

Wayne official heads SEMCOG

By Tim Richard
Staff writer

Local units will have to solve environmental problems themselves, together and without federal or state help, says Milton Mack Jr., the new chair of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments.

"The '90s is the decade of the environment, and solid waste is the issue of the '90s," Mack said as SEMCOG delegates unanimously elected him to head the seven-county regional planning agency last week.

The first western Wayne County official to head SEMCOG in its 21-year history, Mack, 40, is a fourth-term county commissioner.

Mack, D-Wayne, has seen his own career in county politics take a downturn when he supported policies of former County Executive William

Lucas and former board chair John Hertel.

"THE FEDERAL government is backing out of its responsibilities and making more and more demands on local governments," he said.

"State government does not have the dollars to deal with the issues."

"Local governments will have to step up to the task," he said, citing problems of solid waste, stormwater and infrastructure, a collective term for public roads, bridges, sewers and water lines.

Although most solid waste plans are being drafted on a countywide basis, Mack said SEMCOG has a role in this area.

"Solid waste is a classical regional issue," he said, noting that cities generate it, townships accept it, the state makes the rules, and the county runs the programs.

"SEMCOG can participate in inter-county waste management agreements," Mack said.

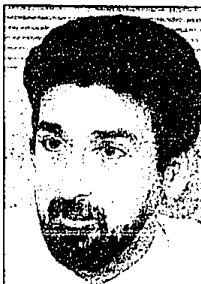
AN ATTORNEY, Mack has headed the county board's public services and solid waste planning committees.

Ironically, he said in an interview, he will have more time as SEMCOG chair than he had serving on its various committees.

At an annual meeting held in Dearborn, Mack was elected to succeed two people — Nancy Davis, Ann Arbor Township supervisor who gave up the post when she lost a reelection bid last year; and Fred Korzon, Bloomfield Township supervisor who filled out her term.

In high humor, the 140-member general assembly gave Davis and Korzon plaques that looked as if they had been ripped in half.

"It's a thankless job but a rewarding one," Davis of regional planning. Other officers elected last week are: first vice-chair, Clyde Cleveland, Detroit councilman; other vice chairs, Martha Hoyer, Novi councilmember, Gerald McCaffrey, Ma-



Milton Mack Jr.
Chair of SEMCOG

comb Intermediate school board; E.A. Jackson Morris, Pittsfield Township supervisor; and Richard Rudnicki, Livingston County drain commissioner.

Donations sought for camp for handicapped

Last summer SCAMP, a summer day camp for children with handicaps, first implemented a camp store program.

The program is designed to encourage positive behavior and to teach basic survival skills to the campers, according to Jean I. Walker, coordinator. Campers earn points for good behavior which can be redeemed for items in the store. Last year's program was made possible by the donations of local merchants.

In order to continue this program, donations are again needed to stock the store, Walker said. In the past, these donations have included promotional items such as T-shirts and bumper stickers with station logos, as well as items from concerts and sporting events.

SCAMP is a six-week summer day camp for children with handicaps run through the Bloomfield Hills School District at West Hills Middle School in West Bloomfield. It is funded through tuition and

Past donations have included promotional items such as T-shirts and bumper stickers with station logos, as well as items from concerts and sporting events.

donations. SCAMP is a tax-deductible, nonprofit organization, which serves youth from preschool to age 26 from school districts in Southern Oakland, Wayne and Macomb counties. These children may be hearing impaired, emotionally impaired, learning disabled, mentally or physically handicapped.

SCAMP is designed to provide campers with an enriching summer day camp experience of recreational activities as well as academic study and reinforcement, Walker said.

For donations, call 540-5278.

Some answers to questions on school tax plans

By Tim Richard
Staff writer

Voters have a simple choice Nov. 7: Say "yes" or "no" to Plan 1, "yes" or "no" to Plan 2. If both get a majority, the one with the greater number of yes votes becomes part of the Michigan Constitution.

But both plans are enormously complex. It means different things to each of the state's 560-plus public school districts, and different things to every household.

Both plans would pump more money into schools, which which have widely varying resources per child — less than \$2,500 to more than \$7,000.

Plan 1 would raise the 4 percent sales tax to 4.5 percent and provide no property tax relief. Plan 2 would raise the sales tax to 6 percent and cut school operating property taxes by varying amounts.

Don't look to your political party affiliation as a guide. Both parties are split all over the map.

In general, lawmakers from high-tech metropolitan suburbs, where assessments are soaring, opposed putting the plans on the ballot.

Lawmakers from rural areas, where the farm economy is hurting, favored the bigger tax plan.

Here are some of the more commonly asked questions with answers from the legislative staff analyses:

Q: How does the tax part of Plan 1 work?

A: The sales and use taxes would go up next Jan. 1. This plan would not exempt electricity and utility bills of low-income people.

Local school property taxes are unaffected.

Q: How does Plan 1 help schools?

A: About \$400 million in new money would be pumped into public schools — \$285 million into a new state aid formula, \$115 million into specific programs to improve school quality.

Q: Could the Legislature raid the pot for other purposes?

A: No, not for other purposes. Plan 1 would constitutionally earmark several taxes for schools: all the new half-cent sales tax, 60 percent of the existing sales tax, net lottery reve-

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nue, portions of the "sin" taxes on cigarettes and liquor, and others.

But the Legislature could change how the total pot is distributed — that is, adjust the school aid formula.

Q: What happens to revenue in Plan 2?

A: The sales tax would go to 6 percent on Jan. 1, but electricity and heating fuel of low-income households would be exempt from the sales tax.

School operating property taxes would be reduced by a gross of \$1.3 billion, minus \$200 million in "circuit breaker" rebates for households whose property tax bills exceed 3.5 percent of income.

Homeowners would get a \$975 million cut; businesses, \$340 million.

Q: Isn't this the plan with tax base sharing?

A: It sure is. Beginning in July 1990, 14 mills of tax on business property would be collected statewide and 9 mills on non-business property.

Local districts would be allowed to levy a "foundation" millage. That would guarantee them 90 percent of what they collected in 1989-90 plus \$250 to \$350 more.

In addition, voters in a local district could levy another 4 mills.

Q: In mills, what do these cuts amount to?

A: On average, a 12.3 mills cut for homes and agricultural property — 37 percent. For businesses, 7.3 mills or 22 percent.

There is no effect on school bond taxes, county, city, village, township, village, special education or community college taxes.

Q: But no one is average, right?

A: Right.

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