

Wednesday, October 27, 2004

Rochester, N



7-day archive

1999-Present Archive

 Customer

Subscribe

Place an

[Classifieds](#) | [Cars](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Homes](#) | [Apartments](#) | [News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Business](#) | [Living](#) | [Entertainment](#) | :

[Home](#) > [Opinion](#) > [Essays](#)

 Past week: [Tue](#) | [Wed](#) | [Thu](#) | [Fri](#) | [Sat](#)

| [Sun](#) | [Mon](#)

Rochester Time: 10

News

[Local News](#)
[Sports](#)
[Business News](#)
[Living](#)
[Entertainment](#)
[Health](#)
[Opinion](#)
[Editorials](#)
[Editorial Board](#)
[Bd of Contributors](#)
[Give us Feedback](#)
[Web Logs](#)
[Special Projects](#)
[Weather](#)
[Obits](#)
[Beyond Rochester](#)

Marketplace

[Jobs](#)
[Cars](#)
[Homes](#)
[Apartments](#)
[Commercial Prop.](#)
[Classifieds](#)
[City Guide](#)
[Coupons](#)
[Personals](#)
[Weddings](#)

Contact Us

[Customer Service](#)
[Subscribe to Paper](#)
[Place an Ad](#)
[Online Info](#)
[NIE Program](#)

Also Online

[Archives](#)
[insider](#)
[Local Webcam](#)

Hiring diverse workers is right and smart thing to do

(October 26, 2004) — For three days in September, Rochester was at the forefront of an initiative that has the potential to change the way we work and live.

This initiative is not based on the technical, medical or industrial innovations we've been known to create here, though it will prove to be economically beneficial to all greater Rochester businesses and organizations. And though not invented here, it is being refined and practiced here to an extent and degree like nowhere else in the nation. The initiative: work force diversity. The event: Diversity 2004.

Close to 500 representatives from more than 130 companies and organizations and 20 states gathered for Diversity 2004, presented by the Greater Rochester Diversity Council and sponsored by Eastman Kodak Co. and more than 20 other leading employers.

Participants heard national experts present strategies, techniques and approaches to improve and benefit from diversity. They were inspired by renowned speakers such as Dr. David Satcher, a former U.S. surgeon general; Yolanda King, daughter of the late Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King; and Rain Pryor, daughter of comedian Richard Pryor.

We are confident that attendees, especially those from outside Rochester, had the opportunity to benchmark their companies' practices, share ideas and hear from some of Rochester's top leaders — including Kodak chief diversity officer and Vice President Essie Calhoun; Greater Rochester Enterprise President and CEO Michael Finney; Rochester Institute of Technology President Al Simone; and Wegmans President Danny Wegman — about how work force diversity is practiced in Rochester. We are also confident they will talk about Rochester with their colleagues and leaders, which is good for our businesses and organizations.

Diversity 2004 reinforced our belief that work force diversity will become indispensable to business success in the 21st century.

The concept of work force diversity is not new, though no longer is it simply



Space.com
USA Today
Gannett
Gannett Foundation



counting employees by race, gender or other demographic. Now, it's the management science of ensuring that all employees, regardless of demographic, have the full opportunity to reach their highest professional potential and contribute their unique talents to the company's success.

In Rochester, we're ahead of the curve, thanks to the priority that a growing number of Rochester employers has given to workplace diversity. In the past year alone, GRDC members, including Aetna, Bausch & Lomb, Inroads, Kodak, Nixon Peabody, RIT, Wegmans, West and the YMCA, received national honors for innovative diversity practices and leadership.

This priority is also reflected by a 60 percent increase in GRDC membership over the past two years. Members include leading corporate employers, colleges, health-care-related employers, and nonprofits. The GRDC is the nation's first diversity organization in which companies, often competitors, find new, innovative ways to share best practices. It also has become a benchmark for communities seeking to form similar collaborations.

Rochester companies have a culture that works hard to attract, train and retain diverse employees, not just because it is the right thing but because it is the smart thing to do. They serve as models and mentors to others wishing to realize similar success.

To sell our products and services to a wide range of people, we need to employ a diverse work force to understand and anticipate customer needs.

Several expert organizations promote the area's economic development and promote its educational, technical, scientific and business strengths. We encourage them also to promote our prominence in work force diversity and cite the many Rochester companies that have achieved success by making diversity initiatives a priority.

Companies that value and understand the benefits of a diverse work force will find Rochester a welcome and rich destination for starting out, expanding or relocating.

Diversity 2004 gave us the opportunity to enhance our national stature and make this community an attractive place to do business. It also provided a national forum for businesses to network with others facing similar issues.

Thanks to the growing involvement of area employers, the GRDC will continue to promote the benefits and potential that a diverse work force can bring to businesses and our community. Our continuing commitment to work force diversity has again put us in a positive national spotlight. We must do our best to remain there.

Brown chairs the Commission for Promoting Pluralism at Rochester Institute of Technology and the Greater Rochester Diversity Council; Streeter is GRDC executive director.



[Weather](#) | [News](#) | [Business News](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Sports](#) | [Forums](#) | [Community](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Cars](#) | [Real Apartments](#) | [New Homes](#) | [Personals](#) | [Weddings](#) | [Advertising Info](#) | [Newspaper info](#) | [Online info](#) | [Feedback](#)

Copyright 2004 Rochester Democrat and Chronicle.
Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#) (updated 12/18/2002).