

RebuildGovernment

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CITY AND COUNTY CITIZENS JOIN TO LAUNCH REBUILD GOVERNMENT Follow Mayor Wharton's Lead

MEMPHIS, TN, DECEMBER 14, 2009 – Today marks the launch of Rebuild Government, a new organization of City and County citizens created to support the work of the Memphis and Shelby County Charter Commission as it builds a new government for our community.

Earlier this year then Shelby County Mayor AC Wharton began his “Listening Tour” to hear what County and City residents had to say about the possibility of merging the City of Memphis and Shelby County governments. At the conclusion of his tour, Wharton proposed a broader, county-wide conversation about what it might mean for the community’s future if our community had a new government. A broad coalition of community leaders came forward to answer that call and formed Rebuild Government.

“Now is the time to have a conversation – county-wide,” said Brian Stephens, a Cordova resident, community leader, and an organizer of Rebuild Government. “This is an historic opportunity for each and every citizen to join in the discussion as we consider what a high-performing government could be and what it could do to improve our neighborhoods and our future. The Charter Commission is starting from the ground up with a blank slate, and Rebuild Government gives all of us a voice in its work and the opportunity to be actively involved in this conversation.”

Over the next eight months, as the Charter performs its duties, Rebuild Government will lead a grassroots educational program to make sure the public has the opportunity to get involved in improving local government. The organization today named 33 Co-Chairs who represent a diverse cross-section of community and business leaders from across Memphis and Shelby County. Additional members will be named in coming weeks.

“We will be hosting hundreds of meetings in homes throughout Memphis and Shelby County over the next several months to engage citizens in conversation and ask what they want in a new government,” said Darrell Cobbins, local businessman and Rebuild Government co-chair. “We

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invite anyone who would like to learn more and have a voice in this process to contact us to schedule a meeting. Our mission is to simply open the lines of communication and take note about what people want in the form and function of a new government.

“We are not asking anyone to be for or against anything. We are asking everyone to be part of this unprecedented conversation about what our government can be and how we can eliminate inefficiency, waste, duplications and the bureaucratic red tape that is an obstacle to economic growth.”

This fall, a Charter Commission was appointed to write a proposed Charter for a new Metropolitan Government. City and County residents will have the opportunity to vote November 2, 2010 on the Commission’s Charter. Rebuild Government is here to provide the Commission input and feedback from the greater voting community.

Rebuild Government will be hosting a launch event at the Shelby Farms Visitor Center, Monday, December 14, from 10:30-11:30 AM. As part of the event, Rebuild Government will unveil a new video about its work and a Web site, www.rebuildgovernment.org, where people can find information and ask questions.

The following is a list of Rebuild Government Co-Chairs to date:

Fenton Wright	Al Bright	Shemica Gautreaux
Brian Stephens	Duncan Williams	Steve Ross
Blair Taylor	Luke Yancey	Calvin Anderson
Elliot Perry	Fred Jones, Jr.	Roby Williams
Emily Trenholm	Kristi Stanley	Pat Carter
Bobbi Gillis	Chirsty Utterback	Darrell Cobbins
Laura Adams	Beth Flanagan	Paul Young
Jeff Moder	Aubrie Kobernus	Nate Essex
Tomeka Hart	Brian Elder	Rikki Boyce
Eric Bolton	Gary Shorb	Sutton Mora Hayes

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