

# Vantage Point

## It's Time For A New Cop On The Block

There is absolutely no doubt that the crisis of crime and violence is real in this country. At all levels within this society the fear of violent crime is pervasive. Hence the receptivity of the American people to proposals by politicians that more police officers be put on the streets. Indeed, the crime bill before the Congress provides for 100,000 additional police officers over the next five years. I have consistently maintained that simply putting more police officers on the streets in and of itself and by itself will not appreciably affect the crime rate over the long haul. What is required is the implementation of a comprehensive social and economic justice agenda in order to achieve real peace and security in American society. It is in the context of implementing a social and economic justice agenda that law enforcement can have some significant impact.

But in order for law enforcement to contribute to the solution of the crisis of crime and violence it can no longer be business as usual. In particular the manner in which the police conduct themselves in the Black community, poor communities and communities of color must radically change. Presently people in the community often perceive the police as a part of the problem as opposed to being a part of the solution. Racist attitudes are often prevalent among police officers leading to widespread abuse of power in terms of police harassment and police brutality.

Trained to function as a para-military force, the Rambo mentality and Rambo style of operating frequently make the police appear like an occupying army in our neighborhoods. Then there is the problem of police misconduct and corruption. The drug traffic could not survive without the complicity even cooperation and involvement of officers within the police force. Recent revelations about police corruption in Los Angeles, Washington, D.C. and New York City illustrate this point. Given all the attitude problems, hang-ups and inappropriate behavior which is characteristic of too many cops, the police often lack credibility and are mistrusted in our communities.

Since some form of law enforcement/protection is necessary in any society, what we need is a new cop on the block. The community must be involved in defining how the police will function in our communities. First and foremost this means that we must demand an education for police officers which includes racial and cultural sensitivity training. Secondly, we must demand civilian review boards with enforcement powers as a means of eliminating police brutality and police abuse. Finally, we must work with affiliates of the National Black Police Association (NBPA) to adopt community policing programs in our communities. To achieve these goals we must organize neighborhood and community block clubs and associations as self-help crime pre-

vention, detection and police monitoring mechanisms.

Police officers must see themselves and conduct themselves as helper/protectors in the our community. As the Police chief of New Haven Connecticut recently commented on 60 Minutes, the police officer should be seen in the same light as the family doctor; a trusted friend to the neighborhood and the people who live there. This means police officers working beats on foot or on bicycles taking time to get to know people in the neighborhood on a personal basis. A new kind of a cop with and new attitude and approach to the community can also work with neighborhood block clubs on a range of community concerns. Relating to and working with youth in the neighborhood should obviously be a very high priority.

This is probably not what most people have in mind when they understandably demand more police on the streets. However, Black people in particular should be aware that more of the same will simply bring more of the same. We do not need to open our community up to greater police harassment, intimidation and brutality in the name of fighting crime, violence and drugs. We need community control of the police and a new cop on the block that will function in a manner that we define as just and humane. Otherwise our communities will begin to look like concentration camps complete with occupying armies.

## City, State, County, Metro Announce Joint Funding Of Regional "Croson" Disparity Study

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economic health of businesses owned by women and minorities, and Oregon is an equal chance to help with the planning, designing and building of our roads, bridges and other public structures," said Roberts.

Croson Disparity Studies have been conducted around the country as a result of the United States Supreme Court 1989 decision in Richmond vs Croson. One of the most significant decisions to emerge out of the Rehnquist court, the opinion declared affirmative-action and set-aside programs unconstitutional without clear evidence of discrimination. Since that ruling, many governmental jurisdictions and agencies have conducted disparity studies in order to meet the Court's requirement of clear evidence.

Disparity studies examine the history, business practices, statistics and other data of the targeted industry, focusing on the opportunities and barriers faced by minorities and women. The studies must explore whether there is a need for instituting, or continuing hiring programs for people who are traditionally discriminated against, primarily minorities and women. Subsequent programs attempt to remedy past discrimination proven by the disparity studies.

In other parts of the country, many of the programs aimed at guaranteeing opportunities for minority

and women-owned business have been challenged in court by majority contractors, or organizations representing them, who believe that they themselves are being discriminated against by such programs. An incidental but significant benefit of the disparity study process is to initiate a thoughtful self-examination by those governmental entities participating to make sure that the programs which have been designed are carefully designed and reasonable in their scope.

Those initiating the Portland-area study say it will help them fend off legal challenges to programs they may institute in the future as well as provide valuable insights into the types of programs most likely to actually assist the minority and women owned business communities.

"Many people of color in Portland believe that systemic employment discrimination has prevented their equal opportunity to be trained and employed in the local construction industry," said Madelyn Wessel, City of Portland Attorney heading up the study.

"Although the barriers to full and equal participation are complex and do not simply result from intentional discrimination, it is clear that in the absence of enforceable participation requirements minority participation in government contracting has dropped off considerably. In addition, workforce data and other evidence we have reviewed support the view that there have been significant barriers to equal employment oppor-

tunity. Officials from the City of Portland and the other jurisdictions involved have researched the viability and scope of a regional disparity study for over a year. City staff have spent the past three months evaluating the many technical issues involved and initiating the design of the study.

The cost of a thorough Croson study for the City, Multnomah County and Metro had been estimated to be roughly \$4000,000. So far, Portland has committed \$175,000 to begin the study. The state of Oregon will contribute \$125,000, Multnomah County \$100,000 and Metro \$100,000.

"A Croson Study will give us the tools to operate with both carrots and with sticks in the area of MBE/WBE contracting and hiring, and both are very important," said Wessel. "We need to be able to reward and support businesses that fairly involve MBE/WBE contractors and employees, and we also need to be able to reject bids from companies that do not." Such a philosophy has been a premise of federal contracting programs for many years, and was thrown into disarray at the state and local level only by the decision in the Croson case.

Preliminary work on the study has already begun. A consultant selection process is expected process is expected to be initiated in the next two months. The City hopes the study is completed in the next year.

Officials within the City of Portland have discussed conducting a Croson study since the 1989 Supreme Court ruling.

## Emergency Unemployment Benefits Start Phase-out In Oregon

Two programs offering extended unemployment insurance benefits to Oregon workers who are long-term unemployed are ending, according to Employment Department officials.

For the past two-and-a-half years, these programs have provided benefits to Oregonians who have run out of their regular 26 weeks of unemployment benefits. Federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC), which has been in effect since November 1991, has provided \$367 million to more than 200,000 Oregonians during this period. Over the duration of the program, EUC has paid up to 33 weeks of benefits to

unemployed Oregon workers.

Because the program has not been re-enacted by Congress, the Employment Department stopped accepting new claims for these benefits on February 5. Oregonians who already established claims before February 5 will continue to receive benefits through the week ending April 30, 1994.

A second extended benefits program, which began in October 1993 will end February 26 due to a drop in Oregon's total unemployment rate. For most people claiming unemployment insurance benefits, the Oregon Extended Benefits program super-

seded the federal EUC program, paying 13 weeks of additional benefits, compared to seven weeks payable under EUC.

The Extended Benefits program to date has provided additional benefits to 12,000 Oregonians and has paid out over \$30,000,000. There is no phase-out period for Extended Benefits, and the week ending February 26, 1994 will be the final week for which these benefits will be paid.

Oregonians receiving benefits under either program can contact the Employment Department office in their community for more information.

## Tenth Annual Tourism Conference To Be Held In Eugene-Springfield

Tourism leaders from throughout Oregon will gather in Eugene March 6-8 for the Tenth Annual Governor's Conference on Tourism.

Preparing the visitor industry for the future will be the focus of remarks by keynote speaker Ed Barlow, Jr., who will kick off the conference on Monday morning with a speech entitled, "The Journey Toward the Next Millennium - Doing Business in the 90's." Clinton appointee Greg Farmer, Under Secretary of Commerce for Travel and Tourism, will address the conference at the Monday lunch, and Charles Jordan, director of Portland parks, will keynote the Tuesday luncheon.

Workshops at the Valley River Inn include niche marketing, ethnic

and cultural diversity, rural tourism development, market research, partnerships, environmental awareness, and "tourism basics." Bill Wyatt of the Oregon Business Council will present the findings of the Oregon Values and Beliefs survey in two workshops on Monday.

The conference is coordinated by the Tourism Division of the Oregon Economic Development Department, and funded primarily by registration fees and sponsorships.

Sunday's "Huddle Sessions" feature the unveiling of the Tourism Division's 1994 spring/summer ad campaign by Wieden and Kennedy and new publications by Mandala Communications.

Eugene was the site of the first

tourism conference, held in 1984. "It is particularly appropriate that we are holding our tenth annual conference in the same location where the very first conference was held," said Joe D'Alessandro, director of tourism. "The Lane county area is anxious to showcase this unique region of the state, and the commitment of the local planning team has been incredible."

Cultural and recreational tours of the area are featured Monday afternoon, as well as a Tuesday evening performance at the Hult Center.

Governor Barbara Roberts will address the delegates at the UO Casanova Center on Monday evening at a reception hosted by the Convention and Visitors Association of Lane County, Oregon.

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