

## Hair

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definition, should require very few products to take care of it," said Dana Gary Pathare. "What I would like to see is for Black owned beauty supply stores or beauty supply stores in general, to focus on healthy hair care products and practices. Instead of pushing weave and wigs on every customer." She added that she would like to see more demonstrations for natural hair and that she would always prefer to support a Black business.

When it comes to having experts in their store, Johnson said she has one and White said one of his goals is to hire a natural hair expert for his store, someone who can give tips and recommendations on products. But while getting products can be difficult, so can support. White said Koreans succeed in the industry because they support each other, but the Black community does not. "They (Koreans) have the relationships and work within, we laugh at them when they are living together, then they break through and have four stores in our community. But we won't help each other out. It is a culture thing." He said that none of the other Black owned beauty supply stores work together to pull their resources.

Johnson agreed that there is a lack of togetherness and said sometimes, "We are our own obstacles. If Black people stuck together we could make an impact. The competition shouldn't be among ourselves."

They both agreed that there is a loyalty amongst the Black community when it comes to shopping at Asian owned stores and working for them. "They do not treat them right, but they continue to go back," White said.

White said the solution to bringing the Black hair industry profits back to the community is by working together. "We (suppliers) need to form an alliance amongst ourselves and find a way to bring our customers to our stores. We can help each other out. We can sit down together and compose our tools. There's enough business around here for everyone," White said.

## Multnomah County MWESB, Procurement: Fostering a Diverse Vendor Pool

By Bruce Poinsette  
Of The Skanner News

Sophia Cavalli has been with Multnomah County for four and a half years. Currently the county's Procurement and MWESB supervisor, she has over 13 years experience in designing and implementing small business programs. In addition, she now works on sustainable purchasing efforts.

Cavalli began working in the private sector in sales and commodities. Following that, she was at the City of Portland, where she oversaw its small business program for close to seven years. Cavalli currently serves on the National Associations of Counties Green Purchasing Task Force.

She says her vision is to include as many businesses as possible to foster a diverse vendor pool and workforce.

"We believe that (having a diverse vendor pool and workforce) is part of not only economic development, but com-



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munity development," says Cavalli. "Specifically here in Multnomah County, 95 percent of all businesses are small businesses, and generally small businesses hire the most workers. It's a good responsible business practice."

The percentage of contracts the county has awarded to minority, women and emerging small businesses has exceeded 30 percent for the third straight year. In addition to awarding contracts, the county also sponsors training programs and holds quarterly meetings between a host of over 20 regional agencies to ensure the long-term success of minority, women, and emerging small businesses in the region.

When awarding contracts, Cavalli says the county is looking for firms with responsible business practices.

"How we buy the goods and services needed by the County and who we buy them from matters," she says. "Social equity is an important aspect of how we make our buying decisions, this includes the participation of local minority, women, and emerging small businesses. Chair (Jeff) Cogen and our Board of Commissioners have been very supportive of our efforts."



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