

African American Views On The Environment, II

BY PROF. MCKINLEY BURT

In my first article I cited a dangerous concentration of the high poisonous element LEAD in our urban environment. Particularly, I referred to lead fittings on water pipes installed before modern plumbing codes were written - and to the fact that small children (especially crawlers) often eat flakes from lead-based paints found on the floor.

We also noted that a higher than acceptable level of lead is found in the Blood of innercity children who often live in close proximity to freeways and other arterials which flood their homes with the fumes from :leaded gasoline." In all these cases it is obvious that economics would prevent poor people from remedying this problem; they can't move to modern facilities or neighborhoods. Governmental intervention is required because in a decade or two the health costs will be astronomical -- for all of us.

Then, there are the environmental problems that transcend state or even national borders. And they are proving to be the most detrimental to people of color and the poor of all races. For instance in Mel, Alabama we find perhaps the world's largest toxic waste dump--located on "the other side of the tracks" and adjacent to the black neighborhoods. This has been a common practice where counties hard pressed for cash have solicited out-of-state dumping.

This particular case has led to an

outrageous situation. The "Chemical Waste Corporation," America's largest operator and promoter of this type of pollution has taken the state of Alabama to the Supreme Court in an effort to force them to accept more waste at a lower price. This, after the company dumped over 7 million tons in 1988, collected all up and down the east coast from big cities whose dumps are full. I'm sure you just saw that GARBAGE TRAIN on the news, finally returning thousands of tons of waste to New York when the shippers couldn't find anyone to accept it at any price.

And in Arizona and other parts of the southwest it is the vulnerable Indian whose lands and health care threatened by the devastating practice of open pit or "strip mining" for minerals that leave the land ravaged forever, run off's leach out poisonous chemicals that poison the grasslands and streams. Coal which is mined in the same fashion is used to fuel huge power plants that supply electricity for cities far away on the coast. But the dangerous pollutants from the smoke stacks settle right down on the poor native Americans who will have no crops, no fish and NO LUNGS.

That "World Summit On The Environment" just held in Rio, Brazil was notable for more than a half-hearted approach to pressing environmental problems caused almost entirely by the major industrial nations. We note, for one thing, that the first "clean up" by the Brazilian government was round up all those thousands of homeless and

parentless "street children" of Rio De Janeiro and place these victims of industrial progress in holding pens until the conference was over. The government certainly didn't want the visitors to be reminded that the 5 to 12 year-old children were the "debris" from sudden and traumatic changes in the nation's economy.

These catastrophes to peoples and environment were brought about by tremendous pressures from American and European Banks, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund--holders of the scores of billions of dollars in debt instruments against the country. A condition with parallels throughout the third world. They demanded QUICK CASH type economic activities no matter that strip mining for iron ore and accompanying destruction of forest for charcoal to smelt the iron would devastate both lands and peoples. The same for lands converted to cattle ranching.

Hundreds of thousands of Indians and black were dispossessed and fled to the horrors of Rio slums; without skills, without education and without hope. It was for this reason, and born of a common shabby experience, that a week before the so-called "Summit" there was called in the same place "The World Conference of Indigenous Peoples on Territory, Environment and Development." This meeting of exploited Third World peoples drew hundreds of delegates from 26 countries and 5 continents. How much of the media dealt with that--reality?

Buying A Franchise: How To Make The Right Choice Scheduled For The Portland Area

Minority and women entrepreneurs have a chance to learn the facts about franchise ownership at no cost. BUYING A FRANCHISE: HOW TO MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE will be held in Portland on Thursday, July 23, 1992, from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the World Trade Center, 121 SW Salmon Street, Mezzanine Level, Rooms 2-4. The three hour program is designed for any minority or woman who would like to learn about options available in franchising.

The seminar, presented by the Portland Minority Business Development Center and supported by the Economic Development Department of the State of Oregon, is the first of a series under the National Franchise Initiative funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce's

Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA). The initiative is the result of findings and recommendations by the Minority Enterprise Development Council which reveal that minorities currently own less than 3% of the nation's franchises, while they comprise approximately 25% of the American population.

"This seminar is a chance to learn about the opportunities available in franchising and also to evaluate franchising as a viable business option. The benefits to be obtained from attending the seminar include increased understanding of the risks, rewards and requirements involved in becoming a franchisee," says Joe Lira, National Director of the Minority Business Development Agency. Local experts in franchising and

small business development, along with representatives from franchise companies and a franchise attorney will participate as guest speakers. Each attendee will receive Buying a Franchise: How to Make the Right Choice, the Franchise Self-Assessment Guide and additional franchise material. Seating is limited. Advance registration is necessary. Registration is complimentary. For information and reservations, please call (503) 245-9253.

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Roy Jay Receives President's Award

Portland business entrepreneur, Roy Jay, was one of the recipients of the Portland Oregon Visitors Association's President's award at the POVA annual appreciation breakfast held on July 9 at the new \$85 million Oregon Convention Center. The events theme celebrated the 150th year anniversary of the Oregon Trail which attracted nearly 1,000 businesses, government officials, hotels and V.I.P.'s involved in Oregon's growing visitor and convention industry.

The 44 year old heads, both the Oregon Business Network and the Oregon Convention and Visitor Services Network, is the first Black business owner to ever receive the prestigious award in the history of the organization. Jay, who has been a business member of POVA since 1982 and a member of their board of directors since 1988 represents one of the areas most positive changes in the industry said one of the attendees.

However it was just a few years ago POVA's nominating committee refused to re-nominate Jay for another term on their board of directors, which created frustration and some anger among the nearly all white membership. POVA business members picketed the organizations weekly breakfast meetings and were instrumental and successful in a massive write-in election campaign that resulted in another term through 1993. Although he was reelected, Board President, Mary Arnstad, general manager of the Heathman Hotel, removed him as chairman of POVA membership committee as well as the executive committee. "Roy was the only board member that was fair and equitable to all of us as members...he is the type of guy that will represent everybody's interest...he is the only board member that would attend nearly every meeting and would take time to hear our concerns, regardless of how busy he was, day or night" said Betty Davis, a white tour operator in Portland.

"As a board member, Roy has been very outspoken and challenged his colleagues with regard to certain issues including the lack of minority employees and vendors within the organization and small business parity. As a result of his persistence, POVA was forced to

take some action by finally adopting an affirmative action plan, and increase their minority contracting involvement. He is a strong believer in private enterprise and allowing everyone an opportunity to make a buck," said Davis who has made thousands of dollars in business leads and sales since joining Oregon Business Network in 1989. Johnny Counterfeit, a well known national entertainer and impressionist from Portland said "I'm sincerely glad to see Roy get this award...he deserves it and much more...I am sure that the reason that so many "open minded" people support his effort is because of his positive attitude, competency, professionalism and personality. He's certainly not like some people that are more interested in self serving and social ladder status...this guy shares."

In 1989, he formed and funded both the Oregon Business Network and the Oregon Convention and Visitor Services Network, Inc. with an initial membership of 17 supporters. Two years later the membership and affiliation exceeds 2000, (nearly three times more than POVA) making it one of the largest privately operated business organizations in the state. Jay said that the whole idea behind these new entities were to help enhance sales, networking and business opportunities for everyone including the convention and visitor industry. Over the past two years, his operations have generated over \$100 million in potential convention and visitor referrals to both members and non-members throughout the state. Jay's ideas of a Tele-Fax network is the first of its kind in the state, which informs subscribers of various business and sales opportunities, 24 hours a day. "We intend to expand the services in the near future to provide even better access for visitors and conventions in Oregon and other states. We are here to enhance existing efforts, not necessarily to compete, said Jay.

The POVA Appreciation Awards program recognized Jay for "Providing valuable networking opportunities and services for business owners involved in the visitor industry and for serving as a positive example for young entrepreneurs." The POVA Awards Selection Committee included three African

Americans, Gladys McCoy, Multnomah County Chair, Sam Brooks, President of the Multnomah County Exposition Recreation Commission / Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs and Ed Washington, commissioner of the METRO. McCoy explained that the selection of Jay was an excellent choice and had provided letters of support to the awards nominating committee from such businesses as Hilton Hotel, Benson Hotel, Shilo Inns and others that recognized the valuable contributions that are being made by the native Portlanders in visitor and convention industry.

The announcement of the award came as a surprise to some attendees who were aware that Jay and POVA's current executive committee and officers are at odds regarding marketing and promotional efforts.

In January, POVA's officers and executive committee, through their attorney, contacted Jay with an ultimatum...resign from their board or cease all business activity dealing with convention and visitor destination marketing." Jay responded through his corporate attorneys, Curtis Kinsley of Lake Oswego and Patrick Butler of Portland... "NO!" In spite of the recent award, the business confrontation is still pending according to reliable sources.

One hotel employee said "Roy's operation has been able to provide a great number of valuable visitor and convention leads that we may not have normally received through other sources...the name of the game is heads in the beds for hotels and we are grateful for any help we can get." In a time when taxpayer funding for this industry is shrinking, it is good to see someone from private enterprise with the ability to provide cost effective solutions and alternatives to help the industry grow."

Jay's other business enterprises include computers, barter, limousine services, advertising, collections, marketing, consulting, investments and other joint ventures. He is among the growing number of local African American men and women that are contributing and involved in many business and professional arenas that were previously excluded to minorities in the Portland area.

PDC Sets Informational Briefing On Impact Of Tax Court Ruling

Media representatives are invited to attend a briefing for businesses, non-profit organizations impacted by the hold the Portland Development Commission (PDC) imposed on 40% of its 1992-93 budget in the wake of a May 18th decision by the Oregon Tax Court. The PDC briefing is on Wednesday, July 15, 1992 at 1:00 p.m., in The Portland Building, 2nd floor Auditorium, 1120 SW Fifth Avenue.

The briefing is informational and will provide PDC's clients and contractors with a forum to ask questions. The Commission ordered the budget hold May 28th until uncertainties about the City's continued ability to fund PDC's urban renewal, low-income housing and economic development efforts are resolved by the Oregon Supreme Court, which will hear the City's appeal of the Tax Court decision July 28th.

PDC's Chairman Douglas McGregor and Vice Chairman Carl Talton will participate in the briefing as will Stephen C. Bauer, Director of the City's Office of Finance and Administration and PDC Executive Director Patrick L. LaCrosse.

The Tax Court ruling, if upheld by the Supreme Court, would effectively suspend the City's ability to sell urban renewal bonds, the funding source for more than three fifths of PDC's budget. The Tax Court reversed an opinion of Oregon's Attorney General and the State Legislature by determining that, unlike other bonded debt, urban renewal bonds are not exempt from the Measure 5 limit.

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