

Woman Turns Hobby Into Commercial Success

Business pursuit begins with call to Small Business Administration

There were no guarantees of success when Yolanda Chavez became an entrepreneur 15 years ago. But the Albuquerque, N.M. wife and mother of two was certain of

one thing: she did not want to fail. "I was 40-years-old at the time," she recalls, "and had too many assets at stake. I really could not afford to gamble my family's future on something that would not work out."

But what started out as a hobby of designing and sewing handbags has blossomed in ways that even the industrious Chavez never thought possible.

Her company, Carmen Hand-



A woven-wool market bag with a flower accent is one of the designs of Carmen Handbags, a business that started as a hobby.

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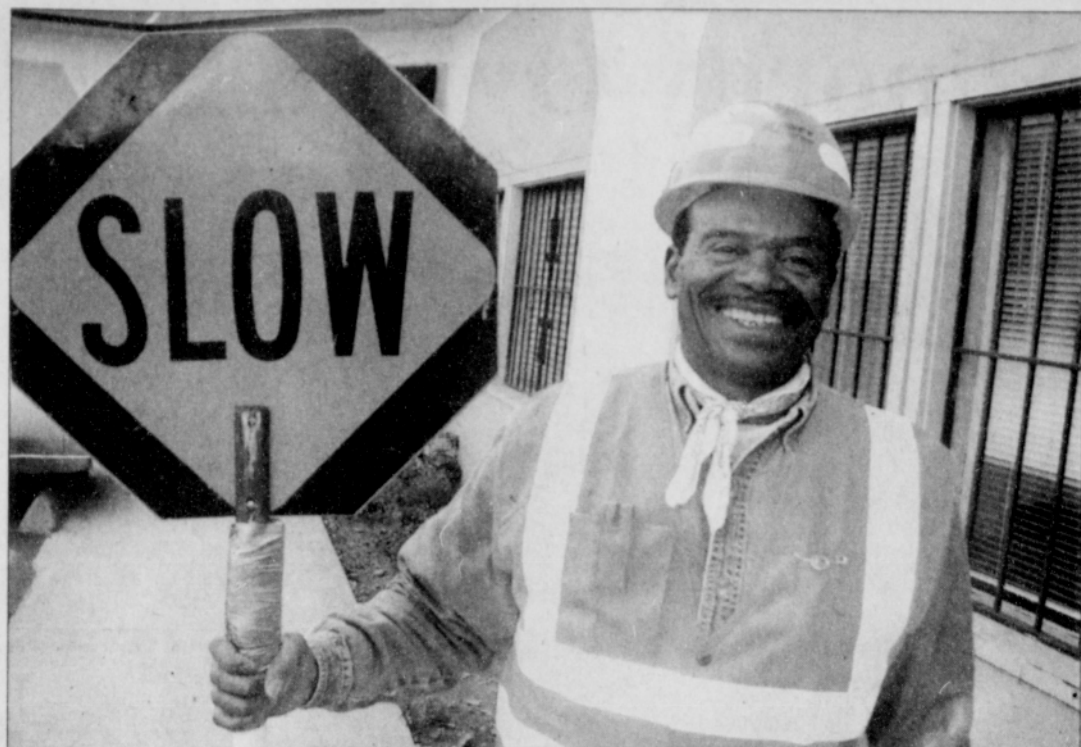


PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

UNFLAGGING DEDICATION

Troy Kyles wears florescent orange clothing in his job as a traffic control flagger. Kyles has been a member for Local Laborer's Union 320 for 15 years. He has worked in the construction industry for 20 years. He's currently flagging for Max J. Kuney Construction Co on the St. Johns bridge project. He will begin teaching traffic control flagging at Portland Community College on Dec. 15. For more information about becoming a certified flagger, call 503-260-0969.

Savannah's Brings Island Experience



It's very rare to encounter authentic Caribbean food so far from the islands, but not at the new Savannah's Caribbean Restaurant and Bar at 105 N.W. Third St.

Caribbean meals at Savannah's are characterized by a rich blending of African, French, Portuguese, East Indian and Spanish influences.

Savannah, which opened in

September, achieves this complex flavor because of family and celebration recipes from Chef Ken Harry, a native of Trinidad.

The location, according to co-owner Jerry Peterson, provides a romantic, classic and serene atmosphere. The site is the former location of the local landmark Couch Street Fish House.

"As far as this type of food and

service, this will be something people haven't seen in Portland before," said Peterson. "If you've never been to the Caribbean, this will give you insight into the island experience."

Savannah is open Tuesdays through Fridays for lunch and dinner, and Saturdays for dinner. For more information, call 503-274-2510.

Transit brings opportunity.



TriMet gives minority workers and minority-owned businesses opportunities to gain experience and grow.

For the new Interstate MAX Yellow Line, TriMet awarded over \$25 million in construction contracts to disadvantaged business enterprises (DBEs). And over 31% of the Interstate MAX Yellow Line workforce have been women and minorities.

Vicqui Guevara (pictured above), owns Valley

Growers Nursery in Hubbard, Oregon.

She won the contract to triple the number of trees along Interstate Avenue, beautifying the new light rail stations.

To learn about current TriMet bidding opportunities, check the online e-bid system at www.trimet.org/bidding/index.htm or call

LeAnne Brown at 503-962-2213.

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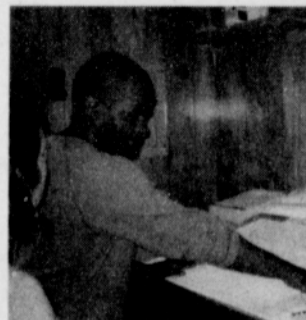
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To ensure equal opportunity for all citizens and to build economic vitality, the City of Portland and Multnomah County are committed to promoting and supporting the use of regional diverse businesses.

We are honored to have this special opportunity to recognize, celebrate and help foster the numerous valuable contributions made by minority businesses in our region.



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