proposed an activist agenda that includes raising federal spending on education and channeling more dollars into diversifying the agricultural economy of the area.

"I hear people say Harvey Gantt can't win because no black has ever won a race for a visible statewide office," Gantt said in Bolivia. "How do they know that?"

He pointed to the elections last fall of Gov. Douglas Wilder in Virginia and Mayor David Dinkins in New York. "It's time for us to believe we can do it," he said.

Gantt also proposed what he called an Educational Revenue Sharing program, in which the federal government would give states money for preschool education, and a resumption of federal grants to college students.

And while Gantt told a Columbus County audience that he'll "protect your right to grow tobacco," he said he favors more federal investments aimed at diversifying the economy through new jobs and job training.

Gantt campaigned in the backyard of Democratic opponent Mike Easley, a Brunswick County district attorney. And, he had a chance encounter with leaders of a group protesting Easley's handling of the February shooting death of former Bolton Mayor Sidney Bowen, a black man.

A grand jury Easley convened returned no indictment against the white highway patrol officer who shot Bowen in what he called self-defense. Critics say the case should have resulted in a murder indictment and they blame Easley.

Gantt ran into some of them Friday while having breakfast at Waffle International in Whiteville.

"We would have supported Easley until this because Mr. Easley was more of a known figure to us than Mr. Gantt," James Webb, a leader of the Bolton Movement for Justice, told a reporter.

"It's just too bad something like that has to get politicized," said Mac McCorkle, Easley's campaign manager. "But Mike had to do the right thing, not the political thing."
You Have Our Voices,' Candidate Told

By JIM MORRILL
Staff Writer

BOLIVIA, N.C. — It was a small group gathered inside St. John’s Missionary Baptist Church on a warm Good Friday afternoon to hear Democratic U.S. Senate candidate Harvey Gantt. Though few in number, the nine blacks who showed up to meet him were leaders of this small Brunswick County community south of Wilmington. They were ministers, NAACP officials and political activists.

“YOU don’t have the numbers, but you have our voices,” retired school Principal Johnathan Hankins told Gantt. “You got the people here. If they make up their minds to do something for you, they’ll get it done.” That’s what Gantt’s counting on.

The two-day visit to four southeastern counties was Gantt’s seventh swing through Eastern North Carolina in the last three months. Between meetings with newspapers and television stations from Fayetteville to Wilmington, he sought to shore up his potential base of black support by meeting with black activists in Bladen and Columbus counties.

Last week’s Charlotte Observer/WSOC TV Poll showed him with the support of 36% of black voters, with the rest undecided or backing another candidate.

Gantt’s message: that a black man can win the Democratic Senate nomination and go on to beat Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C. He also

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