

Malls rent rooms

Some area malls have community rooms available for rent, and at prices much lower than commercial halls or banquet rooms in the area.

For years, weight-loss groups, nonprofit agencies, brides and moms-to-be have rented the local mall's community room for meetings, receptions and showers.

Food can be catered and there's always plenty of free parking. The drawback — in most cases the event must correspond to mall hours.

Here's the rundown:

- Fairlane Town Center: No community rooms for rent.
- Westland Center: Three rooms available. \$35 to \$65 per event.
- Northland Center: Three rooms available. \$55 to \$120 per event.
- Summit Place Mall: Rooms available for nonprofit groups, \$25. Cost is higher for private groups and clubs.
- Oakland Mall: One room. \$100. For business uses only.
- Laurel Park Place: No community rooms for rent.
- Twelve Oaks Mall: No community rooms for rent.
- Lakeside Mall: No community rooms for rent.
- Livonia Mall: Available at no charge to civic and nonprofit groups. Private use rental considered on individual basis.
- Somerset Collection: One room. Capacity 50 people. \$50.
- Southland Mall: No community rooms for rent.
- Meadowbrook Village Mall: No community rooms for rent.
- Winchester Mall: One room available. \$15 per hour.
- Wonderland Mall: One room. Certificate of insurance required. \$50 a day.

Region profile outlines challenges

BY TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

METRO AREA

Southeastern Michigan's population is shrinking, aging, diversifying and becoming tougher to teach.

Its median income is stagnant, but its property values are soaring. The gap between job locations and the people who need them is widening.

The federal government is "withering away" as it puts more of its revenues into debt service and welfare programs, less into helping local units.

"A downer," said a surprised John Amberger, executive director of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, after seven panelists analyzed the region's past and future on SEMCOG's 25th anniversary.

SEMCOG is a planning and road money allocating agency serving seven counties surrounding Detroit. Born in the '60s in the federal freeway planning movement, SEMCOG is the only place where county, city, township, village and school officials talk common problems under one roof.

TV kids passive

Dorothy Beardmore, State Board of Education president, said schools' jobs are becoming tougher because children who would have died are surviving with "special needs," alcohol and family problems affect learning.

and television has resulted in a "passive" generation with fewer verbal skills.

"It shows, even in affluent communities," the Rochester Hills official said.

Beardmore, like other panelists, noted that the current economic recovery isn't being accompanied by higher hiring, as in the past.

"Political power has shifted to the west side of the state," said William Rustem, vice president of Public Sector Consultants. An official in Gov. William Milliken's administration until 1982, Rustem said there is more "smart" development of land and more resistance to taxes today.

James R. Flaherty, partner in the public accounting firm of Deloitte & Touche, said there is an accelerating move toward consolidation and global companies. But as middle managers are permanently displaced, there is more "niche retailing" by small shops.

Cooperation good

On the plus side, Livingston County Drain Commissioner Richard Rudnicki saw more cooperation between local governments in attacking problems of water pollution, transportation and air quality. A vice chairman of SEMCOG, Rudnicki saw the regional air quality plan as the re-

sult of "a solid partnership, working well."

E.A. Jackson Morris, SEMCOG chairman, said the last 25 years have been characterized by the region's loss of its automaking monopoly, the environmental revolution and the change of the federal government "from financial helper to regulator of local government."

Such helpful federal programs as Model Cities, revenue sharing, transportation money and bloc grants are going or gone. "The feds went to mandating. They have sequestered tax dollars for debt."

"It's 'fend for yourself' federalism. We're seeing the withering away of the federal government to debt service and entitlements," said the township supervisor from Washtenaw County.

The profile

SEMCOG, a federal depository of census information, produced a "Regional Profile of Southeast Michigan" which showed:

- Population shrank 3.1 percent from 1970 to 1990 — to 4.6 million. Michigan's population rose 4.7 percent and the nation's 22.3 percent in those 20 years.
- The median age of the population increased four years to 32.8 years since 1980. Household size declined to 2.66 persons versus the national average of 2.84.
- Racial diversity grew. The region is 76 percent white, 21 per-

cent black and 2.6 percent "other." Percentages of Hispanic and Asian populations are smaller than the national average. Arabs and Chaldeans number 80,000, the nation's largest concentration.

■ Educational attainment is higher than the state average but lower than the national. Of people 25 and older, 19.2 percent in southeastern Michigan had earned a bachelor's degree versus 17.4 percent statewide and 20.3 percent nationally.

■ Regional employment gained 218,700 from 1980 to 1990 but lost 68,700 of those jobs in 1990-91.

■ Manufacturing jobs fell 124,000 since 1980.

■ The total labor force rose nearly 235,000 since 1980 to nearly 2.3 million.

■ Incomes were stagnant on average. From 1979 to 1989, median family income in the Detroit Metropolitan Statistical Area increased just \$68 to \$40,962. But the gap between highest and lowest incomes grew.

■ More people are below the poverty line — 12.9 percent in 1989 versus 10.2 percent a decade earlier.

■ State equalized valuation, on which property taxes are based, soared, with 34.4 percent of the growth coming in Oakland County.

■ Despite the stagnant population, vehicle miles rose 22 percent during the 1980s.

Shopping from page 6A

school administrators, teachers and the staff of a radio station," said Debbie Mazer, fashion director at the collection. "It's our way of reaching out to different groups in the community to let them know what wonderful clothes the Somerset Collection has available for the working man and woman."

After an hour-long "party" guests are invited to shop Somerset.

Friday morning at Jacob-

son's, the Birmingham-Bloomfield Women's Council of Realtors will be guests at a breakfast fashion show featuring the Ellen Tracy spring/summer collection. Hopefully, the Realtors will buy a suit, hat, or some shoes, afterward.

Individual stores like Jacobson's, Hudson's, The Liz Cleiborne Store, Saks Fifth Avenue and Winkelman's, bring private fashion shows to clubs and nonprofit organizations regularly.

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