

BUSINESS

Kentucky study reveals Blacks failing to get loans

LEXINGTON, Ky. (AP) — Their incomes may be similar, but whites have a higher approval rate than blacks when applying for a home loan, according to a survey of a dozen Lexington banks. The survey also concluded that the banks are more likely to reject mortgage applications in neighborhoods with populations that are more than 5 percent black, primarily on the city's north side.

The Lexington-Fayette Urban County Human Rights Commission conducted the study, which showed results similar to one conducted by the *Lexington Herald-Leader* in 1995. That discouraged

some civil-rights advocates, who said they hoped to see more progress.

It's important for all races and neighborhoods to have access to home ownership, said William D. Wharton, the commission's executive director.

"When a person owns a home, studies show they're more likely to be involved in the community," Wharton said. "They pay more in taxes, they're more likely to be involved in their child's education, they're more likely to serve on jury duty."

The Kentucky Bankers Association contended the new study is flawed because it does not account for factors

— such as credit history and the value of the home — that help determine whether a loan is approved.

Several state and federal agencies closely watch banks to make certain that loans are approved prudently but fairly, said Ballard W. Cassidy Jr., KBA executive vice president. Wharton said the commission reviewed data on 12,899 home loan applications submitted to 12 Lexington banks in 1995 and 1996.

The data is made public by the federal Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, in part to discourage banks from the practice known as "redlining"—the systematic

refusal to lend money in low-income and black neighborhoods.

The data doesn't give the names of loan applicants, but it notes their race, gender, income level and neighborhood, and whether their loan was approved.

"We certainly do not look at race. Race has nothing to do with credit-worthiness," said Nancy Norris, spokeswoman for Bank One, which reported more home loan applications than any of the other 11 lenders in the study.

Like those of several banks, Bank One's lending numbers by race can vary significantly from year to year.

The gap in 1995 — 80 percent approval for whites and 73 percent approval for blacks — grew in 1996, to 79 percent for whites and 58 percent for blacks.

But Norris said she looks at the numbers another way. Blacks submitted 283 applications to Bank One in 1996, a 160 percent increase over 1995. That shows a more aggressive effort to reach the black community, she said.

Among the study's findings:

Overall, whites—who are 85 percent of Fayette County's population — had better success when applying for home loans.

In 1995, banks approved

85 percent of whites' 4,188 home loan applications. That stayed about the same in 1996, when whites filed 6,655 applications and were approved 84 percent of the time.

In 1995, banks approved 71 percent of blacks' 343 home loan applications. That percentage dropped in 1996, when blacks filed 540 applications and were approved 64 percent of the time.

The study divided the loan applicants into four categories based on the annual median household income in Lexington: \$35,936, according to the 1990 census.

Mall owners deny targeting black students from N.C. A&T

GREENSBORO (AP)—The Koury Corp. is denying allegations that security officers at the Four Seasons Town Centre discriminate against students at North Carolina A&T State University.

Last week, a group of A&T students called for blacks to boycott the mall, claiming it targets blacks with its courtesy code policy for shoppers. The A&T students said they were being approached, harassed and asked to leave by mall security officers for no justifiable reason.

The students also said the mall unfairly targeted them by distributing its shopping courtesy code on the A&T campus.

Ron Mack, an executive vice president at Four Seasons Town Centre, denied the allegations at a news conference last Friday. "The courtesy code at Four Seasons is

designed to ensure that the mall is a safe, pleasant and comfortable shopping environment for all members of our community," he said.

"A&T students have not been singled out and African-Americans have not been singled out."

Mack noted that courtesy code pamphlets had been distributed to all colleges, universities and high schools in Greensboro, not just A&T. Mall officials instituted the conduct courtesy policy in February 1996.

Loitering, yelling, playing radios and threatening other people are not allowed.

According to mall records, slightly more than half of those stopped by mall security are black.

Skip Alston, a Guilford County commissioner and state NAACP president,

said he did not think the problems were related to race.

But several black leaders and residents who showed up at the news conference voiced their displeasure with treatment by mall security. Stephen Showfety, president of the Koury Corp., said mall shoppers should be approached only if they are creating a problem for others.

"If they are not blocking traffic or not inconveniencing other people, then they should not be approached," he said.

"If they are walking abreast, if they don't seem to have a purpose and if it appears that we have been given the responsibility to manage young teen-agers without their parents, we have to exercise some degree of responsibility with regard to our other customers."

Mack and Showfety stated they would be

willing to hold a meeting to discuss the problems with the policy's implementation and, if necessary, makes changes to improve it.

The students told Alston last Tuesday that they refused to meet with mall officials.

"Everyone is welcome to come and shop, but it's a shopping center," Mack said last week.

"It's not a place to come and socialize with your friends. We have an obligation to the merchants who do business here."

Mack said the mall sent copies of its code to A&T only after the university requested it to include in the school's student orientation packet.

"Some of the people will refuse to listen," he said.

"If they're not interested in learning our rules of conduct, we'll ask them to leave."

Black America cannot wait for 2000 to change economic fortunes

By James Clingman, Jr.
Special to Sentinel-Voice
The New Millennium.

Fast becoming the most ominous term in the lexicon, it looms before us like the grim reaper. We hear this phrase used by so many, and we use it in our conversation sometimes as though on Jan. 1, 2000 a magical transformation will take place for Black people and for the rest of the world.

Well, I don't know about the rest of the world, but at the rate we are going our brothers and sisters will hardly notice the change economically. You hear it said so often that we have to get our economic act together before the next century begins.

What if we don't? What's going to happen to us? Answer: Nothing plus nothing equals nothing.

No, there is nothing magical about the date itself.

But, there is something very scary about the fact that in December 1998 Black people are making relatively little progress when it comes to collective economic empowering strategies. At our current pace, the year 2000 will not reach our neighborhoods until around 2010.

Status quo is a prescription for failure, and that is especially true for the economic survival of Black people. If we continue down the same economic path we've been on for the past 35 years, the onset of the new millennium will mean nothing other than a big New Year's Eve celebration for us.

Here is the real deal. Shortly after the turn of the century Black people are scheduled to go from the second to the third largest group in the United States.

Will Jan. 1, 2000 find

Black people still owning less than two percent of this country's assets? On that day, will Black families be in last place when it comes to median income and net worth? Will the New Year enter and find Black people still languishing without a strategy for economic empowerment - and not working on one?

Those and other questions are important for African Americans vis a vis the year 2000. But, they are also vital for consideration today.

All this talk about the 21st century, as if it is some measuring rod for our progress, or the lack thereof, is nonsensical and diversionary. Black people surely do not need timelines that give us comfort as we put off until tomorrow what we can do today. It's not about 2000, it's about NOW.

The question is: What are you doing to help secure a brighter economic future for our children and our families?

All of us must ask that question, and we must be

willing to admit our shortcomings related to the economic status of our people. Take stock of what you are doing and what you can do to help uplift our people economically.

Where are you spending your money? Are you a participant in economic empowerment or a not-so-innocent bystander cheering the rest of us on from the sidelines?

I trust your answers are yes. If the majority of our people do these things now,

the dawning of a new century will mean a great deal to us. But, if we do nothing, continuing our self-imposed economic destruction by giving 95 percent of all we have to someone else, the year 2000 will come and go.

It will be just another insignificant period in the economic saga of Black Americans.

James Clingman is the founder and executive director of the Cincinnati African American Chamber of Commerce.

See Me for All
Your Insurance
Needs

AUTO HOME
LIFE HEALTH

COUNTRY COMPANIES
INSURANCE GROUP



MELVIN L. WALKER
2575 South Cimarron
Suite 201
702-873-6442
Las Vegas, NV 89117

Davey Deals

AUTOS • BIKES • BOATS

1717 FREMONT at BRUCE SHELDON WELCH

E-Z FINANCING & LOW PAYMENTS

HOME OF THE \$300 DOWN

WE SELL 'EM FAST
CUZ WE SELL 'EM CHEAP

474-7777