

ODOT

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Roy Weedman, owner of Bud Construction –not a certified DBE company — who describes how, as a white man, he has no access to contracts because he is “not Black or Asian.”

Weedman goes on to describe how he has essentially done a significant amount of Salt & Pepper’s work, including managing and supervising the trucking subcontract, as well as leasing his own trucks to Salt & Pepper to do the work.

Weedman talks about how contractors “have found a loophole” to falsely inflate their minority participation percentages specifically in trucking and flagging operations.

In its findings, the FHA said Salt & Pepper “did not manage and supervise the trucking operation for which it was responsible; did not provide at least one of its own trucks on the contract; and used a non-DBE to manage the entire trucking operation.”

But the FHA also sketches out deliberately illegal behavior involving two other companies as well.

“Further, the facts support a finding that Emery & Sons, Bud Construction and Salt & Pepper contrived a relationship for the

purpose of meeting the contract goal,” the findings say. “As a result, ODOT inappropriately counted the value of the trucking services provided by DBE Salt & Pepper toward the DBE contract goal.”

Documents show Salt & Pepper has for years been counted as a DBE in contracts with ODOT, the City of Portland, METRO, and TriMet.

It is the second time in recent weeks that NAMC-O has seen some response for official complaints it has filed.

Two weeks ago, the Oregon Secretary of State’s Office released an audit of the OMWESB certification process that found the small staff overburdened, with inadequate resources and poor organization that has caused a backlog of DBE requests – even as Gov. John Kitzhaber has called for more companies to apply for certification.

The audit stopped well short of what NAMC-O called for in its request for the investigation, focusing not on DBE compliance issues, but rather on how certifications are handed out.

In one section of the audit, called

“Process Needed to Ensure Completeness and Accuracy,” what appears to be a significant oversight appears.

“For example, we found that one business certified as an ESB was later found ineligible,” the audit says. However, the certification was kept open for several years prior to

concerns about fraud in the system, the state OMWESB is doing a good job.

“They went and did some double-checking of work of the certification process, and it was their findings that the office of OMWESB did do appropriate double check or verification processes,” she said. “This office is not just rubber-stamping. They are verifying the applications’ eligibility.”

While Brown said the audit’s recommendations for way to tighten up their operations are only voluntary, she described a three-point plan her office has put in place to encourage compliance, including: follow-up audits; and meetings with bureau and agency heads as well as meetings with the Joint Committee on Legislative Audits and Information Management & Technology.

“I have no hammer – the only hammer I have is my bully pulpit,” she said. “We really think that these three things with the joint legislative audits committee, meeting with agency directors or division heads, and the follow-up audits, that we are seeing greater compliance in terms of recommendations.”

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final closure without any explanation in the application file.”

Salt & Pepper Trucking was one of 14 companies specifically named as potentially defrauding the certification process.

Secretary of State Kate Brown told *The Skanner News* that, despite NAMC-O’s

Hair

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Well what resources are there out there for Black owned beauty suppliers, one may ask? Well, the Black Owned Beauty Supply Association, which is supposed to be one of the resources for Black owned beauty suppliers, advertises that it’s a premier national organization that provides African-Americans the platform to demonstrate

competitive leadership in the \$9 billion Black hair care and cosmetic industry nationwide and nationally. However when trying to contact them to find out what help they give suppliers, the website advertised a number that was disconnected and they never returned emails. When asked about the association, White said, “it is a joke”

and Johnson said she has never contacted them, but heard they were not a reliable resource.

Johnson said that not only is hair hard to get, but so are certain hair product lines that cater to women with natural hair or chemically treated hair. She said she has been trying to get a certain brand in her store for years, but they refuse to let her carry it.

White said the same thing, he said he has tried to get certain popular Black hair care lines but they will not let him carry it either because he is too close to one of their major distributors or they want him to buy thousands of dollars in product, which is unrealistic for his store’s size.

Some of the top Black owned hair care companies are Dudley Beauty Corp., Carol’s Daughter, Luster Inc., and Kimba Hair Care.

Jada Robinson, said she spends more than \$100 a month on hair and said she prefers to get her hair products at the salon because, “I feel that there is a large mark up on products

at the hair places that are not owned by Black people. Since there is a huge demand and Black people will always care about their appearance and getting their ‘Hair Did,’ they can continue to charge a lot.”

While many would prefer to shop at beauty supply stores, some feel that they only

Not only is hair hard to get, but so are certain hair product lines that cater to women with natural hair or chemically treated hair

cater to their customers buying hair and not maintaining their own. “Beauty supply stores certainly don’t cater to them. But, there’s no need to because natural hair, by

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