

Law enforcement agencies address racial bias

WASHINGTON (AP) - Law enforcement agencies should review the way they recruit, train and supervise their officers to combat practices that unfairly target minorities, a group of police officials said last week.

While some police departments have enacted policies against racial profiling, and most forbid stopping people solely because of their race, most overlook more subtle problems of racial bias, a report by the Police Executive Research Forum, an organi-

zation of police chiefs studying new law enforcement techniques, said.

"It's not just simply stopping people in cars, it's how you interact with people, it's how you take calls over the phone. This is a broader issue," said Chuck Wexler, director of the research group.

The report, funded by the Justice Department, contains nearly 50 recommendations for police agencies ranging from recruiting more minority officers to working with community groups and teach-

ing police about human rights.

"Protecting individual rights is not an inconvenience for modern police, it is the foundation of policing in a democratic society," Wexler said, adding that notices will be sent to police departments encouraging them to adopt the recommendations.

The report urges police to only consider race and ethnicity when dealing with reliable descriptions of specific suspects and never as the sole reason for suspicion.

Police should also be more courteous when stopping people and apologize if they make a mistake, it said.

Police Chief Jerry Oliver of Richmond, Va. said that a bigger problem than stopping people because of their race - an action he has endured as a black officer when off-duty - is making people feel powerless.

"A police officer has the power to interrupt your life, to pull you to the curb, to search you," he said. "We have not taught them how to

send you on your way feeling that you've got your dignity back."

The report's recommendations for police agencies also include:

- Recruiting more police from traditionally black colleges and universities and from the military.

- Monitoring patrol car videotapes and radio communications to ensure that conversations are professional and free from racist comments.

- Conducting regular re-

views of the complaint process to make sure people aren't being discouraged from reporting problems.

A separate study published last month found that about half of all black men report that they have been victims of racial profiling.

One in five Latino and Asian men also reported they had been victims of racially motivated police stops, according to the poll by The Washington Post, the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard University.

Gaming

(Continued from Page 3)

last seventy years nothing has improved."

UCC is concerned that some properties promote black employees from within, but often select inexperienced and unprepared individuals, promoting them "often with a title but no commensurate authority to make decisions and implement change," said one chamber executive.

Most of the megaresorts in Las Vegas, said Overstreet, are owned by a handful of holding companies. Park Place Entertainment, the largest gaming corporation in the country, Kirk Kerkorian's MGM/Mirage, Mandalay Resorts, Circus Circus, Station Casinos and Coast Resorts, he said, are a virtual oligarchy. Increasingly, they've created corporate "diversity" executives, management level personnel such as vice presidents, department heads and administrative assistants, whose purpose, ostensibly, is to make a property more inclusive, for example, through employment. But Overstreet says he's only seen "a lot of public pronouncements, some rudimentary language related to diversity."

To Overstreet, the only tangible example of movement in the right direction has been the appointment, about a month ago by Park Place Entertainment, of two blacks, Lorenzo Creighton and Steve Bell, as corporate vice presidents.

"We're really proud of that," said Brown. "They gave credit to the fact that we had the conference last year and that it piqued their interest."

"They went outside," said Overstreet, praising the corporation and noting about the two newly-hired executives that "they were experienced."

Conference activities begin on Thursday, Aug. 9, with a town hall meeting from 6:15 p.m. until 8:30 that is open to the public. The first session looks at supplier/contractor relationships and will be moderated by Community Development Programs Center of Nevada Executive Director Frank Hawkins. Overstreet moderates the second, which takes up key national and local gaming issues.

On Friday, Bell and Goodman deliver opening remarks at 8:45 a.m., then Brown moderates the first of two morning workshops, "Diversity: What Does it Mean?" Bell will moderate the second, "CEO's Perspective of Diversity: A Work in Progress," after which Nevada Governor Kenny Guinn delivers a luncheon keynote address.

Two afternoon sessions include "Pending Legislation: Harmful or Helpful to Gaming Venues," and "International Gaming: What and Where?" with Blacks In Gaming founder and chairmand O. J. Webb among presenters that include World Conference of Mayors President Gary Loster, Mayor of Saginaw, Michigan.

On Saturday, the first workshop will be "The Economics of the Gaming Industry," moderated by UCC Vice President Kevin Patton. Later, Stevens presents "Visiting the Progress of Native American Gaming."

Nevada Assemblyman Wendell Williams (D-Dist 6), will be master of ceremonies for a noon luncheon session, then Las Vegas Ward Five City Councilman Lawrence Weekly moderates the workshop: "Community Empowerment: Building Solid Partnerships." Presenters of the following workshop, "Selecting Top Gaming Destinations for Minorities," will include *Black Meetings and Tourism* Publisher Solomon Herbert, Nevada Resort Association President Bill Bible and Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority President and CEO Manny Cortez. The conference finale, a reception at 6 p.m., features an "Outstanding Achievement Awards" dinner and a video presentation by Congresswoman Berkley.



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