



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Joice Taylor operates her own business in the commercial property at 3808 N. Williams Ave. As chair of the North-Northeast Business Association, she is dedicated to providing economic access to all people in her community.

Building Her Community's Economic Foundation

Taylor leads North/Northeast business group

BY LEE PERLMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Joice Taylor's family moved away from Virginia when she was five, first to San Diego and then, when she was 12, to Portland.

Thus, she did not experience first-hand the horrors of Southern segregation prior to the Civil Rights Movement. However, she never lacked understanding that people were being discriminated against and denied equal access to the benefits of American life.

She remembers the struggles of civil rights volunteers, and especially the eloquence of Dr.

Martin Luther King Jr., as people sought to bring about change. "To not acknowledge that courage and dedication would have been disrespectful," she says.

Today, Taylor is among a new generation of leaders dedicated to providing economic access and equal opportunity to people in her community.

As chair of the North-Northeast Business Association, she is working to promote commerce for the area bounded by the I-5 Freeway of north Portland, Northeast Broadway, Columbia Boulevard, and Northeast 33rd Avenue.

Last year the group held a Juneteenth celebration for non-profit corporations. It also collaborated on an Excellence in Business awards program with the Albina Rotary club.

Taylor points out that she is aided by an able and diverse board. It includes Aramark Catering's Roy Jay, Reflections' Gloria McMurtry, thrift shop owner Regina Williams, Bardy Trophy's Greg Gruyszinsky, Hannah Bee's Anita Smith, and political leader Lucinda Tate.

In addition to their board meetings they hold a monthly networking session on the last Wednesday of the month.

"If we're to represent businesses here, we have to hear their voices," Taylor says. "We're

becoming increasingly diverse, and our differences give us strength," Taylor says.

She is also networking with political groups such as the Portland Development Commission. Last year, the two organizations cosponsored a tour of MLK businesses by the Small Business Administration, and they are planning a similar tour for City Commissioner Sam Adams.

PDC also used the local business group to do outreach for a study of transportation issues in the Williams-Vancouver corridor.

"I believe in being a participatory citizen, not just sitting back and complaining," she says.

continued ▼ on page B23

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