

Baptist Ministers' Union Negotiates With KCP&L Officials To Assist Poor And Elderly

By Audrey L.
McKinney

CALL Staff Writer

Members of the Black Ministers' Union (BMU) have been involved in a series of meetings recently to discuss a solution to the rising cost of electric bills and the effect it is having on the elderly and inner city residents.

THE CALL attended one of the meetings held at the Oak Grove Missionary Baptist church, 44th and Benton Blvd. The most recent meeting was held on July 20.

Although some options were presented to the KCP&L officials, the meeting did not resolve the dilemma as the members of BMU had hoped.

BMU members are working with Bill Dias, who owns Dias Capital Growth Corporation, a third party bill payment service. Dias and BMU members came up with a plan to use credit cards specifically for utility payments. Dias would supply the cards to the inner city churches, and the churches would distribute them.

The user would put their own money on the card, and then use the card to pay utility bills. This plan would also help to build credit because it would be reported to the credit bureau. Unfortunately, the KCP&L officials did not agree to it.

"They are currently accepting payments on a regular credit card, so why won't they allow people to use the credit card and help to raise their credit rating?" said Dias.

When THE CALL asked John Marshall, senior vice president of delivery at KCP&L about the credit card, Dias was willing to provide, he said the company did not think it was

beneficial at this time.

"We did the evaluation on it and believe that is not a project we want to do at this point in time," said Marshall. "It's not a project that is in the interest of our customers and it's not developed that significantly. There are lots of technical things we have to think about."

BMU members also request that the officials use flexible due dates that would match the persons pay date, making it easier for them to make the payment. That idea was also rejected.

What the KCP&L officials did say they are doing is putting an energy optimizer thermostat in homes. This special thermostat will go up one degree at a time every hour (but no more than three degrees). This will give a three percent reduction for every degree.

KCP&L officials have already put in 4,000 of these devices in homes. Another 15,000 are scheduled to be in place by the end of the year.

So far, the thermostats have only been placed in homes located in Grandview and Johnson County. However, ever since the last meeting BMU members and KCP&L members had been working on a deal with them. A customer can call or log on to www.kcpl.com and request an energy optimizer thermostat.

Marshall said that the thermostats help regulate energy and save consumers money.

"This is a great way to regulate energy in the home. Any customer can call and get one in their home," said

Marshall.

Dias is encouraged about the positive changes that are happening.

"After I pressed him (Marshall) at the meeting about these zip codes (Grandview and

"It just shows that as a people we can effectively change these corporations. We're going to keep negotiations open."

— John Dias
Dias Capital Growth
Corporation

Johnson County), then all of a sudden, the thermostats became possible for all KCP&L customers," said Dias. "It just shows that as a people we can effectively change these corporations."

Rev. Elijah Clark, president of the BMU, is also optimistic about the efforts.

"Negotiations are going fine. The last meeting we had they did a tremendous job of presenting to us some of the opportunities that were available through KCPL," said Rev. Clark.

Some of those opportunities include possible employment for minority contractors.

"We talked about the use of minority contractors at KCP&L. They have 170 positions open. So we're working on a deal with them about that," he said.

Rev. Clark is not getting ahead of himself. He is being cautious.

"Everything that we talked about was fruitful. But I think in order for us to determine if they are just talking we have to do what we say we're going to do. We need to send some peo-

ple in there and see what happens."

KCP&L is also involved in the weatherization program provided by the city of Kansas City. Possible participants submit forms to City Hall to see if they

qualify for this program. The problem with this according to Dias is only those on welfare or some type of government aid are receiving the help.

"People who are working but not receiving any type of aid are not receiving help with weatherization. They are still in the low income category but they get nothing," said Dias.

"We're going to keep negotiations open and see if we can progress in this area also," he added.

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MBE/WBE INVITATION

Barsto Construction, Inc.

Subcontractor/supplier bid p

Southeast Community CH

Swope Pkwy. Kansas City,

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to our office by August 9, 2

p.m. Questions call Rich

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MCCOWN CO. CONSTRUCTION

Is soliciting contractor propos

Line Baggage Screening System

Occupation is required and cer

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August 15th 2006. Plans w

viewing at the McCown Gord

Admiral Blvd. Kansas City, M

Dias Exhibit No. 1304
Case No(s) 22-0006-0317
Date 10-16-06 Rptr FF