



PHOTO BY ROY LEWIS/TRICE EDNEY NEWS WIRE

Civil rights leader Benjamin Chavis is the president of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, representing black-owned newspapers across the country, including the Portland Observer.

## Envisioning the Black Press as Mainstream

### Civil rights leader cites demographics

BY HAZEL TRICE EDNEY

Civil rights leader Benjamin Chavis, now president of the National Newspaper Publishers Association, envisions black newspapers as becoming the "new mainstream" rather than an alternative press as they are often called.

"The Black Press, I believe has an opportunity where it can make even more traction than it has in the past," Chavis said in a recent interview. "I want the Black Press to become the new mainstream because the demographics are changing."

African American-owned newspapers are often called specialty, alternative or minority press by government agencies and corporate America.

But, according to an analysis of U. S. Census Bureau population stats, people of color, includ-

ing African-Americans, will gradually increase to become a clear majority of America's population over the next four decades.

All in all, minorities, now 37 percent of the U.S. population, are projected to comprise 57 percent of the population in 2060. The total minority population would more than double, from 116 million to 241 million over the period."

Chavis sees this increase as a prospective boon for the NNPA's more than 200 black-owned newspapers as it anticipates its 75th anniversary in 2015 -but only if certain strategies are put in place.

First, he said, black newspapers must focus on a stronger economic foundation by generating more revenue. African-Americans spend \$1.2 trillion dollars a year, he said, noting that these publications must partner with the black churches, banks, colleges and organiza-

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