

Mayor Masters heads to Africa December 8 at invitation of president of Senegal

Mayor Thomas A. Masters has been invited to attend the World Festival of Black Arts and Cultures (cq) in Dakar, Senegal, from Dec. 10-17, 2010, as part of a high-powered national delegation of some 200 black mayors, state legislators, cultural leaders and academics.

The all-expenses-paid trip is being coordinated through the National Conference of Black Mayors and funded by the government of Senegal. Mayor Masters is one of only 20 black mayors who were invited, and one of two from Florida who are scheduled to attend.

For only the third time in 50 years, the World Festival of Black Arts and Cultures is an unprecedented gathering of black artists, writers, filmmakers, academics, scientists and others in many fields from around the world who are convening for a historic celebration of the African diaspora. The first festival was held in 1966, the second in 1977 and only the third, in 2010. It is being organized by the African Union.

Mayor Masters and members of the U.S. delegation will have a private audience with Maitre Abdoulaye Wade, president of the Republic of Senegal, and other African leaders. Other events include roundtable discussions and forums; concerts and sports activities. A draft program is attached.

Other attending mayors include those from Richmond, Va.; Inkster, Mich.; Grambling, La.; and Eatonville, Fla. U.S. delegates also include representatives of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, the National Museum of African Art at the Smithsonian Institution and several Ivy League universities. Thousands of delegates from 80 countries are expected.

Mayor Masters said his involvement will give Riviera Beach an international connection and opportunity.

“Perhaps we can develop some economic trade, cultural exchanges, investment opportunities — there’s a wealth of potential here,” he said. “I am so excited at the possibilities. This is a real plus for the City and honor for me.”

The Mayor leaves for New York on December 8, 2010, for the flight to Senegal. The festival’s official website is www.blackworldfestival.com.

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