



PRESS RELEASE

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WHITESBORO RISES: UNION POWER MEETS BLACK HERITAGE

**Carpenters' Union and Historic Black Town Forge Bold Partnership
for Jobs, Training, and Justice**

WHITESBORO, N.J. - Whitesboro, New Jersey, is writing a new chapter in its centuries old story, one built on union strength, Black heritage, and economic justice. Founded in the late 1800s under the vision of Congressman George H. White as a safe haven for Black families, Whitesboro has weathered decades of disinvestment. Now, it's rising again, and this time, the comeback is fueled by a groundbreaking alliance between labor and community.

The Eastern Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters (EASRCC) and the Whitesboro Historic Preservation Project (WHPP) have forged a bold partnership to bring apprenticeship pipelines, training programs, and high-paying union careers directly into this historic Black town. This isn't charity, it's power. It's about reclaiming the right to build our communities, our way, and to secure the economic future that our parents and grandparents were too often denied.

"This isn't about handouts, it's about power," says Shirley Green, founder of the Whitesboro Historical Foundation, and a lead partner of the Whitesboro Historic Preservation Project. "For too long, we built other people's towns and watched our own crumble. Now, with union muscle and our heritage combined, we're building a future that belongs to us."



Led by EASRCC Assistant Executive Secretary-Treasurer Anthony Abrantes, the Carpenters' Union is funding debt-free apprenticeship programs that allow local residents to earn while they learn. This means real skills, real paychecks, benefits, and long-term union contracts, the foundation of stable, middle-class lives.

"This partnership is a blessing and a model for the state," says Minister Elorm Ocansey, a project partner. "It honors the sacrifice of our past while investing boldly in Whitesboro's future."

"Project Labor Agreements could be the single biggest tool to ensure that everyone benefits from public investments, especially when paired with real, enforceable set-asides for minority and women-owned businesses," Minister Ocansey added. Equity studies have already demonstrated a pressing need for these provisions. Without them, too many residents are shut out of opportunities in their own communities.

That's why defending and expanding PLAs isn't just about jobs, it's about justice. They create a structure where public dollars cycle back into local economies, where community members are prioritized for work, and where diversity in the trades isn't just promised, it's built into the contract.

This August, as Black leaders from across the state gathered for a Statewide Meeting for the Black Agenda at St. Matthew's Baptist Church in Williamstown, Whitesboro stands as proof that union strength and Black heritage together can change the economic future of an entire community.

"We are not just preserving American history here. We are rewriting it with union paychecks, community pride, and Black heritage restored. The grand floor of our public debate should be filled with voices like Whitesboro's and similar communities demanding that every public dollar spent on building our state builds our people too." Said Felicia Simmons, another project partner. The future of justice in New Jersey looks like this: fair contracts, strong unions, and a heritage that not only survives but thrives.



About

To preserve Whitesboro's legacy and future, the Whitesboro Historic Preservation Project seeks to unify the community of Whitesboro, New Jersey, in the pursuit of self-reliance and good self-governance. For more information, please visit preservewhitesboro.org.

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