

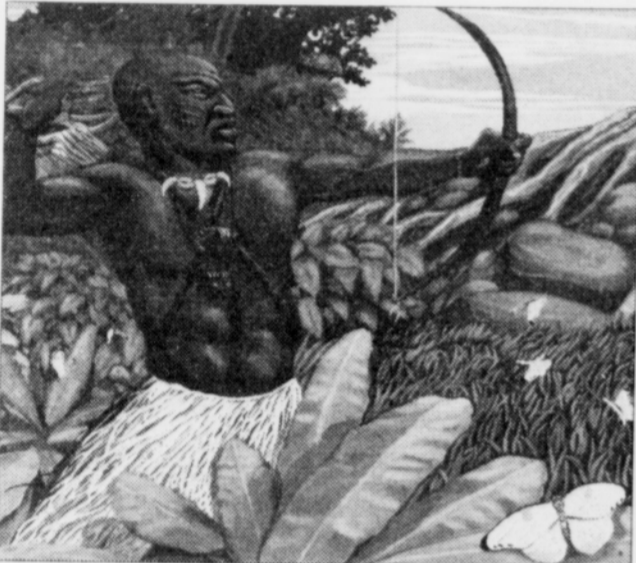
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Housing Chair Takes Reigns

BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Lee Moore was recently named chair of the Housing Authority of Portland's Board of Commissioners, the agency providing affordable and government-owned housing for residents of Multnomah County, including section 8 vouchers.

Moore's parents came to Oregon to work in the shipyards during World War II. During that time he lived in government housing in Vanport, a community between Portland and Vancouver that was destroyed by a flood.

He spoke to the Portland Observer:

What sort of initiatives are you going to pursue as chair?

Because poverty knows no borders, I'm thinking that the Housing Authority really needs to look at our mission to ensure that we are providing services to all of Multnomah County. As we begin to look at the price of housing and the ability of many of our clients to secure housing, particularly in the section 8 area, they need to go where they can get the best value. And if we're limited to being an exclusive Portland agency, then we're not able to serve them as we should. We call ourselves the "Housing Authority of Portland." Is that a limiting factor in a lot of partners' minds? We have reason to believe that is. So we're looking at the possibility of a name change.

Another thing I think we ought to be looking at is diversity. We have one of the most diverse boards



Lee Moore

of any government agency in the state, but we also need to make sure that diversity passes through the inside of our organization, so that we're practicing what we preach. We also need to make sure we're multilingual, so to speak, in terms of being able to identify with all those publics, as well as receiving input from those publics.

President Obama has announced the idea of a spending freeze. Could you talk about limited finances.

As resources become more limited at the federal level we also need to be looking for alternative ways to maximize our asset base. I think that we shouldn't, and can't, be looking to the federal government to solve our problems. In my travels to a lot of European countries, one of the things you see are partnerships between the housing providers and private industry. An example that I saw was libraries on the main level of a building and apartments above, or other kinds of commercial developments at the street level with apartments above. In many cases the revenue

generated from the commercial development helps offset some of the cost for low-income housing.

We have done some partnering with private industry at HAP where there is conventional market-based housing and low-income housing, and one helps offset the other. Also, by doing it that way we're not creating social-economic ghettos in the sense that we put low-income in one place.

What are some other ways that you can incorporate public housing into the community?

We look at New Columbia as really one of the models not only locally, but nationally. It's not obvious as you drive through that development who is low-income and who is a homeowner. So essentially, it is a mixed use community where we put in low-income along with people who actually own the property.

Last year, we lost affordable housing units to the tune of 22 percent in the central city, but we saw an increase in 12 percent in some of the higher income units. What sort of conclusions did you draw from that?

I think we have to be extremely careful that we don't become the San Francisco of the north. Meaning, that as the cost of living and the cost of housing increases you price lower-income families out of the city so that they have to move to the suburbs, then upper-income empty-nesters then move into the central city. And essentially what happens is that the suburbs of today become the ghettos of the future. That's something we need to guard against.

Toyota Hit on Safety

Recall deals blow to image

(AP) -- The Obama administration's top transportation official sharply criticized Toyota Motor Corp. on Tuesday for dragging its feet on safety concerns over its gas pedals, suggesting the automaker was "a little safety deaf" to mounting evidence of problems.

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said that federal safety officials had to "wake them up" to the seriousness of the safety issues that eventually led Toyota to recall millions of popular brands like Camry and Corolla. That included a visit to Toyota's offices in Japan to convince them to take action.

"They should have taken it seriously from the very beginning when we first started discussing it with them," LaHood told AP. "Maybe they were a little safety deaf."

The pointed comments came as



Toyota Matrix compact wagons sit at a Toyota dealership as the automaker deals with a recall of faulty gas pedals.

Toyota showed just how painful the recall has been for the automaker that makes some of the best-selling vehicles in the United States. Sales fell 16 percent in January, hurt by Toyota's decision to halt sales while it sorted out a fix for problems with faulty gas pedals.

One of the more trusted brands of cars and trucks, Toyota is scrambling to repair both vehicles subject to its broad recalls and its image with consumers. Toyota executives

apologized Monday to consumers for the problems, which has shaken the confidence of many Toyota drivers.

That problem prompted the company to recall 2.3 million vehicles two weeks ago in the United States. Toyota hopes a small steel insert the size of a postage stamp will solve problems with friction that are blamed for the potential glitch. Dealers said they expected to receive parts for the fix starting Wednesday.