

Operation Clean-up

The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in Memphis has begun Operation Clean-up, a campaign for volunteers to remove graffiti and clean up trash throughout the city. Collaborating with the City's Division of Community Enhancement, local law enforcement, the Memphis Regional Chamber, the Black Business Association, recording companies, and area churches, SCLC will continue to host a series of Saturday morning clean-up events. By the end of July 2009 the goal is to address all the areas that the Division of Community Enhancement designates for clean up.

"There are two national conventions coming to Memphis in August and September," reports Reverend Dwight Montgomery, President of the Memphis Chapter of SCLC. "We host the national SCLC convention at the beginning of August; the National Baptist Convention comes to Memphis around Labor Day. Together with officials at the Chamber and the BBA and other organizations, we believe Memphis has a tremendous opportunity to showcase our city this summer."

If figures from last year's SCLC convention in New Orleans are any indication, Reverend Montgomery may be understating the case. Over fifteen thousand delegates are reported to have attended the four-day event. The National Baptist Convention projects a similarly impressive number of visitors to Memphis in September.

"We want to send people home with great word-of-mouth advertising about Memphis and have them tell their colleagues and friends what an attractive city we have. We hope to draw more tourists and possibly other business to Memphis. Now, we need volunteers to help spruce up our city," encourages Eddie Batey, SCLC Board member and Director of Memphis Leaders at MUS.

To significantly increase youth involvement in Operation Clean-up, a new incentive has been put in place. Those who get involved in the graffiti removal campaign will receive a ticket to attend a music concert free of charge. SCLC has partnered with local rap artists through Reality Records and Collection Plate Records to provide a series of positive rap concerts. Youth participation in helping their community results in a free pass to a concert.

"After the departure of convention delegates," reflects Montgomery, "we want to have a better physical environment and more young people involved in community service."

Clean-up campaign dates:

February 21 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. in Jackson Ave/Watkins Ave area
(Convene at 8:30 a.m. at Northside High School located at
1212 Vollintine Ave., 38107)

March 21 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. in Jackson Ave./Thomas Ave. area
(Convene at 8:30 AM, location TBA)

For additional information call the Division of Community Enhancement at 901 576-4711 or Reverend Dwight Montgomery at 901 488-4798.