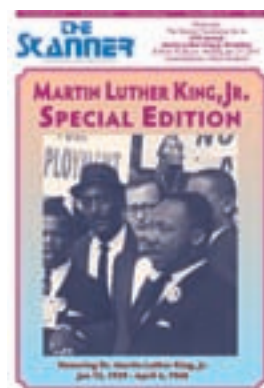


THE SKANNER

CHALLENGING PEOPLE TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE NOW



INSIDE:
Martin
Luther
King, Jr.
Special
Edition



TriMet Light Rail Jobs

Agency posts record for minority, women-owned DBE firms

Lisa Loving
Of The Skanner News

TriMet has found itself on the third rail of Portland politics lately, lost in the media buzz over its labor union negotiations and now an outcry over driver safety linked to staffing problems.

Less remarked upon has been the success of their Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program in generating jobs through light rail construction.

Helmed since 2011 by TriMet Director of Diversity and Transit Equity Johnell Bell, the agency reports that nearly 4,500 jobs have been created so far through the 7.3-mile project extending from downtown Portland to Clackamas County.

By the time it opens in 2015, TriMet says they're on track to create 14,500 jobs in total. And for the first time, the agency says, one-third of the contracts have been awarded to firms owned by people of color and women.

TriMet says nearly 24 percent of the construction jobs so far have gone to people of color and about 16 percent to apprentices; the project is only 30 percent complete and agency officials say \$76 million in DBE contracts have been generated to date.

"With this influx of new labor, the DBE program is not only providing jobs now, but creating the workforce of the future," said spokeswoman Mary Fetsch.

These 102 Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firms have reached a new record of contracting for any regional project.

"A core tenet of TriMet's Transit Equity effort is creating opportunities in low-income and communities of color. These jobs are making a real difference in our community, and are helping to reduce transit inequities through economic empowerment," Bell says. "DBE firms are growing and expanding into new areas because we're providing the opportunity to

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STUDENT PROTEST



PHOTO TAKEN BY MASON TRINCA, COURTESY OF THE EMERALD MEDIA GROUP.

The Native American student body staged a march through campus Jan. 7 to protest the recent UO diversity office changes.

Latest Diversity Office Shakeup

Some students worry they're losing resources to address their concerns

Bruce Poinsette
Of The Skanner News

A recent decision to discontinue the contracts of three popular administrators and restructure the University of Oregon's diversity office has angered many students and community members.

"As a minority on campus it's getting really old playing this game of blindside the minority service," says Tyree Harris, a UO student and for-

mer editor of the school's campus newspaper, The Daily Emerald.

He and other students are concerned that the new, broader approach will take away resources to address the needs specific to their ethnic backgrounds.

During the campus's winter break, an article appeared in the Register-Guard, reporting that student and local community organizations were blasting the decision to discontinue the contracts of Carla

Gary, Emilio Hernandez and Tom Ball in the Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI).

The three administrators have been pillars in UO's Black, Latino and Native American communities, respectively.

In addition to discontinuing these contracts, the OEI also announced that it would be restructuring its approach to diversity with a new "distributed model".

The President's Office deferred all questions to Alex-

Assensoh, the Vice President of the OEI, when asked for comment on this story.

According to an email interview with Yvette Alex-Assensoh, "We move from having one person responsible for representing the multiple interest of a diverse group in one unit of the university to an organization that is accessible to under-served populations in multiple ways."

She wrote that she is not

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Red Cross Urges Donations to Save Lives

Thanks in part to many donors SEI's Miki Hunnicutt still works with kids

Daphne Mathew of the American Red Cross Pacific Northwest Blood Services Region

Miki Hunnicutt is sold on the mission of Self Enhancement, Inc. (SEI) and she will enthusiastically tell anyone who will listen

about the successes of her students.

What she rarely talks about, however, is how close SEI came to losing her to a catastrophic health problem.

But thanks in part to many, many blood donors at the Red Cross, Hunnicutt's life was saved through a series of blood

transfusions during and after intense treatment to remove several cancerous tumors.

The American Red Cross hosts their annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blood Drive Monday, Jan. 21, at their Portland Donor Center, located at 3131 N. Vancouver Ave. The drive runs from 1:30 to 8

p.m. Appointments are encouraged, please call 1-800 RED CROSS or visit online at www.redcrossblood.org.

Hunnicutt serves the vital role of Social and Life Skills Manager at SEI, and is an incredible source of support, bringing life

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