

# Troy's Larry Salci heads SEMTA

By TIM RICHARD  
The general public next week will get its first face-to-face look at the man who will preside over construction of metropolitan Detroit's multi-billion dollar transit system.

The board of the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) prompted Larry E. Salci, 30, to the post of general manager, vacant since last when Clarence Genette was forced out.

Salci, of 2880 Topaz, Troy, had been acting general manager in the interim. After a meteoric two-year rise within the seven-county transportation authority, Salci won the top post Tuesday over a host of candidates, including former SEMTA board member Walter Douglas and the head of Denver's transit system.

SEMTA OFFICIALS Friday are scheduled to weed out a long list of alternative transportation systems (heavy rail, light rail, bus, etc.) and mixtures of systems. Completing a year-long alternatives analysis, SEMTA will pick out three options.

Then on Monday through Thursday, Salci and SEMTA board Chairman Thomas Turner will unveil the options in a series of public hearings. Monday night's presentation will be in Detroit's City-County Building. Tuesday it will be in Center Line's City Hall.

Wednesday the presentation will be in Westland City Hall, 36601 Ford Road, west of Newburgh.

Thursday the series will wind up in the Oakland County Board of Commissioners auditorium, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac, in what is expected to be the hottest of the hearings.

All will begin at 7:30 p.m. with a 30 to 45 minutes illustrated presentation by Salci and George Swede, SEMTA's project manager for the alternatives analysis.

Then they will open it up to the public for two hours or so. Because of controversy stirred by the Oakland County Road Commission over its proposed light rail system, SEMTA lead-

ers are looking forward to a lively week of meetings.

SALCI is no rough, tough Army engineer, as was one of his predecessors, Gen. Thomas Lipscomb (ret.). Nor is he a smooth, smiling political type, like board chairman Turner.

A former University of Detroit basketball star (1,000 career points), Salci is fresh-faced and pleasant looking, but except for the accompanying photo, he practically never smiles. He's business. He earned his BSc in finance and master of business administration degrees from the University of Detroit.

After a stint in the Army, Salci went to work for Chrysler Corp. in Highland Park in such unglamorous jobs as budget analyst, project analyst and accounting supervisor.

He acknowledges his academic background as conservative and himself as a progressive conservative.

Although he's no orator and cautious not to ruffle any political feathers in talking to newsmen, Salci nevertheless managed to impress Turner and other SEMTA board members with the way he handled himself in negotiations with Gov. William G. Milliken, Detroit Mayor Coleman Young and county elected officials.

Born in the little western Michigan town of Greenville, Salci came to metropolitan Detroit with his family as a child and graduated from Warren High School.

HIS JOB will be business, contracts, negotiating with the Young administration for purchase of Detroit's bus system and prying money out of the new federal political structure.

Salci's two-year contract is worth \$44,000 the first year with a raise of up to 10 per cent (up to \$48,400) in the second year.

Promoting a local man from within was an unusual step for the SEMTA board.

First top administrator of SEMTA in 1968 was William Ostenson, a young



LARRY E. SALCI  
His business

Southfield lawyer with great expertise in drafting the first SEMTA enabling act. But Ostenson was not an operating manager, and he ultimately returned to his native Seattle to head an economic development corporation.

Lipscomb was hired because he had built and operated the Lindenwood rapid transit line for the Philadelphia area. Lipscomb was forced out over policy differences with the board.

Turner said. Lipscomb was not particularly enthused about SEMTA's ac-

quiring and merging all local bus systems in the region.

For a spell in the early '70s, SEMTA was headed by an acting general manager, K. Ross Childs. His background was in county management, and he left to become manager of Grand Traverse County.

Genette was a consulting engineer by background and had experience with Cleveland's transit system. He was forced out of SEMTA in 1976 because he was lacking as a public personality and weak on internal staff organization.

TODAY, SEMTA is the closest it has ever been to building a rapid transit line in southeastern Michigan. The Ford administration, in its waning days, pledged \$600 million toward an 80 per cent federal share for construction of such a system—once the alternatives analysis is completed.

And the man who will pull the business end of it together will be Salci. He has a wife, the former Karen Loncharch; a daughter Jennifer, 4; and a son Brian, 2.

They haven't seen much of him in recent months during the scurrying after the federal grant. They won't see much of him next week, during the public hearings. And they may not see much of him in the years to come.

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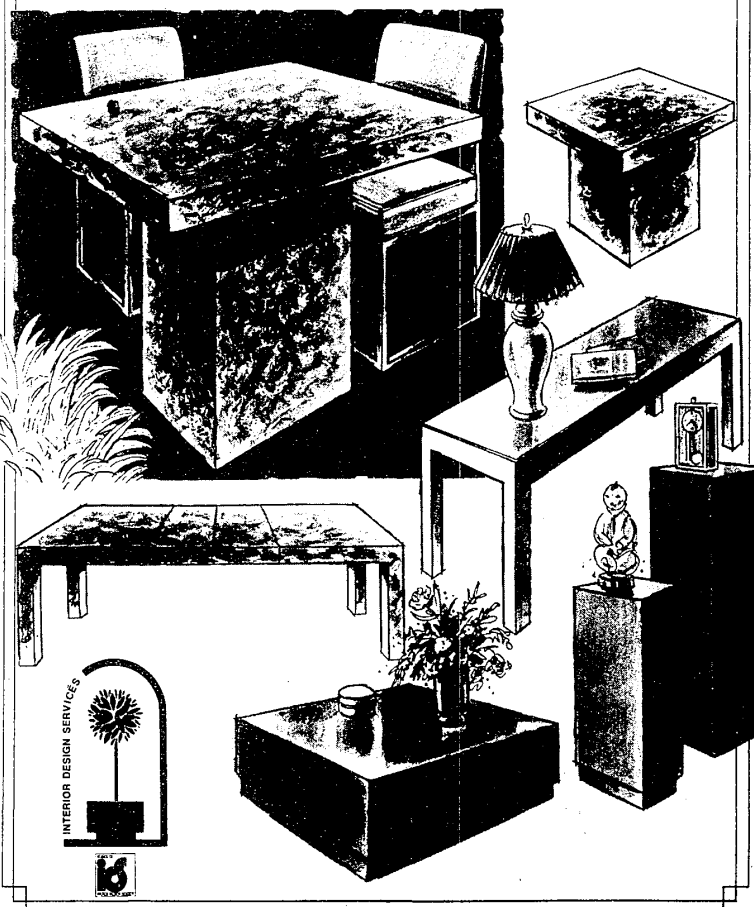
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