

Few crime victims ask compensation

By MICHAEL MATUSZEWSKI

There's violent crime in Oakland County, but from the Crime Victims Compensation Board's perch you'd be hard-pressed to find it.

The compensation board, which celebrated its first birthday last week with an Oakland County meeting, has already awarded nearly \$500,000 to about 400 victims across the state. Only 27 Oakland residents filed claims, however, the successful ones collected only \$5,000 all told. Wayne County residents, meanwhile, got nearly half of the money.

"It's a disgrace," said Thomas Woods, chairman of the fledgling three-member board. He laid blame for the program's dismal showing in Oakland County squarely in the lap of Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson, who he said "is supposed to be the county's chief law enforcement officer."

"THE PROSECUTOR should be right out there leading the effort to aid crime victims, just like the Wayne County prosecutor is doing," Woods said.

He said prosecutors in 82 of Michigan's 83 counties have taken on the role of distributing brochures and application forms to local police departments. In some counties, Woods added, prosecutors have assigned staff members to work with crime victims and make certain the forms are properly prepared and filed.

"These people (Patterson and his staff) just aren't interested in helping the victims," Woods said.

PATTERSON REFUTATED Woods' charges saying it wasn't the prosecutor's responsibility to distribute forms and drum up publicity for the program.

"Just because they're not doing



well," Patterson said. "It's natural for them to look for someone to cull the blame."

According to Woods, the crime victims compensation program is hardly a failure anywhere but in Oakland County.

He said the board has already distributed more money to more victims of crime than similar programs in 23 other states had at the same point in their history. He added that by the

time all of this year's claims have been processed, the board will have distributed nearly all of its original \$500,000 appropriation. Next year, the board will have \$1.5 million to distribute.

The payments usually cover the uninsured expenses that go along with being victimized, Woods said. If a claim is approved, he said, the state picks up the tab for hospital bills left unpaid by health insurance and unin-

sured material losses. The state will even help to make up a part of or all the earnings lost while the victim was hospitalized or out of work.

Each victim, Woods said, can receive up to \$15,000.

AS FOR PATTERSON'S advice that the compensation board distribute its own forms, Woods said he did not want to create another Lansing bureaucracy.

"I want this agency to stay small," he said. Woods and a few clerks are the board's only full-time staff.

"I'm not going to spend an extra nickel in this county picking up the slack."

"I will not put on any additional people to help a county that doesn't know what's good for it," Woods said. NOT ALL IS lost in Oakland County, he added. Woods praised Sheriff Johannes Spreen and the Pontiac Police Department for channeling crime victims to the compensation board. Of the 27 compensations from Oakland County, 10 came from Pontiac residents.

Woods also pointed to Wayne County as a model operation.

Wayne County Prosecutor William Cahalan has put together a "tremendous network" to aid victims, the Woods said. A 24-hour hotline is available and assistant prosecutors "actually assist victims in filing claims," Woods said.

Wayne County's higher crime rate may account for some of the difference between awards to the two counties, he acknowledged.

County offers free flu shots

The Oakland County Division of Health is offering free flu shots to the elderly and anyone over 26 with diabetes, heart, lung or kidney diseases.

There will be a clinic at 1 p.m. Oct. 6th in the Lake Orion Center, 21 East Church Street, Lake Orion.

Shots are available at the two health division offices at 1200 N. Telegraph Road, Pontiac, and 2725 Greenfield Road, Southfield. The hours are from 8:30 to 11:00 A.M. and 1:00 to 4:00 P.M. Monday through Friday.

For more information call 858-1280 or 424-7000.

Side streets near 1,000 mile mark

New subdivision streets completed to Oakland County Road Commission standards have added 16.51 miles to the county road system already this year.

William M. Richards, vice chairman of the road commission, said the board accepted 6.78 miles of such streets last week and accepted 5.78 in March and 3.95 in June for a total of 16.51 for the year to date. The county controls and maintains all township roads.

"We thus have just 6.09 miles short

of 1,000 miles of subdivision streets on our 2,450-mile system, said Richards. By the end of the year new subdivision streets should bring the total past the 1,000 mile mark. That assumes, of course, that total mileage isn't reduced by abandonments by year end. Annual certification will determine exact mileage by road types."

Avon and West Bloomfield Townships, with 3.41 miles each added this year, are continuing the fast pace. Independence Township is third this

year with 2.77 miles thus far.

Other townships and miles of new subdivision streets added in 1978 are: Commerce (1.02), Lyon (1.37), Waterford (1.19), Oakland (1.36), Highland (0.65), Milford Township (0.19), Orion (0.07), White Lake (0.6) and Bloomfield (0.04).



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