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Affordable, Fair Housing Takes Center Stage in South Mississippi

Updated: May 8, 2007 08:43 AM

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Leaders from around the state and across the nation made the trip to South Mississippi Monday to discuss fair housing. The Gulf Coast Fair Housing Center held its third annual fair housing conference in Biloxi. The title of the conference was "Our Challenge, Our Commission."

"When we established the fair housing center here on the Gulf Coast several years ago, we recognized that there were still tremendous issues that still existed among African-Americans, also with people with disabilities. We did studies that showed 60 to 70 percent of the time parents with children were discriminated against," says Christine Woodell, board chair with the Gulf Coast Fair Housing Center.

Woodell says there is a great need for affordable and fair housing on the coast.

"Even before the storm, there were certainly issues with discrimination based on race, based on ethnicity, sex and disability. Since the storm and our critical housing shortage that we have, obviously these have all been exacerbated and there is a tremendous issue in finding

affordable housing with people with moderate incomes," says Woodell.

That's why leaders with the fair housing center called on a national advocate to help.

Gary Flowers is the CEO of the Black Leadership Forum out of Washington, D.C. He says equal opportunity in housing is long overdue.

"We intend to connect the dots, federal, state and local and private interests, to say that in America what distinguishes our nation from other nations is that we provide for our people. So to the extent that our people are not being provided for, we are acting in an un-American posture. We cannot afford to have people 20 months after a natural disaster still living in trailers because of red tape and bureaucracy," says Flowers.

For more information on Mississippi's housing options, visit www.mshomecorp.com

By Elise Roberts



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