Rough roads ahead

No improvements in sight for county street system

tegrating, and they aren't going to get any better.

That depressing message from Richard V. Vogt, chairman of the board of the Oakland County Road Commission was delivered last week to the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

County Board of Commissioners.

gas and veight har revenues calcilling gas and veight har revenues and inflation has reduced our capability to about two-thirds of what it was in 1979.

Our projections are that by 1985 we'll be at half the 1979 capability," said Vogt.

GASOLINE AND weight taxes are collected by the state and distributed by formula to the Michigan Depart-

by formula to the Michigan Depart-ment of Transportation, county road commissions, cities and villages. Revenues from this source have been declining steadily since 1978 as autos become both more fuel-efficient and lighter.

Gov. William G. Milliken's plan to use part of an income tax increase for transportation was dropped in negotiations with legislators. And legislative efforts to raise the gasoline and weight tax rates also appear doomed for 1982 as the state moves to increase other taxes to balance the general fund budget. Thus, so new more from Lansing is likely this year.

These taxes provide more than half the annual income and the only substantial income formly road admittance. For Other country road calculations, and the state of the country of the co

PROJECTIONS ARE that by 1985, Oakland County's road commission will get only \$17 million. The amount left over for construc-tion has fallen from \$5.2 million to \$1.4 million and will continue to decline steadily to an estimated \$557,000 in

1985. As a result, the road commission is unable to provide the necessary match for any available federal aid.

"Except for our commitments to the Tri-Party program with your board and local communities and commitments to federally aided projects, we won't have any money for construction in 1983, 1984 and 1985.

"This year, we are forced to discon-tinue 50-50 matching programs with townships for local road construction, and next year we'll be forced to discon-tinue contributing 10 percent to special assessment subdivision street improvements," Vogt said.

Aside from cutting construction, the road commission froze wages and cut 65 staff positions, which will reduce maintenance. Cuts in gravel-road grading from an average of 12 to 10 times annually were made, and ditching work

Several thousand support employ-ees already are members of the Michigan Education Support Per-sonnel Association (MESPA), one of MEA's sister organizations. MESPA was to hold its own assembly Satur-day in Flint.

'The road system in Oakland County is both financially and physically

deteriorating. . .' - Richard V. Vogt, Oakland County Road Commission chairman

on local roads was reduced by 25 per-cent.

"TO PREVENT further reductions of maintenance and traffic-safety programs in 1983-84, the prospects are now that we'll have to cut wages and salaries 5 percent, from manging director on down, in 1983 — plus lay off 23 more employees and reduce fringe benefits," Vogt told the commissioners.

The road commission doesn't see any The road commission doesn't see any solution to the road financing problem, Vogt said. Local governments will be forced to assume more of the road re-pair burden and taxpayers, through special assessements, may have to finance road projects.

"The road system in Oakland County is both financially and physically dete-riorating, and the trend will continue until an assured source of long-range funding is created," he said.

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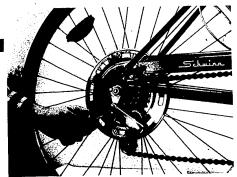
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FREE

Teachers may merge with support unions

Declining memberships due to teacher layoffs and rising costs pla-gued 700 Michigan Education Asso-ciation delegates at their annua spring assembly in Filint. MEA President Keith Geiger said delegates will be asked to approve a constitutional change which would permit teachers in MEA locals to merge with locals of school suppro-personnel, which include bus driv-ers, secretaries, custodians and food-service persons.

Last year, MESPA voted to join the National Education Association, which entitles it to vote for Michi-gan's members of NEA's board of directors.



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