330 West Church Street
Post Office Box 9005
Drawer CA05
Bartow, Florida 33831

Telephone (863) 534-5901
Fax (863) 534-7626

Polk County Board of County Commissioners'

Community Relations Advisory Council

SYNOPSIS

Equal Opportunity Employer
Taking Pride in Diversity

NAME: **COMMUNITY RELATIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL (CRAC)**

PURPOSE: **Advise and assist the BoCC, various other organizations and governmental agencies in creating educational programs, projects, and/or campaigns devoted to the elimination of group prejudice, racial tension, intolerance, and all forms of discrimination in Polk County.**

CRAC COMPOSITION: **The Community Relations Advisory Council of Polk County shall be composed of twenty one (21) citizens of Polk County, appointed by the County Commissioners. Members of the Council are to be representative of the interests and needs of the people of Polk County who are African-American, Hispanic, Asian-American, or other racial minorities or physically impaired people, citizens having other interests including, but not limited to, such areas as economic development, equal employment, affordable housing, retail merchandising, management, real estate, banking and finance, and law enforcement.**

Current Information on the Community Relations Advisory Council

(As of January 9, 2007)

Commissioner Jack Myers is the present liaison from the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) and he usually attends the meetings or is represented by another Commissioner in his absence. In recent years, numerous projects and activities have been accomplished including the Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Essay Challenge and Awards Breakfast which has occurred in each of the last five years. This county-wide event has enabled the CRAC to award grants/savings bonds to students of the winning essays in Polk County Schools. The CRAC has also assisted and advised the BoCC regarding the issue of the First Amendment Display Policy for Polk County Property. In 2005, the CRAC developed the Polk County Firefighter Proactive Diversity Recruitment & Training program and assisted the BoCC with implementing the program, to increase diversity in the Fire Services Division by recruiting, providing financial incentives and training recruits to become firefighters. The program's goal is to attain a diverse firefighter workforce, which mirrors the population it serves.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS ADVISORY COUNCIL

September 27, 1996

The Community Relations Advisory Council was created in 1992. The first full appointments were effective April 1993. The Council, at the time, was composed of twenty-one (21) members representing a cross section of the community. Specifically, five (5) persons are nominated by each of the County Commissioners, six (6) persons are nominated by the clergy, five (5) representing Polk County Inter-Denominational Ministerial Alliance, one (1) representing the Lakeland Ministerial Association, one representative from each of the five (5) major NAACP Organizations, one (1) from the Polk County School Board, one (1) from the Sheriff's Department and two (2) representing the Hispanic Community and one (1) from the Asian-American Community.

The organization grew out of an agreement between representatives from the Polk County Inter-Denominational Ministerial Alliance, the NAACP, and the County Administrator. Reverend Turner was the leader and chief spokesperson. He was also elected as the first Chairperson for the group. Commissioner Nancy Caldwell is the present liaison from the board and she usually attends the meetings. She was preceded by Commissioner Marlene Young, and former Commissioners Daniel Costello. The first year was not very productive in that the Board was defining its role as well as the council members learning to work cohesively with each other.