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MAYOR

CITY OF KENNER

PRESS RELEASE

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BLACK HERITAGE FESTIVAL SET FOR FEB. 11 IN RIVERTOWN

Kenner, LA. – Black History Month will be celebrated throughout February in Kenner, with the showing of a special documentary on the Underground Railroad, a photographic display of the city's African American Heritage and a Black Heritage Festival on Feb. 11.

The photos, Kenner's African American Heritage Exhibit, will be on display every Saturday during the month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Planetarium and MegaDome Cinema in Rivertown, 2020 Fourth St.

That's also the location for the film, "Follow the Drinking Gourd," which offers some fascinating insight on how individuals escaping the South knew the proper path to take to safety. The documentary focuses on one family's escape and is narrated by actor Morgan Freeman.

The film will be presented during the festival on Feb. 11 and will be shown every hour from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The festival hours are 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Heritage Park, 2016 Fourth St.

The festival, photo display and movie are all free and open to the public, said state 5th Circuit Court of Appeal Judge Marc Johnson, a former Kenner council member, the first African American elected to the state appeal court and festival chairman.

"This is a wonderful, free event for the entire family to enjoy," said Johnson. "There will be music and food, but also an amazing opportunity to soak up the historical impact made by African Americans in our city and our country."

The festival will include local artists, musicians and performers. In addition, food and beverages will be on sale.

The event is made possible with the help of Johnson, Kenner Councilman Gregory Carroll, Jefferson Parish Councilman Mark Spears and Mayor Ben Zahn.

Spears said the festival looks as much to the future as it celebrates the past.

"The heritage festival is an opportunity for the community to come together and witness past African-American contributions and hopefully encourage future contributions as a community. African-American history is full of rich and colorful diversity, and I hope everyone takes advantage of this free event with family and friends."

Carroll agreed that the festival offers important lessons in a family-fun and friendly environment.

“I encourage everyone to attend and bring their family and friends,” Carroll said. “Many people may not be familiar with the significant impact African Americans had on the founding and growth of the city of Kenner. The education, fellowship and fun are just a few of the components the festival will offer.”

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