

BUSINESS

Time to end lip service about better economics

Special to Sentinel-Voice

Let's face it, all you, and our Black Leadership do is give lip service to economic empowerment. Unwilling to make the internal changes we need in our lives, most of what we do is talk while every other racial and ethnic group in the country moves ahead of us on the economic scale. African-Americans, and their leaders, do little else than talk around the concept of economic development.

Want to hear a full volume of Black Leadership babble on-and-on about how they are

"fixin' to get ready" to bring about broader economic development for Black America? Get a seat September 16-19, 1998 for the many seminars, workshops and receptions the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) will convene for their Foundation's Annual Legislative Week-End in Washington, D.C. You'll see every high-ranking black in politics, civil rights and Corporate America outreach there talkin' that talk, providing an opportunity for you to ask: "What have you done in your capacity during the last 30 years

Business Exchange

By William Reed, publisher of Who's Who in Black Corporate America.



to make things better for me?" Don't be surprised if the chair of the Caucus, Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.), makes a broad statement: "As

a result of the horrible murder in Texas, we got our Hate Bill passed." But, what in the way of wealth creation have they accomplished so that new

opportunities were created for blacks; so we cease double-digit unemployment among us and can get jobs; work in our own communities for our own without the wide-spread workplace discrimination the lucky ones of us get from whites; and get action on reparations for centuries of discrimination American society has put on us?

When it's said blacks have more talk than action toward our development, how wrong is that? Except when they are in black communities, the major topic of "black leaders"

is going along to get along in their own political, civil rights and Corporate Outreach stations. Black leaders provide rhetoric from podiums of every convention and church social they can find. But, little of that talk has to do with what action items to help the African-American community to develop a viable economic base.

It should be noted that the largest gathering of African-American leaders of politics, civil rights, business, and other fields, occurs each year in (See Economics, Page 7)

Minority, women entrepreneurs in dark about options

By Carl Hillard

Special to Sentinel-Voice

DENVER (AP) — Businesses owned by women and minorities often don't get state contracts because they don't know what is available, a four-month study submitted to Gov. Roy Romer concludes.

Better communication and simplification of the process were two recommendations for eliminating disparity of contracts made at a news conference in Romer's office Tuesday.

A two-volume plan, making more than 40 recommendations in all, was submitted to the governor.

A disparity study, financed by the the State Legislature in 1996, was aimed at investigating

whether contracting and procurement opportunities are available to all businesses, Romer said.

The study was done by MGT of America, a Florida-based research company, and released last April. The study said businesses owned by minorities and women are underused in procuring goods and services for government.

Colorado's economy is strong and can be kept that way by making its economic base as broad as possible, Romer said. To do that, all available and qualified businesses must have a chance to provide goods and services to the state, he said.

Government spends about \$2 billion annually on such contracts, and small businesses compete,

but "the system does not always work right," he said.

"Too many state contracts go to too few businesses. Good, reputable companies are often left out," Romer observed.

"Small businesses complain the system is too complex, too difficult to understand and too hard to get information about. In some cases women and minority businesses have not received any state business at all, even though there are firms qualified and available to do the job," he said.

The strategies developed are to make the system better, he said, but the recommendations "don't mean quotas."

The areas in which disparity occurred

included construction, professional services, personal services and commodities.

The study group recommended:

- One-stop regional centers linked to the state's 17 Small Business Development Centers to provide state and regional information and technical support on contracting and procurement.

- Simplifying the bid information and distribution system with an Internet-based notification system providing information on competitive purchases.

- A centralized statewide computer-based tracking and monitoring system that may include expanding bid information systems and

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'Opportunity Day' promotes minority business commerce

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"Fast Track Towards 2,000" is the theme of Minority Business Opportunity Day '98. Hosted by the Nevada Minority Purchasing Council (NMPC), Opportunity Day is an annual event that brings minority entrepreneurs together with corporate and other purchasers.

An affiliate of the National Minority Supplier Development Council, Inc., the NMPC's mission is "to help build a stronger, more equitable society by supporting and promoting business relationships between minority-owned businesses and participating corporations."

Minority Business Opportunity Day '98 will take place at the MGM Grand Hotel and Convention Center from 5 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 24 till 5 p.m. Friday, Sept. 25. The opening function on Thursday evening, a VIP reception from 5 to 6:30 p.m. featuring hors d'oeuvres, cocktails and live entertainment, is open to registered exhibitors and sponsors only.

However, the public is



Harriet R. Michel

welcome, free of charge, to tour the booths of exhibitors at the Trade Fair on Friday from 9:45 to 11:45 a.m. and from 1:30 to 5:00 p.m. Seminars and workshops offered from 2 to 3 p.m. are also free.

The Trade Fair will be closed during the Power Breakfast and Corporate Appreciation Luncheon, which cost \$25 and \$35 per person, respectively, with discounts available for groups of ten or more.

Luz Araoz Hopewell, the breakfast keynote speaker, has been director of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization for the federal Department of Transportation (DOT) since 1993. Her leadership has reinvigorated DOT's financial and outreach programs. In fiscal year 1997, DOT awarded

63 percent of its direct procurement budget to small, woman-owned and disadvantaged businesses.

The president of the National Minority Supplier Development Council, Harriet R. Michel, will speak at the luncheon. The NMSDC network matches more than 15,000 certified minority businesses (Black, Hispanic, Asian and Native American) with its more than 3,500 corporate members — including most Fortune 500 companies — who want to purchase their goods and services.

Nevada Minority Purchasing Council executive director Dianne Fontes wishes to remind the public that the NMPC is a nonprofit organization that does not receive government funding. Public participation in Opportunity Day '98 will help the organization to continue operating.

Options for participation include becoming a sponsor, purchasing a booth, attending the breakfast and/or luncheon, or making a donation. For more information contact the NMPC at 894-4477.

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