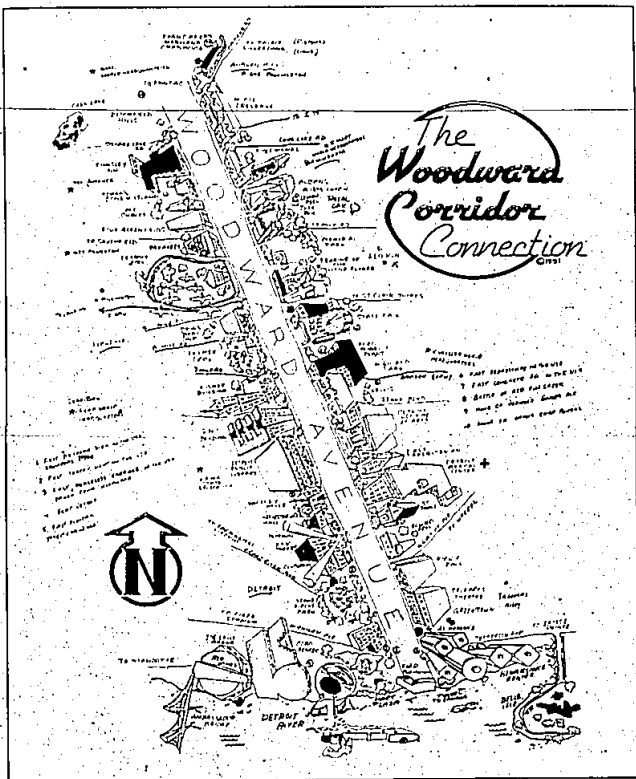


# New van service shuttles well-heeled about



Jackson did the research and drawing for the poster featuring focal points of the Woodward corridor. In truth, his shuttle service also goes off the Woodward track.

By Pat Murphy  
staff writer

It doesn't take an economic wizard to realize times are tough. It does take, however, something of an entrepreneur to regard the economic doldrums of 1991-92 as the ideal time to start a business.

But that's the way Ronald C. Jackson of Rochester Hills looks at the time frame in which he started The Woodward Corridor Connection.

It's a shuttle service catering to upscale clients who might want to party, or relax, en route to the airport, a hockey game, the theater or other Detroit-area attractions. Jackson started his service last May, well after the end of Desert Storm when the U.S. economy, including Michigan's, was expected to come out of its war-time sluggishness.

The economy didn't get better, of course. And as the nation moves into 1992 more and more economists are talking in terms of recession, with no quick turn-about in sight.

BUT THAT DOESN'T bother Jackson, a bachelor in his 40s, whose professional career includes more than 20 years in sales promotion with Chevrolet and time as a part-time chef.

"If a business can make it in hard times," he said, "it can surely make it when things get better."

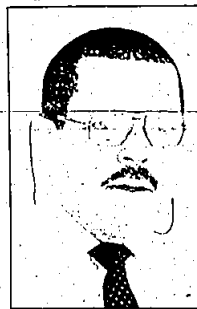
Jackson's company has three vans for taking groups to places like the Joe Louis Arena, the Fox Theatre, the Birmingham Theatre, the Pontiac Silverdome and points between.

Many attractions are along Woodward — hence, the shuttle service's name. But Jackson's vehicles will go anywhere in the metro area — including Metropolitan Airport offering a variety of amenities such as beverages, meals, mobile phone service and newspapers.

For a price (ranging from \$8 to \$55 per person, group rates), the connection will arrange tickets, meals (in suburban or downtown restaurants) and door-to-door pickup and delivery.

For Sunday's meeting between the Dallas Cowboys and the Detroit Lions, for example, Jackson bought 40 tickets and made them available in various packages. One package — advertised in Texas newspapers — included admission to the game (lower level, roundtrip transportation from Mr. B's restaurant in Southfield) to the Silverdome, beer, and parking... for \$49 per person.

"I've sold a number of tickets in the Birmingham area," he said.



*'If a business can make it in hard times, it can surely make it when things get better.'*

— Ronald C. Jackson

"People want to avoid the hassle of driving and parking."

"THEY'RE ALSO CONCERNED about the new laws," Jackson said, referring to tougher laws against drinking and driving that went into effect Jan. 1.

Jackson sees the possibility of other business Jan. 26, the day of the Superbowl (in Minneapolis), with or without the Lions. His shuttle is ready to pick revelers up at their door, deliver them to watering holes hosting Superbowl parties and then take them home.

"People just don't want to drink and drive," he said. "And it makes good sense."

Jackson was raised in southern Ohio and attended evening classes at the University of Cincinnati, graduating in 1971. He lived in Birmingham during the last 10 years of his tenure with Chevrolet, during which he was a manager in sales promotion.

That's when the idea — and marketing plan — for the Woodward Corridor Connection took shape.

"I saw a lot of companies and conventions that had out-of-town clients

who wanted to see the Detroit-area attractions," Jackson said. "I also saw potential in family reunions, bachelor parties or bridal showers."

AS PART OF his promotion material, Jackson did the research and the drawing for a colorful poster (at left) featuring focal points of the Woodward corridor. It begins at Belle Isle and includes well-known landmarks like Cobo Hall, the General Motors headquarters and the Kingsley Inn.

Jackson said he incorporated some interesting bits of trivia into his rendering of the Woodward corridor, like the place where the first ice cream soda was made, the location of the first expressway in the U.S. and the site of the Battle of the Red Run Creek (where Indians allied with Chief Pontiac reportedly massacred British soldiers "making the creek run red" with blood).

"Putting the material together was fun, Jackson said. But it also has a bigger purpose.

"You have to promote your business," he said. After all, these are tough times.

## Topic: developmentally disabled

The Oakland County Regional Interagency Coordinating Committee for Developmental Disabilities is presenting a program for consumers, parents and professionals on planning for the future.

Thomas F. Kendzior, an attorney and associate director of the Association for Retarded Citizens/Oakland County, will give an overview

of the Oakland County Interagency Coordinating Committee and its functions.

The meeting will be 7-9:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Oak Park branch of the Jewish Community Center, 15110 W. 10 Mile Road.

For further information, call Carol Kacander at (313) 967-4357.

## Agency seeks birth companions

Would you enjoy sharing in the miracle of birth or the joy of a new family getting to know one another?

Oakland Family Services is looking for a few good volunteers to act

as perinatal coaches and birth companions with first time expectant families.

Agency orientation for volunteers will be 6-9 p.m. Jan. 21 at 114 Orchard Lake Road, Pontiac. Volunteer

opportunities are located throughout the county.

For more information, contact Melinda Bradley or Jane Van Doorne, Prevention Services Coordinators, at 858-7766.

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