

Corruption probe fuels bitter courthouse feud

By MICHAEL MATUSZEWSKI

The hostility between Oakland Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson and the administration of County Executive Daniel T. Murphy continues to intensify.

Only several weeks ago the long-smoldering conflict broke into the headlines with Murphy calling the prosecutor "a liar," Patterson, in return, called Murphy "a bastard."

At the root of one of the latest confrontations is Patterson's investigation into improprieties in a county-administered \$7 million federal housing aid program. An investigation into those alleged improprieties last summer by Murphy's staff resulted in the firing of Donald McKenzie, deputy director of the program, and Maureen Lowe, a middle-level employee.

Several weeks ago, however, Patterson began issuing warrants against McKenzie and others who had been involved with the housing program between January 1976 and the summer of 1977.

IN ISSUING THE warrants, Patterson said some members of Murphy's administration had tried to "obstruct justice" by ordering county employees

to refuse to cooperate with his investigators.

Last week, eight members of the administration, including Murphy, released affidavits in which they swore they had not pressured any employees into refusing to cooperate with Patterson's Organized Crime Strike Force.

Patterson responded calling the affidavits nothing more than "glorified press releases."

He, however, elaborated on his original charges.

While Murphy and his high-level staffers may not have directly ordered their employees not to cooperate with the investigation, Patterson said, there was "subtle pressure and intimidation."

Speaking of the McKenzie investigation, Patterson said, "Murphy hired McKenzie as a favor to the late State Sen. J. L. Narvey Lodge (R-Waterford Township). Murphy didn't fire McKenzie. . . McKenzie was hired by and answered to Murphy. According to Harold Martin (director of the housing aid program), he was very hard to deal with because of it."

"It's because of the aura of Murphy," the prosecutor said.



Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson (left) and his nemesis, County Executive Daniel T. Murphy.



THE ALLEGED intimidation, according to Patterson is not new to Oakland County.

He said he knows of three persons who had their lost jobs after cooperating with investigations into governmental corruption.

Two Children's Village employees, Gale Warfield and Robert Turnbull,

"had their jobs reclassified right out of existence" after they cooperated with investigators, Patterson said. The two were important sources of information in the investigation former Children's Village director James Van Leuven.

Another employee, Norma Keith, the former secretary to the former direc-

tor of the county's civil defense and disaster control operations, lost her job after cooperating with the Organized Crime Strike Force, the prosecutor said. At the time the prosecutor's office was investigating the department's former director, John Dent.

"I'm no longer a secretary," said Mrs. Keith, who works in the records division of the sheriff's department. She said she now earns \$2,000 less annually than if she were still a secretary.

She said she did not know if the administration had retaliated against other employees who had cooperated with Patterson's office. "All I know is what happened to me," Mrs. Keith said. She had been a secretary in the civil defense office for 14 years, before her job was given to another woman.

"NOW, PUT ALL that together," Patterson said. "It's the comments, the subtle pressure that makes my job more difficult."

"Little by little, people won't cooperate with us," he said.

Pressed for more information, Patterson said John Madole, director of the housing aid program, had confronted three of the program's secretaries after they had met with his investigators and asked, "Don't you have any compassion for Don McKenzie?"

Patterson said this was just another form of subtle pressure and intimidation.

MADOLE REPLIED, "His (Patterson's) imagination is beyond my comprehension."

Madole, however, did not deny that he had talked with his secretaries.

State gives cheap loans to spur fuel conservation

Purchasers of energy efficient houses, or those using solar energy, can save money on interest rates under a new Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) financing program.

The Energy Saver Plus program offers reduced interest rates and slightly higher mortgage ceilings for homes which qualify. MSHDA loans are available on new or substantially rehabilitated homes for families with incomes not exceeding \$17,830 per year.

MSHDA interest rates will be

reduced by one-quarter of one percent for mortgage loans on new single family houses containing certain energy saving items. In addition, the maximum loan on Energy Saver Plus homes will be \$39,000 or \$1,000 more than homes lacking the energy saving features.

MSHDA also recently announced a reduction in interest rates of one-half of one percent for certain homes utilizing solar energy for space or hot water heating and increased its maximum loan by \$2,000, to \$40,000, for qualifying loans.

Sort-it-yourself

Mail flies first class at tourist rate

By MICHAEL MATUSZEWSKI

Maybe you fidgeted in long lines at the post office several weeks ago when the new 15-cent postage rate went into effect.

Yet, your telephone bill and insurance premiums are still delivered even though they carry only 13 cents in postage.

"RELAX," SAYS the United States Postal Service. It's all on the up and up. And for those who qualify it means tremendous savings.

The "big mailers" — the Automobile Club of Michigan, Michigan Bell, Detroit Edison, Michigan Consolidated Gas and Consumers Power, for example — can qualify for the postal service's "presort" service.

According to Charles Schaub, a customer services representative for the Detroit Post Office, all it takes to qualify is:

- A postage meter permit.
- A mass mailing of at least 500 pieces.
- Payment of a \$30 annual fee.
- Sorting the mail by zip code.

A pre-sorted letter can be distinguished not only by the lower postage, but by the "presorted first class" notation running along the left border of the postage meter.

SORTING THE MAIL before it ever reaches the post office, according to Schaub and other postal officials,



helps cut costs. The savings, in turn, are passed along to the service user in the form of the lower postal rates.

Letters that qualify for the presort charges need only 13 cents in postage. The charge for mailing a presorted postcard is a penny less than the standard rate.

According to Anthony Nardi, manager of retail sales and services for the Detroit Post Office, said the Postal Service saves \$10 in costs for every 1,000 pieces of mail cleared through the presort program.



"It saves up the costs of handling," he said. "They're doing some of the work we normally do," said George Green, a

customer services representative for the Royal Oak Post Office.

OVER THE PAST 24-day period, the standard accounting period for tabulating postal flow, more than three million pieces of pre-sorted mail went through the Detroit Post Office. During the same period, more than 866,000 pieces were cleared by the Royal Oak Post Office, which handles most of the mail for Detroit's northern suburbs.

According to a breakdown provided by the Royal Oak Post Office, utility companies funneled more than 696,000 pieces of mail through its office in the 24 days.

Based on those figures, utility companies using just the Royal Oak Post Office realized savings of nearly \$14,000.

Those businesses responsible for clearing three million pieces of mail through Detroit's office, saved approximately \$60,000 by sorting their own mail.

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Freeway foes seek changes in road plan

By DAVID RAY

A citizen's group which was influential in the cancellation of the M-275 freeway, has proposed several revisions to its alternative to the defunct freeway project.

According to Steven Rosman, chairman of Citizens in Opposition to M-275, the revisions call for construction of a four-lane, divided boulevard along Fourteen Mile, from Haggerty to Northwestern Highway, dropping that portion of Haggerty south of Twelve Mile from the proposal; providing curb cuts for businesses along the new state trunkline; and state acquisition of vacant land along the route for a greenbelt.

Rosman said he discussed the changes with Michael Flagole, head of the Michigan Department of State Highways and Transportation's M-275 study team.

Rosman said he also has discussed the proposed changes with a coalition of organizations that have opposed the extension of Northwestern from Orchard Lake Road in West Bloomfield to Commerce Township, where it would have intersected with M-275.

Meanwhile, Flagole said the study team will make a progress report on the M-275 alternatives to the State Highway Commission.

The report will detail recent meetings between the study team and Citizens in Opposition and local officials who have endorsed an alternative proposal by Oakland County Commissioner Robert McConnell (R-Farmington Hills).

Preliminary drawings of the alternatives were presented to the groups at the meeting, Flagole said.

"We'll also be updating the commission on the change of direction of the Rosman proposal," he added.

The study team is ready to develop an environmental assessment of McConnell's plan, which calls for the construction of a four-lane, divided, limited-access boulevard along Haggerty Road from I-96 in Novi to about Pontiac Trail where it would veer

northwest over the original M-275 alignment to M-59 in White Lake Township.

In addition, the team is ready to begin working on estimating engineering, right-of-way acquisition and construction costs for the McConnell Flagole said.

However, the proposed revisions to the Citizens in Opposition plan would send them "back to ground zero," Flagole said. "We're going to have to get some more aerial photos of the area."

The proposed changes, he said, are "quite a deviation" from the group's original and could take four months to "get us up to date."

Flagole said the study team probably will wait until it has completed its review of the Citizens in Opposition plan before sending environmental assessments of both alternatives to the Michigan Environmental Review Board (MERB) for a recommendation to the highway commission.

ROSMAN SAID THAT the Citizens in Opposition are not attempting to delay the study of the alternative. Instead, he blamed the highway department.

After the study team received "specific direction" from the commission in January to review the two alternatives, Rosman said, the panel "took our criteria and on their own came up with some drawings that used Haggerty as a service road."

"That was not our proposal and we want them to put the alignment back on Haggerty, Union Lake, Williams Lake corridor," he said.

"What we're seeing now is a delaying tactic by the department to the impending plebiscite (on whether Lakes Area residents want a north-south state trunkline approximately along the M-275 corridor) as leverage against both alternatives," Rosman added.

"We're extremely upset," he said, "that the department is not following the direction given them by the commission and . . . we will seek strong direction from the commission to correct this problem."