

SEMCOG REGIONAL UPDATE

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

Vol. 14, No. 17

August 4, 2008

Executive Committee approves dues freeze and reduction for 2009 at July 25 meeting

At its July 25 meeting, SEMCOG's Executive Committee unanimously voted to approve a Finance and Budget Committee recommendation to approve a membership dues freeze and reduction for 2009.

This dues reduction is consistent with SEMCOG's ongoing efforts to help members address the fiscal challenges we all face. Approval of the resolution reduces dues by approximately 11 percent for the FY 2008-2009 budget. Services to members will continue as planned by implementing internal operational efficiencies and using SEMCOG's stabilization fund to cover any shortfall.

View highlights of this meeting at www.semco.org. From the home page, link to Podcasts in the upper right bar, then look for the Executive Committee link in the center of the page. Highlights include the dues reduction discussion; DTE Energy representatives discussing potential plans for a new nuclear facility in Monroe County; and an interactive discussion to develop transportation performance targets and investment choices for the 2035 long-range regional transportation plan. *Contact: Sue Stetler, SEMCOG Director of Communications.*

SEMCOG University: Improving Local Government Efficiency is September 10

SEMCOG University presents *Improving Local Government Efficiency: What local governments can do to reduce costs without cutting services* on Wednesday, September 10, 2008 from 9 a.m.-noon (registration begins at 8:30 a.m.) in SEMCOG's Buhl Building office in downtown Detroit.

Local governments are experiencing unprecedented revenue drops due to reductions in property values and state revenue sharing. Tight budgets are the norm and the first inclination may be to reduce services to citizens, cut fund balances, incur debt, or raise taxes. Instead, improving efficiency can help alleviate the need for such drastic action. This workshop will help local governments identify and implement efficiency improvements to avoid tapping fund balances, incurring debt, increasing taxes, or reducing .

Those interested in this workshop are encouraged to attend in person or online via Webinar. When registering online at

www.semco.org, please indicate whether you plan to participate on-site or online by noting your preference in the "additional comments" section of the registration form.

This SEMCOG University is free-of-charge for members and partners; there is a \$75 charge for nonmember local governments. Seating is limited; please reserve yours by September 3. Parking at the Larned/Griswold garage will be validated. *Contact: Amanda Polanco, SEMCOG U Registrar.*

Summer issue of SEMscope focuses on SEMCOG's 40th anniversary celebration

The summer issue of *SEMscope*, SEMCOG's quarterly magazine, has been mailed. SEMCOG's 40th anniversary celebration is the focus of this issue, with a photo feature highlighting the events that took place at the General Assembly meeting held June 26, 2008 at The Pavillion at Greenfield Village in Dearborn. In keeping with this theme, new SEMCOG Chair, Mary Blackmon, contributes a commentary piece, "SEMCOG at 40: Strengthening the region."

Also included in the issue are articles discussing SEMCOG's resources for increasing local government effectiveness and collaboration, the new MichiganRideshare program and commuting options, and results of a regional survey of future transportation directions in Southeast Michigan.

We encourage you to share this issue of *SEMscope* with citizens. Please contact us for additional copies. *Contact: SEMCOG Information Center.*

Downtown Detroit crime rates lower than national and state averages

Crime rates in Downtown Detroit are lower than both the national and state averages in spite of current economic conditions, according to a study conducted by Wayne State University and released by the Tourism Economic Development Council.

The report, "Reality v. Perceptions: An Updated Analysis of Crime and Safety in Downtown Detroit," shows that in 2007, when you take into account the large number of downtown visitors, there were 3,757 crimes per 100,000 people in the Downtown Visitor Area, which compares favourably to the state average, 3,775, and national average, 3,808 crimes per 100,000 people.

The report is available at www.tedconline.com. *Contact: Shivshakti Patki, Tourism Economic Development Council, 313-202-1946, or spatki@visitdetroit.com.*

SEMCOG Regional Update

Legislative activity: Wind power and local zoning

As Michigan looks to meet future energy capacity needs, alternative sources like wind power are likely to become a larger part of the energy source mix. As passed by the Senate on June 27, 2008, Senate Bill 213 seeks to define Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards and to exempt certain wind energy facilities from local zoning, placing them under the control of the Public Service Commission, in an attempt to expedite the process. The bill was recently taken up by the House, where the language to preempt local zoning was removed. The bill will now head to conference committee to settle differences between the bills.

SEMCOG can provide customized searches of information on wind and other ordinances to members upon request. *Contact SEMCOG Information Center.*

MCDA annual conference is September 17-19

The Michigan Community Development Association (MCDA) annual conference, coordinated by SEMCOG, is going green! Please join MCDA on September 17-19, 2008 at Crystal Mountain Resort for an informative and lively program on how local communities can benefit from "green" practices in community and economic development. Program highlights include state and federal incentives, rehab techniques to help lower energy costs, "green materials," and site integration. There will also be opportunities to network with like-minded professionals, and learn from experts on techniques and best practices to make our communities and buildings work into the future.

This annual conference is co-sponsored by SEMCOG, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Michigan State Housing Development Authority, and the WARM Training Center. *Contact: Ken Bishop, Assistant Planner, SEMCOG Community and Economic Development.*

Public comment being accepted on agricultural management practices

Public comment is currently being accepted on the 2009 draft of the state's Generally Accepted Agricultural and Management Practices (GAAMPS). Comments may be made at the GAAMPs Public Input Meeting at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, August 19, 2008, in the Lake Superior Room of the Michigan Library and Historical Center, 702 West Kalamazoo Street, Lansing, Mich. Comments may also be submitted in writing to MDA's Environmental Stewardship Division, P.O. Box 30017, Lansing, MI 48909, or via e-mail to kizziara@michigan.gov by 5 p.m. on August 19, 2008. *Contact: www.michigan.gov/mda.*

SEMPeople

Congratulations to Birmingham City Clerk, Nancy Weiss, who was named City Clerk of the Year by the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks. Weiss has worked for the city for 33 years and has been clerk since 2001.

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.

Mary Blackmon, Chairperson
Treasurer,

Wayne County Regional Education Service Agency
Paul E. Tait, Executive Director
Susan L. Stetler, Editor

SEMCOG Contact Information:

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments
535 Griswold Street, Suite 300, Detroit, MI 48226
313-961-4266 • Fax: 313-961-4869
Staff e-mail: lastname@semcog.org
www.semcof.org

CITY OF ANN ARBOR
CITY CLERK
REC'D
21 AUG 2008
AM 11:26

3-721
Jacqueline Beauty, City Clerk
City Of Ann Arbor
PO Box 8647
Ann Arbor MI 48107-8647



SEMCOG ... Equipping local government leaders for the future
Southeast Michigan Council of Governments
535 Griswold Street, Suite 300
Detroit, Michigan 48226-3602

Presorted Standard
U.S. Postage
PAID
Detroit, MI
Permit No. 3981