

How To Sell Regional Trash Authority

By KATHY MORAN

An engineering report on solid waste disposal recently submitted to the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments has several flaws — primarily that it is "politically unsalable."

This is the conclusion reached by Plymouthite Arch Vallier, who will have something to say about plans to alleviate solid waste disposal problems facing each unit of government in this area.

Vallier chairs the Council on Environmental Strategy, an advisory body to SEMCOG. The council will have a voice in establishing plans to alleviate the solid waste crisis.

The report currently under discussion was submitted by engineering consultants Metcalf and Eddy Inc. It proposes both short and long range plans for solid waste disposal in Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw and Wayne Counties.

But Vallier advised the council and SEMCOG's executive committee to accept the report as background material rather than adopting it because of several weaknesses.

Vallier is a retired engineer. He is a former Plymouth city commissioner and currently is a member of the Schoorcraft College Board of Trustees. As Schoorcraft's delegate to SEMCOG, Vallier is also chairman of the school board.

They agreed and now are working on an overall plan which will be both politically and technically acceptable to SEMCOG and the business community.

The reason for concern on the original report is a recommendation to establish a Solid Waste Disposal Authority with immediate and ultimate power to "acquire, con-

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struct, operate and maintain" solid waste disposal facilities.

Even though this would probably be the most efficient way to deal with the problems, Vallier says local governments won't buy it because it would infringe on their jealously-guarded authority.

Currently, each unit of government arranges for its own waste collection and disposal. While this method has operated smoothly enough in the past, the growing scarcity of landfills and mounting tonnage of trash

have made it a regional problem which must be solved through cooperation of all units of government.

The authority proposed in the engineering report steps on the toes of not only local governments but of private enterprise. For this reason it has come under fire by the Detroit Chamber of Commerce.

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"The role of private enter-

prise has to be protected," Vallier said. "In my opinion, you have to set up this authority with the power to plan and coordinate the disposal of solid waste in the seven-county area."

Vallier said the authority should be independent of SEMCOG, such as the Southeast Michigan Transportation Authority, with members appointed by SEMCOG and other governmental units.

"Local politicians must have something to say about it," he added.

"The authority should plan and designate general areas where a landfill must be located and the capacities required," Vallier suggested.

Then the county and local units could determine the exact location. These landfills would be operated by either county government, local government or private enterprise.

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Nashville Shows Way

Trash Can Become Energy

Can today's garbage solve tomorrow's energy crisis? It just might.

Solid waste is already being used to provide energy in European countries and soon Tennessee's capital city will be engaged in a mammoth project which may prove to the rest of the country that it can be done on a large scale.

And Plymouth resident Arch Vallier wants to know "Why not here?"

Vallier, chairman of the Council on Environmental Strategy of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, thinks that our current near-crisis in solid waste disposal may someday be resolved by changing that waste into energy.

He says this concept has limitless possibilities for solving both the energy and solid waste problems. Local residents may someday find themselves going to work in modern buildings heated by thermal disposal of solid waste, he suggests.

To prove his contention, Vallier points south to Nashville, Tenn., where a project is under way to heat and cool at least 20 major new buildings by a thermal plant in the heart of downtown.

The plant, scheduled to open in 1974, will convert solid waste into steam for heating and chilled water for cooling the buildings.

There is no pollution problem, and the project will result in savings, not only in solid waste disposal costs but in heating and cooling the buildings.

The thermal plant's customers are expected to save 25 per cent in heating and cooling costs by using the solid waste, method than by owning, maintaining and operating their own building boilers and chillers.

Also, the new system is expected to reduce Nashville's cost for solid waste disposal by \$5 per ton, amounting to over \$1.25 million annually. The money will be saved through reductions in transportation and landfill operations.

Actually, Nashville came upon the project by accident.

The original plans for a central energy service facility called for using conventional fuels such as gas and oil. But the city discovered a public referendum was necessary for the Nashville Electric Service and Nashville Gas Co. to undertake the project.

A referendum would have taken too much time if the project was to be constructed in time to meet customer demand.

The plans were changed, and it was decided to form a non-profit corporation to construct, own and operate the plant. During the changes, it was suggested that solid

waste be used in place of fossil fuels. After intensive study, they decided use of solid waste was feasible.

Even environmentalists are satisfied with the plan because it won't pose any pollution problems.

Eight state buildings have contracted with the plant including the State Capitol. Four metropolitan government buildings will use it as will 11 private buildings.

At least 10 additional existing buildings in the immediate area are considered potential customers, and another six which are planned for construction between 1973 and 1977 might come under the plan.

that 30-year contracts have been executed between the buildings and the plant.

Even environmentalists are satisfied with the plan because it won't pose any pollution problems.

Eight state buildings have contracted with the plant including the State Capitol. Four metropolitan government buildings will use it as will 11 private buildings.

At least 10 additional existing buildings in the immediate area are considered potential customers, and another six which are planned for construction between 1973 and 1977 might come under the plan.

"I'm dead against letting this heat go into the air," he said. "Let's take this waste and convert it to energy."

"It's going to take some time," he concluded. "We will need landfills for the next five to 10 years, but our goal should be the long-term elimination of them."

Vallier guaranteed that local politicians will be involved in development of plans and that they are not going to be deprived of their power by a regional authority which has the power to come in and take over everything unless it is absolutely necessary.

"The interesting thing is that everybody honestly knows the solid waste problem has to be solved on a regional basis. I think reasonable people in all facets of government will get down and we can work these things out."

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TWO MAJOR PROMOTIONS have been announced in the commercial loan division of Michigan National Bank-West Metro. David L. Griffin (left) of Livonia has been named vice president of the division, and Trent P. Kitley of Birmingham will serve as assistant vice president. Griffin has been with the bank for nine years and was appointed assistant vice president last year. He is a graduate of Washburn University, Kitely, a graduate of Brigham Young University with an MBA from the University of Michigan. He is former assistant cashier for the National Bank of Detroit.

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Area Chapter Of Accountants Elects Witten

Rubye D. Witten of Southfield was among officers of the Detroit chapter, National Association of Black Accountants, elected recently for the 1973-74 fiscal year which began July 1.

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An employee of the State Bureau of Local Government Services, Mrs. Witten is secretary of the chapter.

The Detroit group was organized in 1968 to promote the interest of minority students in the field of accounting, and to lend technical assistance to minority businesses in New York.

Transit Grant For SEMCOG

The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) will receive \$347,450 to assist in transportation planning, from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA).

The federal funds will be combined with \$115,763 in state county and local funds during the next 14 months to finance planning projects to improve bus transportation.

SEMCOG Chairman James P. Grannan said.

Technical work done under the program by SEMCOG planners and the staff of the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) will be utilized by SEMTA for future development of the region's public transportation system, Grannan said.

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