

**NAACP TRI COUNTY BRANCH NUMBER 5063
REPORT OF ACTIVITIES – 3rd QUARTER 2014**

By Tori Bailey, Tri County Branch President
Submitted August 23, 2014

The Tri County Branch 5063, made up of three northwest Alabama Counties of Lauderdale, Colbert, and Franklin, reports as follows:

Although we traditionally hold our meetings in a central location in Colbert County, we have made the decision to hold some meetings in both Lauderdale and Franklin Counties too. To that end, the branch recently met in a church in Russellville, in Franklin County. One of our members, who also serves as chair of our Veterans Affairs Committee, provided transportation for those who did not want to drive as far and who chose to park at our usual location. As a result of the change in meeting location, we had several people from Franklin County attend a meeting for the first time, some of whom joined the branch. Our workshop was presented by Gina Mashburn, the executive director for Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and focused on the need for more African American families go get involved with the program. (As a matter of fact, I encourage all of you who can do so to consider becoming a Big Brother or Big Sister because in some areas there are not enough minorities to pair with some of the children from our own communities.) Our next meeting will be held at the Florence-Lauderdale County Public Library, which provides free meeting space for organizations. Our workshop is tentatively scheduled to be about banking and finance, and will include information about predatory lending.

We continue to encourage voting, and were pleased to have State Conference representative Mr. Jerry Burnet as our most recent workshop presenter. He not only verbally shared valuable insight, but passed out information that was well received by our group. We had new members to join last month as well, and we are very thankful to Mr. Burnet, who was accompanied by his lovely wife Bernice, for taking time to make the trip to the Shoals area.

We continue to address reported challenges stemming from the violation of civil rights in our area, and to that end express our thanks to Mr. Eric Hutchins, who has taken on a case involving an African American man who although following the instructions of his employer, was assaulted and severely beaten in a racially motivated attack by two white men. Even though he was accompanied on that day by his white co-worker (who was warned not to interfere and was not injured), only he was accused of trespassing and destruction of property. False allegations were made by the attackers while he was in the hospital, the assailants filed a complaint, charges were filed against him, and the judge in the case (who allegedly has ties with the assailants) ruled against him. We are appealing and will continue to monitor this case and others. Our branch owes a special thanks to our Political Action Chair, Pastor Charles Dale, who has not only been active with this case, but has also served as our liaison with the state conference for the past couple of months.

Since our last time quarterly meeting, we held our 21st annual Tri County Freedom Fund Banquet on May 10th at the Jameson Inn Hotel and Conference Center. Our featured speaker was the Honorable Senator Hank Sanders, who was absolutely riveting. Given the timing of the banquet, we had several candidates for political office also attend. They were each given an opportunity to greet the audience, and one, Senator Roger Bedford, was asked to make follow up remarks after Senator Sanders. We also honored our veterans, and thanked those who work in government.

We continue to use our weekly program on WZZA Radio along with Facebook and twitter and to inform the public about issues. This concludes the quarterly report of the Tri County Branch.