When the Economy is Bad, Cleveland County is Worse, When Economy is Good, Cleveland County is still Worse!!! Massa Eddie Holbrook's Economic Development Program Disaster is Examined!!! Report and examination by Robert A. Williams

First of all, before any Politicians' lies are repeated, consider this. DSS has reported for years that over 20,000 people in Cleveland County are on Food Stamps. How do I know? I asked DSS and they provided the information through County Attorney Tim Moore.

20,000 plus people in Cleveland County represent over 20% of our total population.
and 50% of our total workforce. To qualify for FoodStamps personal income must be below certain minimum amounts. There are various reasons but mainly because the recipients are unemployed or underemployed. Other reasons are FoodStamps are the desired currency of the drug trade. Drug Dealers can sell a $25 rock of "crack" cocaine for a $100 FoodStamp. Then the Drug Dealer takes the $100 FoodStamp to a middleman who gives the Drug Dealer $50, doubling his money. Then the middleman redeems the $100 FoodStamp for $100, doubling his money too.

Now, they do the same thing with the EBT Cards that are supposed to be foolproof, but they are far from foolproof as everybody in the drug trade knows. DSS records also show ZERO prosecutions for FoodStamp Fraud. It's a perfect crime.

Lying by Politicians appears to be a perfect crime too. Let's examine the record of Commissioner Chairman "Massa Eddie" Holbrook. And I am not just picking on Massa Eddie because every vote by the Commissioners for years has been unanimous. All the commissioners vote like Massa Eddie tells them—so one example fits all.

Massa Eddie repeatedly and falsely claims that he has brought in so many $Billions in Tax Base and 8,000 new jobs. The truth is the coal fired Duke Power Expansion Project at Cliffside and the natural gas fired NTE Energy plant near Kings Mountain are combined multi-billion dollar projects with ZERO involvement from Massa Eddie and the other commissioners. When construction is over the vast majority of those construction jobs will go somewhere else besides Cleveland County. Massa Eddie never accounts for the jobs that are lost from his phony brags. Figure in Indian Motor Cycles, Bayliner Boats, etc. And Schletter who just got here and have filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Massa Eddie's 8,000 jobs get whittled down quite a bit but he will never tell.

Now, looking at the Economy.

Since Donald Trump was Elected President in 2016 the National Economy is booming:

The economy in Cleveland County is booming too. Massa Eddie takes credit, claiming our county unemployment rate is 4.1%. Never attempting to explain the over 20,000 on FoodStamps.

But the National Average unemployment rate is 3.9%. Cleveland County's rate is 5% higher than the national average.

Now, lets look at Catawba County (without Massa Eddie) with an

unemployment rate of only 3.5%. Cleveland County's rate is almost 20% higher than next door Catawba County.

Lincoln County unemployment rate is 3.7%, Burke County unemployment rate is 4.0%, Rutherford County unemployment rate is 5.8%. So Cleveland County is worse than Lincoln, Burke and Catawba Counties and only better than Rutherford County. Not much to brag about for Massa Eddie amongst those that pay attention.

But Massa Eddie never talks about how Cleveland County went so high in unemployment about 8-10 years ago after the housing bust. Records show that Cleveland County Unemployment rates soared past 15% plus. The record high for the whole state of North Carolina was 11.3% in January 2010. (The record low for NC was 3.1% in March 1999.) The record high for all of the USA was 10.8% during the past 8-10 years.

So, there you have it. During Massa Eddie Holbrook's 12 years as a Cleveland County Commissioner Unemployment rates were always higher than those around us, the State of North Carolina and the whole of the USA during good economic times as well as bad economic times. Only foolish people believe Massa Eddie has done such a good job with Economic Development as Massa Eddie says he has done.

The bad news is Cleveland County is losing population. Not by so many dying early but because workers "are getting the heck out of Dodge" per Commissioner Susan Allen's description at a recent Commissioner's meeting. Workers are leaving for better jobs elsewhere and taking their families too. Massa Eddie's own words were Cleveland County Schools as well as Cleveland Community College had failed our students. As a Commissioner Massa Eddie has funded both CCS, CCC and DSS (which is a WorkFirst Agency-they claim), but provided no oversight, no guidance and no direction. Now Massa Eddie is blaming CCS and CCC for what he had a big part of causing. Especially since Massa Eddie is a Senior Dean for Development and Government

Relations at CCC at a pay of around $125,000 last time I looked.

And just what does a Senior Dean for Development and Government Relations at Cleveland Community College actually do? I don't have a clue, but I am pretty sure there are no teaching duties to the job.

And Massa Eddie is always talking about bringing in jobs to Cleveland County. So. I did a search for jobs in Cleveland County and this was the top ten items on the list:
1. Dog Walker. Pays $25 per hour but it is likely to only include no more than one hour per day,
2. Route Service Sales Representative. Picks up and delivers uniforms, cleaning rags and chemicals to local businesses.
3. Rehabilitation Specialist at the Adventure House dealing with mentally disabled adults.
4. Registrar/Hospital CHS Cleveland Emergency Department-takes information from incoming patients.
5. Shipping Receiving Warehouse Worker at Buckeye Fire Equipment
6. Registrar/Hospital CHS Cleveland ED
7. Freight Handler
8. Warehouse Worker
9. Administrative Assistant-Temporary $7.75-$15 hour
10. Work from Home-Customer Service

All these jobs are necessary and good. But where are all the top paying manufacturing jobs Massa Eddie claims he is bringing into Cleveland County?

Well, Massa Eddie has an answer for that too. "Charlotte's Backyard" is a new website put out by the Cleveland County Economic Development people "associated" with Massa Eddie that are supposedly recruiting for workers in Charlotte to fill jobs in Cleveland County. They are actually silly enough to believe that workers will move from Charlotte to Cleveland County for lower paying jobs because things are cheaper in

Cleveland County? Like gas? Yeah, Right.

This “Charlotte’s Backyard” has a bright and shiny approach, just like Massa Eddie, but when you actually try to look up some jobs you will be sorely disappointed. You find the same stuff Listed in the ten jobs noted above. Most of the better jobs are somewhere else besides Cleveland County. Many are far away. And many of the jobs may be suited for a kid still living at home. If you were the breadwinner for a family of four with one of these jobs, you would also qualify for FoodStamps. No wonder Massa Eddie doesn’t talk about the 20,000+ people on Foodstamps. Many of those on Foodstamps today may very well be working one or two of those jobs Massa Eddie claims he provided.

So, in evaluating Economic Development over the past 12 years Massa Eddie has been a Cleveland County Commissioner, what is the only collusion? This great Economic Development Program is mostly hot air. FoodStamps are the only thing that has kept Cleveland County afloat and still does.

Now, let’s examine this Cleveland County Economic Development Program a bit. The program Massa Eddie is “associated” with? Who are they, how much $$$ does it take to run it and who do they answer to? For the question who are they?, the CCEDP list two women. Kristin Reese and Beth Norman. Incidentally, under for “our successes,” they claim The NTE project, the Duke Cliffside project, the Southern Company project and the AT&T Data Center for a total of $4.4 BILLION, of which Massa Eddie Holbrook, all the other commissioners and the entire CCEDP had exactly nothing to do with. I was at the Commissioner’s Meeting when NTE walked in the door and announced their project as a courtesy. They asked for no incentives. They were there just to say hello. The commissioners repeatedly asked the NTE guys why they came to Cleveland County? Was it because of our good schools? Good this and good that. No said NTE. “We chose the site where the intercontinental gas pipeline intersected with an existing high powered electrical

transmission line.” But Massa Eddie and his EDP claimed it anyway. They even claim it as a “manufacturing” facility. So much for the Truth and Massa Eddie Holbrook.

Now, how much tax dollar funding does the CCEDP and their two women receive. It’s in the millions. All this tax money coming in from motel occupancy tax goes straight to these two women to spend. How they spend it is also a big question.

Now for the jackpot, who does the CCEDP answer to? Well, with all those $millions of Tax dollars you would think CCEDP would be a county agency reporting to the County Commissioners or some other elected official. That way they would have to be transparent and have to make financial reports that the taxpayer public could see. Right??? Oh NOOOOOO!!! They are a branch of the Cleveland County Chamber and answer to nobody. Massa Eddie is only “associated” with The Chamber, like a Mafia “God Father is associated with his crime family, mob.

From an examination standpoint, if it looks like a criminal enterprise and walks like a criminal enterprise; then it must be a criminal enterprise. A tax supported criminal enterprise at that. With a legalized power to steal from the citizens, Taxpayers. Al Capone and John Gotti must be turning over in their graves because they didn’t think of this.

Here are some backup information facts and figures provided by the United States Census Bureau. An official agency of the United States Government. Which totally disproves Massa Eddie’s BS numbers.

Economic Indicators show a decline in Cleveland County during the term in office of Massa Eddie Holbrook:

• From 2015 to 2016, employment in Cleveland County, NC declined at a rate of 0.96%, from 40,571 employees to 40,183 employees. (So, where are all those jobs Massa Eddie Brags about?)
• Between 2015 and 2016 the population of Cleveland County, NC

declined from 97,178 to 97,113, a 0.07% decrease and its median household income declined from $39,453 to $39,134, a 0.81% decrease.

• Wages. Households in Cleveland County, NC have a median annual income of $39,134, which is less than the median annual income in the United States.

• 20.8% of the population in Cleveland County, NC live below the poverty line, a number that is higher than the national average of 14%. The largest demographic living in poverty is Female 25-34, followed by Female 45-54 and then Female 55-64. (Any woman voting for Massa Eddie is committing economic suicide. Men are not far behind.)

• People in Cleveland County, NC are getting older. In 2015, the average age of all Cleveland County, NC residents was 41.4. (The young workers that are leaving Cleveland County are leaving older people behind.)

Well folks, all this is the good news about Massa Eddie’s Economic Development record in Cleveland County. Let this digest awhile, sit down with a cool drink and come back for the rest of the story.