

NAACP: MGM Grand's minority contracting inadequate

DETROIT (AP) - MGM Grand, which holds one of this city's three casino franchises, is being criticized in Las Vegas over the number of black suppliers.

Las Vegas NAACP officials said the company is doing too little to buy goods and services from black companies. The issue came up during a recent Nevada Gaming Control Board meeting to consider MGM Grand's purchase of Mirage Resorts.

MGM Grand at first disputed the claim, but later said the \$1.6 million it has spent on black-owned businesses was inadequate. The figure does not count companies hired by its general contractors.

In Detroit, MGM Grand has spent \$40 million on contracts with minority companies. Detroit requires casinos to grant 30 percent of contracts to women- and minority-owned businesses.

MGM Grand said it now would require general contractors to include minority companies in all bids.

"It was clear and obvious to us that the record in purchasing and letting out contracts wasn't anywhere near where it should have been," MGM Grand spokesman Alan Feldman told The Detroit News for a story Monday.

But leaders of the National Association for the Advance-

ment of Colored People said the casino's actions are insufficient.

The NAACP plans to discuss the industry's commitment to blacks at its national convention next month, said Wendell Anthony, president of the NAACP's Detroit branch.

"It appears the lion is losing its teeth as it relates to biting into the economic power for African-Americans," he said.



REV. AL SHARPTON

Sharpton to black press: Be bolder

The Black Press needs to continue to advocate strongly for African-Americans, civil rights leader Rev. Al Sharpton told NNPA publishers last Friday at its national convention in Chicago.

"The role of the Black Press is not to be thermometers, but thermostats," the New York-based activist said at the 2000 Black Press Merit Awards dinner, which honors the best in Black newspaper journalism of the previous year. "We need to turn the heat up."

Calling on Black newspapers to be stronger truth-tellers who are more challenging of America's status quo, Sharpton praised Jet magazine for its recent cover story on Nation of Islam leader Farrakhan's response to a recent CBS-TV "60 Minutes" segment on his role in Malcolm X's assassination. Correspondent Mike Wallace for several hours interviewed Farrakhan and Attilah Shabazz, the oldest daughter of Malcolm X, about the tension between Malcolm and the Nation of Islam before Malcolm's assassination. Farrakhan, who was present at the award ceremony, has claimed the less than 20-minute story badly represented what he told Wallace.

"You have to tell the truth," said Sharpton. "If we have to wait for Mike Wallace to tell our story it'll never be told right. And if you are afraid of Mike Wallace, what purpose do you serve?"

The civil rights leader said there are too many Blacks with "King's picture on one wall, Malcolm's picture on the other," and not doing what either one of them had done. Sharpton's address preceded the awards portion, which was heavily dominated by The Philadelphia Tribune. The newspaper won first place in six of the 19 contests, and won the Russwurm Trophy, given to the newspaper with the highest score in all categories.

The "Publisher of The Year" award, given for outstanding journalistic and public service efforts, went to Hardy Brown, co-publisher of the Black Voice News in Riverside, Calif. Brown and his wife, Cheryl, Black Voices' other co-publisher, hosted the NNPA's Mid-Winter Conference in Palm Springs, Calif., last January.

Juneteenth



Members of the Theta Theta Omega chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., sold fish dinners during Juneteenth. Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

(Continued from Page 1)

set free. Juneteenth is the celebration of slaves in Texas finding out at least a year later that Civil War was over and that slavery had been abolished.

Five years after Confederate troops attacked Fort Sumter in Charleston, S.C., Blacks in Texas hadn't heard that the Union had won the war and that their servitude to their White masters was over until June 19, 1866.

More than 300 people took advantage of the free screenings for prostate cancer, Sickle Cell Anemia, diabetes, blood pressure, eye and dental fitness.

"Anytime you can bring the community together is a good thing," said District 2 Senate Candidate Ed Bernstein said.

"It's a part of the American culture," said University Regent candidate Sub-Dist A Linda Howard. "Anything that's positive for the community I'm for."

"We know that freedom is not free," said State Senator Dist 4 hopeful URI Clinton. "(Because of the emancipation process) I appreciate this (freedom)."

Cultural anthropologist Isar King said, "As a nation of people it is important to know where we came from and where we are headed. If we don't, we become a people that is lost."

"It's a part of American history ... We need to celebrate our heritage," said Louis "LC" Conner, program director of KCEP-FM 88.1. "There are so many (community) issues going on...its another reason for us to get together and make a difference."

"In the South, we celebrated Juneteenth like it was the Fourth of July," Las Vegas NAACP President Gene Collins said.

"Celebrations like this helps our children to understand what we've been through," City Councilman Lawrence Weekly said.

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