

# Study: Workers unimpressed with diversity

NEW YORK (AP) - Fewer than a third of American workers believe their companies have effective diversity programs, according to a report by the National Urban League.

The report also found that fewer than half of the workers surveyed had favorable opinions of their companies' efforts on recruiting, leadership commitment, and career

development.

"We have work to do," said Marc Morial, president and CEO of the League, a New York-based civil rights group. "One of the reasons why this study is important is it gives us a sense of where we are."

Sixty-five percent of those surveyed agreed that diversity improved creativity and innovation in the workplace,

and 80 percent said they were comfortable working in diverse teams.

But when asked if their company had an effective diversity program, only 32 percent had a favorable response, while 26 percent had a negative view of their companies' efforts.

The rest were neutral. The results differed slightly by race.

Among Whites, 29 percent thought favorably of their companies' efforts, with another 29 percent rating them negatively. Among Blacks, Hispanics, Asian-Americans and Native-Americans, 34 percent from each group were positive about company initiatives.

The Native-Americans had the highest percentage of negative feeling about diversity efforts — at 30 percent — followed by 26 percent of Blacks, 25 percent of Hispanics, and 23 percent of Asian-Americans.

Those with the most favorable opinions of diversity programs included executives — 47 percent of whom thought their companies were effective — and employees at companies with more than 5,000 workers, where 43 percent thought favorably of the initiatives.

The report noted that the disparity in outlook between executives and rank-and-file workers "is an important reminder that executives tend to view their companies through different, perhaps rose-colored glasses."

While the population of the country has gotten in-

creasingly diverse, American companies haven't kept up, said Fariborz Ghadar, professor of finance and director of the Center for Global Business Studies at Penn State University.

"We've got quite a hurdle to jump before we become a truly diverse organizational structure in many of our corporations," he said.

The report also compares the overall responses of American workers with a survey of workers at eight companies widely considered to have effective diversity practices: Enterprise Rent-A-Car Co., Fifth Third Bancorp, Kraft Foods Inc., PepsiCo Inc., Pitney Bowes Inc., Procter & Gamble Co., UPS Inc. and Wells Fargo & Co. Enterprise, whose CEO Andy Taylor is on the Urban League's board, funded the \$400,000 survey, which took two years to complete.

Employees at those eight companies had higher regard for their employers' efforts — 60 percent thought their companies had effective diversity initiatives, and more than two-thirds thought favorably of management's commitment and involve-

ment with diversity.

The report stayed away from setting any hard numbers as benchmarks of diversity, but lists tactics the eight companies successfully used for purposes including retaining diverse talent and marketing to diverse customers and consumers.

The guidelines could be useful, but making improvements requires that companies diversify their management ranks, said Todd Campbell, manager for diversity at the Society for Human Resource Management, an industry group.

"If you want long-term impact and success, eventually you're going to have to diversify those top levels," Campbell said. "People want to see people like them excelling within the company."

The survey was conducted by Global Lead Management Consulting. The data for the American workers was compiled through 2,100 mail-in forms. The employees at the eight other companies were surveyed through a Web poll, with 3,400 responding. The margin of sampling error was plus or minus 5 percentage points for each poll.

## Bennett

(Continued from Page 2)

he worked countless hours. The church was formerly located at "G" Street and Washington Street before building at its current site, 2108 Revere St.

"This has been the most enjoyable and challenging experience I have ever known," Bennett said. "I have never met such loving and amazing people than the people I have known at Zion. They have followed the pastor's blueprint for ministry and were easy to work with." Zion led the way in the community, too, planting seeds that sprouted other congregations.

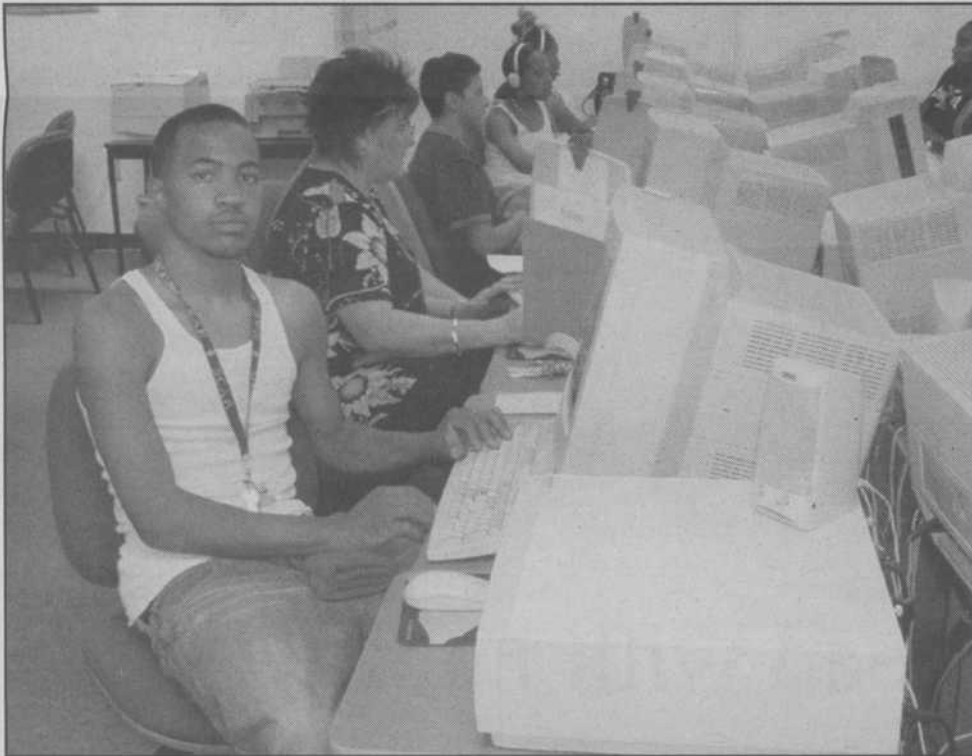
"Victory Baptist Church was born here," said Bennett, inside the facility he led through several additions and construction of a sanctuary that seats 450. "Zion has

always been a community church.

We have always been here for the community. We were the headlights for getting Black people jobs on the strip when they were only hired as maids and porters. We helped to lead the fight for a better education system.

"The church has to be a liberating force in a dark and confused community," Bennett said.

Bennett is the father of two. Judge Karen Bennett-Haron is a justice of the peace in Clark County. Dr. Marion D. Bennett Jr., is a professor at Georgia State University in Atlanta. Bennett is being succeeded by the Rev. Dr. Purchell Church Jr., formerly senior pastor at Warren United Methodist Church in Lake Charles, La.



Sentinel-Voice photo by Les Pierres Streater

Dray Barlow takes advantage of the technology offered at Nevada Business Services.

## NBSI

(Continued from Page 2)

work at Nevada Partners as a computer assistant. I am looking to gain more job skills that will enable me to find employment with a good salary. Eventually I want to become an entrepreneur and own my own business in the entertainment field."

Murphy said NBSI would like to diversify its funding stream.

This would allow them to provide additional programs and services without having the burden of complying with rigid eligibility requirements from its primary funding source.

Dray Barlow, another individual enrolled through the NBSI program, talked about how he got involved with NBSI.

"My mom wanted me to come here and get

a job because she was tired of me asking her for money and McDonalds wasn't working for me," Barlow said

"They were helpful in getting me a custodial job and I appreciate that. One of the things that I learned from being affiliated with this program was to control my anger, be patient and take responsibility for my actions.

"I appreciate the job readiness that I learned in this program, researching for jobs on the Internet," Barlow said. "It has taught me not to turn down opportunities and seek out all possibilities."

There is no cost to participate in NBSI programs.

For further information, call (702) 647-4929.



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