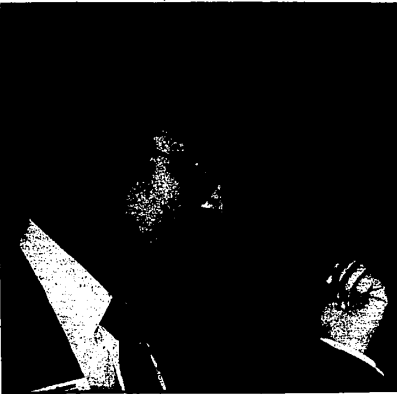


**'We want to say we're competitive again. . .'**

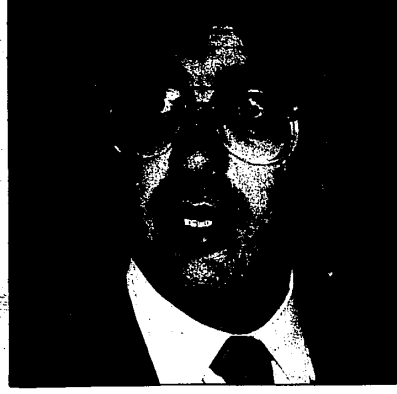
—Douglas Ross, state senator



Douglas Ross talked state economic recovery with Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce members Friday.



The state senator is co-sponsoring a 10-point recovery plan with Senate Majority Leader William Faust.



Bipartisan support seems to be building for the plan in the state Senate, says the first-term senator.

## Rallying to enhance the state's business climate

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Small-business owners need to help Michigan's economic recovery by getting involved in local coalitions to entice new business and capital into the state, said state Sen. Douglas Ross, D-Southfield.

"Right now, we think this (Michigan) is a lousy place to do business," Ross told some 40 businessmen and businesswomen at Friday's Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce membership breakfast.

"We want to say we're competitive again with the (midwestern industrial) region," he said.

Ross, whose district includes Farmington and Farmington Hills, explained his and Senate Majority Leader William Faust's 10-point recovery plan for Michigan's economic and business base. Faust is a Westland Democrat.

Ross was asked to speak by the chamber's legislative affairs committee as an effort to keep chamber members abreast of state legislation that could affect business in the Rochester area.

"Legislators hasten to somehow do something that appears responsive with too little thought and care given to what the problem really is," Ross said. "The most pronounced reason for the difficulties in Michigan is really rooted in what was our success," he said, referring to mass production benefits.

"WE DEVELOPED a set of wage standards and values for doing business," Ross said, adding that Michigan has had some of the highest wage benefits and workers' compensation rates.

He added the factors which seem most to influence where businesses locate or expand to are unemployment-compensation taxes, insurance and

government regulation.

"These things the state has direct control over," Ross said. "It's good news because these can be changed."

A highlight of the 10-point plan is a revision of the single business tax to relieve the tax burden on small, labor-intensive businesses, Ross said.

"They (businesses) can find little profit and still end up with big tax bills," he added.

That bill already has passed the state Senate and is now in the state House Taxation Committee.

In addition, the Faust-Ross plan proposes to exempt workers' compensation and unemployment costs from the single business tax.

"It provides as much relief in those areas as the governor's compensation program," Ross said.

CALLING IT the most critical issue, Ross said workers' compensation insur-

ance rates should become comparable to those in other industrial states.

"We have been trying to eliminate the abuses of the system, but the problem is that frequently the abuses that outrage business people have little bottom-line consequences," Ross said.

"The problem with (compensation rates) is its cost," he added.

Ross said he and Faust are advocating the consolidation of metropolitan Detroit business interests in getting the Michigan economy back on its feet.

"There should be no competition between Rochester and Birmingham," he said.

If communities in the Detroit area would unite, they would have a better chance of competing for new businesses that may locate outside of the state, Ross said.

"Whether we succeed will depend on people like you," he said, adding that establishing local networks would help

prospective businesses obtain capital, land and other resources.

"You've got to find ways," Ross told the chamber members.

ROSS ALSO said he and Faust are interested in making sure the auto companies stay in Michigan.

To achieve that end, they plan to contact the firms and major parts suppliers and ask, "What is important, and what do you need?" he said.

Part of the plan would also eliminate unnecessary rules, regulations and paperwork, Ross said.

Another proposal in the Faust-Ross

plan suggests that pensions and other public resources should be funneled into investment.

"We'll pump money from the public employees' pension fund right back into the state," Ross said.

He said he expects some of the proposals to be out of the state Senate within the next six-to-eight weeks.

"There's been a lot of support in the Senate with both the Democrats and Republicans," he said.

With two proposals now in the state House, Ross said he still could accept changes in his and Faust's plan.

"They (proposals) are not fixed by gods; they're made by people," he said.

Staff photos by David Frank

## INSIDE ANGLES

**FILE THIS ONE** under the Close-But-No-Cigar Category: Two Inside Angles ago, IA took a gentle swipe at the spelling on two outdoor signs in town — the one at the Grand River Drive-in Theater and another, across the street at The Chalet of Farmington Hills, a rental hall.

The signs changed but there are still problems. The drive-in is only charging "1 dollar" admission on Wednesday while the folks at the Chalet offered "Congratulations" to a newly married couple. Look it up in your Funk & Wagnalls.

**TRAVEL WRITER** Iris Jones of Farmington Hills, who works for the Observer & Eccentric, Monthly Detroit magazine, Fodor Travel Guides, Away Magazine and numerous other publications will be guest speaker at a creative writing conference Oct. 16-17 at Oakland University.

Co-sponsored by the Detroit Women Writers group and the Division of Continuing Education at Oakland University, the conference has been held every year for the past 20 years. Professional writers in various areas of expertise share ideas with those in attendance.

Ms. Jones, who serves on the literature panel of the Michigan Council for the Arts and is a member of the Society of American Travel Writers, joins more than three dozen professional writers, editors, publishers and agents at the conference. To obtain times for the various workshops and fees for specific seminars being offered phone 377-3120 or write to the Division of Continuing Education, Oakland University, Rochester 48063.

**LIVE THEATER** is coming to area nursing homes thanks to a \$200 grant from the Farmington Area Arts Commission to the Quaker Valley Community Theater.

The theater, based in the First Presbyterian Church, plans to stage a series of 30-minute shows for the residents of nursing homes in the area. Also, the company will produce the play "A Bad Day for Tomatoes" Dec. 4-6.

**IA GOT AN** eyeful Tuesday afternoon over lunch at Charlie's Place, a new bar in the old Stein Haus location. The bar was packed to capacity mainly with men attending a swimsuit fashion show.

The announcer, who works for Delta Concepts Unlimited, Inc., gave a sales spiel while models wrapped in scanty Spandex material paraded through throngs of whistling businessmen. The announcer: "You can take home this little number for \$30, gentlemen. (roar from crowd) Hey, I'm talking about the swimsuit, guys."

Good thing the local NOW chapter didn't decide to lunch at the same watering hole that noon.

**THE HISTORICAL** Society of Michigan is honoring the Farmington Hills Historical Commission, the Farmington Historical Society and Ruth Moehlman of Farmington at in Battle Creek. Ms. Moehlman is one of 11 persons in the state slated to receive an Award of Merit for her recently published book, "Heritage Homes in Farmington."

The award will be presented at the President's Banquet, Friday, Oct. 2, at the Battle Creek Country Club. The following day, the historical societies in both cities will be cited "for their outstanding efforts in the publication and promotion of historic and contemporary Farmington" with a letter of citation to be presented by Ernest C. Browne, president of the Historical Society of Michigan.

IA salutes the groups and Ms. Moehlman for their efforts. And may more accolades follow as history repeats itself.

**GIVE BLOOD** during the month of October — and no jokes about Dracula making a withdrawal on Halloween.

The American Red Cross and Oakland Community College are co-sponsoring a blood drive Oct. 12-14 and at various sites throughout the county. Donations can be made from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Oct. 13 at the Orchard Ridge Campus of OCC in the lower level J building.

Appointments are desirable, but not required. To make an appointment call the OCC Student Health Service at 552-8900, extension 236 or 237.

**BANKING PRACTICES** will be explored at a breakfast workshop 8-10 a.m. Oct. 1 in the Botsford Inn.

The workshop on local bank financing is one of a series of seminars on "Sources of Financing" sponsored by the Farmington Chamber of Commerce. There is a \$10 fee for chamber members. Non-members will be charged \$15. The fee includes breakfast.

Panelists Thomas Geffert, manager of the National Bank of Detroit-Farmington, Tom Duke, Jr. director of Metro Bank Farmington, Al Huff, president of the Michigan National Bank of Farmington will discuss how to "effectively obtain financing using commercial banks as a source."

Moderator of the panel is Charles H. Williams, of the CPA firm of Williams, Williams, Meiselbach & Thalacker in Farmington Hills. For more information, call the chamber office at 474-3440.

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