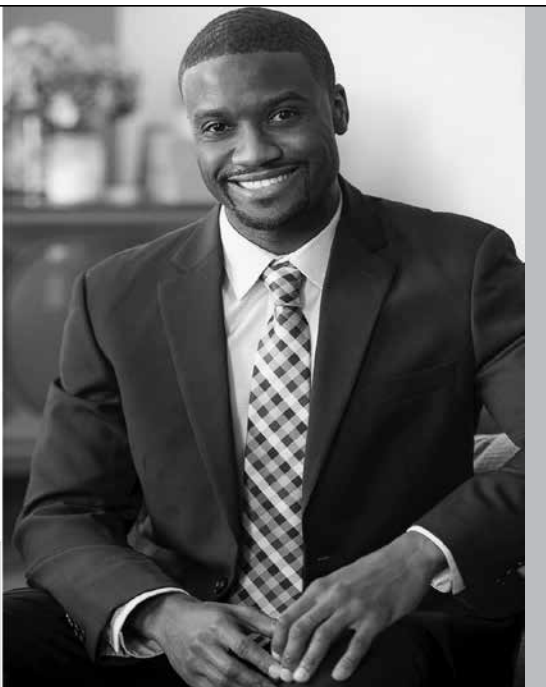


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Prodded Tech Increases Diversity

Some job gains made; more progress needed

A prodding of local tech companies to hire a more diverse workforce is gaining some traction.

The latest “TechTown” report by Prosper Portland, formerly the Portland Development Commission, shows an increase in hiring women and minorities in high tech jobs, but also reveals there’s still progress to be made. Since TechTown’s 2015 launch, 21 Portland companies have joined the pledge “to collectively advance workplace diversity and inclusion.”

The new report shows an increase of women and minority employees since last year. While women and men of color have made gains in hiring for higher-up positions, the leadership and management jobs for women of color have seen no growth.

75 to 90 percent of the survey takers reported that their companies are fostering an inclusive environment.

Prosper Portland, which leads



Marcelino Alvarez

the diversity initiatives for TechTown, has added an action council and new trainings as ways to help companies improve the way they welcome new hires and recruit and retain more people of color and women in the industry

As Marcelino Alvarez, founder and CEO of Uncorked Studios commented and a participant in “TechTown,” commented, “The positive results are gratifying, but clearly we have more to do. I hope more companies will join this effort to make our industry more inclusive, welcoming and representative of all Portland communities.”



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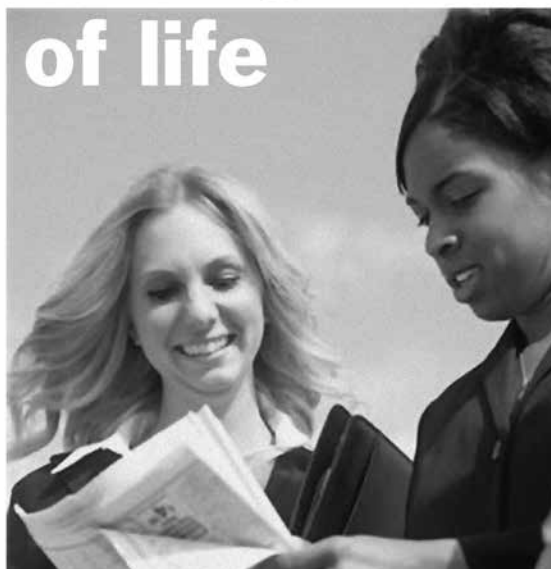
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Creating Positive Images

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

After completing the three-year training program, Frison became involved with the Albina Mural Project, which was a public art project featuring the works of local black artists that was hung from the walls of the Albina Human Resource Center.

“None of them had official training,” Frison said. “While I was going to art school, I learned how to do stuff with graphic design, and drawing stuff on a large scale. If it hadn’t been for me, the project probably wouldn’t have worked too well.”

Frison was responsible for the creation and design of two of the Albina Mural Projects signature pieces, including one piece called “Civil Rights,” which illustrated marches led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Ralph Abernathy. He says that the other mural he designed, “Black Cowboys,” was inspired by his own upbringing in the Southwest. He says “Black Cowboys,” showcases the role of African American ranchers in Texas and New Mexico.

“A lot of people think that black people didn’t do anything on the farm except pull cotton,” Frison

explained. “But my family, we were real cowboys.”

The Albina Mural Project only lasted eight years before the particle board that it was painted on degraded to a point where the artwork was no longer recognizable. Frison says that only one of his three murals in Portland survives to this day, on the inside of a church on North Dekum.

President Obama’s first national campaign inspired Frison to return to his craft after a brief hiatus. His work since the Obama presidency began has focused on civil rights leaders and other prominent black figures, including pop-culture icons such as Prince and several portraits of the Obama family.

“During the time that Obama started running, I said to myself, ‘that’s going to be our next president,’” said Frison. “Ever since then, I’ve been drawing a lot of historical black people.”

Frison’s work will be displayed at the GreenHAUS Boutique and Gallery for the next several weeks, starting with Saturday’s public reception with the artist at the gallery from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. Prints and original copies of his artwork will be available for sale.