Eatonville Rising — Press Kit

140 Years of Eatonville's Incorporation & The 90th Anniversary of the Publication of Their Eyes Were Watching God

Presented By

Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community, Inc. (P.E.C.)

Official Websites

Eatonville Rising: eatonvillerising.com · P.E.C.: preserveeatonville.org

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About Eatonville Rising

In 2027, America will celebrate two milestones. In August, the Town of Eatonville, Florida will celebrate its 140th anniversary as the oldest incorporated African American municipality in the United States. In September, the town will celebrate the 90th anniversary of Zora Neale Hurston's classic novel, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

To commemorate these landmark anniversaries, the Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community (P.E.C.) will present Eatonville Rising, a six-event cultural heritage celebration honoring heritage, culture and community while positioning Eatonville for a bold future.

Message from the Executive Director

> *"For nearly four decades, the Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community, Inc. has worked tirelessly to protect, preserve, and promote the extraordinary history and cultural legacy of Historic Eatonville, Florida. Eatonville Rising is not simply an event series. It is a declaration that stories rooted in cultural heritage matter. It is an invitation for the world to experience the spirit of a community that has helped to shape American history and inspired one of the world's most celebrated literary voices, Zora Neale Hurston. As we prepare to commemorate the 140th anniversary of Eatonville and the 90th anniversary of Their Eyes Were Watching God, we welcome scholars, artists, media, investors, preservationists, cultural heritage travelers, and persons from communities around the globe, to join us on this historic journey. We invite you to rise with us."*
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> *— N.Y. Nathiri, Executive Director, Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community, Inc.*

About P.E.C.

The Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community, Inc. (P.E.C.), established in 1987, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit historic preservation, cultural arts, and community revitalization organization.

Mission: To promote Eatonville, Florida's considerable heritage, historical, and cultural resources as a means for the community's revitalization and economic development; and via programming which promotes pride of heritage, educational excellence and the cultural arts will preserve and protect the community for posterity.

The Six Signature Events in 2027

- **Sankofa Showdown: A Scholastic Middle School Tournament** — A statewide academic competition challenging students to explore history, leadership, teamwork and legacy while competing for educational incentives and awards.
- **Heritage Concert Series: Two Nights Showcasing the Sound Track of a Culture, Genius of a People** — A premier live entertainment experience celebrating the global influence of Black music and artistry.
- **Especially For Eatonville: A Commissioned Public Art Installation by Hank Willis Thomas** — A community-centered celebration honoring local residents, traditions, and the spirit of Eatonville.
- **Pan African Fashion & Food Expo: A Celebration of Fashion, Food and Creative Enterprise** — A vibrant showcase of culture, cuisine, fashion and entrepreneurship from across the African diaspora.
- **Welcome to Eatonville Cultural Heritage Tours: A Curated Experience of Historic Eatonville** — Guided tours highlighting historic landmarks, cultural sites and the enduring stories that define Eatonville.
- **Celebrating Zora Neale Hurston's World: A National/International Academic Conference** — An immersive tribute to one of America's most influential literary voices and Eatonville's most famous daughter.

Why Eatonville Rising Matters

This series of events seeks to expand cultural heritage tourism as a year-round economic driver for the community and position the town of Eatonville as a global cultural heritage destination. Over six days, audiences from across Florida and beyond will gather to experience the people, stories, and cultural contributions that continue to shape Eatonville and influence the world.

Impact at a Glance

Expected Attendees	50,500+
Signature Events	6
Audience Reach	Regional and National
Impact Areas	Tourism, Economic Development, and Cultural Impact
Opportunities	Educational and Community Engagement

About Zora Neale Hurston

> *"Probably the most significant collector and interpreter of Southern, African-American culture, Zora Neale Hurston (1891–1960), writer, folklorist, anthropologist, has, since the 1970s, enjoyed a revival of interest and celebration. A woman of great intensity and charisma, and single-minded in her pursuit of collecting material on 'the Negro farthest down,' Zora has secured her place among those who have painted 20th century America's cultural landscape."*
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> *Excerpt from ZORA! Zora Neale Hurston: A Woman and Her Community, compiled and edited by N. Y. Nathiri, Sentinel Communications, 1991*

Media & Partnership Opportunities

Eatonville Rising offers opportunities for national media coverage, sponsorship activation, cultural heritage tourism collaboration, academic engagement, influencer partnerships, and community investment initiatives.

Social Media

Instagram: @EatonvilleRising · Facebook: Eatonville Rising · Hashtag: #EatonvilleRising

Quick Facts

Event Name	Eatonville Rising
Presented By	Association to Preserve the Eatonville Community, Inc., with funding in part by Orange County Government through the Arts & Cultural Affairs Program
Founded By	P.E.C., established 1987
Location	Eatonville & Orange County, Florida
Anniversary Celebrations	140 Years of Eatonville's Incorporation & 90 Years of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
Event Dates	August–September 2027
Historic Significance	Popularized by Zora Neale Hurston as the first incorporated African American municipality in the United States

Join us as we honor the past, celebrate the present and build for the future.