

# Road gripes level off; officials take credit

Three special road maintenance and construction projects conducted in 1977, as recommended by the Road Commission's ombudsman, seemed to have answered needs voiced by Oakland County citizens.

"For the first time in five years, the number of complaints received during 1978 did not significantly increase over those received the previous year," announced John L. Grubba, managing director of the Oakland County Road Commission.

"In fact, complaints about holes and rough roads were down dramatically, as were complaints about dust, trees and brush, drainage and about damage attributed to our operations," he said. Grubba explained:

"THREE PROJECTS were conducted in 1977 aimed at reducing problems with holes and rough roads. Each project had been recommended by our special ombudsman office after analysis of complaints received in previous years.

"One project placed three inches of new gravel on 283 miles of our gravel roads in 17 townships at a cost of \$1.3 million. The project was paid 40 per-

cent by road commission funds, 40 percent by participating townships and 20 percent by the board of commissioners.

"Another project provided higher than normal repairs to sections of 12 primary roads and streets in 13 subdivisions. This required a special \$230,000 road commission appropriation and hiring of 23 temporary laborers for 15 weeks.

"The third project involved road commission purchase of special \$13,000 'Porta-Patchers,' which are special trailer units that heat cold asphalt and allow better chuckhole patching in cold weather."

GRUBBA SAID only two categories logged by the ombudsman, now called the Department of Citizen Services, showed significant increases in 1978 over 1977.

"Both can be attributed to the unusual circumstance of the 'Great Blizzard' of '78. Complaints about ice and snow did increase, as could be expected with that week-long battle against an 11-inch snowfall, severe icing, high winds and a salt supply shortage," said Grubba.

"Remarkably, the other category

was requests for information. This indicated that many citizens were understanding, for one thing. For another, it indicates citizen acceptance of our ombudsman service, which can be reached by telephoning 658-4804."

Holes and rough roads were the source of 26 percent of complaints, despite the decrease to 2,812 from 3,960 in 1977, said Grubba.

"Most of these complaints (2,043) were about unpaved local roads. In order for us to conduct a construction project such as placing three inches of new gravel on such roads, state law requires that we obtain at least 50 per-

cent of the funding from local sources. The law prevents us from using our revenues from the state-collected gas and weight tax for more than 50 percent of such construction costs," said Grubba.

COMPLAINTS ABOUT holes and rough roads remain high in Waterford and White Lake Townships.

"In Waterford Township, participation in the special road graveling program was insufficient to do all roads there that needed the help. White Lake Township did not participate in the road graveling program," Grubba said.

Ice and snow complaints accounted for 29 percent of the 10,597 total logged in 1978, at 3,144 compared to 2,378 in 1977. "Again, most of the complaints (2,385) referred to local roads, which have a lower priority and include the 1,000 miles of subdivision streets that make up 40 percent of the county road system.

THE SEVEN townships with more than 100 miles of county roads continue to lead in the number of complaints. Waterford is first with 2,558 complaints, or 24 percent of the total in

1978. Second is West Bloomfield with 1,871 or 18 percent, followed by Avon with 728 (seven percent), White Lake with 684 (six percent), Orion with 536 (four percent) and Independence with 435 (four percent).

"Each of these has a large percentage of subdivision streets. Such streets in front of homes typically augments the amount of maintenance we can provide by levying a special local millage for overall maintenance purposes," he said.

Total complaints or inquiries received in 1978 were 10,597, which compares to 10,512 in 1977.

## More contracts awarded for OCC Southfield campus

Drunk driving arrests in Oakland County increased about 80 percent last year.

Officials for the Traffic Improvement Association (TIA) of Oakland County attributed the increase to beefed-up Michigan State Police patrols.

Drunk driving arrests made by troopers from the State Police post in Pontiac increased 66 percent from 1977 to 1978, TIA officials said. Drunk driving arrests reported by the Northville state police post, whose troopers patrol both Wayne and Oakland County roads, increased 93 percent.

Sixteen new troopers were assigned to the Oakland County road patrols last year. "Increased patrol coverage is the main reason for the jump in arrests,"

said Northville commander Lt. William Tomczyk. "In the past, our patrols in Oakland County have been on a hit-and-miss basis. Because of additional personnel we now have three cars on patrol in Oakland County 24 hours a day."

Tomczyk said the number of females arrested for drunk driving appears to have increased, but he quoted no statistics.

State police patrols are usually confined to the expressways, but they report that most arrests have been made on roads leading to the expressways.

According to Capt. Paul Ruge, command officer of the Michigan State Police Traffic Service Division, the beefed-up patrols mean an emphasis on pulling drunk drivers off the roads.

## Prof to talk on architects

Leonard K. Eaton, professor of architecture at the University of Michigan, will present a program detailing the early works of architects Frank Lloyd Wright and Howard Van Doren Shaw March 15 at Lawrence Institute of Technology, Southfield.

The program is part of the LIT

School of Architecture's evening lectures series.

Eaton's presentation will begin at 7:30 p.m. in LIT's architecture auditorium. The campus is at 21000 W. 10 Mile near Northwestern Highway. It is free and open to the public.

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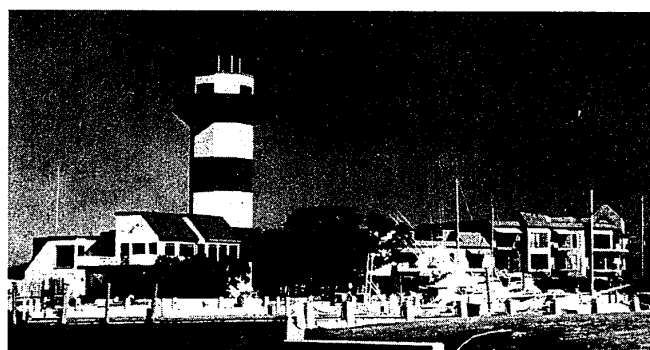
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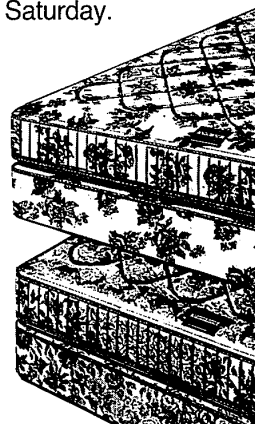
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