



Volume 13, No. 1

 Tonight: Partly cloudy with a low of 26

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Arts and Lifestyle

AT&T celebrates Black History Month

Published Wednesday, February 20, 2013
by [Taylor Shaw](#)



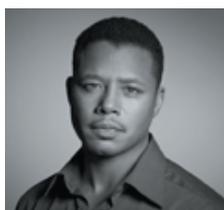
DURHAM – AT&T North Carolina’s campaign centers around reflecting on the past and motivating customers to take a forward look as they create their own history. The company is following its slogan, “Rethink Possible,” by inspiring customers to go beyond the routine.

In 2009, it made a point to rethink Black History Month by empowering diverse communities and inspiring others to act on dreams – not just in February.

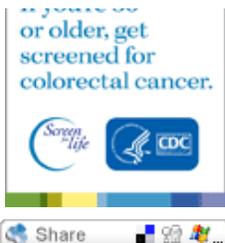
“We believe it’s what you do, with what we do, which is why ‘28 Days’ keeps coming back. AT&T 28 Days is five years strong because of the response and support we’ve received from our African-American consumers,” said Jennifer Jones, vice president of diverse markets, AT&T Mobility and Consumer Markets.

This year’s host is comedian and radio personality Rickey Smiley, and R&B artist Elle Varner serves as musical guest. The event is in its second year in North Carolina. On Feb. 13, guests gathered at the Carolina Theater.

“I feel honored to be involved with 28 Days because it gives me the opportunity to speak candidly about the importance of our history and share the stage with other individuals who are taking that forward look at making history,” Smiley said.



If you're 50



Growing up in Birmingham, Ala., during the 1960s, Smiley said he learned about black history in school. He was born a few months before Martin Luther King’s assassination.

“In the ‘70s, the movement was still going on,” he said. “I think that we’ve gone away from it. The schools stopped putting it in the history books and Black History Month programs started going away.”

Smiley recalled his experience on the heels of the civil rights movement.

“When you joined the church, you had to join the NAACP and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference right along with giving your life to Christ,” he said. “It’s hard to know where you are going if you don’t know where you’ve come from. You have more appreciation when you know the sacrifices that were made just so you can have it.”

Smiley’s passion for black history is why he wanted to host the series. “It’s personal,” he said.

He is pleased that AT&T has taken the initiative to keep black history in the forefront. “People will leave feeling good about what their experiences and the message that AT&T is trying to help get out there, which is spotlight on black history,” he said.

The free, multi-city tour began in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 7 and will end in Michigan on Feb. 27. Guest speakers include hip-hop commentator, activist and author Kevin Powell; hip-hop artist MC Lyte; and award-winning journalist, social activist, political commentator and author, Jeff Johnson.

Tech guru, blogger and entrepreneur, Corvida Raven, was the keynote speaker in Durham.

Quoting Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Raven said “We may all come on different ships, but we are on the same boat now.” She spoke on ways the public can make a change by participating in conversations and elevating our conversations and influence on the community.

“People are connected through technology with history. That’s why we want to mesh those two together and bring our customers to appreciate that. People are able to connect and appreciate Black History Month,” said Carlos E. Sanchez, AT&T’s director of statewide and governmental affairs.

28 Days is just one of the ways AT&T supports the African-American community. Last year, it released the inaugural N.C. Heritage Calendar, a tribute to men and women of all races who have contributed to the lives and experiences of blacks.

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