

SEMCOG REGIONAL UPDATE

A BIWEEKLY PUBLICATION OF SEMCOG, THE SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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2008

Special Issue: Equipping local government leaders for the future

SEMCOG turns 40

Local participation makes us strong

This year marks SEMCOG's 40th year. We believe that the Committee of 100 local leaders who created SEMCOG got the organizational vision right: *"We realize that our individual and collective destinies rest with the interdependent actions of the family of local governments which comprise our region.... We believe that cooperation must be fostered in two ways: by strengthening the abilities of local governments to meet individual local needs, and by developing a voluntary association (council) of local governments within our region to meet the broader common needs."*

Forty years later, SEMCOG is more relevant than ever. Membership is strong because members believe that the strength of local governments working together to solve problems is better than any one community going it alone. SEMCOG members have chosen to invest in themselves by investing in SEMCOG. By investing in SEMCOG, members receive technical assistance and extensive resources in areas that will help them do their local jobs — transportation, water quality protection, intergovernmental cooperation, and redevelopment — as well as individualized data analysis and training through free SEMCOG University workshops on topics of interest to local elected leaders and others.

Your participation in SEMCOG strengthens your membership. We encourage you to get involved. There are many ways — attend General Assembly meetings; become a member of an advisory council or task force; seek election to the Executive Committee.

We look forward to a great year and to welcoming you at a SEMCOG event soon! *Contact: Amy Malmer, SEMCOG Membership Manager.*

SEMCOG membership costs less this year

SEMCOG is well aware of the fiscal challenges facing counties and local governments and the potential impact on SEMCOG membership. To keep membership in your budget, SEMCOG's Finance and Budget Committee, Executive Committee, and General Assembly adopted a membership dues freeze and reduction for 2008. Counties, who pay the majority of SEMCOG membership dues, will see, on average, a 5.3 percent dues reduction. Membership dues for local governments will be reduced an average of three percent.

We hope that this action will allow you to remain a part of SEMCOG and the important, relevant work that we do to improve the quality of life for all of Southeast Michigan. *Contact: Kathleen Lomako, SEMCOG Deputy Executive Director.*

Membership dues can now be paid electronically

SEMCOG is pleased to announce that members can now conveniently pay their dues electronically. Members will receive documentation about this process with the 2008 annual dues invoice. *Contact: Virginia Lickliter, Senior Accountant, SEMCOG Finance Office.*

Membership drive kicks off in 2008

As part of SEMCOG's 40th anniversary celebration in 2008, we will begin a membership drive. The goal is to increase membership to 165. We ask member communities to help us target nonmember communities in Southeast Michigan and suggest ways to attract them. If you are interesting in helping with this membership drive, please call us. We'll send you a current membership map and discuss ways in which you can help. *Contact: Amy Malmer, SEMCOG Membership Manager.*

SEMCOG's new Web site includes section for elected officials; welcomes participation

SEMCOG's new Web site continues to have all the great information and data that users loved from the old site, but is better organized and more user friendly. The new site includes a section specifically for SEMCOG elected officials, with information on membership benefits and quick links to the content and data you need. There you will also find interviews with elected officials; we've started that off with an interview with Governor Granholm. The new site also has some interactive features, where you can communicate with other communities (and with us) on the issues that are important to you. Look for the Members button in the left navigation bar on the home page of www.semco.org or in the top navigation bar of every page on the Web site. Please watch future issues of *Regional Update* for more information about the new Web site. We'll let you know when new things are added. We also invite your comments and/or suggestions about the new Web site. *Contact: Sue Stetler, SEMCOG Communications Director or the SEMCOG Information Center.*

SEMCOG University offers training geared especially to local elected leaders

SEMCOG members can take advantage of a variety of training opportunities free-of-charge and close to home. We will continue to offer SEMCOG University classes, giving local member governments the knowledge to advance Southeast Michigan. This year, you will find workshop sessions held in a variety of locations throughout the region. The SEMCOG University schedule for the first half of 2008 is:

- January 30 — Battling Foreclosures: What can elected officials do?
- February 20 — Let's Get Physical: The benefits of promoting active communities.
- April 18 — Keeping Them Here: Millenials, Boomerangs, and Empty Nesters choose vibrant communities.
- April 24 — It's Easy Being Green: What can local governments do?
- May 13 — Fixing the Transportation Funding Crisis: The road to prosperity.

Please watch future issues of *Regional Update* for more information on workshop times and locations. *Contact: Amanda Polanco, SEMCOG U Registrar, to RSVP.*

SEMCOG's Information Center ready to help members with their research needs

In addition to its reference library and a myriad of data available on www.semco.org, SEMCOG also employs a professional librarian who can help with members' customized research needs. For example, if you are thinking about a new ordinance for your community and want to see what other communities have similar ordinances, SEMCOG can help with this kind of ordinance research. Information on the topic you request can be delivered to your e-mail address next day. Our trained researchers will include ordinances from Michigan communities of similar size and characteristics as yours (nationwide ordinances can be included as well), sample ordinance language, and pertinent newsletter articles on the

ordinance topic. How else can we help you? *Contact: SEMCOG Information Center.*

SEMCOG comes to you: Annual outreach meetings scheduled

Each year there is an opportunity for SEMCOG members to gather in their home county. At these meetings, members learn about recent SEMCOG efforts to assist local decision makers. Members also have the opportunity to voice their top priority issues. And, because elections to the Executive Committee are held at these meetings, members have the chance to enhance involvement in SEMCOG.

The 2008 outreach meeting schedule is: Oakland County, April 8; Monroe County, April 10; Wayne County, April 17; St. Clair County, April 22; Washtenaw County, April 23; Macomb County, April 24; and Livingston County, April 29.

Please save these dates and watch future issues of *Regional Update* for more information including times and locations. *Contact: Amy Malmer, SEMCOG Membership Manager.*

SEMCOG is a regional planning partnership of governmental units serving 4.9 million people in the seven-county region of Southeast Michigan striving to enhance the region's quality of life. *Regional Update* is a publication of SEMCOG, financed through funds from state and federal grants and dues from member communities.

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