

# Townships capture open SEMTA seat

Northern townships captured an Oakland County seat on the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) by the simple tactic of loading the ballot.

"The townships went to great pains to load the ballot with township people," said James Reid, supervisor of White Lake Township, at a caucus prior to a meeting of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) last week.

The SEMTA seat became vacant when Homer Case of Bloomfield Township resigned Jan. 19.

UNDER STATE law, SEMCOG, a voluntary agency of 140 local governments, was to call a meeting of one representative from each governing body of the cities, villages and townships in the county. The group was to nominate three candidates.

Township people, said Reid, got all their representatives to that meeting, held Feb. 9 in Lathrup Village. Mayors of such cities as Lathrup Village, Southfield and Rochester, among others, failed to attend.

That meeting nominated three candidates, all supervisors of northern Oakland townships: James Seeterlin of Waterford, Joanne VanTassel of Orion and Leslie (Bill) Wright of Brandon. When it came time last week for

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SEMCOG delegates to choose between the three, Wright sent word that he was withdrawing, and VanTassel failed to show up.

SEMCOG delegates gave approximately 110 votes to Seeterlin and three to Van Tassel.

SEETERLIN, 55, joins a 15-member board which oversees SEMTA, a seven-county authority operating buses and commuter trains. Oakland County sends three people to the board. Seeterlin's election assures another vote for extending bus service and against rapid transit.

A SEMCOG delegate and former chairman of the Area Water Quality Board, Seeterlin has long been active in regional organizations. He was Waterford Township supervisor from 1963-65, Oakland County treasurer 1965-68 and township supervisor again since 1970.

He has been chairman of the county's association of township supervisors and an Oakland representative on the State Boundary Commission, which rules on annexation issues.

# SEMCOC promotes Amberger to chief

John Amberger will move next door in the Book Building April 12 when he becomes executive director of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments.

SEMCOC's executive committee last week unanimously picked Amberger to succeed Michael Glusac as top staff man in the seven-county voluntary planning organization.

Amberger, 51, of Detroit, has been deputy to Glusac since 1974, occupying an office next to Glusac on the eighth floor of the downtown Detroit office building. Amberger had previously been an aide to Detroit Mayor Roman Gribble and director of the Detroit House of Correction. Terms of his salary were left up to SEMCOG's finance committee.

NO OTHER candidates were considered, which bothered one SEMCOG delegate, Wayne County Commissioner William Sullivan of Exeter. "A lot of people have made application," said Sullivan.

Other executive committee members, however, convinced Sullivan they should hire a known, qualified person like Amberger rather than conduct a long search for a new person.

"I have seen SEMTA (transportation authority) go through a year of agony," said Saline Mayor Donald Shelton, referring to the SEMTA board's deadlock over four applicants. The SEMTA board last week finally voted to give its acting general manager, Gary Krause, a one-year contract as general manager, even though Krause had not sought the post.

THE MEETING was called to consider Amberger for appointment as acting executive director and to issue a call for applicants for a permanent appointment.

But Shelton argued, "People are hesitant to deal with an acting director who may not be there tomorrow. An acting director doesn't speak with a whole lot of authority."

Glusac will leave to become Chrysler Corp.'s director of intergovernmental and civic affairs, a job he said he hadn't sought but was asked to consider. That led Shelton to quip: "Mike's going from one public agency to another."

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