

Mrs. Frances Schoen-Newspaper  
University of Oregon Libr  
Eugene, Oregon  
97403

# The Portland Observer 25¢

## THE WEEK IN REVIEW

### Furse, Wyden Announce Westside Light Rail Appropriations

\$70 Million Will Keep Project On Line  
The Subcommittee has approved \$70 million for this year's budget, which is \$20 million more than was approved by the House last year. Some cities actually received no funding at all for their rail projects. Furse and Wyden said that the \$70 million is a big triumph for us. "We're pleased our hard work and that of Tri-Met's has paid off."

See related story on page A4

### PDC Approves \$2.5 Million Loan To Hacienda Community Development Corp. For Rehab of 178 Housing Units In NE

The Hacienda Community Development Corporation is a non-profit corporation addressing the needs of Hispanics with a mission of providing safe, affordable housing in the Portland area. They will be developing the properties at NE Cully & Killingsworth. Rehabilitation of the buildings will be completed under PDC's Rental Housing Preservation Program. The shortage of high quality affordable housing, coupled with culturally-relevant services at the site, will assure full occupancy.

See related story on page A6

### Studies Find Many Are Unaware Of Social Security Benefits For Those Under 62

Billions of dollars go unclaimed because many workers do not realize they are eligible for benefits. There is more to Social Security than benefits for persons over 62 years of age. One study found, workers have had too much deducted from their wages and were due a refund. In other cases, employers had not sent the correct amount to be credited to accounts. If you have records of the amount earnings and deductions you will be credited with that money and the employer's share whether or not he ever sent the money to the government.

See related story on page A3

### WIC Participation Linked To Reduced Infant Mortality

Study after study has documented the effectiveness of the WIC program. The results showed that predicted infant mortality rates for WIC participants were approximately one quarter to two thirds the predicted rate for nonparticipants. The prenatal component of WIC provides food supplements, nutrition, education and referrals to health care, and social services to low-income pregnant women.

See related story on page A7

### Correction! Correction! Correction!

"Whatever Happened To Black Love?" In our last issue, June 9, 1993 we announced that "Whatever Happened To Black Love?" would be returning to Portland June 20, 1993. Sorry! It will be June 26, 1993 instead. More information on Arts and Entertainment page.

## Sabin Elementary School Hosts Barbecue To Honor Business Partners



A barbecue was held June 11 to honor business that sponsor Sabin Elementary's Self-Managers program. The barbecue was held at the school, located at 4013 N.E. 18th.

Sporting Chef hats, Sabin dads prepared a feast for some 400 students, family members and business partners.

Self-Managers provides incentives and awards for students in Grades 3-5 who demonstrate positive academic and behavioral performance.

## Tri-Met's Contract Decision: The Good, The Bad And The Rail-Ugly

BY JAMES L. POSEY

Almost like a B-grade Western movie, Tom Walsh, Tri-Met's general manager, reads the predictable script. As cool as any Wild West gun totin' gunslinger, he describes to a crowded room, posed for drama, how a midwest company out of Indiana, Frontier/Kemper-Traylor Bros., and their compadre, Mendez Excavation, out of Colorado, (low bidders on the first contract award) rides into Portland, shoots holes in the Disadvantage Business Enterprise (DBE) program and rides out of town with the loot.

But just like most shoot-um ups, the plot was predictable: The unsuspecting town's people were buffaloed into thinking that they would hold on to their land and even reap the benefits of a

railroad scheduled to be built right through the heart of their town. Tri-Met sold the community a bill of goods, claiming they would go out of their way to see that local businesses benefit from the proposed light rail project. But so far on this first contract, a tunneling project valued at over \$103 million, only outsiders, brought in by Tri-Met's light rail top guns, are scheduled to benefit. The prospect of being left out again after so many promises raises the ire of those most vulnerable and with the most to lose in this unseemly drama -- local DBE's.

### The Good:

Local disadvantage businesses, lead by the National Association of Minority Contractors of Oregon (NAMCO), along with the second lowest bidder, protested the award of this contract to an out-of-state contractor. All evidence suggest that the out-of-state contractor did not really seek the participation of any in-state DBE's. Instead, and months ago, the contractor preselected an Hispanic DBE from Colorado, along with another Hispanic firm from Washington state, to fulfill the DBE goals on this project. NAMCO Chairman O. B. Hill conducted an exhaustive analysis of the bidding process. His conclusions raise not only the prospect that the out-of-state DBE is a "front", but his analysis clearly point out that from the very outset Frontier intended to circumvent the good-faith process of hiring local DBE's.

### The Bad:

The fact that Frontier unscrupulously manipulated the process and was rewarded with the contract while others tried to play by the rules and got nothing for their efforts but frustration is disgusting. Even more revolting is the realization that Tri-Met staff bent over backwards to aid and abet the culprits. Linda Garcia Seabold and Julius Evans, both judged by many to be totally incompetent, are Tri-Met's designated DBE support personnel. It appears that they, along with other key Tri-Met technical, legal and public relations staff, created the machine that steam rolled the decision to award the contract to Frontier.

### The Rail-Ugly:

From all appearances, it seems that Tri-Met made a conscious decision to put the blinders on and take the heat on this issue, regardless of who it might hurt, in order to get this rail built on time and on budget. They seem convinced that this entire issue will soon blow over and no one will remember the conniving process of these events. They have calculated that any opposition from the DBE community will soon be silenced by a series of compromising, back-door deals with local DBE's who didn't have the guts to speak out on the issue. They will also continue the patronizing, ineffective activities of the Oregon Opportunities Committee which was set up specifically to run interference on the DBE issue.

Tri-Met has compromised and sacrificed the integrity of the formal bidding process, particularly as it relates to the DBE program. It has done unmeasurable harm to a program already besieged and beset by trials and tribulations on every side. It's almost as if this entire event was staged to demonstrate how indefensible these programs can be. Tri-Met has totally undermined a concept established to create business opportunities and jobs for those least able to compete in today's market place.

And, Clint Eastwood couldn't have written a better saga of "hang 'um high" for a fist full of dollars.

James Posey is a local, small business owner with a background in social work and community activism.

## Metro Council Exercises Authority - Overrides Brooks & MERC On Black Involvement In Convention Marketing Efforts

BY: STEPHEN MOORE,

Independent Columnist  
Even Ray Charles Can See Through POVA

The Portland Oregon Visitors Association, better known to many as POVA, assumed that their multi-million dollar contract renewal recommendation by Sam Brooks and MERC was a merely formality...It wasn't! Instead, last Thursday evening, METRO Councilors voted unanimously to temporarily suspend the approval of the \$1.27 million dollar annual contract based upon the request for review brought to METRO by Black business entrepreneur, Roy Jay, who head the Oregon Convention and Visitor Services Network.

Metro Councilors heard nearly four hours of testimony from Jay and other business owners and residents of the community addressing the past blatant exclusion of African Americans in the multi million dollar convention and tourism marketing efforts as well as, what is becoming more obvious, a discriminatory qualification criteria process that predominately favors POVA as the only qualified applicant and vendor.

The 45 year old Jay, a native of Portland, eloquently addressed the council pointing out various discrepancies and the current efforts

which show little if any attempt by POVA and others to seriously solicit the estimated \$22 billion dollars annually spent on Black conventions, meeting and tourism to the region.

Other testimony from Blacks in the community related to problems and experiences that they have had with POVA, a predominately white organization, which only can boast of 3 Black Business members out of nearly 1000. POVA was not able to present a single Black business, member or resident to provide supporting testimony on their behalf at the hearing. Critics claim that POVA's efforts to include African Americans in all levels is only a last minute empty promise in order to get contract approval for the millions of dollars that are now up on limbo. Testimony at the METRO hearing stated that POVA's past track record speaks for itself. To date, the organization has only hired one African American female, which is paid far less than her white colleagues, in a meager attempt to attract minority conventions.

"You must be qualified to garner community support for your efforts said Roy Jay. This is not an 8 to 5 job. We are talking about sales and service which could happen at anytime...especially when it comes to our people". Others testified that Jay's organization has been very instrumental in servicing

convention delegates and their needs, especially when POVA was either unwilling or unavailable.

Jay responded to the Metro Council stating that his operation is not interested in any set aside funding. "We don't have to be certified...we are qualified". "The ER Commission had no problem in funding the newly created Sports Authority, I see no reason why a significant portion of the \$1.275 million each year cannot be split between two entities that are working for the same purpose" said Jay.

While POVA attempts to defend their record as it relates to Black involvement, the facts speak for themselves. The POVA board of directors, some of which consist of hotels such as The Sheraton, Red Lion, Marriott & Heathman, for the past 7 years and even longer, have absolutely no Blacks in sales, marketing or key management positions, yet these are the same individuals that are the pivoting control of POVA and promise to be more sensitive to cultural diversity. This would lead one to conclude that POVA is not qualified to market to Black conventions, conferences and tourism prospects across the country.

One Black visitor to Portland stated "while I was very impressed with your clean city, I could not honestly recommend it for my con-

vention because the local visitors association representative could not provide me with anything relating to Black needs or services. I was told that they (POVA) even had a Black on their board of directors, but even when I asked to meet him, they never assisted me".

POVA's "all of a sudden" interest to include the Black community is too little and too late. Even Ray Charles could see what has recently transpired between POVA and MERC. It would have been "Business as usual" if Roy Jay had not have spoke up and responded to the contract announcement and openly challenged the qualifications criteria process. Both outsiders and POVA insiders concur that POVA is not qualified to deal with marketing to minorities and that METRO and MERC should divide the budget between both operations since they are working for the same goal!

The process of how to handle the entire situation has been sent to METRO's Regional Facilities Committee for review and formulation. Many in Portland's business community favor Jay's innovative plans and concepts which could unify businesses, government and residents to work together.

Although POVA professes to be the top gun in the visitor industry, they have continually shot blanks in this vital part of attracting tourism and conventions from the ethnic market.

**News**  
"Summer More Fun For Youngster With Tri-Met"  
"Getting Around Town For Kids" listings span from hiking trails to fishing holes, swimming pools to theatre. But the summer's biggest attraction may be the Party Bus.  
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**Careers**  
"Noel Willis: Graduating With Honors"  
The years of family encouragement obviously paid dividends. But Verlean Sylvester-Willis is due to give ultimate credit where it is due. "We were a support group for Noel. But he did it."  
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**MetroLife**  
"New Micro Loan Program To Benefit Small Business"  
The law which created this federal program targets "women, low-income and minority entrepreneurs, business owners and other individuals possessing the capability to operate successful business concerns."  
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**Food & Nutrition**  
"The 1993 Multicultural Music And Food Festival"  
Families are an important part of our neighborhoods and this festival is designed to meet every family members' needs. It's event for the whole family to enjoy.  
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