

SEMCOG REGIONAL UPDATE

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

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December 3, 2007

Executive Committee meets December 7

SEMCOG's Executive Committee will meet on Friday, December 7, 2007, at 1 p.m. in SEMCOG's downtown Detroit office. Action items to be considered are:

- amendment to SEMCOG's 2007-2008 Work Program, to study the economic impact of Canadian commerce; and
- amendment to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program.

Ted Wahby, Macomb County Treasurer, and Jerry Moffit Macomb County Chief Deputy Director, will discuss the foreclosure problem in Michigan and how their county has addressed the tax foreclosure component of the issue. *Contact: Kathleen Lomako, SEMCOG Deputy Director.*

SEMCOG's new Web site debuts in January 2008 to begin 40th anniversary celebration

SEMCOG is pleased to announce the debut of its new Web site in January. It will continue to have all the great information and data that the current Web site does, but will be more user friendly. The new site will include a section specifically for SEMCOG members, with information and quick links to the content and data that you need. There you will also find video interviews with our members; we start that off with an interview with Governor Granholm. The new site will also have some interactive features, where you'll be able to communicate with other communities on the issues that you grapple with everyday.

The new year also marks the beginning of SEMCOG's 40th year. The Web site will feature lots of interesting things to mark that anniversary as we celebrate throughout the year.

Watch future issues of *Regional Update* for more information about the new Web site and SEMCOG's 40th anniversary events. *Contact: Sue Stetler, SEMCOG Communications Director.*

SEMCOG urges safe and sober holiday driving

With more people expected to travel on America's highways during the holiday season, SEMCOG urges everyone to enjoy the holidays, but know the facts — alcohol is a significant factor in holiday deaths.

Fact: Impaired driving is the most frequently committed violent crime, randomly killing someone in America every 30 minutes.

Fact: Crashes involving drinking tend to be more serious than nondrinking crashes. A fatality in a crash is 11 times more likely when alcohol is involved.

Fact: In Southeast Michigan, alcohol was involved in 31 percent of all traffic deaths in 2006. Alcohol was a factor in 123 deaths and over 2,800 injuries in 2006.

Fact: In Michigan, seat belt usage has reached an all-time high of 94.3 percent.

Fact: In the United States, safety belts save more than 14,900 lives annually. Each year, safety belts save society approximately \$50 billion in medical care, lost productivity, and other injury-related costs.

Individuals are encouraged to visit the Web sites of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (www.nhtsa.dot.gov) or Mothers Against Drunk Driving (www.madd.org) for holiday safety tips and additional "sobering drunk driving facts." MADD's *Tie One On For Safety* message calls for a commitment to buckle up because a seat belt is the best defense against a drunk driver. MADD has recently launched a campaign to eliminate drunk driving. *Contact: Tom Bruff, SEMCOG Transportation Coordinator.*

Call SEMCOG for information on local ordinances

Look no further than SEMCOG for your 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 articles on the ordinance topic. *Contact SEMCOG Information Center.*

SEMCOG's municipal training very successful

Seventy-two SEMCOG member communities (a total of 250 attendees) recently attended SEMCOG's training sessions for local governments on "Keeping it Clean: Municipal streets and parking lots." Training on maintaining municipally owned property is another requirement of the federal Phase II Stormwater Regulations. Over 160 communities in Southeast Michigan (including most SEMCOG members) that operate a separate stormwater drainage system are required to obtain a stormwater permit. SEMCOG members who were unable to attend the workshops can access the information online at www.semco.org, under Planning Issues. *Contact: SEMCOG Information Services.*

2007 TIP survey responses requested

SEMCOG is conducting its annual survey of projects in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This survey covers fiscal year 2007 and includes projects scheduled by cities, villages, transit agencies, county road commissions, and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) for the year, as well as ongoing projects from previous years. Surveys are used to track progress in implementing projects and gather cost information. Data are reported to SEMCOG committees and the public. Survey results also assist in determining long-term transportation needs in our region. Communities or agencies with projects in the survey have been notified by letter. SEMCOG is requesting completed surveys by Friday, December 28, 2007. *Contact: Steve Brudzinski, Policy Analyst, SEMCOG Transportation Programs.*

SEMCOG letter to MDEQ results in further dialogue on draft Phase II stormwater permit

On November 16, 2007, SEMCOG sent a letter to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) requesting continued dialogue to resolve concerns before finalizing the revised draft Phase II stormwater permit. SEMCOG has been facilitating a focus group of permittees from across the state who are reviewing and commenting on the revised draft. MDEQ has agreed to the request and we are currently in the process of setting up discussions. *Contact: Chuck Hersey, SEMCOG Environment Manager.*

DTE Energy Foundation tree planting grants now available

The Michigan Department of Natural Resources and the DTE Energy Foundation are currently accepting applications for this year's tree planting grant program. This grant program is funded by the DTE Energy Foundation and administered by DNR's Urban and Community Forestry Program.

The purpose of this program is to increase the number and variety of properly planted and maintained trees in our

communities. Trees improve the environment and quality of life. Planting trees also helps reduce carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming. Eligible applicants include local units of government, nonprofit organizations, tribes, and schools. Eligible projects include tree planting activities on public lands such as parks, right-of-ways, nature study areas, and school grounds. Grant applications must be received by December 28, 2007, and projects must be completed by December 31, 2008. For additional information, visit the DNR's Urban and Community Forestry Web site at www.mi.gov/dnrucf. *Contact: Amy Mangus, SEMCOG Coordinator of Environmental Programs.*

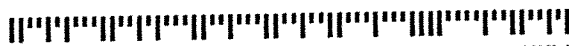
SEMPeople

Our sympathy to the family, friends, and former co-workers of **Bernard Giampetroni**, long-time Executive Director of the Macomb County Planning and Economic Development Department, who passed away November 13, 2007, of complications from Parkinson's Disease.

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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