Three OEO Programs Adopted

The board of directors of Acadiana Neuf, six-parish body in the national war on poverty, approved three programs for Lafayette area last week.

Three neighborhood family service centers, with a proposed budget of $114,676 won the group's sponsorship and the proposal will be forwarded to the national Office of Economic Opportunity along with Acadiana Neuf's proposed Small Business Development center and a program for remedial reading for Lafayette.

The SBDC budget calls for $37,018 and the reading program for $90,767.

Henry Liersat resigned from the board of directors of Acadiana Neuf "because I am no longer a Vermilion parish resident."

The Vermilion parish police jury had appointed Liersat, a former Henry resident, and recently asked for his resignation as he suggested they do when he left Vermilion parish if the jury ever wanted to replace him with a resident of that parish.

NEW APPOINTEE from Vermilion parish is Kern Broussard, from Henry also, and a person active in political circles and interested in parish functions.

Liersat, in resigning, addressed board members relative to observations he had made during the five months he served Acadiana Neuf.

"... the men on this board have been rendered a disservice," he said. "You have been called in to take part in the war on poverty, in Acadiana Neuf, and with the exception of about four members on this board, none have been adequately familiarized with its conception, birth and growth into the formal board existing today."

Liersat briefly traced the movement's history from the Lafayette Economic Development Council and the Southwestern Louisiana Register's "Social Studies Series" to the present board. "Nearly two years of work preceded formation of this board," he said.

RELATIVE to the question of representation of Negroes and the poor on the board, the outgoing member remarked, "For sake of example alone, I refer briefly to our policies in hiring personnel. We never indicated our colored positions were open to whites only. However, we never specified any person of any race or color could apply."

Liersat emphasized, "We should be aware that Negroes, for generations, have suffered discrimination and lack of opportunity; for generations they have been conditioned in a white-controlled society. Because of this, we should realize, Negroes generally believe, unless specific mention is made that Negroes may apply, any good opportunities are open to whites only."

He pointed out Negroes constitute the majority of impoverished families in Southwestern Louisiana and that "the board must adequately reflect the openness of the new and great society we are trying to build. Negroes must see persons of their own ethnic group becoming active members -- and bona fide leaders -- at every level of Acadiana Neuf's war on poverty."

"The prevailing thought through Acadiana Neuf's development has been. If the poor are not effectively engaged in battle against their own poverty, it is futile to declare war on poverty," Liersat remarked.

AMONG FINAL recommendations made by the resigning board members were that the board maintain an official register of members, and "for clarity's sake, state specifically in future announcements concerning membership, job opportunities or programs that persons of any race or color may apply."

The board incorporated Liersat's remarks in their entirely into the official minutes of the Acadiana Neuf meeting.