

# Brouhaha developing over county road commission

The managing director of the Oakland County Road Commission called a county board of commissioners decision to do away with the road commission as the kind of thing arrived at by "rule of whim."

The county board, by a 20-6 vote, recommended an amendment to Public Act 139 which would abolish the county board of road commissioners. The board also voted to disband the parks and recreation commission.

Oakland County became the first unified county government in Michigan when its voters adopted Public Act 139 in 1974. The act brought county executive government to Oakland County and brought a number of formerly independent boards and commissions under County Executive Daniel T. Murphy. A number of commissions, including roads and parks and recreation, were left untouched by the reorganization.

John L. Grubba, the commission's managing director, criticized the board's recent decision. "Here a public body is seeking to extend its powers without giving the people a chance to say that is what they want. The proper way to work for reform of

county government is by the constitutional provisions for county home rule."

"Then the people would vote on a charter how they want the county organized," he said. "The constitution recognizes that a decision by the people is a much different thing from 'rule by whim' such as we now see in the actions of 20 county board members and the county executive."

The Oakland County executive, however, asked, "Why are road commissioners made a special class of unelectable, free to ignore citizen needs with impunity, if that is their desire?"

"It is in the area of accountability that Act 139 needs strengthening. The Legislature, as we all know, yielded to heavy lobbying pressures when amendments were being considered to the act. Road commissions retained their autonomous status, despite the fact that they spend millions and millions of tax dollars each year," Murphy said.

Some members of the board opposing the abolition of the two independent commissions called the amendment a move by Murphy to get more power.

## Grubba lashes back

Murphy countered, "In other areas of the nation with the county executive form of government... road policy, parks policy, and all other major policy regarding taxpayer dollars, is established by a legislative body."

"It is not left to the whim and caprice of an appointed group isolated from the people," he added.

Grubba also said that if the move to abolish the road commission were successful, the county would forfeit \$18.5

million of revenue from the state gas and weight tax fund.

"In order to conduct a program comparable to the road commission's, the county board would have to levy \$18.5 million of new taxes in the county," he said.

Michael Niemann, director of public information for the county, said previously, however, that the county could instantly save \$500,000 by doing

away with the road commission and bringing its function under the county executive.

For the board's amendments to Public Act 139 to take effect, though, they must be approved by the state legislature.

Grubba said, "We trust the less whimsical legislature will consider all aspects of the matter before reaching a decision."

## State adds several auto mechanic exams

Sixteen more tests for certifying Michigan mechanics have been announced by the Secretary of State's office. These tests will cover six repair categories for heavy duty truck mechanics, eight for auto and light truck mechanics, one for motorcycle mechanics and one for recreational trailer mechanics.

Test schedules and registration forms have already been distributed to all registered repair garages in the state, and to educational institutions offering mechanical training. Schedules and registration forms are also available at all Secretary of State branch offices.

The heavy duty truck examinations are scheduled for the month of September. Registration deadline for these tests is August 5.

The gasoline and diesel engine repairs tests are scheduled for September 10. The drive train and braking systems exams are set for September 17 and tests for suspension and steering systems and electrical systems will be administered September 24.

The registration deadline for automobile and light trucks exams, which are scheduled for the month of October, is September 2.

The engine repair and tune-up exams will be October 1 and the front end and steering systems and braking systems tests will be administered October 8. The automatic and manual transmission tests as well as those for rear and front axle repairs are set for October 15. The tests for electrical systems and heating and air conditioning are scheduled for October 22.

Tests for motorcycle repair and recreation trailers are set for October 29. Registration for those exams closes September 2.

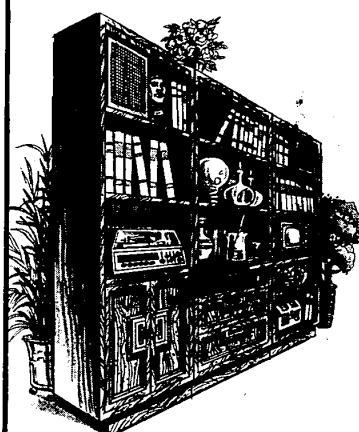
Secretary of State Richard Austin reminded that beginning in January 1978, every repair facility in the state will be required to employ at least one certified mechanic for each repair service offered.

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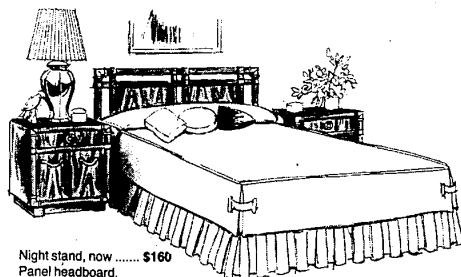


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