

Residents getting ready to paint the town red

Residents in the Hazleton area will get the chance to show their individual community pride on Saturday.

That date has been designated by the Greater Hazleton Civic Partnership as "Paint The Town Red White and Blue Day."

With spring cleaning underway, the weekend before the Memorial Day holiday has been chosen by the Partnership as the time residents should display their community pride.

Lena Kotansky, the Partnership's executive director, said the purpose of the program is to show community pride and unity.

"We want to make everybody feel good," Kotansky said. "We want to show we can work together, and show pride in the community."

Residents are asked to display something red, white and blue near or on their homes. Kotansky said the possibilities are endless.

"You can plant flowers, hang a flag, display a ribbon, put out a window box or do all four," Kotansky said. "Many of the businesses in our area plant flowers every year, so we're asking everyone to use red, white and blue in your planting or decorating scheme. Add an American flag to the outside of your building. A church group

pitched in to help some senior citizens decorate."

Kotansky said a number of local businesses have contributed red, white and blue materials to help with the celebration.

For instance, Berwick Industries, a firm that produces ribbon, has donated 21 pies of ribbon — the equivalent of 60,000 feet — to make red, white and blue bows.

Kotansky said the bows will be made by a host of volunteers from several organizations in the area.

"We will give the bows to people, and suggest they hang it on their front door," Kotansky said.

Interstate Road Markings, a firm that paints lines on roads and parking lots, will be donating time and materials to paint red, white and blue stars on streets in various communities throughout the area.

Also, Kotansky said red white and blue flowers are being donated as another symbol.

"Some of them will be given to residents, who will be asked to plant them in a prominent spot outside their homes," Kotansky said.

The five members of Hazleton City Council are purchasing 10 trees each to be planted in the city.

The whole idea of the pro-



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Members of the Hazleton Senior Citizens Center are making ribbons and bows for this weekend's "Paint The Town Red, White and Blue" project. Working on the ribbons and bows are, from left: Dora Charnigo, senior aide; Meda Rossi, volunteer; Helen M. Wolff, volunteer; Mary Hyde, volunteer; and Jane Ann Salnick, office staff.

gram is for the rest of the outside world to associate Hazleton with red, white and blue, and thus, with community pride and unity.

"We want our area to be a blaze of red, white and blue that will identify us as a community with spirit and pride, a place where people work together to make a difference," Kotansky said. "People travel to Washington to see the cherry blossoms and Vermont to see the fall foliage — why not the greater Hazleton area to see what we've done and how we're making a difference in our area by decorating, painting, and planting red, white and blue. Catch the spirit and pass it on."

Kotansky said it is the hope

of the Partnership that the program continue through the summer. A meeting for the May 22 observance will be held Tuesday at 7 p.m. in the Community Room of the CAN DO Renaissance Center, Broad and Church streets, downtown Hazleton.

A picnic is also being planned. A meeting on that issue will be held in the same place on Tuesday, May 11, also at 7 p.m.

How the project turns out depends upon the response of the people, Kotansky said.

"As a community-based organization, we are asking everyone to do their part by taking pride in their neighborhoods, towns and our greater community," Kotansky said. "Our goal is to

get enough people doing things to make a difference. Everyone has a part to play, and it's up to them to decide what the results will be."

If the initial response of volunteers is any indication, the program will be a resounding success.

Kotansky said volunteers from all age groups have come forward to offer their assistance.

"We've had dozens of organizations in the community respond to us, asking us what they can do," Kotansky said. "Those groups represent all ages, from the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts to school Key Clubs, to the Greater Hazleton Area Drug Free Task Force, to a number of senior citizen groups."