

Entrepreneurs take business to the streets

By Lee Brown
Sentinel-Voice

Neither the Las Vegas heat, nor desert winds could keep nearly 100 new and existing businesses from showing — and in some cases selling — their goods and services to consumers at the 1997 EOB 'Village' Micro Business Expo, held Saturday, May 31 in the heart of the valley's black community.

Designed to showcase the goods and services of area start-up businesses, the all-day expo took place along D Street in West Las Vegas and offered entrepreneurs the chance to test market their businesses — many for the first time to the public.

"I think it's real important that our community, churches, and everyone, actually see the businesses that are up and going and doing something for themselves and their community," said Kimberly Bailey, coordinator for the Micro Business Program, host of the event. "So, I wanted to take it to the streets."

Attended by over 800 consumers last year, this year's event promised to be bigger and better, and it was, as well over 1,000 attended this year. According to Bailey, the Expo, celebrating its third consecutive year, serves as a cultural economic development event celebrating 'micropreneur' economic development.

"Off the responses from the people attending the expo, they'll know if they need to modify or change what it is they have to offer," said

Bailey, who has run the Economic Opportunity Board of Clark County (EOB) Micro Business program since its inception in 1992.

For the first time, businesses were afforded the opportunity to sell their goods and services to the public — provided they have the proper licensing. Those who have yet to obtain their

business licenses were only allowed to showcase their business ideas.

"Communication and networking is the key," said Kerry Nunley, co-owner, along with Wesley Driver, of local retail clothier Proper Gear International. "You can't get any better exposure than networking with your own community. So, I suggest that all new businesses get involved with the Micro Business organization."

Art dealers Robert Scercy Jr., and Regina Wilson, owners of Personal Preference Inc., agreed that for business survival, networking is a must.

"I've met a lot of people and we've been able to do a lot of business — networking with one another," Scercy said of the advantages of going through the Micro Business Program. "How to get my license, how to network, how to sell, how to promote. All of these are a combination of efforts that we, as black people, need to know to make it in today's society."

As for the advantages of being a business owner, freedom seemed to be the common theme.

"Freedom. Bottom line," said Nunley. "The money is good — sometimes it's (business) slow, sometimes it's fast — that's the way business is, but it frees up a lot of time to be with your family."

As part of the event, which was sponsored by the likes of Black Entertainment Television (BET), Black Enterprise magazine, Bank of America, Nevada and Sprint-Central Telephone, to name a few, participants were given the opportunity to win one of two \$500 awards — money which is to be used toward the further development of their business. Those vendors — one in goods and one in services — which were able to show the most expressed customer interest in their business by the end of the event



Jimmy Dixon, (center), and brothers Andrey Ingram (left) and Deon Ingram congregate at one of the booths.



Johnny Watts, vice president of Marketing for Best For Less Boutique, tries to bag some business during the EOB 'Village' Micro Business Expo Saturday on D Street.

Sentinel-Voice photos by John Broussard

were declared the winners.

This year's winners were Shanea and Dontae Myers, who operates Style 2000, a retail clothier; and Laura Fraser, owner of Jandel Consultants, Inc., a business consulting service; in the goods and services categories, respectively.

"I do these more for motivational reasons," Bailey said of the Expo, "because a lot of our businesses have to be reaffirmed, and this is a good reaffirming process. To understand that people are interested. So, it's really exciting when you have people that come out and encourage the businesses."

"They offer a beautiful plan to get started — No. 1," added Scercy of the entire program. "If you have a dream, and you have the desire, I propose that you go ahead and reach out and excel at that. Don't give up. Stay in it. It get's

rough some times. You have to stay strong and be motivated."

"I'm pleased because the businesses were so pleased," said Bailey. "They were so excited about showing what they had."



Comedic duo, the Mooney Twins, Dwayne (left) and Daryl laugh with EOB Micro Business Coordinator Kimberly Bailey.

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"I will miss his wise counsel," said Sen. Harry Reid. "But I am very proud that his trademark honesty and intelligence will live on in the hearts of the thousands of Nevada veterans each time they enter the Judge Addelmar "Dell" Guy Las Vegas Ambulatory Care Center."

"He left behind a legacy of good work, service and wisdom," Congressman Jim Ensign said.

"Judge Guy not only fought in battlefields far away, but also took his fight into the streets of Nevada's communities," said Congressman Jim Gibbons. "His work in law enforcement and on the bench helped rid our streets of criminals."

The clinic joins the O'Callaghan Federal Hospital at Nellis Air Force Base in serving the medical needs of Nevada's veterans. The clinic will be dedicated July 2.