

NAAIA NEWS

National African American Insurance Association

The Connection To The Multi-Cultural Marketplace

WINTER 2006

 **NAAIA NOW IS THE TIME !**

NAAIA GOALS FOR 2006

Increased Membership, Securing an Executive Director and Local Chapter Development

The National African American Insurance Association's goals for 2006 will focus on increasing membership, obtaining an executive director and developing more local chapters, said Chairmaine Davis, NAAIA vice-chairperson.

NAAIA Chairperson Aubrey L. Branch and Ms. Davis agree that these goals are the most important objectives for NAAIA at this point in the organization's development.

"We're working to increase our membership by sending out notices of upcoming events and our newsletter to insurance companies; advertising in Black Enterprise; in local newspapers where we have a conference; and through 'word of mouth,'" said Ms. Davis, who has been on the NAAIA Board of Directors since 2003.

Other recent developments to boost membership and promote NAAIA include the recent enhancement of the website, through adding music and moving graphics. In the near future, there will be a membership only section

and it will include a job bank.

Ms. Davis explained that a NAAIA membership is essential for Blacks who want to advance in the insurance field. "NAAIA gives you access to meeting the many minorities and providing networking opportunities. It has helped me in my career to know whom to go to for different types of information. My involvement with NAAIA has made me more valuable to my company," said Ms. Davis, who works for Marsh USA, Inc.

An important next step for NAAIA is securing an executive director, who will take care of the day-to-day operations of the organization, as well as handle corporate relations, long-term development and assist in the advancement of NAAIA.

"We're investing to get 1.5 to 3 years salary and benefits in place before hiring an executive director," Ms. Davis said. "When we are ready to move forward, we'll look for someone who shares the vision of NAAIA – that of assisting all levels

of insurance professionals; someone who has experience in managing a professional organization and who has development and fundraising experience. We hope to bring a director on board within the next year."

The formation of more local chapters will also be a major push for NAAIA this year. "The Chicago chapter was established two years ago; the Detroit chapter was just chartered; and New York will soon be a chapter."

To sum it up, 2006 will be a year where NAAIA is focused on the success of the organization and the success of each member, Mr. Branch concluded. The organization will accomplish these goals through continued corporate connections, legislative liaisons, professional education opportunities and more.

For more information on NAAIA and its local chapters, visit www.naaia.org.

NAAIA CHAPTER

OPENS IN NEW YORK CITY
THE INSURANCE CAPITOL OF THE WORLD

In June 2005, NAAIA officially started a chapter in what some call the "insurance capital of the world" - New York City. The chapter, known as NAAIA of New York-Tri State, was started by Kimberly Byer of Axis US Insurance, Gamelah Palagonia of Frenkel, Terri Lathan of Chubb and Karen McNair of SwissRe. This chapter includes insurance professionals who work in Connecticut and New Jersey.

This newly formed chapter is following in the footsteps of the Detroit chapter and is in the process of planning its official kick off event in February. To coincide with Black History Month, the theme for the event is "Celebrating our Diversity."

"The major goals of this event are: to increase membership, raise community awareness, and promote leadership development," said Kimberly Byer, interim board president. "We also would like to thank Allianz for sponsoring this event."

Kimberly goes on to say, "Once we accomplish these goals, the chapter would like to get involved in community service programs such as "Dress for Success," as well as other community based programs. The chapter will form committees such as Membership, Public Relations, Scholarship/Community Service and Fundraising."

To inquire about the chapter, please contact Kimberly Byer at kimberly.byer@gmail.com or visit www.naaia.org.

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NAAIA 2005 NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN NEW YORK REVISITED

The theme for the NAAIA 2005 national conference in New York City last September was "Investing in Our Own Future." Judging by the nearly 400 African American insurance professionals choosing to invest in their future by attending the event and the dynamic speakers and illuminating workshops they participated in, it's obvious the annual event was an overwhelming success.

Key sponsors for the conference included Aetna, Marsh Inc., Safeco, Allianz, CAN, Genworth Financial, Prudential and St. Paul Travelers.

The NAAIA 2005 National Conference and Empowerment Summit was held in New York City, the internationally recognized "financial capital of the world." The convention, held at the Marriott On the Bridge Hotel in the borough of Brooklyn, included career building workshops, current issue panel discussions, an exhibit market place and networking.

"The theme 'Investing In Our Future' referred to the importance of NAAIA members volunteering their time, talents and treasure to the organization," said Jerald Tillman, NAAIA founder and new chapter development chairman. "By taking

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those actions, African American insurance professionals are investing in their professional development and in their futures."

The conference featured a variety of powerful keynote speakers at the plenary gatherings and in the break-out sessions. They included William Thompson, comptroller of New York City; Professor Harold Gray of Howard University and Richard Bennett, Ph.D., of the College of Insurance at The University of New York. Key top executives, John C. Butcher, Senior VP of Marsh Inc. and Michael LaRocco, President of Products at Safeco, spoke about the value of a diverse workforce and other industry challenges.

"Dr. Gray's presentation was excellent," Mr. Tillman said. "He talked about the current business cli-

mate and what it takes to make it in the insurance industry today.

"Dr. Gray said many insurance firms continue to be interested in diversity, but the challenge is finding and bringing talented Blacks into all aspects of the insurance industry," Mr. Tillman continued. "The average consumer thinks of the insurance business only from a sales perspective. But, there are a myriad of occupations that mirror the same degree of talent and executive positions that any Fortune 500 company has."

Other workshops were sponsored and moderated by The American College, CPCU Society, the National Flood Insurance Program, Aetna, Aon and Zurich. In addition to the workshops, there were great opportunities to socialize and network at the opening cocktail reception at the New York Botanical Gardens and the closing dinner gala Friday evening.

"It was a great event, because of the information we gained; the networking and relationships that were built there; and that it was attended by the brightest and best in the insurance industry," said Ronald Allen, Allstate Insurance agency owner in Chicago, IL.

NAAIA STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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The NAAIA was organized to create a network among minorities who are employed by insurance companies or self-employed in the insurance industry. Pooling this wealth of talent contributes to the growth of the association and its members through sharing of professional experience, knowledge, and information.

The NAAIA will attempt, on a continuous basis, to promote profes-

sionalism in a manner that will lead to industry recognition and future career opportunities

NAAIA MISSION STATEMENT

The National African-American Insurance Association (NAAIA) shall coordinate the national efforts of the African-American insurance organizations and professionals.

The organization will also invite individual memberships from those

who do not have a local chapter in their areas. If interest does exist to build a local chapter in a respective city, NAAIA will contact the nearest member association for follow up.

The NAAIA shall engage in the following activities: quarterly newsletter, plan and promote national conferences, advocacy involving national issues, influence in many insurance-related areas, and maintain an insurance database.

LOCAL CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT

The Wave of the Future for NAAIA

The development of more local NAAIA chapters is a major part of the organization's plans for future growth and expansion, said Charmaine Davis, NAAIA national vice-chairperson.

"The addition of more local NAAIA chapters not only helps boost our membership, but it also helps strengthen our infrastructure," Ms. Davis said.

The cities with established local NAAIA chapters are: Cincinnati, Chicago, Detroit, Washington, DC and soon New York City.

The Detroit chapter was awarded its charter on July 14, 2005, at a ceremony at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center. The keynote speakers were NAAIA Founder Jerald Tillman and NAAIA National Chairperson Aubrey Branch.

The chapter based in Detroit – called the Michigan Chapter – has an interim executive board and board of directors. They are: Charles Briggs, interim president; Jennifer Kerr, interim vice-president; James Ralph, interim treasurer; Grecia Souffront, interim secretary; and board members Brenda Harvill, Larry Long, LeRoy Bostic, Thomas Goss and Veronica Kleckley. The Hon. Brenda Lawrence, mayor of Southfield, MI, is an honorary board member.

"Local chapters of NAAIA

are especially important, because it's at the local level that we can make more of a personal impact in the professional lives of our members," said Mr. Briggs, Detroit Chapter Interim President.

"Also, if there are local political or community issues NAAIA needs to weigh in on, we can do it through the strength of a local chapter," he said.

NAAIA membership, on both the national and local levels, brings with it significant benefits. They include: a national support group focusing on minority insurance issues; a national database of Black insurance professionals; powerful networking opportunities; a liaison with governmental leaders, including the national Black Caucus; quarterly newsletter; regional and annual conferences; and Avis Rent-A-Car, just to name a few.

For more information on how to start a local chapter in your city, contact Jerald Tillman, New Chapter Development Chairperson, at (513) 733-8732 or tillmaj@nationwide.com

NAAIA
2006 MEMBERSHIPS
ARE DUE.

RENEW ON LINE.
www.naaia.org

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WE'RE ON THE WEB!
www.naaia.org

UPCOMING NAAIA CONFERENCES

Make sure you save the dates for two dynamic upcoming NAAIA conferences – the NAAIA Regional Conference April 27-29, 2006, and the NAAIA National Conference September 14-16, 2006.

The NAAIA Regional Conference in Washington, DC, is a legislative event held jointly with the IIABA. The keynote speaker for the conference will be Colin Powell, former United States

Secretary of State.

The NAAIA National Conference will be held in Atlanta, GA, at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis, 265 Peachtree Center. For room reservations, call (404) 521-0000.

“With two local African American insurance organizations in Atlanta, we expect our national conference September 14-16 in Atlanta to be the biggest national

conference ever, with the largest turnout,” said Charmaine Davis, NAAIA National Vice-Chairperson.



SAVE THE DATES!