

County eyes small budget increase

Oakland County commissioners are eyeing a \$78.6 million budget for 1979. The budget, proposed by County Executive Daniel T. Murphy, is about \$8 million larger than 1978's. The increase is smaller than those of recent years. In 1977 and 1978, for example, the annual budget increased \$6 million each year.

While previous Murphy budgets have been described as "austerity" and "belt tightening" measures, the 1979 version is called "inflation fighting."

In his annual budget message, Murphy said, "I think it is becoming widely recognized that inflation is inextricably tied to government spending. To arrest the inflation psychology that seems to be ingrained in our daily lives, it is incumbent on each of us to weigh our actions in light of their potential impact on the inflation dilemma."

AS THE COUNTY'S contribution to the war on inflation, Murphy said the proposed budget, which will be adopted with some changes by the board of commissioners later this month, was increased only by actions mandated by the state legislature.

"Spending forced on Oakland County government by the actions of the Michigan Legislature has increased the budget recommendation by \$2.6 million, equivalent to 3.4 per cent of the 1978 amended budget," he said.

Minus the \$2.6 million increase, Murphy said the 1979 budget would have remained basically the same as this year's.

THE MAJOR source of county revenues in 1979 will again be the property tax. Next year it will account for 57 per cent of the budget—\$41.1 million.

The estimate represents a dramatic increase in tax revenues over preceding years. In 1976 the county raised \$37.6 million in taxes. In 1977, it raised \$36.7 million and in 1978 it raised \$40.3 million, all with the same millage rate.

Revenues derived from "inter-governmental sources," such as federal revenue sharing, the state shared income tax and child care subsidy—total more than \$18.2 million, accounting for 21 per cent of the budget.

About \$12.4 million, 16 per cent of the budget, will come from charges for county services. Increases in court fines and increased rates for the Medical Care Facility help account for a \$2 million increase over last year's budget.

The remaining six per cent of the budget will be raised through charges for use of county property, revenues from the land transfer tax, county investments and an estimated \$600,000 year-end balance.

ON THE EXPENSE side of the ledger, the county executive's administration and the programs which it controls account for the largest share of spending.

The programs which administration controls, including the departments of public service, human services, public works, central services, management and budget, personnel as well as the executive office, account for 35 per cent of all spending, \$27.6 million. It

represents a \$4 million decrease from the 1978 spending level.

The next largest spending area, non-departmental appropriations, increased roughly \$4 million, about 16 per cent. The county executive attributed much of the increase to the increased costs of fringe benefits and increases in the amounts to be set aside for wage increases and equity packages.

Non-departmental appropriation increased from about \$20 million to an estimated \$24.1 million in 1979.

About 15 per cent, \$11.5 million, is

earmarked for Oakland County Circuit Court, District Court and Probate Court. Oakland County Sheriff Johannes Spreen and Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson will receive \$11 million—14 per cent of the budget.

Funding for the controversial county Organized Crime Strike Force continues to be debated.

The remaining six per cent, \$4.6 million of the total budget, will be used to fund the County Treasurer, the Drain Commissioner, the County Clerk-Register as well as the board of commissioners.

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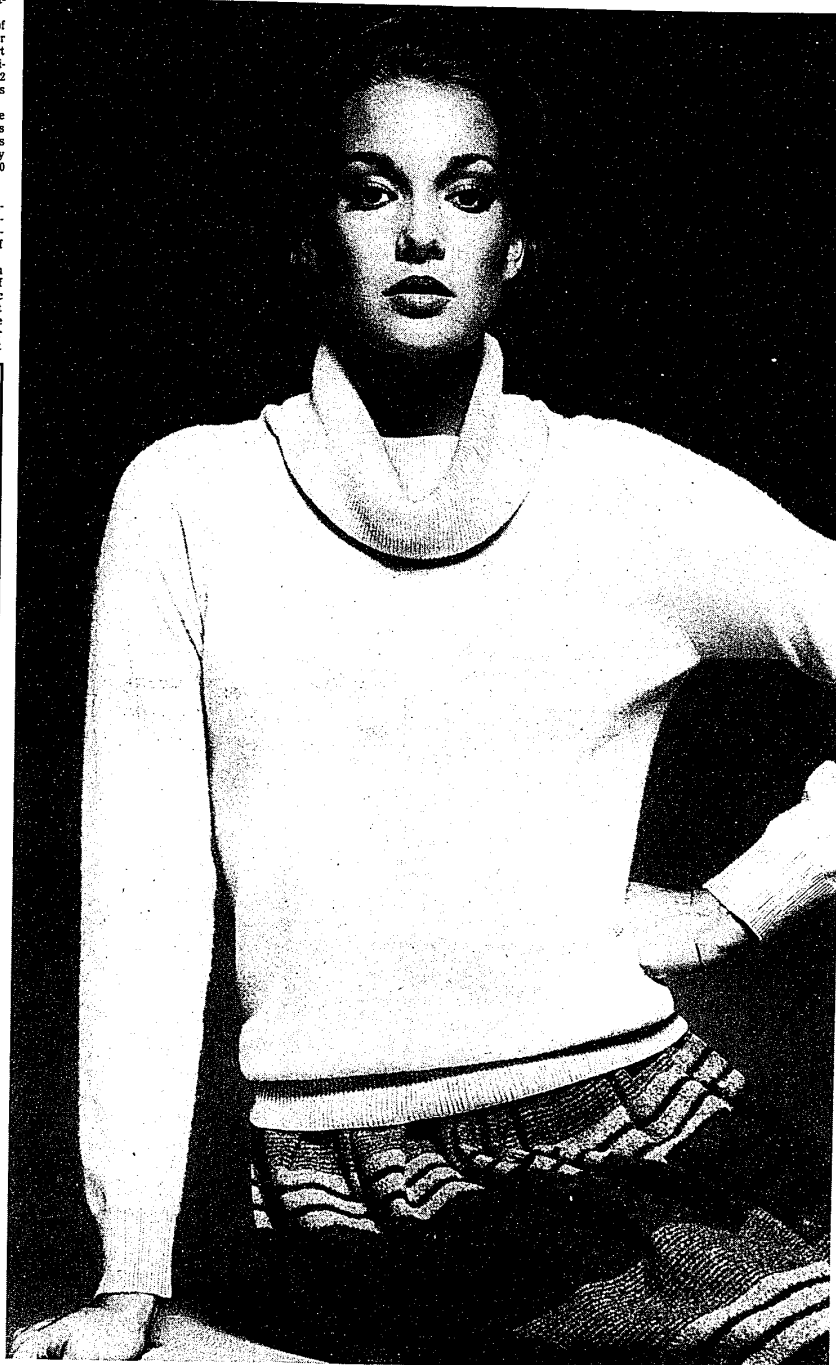
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