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## **Air Force retiree receives windfall**

*Gulfport, Miss.* - When Armed Forces Retirement Home resident Charles Wilson heard on the local television station that the state of Mississippi was launching a campaign to return unclaimed monies back to its owners and into the economy, his first thoughts were of helping his partner to see if she was on the list. A few keystrokes, though, proved that while she didn't have any money being held by the state, he did. And not just a little money...turns out, Charles Wilson, a retired Air Force staff sergeant, had quite a windfall being held by the state from some stock certificates his dad, now deceased, held that were never cashed in.

"I was really surprised when they told me about my Dad's stocks. I didn't want to be too excited because I didn't know then how much they were worth. But when they told me nearly \$50,000 – well now, that got my attention," Charles said.

In the meantime, Dateline NBC had a crew on the Gulf Coast working on a story about the State of Mississippi returning unclaimed money to Mississippi residents. After hearing Charles' story, they asked if they could include him and the Armed Forces Retirement Home in their piece. So on January 31, Charles met with Mississippi State Treasurer Tate Reeves and NBC news correspondent Lea Thompson and camera crew on the AFRH grounds. The cameras were rolling as the Treasurer handed over the original stock certificate to Charles.

"It gives me great pleasure to present you with this certificate," Mr. Reeves said. "We have focused on getting these unclaimed monies back to people on the Mississippi Gulf Coast first in hopes it can help in the recovery from Hurricane Katrina."

Next, in his interview with NBC correspondent Lea Thompson, Charles shared his story about life at the AFRH prior to Hurricane Katrina and what it is like now. The money, he said, will be a great help in his relocation expenses as he waits until the Home reopens in a couple of years.

"I definitely plan to return here when we reopen," Charles said. "This is a great place to live and I plan on moving back as soon as I can."

Charles explained during the interview that his Dad had bought oil stocks while he was working for an oil company. When his father left, he asked to receive the money he had in his retirement account but did not specifically ask for the stocks to be cashed in. So the oil company held them and they continued to increase in value. They eventually turned them over to the state as unclaimed property.

"It was a wonderful surprise," Charles said. "Now I can live comfortably until I can get moved back in here...it couldn't have come at a better time."