

Bien venue

Conventioneers wanted

Detroit's reputation as a convention city depends on the suburbs. That message came to southeast Michigan political leaders from Carol Gies, executive director of the nonpartisan Civic Host Committee for the 1980 Republican National Convention July 14-17.

"Conventioneers are a \$135 million a year business. We can increase that to \$200 million a year in three years if we do it right," said Mrs. Gies. She spoke last week to the General Assembly of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, with some 140 member units.

SOME 7,000 news media persons — representing 1,200 television stations and 2,000 newspapers — will descend on the region.

Only one-fifth will be in downtown hotels, and only half will even be in Wayne County, she said. Oakland, Macomb and Washtenaw counties will house the rest.

While the entire region will make "Detroit's" reputation, Mrs. Gies said the Civic Host Committee will be unable to spend anything on decorating the suburbs and providing welcomes at local hotels.

"We're on a decorations kick," she said. "The Host Committee is raising \$40,000 to decorate the downtown. We can direct you to our provider of decorations."

The Host Committee will sell suburban groups souvenirs, programs

and buttons proclaiming "Detroit Loves a Good Party."

THE HOST Committee is arranging special events in Hart Plaza on the Detroit Riverfront and training hotel, bus and limo personnel in how to make a good impression.

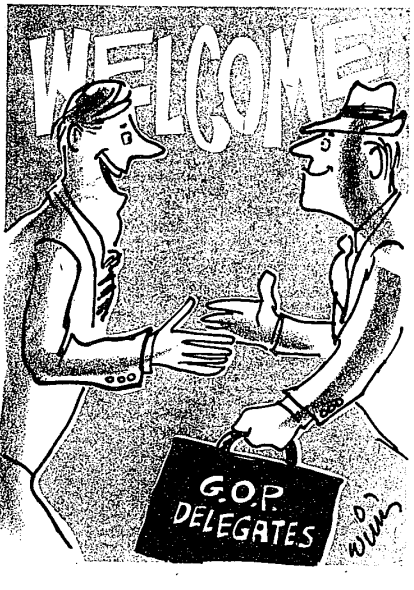
Mrs. Gies asked suburban communities to form their own host committees, place bands near hotels and "do the right thing."

"But Kansas City went from 23rd to seventh nationally as a convention center."

For the region, the Republican National Convention will be \$20 million operation, Mrs. Gies said.

In Kansas City, she added, delegates, staff persons and news media workers spent \$7.5 million on food, \$1 million on banquets and catering, \$1 million on transportation, and \$1.5 million for temporary help.

The TV networks alone spent \$13.3 million in 1976, sending in people weeks in advance, she said. The hotel occupancy rate hit 93.3 percent, and restaurant business jumped 141 percent.



New Center seeks wits for slogan contest

The New Center Area Council, in cooperation with Washington Clothiers, is sponsoring a contest to develop a clever, upbeat slogan for a bumper sticker promoting Midtown Detroit's New Center Area.

Three exciting prizes will be awarded. The grand prize, donated by Moorman's Travel Agency, is a trip for two to Toronto, including round trip train fare from Windsor and lodging for two nights at Toronto's Sheraton Centre Hotel (or similar accommodations).

Second prize is an evening on the town for four — dinner at the Normandie Restaurant, followed by seats for the comedy "Cheaters" with Peggy Cass at the Fisher Theatre.

Third prize will be a \$100 savings bond offered by Michigan National Bank.

Slogans must be brief enough to fit on a bumper sticker, 4-by-4 and still be readable at a distance. It is not necessary to submit art work with slogans. Entries will be judged on the basis of creativity and ability to deliver a concise, positive message about the New Center Area.

Bumper stickers featuring the winning slogan will make their debut and be distributed free at the New Center Summerfest Street Festival in early June.

For further information, contact the Michigan New Center Area Council, 872-0188.

SEMCOG to review handicapped rules

How fast is southeast Michigan moving to make its buses and commuter trains accessible to the handicapped? The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments will hold two public hearings in the coming weeks to get comments on the "transition plan" it must file with the federal government by July 1.

The plan sets timetables for making dial-a-ride buses, large buses, commuter trains and rapid transit facilities accessible to persons in wheelchairs.

Public hearings are scheduled at 7:30 p.m. on:

- Thursday, April 10 in the 13th floor commissioners auditorium, City-County Building, 2 Woodward, Detroit.

- Monday, April 14 in the Oakland County commissioners auditorium, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac.

SEMCOG EXECUTIVE Director Michael M. Giusac said federal rules require that "public transit buses for which funding requests are issued after July 2, 1979 must be wheelchair accessible."

"The rule requires that the 'fixed route bus system must be accessible by July 1, 1982. Fixed route accessibility is achieved when at least one-half of the peak hour service is accessible to handicapped persons."

The paratransit system must also be accessible by July 1, 1982. Access-

ibility, as it relates to the paratransit system, is achieved when essentially the same service is provided to handicapped persons as is provided to others.

"Commuter rail systems must be made accessible. All key stations must be made accessible within three years with an extension to 30 years if station accessibility involves extraordinary costs," said Giusac.

THE RULES were made under the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

That law prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicap in any program receiving federal assistance. Public transportation receives about 80 percent federal assistance for capital outlay and 50 percent for operating deficits.

"SEMCOG, as the metropolitan planning organization for southeast Michigan, has the principal responsibility for preparing and submitting the transition plan," said Giusac.

The public hearings were set by SEMCOG's General Assembly, composed of all member governments. Plans have been reviewed by the Regional Elderly and Handicapped Service Development Committee, the Ann Arbor Local Advisory Council, the Transportation Advisory Committee, SEMCOG's Council on Regional Development and SEMCOG's Executive Committee.

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