

CARE job prompts action director's resignation

By KRIS CALDWELL
of The Oregonian staff

Gordon J. Molitor is a man who "cares."

It is for this reason that Molitor has resigned as the executive director of the Washington County Community Action Organization to take a post in Sierra Leone, West Africa, with CARE, the international relief and development agency.

Jerralynn Ness will be acting director of the action organization starting Sept. 1, until a replacement is found later in the month, Molitor said.

Molitor has run the agency for the past seven years. The 18-year-old private non-profit corporation, which was started as part of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, now has 85 employees and a \$2 million cash budget.

In a letter of resignation to Denzil Scheller, chairman of the organization, Molitor wrote, "I am excited about my new job and the possibilities of achieving a personal goal of an international career." He will leave his \$25,000 a year job with the agency for a higher-paying position with CARE.

"They provide housing, a car, a salary. It will be the equivalent of more money," Molitor said.



GORDON J. MOLITOR

Molitor said the duties he would have as a program developer with CARE were similar to the ones he had with the action agency. "I'll have less

responsibility there, but I'm sure I'll have to work just as hard," Molitor said.

As director of the agency, Molitor oversaw a number of community projects for those in need. The organization runs a program that offers early childhood and preschool education to handicapped children and children from low-income families.

A weatherization program run by the county agency offers fuel assistance to low-income family households. It also operates a crop-gleaners program in which excess farm produce is picked and then donated to needy families.

An emergency services and shelter program gives a variety of assistance to families. The agency also runs a Christmas clearing bureau, a retired senior citizens program, the Vista volunteer program and a youth employment program that finds employment in the private sector for needy youths.

Molitor listed three main accomplishments made by the organization during his term as administrator: quadrupling its budget; purchasing three new buildings — the new main office at 245 S.E. Second in Hillsboro, the shelter house and the volunteer center; and establishing the Housing

Development Corp. with its 100 units of farm labor housing and reorganizing Centro Cultural with its new community center.

Molitor said he is proudest of the "good quality of services we've provided to our clients." He gave credit to the county Board of Commissioners, the agency's board of directors and staff, and elected officials such as Rep. Les AuCoin, D-Ore., an ex-officio member of the county board, and Senator Mark O. Hatfield, R-Ore., whom Molitor called "a longtime supporter and friend" of the agency.

"The volunteer center would not be without his support," Molitor said.

Molitor's duties as a program director for CARE in Sierra Leone first will be to write grant applications to finance programs, and he said he hoped he would then be able to administer the development of the programs. Molitor said that road and water projects currently were the largest being undertaken by the Sierra Leone government.

"I will be putting the resources together to get the development of the programs off the ground," Molitor said. To do that, Molitor will be working with such groups as the United Nations, the World Bank, the U.S.

Agricultural and Industrial development agency, and the Sierra Leone government.

"That's what I've been doing the last seven years: packaging programs and putting together local, state, and federal resources to improve the issues that affect low-income people," Molitor said. "To go out, identify the issue and put the resources to that's what I hope to do overseas."

Molitor said that one of the reasons he was assigned to Sierra Leone was that he didn't speak a foreign language, and he wanted to be assigned to an English-speaking country. "Africa is just fascinating," he said. "The longer you're there, the less you know. The diversity in Africa is just fascinating."

One of his main considerations about going to the country was the 140 inches of rain that he said the country receives a year. "The sun out more so it dries up faster," he said.

Molitor said his last day at work probably would be August 31. He will then go to Minnesota to visit his family, and on Sept. 10 will be on his way to New York, international headquarters for CARE, where he will go through an orientation before going to Sierra Leone.