

Boosters charged up

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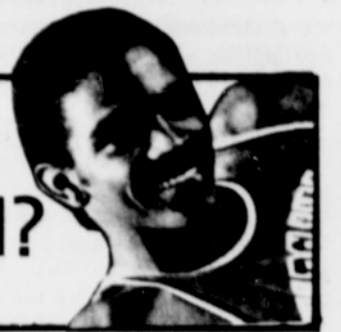
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Portland receives national minority awards

by Lanita Duke

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W.—The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded three of the four National Minority Contractor Utilization Awards to the Housing Authority of Portland and Washington and Polk counties.

These Housing Authorities allocated 52 percent of their public housing improvement contracts in 1983 to Minority Business Enterprises (MBE).

William Y. Nishimura, HUD's Region 10 Administrator, said, "These authorities used the money they got from HUD wisely. They improved their projects but also made a strong effort to get bids from minority businesses. They got the bids and, in many cases, minority businesses got the job!"

This federal utilization of MBE's certainly overshadows the state implementation of MBE's which are constantly embroiled in questions over business ownership.

MBE's financed by the im-

provement program, did major repairs, upgraded living conditions, improved energy conservation and promoted other management changes that reduced long-term operating costs for operating public housing projects.

Tom Cusack, manager of Portland's HUD, said the housing authorities cited did the necessary outreach to let minority contractors know what was available to bid on.

"Besides the aggressive outreach we structured the work in such a way (that) smaller firms could bid competitively on jobs."

Dick Jones, the housing authority comprehensive improvement coordinator, developed policies which overcame institutional barriers that limited MBE's efficiency. "The Housing Authority of Portland purchased materials and supplies so contractors would just bid on labor. This way, they do not have to tie up materials and the HAP gets more of competitive price on supplies."

By breaking jobs down into

smaller contracts, it is easier for small contractors to get performance bonds to insure work, Jones added.

Cusack said, "I hope other government institutions would look at the achievement of the Portland (area) housing authorities which were cited for their efforts in location MBE's."

Jones continued, "We haven't given them anything for free or in the way of 'set-asides'. They competed just like everybody else and won."

Another reason for their success was Executive Director William E. Hunter who was sensitized to the problems MBE were having and directed his administration to see what they could do to help.

An additional pat on the back was given to the housing authorities cited when HUD awarded them 3.1 million dollars for renovation projects. The Portland Housing Authority will upgrade and repair Columbia Villa in North Portland.



(l-r) Jan Yocom, Chairperson, Portland Housing Authority; W.E. Hunter, Executive Director, Portland Housing Authority; Ric Weaver, Executive Director, Polk Co. H.A.; William Y. Nishimura, H.U.D. Region X Regional Administrator; Dayton

Page, Executive Director, Washington Co. H.A.; Ray Hackl, Chairperson, Washington Co. H.A. and Wes Myllenbeck, Chairperson Washington Co. Commission. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

S. African athletes seek Olympic back door

Editor's note:

Saturday, May 26th, is African Liberation Day (see related story on page 3). Last week, the Portland Observer learned from Dennis Brutus, chairman of African Network that South Africa is trying to get back into the Olympics. One thing is certain, the summer games will see many South African athletes competing under the banners of other nations.

AFRICA NEWS—Even though South Africa has been expelled from the Olympics since 1970, it won't be without representation at the upcoming Olympic Games.

Several promising South African athletes, looking for a back door to Olympic competition, have chosen to adopt another nationality in order to participate in this year's games.

Beyond the legal issues raised by this sort of maneuver, anti-apartheid activists contend that there are political complications as well: Those athletes who have worn the

Springbok colors of South Africa's official team, critics say, have effectively endorsed the sporting policies of the white government and should therefore be barred from the games no matter what their current citizenship.

Among the former Springbok athletes, long-distance runner Zola Budd has stirred the most controversy. A 17-year old from Bloemfontein in the Orange Free State, Budd has broken—in a South African race—the 5,000-meter record held by American Mary Decker.

With the assistance of London's *Daily Mail* newspaper, which has exclusive rights to her personal story, the South African running prodigy arrived in London on March 24th. She was granted British citizenship within ten days.

According to reports, a Cleveland-based agency, International Management Group, also contributed money to assist Budd's move to England in the hope of

staging several meets between Budd and Decker.

Zola's reception in Britain was not entirely cordial, however. Wendy Sly, one of the leading British long-distance contenders has threatened to boycott the summer games should the South African be included in the British team. "I just don't believe it's fair to other British athletes, who have been making sacrifices for several years to get to Los Angeles," she said.

Jane Furniss, England's number-two middle-distance runner, questioned the athlete's ultimate loyalty: "When our flag goes up and they play the national anthem, would she feel she had won for Britain or South Africa?"

The South African athlete's stride towards the Olympics has also caused conflict within the British Olympic Association (BOA).

Some members believe Budd will likely be disqualified from this year's Olympics due to rule Eight of (Please turn to page 2, column 3)

Business Boosters push positive N.E. image

by Gina Wood and
Chuck Goodmacher

"Northeast Portland, A Well-kept Secret," was the title given to a special one-day conference held at PCC Cascade Campus last Saturday, May 19th. The well-attended conference, sponsored by the Northeast Business Boosters, was the first step in a major new effort to set goals and improve the business and community environment.

Sam Brooks, Northeast Business Booster's president, told the crowd of the conference's intention to start a lasting coalition in the community. Brooks outlined some of the initial steps his group has taken in this regard.

Three problem-solving workshops focused the attention of conferees on three main topics:

- keeping business and jobs in the Northeast and attracting new ones;
- nuts and bolts: traffic and parking, building codes, vacant lots and more; and,
- Northeast's image: perceptions, misperceptions and aspirations.

Jim Van Dyke, of PCC Cascade Campus, facilitated the workshop on attracting and keeping new



businesses. All agreed the area has many advantages which are not widely known. These include: being only 5 minutes from all major freeways; 15 minutes from the major business districts, ports of entry and the airport; and this area has a good stock of affordable housing

and commercial buildings. A community-wide advertising drive was suggested and a committee on marketing formed.

The workshop on Northeast's image, facilitated by Michael Benjamin, executive director of the North/Northeast Mental Health Center, reviewed many of the facets of this area's current image and discussed the image we'd like to have.

The "nuts and bolts" workshop covered a wide range of specific advantages and disadvantages currently existing in the area. Don Barney, of the Don Barney and Associates consulting firm facilitated.

Three major first steps were agreed upon by conferees. First, a marketing plan needs to be developed, with input from neighborhood and church groups as well as business and property owners. Secondly, an advisory group should be formed and thirdly an information and communication network established.

The conference ended on an upbeat note as everyone present agreed the discussions were fruitful and the community is ready to move forward.

Job training plan eyed

by Lanita Duke

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W.—On May 30th, the City Council will make a decision that will directly impact job training opportunities for minority youth, welfare recipients and Black males. The Council will either authorize the Private Industry Council (PIC) to implement the City's job training plan or send PIC back to the drawing board for further development.

In July, the duties of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) will be absorbed by PIC. A number of concerns and questions have been raised regarding PIC's accountability to the population groups that need help the most.

An April 4th draft outlined how PIC would administer and operate the Federal Job Training Partnership Act. There was no mention of target groups, and their conspicuous absence started a choir of concern from the Urban League, Black United Front and the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission.

During an interview with **GRASSROOT NEWS**, Monday, with PIC Director Dennis Cole, an addendum was added which stated, "PIC is committed to the goal of at least one-third of all job placements being minority participants."

Cole admitted that the original plan was drafted to satisfy the City Council's deadline.

"It left a lot of questions unanswered. People who were interested in the program picked up on all that vagueness," said Cole.

However, the updated language does not state in clear terms who will be served or how racial-ethnic minorities will benefit.

A source close to PIC, who declined to be identified, said, "The main question is, what percentage of each ethnic minority group will be served."

The revised target services

document states its focus on minority groups will be accomplished at three levels: "through job placement, intake and assessment consideration given to those who might have difficulties navigating through the participant selection process, and PIC's commitment to maintaining an ethnically and racially-mixed staff."

However, the hiring practices within PIC itself were questioned by the Urban League, the Black United Front and Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center (POIC).

Joyce Owens Smith, vice-president of the Urban League, said, "We have some concerns about minority participation at the administrative level."

Other sources close to PIC said Cole's administrative staff—his position, the deputy director and administrative assistant—are all white males and females.

But Cole said his managerial hiring was not complete. "There are two positions left and, in one, we have a strong minority candidate."

During this transition, half of the City's CETA staff were not retained. Among those who will join, 50 percent are minority, Cole added.

He denied allegations that he kept the staff on who did not question the plan.

But our source said, "From the original three who launched misgivings, only one was hired. And she was hired because her salary was paid from another grant."

These administrative questions are overshadowed by the question of whether the hard-core unemployed, minority youth and welfare recipients will be served by PIC.

Rosemary Anderson, director of POIC, expressed concern that the six-step participant selection process would serve only those who already had job experience and skills.

"The three-day pre-employment training is not enough time to

prepare people who have been unemployed for long periods of time. It seems to serve only those who need help in finding employment."

Cole retorted that the concern for the process was "overstated. Anytime you try to put a process down on paper, it looks cumbersome. It's really very simple. They walk in, get an application and fill it out. After it's completed, they give it to our staff and they are ready for an appointment."

The client will go directly into pre-employment training. "They will end up with a resume they can use and we will provide them with mock job interviews," Cole added.

"It gives the staff an opportunity to assess that individual. It may be at that point that we decide we cannot help that person. The barriers may go beyond our staff's capabilities and we will refer them to an agency that can assist them."

Cole said PIC had committed resources to basic skills. "Taking people who read at a 5th-grade level and bringing them up."

GRASSROOT NEWS sources said those with low skills or academic training will not be able to get through the process. "The process is structured for two or three days and then they are sent out on jobs."

The sources also commented, "We, through PCC, can bring your reading and math skills up to the 8th grade level, but is that a marketable skill?"

There are indications that clients' retention is minimal. "Three weeks after you leave, you forget it. There are statistics which prove our contention."

Critics state job placement will be limited for the low-skilled.

"They will get jobs at McDonalds or other fast-food places where they could have gotten a job without PIC's involvement. When the real

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