

**The Miami Times**  
VOLUME 92 NUMBER 46 MIAMI, FLORIDA, JULY 8-14, 2015 50 CENTS



### SAFETY IN LIBERTY SQUARE

City and county in long-standing dispute over responsibility

**Police convictions difficult to come by**  
A partnership between the local NAACP and Miami State Attorney highlights a lack of police prosecution

**Pot ordinance allows \$100 fine**  
Officers will have the choice to arrest or issue a ticket for an ounce of marijuana

**Worldcenter job fair draws 500 applicants**  
Construction workers sought for first phase of project

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# Worldcenter job fair draws 500 applicants

## Construction workers sought for first phase of project

By Derek Joy  
Miami Times Writer

Episcopal Church, said Worldcenter Managing Principal Nitin R. Motwani asked his parish to get involved and host the job fair.

"Mr. Motwani sought me out, came here and discussed his thoughts on development. Please turn to **JOB FAIR 4A**

Worldcenter held its much-anticipated Job Fair at Historic St. Agnes Episcopal Church in Overtown.

The July 7 event was the beginning stage of what is expected to result in up to 10,000 construction jobs and as many as 8,000 permanent jobs over the course of the one to four year project.

Father Denrick Rolle, rector of St. Agnes

**Dozens of applicants line up for job opportunities at the Worldcenter job fair on July 7.**

—Miami Times photo Derek Joy



## Fair provides potential opportunities

### JOB FAIR

continued from 1A

I like what he said, the opportunity for employment and training. I think that is important," said Rolle. "Employment and training is [sic] important because you offer a space for 100 jobs, but if you offer no opportunity for people to be equipped for the job, then you have unemployment."

Motwani cited two driving forces behind his company's \$1.7 billion project that will include apartments, condominiums and a mall with Bloomingdales and Macy's as anchors tenants: "We want to support the local community and we want to benefit. Those are the two things," he said, while noting that his company's effort is designed to exceed the agreed specifications stipulated by the Southeast Overtown/Park West CRA.

Groundbreaking is expected to begin in August or September at Northeast Sixth Street to 11th Street, and from Northeast Second Avenue to Miami Avenue, where Phase I is located. Phase II comes after the Miami-Dade County Commission gives approval for a Community Development District.

Onlookers at the job fair marveled at the turnout. An estimated 500 applicants stood in line, awaiting their turn to be admitted. Tuesday's job fair for the construction development phase of the project prioritized residents living within the Southeast Overtown/Park West and Omni Community Redevelopment areas, the Overtown community, and then priority zip codes within the City of Miami and Miami-Dade County.

The first 100 numbers were given out, more followed as applicants complicated the process and exited. The development group seeks to hire for positions that include plumbing, carpentry, concrete, painting, general labor and more.

Some people grew tired of waiting.

"I haven't gotten a number yet.



—Miami Times photo Derek Joy

### Miami Commissioner Keon Hardemon interacts with residents at the Worldcenter job fair on July 7.

I got here about 10 a.m. I need this job because I've been unemployed for seven months. My wife is pregnant with our fourth child. A job would really help now," said Mark Blake, a native of Kingston, Jamaica, who resides in Coconut Grove.

Another job seeker, Revaughn Gregory, who resides in the Shadowlawn area, was hoping to land a construction job in the process, said, "It's hard being young and unemployed."

According to Henry Crespo, whose company, The Relocation and Development Firm, coordinated the job fair, the application process will ultimately lead to about 300 hires.

"These jobs will pay from \$11.53 per hour to \$12.83 per hour, depending on whether or not they have insurance," Crespo said.

The job fair met the approval of city of District 5 Miami Commissioner Keon Hardemon and chairman of SEOPW CRA.

"My community needs jobs, jobs and enhanced wages. In this deal they get that. This is the first ever development in this district that offers that," said Hardemon as he interacted with applicants. "None of the other developments are paying a living wage. They're paying the minimum wage. People can't live on \$8.05 per hour. The wage being paid here is good for a family man or woman."

Other partners on the job fair include Miami Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA), the Miami-Dade Chamber, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Mt. Olivette

MBC, St. Johns MBC, Temple MBC and Greater Israel Bethel PBC.

The job fair saw CareerSource South Florida -- along with four Worldcenter subcontractors -- on hand to accept applications in the construction trades. They were HJ foundation Inc., Gonzalez and Sons Equipment Inc., Baker Concrete Construction and Liberty Equipment Supply.

On the second-largest urban development in America, Keon Hardemon's uncle, Roy Hardemon, considered another perspective.

"These are construction jobs. Construction jobs are temporary. All Blacks are not hammer and nails people," said Roy Hardemon, chairman of the Miami-Dade County Community Development Board.

Miami-Dade Commissioner Audrey Edmonson, who attended the job fair, was happy that Miami Worldcenter's developers followed through with the commitment in helping to support economic opportunities by hosting the first job fair.

"Today, almost 500 residents took part in the process of what will be the first of many for one of the largest developments in the history of Overtown," said Edmonson in a statement. "I had the opportunity to speak to many of the applicants that were there and saw firsthand the ongoing need for employment in our community. I will continue to work for you today so that our community will have a better tomorrow."