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Confab urges cooperation

By JACKIE KLEIN

The need for improved relations and communications between local and federal governments was the thrust of the recent National League of Cities (NLC) conference in Denver.

The conference gave local officials a chance to touch base with Washington legislators for better understanding of the

issues facing the nation's cities, said Southfield Councilwoman Lillian Jaffe.

Lobbying, exchanging ideas, comparing problems and offering solutions are effective tools, Mrs. Jaffe said. NLC is the catalyst for municipal and federal lawmakers, but involving citizens in the governing process is extremely important.

The theme of the conference was that everyone wants government to act with vision and a greater sense of responsibility. We must all be part of the system.

Also attending the conference at an average cost of \$500 each were Councilmen Jean McDonnell, Philip Peterson, Nelson Chase and John Marovick.

'It's not enough for citizens to elect persons to make decisions for them... citizen involvement is so crucial so the product will be something they can accept.'

— Lillian Jaffe

THE NLC for the first time in its 52-year history, elected a woman president. She is Phyllis Lampert, a member of city council in Seattle, Wash. She is also the first councilperson to head the league which has always elected mayors.

The role of city council members is going to become vastly important, she said. They'll be setting policies and making more difficult choices. City officials will be required to understand complex issues and problems.

It's not enough for citizens to elect persons to make decisions for them. In areas like community development, parks and neighborhood housing programs, citizen involvement is crucial so the product will be something they can accept.

Mrs. Jaffe said she agrees with Mrs. Lampert's contention that citizens have to be educated in the governmental process to participate effectively. Public officials can help their constituents learn to deal with community problems, she said.

aid predicted will be no more than 5 to 10 per cent effective.

According to one NLC committee report general revenue sharing will make available for the first time a significant amount of federal income tax collections for relatively unrestricted local expenditures.

The partnership of federal, state and local governments in the system, the report said, can best be nurtured by a coordinated approach to allocating local responsibilities.

The need for area-wide planning was also discussed at the conference. Mrs. Jaffe reported. Federal response to urban problems has been fragmented and separate policies and programs cancel each other out, she said. The availability of regional agencies to act as clearing houses for federally financed projects was emphasized, she said.

MAJOR CREATIVE federal, state and local initiatives are necessary to revitalize the complex economic fabric of the nation's cities, according to a committee report.

Cities have an important role in the national economy.

Local officials must recognize the critical role of economic development policies and the assessment of community needs, the report states.

In turn, according to the report, the federal government should establish economic development policies and strategies to recognize these needs and should provide financial support to cities, the report said.

NLC officials maintained the Denver conference could provide Carter with a key fact-finding opportunity.

LOOKING AHEAD to the new Democratic administration of Jimmy Carter, the league is urging that a council of urban advisors be created by the president.

But the common thread running through speeches during the conference, Mrs. Jaffe said, is that there won't be dramatic turnabouts in federal policy.

The national conservatism that exists in Washington will temper any drastic change, according to a former administration aide to Richard Nixon. The president did not announce intentions to reorganize the federal bureaucracy, the former

A three-day conference of the kind of John Denver may have been the high point of the year for five Southfield officials, but they apparently didn't catch it in the Rocky Mountain tradition.

The five officials traveled to Denver, Colo., for a conference of the National League of Cities Nov. 28-30. Three Southfield city council members submitted reports following the trip. The reports were approved by the council Monday evening. Two other reports are expected to be approved within the council meetings again in January.

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