

CLASSIFIEDS ~ PUBLIC INFORMATION

Community Conversation Held To Discuss proposed Utility Rate Increase from page 1



Susana Almanza addresses panel. Photo by Angela Wyatt

emergency circumstances. Council wanted to keep emergency rates low. But now Austin Energy is on the verge of financial

emergency, Cole stated that Austin Energy has "hit the red line" its reserve fund is very low, costs continue to rise, and new rates are needed.

Cole and others added that Austin Energy is the third largest source of the city's general funds budget. The audience opposition mainly focused on the proposed "base rate" increase, publicized as now \$6 moving to \$22, Susana Almanza of PODER arguing that the increase represented a week's groceries for a poor family. Cole and others proposed various ways to address that issue, most focusing on getting more money into Austin Energy's Customer Assistance Plan, which is currently at \$7 million, also known as (Cap) and provides a large variety of help to low-income families in the Austin area. Cole hopes to double it or more. The number of people in urgent need approaches 50,000, to help that number would cost \$27 million.

Cole also emphasized more energy efficiency, that larger institutions, especially churches and schools, (conservative windows, energy efficient lights, weatherization) need more attention to conservation that would not just save energy but lower bills. There was rough consensus in the room that whatever the new rate schedule might eventually look like, this current proposal still needs a lot of work.

Raising rates too high and too fast certainly will strengthen the political case for deregulating Austin's utility market. Austin might find itself with few defenders at the Legislature next year in protecting its utility if nothing changes with proposed rate hikes. Austin Energy officials say the utility needs \$126 million to address financial problems. That requires a 12.5 percent rate hike overall, with residential rates rising about 20 percent. This means many homes will be paying an increase of \$15.00 or more than their current Energy bill.

There is wide dissatisfaction with those proposed rate increases, which are likely to be adjusted downward in coming days. As a policy matter, there is no reason Austin Energy's earnings should not be used to improve the quality of life for Austin residents and keep their taxes low. As shareholders, Austin residents should benefit from an asset they essentially own. But the city must not plunder that asset. It's time to look at reducing those payments so that more of Austin Energy's earnings can be plowed back into its operations and reserves. That will help the utility's bottom line and benefit all customers.

NNPA Formed in Chicago in 1940

A Brief History By Armistead S. Pride and Clint C. Wilson II Excerpted from Pride and Wilson's book, A History of the Black Press Published by Howard University Press (1997). Dr. Wilson, a Howard journalism professor, is director of the Black Press Institute, a program of the NNPA Foundation.



John H. Sengstacke NNPA Organizer

When John H. Sengstacke, then in his 30s and heir to the controlling fortunes of the Robert S. Abbott Publishing Co., sent out his call for a meeting of Negro newspaper publishers in Chicago for February 29 through March 2, 1940, he had in mind a conference that would give major attention to advertising, editorial, and newsgathering problems and would substantially recognize inevitable and omnipresent racial matters. It had been difficult enough in former years to bring together a common purpose a large representation of the men and a few women who made up the Black Press. Yet, except for a five-year period, the Black newspaper publishers and editors had some form of national organization ever since the first meeting in Cincinnati in 1875 called by ex-Lieutenant Governor Pinchback of Louisiana. Before the 1940 call by Sengstacke, Carl

Murphy had stressed the operating economies to be derived from a cooperative association of publishers, but even the bait of cheaper engraving costs, exchange of news and pictures, and a central clearing house for publishing problems and ideas was insufficient to overcome the drawbacks of distance, travel expense, sacrifice of time, and questionable benefits of membership in an organization.

The Negro newspaper had long proved its usefulness and its indispensability both for the Black masses and for the Negro elite. It had acquired a niche that the general press then had no interest in challenging and was, like its predecessors; the major dispenser of news and opinion for an isolated people. Other Negro groups

had long since found the path to organization successful; among them were physicians, lawyers, clergy, land-grant college presidents, educators, musicians, and war veterans. The question was, "Why couldn't the publishers?" Sengstacke thought that the first step in joining hands was for Black publishers to get to know each other, and he said as much in his opening message at the first session of the 1940 conference. The meeting was, he said, designed for "harmonizing our energies in the common purpose for the benefit of Negro journalism." Sengstacke outlined the three-day program and left room for a catch-all item labeled "business in general." The newspapers represented at that first gathering included the leaders of the Negro fourth estate and three-fourths of the Negro newspaper circulation. Representatives from 20 commercial newspapers from all sections except the far western part of the country attended the Chicago conference. Currently, Austin has three African American owned papers. They are: The Villager, Nokoa, and Capital City Argus.



NNPA held its 2012 Conference in New Orleans, LA in January and went to historic Dooky Chase Restaurant for lunch. Dooky Chase is one of the city's oldest Black restaurants.

EMPLOYMENT/BIDS/ PROPOSALS/ PUBLIC INFORMATION/ FOR SALE /FOR RENT/ MISC

Employment

AUSTIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

New Jobs for the Week of 1/27/2012
 Assistant, Student Services Northridge Campus Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. \$2,256-\$2,820/Monthly Job# 1201022
 Manager, Payroll Highland Business Center Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. \$4,489-\$5,862/Monthly Job# 1201023

Apply at HR
 Middle Fiskville Rd. 6th Floor, Austin, TX 78752
 Job Line (512) 223-5621
 http://www.austinceed EEOC/AA/MF/D/V

Property Manager/Admin. Asst. (Part-Time) Blackland Community Development Corporation seeks a Property Manager/Administrative Asst. 30 hours/week. Responsibilities: oversight of maintenance, bookkeeping, tenant selection, application verification, property inspection, and other administrative duties. Required: Two years of property management and bookkeeping experience, experience working with low-income people, H.S. diploma, and excellent interpersonal skills. Preferred: experience working in non-profit or public housing and Spanish-speaking. Must be willing to work between hours of 8-5 M-F and occasional weekends and evenings, maintain regular office hours, and carry an emergency cell phone. Salary range: \$13-16/hr plus vacation and sick leave benefits. Applicants must submit cover letter and resume and fill out job application, available 1/27-2/10 at the Blackland Neighborhood Center, 2005 Salina Street, M-Th 8-6; F 8-12. For more information please email headrick@blacklandcdc.org. EOE

BIDS/PROPOSALS

Laughlin-Thyssen is soliciting Minority, Small Locally Owned & Women-Owned Business Enterprise participation for the following City of Austin Project: Waller Creek

Tunnel Project Waller Beach Site Imprv Outlet (IFB 6100 CLMC352); Bid Date & Time: 2/23/2012, 11:00AM CT. Please Call (713) 429-6500 for more information on scopes of work.

Laughlin-Thyssen is soliciting Minority, Small Locally Owned & Women-Owned Business Enterprise participation for the following City of Austin Project:

NW C Pump Station @ Anderson Mill (IFB 6100 CLMC351); Bid Date & Time: 2/23/2012, 9:00AM CT. Please Call (713) 429-6500 for more information on scopes of work.

Austin Bridge & Road is seeking MBE/WBE subcontractors for the City of Austin's Boardwalk Trail at Lady Bird Lake. Bids are due at 11:00 am February 16. For more information contact AB&R at (512) 219-5776, (512) 219-6322 fax, or jdague@austin-ind.com

FOR RENT

OFFICE SPACE FOR RENT
 2941 E. 12th Street
 Central Air and Heat
 4 Rooms Available
 \$400.00 per room
 Call 512-921-0763

"Let me put YOUR face in the place!"
ADVERTISE WITH THE VILLAGER
 Call (512) 476-0082 TODAY

City of Austin Purchasing Office

The City of Austin Purchasing Office invites you to view current bid solicitations at <http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/purchase/vs/p2.htm>. Vendors are encouraged to register on-line in the City's Vendor Self Service System. Once your company is registered, you will receive notifications about new bid opportunities. For additional information regarding current bid opportunities or Vendor Registration, please call the Purchasing Office at 512-974-2500. For information on the City of Austin's Minority-Owned and Women-Owned Procurement Program and the certification process, please contact the Small & Minority Business Resources Department at 512-974-7600 or visit their website at <http://www.-ci.austin.tx.us/smb.r>.

TRAVIS COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG)

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN COMMUNITY NEEDS FORUMS THROUGHOUT THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY, 2012

Travis County invites the public to participate in community forums where residents will have an opportunity to present community needs and recommend projects for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for use in the unincorporated areas of Travis County. The information collected in the forums will guide the selection of CDBG projects for the Program Year 2012 (October 2012 - September 2013).

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is funded by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to benefit Travis County low- to moderate-income residents who live in the Village of Webberville or outside any other city limit. The program supports community development activities aimed at revitalizing neighborhoods, improving affordable housing options, and providing improved community facilities and services. For program year 2012, Travis County anticipates to receive approximately \$896,762.

The forums will be held according to the following schedule:

FEBRUARY 2012						
TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
FEBRUARY 21	FEBRUARY 22	FEBRUARY 23	24	FEBRUARY 25	26	FEBRUARY 27
9:00 am at the Commissioners Courtroom at Granger Building	6:30 pm at the Eastside Service Center, Town Hall	6:30 pm at the South Rural Community Center (Del Valle)		9:00 am at the Steiner Ranch Community Center		6:30 pm at the West Rural Community Center (Oak Hill)
314 W. 11th St. Austin, Texas, 78701	6011 Blue Bluff Road, Austin, Texas 78724	3518 FM 973 Del Valle, Texas, 78617		12550 Country Trails Lane, Austin, Texas 78732		8656-A Hwy 71W, Oak Hill, Texas, 78735

Beginning February 21, 2012, if you can not attend any of the forums, you can participate by filling out a Participation Form found at the Travis County Website at www.co.travis.tx.us/CDBG/, at one of the seven Travis County Community Centers or by requesting that it be mailed to you by calling 512-854-3460.

For additional information contact Christy Moffett, at christy.moffett@co.travis.tx.us or call 512-854-3460. To request that an American Sign Language or Spanish interpreter be present at any of the public hearings, please contact staff at least five business days in advance.

PUBLIC NOTICE