Tax rate cut, services held in '81 county budget

By TOM LONERGAN

To maintain the same services, Oak-land County needs to spend \$9.1 million

more next year.

That was the message from County Executive Daniel T. Murphy last week as he proposed a \$96.3 million budget for 1981 to the Board of Commission-

erty-tax rate cut of 20 cents per \$1,000 of state-equalized valuation.

No "major programs have been added," said James Brennan, the county's budget director.

The proposed budget is 10.5 percent larger than the current year's \$87.1 million budget. The new budget year begins Jan. I.

Murphy said in a written statement to commissioners that the 10.5-percent

No county park plan for Orion property

The Oakland County Parks and Rec-reation Commission shares in the pur-chase of 2,400 acres of property next to Bald Mountain State Recreation Area but has no plans to develop its share

bato Monitani State Recreation Area.

The commission last week voted in acquiring 2,400 acres of land now, owned by the Chryster Realty Corp., west of the Bald Mountain State Recreation Area.

The state plans to purchase the land for \$5.5 million, with \$500,000 from oxlatan County, \$1 million from a state recreation trust fund and \$4 million in federal land and water funds.

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) would expand the Bald Mountain recreation area by at least \$1,200 acres with the purchase.

1.200 acres with the purchase.

BUT THE COUNTY hasn't even started planning the development of its 900 acres in Orion Township.

"I don't think there will be any defi-nite plans within a year," said a Parks and Recreation Commission spokes-

woman last week.

The county doesn't plan to tap its capital improvement funds for other parks to develop the Orion park, she said. The commission has directed parks manager R. Eric Reickel to investigate finnancing for the county's share of the park purchase.

The county board of commissioners may be asked to issue bonds allowing the park commission to borrow the money.

The new county park would be bordered by Baldwin Road on the west, Clariston road on the north, Joslyn Road on the east, and a line south of Lake Sixteen on the south. The expanded state park would be just southeast of the county park.

BRENNAN SAID the proposed tay-rate reduction was due to the tax-lim-tation section of the state constitution, popularly known as the Headlee Amendment, and a \$1.2 million 1978 budget surplus. Earlier this year, the county board voted to apply the surplus toward reducing the tax rate. A \$100,000 surplus is projected for the end of the present budget year. The county's current tax rate is \$5.39 per \$1,000. The rate includes 'w mill (25 cents) levies for the county Paxian and Receration Department and the Huron-Clinton Metropolitun (parks) Au-thority.

Huron-Clinton Metropolitian (parks) Au-thority. Reduction of the county general-fund rate from \$4.90 to \$4.70 would save a homeowner with a \$60,000 house (as-sessed at \$30,000; \$6 as year or 4 per-cent in county taxes. The maximum general-fund tax rate, authorized by voters two years ago, is \$3.26 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Murphy said the 1981 budget doen't consider the potential impact of this

fall's state tax referendums since revenues would not be affected until the 1982 fiscal year.

The addition of three new jobs, mandated by the state's creating a new district court judge for western Oakland County, is recommended in the new budget. Mur thy said county department heads had requested 113 new positions.

sitions.

The new psoitions are a judge, judicial secretary and district court officer/law clerk.

THE COUNTY'S major revenue

THE COUNTY'S major revenue sources are:
• Property taxes - \$54.8 million or 57 percent.
• Federal shared revenue, state-shared income tax and other miscellaneous state subsidies - \$20.7 million or

21 percent.

• Charges for county services - \$14.9 million or 15 percent.

• Miscellaneous revenues such as interest on investments and land transfer

tax - \$1.3 million or 7 percent.

The county proposes to spend the \$96.3 million in five major areas in-

Circuit, district and probate courts
 \$17.6 million or 18 percent.

prosecutor's 20 percent.

Non-departmental spending -\$14.6 million or 15 percent and:

cluding:
• County executive departments such as health, public works, personnel and the executive office - \$40.4 million or 40 percent. million or 7 percent. . Law enforcement -- the sheriff and secutor's offices - \$19.5 million or

About two-thirds of the budget is spent on salaries and fringe benefits. The county employs an estimated 3,500

General government -- the treasur-er, clerk, drain commissioner and board of commissioner offices -- \$6.4

A joint committee of the county board's finance and personnel commit-tees will begin review of Murphy's budget recommendations Friday.

CPAs to hear tax review

An Oct. 17.19 weekend course for accountants sponsored by Oakland University will include a review of the tax proposals on the Nov. 4 ballot. Eugene Sponere of Rochester, assistant to the university president, will speak Oct. 18 on "The Courtoversial Michigan Property Tax — Progressive or Regressive". The weekend, sponsored by OU's Diagnostic and Management.

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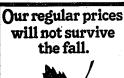
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