

TECHNOLOGY

HARLEM COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS

Closing the Digital Divide Part I

By: William A. Rogers

I first started writing about Doug Frazier and Stuart Reid in 2007. I was interested in the work that they were doing which was focused on closing the Digital Divide in urban communities. I have been an advocate of the empowerment opportunities that could be made possible with the access of information technology for many years.

In 2000 as the director of Urban Policy at The City College of New York, my office coordinated one of the first

major technology conferences. "Teach Harlem" was the title of the two-day conference. In the conference program I wrote "The Digital Divide will be the civil rights movement for the 21st century."

I believed then and I know now that the greatest form of discrimination in the information age will be the lack of access to information technology, no matter who you are or where you are. When I wrote my first article on Doug and Stu it was at the

suggestion of Angela Harden the general manager of Harlem's WHCR 90.3 FM.

Angela informed me that two brothers had agreed to make WHCR a live internet streaming radio station (www.whcr.org). When I first interviewed Doug and Stu their office was in the Bronx. They had been the team that ran cable lines in the South Bronx projects at a time when Cablevision would not touch that area.

They also ran cable lines in most of Newark New Jersey.

Their work in Newark caught the eye of the Honorable Percy E. Sutton who was looking for Black cable contractors who were skilled enough and brave enough to run his cable companies' lines in Howard Beach and other areas in Queens.

Mr. Sutton was so impressed with their work that he used his influence to help them obtain City, State and Federal licenses allowing them to provide: telephone service throughout New York State and broadband telecommunications and information services throughout the five boroughs of New York City.

A federal license to provide video programming throughout New York City and Westchester County, a license to provide wireless broadband service nationally, and a license from the U.S. Department of the Treasury certifying their company Digital Divide Partners (www.ddpny.org) as a Community Development Entity (CDE).

A CDE is authorized by the I.R.S. to utilize New Market Tax Credits in their efforts to raise capital for investment in local community-based companies that provide technology awareness, education

and access initiatives as well as other services for underserved urban communities.

This means that a Harlem based company run and operated by two Harlem based brothers has the ability and authority to do everything that Spectrum, Cablevision and Verizon can do.

Doug Frazer's response to my question on DDP's strategy for using their skills and authorization to provide the same services provided by major broadband service companies was: "We can't compete with them", but we can give our services free to underserved communities.

The ability to pro-

vide a free phone service, free Wi-Fi and internet services to those who cannot afford to pay for this technology is a major step towards closing the digital divide in Harlem and urban communities across the country.

In the second part of this dialog I will focus on examples of how receiving free Wi-Fi and broadband services from DDP has improved the quality of life for many individuals living in and visiting Harlem, which is very important; because no matter who you are, if you are on the negative side of the Digital Divide in today's world you are in trouble.

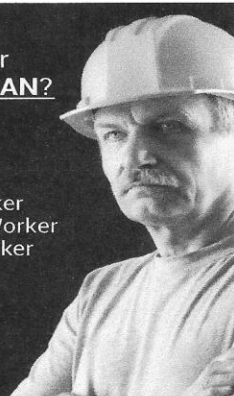
Were you an **INDUSTRIAL** or **CONSTRUCTION TRADESMAN?**

- Machinist
- Boilermaker
- Pipefitter
- Insulator
- Millwright
- Electrician
- Steel Mill Worker
- Shipyard Worker
- Power Plant Worker
- Industrial Plant Worker
- Maintenance Worker
- Railroad Worker

AND recently diagnosed with **LUNG CANCER?**

You and your family may be entitled to a **SIGNIFICANT CASH AWARD**

Call for your risk free consultation
855-241-7656



SUDOKU ANSWERS

5	7	2	8	6	9	4	3	1
8	9	6	4	1	3	5	2	7
4	1	3	7	2	5	9	8	6
7	3	1	2	4	6	8	5	9
2	6	5	3	9	8	7	1	4
9	4	8	5	7	1	2	6	3
6	5	9	1	8	7	3	4	2
1	8	4	9	3	2	6	7	5
3	2	7	6	5	4	1	9	8