

# Murphy raises his voice and gets heard

By TIM RICHARD

Last in a series  
"You do get the governor's ear," smiled Daniel T. Murphy, who in a year has catapulted from the obscurity of a three-man board of auditors to executive of the second largest county in Michigan.  
The Oakland County executive gets a few other ears too. In his first year in office, Murphy testified five times in Washington on such topics as aviation, revenue sharing and solid waste.  
"It's because I represent a million people," he said. "You go to a hearing, and there's someone from Nassau County (N.Y.) and someone from California, and me from the Midwest."  
His position makes him spokesman not only for Oakland residents, but potentially for suburbs in general. And Murphy realizes it.

"THE PEOPLE of Oakland County have a greater voice in state and national affairs with one spokesman," agrees County Commissioner Lillian Moffitt (R-Bloomfield Township), adding:  
"Do you realize we're larger than 13 states!"

Commissioner Lawrence Pernick (D-Bloomfield) says Murphy has the potential to speak on behalf of the entire county to the state. But Pernick fears the law allowing counties to establish an elected executive was too loosely drawn because it gives him virtually unlimited veto power.  
"We passed a resolution endorsing a place of legislation, and he (Murphy) said he wouldn't veto it," Pernick said. "So he hasn't abused his veto power, but he's reticent he could veto any action of the board of commissioners—even the way we set out our commissions. The veto power needs to be re-defined."

AMONG MICHIGAN local governments, Detroit is the largest city with 1.4 million population. After that, the largest two cities are in the \$30.80 class, and both have appointed city managers.

Thus, Murphy, with a million constituents, speaks with the second loudest voice after Detroit Mayor Coleman A. Young.  
Murphy's position is brand new, and it's doubly important because Young wields great influence with Gov. Milliken and Murphy frequently disagrees with Young.

YAKE PUBLIC transportation, for example. Milliken and Young made a bargain whereby the Detroit mayor would be able to appoint as many board members to the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) as all the suburbs combined.

Murphy and leaders from Oakland and Macomb counties came up with a counter-proposal. It involved county appointments to the SEMTA board and a different taxing formula for building a rapid transit system.  
Murphy's specific idea failed to capture enough legislative votes, but he feels he accomplished one important thing: "I got them to agree the SEMTA board will be a one-man, one-vote board."

THE OAKLAND executive has raised his voice against a Milliken proposal to help Detroit by letting it share half the property taxes on new industrial growth in the seven-county region.  
And he, along with other suburbanites, has raised a din against Young's request for legislative authority to hike the Detroit income tax on commuters. "I'm gonna be heard on it," Murphy vows.

The new post didn't make Murphy a suburban leader overnight. Among Oakland County politicians, the colorful Prosecutor I. Brooks Patterson and Sheriff Johannes Spreer are probably better known to the metropolitan public as newsmakers.  
"If the executive has the guts and can take the heat, he can solve problems," Murphy says.

Even Wayne County, with 2.7 million population, lacks a single voice although it came close to having one when Robert

FitzPatrick was chairman of the board of commissioners (1971-74). Murphy, incidentally, believes Wayne could solve its county jail problem if it had an executive who provided the leadership.

ALTHOUGH MURPHY'S role as a public spokesman is new, his role in internal operations of Oakland County government isn't.  
For a decade prior to the last election, he had been head of the three-man board of auditors that draws up the budget. In

addition, he and Debra Hamlin, long-time chairman of the county board, were the two major figures who got things done in Oakland.

When Oakland became the first (and so far only) county to adopt the executive plan, the majority Republican Party turned immediately to Murphy as its logical candidate.  
Previously Murphy is asked by other counties whether they should adopt either an executive or manager plan.  
"I look at their size and at what they've

got" in the way of administrative structure, he answers. "All counties should go under Act 130. But a small county can't go to the elected executive form, you've got to crawl before you can run."

"I was in Macomb County last week. Macomb has a small board and they'd be better off under an appointed manager plan."

"If anyone needs a county executive they need it in Wayne County. They need somebody to speak to 2.7 million people."

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## Board 'harassment' needless, Murphy says

By MARY LOU CALLAWAY

Oakland County Executive Daniel Murphy has called for a moratorium on memos.

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The cease-fire would also apply to the degrading relationship between the county's elected executive and its board of commissioners, Murphy said Tuesday at a press conference.  
Branding three memos from Oakland County Board Chairman Lawrence Pernick, Murphy said they constituted "harassment."  
"All this takes time we do not have," Murphy said, adding that his office is continuously reporting to the board.

PERNICK'S MEMOS to the central services department concerned county employees' dental care, county seals on county vehicles and a reduction of 13 cars from the county's fleet.

The memos, Pernick said late Tuesday, were "just a re-statement of board policy. We wanted to know if he is implementing the board's policy or ignoring it. We don't do our business in press conferences. We conduct our affairs at commission meetings."  
Murphy explained he was responding to Pernick's memos at a press conference because he would be unable to attend the finance committee meeting, which Pernick chairs, because of an appointment with the governor.

"ACT 130 divides the legislative and executive branches. It's the law here in Oakland County. The county board ought to be directing its attention to issues. We're being harassed like school children. My strong suit is integrity. It's an election year. They can't afford to outpace," Murphy said.

Checks and balances do exist in the county's government, he pointed out, because he holds the power of veto over the board and the board, if it can muster 18 votes, can override his veto.

Last month's political switch by two commissioners which gave the Democrats control of the board has brought about more "second-guessing, repeated reviews of procedure and unproductive redundancy," Republican Murphy said.

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