C. Alford III (former Chamber baby) introduced it to the Washington, DC public schools this year via his coaching the rookie team at Wilson High School. With a little publicity from the Washington Post and Channel 9 news, there is much support behind it. In fact, a DC law firm is doing pro bono work to set up a foundation that will eventually fund a Lacrosse program in all of the DC high schools. Meanwhile, Harry's twin brother, Thomas, was an assistant coach this season at local Gonzaga High School which took the championship for DC Metro Catholic Schools. For more on the young Alford's quest for expanding Lacrosse go to their website www.lacrosseplayground.com
[m](#) Remember, major colleges and universities offer scholarships in boys and girls Lacrosse these days.