



Texas Association of African American Chambers of Commerce: All Business – All the Time!

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Two years ago, the Texas Association of African American Chambers of Commerce (TAAACC) formalized a relationship with the Texas Publishers Association, the network of Black newspapers across our state. We know that we cannot be successful without the reliable communication channel provided by those who are committed to improving the lives of Black Texans. We even created an award named for Richard Nelson, the publisher of Texas' first

Black newspaper, way back in 1871. We are grateful for their commitment to the work we do on behalf of Black business owners, and – especially in this digital age – we are certain of how much more effective our mission is with their support.

This year, we're taking another step in our journey to improve business opportunities for our state's 200,000+ Black-owned businesses. We have invited the members of the Texas Conference of Black Mayors to join us for TAAACC's 15th Annual Conference in Austin, September 24-25. Did you know there are over 40 Black mayors in Texas?

The men and women guiding the governments of Texas cities – from Plano to San Antonio, from Port Arthur to Forest Hills – represent a critical component in our efforts to increase opportunities. From trash bags to sidewalks, from wastewater treatment plants to squad cars, the aggregate spending of these cities can change the bottom lines of Texas' Black-owned businesses AND significantly reduce Black unemployment in our state.

If you are in business or are concerned about the plight of our state's Black-owned businesses, you should plan to attend TAAACC's conference, as well. The Texas Economic Forecast, alone — delivered by economist William Michael Cunningham – would make your attendance worth it. His presentation last year was so insightful that it sparked legislation offered – and passed – by Rep. Eric Johnson. Johnson's HB1629, addressing crowdfunding portals for small business, is a direct result of his staff's attendance at our conference in Dallas last year.

There are nearly 30 Black chambers in our state, from the Panhandle to the Gulf Coast, from Central Texas to deep in East Texas. Again, if you are concerned about Black-owned business in our state, you should make it a point to know the

women and men who work tirelessly (sometimes thanklessly) on behalf of your business. Trust me, it's rarely fun work, but it is ALWAYS rewarding. Doesn't it make sense to know the people who are working to get you more business?

TAAACC's work with state agencies and our recent sit-down with Gov. Abbott increases our optimism that we're beginning to gain support for the work we do. Many of the agencies with the biggest budgets will be present at this year's conference, and you'll have the opportunity to interact with them. Those agencies will spend BILLIONS of dollars in construction, commodities and professional services in the coming months. If you're not in Austin for the conference, you'll miss the chance to stand out from the crowd. And who knows, you might just land the biggest deal of your life!

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