

# Gasastrophe!

## Don't haul extra fuel

Trying to keep their tanks full on weekends and holidays may tempt worried motorists to store extra gasoline. However, the practice can be lethal.

"There is no way to safely carry gas inside the car," said Richard G. Pfister, Michigan State University Extension safety engineer. "Gasoline vaporizes easily and the vapor, being heavier than air, will build up in the trunk. This vapor can be easily ignited by any spark or flame."

A couple of five-gallon cans of gasoline can be hauled in the back of a pickup, Pfister says, because there is enough ventilation to disperse the vapors. These cans should be tied down to reduce the chance of their becoming a fire hazard in case of an accident.

"There is also no safe way to store gasoline in a basement or any other place in the house," he added. "The vapors can easily be ignited by a furnace, hot water heater or anything with a motor."

Pfister says a small amount of gasoline — a gallon — can be kept for use in lawnmowers, chainsaws, etc., in a building separate from the house, providing it's stored in a safety can. Safety cans have a spring loaded cap to release vapor pressure, have a flame arrester, are made of heavy gauge steel, come in sizes from one point to five gallons.

"Safety cans are quite expensive, but they are worth it if you plan to handle gasoline," Pfister said. "They should be looked at as a good, long-term, lifetime investment."

Pfister said that other flammable liquids, such as gasoline and the white gas used in camping stoves, should also be stored in safety cans. These fuels vaporize even faster than gasoline and so are more dangerous. Diesel fuel does not vaporize as much and is safer to have around, but it is also more secure if stored in a safety can.

Before fueling any vehicle in which the engine is near where the fuel is added, such as a tractor, shut off the engine and allow it to cool for three or four minutes. Fuel vapors over a hot manifold may ignite and cause a fire.

"Click tires or oil, or take a walk, but let that engine cool down," Pfister warned.

Fill gas tanks only seven-eighths full in spring and summer. Fuel from underground storage is cool and will expand gas if it gets warm. If the tank is filled all the way, gasoline will overflow.

Installing extra gas tanks on cars and trucks increases the potential for a fire, Pfister said, because there is a greater chance for one of the tanks to rupture in an accident. It is not much of a problem, but buyers should make sure the tanks are installed in a protected location well within the frame.

"There are possible situations where a back-up fuel supply is critical," Pfister said, "but it must be handled carefully and kept in a safe place."

## Ford booked to speak to retailers

Former President Gerald R. Ford will be the luncheon speaker and guest of honor for the Michigan Retailers Association's meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 15.

Mr. Ford's appearance will be in conjunction with the association's annual meeting and public affairs conference.

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## Food storage information

An eight-page pamphlet describing ways to preserve and store food is available from the non-profit International Food Storage Association. To receive the pamphlet, send a self-addressed stamped envelope and 20 cents in coin to: International Food Storage Association, 5806 114th Ave. NE, Kirkland, Wash. 98033.

## 'It's a bargain'

# Costs up—but building backed

By TOM LONERGAN

Even though it will cost \$900,000 more than originally estimated, Oakland County's new Executive Office Building is a bargain, according to one county official.

The cost of renovating the old county hospital for the new office building has far exceeded the county's \$2.9 million estimate, made in 1976. But compared to new construction, "we still got a bargain," said Glen Dick, director of central services for the county.

Dick said the \$3.8 million project is costing the county \$34 a square foot. He estimated a new building would cost between \$50 and \$55 a square foot. The building is part of the county courthouse complex, off Telegraph Road in Pontiac.

THE SPIRALING cost of the new facility, which will house County Executive Daniel Murphy's office, plus other departments that fall under his jurisdiction, has been a sore spot with

Democrats on the County Board of Commissioners.

Two county board attempts since 1977 to limit the project cost to \$3 million and \$3.5 million didn't last long.

Commissioner Lawrence Pernick of Southfield, leader of the board Democratic Caucus, said the limits didn't stick because the issue became "politicized."

"There's no way the commission is going to limit the cost of a building for the executive," he said. Murphy is a Republican executive with a 16-11 Republican county board majority.

"At this point, whatever costs to come along are going to be approved," Pernick said.

"Whenever we wanted to get a nickel to upgrade the hospital, it was like pulling teeth out of a snake."

The county hospital was vacated after a new medical facility adjoining the old site was built several years ago.

DICK SAID the building will be completed within the revised \$3.8 million

price tag. It's scheduled for occupancy by late January.

He gave two reasons for the dramatic jump in the renovation cost. The board didn't approve initial costs for the building until a year after the initial \$2.9 million estimate, Dick said. By early 1977, when architects were hired, construction costs had already jumped 12 percent, he said.

Second, the county decided to use an inner courtyard designed for the hospital, which added 17,000 square feet of space. That space was not included in the original estimate, Dick said.

When bids for the project were approved at \$3.5 million, Dick said only \$3,300 remained for the project contingency fund.

Another \$300,000 was added for contingency use in the 1979 capital improvements budget, he said.

The project has received nearly \$100,000 of the allotted contingency from the board and will be back next month for the remaining \$120,000.

Dick said his office wants to have the additional expenditures approved by the commission's Planning and Building Committee, with board concurrence, so the full board doesn't have to consider "every little change order."

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## Trustees OK fund

The Oakland County Board of Trustees has approved a private campaign contribution fund for the two-year school.

Called the "Educational Support Fund for OCC," the coordinated lobbying effort towards state and national legislators in Lansing and Washington D.C. will be led by W.H. Nikkel, the college's vice president for facilities and planning.

Nikkel told trustees last week that individual contributions to the fund will be sought from "various sources within the college community." OCC can't use public funds to make campaign contributions.

Contributions to a state or national representative will be based on the person's "support for the educational process and institutions," Nikkel said.

Besides contributions, the fund can make expenditures on behalf of candidate committees, ballot question committees and political party and independent committees. Nikkel will keep track of the fund's income and expenditures while College Treasurer Anthony Jaxon will sign the checks.

Nikkel said the fund isn't required to report its expenditures, but the politicians, parties or issue committees it contributes to must report the campaign money received.

Roelofs said the administration will want to report individual contributors to the fund, which will be established soon as a non-profit corporation.

Trustees said the fund is necessary because college officials are pressured to make campaign contributions to individual legislators for the benefit of the college. Campaign dinner tickets and other fundraising contributions have come out of the administrator's own pockets, said Trustee Suzanne Reynolds.

Nikkel will be the college's primary lobbyist in Lansing next year, which is an election year for state representatives and some state senators.

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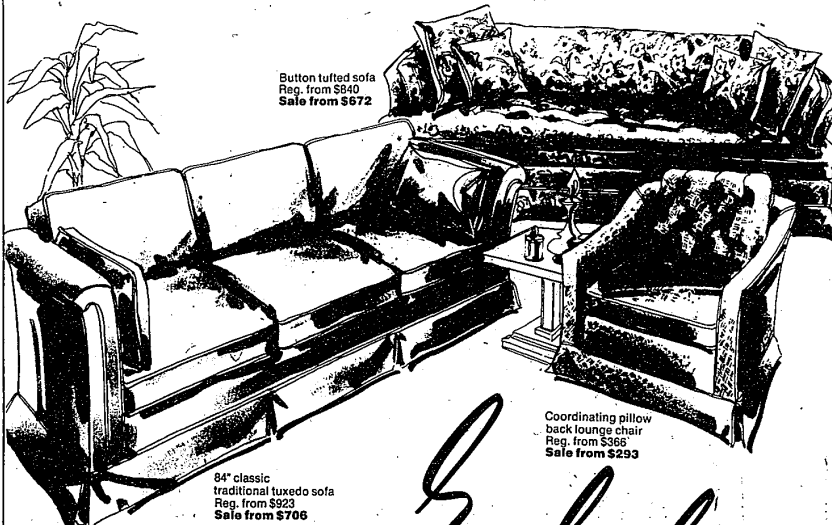
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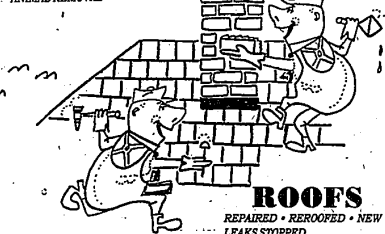
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