

Plan to boost minority homeownership in Southern Nevada

Special to Sentinel-Voice
Department of Housing and Urban Development Assistant Secretary Michael Liu and a coalition of nonprofits, politicians and lenders on Monday announced the creation of "Catch the Dream

Southern Nevada," a new \$100 million effort to help more minorities in Southern Nevada own homes.

The program marks the first collaborative effort of nearly a dozen financial, civic and public interests have

joined forces for such an effort.

"Homeownership not only strengthens families, but also communities," HUD Secretary Mel Martinez said in a statement about similar programs HUD is launching na-

tionwide. "The Bush Administration has joined forces with numerous private and nonprofit organizations in a collaborative effort to increase homeownership, particularly among minorities.

Only 46 percent of Latino families in Las Vegas own homes, compared with a citywide average of 62 percent, according to Census Bureau data. Catch a Dream uses a three-pronged approach to solving that dispar-

ity. It combines aggressive consumer outreach, homebuyer education programs and flexible mortgage products. Freddie Mac plans to purchase \$100 million in mortgages made under the new initiative, ensuring a steady supply of capital for borrowers.

"Freddie Mac is pleased to join forces with these outstanding community organizations and our lenders to make homeownership more

affordable and attainable in Southern Nevada," said Craig Nickerson, vice president of community development lending at Freddie Mac.

Participating entities include the Nevada Fair Housing Center, Community Development Programs Center of Nevada, Women's Development Center, Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, U.S. Bank, Clark County and the cities of Henderson and North Las Vegas.

Dancers to showcase choreography during library musical performance

By John T. Stephens III
Sentinel-Voice

Choreography from the nonprofit Austin Dancers Academy will be on display next weekend as the academy presents "The Land of Fanta," a story about two genies traversing the earth to grant children's wishes. The performances will take place 6 p.m. Saturday, June 21 and 4 p.m. Sunday, June 22 at the West Las Vegas Library Theatre, 951 W. Lake Mead Blvd.

"(The genies) grant fantasies that make the world a better place," instructor Chazz Young said. "It's a fantasy land."

"The Land of Fanta" will feature live music by LA Connection. Advance tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for children 12 and under. Ad-

mission at the door is \$20 for adults and \$15 for children 12 and under. Those interested can call 242-9551.

The academy is comprised of artistically talented individuals ages 3 to 21. Four instructors teach 50 students various forms of dance, including tap, jazz, swing, and African, drama.

Says founder Aramentel Austin: "We are all dedicated. We rehearse and it's a professional (performance). The children are very talented."

The academy is a family affair: instructor Debbie Williams is Austin's daughter and Brendon Williams, also a teacher, is her grandson. The other instructors are Chazz Young and Diamond Richard; Young has been with her dance group for more than 30

years and Richard is a former student. Austin's husband Henry Austin provides transportation for some students.

The Austin Dancers Academy concept started in New York in 1966. Aramentel Austin began the academy with 10 children paying \$1 per week for classes.

"I wanted to get the children off the streets," she said. "I like to work with at-risk children. You can take these children and make a difference. They just need leadership and discipline."

She brought the academy to Las Vegas in 1994. Today, students pay \$55 a month and practice at the Las Vegas Dance Theatre Studio and the Bruce Recreational Park. Austin hopes to teach in her own school one day.

Meadows Mall launches million dollar retail makeover of property

Special to Sentinel-Voice

The Meadows Mall is embarking on a multi-million dollar renovation this summer that will add new retailers and feature an interior and exterior cosmetic upgrade as well as additional consumer and family-friendly amenities such as a multi-suite family restroom, soft seating throughout the mall, three new escalators and one new elevator and a refurbished food court.

Renovation of the 950,000-square foot mall began June 4 and is expected to be completed by the 2003 holiday season.

One new store scheduled to open is Limited Too (July).

The mall recently opened Vitamin World and Rave Girl; the latter is a vitamin and nutritional supplement retailer, the former features clothes for girls sizes 6 to 14.

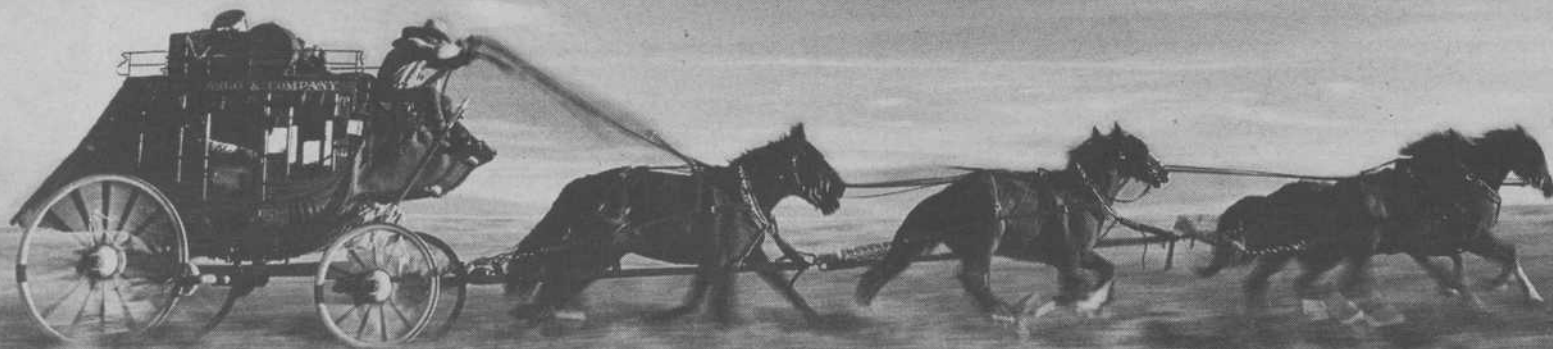
"Meadows Mall is one of the area's powerful regional shopping centers. We are determined to make it even better," general manager Greg Sims said.

"The Las Vegas retail market is an ever-changing, dynamic market. In order for us to continue being one of the leading regional centers, we must innovate and renovate to stay ahead of the game. This renovation will give us that edge."

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