

SEMOGCOG urges finding alternatives to landfills

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(D7A)

By Kathy Parrishatani writer

People count on them for advice on getting rid of the 15,000 tons of garbage thrown out daily in southeastern Michigan.

Sometimes, though, Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) officials weren't quite sure what their own policies were — because they didn't have any. So SEMCOG brought 40 solid waste experts together June 28 for a daylong brainstorming session. Just two months

later, their guidelines were accepted by SEMCOG's executive committee — and are on their way to general assembly action Oct. 26. If adopted, the policy would help SEMCOG and local governments make decisions on important solid waste management issues like whether to use landfills. It would also give the regional agency "effective, coordinated input" into the process of amending Public Act 841, Michigan's Solid Waste Management Act.

"We are asked to speak with the voice of the region on these issues," ex-

plained Patrick Brunett, SEMCOG's manager of land use and environmental programs.

"But we really had never adopted our own policies on them. We knew most of the issues, so it was just a matter of clarifying them."

The 22 policies address water quality and environmental protection elements of solid waste disposal, with special attention to siting of landfills and management of landfill sites.

SEMCOG URGES FINDING alternatives to landfills, calling them the

"least desirable method of dealing with solid waste." Reasons given were that landfills take up land, increase truck traffic and produce noise, litter and odor.

But a landfill moratorium was vetoed during the original planning session, which brought together more than 40 technicians and citizens interested in solid waste management issues.

"We need landfills for part of our disposal system. There's no way to get around them," said Brunett, explaining that even when trash is incinerated ash

still remains.

"But we must be sure local governments are involved in the process and that it's the most environmentally sound."

Backing local control, the proposals recommend that each county handle its own disposal needs within its boundaries or negotiate with counties it exports waste to.

Communities would participate in making decisions about solid waste management, with sites conforming to local land use planning and zoning re-

quirements.

Local governments could inspect operating standards and there would be mitigation measures such as landscaping and truck routes to make facilities more acceptable.

SEMCOG's recommendations also urge that funds be available to host communities to defray costs for activities related to landfills and other disposal facilities. And communities which dispose of their neighbors' waste would get monetary or other compensation.

4 OCC unions on job without contracts

With classes scheduled to start today, Oakland Community College officials were hoping to wrap up negotiations with four of their unions.

"Generally, negotiations are progressing. We are expecting positive conclusions before long," said George Cartsonis, director of college communications.

Classes were to begin at 9 a.m. today at the school's four campuses, which are located in Auburn Heights, Farmington Hills, Royal Oak and Southfield, and Union Lake.

Agreements have already been reached with the non-union administrators and college support staff and the operating engineers, who belong to the AFL-CIO.

Still discussing agreements are the classified, faculty, maintenance and public safety employees. While the faculty contract expires today, the rest are all working on extended agreements. Cartsonis said OCC's last strike was in the early 1970s, and school officials don't expect one this year.

At a board of trustees meeting last week, OCC president Robert F. Roelofs assured the board there was "no likelihood of a strike by our faculty."

"It's understood they will continue to work without a contract."

Roelofs said the negotiations are taking "more time than we would have liked, but there are some tough issues. But there will be no disruption in our classes."

Classified, faculty, maintenance and public safety employees are negotiating contracts

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