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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **HOUSTON AREA BLACK COMMUNITY LEADERS COLLABORATE TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY ISSUES**

**HOUSTON, TX** -- Houston area Black businesses, professionals and advocacy organizations are joining forces at the inaugural Houston Black Leadership Forum, Thursday, February 10<sup>th</sup> to discuss key issues in the community and allow participants and guests the opportunity to network.

“The goal is to advocate for black-owned businesses to grow and prosper,” Houston Citizens Chamber of Commerce (HCCC) President, Eric Lyons said. “We hope to discuss a variety of issues including business growth and how to not only impact yourself, but also impact the community.”

Conceptualized by HCCC Chairman, Carroll Robinson, The Leadership Forum will take place at The United Way of Greater Houston and is hosted by the Houston Citizens Chamber of Commerce and the National Black MBA Association and sponsored by Who’s Who in Black Houston.

National Black MBA Association (NBMBA) Houston chapter president, Carl McGowan, has stressed the importance of Houston leaders serving as the foundation and cornerstone in maintaining a thriving community.

“We as organizations are all committed to improving the quality of life in our communities,” McGowan said. “This level of collaboration is huge step forward in our collective progress.”

### **Confirmed panel guests include:**

Houston Citizens Chamber of Commerce – Eric R. Lyons, President & CEO  
The National Black MBA Association, Houston Chapter – Carl McGowan, President  
The Houston Lawyer’s Association – Antoy Bell, President Elect  
The Houston Medical Forum- Dr. Garfield Johnson- President  
The Houston Area Urban League- Judson W. Robinson III, President & CEO  
American Association of Blacks in Energy, Houston Chapter – Terry Stringer, President  
The Across the Track PAC – James Donatto Sr., Founding Member  
National Society of Black Engineers – Johnny Grant, HAE Chair 2010-2011  
Houston Real Estate Association- Courtney Johnson-Rose, President  
NAACP- Rev. DZ Cofield, President  
The National Association of Black Accountants – Gene Padgett  
Texas Black Expo – Jerome Love, President  
National Association of African American HR Professionals-Darryl James, President  
100 Black Men (Metropolitan Houston Chapter)

For additional information visit [www.hccoc.org](http://www.hccoc.org) or contact HCCC President Eric Lyons at 832.350.4222.

### **About the Houston Citizens Chamber of Commerce**

Since 1935, the Houston Citizens Chamber of Commerce has served as an advocate for African-American business owners and professionals in the Houston area. Seventy-five years later, the organization's mission and vision has flourished, reflecting the needs and growth of its members. HCCC has provided value to members, area businesses and the community and has remained committed to assisting African-American businesses succeed within the local community.

With much of the nation's attention focused on the economic state of the country, HCCC has kept the needs of black business owners on the forefront, proving itself to be a premier organization focused on the prosperity and growth of Black entrepreneurs. Today, the Chamber remains focused on how to impact and provide advocacy, awareness and access to African-American businesses within the community.

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