

City Council to Vote on Loan for Moulin Rouge

By Nichole Davis, Sentinel-Voice

The Las Vegas City Council will vote on a measure proposing a 20-year, \$3 million loan for the Moulin Rouge Hotel and Casino Feb. 21.

The monies in question would pay for numerous repairs to the Moulin Rouge, the first integrated hotel and casino, said James Walker, an owner.

The installation of a new roof, replacement of bathrooms, and the redesign of cashier's cages are just three of the changes owners hope to make.

"We're only utilizing 10 percent of the building. The rest is unusable," Walker said.

The Moulin Rouge has a brief but colorful history. It first opened in 1955 and closed about six months later for unspecified reasons.

The first integrated hotel and casino in Las Vegas, the Moulin Rouge also hosted the meeting which produced an agreement ending racial discrimination in the city.

Sarann Knight Preddy, James Walker and Joe Preddy, the current owners, purchased the Rouge in 1991 for \$1.5 million, and are only the second owners in its' history to own a gaming license.

The newest owners hope the Las Vegas City Council will approve a request for \$3 million in U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant

(C.D.B.G.) or 108 funds.

The CDBG program is unique among federal programs, because individual cities are allowed to determine how the funds are used.

"H.U.D. allows entitlement cities to borrow up to five times their annual entitlement. In our case, that means we can draw up to \$20 million for economic development projects," said Peggy Proestos, manager of the city's Neighborhood Resources Planning and Development Division.

The Moulin Rouge would pay the money back over the next 20 years to city officials, and, if for any reason the hotel should default on the loan, H.U.D. would deduct the unpaid portion of the loan from city entitlement funds.

Walker said, since some council members are up for re-election, government aid to private business might viewed unfavorably by voters.

"That's the hang-up for some council people, because it's politically expedient to give the money to a non-profit. Because they think that's what people want them to do," Walker said. "If they give it to a business, they can recycle the dollars and give it back to a non profit"

If the council approves the measure, H.U.D. would have 60 days to review the request, said Proestos.

This proposal marks the second time the Moulin Rouge has requested loan

(See Moulin Rouge, Page 2)

African Influence Gains Momentum



Entrepreneur and sculptor Joe Walker skillfully puts the final touches on a hand carved cane from his store, KOFI's of Las Vegas.

By Nichole Davis
Sentinel-Voice

An awakening among upper-class blacks has led to the emergence of African cultural shops that have enriched the black community, local merchants and educators said this week.

The common thread among these shops seems to be the desire to better the black community through self-education and the transference of knowledge.

Dano Eferakeya and his wife, Ruth Ayab, who own and operate

African and World Imports located in the Boulevard Mall.

Eferakeya, who opened the store in 1991, said although it takes a lot of work to keep his shop running, but the efforts are worthwhile. He has done free presentations at schools and regularly teaches customers about the many objects the store sells.

"With individuals like us getting to mix with the African-American individuals here gives us the opportunity to exchange experiences," he said.

"Bringing in things from Africa gives them (customers) a place to see maybe

things they haven't seen before...When I share something with you, it's not just coming from someone who wants to sell the book," he said.

Eferakeya said that community desire for African import stores has always existed, but there the African and black community haven't always been communicative.

"The interest has always been there, but the only thing that has been there is that we haven't come together," he said.

(See African Influence, Page 7)

Feds Check on Weed and Seed Program

By Nichole Davis, Sentinel-Voice

Department of Justice staff ended their bi-annual inspection Wednesday of the federally-funded Weed and Seed program, which coordinates community groups to eliminate criminal influences and rebuild neighborhoods.

The program has four inter-locking components: the stabilization of neighborhoods, community-oriented policing, crime prevention and economic restoration.

Auditors said the "weeding" aspect of the program involves local police and FBI officers, who must first deal with crime rates in targeted areas.

Before investors will consider bringing in new development, crime rates must be stabilized, said Stephen Rickman, director of the department's Crime Act Support Division. That's why initial funding is earmarked for policing agencies, he added.

Auditors said the next step is the implementation of community-oriented policing, which allows officers to become an integral part of neighborhoods.

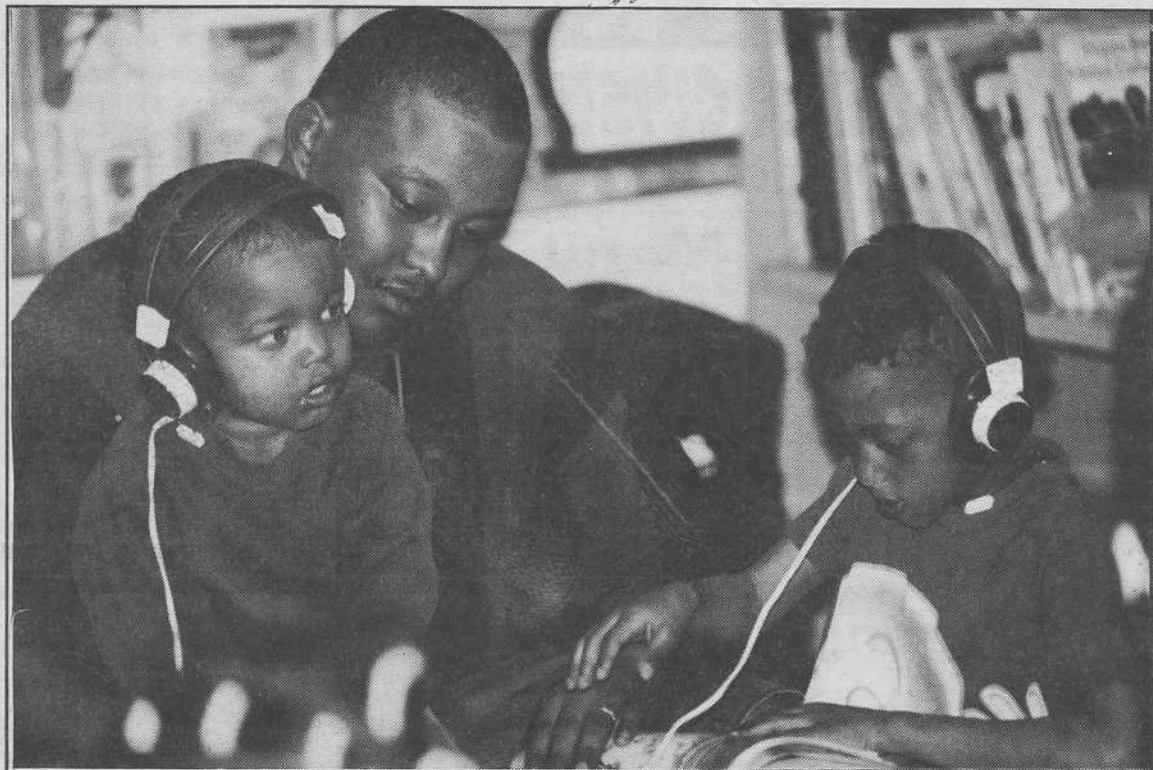
Crime prevention and neighborhood restoration, the final components, make up seeding efforts.

Officials hope that crime rates will be reduced if permanent economic opportunities are created.

They say the good news is that federal auditors widely praised the involvement of key local leaders. The bad news is that the local program is in a "critical" early stage of program coordination.

"I am very impressed with your mayor. She seems to be very progressive, very committed and very much involved in this program. Progressive leadership like that is very important to the success of this

(See Weed & Seed, Page 3)



DAD PITCHES IN.... Donald Fleming (c) read along Monday with sons, Quinton (on lap) and Tikowha a kindergartner at Booker Elementary School during the first annual National African-American Parent Involvement Day.

Photos by Savoy/LVS-Voice