

# Hope persists for road-widening

By MARY LOU CALLAWAY

Ten years ago, the Oakland County Road Commission said no money was available to widen Orchard Lake Road from Maple north to Will-O-Way.

And last week, OCRC Managing Director John Grubba told West Bloomfield officials there is even less money available for the project today.

But he did give township board members some hope in their appeal to put paving the 1.3-mile stretch of Orchard Lake Road on a higher priority list.

"We are open to changing our priorities," Grubba told board members at a special meeting last week.

Trustees Dennis Vatsis, Weldon Yeager and Raymond Holland did not attend the session.

For years, township officials have sought to have Orchard Lake Road widened all the way to Will-O-Way (south of the high school) at the same time the commission widened the road from 12 Mile to Maple this summer.

That widening project encountered a long series of delays during the past several years. It should be completed by next summer.

But the road commission has contended the widening of Orchard Lake Road north of Maple to Will-O-Way must be done separately from the present widening project. It says state and federal approvals must be negotiated and finding the money also is a problem.

GRUBBA SAID he would recommend to the three-member road commission that widening to Will-O-Way be given priority.

He said the commission will make the final decision.

"Nothing is cast in concrete until the road is poured," Grubba said. Farmington Hills and Farmington also want Orchard Lake Road widened at their end.

"Bring your data up to date right now. The stretches from 10 Mile Road to Grand River and Maple to Will-O-Way are on the schedule for after 1983," Grubba told the township board.

"Our traffic load going north is even heavier than I-696 to Northwestern Highway," said Supervisor John Doherty.

*"We are open to changing our priorities... nothing is cast in concrete until the road is poured."*

— John Grubba, managing director OCRC

"You're right," added Grubba. "Our 24-hour traffic count shows between 18,000 and 24,000 on the 1.3 miles to Will-O-Way while the southern end (in the Farmington area) has from 16,000 to 19,600. But there is no way we can do both in one year."

"But Farmington Hills has other roads. Our people in the north have to get in and out. It's the only road we have," said Clerk Betty Sue Dupree.

Grubba stressed the OCRC has safety as its first priority.

To that, Doherty said "People will die. We see our EMS (emergency medical services) vehicles having to drive down the road shoulders because of the bottleneck."

GRUBBA ACKNOWLEDGED West Bloomfield's growth, but said money for such projects is decreasing. Federal money has been cut, and less money is being received from the gasoline and weight taxes. Those taxes bring in the money for the roads. Inflation takes its toll, too, Grubba said.

No cost estimates have been prepared by the road commission for widening Orchard Lake to Will-O-Way.

Doherty estimates the township's share would be \$350,000.

If federal aid is available, it would pay 70 percent of the cost. The county and township would split the rest.

"Look at all the communities which would benefit, like Commerce," said Trustee Thomas Law. "The widening of Northwestern to Maple is almost useless (without extending Northwestern through West Bloomfield).

"You're going to get deluged," said Doherty of the statistics he plans to submit to the commission in order to have the widening project moved up in priority.

## obituaries

(Continued from Page 2A)

STELLA M. SUMMERS

Mrs. Summers, 82 of Drayton Plains died Aug. 30 in Pontiac General Hospital.

Survivors include a daughter, Dortha Ann Cratch of Drayton Plains; a son, Donald K. of Farmington Hills.

Services were Sept. 2 in Thayer-Rock Funeral Home with Rev. Robert Walters of Calgary Lutheran Church of Clarkston officiating. Burial was in Parkview Memorial Cemetery.

HILLARDE E. PETTEY

Mr. Pettey, 64, of Farmington Hills

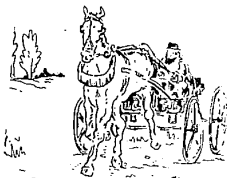
died Aug. 31 in Providence Hospital, Southfield.

He was retired from his job as set up man with Kelsey-Hayes.

Survivors include two sons, Glen T. of Livonia and David P. of Farmington Hills; four sisters, Aquilla Albritton of Ky., Rebecca Whitlow of Redford Township, George Rudd of Ky., Sue Dewisse of Ill.; a brother, Charles of Ky. and two grandchildren.

Services were Sept. 4 at Thayer-Rock Funeral Home, Farmington with Rev. Richard G. Duncan of First Farmington Baptist Church officiating. Burial was in Christian Memorial Cultural Center in Rochester.

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