

Chuck Matthei Leaves ICE Directorship



After more than a decade of service, Chuck Matthei has left his position as Executive Director of the Institute for Community Economics, his resignation having become effective July 31, 1990. He will establish a new organization as a base for the Equity Trust Program, which he conceived while with The Institute, as well as continuing his public speaking and consulting with CLTs and other organizations. Chuck's remarkable accomplishments as ICE Director are described below.

ICE is currently conducting a search for a new Executive Director. At present, Assistant Director Greg Ramm serves as Acting Director. Greg joined ICE in 1985, after three years with the Peace Core in Zaire. In addition to fulfilling the many managerial duties of the Assistant Director position, he served as primary staff person for the National Association of Community Development Loan Funds during the Association's start-up period, when it was housed and staffed by ICE. He continues to be an active participant in the community investment movement and serves as a director and officer of the Social Investment Forum.

A Decade of Accomplishment

When Chuck Matthei joined ICE more than a decade ago, the Institute had played a pioneering role in developing and promoting the community land trust concept and in exploring ways of channeling capital into community-based projects. However, in 1980, the year when Ronald Reagan was elected President, there was little reason to think that the next decade would see the development of vital and influential community land trust and community investment movements.

As an ICE Board member at a time when the Institute had no paid staff, Chuck committed himself to a full-time effort to strengthen the organization and implement its ideas. With extremely limited funds, he hitch-hiked around the country, meeting and talking to many people and a variety of groups. In Eastern Maine, in Appalachia, in inner-city Cin-

cinnati he spent time helping local organizers establish some of the first community land trusts. As these CLTs needed financing for initial acquisitions, he began talking with potential social investors, telling them of the capital needs of these low-income community groups. The ICE Revolving Loan Fund was established to receive loans from these investors and make loans to those groups.

In the summer of 1980, with Board member Chuck Geisler, he organized a week-long workshop on community land trusts at Cornell University. Shortly thereafter, the two men reassembled a number of the conference participants to begin planning and drafting the *Community Land Trust Handbook* — an extensive group effort incorporating the experience of many, but particularly articulating Chuck Matthei's clear vision of how the CLT model related both to the needs of low-income communities and to larger economic and ethical issues.

In the fall of 1981, Chuck arranged the purchase of a building in Greenfield, Massachusetts, and recruited four additional people to live and work in that building, staffing a burgeoning program. Throughout that period — and throughout the decade of the 1980s — he continued to travel, keeping to an exhausting schedule, talking to organizers and community groups, to church groups, to investment professionals, to public officials, to an ever-widening assortment of people and groups. He talked eloquently. With his personalist approach to social issues, he did more than disseminate ideas; he affected people. He affected people's sense not only of what ought to be but of what is possible — and of what each of us can do to make it happen. He told stories about real CLTs providing homes for real families, and about a loan fund that was growing geometrically from year to year and compiling an impressive track record. In the mid-80s, with interest in community investment growing rapidly, he pro-

moted the concept of the community loan fund, similar to ICE's loan fund, but organized through local coalitions of social investors and community organizations. As successful community loan funds were established with ICE's help in New Hampshire, Boston, Philadelphia, and other areas, ICE convened a national conference of fund representatives and initiated the process that was to bring about the National Association of Community Development Loan Funds, which Chuck Matthei has since served as Board Chairman. Chuck was also a founding member and director of the Social Investment Forum, and through this organization did much to establish community investment as an important part of the larger field of social investment.

In recent years, seeking a way to encourage more people to apply the principles underlying the CLT model to their own property interests, Chuck conceived the Equity Trust. Through this program, concerned property-owners can pledge a portion of the appreciated value of their property to an Equity Trust Fund. When the property is sold, the designated percentage of appreciated value realized in the sale will be committed to the Fund, which will use it to capitalize projects serving low-income people and communities. Originally conceived as an ICE program (announced in *Community Economics* #19), the Equity Trust Fund will now be administered by a new organization to be directed by Chuck Matthei.

Today it is possible to say that the community land trust and community loan fund concepts are ideas whose time has come — ideas that now have the power to inspire constructive efforts and to liberate a sense of hope. But it is hard to imagine that the power of these ideas would have been recognized and released without Chuck Matthei's vision, intelligence, persuasiveness, and endless hours of work. Chuck's departure from ICE is a sad event for all of us, and a loss for the Institute. He leaves behind a strong organization, indelibly stamped by his vision and committed to carrying that vision forward. But he does not leave behind the movement that he has done so much to create. We trust that he will continue to inspire and guide this movement for years to come. We wish him well in all his endeavors. □