

2012—The Year of Equity?

Every year *The Skanner News* publishes a special edition devoted to Minority Business Enterprise.

This year, however, there's something different: Equity is breaking out.

After years of advocacy, a string of significant milestones – from audits and investigations to new contracting policies and procedures – may have an impact on an industry that has been resistant to change.

In these pages you will find short profiles of some dynamic individuals in our region who are now the gatekeepers for construction contracting and procurement by government agencies – and we think you will be impressed by what they bring to their jobs.

We are also throwing into the mix some business program tips and information that can help you take your business to the next level.

Whatever your business is – or your dream business – we wish you the best of luck in entrepreneurship. And for all our readers who are looking for goods and services, we want to encourage you to spend your dollars wisely, spend them in our own community, and thank the small business owners who hold up so much of our local economy.

The Skanner News Team



Last month, two protesters from NAMC-O picketed the grand opening of the Martin Luther King Jr. Heritage Marker project at the edge of the Boise Eliot neighborhood, trying to draw attention to what NAMC-O says were missteps in the bidding process for construction companies. Members of the group criticized the Portland Development Commission's contract award process which, they say, did not result in significant investment in the local Black community's businesses despite the fact that the Heritage Marker was designed to honor the Black community (many of NAMC-O's issues with the Heritage Marker echo those in two recent developments in the industry locally, see 'ODOT Ruling' on page 3 of this issue). PDC Business and Social Equity Director John Jackley says the Heritage Marker contracting process was a model of MWESB participation, with 75 percent of work done by Asian, Native American and Black family-owned companies. NAMC-O members say that only one Black-owned company, O'Neill Electric, got any part of the work, and that was \$68,000 worth out of nearly \$650,000 spent. The curving, rusted-metal signage on the spot reads: "They will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr." A reporter for *The Skanner News* who watched part of the sign's installation says it appeared the crew that erected it was comprised only of white workers.

Port of Portland Small Business Development Program: Looking to Build Success



By Bruce Poinsette
Of *The Skanner News*

Angela Watkins, MCA, manages the Port of Portland Small Business Development Program (SBDP). The SBDP consists of the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program, The Mentor Protégé Program, and the Small Business Participation Initiative. Watkins is also responsible for MWESB/DBE outreach, oversight of all small business goals in contracting, purchasing, and airport concessions.

She says she works to build small businesses in the metro region through education, mentoring, and training.

"My vision for this position is to be the premier pro-

Watkins works to build small businesses in the metro region through education, mentoring, and training

gram preparing certified firms to compete in any economic market and understand what truly will make their business successful – understanding all aspects of your business," says Watkins.

When awarding contracts, she says she is looking for contractors/consultants that have knowledge of the Portland Airport project and have an idea of the security policies of the airport. In general, she looks for small businesses to have knowledge of their industry and have their "business financials in order".

"Bottom line, our goal in this program is to increase access and ensure small businesses are included and they are ready, willing and able to participate on any public improvement project," says Watkins. "The Mentor Protégé Program is a good way to build relationships with decision-makers and gain access to projects from public/private partners."

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