

MED Week '93

1993 Minority Enterprise Development Week

Minority Subcontractor Participation On Walnut Park Project Higher Than Expected

Portland Mayor Vera Katz Says Project Represents City's Commitment to do Things Right

Saying that work on the Walnut Park Project represents a number of positive steps toward improving the City's record of hiring minority contractors, Portland Mayor Vera Katz today announced that the project would include 31.7 percent minority subcontractor participation as part of the venture. That number increases by five fold the City's average of 6 percent minority participation.

"We tried some new things on this project that worked," said Mayor Katz. "The 6 percent number was one our attorneys felt would be legally defensible, but it's not enough. When we met with prime contractors, we were encouraged by their interest in exceeding that standard."

As of Tuesday afternoon 17.5 percent of the subcontractors signed up to work on the project were minority contractors. As a result of ongoing negotiations between City officials, the primary contractor, and minority subcontractors, that number jumped 14.2 percent shortly after 6:00 p.m. The City's Bureau of General Services estimates the cost of the Walnut Park Project at \$3.8 million. Koll Construction's bid came in at \$3,449,700, making it the low bidder, and winner of the construction project.

"We intend to set an example for the rest of the contracting commu-

nity," said Steve Lilly, Senior Project Manager, and Director of Business Development of Koll Construction.

"If there is a willingness to actively pursue and become involved in and develop relations in the minority contracting community, that these people who in the past have not had an opportunity to participate at this level will be able to go out and enter into, not only the public arena, but the private arena of the construction industry," said Lilly.

In planning for this project, the City embarked on a new program to encourage minority participation during construction.

The bidding period was extended for six weeks, twice the normal time for a project of this size. The extra time allowed minority firms the opportunity to work with prime contractors to submit bids.

Special technical assistance has been available through the Portland Development Commission to assist minority firms in bidding, project planning and financing. In addition, subcontracts were broken into smaller units, allowing greater access to minority firms which tend to be smaller operations.

"This is a great opportunity for us to demonstrate that people in Portland are willing to work with each other, especially in the contracting community, which is historically based on old aligned relationships,"

said O.B. Hill, President of the Portland chapter of the National Association of Minority Contractors. "Those old relationships can no longer remain if we are to all be citizens of Portland working in cooperation, and in the spirit of brotherhood.

BGA also estimates that African-American contractors would receive approximately \$644,792 of the \$1,022,895 going to minority contractors through Koll. Hispanic contractors will receive approximately \$291,721, and Native-Americans will receive approximately \$86,376.

The Walnut Park Project is a renovation of the former Fred Meyer complex on the corner of N.E. Martin Luther King Blvd. and N.E. Killingsworth. When completed it will house the Portland Police Bureau's North Precinct office, a Boys and Girls Club, retail space, and a public plaza.

Construction is scheduled to begin in October. Police are expected to move in May, 1994. Retail development will take another year or so to complete.

"Our work with the Walnut Park Project demonstrates this administration's commitment to north and northeast Portland is more than a commitment to just focus resources on north/northeast," said Katz. "Our commitment is far greater than that. It is a commitment to do things right."

by George R. La Noute

In recent years opinion polls have shown increasing public skepticism toward affirmative action. One reason is that, as the number of groups benefiting from affirmative action have constantly increased, the programs have lost their moral legitimacy.

The drive toward gaining public acceptance of affirmative action really began with Lyndon Johnson's Commencement Address at Howard University in 1965. The President declared, "You do not take a person who, for years has been hobbled in chains and liberate him, bringing him up to the starting line or a race and then say 'you are free to compete with all the others' and still believe you have been completely fair."

This powerful image obviously referred to the nightmare of slavery and segregation that had afflicted African-Americans. It was the moral energy stemming from the desire to erase those national stains that led Johnson to issue Executive Order 11246 which became the framework for affirmative action in employment and elsewhere.

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most no debate, many other groups were added to the protected affirmative action in employment and elsewhere.

It was clear to all concerned that blacks were to be the principal beneficiaries of such programs because they had suffered the greatest injustices. But, with almost no debate, many other groups were added to the protected affirmative action, blacks have become a minority of even the racial and ethnic groups included in the programs. In 1970, blacks were 66% of all the racial and ethnic minorities covered by affirmative action. Twenty years later they were only 49% and the numbers are dropping rapidly. Between 1970 and 1990, the black population grew by 33%, while Hispanics and Asian-Americans grew by 144% and 380% respectively. Overwhelmingly this increase is from legal and illegal immigration. In 1990, 42% of all the Hispanic population was born abroad, as was 62% of all the Asian-American population.

Increasingly, Americans who were inclined to support affirmative action for those who truly had a history of discrimination in this country are opposed to extending those benefits to groups composed of new or recent immigrants. In Atlanta, Richmond, Jacksonville, and other cities, minority business

programs have eliminated non-black groups from coverage. On the other hand, Dade County (Miami) has a black-only program now, but is spending a large sum to justify the addition of Hispanics, even though that group is almost all recent immigrants and now makes-up a majority of the County's population. In Ohio, the legislative black caucus mounted a successful campaign to have Asian Indians, a recent immigrant group among the best educated and most affluent ethnic groups in the country, excluded from the State's minority business program.

Still black businesses receive only 32% of the contracts under the federal 8(a) affirmative action program. Joshua Smith, the successful black businessman who headed the U.S. Commission on Minority Business, concluded that the percentage of black businesses in the minority business category was falling so fast that in ten years they "won't make a difference."

Whether affirmative action survives will depend in large part on whether its benefits can be focused on truly deserving groups. Surely it will be hard to defend a concept when millions of new immigrants are granted favored status in business, education, and employment over families who have been in this country for generations.

The Portland Observer

BLACK CONTRACTORS ALLIANCE

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Company	Phone Numbers	Specialty	Company	Phone Numbers	Specialty
Bill Suell-Painting/Contractor Bill Suell 1020 N. E. 3rd Ave, Suite 12 Portland, OR 97232	Office (503)284-1167 Mobile (503)781-3945 Fax (503)235-9661	Painting	Scott's Masonry Walter Scott 4552 N. E. Jarrett Portland, OR 97218	Office (503)287-8577 Office (503)281-1874 Beeper (503)555-8704 Fax (503)287-0552	Concrete
Gro-Jac Wall & Ceiling System Grover Jackson 4631 N. Albina Ave Portland, Or 97217	Office (503)288-5850 Pager (503)294-4521 Fax (503)284-1656	Drywall/ (Wall & Ceiling)	Riggins Remodeling Herschel Riggins 2739 NE Alberta P. O. Box 11591 Portland, OR 97211	Office (503)284-3285 Mobile (503)880-0455	Remodeling
S.G. Minor & Associates Shirley Minor 1020 N. E. 3rd Ave, Suite 12 Portland, Or 97232	Office (503)235-9655 Pager (503)299-7321 Fax (503)235-9661	HVC/ Plumbing	Courtesy Janitorial Service Inc. Floyd N. Booker, Sr. 1705 N. E. Alberta Portland, OR 97211	Office (503)287-7354 Fax (503)298-6521	Janitorial Services
J Boyd Lawn Landscape & Maint James Boyd 2808 NE MLK Blvd Portland, OR 97212	Office (503)335-3092 Fax (503)335-0395	Landscaping	Reid Construction Elliott Young 1020 N. E. 3rd Ave Portland, OR 97232	Office (503) Pager (503)790-1470	Carpentry
Kline Masonry & Remodeling Inc Harrison Kline III 536 N.E. Failing Portland, OR 97212	Office (503)287-2114 Pager (503)299-7972 Fax (503)282-5341	Concrete Brick Laying Remodeling	Holefield Construction Darnell Holefield P. O. Box 11433 Portland, OR 97211	Office (503)286-6571 Beeper (503)286-3284 Fax (503)870-8127	Paving
G.C. Brown Construction Greg Brown 13726 S.E. Schiller Portland, OR 97236	Office (503)730-3860 Fax (503)762-2046	General Contracting			
A-Mar Electric Inc Greg Martin George Christian 1020 N. E. 3rd Ave, Suite 11 Portland, Or 97232	Office (503)281-5528 Pager (503)299-7863 Home (503)335-3901	Electrical			
Lampkin's Construction Ray Lampkin 516 S. E. Morrison Suite 705 Portland, OR 97214	Office (503)235-5954 Mobile (503)320-8813	General Contractor			

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