

State To Back Regional Planning With \$100,000

By TIM RICHARD

Five years ago, the Michigan Legislature fought long and hard over a bill that would permit local governments to organize regional councils of governments.

This year, the state may go a long step further by appropriating up to \$100,000 for the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments and \$25,000 to \$100,000 for others across the state.

This strong endorsement of regionalism came last week from Gov. William G. Milliken. Ironically, it came at a time when SEMCOG is losing members, particularly in the school bloc.

BESIDES MILLIKEN'S budget proposal, SEMCOG, a six-county voluntary agency, has two other cheerful prospects.

At Friday's annual meeting in Detroit's Cobo Hall, Milliken was introduced by State Sen. Carl Pursell (R-Plymouth), who pointed out that he is the only south-eastern Michigan person on the State Appropriations Committee. Pursell is one of the state's strongest champions of SEMCOG. SEMTA (the transit agency) and other regional bodies.

Robert FitzPatrick, chairman of the Wayne County Board of Commissioners, was elected chairman of SEMCOG. Although he is a Democrat, FitzPatrick has a

close working relationship with Republicans Pursell (a former county board member) and Milliken.

Milliken smiled at the prospects. In an interview with Observer Newspapers, he said, "Carl and Bob have a good working relationship. . . . Bob's not a typical Democrat." And he nodded agreement to the suggestion that the senator isn't a typical Republican.

FitzPatrick, a Detroit with a medical clinic in Livonia, acknowledged in a separate interview that the senator isn't a typical Republican.

The difference between people, said FitzPatrick, is not a partisan label but a willingness to make structural changes in government.

The old-timers whether they be Democratic county officers in Wayne or Republicans in Berrien—seen always to want to postpone big decisions and changes, and just operate the way they always have.

Significantly, in the Michigan Senate, the chief sponsor of the county restructuring bills FitzPatrick wants most is Carl Pursell.

Moreover, Milliken, Pursell and FitzPatrick use similar language when discussing the high quit rate of SEMCOG's school members. Milliken calls it "too bad." Pursell shakes his head sadly because three school districts he represents recently dropped out (Livonia, Plymouth and Farmington). FitzPatrick calls it a "shame."

IN OBSERVERLAND, these units of government still remain in SEMCOG:

Oakland County—City of Farmington, Lathrup Village, Oakland Intermediate School District, Oakland County Community College, the county itself.

Wayne County—Cities of Livonia and Plymouth, a township of Plymouth and Canton, Schoolcraft College (currently re-assessing its role), Wayne County Community College, intermediate school district, county government, Wayne-Westland School District.

IN HIS SPEECH calling for state aid to SEMCOG, Milliken said:

"I have recommended in the budget which I presented to the Legislature last week that the state make financial assistance available to multipurpose, regional planning agencies established through the cooperation of local governments within the state planning and development regions.

"I have proposed a minimum of \$25,000 and a maximum of \$100,000 per region, with the exact amount available determined by population. . . .

TO JUDGE the size of the state grant, consider what other sources of revenue are bringing SEMCOG:

• Member dues (mostly from counties): \$367,000.

• Business contributions for a solid waste disposal unit: \$102,500 sought, \$51,350 received as of Jan. 1.

• Business donations from 100 major firms in the region: \$89,500 forwarded or pledged toward a goal of \$165,000.



DR. EWART GUINIER

will discuss "Can the Blacks Go It Alone? What Price Coalition?" at Schoolcraft College at 8 p.m. today (Wednesday) in the Waterman Campus Center. Dr. Guinier is professor and chairman of the Afro-American studies at Harvard University. Admission to the talk, which is sponsored by the Cultural and Public Affairs Committee, is \$1 for students and \$2 for the general public.

Justice Is Compared In Seminar

A short seminar on comparative criminal justice systems of Europe and the United States will be conducted by Major E.O. Hjeltnes of Oslo, Norway, at Schoolcraft College from 7-10 p.m. on Feb. 8 in the Forum Theater.

The seminar is sponsored by Schoolcraft's community services office in cooperation with the Michigan Law Enforcement Education Association and the Macomb County Community College Criminal Justice Center. No registration fee is required.

Schoolcraft Puts COG On Trial

By KATHY MORAN

The current structure of the school bloc in the Southeastern Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) could be the deciding factor in Schoolcraft College's decision whether to renew membership in the organization.

At least two trustees are opposed to renewing membership in the regional planning organization because the community colleges are completely outnumbered by the K-12 schools in the school bloc.

The board voted to defer action on membership renewal until the Feb. 23 meeting when it hopes to have a representative from SEMCOG talk to the board about the advantages of continuing membership.

TRUSTEE MARY Dumas, an alternate delegate to SEMCOG, voiced opposition to renewal, suggesting that the college wait until community colleges are given a greater voice in SEMCOG.

Currently, community colleges are included along with school districts in the school bloc. School districts and community colleges from Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Monroe, St. Clair, and Washtenaw Counties are eligible for membership.

Livonia and Plymouth School Districts withdrew their memberships in SEMCOG this January, leaving Schoolcraft College as the only member from the college's district.

Arch Vallier, Schoolcraft delegate to SEMCOG, was not present at the board meeting, but reportedly is opposed to renewing membership.

MRS. DUMAS said that she and Vallier evaluated the significance of the college's membership in SEMCOG and concluded that it should not be renewed.

"We felt the community colleges were really not being properly represented," she said. "The issues before the bloc are primarily K-12 issues. Since the colleges are so totally outnumbered, if the bloc made a decision we didn't like, we would have to become a party to it because of our membership."

"We believe in the principle but do not like the structure," she said. "We would like to come back to SEMCOG (later) with some kind of voice."

Mrs. Dumas suggested temporary withdrawal from the organization until colleges could be accepted as a separate bloc with a seat on the executive committee. Currently the school bloc has a seat on the executive committee of SEMCOG but it is held by a K-12 representative.

"MY EXPERIENCE" with SEMCOG has been the same as Livonia's," trustee Erv Brown said. "There's a lot of money going into SEMCOG, but nothing coming out of it." Board Chairman R. Robert Geake spoke in favor of renewing membership.

"I feel very strongly that

Schoolcraft should continue its membership in SEMCOG," Dr. Geake said. "I think we should exercise some leadership and stay in the college 'recognizes a role and obligation to provide educational leadership and now finds itself the only organization left to represent this region in the SEMCOG education bloc.'"

Geake's motion was set aside after the board voted to defer action until the next meeting.

"If anything, this is a

stronger reason why we should stay in," he said.

Dr. Geake proposed a motion that Schoolcraft renew its membership stating that the college "recognizes a role and obligation to provide educational leadership and now finds itself the only organization left to represent this region in the SEMCOG education bloc."

Geake's motion was set aside after the board voted to defer action until the next meeting.

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