



NCNW state conference begins

By Jason Niblett, newseeditor@laurelleadercall.com

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— Mississippi's oldest section of the National Council of Negro Women is hosting sections from three states this weekend.

The Laurel section, chartered in 1935, is hosting 155 people from 16 counties and parishes from Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana. The event was hosted in Natchez last year and will be held in Jackson in 2010. It has been 20 years since Laurel hosted the event.

"Twenty years is too long," Laurel Section President Margarett Johnson said. "Hosting the conference is an event we really want to make happen again. We are the oldest section in Mississippi and we want other sections to come back."

Johnson said the Laurel section placed a bid to host the conference two years ago.

"This is a big event for us," she said. "This is something we've been looking forward to since 2007. We're excited about it."

Although the main event is taking place at the Laurel Hotel and Conference Center, the Laurel section also has another special location planned for tour. They have a newly-renovated building that is now home to their section.

"It's so important we come here for the state conference this year because this is your building," NCNW Miss. State Convener Mary J. Burciaga told group members during a planning session a few months ago. "So many sections across the state can not say we have our own building where we can meet. You can show other sections across Mississippi and Alabama what can be done. Last year when I came we couldn't meet in this building."

Plans for the weekend include both events for youth and adults, a gala, inspirational speakers, and plenty of eating.

"We usually have a grand time," Burciaga said. "It's really good development in leadership for our young folk for leading in the future. Make sure the young folks are involved in all of the aspects of the conference."

Johnson said attending state conferences is like meeting old friends and family. She said she can't wait for other sections to come to Laurel for the next "reunion."

"It's exciting. We meet friends for life," Johnson said.

Mayor Melvin Mack proclaimed April 3-5 as National Council of Negro Women Weekend in Laurel.

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Photos

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