



The Gazette

The latest news in your community.....



A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue #1 Fall 2010

Economic Development:

Find out the latest news regarding economic development in your area. Sources range from the Atlanta Beltline, Atlanta Development Authority, the University Community Development Corporation and more!
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Youth obtains a Million dollars in scholarships

Read more about the Booker T. Washington valedictorian who managed to obtain 1 million dollars in scholarships! **Page 3**



GO GREEN!!!!



Read more about the Green presentations coming to your community!
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What is MCCRI? Who are they?

Get to know MCCRI more closely by seeing the faces of the organization!
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Poll Workers Grant

By: *B. Mar'Che James*

The Morehouse College Community Revitalization Initiative (MCCRI) College Poll Worker's Program will aim to mobilize college students to participate in the voting/poll worker's process with the goal of enhancing voter participation.

By providing opportunities for students to strengthen their understanding of voting trends and the importance of civic engagement across demographics, including the college-aged. By implementing a College Poll Worker's Program – the

Morehouse College Community Revitalization Initiative aims to contribute to the need of increasing voter turnout and participation among the underrepresented groups of society.

We expect to collaborate with various agencies including the Fulton County Election Commission and community organizations. The opportunity is being funded by the United States Election Assistance Commission.

Changes in MARTA to come...Again

By: *Brandon Farrar*

Yes...you read correctly. MARTA fares are on the rise. The West End area is highly dependent upon MARTA and ranked 8th in station entries in 2010 according to MARTA statistics. One year after the September 2009 fare increases, MARTA looks to increase fares again, reduce rail service by 14.2 percent and bus services by 10.2 percent. The changes are slated to take effect on October 3rd(Saturday).

Aside from these changes, tokens will no longer be accepted. Tokens may be exchanged for Breeze card

tickets but cash refunds will not be given. Some restrooms have been closed along with two RideStores at Lenox and Lindbergh. Call center hours have been reduced and bus routes have been changed. The list goes on.

These transitions come as the public transportation service tussles with a \$69.34 million budget deficit. The West End community highly depends on MARTA and will most certainly feel the effects of these changes.

UCDC promotes economic development in the West End

By: *Pete Hayley*



The University Community Development Corporation (UCDC), is a non-profit Community Development Corporation (CDC) who's mission is to assist the neighborhoods of the west side with their redevelopment goal and plans while being the representative of the Atlanta University Center Consortium (AUCC) schools in the community.

Since its creation in 1988 UCDC has been diligently working to change the demographics in the community from a majority investor owned tenant occupies community to that of a majority owner occupied community. Owner occupancy has proven to do more for turning a neighborhood around than any other single factor. Since 2004, UCDC has built and/or renovated approximately 40 houses which have been sold to owner occupants. Additionally these houses have also been sold to families with incomes at or below 80% of Atlanta's median income.

In 2005 UCDC became the first CDC in the nation to build "green" affordable housing under the Enterprise Community Partners "Green Communities" program. Through the use of low flow plumbing fixtures, energy efficient appliances and lighting, paint, cabinetry and flooring that are free of harmful chemicals, water permeable surfaces designed to absorb storm water runoff, and quality tightly sealed construction these "green houses" promote healthier living while reducing the cost of operations, and improve the environment and the impact on the city's aging sewer system. Now, under the watchful eye of Southface Energy Institute, its environmental consultant, UCDC has expanded "green" building and designed all of its construction projects. These

"green" homes are on the cutting edge of design and will help to raise the value of properties throughout the community.

In addition to construction project, UCDC also engages in community building activities as well. Over the past six years UCDC has sponsored homeownership workshops that have trained over 200 participants on the home buying process and certified these participants for all the down payment assistance programs in the city and state. UCDC has also sponsored programs on youth etiquette and health, worked with neighborhoods on safety, and is working on a financial literacy program and an economic development program.

In 2007, UCDC began to focus its efforts on economic development in the Westside communities. Partnering with the AUCC, and with funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce, completed a Community Economic Development Study (CEDs) for the Westside community. This study identifies industries the Westside community can support and also breaks those industries into sub-categories. These industries have potential for recruitment in the area and will bring jobs to all income levels.

In 2009 additional funding was acquired for a business accelerator study that will determine if a business incubator can be successful in the area. These two major studies will help create a base of information that will be used to identify and recruit the right types of industry to the area.

The Westside is one of the last inner city core communities to see major economic development. Bringing major industries into the area will create economic opportunities to residents on all levels as well as combat the high rates of unemployment. Along with the recruitment of industry to the area, UCDC hopes to provide jobs and training services that will help residents and students to prepare for the jobs this effort will create. UCDC's economic development will include job creation, training and placement.

UCDC has been a partner in the community for over 20 years and plans to continue to assist with the revitalization of the community.

Water solutions in debate

By: *Brandon Farrar*

Water: the element that covers two-thirds of the earth and makes up seventy five percent of our body. It is undeniably essential to life; and the City of Atlanta must address it with the upmost importance.

Residents are furious and have a right to be. Since the 2003 renovations, water bills in the City of Atlanta have been on the rise. A twenty dollar water bill norm is now in the past.

This cost increase is associated with the redevelopment itself; however, millions of tax payer dollars were spent

rejuvenating a sewer system that is still plagued with problems of the past.

Remedies to this surge may exist in a business venture that would cost the City of Atlanta nothing and potentially drive down water costs for citizens.

A ten thousand-acre tract in Dawsonville is now in discussion of being turned into a two thousand-acre reservoir in which water will be sold to the rest of the region at a rate close to one hundred million gallons a day.

The City of Atlanta has owned this property since the early 1970's. An offer of thirty million dollars was made for the land three years ago during the tenure of Mayor Shirley Franklin. The land was bought for five million with ideas of building a second airport at the time.

Costs for the project are estimated at six hundred and fifty million dollars by

the Etowah Water and Sewer Authority, a potential partner, with the City of Atlanta not having to pay into the project as stated earlier. The Dawson County commissioner estimates the likelihood of an airport or reservoir at sixty percent nay, forty percent nay.

Regardless of the outcome, Atlanta's water concerns must be addressed. Mayor Kasim Reed opposed building a reservoir at this site prior to the elections but may find himself reevaluating that thought.

Million Dollar Scholar

By: *Brandon Farrar*

While I was working on this newsletter, I faced the dilemma of picking from fifty different articles to include. A former intern of ours, Lamont Cobb, sent me many topics that ranged from neighborhood development to business development; but nothing in my mind could compete with Mr. Deonte Bridges.

As the valedictorian of Booker T. Washington high school in Atlanta, Deonte obtained over one million dollars in scholarships. Aside from this prestigious accomplishment, Mr. Bridges overcame many adversities to succeed. His mother was dealing with leukemia at the time and he even dealt with the death of his brother.

After hearing about this, I had to know more. I couldn't stop reading about the numerous organizations who donated scholarships: Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc., Omega Psi Phi fraternity Inc., George W. Brumley, BTW Freedom Riders, the Anti-Defamation Unsung Hero, the Emory University MLK Ford and the Gates Millennium.

The list was amazing. What I admired most was his strength and desire to succeed. It was even more evident in an excerpt from his valedictorian speech:

"I am committed to education. I choose to do what is necessary, not what is popular. I stayed up till the wee hours of the morning, I met deadlines and embraced the challenges of several advanced placement courses."

All I could do was marvel at this diamond in the rough. When I told people I was considering moving to the West End, I was met with resistance: "Nothing good happens there", "You will get robbed or shot", "Why would you want to do that?"

Not once did I receive positive input. That is why this story was of such importance.

We often read a paper, look at the news and listen to the radio without hearing numerous positive activities. It makes me wonder why does positivity not sell? Are we as people really more interested in death and controversy? Or is

that what we are told sells?

One thing is certain, stories like Deonte Bridge's deserve more time in our lives. They serve as pathways for our youth and are building blocks for a stronger community. They provide us with belief that we can overcome many odds to reach the goals we set forth. While sex, lies and controversy may "sell", positivity adds value, character and integrity. I'll take this any day over a dollar.

GO GREEN!!!

By: *Ms. B Mar'Che James*

The Environmental Project of the Morehouse College Community Revitalization Initiative(MCCRI) is underway! In the next few months presentations will be given on "Greening Your Life", to each neighborhood organization in Neighborhood Planning Unit(NPU)-T. This presentation will discuss ways to include "Green" practices that can be included in your everyday living habits. The presentation will also include energy efficiency practices that could help residents save energy and reduce utility costs.

Being "green" is about preserving and enhancing environmental quality. There are many areas in the green field. Green-collar jobs are an example of the growing industries that are helping us kick the oil habit, curb greenhouse-gas emissions, eliminate toxins, and protect natural systems. Green-collar workers are installing solar panels, retrofitting buildings to make them more efficient, constructing transit lines, refining waste oil into biodiesel, erecting wind farms, repairing hybrid cars, building green rooftops, planting trees, and so much more. We will explore ways to incorporate these ideals in the culture of the Atlanta University Center and Neighborhood Planning Unit T. For information regarding the Environmental Project, contact:

B. Marche James - Project Coordinator
email: bjames@morehouse.edu
phone: 404-681-5482

Omar Parham - Student Assistant
email: Omar_R_Parham@yahoo.com
phone: 510-290-1050

Help Clean Up Joseph E. Lowery!!!

By: *Brandon Farrar*

Whether you live in the West End or attend a school in the AUC, you have driven down Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard. The historical significance of this street is one that must be preserved hence the purpose of this clean up. Below is more information regarding the event:

Who is hosting the event?

Georgia Coalition for the Peoples Agenda

What is being cleaned?

Joseph E. Lowery from White St. to Marietta St.

Why is this event taking place?

Cleaning and greening in the Honor of Joseph E. Lowery

When is the event?

October 9th, 2010 from 8am - 5pm

Where do we meet?

Rose Circle

To volunteer for this event, please pre-register with the Volunteer Coordinator:
Deborah McCrary 404-441-4054

ADA Homelessness Program

By: *Brandon Farrar*

The Atlanta Development Authority has developed a program designed to assist homeless families and individuals stabilize their lives. The program is timely considering the mortgage crisis that has left the city in shambles.

Applications can be submitted by visiting the ADA website (<http://www.atlantada.com/adaInitiatives/HomelessnessProgram.jsp>) and filling out the out the appropriate Word and PDF documents.

For more information contact:

Granvel Tate
phone: 404-588-5469
email: gtate@atlantada.com

Who make up the new faces of MCCRI?

Kendrick Long, Program Assistant -



Kendrick Long began his tenure at MCCRI in 2002 as an unpaid student volunteer planting flower pots for West End Coalition. He later became a paid intern having served 6 neighborhood organizations in NPU-

T. Kendrick returned to MCCRI after serving two Americorps term, and most recently being employed as a Special Initiatives Coordinator for the Department of Commerce. Currently a small business owner serving as a member of the Beltline Speakers Bureau, Bloomberg Business Week Advisory Board and Chair of the Dekalb YRs, Kendrick provides necessary skills to both supervise the MCCRI Americorps Program and supervise Program Interns

Devon Lambert, VISTA Project Coordinator -

Devon is a second year VISTA who joined the MCCRI team with experience in real estate finance, market forecasting, commercial and residential development, as well as economic development. His career affiliations include WaterView Financial Consulting



Group, Metro Home Buyers LLC, Greater Westchester Real Estate Investors Association, and Lambert Asset Management Inc. His skill set includes public policy skills and strategies, land use and development, geographic information systems analysis, and grassroots community development. His focus is developing a comprehensive database of public safety initiatives, commercial and residential real estate use, and demographics supporting economic growth.

Marche James, VISTA Project

Coordinator - As the Environmental Project Coordinator at MCCRI, Mar'Che is a Green for All Fellow and a recent graduate of Spelman College. As a resident in the Ashview

Heights community, she understands the issues communities face on a daily basis. Mar'Che joins the team to help generate solution driven outcomes in the West-End community. Her primary goals are to promote positive community unity and to help create a greener and healthier environment.



Robyn Washington, VISTA Project

Coordinator - Serving her third year with VISTA, two successful terms with Hands on Atlanta's State & National Program, Robyn brings a strong background in Youth Engagement and Education. Having owned and operated a successful daycare, her primary goal is to start a Youth Entrepreneurship Program in both Middle Schools and local communities.



She is very excited to have the opportunity to join the community at Morehouse College and help the youth of today become the entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

Catherine Williams, VISTA Project

Coordinator - Catherine joined the MCCRI staff as a graduate from Florida A&M University. She attained a B.A. in English and regularly sharpens these skills through her work on the MCCRI team. Although everyone works together to complete many different tasks, Catherine's primary focus for this year is the construction of the



"How- to Manuals" as well as various surveys. Her goal is to provide information within each manual that will educate and provoke curiosity within NPU-T citizens resulting in a wider knowledge base and participation from more persons within the community.

Brandon Farrar, VISTA Project

Coordinator - As a first year VISTA, Brandon joined the MCCRI team having worked with JPMorgan Chase and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. He brings a variety of skills to the team such as graphic design, financial analytics, information technology, marketing and public relations. His focus this year will be developing a newsletter for consistent distribution throughout NPU-T Neighborhood Organizations bringing neighborhood organizations closer.

