

SEMCOG REGIONAL UPDATE

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

Vol. 14, No. 12

June 2, 2008

SEMCOG's 40th anniversary celebration is June 26

Please join us for a celebration of SEMCOG's 40th anniversary! The General Assembly (GA) of SEMCOG will meet on Thursday, June 26, 2008, at the Village Pavilion (please see map on SEMCOG's Web site Calendar), Greenfield Village (Dearborn, MI) beginning at 4 p.m. (note the earlier start time).

Registration begins at 3 p.m. and will feature an ice cream and lemonade social. Bloc caucuses will meet prior to the GA, at 3:15 p.m. to elect the important positions of Bloc Chairs and Vice Chairs, as well as members of the Regional Clearinghouse Review Committee and the Transportation Improvement Program Development Committee.

The business meeting convenes at 4 p.m. Dearborn Mayor John B. O'Reilly, Jr. will give the welcome. The agenda includes election of 2008-2009 officers and adoption of amendments to the 2030 Regional Transportation Plan.

The 40th anniversary celebration begins at 5 p.m. and will include remarks from the outgoing Chairperson, the incoming Chairperson, and "Henry Ford I." The celebration concludes with a reception and horse-drawn tours of Greenfield Village. Attire should be business casual and comfortable for an outdoor summer celebration. Please RSVP online (www.semco.org) using the Calendar (accessible from the upper navigation bar on the home page). Watch the mail for an invitation coming soon. *Contact: Kathleen Lomako, SEMCOG Deputy Director.*

Nominating Committee recommends slate of officers for 2008-2009

SEMCOG's Nominating Committee — Township Bloc representative Richard Henningsen, Northville Township Treasurer; County Bloc representative Joan Flynn, Macomb County Commissioner; City and Village Bloc representative Ronald Gillham, Huntington Woods Mayor; and Education Bloc representative Joan Gebhardt, Schoolcraft College Board of Trustees — have recommended the following slate of SEMCOG officers:

- Chair — Mary Blackmon, Wayne County RESA Board of Education Trustee;
- First Vice Chair — Robert Hison, St. Clair Shores Mayor;
- Vice Chair — Robert Cannon, Clinton Township Supervisor;

- Vice Chair — Philip Cavanagh, Wayne County Commissioner;
 - Vice Chair — Gretchen Driskell, Saline Mayor; and
 - Vice Chair — Michael Sedlak, Green Oak Township Clerk.
- Officers will be elected at the June 26 General Assembly. Delegates can also recommend an officer candidate from the floor at the meeting.

Pursuant to the Bylaws, the Chairperson serves one year and is automatically succeeded by the First Vice Chairperson as long as he/she remains eligible. Current SEMCOG Chairperson William Roberts, Mayor of Walled Lake, will serve as Immediate Past Chairperson. The four additional Vice Chairpersons are elected annually to one-year terms. Vice Chairs can serve more than one term. *Contact: Kathleen Lomako, SEMCOG Deputy Executive Director.*

SEMCOG University presents an overview of the new Phase II permit requirements

SEMCOG University presents Phase II Stormwater Regulations: An overview of the new permit requirements on Thursday, June 19, 2008, from 9 a.m.-12 noon (registration begins at 8:30 a.m.) in SEMCOG's Buhl Building office in downtown Detroit.

Local communities have been working since 1993 to implement the federal Phase II Stormwater Requirements. These regulations impact more than 150 communities in Southeast Michigan. With the current permit expiring, SEMCOG facilitated a workgroup to provide input into development of the new permit. The new permit has numerous changes compared to the first one issued in 2003. This workshop will provide an overview of the key changes to the permit and provide an opportunity for question and answer with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality. Local elected officials, Phase II permit holders, and stormwater professionals should attend this important workshop. Please register online at www.semco.org via the Calendar (upper navigation bar on the home page). *Contact: Amanda Polanco, SEMCOG U Registrar.*

How SEMCOG can help local governments meet today's fiscal challenges

SEMCOG member local governments are being challenged to balance budgets during a period of uncertain economic times and ever-rising energy costs. Ideas being considered all over Southeast Michigan include such drastic actions as cutting

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services, tapping fund balances, incurring debt, and/or raising millage rates.

There is a better solution — improve efficiency and productivity so the same level of services can be maintained, but at lower costs. Private industry has been using such an approach for years, and the time has come for local governments to do the same. SEMCOG can help its member local governments meet these fiscal challenges.

For example, the SEMCOG University schedule now includes a workshop where member local government officials can learn more about improving efficiencies. This workshop is scheduled for September 10, 2008, from 9 a.m.-noon.

SEMCOG's Web site — www.semco.org/LocalGovernmentEffectiveness.aspx — lists of more than 60 successfully implemented efficiency ideas, as well as a self-assessment checklist that provides insight into what steps local governments must take to be as efficient as the best. Another excellent way to realize efficiencies without cutting services is by partnering with neighboring local governments; SEMCOG's Web site has very useful information on how to undertake such collaboration.

SEMCOG Consultant, Dave Boerger, is available for on-site help. This service is free to member local governments. *Contact: Dave Boerger, SEMCOG Consultant, Local Government Effectiveness and Collaboration.*

Third Annual National Dump the Pump Day is June 19

Join in celebrating the Third Annual National Dump the Pump Day on Thursday, June 19, 2008 with an event taking place at Campus Martius from 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Learn about alternative commute options such as transit, carpooling, and vanpooling that will save money on gas.

The day is dedicated to raising awareness that using alternative commute options helps improve the environment and conserves fuel. It also reduces the amount of harmful greenhouse gases that are emitted into our environment.

The local event is a partnership between SEMCOG, MDOT, SMART, DDOT, and the Detroit PeopleMover. *Contact: Iris Steinberg, Senior Communications Specialist.*

Grants page updated on SEMCOG's Web site

The Members section of SEMCOG's Web site contains information on grant opportunities available for local governments. This page is updated often. SEMCOG local government members are encouraged to check this page regularly. Access it from the Members tab on the home page, then scroll down to Grants (list on right). *Contact: Sue Stetler, SEMCOG Communications Director*

New SEMCOG member

Welcome to Pleasant Ridge, SEMCOG's newest member! Southeast Oakland County community has a population of (SEMCOG May 2008 estimate). SEMCOG membership now totals 157. *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.

William T. Roberts, Chairperson
Mayor, Walled Lake
Paul E. Tait, Executive Director
Susan L. Stetler, Editor

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June 16, 2008

Join us on June 26 for SEMCOG's 40th anniversary celebration!

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View an animated video of the Ann Arbor to Detroit regional rail project on SEMCOG's Web site

An animated video describing the proposed Ann Arbor to downtown Detroit commuter rail service is available to view on SEMCOG's Web site (www.semcog.org). From the home page, link to the video from Hot Topics. The eight-minute video introduces Southeast Michigan commuters to an exciting and viable option to car travel. It takes viewers on the 45-mile trip, showing the proposed route, station stops, and amenities once on board. Since no similar service currently exists in Southeast Michigan, this video serves as a virtual tour that will create interest about this service to the commuting public. Local communities are encouraged to add a link to this video on their Web sites. *Contact: Carmine Palombo, SEMCOG Director of Transportation Programs or Sue Stetler, SEMCOG Director of Communications.*

Simple steps communities can take to address rising gasoline prices for residents

With gasoline prices reaching historical highs and an increasing amount of pain at the pump on everyone's mind, RideShare, the free carpool matching program of SEMCOG, provides the following simple steps communities can take to help their residents address the high cost of gasoline.

- Collaborate with RideShare staff to promote RideShare to residents. Displays, tip cards, and newsletter articles are available to you at no cost.
- Keep RideShare information and current transit schedules on hand and posted on community bulletin board(s).
- Allow city employees flexibility in selecting their own start/end times during periods of gasoline price spikes. Doing so increases a commuter's chance of finding a ridesharing partner, riding transit, and avoiding peak congestion.
- Link to www.semcog.org on your community Web site, giving residents easy access to RideShare information.
- Invite RideShare representatives to community events to promote commuting options.

RideShare is here to assist commuters change their daily travel behavior. Instead of driving alone to work, employees can carpool, vanpool, take public transportation, bicycle, walk, or telecommute to conserve fuel and thus save money. More information is available on the Web (www.semcog.org, under Hot Topics on the home page). *Contact: Iris Steinberg, Senior Communications Specialist.*

SEMCOG University presents an overview of Asset Management

SEMCOG University presents *Pennywise and Pound Foolish? Better ways to manage our community assets* on Tuesday, July 15, 2008, from 8:30 a.m.-12 noon (registration begins at 8 a.m.) in SEMCOG's Buhl Building office in downtown Detroit.

Managing transportation assets is routinely practiced throughout Michigan using established systems. Communities are beginning to look at how to integrate multiple assets, including water and sewer infrastructure, into a management program to prolong their useful life and reduce costs. This SEMCOG University workshop will provide local elected officials a forum for learning the benefits of asset management for roads, water, and sewer, along with current activities throughout Michigan. Implementation challenges and solutions

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will be discussed. The workshop will be an opportunity for intergovernmental networking on asset management. Designed for local elected officials, this workshop will also benefit public works staff, road commission staff, municipal planners, engineers, consultants, and policy makers. Please register online at www.semco.org via the Calendar (upper navigation bar on the home page). *Contact: Amanda Polanco, SEMCOG U Registrar.*

SEMCOG's efficiency and collaboration efforts need local government help

As part of SEMCOG's efforts to help local governments address fiscal and service delivery challenges, we are updating our database on government efficiency and collaboration. This information will be used to help local governments improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services using ideas and information from other communities in the region. SEMCOG is currently contacting all local government members to ensure that we include as many initiatives as possible in our database. *Contact: Naheed Huq, SEMCOG Manager of Community and Economic Development.*

Freight conference scheduled for Sept 15-17

The annual Ohio Conference on Freight, a forum on freight, transportation logistics, and workforce development will be held on September 15-17, 2008 in Toledo, OH. The conference, sponsored by the Toledo Metropolitan Council of Governments and the National Association of Regional Councils, addresses development of the freight movement industry in Ohio and the Great Lakes region from a national perspective. For more information, go to www.tmacog.org. This issue is important to SEMCOG because of the impact of freight in Southeast Michigan. SEMCOG recently approved several projects that will result in efficient movement of freight which will keep prices low and lessen truck travel in the region. *Contact: Carmine Palombo, SEMCOG Director of Transportation Programs.*

SEMCOG to host grant writing workshop

SEMCOG and Grant Writing USA will present a two-day grant writing workshop on July 17-18, 2008, from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. in SEMCOG's Buhl Building office in downtown Detroit. Beginning and experienced grant writers from city, township, county, and other governmental agencies as well as nonprofits, K-12, colleges, and universities are encouraged to attend. Tuition is \$425 and includes all materials — workbook and accompanying resource CD that's packed full of tools and more than 200 sample grant proposals. For more information visit www.grantwritingusa.com. *Contact: Cathy Rittenhouse, (800) 814-8191 or cathy@grantwritingusa.com.*

SEMCOG Web site records record hits in May

SEMCOG's Web site — www.semco.org — had nearly 450,000 hits in May, an all-time high. The first five months in 2008 saw nearly 1.6 million hits, also an all-time high for the site. *Contact: Sue Stetler, SEMCOG Communications Director.*

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