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Kodak scores for diversity

■ But expert panel says company can still do more.

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Eastman Kodak Co. deserves high marks for the way it treats minority and women employees, but it can still do more to become a fairer place to work, an outside group of experts has concluded.

The company needs to create a work force whose profile matches the cultural makeup of the U.S. economy by the end of 2006, the experts said.

It should also look to cement diversity into its operating culture, create



TINA YEE staff photographer
The Rev. Norvel Goff Sr. addresses a news conference at Kodak tower Wednesday on expert panel's report on diversity. Beside him is panel chairman Eric Holder.

mechanisms to make sure employees uphold Kodak's values and expand efforts to address challenges in education, according to the group.
The experts spent the past two years — at Kodak's request — reviewing the company's track record on providing equal employment opportunity to workers of diverse backgrounds across the globe.

private practice in Washington, D.C., once served as deputy U.S. attorney general.

The panel's final set of recommendations signals "the end of only a single chapter in Kodak's diversity story," Holder said. "The rest will be written as the company moves ahead."

In the past several years, 22 workers have sued Kodak, most of whom complained of unfair

ees felt very satisfied with how they were being treated.

"To the extent people had concerns, they said they knew there were mechanisms in place, and they had hope," Holder said. "That's in stark contrast to other companies."

The Rev. Norvel Goff Sr., a member of the advisory panel and president and chief executive officer of the Greater Rochester chapter of the NAACP, said he knows Kodak is on the right track because he's hearing fewer

complaints from its employees.

Goff praised Carp for committing Kodak to improving the workplace climate for all races and genders. "He has a moral compass and is on the cutting edge of change for the greater good," Goff said.

Carp in turn praised employees for steering the company toward the improvements noted by the panel. He said he formed the panel as a "reality check" on Kodak's diversity efforts. "We wanted to get ahead of the game," he said.

The panel also included: Johnetta Cole, president of Bennett College in Greensboro, N.C., and former president of Spelman College in Atlanta; Jean E. Dubofsky, former justice on the Colorado Supreme Court; Taeku Lee, political science professor at the University of California/Berkeley; Richard McCormick, past chairman of the International Chamber of Commerce; and Lionel Sosa, media consultant and founder of the largest Hispanic advertising agency in the United States.

A year ago, the panel persuaded Kodak to make diversity a criterion in the selection of its top 20 leaders, among other changes.

Nelson Thomas, who represents workers in a variety of employment related disputes, said he worries that Kodak is too focused on process, such as meeting hiring goals.

Thomas said he wishes the company would devote more energy toward making sure mid-level managers live within the law and the company's policies. □

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Kodak

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minorities and women in the Kodak work force have remained virtually unchanged over the past several years, said Eric Holder, chairman of the panel. Holder, now a lawyer in

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