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Justice Demanded in Danziger Bridge Shooting



By Gary Estwick

Wes Johnson speaks with a measured yet forceful tone as he discusses the New Orleans Police Department officers charged this week with gunning down unarmed citizens then covering up the Danziger Bridge shootings for more than four years.

It's hard to tell if Johnson is more frustrated with the incident that left two Black men dead and four people wounded in the days following Hurricane Katrina or at the arrogance displayed even after a federal probe unveiled a plot to kill, hide the true killers and frame victims. Arrogance that Johnson said allowed the Police Association of New Orleans to raise money for the officers' defense fund on its website months after the scheme started to unravel and those involved accepted guilty pleas. Perhaps this is why, Johnson, a community activist living in Gentilly, considers the shootings not as a singular event but the latest example of a problem

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he has protested for decades.

"There's no way I can rectify or justify anything less than the death penalty," said Johnson, who alleges the NOPD murdered, brutalized and disrespected Blacks long before the events that took place on Sept. 4, 2005 and continue now, even after one of the most heinous crimes in the department's checkered history was uncovered.

"I have no compassion (for them), I have no understanding. I have no mercy whatsoever because they have not had any mercy for our people in New Orleans." In all, six officers – three Black, three White – are charged with either the shootings or the conspiracy to cover-up shootings which left 17-year old James Brissette and Ronald Madison, a 40-year-old mentally disabled man, dead in separate incidents, minutes apart from each other, as they attempted to escape police gunfire by traveling across the bridge which rises above the Industrial Canal at Chef Menteur Highway. The report revealed a level of terror and corruption often reserved for the most heinous criminals: both were shot in the back; as Madison lay dying on the ground, he was kicked by Officer Kenneth Bowen. Wounded on the east side of the bridge were Leonard Bartholomew III, 44; Susan Bartholomew, 38; their daughter, Leshia, 17; and nephew, Jose Holmes, 19. Their son, a minor, evaded gun fire and was not injured. Minutes later, on the west side of the bridge, police fired at brothers Lance and Ronald Madison.

Lance Madison and Holmes were arrested, with Madison charged with attempted mur-

der of police officers, a false condemnation based on false evidence, including month-old shell casings fired by police.

"As our investigation of the Danziger Bridge incident shows, the Justice Department will vigorously pursue anyone who allegedly violated the law," said Attorney General Holder said. "Put simply, we will not tolerate wrongdoing by those who have sworn to protect the public."

The four officers charged in the shooting – Bowen, Robert Gisevius, Robert Faulcon and Anthony Villavaso – face the death penalty if convicted. They also face allegations related to the cover up and false charges. Supervisors Arthur "Archie" Kaufman and Gerard Dugue are charged with helping to obstruct justice during subsequent investigations.

"Our family has waited a long time for justice in this case. These indictments represent another step forward towards that goal," said Dr. Romell Madison in a statement. The Westbank dentist has served as a spokesperson for the Danziger Bridge victims and families.

The officers are the not the first in the police department to face death if convicted of crimes against the public they were sworn to protect and serve. Len Davis is on federal death row for ordering a hit in 1994 on a woman who filed a brutality complaint – Kim Groves was murdered soon after. The following year, Antoinette Frank robbed a New Orleans East restaurant she worked at as a security guard, murdering three people. "It's very unfortunate to say that it's not unprecedented in New Orleans to have police officers arrested and charged with

crimes that subject them to the death penalty," said Katherine Maris Mattes, professor of practice and interim director of the Criminal Litigation Clinic at Tulane University Law School. "It's not a record to be proud of."

Dr. Tod Burke, a professor of Criminal Justice at Radford University, said the officers' outcome in will depend on whether the shooting was a deadly mistake or premeditated murder. "If it wasn't a mistake, that's outright illegal," said Burke, a former Maryland police officer. "If you're violating the law, you don't say, 'Opps I made a mistake.' Action has to be taken. You do the crime, you do the time. Police officers understand that. In fact, they need to be put at a higher standard because they enforce the law." Such a standard is unattainable in NOPD's current setting, Johnson said. He points to the extent of the cover-up.

"Do you realize that every police officer stands to be judged by the actions of the ones on the bridge and the ones that have done the murders throughout the city?" Johnson asked, knowing the answer. "Because you can't tell me that other officers haven't known about it, and now it's been proven that other officers have known. "So the entire department needs to be evacuated, needs to be removed." Johnson is an organizer of Community United for Change, a coalition of New Orleans-based organizations which hopes the U.S. Department of Justice expands its probe of misconduct by NOPD's officers.

After all, he believes others have faced the same fate as Ronald Madison and James

Brissette, excluding the international headlines. Even the victims and families of the Danziger shootings might have failed to be exonerated if not for their persistence in urging the federal government to start its own inquiry, even after one by NOPD found no wrongdoing and another by a state grand jury also failed.

In the end, the cover-up – a plot to taint facts, jail innocent citizens and keep the truth away from the public – has become as big of an issue as the killings. "What happened there, especially in the resulting cover-up, that was just a breakdown of ethics? and integrity," said Randy Sutton, a former lieutenant with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department who has authored several law enforcement books and articles. "That was guys that did things that were not acceptable by any stretch of the imagination, in any law enforcement organization."

That's what bothers Johnson. How can NOPD protect and serve if officers not only commitment crimes, but go to great lengths to disguise their faults? If the officers in the Danziger Bridge shooting were willing to cover-up murder, how often does it happen it fits police brutality or rages of excessive force in apprehending criminals? Dr. Burke refers to it as the "Dirty Harry Syndrome," when cops are willing to break laws to apprehend suspects.

To Johnson, it's simply bad police work. "It was nothing but police gang murder," he said of the Danziger Bridge shootings. "There's no question in most of the minds of Blacks in New Orleans."

Hope For Haiti

By Adrian Bostick

This is the third installment by our special correspondent Adrian Bostick on the continuing devastation in Haiti. After the devastating earthquake that rocked Haiti on Jan. 12, I spent nearly three months in the Caribbean island nation as a Public Affairs Specialist for the US Army. My time in the capital of Port au Prince, in deeply impoverished communities and in outlying towns has provided a first-hand look to the obstacles facing Haiti in its efforts to rebuild. However, the more time I spent there, the more Haiti felt like a study in opposites. It is a country that just cannot seem to get ahead, despite all the help it has received and the Haiti often has been labeled as "one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere." However a two-hour plane ride is all that separates Haitians from the United States, the richest country in the world. Even so, I was extremely shocked by the differences between my life in New Orleans and life in Port-au-Prince.

In New Orleans, there's water in the faucet, flushing toilets and lights that turn on. Streets are

the road. The U.S. government has given more than \$1 billion to Haiti since 2005. Many other countries also have spent large



sums to help. These facts make it hard to understand how Haiti can have 80 percent of its people living below the poverty line. It seemed to me that if Haiti couldn't capitalize on its proximity to the United States, then at least all the foreign aid it's received should be enough to stabilize the country.

After spending time in Haiti

ment hovers between 70 and 80 percent. Anytime I walked the streets of Port-au-Prince or even stepped outside the Base at Tous-

saint L'Ouverture Airport, I was likely to be approached multiple times by capable people looking to become my As a result of high unemployment, the government of Haiti is left with a largely untaxable population, which makes providing social services and developing infrastructure nearly impossible. Therefore, Haiti has been inundated with non-governmental organizations, known as NGOs, that try to provide many of these basic social services. And while many of these groups work in education, health care and development, illiteracy is estimated

at 44 percent, 60 percent of Haitians don't have access to basic health care, and roughly half the population lacks access to clean drinking water.

Another often cited statement about Haiti is that it's "one of the most dangerous and violent places in the region." Perhaps statistically accurate, but my experience belies that statement. Not once in my three months there was I ever threatened or accosted, and most of my time was spent in impoverished communities and without any security. It's impossible to project what the future holds for Haiti. The optimists hope this earthquake will generate so much attention from the international community that the country will be rebuilt from scratch and be stronger than ever. The pessimists are discouraged by the possibility that the billions of dollars pledged won't materialize and that the money already donated - mainly to large, international organizations - will just be consumed without any more or better results than previously experienced.

Surprisingly, many Haitians I've asked about the future say things will improve only if the Haiti has a high set of barriers to overcome. But after seeing the resident talent, compassion, intense desire to work and other contrary-to-popular-belief characteristics, I'm hopeful because it's hard to ignore the

tens of thousands of people who have decided to invest in or travel to Haiti to assist in whatever way they can. I've met many people, from middle-school students to surgeons, who left their families to volunteer their time, expertise and money. I've seen hundreds of NGOs working hard and selflessly in Haiti and, despite some failings, it's clear that they do make Haiti a better. But most of all, I've had a chance to meet and converse with Haitians. I have seen Haitian men, who are desperate to work and tired of waiting for somebody else, climb atop collapsed multi-story buildings and pull the rebar away from concrete piece by piece, using only a sledgehammer and an occasional wheelbarrow. Hospitals that were overrun with patients and families who had nowhere else to go, are now functioning almost at pre-earthquake levels. And children are going back to school, dressed in clean uniforms, even though the rainy season has started and most are still sleeping.

I've never met a person whose life aspiration is to be an aid recipient, least of all Haitian people who have incredible work ethic and great sense of pride. So I find myself with refreshed optimism. I am looking forward to going back someday to see what has improved, how far they've come and what other barriers have been broken.



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paved (mostly), traffic is bearable, and you can easily buy gas at the station. In Haiti, water is carried from wells over great distances, baths are taken in streams, toilets are often holes in the ground, and electricity is a luxury for the wealthy. Streets are unpaved and turn into muddy rivers after heavy rain, traffic is so bad that you often don't move an inch for hours, and you're often confronted by men carrying shotguns in the line at the gas station who are filling their cans to sell for a profit down

I've seen the opposing realities firsthand. I think recall this woman I saw on the street who held up her two naked babies and asked that I take a picture of them to show people back home that she doesn't even have money to put clothes on her baby girls. We are working hard to help the people of Haiti, infusing the country with large sums of well-allocated resources, but there are huge gaps not being. And despite the fact that the people of Haiti are doing all they can to find jobs, unemploy-

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Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Cedric Richmond Announces Run for Congress



Data Around Town





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- Keith Seilhan, BP Cleanup

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Erica Duroousseau

A Twenty-first Century Renaissance Woman

By Edwin Buggage

She is sexy, sensual, and intelligent. She is a twenty-first century renaissance woman. Erica Duroousseau, is an actress, model, fashion designer, and visual artist. She is a native of Lake

products, and have been one of the featured models in the Seagram's 2009 calendar. "It was a very enlightening and done in a very professional tasteful way, very high class, top of the line, I was glad to be part of it," says Duroousseau.

Not just another pretty face but a combination of beauty and brains, she is a graduate of Grambling State University with a degree in Mass Communications and Broadcasting. She believes education is an important key to success, "With all the competition out there I feel education is the key that set yourself apart in the marketplace and it is just a chance for

all our clothes when we were young, so it is a tradition that has been passed down through my family." Continuing she says, "Fashion is my passion and I am excited about taking this journey to pursue it and I feel that is the most important thing in life; the journey in the fulfillment of our dreams and that we have the courage and fortitude to pursue it, and that's what I am doing in all aspects of my life." Her illustrious beauty is to truly witness a masterpiece in motion, and this woman of many talents is also a visual artist, "It all started with one of my cast mates Jessica from Survivor when we were in Australia; we had a magnificent view and she would paint; and Then I decided that I would try it, and now

I have exhibited my work at a few galleries; And through my work I myself am evolving as a person and as an artist." Erica has made her debut in the world of filmmaker as one of the co-stars of 'Transpose', a 2010 release that created a buzz on the film festival circuit. Her future plans are to take her career and life to the next level. "I've had some level of success in what I am doing, but it is time for



Charles, Louisiana now based in New Orleans where her talents have taken her across the globe. She was a cast member of the runaway hit television show 'Survivor,' "Being on the show was a life changing adventure, I met so many diverse people, and I have found lifelong friends in some of the cast mates," says Erica. "And also being in Australia opened my mind up to a lot of things I wouldn't have otherwise thought about."

Additionally, Erica has also been the face of

people to grow and I encourage people to go out and pursue an education," says Duroousseau.

This one woman brand is expanding her reach to launch her fashion line simply called 'Monet'. She recounts how she got started, "My mother gave me a sewing machine that belonged to my grandmother, Odette and also my mother made

me to try to reach more people with what I am doing." "I feel it is time to continue to grow in all areas of my life and be an example of what a woman could potentially be in the 21st century when you take control of your own destiny."

Plan will aid Louisiana residents with pre-existing conditions

By Ted Griggs

Louisianans' who haven't been able to buy health insurance because of a pre-existing condition now have a new option under a federally administered insurance program.

The Pre-existing Condition Insurance Plan — part of President Barack Obama's health-care overhaul — will provide coverage for people who have lacked insurance coverage for at least six months and have been denied coverage by a private insurer because of a pre-existing condition.

It's unclear how many Louisiana residents will be eligible for the program, said Cheryl Fish-Parcham, Deputy Director of Health Policy at Families USA, a consumer advocate group.

Until now, Louisiana residents had to shop for coverage from the Louisiana Health Plan, the state's high-risk health pool, if they had been denied elsewhere, Fish-Parcham said. But the state high-risk pool's premiums were roughly twice what a healthy person paid in 2008.

"This new plan is priced at the same rates healthy people pay, that's standard rates," Fish-Parcham said. "That's a big difference, and a lot more people are expected to sign up because it's more affordable."

Under the new system, a 50-year-old will pay an estimated \$482 to \$589 a month for coverage, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The federal government has set aside \$70.7 million to run the program in Louisiana until 2014, when insurance companies will be required to cover people with pre-existing conditions.

Nationwide, \$5 billion has been set aside for the program. However, Medicare economists estimate the program will run

through that money by the end of 2011. And the Congressional Budget Office has estimated the program could cost \$15 billion in total.

Louisiana is one of about 20 states that chose to have the federal government run the new program.

In April, Gov. Bobby Jindal and Insurance Commissioner Jim Donelon wrote a letter to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, saying there was no reason for Louisiana, given its budget problems, to get involved in another potentially costly program.

Until Aug. 1, consumers have two options in applying for the coverage:

Go to <http://www.healthcare.gov>, download the online application, fill it out and mail it to National Finance Center, Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan, P.O. Box 60017, New Orleans, LA 70160-0017.

Call the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan at 1-866-717-5826 (TTY: 1-866-561-1604) and ask the plan to mail them an application. The call center's hours are 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Starting Aug. 1, consumers will be able to apply online at www.healthcare.gov.

Although the program kicked off July 1, a number of questions remain.

"There is no description of benefits and no description of premium as yet, so it's rather difficult to make a determination as a consumer on exactly what you're purchasing," said Leah Barron, Chief Executive Officer of the Louisiana Health Plan.

According to DHHS, the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan will cover "a broad range of health benefits," including primary care physicians and special-

ists, hospitalization and prescription drugs.

But Barron said it's hard to tell how far the funding will stretch without knowing what benefits the federally run plan will include and how extensive the network's providers list will be.

Barron said the longevity of the funding will depend largely on how the benefit package is structured. Coverage with low deductibles and minimal co-payments would mean higher costs for the plan than a package with bigger deductibles and higher co-pays for doctor's visits and prescriptions.

The Louisiana Health Plan had 1,702 people enrolled at the end of 2009 and cost \$12.5 million to run, Barron said.

The Louisiana Health Plan actually administers two plans, the Health Information Portability and Accountability Act, or HIPAA, plan and the high-risk pool. Both have a number of eligibility requirements but one major difference is that to get into the HIPAA plan, a person's most recent coverage had to have come from a group plan.

The monthly premium for a person 50 to 54 years old is \$489.59 in the HIPAA plan and \$437.67 for the high-risk pool, Barron said. Those premiums were roughly 175 percent and 125 percent of the standard rate.

The Louisiana Health Plan will continue to operate despite the new federal plan, Barron said. Barron said she doesn't expect the federal plan to affect the Louisiana Health Plan's current coverage numbers.

"We're certainly going to continue to have the people that we have now mainly because they're so sick they can't afford to drop their coverage for six months and then have access to the new pool," she said.

Pontchartrain Chapter of The Links Hosts Fundraiser



Brunch Members of the Pontchartrain Chapter of the Links, Incorporated pose before hosting the chapter's annual White Rose Jazz Brunch recently at the English Turn Country Club. In addition to sumptuous food and great music, art work by Terrance Osborne and Ted Ellis were among the silent auction items that generated funds for the Pontchartrain Chapters programs in the arts, services to youth, and national and international trends and services.

Councilmember Jon D. Johnson Statement Re: National Oil Spill Commission

"The National Oil Spill Commission will soon wrap up the first round of public meetings regarding the Oil Spill disaster in the Gulf Coast. On Monday, July 12th and Tuesday July 13th, meetings were held in New Orleans to gain insight from both experts and the public on the cause and effects of the disaster. The National Commission wants to hear directly from the people of the Coast whose lives and livelihoods are being affected by the BP Deepwater Horizon Spill.

"As the Councilmember for District "E", the district most recently affected by the discovery of oil in the Rigolets via Lake Borgne, I believe it is important that our residents are properly compensated, and are not overlooked. We learned a lot from the response and recovery of Hurricane Katrina, and I want to ensure that better methods of compensating individuals and businesses impacted by the di-

aster are used going forward. "Today, I sent the following message to the National Oil Spill Commission:

"My concern is with ensuring the equitable distribution of relief funds in a timely manner. The shortcomings of the Road Home program after Hurricane Katrina have taught us that the process for the dissemination of funds must be kept simple. The application and eligibility determinants should not be so complex that those who are suffering as a result of the oil spill are forced to wait months and even years before they obtain relief. Insurance, along with many of the other determinants used by the Road Home program, should not be factored into this process. Compensation should be based on replacement costs. Let me say it again; 'Keep it simple.' "

Dillard University's Community Development Corporation Presents The 2010 Housing Improvement Fair



Dillard

100+ Exhibitors Offer Services from Roofing to Cabinetry; Workshops Offered on Home Ownership, Credit Repair, Construction Management, and Hurricane Preparedness & More

On Saturday, July 24, 2010, Dillard University's Community Development Corporation will present the 2010 Housing and Home Improvement Fair in Dent Hall on Dillard University's campus at 2601 Gentilly Boulevard. The

housing fair is scheduled from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. and will feature more than 100 exhibitors including banks and other lenders, realtors, contractors and home builders, as well as a variety of large and small business owners offering services from roofing and siding to flooring, cabinetry and landscaping. Major corporate sponsors for the Housing Fair include Capitol One Bank, Entergy New Orleans and Enterprise

Community Partners, Inc.

"Dillard's Community Development Corporation believes our mission is to help build sustainable communities," said Nick Harris, Assistant Vice President of Community and Economic Development at Dillard. "We've assembled a one-stop shop where homeowners can access the services they need and contractors and other trade workers can upgrade their industry skills and knowledge."

The CDC invites the general public to participate in workshops of interest to homebuilders and homeowners alike. Workshops begin at 10:30 a.m. The following is a list of the topics covered in the workshops and their locations.

2010 Housing and Home Improvement Fair Workshops

Understanding Section 3 Opportunities: Room 157 - Dent Hall: This workshop will include a discussion and slide presentation on federal laws, regulations and opportunities pertaining to Section 3. This is a very important work-

shop for contractors and renters to attend; includes a PowerPoint covering all aspects of Section 3.

Fair Lending - What You Need to Know - Room 105 - Dent Hall: Workshop covers federal fair housing laws, regulations, and how to avoid predatory lenders. Will cover what banks, realtors, brokers, landlords, and sellers, and buyers should know about the fair housing aspects of mortgage lending and leasing.

Selecting a Contractor: Room 104 - Dent Hall: Presenters will offer tips on pre-purchase home inspection, money saving maintenance, and general construction questions.

Pathway to Home Ownership: Dent Hall - Room 105: Workshop will cover Initial home buying consultation, home ownership training, finding a lender and prequalifying, the purchase process, and home ownership.

Weatherization: Maximize Your Cooling and Heating Savings - Dent Hall - Room 170: Presenters will discuss simple techniques to

lower your energy bills, and offer tips on selecting a high efficiency air conditioner. Entergy experts will be on hand for a special presentation.

Financial Workshop /Hurricane Preparedness - Dent Hall - Room 171: How do you protect your household from unexpected financial losses as a result of a natural disaster or hurricane? Learn how to create a financial plan that makes allowances for the unexpected.

Green Building and Green Building Materials - Dent Hall - Room 170: Presenters will discuss tankless water heaters, tax credits for solar power in homes, bamboo flooring, foam installation, and natural ways to cool your home in the summer.

There are a few spaces left for non-profit, community or for-profit exhibitors. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Nick Harris in the office of Community and Economic Development at 504.816.4704.

Entergy New Orleans Encourages Customers to Bring In the Green

Wiser energy choices are friendly to your wallet

Summer time can bring lots of family fun...but not necessarily when it comes time to cool your home during rising summer temperatures. Entergy New Orleans, Inc. wants to remind customers that while higher summer usage does result in higher electric bills, customers can make wiser energy choices that will help optimize their electricity usage.

"A small change, such as keeping your home's thermostat set at optimum levels in summer, can add up to real savings," said Melonie Hall, Customer Service Director for Entergy New Orleans, Inc. "Some of these are well within customers' control."

Entergy New Orleans encourages customers to partner with the company in controlling electricity costs by taking advantage of solutions the company offers, such as these top three tips for reducing your electricity usage:

- Raise your thermostat, lower your bill—Air conditioning can account for up to 55 percent of an average home's monthly bill. Raise thermostats to 78 degrees during warmer months to reduce electricity use as much as 20 percent.
- Get your ducts in a row—Sealing duct work, caulking and weather stripping are easy ways to reduce electrical consumption. Seal places where electrical, plumbing or heating systems come into your home. Caulk or weather-strip around doors, windows and wall seams, and add insulating gaskets on all electrical outlets and switches.
- Keep your cool—Use ceiling or box fans to circulate cool air and feel more comfortable.

Find more easy-to-use tips and answers to your energy questions at entergyanswers.com.

Renee Lapeyrolerie Named Executive Director for Louisiana Democratic Party

BATON ROUGE - Louisiana Democratic Party Chairman Claude "Buddy" Leach, Jr. announced that St John Parish native Renee Lapeyrolerie has been named the party's Executive Director. As Executive Director, Lapeyrolerie will manage day-to-day operations and head up the Louisiana Democratic Party's efforts heading in to the fall elections. "Renee Lapeyrolerie understands Louisiana politics, has extensive experience building coalitions and solid vision for the future," Leach said. "The Louisiana Democratic Party is lucky to have found such a talented and

smart young woman to help lead our party."

In 2008, Lapeyrolerie served as Political Director for Senator Mary Landrieu's successful reelection campaign. Lapeyrolerie also worked on the 2003 campaign of former Governor Kathleen Blanco, Mayor Mitch Landrieu's campaign for Lt. Governor and served as Louisiana Press Secretary for two presidential campaigns. Lapeyrolerie is a graduate of Loyola University.

"I'm humbled by the task ahead of me, but ready to get to work strengthening our Party and preparing to defeat

U.S. Senator David Vitter, elect a Democratic Lt. Governor and pick up Democratic seats in our congressional delegation," Lapeyrolerie said.

"At this time in our history, the distinction between the two parties couldn't be starker," Lapeyrolerie added. "Louisiana Democrats are fighting for the middle class, standing up to big corporations and looking out for the least among us, while the other party is only interested in serving the needs of special interests in Baton Rouge and Washington."

NAACP Condemns Tea Party Racism In Resolution

KANSAS CITY, MO. — Leaders of the country's largest civil rights organization accused tea party activists on Tuesday of tolerating bigotry and approved a resolution condemning racism within the political movement.

The resolution was adopted during the annual convention in Kansas City of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, spokesman Chris Fleming said. Tea party organizers disputed claims of racism and called on the NAACP to withdraw the resolution.

Debate was mostly closed to the public, but the final version "calls on the tea party and all people of good will to repudiate the racist element and activities within the tea party," said Hilary Shelton, director of the NAACP's Washington bureau.

"I hope it will empower the tea party to actually look at itself and see that there are those who are



NAACP President Ben Jealous

noticing things that I think most tea partiers don't want," he said.

Sarah Palin, a vocal tea party supporter, said in a statement late Tuesday that she was "saddened by the NAACP's claim that patriotic Americans ... are somehow 'racists.'" The former Alaska governor said claims that tea party activists "judge people by the color of their skin" were false and

appalling.

The final wording won't be released until the NAACP's national board of directors approves the resolution during its meeting in October. But the original called for the NAACP to "educate its membership and the community that this movement is not just about higher taxes and limited government." It said something could evolve "and become more dangerous for that small percentage of people that really think our country has been taken away from them."

"We felt the time had come to stand up and say, 'It's time for the tea party to be responsible members of this democracy and make sure they don't tolerate bigots or bigotry among their members,'" NAACP President Ben Jealous said ahead of the debate.

"We don't have a problem with the tea party's existence. We have an issue with their acceptance and

welcoming of White supremacists into their organizations," he said.

Tea party activist Alex Poulter, who co-founded a Kansas City-area group called Political Chips, also disputed the allegations. He said the movement is made up of a "diverse group of folks who are upset with what is going on with this country."

Poulter said he has seen no evidence of racism within the movement.

"It's unfounded, but people are running with these accusations like they are true," he said.

A group called the St. Louis Tea Party issued its own resolution Tuesday calling on the NAACP to withdraw the proposal.

Though not affiliated with either major political party, tea party activists espouse a political philosophy of less government, a free market, lower taxes, individual rights and political activism.

The group has faced occasional

claims of racism, most notably in March near the end of the bitter health care debate. U.S. Reps. John Lewis, Andre Carson and Emanuel Cleaver said some demonstrators, many of them tea party activists, yelled a racial epithet as the Blacks congressmen walked from House office buildings to the Capitol. Cleaver, D-Mo., also said he was spit on.

A White lawmaker said he also heard the epithets, but conservative activists said the lawmakers were lying.

"They are pulling people together and focusing on the negative, and then it's hard to make anything positive out of that," said Anita L. Russell, president of the Kansas City, MO., branch of the NAACP, which introduced the resolution. "And then these groups, these extremist groups, are looking for something, and they are latching on to this."

Rainbow PUSH to Address Advertising, Media Issues With Marketing & Media Project

Target Market News (NNPA) - Today, the Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr., founder and presi-

dent of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition, has announced the creation of the Marketing & Media Project

to coordinate the organization's activities and initiatives within the advertising and media industries.

The Marketing & Media Project will join RPC's other industry-focused projects whose mission is to protect, defend, and gain civil and economic rights by leveling the playing fields. The current initiatives are The Telecommunications Project, The Peachtree Street Project, The Automotive Project, The Energy & Science Project, The Entertainment Project, The Wall Street Project, and The Silicon Valley Project.

"For more than a decade we have engaged corporations on their contracts and economic relationships with African-American advertising agencies and African-American media companies," said Rev. Jackson. "The creation of The Marketing & Media Project signals the elevation of that dialogue at a critical time. Current economic factors have put these businesses in peril because Corporate America has ignored the unique expertise they possess, while discounting the bottom-line significance of the consumers they represent. By centraliz-

ing our resources we can better achieve justice and economic fairness for all."

Rainbow PUSH will invite African American-owned advertising agencies, public relations firms, marketing communications firms and media companies to become member partners of The Marketing & Media Project and to provide RPC with insight and strategy on the critical issues they are facing.

At its recent annual conference, RPC announced an agreement reached with KFC in which the restaurant chain will partner with minority-owned marketing firms to develop programs and strategies targeting minority consumers, and allocate up to 10 percent of KFC's national media budget.

Among the issues that The Marketing & Media Project will immediately address are:

- Securing opportunities and fairness as part of the proposed merger of Comcast and NBC Universal
- Initiating a dialogue with The Obama administration's Inter-agency Task Force on Federal Contracting Opportunities on

increasing the allocation of the \$1 billion Federal advertising budget to African-American-owned ad agencies and media

- Negotiating with the automotive, telecom and other industries on the engagement of African-American advertising agencies, public relations firms and other professional services companies
- Entering into a dialogue with marketing and media trade associations on a commitment of inclusion of African American professionals within their ranks
- The establishment of research and databases to quantify the economic relationship between marketers, advertising agencies, black radio stations, black newspapers, black magazines, black TV and cable companies and the African American consumer market
- Establish coordination between all entities of the Rainbow PUSH Coalition on marketing, media and advertising issues at the local and national levels, including 1000 Churches Connected and PUSH Excel

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