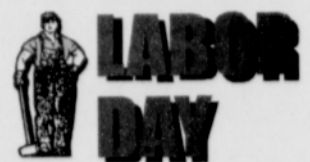




Business



Ford names new minority retailers

• Ford Motor Company's newest class of Minority Retailers to Enter the Retailing World

CONTRIBUTED STORY FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

They've spent the past two years studying business and retail theory in classrooms, as well as working with real customers in Ford Motor Company's newest class of minority dealer candidates to enter the automotive retailing world. The 13 men and women receiving their diplomas on Aug. 18 are the first class to graduate from Ford Motor Company's Minority Retailer Development Program since the program was redesigned in 1998.

"We're very proud of our dealer graduates, and have great confidence in their future success," said Elliott Hall, Ford Motor Company vice president of Dealer Development. "This is a very exciting time to be entering the automotive retail world, and we believe our Minority Retailer Development Program has positioned these candidates to compete very well in today's marketplace".

Students in the Minority Retailer Development Program undergo an extensive two-year training program designed to expose them to all aspects of the automotive retailing business. The August 2000 class of graduates will be the 28th graduating class to complete the MRDO program since it began in 1974. Ford Motor Company has the largest number of minority dealers in the country, with 378 Ford, Lincoln and Mercury minority dealers operating throughout the U.S.



Increased competition means local employers must adopt innovative benefits

CONTRIBUTED STORY FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Deborah Tompkins, founder and president of Tompkins Benefit Group, a Portland niche firm that creates and manages customized employee benefit packages for employers, forecasts increased growth in the employee benefits arena based on current trends.

"In the Portland area, the cost of providing the same benefits as a year ago has increased by about 11 percent, while the cost of salaries has only increased by three percent," said Tompkins, a 22-year veteran of the insurance and benefits industry. "That's a real issue for employers. They're finding it increasingly difficult—and expensive—to lure and retain good employees

in such a tight labor market."

Under such conditions, the importance of employee benefits becomes heightened, said Tompkins. She explained that with the labor squeeze in Portland, fueled in part by a booming Internet start-up industry, employers are coming up with creative new ideas for benefits. Tompkins herself is a firm believer in so-called "quality of life" benefits. She cites quarterly staff parties and even a shopping trip to Nordstrom as examples of benefits her company has offered its employees.

"An employer has to create a culture that fits his or her employees. Essentially, they need to create a community. No stock options in the world can make up for that," Tompkins pointed out.

Tolerance from page 4

questions some Protestants had about his Roman Catholicism. Oh, yes, to be sure, the Liberman selection galvanized, at least for the moment, some of the forces of anti-Semitic intolerance—be it the kind that is deliberate and some of the hard-core, or the kind that is largely born of a reflexive bigoted ignorance.

We should not be saddened or dismayed by these outbursts of intolerance. We should be energized by it, as the leadership of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People obviously was in disciplining the head of their Dallas, Texas chapter for his bigoted references to Jewish Americans.

The NAACP's quick, forceful response underscores what happens when people, a group, an entire society stand up for tolerance, as American society has done significantly since the early 1960's of John F. Kennedy and the Civil Rights Movement.

For one thing, such unabashed support for inclusiveness makes clear what bigotry is: a stinking venom under the cover of anonymity the internet provides.

Most of these people won't dare make such remarks in the open, whether in a public forum, or around the water cooler at work, or even with most of their friends because they know those remarks would stamp them as backward, as afraid of the rich diversity of the American present and the future.

So, regardless of party affiliation, we can all take heart from the recent actions on both sides of the major-party divide.

On the one hand, the Republican convention opened with such substantive high-profile African Americans as Gen. Colin Powell, and George W. Bush's chief foreign policy adviser, Condoleezza Rice.

And, on the other Democratic Party has pushed the top of its ticket past the boundaries of conventionality.

Some would say both actions are just so much political jockeying. If so, I say it's the kind of jockeying America could use a lot more of.



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On September 3rd we would like to wish Jah'Ron Nah'Shon Smith a Happy 1st birthday.

Happy Birthday Li'l Stinker
Love Mama, Daddy, Grandma, Grandpa, and a host of family and