

## Gateway to Heritage Plaza

Gateway to Heritage Plaza is a collaboration between Tennessee State University, Jefferson Street United Merchants Partnership (JUMP), the City of Nashville, the Tennessee Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The project transforms the I-40 interstate underpass that separated the North Nashville Community into a plaza that celebrates the African American history of Nashville and Jefferson Street in the areas of Athletics, Civil Rights, Education, Music and Religion.

The 10 bridge columns under the interstate are wrapped with lighted panels that display 80 photographs and narratives about the people and events that have contributed to Jefferson Street's unique place in history. Local artists James Threalkill and Michael McBride have created a series of mural panels that will be installed at one end of the plaza. Tennessee State, through a HUD grant, has invested over \$400,000 in the project, and TSU students in art, engineering, geography and history assisted in the research and design of the plaza.

The Metropolitan Development & Housing Authority contributed to the streetscape revitalization of Jefferson Street, as well. Twenty-eight smaller columns lighted with solar-powered panels highlighting historical north Nashville events or people are installed on each block of Jefferson Street between 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue N and Rosa Parks Boulevard. In addition, the state and Metro Public Works are funding over \$800,000 of landscaping improvements to the Jefferson Street and 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue interstate exit ramps that will be maintained by TSU, Meharry and JUMP.

The grand opening celebration is Friday, September 28<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. Mayor Karl Dean, Assistant Commissioner of Transportation Toks Omishakin, and Regional Director of the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Ed Jennings will be on hand with community members, university officials, elected officials, and business owners to celebrate the plaza and the revitalization of Jefferson Street.