



Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, the historic African American congregation serving north and northeast Portland, is getting help from Portland's economic development agency to develop the first permanent museum dedicated to Portland's black history.

Revitalizing Cultural Roots

Grants support black history museum, other projects

BY ZACHARY SENN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Prosper Portland, the city's re-named economic development agency, is awarding a series of grants to help revitalize and expand north and northeast Portland establishments that represent the rich history and culture of Portland's historically black neighborhoods.

The new Community Livability Grants represent projects in the agency's North Interstate Avenue Corridor, which includes a big chunk of inner north and northeast Portland, aim to preserve the area's diversity and promote the

health of minority-owned businesses.

The Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church received a grant of \$62,500 that it will use toward expanding its square footage from 6,000 to 10,000 square feet. With the additional space, the church will be increasing its non-religious programming, and is beginning the process of developing Portland's first permanent museum dedicated to the city's black history.

The Billy Webb Elks Lodge also received \$62,500, which it will use to upgrade its kitchen and increase its exterior signage.

Alberta Main Street is the recipient of a \$20,000 grant that will allow the organization to design, fabricate and install cultural and historical markers showcasing Alberta Street's black heritage and rich cultural background.

Recipients of the grants are ex-

pected to contract with State of Oregon-certified minority-owned, women-owned or disadvantaged small businesses to complete any capital additions or improvements.

In a statement, Prosper Portland Executive Director Kimberly Branam said that the grants will help the organization to better serve communities that have been shut out from the economic benefits of development in the past.

"We believe these successful proposals will advance our goals to enhance partnerships and support thriving, vibrant neighborhoods," Branam said.

In total, \$300,000 worth of Community Livability Grants were awarded by Prosper Portland. The organization expects that the grants will leverage an estimated \$1.1 million in additional funds toward north and northeast Portland communities.

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