

HEADS UP

UPDATES AND ISSUES

DIVERSITY AND
CIVIL RIGHTS



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February is African-American Heritage Month

The month of February provides a wonderful opportunity to recall and celebrate the contributions made by persons of African-American descent. Since this month is both Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass' birthdays it provides a time for reflection on the heritage of the African-American experience in the United States. The African American population in Utah is under 24,000 persons or about 1% of the total population, Extension annually serves nearly 19.5% of the population in face-to-face interactions. As a state we must do better at reaching this audience. Plan now to share with others in your community the rich heritage of African-Americans by recognizing those who have contributed to the building of this nation and dispelling racial myths evident and oft times hidden in Utah communities.

Racism Still a Major Problem in America

Few of us consider ourselves to be racist but according to a new poll many say they know people who are racist both white and black. Racism is an underlying challenge to good community relations in the United States and within the state of Utah. Researchers say that racism evolved from a time prior to the Civil War era during the days of Jim Crow to the point that today people may not even recognize or believe that racism exists in America. In a recent poll conducted by Opinion Research Corp. Forty-nine percent of African-Americans-- said racism is a "very serious" problem, while 18 percent of whites shared that view. Forty-eight percent of whites and 35 percent of blacks chose the description "somewhat serious." However, 13 percent of whites and 12 percent of blacks consider themselves racially biased. The Opinion Research poll shows that blacks and whites disagree on how each race feels about the other. Asked how many whites dislike blacks, 40 percent of black respondents said "all" or "many." Twenty-six percent of whites chose one of those replies. About half of black respondents said they had been a victim of discrimination because of their race. A little more than a quarter of whites said they had been victims of racial discrimination. Clearly we have an opportunity to open dialogue with Utahans about race and promote cultural understanding during African-American History month. The facts from the U.S. Census help to dispel some of the myths concerning African-Americans in society today. [*Racism is Alive and Well in America, CNN Report December, 2006*]

You can learn more about the African American Heritage month at:

<http://creativefolk.com/blackhistory/blackhistory.html>

Facts from the U.S. Census – “Thought You Should Know”

2.4 Million ... Number of black military veterans in the USA. More military veterans are black than any other minority group.

80%... The proportion of blacks age 25 and older that had at least a high school diploma in 2005.

2.3 Million... Number of black college students in fall 2004. This was an increase of roughly 1 million from 15 years earlier.

\$88.6 billion... Revenues for black-owned businesses in 2002 up 24% and the number of black-owned businesses up 45% since 1997.

24.9%... Poverty rate in 2005 for those reporting black as their only race. This rate down from 31.3 percent in 1985.

39.7 million... Estimated population of black residents in the USA. including those of more than one race. They make up 13.4 % of the USA population.

44%... Nationally, the number of black families contained a married-couple family.

For further U.S. Census based facts go to:

http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/007862.html