

# County moves to ease double-dip levies

By Janice Brunson  
staff writer

The Oakland County Board of Commissioners finally has taken a step toward relieving so-called double dipping taxation of courts.

Commissioners approved a resolution May 25 calling for the county to keep more of the money collected as fines from the 52nd District Court. That district court has four divisions located in Troy, Rochester, Walled Lake and Clarkston.

The resolution is aimed at correcting double taxation in communities that support the court but receive no service from it, according to commissioner Michael McCulloch, R-Royal Oak, who authored the resolution.

Those communities include Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, Bloomfield Township and West Bloomfield, which have consistently made a fuss about their residents' county taxes being used to pay for a district court,

the 52nd, which provides them no services.

These communities have an independent district court, the 48th, located in Bloomfield Township.

BIRMINGHAM CITY commissioner Eleanor Swerter later described the county's action as "a short-term solution to a long term problem."

"We appreciate their support and effort to finance the 52nd on their own. However, I do not consider this a long-term solution because it doesn't deal with the principle. It doesn't relieve our residents from the responsibility of financing both the 48th and 52nd district courts."

Recent reports on the increasing caseload of the 52nd court, she said, "concern me because I think there are long-term cost implications."

Communities in the 48th District Court have called on the county and state to find a solution to the double taxation. One suggestion has been that the county offer a tax rebate to those with two levies.

CURRENTLY, THE county retains two-thirds of all revenue generated by the 52nd. This year, how-

ever, the court faces a projected \$374,713 budget deficit. The resolution asks that Oakland County be allowed to retain 90 percent of the income.

"I'm elated," McCulloch said of the vote, his first major effort since winning election to the commission last November.

"Now," he added, "the real work begins." McCulloch said he must find a "sympathetic" sponsor to introduce state legislation and then build bipartisan support for a new law that ups the percentage of money the county can retain from court income.

Commissioner Lawrence Pernick, D-Southfield, co-sponsor of the resolution, called the vote and its debate "the most exciting thing the commission has had before it in a long, long time."

As adopted, by a 14 to 11 vote, the resolution "urges the state of Michigan to amend (legislation) to increase the percentage of ordinance fines retained by Oakland County, as control unit for 52nd District Court, to not less than 90 percent."

The county system of funding dis-

trict courts was established in 1958. A class action suit has been filed against the state to try and change the system.

IN AN EFFORT to head off passage of the resolution, commissioner Marilyn Gosling, R-Rochester Hills, introduced an amendment calling for additional monies to be phased in over a four-year period.

In an effort to give even more funds back to the county, commissioner vice-chair Nancy McConnell, R-Bloomfield Hills, introduced an amendment asking that surplus funds generated by the court also be included in calculations.

Both resolutions were narrowly defeated.

Also defeated was a request by commissioner G. William Caddell, R-Walled Lake, that the resolution be referred back to the finance committee. Commissioner Richard Skarritt, R-Highland, joined in opposing the resolution.

"THIS IS taking money out of the district I represent. It's self serving and I oppose it," Skarritt said.

The most vocal opponent was first-term commissioner John Pappageorge, R-Troy.

"The trouble with the 90/10 proposal is that it is a point solution to a moving problem. Whatever percent you put in there, you will have inequities on one side or the other. The real problem is (a lack of) funding by the state. This will defer getting to the real issue," Pappageorge said to commissioners and in a letter printed in an area newspaper.

Commissioners John Olsen, R-Berkley, Donald Jensen, R-Birmingham, and Donn Wolf, R-Farmington Hills, and Pernick co-sponsored the resolution with McCulloch, who acknowledges it is not the ideal solution.

"The best thing would be state-wide funding of all courts, with uniform pay scales for all court employees. The problem is, the state has never indicated what it's going to do. This, at least, recognizes the inequity in Oakland County."

In a conciliatory gesture following the vote, Pernick told commissioners the issue has been before them for years.

# Bolt of lightning strikes chimney

By Bob Sklar  
staff writer

Farmington Hills resident Jim DeYoung was spreading dirt in his front yard Friday afternoon when he and his daughter, Jamie, heard a bang as a lightning bolt swooped into the chimney of a nearby house.

"I looked over, saw a huge long bolt come down, then saw bricks and shingles flying everywhere," said DeYoung, who lives on the 23900 block of Scott Drive in Foxmoor subdivision, near 10 Mile and Inaker.

He grabbed next-door neighbor Lance Washburn, who had just arrived home, and they ran across the street to assess the damage. They saw the roof smoldering but found no one home so they called the fire department.

Bricks from the top of the chimney and some adjacent shingles "exploded," spraying the roof and grass with debris, DeYoung said.

THE CHIMNEY needs repair and the roof was splintered, but the two-story house sustained no major structural damage. "I expected worse," said homeowner Mike Galbraith, who arrived home about an hour after the 4:25 p.m. electrical storm.

DeYoung said he'd "never seen anything quite like the explosion."

"I was kind of scared," said his daughter, Jamie. "I heard a big boom and, at first, didn't know what had happened."

Farmington Hills firefighters found no fire and no charring, Chief Richard Marinucci said.

# Pro-lifers picket in Hills

About 10 pro-life supporters picketed peacefully outside a Farmington Hills abortion clinic Saturday, police said.

After marching for two hours on the sidewalk outside the Women's Center, located in a medical complex at 23700 Orchard Lake Road, the Operation Rescue supporters left at 9 a.m.

Twelve Farmington Hills officers stood by, but there were no confrontations and no arrests. "It was very orderly," Lt. Jack Brown said.

Women's Center escorts — a man and two women — escorted four or five abortion patients inside

from the parking lot, but the picketers "never said a word," Brown said.

Operation Rescue supporters targeted 16 Detroit-area clinics Friday and Saturday. Peaceful protests were planned because of the court and jail time involved for those arrested.

Pro-lifers picketed the Women's Center twice before — on April 29, as part of a National Operation Rescue Day, and on Good Friday. No arrests were reported either time. On April 29, 16 pro-lifers were court-picketed 425 pro-lifers.

# on the agenda

Below are highlights from agendas of government meetings this week. All meetings, unless otherwise noted, are open to the public.

- Farmington Board of Education**  
Schulman Administrative Center  
32500 Shawwassee  
6:45 p.m., Monday, June 12  
During this special meeting, the school board is expected to consider going to court in a session to discuss contract negotiations.
  - Farmington Hills City Council**  
Council Chambers  
31555 11 Mile  
7:30 p.m. Monday, June 12  
Two public hearings are scheduled.
  - A show case hearing for demolition of a dangerous building, 27907 Greening.**
  - A hearing on the proposed city general fund, community development block grant funds, road funds, capital and other budgets.**
- The council is expected to adopt

- he proposed 1989-90 budget following the public hearing. The council also will consider renewing a retainer agreement with city attorneys Larson, Harms, Wright & Elbeau.
- Also to be considered is the transfer of stock interest in a 1989 Class C licensed corporation with dance-entertainment permit, from Steak and Ale of Michigan, Inc., 27590 Orchard Lake Road, to Rodman N. Myers, trustee.
- The consent agenda includes:
  - Award of purchase bids for a Jacobsen mower, picnic table frames and bike racks for the special services department.
  - Approval of a special event license for the Birmingham Temple's second gala evening at the movies at the Old Orchard Theatre, 28123 Orchard Lake Road, 4:30-6:30 p.m. Sunday, June 25.
  - Approval of a special event license for the Farmington-Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce to have activities associated with the 25th annual Founders Festival July 8-16.
  - Approval of a payback for the

- Whittington sanitary sewer.
- Award of bid for asphalt paving at the public works department to be developed as a refuse recycling/dropoff center.
- Approval of a closed session to discuss land acquisition and pending litigation.

## ATTENTION KIDS!

Summer Classes  
begin June 20th  
Ages 3-14

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| <b>DISCOVERY DAYS</b><br>Kitchen Chemistry<br>Leather Workshop<br>Itsy Bitsy Science<br>Computer Sampler<br>Me and My Body | <b>ACADEMIC SUMMER SCHOOL</b><br>Academic Enrichment<br>Self Esteem<br>Organizational Skills<br>Math Fun<br>Story Writing |
|--|---|

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Aistrin Corporation of Plymouth, Michigan,  
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# Raccoons returning to wild

Continued from Page 1

Stories about Charlie and Linus in the Observer recently have brought a lot of public interest in Cornell's care for orphaned animals. She has received a call from an Ann Arbor woman, a former San Diego Zoo employee, who became aware of Cornell's work.

Cornell is sharing her orphans and the knowledge she's learning while raising them. Charlie and Linus recently visited students in Forest and Eagle elementary schools. "The kids thought that because they are so cute and cuddly why can't I keep them. I told them, 'They are born to be free.'"

Even at this point in their young lives, the raccoons could survive in the wild if they had to. "Once they get out into nature, it's amazing how fast they can adapt," Cornell said.

BUT CHARLIE and Linus seem to be having too much of a good time right now to be separated from the Cornells and their other animals and pets. That's especially true of one of Cornell's two dogs, Bristol. The dog serves as sort of a nanny to the raccoons.

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