

Delaware Manager Shares Training Techniques with Armenia

"Small Wonder? I've heard of Stevie Wonder, but never Small Wonder" was the reply from Keghan Keribjanian, Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Welfare for the republic of Armenia. Joe Hickey, Delaware's Manager of Training and Development, had just introduced himself and described our State at the beginning of a three-week training project in Yerevan, Armenia in November, 1992.

As part of a five-person team, Hickey provided training and consultation services to over 300 national and local government officials. The project was sponsored by the Council of State Governments and the American University of Armenia, and funded by the U.S. Information Agency. Armenia, formerly part of the Soviet Union, is now an independent republic struggling to manage its government operations. It is about

the size of Maryland and has a population of 3.3 million.

The U.S. trainers spent their first week in Armenia meeting with the Armenian participants in their offices to learn about their system and to discuss their needs. It was during this time that the trainers learned first-hand the magnitude of Armenia's problems. War with Azerbaijan, an almost complete blockade of their borders, and a steady stream of refugees from Azerbaijan that now accounts for over 15% of their population has left the Armenian people economically impoverished.

Serious fuel shortages leave most houses without electricity, heat or hot water. Lines for bread fill the sidewalks as wheat becomes more and more scarce. "Government officials, however, are determined to solve these problems and lead Armenia to a

strong, stable future," Hickey said.

The second and third weeks were spent providing training on such topics as the U.S. federal system, roles and responsibilities of each level of U.S. government, balance of power in government, budgeting, intergovernmental relations and free market economics. Management principles and techniques were stressed, with particular emphasis on the processes of problem-solving, decision making, and managing change.

It was the trainers' intent not to solve Armenia's problems but to give the participants new knowledge and skills to help them find their own solutions. Many participants commented on the usefulness of the training, especially the problem-solving.

"The Armenians are dealing with life and death situations every day and it may get worse before it gets



An Armenian official asks a question during one of the training sessions held in Yerevan, Armenia.

better," Hickey related. "We were very impressed with the spirit of the participants — their interest and enthusiasm for the training, their courage in facing seemingly insurmountable problems, their generosity in the face of scarcity, and their commitment to making Armenia the 'Small Wonder' of the world's nations."