

Bus company seeks SEMTA routes

By Kathy Parrish
staff writer

Commuters stranded by Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) may get picked up by a Toledo bus company.

Shortway Lines, which has a major service center in Southfield, is interested in taking over some of the routes SEMTA will eliminate next week.

"We're experienced in commuter service and feel there's a market for us to step in and offer that here," said Donald Zajac, vice president of marketing for Holland Industries, Shortway's parent company.

"We think it could be done economically for the consumer and profitably for our company."

TO OFFSET A \$16 million deficit, SEMTA will cut out its commuter rail and reducing bus routes serving Oakland, Macomb and western Wayne counties. Some staff members have already been laid off, but the bulk of the cuts take effect Oct. 17. SEMTA has also been approached by Trailways, said a SEMTA spokesman. But it hasn't met yet with either transportation company.

Fitness fans flock to OU

A fall session of Oakland University's "Total Fitness/Health Maintenance" program will be held Nov. 8 to Dec. 30 for area men and women.

Persons are invited to sign up for the program that combines calisthenics and flexibility exer-

cises, mini-lectures on nutrition, diet, and exercise physiology, with aerobics.

For costs and additional information contact Sally Peters or Becky O'Connor at the OU Exercise Physiology Lab during regular weekday business hours at 377-3198 or 377-3197.

Shortway's silver buses would pick up and drop passengers in lots where SEMTA provided Park and Ride service. Fares would be competitive, if Shortways doesn't have to pay too much to rent or maintain the lots, a company spokesman said.

If an agreement is reached, SEMTA probably would license a firm to use certain established routes.

Shortway representatives appeared before the SEMTA board of directors last week to show their interest in providing service to commuters. Zajac said his company would probably request a purchase of service agreement to take over established routes.

STARTED IN 1928 in Tecumseh, Shortway originally ran buses between Adrian and Detroit. The company moved to Toledo in 1928 and has been in the Detroit area since the 1930s.

Now in seven states, the transportation firm has 200 buses offering charter and tour service. In Pennsylvania, it runs 43-49 buses from suburban

Washington, Pa., to Pittsburgh.

Southfield-based Shortway Airport Limousines provides service from Metro Airport to all cities within 50 miles. Zajac said preliminary studies showed "potential" in expanding the local operation to include former SEMTA riders.

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Fares would be competitive, if Shortways doesn't have to pay too much to rent or maintain the lots, Zajac said.

If agreement is reached with SEMTA, the company could start service within 30 days, he said.

"It wouldn't be long," Shortways has buses available now, he said. "We are prepared to step in and offer the service."

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