



33rd Annual Conference and Training Institute

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACKS IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

NABCJ NOTES

Message From The Chief Conference Planner

Greetings Conference Participants and Friends:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the conference participants for contributing to the success of the 33rd Annual Conference and Training Institute. The Denver Chapter has been the exceptional host; having exceeded all expectations to ensure that we had everything to accommodate our needs for the conference. It was nice to have in our midst so many African Americans in leadership roles from the city of Denver, also known as the "Mile High City." Although, there is a small sector of African Americans who make up the population within the State of Colorado, it was indeed refreshing to see the commitment of governmental officials in ensuring that people of color who reside here, do in fact have a voice at the table.

There have certainly been inquiries as to why the 2007 conference will be held in Buffalo, NY. The answer is quite simple, we recognize that NABCJ does not have chapter representation in New York; therefore, in order to close the regional divide as well as expand chapter representation, it becomes necessary to consider locations such as Buffalo, NY. In addition, the site provides the opportunity for conference participants to experience the rich African American heritage and the legacy of strength, character, and courage, left behind by our ancestors who sojourned in Buffalo for a brief period of time, while waiting to cross the border to Canada. Minster Hinds spoke to the importance of legacy during the opening session on Monday, and we indeed have a very strong and rich legacy in Buffalo, NY. It is ironic that the selection for the site of the 2007 conference was made prior to his charge for Black people in America to leave a legacy behind. Well, we do have legacies throughout this country (which of course needs to be strengthened), with Buffalo, NY being one of the locations. Buffalo Niagara's location across from the Niagara River from Canada made it one of a handful of final destinations on the Underground Railroad, as such, an important center of African American heritage and culture. According to litera-

ture from the Buffalo Niagara Convention and Visitors Bureau, visitors to the region will find many vestiges of the Underground Railroad at sites such as the "*Michigan Street Baptist Church*," which is the oldest structure in the area continuously occupied by African Americans. Then there is "*Murphy Orchards*" which is a farm that served as a safe house and remains virtually the same as it was 150 years ago. Of course, there are many more sites to reference, however, my point is to provide you a sample of our history that exists in Buffalo, NY. Finally, there is Nigeria Falls, which is considered to be one of the great wonders of the world, in which people travel from all over the world to visit this attraction, which is filled with cultural capital. As well, there are abounds of research, which note the lack of human, social, and cultural capital among African Americans and this relationship to crime, other forms of unacceptable behavior, as well as the ability to successfully compete in mainstream America. Hosting of the conference in Buffalo, NY provides the opportunity to strengthen the cultural capital among the conference participants.

Also, I want to share a part of my vision for the 2007 conference. The registration process will be fine tuned, we will work to increase the number of vendors, and also bring back NIC intensive workshops, just to name a few. As well, my fellow sisters, look forward to a new and improved Women Task Force. Finally, I hope each of you realize that the benefits from the conference far exceeds more than the payment by your agency for you to attend this event. In addition to the training and continued professional development, attendance at the conference is an investment in yourself and also an opportunity to invest in the success of someone else. I challenge each of you to return to your home and implement at least one DMC and re-entry initiative. As we come to the end of another successful conference, I want to extend my sincere gratitude to the 2006 conference committee who showed and showed out!!!! See you in Buffalo!

Warmest Regards,

Belinda Stewart

Did You Know That

The majority of inmates in prison come from and returns to disadvantaged, minority communities. In 2002, over 600,000 individuals left state and federal prisons, four times as many as were released in 1975. Travis and Visher (2002) note that according to a national study, within 3 years, almost 7 in 10 will have been rearrested and half will be back in prison, either for a new crime or for violating conditions of their release. A compilation of the literature by the "Sentencing Institute" indicates that ex-offenders have major difficulties finding steady work in addition to transitioning to a high-tech society. The results from the empirical review also state that if these ex-offenders returned to their old neighborhoods, they are more likely to commit additional criminal violations, therefore, run the risk of recommitment. Another interesting finding, is that more than 1.4 million, or 13% of all African American men are disenfranchised as a result of a felony conviction.

Other research calls to our attention, the dysfunctional work habits that result from incarceration. For example, the majority of time in prison is idle, which is a result of a limited amount of FTE's or that of a resistance to authority by some inmates (Correctional Association of New York, 1984; Vigil, 1989). As such, inmates rarely come out of prison with enhanced job skills, and they often acquire very dysfunctional work habits and attitudes while incarcerated (Travis and Visher, 2002). These researchers also note that a prison record presents a negative stigma, which makes it difficult for an offender to find employment as well as the interference of work from intense post-release parole surveillance. In addition to poor prospects for employment, these offenders are often uneducated and have minimal family support. As well, they often leave prison with the same alcohol/ substance abuse problems, mental illness, and homelessness they had at the time of arrest. While there are many programs set up to assist with reintegration into the community, as a result of the sheer numbers of offenders who are released and limited funding and resources, these programs are overwhelmed, therefore, cannot provide the necessary services that will increase the likelihood of ex-offenders becoming productive law-abiding citizens.

WORKSHOP CHANGES AND CANCELLATIONS

Changed – Mr. Victor Woods "*How to Weather the Storm and Win the Battle of Life as African-Americans in the New Millennium*" workshop location changed from **Governor's Square 9 to Governor's Square 15.**

Changed – Mr. William Dudley "*Former Board Members: Reflections and Planning Session*" workshop location changed from **Governor's Square 15 to Governor's Square 9.**

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Session Evaluators: Evaluators please remember to pick up your packets at the registration counter.

Race To Incarcerate: Receive a free copy of "Race To Incarcerate" by Marc Mauer when you join the National Alliance of Faith and Justice (NAFJ). NAFJ has a booth in the exhibit hall.

Pen or Pencil: The National Alliance of Faith and Justice (NAFJ) will host a Plenary Session from 8:00 am - 10:00 am on Wednesday, July 19, in Plaza Ballroom D and E to provide an overview of the "Pen or Pencil - "Freedom of Choice" Project. Afterwards, from 10:15 am - 12:30 pm in Governor's Square 14, NAFJ will provide a training session to provide the tools to interested chapters, community groups, and individuals interested in getting involved with one of NABCJ's most exciting initiatives. Both sessions will address concerns of Re-entry and DMC expressed during the Town Hall Meeting on Sunday, July 16.