# SMART officials ponder a road to privatization

Directors of Metropolitan De-troit's suburban bus system his week will again try to resolve a problem that has divided them for three months and undermined \$40 million in grants to update and ex-pand the mass transportation sys-tem.

At issue is about \$12 million in federal money allocated to buy 20 new buses and add 12 routes to SMART (the Soburban Mobility Au-thority for Regional Transporation).

The expansion is the first phase of a plan to eventually add more than 60 new buses and replace others in SMART's aging fleet.

SMART's aging fleet.

SMART's board of directors is scheduled to review the matter at its regular meeting Tuesday. But each of the last two monthly meetings—when directors were also scheduled to address the matter—was adjourned for the lack of a quorum.

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SMART annually handles about 8
million riders in Wayne, Oakland,
Macomb, Monroe, Livingston and St.
Clair countles. About one-third of
those riders begin or end their trips
in Oakland County.

SMART board members are split over awarding the contract to either of the two low bidders, ATE Management and Service Co. of Cincinnati or directly to SMART.

To qualify for the \$12 million, SMART must award a contract to one of five companies submitting competitive bids to operate the 20 new buses and 12 new routes.

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The split is personified in the deputy county executives from Oakland and Wayne counties, Parick Nowak and Michael Duggan, respectively.

Nowak, who is also chairman of SMART, wants to award the contract to ATE, asying the company would save SMART about \$300,000 in phase one, and more than \$1.6 million over the complete expansion.

Awarding the contract to ATE, would help privative SMART, Nowak

said, something the federal govern-ment is encouraging to save money and improve service.

Duggan wants to award the con-tract to SMART, insisting its bid is actually lower and would save mon-ey over the years.

by over the years.

Duggan said federal bid procedures are designed to provide an advantage to private companies, like ATE, by the way administrative costs are computed.

costs are computed.

Giving a sense of urgency to the situation is Nowak's contention that the federal Urban Mass Transit Administration will take back its grant if SMART doesn't award the contract soon.

"Other communities are ready to put that money to use if we're not," said Nowak. "I'm afraid we'll lose it."

## OU enrollment

### Half of students come from county

Oakland County continues to pro-vide just over half of Oakland Uni-versity's students, fall enrollment records show.

A total 6.314 of OU's 12.400 stu-

Information from the Office of In-stitutional Research shows totals in

three areas fell slightly from 1989 figures: Oakland County down only four students, Macomb down 24 and Wayne down 17.

Combined student totals for Gene-sec, Lapeer and St. Clair counties were 623 for fall 1989 and 660 for fall 1990.

Of OU's students, 12,204 came from Michigan, up 20 over last fall. Foreign enrollment was 129 com-

pared with 125 last fall. Other U.S. enrollment fell from 76 students in 1989 to 67 this year.

Women continue to outnumber men in the OU student body by a count of 7,920 to 4,480. Fernale en-rollment was up 20 students over last year and male enrollment up by one student.

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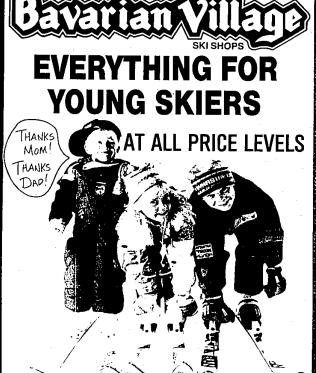






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