

Northville Coach Line May Call It Quits

Northville Coach Lines, northwest suburban Wayne County's only bus service but one of the smallest fleets in the metropolitan area, is considering going out of business.

Adolph Schiller, operating partner among three stock-

holders, told Observer Newspapers Monday: "I'd rather not commit myself right now, but, yes, we are holding a stockholder's meeting Tuesday afternoon."

He refused to specify the purpose, but neither did he

discuss liquidation would be discussed.

"When you're not making money, naturally you talk about it," Schiller said.

Northville Coach Lines operated at a \$13,000 annual deficit for the five years prior to

last June. Its main business is in charter service, operating only one passenger route on Seven Mile between the Northville and Grand River Avenue.

Schiller explained that if a decision to cease operations were made, this passenger

service would continue for a certain period until excused by the Michigan Public Service Commission.

The commission must approve the decision in any case, said Schiller. "Look at the railroads. They've been trying to

go out of business for years and can't."

Stockholders meeting with Schiller Tuesday were Max Wolf and attorney Samuel Leib.

THE COMPANY operates 18

buses, and Schiller recently placed the sale value of the company, including two buildings, at \$500,000.

At the time, he was estimating what it would take for the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMATA) to buy his company.

SEMATA consultants have confirmed Schiller's own contentions that subsidies will be necessary to keep buses rolling in this locale, due to unenthusiastic riders.

Would SEMATA be offered the fleet if Northville Coach does quit? "Maybe we would sell to them. Maybe they would be forced to buy. Who knows," said Schiller.

WILLIAM C. OSTENSON, executive secretary of SEMATA said he had three possible options to meet the emergency of any closing:

- 1) Seek a state or local subsidy;
- 2) try to get Detroit's DSR to extend its service westward along Seven Mile; or
- 3) do nothing and let the service drop.

Ostenson said Northville Coach Line carried about 100 passengers a day for a revenue of about \$400 a week on its only commercial passenger line-along Seven Mile from the City of Northville to the Livonia Mall.

Most of the company's business has been in charter runs for private clubs and school groups. At times in recent years, it attempted to expand its passenger runs in Plymouth and Livonia but was never successful.

Ostenson said the coach line owners had asked him if SEMATA would like to buy them out right now, but Ostenson said he would be unable either to subsidize them or buy them out in anything less than six months or a year.

SEMATA has a recommendation from hired consultants that it acquire eight bus companies-including Northville Coach and DSR-and merge them into a single, unified system in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties. Other financial studies of this plan are in progress.

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