

# Pray: 'Good Vibes' As Model Cities Moves Toward Fourth Action Year

Wayne S. Pray says he's getting some "good vibes" as he moves into his third month as acting director of High Point Model Cities.

Pray replaced Don J. Forney when Forney took a position as director of community affairs at WGHP-TV, Channel 8, in August. Until the time he assumed the director's role, Pray had been deputy director.

He sees his job not as one which will change the direction of the Model Cities Staff (City Demonstration Agency), but one in which the entire Model Cities process is strengthened as the program moves toward its Fourth Action Year.

During this planning period prior to fourth year implementation August 1, 1973, Pray says Model Cities and especially its citizen participation aspects must be stepped up. Negotiations with permanent funding agencies will also be intensified.

"It's this future spin-off of our processes and projects that's important at this point," says Pray. "It's clear to me that there has been substantial progress in the capability of local government to involve citizens in planning

programs, managing an annual block grant, and monitoring and evaluating programs so there is not ineffective spending of government funds."

High Point Model Cities receives an annual \$1.77 million grant from its parent federal department, Housing and Urban Development (HUD). With its additional state and federal funding sources, the local Commission's average annual total budget exceeds \$3.54 million.

## FIVE-YEAR PROGRAM

Because Model Cities is a five-year demonstration program, those cities in the United States who were selected for this urban block grant must prepare for a phasing-out period. In High Point, this pivotal point is now in the Third Action Year.

"It's imperative to look at the end of the program, which is only 33 months away," says Pray. "We must plan for the orderly transition of the process—that is, find a permanent home for many of our innovative programs begun with Model Cities money.

"To this end, we're pursuing to strengthen our citizen participation base, using neighborhood-based special interest groups, for example, and expanded city-wide task forces. We'll be pursuing the future of many of Model Cities' existing projects with city government and with permanent public and private agencies such as the county departments, Employment Security Commission, United Community Services and PTA groups."

At this point in the Model Cities history, Pray says, it is important not only to establish the status of projects, where they go and how they function, but to identify permanent funding sources.

The differences in administrative practices and in the approach to the director's job are slight between Forney and himself, Pray says. The differences lie in what job each of them faced at the beginning.

"Don was charged with laying the groundwork of a viable, respectable program," he said, "while I must insure the capabilities and innovations the Model City Commission has demonstrated—to make them known to the decision-makers and to the public, and to show they can meet comprehensive city-wide needs."

## UNTAPPED RESOURCES

Pray added that the primary resources of the Model City Commission will continue to be aimed at the Model Neighborhood area itself. However, previously untapped financial and planning resources will be geared to becoming part of a city-wide plan.

"The Fourth Year Action Plan is the beginning of the end for Model Cities," said Pray, "but it represents a beginning of a larger plan which could muster much more resources than have been brought in before, from both federal and state levels."

Pray looks to the near future when Community Development and revenue

sharing monies can come to High Point, which has had a head start in preparing for the expenditure of these funds through Model Cities.

"It would be unrealistic for us not to look at these new funding techniques as opportunities to coordinate even more closely with city agencies such as the School Board, Guilford Technical Institute, and the City of High Point's own departments," he said.

One difference in the Third Action Year, which has been called a "make or break year" for Model Cities, is the need for the Model Cities staff to do a better job with the same number of people," Pray added. He is looking ahead to a gradual reduction of staff members as personnel is absorbed



WAYNE S. PRAY

either into the city or in other positions. "We must plan ahead so this transition can be orderly and feasible," he concluded.

## In Model Neighborhood

# Jack Poisson and Company Register Nearly 700 Voters

A group of about a dozen interested High Point citizens from in and out of the Model Neighborhood registered nearly 700 voters from the Model Cities target area before the election books closed October 9.

Headed by Jack Poisson, senior attorney at High Point Legal Services, the group concentrated its efforts on the Model Neighborhood and fringe areas from mid-September until the registration deadline.

By the week of October 2, Poisson said 680 persons had been registered in the project, which he organized himself.

While other registrars in the city were working independently, Poisson submitted a list to the local Board of Elections for certification in August. Four to six weeks, he says, were lost in waiting for the election board to approve the names of those who wanted to register new voters.

Poisson also asked Model Cities Citizen Participation to assist in the voter registration drive. However, the office declined, being itself involved in the biennial Model City Commission election which took place September 23.

Working with Poisson in his registration campaign were Barbara McGee, Betty Austin, Rosetta Hudson, Margaret Bowen, Carol Kirby, Letitia Johnson, Julia Harmon, Paul Braxton III, and Albert Campbell.

## NO FAVORITISM

These ten registrars, who were certified especially for this November's general election, represent both major political parties. The drive itself was non-partisan, which means that registrars could show no favoritism to any party or candidate.

About 90 to 95 percent of those registered however, joined the Democratic Party, while the remaining five percent registered either Republican

or Independent. None of the new voters affiliated themselves with the American Party.

Poisson, who registered 210 persons himself, guessed that 85 percent of the new voters are black.

The registrars were assisted by Margaret Poisson, Becky Bailey and Connie Ashworth, who did much of the advance work to pave the way for the door-to-door canvassing, drawing up lists of names of those known not to be registered to vote.

The registrars also visited all public housing developments, Model Neighborhood churches on Sundays, and major shopping areas in the Model Neighborhood and vicinity, such as Washington Street.

All work done in this voter registration drive, Poisson added, was strictly volunteer. To his knowledge, this group was the only one working in the Model Neighborhood to register new voters, many of whom he feels would not have registered otherwise.

## Know Your Rights

(Last of three parts. If you buy furniture or other goods on credit and miss payments, the seller may go to court and try to repossess the merchandise using "claim and delivery" to seize the things before the trial.)

Under the new court rules, it is more difficult for the creditor to use claim and delivery to seize my goods before trial. If he does not seize them, what will happen at the trial?

The creditor will try to prove in court that you owe him the money and that you failed to make the required payments. If he does this, the court will order the sheriff to seize the goods, and you will not be able to get them back.

Should I go into court on the day set for trial? What good will it do me?

If you know for sure that you owe the money and can't pay it, there is no use going to court. But all lawyers know that sometimes creditors will make mistakes occasionally and go to court unprepared or against the wrong person.

If you feel that the action is wrong you must go into court and defend your position. The judge expects to hear arguments from both sides and a court trial is intended to protect debtors as well as creditors. When you are being sued you have as much right to speak as the person who is trying to collect from you.

In court, do I need a lawyer?

If you can get a lawyer to defend you, yes. If you cannot, no one can stop you from speaking on your own behalf in court.

If the merchandise is repossessed by order of the court, do I still owe anything on it?

Usually the creditor will simply take back his goods and do nothing more. It is possible, though, that you still may have to pay court costs and in some cases, attorney's fees.

What will all this do to my credit rating?

Any repossession or unsatisfied money judgment remains on your credit record for several years, making it more difficult for you to borrow money later on.

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