

Small bus strike strands 1,200

A month-long strike continues to keep some small buses off the streets in Oakland and Wayne counties.

An estimated 1,200 daily users of the Oakland and Wayne Advanced Reservation Transit Systems are affected by

the walkout, which began Oct. 3.

Users are primarily elderly and handicapped.

The strike is against Transit Management Inc., which operates the small bus service under contract with the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA).

The strike, by 105 drivers and clerks represented by Teamsters Local 247, has not affected SEMTA's Dial-A-Ride service in several Oakland County communities, including Birmingham. Likewise, Nankin Transportation Commission service in Westland, Garden City and Canton Township is not affected. Redford Township's Dial-A-Ride is also still in service.

SPokesman for both sides said last week little progress has been made in bargaining since the strike began. Both federal and state mediators have been participating in negotiations.

"We're still a long way apart on quite a few issues," said David Schuler, Teamsters negotiator. "The company has made us two offers, but they say they haven't made a final offer. I don't know what the hell the hold-up is."

Ron Barnes, general manager of

Transit Management of Wayne and Oakland County, said the company has offered the drivers and clerks \$3.25 an hour, a 14-cent increase over the current hourly rate.

Because the strikers had worked 47 hours a week, the equivalent hourly wage was \$5.11 an hour, Barnes said. He said the \$3.25 offer was based on a 40-hour week.

The Teamsters reportedly were seeking a \$4 hourly increase for the clerks and drivers. Barnes said the union has reduced the demand to a \$3.75 hourly increase.

THE NEXT bargaining session is scheduled for Friday. Barnes said he was waiting for the union to make a counter-offer. Transit Management, which also operates small bus systems in other areas of the country, was awarded the OCART and WAYCART system contracts this summer.

The Teamsters local won a bargaining representation election among the system's clerks and drivers in July. Other issues apparently unresolved include health insurance benefits and contract language covering working conditions.

Stats show decrease 18-20 drunk driving

Drunken driving by drivers aged 18, 19 or 20 decreased significantly in Michigan after the legal drinking age was raised from 18 to 21 in December 1978.

The finding is one result of a current University of Michigan study of 1978 and 1979 breath test reports furnished the U-M Highway Safety Research Institute (HSRI) for analysis. The data included the breath test results and age of the drivers arrested and tested by police.

The study, sponsored by the Office of Highway Safety planning, Department of State Police, is being conducted by Lyle D. Filkins, research scientist at HSRI.

"Compared to 1978," says Filkins, "the numbers of 18- to 20-year-old drivers who were arrested and tested for drunk driving during 1979 decreased significantly. For 18-year-olds, the decrease was 5 percent. For 19-year-olds, it was 9.2 percent. For 20-year-olds, it was 5.4 percent.

"This is in sharp contrast to increased numbers of arrests and tests during 1979 of drivers in all other age groups — a 21 percent in-

crease over the total for 1978. The increase for drivers aged 21 to 25 was 22.4 percent."

In the absence of any evidence of bias in police enforcement practices favoring 18- to 20-year-olds, said Filkins, the study findings "clearly indicate that the raising of the legal drinking age to 21, effective in 1979, has decreased the numbers of under age-21 drivers who are driving under the influence of alcohol."

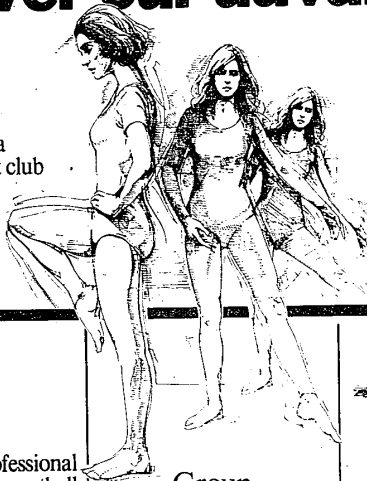
The total number of breath tests given all 18- to 20-year-old drivers in Michigan in 1978 was 3,961. In 1979 this total was 3,699. The total for drivers of all other ages in Michigan in 1978 was 22,884. In 1979 this total was 27,700.

In 1979, according to HSRI, the average blood alcohol content for tested drivers 18 to 20 years old was .147 percent. It was 175 percent for drivers of all other ages.

Under Michigan law, drivers with a blood alcohol content above .070 percent are presumed to be driving while impaired by alcohol, says Filkins.

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