

A Challenge to Black Leaders



"WHILE THE RISING INCIDENCE OF CRIME HAS BEEN A SOURCE OF EMBARRASSMENT TO MANY BLACK LEADERS, FAR TOO MANY HAVE REMAINED AMBIVALENT TOWARD THE PROBLEM. PERHAPS THROUGH FEAR OF PROVIDING COMFORT TO RACISTS MASQUERADING BEHIND A MASK OF LAW AND ORDER, I RECOGNIZE THESE RISKS, BUT I ALSO RECOGNIZE AN EVEN GREATER RISK, THAT BLACKS THEMSELVES MAY CONFUSE THE RIGHT OF BLACK PEOPLE TO PROTEST THEIR UNSATISFACTORY CONDITION IN THE UNITED STATES WITH THE OPPORTUNITY FOR CRIMINALS TO PREY ON EXPOSED CITIZENS."

Write a letter to the editor today. Let us hear your VOICE!

BUSINESS IN THE BLACK

By Charles E. Belle

THE BLACK BUDGET

President Ford pooped out an austere fiscal 1977 budget of \$394.2 billion for the country in his State of the Union spill. Austere is the white man's word for doing away with social welfare programs. Instead of attacking at the heart of unemployment, the President has chosen to be seductive -- namely, with windfall gifts to the working white class and/or with big corporation gifts. Thus he put forth accelerated depreciation for corporations' capital spending in high unemployment areas. This is expected to give big business an incentive to spend more therefore creating jobs in needy places. This, like the incentives to encourage low and middle income wage earners to buy common stocks, has too many steps to set full employment in motion in the near future. But read on, it gets worse. President Ford's brainstorms for a moderate rise in employment can best be scribed as dead slow. If the plan should stumble, as the President seems prone to do, then Blacks have heard one of the hardest budgets ever announced by a President in pressing times. The over 15 percent unemployment of Blacks and other minorities must be something the President believes he can live with these days. The first problem with accelerated depreciation is that the purchase of new equipment is likely to come from areas other than where there is unemployment. Thus strengthening other possibly foreign countries like Japan and West Germany who sell labor-saving devices. Modern machinery purchases are bound to be for labor reduction purposes. This will make it unlikely that the corporation which benefits from reduced taxes with a higher depreciation write-off will recall many of its old workers, much less hire new people. Clearly, the big corporations will benefit, while the people will lose. What thrust there might be for capital equipment companies to (See, Business in the Black, pg. 3)

Just the FACTS

The owner of a small Black business wears many hats. Most likely he is his own accountant, bookkeeper, treasurer, manager, purchasing agent, keeper of inventory and usually even employee eight or ten hours a day. And more often than not, we find he has little if any training for any of these positions.

The owner of a small grocery store or hamburger shop usually purchases food for his household along with his regular inventory. Money from the till is used for his daily and weekly family obligations, to buy clothes, pay his rent, make the payments on his car, and so on. Then it is not unusual, without an adequate system of bookkeeping to know how much money he has made at the end of the month. Or where did how much go for what? He may find it difficult to determine if he really made any money at all.

In addition, most small Black community businesses extend a great deal of short term, interest free personal credit to their customers. Without such credit, it would be difficult for some of his customers to afford his product or service. But this also makes it difficult for the shop owner to gain enough capital, that is, get far enough ahead of his own bills and expenses to expand or even maintain his place of business.

All this points to a definite need for education in the complex (even for a small business) process necessary to maintain a successful small business.

But where can the small Black businessman go to get such an education? Where can you find a local school that teaches how to be a successful cleaner and laundry businessman? With such a small margin of profit, how can he even afford to attend if there was such a school? And where will he find the time away from the daily demands of operating his business?

Surprisingly, from the Small Business Administration. In fact, while most people think of the SBA as merely a type of federally funded money lending organization, more than half of the business of the SBA is in management assistance programs designed to provide just such services to small businessmen. Unfortunately, few West Las Vegas businessmen have taken advantage of the services offered at no charge by the SBA.

The director of the local office of the SBA is Bob Garrett, and Mr. Garrett is ready, willing and able to provide vital management counseling services and business education to small businessmen that might not otherwise be able to afford them.

The SBA offers a virtual galaxy of programs, including specific programs for minority owned businesses. So many, they could not be listed here.

The local SBA office has recently expanded its program in Southern Nevada, and is no longer a satellite office of another district. To help facilitate this expansion, a Minority Enterprise Representative, Dennis D. Nelson (LCdr, USN Ret.) from the San Diego Regional Office of the SBA, has come to Las Vegas in an advisory capacity.

Commander Nelson made it clear in a visit to the Voice office recently, that he brings with him no special promises of special money set aside for Las Vegas. The SBA does not provide funds in such a manner. He did, however, outline many fascinating opportunities for the small businessman that already exist in the SBA framework. Each issue of the Voice for the following weeks will contain detailed outlines for some of these programs.

Meanwhile, if you think the SBA can be of assistance, call Bob Garrett, or Commander Nelson at the local office, or come by the Voice and pick up some of the literature they provide. Small business tax forms and information are also available at the Voice.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

.....
it's your turn, reader



by LAWRENCE ALBERT

This is the first in a special series of editorials and information features of the West Las Vegas business community, and more importantly, concerning the most logical and effective solutions to those problems.

The Voice invites all its readers to participate in this important dialogue through letters to the editor. We feel that the future prosperity of our community will be determined by the actions we take now. And we know that nothing worthwhile can come about from the words of our leaders without community involvement. That means, simply, you, the reader.

In the coming weeks, the Voice will endeavor to mirror the sentiments of not only those people we refer to as leaders, but the opinions, suggestions and recommendations of the citizens themselves. That's you, again.

Too often, the Voice is used to get the word from our "leaders" to the people. We intend now to establish the Voice as a two-way medium - that is, so that you the people, the citizen, the voter, the young, the aged, the concerned, can make your voice heard - to get the word from you to the leaders.

Beginning with the issue of February 12, the Voice will also offer some recommendations of our own as to how the crisis of capital, money starvation, can be met and dealt with. This will culminate finally in a master plan for the renovation, rejuvenation, and restoration of the West Las Vegas area, which will include solid proposals for establishing a legitimate financial foundation upon which a growing, thriving business residential community can be built.

Getting together a program like this will not be easy. But it certainly is not impossible. With a realistic plan of action that will provide the local businessman with the capital necessary to expand his present business or build a new one, without having his profits siphoned off and out of the community, we can make a beginning. Non-resident owners, managers, and corporations who invest money for some business on the Westside, merely to bleed every nickel of profit they can from the resident tenants and customers, and drain the financial blood from the body of the Community, must not be allowed to exploit our thirst for capital with a flood of out-of-town money -- the price we would pay for such brew would eventually become impossible to swallow.

No! We must be careful that the resources we draw upon for seed money do not demand the entire harvest in repayment. We will gain nothing by becoming sharecroppers.



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