

Decade Of Turmoil For Black Business

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ty years ago or even ten years ago, we would not now be faced with the kinds of double-digit inflationary hinderances nor the reluctance to spend the kind of money now necessary to make those corrections.

It is recognized that the victim cannot perform self-rescue. One who is drowning can yell for help but cannot rescue oneself. The same is true of one who has fallen or been cast into a deep hole. Efforts can be made by one, but generally it requires outside assistance.

During the 1970s a Black Businessmen's Association was organized. It sought to achieve more equity within the minority business community. It has worked with federal agencies such as Small Business and others to bring needed funds to aspiring business efforts within the minority communities. In 1974, it was formally recognized with a Proclamation of Minority Business Day by Governor Mike O'Callaghan.

The Nevada Economic Development Company is yet another agency which has sought to alleviate problems in the Black business community. It is an affiliate of the Office of Minority Business Enterprise and U.S. Department of Commerce. The program consists of developing new viable businesses in the Southern Nevada area, and assisting socially and economically disadvantaged entrepreneurs with technical assistance to insure their success in developing a viable and growing concern.

Although the major emphasis of the business counseling program is geared toward creating new businesses, they are trying to establish the first real statistics in

minority enterprise in Nevada. NEDCO also provides technical and management assistance, marketing research, and develops lines of credit to help create avenues for redevelopment and expansion.

In an effort to keep its staff and clients informed of the important news in the business world, NEDCO maintains a library in its office facility which is open to the public. The library contains information from government agencies, business organizations, banks, business opportunities, and financial, technical and educational resources.

NEDCO places prime importance on the need to assist minority contractors in the upgrading and development of their services. Further, it aids the contractor in locating and bidding on contracts, and seeks local support and cooperation in the growth and development of the minority contractor.

The 1970s found Black Las Vegas in a position

much less attractive than that of white Las Vegas. Census Reports indicate that the income gap between the two is considerable. Average white families in the area had 3.54 persons while Black families averaged out at 4.45 persons. The median income of white families was 40 percent greater than that of Blacks. Not only were the two required to pay the same for a loaf of bread or other consumer products, but Blacks had to travel a greater distance in making those purchases. At a time when energy costs and energy conservation are items of concern, Blacks are being additionally penalized by their necessary misuse of those resources. The absence of businesses in the Black community has wielded a two edge sword.

In other areas of Las Vegas where there were community businesses, there were additional positive characteristics. These had profound effects on families living in those areas. Because of the presence of such businesses, though small they might be, they afforded local teenagers job opportunities. Such businesses as fast food operations, chain stores, restaurant chains, grocery chains are not to be found in the Black community. The presence of those kinds of businesses in other areas brought with them such things as banking institutions and more upgraded police protection.

In the Black community

such businesses are not present. Resultantly, Black teenagers do not have access to employment as readily as do white teenagers. The pay scale at such places is such that one would need live nearby in order for it to be advantageous to work there. The person who lives on "D" Street and who is employed at a MacDonald's on Maryland Parkway, will not realize much of an income once the expense of transportation and time is deducted. The unemployment rate among black teenagers is much greater than that of white teenagers. The overall impact of that on the Black family is disastrous.

The presence of business enterprises in white communities and the relationship on youth employment removes a great deal of pressure from the white family. The absence of such imposes a great deal of pressure on Black families. The need of business activity in the Black community is not only necessary from a purely business point of view but also because of the resident impact such would have on Black families. The quality of life would be enhanced



Professor Fitzgerald is director of ethnic studies at University of Nevada-Las Vegas

and black youth, during the formative years, will develop skills necessary for the future.

The business of Black business bears bountifully on bulwarking and buttressing the budgets of Blacks. The sooner that the business community at large and the local governments recognize the positive effects Black businesses can have on the total community, the sooner each will lend their assistance.

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