

# Sun Belt exodus isn't so

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

Despite talk of an exodus from metropolitan Detroit to the "Sun Belt," it's not happening, according to the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments. "The unemployed are staying here, hoping for better days," said SEMCOG Executive Director Michael Glusac. "People with long attachments to a home, family and a community are not likely to leave."

**'A lot of workers are hanging on. They think we ought to diversify the economy or rebuild the auto industry.'**

Michael Glusac  
SEMCOG director

Dries were unable to say whether this group went mainly for jobs or retirement, but the presumption is that many were retired.

- Neighboring Great Lakes states such as Ohio, Illinois and Pennsylvania drew 15 percent.
- California attracted only 5.7 percent and Texas 4.5 percent.
- Forty other states drew the remaining 25.7 percent.

THE STUDY dealt only with entire households, which may have been families, adults living together or single adults with their own quarters.

In answer to a newsmen's question, Glusac said it did not deal with single individuals who may have left Michigan without breaking up a household. Such individuals would be grown children who have completed schooling and left

the state for jobs or husbands who departed without taking their families. "We don't know the age range of those who left, whether they had a job or what they're going to do," said Glusac.

The study didn't pinpoint cities or counties that lost households, but the researchers had an impression. Washtenaw County lost many households, presumably because it had left the University of Michigan and Eastern Michigan University.

THE PROJECT was undertaken as part of SEMCOG's and Detroit Edison's participation in the economic development activities of the Greater Detroit Business Attraction and Expansion Council. That organization is a four-member joint venture whose other partners are the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce and the Michigan Department of Commerce.

The study would provide ammunition to gun down the notion people are fleeing southeast Michigan in droves, Glusac said.

Good and Dries studied two years, 1977 and 1980, and got almost identical results.

In 1980, Edison reported 566,816 electric service terminations. Of these, 137,929 were untraceable because of bad forwarding addresses.



**A 'retiree'**

George Kuhn, Oakland County drain commissioner, was "piped over the side" after 30 years in the U.S. Naval Reserve. Capt. Kuhn, of West Bloomfield, was honored in retirement ceremonies held at a Naval Reserve facility in Southfield. Kuhn saw active duty on a submarine in the Pacific during World War II and in the Naval Air Arm during the Korean War. Letters of commendation from former President Gerald Ford and other dignitaries were read at the ceremony.

## 30-year-career ends Road commission sees end of era

Two eras ended this week at the Oakland County Road Commission.

One was an effort to coordinate and monitor construction of sewer and water lines along hundreds of miles of county road rights-of-way.

The other was the 30-year career of the man who guided that effort, William R. (Bert) Mercer retired as director of the department of special permits and uses.

"OUR CURRENT financial plan anticipated the phasing out of the permits and special uses departments at the end of 1983 based on projections of declining revenue and reduced workload," said OCRC Chairman Richard V. Vogt.

"Permit department personnel were reduced by 32 percent this year. Rather than seek a new director, it is appropriate to effect the reorganization," said Vogt.

Most of the 15 employees will work within the traffic-safety department under director Gerald Holmberg.

The weighmaster section will become part of the maintenance department under director James Dunleavy.

OCRC will save \$57,530 in 1982, in addition to the cutbacks of seven staff positions already made in the "permits" department.

PAUL VAN ROEKEL, county highway engineer, recalls that "permits" was separated from engineering in 1969.

"Permit activity had increased dra-

matically as communitywide sewer and water projects were being built, particularly in heavily populated townships in the center of the county," he said.

"It was the era of huge interceptor sewers, beginning with the Evergreen system. Literally hundreds of miles of county road rights-of-way were being dug up for the sewer and water lines."

"We have the responsibility to see to it the work done in the public road rights-of-way is planned to proper standards and that the roadway is restored. For those purposes, we take applications and issue permits . . . and see that the work is done as promised."

"It became necessary for us to place a major emphasis on working with the communities, who were administering the sewer and water projects, because they were the ones getting the federal grants for them."

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