

# Jeffries expressway completion is expected this fall

By SHERRY KAHAN

"We anticipate the Jeffries Expressway (I-275) will be completed in the fall," reports Frank Simmons to residents of the western suburbs who have been champing at the bit and gnashing their teeth over the delays in the seven-year project.

Administrative assistant of the metropolitan district of the Michigan Department of Highways and Transportation, Simmons nonetheless dashed the hopes that the link between Telegraph and the Southfield Road interchange would be opened soon.

"The whole section from Southfield to I-275 will be opened at the same time," he said.

But where is everybody, area residents are wondering? Where are the men in their hard hats and the heavy machinery now that the weather has improved?

Councilman Robert Bennett of Livonia is one of those who has been pondering the lack of activity on the Jeffries. A frequent complainant about delays in the projected freeway, he has already written a letter to John Woodford, director of state highway and transportation department, announcing his disappointment about the lack of activity.

SIMMONS OFFERED an explanation.

"The construction season has not opened. The water is not out of the

ground. We have to wait until it dries out. By May we will be working with a full head of steam."

Activity has begun just west of the five-level Southfield interchange where ramps descending toward the gleaming white, they are all dressed up with no place to go. At their feet and to the west no concrete has been laid.

However, a sand subbase is being put down to prepare the ground for the concrete to come, and the contract for paving has been let.

The area to be paved, from Southfield to Evergreen, is one of the most difficult construction spots on the Jeffries. It had to tunnel beneath the

huge marshalling yards of the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway.

In Livonia, a 3 1/2-mile section is yet to be paved. The freeway runs a total of six miles through Livonia. Bennett claimed that construction of this six miles "is taking longer than it took to build the American-built portion of the Panama Canal." Residents living near the Jeffries have had to contend over an extended period of time with such construction woes as noise, dust and traffic problems, he said.

Asked if he would put in an appearance at opening day ceremonies for the completed Jeffries, he said, "If I do it will be to say, 'At last.'"

Redford Township Supervisor Patrick McDonald said that residents of

his community would be glad to see an end of freeway problems such as dust, traffic hazards, dangers to children and the possibility of cars falling down the freeway embankment.

"Because of the increased surface traffic on Schoolcraft, nearby residents also found it difficult to drive from their subdivision onto the street," he added.

SIMMONS RESPONDED to residents' anger at priorities for the long-awaited Jeffries. Why did they complete I-275 running north and south through a much less populated area before the Jeffries?

The answer is, it was easier.

"The Jeffries is a devil of a lot more complicated to build," said Sim-

mons. "Being rural, I-275 required no underground sewer system, no service drives and no interchanges. The complexity in building the Jeffries was a factor in this."

He added that the Jeffries is bottling out a year later than anticipated because of the bankruptcy of the Yeager Steel Fabricating Co., with which the highway department had contracted for steel for many bridges across the freeway.

"We had to relet all of the steel fabricating contracts," said Simmons.

He noted that the cost of these bridges varies, depending on size. A one or two lane turnaround runs between \$250,000 to \$300,000.

## Anti-Semitism topic for JWF women

The women's division of the Jewish Welfare Federation will take a contemporary look at anti-Semitism at its annual Spring Forum on Thursday, April 28.

The program, titled "Apart...Or a Part of," will run from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Jewish Community Center, 6600 W. Maple in West Bloomfield.

In the morning session, 11 members of the spring forum committee will present three vignettes dramatizing instances of anti-Semitism. They are: Gloria Colton, Francine Gold, Marilyn Hartz and Anna Levin, all of Southfield; Renee Epstein and Dorene Finer, both of West Bloomfield; Trudy Foster and Sue Moss, both of Birmingham; Carol Krugel of Farmington; Margo Serlin of Oak Park and Dede Weinberg of Huntington Woods.

Discussion will follow each vignette. Robert Nafaty of Southfield, a member of the national executive committee of B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League, will moderate and respond to questions.

After lunch, Aaron D. Rosenbaum, director of research for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and an editor of "Near East Report" will speak on the problems of anti-Semitism throughout the world.

There is a charge of \$3 for the luncheon, and reservations are required. Contact Lois Brown at the Jewish Welfare Federation at 965-3939 for information.

Shelly Jackier of Birmingham is chairwoman of the spring forum committee. Maida Portnoy of Southfield is co-chairwoman and Roberta Stulberg of Southfield is advisor.

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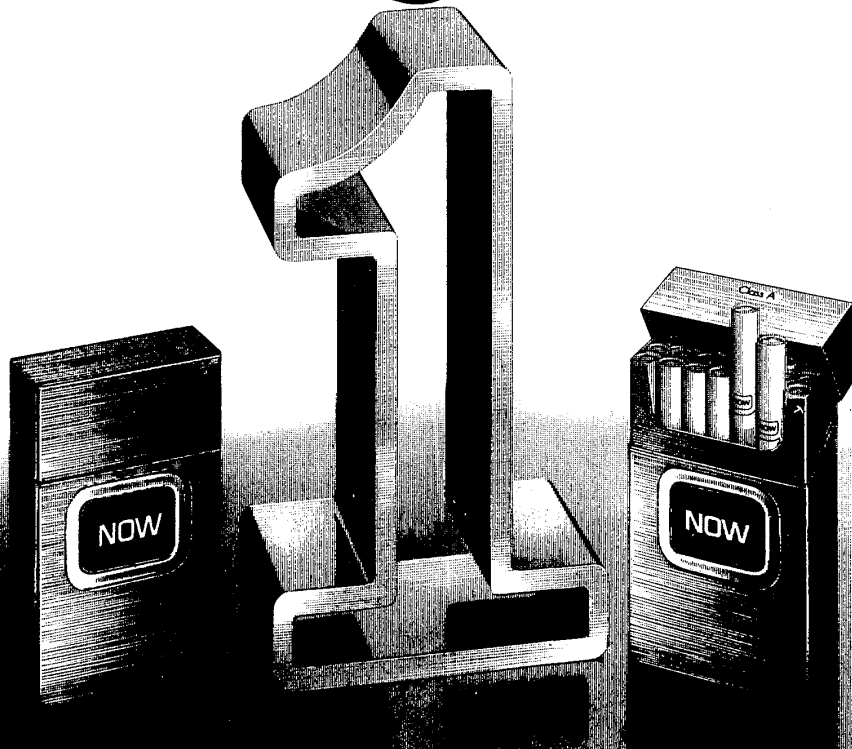
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