

Chamber to kick off Business Institute

by Sonya M. Toler

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Spurred by a third quarter in which the U.S. economy logged its highest quarterly growth in Gross Domestic Product, the African American Chamber of Commerce of Southwestern Pennsylvania announced plans to increase market opportunities for its members.

In January, the chamber will kick-off its new African American Business Institute, announced chamber President Doris Carson Williams Dec. 3 during its annual luncheon at the downtown Omni William Penn Hotel.

The institute will offer classes, workshops and one-on-one consultations. Both the University of



PHOTO BY KINNY NEELY
DORIS CARSON WILLIAMS

Pittsburgh Katz Graduate School of Business and Carnegie Mellon will assist with the effort.

While Carson's talk—in which she outlines the chamber's accomplishments for the year—is always anticipated, many of the 400 people in attendance wanted to hear from F. Michael Langley, the new chief executive officer of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, who delivered the keynote address.

The conference, a regional economic development organization, with a goal of creat-

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ing 50,000 new jobs over the next three years, said the conference will "focus on a better tomorrow for our citizens, all of our citizens."

He explained that "opportunity is all around us. It's all over this region. It hits us every day."

As an example, Langley said a popular television commercial promoting Nextel walkie-talkie cell phones has created opportunities for this region.

In the commercial, a business meeting is taking place

around a table and everyone is communicating via their cell phones.

In their discussion they decide that Pittsburgh paper is the solution to their problem.

"This creates an opportunity for enterprises to levee this multi-million dollar marketing campaign," he said, adding that the web address pittsburghpaper.com was not taken as of less than an hour before the luncheon started.

He also said the ad would air during the Super Bowl.



PHOTO BY KINNY NEELY

PARTNERS—African American Chamber of Commerce Chairman Robert Agbede presents new Allegheny Conference head F. Michael Langley with a portfolio bearing his initials and a chamber pin. Chamber President Doris Carson Williams is shown in the background.

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