

# Tornado alert plans differ

By ALICE COLLINS

Individuals and agencies from throughout Oakland County have joined the bandwagon for a unified tornado alert system, using civil defense and fire sirens. But there are disagreements as to what the specific system should be and who should direct it.

During April, many of Oakland's 61 governmental units adopted plans to sound the sirens as weather warnings—but the plans

differ from each other and do not follow a procedure suggested by Oakland Civil Defense and Disaster Control Director John Dene.

The effort started with a telephone in the hands of Sue Kuhn of Beverly Hills after the tornado struck West Bloomfield on March 20.

It soon reached the desks of county, state and federal officials, the U.S. Weather Service, civil defense and fire departments.

West Bloomfield voted to sound its sirens for both watch and sighting. Royal Oak approved sounding its sirens for watches and sightings.

Bloomfield Township, according to Fire Chief Vally Vannuzesi, decided two years ago to sound its fire sirens for actual tornado sightings.

"But the only two times we could have used them—on March 20 and last week—we didn't get any official warning until it was too late to sound them," Vannuzesi said.

OAKLAND COUNTY EXECUTIVE Daniel T. Murphy said last week that he had received about 40 letters, some with petitions signed by 200 and 300 persons requesting a unified warning system.

"It should be a county project," he said, adding that his office is researching tornado alert systems in other parts of the country.

"We don't know where the funding will come from, but we're working on it," he continued. Murphy said that within the next month or so, "we'll have something to talk to the board—Oakland Board of Commissioners and the people about."

Civil Defense Director Dene has asked all communities to sound a 33 minute steady blast for a tornado "watch." The U.S. Weather Service declares a "watch" during the existence of threatening weather conditions which could produce a tornado.

The plan also calls for the same sound each hour during a warning, and again for a tornado sighting.

IN RESPONSE, the Birmingham City Commission voted to sound the city's sirens only when a tornado is actually sighted and to take no action for the tornado watch.

PONTIAC LAST WEEK agreed to sound its alarms for watches, prolonged watches and sightings.

Troy residents are to be warned of approaching tornadoes by a continuous blast on the city's fire sirens.

Other communities like Beverly Hills have agreed to adopt a unified plan when one is decided upon and when its civil defense sirens is repaired.

"It's all very confusing the way it is now," said Pontiac Fire Chief Albert Rynner. "We've got a meeting of Oakland fire chiefs later this month. Maybe we can all reach an agreement then."

Dene will discuss his proposal at the meeting attended by professionals and volunteer fire chiefs in the county. It is scheduled for May 27 at the Bloomfield Township fire hall.

In the meantime, Sue Kuhn has meetings scheduled with a committee of the Oakland Board of Commissioners which is considering a resolution to abolish the county's civil defense and disaster control department and place those responsibilities under the Oakland County Sheriff's Department, and with representatives of the Michigan State Police and district representatives of the United States civil defense agency.

## Decision on widening Telegraph may be soon

By ALICE COLLINS

The state highway department hopes to make a final decision soon in the six-versus-eight lanes controversy over the proposed widening of Telegraph between Twelve Mile in Southfield and Orchard Lake Road in Bloomfield Township.

Max Clyde, assistant deputy director of the State Department of Highways and Transportation, is in Lansing Tuesday that negotiations were continuing for a compromise agreement between the six-lane proponents and Oakland County officials who want the project to be eight lanes.

The state highway department is still moving ahead with plans to start construction in August, Clyde said. The first leg of the project will be between Long Lake and Square Lake roads and is now designed to be widened to six lanes only.

A compromise is expected to result in some sections of Telegraph being widened to eight, and some to six.

The state highway department announced in January, "after public input coupled with our own reservations about the immediate need for the full eight lanes, that it would be redesigned for six."

RESIDENTS of the villages of Birmingham and Franklin, which flank the highway between Twelve and One-Half Mile and Fourteen Mile roads had campaigned for the reduced width and noise abatement.

The Oakland County Road Commission and the County Board of Commissioners have been pressuring the state to return to its original eight-lane plan.

Meanwhile, the Franklin Village Council Monday night voted to seek an environmental

impact study on the effects the widening to eight lanes would have on the village.

The council will request the study through the state highway department and the Michigan Environmental Review Board.

In making the motion for the review, Councilman David Klein said he wasn't ready to go on record for six lanes. "I don't know enough about it. We ought to find out."

Instead of an environmental study on the project, the state and federal highway departments issued a negative declaration stating that the proposed widening (eight lanes at that time) would have no significant effect on the quality of the human environment.

THE STATEMENT, however, did list several "probable unavoidable adverse impacts," including noise levels that would exceed Federal Highway Administration standards.

In a discussion preceding the vote for the environmental study, Councilman Peter Bertelson said that while he initially believed all of the Franklin residents who lived along Telegraph opposed its widening to eight lanes, he had since found them to be "split on this issue."

"I've found some of our residents who do favor the eight lanes over six," Bertelson said.

Resident Charlotte Ellison said some owners who live in the Dorchester Subdivision between Thirteen and Fourteen Mile roads had been questioned and 70 per cent of them "prefer six lanes."

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