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Brotherton tells chamber reforms will work

By M.B. Dillon Ward
staff writer

Revised workers' compensation laws represent a victory for Michigan and demonstrate that "if business gets down to business, it can accomplish a hell of a lot."

So says state Rep. Sandy Brotherton, who along with Dennis Muchmore of the Michigan State Chamber of Commerce recently addressed the Farmington Chamber of Commerce.

Most significantly, workers' comp reforms signal a substantial reduction in spurious claims as well as the departure from a pro labor attitude to one that recognizes business needs help.

"We've improved benefits for the people who truly deserve workers' comp while correcting the abuses which allow employees to unfairly tap into the system," says Brotherton.

The legislation means \$350 million in

savings to be realized mainly by employers who pay salaries averaging between \$10,000-\$15,000, according to Muchmore.

Based on a national ranking of workers' comp costs incurred by business, Michigan drops from among the three most expensive states to somewhere between 15th and 20th, Brotherton adds.

UNDER THE NEW laws, all of which go into effect this year:

- Compensation will be allowed only if employment directly contributes to disability. Injuries suffered during social or recreational activities are no longer covered.

- A disabled worker must accept a reasonable job offer, whether or not it falls within his or her general field of employment. If the former job paid more than the new one, the worker may receive 80 percent of the differ-

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—Rep. Sandy Brotherton

ence in take-home pay.

- Disabled workers will be unable to collect more in benefits while idle than they did while working. Employers can reduce incentives to remain off the job by subtracting from weekly compensation the amount of other benefits received, such as unemployment

insurance, social security and retirement payments.

- Administrative costs will be decreased by lessening paper work and by allowing the voluntary resolution of disputes between employers and employees.

- A claimant must notify the employer of injuries or illness within 90

days, and claims will be nullified unless made within two years of the date of injury.

- Redemptions, or out-of-court settlements of claims, cannot be made after Jan. 1, 1984, and

- The Department of Labor will regulate medical fees, thereby limiting medical cost increases.

ANOTHER SOURCE OF comp costs was affected beginning last month. Insurance firms voluntarily lowered dis ability compensation coverage rates by 22 percent, paring old rates by an estimated \$220 million. The rates remain in effect until Jan. 1, 1983, when insurance companies will set rates independently in an open competitive market.

The reforms should correct inequities in what Muchmore calls "the most abused level of our government."

"There are still some problem areas, but we won't go back to them for a couple of years until scars have had a chance to heal and we get a track record. A lot of cases take that long to get through the courts," Muchmore says.

BROTHERTON WARNS THAT ACTION is needed in an even more important area — unemployment compensation.

"Unless employers start tooling up to push for unemployment compensation reform, it's not going to happen," he says.

"Unemployment compensation affects 600,000 jobless people in this state and deals with much more sensitive issues than does workers' comp, which affects only 7 percent of the work force. Yet we're not getting the same support."

Students accosted in two incidents

Two youths in Farmington Hills reportedly attempted abductions to police Tuesday.

A 15-year-old boy said about 7:30 a.m. Tuesday he was walking alone on his way to North Farmington High School when a dark green car, driven by a man about 30 years old, pulled up alongside him.

The driver asked the youth if he wanted a ride and then reached outside the car, grabbing him by the shirt. The youth told police he was able to break away and then flee down a footpath to a nearby house.

The suspect is described as white, about 5 feet, 8 inches tall, 165 pounds, with a medium build and curly black hair.

About 3:40 the same day, a six-year-old boy was playing in the snow near 21195 Gill Road between Gill School and Power Junior High, when he was approached by the driver of a white Volkswagen Rabbit, police report.

The man reportedly opened a car door and said, "Hey little boy, get in the car." The boy told police the man spoke with an accent and had "something silver" in the car's back seat.

The boy reportedly ran through a field and was picked up and driven home by a neighbor soon afterward. He described the man to police as being in his mid-30s, having a dark complexion, brown eyes, wavy dark hair, a mustache and sideburns.

Police are investigating both incidents.

General inducted into Hall of Fame

Naiff H. Kelel of Farmington Hills, a leading Detroit-area businessman, civic leader and retired Army Reserve major general, has been inducted into the Officer Candidate Hall of Fame at Ft. Benning, Ga.

ing as chairman of the national dealer advisory board, national advertising planning board, and United Fund drive. He received the corporation's 1980 World's Largest Dealer Award. And he has been secretary of the Dodge Dealers Council.

He has also been active in military and civic associations. He served as president of the Michigan Department of the Reserve Officers Association (ROA) and as a national ROA executive committee member, councilman and Army resolutions committee chairman. He was a director of the Senior Army Reserve Commanders Association and a member of the Association of the U.S. Army and the Military Police Association.

He has served on the Michigan Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, which urges employers to support workers who are also part-time soldiers and must take leave from their jobs for military training.

His civic activities have included service as a director, Detroit Chamber of Commerce; vice president, Staman Acres Civic Association; Commodore, the Old Club; and membership in the Hundred Club, Presidents Club of Oakland University, Detroit Athletic Club, Detroit Yacht Club, Recess Club and International Association of Chiefs of Police.

HIS HONORS include a Distinguished Community Service Tribute by resolution of Michigan's state legislature; Key to the City of Detroit in 1969 for public service; and 1980 Time Magazine Quality Dealers Award.

Kelel began his military career in World War II, entering the Army Air Forces as a platoon leader and commander of James Millikin Unit. He transferred to the infantry and was commissioned as a second lieutenant after completing the Ft. Benning school. He later served in the Pacific Theater as a platoon leader and company commander, participating in the occupation of Japan. He was released from active duty in 1946.

As a Reserve officer, he transferred to the Military Police (MP) Corps in 1958 and served with Detroit's 398th MP Battalion until the 300th MP Command was activated in 1959. He served the 300th in numerous staff posts, became its commander in 1969 and was promoted to brigadier general the following year.

The Highland Park native and his wife, Sharon, have three adult children.

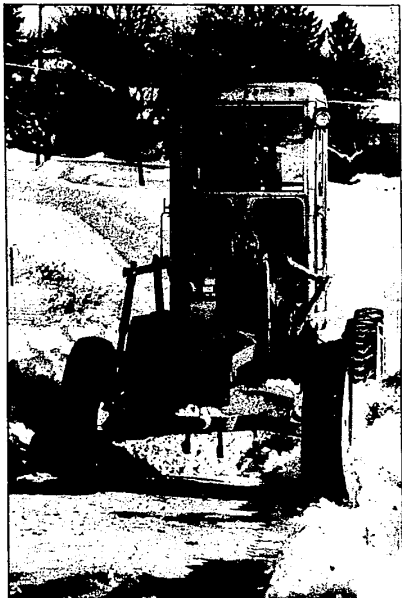
Machine power attacks snow



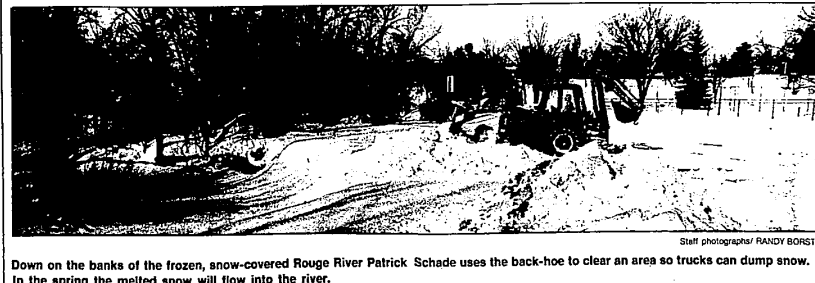
Robert Hope mans the front-end loader to clear the sides of the street while Kirk Schade (left) works on the sidewalk.



The snow was taken by truck to a location on Drake Road where it will wait for the warm weather of spring before melting.



Farmington City Park will also be used to store the snow until warm weather. Here, Don Gramer plows a path for City of Farmington trucks.



Down on the banks of the frozen, snow-covered Rouge River Patrick Schade uses the back-hoe to clear an area so trucks can dump snow. In the spring the melted snow will flow into the river.

Armed employe fails to stop shoplifter

Employees of Diamond Boutique, 37105 Grand River in Farmington reported to police they unsuccessfully chased a thief who ran out of the store last Monday with a \$5,250 watch.

Salesman Leonard Lark told police about 6:30 p.m. a 25- to 30-year-old man came in the jewelry store, "looking for a watch for his father."

Lark pulled out the diamond-studded watch upon the man's request and answered questions about its guarantee. The man then picked up the watch and ran out the door saying, "See you later," according to police.

Lark and fellow employe Robert Mil-

ler chased the fleeing suspect who jumped over the wall dividing Jamestown Apartments and the K-Mart center.

Miller reportedly drew his handgun, yelled, "Stop, police," and fired the gun into the snowbank.

The suspect continued running and eluded the employees.

A third salesman told police the subject had been browsing in the store a week earlier. He was described as being 6-foot-2, weighing about 200 pounds, dressed in a camel overcoat and having short black hair and a thin mustache.

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BRIDAL SECTION

See this section that has become a tradition with us in today's paper!

KELEL HAS also been a leader among American Motors dealers, serv-