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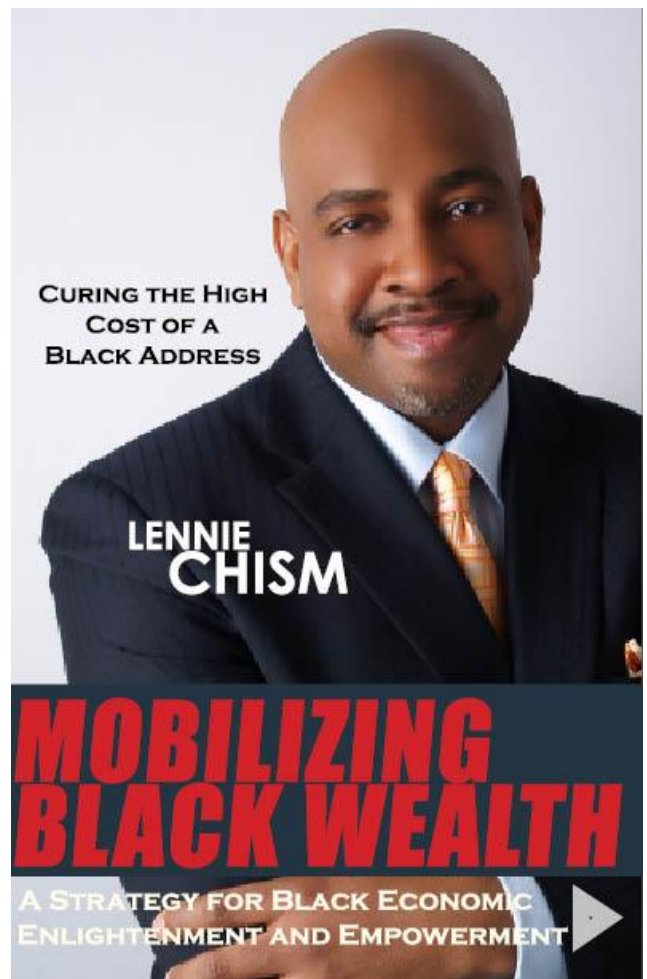
Lennie Chism, entrepreneurial activist, walks it like he talks it. In a day and age full of so-called community leaders who front, Chism rolls up his sleeves and gets busy looking out, determinedly committed to African American self-empowerment through entrepreneurship.

His track record speaks for itself. Starting out with creating a Twin Cities staple, The Black Pages. Chism started it in 1989 on a shoestring, literally going door-to-door drumming up listings to establish an autonomous network of business men and women. He never lost his love for enterprise. Nor his passion for activism. Chism feels we will never achieve parity without having an economic base. The great Dr. King felt that owning the lunch counter would be much more difficult than sitting there.

Lennie Chism, today, is executive director of Springboard Economic Development Corporation. Its focus is on capacity building as to be able to participate in economic endeavors of our community.

Chism is the author of *Mobilizing Black Wealth: A Strategy for Black Economic Enlightenment and Empowerment*. The book is a practical guide to achieving financial autonomy. Chism also is a motivational speaker and released the DVD *Ready, Willing and Able!* produced in partnership with Minnesota Department of Transportation. He has several You Tube videos, including one that smoothly teams him with topical comedian K Jay for an appearance on KFAI Fresh Air Radio.

K Jay readily says of Lennie Chism, "Lennie wants to represent the needs of the black community and clearly has a gift. I think the kind of mission Lennie is on will impact change and bring vision to unaddressed issues that affect black people. His method of operations is grassroots, different [than a] politician. He's a brother that I'm hoping can make big noise."



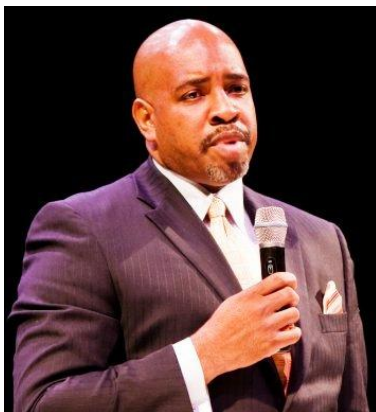
The fact is Chism is making a big noise. One that increasingly is making itself heard on behalf of black communities.

In a day and age when it is politically incorrect not to embrace the concepts of integration and assimilation, Chism is unapologetic about being an economic separatist. Not that he has anything against white people. To the contrary, he simply has a great deal of determination to see his own people succeed. "I hope to be [an] inspiration for economic parity", says Chism, "not just social acceptance." He refuses to accept the disparity characterizing black business in the U.S. And concretely understands that the business world is where black people need to continue forging significant inroads.

Chism looks at history's icons with an eye on what needs to happen in our lifetime. He sagely reflects, "W. E. B. Du Bois spoke of our greatness Malcolm X spoke of our greatness. A. G. Gaston spoke of our greatness. We all owe it to ourselves to try to achieve that. As did the other [groups in] America."

With the global economy teetering on bankrupt, with Wall Street and the White House doing an ineffectual song and dance routine of bailouts and, it's clear that black Americans must seize the reigns of our own destiny. We can ill afford to go along for whatever rollercoaster ride the stock market has in store. Black America has to take charge of its fate.

For Chism, it is not about individuals being able to slip into the mainstream. Chism states "A spoonful of integration is not enough for the rest of us". Nor is it about social program handouts. James Brown sang, "I don't want nobody to give me nothin'. Open up the door. I'll get it, myself." That may as well be Chism's mantra.



The fact is Chism is making a big noise. One that increasingly is making itself heard on behalf of black communities. Chism states "Get your black on, its ok."



IT'S ALL ABOUT WHO YOU SHAKE HANDS WITH AND WHAT YOU CAN BRING TO THE TABLE

By Orlanda Klinkhammer

Dajuan Savage knows the saying, "It's all about; who you shake hands with and show them what you can bring to the table."

Dajuan Savage with Savage Operations, LLC, is married with two sons. Mr. Savage started out by meeting Lennie Chism who is with Springboard Economic Development Corporations., working on video promos for small businesses and placing their marketing information about of companies on their web-site is how it started. Lennie Chism is committed to helping small businesses market themselves and becoming successful businesses (especially in the Disadvantage Business Enterprise program). This was a new opportunity for Dajuan; it opened a new door to a world of construction. Lennie learned what Dajuan's expertise was as a ex-marine with welding education and knowledge, Lennie did not hesitate on talking to Dajuan about the benefits of becoming a business owner, calling his business Savage Operations LLC.

Lennie took Dajuan to a company called Sterling Welding Inc., to show all the possibilities of owning your own business. Dajuan then met with Erroll Foster and Dale White from Selby Area Community Organization, which is a non-profit organization that specializes in Bidding and Estimating. Dajuan completed the training and started to see the bigger picture. All kinds of obstacles and road blocks started going through his head. How was he going to do this, how would he stay motivated to keep growing in the business. His first hurdle was to complete the certifi-

cation application his second hurdle was attending the Association of General Contractors (AGC) meeting. Lennie told him in order to start networking it was important to attend the AGC meeting. Lennie stood up and introduced Dajuan as a ex-Marine his expertise is in welding and stated he needed a mentor and put the challenge out to see who would be willing to mentor a new entrepreneur. Denny Perrier with Bolander and Sons Inc. approached Dajuan with a job opportunity and said he would be willing to show him the ropes of being in a construction company, so he started working for Bolander & Sons Inc., has showed Dajuan the ropes of the construction world aspect but as far as the business part, that is still not as clear of a picture for Dajuan. Dajuan is sure that building relationships is the key to success, so being



a part of the AGC organization will be very helpful, if given the opportunity. Also, sharing his experience in all he has learned will be helpful to others who are interested in starting a construction company and don't know how to go about doing it now Dajuan feels experienced enough to share all he knows to help them out. Dajuan also stated that if not for Lennie Chism this would still be a dream to Dajuan. Dajuan hopes to be a mentor to others just as Lennie has been to him. There are still a lot of things Dajuan needs to learn such as, who are the key players are in doing business, and he still feels the need to prove himself to others. Keep your eyes on the watch for Savage Operations LLC, great things are going to come of this new certified DBE busi-



Dujan Savage and Tim Worke Association or General Contractor Annual Event

Questions and Answers on the Bonding Assistance Program

By Rhonda Wilson, Central Region Project Director

If the DBE obtained a bid bond, but was not awarded the contract, can the DBE be reimbursed for the bonding fees?

Yes, if the bond was purchased between August 28, 2009 and September 8, 2010 if the project contained ARRA (Recovery/Stimulus) funds if the project was funded by the US Department of Transportation (DOT)

If the DBE was awarded a contract which has ARRA funds, is funded by the US DOT, and the contract was awarded before August 28, 2009 but the bond was not purchased until after August 28, 2009, is the DBE eligible for reimbursement of the bonding fees?

Yes, as long as the bond was not purchased after September 8, 2010.

How much of the project has to be funded by ARRA funds to qualify for reimbursement?

At least \$1 of the project has to be funded by ARRA funds.

If the prime contractor purchases the bond and the DBE sub-contractor is covered under that bond and the Prime charges the sub-contractor that amount or takes that amount out of their payment, can the DBE sub-contractor be reimbursed for that cost?

No, the DBE must pay for the bond directly.

Does the DBE have to be a prime contractor on the project to be reimbursed for their bonding fees?

No, the DBE can be either the prime or the sub-contractor as long as all the requirements are met.