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PRESS RELEASE

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MAYOR GLOVER ADDRESSES THE SHREVEPORT-BOSSIER AFRICAN AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2010 SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS LUNCHEON



Let me first of all, express my appreciation to Booker White and the members of the African American Chamber of Commerce, for the work they do and for this program that seeks to recognize and acknowledge unsung heroes who are not the largest businesses in our community, but who represent the core of what keeps our economy moving - and that is the entrepreneurs who take the risk and put in the work to carve out a piece of the American pie - not only for themselves, but for their families and the families of those who they employ and the associated businesses that they support. I applaud you as President and your Board, for continuing to work on behalf of those who may not have the smoothest path to success, but who are critical to everything that we do to help make this a great city and community. This program is but a reminder to us all that beyond the BPs of the world, we have the Chronicles of Numbers, Logistics Electrical, Griggs Enterprises, Heard Beauty Supply and Omni Fertilities and all of the other nominees and awardees named here today, who represent the true spirit of American capitalism and entrepreneurship.

Prior to being elected Mayor of this great city, I, too, was among those self-employed business persons who worked to meet payroll and hoped to demonstrate a profit at the end of the month. I understand the challenges of having a dream and seeking to bring that dream to fruition. I understand the challenges of securing financing and contract opportunities and depending on others to help make my vision a reality. I, like you,



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didn't always like the answers I got, but I understand how it feels to keep pushing and keep trying and keep believing in my potential and my ability.

So, I congratulate those of you who are nominated here today. I know someone will win the official recognition, but you all are to be congratulated for your indomitable spirit and the contributions that you make daily to our community when you open your doors or answer your phone or call upon that potential client for business. Certainly those who receive awards here today should feel proud, but each and every business that is represented here today- whether as a nominee or simply a member of the Chamber or guest- every business and entrepreneur represented here should understand that you are critical to our success as a city. So, I applaud each and every one of you and express my appreciation on behalf of the citizens of Shreveport for all that you do.

For you see, other than public safety, economic development is a key measure to my goal of making Shreveport the kind of city where those here want to stay and others who are not here want to come. Without good paying jobs accessible by all segments of our community, we cannot live up to the challenge of providing a high quality and life for our citizens. You have all heard that the majority of job creation and employment in this nation is attributed to small businesses and I am a firm believer in the truth of that statement. And it is that spirit of entrepreneurship that is evident in here today! And it is indeed my honor to be here and share in this occasion!

As Mayor, I realize that we face challenges in ensuring that that spirit is not dampened by historical limitations based upon color, class or gender. I realize that that spirit of entrepreneurship should not be hindered by limited access to the capital needed to fund these dreams and visions. And that those of us chosen to serve as leaders of our community must work hard to ensure access to those avenues of success for everyone. And the great thing is that despite the obstacles that might otherwise hold you back, those of you present here today have demonstrated the perseverance and persistence necessary to succeed, even within an environment that does not always welcome you!

And while we are proud of that, we are also aware that obstacles remain and avenues are sometimes blocked by outdated thinking. That is why I have empowered the City's Fair Share office to be even more aggressive and proactive in its mission. I am proud to say that we have worked successfully to put together joint ventures, such as with the Ledbetter-Millennium Studio project that is rising in the shadow of downtown. A project that represents over \$10 million in investment and for the first time in the history of the City of Shreveport employs a dynamic joint venture between two local



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companies- Hand Construction and Triple L Management that is lead by Bill Lott, a Fair Share graduate! Karen Barnes, our Fair Share coordinator has worked hard to ensure that companies within our Fair Share Program are aware of opportunities, not only within city projects, but the private sector as well. The new Sleep Inn at I-49 and Kings Highway is a project that involves my friend and local entrepreneur Roy Griggs. That project represents an over \$800,000 participation by Fair share vendors on a \$2 million venture that includes minority ownership. A Fair share vendor completed over \$1 million in renovations at El Dorado hotel, and in one of the largest city projects of the past year, Douglas Construction was the general contractor on the Concordia Place Subdivision development that represents the single largest contract awarded to a minority contractor in the history of the city of Shreveport! I have insisted that all awardees of contracts demonstrate true commitment to inclusion, by not signing off until I am assured that every effort has been made to include local and Fair Share vendors within the appropriate scopes of work.

I highlight these few examples to let you know that our Fair Share effort goes beyond just certifying companies, but also providing access and fighting for inclusion across the board. The first six months of this year have seen over \$4, 600,000 in participation by Fair Share clients. In addition to those examples I just gave, I am also proud of the responsiveness of our program and Karen Barnes who heard the complaints about Fair Share clients being listed as subcontractors in a bid submission, but then never receiving a contract or participating in the work after the contract is awarded. In response we have worked to revise our forms and procedures to require a general contractor to submit evidence of actual contracting with a subcontractor and subsequent payment to that sub. With these changes, we are now in position to consider that contractor nonresponsive and void his contract, as well as, bring charges of possible perjury and fraud against them. I am very serious about using all of the power I have as Mayor to see that our local small businesses are given every opportunity to participate in any activity of the City of Shreveport or any other venture that requires some participation by the City of Shreveport. We will continue to do so and I encourage you to continue to support our program and help us make it work even better for those of you who stand to benefit from our efforts.

One of those efforts includes support of finding alternative funding mechanisms for those of you seeking to enter the business world. Later today, there will be an event at the Southern University-Shreveport incubator announcing the arrival of Accion Louisiana which is a program designed to provide microloans and assistance to



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entrepreneurs who cannot get necessary assistance otherwise. I am glad to say that the City of Shreveport is a partner and has contributed funds and fully endorsed this program. I believe it will serve to fill the gap for those who can't access to mainstream lending institutions. They have an extensive track record in Texas and other parts of our State and I applaud Southern and our partners at Capital One; particularly Sen. Lydia Jackson, who helped to spearhead the effort to bring this valuable resource to our community. And while we are speaking of Sen. Jackson and Capital One, also included within the event later today will be the establishment of the presence of a Fortune 500 company within my neighborhood, when Capital One Bank announces the establishment of its Southern University-Shreveport branch right across from the campus next to the statue of Dr. King! This bank will represent one of only 2 banks on the campus of an HCBU (the other being Hampton University) and I am extremely proud of Southern University for housing them and commend Keith Bergeron, Senator Jackson and the folks at Capital One who had the vision to see what we have fought for a long time- and that is recognizing that my home community has financial resources worth cultivating! The grand opening for the bank branch is scheduled towards the end of August, and I hope you all get a chance to join us on that momentous occasion!

Beyond the Fair Share program, we also must recognize that there are professionals who also deserve opportunities to participate. Not only have we increased the number of minority attorneys two times and other professionals who perform contract work for the city, but we also for the first time in the history of the city of Shreveport employed a minority owned Financial Advisor Firm and minority Bond counsel to handle the over \$150 million in bond work for the City. The challenges were steep, including unraveling some rather negative situations we found ourselves involved in and fighting off the whisper campaign of those who sought to maintain the status quo. Despite all of that, I am proud to say that our Team has performed in an outstanding manner, saving the city millions in fees and lost opportunity while maintaining the city's excellent bond rating. We have a minority owned firm as our third party administrators and insurance adjusters and there are many of you in this room who we purchase supplies or services from.

So, again I applaud those of you who step out in faith and risk your family's future, as well as, your own on the ventures represented here today. As I said earlier, all of you are to be congratulated on your courage, perseverance and commitment. I believe we have a bright future ahead and it will be those like you that keep us moving forward economically while many are losing ground. With the completion of I-49 (and work



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opportunities to come with the bidding process), other local projects and the bond issue that I am pushing to present to you the voters, there will be many opportunities for many of you to gain work. For those in the non-construction enterprises, we will continue to work to make Shreveport the kind of community where jobs are available and money is available, to spend for your goods and services. I have greatly enjoyed sharing with you this afternoon and look forward to congratulating the winners when they are announced. However, I say to all nominees and attendees, thank you, we appreciate you and we need you to help us make this the next great city of the south!

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