

**Topic: Proactive Community Engagement Proposal for
BESDA, INC. to Provide Community Action Support for
Home Communities in Bladen and Columbus Counties, State of North Carolina**

Guest Speaker Invite: I have been invited to be the guest speaker at the Farmers Union Civic Association meeting August 15th, 2011. The issue of concern is the need for the community to become more proactive in its dealing with the lack of community resources.

My Message is Intended to encourage the community to start organizing and becoming united around one cause which is: to improve the quality of the delivery of public services within the community (which includes all segments of the community, i.e. Farmers Union, St James, etc.); and to find common ground and consensus with limited bickering and disagreement regarding the needs and interest of the community.

The goal of community organizing is to not only have a seat at the table, but to actually influence the policies and decisions that directly make an impact on your life. A basic principle of community organizing is exercising your power by joining together around common concerns, forming action plans, and carrying them out. Consistent, organizing effort will lead to results.

Make point that: Our ancestors (*i.e. forefathers and mothers in the Columbus and Bladen county communities*) controlled their own destiny. They built their own schools, they educated their own children, and they started their own businesses and were self-reliant and self-sufficient. To a large degree the foregoing is not occurring today and the residents of the community are in need of support in navigating the political process. The original community left by our ancestors was built on hard work and today....there are very few opportunities for work that anybody is really interested in doing. And there are very limited public funded facilities in the community.

Support to Home Community by BESDA/BESDF: At the July 30th, 2011, National Business Meeting of BESDA, Inc/BESDF, Inc., (*a national for-profit and national non-profit organization made up of descendants from Bladen and Columbus community who live all across the United States of America.*) passed a resolution in support of assisting the residents of our home counties in North Carolina in obtaining better delivery of public services. The issue that brought the needs of Bladen and Columbus counties to the attention of our organization is the following:

- 1) Columbus County has the worst health care of all counties in the state of NC and Bladen County is 4th from the bottom reported by: University of Wisconsin and the Robert Ford Johnson Foundation County Health Ratings.
- 2) The State Representative for Columbus and Bladen Counties voted with the Republican Majority to cut taxes for schools, public services, and Medicaid matching funds.
- 3) The State Representatives for Columbus and Bladen Counties are not working and voting in the best interests of the members of the Farmers Union Community and the other sister communities within the perimeter of the communities, Columbus and Bladen counties, we refer to as home.
- 4) The State Representatives and the local County Commissioners take for granted the voting of the residents of Bladen and Columbus counties who live in the Farmers Union Community and the other communities within the perimeter where we call home.
- 5) The Farmers Union Community and other sister communities needs to identify possible candidates for political office.
- 6) The Farmers Union Community and the other sister communities need to become politically more proactive and include establishing a Legislative Committee in Each Community Civic Association.

Community Leaders Concerns and Recommendations: As a part of coming up with a list of community needs and concerns, various persons inside the community and outside of the community were contacted to obtain their views regarding the needs of the community. The list of persons include:

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|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| - Rev Gregory Spaulding | - Leon Spaulding |
| - Rev. Franklin Spaulding | - Fannie Spaulding Walden |
| - Margaret Freeman Gordon | - Sandra Spaulding Hughes |
| - Paula Jacobs | - Marie Campbell, PA |
| - Milton Campbell | - Dallas Smith |
| - Wilson Spaulding | - Bernard Goins |
| - Stedman Graham | - Oscar Mike Blanks III |
| - Romeo Spaulding | - Wendell Campbell |
| - Clarence Spaulding | |

Community Needs: During those conversations, the following items were identified as community needs in addition to the concerns about the need for the community to become more politically proactive and the need to become united as a community for the common good. The list of community needs includes:

- 1) Community Center:
 - a. Serve seniors, young adults, children care, and general public
 - b. Provide space for the following services and needs:
 - i. Meeting Rooms
 - ii. In-door sports such as basketball, tennis, exercise, etc
 - iii. Learning opportunities such as: computer training, health care,
 - iv. Outside of facility: Walking trail, basketball courts, tennis courts, picnic, etc
- 2) Community Facilities:
 - a. Road in front of Mitchell Field Cemetery; which was said to be 10th on the road paving list.
 - b. Public Drinking Water System
 - c. Etc.
- 3) Health Care/Wellness Facility
 - a. Within community
 - b. Medical care and preventive care
 - c. Emergency care
- 4) Economic Development
 - a. Sit-down restaurant w/Gas Station
 - b. Grocery Store
 - c. Convenience and Hardware Stores
 - d. Etc
- 5) Pre K School Facilities/Day Care
- 6) Grades 1 thru 12 Enhanced Educational System
 - a. Need better and up-to-date technology training
 - b. Need better internet services within the community to allow students to do research at home.
 - c. Need to have an educational environment at school that will encourage today's community youth to stay in school and come out qualified for some type of work.

- 7) Communications Improvements:
 - a. Cell phone towers
 - b. Better Internet Services
 - c. Etc

The Community Elected Positions: The political structure of the community was addressed by some of the persons I spoke to and they explained that the community is represented by persons in the following elected positions. The opinion was expressed by many that the persons currently holding these positions to a large degree don't do a good job of representing and supporting the needs of the community.

Community Elected Political Positions:

- 1) County Commissioners
- 2) State Representatives
- 3) State Senators
- 4) US Congressmen
- 5) US Senators
- 6) Local Board of Education Members

Recommendations for Actions: The following recommendations for consideration are some things that can be done by our national organization taking the lead and the other things are some items that the local community should take the lead on with the support of the national organization:

- 1) Look into what it will take to establish a PAC to support persons for political office who support the needs of this community and to support lobbying for the needs of this community.
- 2) Look into the concerns of the community and come up with a list of needs for the community.
- 3) Look into the current political structure and performance of persons currently in elected positions.
- 4) Identify the most compelling needs of the community.
- 5) Rate the performance of the current political leaders in the performance of their duties as they relate to the needs of the local community.
- 6) Decide what is the best organizational structure to meet the needs of the community.
- 7) Identify persons who are willing to serve as leaders and workers.
- 8) Identify persons who are willing to run for political office.
- 9) Consider Incorporating as a Municipality
- 10) Identify how the national family organization can provide support.
- 11) Additional items as appropriate.

BESDA, Inc. Community Support: The following type of assistance can be provided by BESDA, Inc:

- 1) Information Research
- 2) Obtaining Technical Experts as Needed
- 3) Community Organizing
- 4) Preparing Press Release and News Articles
- 5) Testifying at Hearings
- 6) Bring National Family Attention to Community Needs
- 7) Etc.

Sincerely,
Vincent M. Spaulding,
President/COO
BESDA, Inc/BESDF, Inc