

# Local pleas prompt county roadwork dollars

Four road construction projects proposed by municipal officials will be included in the Oakland County Road Commission's \$18.5 million program for 1979. They are:

- In Troy — widening of the intersection of Long Lake and Rochester Roads.
- In Southfield — widening Lahser Road to four lanes between Potomac and Winchester Streets.
- In Orion Township — paving of approaches to intersections at 12 locations.
- In Keego Harbor — wedging the surface of Cass Lake Road near Orchard Lake Road to eliminate water standing on the roadway.

## County's wealth cited

# College's state aid advantage to end

By MICHAEL MATUSZEWSKI

A change in the state's community college funding formula has knocked Oakland Community College (OCC) from a long-held advantage position. That may mean future tuition, fee and property tax increases.

Until this year, the multi-campus college had benefited from the state's funding formula. Because the college's tax district is one of the state's wealthiest, OCC is able to raise more local revenues than most of the state's other community colleges.

Previously, the state's complex funding formula deducted \$500 per fiscal year equated student (FYVES) from the college's calculated total financial need. This year the \$500 ceiling has been eliminated.

Because of its large property tax base, OCC collects \$725 per FYVES. With only part of the college's total property tax revenues being used in computing its annual state funding,

John R. Gnaul Jr., chairman of the road commission, said, "The safety consideration involved in each of these was a major factor in the board's decision today to include them."

He said the road commission will pay 100 per cent of the cost of Cass Lake Road improvement and share the cost of the other projects equally with the local community.

The projects were sought during the Nov. 15 public hearing on the road commission's proposed 1979 budget and construction program. That hearing was attended by 51 persons, most of whom were public officials, and 19 persons presented needs.

## HERE'S HOW the \$230,000 of road commission funds will be reallocated

Gnaul said that all but four of 31 requests received from commission staff endorsement for action. He said six projects are recommended for inclusion in the 1980-81 construction program and noted that the 1979 program includes three projects similarly cited from among the public's requests the previous year.

"Another request sought a design consideration in a project already scheduled for 1979 and our engineers are alerted. Five called for actions which have been referred to road commission operating departments.

among the four projects prompted by public input:

- Resurfacing and drainage improvements on Cass Lake Road for 0.2 mile will require of road commission funds only.
- Reconstructing Long Lake Road to five lanes with concrete curb for 0.2 mile east and west of Rochester Road will require \$75,000 of City of Troy funds.
- Widening Lahser Road to four lanes for 0.2 mile between Potomac and Winchester will require \$50,000 of road commission funds and \$50,000 of City of Southfield funds.
- Paving approaches to inter-

sections at 12 locations in Orion Township will require \$50,000 of road commission funds and \$50,000 of township funds.

"Three require actions of other jurisdictions, and have been referred to them. Two were considerations presently being studied for general Road Commission programs and two others require additional time to evaluate."

"In summary, 'I'd say the public participation in the public hearing has been most worthwhile,' said Gnaul.

HE NOTED that the four public-suggested projects will add \$185,000 of local government contributions to the road commission's capability in 1979, bringing the construction program to \$18.5 million. The local contribution now totals \$4.8 million.

"In order to come up with the road commission's share of the projects' cost, it was necessary to delete six projects from the program proposed prior to the public hearing. We have only \$6.2 million for construction and these four projects require \$230,000 of

the Road commission's limited proceeds from the state-collected gas and weight taxes," Gnaul said.

He noted that none of the projects for which \$5.3 million of federal matching funds is available were deleted. These were:

- In Independence Township—widening intersection of Andersonville and White Lake Roads.
- In Highland Township—a north-bound passing lane at the intersection of Millford and Middle Roads.
- In Pontiac Township—resurfacing of Opdyke Road between Pontiac and Lapeer Roads.
- In Waterford Township—resurfacing of Airport Road between Williams Lake and Andersonville Roads.
- In Highland Township—resurfacing of Millford Road south of Middle to Clyde Roads.
- In Waterford Township—resurfacing of Elizabeth Lake Road at Cass Lake Road.

"We hope to include all six of these projects in the 1980-81 program," said Gnaul.

the college has few options if it should need increased revenues. OCC could ask voters for a property tax increase, raise tuition or institute new fees.

OCC is "one of a handful of community colleges that only levies a one-mill property tax," Roelofs said.

In the past, we've been able to maintain low tuition, and we've not had to charge user fees. We won't be able to do that any more if we're to keep a balanced budget."

Roelofs refused to predict when a tax, tuition or fee increase might be necessary.

REACTION CAME quickly from members of the college's board of trustees.

Some said the state legislature and the governor were trying to equalize

the quality of community colleges across the state. Others alleged political maneuvering.

"The little counties are getting more money back (for their community colleges) than they are sending to Lansing," said Trustee Earl Anderson.

"Somewhere along the line when appropriations come up, somebody's going to have to pull some switches (in Lansing) to bring up the dollars," he added.

Roelofs refused to put the full blame in the lap of the state legislature.

"It's not just the legislature. It's the fiscal agencies and the community colleges themselves," he said. He said it was "highly unlikely" OCC could convince everyone its advantages should be restored.

"I don't intend to get into a political fight with anybody," Roelofs said.

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