

Suit

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years. "The case has been an overwhelming educational experience for the black fire fighters, said Scott. Today I believe the fire department is a better place for our children to apply and receive equitable

Targeting

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of her client, Grace. He was arrested in March on drug charges.

Forsman believes the local initiative is an abysmal failure, doomed from the start by improper planning. The neighborhood, for example, was not even initially selected for the program. Pennwood Avenue and Arville Street, a more racially-balanced area, was passed over when West Las Vegas community activists requested that the initiative be placed in the area, Forsman wrote.

"The reason they asked for it was because they were assured this would be a real weed and seed program," she said Tuesday. But "very, very little money has gone into West Las Vegas, and (when it does go there) it's basically salary."

But at least three 1996 Weed and Seed grant recipients disagree.

"I'm pretty disturbed they're associating the drugs with the social part of the Weed and Seed program," said Aramentel Austin, founder and executive director of the Austin Dancers.

"I'm teaching kids not to get involved with that stuff," said Austin, who used her group's \$5,000 grant to cover costume, theater rental, salary and utility expenses. "You don't hear

treatment."
He has cited the PBFF attorney William McNeil and recently appointed, San Francisco Fire Chief, Bob Demmons as mentors.

"Past presidents, Vergus Porter, Jesse Scott, and a few

about the positive things they are doing."

Nearly 20 young men from the Omega Gentleman's program will participate in a 3-day tour of black colleges in Louisiana next month, which was funded in part by a seeding grant.

Instead of paying \$400, participants will only pay \$175, said Andre Denson, the advisor of the educational program.

Denson, who is also a school district vice principal, said his group's \$2,000 grant has helped them cut fund raising time almost in half.

"It allows us to do things that the group should be doing like community service activities," he said, "instead of fund raising, which is vital."

But at least one recipient expressed concern about weeding efforts.

Mike Waller, chief executive officer of Committed 100 Men Helping Boys, said he had mixed emotions about that aspect of the program.

"There are bad people out there, and if they continue to do bad things, they should be punished," Waller said.

"I do believe in some instances they (residents) may be picked on," he said. "On the other hand, these young people attract it to themselves to some extent," with inappropriate dress and lousy manners.

others are the core of the "hard workers" in the organization" said Samuel Smith, deputy fire marshal. Smith volunteers time instructing prospective fire fighter applicants. Smith has been teaching more than 10 years. He has been responsible for "more than 90 successful candidates over the years", he said. Some have gone on to higher positions because of their training.

"My goal, Smith said, is for the candidate to look me in the eye and say they can do better than me." He said the most important element is being productive in your community as

demographics change. He encourages women to become applicants. He feels women have a very high success rate due to their personal motivation. He stresses "Math, common sense and reading comprehension."

The firefighters believe ethnic diversity is evident but negative learned behaviors should be identified in candidates before they are hired to promote respect and harmony within the department.

The profession of the fireman lives as a dream in the minds of young people. It is highly respected and regarded career. Garret Morgan was an

African American who invented the gas mask; T.J. McWilliams invented the fire extinguisher and the Professional Black fighters

of Clark County have changed the course of recruitment and survival equitably within the department.

Agenda

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event where members of the 15-person Las Vegas delegation to the St. Louis, Mo. conference - the largest from the West - talked about their experiences for the first time publicly.

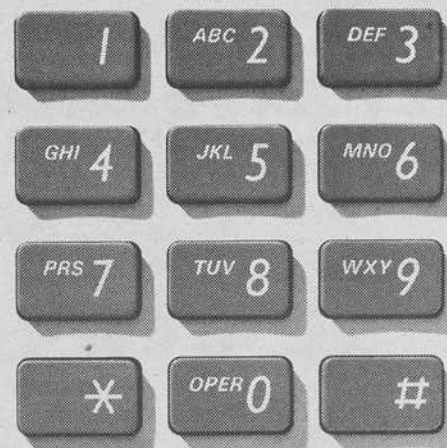
Political empowerment, education and economic transformation were just three of the issues discussed. A proposal to file a class-action suit against the federal government was also discussed, said delegate Cleve Avery, an adult probation and parole officer.

A recent San Jose Mercury News article accusing the CIA of allowing crack into predominantly black, inner-city Los Angeles sparked the move.

"If they did it in South Central-Los Angeles, what's the difference (See Agenda, Page 15)

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