

ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
DEPARTMENT OF THE
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
George Forrest, County Administrator



Thomas F. McKay, President
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Lawrence D. Jarboe, Commissioner
Thomas A. Mattingly, Sr., Commissioner
Daniel H. Raley, Commissioner

September 25, 2006

Roz Racanello, Executive Director
Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium
PO Box 745
Hughesville, MD 20637

Dear Ms. Racanello:

It gives me great pleasure to write with my strongest support for the application of a Mini-Grant by the Unified Committee for Afro-American Contributions. I have attended previous Juneteenth celebrations; and, I can honestly say that the events are well organized and executed.

Throughout my adult life, I have been an enthusiastic participant in the public awareness campaign to recognize and respect the history and culture of African Americans. It is through this knowledge, that each of us can better understand who we are, as Americans, and find our place in society.

Juneteenth 2007 bestows on Southern Maryland a unique opportunity to enhance cultural appreciation and promote African American tourism. The Unified Committee has championed both of these worthy pursuits, most prominently in their work preserving the Drayden Schoolhouse, building the African American Monument in Freedom Park (Lexington Park), and recently, publishing the highly acclaimed book, *In Relentless Pursuit of an Education*, capturing the essence of African American education throughout the late nineteenth and much of the twentieth centuries.

Since the first Juneteenth celebration more than three years ago, the event has continued to grow and draw bigger audiences from outside Southern Maryland. Many of these attendees stay the night, stop for a meal, shop, or patronize other local tourism venues such as Historic St. Mary's City and Sotterley Plantation, before heading back home.

I encourage you in the strongest terms to grant this request for funding for this wonderful event.

Sincerely,



George G. Forrest
County Administrator

GGF:ryc
H:/Correspondence/2006/juneteenth