



Melvin Whitley, director of CHOP (Charlotte Organizing Project), speaks at the rally held in Raleigh recently to protest the proposed Duke Power rate increase. Behind him are members of the United Neighborhoods for No Utility Increase.

Sample Ballots

Sample ballots for the September 24, 1985 City primary election are now available at the Mecklenburg Elections Office, 710 East Fourth St., and at all public library branches inside the Charlotte City limits.

Only Democrats and Republicans will be eligible to vote for Mayor, City Council at-large candidates, and City Council candidates in Districts 4, 5 and 7.

Pick up a copy of the sample ballot and study it before you go to the polls, Tuesday, September 24. The polls are open from 6:30 a.m. until 7:30 p.m.

If you have questions about the upcoming election, call 336-2133.

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United Neighborhoods For No Utility Increases Gains Support

By Loretta Manago
 Post Managing Editor

Emerging as a seemingly powerless group, The United Neighborhoods for No Utility Increases has had a powerful ally to come to its rescue.

Attorney General Lacy Thornburg spoke strongly in opposition of Duke Power's proposed rate increase of \$321 million to the Utilities Commission.

Nearly 30 Charlotteans of the UNNUI joined other North Carolinians in a rally that was held recently in Raleigh, protesting the issue. They brought with them signed petitions of 16,000 signatures.

In his speech Attorney General Thornburg made perfectly clear his position on the issue. He stated, "...considering all the evidence that we have presented in the rate hearing we have shown that not one cent of Duke Power's \$321 million increase can be regarded as necessary, reasonable, justifiable or fair. "Not only that, our proposed findings of fact support our conclusion that Duke Power should de-

crease its annual gross revenues by more than \$190 million."

In an earlier statement to Melvin Whitley, the director of Charlotte Organizing Project, Lacy Thornburg made plain that, according to the statutory standards that must be applied by the North Carolina Utilities Commission to judge the reasonableness of rate increases, Duke Power's request should have been denied.

He further added that Duke Power currently has \$800 million of reserved earnings and \$450 million in cash, making Duke Power's request for a 15.2 percent profit for shareholders of the Catawba plant excessive.

This news was greatly received by the UNNUI who organized nearly three months ago to protest Duke Power's rate increase proposal. The members of the UNNUI complained that those who would be most affected by the rate increase if approved would be the poor and the elderly. It has been estimated that an additional \$150 will be added to the average family's electric bill.

This type of unity, present at the recent rally, combining concerned citizens from all across North Carolina apparently made a difference. Tuesday evening, it was announced that the Utilities Commission ruled that Duke Power should only receive half of what it asked for. Instead of the \$320 million, Duke Power only received \$160 million. While that decision still means that there will be an increase on North Carolina citizens' electric bills, it also means that those increases will probably be in a range that the poor and the elderly will be able to afford. The little guys, like the United Neighborhoods for No Utilities Increase do make a difference.

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