

**1st Holy Family Groundbreaking Celebration
Holy Family Site - February 19, 2011
Mayor Van Johnson Remarks**

Good afternoon and thanks to each of you for joining us as we break ground to commence renovation of one of the city's most notable and historic landmarks located in the heart of the African-American community.

Approximately 27-months ago, the Apalachicola City Commission learned of a \$2 million dollar grant from the Department of Elder Affairs for the construction of Senior Citizen Centers throughout the state.

We were told that the state would look favorable upon an application from Apalachicola because we didn't have a dedicated center within our community.

The commission had an intense, but brief debate over use of the building - which we had purchased a few years earlier from the Catholic Dioceses.

In the end, we decided the facility was large enough to provide a dedicated place where our seniors could gather, which was the purpose of the grant and space to display information about local African-American History, Arts, and Culture.

For decades, this building and its purpose shined as a beacon of light - ministering to both the soul and intellect of the local African-American community.

Today we begin the process of resuscitating this old facility - breathing new life into its hallowed halls and filling its rooms with African-American history and the laughter of our seniors.

For this, we have to thank our local legislative delegation, the Florida Department of Elder Affairs and our City Administrator Ms. Betty Taylor-Webb and the Apalachicola community for supporting this important endeavor.

We are excited about the future of this building and its new role in the community - we believe that this undertaking represents the best of what local government can do to enhance the quality of life of its citizens.

Again thank you for taking time to help us celebrate this important occasion - at the end of this year we'll be inviting you back for the ribbon cutting.