

Seasoned contractor gives constructive advice

by Lanita Duke

Grassroot News, N.W.—Manuel Martinez is the brain, heart and soul behind Martinez General Construction, located in Oregon City. "We do a lot of metal building, steelwork, fencing and remodeling—commercial and residential. Nowadays, it's a little slow but we're making it."

Martinez says the construction industry is like a yo-yo, "especially for the MBEs. Although, things are a little better for us." He hasn't benefited from the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982 but he expects to one he goes after the bids.

have. You just have to get used to the paperwork and you have paperwork no matter what type of job you have."

The process of bidding constantly is Martinez Construction's key to survival in a business where only the ones who get the bids survive. "I bid with all the governmental agencies and a lot of private work. The notion that MBEs aren't competitive is not true. We are and we hope to be more so."

He stated that he believes today's market makes it tough for a minority businessperson to get started. He calls bookkeeping procedures "critical to getting started and keeping alive."

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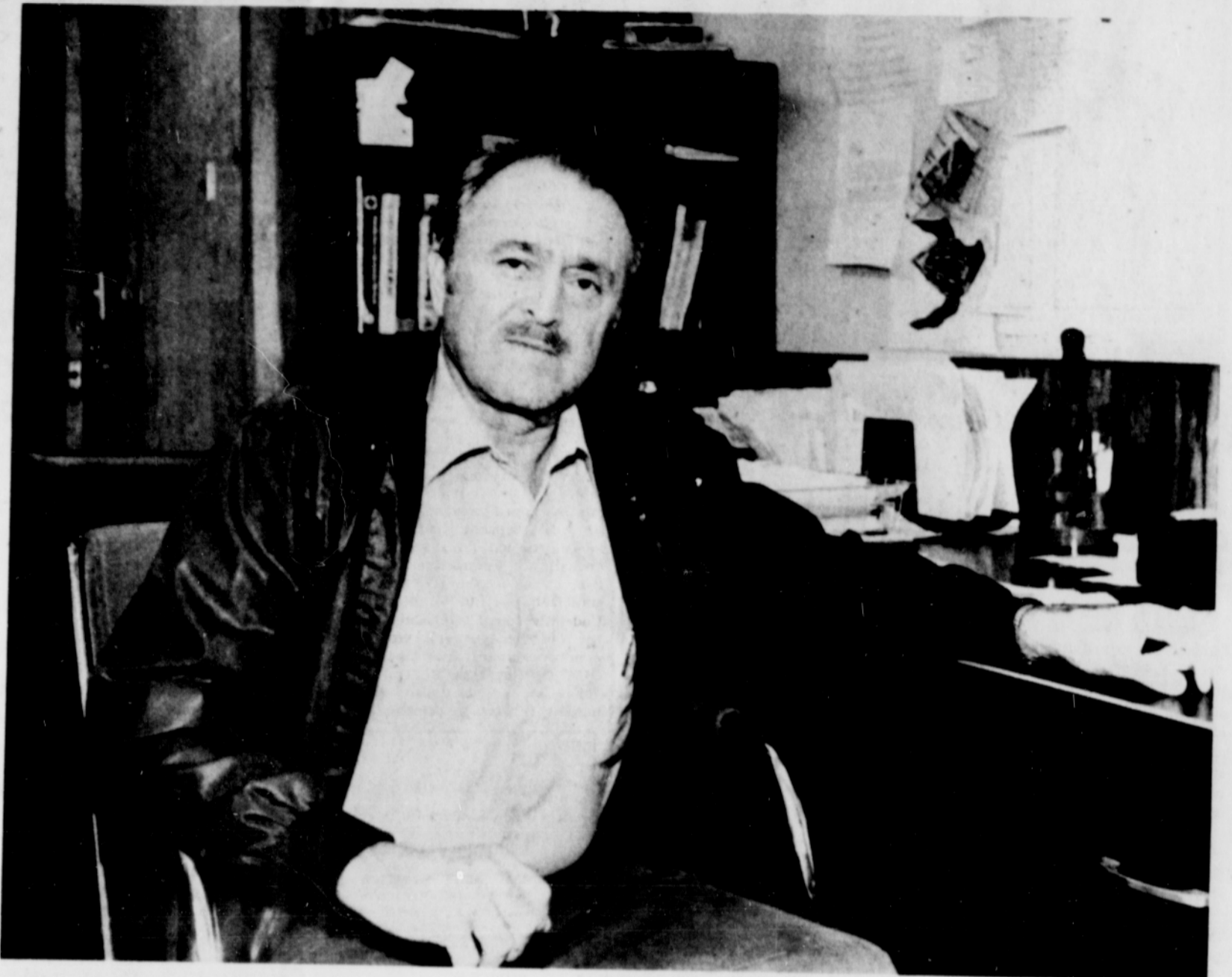
With the growth of Women Business Enterprises Martinez says the contracting business is as competitive as ever. "Seems to me that every contractor has turned his business over to his wife. And now they don't need the MBEs." He also says he believes this practice of turning one's business over to a female relative happens quite a bit in Oregon. "She might be working in the office somewhere and will know nothing about the business. I even know of one incident where a wife worked for another firm. These are nothing but fronts."

According to Martinez the Small Business Administration kept him in business. "If it wasn't for the SBA I wouldn't get half the jobs that I

"You should establish a line of credit with a bank and bid for those private jobs so you won't have to depend on the government agencies for work."

He also said securing bonding can be a problem. "You can get bonding if you are financially well off. But if you have had a few problems that tends to block everything. You are stuck with bidding for jobs that are under \$25,000. And there must be 25 other bidders for those types of jobs."

Down the road Manuel Martinez wants his construction company to compete with the larger firms. "In the future we want to be as competitive as possible."



Manuel Martinez, owner of Martinez General Construction credits constant bidding, good bookkeeping procedures and help from the

Small Business Administration for his success.

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Congratulations to the Portland Observer on its Minority Business Week edition

We urge all minority businesses to contact Pacific Power to determine how you can best serve our contracting and purchasing needs.

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MULTNOMAH COUNTY OREGON

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES WITH MULTNOMAH COUNTY

Multnomah County has had a Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Program since 1977. However, past MBE opportunities have been limited. For example, until 1981 the County's MBE program focused only on setting aside 10% of construction projects under \$50,000 for minority firms. In that year Multnomah County was one of the first local governments to increase the MBE construction projects to \$100,000.

Now participation by minority and female owned firms has been reaffirmed by County Executive Dennis Buchanan and the Board of County Commissioners.

Since November, 1981, with the adoption of a Multnomah County Ordinance, there has been a new and expanded Minority and Female Business Enterprise Program with...

• LESS RED TAPE:

Multnomah County is accepting the City of Portland's MBE and FBE certifications

• MORE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES:

- To bid on construction projects
- To sell supplies
- To render services
- To provide professional services
- Soon a new automated purchasing system to assure more frequent bidding opportunities

To find out more about these business opportunities and to learn how and what Multnomah County buys each year, please visit our information booth at:

Minority Business Opportunity Trade Fair

Memorial Coliseum Assembly Hall, Portland, Oregon

Wednesday, October 12, 1983, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Please also contact our Purchasing Division:

**SHERRY JACOX, DIRECTOR/MBE OFFICER OR DON EICHMAN, ASST.
DIRECTOR/MBE OFFICER**

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