

# SEMCOG REGIONAL UPDATE

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

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## New on SEMCOG's Web site: Federal stimulus package update Web page

SEMCOG is pleased to announce the creation of a Web page that will closely follow the development of the stimulus package. We are doing what we can do to ensure that our member local units of government and transportation agencies will be in the best possible situation to be able to spend as much money as Congress makes available through the stimulus program.

As we learn more about the stimulus program and as projects are funded, we will post that information on this page. It can be accessed from Hot Topics on [www.semco.org](http://www.semco.org) or directly at [www.semco.org/FederalStimulusPackageUpdateForSEMI.aspx](http://www.semco.org/FederalStimulusPackageUpdateForSEMI.aspx). We urge you to check back often. *Contact: Carmine Palombo, SEMCOG Director of Transportation Programs.*

## Taubman Fellowship applications due March 3

The Taubman Company will once again provide tuition assistance for two Taubman Fellows (including registration, materials, room, and board) to attend Harvard University's Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. The Taubman Fellowship is available to local elected officials and appointed staff from SEMCOG's member communities. The program is designed to improve leadership skills and increase awareness of effective approaches to public sector issues and concerns. Applications are due to SEMCOG on March 3, 2009. *Contact: Raymonia Dale, SEMCOG Executive Assistant.*

## Call for projects: FY 2010 and FY 2011 safety program

SEMCOG and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) have issued a call for projects for fiscal year 2010 and FY 2011 safety programs. Safety funds are intended for highway safety improvements on the local road system. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to, guardrails, removal of fixed objects in clear zones, traffic signals, access management, curve corrections, sight distance and drainage improvements, bridge railing replacement or retrofit, mid-block pedestrian crossings, improvements to school zones, intersection improvements for capacity and/or safety, rumble strips, and improved permanent signing and pavement markings. Federal funding of up to \$400,000 per project is available. A minimum 20 percent local share of project costs is

required. Only the construction phase is eligible for funding, except for certain limited circumstances.

All safety application forms and materials are available at: [www.semco.org/2010\\_2011SafetyCallforProjectsApps.aspx](http://www.semco.org/2010_2011SafetyCallforProjectsApps.aspx)

Cities, villages, and road commissions are eligible to submit applications for safety projects, due to SEMCOG by February 27, 2009. SEMCOG continues to request that MDOT award at least one safety project to each county in the region and the City of Detroit. *Contact: Steve Brudzinski, Policy Analyst, SEMCOG Transportation Programs.*

## Workshop on February 20 to discuss \$20 million in Federal Assistance to protect Lake St. Clair

Over the last several years, significant water quality improvements have been made in the Lake St. Clair Watershed. A recent federal authorization of \$20 million could provide significant assistance to local governments in their efforts to protect Lake St. Clair. A workshop will be held on February 20, 2009, from 9-11 a.m., at the Macomb Intermediate School District (44001 Garfield, Room 103 A/B, Clinton Township), to discuss opportunities and alternatives for moving the \$20 million authorization to appropriation and to explain how the real-time drinking water monitoring system is working and how it can be used to efficiently allocate resources. There is no charge for the workshop, but registration is encouraged. Register online at [www.semco.org](http://www.semco.org) via the date of the workshop on the Calendar or contact Raymonia Dale at SEMCOG (313-324-3309 or [dale@semco.org](mailto:dale@semco.org)). *Contact: Bill Parkus, SEMCOG Environment Planner.*

## Federal policy to aid foreclosure prevention

On January 21, 2009, the U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation to devote at least \$50 billion towards a plan to prevent and mitigate residential mortgage foreclosures. This bill, the TARP Reform and Accountability Act (H.R. 384), requires the Treasury Department to use a portion of the remaining \$350 billion in the Troubled Asset Relief Program (TARP) to help homeowners by improving the Hope for Homeowners program, assisting qualified home buyers obtain affordable mortgages rates, and providing incentives and assistance to servicers to modify or refinance existing loans. These provisions correspond with the recommendations of SEMCOG's Executive Committee of December 12, 2008. SEMCOG will continue to monitor this legislation and provide



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updates as they occur. Contact: Kevin Vettrano, Planner, SEMCOG Community and Economic Development.

### SEMCOG releases regional age forecast by school district

SEMCOG released regional forecast of population by age group by school district within Southeast Michigan for five-year increments from 2005 to 2035 to assist in school planning.

Based on SEMCOG's 2035 Forecast, Southeast Michigan will have 142,000 fewer school-age children (ages 5-17) in its seven intermediate school districts in 2015 than there were in 2005. While the region as a whole is expected to experience a reduction of 16 percent in its school age population, the rate of change varies significantly among individual school districts within the region. In the longer term, the region as a whole is expected to experience a modest growth of 24,000 children (or three percent gain) between 2015 and 2035.

Age forecast data are available by school district, as well as by county, city, village, township, and for the region as a whole, on SEMCOG's Web site at [www.semco.org](http://www.semco.org) (Programs and Data>Planning>Regional Forecast). Contact: Xuan Liu, SEMCOG Data Center Manager.

### SEMCOG saves local governments money by coordinating joint purchase of stormwater video

SEMCOG is working to coordinate a joint purchase of a Stormwater Best Management Practices Training Video to assist local governments in meeting their Phase II permit requirements. The newly revised Michigan Department of Environmental Quality Phase II Stormwater Permits require all existing employees that work with stormwater to be trained once during the permit cycle on basic stormwater pollution prevention. In addition, all new employees must receive training within the first year of employment. Staff that view this Stormwater Training Video will help meet this requirement. The video has been previewed by several local

government staff with positive reviews (it can also be previewed for free at [www.excalvisual.com/exvihome.pl](http://www.excalvisual.com/exvihome.pl)).

The price of the Stormwater Training Video is \$495; however if 25 or more kits are ordered through SEMCOG, the cost to communities is \$297 (a cost savings of 40 percent). Contact: Angela Riess, SEMCOG Environment Planner.

### USDOT approves second border crossing for Southeast Michigan

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) has approved plans to build a second border crossing between Michigan and Ontario. A Record of Decision (ROD), signed January 14, 2009, represents the Detroit River International Crossing's (DRIC) final environmental clearance and allows Michigan to begin right-of-way acquisition and construction planning for the bridge. Under current estimates, the new crossing is expected to be open to traffic in 2013. Contact: Mohammed Alghurabi, Michigan Department of Transportation (517) 373-7674, or [alghurabim@michigan.gov](mailto:alghurabim@michigan.gov).

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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