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Drawing More Business from Minority Firms

continued ▲ *from page 2*

with the school district," said Superintendent Carole Smith.

Policy goals include increasing district contracting dollars spent with women- and minority-owned businesses and emerging small businesses. Likewise, the district hopes to see greater numbers of student minorities engaging in career learning opportunities and programs.

"This is about equity and access for qualified professionals," said Martin Gonzalez, school board chairman.

The equity policy intends to boost the number of women and minorities in the construction trades through the school apprenticeships on district construction contracts.

Representatives from the Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs, National Association of Minority Contractors, the Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber, Portland Workforce Alliance and the Coalition of

Clack Men also testified in favor of the policy.

"The implementation of this policy is key to success," Gale Castillo, president of the Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber, told the board. "I would encourage you to focus on communities of color and women."

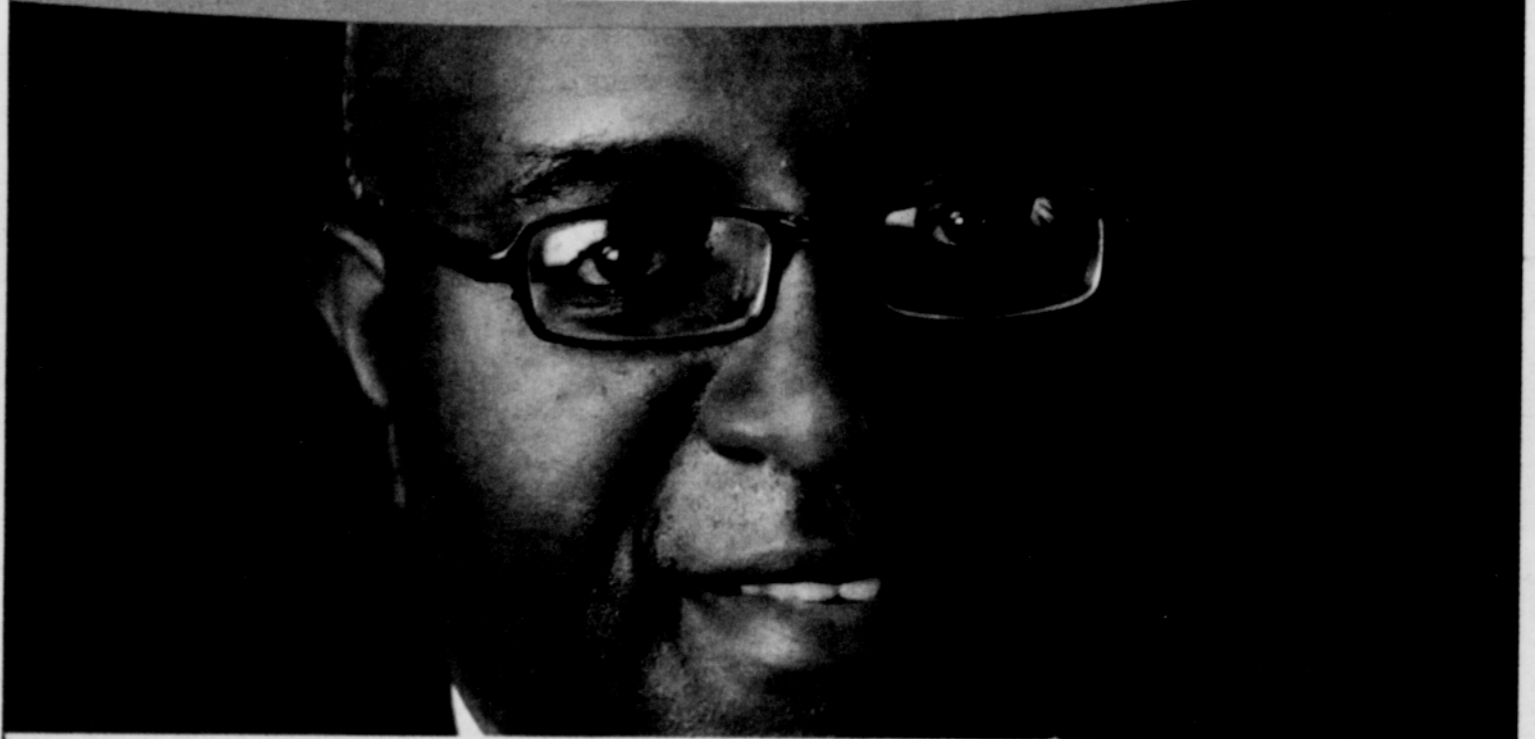
According to Elaine Holt, program director of PPS Purchasing and Contracting, under the new policy, the goal of contracting with more minority- and women-owned firms and emerging small businesses will now be among key criteria when the district is looking to hire contrac-

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— Gale Castillo, president of the Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber

James Posey, former chairman of the National Association for Minority Contractors and former president of the Coalition of Black Men, called the policy "a real anchor in this community in terms of equity" and an opportunity to go beyond what other institutions have done.

tors. The school district considers several priorities when selecting the best contractor for a job, Holt said. "Bidding price and the firm's track record are always considerations and now diversifying our contractor base will be as well."



"Long-term contracts like this enable us to be more proactive in going after other work," says Jonnie L. Thomas, CEO of Triunity Engineering & Management and DBE contractor for the Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail Transit Project.

I work here

Jonnie L. Thomas runs one of the 88 Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firms that have benefited from more than 1,900 direct jobs created by the light rail project.*

*As of September 5, 2012

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