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Medical tax spurs battle in capital

By Mary Rodriguez
staff writer

A Reagan administration plan to make workers pay income tax on medical insurance premiums has raised the ire of Congressman William Brodhead, D-Detroit.

Denouncing the plan as "an absolute tax increase for workers," Brodhead said he would lead the fight against it in committee and on the House floor if necessary.

"I would wipe out any small tax break provided to the average American family by the recently enacted tax cut," he said.

Brodhead believes the administration leaked the plan to the Washington Post, where he read about it last Friday, as a test balloon to gauge Congressional reaction.

The story quoted Health Department officials and a White House source who denied the plan was being considered. As a member of the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee which would have to originate such a bill, Brodhead said he was in a position to predict it wouldn't pass.

"I would certainly do everything to defeat it," Brodhead said in a phone interview from Washington.

His 17th Congressional District encompasses the Farmington area.

"The administration is beginning to understand that its tax cut contained overly generous benefits for the big oil

companies, and they're looking for a way to recoup.

"THEY'RE BILLING the proposed tax on medical insurance as a means of cutting health-care costs, but that's just a smokescreen."

In Michigan, where 60 percent of the workers are covered by Blue Cross/Blue Shield plans partly paid by employers, such a tax would have major implications.

"The single most important fringe benefit is health protection," Brodhead said. "It should be the last to consider (to be taxed) because health care is so vital."

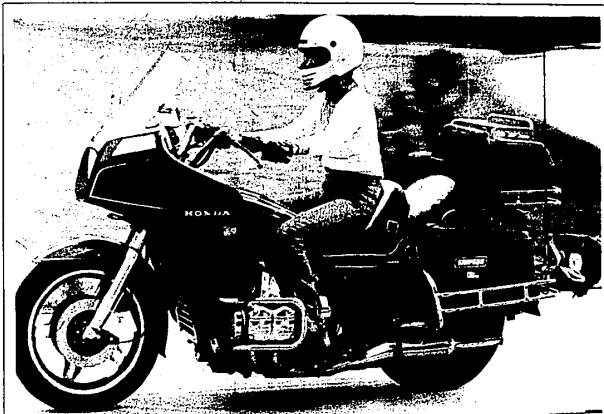
"It's ironic that the administration hasn't announced its intention to tax the truly wasteful fringe benefits such as lavish entertainment accounts, membership in country clubs, company cars, subsidized vacations and free air travel."

The Republicans have to draft an economic program to deal with inflation and deficit spending which will become chronic, Brodhead said.

"There's no question there is a real problem. The question isn't whether there will be a tax increase, it's when and what kind," he said.

"At least for the time being (the solution) is up to the administration."

Brodhead said he's seeking an early meeting with Ways and Means Chairman Daniel Rostenkowski to discuss the plan.



R.S. WILSON/staff photographer

In a little over a month's time, Joan Hughes visited 48 states on her motorcycle to see the sites and prove she could do it.

Mom proves her mettle on a big motorcycle

By Craig Piechura
staff writer

Over a span of 33 days, Joan Hughes felt the mist of Big Sur on her face and endured the baking heat of the Mojave desert on her back. But darned if she could find the famous hot springs of Arkansas.

"I wanted to see the Hot Springs of Arkansas and all it was buildings," said the 43-year-old Farmington Hills mother of two who toured 48 states this summer solo on her huge 840-pound motorcycle.

"I never saw one drop of hot water that wasn't in a faucet," is the way she explains the Hot Springs resort.

Aside from the Arkansas setback and an encounter with a crazie who called himself "The Controller" in Bridger, Montana, Mrs. Hughes calls the trip a lifelong dream fulfilled.

She started the journey from her hometown July 15 heading west and 10,700 miles later she drove in from the east, arriving back Aug. 16.

Waiting for her at the first rest stop in Michigan that day were 40 members of the Gold Wing Owners Association, a group of Honda enthusiasts that Mrs. Hughes presides over as state president. They saluted her accomplishment by presenting her with a bouquet and toasting her with champagne. In addition, club members and patrons of a bar located near Warren Honda, where Mrs. Hughes works as sales manager, pledged a \$650 donation to fight muscular dystrophy.

THE QUESTION is why would a middle-aged woman want to ride such a big motorcycle such a long way all by herself?

The answer is there are a number of reasons. She wanted to see if she had the tenacity to take on such a trip alone. She wanted to "discover America. She wanted the time alone to sort out her life. Kind of a mobile meditation. And she wanted to see how her 1,085 cc Gold Wing interstate motorcycle performed over a long, high-speed haul.

"If you drove your car through the Redwood Forest, you wouldn't have smelled anything, felt anything or have seen as much as I did. I looked at people driving by in their cars with their air conditioning smoking stinky cigars. They didn't smell the forest or feel the mist off the California coast."

Of course the people in those same cars probably weren't afraid that a gust of wind would blow them off Big Sur into the Pacific, either.

MRS. HUGHES admits there's a risk factor in riding motorcycles but laughs and says, "If I wanted to die in a rocking chair, I'd go to a furniture store."

Mrs. Hughes' love for fast machines began when she was 18. Her ex-husband fixed up and raced cars and she was bit by the same bug. She started riding motorcycles 13 years and 17 motorcycles ago. For the past seven years she's combined her work with pleasure as sales manager of the Warren Honda store.

Her 1980 Gold Wing is no ordinary motorcycle. Besides the heavy-duty shaft-driven engine the bike features an AM-FM stereo radio, a C.B., wool and leather padded seat and special headlights that pulsate at a rate of four flashes per second for greater visibility. She takes her motorcycles seriously.

Behind her desk at work is a map of the United States dotted with color pins like a Pentagon war room designating each stop Mrs. Hughes made.

The dots form an irregular oval. There are dips in the dotted line dropping down to Nebraska, but the only time the trail is retraced is in Kentucky, where the only road leading in and out was a hilly 1 1/2-lane

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Farmers' market planned

Plans are under way to convert a former Great Scott supermarket at 14 Mile and Middlebelt in Farmington Hills' Franklin Farms shopping center into a farmers' market.

Tenants in the market, scheduled to open by Nov. 30, will rent space from its owners to sell produce, fish, meat and poultry, delicatessen items, bakery goods and out-of-town newspapers.

The business, known as Broadway Marketing, Inc., is owned by a partnership comprised of David Auer, owner of Auer Mortgage of Pleasant Ridge, Bernie Schrott, both of Bloomfield Hills; and Irving Ross and Edward Rosenberg, both of Southfield. Schrott, Auer and Ross also own the rest of the Franklin Farms shopping center.

Auer said "concept" of the farmers' market is similar in some respects to Tally Hall, the large food mall located adjacent to Hunter's Square Mall in Farmington Hills.

But while most of the food sold at Tally Hall is consumed on-site, Broadway Market will be a place to buy food to prepare at home.

"There will be limited eating on the site," Auer said. "If we have a deli, naturally there will be tables to eat a sandwich."

The name Broadway Market was picked because it evokes the memory of Detroit's old Broadway Market where shoppers could select meat, fish and fresh produce from a number of established vendors in almost a carnival-type atmosphere.

THE NEW MARKET will house approximately 10 to 12 vendors, Auer said. Leases are being negotiated but none have been finalized, he said.

"They're being finalized," Auer said. "Everybody wants to wait to see what everybody else does."

A produce stand will take up 5,000 to 7,000 square feet of the available 22,000 square foot of space, the investor said. One of the other tenants negotiating a lease is Kowalski meats. Auer said he doesn't see a conflict with the kosher delicatessen located in the same shopping center because the two stores serve a different purpose.

The only real competitor for Broadway Market is Detroit's Eastern Market, said Robert Weltman, salesman for the Farbm and Stein leasing company of Troy, which is looking for tenants to lease space at Broadway Market.

"We're going to be a classy version of the former Broadway Market," Weltman said. "We want first-rate, top-notch produce, fish, a deli and everything else."

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R.S. Wilson/staff photographer

The infamous Shilawassee Bridge over the Rouge River at the Farmington Road intersection was opened once again to traffic this week after construction that had detoured traffic (21,000 cars a day) to alternate routes since April. The bridge was rebuilt and intersection widened.

Construction ends on Farmington Road

The Farmington Road/Shilawassee intersection was opened this week after more than four months of construction work was completed.

John Carlos Construction Co. of Mt. Clemens performed the work rebuilding the bridge over the Rouge River and widening the intersection.

The major north/south access route between Farmington and Farmington Hills services 21,000 cars a day, said Earl Billing, Farmington public service director.

Construction, which began last April

14, was delayed by the location of a utility pole in the barricaded zone.

"We had hoped to have it open by mid-July, before the Founders Festival," Billing said.

Traffic was rerouted to Power and Orchard Lake roads during construction.

"There were no problems once people were aware of the detours," Billing said.

The \$362,000 project was funded primarily by the state and Oakland County.

As Estes saga develops, a community reviews the route of the super-achiever

Although no charges have been filed in the controversy surrounding Thomas Estes of Bloomfield Hills, stories about his alleged involvement in an elaborate auto world money scam continue to surface.

The Detroit office of the FBI is investigating him. But John Anthony, agent in charge of the probe, offers only a "no comment" when asked about any dealings by Estes or others linked to the case.

Estes, 42, the son of one-time General Motors Corp. President Elliot M. Estes, was employed by Display Corp. International. Calls to the Troy-based office were greeted again with "no comment."

Estes' attorney, Ivan Barris of Bloomfield Hills, has advised his client not to talk about the matter.

Although the FBI may have been investigating Estes for several weeks, a tangled web began to unfold publicly last August. Basil M. Briggs, a Southfield attorney, claimed Estes falsely applied for loans from several area banks in a scheme that led private investors to believe they could make millions on a GM car dealership.

Those who have associated with Estes in the past say recent media reports are "just the tip of the iceberg."

If Briggs' accusations are true, it could take the FBI weeks to question the score of persons potentially involved. Based on previous cases

the FBI has handled, a grand jury is likely to follow.

By Jeanne Whittaker
staff writer

At the same time an affluent community in Oakland County was asking "Why?" this week, many residents there were taking a long look at themselves and their roles in a super-achiever society.

While friends and associates of the Estes family voiced concern and support for the troubled family, some said there is a lifestyle often pictured erroneously in the press and fashionable magazines. Others said they hope that the public will judge Thomas Estes fairly by waiting to hear the whole story.

"I'm not critical of how other people's kids grow up. A lot of it's luck," said Betsy Caldwell, wife of Ford Motor Co. president Philip Caldwell.

According to Mrs. Caldwell and others, many corporate executives lean over backward to find time in the midst of hectic schedules to make up to families for the many hours they must be apart due to company responsibilities.

"I think my husband is amazing," said Mrs. Caldwell. "No matter what the pressures are at the office, he is always there whenever they need him. When they want to talk, he acts as if there is nothing else on earth that he should be doing."

"Those with money don't necessarily

live in the lifestyle that a lot of people think they do," said one corporate wife and mother who requested that her name and her husband's position be withheld.

"Let's face it, who knows what goes on in some households? All each of us can do is try to keep up with our own and our family's needs and aspirations," another automotive wife and mother said.

DOLLIE COLE, widow of the late

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EARLY DEADLINES

Due to the Labor Day Holiday, the Observer and Evening Newspapers will be closed Monday, Sept. 7, 1981.

Our classified lines will be open Tuesday, Sept. 8, from 8:30-11 P.M. to place your classified ad for Thursday, Sept. 10. Remember, one call does it all!

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