

Summer program schools youth on business

By Lés Pierres Streater
Sentinel-Voice

More than 300 students, family members and sponsors met at Clubhouse at Cashman Field on Friday to launch the start of the Summer Business Institute.

Founded in 1996, SBI represents a collaborative effort between the Clark County Business Development Division and local business community to give youth opportunities to experience working in the corporate environment through internships.

"The competition for this year's program was fierce," said Clark County Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson Gates. "We received numerous phone calls from parents who wanted their sons and daughters to be apart of this year's program."

Gates, who guided SBI from concept to fruition 10 years ago, was the mistress of ceremonies for the Friday, June 11 event.

"This is a chance of a lifetime for those selected to attend this program," Gates said. "I can only tell you to take advantage of it because we have students who went through the first years of the



Sentinel-Voice photo by Lés Pierres Streater

Founder of the Summer Business Institute, Clark County Commissioner Yvonne Atkinson Gates (middle) stands with long-time donors of the program. Left to right: Construction company owner Louis Richardson, Bank West of Nevada's Lois Green, Clark County Business Development Manager Debbie Conway and Lloyd Cutler of Kellogg-Cutler.

program and have completed college or are continuing college writing me and thanking me about their participation in this program or supporting us in this year's effort."

The SBI features an eight-week paid internship training that includes business mentoring, life-skills training, financial management and a community service

project. High school juniors and seniors are selected for participation. This year, 115 students were selected from more than 500 applicants in Clark County.

Debbie Conway, manager of the Business Development Division for Clark County, coordinates SBI.

"We began this program back in 1996 as a pilot pro-

gram working with businesses to place eight students in their organizations to be trained and give them an entrepreneurial mind-set," Conway said. "After graduating from high school or college, they would think of owning a business as opposed to looking for a job. We try to select students from every high school in the county.

We look at their grade point average, if they have been involved in community activities, any previous work experience, what their career goals are, and if they were active at their school."

Rainee-Shaye Sayles, a senior at A-Tech, commented about her involvement with SBI for a second year.

"Last year, I was a student of the SBI program and I worked at Bank of America," Sayles said. "It was a very good experience because I got to network with a lot of people. I learned new job skills. Attending the workshop seminars, I learned about financial planning, life skills management and training to work in the career of my choice for the future."

Her mother, Andrea D. Sayles, has a son who participated in SBI and is now attending Howard University.

"It was a valuable experience for him and we are blessed that both of our children were able to participate in this program and that my daughter was chosen to be in this program for a second year because all of our children need a leg up to continue their education and preparation for

the future," Mrs. Sayles said.

Another student, Sharonda Fanning, a senior at Rancho High School, spoke about her involvement with SBI for the second year. Her goal is to become a pediatrician or sports athletic trainer.

"I worked at Wells Fargo Bank last year and it was a lot of fun," Fanning said. "I learned a lot with the support of my mentor, Jackie Ingram. I developed good communication skills and how to work effectively with other people. I will be working with a mortgage investment company this summer and learning some new skills."

The eight-week program consists of work and seminars each Friday at the Community College of Southern Nevada.

SBI costs more than \$1 million. There are 40 program donors. Ninety-five percent of the students who have participated in the program have gone on to attend college. "The program plans to increase the number of participants next year," Conway said.

A program donor from the start has been Bank West of (See SBI, Page 4)

Now, Vegas all over television

LAS VEGAS (AP) - When MTV came to Las Vegas three years ago, some of the Strip's biggest hotel-casinos refused to host "The Real World."

A long production schedule, concerns over patron privacy and a target audience too young to visit Vegas were reasons cited.

BIG mistake.

The reality show transformed the eventual host — the then fledgling, off-Strip Palms hotel-casino — into the place for celebs and beautiful twentysomethings.

"If they had to try and buy that kind of advertising, they wouldn't be able to afford it," said Jeanne Corcoran of the Nevada Film Office. "No one could."

Fast-forward to 2004: Vegas has rolled out the red carpet to TV producers.

Two prime-time shows devoted to all things Vegas are already on the air, two more are on this month, and another two in the fall — not to mention all the poker and travel shows from and about the city.

The two new reality shows:

- "The Casino," set inside the Golden Nugget hotel-casino, focuses on a new pair of thirtysomething owners, Tom Breitling and Tim Poster, and debuts at 9 p.m. EDT Monday on Fox. It's produced by Mark Burnett, creator of "Survivor" and "The Apprentice."

- "American Casino," which began earlier this month on The Discovery Channel, is less about the owners and more about the everyday challenges of working in a casino. From handling drunken guests to managing a Super Bowl party for thousands, the show (Fridays at 8 p.m. EDT) follows employees as they go to work at the suburban Green Valley Ranch hotel-casino.

"There's a mystique about Las Vegas that people find insatiable. And that's what we're

capitalizing on," said Mark Finkelpark, co-executive producer of "American Casino."

Come fall, there'll be the animated spin on Las Vegas with "Father of the Pride," about a family of White lions that perform in the famed Siegfried and Roy show.

The comedy on NBC's prime-time lineup joins "Las Vegas," which stars James Caan as a casino boss and was the highest-rated new drama for the 2003-04 season.

"At a time when so much of the news in the world is bleak, it's a great escape for the audience," said Jeff Zucker, president of NBC Universal Television Group. "It's a fun, sexy ride in a fun, sexy place."

Over the years, Las Vegas has been a popular destination for sitcom characters such as Ross and Rachel of "Friends," but rarely the setting for its own television show. Until recently, the biggest show was "Vegas," a late '70s series starring Robert Urich as a private eye.

It wasn't until the 2000 debut on CBS of "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" that Hollywood forged its current affinity with Vegas.

But even the forensics drama initially was leery.

"At the outset, the idea was that Vegas was a backdrop," said Carol Mendelsohn, the show's executive producer. "As time went on, Vegas has become more and more a character on "CSI." Vegas has been the accent, the seasoning of so many episodes."

After the success of "CSI," CBS is taking a gamble this fall on "Dr. Vegas," a show about a playboy casino doctor played by Rob Lowe.

Still, hotel-casinos like Mandalay Bay remain skittish about reality TV shows. It has (See Television, Page 8)



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