

Case declines bid for second SEMCOG term

By CAROL HASKIN

Bloomfield Township Supervisor Homer Case has declined nomination to run for a second term as chairman of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG). "I have been chairman for a year and four months and I feel it ought to be passed around," said Case, who will continue on the organization's executive board as representative from the township bloc.

West Bloomfield Township Supervisor John Doherty is the bloc's alternate representative to the executive board.

SEMCOG, instituted in 1968, is a planning organization representing the seven-county southeastern Michigan region.

At first shunned by many municipalities as an uneeded addition to the bureaucracy, the organization gained maturity, financial stability and credibility during Case's chairmanship.

LAST YEAR, Riverview, Southfield, Keego Harbor, Clawson, Madison Heights and Redford Township joined SEMCOG, the result of a membership campaign organized by Case and SEMCOG Executive Director Michael M. Glusac.

SEMCOG's surer financial status, Case said, can be attributed to Glusac, who was able to improve relations with the state highway department to remedy SEMCOG's cash flow problems.

Previously, the state paid contracts after work was completed, which made meeting SEMCOG's bi-weekly payroll of \$25,000 difficult. Now the state pays a portion of the contract in advance.

SEMCOG gained credibility as an organization by tightening up its internal affairs and solidifying its reputation as a planning organization.

"We improved relations with state officials and federal officials as far as public relations are concerned," Case said, explaining that all press releases are now approved by the executive board whereas, before, unofficial statements on SEMCOG policy were indiscriminately released.

"Now when SEMCOG speaks, it's the executive board speaking," Case said.

WITH SEMCOG'S COMING OF AGE, Glusac said, "more attention was paid to issues and less to emotional

rhetoric on the purpose of the organization."

"We're not what our enemies claim us to be — another monstrosity of government," Case said.

Glusac attributed SEMCOG's growth to Case's chairmanship.

"Homer Case helped us a great deal because he is a respected public official and that respect went across party lines. He gave us a degree of credibility because of his involvement and made others look at us more seriously."

SEMCOG's new chairman might have fewer organizational problems to deal with, but there are a number of important planning issues scheduled

to come to a head in the next few months.

SEMCOG is seeking designation by the governor as planning agent for Federal Grant 308, earmarked for the alleviation of water pollution problems on a multi-jurisdictional basis.

"If the governor does not name us as the designated planner for this project," Case said, "there will be no federal money. I have all confidence we will be named within the next 30 days."

GLUSAC SAID THE council's 1980 Transportation Plan, which has been in the works for several years, will probably come to the decision stage

within the next six months.

The group is responsible for the general route of the transportation system. It will decide which will be the specific routes where high-level service will be needed. It will take no part in deciding what specific form of transportation will be installed.

Case said the governor asked the group not to pass any further resolutions on transportation until he could make an announcement on the matter following his trip to Washington.

"I anticipate some federal funding to clear up the transportation headache," Case said.

Another important policy decision facing SEMCOG concerns how storm

water and sanitary sewers should be handled in the seven-county area.

Because the development of an area is directly related to the availability of sewer services, SEMCOG is involved in revising the sewer map.

THE POLICY, Case said, "will put a stop to land developers putting houses way out with no way possible for local governments to get sewers to them."

Case recently appointed a committee to determine the future of Willow Run Airport. He said the next chairman will probably appoint an airport committee for the entire seven-county region.

"With the Troy airport closing down," Case said, "it's time to look at planning for airports before any more land is taken up."

The new chairman of SEMCOG will be elected at the annual meeting of the General Assembly, scheduled for March 7.

Nominated for a one-year term by SEMCOG's nominating committee are Wayne County Commissioner Conrad Mallett, currently first vice-chairman for chairman, and Oak Park Mayor David Shepherd, now second vice-chairman, for first vice-chairman.

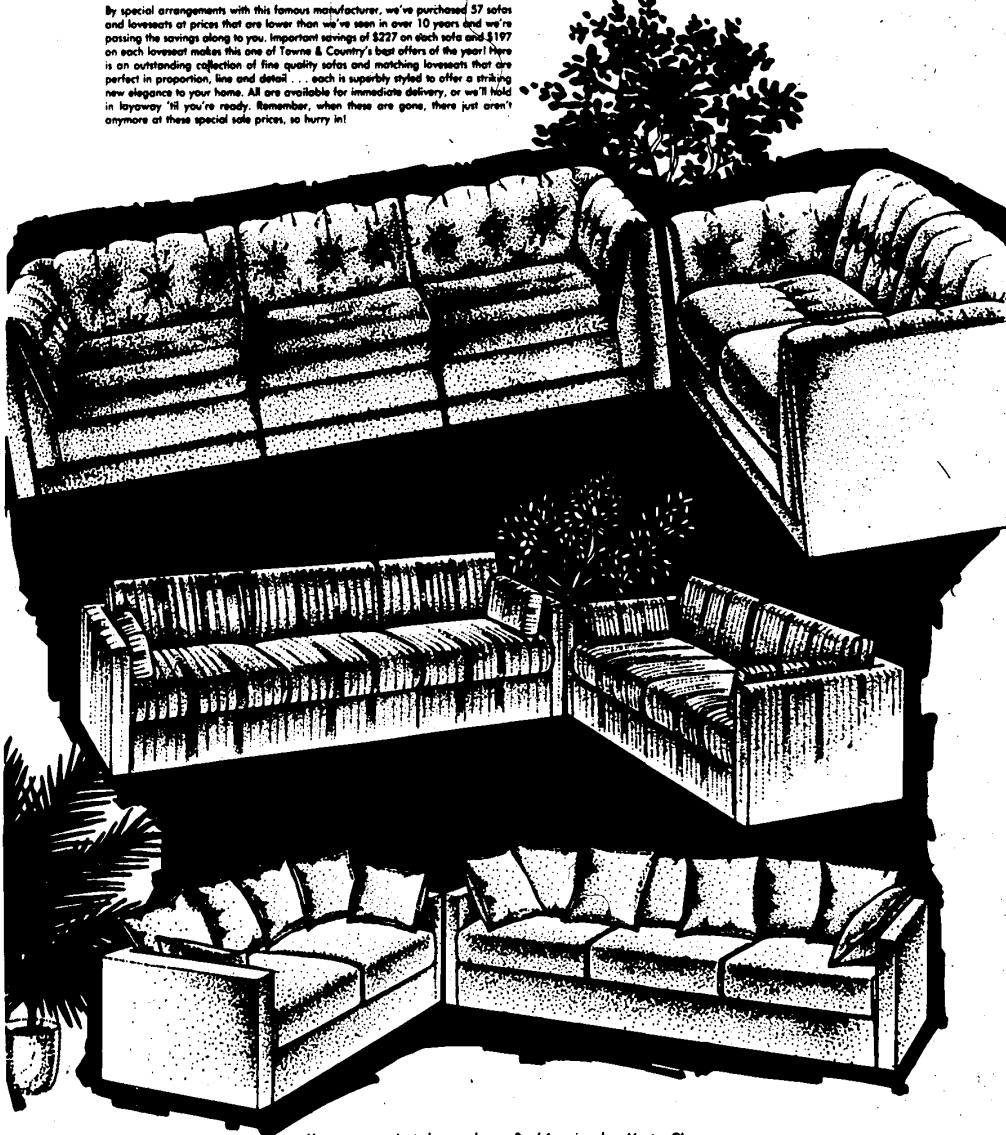
There is as yet no nominee for second vice-chairman, a post that must be filled from the township bloc.

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Niemann named as aide

OAKLAND COUNTY—County Executive Daniel Murphy has drawn his second top level appointment from the ranks of the former Michigan Committee to Re-Elect the President (CREEP).

Michael T. Niemann, former Michigan press secretary for CREEP, was named Oakland County Public Information Officer, or, in a more practical sense, Murphy's press secretary. Last month Murphy chose the former special group's director for CREEP, William Spinelli, as deputy county executive.

NIEMANN, a former Grand Rapids reporter, most recently served as press representative for Detroit Edison.

A graduate of the University of Detroit, Niemann, 34, is married and lives in Farmington Hills.

The new press secretary will be present when most of the major county decisions are made, but he will not play a large role in shaping those decisions, according to Murphy and Spinelli.

WHILE NIEMANN'S role will later be expanded to supervise a public information office, for the next year or so he will be a department of one tending to the press relations of Murphy.

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