

First Annual End of Year Reunion Celebration - Friday December 30, 2011
6pm to Midnight (The day before New Year's Eve) See Page 15 for details

December 23 – January 5, 2012

The Pontiac News

A POSITIVE NEWS SOURCE WITH A LOCAL FLAVOR

VOL. 2 ISSUE 11



Welcome Back Dr. Walter Burt Interim School Superintendant

Commissioners Hatchett & Greimel Serve Pontiac Residents @ Kids First Initiative Dinner



This holiday season, Oakland County Commissioners joined with other community leaders to serve area residents at the Annual Kids Firsts Initiatives Annual Thanksgiving Dinner held at Pontiac Middle School. Pictured left to right are Oakland County Commissioner Mattie McKinney Hatchett talking with residents and Oakland County Commissioner Tim Greimel.

Governor Snyder signs Oakland County redistricting bill

Gov. Rick Snyder ignored Democratic complaints of unfairness and signed bills Tuesday giving redistricting power in Oakland County to the Republican-controlled Board of County Commissioners. GOP lawmakers who approved the bills said giving the commission control of redistricting and reducing the number of commissioners was necessary because the map drawn by the bipartisan Oakland County Apportionment Commission favored Democrats. The Republican governor told the Associated Press that he supported the legislation because it reduces the size of the commission in the populous, prosperous suburban Detroit county from 25 to 21 members. "It's a cost savings and is still of a size where you're going to get good democracy," he said. He also said he didn't like the unelected heads of the county GOP and Democratic parties having a say in what the commission seat boundaries looked like. "This really makes it much more parallel to what we do at the state, to say the equivalent of the legislative body is really doing redistricting," Snyder said. "There are two elements of good government that you can look to in that bill." But the chairman of the apportionment commission that drew up a redistricting map in May strongly criticized the governor's decision to sign the bill. "Today is a sad day for more than just Oakland County voters or Democrats, but for people everywhere who

care about the rule of law and the separation of powers that the Constitution calls for," said Frank Houston, who's also the Oakland County Democratic Party chairman. "It is outrageous that Governor Snyder signed this Republican power grab bill into law, in effect changing redistricting retroactively just for Oakland County." The county apportionment committee consisted of the Democratic county prosecutor and treasurer, the Republican county clerk, the head of the Oakland County Republican Party and Houston — three Democrats and two Republicans. Republicans tried to challenge the new map in court, but lost. They then turned to the Michigan Legislature, where Republicans control the House and Senate and a GOP governor could sign the bill. Democrats may challenge the new measure in their own lawsuit, Houston said (SEE RELATED Story on Page What's happening in Oakland County)



AP File Photo Gov. Rick Snyder

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Save Date Friday, February 10, 2012
Oakland County 10th Annual Workplace Diversity Forum
Women In Leadership Summit
See Details on Page 9

“Pontiac Board of Education Looking For Volunteer Mentors.”
See Page 8 for details.

Editorial Comments

By Frank Russell Publisher TPN



As the year 2011 comes to a close, I want to take this opportunity to applaud and personally thank each and every member of the Pontiac City Council for your selfless attitudes, outstanding service and your dedication and commitment to the residents of the City of Pontiac. Thank you, President Lee Jones, Pro-tem Patrice Waterman, Councilpersons Mary Pietila, George Williams, Kermit Williams, Randy Carter, and Donald Watkins.... for hanging tough and not quitting on us!!

To Mr. Louis Schimmel:



Recently The Pontiac News conducted a poll of 100 Pontiac City residents. The question was asked ...Should members of the Pontiac City Council be compensated for the many hours that they work on behalf of the City? The overwhelming response was Yes... ..in fact over 90% of the respondents indicated that they support a stipend of between \$400 to \$600 monthly, or up to \$6,000 annually!

The Pontiac News stands with these citizens! We implore you... Mr. Schimmel to please compensate these hardworking Public Servants for the work that they do on behalf of Pontiac...after all this is still a capitalist system that we live in!



Pontiac City Council Members



Pastor Keys and Wife Dorothy.
Happy Birthday and Thanks for all that you do for the City of Pontiac!

The Pontiac News

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— National News —

Black farmers start processing claims in billion-dollar discrimination lawsuit

By News in Black

With the first held in Hattiesburg, Miss., meetings have begun to process the claims in the second phase of the lawsuit filed by Black farmers who have suffered racial discrimination at the hands of the federal government.

Organizers say a number of other meetings are scheduled across the South. "Farmers don't need to worry about being in the first meetings with counsel," said Ralph Paige, Executive Director of the Federation. "There will be several meetings throughout the South and Judge Paul Friedman is not going to allow money to be sent out until all claims are processed. We do encourage farmers to call to set up their meetings with class counsel, however. They should do that immediately."

The ending date for filing claims is May 11, 2012.

It is in Mississippi that most of the meetings will take place, because that state has the most claimants, estimated at approximately 21,422. From January through May 11, 2012 there will be meetings in Mississippi nearly every Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

To find information about the schedule of meetings you can go to the "In Re Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation Settlement" at <https://www.blackfarmercase.com> or <https://www.blackfarmercase.com/Meetings.aspx>.

Farmers are encouraged to immediately contact class counsel to make appointments for the meetings. This, of course, is to receive assistance in filling out the claim forms. If farmers seek assistance of counsel

who are not class counsel, claimants will need to pay the attorney fees directly out of their relief money - this is not so with class counsel.

According to the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, claimants who fill out and send in forms themselves, they cannot submit revisions if errors are discovered later. They recommend that farmers receive assistance from class counsel at the beginning of the process.

There are no appeals in this second phase of the Pigford lawsuit. All decisions based on the claims farmers have submitted are final. This is why we encourage farmers to receive the best assistance possible to fill out the claim forms.

Information also highlighted by Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund:

(1) In all claims meetings, class counsel will have made appointments with the claimants. These are not cold-call meetings.

(2) Claimants should call EPIQ at (877) 810 8110 to receive claim forms. According to EPIQ, a significant number of claim forms

will be mailed out this week to all the eligible late filers and late/late filers. All individual claims will have bar-codes specific to the individual claimant.

(3) Taking claim forms to meetings with class counsel: When going to the meetings with class counsel farmers need to take with them the claim forms they have received from EPIQ.

(4) IMPORTANT: Ask for class counsel when calling EPIQ. When people call (877) 810-8110, they should ask to be referred to class counsel. We are also told, however, that EPIQ is encouraging eligible claimants who call to speak with class counsel, which is how claimants obtain appointments. If farmers have already called for claim forms, and did not talk with class counsel at that time, they can call again and ask to be connected to class counsel.

(5) Claimants can also call class counsel at (866) 472 7826 to make an appointment for one of the meetings.

Ad Time For 'All-American Muslim' Sells Out, Despite Lowe's Withdrawal

By ALAN DUKE, CNN

LOS ANGELES (CNN) — Ad time for next Sunday's "All-American Muslim" episode is apparently sold out, despite Lowe's decision to pull its commercials from the TLC reality series, a TLC network spokeswoman said.

Hip-hop mogul Russell Simmons announced his intentions Monday to buy up any unsold commercial time on the controversial show in response to the withdrawal of the home improvement giant. He would use the ads to promote his prepaid Visa "Rush Card," he said.

"He has tried to buy," TLC's Laurie Goldberg told CNN in an e-mail Tuesday. "We are checking inventory. Still don't know on that one. I do think it was already sold out, but still checking."

If any ad time is left, Simmons said he was standing by to take it.

Simmons' website posted a statement recently saying "TLC has announced that Rush Card will not be able to purchase the remaining ad space as they have all been sold out."

"All-American Muslim" is an eight-part series that follows five Muslim families living in Dearborn, Michigan.

"Each episode offers an intimate look at the customs and celebrations, misconceptions and conflicts these families face outside and within their own community," TLC said in the show's description.

The controversy, and Lowe's decision to pull their spots, followed a complaint by the Florida Family Association. The group warned Lowe's in a letter that the show "is attempting to manipulate Americans into ignoring the threat of jihad and to influence them to believe that being concerned about the jihad threat would somehow victimize



Hip-hop mogul Russell Simmons vows to buy unsold ad time. A Florida group says the show tries to "manipulate Americans into ignoring the threat of jihad."

these nice people in this show."

Lowe's, a national home improvement chain, defended its decision in a statement to CNN last Saturday.

"Lowe's has received a significant amount of communication on this program, from every perspective possible," the company said. "Individuals and groups have strong political and societal views on this topic, and this program became a lightning rod for many of those views. As a result we did pull our advertising on this program."

Simmons, who is an outspoken social activist, sent a series of Twitter messages over the last several days urging Lowe's to reverse its decision:

"Dear @Lowe's, we got over 21k signatures standing up against your poor decision. Do right thing: apologize & put \$ back in # All American Muslim"

Simmons called the controversy "a press nightmare" for Lowe's in an interview with Entertainment Weekly.

"This country is built on religious freedom," he said. "This is the kind of hate that tears this country apart."

CNN's Carolyn Sung contributed to this report.

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— What's Happening In Pontiac —

A Vision for the Hayes Jones Community Center

When Opportunity Knocks

With the closing of the Hayes Jones and other community centers complete, the Citizens of Pontiac, various community organizations and partners now have the opportunity to transform this vacant facility into a first class Community Center, historical museum and water park. The Hayes Jones Community Center would become more than just an enrichment, lifelong learning, social, health and fitness facility. It will also serve as a valuable community asset and important anchor for the community. It would become the hub of recreation activities, social and aquatic programs for the City of Pontiac, serving residents of all ages. In addition it would also serve as the site to reintroduce and preserve the great legacy of black history and business development of the Wesson Bagley area.

Why The Need?

Because of recent economic downturns we have been unfortunate to lose a variety of facilities throughout Pontiac including the use of schools (9 closing since 2008) and 4 community centers (Howard Dell, Ewalt, Holland & Hayes Jones). Unfortunately, due to changing circumstances and the closing of the aforementioned facilities, many of the activities previously offered no longer exist.

The Plan...

To renovate the old Hayes Jones Center into a Community Center, Water Park and historical Museum, making the most efficient use of the existing structure and features as possible, to better meet the needs of the community with new program offerings and community usage. Three multiple-purpose rooms have been proposed to accommodate a variety of activities, all of which can be used as rentals for large to small groups/events.



Multipurpose Banquet Room

(Large groups - 500 capacity with tables & chairs)

- Banquets • Exercise/Dance Instruction (lg. groups)
- 100+ Meal Site • Special Events/ Fundraisers • Rentals

Features: Access to kitchen / coat rack / tables & chairs / big screen video / outdoor patio / storage / Activity Room

(Midsize/small groups - 80 capacity with tables & chairs)

- Enrichment (safety training/arts/music /computer/etc.)
- Meetings • Events • Pre-school Activities • Rentals
- Older Adult (cards/arts & crafts/social /educational)

Features: Access to kitchen / tables & chairs / TV's / sink / Retractable Divider

Wall Art Studio

(Midsize groups - 100 capacity)

- Dance/Fitness (mid. size) / Pre-school Activities /
- Birthday Parties • Rentals

Features: Hardwood Floors / Mirrors / Ballet Bars / Storage By code, more bathroom facilities will be added along with a kitchen to accommodate a summer meal site and rentals.

It Takes A Community... To Build A Community

The closing of Hayes Jones presents an opportunity for individuals to dramatically enhance the community's investment in it's future. The outcome will be a site through which the entire community will experience a greater sense of appreciation of the events unfolding in this special place.

Fundraising efforts will begin in Winter of 2012, with the goals of raising enough funds to transform the facility into a first-class Community Center, Water Park and historical preservation museum. Funding of the Community Center renovations will rely solely on donations, fundraisers and the support of the community sponsors. We will apply for various grants to correct the various infrastructure problems and upgrade the heating, cooling system and other systems. We will also be seeking historic designation for the center in conjunction with The Pontiac Historic District Commission.

Opportunities to contribute financial support for the Hayes Jones Community Center at various levels, including room naming rights and targeted donations will be available.

If you are interested in making a donation or for more information about sponsorship opportunities, please contact Frank Russell at (248) 758-1411 @ The Pontiac News or by email thepontiacnews@sbcglobal.net.

Donations, gifts and sponsorships are tax deductible in the year they are received/paid. Checks are payable to the Youth Development Institute, a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization.

We hope you will join the many businesses, organizations and individuals who are supporting the Community Center renovation project.

Q&A

A Hayes Jones Community Center Ad Hoc Committee has been formed and will meet on a monthly basis. Residents are invited to attend and are welcome to make suggestions or comments. Please call The Pontiac News @ 248 758-1411 or email thepontiacnews@sbcglobal.net for meeting dates/times.

FCC launching \$4-billion program to narrow digital divide

By Alexa Vaughn, Los Angeles Times

Reporting from Washington—The Federal Communications Commission is launching a \$4-billion program to narrow the digital divide by making high-speed Internet access and computers more affordable for more than 25 million mainly low-income Americans.

The FCC said a public-private partnership, which includes major broadband and computer companies and nonprofits, will make "the biggest effort ever" across the nation to help poorer citizens as well as rural residents, seniors and minorities obtain broadband access.

Those who qualify would pay \$9.95 a month for Internet access at 1 megabit per second and \$150 for a refurbished laptop running the Windows 7 operating system, along with applications that include digital literacy training.

"We're at a time of real challenge in the economy, and broadband access is becoming increasingly vital to participating in it," FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski said Tuesday.

The program, which was unveiled, is aimed at providing qualifying residents with greater access to both professional and educational opportunities while expanding consumer demand for the online marketplace. The effort, Genachowski said, should end up stimulating the economy as well.

"Steve Jobs was born into a lower-middle-class family, but part of his story is he had access to then cutting-edge technology because his father was a mechanic in Silicon Valley," Genachowski said.

"If we give children better digital technology, we're much more likely to see the next generation of innovators like Steve Jobs develop," he said.

About one-third of Americans haven't yet adopted broadband at home, the FCC said. That group disproportionately consists of the people who could be aided by the program.

Overall, the U.S. ranks 18th worldwide in the percentage of households with high-speed Internet access, according to the World Economic Forum.

A newly formed nonprofit organization, Connect to Compete, will operate the program, which the FCC will oversee. It will launch on a small scale this spring in yet-to-be-determined areas and roll out nationwide in September.

The program won't be publicly funded. Instead, Microsoft Corp., the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and Redemtech Inc., a Columbus, Ohio, company that refurbishes used computers, will be among the major participants covering the cost, either in cash or with in-kind services.

The program eventually will offer participants the option of paying \$250 for desktops

and tablets as well.

Families will qualify for the program if their children are among the 32 million students who also qualify for free school lunches. They also have to be new users who have not had Internet access for at least 90 days.

Even though the nation has a 9% unemployment rate, several sectors have job openings. But more than 100 million Americans don't have access to online job postings or the digital literacy skills required to be hired for them, Genachowski said.

At least 80% of Fortune 500 companies, such as Wal-Mart Stores Inc., Target Corp. and Exxon Mobil Corp., require that job applications be submitted online. That puts more than half of low-income families and more than half of African American and Latino families at a disadvantage because they don't have broadband access.

Students without a fast Internet connection typically must wait for library computers to finish homework, or they find that their teachers hold back on the scope of research and homework assignments.

A 2009 technology immersion study in Texas found that low-income students who were given laptops to study at home tested higher in both reading and math and participated more in group projects and discussions than those who did not have online access at

home.

Without the Internet or a computer at home, the struggle to complete homework or learn marketable computer skills eventually makes it harder for students to compete in the job market, Genachowski said.

The program is scheduled to run for three years, and those who qualify within that period can take advantage of the special offers for two years. Genachowski said he hoped the program would prove itself so beneficial that it would continue for a longer period.

"I'm confident this will work and that we'll see real creativity and innovation that will help us chart a course for the future," he said.

All major and most other cable companies — covering all 50 states and 86% of the population — are taking part in the project.

Ways to expand broadband access nationwide have eluded previous FCC boards and administrations. President Obama made the effort a major goal when he took office by appointing Genachowski, his campaign's top technology advisor, as FCC chairman.

Obama outlined plans this year to extend wireless telecommunications coverage to 98% of Americans over the next five years, including a \$5-billion government infrastructure investment in rural areas.

—What's Happening In Oakland County—

Support of the Adoption of House Bill 5187 Statement of Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson



L. Brooks Patterson

government.

The current law required Oakland County have at least 25 elected county commissioners. In fact, it allowed for the election of an additional 10 commissioners, or a total of 35 possible slots. We agree with the majority of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners: there is no need for Oakland or any other county to elect and pay for more than 21 elected commissioners.

HB 5187 changes the current requirement and provides that Michigan counties having over 50,000 in population may not have more than 21 commissioners. Under this new standard, Oakland County must reduce its board of commissioners by four elected positions. This reduction in the size of government will save an estimated \$500,000 in salary, fringe

As Oakland County Executive I support the Michigan Legislature's enactment of HB 5187, a bill that addresses several issues important to Oakland County government and its taxpayers. First and most importantly, HB 5187 requires a reduction in the size of Oakland County

benefits, travel, mileage and other miscellaneous expenses over the two year commission term commencing January 1, 2013. It saves at least \$2.5 million between now and the next actionable U.S. Census. The Legislature needed to act this month if the taxpayers were to realize any before calendar year 2015. Fortunately, they did and now the taxpayers can realize the benefits going forward.

Reducing the size of government before the next election requires a reduced number of election districts to accommodate the smaller board. These districts must be created before the May 2012 filing deadline for candidates. HB 5187 addresses this reality by requiring any county having over 50,000 in population and having more than 21 commissioners to map out new districts within 30 days of the effective date of the new law. Generally, the Michigan Constitution provides that new laws become effective 90 days after the legislature adjourns for the year. Laws passed this legislative session subject to the 90 day requirement will become effective around March 30, 2012. HB 5187's 30 day requirement insures new districts will exist in time for the May 2012 filing deadline.

HB 5187 fixes another problem facing the county by changing the make-up of the committee that draws election districts. It changes the current rules that allow unelected, partisan party operatives to determine election districts and replaces it with the model long used by the State of Michigan for drawing its own legislative and Congressional districts. HB 5187 designates are local, elected legislative body as the board to perform the function. It is a clear improvement that makes elected officials directly accountable to voters responsible for the process.

As noted, unelected partisan political operatives currently play the pivotal role in re-districting. They are not elected by and not accountable to voters. The danger in this is illustrated by recent events in Oakland County, where one a party chair, a person who under current law was to be on the county apportionment commission, and one of his executive assistants, was charged by a Grand Jury with multiple felony offenses for criminal activity directly related to the conduct of the county's last general election. One partisan operative faced six felony counts, the other one faced nine. Had the former party chair not chosen to resign before

his conviction, he would have been legally authorized to participate in the adoption of the 25 board member district plan and would have cast the out-come determining vote. Our county voters had no option to stop his participation, other than to "hope" that a person charged with multiple felonies related to attempts to illegally influence an election, resigned. The fact that that party operative, who today stands as a convicted felon for his conduct, did resign, doesn't change the need for the system to be fixed.

Elected officials who engage in questionable conduct can be held accountable by voters. They can be turned out by voters, not just party bosses, via ordinary election or special recall election. County party chairs are not subject to that process. Officials who perform redistricting should be accountable to voters. Having the local elected commission stand accountable for the districts they create is a superior means to achieve this objective. HB 5187 allows for this reform.

Oakland County voters adopted the Optional Unified Form of County Government to reform county government. It is appropriate that they be able to use the state-model process for redistricting.

Treasurer Meisner's Oakland County Foreclosure Prevention Initiative



Andy Meisner

Fighting back means preventing foreclosures by bringing banks and mortgage servicing companies to the table to work out agreements with homeowners, especially those victimized by subprime or predatory lending.

Fighting back means helping homeowners refinance into stable and affordable mortgages that are within their means, including through Michigan's "Save the Dream Act." Fighting back means working with taxpayers to address and prevent tax foreclosure, where the Treasurer is required to auction properties with delinquencies more than 3 years old.

More than anything, fighting back means working across public, private and non-profit sectors to equip homeowners with the tools they need to overcome their financial challenges, keep their homes and enjoy Oakland County's world-renowned quality of life.

The Oakland County Foreclosure Prevention Initiative

The Oakland County Foreclosure Prevention Initiative represents a collaboration between the Office of Oakland County Treasurer Andy Meisner, the United Way, and Lighthouse of Oakland County, in part-

The national foreclosure crisis has hit Oakland County and the metropolitan Detroit region hard. While there are many opinions about what caused this crisis, everyone agrees that we must do everything we can to fight back.

nership with Wayne County and other public and non-profit organizations.

The services we provide through our website are **FREE OF CHARGE!!!**

We can not guarantee your success in preventing your foreclosure, but we've got a tool available on this website that will put you in a position to succeed. Our website will prompt you to fill in information about your mortgage and financial information. Our website will help you organize and analyze that information to develop an action plan for fighting your foreclosure.

This information is confidential and will only be shared with your lender if you agree. We advocate for you in a simple and direct manner:

- A financial and foreclosure status assessment is completed on our website.
- A housing counselor will make recommendations regarding a homeowner's options.
- The Lender is contacted to negotiate a settlement.
- A settlement agreement is reached with the lender.

To get this process started, contact Lauren Borson in the Office of the Oakland County Treasurer at 248-858-0627.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Oakland County Foreclosure Prevention Initiative
Office of Oakland County Treasurer Andy Meisner
1200 North Telegraph, Building #12 East Pontiac, Michigan 48341
248-858-0627
<http://www.oakgov.com/treasurer>

January Business Workshops Offered by Oakland County

Waterford, Michigan — Business owners and entrepreneurs who need assistance are invited to attend seminars in January offered by the Oakland County Business Center. Business Basics workshops are now offered in the evenings on alternating months.

Pre-Business Research - Are you thinking of starting your own business and want to research your business idea? Are you a business owner who wants to understand which research sources to use for your business plan and where to find the information you need? Presented by The Oakland County Business Center, The Entrepreneur's Source, Oakland County Market Research division, and a business reference librarian.

Tuesday, January 10, from 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. at Farmington Community Library, 32737 W. 12 Mile Rd., Farmington Hills, MI 48334

This workshop is free but pre-registration is required.

CEED Microloan Orientation - Many small business owners face obstacles when trying to obtain a business loan. The recognition of the serious need for working capital for existing businesses, start-up or expansion, equipment purchases, and job creation is not the priority it once was. If you have a need for alternative financing consider the MicroLoan Program. Discover the requirements and process necessary to apply and obtain a microloan. Program presented by the Center for Empowerment & Economic Development (C.E.E.D.)

Wednesday, January 11, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at Oakland County Executive Office Building Conference Center, 2100 Pontiac Lake Road, west of Telegraph, Waterford.

This workshop is free but pre-registration is required.

Fundamentals of Writing a Business Plan - A workshop for small business owners who are developing a plan to serve as their road map to success. Workshop participants learn what elements are commonly found in effective plans and work on developing each of these for their own business. Assistance in the process as well as information on resources is provided.

Thursday, January 19, from 9:00 a.m. - Noon at Oakland County Executive Office Building Conference Center, 2100 Pontiac Lake Road, west of Telegraph, Waterford.

Fee: \$30*

Legal & Financial Basics for Small Business - This workshop covers many of the key legal and financial issues faced by both new and existing small businesses in Michigan. The program initially focuses on the many management and liability concerns faced by entrepreneurs, as well as today's tax consequences. The program also provides solutions and techniques for business concession and individual investment and retirement planning. Presented by Carter & Associates, P.C.

Tuesday, January 31, from 9:00 a.m. to Noon at Oakland County Executive Office Building Conference Center, 2100 Pontiac Lake Road, west of Telegraph, Waterford.

For pre-registration and location specifics, visit our website at oakgov.com/peds/calendar or call (248) 858-0783.

This workshop is free, but pre-registration is required.

For pre-registration and location specifics, visit our website at oakgov.com/peds/calendar or call (248) 858-0783.

What is Up With Black on Black Violence? And How Do We Educate Our Children Today?



Quincy
Stewart III

By Quincy N. Stewart III

Two related burning questions in most urban hubs, especially where New Afrikans (blacks) live, are how do we best educate our children? How do we stop all the killing and violence? Most of us see education as a way out

of poverty and low social status, dependency and even as a way to rise above racism. What is an education? How should it affect society? Who decides how the education is delivered? Who decides what information is healthy for growth? What sources do we use to gain information to give to those we profess to educate? What is the purpose of an education overall?

Most people don't ever think about education as a product, no less than food, cars, homes or any other commodity. Believe it or not, there is such a thing as a garbage education. There is such thing as toxic teaching, toxic information and toxic purposes for that toxic education. How do we, particularly as New Afrikans judge for ourselves what is a toxic education? The first thing we should do is consult our own scholars on the subject and the only way to do that is that *we must know who they are!*

The late Dr. Amos Wilson is a New Afrikan of great importance in the field of psychology, education and politics. Kwanza Kunjufu is another great New Afrikan who has contributed greatly to the information we need to educate young New Afrikan boys in particular. One of our greatest scholars to

ever grace a classroom was the late, great, Dr. John Henrique Clarke.

There are so many others I could name such as Dr. Francis Cress Welsing and Dr. Claude Anderson and of course, Carter G. Woodson, who first brought up the question of educating the so-called Negro with his ground breaking books, *The Education of the Negro* and *The Miseducation of the Negro*.

I think it is critical that we begin to look seriously at how our children are being educated. As an educator myself, I have seen the *miseducation* of our children first-hand. I have seen our children go through the educational system for years and never investigate hard core historical facts about their own culture and history. I have seen both boys and girls walk through young life with no true benchmarking of growth beyond some certificates congratulating them for their compliance with the system. A true *Afrikan Centered Rites of Passage* is sorely needed to defray the heavy cost of neglect.

Look at the recent rash of murders and violence in Pontiac recently and ask yourself, what the schools can do to assist in curbing and even eliminating this needless carnage. Please understand that violence is a form of social interaction. It is rooted in social history and represents the environment that violence is occurring in. America's relationship with young New Afrikan (black) men has been historically and contemporaneously violent. Young New Afrikan boys and men encounter acts of violence from early on. The trick this system plays is to get us all to focus primarily on Black on Black violence instead of a history of **White on Black** violence. This trickery is designed to

make those who have a history of violence against us as New Afrikans somehow look pristine. By focusing on Black on Black violence as pathological, alluding to a propensity for violence among young New Afrikan (black) boys and men, then the system can further degrade the humanity of our young males while continuing to perpetuate social, economic, political and physical violence on them all along. Whenever our scholars focus on the history of White on Black Violence, in books such as Ralph Ginsberg's *100 years of Lynching*, or *Without Sanctuary, A Pictorial History of Lynching in America* these books are not funded well, or the research paper is hidden, the speaker isn't invited anywhere to speak and the professor is transferred or never given tenure. It is fine however, to talk about any other form of atrocity in world history, be it the Jewish Holocaust, the internment of Asians in camps, even the Native American slaughters have become stories of benign cowboy scripts.

Yet, the true facts surrounding the reasons for the massive, long term and sadistic violence against New Afrikans (blacks) is shunned in forums supposedly designed to "solve the race problem", or often seen as trouble-making or inciting anger, "living in the past" and generally maligned even by our own people. Yet, the violence continues through police murder and brutality, social injustice, economic exploitation, the execution of our people in prisons on death row, and by racist white groups like Skinheads, the Aryan Nation, Stormfront and others. White violence against New Afrikan men and boys is so common that we rarely question police shootings of our men any longer, and rarely pay attention to acts of violence in any and all forms perpetrated against them because we have been conditioned to think *that that's the way it should be*, very much like deer or other hunted game. Yet, when white death occurs, it makes headlines, be it a baby or a missing white woman. These victims *become human*.

We can tie all this in with education. If our young men and women are not educated comprehensively as to whom they really are how will they know this system lies? If their collective self esteem isn't at a level where they feel responsible to the culture's survival why fight for it? And, if they don't have a full and competitive command of math, science, languages and the arts, then no revolution will occur and we can never nation build. The reason why many of our young rap artists degrade themselves and our women (with the women's tacit approval) is because we have not laid a foundation of cultural pride or responsibility. It is the reason why you would never see Jewish or Middle Eastern cultures tolerating such self decimation, because their culture is intact. Amilcar Cabral once said that, "Culture is the first line of defense against colonialism." Our greatest loss as a people was the loss of culture. Within it, are our religious practices, ways of interacting, which one of us we choose as *our* leaders, who is *our* God and so forth. At best all we have ever done in this country is vicarious gratification, except for a small period during the late 1960's.

Our culture, religious practices and languages were generally taken from our ancestors and replaced with our oppressor's

God (Christ), and our heroes like Toussaint L'Overture, Bookman, Queen Asantewa, Diesoline the Ferocious or Nat Turner were replaced with being forced to honor Thomas Jefferson, George Washington or John Kennedy and the list goes on until this day, many of whom by the way, were slave owners and proponents of our dehumanization through slavery, Jim Crow and now, modern white corporate supremacy.

Lastly, it is critical that we begin to look at institution building of our own. Yes, we may have to start small. It may be a one room school house in the summer in someone's basement, re-teaching our young people the truth and emboldening them with new self esteem based not on rims, gold necklaces, cars and money, guns and false machismo, rather, good stewardship of the community, dignity and pride in one's own cultural heritage, full and defensible knowledge of history, good physical health and knowledge of the martial arts and other self defense mechanisms, an applied knowledge and practice of the arts be it music, visual, dance, literature...

In the future we must revolutionize our education and tailor it to our specific needs as a people and abandon this archaic, agricultural model replete with lies, historical misinformation, cultural deception, social promotion, lack of true benchmarking of both academic and social progress, a completely misleading and self defeating testing system, and national mandates that are unfunded and ill-conceived like No Child Left Behind.

Black on Black violence is a reflection of White on Black violence, which has a long and sadistic history. The promotion of black on black violence in the news media as well as the dehumanization of the so-called black male (New Afrikan) provides a good cover for the history of and continuance to this day of White on Black (New Afrikan) violence. If we ever have an honest national discussion about the pathology of white on black violence, be it economic violence, social violence, physical violence, sexual violence, cultural violence or psychological violence, we will find that the only conclusion we can come to is that the relationship between so called whites and blacks (New Afrikans) has been and *continues* to be *sociopathic* in nature. Keep in mind that a sociopath is cunning, looks very "normal", and is even charming, yet he is indeed a cold blooded killer without a conscious or even a sense of remorse. Our state as a people clearly indicates that we are the victims of a **sociopath**.

WE can end our self destructive ways by *forming our own institutions* and restructuring our entire way of life in America *tailored to our needs* regardless if we are "accredited" by the system or not, "certified" by the system or not or praised by the system or not. Being accredited by those who oppress us should not be a worry. No Jew ever sought to be sanctioned by Nazis. No oppressed people need to seek the approval of their oppressor or permission to employ whatever means are necessary to be free of that oppression. Thank goodness Harriet Tubman wasn't waiting to be "certified" or "accredited" to run the Underground Railroad nor Malcolm X or Marcus Garvey waited till they got a degree to lead us and teach us.

**LARRY
JONES
CPA**

(248) 333-7414

The Persistence of Educational Inequality

Newly Released Data Confirms Our Nation Needs Educational Funding Reform

By Raegen Miller, Cynthia G. Brown

The U.S. Department of Education recently released a damning new report documenting that school districts across our country are unevenly distributing their state and local funds, shortchanging schools that serve low-income students. The report reveals for the first time the extent of inequity in our nation's per-pupil expenditures from state and local sources among the schools within a school district.

The report details that 36 percent of elementary schools have expenditures that are at least 10 percent above or below the district average for such schools. The figure for high schools is 42 percent, and for middle schools, 30 percent. And tellingly, schools in high-poverty communities tend to be the ones whose expenditures fall below average. Eighty-two percent of Title I districts—those school districts that receive federal funding to provide extra resources for the neediest students—had at least one Title I school with lower state and local per-pupil expenditures than the average of non-Title I schools at the same grade level in that district.

This new evidence from the 2008-09 school year puts the spotlight on a fiscal requirement of districts receiving Title I funds authorized under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, more familiarly known as the No Child Left Behind Act. These federal grants, which amount to \$14.5 billion in the current fiscal year, are meant to enhance the educational experience of students living in concentrated poverty. The so-called comparability requirement in that law holds that the district's Title I recipient and nonrecipient schools receive reasonably similar resources from state and local sources so that the Title I funds are indeed supplementary—meaning they enhance funding for Title I schools, not supplant less state and local



SOURCE: AP/Patrick Collard

Eighty-two percent of Title I districts—those school districts that receive federal funding to provide extra resources for the neediest students—had at least one Title I school with lower state and local per-pupil expenditures than the average of non-Title I schools at the same grade level in that district.

funding for those schools.

But the comparability requirement has a loophole. Districts can ignore that portion of teachers' compensation that is tied to experience. Since experience is a chief driver of compensation, it's possible for districts to comply with the comparability requirement even if their experienced teachers tend to migrate to the district's low-poverty schools—a commonly observed pattern.

Recent analyses link this pattern to school-level expenditures. A report commissioned by the Center for American Progress and the American Enterprise Institute, for example, finds troubling patterns of inequity among Florida's traditional public schools. This research reinforces findings from prior Center research exploiting school expenditures available in California's School Accountability

Report Cards.

The Department of Education report goes further, pulling back the curtain to look at nearly all districts receiving Title I funds. The effort is possible because of a specific reporting requirement attached to the extra \$13 billion in Title I funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, namely that school districts receiving these funds file a school-by-school listing of per-pupil educational expenditures from state and local sources.

Nobody should be terribly surprised that the Recovery Act-inspired data also show that, on a national level, the school serving a higher proportion of low-income students tends to have a lower expenditure of nonfederal funds. Put another way, nearly one in five districts would be out of compliance with

even the weakest of several hypothetical revisions to the Title I comparability requirement.

Digging into comparability-challenged districts underscores the inequity condoned under the current, flawed requirement. In Chicago, for example, Title I schools with expenditures below the average of non-Title I schools had an average school poverty rate of 89 percent, as opposed to 45 percent in non-Title I schools. Yet despite having nearly twice the poverty rate, these low-spending Title I schools in Chicago had average per-pupil expenditures that were 13 percent below the average for non-Title I schools.

There is little wonder that the National Education Association supports closing the comparability loophole. Advocates for low-income children should make use of the new data to conduct additional analyses that expose misguided state and local education spending policies.

Moreover, the Office of Civil Rights's biennial survey, which took a page from the Recovery Act requirement, will include school-level expenditure data from the 2009-10 school year for some 7,000 districts when it is published. Combined with the Recovery Act data from the prior year, researchers will have unprecedented opportunity to shed light on fine-grained patterns of inequity in U.S. education spending.

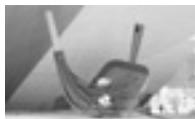
The Department of Education should be commended for its initial efforts in this area, and for highlighting the policy relevance of these new data. It has clearly embraced the new era of responsibility. And patterns emerging from the analysis of this new expenditure data will surely call on local and state education officials to do the same.

Raegen Miller is Associate Director for Education Research at the Center for American Progress. Cynthia G. Brown is Vice President for Education Policy at the Center.

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Make a Difference Through Mentoring

The POH Riley Foundation, Winning Futures, and United Way have partnered together to create the POH Riley Scholars Mentoring Program at Pontiac High School.

WE MAKE IT EASY TO BE A MENTOR

Winning Futures facilitates innovative and motivational mentoring programs. We:

- Provide services to 9th graders at the school.
- Prepare students to have successful futures through the development of character values, goal setting, and strategic plans.
- Provide mentors with a structured setting and topic-based activities to complete with their mentees.

STUDENTS WANT A MENTOR

Students find their mentoring experience invaluable. Mentoring provides students with an opportunity to:

- Learn about other professions and life options
- Meet someone outside the classroom who can provide guidance, share personal and professional experiences, and serve as a role model.



BECOMING A MENTOR

As a mentor, you can select which school you want to work at, and you will be asked to:

- Attend a three-hour training session.
- Participate in an interview and background check.
- Work with three or four students on a scheduled weekday for one hour during school hours.
- Help students develop their character values, set goals, explore careers, build employability skills, and prepare for the future through fun activities designed by the program.

Mentoring in a classroom setting and program staff are always on site to provide support.

PROVEN SUCCESS

With the combination of dedicated mentors and our evidence-based curriculum, students succeed in Winning Futures.

- 84% increased an academic grade through goal-setting.
- 90% continued their education past high school.

GET CONNECTED

To become a mentor with Michigan's Innovative Mentoring Program of the Year, contact Winning Futures.



586-294-8449 • info@winningfutures.org • www.WinningFutures.org

Inspiring and preparing youth to succeed through mentoring

School District City of Pontiac POH Riley Scholars Program Statement

Pontiac Ninth Graders Need Adult Mentors

The POH Riley Foundation/POH Regional Medical Center is offering mentoring opportunities for caring adults who wish to volunteer at Pontiac High School. The POH Riley Scholars Program, which is funded by United Way for Southeastern Michigan, supports educational preparedness through mentoring and tutoring services and exposure to career opportunities.

The mentoring program is recruiting volunteers to serve as mentors to 9th grade students during the 2011-2012 school year at Pontiac High School. Selected mentors will meet with assigned students once a week for 90 minutes during school hours and, under supervision of mentor facilitators, lead them through activities designed to help identify strengths and talents, set academic goals and connect the importance between school activities and future careers. Winning Futures, an award winning mentoring program provider, will facilitate the highly interactive structured mentoring program.

According to Teresa A. Rodges, Executive Director of the POH Riley Foundation and of Marketing at POH Regional Medical Center, "We believe that when youth are connected with committed adult mentors, they may learn how to make better decisions, experience improved self-esteem, improve relationships with family and friends/peers and improve academic performance."

Mentors receive rewards as well, such as feeling great about themselves for positively contributing to the lives of youth from diverse backgrounds. To make a difference in the lives of Pontiac youth by mentoring 9th grade students, contact the POH Riley Foundation at 248-338-5385.

Comcast and Pontiac School District Partner to Provide Families with Fast, Affordable Home Internet Service

Eligible Pontiac Schools Families have an opportunity to sign up for affordable Internet access through Comcast starting at \$9.95, a low-cost PC and free Internet training. For more details and where to call, See ad below – Insert Internet Essentials Ad here



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O O C E D C
Oakland County Employment Diversity Council

MONTHLY DIVERSITY EDUCATION FORUM

THURSDAY JANUARY 20, 2012 – 1PM UNTIL 3PM

Oakland County Executive Office Building, 41 West, 2100 Pontiac Lake Road, Waterford MI 48328, 4th Floor Conference Room

PRESENTER: RENEE PREWITT

TOPIC: The Inclusive Leadership Style of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The Leader Within: Applying the Five Principles of Leadership at Home, at Work, Everywhere!"

In 'Leadership Lessons of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,' Renee Prewitt takes a closer look at the inclusive leadership style of Dr. King, and shares insights about the way we can all apply his techniques to enhance our own personal and business endeavors. She looks at how he was able to keep thousands...millions of people focused on "equality for all,"...how he pushed through the resistance and turned setbacks into victories...how he communicated effectively—without PowerPoint or Facebook—to a diverse multitude of both supporters and detractors. 'Leadership Lessons of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., will inspire you to stay the course—whatever it is—by learning how Dr. King left his mark on the world and how you can too.

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To Register go to our website at www.ocedc.net
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—World Political, Social and Financial News—

Black Scholars, Activists Debate Gadhafi's Legacy

Believing he was killed at the behest of the U.S. and other Western powers, some say his work to unify Africa and control oil prices were the real reasons the Libyan strongman was targeted for death.

CHICAGO — A seven-member panel comprised of scholars and community activists came together recently to discuss how Libya moves forward in the wake of former strongman Moammar Gadhafi's death. Held at the headquarters of WVON radio in the Chatham community, the forum allowed panelists to discuss the Western media's portrayal of Gadhafi, who they believed was responsible for his ultimate fall and highlighted some of the good things he did in Libya.

In the 42 years he ruled Libya before he was killed Oct. 20, Gadhafi ascended to the world stage and become one of the most memorable, albeit controversial figures of the past four decades. Few heads of state were as polarizing as Gadhafi. The panelists all believed that history's view of Gadhafi will be contingent upon what version of his life — the freedom fighter, religious ideologue, accused

terrorist — endures.

When asked why Gadhafi's regime was overthrown, panelist Buzz Palmer expressed a belief that four nations were primarily responsible. "England, France, Italy, and the United States," Palmer began. "Rebel forces were merely in collusion with these greater, external forces and allowing Libyan rebels to deliver the coup d'grace [that] the Western powers wanted."

Palmer and others on the panel were convinced that Libya's political system was not overthrown for the sake of democracy. Instead many think its rich natural resources, primarily oil, and its geographically advantageous location on the continent of Africa were much bigger factors.

"The Western powers were hell-bent on acquiring Libyan oil and they had an invisible hand guiding these so called 'revolutions,'"

said historian and lecturer Akbar Muhammad.

Some of the panelists highlighted the fact that of all the African nations, Libyans are some of the most highly educated. Dr. Conrad Worrill, director for the Center for Inner-City Studies at Northeastern Illinois University, noted that Gadhafi frequently paid to send citizens to be educated at American and European universities. He also said many of Libya's scholars often returned home to share their knowledge and teach in academic settings in Libya.

"That's something that isn't talked about," Worrill said. "He put a strong emphasis on education. When you look at other African nations, you will not find many that are even close to having the number of highly educated citizens as Libya."

Zaki Baruti, president of the Universal African Peoples Organization, added that

Gadhafi was probably targeted because he had amassed a large gold fortune, and wanted to unify African nations to change how oil was paid for in the world. According to Baruti, Gadhafi wanted oil to be valued in gold instead of the dollar on the world market; he also sought to unify African nations by establishing one universal language for the continent to make it easier to conduct business with the rest of the world.

The consensus of the panel was Gadhafi was killed in order to shield the United States from claims that his family was allegedly offered asylum in exchange for voluntary exile from Libya and the surrender of his nation's massive oil reserves. Nation of Islam leader Min. Louis Farrakhan made a similar assertion on this week during a two-hour interview with talk show host Cliff Kelly.

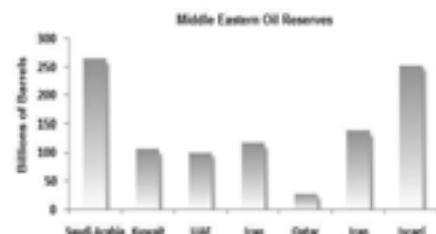
A Saudi-Sized Oil Find... And a Rupert Murdoch-Backed Company Is in the Middle

By **Andy Obermueller**
Chief Investment Strategist
Game-Changing Stocks

A Saudi-Sized Oil Find... And a Rupert Murdoch-Backed Company Is in the Middle
What I'm about to say might shock you... Israel sits on nearly as much oil as Saudi Arabia.

You read that correctly, Israel — a country the size of the state of New Jersey — sits atop an estimated 250 billion barrels of oil.

To put the sheer volume of Israel's reserves in perspective, take a look at this chart.



As the chart shows, that's roughly the same as Saudi Arabia, which is the 13th largest country in the world and almost exactly 100 times larger than Israel. If oil is worth \$100 a barrel, Israel has the ability to

tap into \$25 trillion worth of crude.

How did a country that's historically struggled to meet its energy demands stumble into one of the largest known petroleum reserves on the planet?

Trapped beneath Israel's famed Shefla basin rests a special type of shale called kerogen. Kerogen contains bitumen, the petroleum-rich substance that the Canadians extract from the tar sands to make oil.

Like the bitumen in the oil sands, the shale in Israel is not particularly deep, and that's the rub. Were Israel's kerogen further below the surface, where the Earth's crust reaches 160 to 340 degrees Celsius, it would have been crock-potted into crude by now.

Had that happened, drilling a Saudi-scale gusher of a well would be about as challenging as digging an artisan well in a very shallow aquifer. But, alas, the kerogen is not quite deep enough, so it holds onto its bitumen like an oyster holds a pearl and thus one of the largest petroleum deposits in the world has sat unmolested for 70 million years.

Until now.

See, Israel relies on imports for 99% of their energy consumption. Consequently, they direly need energy. As an attempt to become more energy independent, Israeli

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has backed an extraction project hosted by Genie Energy (NYSE: GNE) to recover petroleum from Israel's bitumen rich shale.

Their plan? Expand on a procedure that Royal Dutch Shell (NYSE: RDS-B) created back in 1997 called the in-situ conversion process (ICP).

Shell's ICP basically creates a giant oven beneath the earth, encircling the petroleum laden shale. Once the shale is hot enough (650 degrees Fahrenheit), given enough time, the shale oil and gas will be released from the rock whereby it can be extracted and refined into fuel.

Now you may be thinking this recovery method sounds expensive... but you'd be wrong.

Thanks to the engineer heading the project, Dr. Harold Vinegar, the ICP is cheap. By using the formation's own natural gas to generate heat, Vinegar and his crew have made the process relatively clean and inexpensive. The cost of extracting the crude could be as little as \$35 a barrel.

Of course, this project is entirely dependent on the successful adoption of the ICP technology. If the method isn't viable, then the petroleum could sit for another couple million years or until someone else finds a better way to retrieve it.

That's why Genie Energy has devoted an entire division dedicated solely to the development of unconventional shale extraction methods like the ICP. That division, known as the Israeli Energy Initiatives (IEI), is working around the clock to get their alternative extraction processes up and running.

If the IEI can prove that their methods are successful, then Genie Energy should be in the money. And I'm not the only one who thinks so... media mogul Rupert Murdoch recently reported he holds a 0.5% stake in Genie.

But don't get me wrong, I'm not saying Israel will become the next Saudi Arabia of oil. Even if they do come online, I'd be surprised if Israel, despite its gargantuan

resources, ever exported much of its crude. Their plan is to be energy independent... not become a major petroleum exporter.

So buying Genie isn't as much as a bet on Israeli shale as it is a bet on IEI's technology. Which, given the recent shale boom in the United States, has some pretty big implications. If IEI's production techniques work, Israel will certainly benefit... but it will also be a boon to one of their biggest allies.

You see, there are 250 billion barrels of oil in Israel's shale. But there are an estimated 2 trillion barrels here at home. If the same recovery methods that are being used in Israel can be applied to the shale deposits in our own back yard, then that, my friends, would be a game-changer.

But let me warn you, a dark cloud currently resides over IEI's project in the Shefla basin.

Underneath the massive shale deposits lies one of Israel's most valuable commodities... water. Consequently, the environmental community has begun to voice opposition.

For Israel, water security is no laughing matter... If Israel's aquifers were threatened for any reason, I think Israelis would leave the shale be and continue to import petroleum.

But fortunately, there's a massive layer of impenetrable rock — hundreds of feet thick — between the oil-bearing shale and the aquifer... that should keep the water from getting contaminated.

Even with the natural barrier though, the risk still remains that environmental backlash could shut the project down. That's why it's essential IEI continues to sell this proposal as the clean, safe and abundant energy source that it is.

But even with the risk, I still like Genie Energy. Its IEI initiative, the potential for short-term stock gains, and the potential for long-term results for investors willing to hold the shares as the shale boom takes off in this country are more than enough reasons to buy in.

Always looking for the next big thing...

Mosaic Ghana Africa

In October 2012, **Mosaic Ghana Africa** will lead a business development, investment and cultural tour to Accra, Ghana in West Africa. The delegation will include various Oakland County, State of Michigan and other U.S. based executives of small, medium, and large U.S. firms representing a variety of business sectors.

The overall focus of the trip will be commercial, cultural and investment opportunities for Oakland County, State of Michigan and other U.S. companies, including joint ventures, presented by the continuing market liberalization and privatization underway in this country. In Ghana briefings and one-on-one business appointments will be arranged for members of the government, business and cultural delegation".

For information regarding this trip contact **248-758-1411** or email thepontiacnews@sbcglobal.net

–Voices in the Community–

PONTIAC COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS

The Power Company Kids Club – Oakland Community College

Genisys Credit Union – POH Riley Foundation – State of Michigan

Pontiac Promise Zone Presented With Check

The Pontiac Promise Zone was recently presented with a \$5,000 check by the Power Company Kids Club in Pontiac. The money was donated from a fundraiser the Club held and will be used to help Pontiac students finance a two-year Associate’s degree from a Michigan college or university.

“This is a kind and generous donation by a respected community partner,” said Dr. Timothy Meyer, Chancellor of Oakland Community College & Chair of the Pontiac Promise Zone. “Through their financial leadership, all students graduating from the

Pontiac school district have the opportunity to receive financial support towards higher education.”

In addition, the Promise Zone also receives funding from the State of Michigan through tax revenues to enable eligible students living within the Pontiac School District to receive financial assistance for higher education. It’s a relatively new program that hopes to obtain enough sufficient funding to eventually expand to support students through their Bachelor’s degrees.

The Power Company Kids Club has over

19 years of experience serving the youth of Pontiac. Their programs have reached over 20,000 children and interact with 1,500 children weekly. Over 8,000 meals are provided annually and 20,000 Christmas gifts have been distributed. They have also awarded nearly \$40,000 in scholarships and have a 98% graduation rate for students involved in their Junior Worker Program.

“These two local organizations give back a tremendous amount of time, money and resources to Pontiac youth in hopes of creating positive outcomes for many years to come,” said Lon Bone, Genisys Credit Union Vice President of Public Relations & Vice Chair of the Pontiac Promise Zone.

Non-profits and other organizations who would like to donate, please mail your check to the Pontiac Promise Zone, P.O. Box 431429, Pontiac, MI 48343-1429, or visit www.pontiacpromisezone.org for more information. Any amount is greatly appreciated.

Genisys Credit Union is proud to be making a difference in our communities, and we truly believe that Genisys is “where you come first”. We are locally owned, locally controlled and continue to receive Bauer Financial’s five-star rating.

Genisys Credit Union.....Where you come first



(left to right) – Genisys Credit Union Vice President of Public Relations, Lon Bone, Chancellor of Oakland Community College, Dr. Timothy Meyer, Executive Director for the POH Riley Foundation, Teresa Rodges, and Executive Director for The Power Company Kids Club, Pastor John Gunn, at the check presentation.

Ask Elaine.com

By Elaine Smith-Wright



Mrs. Smith-Wright started out as a Mass Communications major at Oakland University and now holds a B.A. degree in Nursing Home Administration and the Certificate of Gerontology and Sociology of the Aging from Wiley College along with a MBA Degree from East Texas Baptist University in Management. She also holds a Certificate in Filmmaking, Screenwriting and Directing from the Motion Picture Institute of Michigan.

Dear Elaine:

I just turned 18 in November and decided to go and get my driver’s license road test so that I could feel like a grown up since I’m really legal now to drive. I went in all confident and everything and had passed the driver’s written test on the first try not missing even one question! I was pretty proud of myself. I’ve been driving around but not much because I have to use my mom’s car when she gets off work so I’ve been driving myself to work and other places without anyone in the car with me. The problem is that I haven’t had enough practice trying to park. That includes parallel parking and pulling straight into a spot. I’m HORRIBLE! So needless to say, I failed the road test. Now I’m stressed out about even the idea of driving. Now I’m no longer excited about being able to drive, I’m scared to death! Now I’m having anxiety about getting behind the wheel period and feel like I’m risking my life. I don’t know if I’ll ever get over it. My mother has been giving me more lessons and so have my friends who have cars. I wish there was some way I could have more confidence. I don’t want to have to catch the bus or bum rides, but I’d much rather do that then wind up in a big heap of mangled up metal. HELP!

Signed: My Boots Are Now Made For Walking

Dear Boots:

Sounds like it’s all psychological to me. Let me share this with you. When I was in high school we could take driver’s Ed as a class for free and receive a grade. Upon completion of the class you were given your learner’s permit to drive on with a licensed driver who was 21 in the car. When my teacher handed me my permit he said, “I’m giving you this permit but don’t you go and get your license ANY time soon!” I was devastated! I thought I done pretty good. Evidently I had scared the crap out of him. So I took his advice and practiced every chance I got. One thing is for sure: you do get better. But I do have a suggestion for you: when I received a speeding ticket, someone told me that if I took a defensive driving course I could get out of the ticket and the points and help my insurance costs. That was my main reason for taking the course. Then a couple of years later the same thing happened again and I took the course again. I realized that was the BEST thing I could have ever done. It made me much more aware of my surroundings, my eyes were focused more on what was way up in front of me, I checked my side and rear view mirrors more and guess what? I have never had an accident in 42 years. Just keep one thing in mind: don’t let yourself get distracted while you drive or park. No cell phones, no radio, no eating or drinking, no talking, no reaching for things on the floor or the backseat or trying to hit a kid acting up. Vehicles in the hands of a careless person is dangerous. Take your time, practice at a vacant school parking lot and take someone with you who can give you pointers. The confidence will return. Believe me. You’ll soon be back to driving like you’ve got it going

Earlene R. Baggett-Hayes

The Law and Mediation Center PLLC

110 North Perry Street, Pontiac, MI 48342
248-454-9660 • Fax: 248-454-9661
E-Mail: erbhayes@sbcglobal.net



Mediator, arbitrator, attorney, trainer, and facilitator, Earlene R. Baggett-Hayes specializes in employment, labor, contracts, property, municipal, and probate matters. She has worked in courts at various levels and in several administrative agencies. Ms. Baggett-Hayes has over 25 years of combined litigation and alternative dispute resolution (ADR) experience and currently maintains her own business, where she mentors law students and teens. She serves on numerous arbitration panels, including the American Arbitration Association, Financial Industry Regulatory Association, the City of Detroit - AFSCME Arbitration Panel, and the Federal Mediation Conciliation Service, as well as on private employment panels nationally. Ms. Baggett-Hayes is an SCAO-approved trainer and has drafted and facilitated training on civil, peer, and domestic relations mediation. She has written several articles on ADR and regularly conducts presentations for schools, churches, and community organizations. Ms. Baggett-Hayes has served as trainer at Thomas M. Cooley Law School and presented to Wayne State University, Chicago State University, and DePaul University. She has served in leadership positions with the Oakland County Bar Association's ADR Committee and the State Bar of Michigan's ADR Council. A member of Professional Resolution Experts of Michigan (PREMI), Ms. Baggett-Hayes currently hosts a talk show entitled, "It's All About Law," which has featured the role of mediation in our businesses, communities, and churches.

—Senior Citizens Matters—

St. Joseph Mercy Oakland Offers Free Fitness Program For Senior Adults At Three Sites



Promoting a Healthier Lifestyle Focus of Program

St. Joseph Mercy Oakland (SJMO) has openings for its free Senior Fit program at three sites in Oakland County.

Senior Fit is aimed at improving stamina, lowering blood pressure and decreasing the risk of osteoporosis among senior adults through regular exercise. It is geared for adults age 55 and up. The program uses chair and floor exercises that build strength and flexibility, help maintain strong bones, control body fat, reduce stress and improve an individual's sense of well-being.

An initiative of SJMO's Senior Services, Senior Fit registrations are free. The program, which includes a one-hour session, three days a week for 14 weeks, will be held Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at the following locations:

St. Stephen Missionary Baptist Church
69 S. Astor, Pontiac
11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Gerry Kulick Community Center
1201 Livernois, Ferndale
9:30-10:30 a.m.

Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church
9101 Highland Rd., White Lake
11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Sessions are filled on a first call, first served basis. Openings are limited. The winter session begins the week of Jan. 9 and ends April 13. A Senior Fit consent form must be signed by each participant's physician prior to the first class. Consent forms may be picked up at each exercise site. Individuals must register to participate in the free sessions.

To register call 1-800-372-6094.

About St. Joseph Mercy Oakland

St. Joseph Mercy Oakland is a 443-bed comprehensive, community, teaching hospital and a long-time leader in health care in Oakland County. Founded in 1927 by the Sisters of Mercy, St. Joseph Mercy Oakland has won numerous local and national awards for patient safety, quality and performance, and consistently ranks in the top 10 percent of hospitals nationwide. A member of the Saint Joseph Mercy Health System, St. Joseph Mercy Oakland is a technologically leading hospital that combines advanced medicine and personal care to assist patients on their path to wellness. With dedicated physicians, nurses and hospital staff committed to providing quality care throughout the patient stay, St. Joseph Mercy Oakland has truly personalized the patient care experience.

For more information about health services offered at St. Joseph Mercy Oakland, please visit stjoesoakland.org.

Social Security & The Holidays

By Rufus Gaston

Social Security Public Affairs
Specialist in Metropolitan Detroit
rufus.gaston@ssa.gov

When the holidays come, the money goes — usually for presents and parties, greeting cards and traveling to see family. Before you spend that last holiday buck, make sure you set some cash aside for retirement as a gift to yourself.

If you haven't started already, now is the time to begin saving for your retirement — no matter what your age. If retirement is near, you'll want to hop on a fast sled right away. If you're younger and retirement seems a lifetime away, it's still in your best interest to begin saving now — compound interest will help your retirement fund to snowball.

Don't take our word for it. You can check out the numbers yourself. A great way to start figuring out how much you will need for retirement is to learn how much you could expect from Social Security. You can do that in minutes with Social Security's online Retirement Estimator.

The Retirement Estimator offers an instant, personalized estimate of your future retirement benefits based on your earnings record and a few variables you enter. Try it out at www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator.

We encourage saving for retirement, but there are reasons to save for every stage of life. A great place to go for help is www.mymoney.gov. MyMoney.gov is the U.S. government's website dedicated to teaching Americans the basics about financial planning. Whether you are planning to buy a home, balancing your checkbook, or investing in your 401(k) plan, the resources at www.MyMoney.gov can help you.

Be sure to give yourself a holiday gift you deserve. Not only should you set aside some money for your retirement fund, but you should also spend some time looking at these websites and picturing your future retirement. Spend a little bit of holiday time at www.socialsecurity.gov.

Social Security Helps The Homeless

More than half a million Americans experience homelessness on any given night. Nearly 20 percent of them are "chronically homeless," meaning they are on the streets regularly.

Social Security has several programs that pay benefits to qualified individuals, including those who are homeless. These programs include retirement, disability, and survivors benefits, as well as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), which is a needs-based program for people who are blind, disabled, or age 65 or older. If you know someone who is homeless, and you want to learn more about how Social Security might help, a good place to get information is at www.socialsecurity.gov/homelessness.

That page includes a link to the Spotlight on Homelessness — a website designed to help the homeless apply for SSI. It's available at www.socialsecurity.gov/ssi/spotlights/spot-homeless.htm.

The homelessness page also includes links to information on health care for the homeless, institutionalization, advocacy groups, reports on homeless outreach, and even links to other websites like the U.S. Interagency

Council on Homelessness and HUD.

You'll find other information helpful to the homeless on www.socialsecurity.gov. For example, there is a link to our Benefit Eligibility Screening Tool, or BEST. Based on answers to various questions, this tool helps determine the benefits someone might be eligible for and gives information about how to qualify and apply. Go directly to www.socialsecurity.gov/best.

Tell anyone you know who is homeless or threatened with homelessness to use the Benefit Eligibility Screening Tool and to check out the different types of benefits and assistance they may be eligible to receive. Spread the word about the help available to the homeless.

Visit www.socialsecurity.gov/homelessness to learn more.

Save Some Time During The Holidays

The holidays are here and that means busy days ahead for families across the nation: gift shopping, preparing for guests, sending out holiday greetings, looking up recipes for favorite traditional dishes, checking those credit card and bank account balances.

Many people have found an easier way to manage many of their activities of the holiday season by going online. Some shoppers have eliminated the need to go to crowded shopping malls for holiday gifts by taking care of it over the Internet. Some even look up recipes on the Internet and send holiday greetings by email. You'll find that these types of convenient, secure transactions can also be found in places you may not ordinarily think to look — for example, at www.socialsecurity.gov!

You can apply online for benefits, obtain information, plan for retirement, and request a replacement Medicare card, even apply for Extra Help with your prescription drug costs all at www.socialsecurity.gov.

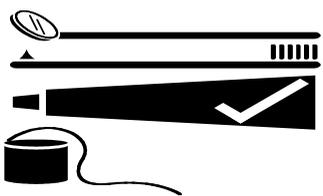
You can handle much of your Social Security business quickly and securely from your home or office computer. If you visit our website at www.socialsecurity.gov you will find that you can —

- get an instant, personalized estimate of your future Social Security benefits;
- apply for retirement, disability, and spouse's benefits;
- check the status of your benefit application;
- change your address and phone number, if you receive monthly benefits;
- sign-up for direct deposit of Social Security benefits;
- use our benefit planners to help you better understand your Social Security protection as you plan for your financial future;
- find the nearest Social Security office; and
- request a replacement Medicare card.

Looking for more Social Security information? You can go online to find out almost anything you need to know about the Social Security program. Information is available on subjects ranging from how to get a Social Security number for a newborn to how to go back to work while receiving disability benefits.

This holiday season, do you want to have more time to visit with friends and family? If so, take care of your Social Security business at www.socialsecurity.gov.

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Pontiac Phoenix High School



Pontiac High Basketball Team

Pontiac Phoenix High School beats Southfield High Bluejays 68-41 in league game on Thursday December 15. With the victory, Pontiac upgraded its record to 3-1 on the season. The Phoenix were led by Senior Guard Jemarea Samples with 18 points including six 3-pointers. Jarod Jones a Junior Forward/guard scored 14 points, along with seven steals, four assists and seven rebounds. The Phoenix travel to Renaissance High in Detroit to play a non-league game on Friday, December 30.



Player #14 Jemarea Samples



Coach Rogers



Art Jefferson & Chester McFadden Longtime fans

Pontiac High Wrestling Team

By Adam Polk

Pontiac High Wrestling Team starts their season off to a 6-0 record and winning the Waterford Mott Invitational on December 10, 2011.

Wrestlers Competing and their Weight Class

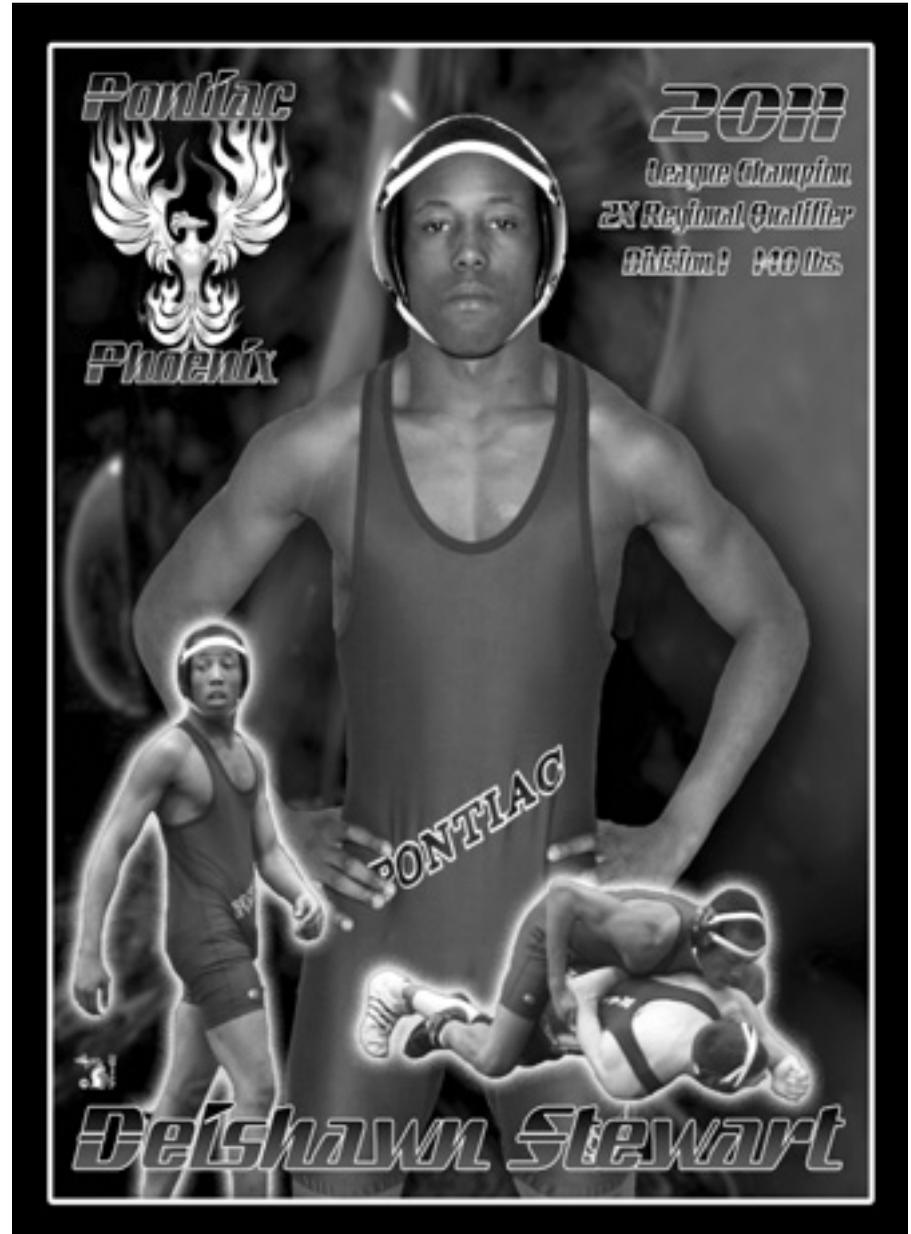
- 112lbs Rasheen Hatton
- 119lbs Javier Rivera
- 125lbs Jacob Jackson
- 135lbs Deshawn Cole
- 140lbs Davion Logan
- 145lbs Deishawn Stewart
- 152lbs Jordan Moses
- 160lbs Jammell Humphrey
- 171lbs Keonte Fuqua
- 189lbs Jakeese Cody
- 215lbs Charles Walker
- HWT Xavier Hersitviz

Deishawn Stewart

In a recent match, on December 17, 2011, Deishawn Stewart a senior placed third in the 52th Oakland County Wrestling Championships. Stewart a former wrestler with the Pontiac Jr. Huskies Youth Wrestling Club won a decision championship match over Holly's Andrew Scott 6-2.

Stewart is a two time regional qualifier for Pontiac High Wrestling Team. In 2009, he transferred over from Pontiac Central High during the merger of the two high schools. Stewart mentioned to head coach Adam Polk "I accomplished my first goal this year". His ultimate goal is to be the next Pontiac High all-state wrestlers next to his former teammate Deon'dre Polk. Deishawn Stewart overall record is 12-1 this season.

Pontiac High next wrestling match is at the Brother Rice Invitational December 28, 2011 @ Brother Rice High School. The Wrestling event starts at 9:00 am.





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295 West Huron - Pontiac, MI 48341

Community Calendar

First Annual End of Year Family Reunion Celebration

Friday December 30, 2011

(The day before New Year's Eve)

6pm to Midnight

St. George
Cultural Center
3616 Woodward
Bloomfield Hills

- Dinner
- Dancing
- Live Entertainment
- Disc Jockey

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Pontiac Alumni Association



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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON THE SALE OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS CITY-OWNED LAND

TUESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2012

5:00 P.M.

PONTIAC CITY HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBERS

A public hearing to discuss the proposed disposition of Federal Programs city-owned land has been set for Tuesday, January 10, 2012 in the Pontiac City Hall Council Chambers at 5:00 p.m. Because the Federal Programs for the City of Pontiac is being eliminated, the Emergency Manager is liquidating all of its real property purchased through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP 1). This hearing, as required by Federal guidelines and Section 3.113 of the City Charter, will provide citizens an opportunity to review available city properties where the Federal Programs Division may have an interest and that will be conveyed by the Emergency Manager.

The City of Pontiac will dispose of the following individual vacant properties:

Parcel ID Number, address, size and program:

1427305013 – 681 Northway – 45x118.5 – NSP1
 1428476009 – 42 S. Edith - 45x111 – NSP1
 1429155003 – 199 Florence 50x151 – NSP1
 1429309022 – 83 Prall 46x159 – NSP1
 1432137006 – Beaudette – irregular shape – CDBG
 1432177012 – Houston – 50x127 – CDBG
 1432218003 – Branch – 5.7 acres – CDBG
 1432201031 – Orchard Lake – irregular – CDBG
 1433104011 – Alfred Court – 22x68 – CDBG
 1433104012 – Alfred Court – 38x68 – CDBG
 1433231069 – 280 S. Anderson– NSP1
 1433276005 – 356 Going – 40x120 –NSP1
 1433403010 – 292 Raeburn – 40x150 – NSP1
 1433453028 – Ferry – 40x150 NSP1
 1434107019 – 212 Clifford – 50x147 –NSP1

 1433452022 – 347 Ferry – 35x150 and 1433452023 –
 Ferry 35x150 will be offered together only.
 1433452035 – 391 Ferry – 35x150 and 1433452036 –
 395 Ferry – 35x150 will be offered together only.

 1430478021 – 16 Thorpe – parking lot, 1430478054 – 500
 West Huron – Commercial structure and 1430478037 –
 Parking lot. These three parcels will only be sold together.

Parcel ID Number, address, size and program:

The following parcels are being offered as one purchase:

1432252001 – Grant 40x125 – CDBG
 1432252002 – Grant 40x125 – CDBG
 1433252003 – Grant 40x125 – CDBG
 1433252004 – Grant 40x125 – CDBG
 1433252005 – Grant 40x125 – CDBG
 1432252006 – Grant 40x125 – CDBG
 1433252007 – Grant 40x125 – CDBG
 1432252008 – Hess 41x80 – CDBG - Landlocked
 1432252009 – Hess 80x84 – CDBG - Landlocked
 1432252010 – Irene 40x125 – CDBG – Landlocked
 1432252014 – Irene 40x125 – CDBG - Landlocked
 1432252015 – Irene 120x125 – CDBG - Landlocked
 1432253001 – Irene 42x236 – CDBG - Landlocked
 1432253002 – Irene – 120x216 – CDBG - Landlocked
 1432253004 – Irene 80x257 – CDBG – Landlocked

The following properties will be sold together:

1432129012 – 4 and 6 Lee Court – CDBG
 1432130007 – 12 Walnut – CDBG
 1432130011 – 28 Walnut – CDBG
 1432130016 – 3 Lee Court – CDBG – Landlocked
 1432130017 – 5 Lee Court – CDBG
 1432130018 – 8 and 23 Lee Court – CDBG
 1432133005 – 13 Walnut – CDBG
 1432133006 – 17 Walnut – CDBG
 1432133009 – 29 Walnut – CDBG
 1432133030 – Harris – CDBG – Landlocked
 1432133034 – Walnut - CDBG



The disposition of each of these properties will be discussed at the public hearing. For further information, please contact the Federal Programs Division at 248-758-3780.