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Service Attendant Kenneth Trammel, Utility A Leader Arthur Winston, Mechanic Steve Clay and Mechanic Renee Navarre Mclin, enjoy the Juneteenth Celebration barbeque.



PHOTOS: ARLENE LIM

Metro's Juneteenth Event Celebrates 'Unity In the Community'

By PERRY WILLIAMS

(June 21, 2005) Metro employees gathered, June 16, for the third Annual Juneteenth Celebration and Barbecue. The program was sponsored by the African American Employee's Association (AAEA) and held at the Arthur Winston Division.

Juneteenth, or June 19, 1865 is considered to be the date marking the ending of slavery in America. Rumors were spread regarding freedom, but the announcement was not formally heard until Union General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston, Tex., to read General Order No. 3.

The theme for this year's Juneteenth celebration was entitled "Unity in the Community." Organizers decided it would be a formal expression to celebrate the diversity of Metro's employees and customers.

After months of planning, Arthur Winston Division 5 was chosen because of the history behind the name. Frank Willis, Diversity and Economic Opportunity representative, said, "It is only fitting that we have this event here, because it is a historical event tied to a historical division."



The Metro Choir entertained the crowd with four music selections.

' A glorious occasion '

The program opened with a prayer by Transit Security Sgt. John Davis. He began by saying, "It's a glorious occasion and I'm glad to be a part of it."

Bus Operator Mary Johnson sang the National Negro Anthem and said she felt really good about the program being held to promote awareness among all people. "I'm honored because this is a beautiful holiday and I don't think many people are aware of its historical significance."

The program included traditional drumming accompanied by other instruments played by Senior Contract Administrator DonCosta Seawell and friends.

The Metro Choir entertained with four selections that encouraged crowd participation and celebration.

"We want to make sure everyone is having a good time and enjoying the music," said Digital Technician Keith Hanson.



Employees attending the Juneteenth Celebration enjoy the entertainment.

Plans monthly events

A key factor to making this event a success was the communication between different divisions. The AAEEA plans to host monthly events to inspire in employees an appreciation for all cultures.

"Ten years ago we had regular events and guests such as Congresswoman Maxine Waters who came out to attend this program," said George Parks of the County Counsel's office. "We're building it up to make sure we reach out to all the community through

Metro's Juneteenth celebration was an overall success and enjoyed by many in attendance.

"This is the best we've had yet," said South Bay General Manager Dana Coffey. "Programs like this one really show that Metro has many talented individuals."



South Bay Sector General Manager Dana Coffey and others wait in line to get their plate of Texas-style barbeque.