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Self-Reliance

Number 20

INSIDE:

The Anacostia Experience

New Opportunities for Community-based Energy Audit Programs

Increasing numbers of local governments are developing comprehensive energy plans. In a rising number of cases there has been serious involvement by citizens in the planning efforts. The city of Portland, Oregon involved more than 2000 citizens in its two year planning process (see Progress Report, page 8). In Franklin County, Massachusetts, there has been close coordination among most towns and energy organizations in developing data and policies.

There has been little work in implementing an energy program using the involvement of a big city neighborhood. The Institute for Local Self-Reliance recommended in a report to the District of Columbia that it establish a neighborhood-based energy extension system, and the city has accepted the recommendation.

In March of 1979, the Institute began an experimental neighborhood energy audit program in Anacostia, a neighborhood in the southeast section of Washington, D.C. In order to design a program in which certain results could eventually be measured, the Institute selected a four-square block area of Anacostia with a thousand homes, consuming 150 billion BTUs of electricity, gas and oil each year (a neighborhood energy bill of $700,000). The homes are mostly wood frame, built around the turn of the century, but there are also some brick homes built in the 1920's. There is a mix of single and multi-family attached, semi-attached and detached dwellings. The average living space is about 1500 square feet per home.

Job Training For Unemployed Residents

To staff the program, six previously unemployed neighborhood residents were recruited from a local job bank. Candidates were given two weeks of extensive unpaid training in building construction and materials, heat transfer, heating and cooling mechanical systems and solar applications. After the training session, participants who passed an examination were allowed to begin the program.

Staff members were divided into groups to handle special parts of the auditing process. These groups included: windows, walls and doors; attic roofs, and solar potential; mechanical systems; appliances; utility bills; and computer input. In addition to the general training, staff members received training in their particular area.

In all, the training process took one month. Additional time and expense were involved in training residents with no previous experience in energy or home construction. These were offset by the staff's knowledge of the community and their ability and willingness to bring other individuals and local community groups into the program.

This was crucial, because the main difference between a neighborhood energy audit and any other home energy evaluation is its relationship to the larger community. For example, there are at least a half dozen on-going programs and organizations in Anacostia dealing with housing. It makes sense to coordinate home energy audits with other programs for mutual benefit. (continued on page 10)

Notes

Groups interested in starting farmer's markets will find useful information in a recent survey of nine markets in Vermont. The study includes tips on organizing and running a farmer's market, the potential for expanding markets, and a bibliography. Copies of the study are $4 from: **Center for Studies in Food Self-Sufficiency, Office 202, 109 South Winooski Avenue, Burlington VT 05401.**

A four-page flyer called *Waste Alert!* outlines steps citizens can take to set up a recycling program in their community. Although brief, the flyer sells for 30 cents and gives a good introduction to recycling, including some addresses to write for more information. Bulk orders are available. Contact: **League of Women Voters of the United States, 1730 M Street NW, Washington DC 20036, 202/296-1770.**

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March of "Progress". . .

Big Business Likes Subsidized Solar: One of the country's most innovative local efforts to encourage renewable energy systems is falling apart. Since 1977, the state of Montana has been taxing coal production (a finite resource) and using the money to fund renewable energy projects. For awhile, the grants averaged less than $14,000 each and went to a variety of worthwhile projects, including those proposed by individuals and community groups. The latest round of grants, however, are something else. The average grant has jumped to more than $40,000, with the lion's share going to insurance companies, universities and large research firms. A typical example is a $59,500 award to the Life of Montana Insurance Company for an active solar heating system on its new office building. Not only will the system never pay itself back in energy savings, the building's overall design has half its exterior walls on all sides in glass, making it a virtual "heat sieve." Why was this project funded at all? Perhaps the company president's close friendship with the Montana governor helped. But the grant is typical of an overall trend toward overly sophisticated energy systems for big businesses, at the expense of those who can bring renewable energy to people who need it the most. Life of Montana, by the way, has already grabbed $208,000 for its solar system from the Department of Energy. One has to wonder why the company is investing almost no money of its own. But then again, when it can get a free ride from the government, why should it?

Involuntary Complicity: A recent Internal Revenue Service ruling in Milwaukee may eventually put dozens of food co-ops around the country out of business. The IRS claims that Gordon Park Food Co-op in Milwaukee's low-income Riverwest neighborhood pays its members a "wage" in the form of a discount for volunteer time at the store. As a result, the IRS wants approximately $3500 in back taxes and Social Security payments from the co-op. Like many co-ops which rely on volunteer labor, Gordon Park may have to close if the ruling is upheld in Tax Court. The group has recently redesigned its volunteer system and is negotiating a new agreement with the IRS. For details contact: **Carl Hedman, 821 East Locust Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53212, 414/265-4040.**

Turning Money Into Garbage: One of the country's bigger resource recovery boondoggles continues to have its problems. A $2.1 million high technology plant to burn garbage in Lane County, Oregon is now two years behind schedule. And it could be another two years before the plant opens, if at all. The project is plagued with unforseen air pollution problems, cost overruns that no one wants to take responsibility for, and a developer, Allis-Chalmers, that has pulled out of the recycling business, leaving county officials holding the bag. Low technology recyclers warned against the plant years ago, and now it seems their worst fears have come true. If the high technology plant ever opens, county residents can expect to pay a minimum of $430,000 a year in operating costs for the privilege of not separating metals, paper and organic garbage in their kitchens.

Raising Kidney Disease in Chicago: When church groups in Chicago planted community gardens in 1976, they were happy to get free fertilizer and soil conditioner from the Metropolitan Sanitary District. The material, called Nu-Earth, was made from processed salvage sludge. Three years later, the gardeners have been told that Nu-Earth has almost 20 times the safe level of cadmium, a "heavy metal" that, when absorbed by the body in sufficient amounts, causes kidney damage. The gardens have been plowed under, but the Environmental Protection Agency estimates that as many as 200,000 people in the Chicago area may have additional cadmium in their kidneys, thanks to the Sanitary District's Nu-Earth. For more information on urban garden contamination in Chicago, contact: the **Center for Neighborhood Technology, 570 West Randolf Street, Chicago, Illinois 60606, 312/454-0126.**

Local Energy Self-Reliance: Three Primers on Planning

Alan Okagaki, with Jim Benson
County Energy Plan Guidebook: Creating a Renewable Energy Plan
July 1979 $7.50/indiv., public interest groups, $15/all others
Institute for Ecological Policies
9208 Christopher Street
Fairfax VA 22031

Eva C. Galambos and Arthur F. Schreiber
Making Sense Out of Dollars: Economic Analysis for Local Government
November 1978 140 pp. $10
National League of Cities
1620 Eye Street NW
Washington DC 20006

Meg Schachter
Creating Jobs Through Energy Policy: A Guide to Resources for Decisionmakers
July 1979
Government Printing Office
Stock Number 061-000-00329-1
Washington DC 20402

Local self-reliance presumes a delegation of authority, but such a delegation can be misplaced if it is not accompanied by an equal delegation of responsibility. We must be able to competently evaluate the tradeoffs involved in any decision-making process. To help us make these evaluations, the first primers on local self-reliance are now available.

It is heartwarming that some of the better technicians of the appropriate technology movement are giving a high priority to the development of methodologies that permit a great number of their colleagues to participate knowledgeably in municipal policymaking. In an era of technical jargon and complicated computer models, it is refreshing to discover that, with serious effort, we can avoid the paralysis that comes with confronting experts who speak in a foreign tongue, and machines that have a language all their own; that we can become citizen/experts.

As Meg Schachter states, in *Creating Jobs through Energy Policy*, "Serious study of this compendium may eliminate some of the need for consultants. Much of the information provided here can be utilized without employing professional economists." Eva Galambos and Arthur Schreiber explain, in *Making Sense out of Dollars*, "This handbook has been written as a how-to-do-it reference manual for local government decision-makers and staff. . . . no previous exposure to economics is necessary to read and understand the contents of this book, as technical jargon has been avoided." Okagaki and Benson in *County Energy Plan Guidebook* note, "In preparing the *Guidebook*, it was necessary to walk a fine line between technical sophistication and accessibility. The techniques of the guide had to be easy enough for a person with a high school math background to perform, yet sufficiently rigorous to yield reasonably accurate results."

The County Energy Plan Guidebook, unlike the other two, has a political objective. It presumes that energy conservation and the use of renewable energy resources are socially beneficial objectives. This book is meant to help people effect the transition to a soft energy path. The authors describe it as an "organizing tool." They hope there will be sufficient interest to spur the creation of soft energy path plans in all 3,000 counties—a massive display of ground-up planning which they hope will culminate in a national convention.

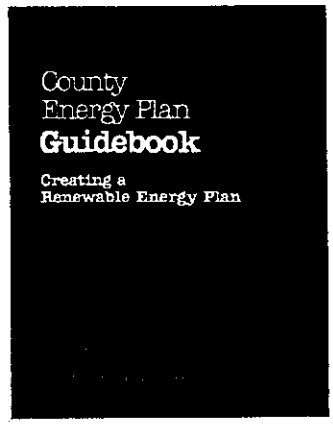
The *Guidebook* shows readers how to use available data to analyze energy consumption in the commercial, residential, industrial and transportation sectors to project energy consumption to the year 2000 (using a linear projection), and to calculate the potential for conservation and solar. The section on solar includes rules of thumb for estimating the potential impact of direct solar, wind, water, and wood energy.

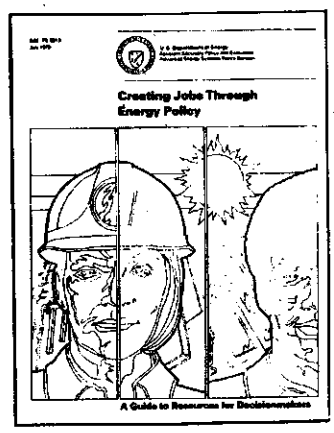
The authors admit that this planning guide is only a first step, and that more sophisticated methodologies will evolve through practice. It is a fine effort, although one might quibble with some of the methods used. In some cases the information they require might not be easily collected. In other cases, the data could be obsolete. For example, they suggest that the number of dwelling units, type of units, and breakdown by fuel use be obtained from the Census Detailed Housing Characteristics. Unfortunately, this data was last collected in 1970. Thus figures would be out-of-date for rapidly growing counties. Using sales and employment data to estimate industrial and commercial energy consumption could also generate some misleading data. It also appears that the method used to estimate the potential of solar energy does not account for cloud coverage.

However, these are minor points. The major shortcoming of the *Guidebook* is that it deals only with counties. Fewer than a dozen cities are coterminous with counties. Those planners who wish to estimate the potential for conservation and solar in smaller governmental units will need to find other data sources, and other rules of thumb. Accurate data on transportation

(Continued on page 12)

"It's refreshing to discover that, with serious effort, we can become citizen/experts."





Managing and Financing Community Newspapers

Alternatives to established print media usually bring to mind a few standard examples: the death of *Ramparts* magazine and the success of *Mother Jones*; the new respectability of formerly "underground" city weeklies; the variety of specialized journals published by social change groups. Rarely mentioned are community newspapers, even though hundreds of these papers have been started in the last decade, often providing real alternatives in terms of news content and decision making. Little is said because individually, community newspapers seldom have an impact beyond their own neighborhoods. And as a whole, community newspapers are so diverse and decentralized that research and generalizations become difficult.*

Nevertheless, even a small newspaper's power to define neighborhood issues, form attitudes and catalyze events is obvious. Residents with vibrant, responsive local newspapers usually describe them as one of the most important forces for social change in a community. Despite their potential, many community newspapers encounter problems with their own structure as much as with their task to report neighborhood news. Some do not have nearly the impact or effectiveness they could have. Most are constantly pressed for funds, and many cease publication after only a few years.

This report is based largely on my three years experience as managing editor of the *East Boston Community News*, a community newspaper now in its tenth year of publication. The article does not deal with the mechanics of newspaper production, such as layout, writing skills and printing. There are already several adequate publications on these subjects geared to smaller newspapers (see related story, page 5). Instead, this report will focus on decision making and finances, two areas which have consistently presented the most problems for the *Community News*.

The *Community News* was founded by a group of local residents who felt their local weekly paper was doing a poor job of reporting neighborhood events. *Community News* organizers wanted to publish news ignored by the local weekly, but they also wanted a newspaper that would be more accountable to the community. They felt that most newspapers, whether run by publishers sensitive or insensitive to their communities, were essentially similar. Control over basic decisions still rested in the hands of one or a few individuals; and if readers were dissatisfied with the newspaper, there was little they could do, short of starting their own.

As a result, *Community News* founders developed an organizational structure that includes community control. The paper is incorporated as a non-profit public corporation, with overall policy set by a board of directors, elected by members of the corporation. Membership is open to any adult neighborhood resident who regularly helps in production of the newspaper. Most day-to-day decisions are made by the newspaper staff, which meets weekly with a managing editor to plan each issue. Staff meetings are advertised and open to the public.

In theory, this basic structure allows real decision making in the *Community News* by almost anyone in East Boston who wants to participate. Residents can attend a staff meeting and speak their piece, or they can join the staff, become a member of the corporation, and eventually run for election to the board of directors.

In practice, however, the structure has been less than perfect. Access, for example, does not guarantee participation, and less than a dozen or so people have contributed to the production of the *Community News* at any one time. Moreover, most decision-making gravitates to a few hands within the small group. As the *Community News* expanded, this tendency increased. When the paper's budget climbed from a few thousand dollars to over $25,000 a year, full-time staff were needed to raise funds, handle business matters such as taxes, accounting and billing, and coordinate volunteers to ensure efficient participation. Those who spend more time on the paper inevitably make more decisions. Those who do not have the time tend to have less control, whether by choice or not. To reduce this inequity, staff meetings which ran long into the night so "everyone could have a chance to speak" were curbed when the process turned into control by endurance. Meetings now last no longer than a few hours, with a set agenda and a specific amount of time allotted to each item. The responsibility for chairing staff meetings is rotated among the staff.

Newspapers Pose Unique Problems

Most groups trying to operate democratically will run into these kinds of difficulties. But running a newspaper democratically poses additional, unique problems. Editing and news writing, for example, are skills that not all staff members share. Also, editorial decisions must usually be made quickly, in order to meet deadlines. And space considerations mean that only a small fraction of what might be considered news can be printed.

Attempting to solve these problems, the *Community News* created the position of managing editor, with the responsibility for supervising all editorial decisions and, when necessary, for

* One of the few comprehensive studies of community newspapers was done in St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota, where a University of Minnesota professor and doctoral student compared 23 local papers in terms of ownership, circulation, distribution and news content. The study originally appeared in *Journalism Quarterly* (Spring 1976) and was updated to include 37 community newspapers and summarized in *Ekistics* magazine (March/April 1978).

making the final decision on editorial disputes. The managing editor is hired by the board of directors and is expected to work with the support of the staff, teach editing and writing skills to those who want to learn them, and follow broad editorial policies outlined by the board of directors. Other community newspapers feel that even this kind of arrangement places too much control with one person. They share or rotate editorial responsibilities among several people. Some papers have attempted, with few

successes, to share editorial responsibilities among the entire staff.

Few organizations, particularly newspapers, can call themselves "community-controlled" or "democratically run." These terms are necessarily vague and often misleading. Every community has diverse and conflicting interests, and newspapers making subjective judgments about these interests can never be truly community-controlled. Likewise, newspaper production involves expertise and quick decision-making, and so a newspaper can never be completely democratic.

From decision-making to finances

A community newspaper's biggest challenge, however, is developing and maintaining an independent financial base. How a community newspaper handles its growth largely determines not only its financial health, but also its ability to shape attitudes and influence community events.

Unfortunately, the low initial cost that allows many community newspapers to get started can also quickly put a newspaper into financial trouble. Because of technical advances in offset printing, it is now possible, using volunteer labor, to produce a professional-looking newspaper for as little as a few hundred dollars per issue. As a result, many newspapers are launched with ill-conceived or poorly developed plans for establishing a firm financial base. Newspapers begin in a burst of enthusiasm, with donations from a small network of supporters, but then falter when the committed can no longer give, sometimes bringing on disillusionment and cynicism.

Community newspapers can avoid trouble by developing long-range sources of income and making a realistic assessment of how much income is needed and how much can be obtained from each source. Newspapers can raise funds through subscriptions and sales, donations, grants, and related businesses (such as typesetting). In addition, operating costs can be lowered substantially with volunteer help.

Ideally, a newspaper is financially supported by readers, who "control" the paper with their decision to buy or not buy it. Most communities, however, have only one neighborhood newspaper. So the reader's choice is usually between that paper or nothing at all. Also, almost all newspapers depend on advertisers, not subscriptions, for two-thirds or more of their income. This dependence on advertising is difficult for community newspapers that face weak advertising markets, particularly in urban and low-income areas. In these neighborhoods, many local businesses rely on word of mouth advertising for reputation sales, rather than newspaper advertising. Local businesses that do advertise have smaller budgets and are less flexible than large businesses. Also, controversial reporting hurts newspapers with a narrow advertising base, especially in small communities, where an offense to one advertiser is often an offense to many.

Newspapers as Small Businesses

The problems caused by weak advertising markets in neighborhoods are compounded by the reluctance of many community newspapers to become commercial ventures. People who staff community newspapers tend to have strong neighborhood concerns first, and business interests second, if at all. Some lack business skills, and for others, the idea of a community newspaper as a business, dependent largely on advertisers, is hard to accept.

Community newspapers that do rely on advertising, however, must blend a traditional business approach with their new forms of democratic decision making and community control. Some hard business lessons, learned over ten years of publishing at the *Community News,* include:

● **Assess the market.** A newspaper of a given size and quality costs so much a year to produce. Businesses in a given community have a certain amount of advertising dollars to spend. To survive, a newspaper's ability to attract advertising will have to match a certain substantial portion of its expenses.

This kind of hard-nosed financial analyzing leads to long-term stability rather than issue-to-issue financial worries. The *Com-*

(continued on page 13)

Tips on Newspaper Production

Groups interested in starting a community newspaper will have to learn the basics of newspaper mechanics: gathering news, editing, layout and design, printing and production. By far the best introduction to the subject is *Holding Our Leaders: Newsletters and Newspapers,* by [illegible] of the Boston Community School. There is a surprising amount of [illegible] in this [illegible] booklet, with plenty of illustrations that help explain the more technical material. The section on printing gives just enough information to help a novice talk intelligently to a printer and the editing examples make many useful points on what can be a touchy subject. At $1.50 per copy, this booklet is a remarkable value. Contact: **Boston Community School, 107 South Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02111.** Less satisfying but still worthwhile is *How to Produce a Small Newspaper,* by the editors of the *Harvard Post.* This book covers many of the basics, but the *Harvard Post,* a weekly in an affluent Boston suburb, is not comparable to most of the community newspapers which have been started in the past ten years. As a result, much of the authors' experiences and advice is geared to private entrepreneurs who want to run a profitable business in a good market. There is useful information on typesetting equipment and the importance of keeping good records, and an annotated bibliography. Copies are $5.95 from: **Harvard Common Press, The Common, Harvard, Massachusetts 01451.**

Municipal Composting Saves Soil, Energy, Landfill Space

Each year our cities and towns produce almost 100 million tons of organic waste. Currently, almost all of it is dumped, landfilled or burned, at an annual cost of $3.5 billion (not counting the environmental cost of groundwater and air pollution). As an alternative, almost any city can compost its organic wastes, converting them into a resource for greening vacant lots, city parks and gardens, or creating small-scale businesses.

A municipal composting program can take a variety of forms. It can be done on a neighborhood scale, using decentralized sites fed directly by organic wastes produced in surrounding households. Large-scale composting generally takes two forms: organics can be stored outdoors in long piles (called windrows) and turned by huge machines for even decomposition; or a centralized plant with sophisticated equipment can process and decompose organics directly from a city waste stream. Another process, called vermi-composting, uses worms to change organic waste into nutrient rich castings, which can be applied directly to the soil.

Although municipal composting of mixed city wastes is well established in Europe, almost all municipal composting done in this country today involves only yard wastes or sewage sludge. But programs can be designed to handle other kinds of specialized organic waste, such as that produced by industry or households. This report will deal with the potential for composting the material found in a typical municipal waste stream, which, on the average, is about 70 percent organic (40 percent paper, 15 percent yard waste, and 15 percent house organics).

Altoona, Pennsylvania does not usually bring to mind visions of Ecotopia. But for the past 27 years, this industrial city in the Allegheny Mountains has been quietly converting much of its municipal organic waste into compost. The process not only turns waste into an environmentally sound product, it saves on several resources in short supply: soil, energy and landfill space.

The 18,000 households in Altoona produce between 25 and 50 tons per day of organic waste. After the material is separated and composted, between six and ten tons of compost are produced each day.

Although not a stunning success, the Altoona project works. The city pays the cost of collecting organics separated at the household level, and saves landfill and pollution costs. Recently, a private contractor has begun processing the waste with an eye for marketing the end product, mostly within 300 miles of the city.

"Before municipal composting can become widespread, social attitudes toward waste and political biases against alternatives to the way we currently deal with waste must be changed."

It could work better. More people would separate their organic waste if the city invested in an education program. The contractor, Fairfield Engineering, Inc., is slowly perfecting new machinery and building markets for the finished compost, with the hopes of expanding the Altoona operation and starting new municipal composting projects in other cities.

Despite Altoona's progress, its composting program is still unique in this country. Other projects have been tried and, for a variety of reasons, failed. Others that have survived are more specialized, composting only easily processed organic wastes, such as those produced by food markets or city lawn clipping collection. A few new municipal composting operations will begin soon. But some, such as the composting plant scheduled to open in October in Key West, Florida, have particular advantages. Soil for Key West must be imported from hundreds of miles away, so the demand for compost there is unusually high.

Obstacles to Municipal Composting

In the past, the biggest obstacle to municipal composting has been the technology required to produce efficient and complete decomposition on a large-scale. But as this technology has been perfected, the principal objection to municipal composting has

Some Hard Facts on Municipal Composting

How much will a municipal composting project cost? How much land is needed? Who manufactures equipment for municipal composting? How much landfill space and energy can be saved? Answers to these and other specific kinds of questions on municipal composting can be found in *An Examination of Composting Alternatives to Landfilling of Organic Wastes*, prepared by Cloudburst Environmental Institute.

No report can give all the information a city needs to know in order to plan a municipal composting program, mostly because circumstances in a wide variety of factors are different for each city. But the Cloudburst report does provide an extensive amount of data, charts and tables that will point city planners and community groups in the right direction. Copies are available for $5 from: **the Cloudburst Environmental Institute, 2440 NE 10th, Portland, Oregon 503/281-8075.**

This report on municipal composting is the first in a series on waste utilization options for cities. Future reports will include glass recycling and alcohol fuel production.

This was prepared with funds from the National Center for Appropriate Technology to fulfill a grant requirement. NCAT is funded in part by the U.S. Community Services Administration. The opinions expressed in this report are those of the waste utilization staff of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance and do not necessarily represent the views or policies of NCAT or CSA.

been a lack of markets for its finished product.

The problem with municipal composting, however, is not biological or physical, or even one of economics. Before municipal composting can become widespread, social attitudes toward waste and political biases against alternatives to the way we currently deal with waste must be changed. It is the continual burden of recyclers, for example, that their project must "pay for themselves," even though no one expects a dump or incinerator to make a profit. Also, solid waste planners have in the past used the "quick fix" method of solving disposal problems. So while landfills may be cheaper in the short run than capitalizing a composting project, recycling as much waste as possible makes for sense in the long run. The "quick fix" planning attitude ties in with popular thinking that garbage is simply something to be thrown away, rather than treated as a resource.

Unfortunately, municipal composting has more going against it than lack of foresight. Most government policy and spending at local, state and federal levels not only discourage municipal composting, they encourage non-recycling projects that compete with composting. The U.S. Department of Energy urban waste technology program, for example, provides $300 million in price supports, loan guarantees and market development to high technology processes for burning garbage. Although more energy could be saved at far less cost by recycling waste instead of burning it, programs like municipal composting are not receiving DOE urban waste technology funds. Most states have the same biases. New York's $175 million resource recovery program, for example, allocated no money for recycling, until a group of recyclers and environmentalists protested and shook loose $1 million for contingency funds for recycling projects. At the local level, garbage collection fees are usually unrelated to the quantity of waste produced, and incentives to separate waste in the household are almost non-existent.

The case for municipal composting rests on three points: recycling organic wastes extends the life of landfills, it saves energy, and it produces an environmentally sound and marketable product that enhances depleted soil.

Extending the Landfill

In Portland, Oregon, subscribers to a private garbage collection service that requires source separation have cut the amount of garbage they send to a landfill by more than half. And because landfills of mixed waste need a daily earth cover to reduce pests and odors, removal of the organic fraction alone can extend the life of a landfill by 10 to 30 percent. Removing both the organics and recyclable material could extend a landfill's life by as much as 80 percent.

Municipal composting can save energy in several ways. First, substitution of recycled or reused materials for virgin materials uses less energy. Energy savings from composting are particularly great. According to the Cloudburst Organic Waste Research Project:

> *The net energy difference per ton between anaerobic composting and landfilling is about 13 million BTUs per ton. Energy credits for anaerobic composting come from methane gas generation and savings in natural gas and electricity that will not have to be used to produce chemical fertilizers. What's more, the quality of heat from generated methane is such that the yield per ton is 75 percent higher than other methods of energy recovery from wastes.*

Separating organics from waste also increases the energy content of the waste. If mixed wastes are burned for fuel in energy recovery plants, the fuel value will be lowered by the presences of organic materials, due to their high moisture content. A municipal composting program, therefore, combined with a program to recycle non-compostable material and burn non-recyclable material, produces increased energy all around.

Markets for Compost

The value of finished compost must be analyzed on a number of levels. Compost's chief value is in its ability to improve the

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Municipal Compost Contacts

Clarence Gouleke
Cal Recovery Systems
Richmond, CA 94804
415/232-3066
Dr. Gouleke has written the book on composting and is considered one of the country's leading authorities on the biology of composting. He now heads research and development for a private engineering firm.

Jerome Goldstein
JG Press
Box 351, 18 South Seventh St.
Emmaus, PA 18049
215/967-4010
Jerome Goldstein has published a number of books and articles on composting. He is editor of *Compost Science/Land Utilization* magazine (subscriptions: $15 annually) which is a must for any city waste planner.

Roger Blobaum
Blobaum Associates
Suite A, 1340 42nd St.
West Desmoines, IA 50265
515/225-6035
Roger Blobaum is particularly knowledgeable about large-scale rural and agricultural composting projects.

Robert Tonetti
Resource Recovery Division
Environmental Protection Agency
401 M Street, SW
Washington, DC 20460
202/755-9120
This is the place to go for questions about what the EPA is or is not doing on municipal composting.

Frank Carmody
California Vermiculture Exchange
P.O. Box 3058
Santa Rosa, CA 95402
707/526-0294
Mr. Carmody works for a private vermiculture business, but his California Vermiculture Exchange acts as a clearinghouse for developments in this field around the country.

Curtis Suerth
Bronx Frontier Development Corporation
1080 Leggett Avenue
Bronx, NY 10474
212/542-4640
Curtis Suerth is the director of a community-based composting project in the South Bronx.

Progress Reports

Portland Passes Tough Law on Energy Conservation

The City of Portland has just approved the nation's most comprehensive energy conservation program. The plan could save residents an estimated 30 percent of their current energy use—about $160 million worth—by 1995.

The centerpiece of the plan is a mandatory weatherization program for all homes and businesses. Under the plan, residents will have five years to weatherize their homes. After that, those who have failed to weatherize will be barred from selling their homes or making extensive renovations. Similar restrictions have been placed on businesses. An estimated 150,000 private homeowners will have to pay an average of $1,350 to install insulation, storm windows or other improvements. But no weatherization will be required that does not have a ten year payback period in terms of energy savings.

The plan was approved by the Portland City Council after some opposition, mostly that it infringed on private property rights or places a burden on middle-income homeowners. Special financing arrangements, however, by Pacific Power and Light Company, the local utility, made adoption of the plan considerably easier. PP & L will make arrangements to install up to $30 million of weatherization materials in single-family homes and duplexes. The weatherization will be installed initially without charge, but must be repaid, without interest, no later than the time ownership of the dwelling is transferred. Thus, customers get to pay for weatherization through their energy savings, and the utility saves money by reducing its need to generate more power.

The Portland conservation plan was also the result of considerable lobbying of local city officials and Portland citizens. According to city energy advisor Marion Hemphill, the plan was three years in the making. The City Council alone spent a year and a half in meetings, hearings and workshops before deciding that a conservation policy was good for the city. Organizers then launched an extensive education campaign through the local media, neighborhood associations, business groups, and private contractors. Before the vote by the City Council in August, an estimated 2,000 citizens participated in the review process. A brochure describing the program is in its second printing, and has been requested by 8,000 people.

Besides weatherization, the Portland Conservation program will also include energy audits for all homes and businesses, laws that would encourage development of neighborhood energy-production projects, a special gasoline tax to finance traffic-flow improvements and new zoning regulations that would protect each home's access to solar exposure. The plan is also expected to open new channels to federal aid from the Department of Transportation, Economic Development Administration and Department of Housing and Urban Development. Ironically, local officials say they are getting the least amount of interest and cooperation in Washington from the Department of Energy. For more information about the Portland conservation plan, contact: **Marion Hemphill, Energy Advisor, City of Portland, 620 SW 5th Street, Room 610, Portland, Oregon, 503/248-4579.**

* * * *

As part of Portland's comprehensive energy conservation plan, a relatively low-cost and simple system has been developed for retrieving energy conservation information and data. Although non-computerized, a system using cards that can be matched visually on special machines allows much of the flexibility of a more expensive computer system. The heart of the system is an energy conservation thesaurus developed for Portland, but readily adaptable to other cities that want to form an energy planning library. A booklet describing the information retrieval system is Volume 2 of a six volume set of material on energy conservation for the City of Portland. For more information, contact: **Marion Hemphill, 620 SW 5th Street, Room 610, Portland, Oregon 97204.**

Food Conspiracy/cpf

Locally Controlled Supermarkets

Supermarkets, one of the most important businesses in any neighborhood shopping district, are leaving low-income urban areas in large numbers. Since 1968, the number of supermarkets operating in these areas has been cut in half.

Recently, joint ventures between community organizations and supermarket chains have developed as one solution to inner-city supermarket closings. In Chicago, the Woodlawn Organization **(1180 East 63rd Street, Chicago, IL 60637)**, one of the city's largest community groups, runs a supermarket in partnership with Hillman's, a locally based supermarket chain. A for-profit subsidiary of the Woodlawn Organization owns 67 percent of the corporation running the supermarket. The organization raised its original $350,000 share of the project through a Small Business Administration loan. The Hillman's chain was then hired to manage and operate the store.

A similar arrangement has been underway in New York City since February. There, the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation and Pathmark, an East Coast supermarket chain, operate a joint venture in a newly restored city block of Bedford-Stuyvesant, one of Brooklyn's poorest neighborhoods. The community organization owns two-thirds of the stock, and gets two-thirds of the profits, while Pathmark manages the store. The Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, one of the largest community development groups in the country, was able to get capital for its part of the venture entirely from private sources.

In Dorchester, Massachusetts, residents

are proving that you don't have to be a large and established community group to go into the supermarket business. When the First National supermarket chain decided to close its Codman Square branch in Dorchester, several community groups formed a community development corporation to reopen the store. The new corporation secured loans from a local bank, the Small Business Administration and the Massachusetts Community Development Finance Corporation. The store, now called "Our Market," does not sell non-food items usually found in a chain supermarket, but it does carry a full line of foods, including meats, dairy products, canned and frozen goods and fresh produce. And the store is completely owned and managed by the Codman Square C.D.C. **(560A Washington St., Dorchester, MA 02124)**, which is open to all adult residents of the Codman Square area.

In Washington, D.C., a joint venture between the locally-based Giant Foods, the District of Columbia Development Corporation and the Shaw Community Citizens Pact is being planned in the Shaw neighborhood urban renewal area. The groups hope that the involvement of neighborhood people will help to minimize pilferage, vandalism and other problems. Giant has also pledged to staff the store with as many neighborhood residents as possible.

Community control or ownership of large businesses like supermarkets are not guaranteed of success, especially in low-income neighborhoods. In Chicago, for example, a second market run as a joint venture by the Woodlawn Organization has closed. And stores not managed by large chains do not have access to the same distribution and marketing networks. A spokesperson for Pathmark, however, said its Bedford-Stuyvesant experiment may lead to joint ventures with other community groups in other cities. The key seems to be the ability of a community organization to put its local clout into making a marginal store more profitable.

The Woodlawn Organization, Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation and Codman Square Community Development Corporation do not have prepared material describing their experiences. Groups wanting to explore the possibility of a joint venture or community-owned supermarket should contact a local community development corporation, a chain supermarket in their area or a local office of the Small Business Administration.

When writing to any of the contacts mentioned in SELF-RELIANCE, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope. It will speed the reply and will save these folks some money.

Communities Use Both Carrot And Stick

Governments have long provided incentives to private businesses on the belief that tax credits, tax-exempt bonds, low-interest loans, loan guarantees and the like inevitably lead to expansion, new investment and additional jobs. Now that a growing body of research is questioning or disproving this assumption, a number of communities are taking a different approach. They are demanding—and winning—specific concessions from private businesses that wish to do business in their communities.

In Memphis, Tennessee, for example, contractors involved in modernizing a local school are required, whenever possible, to give preferential consideration for employment to the unemployed and underemployed living in the neighborhood near the school. The rule was set by a regional office of the federal Economic Development Administration (which is funding the project) as the result of community pressure organized by Tennessee ACORN (Association of Community Organization for Reform Now).

In Massachusetts, the state-run Community Development Finance Corporation (CDFC) imposes covenants on businesses getting equity or long-term debt financing from the corporation that require local and minority hiring for primary labor market positions (those paying above 150 percent of the minimum wage).

In Oregon, the Portland Port Commission imposes hiring agreements on all contractors receiving money to perform work related to the renovation of the port area. Like the CDFC program in Massachusetts, this particular program is aimed at increasing the private sector employment opportunities for minorities through government "deals" with firms it does business with. Portland also has developed a sophisticated *quid-pro-quo* system that is applicable to any expanding or relocating plants in Portland. If the City is being asked to provide preferential zoning, special sewerage or road construction or other similar "freebies" to a firm, the city imposes a "first source agreement" on the firm that requires that CETA-eligibles be the first source of all non-managerial jobs at the companies involved. A German chemical firm, for example, has decided to move to Portland. Of the 600 new jobs to be created, 500 have been pledged to CETA-eligibles.

An innovative leveraging strategy for creating job training opportunities in the private sector has been developed by the New York State Department of Transportation. Large contracts with the Department of Transportation provide funds over and above the contract amount to pay for the training of minorities by the firm signing the contract. Thus, the firm does not lose any money by participating in the training program.

These kinds of agreements are, in effect, the beginning of a new public sector strategy that uses both incentives and leveraging, as well as sanctions and negative incentives, to force business participation in programs to employ the unemployed and underemployed in local communities. For more information, see *The Political Economy of State Job-Creation Business Incentives*, by Bennet, Harrison & Sandra Kantner, one of a collection of articles in *Developing the Public Economy*, available for $7.00 from: **Policy Training Center, 4 Nutting Road, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138.** See also, *Leveraging with a Toothpick: The Carter Administration's Private Sector Strategy for Job Creation*, available for $2.50 from: **National Center for Jobs and Justice, 1605 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20009, 202/462-4200.**

New Opportunities for Local Energy Audit Programs

(Continued from page 1)

As a result of these contacts, the Anacostia energy team was asked to perform an evaluation of an abandoned building in the neighborhood for possible use as a community center. It also convinced several local merchants to give discounts on weatherization material in return for publicity. Several local programs that provide technical assistance for home purchase or rehabilitation now include energy auditing as part of their service. Community organizing, in fact, has become a full-time job for one member of the Anacostia energy audit team.

Door-to-Door Visits

Central to the energy auditing process are the door-to-door visits to resident's homes. Part of this visit involves a simple walk-through with the homeowner or tenant. Questions are asked about daily procedures involving energy consumption, appliances and heating systems are inspected and listed, and features of the building "envelope" (walls, ceilings, windows) are recorded. Through an on-going arrangement with local utilities, the audit team obtains a release from the resident allowing access to utility bill records kept by the companies over the past year.

All pertinent information about energy consumption, the characteristics of the building, and the efficiency of its systems is fed into a computer. The program for the computer was developed by the Institute. It calculates the space heating load, hot water consumption, and energy use for appliances. It also demonstrates how much money is lost through various sections of the house. For example, a house might have a space heating bill of $500, of which $150 worth of heat escaped through the uninsulated attic, $200 worth of heat escaped through cracks, $50 worth of heat escaped through unstormed windows, and $100 escaped through two uninsulated walls. The computer printout shows which parts of the home should be looked at first to stop heat loss and save money.

The ILSR printout also provides the consumer with a listing of energy bills on a month by month basis, along with the cost of each energy source in the home. Here, consumers can identify which months cost the most for energy, and when certain devices triple and quadruple energy use (such as air conditioners and electric space heaters).

Some Surprising Results

To date, the auditing team has done 200 energy audits, with some surprising results. We discovered with our first audit that there is more to energy auditing than talking about storm windows and attic insulation. There are very few times that neighbors knock on one another's doors to discuss household and neighborhood problems. As such, the auditor must learn to deal with problems which are non-energy related. In the first house we audited we uncovered a structurally deficient foundation. There was little purpose in recommending storm windows when the house was falling down. In another house an elderly woman had been heating her house from her stove. The

What Community Audit Programs Should Know About The Energy Conservation Act

A new federal law will soon have a big impact on community groups that operate or would like to begin an energy audit program. As part of the National Energy Conservation Act, passed last November, a massive energy audit and weatherization program will begin nationwide over the next year. Community groups should begin organizing now to make sure that this program is locally based, comprehensive, and available to people who need it most.

The new law basically requires most utilities to arrange for audits of residential energy use for most consumers. At this point, many questions about the final form of the law and how it will be implemented remain unanswered. It is unclear how the audits will be performed, what type of audits will be offered, who will do them, and how conservation measures recommended by the audit will be financed.

When regulations for the new law are completed (expected to be sometime this fall) each state will then be required to submit a plan for implementation. This is where citizens and community groups can attend public hearings to ensure that their state makes the most of the law.

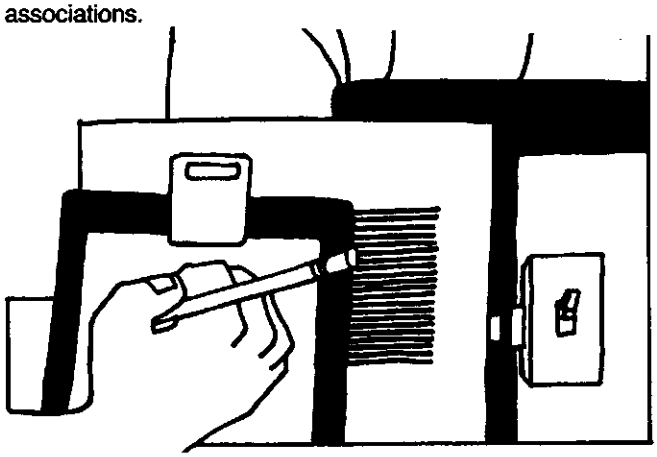
To help groups prepare for the hearings, the Environmental Action Foundation has prepared an information packet on the law and the issues involved. It includes an overview of the National Energy Conservation Act, a legal analysis by the National Consumer Law Center, a synopsis of comments on the proposed regulations made this summer by community groups, an explanation of why utilities are unhappy with the law, and suggestions for formulating state plans. The information packet is available for $2.50 from **EAF, 1346 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 517, Washington DC 20036, 202/659-9682.** EAF is also acting as a clearinghouse for information about organizing efforts around the country related to the energy audit law. They have a list of involved community groups in every state, and can help interested individuals get in contact with others in their area. People working on state energy audit plans should also read *The Coming Debate on the Future Role of Utilities*, by David Morris of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance. This 15-page report summarizes the issues of interest to community-based groups in the Residential Conservation Service Program. It also explains the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act, which requires states to examine the rate structure of large utilities with an eye on energy conservation, maximum efficiency and equitable rates. Copies are available for $2 from the Institute.

furnace was repaired, but the repairman asked for $25 and she only had $15, so he went back downstairs and cut the electrical relays to the furnace. This was illegal, and the problem was referred to the neighborhood legal services. In other cases, there were landlord-tenant problems; in still others, problems with contractors who had performed incompetently in previous rehab jobs. The energy auditor's functions are to catalyze resources, to bring people together, to engender a sense of self-reliance. This is what makes neighborhood audits so different than computer oriented utility audits sent by mail.

The Anacostia energy audits also produced some immediate energy savings. Most homes, for example, had the thermostat on the water heater set too high. It has been estimated that simply setting the thermostat lower (which does not reduce hot water comfort) saved the audited homes $2000 in fuel bills. Families also discovered some basics about their home's construction. Many families living in homes with crawl spaces between the top ceiling and roof were surprised to learn they had one. One tenant was shocked to find that a simple electric fan doubled his electric consumption at certain times of the day. He realized this after learning to read his electric meter as it was recording electric consumption in the home.

It is still too early to measure long-term results from the project, although energy consumption this winter will be carefully monitored. City officials, however, have been convinced that a community-based energy project is a good way to start. This fall, the program will expand, with city funds, to two other Washington, D.C. neighborhoods. The audit team is also using a city grant to do a passive retrofit of its Anacostia headquarters. Eventually, the office will be heated entirely by renewable resources.

The auditing team is continuing to spread its program around the neighborhood and beyond. Outreach on energy conservation is being done through workshops on conservation and solar design, and community presentations, such as a recent solar hot water display at a local shopping center. Meanwhile, the federally funded National Housing Services has decided to adapt the Institute's energy training program to its program in 75 cities across the country for rehabilitation specialists and trade associations.



Community groups that want to start similar energy audit programs should first seek support from existing energy and housing related programs in their area (see Resources for Community Auditors, page 11). In the coming months, state residential Conservation Service plans will be drafted (see related story, page 10). States with good plans will give community groups the opportunity to start energy audit programs of their own. A community group that begins organizing now around their state Residential Conservation Service plan can be ready to start an energy auditing program when the plan is drafted.

Resources for Community Energy Auditors

Funding

Expect a four month project, completing 100 audits, to cost about $20,000 for set up, training and implementation. Once a program is underway, additional audits will cost less. Sources for funds include community action agencies, local housing offices, weatherization programs, CETA, city energy offices, local energy extension services, and local utilities.

Training

Tap local resources. These include weatherization trainers, home inspection experts, home insulating contractors, vocational school teachers, and utility auditors.

Useful training materials include:

Weatherization Facts for Program Workers $16
Energy Research Center
Syracuse Research Corporation
Merrill Lane
Syracuse NY 13210 315/425-5100
"The Red Book," as this manual is called by the auditors of the Institute's Anacostia energy project, is clearly written and easily understood.

SRC has also produced six ten minute films designed for weatherization training purposes to be used in conjunction with the manual. Check local building trades for training films on building construction.

Weatherization Materials $12
Institute for Local Self-Reliance
1717 18th Street NW
Washington DC 20009
This book explains what weatherization materials are available, their best uses, and how to get them. It's written especially for community energy projects.

Project Save M/E and Oasis 2000 Project $2
Frank Kelley, et al., February 1979
Rice Lake WI 54868
This account of an energy audit program provides some basics on auditing procedures as well as some useful tips on how to organize an energy audit program.

Manual of Energy Savings in Existing Buildings and Plants Vol.1 and II $24.95 and $34.95
Prentice Hall
Englewood Cliffs NJ 07632
This is a technical document on commercial and industrial buildings.

ASRAE Handbook of Fundamentals $40
345 47th Street
New York NY 10014
This is the "Bible" on heat loss, heat transfer and design.

Energy Auditor's Toolbox

25' retractable measuring tape
50' measuring tape
8' carpenter's rule
flat and philips head screwdrivers
compass • binoculars • volt tester
awl • 8' step ladder • flashlight
combustion efficiency tester
inspection mirror
stem type thermometers
sling psychrometer (for measuring humidity)

Three Primers on Local Energy Self-Reliance

(Continued from page 3)

patterns is particularly difficult to collate when one gets below the metropolitan area analysis.

Employment Impacts of Energy Investments

Meg Schachter's compendium, *Creating Jobs Through Energy*, is more difficult to use than the Okagaki and Benson guidebook. But it is more rigorous in its analytical methods. It is a tool for answering the following types of questions: "Whether to mandate energy conservation measures or to build a LNG pipeline for importing energy into the region? Whether to subsidize investment in the solar energy industry, or continue to rely on conventional energy sources? Whether to build a wood-fired power plant, or a nuclear plant to meet the electricity needs of the region?"

The book focuses on the employment impacts of energy investments. It assesses the net effect on employment as a combination of three processes:

1) direct effect, or the effect on labor requirements for resource recovery, direct manufacturing, construction and general operation and maintenance associated with the energy development,

2) indirect effect, or the effect on labor requirements in supporting industries required to provide materials and services for the energy system,

3) induced employment effect, or the effect on labor requirements to meet the demands for goods and services generated by the increased earnings associated with (1) and (2).

The methodology used in this book goes beyond most previous analyses. The method takes into account, for example, the displacement impacts of energy spending. A shift to solar will decrease investment and employment in conventional energy industries. If energy investment is financed through private spending, funds will be diverted from other types of expenditures in or outside of the region. If public funds are used, they will divert spending from other sources of the economy, to the extent to which public funds displace private funds.

Job Trade-offs in Conservation

In the analysis of employment impacts of a soft-energy path for the District of Columbia, for example, the Institute discovered that in effecting maximum conservation, we would actually be losing jobs in the local economy. This occurs because D.C. is based on service jobs that are very labor intensive, and doesn't have any conservation materials manufacturing sector. The lost jobs, however, are more than compensated for by the increased spending power gained after conservation measures are installed.

Ms. Schachter lists common energy models, describes each, and lists available data bases. She also, pleasingly, tries to order the nation's methodological procedures into a cost-benefit framework of her own. As she writes, the "uncertainty associated with energy choices can be reduced as more detailed information on the relevant employment effects is made available to decisionmakers. Unfortunately there is almost a direct relationship between the level of detail and the level of costs, so that budget constraints are a major limiting factor." In other words, one can get a rough idea with a few hundred dollars investment, and a much better idea with a greater investment.

While it is clear that computer models are more sophisticated, it is not clear that they are more accurate. It would be good to know to what degree uncertainty is reduced if costly computer models are used. Computer models can take into account feedback effects that are impossible to do with manual techniques. On the other hand, they rely on similar and sometimes even more outdated data. Many computer models which specifically address the issue of energy impacts rely on pre-1973 data—that is, they are based on data from an era when energy cost only 10 percent of what it does today.

Local Decisionmaking For Citizens

Galambos and Schreiber's handbook, *Making Sense Out of Dollars*, is a stunningly lean, and clear discussion of almost all aspects of local economic decisionmaking. As the authors indicate, "Most important local government decisions involve the hard choices of how to spend scarce revenues to meet what seem to be unlimited demands for services by constituents. Making the best use of scarce resources is the core of economics. Therefore, economic analysis belongs at the top of the list of tools needed for effective local government management. But if economics is to be used by the daily practitioner in local government, it must be brought down from the ivory tower. Achieving this is the purpose of this handbook."

It successfully achieves that purpose. The methods contained in the handbook can be applied by cities, counties, or special districts of moderate size. Step-by-step instructions, with excellent examples, are used throughout the book. The volume analyzes the economic base of local economies, the diversity of its businesses, and balance between its export and import sectors. It uses available data to analyze employment patterns, labor markets, revenue projections, cost-benefit equations, and user charges in place of taxes, etc. Some of the questions which its methodology can answer include: What type of business firm or industry would be the most desirable to attract in terms of new jobs and contributions to stable economic growth of the community? Should we continue providing backyard sanitation pick-up or go to curbside pick-up? What will be the revenues versus the costs to the local treasury if we rezone a tract of land for apartment complexes? If we have to close one of our police precinct stations, which one should it be?

"We can expect that these three handbooks represent only the beginning of what might prove to be a flood of how-to books on policymaking."

One drawback in using economics to design our communities is that it is not a science which integrates quality of life variables well. The authors recognize this failing, and in their cost-benefit section they do include social benefits as part of the equation.

We can expect that these three handbooks represent only the beginning of what might prove to be a flood of how-to books on policymaking. There are literally thousands of books that can tell us how to tune-up a car, repair a leaky faucet, or build a house. Hopefully the new primers of local self-reliance will help us design and build communities that efficiently use their resources to promote a better quality of life for their residents.

—David Morris

Managing and Financing Community Newspapers

(Continued from page 5)

munity News, for example, spent years hoping to somehow expand from publishing every two weeks to every week. When some careful financial analysis was finally done, the staff realized that a low-income community of 30,000 people simply does not have enough business (and advertising) to support two healthy weekly newspapers. The staff now knows that if it wants to publish weekly, it must buy or put the competition out of business, and it plans accordingly.

● **Deal with businesspeople on their own terms.** The *Community News* staff at first considered local businesspeople as separate from or antagonistic to its view of neighborhood improvement. Local businesspeople, for a variety of reasons, can indeed be the least progressive and most self-centered forces in a small community. But this must be dealt with if local advertisers are the major source of a newspaper's income. Advertising increased when the *Community News* became an active member of the local chamber of commerce, gave more attention in its news columns to legitimate concerns of the business community, and put effort into developing relationships with businesspeople.

● **Go after "real" advertising.** Ads which simply state a business name and address are called "nameplate" advertising. They are the bread and butter of yearbooks and concert programs, but deadly for newspapers, because nameplate ads produce no tangible results for the advertiser. On the other hand, an advertisement that sells a certain product for a certain price gets results (provided the offer is a fair value and the newspaper has a good readership). A business that makes money from its ads will continue to advertise. Also, advertisers are drawn to a newspaper when they see this type of advertising in it.

● **Find alternative advertising markets.** The *Community News* could never convince a local department store owner to advertise regularly in the paper. But it does make money from the department store by designing and printing a monthly advertising circular, which the owner distributes himself. A local credit union runs its annual report as a special supplement in the paper each year. Other businesses that would not buy an advertisement alone are happy to join others in special holiday or civic improvement promotions.

● **Make professional presentations.** Advertiser acceptance increases dramatically when businesspeople are shown an example of what their ad would look like. Advance preparation and a little homework on a businessperson's special needs often take just a few minutes.

● **Develop personal contacts.** In small communities, who you are is often more important than what you are. Many of the *Community News*' most loyal advertisers do not spend their money based on pure economics. They advertise because they've known the paper and staff for years.

None of these approaches necessarily interferes with a newspaper's goal to serve its readers first. But financial realities do make non-traditional forms of newspaper organization more difficult. An advertiser-supported community newspaper is, on the bottom line, a newspaper that must be geared toward advertisers. An advertiser-supported newspaper, however, can also be an excellent community newspaper, sensitive to a variety of local interests, and an important force in neighborhood events.

—David Macgregor

Municipal Composting Saves Soil, Energy, Landfill Space

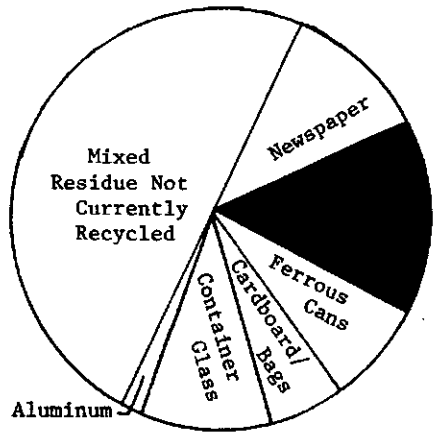
(Continued from page 7)

physical and biological structure of the soil (it is not fertilizer). Several studies have shown increased crop yields when compost is added to the soil, and the need for soil conditioning has been well documented.

Nevertheless, markets for large quantities of compost are obviously weak. One problem is the cost of transporting and applying large quantities of compost. A private company in California, however, has recently developed a vehicle which efficiently spreads the product on farmland. And as the cost of chemical fertilizers rises, the demand for compost will increase. Transportation problems can be overcome in metropolitan areas by encouraging use of compost at home through adult education and extension service programs. In Northglenn, Colorado, for example, compost is first used for city needs in parks and gardens, and the rest is picked for free by residents. The acreage used for composting never fills up as it does with sanitary landfills.

Two community-based programs are developing another market for compost: nutrient-starved vacant lots and gardens in cities. Bronx Frontier, which runs the largest community-based urban composting project in the country, produces a year-round average of 15 tons of compost per day by composting food wastes from the nearby Hunts Point Market and other organics. Conventional topsoil for the 400 acres of vacant land in the South Bronx alone, would cost the city $13,000 per acre each year. In Boston, urban gardeners have started a test compost program, using supermarket wastes and wood chips, in hopes of establishing a permanent source of soil conditioner for the city's community gardens.

COMPOSITION OF TYPICAL HOUSEHOLD SOLID WASTE



As with any "new" idea (cities have been composting their wastes for thousands of years), municipal composting will need further research, additional technology and more test programs. Yet, in many urban areas, municipal composting clearly makes sense now as part of a balanced waste utilization program. The costs of not developing or even delaying municipal composting programs will only get higher.

Off the Shelf

Guides to Neighborhood Revitalization

Neighborhood reinvestment, neighborhood revitalization and local economic development have become the new catchwords for urban renewal. The words "neighborhood" and "local" separate the new approach from the massive and undemocratically planned development that gave urban renewal such a bad name. But do the new terms really make a difference for our cities? Are the details of these programs creating new wealth, providing better access to resources, or changing power relationships? Some of the new strategies clearly do not. Others may, but it is still to early to tell whether they will be blocked or watered down if they become effective, or if they will lead to real change. The resources here provide a good introduction to the variety of approaches to the subject.

Partnerships for Neighborhood Preservation:
A Citizen's Handbook
December 1978 200 pp. free
Pennsylvania Department
of Community Affairs
Harrisburg PA 17120

This thick booklet surveys a wide variety of topics in neighborhood revitalization: the role of community organizations, programs in housing, economic development and social services, and brief descriptions of many projects in various cities. This is not a workbook. Displacement and redlining are explained, but no information is given on what to do about them. Federal neighborhood programs are listed, but not in a way that will help community groups write or get grants. This booklet is, however, one of the better summaries of the various components of neighborhood revitalization planning.

People, Building Neighborhoods
The National Commission on Neighborhoods, final report
March 1979, 358 pp. $7.50
Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402

This report is remarkably detailed and progressive. Problems confronting neighborhood development are faced squarely, and fingers are pointed throughout, not only at culprits, but at solutions. The sections on reinvestment and neighborhood economic development summarize the current thinking among neighborhood activists on a wide variety of neighborhood issues. The emphasis is on government initiative, either through financial incentives to private businesses and grassroots groups, laws and regulations curbing activity destructive to neighborhoods, or direct participation in neighborhood development. Readers will get a good sense from the recommendations for action of specific legislation and programs that are needed. The problem, as with any commission report, is how to get from point A to point B. Chances are, very little of this report will get serious consideration from legislators.

Reinvestment Handbook:
Ways to Analyze and Remedy the Disinvestment of Residential Neighborhoods
October 1978 94 pp. $2
Action-Housing
Number 2 Gateway Center
Pittsburgh PA 15220

This booklet deals only with mortgage lending as a factor in neighborhood development. It begins weakly, noting both in a cover letter and again in the foreward that "there is little profit in assessing blame" for disinvestment and that the book does not attempt to prove 'guilt' or 'innocence' of lenders. What this really means is that little attention is paid in this booklet to the causes of disinvestment. The typical lender argument that suburban development is more profitable than inner-city development is not questioned (neither as fact nor as a matter of policy). And there is no discussion of how reinvestment can be achieved without displacement. Nevertheless, this book presents a good summary of the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act, a survey of various reinvestment strategies (but no analysis of their effectiveness) and an excellent section on working with mortgage disclosure data, filled with statistics, tables and computations that actually explain what the law can or cannot tell about mortgage disinvestment.

CCED Newsletter

Assessing Community Credit Needs
Reinvestment Strategies for Neighborhood-Based Organizations
Reinvestment Strategies for City Planners
U.S. Housing and Urban Development
Office of Neighborhood Development
451 Seventh Street SW
Washington DC 20410

This three-part publication, available sometime this fall, is easily the definitive work on the Community Reinvestment Act and its potential for neighborhood revitalization. These booklets present the CRA law, regulations, sample worksheets for data compilation and other raw material for sitting down and actually getting to work. The booklet for neighborhood-based organizations alone has almost 100 pages of text and another 60 or so of appendices, so these are not the usual slim guides intended to give a brief introduction to the subject. One has to wonder, however, just how much can be accomplished through what the authors admit is a vaguely worded CRA law. Doubts are partly removed by the number and variety of case studies cited in the text, showing that at least some neighborhoods are using the Community Reinvestment Act with good results.

Notes

Developing a Public Economy:
Models from Massachusetts
edited by Pat McGuigan and Bob Schaeffer
1979 208 pp. $7/indiv. $12/inst.
Policy Training Center
6 Nutting Road
Cambridge MA 02138

This is not a "how-to" book on neighborhood revitalization. There are no worksheets, no explanation of regulations, and, although numerous examples of what the authors mean by economic development are cited, there are no detailed case studies. What this book does provide is an excellent framework for evaluating the effectiveness of revitalization programs. As the book states in an overview, the key principles in economic development should be "distribution of income, wealth and power . . . public interest in the process and outcome . . . accountability of private corporations . . ." and "public intervention in the process." There are some interesting proposals: using CETA funds to create jobs, not simply pay salaries; a state funded corporation to finance community-controlled ventures; and tying public subsidy of private development to job creation. The book also covers redlining, linked deposits, and stopping runaway businesses. As a collection of articles by a variety of authors, this book is somewhat uneven. But it is a must for anyone seriously thinking about a neighborhood reinvestment plan.

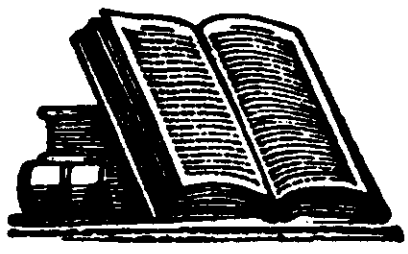
Handbook on Reinvestment Displacement:
The Public Role in a New Housing Issue
February 1979 102 pp. $5
National Association of Neighborhoods
1612 20th Street NW
Washington DC 20009

Displacement Handbook
National Urban Coalition
1201 Connecticut Avenue NW
Washington DC 20036
1979 Inquire for price

These two booklets at least discuss neighborhood revitalization in terms of what it usually is: displacement of low-income people with middle- or upper-income people. Both booklets provide a good introduction to displacement, but each has its weaknesses. The National Association of Neighborhoods booklet devotes too much space to a historical and academic overview of displacement and not enough on prevention. Also, although the author wisely states that government neighborhood programs should be analyzed for their effect instead of their goals, there is not much detail on government complicity in displacement. The National Urban Coalition booklet provides a good bibliography on displacement, and makes a useful distinction between incentives to help low-income people get in on the revitalization action and disincentives to slow down the process of wealthy residents moving in. But suggestions such as studying neighborhood churches to identify displacement are rather useless. By the time a church congregation changes or dissipates, displacement is too far along to do anything about it.

Neighborhood Conservation
Lessons from Three Cities
1977 125 pp. $4
Conservation Foundation
1717 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington DC 20036

Unfortunately, the lessons learned from this booklet are that neighborhood development means fixing up buildings through "historical districts," that most cities have at least one neighborhood just waiting to be "discovered and reborn," and that displacement is a problem for government, not private lenders. One banker is even quoted as saying redlining exists because lenders were "deeply scarred" by the FHA rehab program, even though banks made tidy profits on their FHA insured loans, while homeowners and taxpayers were stuck with the losses. Nothing in this book will help the vast majority of depressed urban neighborhoods, and as such, *Neighborhood Conservation* is a good example of the limitations of neighborhood revitalization rhetoric.



The Institute for Local Self-Reliance is planning a **research conference to develop a technical agenda for a national recycling policy.** Fifteen experts in recycling, waste utilization, source reduction, product design, marketing and appropriate technologies will be selected to meet on November 9, at a location to be announced, for a planning session, and again in Washington on December 6 and 7 to develop the agenda. Those interested in more information should contact: **Jeryl Specter, Division of Waste Utilization, Institute for Local Self-Reliance, 1717 18th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009.**

A plan to combine a wide variety of small-scale projects in food, energy, housing, health and waste utilization—helped by a $150,000 grant from the National Center for Appropriate Technology—has begun in Whiteaker, a low-income neighborhood in Eugene, Oregon. The plan includes large community gardens, an energy conservation business, cooperative housing and medical self-help program. Where possible, projects will be integrated (such as energy production through composting of wastes). For a summary of what's planned, contact: **NCAT, Box 3838, Butte MT 59701.**

A "new and improved" *Citizens' Energy Directory* has just been published by the Citizens' Energy Project. This edition includes over 600 entries of individuals and groups in the U.S. working on alternative energy technologies. Information has been updated and another 50 pages added to what is one of the more frequently consulted directories at ILSR. Copies are $15 for businesses and $10 for individuals and non-profit organizations. Contact: **CEP, 1110 Sixth Street NW, Washington DC 20001.**

Groups interested in starting community economic development activities will find basic information in a 32-page pamphlet called *Business Venture Selecting Methods for Community Development Corporations*. Covered are business investment fundamentals, the venture selection process, and negotiation and venture structuring. Included are case studies and a bibliography. Copies are $1.50 from: **Center for Community Economic Development, 639 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 316, Cambridge MA 02139.**

Notes

A directory of resources and groups working on community organizing, energy, housing, food, workplace and other issues has been published by the editors of *Communities* magazine. Well-organized and comprehensive, this 184-page book will be a handy desk reference for community activists or an excellent introduction for those who want to learn about the variety of alternative projects in the country today. *A Guide to Cooperative Alternatives* costs $5.95 plus $.50 postage and is available from: **Communities, Box 426 GS, Louisa VA 23093, 703/894-5126.**

Boston Urban Gardeners, Inc. is one of the most successful community gardening groups in the country. Recently, BUG published a booklet describing its projects. Most of the resources cited are for Boston area gardeners, but the booklet includes sections on how to start a community garden, maintenance, tools and materials, and related projects that would be useful to community garden groups anywhere. Copies of the *City Gardener's Guide* are $2 from: **BUG, 66 Hereford Street, Boston MA 02115.**

Adequate water supply is a problem in many urban community gardens, but gardeners at Pennsylvania State University may have a solution. They've developed a storage system using inexpensive (or often free) 55-gallon drums and drip irrigation systems to make the water go further. Plans and directions for constructing the systems have been collected in *Irrigation Systems for Urban Gardeners*, a free booklet available from: **Urban Gardening Program, Penn State University/Cooperative Extension Service, SE Corner Broad and Grange Streets, Philadelphia PA 19141, 215/224-7870.**

Vacant land and buildings are a problem—and a potential resource—in almost every urban neighborhood. A Cleveland group has recently published a handbook on how a neighborhood can take control of its unused property.

For one dollar (to cover postage) groups can get a good introduction to community land use. Contact: **Neighborhood Centers Association, 1001 Huron Road, Cleveland OH 44115, 216/781-0725.**

Another publication on insurance redlining has been published by the National Training and Information Center. *Insurance Redlining: Organizing to Win!* gives an insider's view of the insurance industry and explains how to document insurance redlining and organize an anti-redlining campaign. *Organizing to Win!* is a good companion volume to *Insurance Redlining: Profits vs. Policyholders*, which explains the history and structure of the insurance industry and the nature of insurance redlining. Copies of *Organizing to Win!* are $5 for individuals and community groups, $7.50 for libraries and non-profit groups, and $15 for government and for-profit groups. Contact: **NTIC, 1123 W. Washington Blvd., Chicago IL 60607.**

The idea of growing fish for food production in small-scale indoor ponds captures many peoples' imaginations. Five years after an unsuccessful fish farming project here in Washington, D.C., the Institute still receives many inquiries about it. A new publication called *Fish Farming in Your Solar Greenhouse* will help bring dreamers back to earth. The authors obviously believe it can work, but the booklet clearly shows that small-scale fish farming is a tricky business. And even with pages of information, charts, illustrations and bibliographic references, future fish farmers will need more than this booklet to get started. Copies are $5 from: **the Amity Foundation, PO Box 7066, Eugene OR 97401.**

Support Self-Reliance

The Institute for Local Self-Reliance is a research and consulting organization that explores the potential for, and the implications of, high-density population areas becoming independent and self-reliant. The Institute, incorporated five years ago as a tax-exempt non-profit organization, conducts basic research, develops working demonstration models of new technologies, institutions and small-scale production systems; develops educational materials, and disseminates information.

The best way to keep up with developments at the Institute and around the country that are relevant to the movement toward urban decentralization is to subscribe to SELF-RELIANCE. The best way to support the Institute is to become an Associate Member.

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