

Black Media Roundtable

Written by Jeffrey L. Boney
Tuesday, 25 December 2012 00:00



The National Black United Front (NBUF) hosted a packed-house, historic gathering of representatives from a large portion of Black media in Houston along with community organizations at the S.H.A.P.E. Community Center located in Houston's Third Ward.

The purpose of the gathering was to hear directly from these Black media outlets on a wide range of issues impacting the dimensioning platforms for substantive political, historical, cultural, economic information, discussion and debate.

Former V.P. and General Manager of 97.9 KBXX, Majic 102.1 FM and KYOK 1590 AM Ernie Jackson started the discussion by explaining how changes in the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) guidelines, going back to 1996 under Bill Clinton, have helped "Kill Black Radio".

NBUF National Chairman Kofi Taharka moderated three power packed panels calling on the participants, audience and Black community to:

1. Support the national effort coordinated by Bob Law to have the Congressional Black Caucus address the issue of restructuring the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) guidelines. They are asking that the guidelines foster a proper business climate for African-American ownership of radio stations. Taharka encouraged all attendees to read the open letter to the Congressional Black Caucus entitled "The Assault on Black Owned Radio," found in the Dec. 12-18, 2012 edition of the Houston Forward Times.

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2. Listen, watch, read, advertise, and subscribe to shows, publications and social networking sites that provide vital information to the African-American community in Houston. NBUF provided hand outs to the audience listing such platforms. The Houston Forward Times was listed as one of the key publications to support and receive critical information for the Black community. Attendees were encouraged to visit [jessemuhammad.blogs.finalcall](http://jessemuhammad.blogs.finalcall.com) to view the list of those endorsed Black media outlets in Houston.

3. Called on media representatives to form a cross medium coalition to work together to address critical issues and opportunities that face the Black community in Houston. Put plainly, Black media outlets were challenged to develop a type of amber alert system amongst their respective entities, with the intent of ensuring that information is distributed in unison concerning important issues, projects or programs significant to the Black community at-large. Those in attendance generally agreed on the concept. Follow up will be necessary.

The touchstone issue that drew many people out to the roundtable was the sale of KCOH 1430 AM radio station.

Those in attendance heard directly from radio personalities Michael Harris and Ralph Cooper, minority owner Judson Robinson Jr. and Congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee. The different panelists represented differing viewpoints on the controversial sale of the station. Quite a bit of tension surrounded the KCOH subject matter and that tension was clearly evident to the audience. Due to time constraints, the audience was not able to ask questions or speak to the KCOH 1430 AM situation, but many in the room wanted to know more about KCOH's long-term future in Houston. Harris made a key point that going forward he hopes the community respects the new management of the station and treats them with the same level of respect that other stations in the city receive. Organizers made it clear that whoever owns or leases KCOH should hear from the community of faithful listeners and community based organizations about their desires and needs.

Two other panels, one on radio and the other on print media, focused on quality programming, access to these platforms and issues confronting them for economic survival. Participants included: Jeffrey L. Boney (Houston Forward Times), Cindy George (National Association of Black Journalists), Erica Davis (African-American News & Issues), Stacey Muhammad (Final Call), Myra Griffin (The Houston Sun), Doug Abernethy (Radio One, Majic 102.1 FM, KBXX 97.9 FM, News 92 FM), Nzinga Rideaux (Radio One), Larry Johnson (KTSU 90.9 FM), George Thomas (KTSU 90.9 FM), Akua Holt (KPFT 90.1 FM), ZIN (KPFT 90.1 FM) and Dr. Obidike Kamau (KPFT 90.1 FM). Many others in the Black Media were in the audience.

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Taharka believed that the meeting was extremely productive, however he states that after hearing all of the feedback and information that was shared at the end of the gathering it was evident that there was a strong need for follow-up and follow through.

“I am very pleased with the turnout of the forum,” said Taharka. “There is follow up that needs to be done and the NBUF will be on the frontlines making sure that it happens.”

{jcomments on}