



No butts about it

Eric Carrier's position on cigaret smoking is graphically clear. The ninth-grader from Canton Township took three months to gather and assemble enough crushed-out cigarets for this mosaic, entitled "Death," which will go on display soon at a bank in Dearborn. (Staff photo by Gary Caskey)

County executive wants status quo

By MICHAEL MATUSZEWSKI

Sixty days into 1979, Oakland County Executive Daniel T. Murphy delivered his "state of the county" address. His speech prompted some commissioners to ask, "Why did it take so long?"

Murphy stressed 1978's accomplishments, but proposed no new programs, services or goals.

He asked for creation of a special contingency fund for 1979's budget surplus. About \$890,000 would be held for use in 1980 when the constitutional amendment limiting property tax revenues goes into effect.

Murphy also said he will appoint a task force to examine the feasibility of an Oakland County Economic Development Corporation.

FOLLOWING his speech, Murphy blamed the absence of new county initiatives on the state of Michigan's muddled financial situation.

"It's not possible to talk about anything new because we don't know what kind of money we're going to be getting from the state," the executive said in an interview.

In an effort to cut a projected \$100 million deficit, Murphy said state officials have notified local governments that state shared funds may be cut 45 percent.

A 45 percent cut would mean \$2 million less for Oakland County's coffers, Murphy estimated. Such a cut could mean vacant positions going unfilled and possible layoffs, he said.

MURPHY'S VIEW of Oakland County differed markedly from that of Democratic Caucus Chairman Lawrence Pernick, D-Southfield.

In the minority party's "state of the county" address two weeks earlier, Pernick criticized the board of commissioners' Republican majority for trying to minimize Democratic input in policy-making. He called for establishment of satellite service centers in the

southern and western Oakland, the restructuring of the Oakland County Organized Crime Strike Force and efforts to persuade Congress to change federal funding formulas and CETA (Comprehensive Employment Training Act).

Criticizing Murphy's address, Pernick said, "He makes it sound as though Oakland County has no problems."

Another Murphy, Commissioner Dennis Murphy, R-Nowi, supported the county executive's assessment. "There are no major, earthshaking problems in the county," he said. "What most people complain about are the roads. They're adequate. Social services are adequate."

"Because of the problems and turmoil to the south of us (Wayne County), we should be able to see the storm warnings. If we're smart we can steer around those warnings," he said.

ALTHOUGH EXECUTIVES of six counties surrounding New York City are complaining about social services cuts, Murphy was adamant that Oakland's social service programs will see no increases.

Executives from New York State's Westchester, Nassau and Suffolk counties and New Jersey's Rockland, Bergen and Essex counties complain that their social service programs needed overhauling plus increased federal and state funding. Each suburban county faces a declining tax base.

Unless improvements are made, some said, crime rates were likely to rise. Rising crime rates meant further increased spending on police protection and the courts.

Murphy discounted the prediction of the East Coast county executives.

"We're not in the same position as the New York counties," he said. "In New York the counties are responsible for welfare and social services. In Michigan the state is responsible."

"Out there, they're always trying to maintain their funding or get it increased," Murphy said.

Nursing prof warns against aid cutoff

Confronted with an existing shortage of nurses, area hospitals will face an even bleaker future if federal support for nursing education is discontinued.

According to Mary M. Lohr, dean of nursing, and other educators at The University of Michigan Medical Center, unless the Federal Nurse Training Act (passed by Congress but cut by President Carter last November) is reauthorized, the reduced number of graduating nurses will eventually result in less attention to patients by fewer over-worked nurses.

Philip A. Kalisch, a U-M School of Nursing researcher who studies nurse staffing, says that the effects of the presidential veto would include a steady intensification of existing problems in health care and a crippling of newer programs aimed at containing skyrocketing health care costs.

Kalisch cites the recent efforts by health care planners towards providing primary and ambulatory care in order to reduce time patients spend in the hospital. Such approaches depend heavily on a highly trained nursing staff, he says, and staff shortages would throw

much of the burden back on physicians and the hospital—just what planners are trying to avoid.

Kalisch notes also that the quality of overall nursing staff will undoubtedly deteriorate. The ratio of registered nurses to licensed practical nurses and aides is already uncomfortably low and will drop further. This problem is now especially severe in nursing homes, he says, and will inevitably creep into hospitals.

The White House's contention that the United States has a surplus of nurses is untrue, according to Kalisch, and probably rests on mistaken conclusions drawn from a recent Congressional Budget Office report based on data gathered five years ago. The fundamental error, he says, is a false projection of the number of people entering the nursing profession and the assumption—also false—that the number entering would be proportional to the need for trained nurses.

A major underlying problem, according to Kalisch, is that nursing is in reality not only unglamorous, but also physically and emotionally taxing.

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