

THE HISTORY OF THE BLACK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE – PERMIAN BASIN

THE BLACK CHAMBER OF COMMERCE-PERMIAN BASIN (BCCPB), is a non-profit organization under the Internal Revenue Code as a 501 (c) 6 status. It was chartered with the Texas Secretary of State in **1984**. The BCCPB is chartered for the seventeen county areas known as the Permian Basin, with members in Odessa, Midland, Monahans, Andrews and McCamey. The chamber itself is located in the City of Odessa and the county of Ector. The membership of the BCCPB includes individuals, businesses, clubs, churches, non-profits and corporate members. Its membership is multi-ethnic and has grown by a hundred eight (108) new members since 2003.

The BCCPB's primary objective is to promote the creation and retention of Black owned businesses in the Permian Basin area through Economic Development and to promote Black and minority Convention and Tourism. The work of the BCCPB is concentrated within the Black Communities of the Permian Basin, where it works toward the economic stability, growth and business creation in the Black community. It works on a statewide basis on legislative agendas with the Texas Association of African American Chambers.

The Black Chamber of Commerce-Permian Basin was the first in the City of Odessa to begin work on the creation of the Odessa Enterprise Zone and the Small Business Loan Program, which is funded through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, from the Department of Housing and Urban Development Block Grant (HUD). The two (2) programs foster business creation/retention as well as new jobs in Odessa's Southside community and within the city of Odessa.

During the course of each year, the Black Chamber of Commerce conducts workshops for small and minority businesses on:

- a. *How to Develop a Business*
- b. *Doing Business in the State of Texas*
- c. *Procurement with Local Government*
- d. *Financing with Local Banks*

The Black Chamber has established a Scholarship Fund for graduating seniors from Ector County High Schools. An average of three (3) scholarships at \$500 each are awarded in May each year. On the second weekend of October each year, "The Robert E. Williams Memorial Golf Tournament" is held to benefit the scholarship program. On the third Thursday of the Month, a Prayer Breakfast is held, using the selected yearly theme.

At this time, the Black Chamber is not funded in any way by the City of Odessa by the dollars that are received from the State of Texas for Economic Development and for Convention and Tourism. It relies on membership, special fund raising and corporate support. The major fund raising event started in 1986 is the annual "**Ebony Bar Awards Banquet**", held the second weekend in November. The BCCPB recognizes during this awards presentation, a male and female Black employer/business owner for their contribution to the Black community. On the last weekend of January, a Black Tie Gala a formal attired event is held.

Although named the "**Black Chamber**", the organization is comprised of Black and non-minority businesses and individual members. Its board of directors is the governing body, consisting of a President/CEO, a Vice-President, a secretary, treasurer, parliamentarian, and other board of director members. The membership in the Black Chamber is open to all businesses, organizations and individuals.

The **Black Chamber of Commerce-Permian Basin** held the first organizational meeting in **1986**, to start the Texas Association of African American Chambers of Commerce of which it is a member. It is a member of other community organizations..

The **Black Chamber of Commerce-Permian Basin** is one of twenty-seven (27) African American Chambers in Texas.

A non-profit status, 501© 3 has been received recently by the Internal Revenue Service as, the "Odessa Black Chamber Charitable Fund". This gives us the true non-profit status as a charitable organization so that businesses may donate and have a write-off to a true charity.