

Housing chief is chosen

Arthur W. Pearce has been hired as executive director of Ithaca Neighborhood Housing Services, the new non-profit corporation organized to help downtown homeowners upgrade their properties.



Arthur Pearce plans and carries out rehabilitation projects in Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben counties. An Ithaca area resident for five years, he lives at 334 Bostwick Rd.

The Ithaca corporation has been a year in the formative stages.

"My own job will be to see that from now on things move very quickly," the director said in an interview Thursday. An office location is now being sought, he said.

Founded by the city through federal Community Development funds, plus local contributions, the new corporation will offer advice on renovations and financing, as well as low-cost loans to families of low income.

Several blocks on the city's South Side have been designated the initial target area.

Pearce said that the current partnership between residents, banks and the city is important to the program's success.

The cooperation evident between these groups is exciting," he said. "The program's future depends on it."

"Neighborhood support is the key," he added. "It is their property, their neighborhood and their future. The fact that neighborhood residents hold a majority on the corporation's board is official recognition of the fact that the program is basically theirs."

Pearce, whose salary will be \$20,000, said he was paid slightly more in the regional job.

"But I won't have to commute," he

said. "And I'm looking forward to working closely with a single community, instead of acting as a catalyst in about 80."

The Southern Tier housing council was formed a year ago, with Pearce the first director, and began with a project in the Village of Bath, where 20 homes were rehabilitated on a budget of \$11,000.

The Bath program has a second-year budget of \$100,000 and has expanded its functions. The council, meanwhile, began assisting the organization of rehabilitation programs in other communities, and has a second-year budget of \$335,000.

A native of Fairfield, Conn., Pearce was graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1964, served two years in the Navy, and worked for four years on Wall Street as a registered representative for Spencer Trask & Co. stock brokers.

He left Wall Street in 1971 to study urban planning at Cornell, where he earned a master's degree in 1973.

In 1973-75 he was with Economic Consultants Organization Inc., as a housing consultant to governments and corporations. He counseled Southern Tier cities after the 1972 flood on rehabilitation and other housing problems.

Pearce said he attended a national conference of neighborhood housing organizations in Chicago last week.

"I was impressed with the fact that Ithaca is on a very strong footing for a beginning program," he said.

"Others were envious of our level of city cooperation and our financial support," he said, adding that local banks, industries and other employers, as well as other sources have agreed to contribute to costs of operating the housing program.

