

The Citizen

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Phone: (313) 365-9500

Cost of services soaring

Officials struggle to wring more funds from budget

By Charles Sercombe

As more and more cities struggle to come up with money to support their police and fire services, a number of them are turning to each other for help.

According to a recent report from SEMCOG, the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, shrinking municipal budgets are forcing communities to re-think how they go about providing basic services.

Cities began experiencing painful budget decisions in the past two years as state tax revenue funding has been slashed to make up for a multi-billion dollar state budget deficit.

Hamtramck is part of this struggle as well.

The city has lost over \$100,000 in state revenue sharing while at the same time being hit with skyrocketing health insurance policies.

Hamtramck's financial

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Citizen editor scratches out first prize

The Citizen newspaper won first place for "spot news reporting" in the annual Michigan Press Association "Better Newspaper" contest.

Editor Charles Sercombe won the award for his reporting on the power blackout of 2003.

Some 44 entries competed in the weekly newspaper category in which The Citizen is part of.

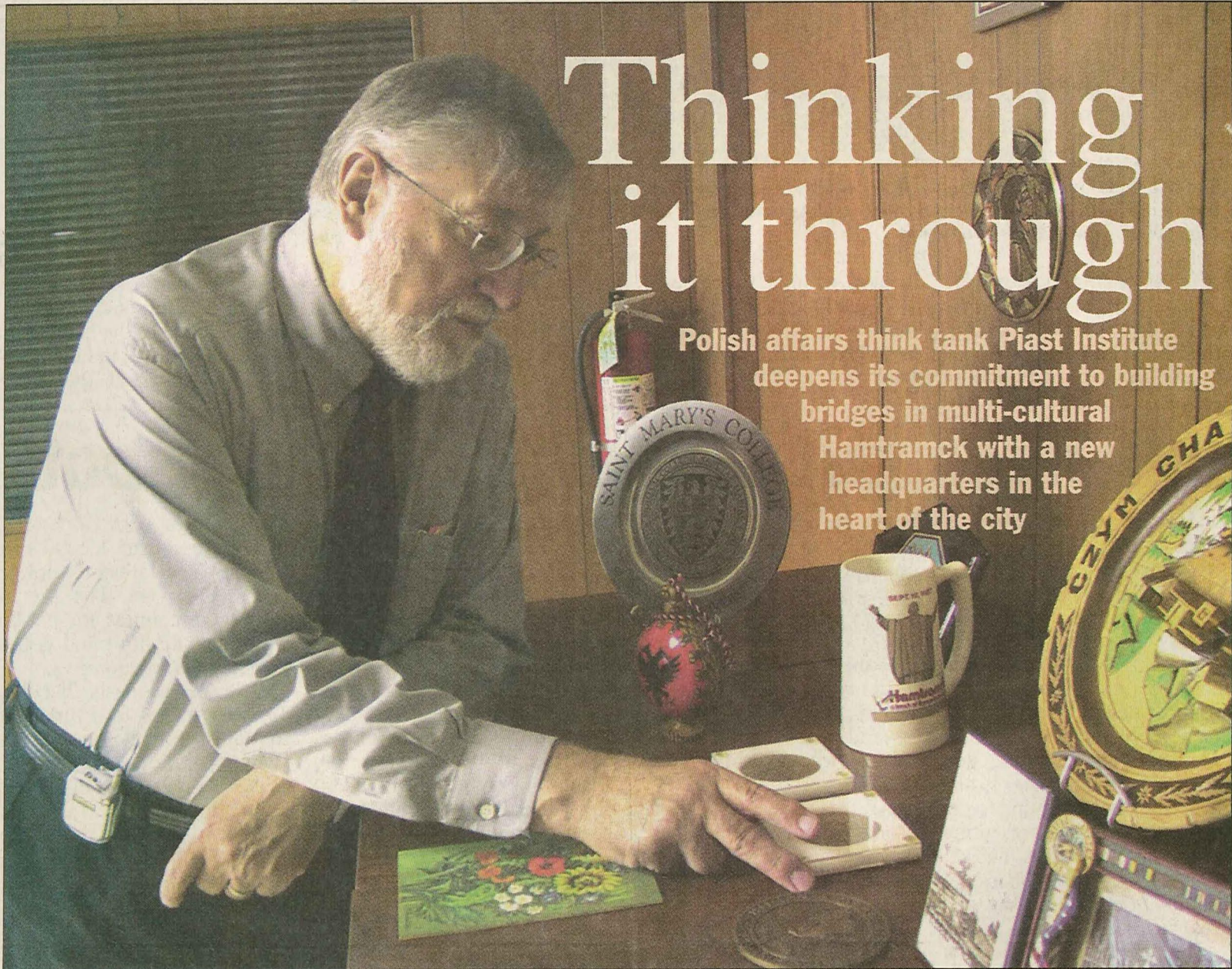
The judge awarding the first place designation said this about Sercombe's news story:

"Many newspapers submitted stories about the August 2003 blackout, but this entry stood out because of its storytelling. Clever touches included the paragraph about the 'semi-cold beer in hand.'"

The 2003 blackout affected 50 million people from Michigan to New York. For 30 hours, Hamtramck was without electricity during the hottest week of that summer.

Hamtramckans survived the blackout with few prob-

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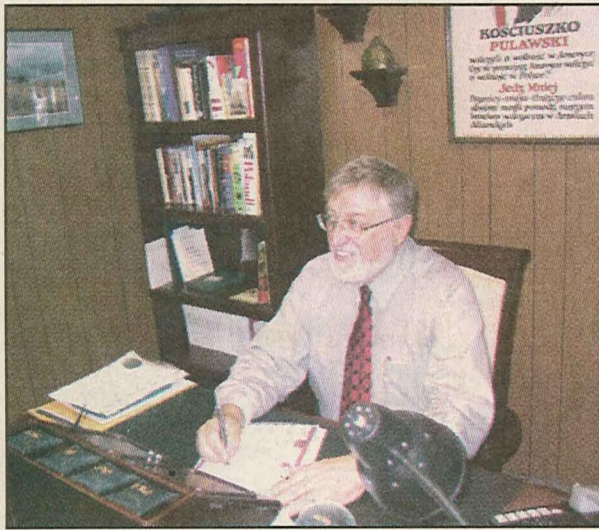


Thinking it through

Polish affairs think tank Piast Institute deepens its commitment to building bridges in multi-cultural Hamtramck with a new headquarters in the heart of the city

By Walter Wasacz

When the Piast Institute, a think tank devoted to Polish and Polish-American affairs, was organized last year it inhabited the lower flat of a house on Talbot St.



Within a few months, Piast began to outgrow that small space and relocated to a larger residential house on Casmere St. Both locations were in Detroit.

"We always wanted to be in Hamtramck," says Piast President Thaddeus Radzilowski, an historian who most recently was president of St. Mary's College in Orchard Lake. "And we needed a larger space because we were expanding our services."

Late this summer, the move was made to a building on Caniff east of Jos. Campau. The facility allows Piast to accelerate a five-year plan to expand its services, which eventually will grow to sup-

port legal and educational services.

"We have an objective to help Polish people help themselves with their practical needs," Radzilowski said.

Virginia Skrzyniarz, Piast's executive director, said the group has been developing valuable relationships to people in the community during the past year.

"We are now more of an umbrella group, with a number of associates working with us," Skrzyniarz said. "We also want to establish a network of volunteers that will help us implement various services and projects."

That outreach has already resulted in the Hamtramck Chamber of Commerce sharing space in the new office. Radzilowski and Skrzyniarz both agree that basing Piast's headquarters in Hamtramck will be beneficial to the organization and to the community.

"Hamtramck has a density of Polish organizations that are important to us," Radzilowski

said. "The Polish National Alliance is here, and the Polish American Congress is right around the corner."

"We could have put up the Piast shingle in the suburbs, but we wanted to bring it here," Skrzyniarz said. "It was important that we be here because this is where our work is needed."

The Piast Institute is at 2926 Caniff. For more information call 664-0321.



Thaddeus Radzilowski and Virginia Skrzyniarz set up their new Piast Institute office on Caniff.

