

Reps. seek ballot slot for tax cut proposal

A bipartisan team of state representatives is seeking a ballot position for proposals that would cut property taxes and replace the lost revenue with a 1.5-cent sales-tax increase.

Co-sponsors are Republicans Roy Smith of Saline and Mark Siljander of Three Rivers, and Democrats Tom Brown of Westland and Claude Trim of Davolburg.

Smith was a co-sponsor of the 1980 Smith-Bullard plan, which was overwhelmingly defeated by voters. It called for property-tax reduction with lost local revenue to be made up by a personal income tax increase. Its only substantial support came from the Michigan Education Association.

Siljander promoted a plan to cut property taxes and replace them by raising the sales tax from four cents to 5.5 cents on the dollar. Siljander's plan failed to get on the ballot, but a similar proposal was endorsed by a bipartisan leadership group and rejected by voters.

Neither Brown nor Trim has been identified with such a ballot proposal, but both have long been interested in the funding of local government.

VOTERS WOULD be asked two questions:

A) Do you want substantial property-tax relief, moderate property tax relief or no property tax relief at all?

B) Do you approve of raising the sales-tax rate 1.5 cents?

The property tax cut would amount to \$1.3 billion. The sales-tax increase would bring about \$1 billion.

If A passed and B lost, revenues would be cut \$1.3 billion. If both passed, the net effect would be a \$300-million tax cut. If both failed, there would be no change.

"This plan would help to preserve equal educational opportunities for all

Michigan students while protecting homeowners from the ever-increasing property tax burden, which has become more and more unfair the past few years," the lawmakers' joint statement read.

The plan would put the tax questions to Michigan voters in a special election to be held in the summer of 1981. Both houses of the Legislature would have to approve the election by two-thirds margins.

If approved, their package would:

- Remove the first 30 mills of school operating tax from residences and family farms. The group estimated property taxes would be cut 55-60 percent or \$1.3 billion for 1981.
- Exempt the first \$20,000 of state equalized value of property owned by disabled veterans and senior citizens.
- Increase renters' income-tax credits by raising the imputed property-tax liability to 20 percent of income from 17 percent.
- Require the Legislature to reimburse local units of government for lost property-tax revenue.
- Require any tax bills to receive two-thirds approval of both houses of the Legislature. The exception would be the 1.5-percent sales-tax increase.
- Index the personal-income tax so that exemptions and credits are automatically increased with inflation.
- Provide for a rollback of property assessments by classification — agricultural, residential, commercial, timber cutover, industrial and developmental. The 1978 Headlee Tax Limitation Amendment rolls back assessments for an entire community, although residential prices have risen far faster than industrial-site prices.
- earmark state lottery revenue for kindergarten through 12 schools. Currently, it goes to the general fund.

Colleges schedule enrollment periods

Four colleges have announced enrollment schedules in southeast Michigan for the winter semester.

WAYNE STATE University will hold final registration Monday through Wednesday, Jan. 5-7, in the Administrative Services Building, Cass at Antioch, Detroit.

Persons who have not attended WSU previously should contact the admissions office first. Those previously enrolled will be registered in alphabetical order from 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. each day.

Winter classes begin Jan. 9. More than 130 fields of study and financial aids are available. Day and evening classes run from 7:30 a.m. to 10:20 p.m. Off-campus courses are also offered.

DETROIT INSTITUTE of Technology's winter registration is 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 6-7. DIT is located at 2727 Second, Detroit.

The private college offers programs in business, engineering and technology. It awards academic credit to degree seekers for "life experience" if it can be demonstrated to satisfy educational objectives. Financial aids are available.

LAWRENCE INSTITUTE of Technology will hold registration for the second term of evening college Jan. 19 and 21. Registration for evening associate programs will be held Jan. 20 and 22.

Prospective students should apply promptly if they wish admission this term. LIT is at 21000 W. 10 Mile, Southfield.

Classes for evening college baccalaureate programs meet Monday, Wednesday and Friday evenings beginning Jan. 23. Baccalaureate programs are offered in architecture, chemistry, engineering, humanities, management, math/computer science and physics.

Associate studies classes are held Tuesday and Thursday evenings starting Jan. 27. Associate programs are offered in construction engineering technology, chemical technology, data processing, electrical engineering technology, industrial engineering technology and mechanical engineering technology.

CENTRAL MICHIGAN University will offer an education workshop in Bloomfield Hills this winter.

Elementary Education/Secondary Education 508 "Workshop: Wehrli's Performance Training Classroom Method" gives three semester hours credit.

Registration and first class session will be at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 12, at the North Woodward Learning Center.

Enrollment information is available from: School of Continuing Education, 125 Rome Hall, CMU, Mount Pleasant, Mich. 48859.

Park fees will be taking a hike in '81

By LEM MESESE, Outdoors writer

State park fees are going up this year. The annual permit will rise to \$10 from \$7, where it had been for three years.

The Michigan Legislature's action is generally to raise \$800,000 in new revenue, with three-fourths of the increase going for parks operation and maintenance.

In simple terms, the amount going for maintenance will be hiked from \$3.50 per permit to \$5. The rest goes to pay off bond issues.

Natural Resources has been the hardest hit department of state government during the recession budget cuts.

Nevertheless, those of you with new calculators have figured out that the increase from \$7 to \$10 is a hefty 42 percent hike.

How can the state do that under the Headlee Tax Limitation Amendment? Simple. Park fees and college tuitions aren't taxes.

HURON-CLINTON Metroparks fees usually follow the lead of the state park permits, but not this year, apparently.

HCMA, which permits were kept at \$7 when the board met in December. It's possible the board could vote Jan. 8 to raise them, but HCMA information officer John Sterling Jr. doubts it.

"The board felt that with the economy the way it is, now is not the time for an increase," he said.

HCMA operates its 10 metroparks on

enue. Its only federal and state fund are special grants to aid (for example) bike trails, and those are few and far between.

"TRACKS AND Trails" will be the topic of an outdoor family nature program at 10 a.m. Sunday at the nature center of Kensington Metropark, west of New Hudson.

Register in advance by calling the nature center at 895-1551.

outdoors

a quarter-mill of the property tax plus the \$7 annual vehicle permit. It wasn't hit by the recession the way the state budget was.

HCMA, as a five-county agency, doesn't get federal or state shared revenue.

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