



Black families debate

Page 4



Art for justice

Page 6



Guatemalan terror

Page 2

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R.A. Hatch denies wrongdoing

by Lanita Duke

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W.—The most controversial and successful construction magnate in Portland is R.A. Hatch. He is controversial because his main Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) was erroneously certified as an eligible minority-owned and controlled business enterprise.

However, Hatch is successful—the low bidder—in obtaining construction contracts from the state and recently was awarded the Downtown Lightrail Construction Project. The lightrail will be built in conjunction with Railco Construction of Lake Oswego.

To this day, Hatch admitted nothing was improper about his relationship with Hopsing Construction. "But we are contractors. When it comes to social engineers, we know nothing. So, I hired an expert, O.B. Hill and C.S.S. and Associates."

Hill, an Afro-American businessman for many years, runs the consulting firm, C.S.S. and Associates, and has had to respond to those MBE's who say Hill sold them out with his affiliation with Hatch.

Hill smiles and states his record speaks for itself. "My role is a consultant. I am an independent businessman. O.B. Hill manages his own affairs. It is my business to consult with prime contractors. I'm a businessman and my role and involvement have nothing to do with selling out."

Hill pointed to his role as a continuous advocate for MBE participation. When Greyhound Corporation asked for a list of contractors in the area to build their new bus terminal downtown, there were no MBE/WBE goals. Hill wrote a letter and an addendum was added that included MBE/WBE goals.

Hatch said, "I hired a consultant to help me maintain my MBE program and improve on it." Hill has done that. Since coming on board, Hill has evaluated MBE participation in R.A. Hatch Company and has expanded it. There are now 7 different MBE firms subcontracted out by Hatch. Also, Hill has increased minority hiring within the R.A. Hatch construction company.

Hill said, "I don't have time to sit around and complain about what is not being done. My role is to see that something is done. When I see someone who can assist a person in bonding and establishing a line of credit, that is the person I want to align myself with. This way, I can refer competent Black contractors so they can get some of that assistance."

The labor unions have targeted Hatch with pickets and public

criticism through the newly formed Labor Minority Business Enterprise Coalition. Hatch is non-union and stated he is not anti-union, but he wants his employees to make that decision.

Hill voiced reservations about the coalition. "It has been my observation on job sites, that unions need to look at their own house and clean that up. I see no indication that women or minorities are being hired by the union or given the opportunity to join. I find it very strange that unions, all of a sudden, form a coalition with MBE's to go after non-union R.A. Hatch Company."

Hatch has responded with a lawsuit against the International Union of Operating Engineers for intentional interference. "The defendant engineers...shouted and screamed abusive, obscene and derogatory racial slurs at Hatch's Black employees, in a manner likely to provoke violent or disorderly response."

Hill said, "MBE's are being used. In this game, they can't see the forest for the trees. My objective is to get from all these communities...some of these state and federal dollars. This way, everyone can get their proportion of the funds based on their tax dollars."

Hatch concluded by stating, "We do not do everything right. We make mistakes and we take steps to correct them. By hiring O.B. Hill and C.S.S. and Associates, we feel that is a step in the right direction."



R.A. Hatch and O.B. Hill

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)



Rev. John Jackson, Co-chair of the Portland Black United Front and Phillip Knight, President of Nike, Inc., cut the ribbon at Tuesday's grand opening ceremony for Nike's new outlet store located at 3044 N.E. Union Ave. Manager LaRue Martin observes with a glazing smile.

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Council passes PIC

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W.—The City Council voted unanimously to authorize the Private Industry Council to implement the Federal Job Training Partnership Act.

The vote came after testimony from the Urban League, the Black United Front, Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center and the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission. Each pointed out holes in the original and revised plan.

Commissioner Charles Jordan voted his approval on the condition

that addendums and amendments incorporated to answer the questions and concerns brought up by the community.

"I want to see some of the recommendations put forth by the Urban League adopted into the plan. I want to see improvements on affirmative action within the PIC and concerns of the hard-core unemployed addressed. Also, we need each target group focused on in writing."

Joyce Owens-Smith, Vice-
(Please turn to page 10, column 4)

Portland's Rose Princesses — every one a winner



Allison Bernards
Wilson



Denise Washington
Grant



Rita Dir
Central Catholic



Alexandra Harvey
Jefferson



Cynthia Marie Brooks
St. Mary's



Ordella Reynolds
Cleveland



Lucille Ann Boyrer
Roosevelt



Carmen Herman
Marshall



Stephanie Kalez
Lincoln



Sandra Kay Zimmerman
Franklin



Anita Smisek
Madison

Parades cause Bridge closures

The Burnside Bridge will be closed to river and vehicular traffic on Saturday, June 2, 1984, between the hours of 7:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. to accommodate the Rose Festival Starlight Run.

The road event will start at 8:00 p.m. at Lloyd Center, crossing the Burnside Bridge, where it will follow the parade route of the Starlight Parade which starts at 8:30 p.m. that evening.

The bridge will also be closed to river and vehicular traffic during the Rose Festival Grand Floral Parade on Saturday, June 9, 1984, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.