

## **Guidelines for games set**

### **\$2 million joint venture between white-owned Sizemore, Floyd Architects and black-owned Cordell W. Ingram, Inc. (CWI Inc.)**

The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) has taken measures to ensure that minorities and women receive a fair share of the estimated \$1 billion in contracts that will be awarded to prepare Atlanta to host the 1996 Summer Olympic Games.

Last September, the agency adopted federal guidelines that would maximize the participation of minority- and women-owned businesses in the city's preparation efforts. The guidelines, which are standard practice in government but are rarely used in the private sector, are expected to fall in line with Mayor Maynard Jackson's Equal Business Opportunity (EBO) legislation, which was enacted last year. The EBO legislation established annual business-opportunity goals of 30% for African-American owned businesses, 3% for women-owned businesses and 1% each for Hispanic-owned, Asian-American owned and Native-American owned businesses.

The ACOG's decision to adopt the federal guidelines has won praise from many because it requires that minorities be included on every level. However, some community leaders remain skeptical about ACOG's commitment to implement the plan because the guidelines lack specific language about the degree to which minorities will actually participate.

"Generally, we are pleased," says William Clement, chairman of the board of the Atlanta Business League, an association of minority business owners, "but actions speak louder than words."

ACOG director of media relations Bob Brennan says community leaders shouldn't doubt the agency's commitment.

"We decided not to set a number [for participation] because it's just that--a number," Brennan says. "With a number, you set a goal and you stop. A number is artificial." He added that the ACOG has agreed to publicly announce the number of contracts awarded to minority- and women-owned businesses.

The ACOG began letting contracts in January 1991. The agency began slowly, awarding \$3.5 million in contracts--\$1.2 million (35%) went to minority-owned firms--by June 1991. The pace at which contracts are awarded will increase this year, with many firms vying for major construction and vending contracts worth millions of dollars.

The influx of dollars that the 1996 Olympics will bring to the Atlanta community is particularly important in these tough economic times. Richmond Theggs, owner of Alpha Omega Studios, one of only two minority-owned screen printers in Atlanta, says a contract he landed to print T-shirts and sweat shirts for the ACOG has provided the capital to keep his firm alive.

"This contract took us from a small company barely able to afford the rent, to a company that now employs 28 people and runs two shifts," Theggs says. "Before I got the contract, no one knew about my company. Now I have plenty of business." Theggs estimates that his contract will net him close to \$1 million this year.

Up until now, the largest single contract has been a \$2 million joint venture between white-owned Sizemore, Floyd Architects and black-owned Ingram & Associates. Both Atlanta-based architectural and construction management firms will provide space-use analysis for structures used during the Olympic Games. The two firms share equally in the work and the contract dollars.

"I am impressed with the city for setting the tone for minority participation," says Cordell W. Ingram, owner of Ingram & Associates. "Usually, minorities get anywhere from 25% to 30% of the work. This 50-50 venture is an indication of how the ACOG plans to work."