

# Detroit economic growth council may cause city-suburbs friction

By MICHAEL MATUSZEWSKI

In an effort to bolster the City of Detroit's sagging tax base and stop the erosion of its business and industrial community, a new economic coalition has been called together to compete with the rest of the state in attracting new industry.

"All of us are aware that for the last several decades, the City of Detroit has been losing businesses, losing jobs, losing population, and losing tax base. Our determination a year ago was to develop an effective approach to reversing those trends," said Lynn Townsend, former chairman of the board of Chrysler Corp. and co-chairman of the Economic Growth Council of Detroit. He spoke at a meeting of the Economic Club of Detroit.

The Detroit Economic Growth Corp., a non-profit corporation formed at the request of Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, will receive \$350,000 from Detroit, and \$350,000 from the State of Michigan. It is anticipating \$250,000 in

contributions from Detroit businesses.

According to Townsend, the corporation will "confine its efforts to the corporate limits of the city of Detroit"—throwing it into direct competition with the suburbs and regional agencies.

"AFTER LOOKING carefully at the statistics on southeastern Michigan, it became quite clear that, although there are pockets of problems regarding the loss of jobs and tax base in other areas of southeastern Michigan, the region as a whole has done quite well over the last 20 years in substantially increasing its jobs and tax base, whereas the city has declined," Townsend said.

"Looking at this issue from another vantage point, if we can effectively reverse the trend of job, business and tax loss that has taken place in the City of Detroit, this may well be the best possible thing that can be done for the region as a whole."

One way the city hopes to attract new business is through the establishment of a "land bank."

"If we hope to attract new businesses, then we have to facilities to handle and house them," said James M. Roche, former chairman of the board of General Motors and co-chairman of the Economic Growth Council of Detroit.

Townsend agreed: "If we're to attract new plants, we have to have sizeable building sites."

DESPITE THE direct competition between the new corporation and the suburbs, Townsend assured that the growth corporation would "work closely" with regional and state economic-expansion agencies.

lest to Detroit, we will leave no stone

turned to insure that effective steps

are taken by others to keep those busi-

ness and those jobs in the State of

Michigan," he said.

Townsend and Roche offered other

suggestions for aiding the city.

The Economic Growth Council, an

advisory body and the predecessor of

the Economic Growth Corp., recom-

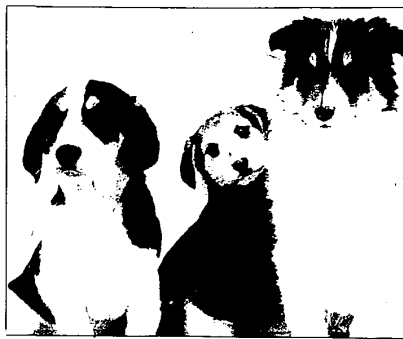
ended that Detroit taxes be lowered and that state maintain or increase the flow of dollars into the city.

"Federal and state revenues must be continued at least at present levels. This city cannot raise taxes and hope to remain competitive as a place to live and do business. New revenues for this country's older cities must come from the broader tax bases represented by federal and state governments," Roche said.

"WE ALSO determined," he said, "that the Detroit tax has generously, but perhaps beyond its means, provided some services for people who live largely outside the city."

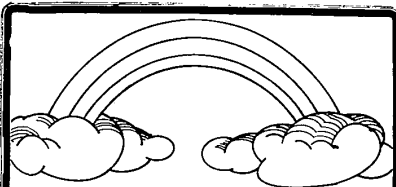
He pointed to a number of Detroit institutions which were used overwhelmingly by non-Detroiters including the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Main Library and the Detroit Zoo.

"Three-fourths of the Institute of Arts' visitors are non-Detroiters and an estimates 75 to 85 per cent of those going to the zoo are from outside the city limits," Roche said.



Three for the road

Kathy, Nick and Ron, three gentle pups at the Birmingham Mini Shelter, 1329 S. Woodward, are waiting for that perfect home. Kathy (left), a loving beagle-basset mix, is 10 weeks old and adores children. Dick, a terrier-mix, is eight weeks old, and Ron, a collie-mix, is 10 weeks old. All three can be contacted at 646-5999.



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