

Women are moving up transit ladder

By SANDRA ARMBRUSTER



Life as a civil engineer in the state department of highways and transportation can be a lonely one. But as president of the newly formed Society of Women in Transportation, Irene Mead has an opportunity to contact other women in the field.

Women not only are on the move these days, they're also part of a network that keeps you moving.

Throughout the state, women are taking an increasing role in the transportation field. And now a group of these women have formed a mutual support organization known as the Society for Women in Transportation.

Why have a professional organization for women in the field?

While opportunities and awareness of the transportation field are growing for women, according to the group's president, Irene Mead, their numbers are still few.

"The one disadvantage of being in the transportation field is that there aren't many women in it now. You find yourself a loner, and you have to have a lot of belief in yourself," explained Ms. Mead. "This group provides mutual support and encouragement. There is someone there to hold your hand when you're down."

But the goals of the neophyte group, organized last January, are far more reaching.

"One of the biggest things we provide is a chance for women to establish contacts," said Ms. Mead, a civil engineer with the State Department of Highways and Transportation who attends law school in the evenings.

The society has established a resource library to collect relevant materials for members and has sponsored workshops on such subjects as how to write resumes and apply for jobs.

Members of the group, which numbers 65 from throughout the state, have participated in a career fair at Lansing Community College—an effort they plan to expand.

One way of doing that will be by sponsoring a workshop on setting up a "good ol' girls" network at a Lansing Women's Festival on Nov. 18.

The result of this new network of working women has been seen in efforts by members who "are going after promotions that they would earlier have not tried to attain for fear of co-worker censure or jealousy," said Ms. Mead.

"We don't expect advancement and promotions only because we are women. We do expect advancement on the basis of qualification and skills, and there are many highly qualified women available," she continued.

"Today it's a matter not only of equal pay for equal work, but of equal opportunities for equal qualifications," John P. Woodford, director of the highways and transportation department, agrees that women belong in the field.

"Women professionals have contributed much to transportation in Mich-

'We don't expect advancement and promotions only because we are women. We do expect advancement on the basis of qualification and skills, and there are many highly qualified women available.'

—Civil engineer Irene Mead

igan for many years," he said. "Unfortunately, however, they were few and far between and generally were not encouraged to take up what traditionally was regarded as a male field."

Those professionals include Southeast Michigan Transportation Association employees such as Gail Whitty, a community relations specialist from Birmingham; Jane Rottner, a graphics designer from Southfield; and Karen Jensen, an accountant from Rochester.

Women also are involved in the more technical aspects of transportation, like Claryce Ossman, a planner and program developer with the Detroit Department of Transportation.

Ms. Ossman, who has an urban planning degree from the University of Michigan, said it will take time for women to move into administrative positions.

"Women are new to our organization and new to transportation," she explained. "It will take awhile before women on our staff gain the experience used as a basis for promotions. That will be a problem getting into administrative positions."

Both Ms. Mead and Ms. Ossman stress the importance of education and counseling for women entering the transportation field.

Ms. Mead said she entered the field by accident as a way of applying her interest in math and physics.

"Women can do a lot in the transportation field," said Ms. Mead. "But the basics, like math, have to be established in high school and counselors have to become aware of the abilities and opportunities for women."

"Training in transportation is limited, especially at the university level," Ms. Ossman said, but she encourages women interested in the field to study computer technology.

"The computer aspects of the field are growing, especially with more automated modes of transportation, besides buses," she said.

Whatever the challenges—and heartaches—the transportation field offers Ms. Ossman its own rewards in "seeing a project get off the ground and implemented."

Whether you're a woman on the move, or just interested in keeping the goals of the Society of Women in Transportation moving, Ms. Mead said prospective members can join by writing to the group at Box 13165, Lansing 48901.

Dues are \$12 for voting members and \$9 for non-voting members, which includes cost of a newsletter. The society hosts a dinner meeting every other month, featuring speakers of interest.

Psychologist offers business pointers

private practitioner to restaurateur? An incredible number of things, and none of them things my mother taught me.

BILL VAN HORN, who manages P.J. Clarke's, is still trying to teach me some of the most important points a woman must learn in business.

- Anyone can have 1,000 ideas; it's the execution that counts.
- Listen to everything, but don't talk too much about your business.
- Don't use feminine wiles and expect respect from co-workers.
- Don't expect everyone to like you.
- And for heaven's sake, don't be too open and trusting.

The environment of the business world is quite different from the home or even in a professional office. The ethics, competitiveness, the lack of doing for others as well as oneself can be shock therapy. For women considering a career in business, they'd best be forewarned.

'Don't use feminine wiles and expect respect from co-workers.'

—Sonya Friedman



**Now it comes to you in a great light beer too...
New Michelob Light.**

A super premium light beer with the taste you would expect from a light beer with Michelob on the label.

Beer drinkers across the country have come to expect superior quality from Michelob. Michelob Light lives up to those expectations. It's light, but not too light.

After all, taste is still what beer drinking is all about.

*Superior
Taste in a
Light Beer*

"Making Friends Is Our Business"

HUBERT DISTRIBUTING CO.

SINCE 1937

PONTIAC

858-2340