

He remembers it well

Retiree saw big cities bloom where farms once stood

By TIM CARVELL
STAFF WRITER

When Edward Hustoles started work 40 years ago, Farmington was still a farming town and Southfield consisted mainly of fields.

Hustoles' first day of work was Monday, June 13, 1952, three days after his graduation from the Illinois Institute of Technology. From then until his June 12 retirement, he worked almost nonstop, watching and helping the expansion of the Detroit area.

"I never missed a paycheck, and I had three two-week vacations," said Hustoles, a Southfield resident.

Hustoles' devotion could be at-

tributed to a simple fact: "I can honestly say that I've never been bored. Never."

Indeed, Hustoles still will act as a consultant at the Southeastern Michigan Council of Government in Detroit, where he worked for the 16 years preceding his retirement. Although Hustoles intends to keep busy — he's currently helping the Catholic diocese in Detroit draw up a master plan — his wife will have first claim on his retirement time.

Before SEMCOG, Hustoles served as vice-president of the Southfield community planning firm of Villan-Lemon & Associates for 10 years and served on the De-

DEVELOPMENT

troit and Chicago planning commissions.

In those jobs, Hustoles helped design communities both around Detroit and throughout the Midwest. He was the project director for the 1-696 Corridor Joint Development Study, and helped draw up plans for cities when they weren't even townships.

"When Troy was farmland, we marked that it would be a corporate center, but we never expected 25-foot office buildings," Hustoles said.

Although Hustoles has often been surprised by the massive expansion of the area, there was one development that proved particularly jarring.

"We never expected Detroit to empty out," he said.

In the 1950s, Hustoles said, the 1950 population of the Detroit area was estimated at 8 million. The projections, however, failed to take into account the decline of the auto industry, the shrinking size of the family and the rising crime rate. There are now 5 million people in the Detroit area, and the errors made in planning Detroit have provided costly lessons.

"All the mile roads were zoned commercial. Detroit had enough mile roads for 11 million people," Hustoles said. "Businesses became scattered and we had empty lots. Now, commercial strips are sequestered."

During his time in Michigan, Hustoles has studied firsthand the effects of the exodus from Detroit, which began in the 1950s — in particular, the continuous expansion of suburbs. The trend of replacing old suburbs with new ones, he said, has damaged both city and suburb.

"We can't keep building the way we used to," Hustoles said. "The golden age of building and expan-

sion is over."

This is no idle speculation; Hustoles arrived at his conclusion while working on an massive Regional Development Initiative at SEMCOG, which predicted trends in land use for the next 20 years. The study's results indicate that the cost of suburban expansion will soon outweigh its perceived benefits.

"You can't keep moving out, creating new infrastructure while you abandon the old ones. The old ones still have to be maintained. You can't build roads and spread out and live on a big lot and keep building and have low taxes. They're incompatible."

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