

BUSINESS

McCarran to host diversity conference

By Damon Hodge
Sentinel-Voice

Aimed at empowering disadvantaged business enterprises (DBEs) who work with major airports, the 1997 Airport Business Diversity Conference will bring more than 1,000 participants to Bally's June 8-11.

DBEs are minority and women-owned businesses or those businesses determined to be socially and economically disadvantaged.

The event is sponsored by the Airport Minority Advisory Council (AMAC) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The Clark County Department of Aviation (CCDOA) will serve as this year's host.

Nearly 1,000 from a variety of backgrounds are expected - industry professionals, board members, corporate executives, government officials and those seeking airport business and employment opportunities.

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and the FAA will discuss the most recent compliance standards and address DBE concerns.

Workshops will focus on airport concessions, procurement of goods and services and DOT-assisted construction and professional service contracts.

A national organization, AMAC advocates policies and practices that will enhance business opportunities at airports for DBEs.

Since its inception in 1988, AMAC has actively participated in the development of laws, policies and regulations that foster growth of this segment of society.

For registration and more information, contact AMAC at (703) 548-8806 or Cynthia Cicero at 261-5161.

Pastor preaches business smarts

By Damon Hodge
Sentinel-Voice

(The Rev. Marion Bennett believes in West Las Vegas and its people.)

That's why he has pastored there for nearly 40 years. And that's why he opened D & K Plaza this spring, a 12,000 square-foot commercial center aimed at empowering the area.

"If the black community is going to become viable and West Las Vegas is going to become a quality place to live, we must invest in it."

Bennett, pastor of Zion United Methodist Church, 2108 N. Revere, owns D & K Plaza. The plaza, named after his two children, rests between Smart Start Child Care Center and a commercial center on Owens and K streets.

Bennett said preachers should be the "head lights" and provide vision in the church as well as in the community.

"What's wrong with having a piece of the pie and owning and controlling your destiny," Bennett asked. "I don't think God put us on this earth to be

nomads."

Bennett urged shortsighted preachers to translate experience in managing churches into creating and running businesses.

A native of Greenville, S.C., Bennett, 67, came to Las Vegas in 1960 on assignment from the Methodist church. He has pastored at Zion since his arrival.

Bennett took odd jobs to supplement his pastor's income. He sold insurance, became a mortgage broker. He even took a paper route, much to the amusement of the local black pastoral community.

"My route was from Bonanza to Carey," he said. "I bought the papers wholesale and sold the retail. Many of the black preachers used to laugh at me."

Bennett banked his business experience and in 1963 made his first investment when he bought lots in Vegas Heights — bounded by Revere, Martin Luther King, Lake Mead and H streets — and built duplex homes. Since then, he has continuously bought property, built equity in it, then sold it. Today, he estimates he has about 30 investments.

D & K Plaza, with its half-acre plot, is Bennett's biggest



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

The Rev. Marion Bennett says his latest project, D & K Plaza is providing opportunities for aspiring business entrepreneurs.

venture. In 1994, Bennett said the City of Las Vegas forced him to sell his land to make way for Magic's Westland Plaza.

The city swapped land rights, moving on the other side of Owens. Later that year, D & K Plaza was born.

The plaza holds 12 vendors. Presently, three are open: Westside Bail Bonds, Stargate Plumbing and Body Snatchers Nail Salon. Other vendors

slated include a church, restaurant, barber shop, beauty supply, fashion boutique, an African gift shop, air conditioning and home decor shop.

Bennett said God has given him the opportunity to make a change and he won't define success by how much money the business makes.

"Success is giving people the chance to achieve their goals."

Agency seeks group to run LV MBDC

Special to Sentinel-Voice

The U.S. Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), is soliciting competitive applications from profit and non-profit organizations to operate the Las Vegas Minority Business Development Center (MBDC).

The purpose of the MBDC Program is to provide business development assistance to persons who are members of groups determined to be socially or economically disadvantaged, and to business concerns owned and controlled by such individuals. To this end, MBDA funds organizations to identify and coordinate public and private sector resources on behalf of minority

individuals and firms; to offer a full range of client services to minority entrepreneurs, and to serve as a conduit of information and assistance regarding minority business.

For an application packet, interested parties should write to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Minority Business Development Agency, 221 Main Street, Suite 1280, San Francisco, California 94105.

A pre-application conference for the Las Vegas MBDC will be held on Friday, June 13, at 10:00 a.m., at the Foley Federal Building, 300 Las Vegas Boulevard South, Room 124, Las Vegas, Nevada 89101.

The closing date for applications is July 7.

NPC Minority Business Award

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Nevada Power Company receives Minority Business Award

Nevada Power Company was honored on Tuesday with the Edison Electric Institute's

(EEI) Minority Business Development Award.

The award recognizes EEI-member companies for outstanding efforts in advancing purchasing opportunities for minority and

women-owned businesses.

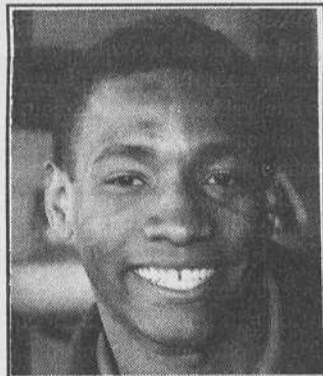
Nevada Power Company is the only program to receive this year's award.

Judges based the award on Nevada Power Company's officer support of the program, the Company's mentoring program, the business outreach program and the Company's focus on bottom line results.

The award was presented to Company representatives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania today. At EEI's Fourteenth Annual Minority Business Development Seminar and Trade Show, David Griego, Nevada Power Company Business Consultant, accepted the award on behalf of the Company.



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