

CLARK COUNTY MEANS BUSINESS . . . FOR MINORITIES?

by Dr. William U. Pearson

The development of business opportunities and the creation and retention of jobs is of top priority as it relates to the minority community. Blacks are lacking in numbers of local elected officials and, due to that factor, it is incumbent upon me to take the leadership role in espousing the needs of the minority and Black communities. I also feel that people of color should reap the benefits of the successes brought about by civil rights legislation, but I am fully aware of where the help is needed most.

During my tenure as a Clark County Commissioner, I have worked toward minority job creation, minority job retention and minority business enterprises. The efforts, in some cases, have been in vain, but, with persistence, we have managed to lay the groundwork for progress in some areas.

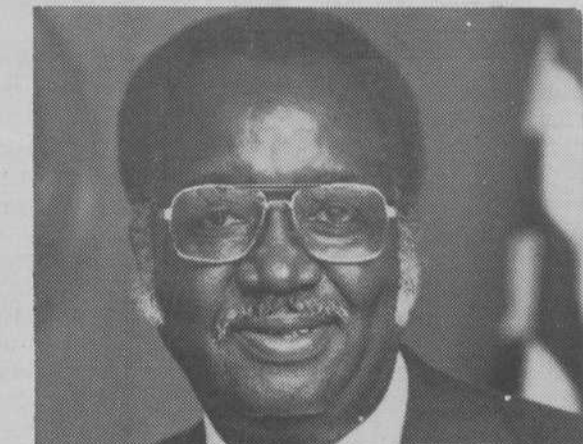
Progress in the areas of job creation, as it relates to jobs with the County, has been slow but consistent. We were successful in gaining a consensus of the Board to hire an Affirmative Action Officer. Subsequently, we have hired and promoted more Blacks in County government over the past three years than at any time in Clark County history. Without a consistent effort, ground gained could quickly be lost.

In the area of Minority Business Enterprise, efforts have been underway for over two years, through massive amounts of research and networking with nationwide entities, and finally we have managed to have County legislation passed to establish the Minority/Women Council. This Council is designed to act in an advisory capacity to the Commissioners on solutions to enhance the participation of minorities and women in the County's pro-

urement and contracting process. Although this is merely a Council, at least it is a beginning.

The Council is composed of procurement representatives from various County Departments, i.e., Department of Aviation, Department of General Services, University Medical Center, Las Vegas Valley Water District and the Sanitation District. Also, sitting on the Council

is a representative from the Nevada Black Chamber of Commerce, Latin Chamber of Commerce, the Asian - Pacific Chamber of Commerce, the Indian Business Development organization and the Women's Business Council of the Greater Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce. The Council is chaired by a representative from the County Manager's Office. Hopefully, from this Council a Minority/Women Business Enterprise Plan for the entire County will be devised. This, I feel, is the first in a number of steps to be taken to increase minority participation within the County.



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Several months ago, I requested a review of the potential of including a minority rental car concession at McCarran International Airport. It was voted by the Commission to solicit proposals for Minority/Women Business Enterprise. We are now

takes majority consent. Hopefully the brief delay will allow commissioners an opportunity to gain a bearing on all the ramifications and benefits of this procurement.

This, and other such occurrences, denote the reasons that I am consistently requesting the help of the Chambers: Black, Latin and the Asian-Pacific, as well as the NAACP and the Ministerial Alliance. It is difficult to expound on the needs of the community when no one publicly voices such needs. Minorities need to attend Commission meetings and make their feelings known. They need to come en masse when issues of relevance are

on the Agenda. Minorities must relinquish the fear to speak out and follow through. We must unify for the common good.

There are pitfalls in the utilization of Minority/Women Business Enterprise programs, but if we monitor and make certain that we allow only legitimate firms to participate in the minority procurement programs, the process can ultimately be successful. Exploitation of Blacks and other minorities by majority business owners and "outside interests" must not be tolerated in our efforts to enhance procurement and contracting potential for bona fide minority firms. We must not be pulled into the thought pattern that is currently being espoused that *all minority businesses will fail*, based on the lack of success of any one minority firm.

Conclusively, while I share the concern of setting policy for the entire County, I realize that one consideration of my having been elected was the fact that a great portion of my district is minority. As a minority, it is incumbent upon me to make every effort to assure the sharing and participation in all facets of the governing of Clark County.

IT PAYS TO ADVERTISE

Black Shriners Select Las Vegas for '88 Convention

Earl Gray, Imperial Potentate of the Ancient Egyptian Arabic Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine of North and South America, has announced that Las Vegas will host the 95th Annual Imperial Council Session and the 77th Annual Imperial Court Session—Daughters of Isis—August 12 to 20, 1988.

Gray said Las Vegas can expect 45,000 conventioners. He added more than 7,000 guest rooms will be used — 2,100 at Bally's, headquarters for the men. Caesars Palace is expected to house the ladies.

Two festive parades, both in the evening, will highlight the 9-day conclave. One parade will be staged in the black community, Monday, August 15, the other on Fremont Street, Wednesday, August 17. There will be other activities, i.e., Drill Team Competition, Beauty and Talent Contest, Mounted Horse and Motorcycle demonstrations.

Gray said Imperial Conven-

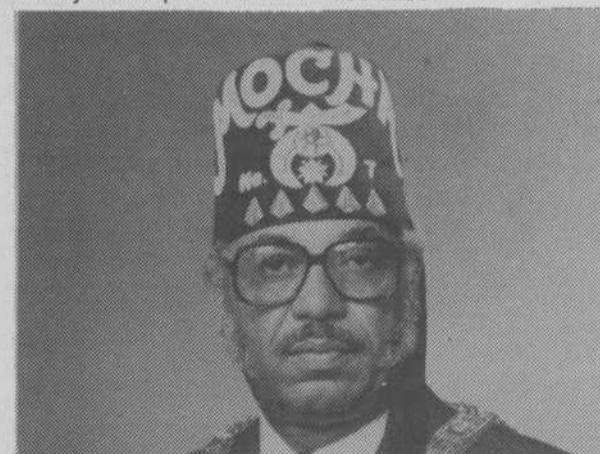
tion Director, Charles Hales, and Deputy Convention Director, Nat Johnson, will visit Las Vegas October 23-27, to begin rate negotiations with hotels. Hales pointed out that he will seek to do business with black entrepreneurs, particularly printers, transportation companies, and restaurateurs.

Gray mentioned that 60 AEAONMS Department Directors and his staff will convene in Las Vegas November 12-15, 1987, for a pre-convention meeting, the only such meeting before the 1988 National conclave.

The Shriners are noted for their generous charitable contributions.

Ophir Temple #211, Las Vegas Chapter, serves as official Convention Host. Grand Master Cranford Crawford is Nevada's highest ranking black Shriners.

For further information call Roosevelt Toston, Sales Executive, Las Vegas Convention/Visitors Authority, 733-2290.



Earl Gray

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