

SEMCOG Gets Big Member, New Funds

The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) is starting 1971 but in the last weeks of the year Executive Director E. Robert Turner could say: Like most public agencies and private firms, and many

households, SEMCOG in 1970 found funds hard to come by. The succession of December events: Approval by the Ford Foundation of \$100,000 in support grants.

little daylight at the end of the tunnel. The succession of December events: Approval by the Ford Foundation of \$100,000 in support grants.

● Action by the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce to raise \$75,000 in private funds to support a region-wide solid waste disposal system study.

● Affirmative vote by the Macomb County Board of Commissioners to join SEMCOG.

THE MACOMB County government had not participated in SEMCOG as an active voting member since this voluntary association of units of local government and school districts in six counties was activated in January 1969.

With Macomb County now a member, a task force on goals, objectives and structure will this month wrap up a series of discussions on how to strengthen SEMCOG.

In a review of 1970 program accomplishments, Turner cited both beginning efforts in

such new activities as drug abuse control coordination, cable television (CATV) potential, and 911 emergency telephone assistance programs.

Also new, not only in southeast Michigan but in the nation, are SEMCOG's regional Census Service Center, which will provide details of 1970 census for local agencies and firms, and a program to encourage and support qualified minority group persons in training for government administration.

"In our cities, where minorities, particularly blacks, comprise an ever-increasing percentage of the population, there is a shortage of minority group persons in administrative positions.

"One of the reasons is that the system has failed to provide adequate training."

BY ARRANGING programs at four area universities (Wayne State, University of Michigan, University of Detroit, and Eastern Michigan University at Ypsilanti), and apprenticeships in local governments, SEMCOG has coordinated the training of 35 young hopefuls, 19 of whom are presently enrolled. Funds are provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The Census Service Center project, long sustained without federal or state support, was found by Ford Foundation to be the kind of innovative program that offers great potential, thus will be supported with a \$50,000 grant. The foundation also provided a \$50,000 recoverable grant, which will serve as loan collateral for a one-year period.

Other continuing SEMCOG programs:

SOCIAL SERVICES-A new Social Services Division headed by Kathleen Straus, former assistant director of Detroit's Model Neighborhood Agency, was formed. One of the division's functions was to complete the first region-wide housing inventory. This showed that to meet demands for housing through 1990, an average of 86,000 new dwelling units must be built every year, and that between 1969 and 1973, 47,000 low and moderate price housing units are needed.

To help generate new housing production, SEMCOG's housing division began an educational program to advise how "Operation Breakthrough," the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) might be utilized.

Other Social Services Division functions included coordinating Model Cities programs in three SEM cities (Ann Arbor, Detroit and Highland Park).

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