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## Blacks Turn To Non-Traditional Jobs In Economic Downturn

By Hazel Trice Edney

NNPA Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA)—African-American men are becoming nurses. Black women are becoming construction workers. African-American employees are leaving major corporations and

starting their own businesses. And Black custodial workers and skilled laborers are going back to school.

These are just a few of the strategies African-American workers and the unemployed are using as jobs are lost and become more difficult to find. Forty-four thousand jobs were lost last month,

according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The bureau also reports that so far this year 406,000 jobs have been cut. That's 106,000 more than the 380,000 jobs lost in all of last year.

"There has been a huge increase in women going into the highway construction program," says

Thomasenia G. Cotton, president and chief operating officer of the Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America (OIC), a Philadelphia-based nonprofit organization that provides education and job training for low-income people.

"As a matter of fact, I just hired

a male executive assistant and that's probably something that I wouldn't have thought about doing as much as three years ago," Cotton says. "But the market is out there and people are walking in with fabulous skills."

Though the Black unemployment rate dropped from

11.8 percent in June to 11.1 percent in July, it remains more than twice the White unemployment rate, which remains steady at 5.5 percent.

Unemployment rates for White men and White women remain below the overall 6.2 percent rate at 5.4 and 4.4 percent, respectively. (Cont'd. On Page 2)

## Community Feedback Sought On Revisions To High School Graduation Requirements

Seattle Public Schools is currently seeking community feedback on new high school graduation requirements that would increase the number of credits required to earn a diploma from the current 20 to 24, beginning with the class of 2010; give students the flexibility to graduate in three, four or five years; and incorporate performance-based assessments that allow students to demonstrate what they know and are able to do.

Credit requirements and other aspects of the new policy will be phased-in over time. The class of 2008 — or those students entering eighth grade in fall 2003 — will be the first to graduate under the new policies. A summary of the draft policy is attached. Feedback can be given via the District's Web site; via email; or in writing — details are provided below.

Over the last two years, a team comprised of high school teachers and counselors has worked to revise the graduation requirements to ensure that graduates of Seattle Public Schools have the necessary skills to thrive in the 21st century. To develop the draft policy this group:

Reviewed research and data from leading educators around the nation.

Examined best practices from other school districts.

Asked community members about

their ideas. In partnership with the Alliance for Education, Seattle Public Schools heard from more than 3,000 parents, community members, students, and teachers about their expectations for graduates and their views on potential changes to graduation requirements.

This team is working over the summer to develop implementation plans and will consider community feedback received by August 22 prior to presenting a draft policy to the School Board this fall.

Community feedback on the draft policy can be provided through an on-line survey on our Web site at [www.seattleschools.org](http://www.seattleschools.org) — click on "Graduation Requirements" in the navigation bar on the left hand side of the page. The full address for the on-line survey form is: <http://www.seattleschools.org/area/gradreq/index.dxml>. The Web site also contains the full draft policy, information on performance-based assessment, and a series of presentations made to the School Board and the community on this subject. Feedback may also be directed to Dr. June Rimmer, Chief Academic Officer, via email to [aparaghamian@seattleschools.org](mailto:aparaghamian@seattleschools.org); or in writing to Chief Academic Officer, Seattle Public Schools, M/S 32-195; PO Box 34165; Seattle, WA 98124-1165.

## African American Police Officers Launch New Class Action Lawsuit

Washington, DC - African American Capitol Police Officers are launching a second class action lawsuit challenging the United States Capitol Police department's systematic efforts to intimidate them and retaliate against them. The Officers are currently suing the department in United States District Court for a wide range of discriminatory practices.

The Officers are responding to the department's pattern of filing excessive and unfounded disciplinary charges against prominent members of the class action, as well as a pattern of harassment including exclusion of class members from the U.S. Capitol Complex and a series of auto tampering, break-ins and vandalism of class members' automobiles.

"We suspect that such conduct by the department smacks of retaliation against the class members, and is designed to

undermine the momentum of current settlement negotiations," class attorney Nathaniel D. Johnson, declared. "Accordingly, we strongly believe that anyone initiating these frivolous and false charges should be held accountable and disciplined."

"The department is inflicting draconian punishments on African American class members, based on bogus charges and phony rationalizations after the fact," said attorney Charles W. Day, Jr., who also represents the class members.

Officers Regina Bolden-Whitaker and Arnold Fields, both of whom are named class representatives in *Blackmon-Malloy v. United States Capitol Police Board*, Civil Action No. 01-02221 EGS, have recently filed complaints with the Congressional Office of Compliance challenging discriminatory and retaliatory disciplinary actions. Officer (Cont'd. On Page 2)

## Sharpton Encourages Youth, Blacks To Vote

By JENNIFER HOLLAND  
Associated Press Writer

SANTEE, S.C. (AP) - The electric organ pumped music into the sanctuary and a chorus of voices echoed the Rev. Al Sharpton as he reminded the congregation at

just too lazy and ungrateful to use something that folks died to give you the right to," said Sharpton, one of nine Democrats vying for the White House. "Folks got to beg you to vote when others died to give you the right to vote."

resources should be used back in America. "Bush is there as a result of us going to sleep," he said.

Hand-held fans pushed air across faces looking up at the gray-haired preacher, who broke into song as he told his story of growing

believing that we don't have to try and excel and stand for something."

Sharpton encouraged the congregation to look toward its young people to help lead the way in the political process.

"When I think of how our grandparents suffered and died to give us rights ... the hope they had was 'If we pay the price, that our children can then use the door that's open to finish the journey,'" he said. "But many of us are sort of cracking the door, and slip through for us rather than continue the journey for everybody."

Shannon Graham, 20, said she likes what Sharpton stands for, but she needs to see all the candidates face-to-face to help her decide who will get her vote. "So I wouldn't feel like they're too high and mighty to be interested in the people," she said.

"There's no candidate in this race that can go on the highways and byways of this state and try and encourage new voters like I can," Sharpton said later in an interview with The Associated Press. "The more people involved in the process, the better it is for the country."

Even though he lags behind his opponents in fund-raising, Sharpton says he's in the race until the end because he draws attention to the needs of minorities.

"You act like I'm the only one who might lose. Eight folks are going to lose," he told the congregation. "The question is not who's going to lose. The question is who gives you the best shot at empowering yourself."

Sharpton said his efforts to register voters can help states win congressional and senate seats to help change the pulse of the country.

"When you shoot high you get everything else in between," he said. "When you shoot low you ain't going to get nothing because you weren't after nothing."



Rev. Al Sharpton. AP File Photo/Marta Lavandier.

Chapel Hill Baptist Church on Sunday about the struggle for civil rights and the important role for blacks in selecting the next president of the United States.

"Here you are 40 years later in South Carolina. Nobody bombing your churches, no dogs bitin' ya, nobody shooting ya in the driveway,

The visit was part of Sharpton's campaign for the state's first-in-the-South primary Feb. 3. The vote is expected to be Democrats' first test with a large black population.

Sharpton told the congregation that President Bush is "bent on phenomenal destruction" in Iraq when the billions of dollars in

up with a single mother on welfare in Brooklyn, N.Y., and how he successfully rose above the obstacles that many black people of his generation faced.

"Some of what we're facing is because we're not doing enough," he said. "We've allowed this generation to be fooled into

## Immunize Now For The 2003-2004 School Year

**Important New Requirements; Clinics Available Throughout King County**

During National Immunization Awareness Month, Public Health - Seattle & King County is calling on families in all of King County to get prepared for the new school year by making sure all children's immunizations are up to date.

"Immunizations are a very safe and effective way to keep children healthy and in school," said Dr. Alonzo Plough, Director of Public Health - Seattle & King County. "Whether you're a parent enrolling your child in school or a student entering college, you should be checking to see if your immunization records are up to date."

New school requirements for this fall

Hepatitis B vaccine is now required for students enrolled in kindergarten through sixth grade; students entering kindergarten through third grade will be required to show proof of having received two doses of measles-containing vaccine, one dose of mumps-containing vaccine, and one dose of rubella-containing vaccine, usually

given as part of the measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine.

For information on special back-to-school immunization clinics in King County as well as Public Health immunization clinic sites, addresses and phone numbers, call the Public Health Hotline at (206) 296-4949 or visit: [www.metrokc.gov/health/immunization/backtoschool.htm](http://www.metrokc.gov/health/immunization/backtoschool.htm). Please remember to bring your shot records to all clinics.

Summary of school requirements

**Kindergarten through third grade:** Children enrolled in kindergarten through third grade in fall 2003 are required to have the appropriate series of diphtheria/tetanus/pertussis (DTaP, DTP, DT or Td) and polio vaccines, two doses of measles/mumps/rubella (MMR), and a series of hepatitis B vaccines.

**Fourth and fifth grade:** Children enrolled in fourth and fifth grade are required to have the appropriate series of diphtheria/tetanus/pertussis

(DTaP, DTP, DT or Td) and polio vaccines, one dose of measles/mumps/rubella vaccine (MMR), and a series of hepatitis B vaccines.

**Sixth grade:** Students entering sixth grade are required to have a second dose of measles-containing vaccine, preferably MMR, in addition to the requirements for earlier grade levels. They must also have a series of hepatitis B vaccines. A booster dose of tetanus/diphtheria (Td) vaccine is recommended for 11-17 year olds.

**New students:** All students who are new to the district are required to have a second dose of measles-containing vaccine, preferably MMR, in addition to the requirements for earlier grade levels.

During 2001 and 2002, seven different vaccines were in short supply, and some doses of vaccine may have been deferred. "Supply of all routine vaccines has returned back to normal so make sure you're not missing any doses," said Betsy Hubbard, Public Health's

Immunization Coordinator.

Risks in not vaccinating

Parents or legal guardians have the right to choose not to immunize their children, based on medical, religious or philosophical reasons. Parents or legal guardians must sign the appropriate box on the Certificate of Immunization Status form to exempt their child from receiving vaccines required for school entry. There is a risk, however, when choosing against vaccination. In addition to the potential risk of becoming infected with a vaccine-preventable disease if exposed to the illness, a child who is not fully immunized may be excluded from attending school or childcare during an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease.

For more facts about vaccine-preventable diseases, vaccine safety, the immune system and how vaccines work, read "Plain Talk about Childhood Immunizations," an internationally-recognized booklet for parents: [www.metrokc.gov/health/immunization/childimmunity.htm](http://www.metrokc.gov/health/immunization/childimmunity.htm)

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