

HOUSING The Portland Observer

Celebrating Black Heritage



Don Cornelius (right) and Sinbad join the Luster Foundation in celebrating black heritage. Also pictured are Jory Luster, (left) president of Luster Products and his wife, Mary. Cornelius, producer of Soul Train, the Soul Train Music Awards and the Soul Train Comedy Awards, received the 1994 Fred Luster Sr. Image Award.

Funds Received For YouthBuild Program

Congresswoman Elizabeth Furse, together with Mayor Vera Katz and City Commissioner Gretchen Kafoury announced Thursday that the City's Bureau of Housing and Community Development, along with 15 partner agencies, has received a \$100,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to design a YouthBuild program for the Portland area.

The aim of the YouthBuild is to involve at-risk young people in building affordable housing within their community. The YouthBuild program, first developed in New York City in the late 1970's combines intensive construction training with education and leadership development.

Currently, a pilot program - Portland YouthBuild '94 - is underway with eleven young people ages 18-21. During the next five months

these youth will be divided into two teams which will alternate between a week on the construction site and a week in the classroom. The group aims to have a new home constructed by the end of November.

The aim of this pilot, organized by several coalition members, is to strengthen Portland's ability to design, and acquire funds for a full YouthBuild program. A formal kick-off event for this program is scheduled for noon on Monday, July 18 at 1257 NE Highland - the future construction site for this program.

"I'm thrilled that Portland has the opportunity to develop such a program," Commissioner Kafoury noted. "YouthBuild blends the best elements of community development and youth education and empowerment."

The current HUD grant covers the planning phase of the YouthBuild program. If planning and develop-

ment efforts are successful, Portland YouthBuild will open its doors to 30 youth in the summer or fall of 1995.

"YouthBuild is a perfect example of a program where everybody wins," said the Mayor, "young people learn valuable construction trade skills and the community gains more units of affordable housing."

Coalition member agencies include: Portland Habitat for Humanity, Oregon Outreach, Portland House of Umoja, the Youth Employment and Empowerment Project, NE Workforce Center, Portland Public Schools, NE Community Development Corporation, the Portland Development Commission, the Tri-County Youth Services Consortium, the Housing Authority of Portland, Youth Gang Outreach program, The Private Industry Council, the Oregon Building and Albin Ministerial Alliance.

Dedication Set For Super Energy-Efficient House

A low-income family's new home uses the latest research in energy-saving and low-cost construction.

Design and construction of the house were made possible by a venture between the University of Oregon School of Architecture and Allied Arts' Center for Housing Innovation, St. Vincent de Paul and several local contractors. The house is lo-

cated in Springfield and will be rented to a low-income family.

Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., and John Millhone, deputy assistant secretary in the U.S. Department of Energy, will attend the dedication. The Energy Department funded the design and analysis portions of the project.

The house is designed to comply

with the Bonneville Power Administration's stringent Super Good Cents energy standards. The use of stressed skin insulating core (SSIC) panels, refined by UO researchers, allows the 1,200-square-foot house to use 40 percent less energy than a comparable structure that meets Oregon building codes. SSIC panels are prefabricated units made

of hardboard and plywood that is laminated directly to an inner core of a Styrofoam-like material.

While SSIC panels are inherently energy-efficient, they often cost more than conventional framing. The challenge for researchers at the UO Energy Efficient Industrialized Housing Research Program was to develop design innovations that would make the house more affordable, while optimizing the capabilities of the panels, according to G.Z. Brown, UO professor of architecture and program director.

Brown says the immediate value of the project is that it provides an energy-efficient home to a low-

income family. He says the long-term view of the program is to develop ways to reduce domestic energy consumption and to help the U.S. housing industry compete on a global level with countries such as Japan and Sweden, where the industry is highly advanced.

The house also demonstrates the potential when researchers, govern-

ment and industry join together on a project, Brown adds. The testing of ideas and the advancement of technology and materials became possible because of the collaboration, he says.

The house was built by local contractor Goldenridge Construction and will be monitored for its energy performance.

Home Sales Strong

Sales of existing single-family homes were up from a year ago and steady compared with April, according to the National Association of Realtors.

The West recorded a sales rate of 850,000 units in May, a rise of 14.9 percent from one year ago. The median price was \$148,600, up 5.8 percent from one year earlier.

The Northeast led in home sales, posting a resale rate of 630,000 units in May, up 23.5 percent from one year earlier. The median price in the Northeast was \$138,300, down 1.4 percent from May 1993.

"The recent up-tick in mortgage interest rates has had little impact in the existing home sales segment of the market. It appears that while some consumers have chosen to delay purchases due to higher rates, overwhelmingly, buyers have brushed off rates because they are intent on buying a home," said NAR President Robert H. Elrod.

The Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corp. reported that the national average commitment rate for 30-year, conventional, fixed-rate mortgages was 8.60 percent in May, up from 8.32 percent the previous month and the highest since May 1992 when it was 8.67.

May's national median existing single-family home price was \$109,900, up 3.2 percent from one year earlier. The median is

the midpoint in the price range, half the homes old cost more, half cost less.

Economist John A. Tuccillo said that while the drop in total U.S. home

sales between April and May reflects a normal reaction in the marketplace to higher mortgage interest rates, the stable pace also indicates that higher rates have not dampened sales.

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Housing Projects Target Homeless

The Federal Home Loan Bank has awarded \$533,133 in targeted grants to help U.S. Bank fund the development of 168 affordable apartments in Northwest Portland.

The grants will support the rehabilitation of the Rothchild Building, 106 efficiency apartments primarily for homeless individuals recovering from substance abuse and/or suffering from chronic mental illness. The monies will also be used to remodel the Victorian Inn, 62 apartments for low-income elderly individuals, primarily from the Asian community.

Each resident will receive an individual treatment plan and will have access to mental health services, alcohol and drug treatment, and medical care services. Before they are eligible to move in, tenants of the Rothchild must be involved in a recovery program.