

Ufeline: General manager Richard Kaufman says SMART can't survive unless voters renew its operating millage. Suburban bus routes and specialized community transportation systems could be threatened if SMART folds.

Parks program has kids climbing the wall

Oakland County Parks can send guests at birthday parties, family reunions and company pincies "up the wall" with its latest addition – The Climbing Wall.

The rotating wall unit, activated by body weight, moves the wall downward so climbers one never more than a few steps off the ground.

Starting in mid-June, The Climbing Wall will be avail for rent for \$250 for a three-hour visit. Parks staff will set up and take down the unit. Users must weigh under 230 pounds.

Other Mobile Recreation units for rent includo: the Orbotron, human gyroscope; the Sports



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SMART will base millage campaign on promises kept

SMART is getting ready to approach Oakland County voters again.
But this time the suburban transit system will make its case

Specifically, he said SMART has delivered on Specifical has delivered on Sp approach Oakman county voters gain.
But this time the suburban transit system will make its case based on performance, rather than expectations, general man-ager Richard C. Kaufman said Monday in an interview with the Observer & Eccentric Newspa-ners.

pers.
Voters will be asked Aug. 4 to renew the property tax they approved in June, 1995. The one-third of a mill levy costs the owner of a house with a market value of \$200,000 about \$33 per

year.
"If it doesn't pass, I don't think SMART can survive," Kaufman said.

Kaufman said.
SMART stands for Suburban
Mobility Authority for Regional

Transportation.

He's optimistic. Three years ago, SMART promised voters it would do three specific things if they approved the millage and

all three, he added.

Specifically, he said SMART has:

MRedesigned fixed route systems to make them more officient. In the tri-county area, ten new routes — including service to 10,000 more employers.

MFormed partnerships with communities — including Berkley, Farmington Hills and Troy — to upgrade community transit.

MReduced its deficit. Since June, 1995, SMART has reduced the deficit from \$20 million to around \$5 million. We've exercised the fiscal responsibility we promised, Kaufman said.

SMART provides almost 30,000 rides daily, he said, enabling workers to get to their jobs and the elderly or disabled

ping.
In West Bloomfield and
Rhomfield townships, for exam-In West Bloomfield that Bloomfield townships, for exam-ple, SMART has combined ser-vice to provide transportation for senior citizens and the disabled. And that services is flexible,

senior citizens and the disabled. And that services is flexible, according to transportation coordinator Dorothy M. Friedl.
Over the weekend, for example, SMART buses provided a shuttle service from public parking at the Jewish Community Center to the West Bloomfield Art Fair, Friedl said.
If SMART had more money, Kaufman said, it could expand and upgrade service. But as it exists, the said, it chas well testing the said, it has well designed routes, and it provides what Kaufman calls, "reliable transportation on clean vehicles driven by helpful and courteous drivers".
Much of Kaufman's optimism is based on what he considers

two generally accepted principals. People see the economic reasons for a good transit system, he said, and they realize the need to provide public transit for the diedryl and disabled.

Over the years, SMART's image has been tarnished, Kaufman said, by the public perception that it has been unable to merge with DDOT (the Detroit Department of Transportation) that provides service within the city. Some riders complain, for example, that SMART and DDOT buses inefficiently run duplicate routes.

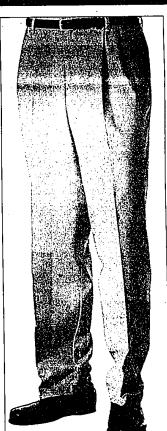
The worst thing for SMART and DDOT, said Kaufman. But the truth is we cooperste. The two systems don't have a common schedule, he said, but some routes are coordinated, and

routes are coordinated, and SMART and DDOT recognize and honor the other's passes, "and we cooperate more than

Please see SMART, A7



Father's Day Savings



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