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Key updates Garfield Heights progress at chamber breakfast

by C. Denise Johnson
Courier Staff Writer

It was an uplifting and bottom-line presentation that most Black business owners have longed for. The filled-to-capacity audience for this special "Power Breakfast" sponsored by the African American Chamber of Commerce of Western Pennsylvania hung on every word of real estate developer Keith B. Key Friday morning.

As he settled in behind the podium of the Rivers Club conference room, Key shared his background and preparation, which was a prime example of the sometimes-elusive "American

Dream"—from living in subsidized housing development to building one.

In fact, it was learned that when Key was awarded the Garfield Heights redevelopment contract valued at \$20 million, he was a former resident of the Garfield Heights community.

Explaining his involvement with the contract it became clear that he had no intention of doing business as usual. "As an entrepreneur, I understand that if we're getting you

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KEY

Key updates progress

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out this early in the morning, I'd better have some substantial business present!" as he began his remarks at 8 a.m.

Key detailed his transition from a banker and banking consultant to form his Columbus, Ohio-based KBK Enterprises, LLC, a real estate development concern. He also explained how KBK implements its motto "Beyond bricks and sticks."

Beyond the residential structures, plans call for a community center outfitted with the latest hi-tech amenities. "Not only will the center be computer-equipped, but we will provide a computer for the units," said Key to applause.

Additionally, KBK has worked extensively with Garfield Jubilee to ensure community partnership in the planning process and to initiate a Section 3 training program to develop qualified labor for construction jobs.

Updating the progress with the Garfield Heights Development, Key announced that KBK was awarded tax credits for Phase 2, which is an additional 45 units to complement the 90 units and community center building of Phase 1. Demolition has been completed for Phase 1 and the closing process is nearing completion in anticipation of a targeted construction start by Sept. 1.

"This is the time (for business owners) to begin telling us about their capabilities and inquire about RFPs," Key emphasized. "The timeline for this is tight—we must be done by Dec. 31, 2009."