County solid waste czar pledges action

By Janice Brunson
staff writer

Roger Smith, 50, Southfield's director of Public Services since 1978, has been named the first deputy director of solid waste management for Oakland County.

The position, created last year to implement the county's new solid waste program, is aimed at a significant reduction in landfill trash.

"It's an exciting challenge. I'm looking forward to it. My primary focus will be on implementing the new program. We've been through all the planning. Now it's time for implementation," said Smith, a 30-year resident of Livonia, who will assume his duties June 12.

Smith has participated in the planning as Southfield's representative to the Southwest Oakland County Solid Waste Consortium the past two years, serving as staff analyst and secretary/treasurer to the body.

In his new position, which pays nearly $65,000, he will implement goals recommended by the consortium. Goals include a 50 percent reduction in solid waste by implementing recycling, reuse and composting programs, an energy incineration waste program producing 40 megawatts of electricity and a household hazards waste program.

'We've been through all the planning. Now it's time for implementation.'
— Roger Smith
deputy director for solid waste

"WE FEEL HE'LL be a very strong addition to the department," said Milton Handorf, director of public works for Oakland County who submitted Smith's name to county commissioners for confirmation late last month.

Handorf said Smith was selected from a wide range of candidates because "a number of us were impressed with his work on the consortium."

Smith's responsibilities will also include determining if there are any infectious waste materials in Oakland County, according to Handorf.

Smith has previously been employed in a county position, conducting a 15- month, federally funded safety study for the Traffic Improvement Association of Oakland County.

A graduate of Michigan State University in 1958 with a degree in civil engineering, Smith has been employed by the city of Southfield since 1970.

He is past president of the Southeast Oakland County Water Authority Board and the Institute of Transportation Engineers. He has also lectured on traffic safety at Wayne State University.

He is married and has two grown children.

JERRY ZOLYNSKY/staff photographer

Goals for Roger Smith include reducing Oakland County's solid waste by 50 percent by implementing recycling, reuse and composting programs.

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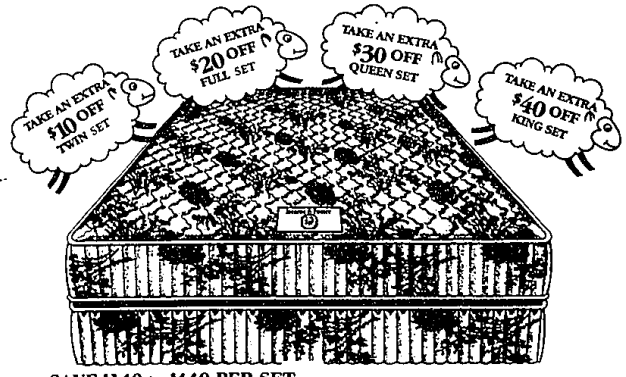

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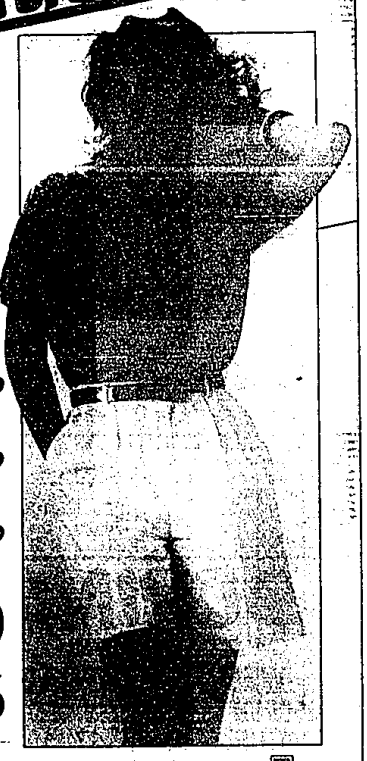

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