

Transit chief targets welfare

*By Dalia Dangerfield
Special to Sentinel-Voice*
U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney Slater and transit representatives from around the nation have vowed to provide efficient transportation for welfare recipients who are trying to make the transition from welfare to work.

"Transportation is about more than concrete, asphalt and steel," Slater said to the hundreds of transit representatives at the September convention of the American Public Transit Association (APTA).

"It is about providing opportunities for all, access to all, getting people to their jobs, getting students to their schools. We all have a stake in this," he said.

According to Slater, three million Americans have left the welfare program and have started working, but only six

percent of welfare recipients have vehicles.

"So you know who those three million are — they are becoming customers," he said. "And the president wants you to have another two million potential customers before the end of his term."

The Department of Transportation has hired 50 people from the welfare-to-work program, Slater said. Additionally, APTA has passed a resolution to encourage transit agencies to hire welfare recipients.

The process of moving people off the welfare rolls and into jobs has been plagued with problems. One major concern is the fact that many of the better paying positions are available in the suburbs and the majority of the nation's welfare recipients are congregated in urban centers. Therefore, the people who need those jobs can't reach them.

"Transportation is the 'to' in the phrase welfare-to-work," Slater said. He detailed that the transportation industry has to adjust to the changing dynamics of work and travel and make itself relevant to the needs of its customers.

In that regard, Slater said that President Clinton has asked Congress for \$600 million to transport people to suburban jobs.

"There is a broad based support for transportation," Slater said. There are common goals in increasing safety funds, relieving congestion and protecting the environment."

Slater said that the other major area of concern is the environment. He said that the global climate change has had a devastating effect on the United States during the last 10 years. A 1995 heat wave killed hundreds in Chicago and rainfall has also increased by six percent.

"The earth is warming because of increased global greenhouse gas emission," he said. "The United States is the leading source of these emissions in the world. And a third of them come from transportation."

Instead of being considered one-third of the problem, Slater urged transit officials to become one-third of the solution to preserve the environment.

"Think about the pollution and congestion transit prevents," he said. "The problem may be solved if Americans made more of a commitment to take trips by train, bike, bus or on foot."

Prior to the convention, the world's first emission-free bus was introduced in Chicago. Slater said that this is only the beginning of providing customer service while simultaneously protecting the environment.

North Las Vegas plans to make a difference

Special to Sentinel-Voice

On Oct. 25, the City of North Las Vegas is participating in national and local Make A Difference Day activities.

The public is invited to participate in the various projects planned.

The city will assist the Cheyenne Senior Care Center, 2856 E. Cheyenne Ave., with its annual yard sale.

Two other events will be held at Eldorado Park: a tree planting and the installation of a safety surface in various play area. The park is located at Camino Eldorado and Tropical Parkway.

Youth groups will help clean up the Kiel Ranch historic site in North Las Vegas and the city's Detention/Corrections Center residents will help clean the exterior of City Hall, 2200 Civic Center Drive.

North Las Vegas has a special interest in this national observance.

In 1992, the city and North Las Vegas Housing Services received national recognition by being awarded first place in USA Weekend's community category. More than 500 volunteers helped clean up the city. In 1995, Housing Services received honorable mention.

"A national day of doing good," Make A Difference Day was created in 1992 by USA Weekend in partnership with the Points of Light Foundation, a nonpartisan, nonprofit network of more than 500 volunteer centers. Held the fourth Saturday of each October, the day was created as a way for the magazine's readers to help others by volunteering. Some 68,000 people took part that year. The number increases every year with more than one million people participating last year.

"We are proud of the past achievements of North Las Vegas regarding this national and local observance," mayor Mike Montandon said. "We also value the commitment of our residents and businesses to our community and for the betterment of individual lives. We aspire to make this year the best Make A Difference ever."

Poets

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something meaningful away from his poems.

Brantley, co-founded the Izulu Poets, a local African-American poetry society.

He has several decades of experience writing poetry. Izulu means thunder in Swahili. Organizers said he was chosen because his words hit like thunder.

He said he wanted to participate in the program to positively represent the Black community.

He cited as his influence noted poet, author and musician Gil Scott Heron.

Organizers hope that the Black and Jewish communities support this first collaborative effort to open the lines of communication and begin healing.

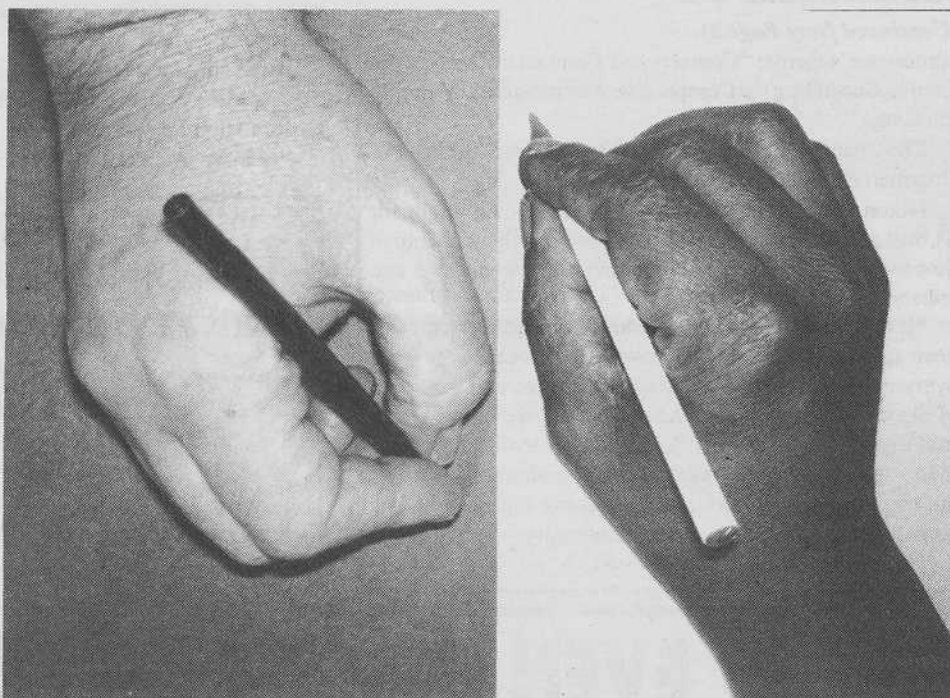


Photo special to Sentinel-Voice

Organizers of the poetry reading hope the forum helps quell tensions between Blacks and Jews.

Homeless

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and other entities donated of hygiene items and the manpower to distribute the goods.

The attendants received dental care, free and confidential HIV testing, immunizations, vaccinations, eye testing, psychiatric exams, health education and other medical screenings. National Guard physicians assessed those with worrisome medical problems and devised treatment plans for them.

John McKinnely, homeless and wheelchair-bound, appreciated the services.

"I've been waiting for years to have these cancer cells removed. I also needed dental surgery really bad. This event has made it possible for me to get the operations I need. Without this, I'd have to keep

living in pain."

More than 300 people, including homeless children, received free haircuts from all 13 Supercuts Hair Salons.

First Presbyterian Church issued out approximately 3,000 pairs of new socks and apparel.

James Dunton, chief social worker for the Veterans Administration Medical Center, said Las Vegas is fertile ground for homeless people. Pleasant weather and a healthy economy attract people who are in employment transition or making life changes.

Dunton estimated that more than 3,000 homeless attended last year's event. He said the event really means a lot to homeless veterans, who make up one-third of the homeless population. It is a great way to bring all the services needed under one roof, he said.

At Stand Down—a military term for front line soldiers moved to a safety zone — homeless also had opportunities to seek employment with a number of businesses including Wells Fargo Bank, the Mirage, Treasure Island, Harrah's, J.A.T.C. Laborers. Job training groups such as the Culinary Union, electricians and other union groups were on hand.

The State of Nevada Employment Training Division processed 60 applications for training and jobs by 11:30 am.

Stand Down organizers urge the community to remember homeless people year-round, not just during holiday season.

For more information, call Linda Lera-Randle at 229-4808 or 388-0888.

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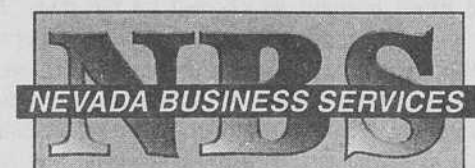
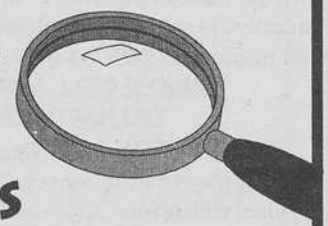
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requires disclosure to ensure that consumers understand a debit card does not require a PIN for use and provides direct access to their account.

Their debit card issuer would also be required to disclose their policy on making restitution to consumers which may result from fraudulent use of the card.

Many consumer groups, such as the Consumer Federation of America, the U.S. Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) and Consumers Union, support the legislation. Similar legislation has been introduced in the House of Representatives.

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