

From: Admiral L. LeRoy, Jr. [gcaacc2013@yahoo.com](mailto:gcaacc2013@yahoo.com)  
Executive Director, Gulf Coast African American  
Chamber of Commerce (GCAACC)

To: Keith T. Wilkins, [kwilkins@myescambia.com](mailto:kwilkins@myescambia.com)  
Escambia County Florida  
Director, Community & Environment Dept.

Subject: Presentation to the Escambia County RESTORE Advisory Committee

Thank you Escambia County RESTORE Advisory Committee for allowing the Gulf Coast African American Chamber of Commerce (GCAACC) to provide input on criteria you may consider for evaluation of future RESTORE project submissions.

GCAACC presents the following:

#### Environment

- Projects should be strongly considered that serves to cleanup and make whole communities throughout the Greater Pensacola-Escambia County areas. Abandon properties, dilapidated buildings, sewage-water lines, flood zones affecting water quality which creates health and safety hazards (particularly in poor and low income neighborhoods).
- Projects that provide continuous maintenance and upkeep and improve environmental conditions that lead to blighted neighborhoods. Maintenance and upkeep that provide on-going and sustainable employment, training and workforce development to meet the challenges of reducing crime and high unemployment in Escambia, County, Florida.
- Projects should blend with the restoration and revitalization of forgotten neighborhoods. Green investment strategy should be included with the use of environmentally friendly products. Remediation and cleaning of historical sites in the African American community is also a must for more beautification of the community.

## Economic Development

- Economic Development projects that are considered should provide a very strong dose of Diversity and Inclusion of Minority Business in all aspects of the awarding of contracts.
- Projects should have a sustainable tourism development and promotional program that will serve to bring more African American visitors to the Greater Pensacola-Escambia County, Florida area as a tourist destination and as a site for regional conventions. The Southeastern United States should be a prime market to target new and repeat visitors to our area. African American tourism development and promotion should be on a year-round basis serving to create jobs and hospitality careers that pay good salaries and further economic development in the area.
- Projects should have an economic development plan that will make use of already available land and potential sites for the immediate recruitment of small and median size industry that will create much needed jobs now! As well as the future.
- Projects should contain strong consideration for the chronic unemployed and those individuals that are hopelessly unemployed due to criminal records. Workforce development should have a component that will serve to assist individuals with troubled backgrounds and provide training in skills to help find permanent work and transition individuals who have been incarcerated, and bring them back into society as productive citizens.

## Conclusion

Greater Pensacola and Escambia County, Florida has never had a viable plan that included the African American community in the growth and economic development of the area. Economic Disparity is widespread in the area and continues to be a major factor in holding the area back while other surrounding areas move forward. Equal opportunity does not exist in Escambia County. The Escambia County RESTORE Advisory Committee can play a major role in changing the mindset and helping to bring the community together as we make our city and county whole. Economic Parity is needed at all cost.