

LAS VEGAS

Sentinel



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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

## Rouge awarded \$3 million city loan

By Nichole Davis  
Sentinel-Voice

With Wednesday's approval of a \$3 million loan package from the Las Vegas City Council, the Moulin Rouge, the city's only black-owned hotel and casino, will become the latest revitalization project in a series of economic developments in West Las Vegas.

More than 150 people attended the public hearing, where the council unanimously approved the measure. There were no public comments against it.

The city council attached 14 conditions to the approval of the project which including procurement of more than \$1.6 million in loans from the private sector, repayment of existing debts and liens prior to the disbursement of new monies and an agreement to cap the salaries of the principal owners, James Walker, Sarann Knight-Preddy and Joe Preddy, for at least three years.

Walker said some of the conditions were unnecessary because bank requirements are more stringent than city requirements. The council's decision to co-sign on the loan will make it easier

for the Rouge to get additional monies from private investors to renovate the 900 W. Bonanza.

"It's going to be a lot easier (for private lenders) to talk to me, because basically there's no risk," Walker said.

Calling Wednesday's action long overdue, Knight-Preddy said, "I'm very happy about the decision. It will be something that will benefit all of Las Vegas. When this goes out, it will make Las Vegas look good."

Numerous community and business leaders spoke in support of the 20-year loan during the two-hour hearing.

"Nothing will have an impact on our community (like) the Moulin Rouge will when it's up and running," the Rev. Chester Richardson said.

Because the council recently has supported other commercial ventures in the surrounding area, state Sen. Joe Neal, D-District 4, urged members to approve the Rouge's request.

Joanna Wesley, owner of Wesley's Barber Shop, told the council, "you've given us some things we need, now's the time to give us something we want."

The Section 108 Community

Development Block Grant loan is granted to the city by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. Should the Moulin Rouge default for any reason the funds would be deducted from future CDBG funds, Walker said.

In other news, the Gaming Commission extended the Walker-Preddy gaming license for six months pending the procurement of financial resources from private lenders to complete the project. The loan monies will be used to pay for numerous repairs including the installation of the new roof, replacement of bathrooms and several other structural redesigns.

Wednesday's vote came after a Feb. 21 decision by the council to put the matter on hold while owners finalized their loan package.

When finalized, sources said, this will be the first Section 108 loan to be awarded in Nevada.

The Moulin Rouge Hotel and Casino first opened in 1958 and closed seven months later due to financial difficulties. The current owners acquired the property less than five years ago.



Moulin Rouge owner Sarann Knight-Preddy said the council's loan approval Wednesday will benefit all of Las Vegas. Photo by Savoy/LVS-Voice

## Minority images in news media examined

R. L. Gibson  
Sentinel-Voice

The media's sensitivity and perception of minorities was the topic tackled by local media managers and community panelists Saturday during a public forum held at the West Las Vegas Library.

Sponsored by the Las Vegas Association of Black Journalists, the forum's purpose was to provide a constructive, analytical critique on the way which electronic and print media portray people of color and women.

Patricia Morse-Jarman, a member of the state's Consumer Affairs Division, moderated the discussion anchored by community leaders and local media representatives.



Deborah Jackson expressed her displeasure with a recent newspaper article during Saturday's forum.

Photo by Savoy/LVS-Voice

There were a variety of concerns expressed throughout the two-hour forum, but a recurring complaint among many panelists and the audience was the disparity between the way whites and minorities, particularly African-Americans, are portrayed by the media.

Alonza Robertson, a Las Vegas Review-Journal staff writer - speaking on behalf of community panelist Ricky Barlow, a University of Nevada-Las Vegas graduate who was unable to attend - pointed to a recent article by the Review-Journal in which a large, denigrating photograph of three African-Americans was placed in a prominent section of the newspaper. In a similar case, white defendants were not shown in the same way.

"Our goal is to be as colorblind as we can be when it comes to covering the news," said Dave Linder, KLAS-TV 8 managing editor. "We have not solved the problem of media sensitivity, but I do think we have come a long way from the time when black images could only be seen in a crime story or the sports section."

Charles Zobell, the Review-Journal's managing editor, agreed and said a person's race has nothing to do with a photo's size. Instead, he said, a story's treatment is dictated by its significance.

"We have committed ourselves to representing the entire community and

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## Jury selection, unfair sentencing complaints voiced at hearing

By Nichole Davis  
Sentinel-Voice

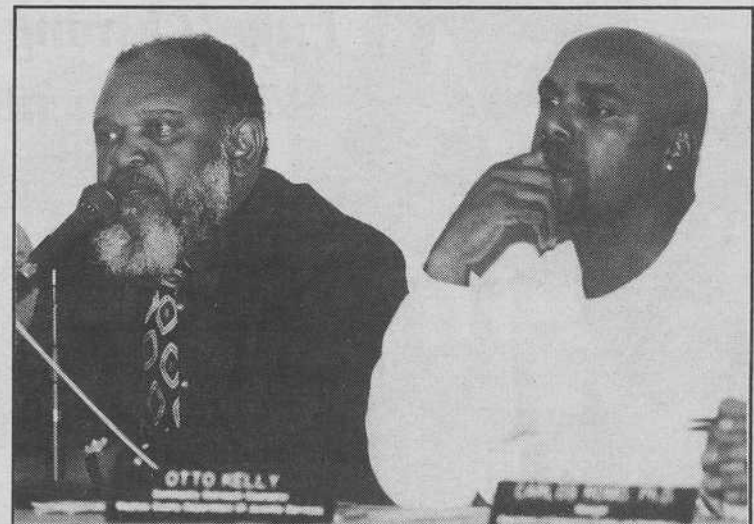
More than 70 frustrated locals attended a public hearing Monday at the West Las Vegas Library where members of a state task force listened to testimony regarding racial and economic bias in Nevada courts.

The 2-1/2 hour meeting filled the conference room where blacks and whites alike related negative experiences with jury selection, police, courts, and sentencing to the nine members of a 21-member task force that attended.

Participants complained about the lack of blacks serving on juries and task force member Elgin Simpson said that minorities "don't participate in the process. For whatever reason, they refuse to do it."

Simpson felt there were two main issues: One, people don't want to take time off work for jury duty, and two, attorneys may be deliberately removing minorities from jury pools, he said.

"People have to participate in the system, participation in the system will help change it," Simpson said. "If people are not willing to go and sit, then it's always going to be fighting uphill battle about being tried by a



Task force member Elgin Simpson (left) emphasized citizen participation during Monday's court bias hearing as Otto Kelly (right) listens on.

Photo by Savoy/LVS-Voice

jury of our peers.

"We have to go and participate. We have to go and fight for the things that we want, and the way to do it is to be a member of a jury. If we don't do that we will never get a jury that has seven or eight blacks on it," he said.

Linda McCollins, a city employee, spun a different yarn.

The mother of a police officer, McCollins was asked to serve on three juries since 1990, and she said when she came to court she witnessed

numerous blacks being dismissed from service without cause.

One judge, who came back and spoke to the jury after a case, said there was no rhyme or reason to jury dismissal.

"You could have a pony tail. You could have an earring. You could be dressed in cowboy boots. The women could be kind of scantily dressed. There were a lot of reasons and this came from the judge," McCollins said.

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