

**NAACP TRI COUNTY BRANCH NUMBER 5063
REPORT OF ACTIVITIES – 1st QUARTER 2015**

By Tori Bailey, Tri County Branch President

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

In response to the outcry following the deaths by law enforcement of unarmed Black men including Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, Eric Garner in New York City, NY, and Emerson Crayton in Alexander City, Alabama, the police chief of our largest city in northwest Alabama called on some community leaders to open a dialogue as a preventative measure to anticipate and circumvent similar problems in our area. As a result of this conversation, we decided that it was necessary to hold a series of community meetings in order to assist in identifying possible future challenges. The first was held in Florence and was a success. As president of our Tri-County Branch, I have secured commitments from three of four area additional police chiefs to continue these conversations. Pastor Charles Dale has secured the fourth. I was also asked to provide an opinion on the state of race relations for our primary local newspaper. (That article is attached to our report.) We look forward to more open dialogue and continued opportunities to be proactive rather than reactive.

Our branch also partnered with WZZA radio to request that people in northwest Alabama wear all Black to church on Sunday, January 18th, the day before the MLK Holiday Celebration. The purpose was to signify that Black Lives Matter. That request was widely honored and many churches repeated that announcement, reminding their members on the Sunday before to wear all Black the following Sunday. We intend to do this again soon and will ask other branches throughout the state to join us in selecting a Sunday when we can all wear black. We have expanded the meaning of Black Lives Matter to not only refer to death by police, but to encompass improved quality of life. We remind our children that their lives matter so education is important. We remind our seniors that their lives matter so health care is important. We remind our less fortunate that their lives matter so wealth building is important. We remind policy makers that Black lives matter, and that we can and will vote.

The January workshop, presented by a representative from BBVA bank, included banking and finance tips and the importance of protecting one's identity from theft, credit reporting agencies, and loans.

Our branch has been asked to form a team to participate in a spelling bee to benefit the North Alabama Reading Aides. Our team is being sponsored so it will cost us nothing, but will provide visibility for our branch while supporting a worthy cause.

We have activated even more of our committees with regular meetings now being held by our WIN, Political Action, Legal Redress, Housing, Membership, and Communication committees, and we have seen progress being made with regard to actual member participation.

Several of our members are also involved in ADC so we do appreciate the state conference for working on dates that won't conflict with their annual conference on May 15th and 16th.

As previously reported, we continue to use our weekly program on WZZA Radio along with Facebook and twitter to inform the public about NAACP national, state, and regional activities. This concludes the quarterly report of the Tri County Branch.