

Otis Harris Should Be Thanked

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"many residents say he had the vision and wherewithal to help the community, but has not used ability to that end."

Mr. Palm appears to be a newcomer to the area, but that is no excuse for his ignorance of the fact with the wealth of information available at his fingertips. From his established style of ignoring these facts, Mr. Palm will not be expected to dig for the truth, so I will set it down for him.

Mr. Harris was one of the first to recognize the need for recreation within West Las Vegas to keep our children off the streets, and one of those instrumental in getting Doolittle Center opened at Lake Mead and "J" Streets in 1965. He was the moving force to establish the Clark County Community College at its location on Cheyenne to make it easier for poorer residents of the area to get a higher education. He enlisted the aid of Floyd Lamb, one of the most powerful legislators in the history of the state, to introduce

and push the program to establish the school here in 1968, and continues in his support of the institution to this day. He brought the Four Corners Regional Commission to the attention of the State of Nevada to help solve unemployment problems here, and this year, the Four Corners Regional Commission is funding six projects in the state including two in Clark County. One of these will be Stormwater Management, to assess the present flood control systems and a study to establish better means of flood control in the future. It also funds the State Futures Commission, State Planning and other pet projects of the Governor including the Foreign Trade Zone application of the Opportunities Industrial Center (OIC).

Mr. Harris brought the first SBA Local Development Loans into the Westside, and helped to arrange the first loan to a black person of more than \$75,000 in the heart of the Black Community Business District. He brought the first community project to exceed \$200,000 in more than 20 years for a black owned

business.

Harris instituted the program for revitalization of the "D" and Jackson Streets which is now being carried forward by NEDCO; he created the Special Impact Area (SIA) enabling it to become eligible for federal funds for up to 80 percent of the cost of such projects as street improvements and water and sewer facilities within the SIA, created

the Revolving Loan Bank Fund, brought the first financial institution into the Westside, completed a feasibility study for a full service community bank. SNEDC was the only non-public entity chosen by the

Economic Development Administration to demonstrate Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs). All this was done for the benefit of the community. While he

has broken ground for the others mentioned in Mr. Palm's article and begrudges none of the affluence they are enjoying, Mr. Harris lives in the same little tract house he bought 15 years ago with the same working and drives a utilitarian van instead of an impressive Mark IV.

The persons he spent time and money training are working at profitable jobs in other development companies in the area,

and as a result are upwardly mobile and motivated.

No popularity contestant, Otis Harris is making Economic Development happen and he is using all his abilities toward that end.

Hannah Brown, Secretary, Board of Directors, Southern Nevada Economic Development.

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Kathy Fox Gay, a native Las Vegas, attended Las Vegas High School and the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. Her hobbies include reading, horticulture and interior design. Kathy has been a member of the Toler Realty Staff for 4 years and specializes in Residential sales and vacant land.



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