

William L. McBride
October 13, 2011
St. Helena Branch Library Groundbreaking

Good morning and thank you for coming here to celebrate a dream come true. I would like to thank my fellow members of county council for moving this library project forward, for allocating funds and working to locate the additional money required to complete this undertaking. I would also like to thank the USDA, the State Library Association, and for their valuable contributions to this very worthy cause.

I would also like to express my deep appreciation to our good friends at Penn Center. There is no location on St. Helena Island more appropriate than here at Penn, one of America's most historically significant African-American educational and cultural institutions. What better place for a new County library which will surely complement the good work being done here now.

The status of Penn Center as a National Historic Landmark has helped limit development on this island, which I have had the privilege to represent on county council for the past 34 years. But, this new library is a symbol of the value of this community and its people. It is the kind of development that serves to strengthen our bonds and our history – not dilute it. It will be add to the beauty of this landscape rather than deter from it. It serves as an investment in the people of St. Helena and there is not greater investment a government can make than in its people.

It pleases me to think of Dr. Martin Luther King, Junior and the members of his Southern Christian Leadership Conference who met here years ago to make plans for the civil rights movement. If they were here with us today; would they not be proud? If they were here with us today, would they not applaud our County government for moving forward with this project? Would they not congratulate us on our plans for a state-of-the-art, eleven-million-dollar library that will serve the people of St. Helena Island, a library built right on the very campus where they worked to make change!?

I like to think they are here today in spirit...smiling down on us as we prepare to break ground on a beautiful new facility.

Thank you!