

NCBM adopted, amongst its highest priorities, a telecommunications agenda that focuses on the promise and potential of economic stimulus through digital empowerment.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BLACK MAYORS



SPECIAL REPORT

Broadband

Issue 1

April 1, 2009

Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act the federal government has allocated \$7.2 billion towards broadband deployment.

Representing an unprecedented opportunity to extend broadband service to members of underserved and unserved communities, the potential benefits our communities can reap from this sizeable investment in broadband infrastructure is substantial.

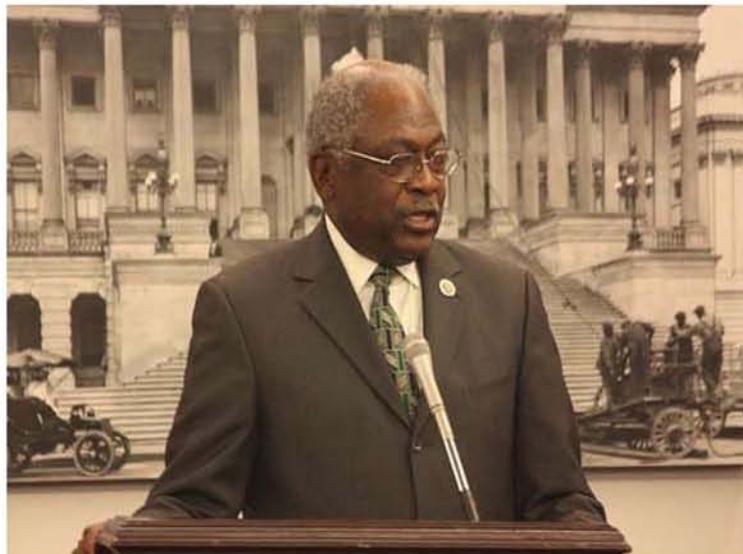
The Hill Comes to NCBM

On March 17th, the National Conference of Black Mayors convened its 2009 Legislative Policy Summit at the U.S. Capitol, gathering more than 150 member mayors and partners.

The event featured remarks from representatives of various U.S. Departments and key federal agencies that included the Census Bureau, Dept. of Labor, Dept. of Commerce and the FCC.

Nearly a dozen members of Congress spoke with NCBM, supporting the mayors with stirring remarks.

Representatives included Democratic Majority Whip Rep. James Clyburn, Judicial Committee Chair Rep. John Conyers, Congressional Black Caucus Chairwoman Rep. Barbara Lee, Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, and Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Chair Rep. James Meek. Cheryl Parker-Rose, Senior Advisor to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi also stopped by at the Speaker's request.



Stimulus Plan

NCBM was honored to welcome Democratic Majority Whip in the 110th Congress Rep. James Clyburn to the summit.

The third-ranking Democrat in the House and only the second African American to hold the position Majority Whip Clyburn entered the room to a standing ovation; acknowledgment for his leadership within the U.S. House of Representatives during the crafting of the stimulus legislation.

Taking his place behind the podium he stressed, "We want you to know that we have had you in mind as we put this together, and we will keep you in mind. We have done our part. It is now for you to do your part," noting the funding requirements for broadband in rural areas, the inclusion of women and minority business contractors, and city surety bonds and training.

"You have to go to your state legislatures, your state assemblies and senates because they will be responsible for implementation.

You must do all that you can to make sure that your constituents get the benefit," he added.

Broadband Agenda

In furthering its broadband agenda, NCBM asks its members to support:

1. Broadband mapping to identify unserved areas without broadband access;
2. Public-private partnerships and develop broadband technology plans;
3. Deployment of broadband to unserved areas and develop plans for increasing adoption and use of broadband in underserved areas;
4. Accountability and transparency in the broadband deployment process; and
5. Development of culturally relevant content for minorities.

Broadband Mapping

The best way to ensure that our communities receive the benefits of stimulus funding is to support efforts at broadband mapping, which can help get broadband deployed in unserved areas. Mapping the current availability of broadband is critical to ensuring that stimulus money is used wisely.

Public-Private Partnership

While financial support and leadership from the federal government is important, state and local governments have the best understanding of what their communities need, and how broadband can best stimulate their regional economies.

Technology Plan

To accomplish our goals of mapping and broadband accessibility through public-private, each state should create a "Broadband Technology Plan" that outlines how it would use NTIA/RUS stimulus grant funds to meet the goals of ensuring deployment and broadband availability in all unserved areas.

Joint Center Policy Discussion



Ralph Everett, President & CEO of the Joint Center for Political & Economic Studies led panelists through discussions on how to effectively confront the opportunities and challenges facing our cities and towns, reverse the current economic downturn and build the most direct path to creating jobs and stimulating our local economies; highlighting how broadband infrastructure and advanced communication technology are key tools to economic success within minority communities.

Broadband and new infrastructure discussion included many of the nation's top opinion leaders including:



• FCC General Counsel Paula Michele Ellison



• Internet Innovation Alliance Co-Chair Larry Irving



• Connected Nation COO Mark McElroy



• One Economy's Dr. Nicol Turner Lee

Message from President Hudson

"NCBM mayors will be the leaders in the effective implementation of stimulus funding. When you give us opportunity and dollars, we know where to put it and how to put it to work in our communities," said NCBM President Mayor Heather Hudson of Greenville, Mississippi.

And with those words the mayors let it be known that they intend to play a major role in not only leading their towns and cities through these harsh times, but ensuring that their constituents are prepared to lead in the world of tomorrow with NCBM setting the course.

Next Steps

This was about connectivity. This was about showing our membership and potential business partners what we can do when we come together. This is productive change. Change without a plan is not successful.

We have people in this room today who can put together a strategic plan as to how we change the demographic, so that those who are underserved become served. In being the voice of 40 million people, we will be effective.

This agenda and these beliefs will be used to draft more detailed letters, resolutions and filings that the mayor's are prepared to bring back to the Hill and to the doorstep of the White House.



NCBM Executive Director Vanessa R. Williams

Broadband Challenges

The digital disparity that currently afflicts a number of our communities is two-fold: (1) many low-income families do not have access to affordable Internet via a high-speed broadband connection at home, and (2) we lack culturally relevant content & quality programs.

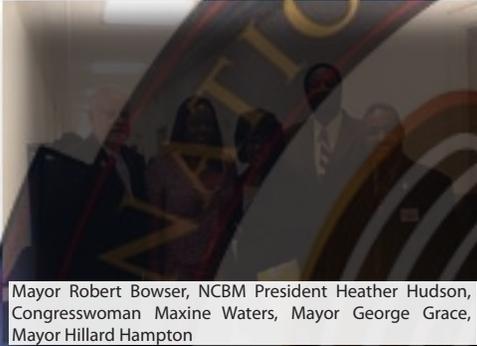
Broadband Opportunities

Minority buying power, prior to the economic downturn, was one of the strongest factors driving the nations economy. Blacks, particularly the younger generation have been and will continue to be some of the earliest and best adopters of digital technology.

The combination of these factors brings unparalleled opportunity as minority consumers and entrepreneurs alike position ourselves to utilize our economic power and creative ingenuity to become leaders in the digital economy.



NCBM Executive Director Vanessa Williams, Mayor Hillard Hampton, Mayor George Grace, Democratic Majority Whip James Clyburn, NCBM President Heather Hudson, Mayor Robert Bowser



Mayor Robert Bowser, NCBM President Heather Hudson, Congresswoman Maxine Waters, Mayor George Grace, Mayor Hillard Hampton



CBC Chairwoman Congresswoman Barbara Lee



Congresswoman Laura Richardson



NCBM Executive Director Vanessa Williams, Mayor John Marks, CBC Foundation Chair Congressman Kendrick Meek, NCBM President Heather Hudson



HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan



Congressman John Conyers



Congresswoman Sheila Jackson-Lee



United Waters Director of External Affairs Addison Simpson, EmPower Consumers Spokesperson Daryl Bassett



Cheryl Parker-Rose, Senior Advisor to Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi



Congressman Donald Payne



CBC Foundation Chair Congressman Kendrick Meek



United Waters Vice-President of External Affairs Edmund DeVeaux, NCBM Executive Director Vanessa Williams, United Waters President Contract Services Segment Tom Brown