

7 Areas Lose In Population

By TIM RICHARD

Three years ago, local officials in Observerland howled when the U.S. census showed their 1970 populations lower than had been estimated.

They can get ready to howl again. New figures show seven Observerland suburbs actually lost population since 1970 (see chart), and others have failed to grow as much as anticipated.

School officials are already struggling in many districts with reduced state financial aid, which is based in large part on enrollments. Now city, village and township officials may expect problems in getting various kinds of federal aid — especially the kind of aid needed for "growth" facilities, such as roads, sewer and water lines.

The new figures showing 69 communities in the tri-county metropolitan Detroit area lost people were made public by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, official regional agency for the Census Bureau.

Perhaps significantly, five of the seven local governments had to learn about their population losses second-hand. Garden City, Redford Township, and the villages of Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms and Franklin are not members of SEMCOG.

Livonia and Plymouth are. Most of the 69 losers are in "the first ring of suburbs," according to SEMCOG Executive Director James Trainor, who added:

"The loss leaders are clustered around Detroit and along the Woodward corridor."

Gainers were counties lying outside the metropolitan area — notably Livingston (12,000 persons, 20 per cent), Washtenaw (15,000 or 8.2 per cent) and Lapeer.

What happened? Trainor and Donald Lamb, manager of SEMCOG's environmental programs, gave these possible reasons:

• Some persons are attempting to escape Federal Judge Stephen Roth's order to integrate Detroit schools with more than 50 suburban districts in adjoining Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties in order to achieve racial balance. Livingston County's growth, in particular, seemed due to this.

• The birth rate has declined. A situation of "zero population growth" requires 2.11 children per family. In the U.S. so far this year, the rate has declined to 1.95 — 10 per cent below a ZPG situation. In Detroit, average family size has dropped from 3.14 in 1970 to 3.01 this year. Michigan births have plummeted from 91,600 in 1971 to a rate of 76,600 this year.

• Industry has dispersed, allowing workers to move out of the metropolitan area and still be reasonably close to their jobs.

Although it will be a blow to the American ego, whose axiom has been "growth," Trainor said public policymakers will have to take a new look now that "we are doing nothing more than redistributing an existing, essentially static population."

Calling attention to "the constant expansion of urban

services at the expense of the existing infrastructure," Trainor pointedly asked SEMCOG's general assembly:

"Can we afford to perpetuate the traditional policy of unchecked growth, or is it less costly to renew the communities in which most of us live?"

He was, in a subliminal way, hinting it is unwise to build more roads, sewers, school buildings, freeways, fire halls and other basic facilities in the suburbs on the theory that population is growing.

The population declines came to light only recently when census officials told SEMCOG demographers about declining household sizes. Between decennial censuses, populations are estimated annually by multiplying the number of households by the average family size.

It was the declining family size figure that accounted for 1970's unexpectedly low population figures, and the further decline caused the actual drop in 1973 figures.

Bloodmobile Schedule Set

Public donor drives sponsored by the Michigan Community Blood Center are being scheduled during December to meet the anticipated blood shortages which usually occurs during the holidays.

Donors in the 17-year-old age category may now donate blood with parental consent.

Bloodmobiles will be located during December as follows:

Tuesday, Dec. 11, at the Korvette Shopping Center in Southfield; noon - 8 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 15, at the Green-Right Shopping Center in Oak Park; 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 20, at Tamarack Buick in Southfield; 8 a.m. - noon on Friday Dec. 21, at the Plymouth City Hall; and noon - 8 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 22, at the WonderLand Shopping Center in Livonia.

Bell Tower's Lights Dimmed

Although the bell tower at Schoolcraft College is to be lighted Thursday evening for the Christmas season, power will be reduced by 75 per cent because of the energy crisis.

Lights will be on from 8 to 11 each night and all night Christmas eve as a token of community participation in the holiday season.

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The Losers

COMMUNITY	POPULATION		DECLINE	
	1970	1973	Persons	%
Beverly Hills	13,598	12,917	781	5.6
Bingham Farms	566	534	32	5.7
Franklin Village	3,344	3,210	134	4.0
Detroit	1,513,601	1,396,231	117,370	7.8
Garden City	41,864	40,762	1,102	2.6
Livonia	110,109	109,224	885	0.8
Plymouth (city)	11,758	11,428	330	2.8
Redford Twp.	71,901	68,096	3,805	5.3



EMORY DANIELS, editor of the Southfield News & Observer, displays certificate recently awarded him by the National Newspaper Association in 1973 competition for best personal columns. Daniels won honorable mention for a column entitled, "From Our Plastic Cities Comes Counterfeit Nation." Daniels' theme was that refusal of Americans to meet commitments at the local, grass roots level has resulted in a corruption of spirit which has spread throughout the nation. It is the latest in nearly a score of awards won by Observer Newspapers personnel during the year. (Observer photo)

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