

Economic Development Specialist Addresses NAACP Deficit

Regional fundraisers, electronic memberships and a football classic are among the innovative solutions the NAACP is examining to reduce an approximated \$3 million shortfall, according to economic development consultant L.R. Byrd.

Byrd, also the creator of the successful Black Dollar day drive, is most recognized as the national leader who steered the NAACP to the adoption of economic development as a major platform for African-Americans (beyond education and politics). "Our well-publicized debt is something that must be addressed



L.R. Byrd.

strategically, with the employment of contemporary resources." Byrd said. "We are working to address decreasing the time frame necessary to process memberships and donations. We are looking forward to a series of major fund raisers and the electronic enrollment of new members (perhaps through existing automatic teller machines and/or telephone cards), as well as a football classic in Atlanta, Charlotte or Baltimore."

Amidst the most recent change in administration, Byrd also expects to be instrumental in other projects designed to increase the cash flow of the NAACP.

Byrd Explores Minority Perspective

On Information Superhighway African Americans can do better than four percent. That is what a Greenville, SC-based business de-

"While the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is stating its priorities to include ownership, Management, employment and education opportunities for African Americans, this should not be another instance where we sit and wait for a government agency to solve problems or open doors. Having done so before, we now see minorities controlling only approximately three percent of the commercial radio and television stations and less than one percent of the cable operators and telecommunications companies."

During auctions earlier this year, minorities secured almost 24% of the regional interactive television licenses. These, however, are considered less profitable than the other licenses. Minorities did not secure, for example, any of the 10 nationwide paging frequencies that were available. "Minorities attempted to bid, but the level of bidding was exclusive. While we are making great strides, we still operate from an economic deficit in Black America."

Industry accounts report that 20 million Americans are using cellular phones. Byrd says African Americans represent a significant portion of that number and have even greater numbers for interactive television and computer use at home. "I am encouraging financially stable African American business owners to look into the telecommunications industry, overall," he explains.

Broad band licenses (accommodating both cellular phones and computers) are expected to be auctioned later this year. Byrd advises that African Americans pool their resources, including "intellectual capital" and look for strategic alliances with majority-owned companies to compete effectively in this multi-billion dollar industry.

Byrd asserts that the computer databases accessed through the new technology also will assist African Americans in meeting new customers and expanded access to research and other pertinent information.

While one recent survey attests that nearly half of all small business owners are aware of the intent of the information superhighway, another study reveals that corporate execu-

Officials Approve Jobs Plus Start-Up

Approval of the final federal waiver needed to start the Plus welfare-to-work initiative in six Oregon counties was announced by Donna Shalala, U.S. Health and Human Services secretary.

The waiver means that beginning within the next month, selected welfare recipients will be assigned jobs with private employers and receive wages instead of welfare grants and food stamps in Clackamas, Washington, Baker, Gilliam, Lincoln and Malheur counties.

"In approving Oregon's waiver, the President is making good on part of his pledge to end welfare as we know it," Oregon Gov. Barbara Roberts said today. "Now, we will have another tool for getting Oregonians from a welfare check to paycheck. This was made possible by the hard work of the Oregon Department of Human Resources and the state's congressional delegation, particu-

larly Congressman Wyden and Senator Hatfield."

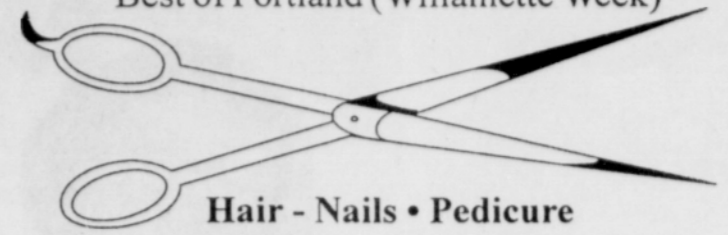
Earlier, Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy approved a federal waiver to permit "cashing out" food stamps as part of the Plus Pilot. State officials estimate that 1,000 families will participate in the six counties.

Plus joins Oregon's nearly four-year-old program, which is now helping more than 1,300 welfare households a month find employment. The pilot will be managed by the Adult and Family Services Division of the Oregon Department of Human Resources.

Recipients will train for employment and be placed in nine-month, on-the-job training positions in private and non-profit businesses. Instead of receiving welfare benefits and food stamps, participants will be paid at least the state minimum wage. Benefits will be no less than those provided by public assistance.

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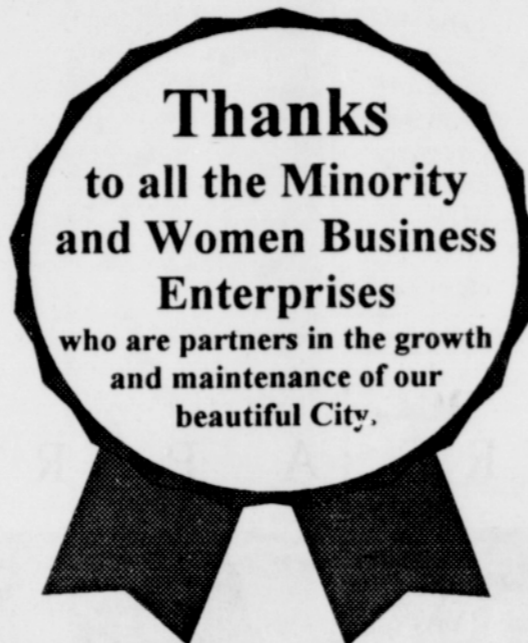
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City Council Adopts "Prosperous Portland", City's First Comprehensive Economic Development Policy

Following more than a year of intensive work, scores of meetings with members of the public and private sector, and input from City bureaus, the Portland City Council unanimously adopted "Prosperous Portland", the City's first comprehensive economic development policy.

"Prosperous Portland sets forth a broad new action agenda to guide the city's economic development efforts," said Mayor Vera Katz. "Now we have clear guidelines that will help us take advantage of our changing economy and maximize our opportunities to attract jobs to the city and the region. All of Portland's citizens will benefit from this economic development plan."

One of the issues identified by the Mayor as she was preparing for her transition into office was the city's lack of an updated economic development policy.

In May 1993, Katz created the Business Roundtable as an advisory council to the mayor's office. The Roundtable, comprised of 25 business leaders and chaired by John Russell, president of Russell Development Company, was assigned the task of rethinking the City's role in economic development and helping to develop policies and strategies to ensure the City's economic health and vitality.

"This report brings forward a set of integrated policies which will build on our city's strengths and bring business and community leaders to the

table as partners in dealing with changing economic forces," said Russell. "It was an honor to serve the city in this capacity."

"Prosperous Portland" focuses on integrated strategies and action items that address the city's business climate, business development, workforce development, and physical development and infrastructure. It also calls for active partnerships with key neighborhoods for redevelopment of specifically targeted areas of the city.

A steering committee of the Business Roundtable has been responsible for the actual development and drafting of the document, formally titled "Prosperous Portland, Integrated Policies for Jobs and the Economy." Following 14 months of work, 70 public discussions and an number of public hearings, the document underwent revisions that were incorporated into the draft approved today.

Katz thanked members of the city council and all those involved in developing the policy saying, "this is a long-term plan that will take a long-term commitment, but for the first time in our city's history we now have an economic development plan that addresses the concerns of all Portlanders, particularly those traditionally left out of economic prosperity," said Katz. "Your hard work will pay off in making our city economically stronger and more vibrant for years to come," said Katz.

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