

An Assessment of

BUSINESSES

In the Black Community



BOB BAILEY

By Ed Brown

There are approximately 150 black-owned businesses in the community and a prognosis of their overall success is good. There is "light" at the end of the tunnel.

This is not to indicate that all of the businesses, at the present time, are reaping with success. The present economy has forced a marginal situation. There are some businesses on the brink of folding. However, the potential for success is there.

"The prospects are good," says Bob Bailey, executive director, Nevada Economic Development Company (NEDCO). "The market potentials are there, but we have to get into growth industry areas. Retail businesses here must get into the tourist business

exposure.

"I'm talking about manufacturing," Bailey continued. "I'm talking about the assembly business — assembling things where parts are made in the orient then assembled in Nevada. We're talking about energy related businesses. We're talking about transportation; media production such as radio, TV and motion pictures — all facets of communications.

"I think we should develop a merchants association or fully support the Black Chamber of Commerce presently being formed through the local chapter, NAACP. This is not to say that we should not participate with the Greater Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce. The main reason for having a black cham-

ber is to address the specific problems that are inherent to minority disciplines."

Larry Wilburn, owner of Larry's Sight and Sound and winner of more than 15 awards during his 27 successful years of business, sees the prospects differently: "I tell the young guys all the time, when they are thinking of forming a business or some type of corporation, to prepare themselves for independence. So long as blacks work on the job, it doesn't matter how much 'the man' is paying, you are controlled to a degree. You are not independent."

Wilburn prophesied, "He can pay you \$100,000 a year, you are still controlled. Once you develop an enterprise of your own, you have freedom of action, and there's no limit

to where you want to go.

"We have been guilty of telling our kids go to school and get an education so you can get a good job. That's wrong. We should tell them to prepare your mind for whatever comes your way, be able to take advantage of whatever comes your way! That's a key to success for generations to come."

The constant growing unemployment situation in the black community has certainly been a deterrent to growth and development. For some, it has been a deterrent to existence.

Small business has been part of the building process toward economic and social advancement for others. Small business has been the way that many ethnic groups have established a certain

hegemony in certain areas of the economic sector. It is interesting to note that many of today's innovations were created by small companies. Small businesses have been, if not a panacea, a boon to various minorities.

"The idea is to work to break down inequality we have lived with all our lives. When you talk in terms of business, there are certain things other business people respect. The more blacks there are in business, the more there will be who will succeed because businesses feed upon businesses. The more successes we have, the more black business will command respect in the marketplace. The more respect, the more success. So, it's a circle."

There is no question that the present economic

situation has played a major role in the plight of many black businesses.

"I see them on a somewhat stagnant situation right now, but I think it basically has to do with the economy," agreed Jimmy Toler, president of Toler Realty. "The economy is in pretty bad shape right now all over the country. I think if we have a turn around in the country, everybody's going to prosper a bit more.

"I see growth. I look forward to growth. Las Vegas, alone, instills in me something of growth. I see growth (in black businesses) at all times."

It is encouraging to see, even at this stage, the recent addition of businesses in the black community. More and more, we see the "light" at the end of the tunnel.



NEW MEDICAL SOCIETY — Officers of the recently founded Charles I. West Medical Society were installed after the society became a member of the National Medical Association. Dr. Phillip Smith, second from left, secretary of the national association's board of trustees, was assisted by Dr. Frank Staggers, left, board of trustees member, at the installation. Installed officers are Dr. Amanda Bleunt, center, secretary-treasurer, and Dr. John Crear, right, president. The society was named in honor of Dr. Charles I. West, second from right.



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Director

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