



**Lifeline:** 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.

## 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 based on performance, rather than expectations, general manager Richard C. Kaufman said Monday in an interview with the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

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.

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

gave the transit system a new lease on life, Kaufman said.

And SMART has delivered on all three, he added.

Specifically, he said SMART has:

■ **Redesigned fixed route systems** to make them more efficient. In the tri-county area, ten new routes — including service along Telegraph Road — have been added, providing service to 10,000 more employees.

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

■ **Reduced 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

to go to the doctor — or go shopping.

In West Bloomfield and Bloomfield townships, for example, SMART has combined service to provide transportation for senior citizens and the disabled. And that service 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 system is efficient and accountable, he 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 elderly 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 is public dispute between SMART and DDOT," said Kaufman. "But the truth is we cooperate." The two systems don't have a common schedule, he said, but some routes are coordinated, and SMART and DDOT recognize and honor the other's passes, "and we cooperate more than

Please see SMART, A7

## Parks program has kids climbing the wall

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

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

Starting in mid-June, The Climbing Wall will be available 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 include: the Orbtron, human gyroscope; the Sports

Mobile, which features games like a parachute and football table; In-line and Skate Mobiles; the Puppet Mobile, with six original productions; Bump-a-Bounce, a giant, inflatable bouncer; the Dunk Tank; and performances by Oakland County Parks Singers, whose shows include "Rock Around America" and "Animation Celebration". Bleachers, stages and buses are also available.

For reservations and rental prices, call (248) 858-0916. Visit Oakland County Parks website at [www.co.oakland.mi.us](http://www.co.oakland.mi.us) for discount coupons and maps.



### Father's Day Savings



Classic pleated pants from Tommy Hilfiger. Cotton twill. Imported. Khaki or navy. Sizes 32-42. Reg. \$49.50, now \$39.99

Men's  
While quantities last.



Surprise Dad with a patterned polo from Tupdra. Mercerized cotton. Imported. Assorted colors. Sizes M, L, XL. Reg. \$68, now \$49

**1/2 OFF**

**ALL ROMANTIC FIREPLACES**

**Perfect for Father's Day!**

**FOR BEDROOM, BATH OR PATIO**

**ALL 1/2 OFF**

- 20 STYLES
- 10 COLORS
- 30" TALL TO 48" TALL

**THE POTTERY FACTORY - VIA MEXICO**

32750 NORTHWESTERN HWY., FARMINGTON HILLS  
3 BLKS. E. OF ORCHARD LK. RD. (NEAR I-480)

**248-855-4955**

**HOURS:** Mon.-Sat. 11-7; Sun. 11-5; Closed Tues. to restock

Give your dad  
the time of day.  
Father's Day is Sunday, June 21.  
Isn't it time  
to remember Dad?



ROLEX

**GREENSTONE'S**  
CREATORS OF FINE JEWELRY SINCE 1925

520 N. Old Woodward, Birmingham, MI  
4 (aka North of Maple)

MONDAY-FRIDAY 10-5:30 • THURSDAY UNTIL 7:00 • SATURDAY UNTIL 5:00

# Jacobson's

Birmingham • (248) 644-6900 Livonia • (734) 591-7696 Rochester • (248) 651-6000

SHOPPING HOURS • MON-SAT 10-9 • OPEN SUN AT NOON