

# In the News

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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## EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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## Message from the Mayor

### Remembering the Life and Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Last week, our city took time to remember Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a great man who helped change our country. Dr. King struggled for years to achieve equality for all people. A visionary, pragmatist, and a coalition builder, he fought on behalf of citizens around the country. Most importantly, he challenged us. Dr. King truly was the biblical example of a good leader. He was "a servant of all."

For 18 years, our city has celebrated Dr. King for his service and commitment to our nation. In celebration of his life's work, our city came together through a variety of activities.

We started the day with the United Planning Organization's annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Breakfast. I presented our city's Martin Luther King Jr. Community Service Award to Vision DC, an organization that, among other worthwhile activities, has created a vast network of volunteers, corporate supporters, and partnerships with local social service agencies to provide free school supplies and school clothing to children in need.

The spirit of our celebration continued with the Citywide Observance of the Birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. at the University of the District of Columbia where I presented two *Living the Dream* Awards.

Bread for the City received an award for providing services to the poor and homeless in the District for nearly 30 years. While Bread for the City has met the needs of many who would have otherwise gone hungry, it has also provided a vehicle for people committed to service to put their talents to use. Bread for the City is an exemplary organization and well deserving of this award.

I presented another award to Lawrence Guyot, an Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner, who has been active in the fight against racism and for income equality and statehood for the District. He currently conducts leadership training for the Columbia Heights Development Corporation, Operation Understanding, AmeriCorps, and Georgetown University.

Our community came together again at the annual Ward Eight Martin Luther King Jr. Parade complete with floats, cars, marching bands, and civic and community organizations.

Thousands of citizens from all around the city volunteered over the Martin Luther King holiday weekend for community service projects coordinated by the DC Commission on National and Community Service. The commission works year-round to strengthen and promote the District of Columbia's spirit of service through partnerships, national service, and volunteerism. This year, we were honored that Mrs. Laura Bush volunteered her time shelving books at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library.

Dr. King's dream wasn't a dream for just one person or one group, but a dream for all of us. It is forever a part of our shared history, and we all share in the responsibility to carry that dream forward. I hope that we continue the spirit of this incredible weekend throughout the coming year.



## AGENCY WEBSITES

[Office of Tax and Revenue](#)

[Department of Parks and Recreation](#)

[Department of Employment Services](#)

[Metropolitan Police Department](#)

[Office of Boards and Commissions](#)

[Commission on the Arts and Humanities](#)

## Community Profile Elizabeth “Betty” Pierce

Elizabeth “Betty” Pierce paraphrases Maya Angelou when she says, “Some people age and some people grow.” Betty, a mother of three and a grandmother of five, is a recently retired District resident who has committed hundreds of volunteer hours to help educate District youth.

Her passion for education and her compassion for people make Betty a gifted tutor. For over three years, she has volunteered for the Educational Program at Covenant House in Southeast DC, where she is a mentor and friend to many young people. Covenant House is a non-profit organization dedicated to serving homeless, runaway, and at-risk District youths between the ages of 16 and 21.

“There are just so many ways to give back to the community,” says Betty. “Covenant House is a place that turns no child away.”

During her one-on-one sessions with young people who are working to earn their General Education Diploma (GED), Betty teaches academic fundamentals such as English, grammar, and essay writing. Youths at Covenant House are typically apprehensive about reentering the academic arena, and Betty is able to assure them that the decision to further their education is the right one.

Recently, Betty reentered the academic arena herself as a non-traditional college student. She graduated from Trinity College in May 2002 with a degree in Human Relations. Her work with at-risk youth led her to enroll in the University of the District of Columbia’s graduate studies adult education program.

A native Washingtonian, Betty currently lives in Ward 6, where she also volunteers for DC Vote.

Betty is the January adult winner of the Mayor’s Community Service Award, sponsored by the DC Commission on National and Community Service.

If you would like to nominate a youth or an adult for the monthly award, visit [www.cnscs.dc.gov](http://www.cnscs.dc.gov) for nomination information, or call (202) 727-9461.



Elizabeth “Betty” Pierce

## Remember to File for the Earned Income Tax Credit

Tax filing season is now upon us and, believe it or not, this is good news for thousands of working families in DC. Thanks to the Federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)—and the District’s own version of the EITC—working families can get a refund of up to \$5,000 when they file their taxes.

Families raising two or more children are eligible for the EITC, if they earned less than \$34,178 in 2002. Families caring for one child are eligible, if they earned less than \$30,201. Workers without children qualify, if they earned less than \$12,060.

Put simply, a citizen’s adjusted gross income (AGI) must be less than:

- \$33,178 for filing single, or head of household, or widower (\$34,178 for married filing jointly) if you have more than one qualifying child.
- \$29,201 for filing single, or head of household, or widower (\$30,201 for married filing jointly) if you have one qualifying child.
- \$11,060 for filing single, or head of household, or widower (\$12,060 for married filing jointly) if you do not have a qualifying child.

A few years ago, the District of Columbia government created the District’s EITC, and now we are launching a campaign to make sure that families know about it. The EITC Outreach Campaign is a collaboration of government, community, business, labor, and religious groups, which include the DC Fiscal Policy Institute, DC Action for Children, Community Tax Aid, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and Ward 7 CASH.

I am particularly grateful for the contributions of Phyllis Campbell Newsome, who passed away last month. Phyllis worked on this issue with the DC Council and me to support a DC Earned Income Tax Credit. My condolences go out to her family.



## Fire Department Adds New Equipment

Last week, I gathered with a host of the District's public safety officials to celebrate a spectacular new assortment of equipment for our Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department (FEMS). I was pleased to have the opportunity to showcase six new fire engines and ten new ambulances.



New equipment for the Fire Department

What's special about the new fire engines? They are the first installment of brand new equipment that's on the way. By the end of the summer, we'll receive 20 new engines, 20 new ambulances, three new ladder trucks, and seven new command vehicles. The new ambulances will soon be equipped with "AVLs"—automatic vehicle locators—a high-tech method of letting dispatchers know which ambulances are closest to the scene of an emergency. Therefore, the use of new technology improves public safety.

Earlier this month, I described in my inauguration speech how public safety is one of three critical priorities for the coming years. Public safety encompasses crime, emergency response, quality of life, and so many other things. Public safety is a lynchpin of any strategy to improve the neighborhoods we love so much.

Last week's announcement about new FEMS equipment represents the most significant addition of heavy-duty front-line apparatus in at least two decades in the District of Columbia. I'm extremely proud of our hardworking Fire/EMS personnel, and now they will have newer and better equipment to support their heroic efforts.

The addition of the new equipment bolsters our "front-line preparedness"—and it also means our reserve fleet is in the finest shape it has ever been in. This is not only about machines—additional training is also being undertaken for our staff. For that, we should all feel safer in our city.

## Cities Search for Workable Economic Stimulus Packages

On January 21, I conducted a news briefing with Mayor John DeStefano Jr. (New Haven, CN) and Mayor Karen Anderson (Minnetonka, MN)—both National League of Cities leaders—to make an urgent plea to the federal government. Together, the three of us made the point that cities are suffering under the weight of federal mandates, and we want to work with Congress and the Bush administration to find a workable solution to the problem.

Cities around our country are suffering from the loss of billions of dollars in revenue, rising costs in healthcare and human services, and new demands resulting from the national "war on terrorism." In the District of Columbia—and in most cities across our nation—we are seeing an increase in the number of homeless individuals and families; an upturn in the crime rate; and rising unemployment. Most of this is due to a pronounced economic recession that has been with us now for nearly three years.

We want Congress and the administration to recognize that a proposal to "stimulate" the economy through the repeal of taxes on stock dividends will have a negative impact on cities and states. We will lose even more tax revenue and, in time, the dividend tax repeal will drive up the cost of municipal borrowing and increase our debt service costs. It would do little if anything to stimulate the economy, and it would shift the tax burden from those who own dividend-yielding equities to those who have the least ability to pay.

Our city's Chief Financial Officer, Natwar Ghandi estimates a \$25 million loss in revenue for the District for Fiscal Year 2004 if the dividend tax repeal becomes law.

On the other hand, the National League of Cities' plan will stimulate the economy. It is a tax stimulus plan that benefits working class Americans. It addresses the need to invest in rebuilding our schools and highways and to provide tax relief that will increase consumer spending and spur job creation.

The federal government needs to step up to the plate and become full partners with America's cities in funding the war on terrorism.

We will lobby the Congress to see that a fair and sensible tax plan goes forward—one that addresses our concerns and provides the stimulus this country needs.





## Klingle Road Update

Approximately one year ago, I announced my decision regarding the future use of the portion of Klingle Road in Wards 1 and 3 currently closed to vehicle use. I made my decision to support a bicycle/pedestrian path after having studied the costs and benefits of various proposals. I also listened carefully to public opinion on both sides of the issue.

I remain convinced that rebuilding Klingle Road for vehicle traffic is a bad idea. The minimal benefit that would result from such an expensive project cannot be justified, especially during a time when the District government is experiencing significant revenue shortfalls. A preponderance of historical evidence suggests that efforts to maintain a public highway in this location have proven costly and ill advised.

The proposal to rebuild the road for vehicle use fails basic cost-benefit analysis for at least three reasons:

**Financial costs:** The cost to District taxpayers of rebuilding this portion of the road is too high. Millions of dollars would be required to rebuild Klingle Road to meet modern safety standards and ensure that it does not wash out again.

**Negligible benefits:** The transportation benefit that might result from rebuilding Klingle Road would be minimal.

**Environmental costs:** The regional office of the National Park Service (NPS) has argued that the environment and the public "would be best served by the permanent closure and removal" of Klingle Road. An April 2000 letter from the Executive Director of the National Capital Planning Commission mentions NPS support for "non-vehicular use of the right-of-way" and "reaffirms that position relative to the federal interest in Rock Creek Park." I share the environmental concerns of our federal partners.

Finally, I should mention that, as an outgrowth of the feasibility study, DDOT will conduct an East-West Transportation Study to examine potential improvements designed to improve east-west travel options through Rock Creek Park.

As the DC Council considers this issue, I hope that it does so in the context of recognizing the transportation needs of the entire city. The millions of dollars that would be required to rebuild and maintain this small road for use by a limited number of cars would come at the expense of other transportation projects in the city. Considering its negligible to minimal transportation benefits and the environmental harm it might cause, it is hard to see how the costs of reopening Klingle could be justified.

## District Activities



Mayor Williams addresses a group of concerned citizens at the Crime Prevention Forum on January 25.



Mayor Williams volunteers with Mrs. Laura Bush at the MLK Library Child Resource Center with students from the Children's Studio School.



Murdock A. Schofield, far left, told of his diagnosis and treatment for prostate cancer during the Prostate Cancer Town Hall Meeting at the George Washington University on January 27. The panelists, including Mayor Williams, participated in educating the public on this health problem.



Mayor Williams celebrated Martin Luther King Jr. Day with schoolchildren during his ride in the Martin Luther King Day Parade on Martin Luther King Avenue in Southeast.



## Community News

- [Office of Latino Affairs Announces Community Education Grants](#)
- [New Policy has Police Patrolling with Flashing Lights](#)
- [Public Input to Help Determine Future of Downtown DC](#)

[Click here](#) to view news releases.

## Upcoming Events

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|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>01/10<br/>to<br/>03/04</b> | <b>Memorial Moments from the Black Press</b><br>Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library Windows<br>901 G Street, NW  |
| <b>02/01</b>                  | <b>DC Public Service Commission Community Hearing</b><br><b>10 am</b><br>Washington Highlands Library<br>115 Atlantic Street, SW   |
| <b>02/07</b>                  | <b>National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day Community Forum</b><br>12:30—2:30 pm (main lobby)<br>2:30—4:30 pm (Room A-5)<br>Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library<br>901 G Street, NW         |
| <b>02/09</b>                  | <b>Lunar New Year Parade</b><br>2—5 pm<br>6th and H Streets, NW  |
| <b>02/12</b>                  | <b>Public Meeting: Development Proposals for the Existing Convention Center Site</b><br>6 pm<br>Washington Convention Center<br>900 9th Street, NW   |
| <b>02/12</b>                  | <b>From Slavery to Freedom: The Role of the Black Press</b><br>Lecture by Fredrick Douglass IV<br>6 pm<br>Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library<br>901 G Street, NW                        |
| <b>02/15<br/>to<br/>02/16</b> | <b>17th Annual Black History Invitational Swim Meet</b><br>7 am—5 pm Saturday<br>9 am—4 pm Sunday<br>University of the District of Columbia<br>4200 Connecticut Avenue, NW<br>Aquatic Center |

[Click here](#) to view the Mayor's daily schedule.

