

# Why security division grows

By Suzie Rollins Singer  
staff writer

Several Democratic commissioners again are taking shots at the Oakland County executive's safety division. They call it a second police force and a waste of money.

Deputy County Executive Pat Nowak defends the 44-person department, however, as merely a security department to patrol county-owned buildings and property.

"The law (Public Act 139) says that the county executive must provide security for county-owned buildings," Nowak said.

It costs us less to have our security division do the patrolling than to hire

sheriff's department deputies."

Nowak estimated that top-of-the-scale security officers who are being paid \$19,144 in 1982 make \$6,300 less than sheriff's deputies of the same rank.

"THE MAJORITY of their work is securing buildings and patrolling parking lots. So why should we hire deputies to do that?" he added.

Nowak and his boss, County Executive Daniel T. Murphy, are Republicans, as is the majority on the Board of Commissioners. Sheriff Johannes Spreen is a Democrat.

At a recent finance committee meeting, Commissioner Alex Perinoff, D-Southfield, denounced the safety divi-

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sion as "another expense we don't need."

"Every elected official wants a police force, and these people are just glorified watchmen with cars and sophisticated radio equipment," Perinoff said.

Nowak said Democrats attack the safety division every few years. The division was formed in the early 1960s but became more sophisticated in the mid-70s.

SAFETY officers have the same training as other area police officers. They attend the police academy and are deputized by the sheriff.

Twenty-seven academy graduates have arrest powers. They may enforce traffic and other ordinances on county property.

They patrol the service center complex. They are stationed in the computer services center, social services

building and the county courthouse.

The security division is also under contract with the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission to patrol county-owned parks.

And the security division is hired by Oakland Intermediate School District to patrol its grounds near the service center complex.

Its other responsibilities include: offering emergency medical care to persons on county property, establishing and overseeing emergency disaster plans, and assisting the general public such as stranded motorists on county property.

The other 17 members are building and safety attendants.

BEFORE MURPHY was elected county executive in 1974, the safety division's budget was \$184,843. Its 1982 budget is six times as large — \$1.2 million, Democrats point out.

Some Democrats contend the division grew from 24 members to more than 40 because Murphy wanted to "build an empire."

But Otis Dick, supervisor of the safety division, said the big growth occurred in 1976, when it was first hired to patrol county parks.

"Because of the contracting, we had to add personnel, more equipment and uniforms. But we're reimbursed for that service," Dick said.

## County offers cable reports

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The reports were prepared by various task forces of the Oakland County Cable Television Advisory Council. Each is a detailed presentation of issues and problems involved in special cable TV applications.

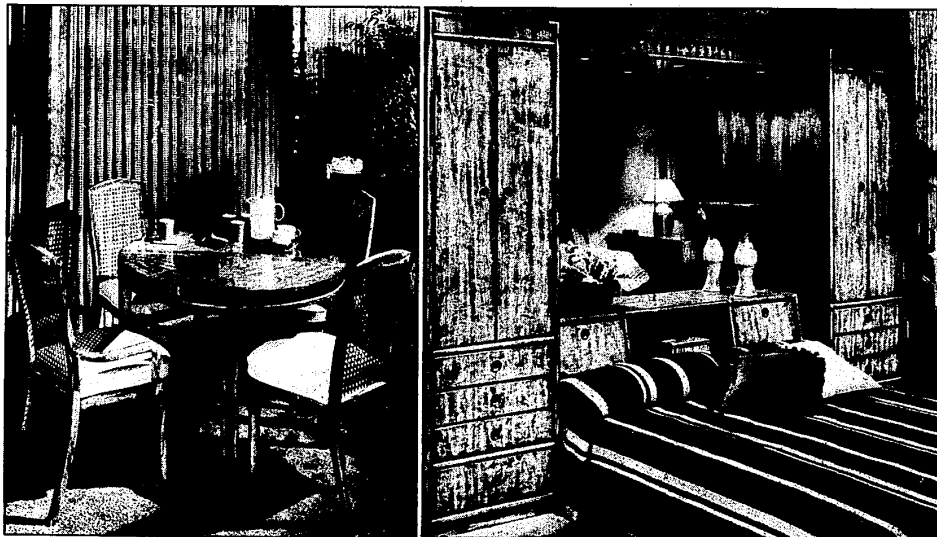
For copies of the reports, call 858-1032.

Task force chairpersons are: business and commerce, Michael H. Conlin, American Motors Corp.; public access, Rev. Robert S. Humitz, St. Patrick Church; health and medical applications, Ernest H. Hammel, Oakland University; and educational access, Audrey I. Mariner, Oakland University.

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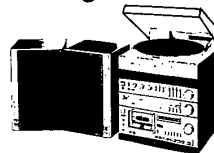
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