

Some commissioners want sheriff's budget cut in half

By Suzie Rollins Singer
staff writer

Some Oakland County commissioners have recommended slashing the county sheriff's 1983 road patrol budget by nearly 50 percent.

Calling the recommendation an "economic issue," Republican members of the county's personnel and finance committees cite examples of unauthorized spending and runaway costs in Sheriff Johannes Spreen's department. They also point to nearly \$1 million worth of expenditures to reduce the jail population.

"When you're reviewing the budget you have to look at places you can cut, and this (sheriff's) budget has the most fat," said Commissioner G. William

Caddell, R-Walled Lake and chairman of the county finance committee.

"There are programs that can be cut in that department which were never approved by the Board of Commissioners," he said, referring to the Sheriff's E.S.C.A.P.E. program and the scooter patrol.

E.S.C.A.P.E. is the sheriff's 1980 brainchild that stands for Enroll in the Sheriff's Crime and Accident Prevention Program — a program designed to acquaint youth with the jail and patrol officers.

"The recommendation to cut 50 percent of the sheriff's budget is one more attempt to look at a personality rather than at public safety," said Commissioner Lawrence Pernick, D-Southfield.

THE COUNTY finance and person-

nel committees are recommending that 23 road patrol positions be eliminated as well as four command officer positions. The committees also are recommending that \$1 million be cut from the proposed \$13-million budget.

The full board is scheduled to adopt the budget Dec. 2. It takes effect Jan. 1. The sheriff's proposed budget calls for a total of 443 positions; of that, 45 are budgeted patrol officers.

"I'm not concerned about an unemployment problem," Caddell said, "because many of the positions that were recommending be eliminated are not filled at the present time. We've also got three private contracts coming up for renewal where additional personnel is needed."

The Sheriff's department contracts its services to townships in the county which do not have their own police forces. Presently there are 60 contracted patrol officers.

Commissioner Lillian Moffitt, R-Birmingham, said the county has to spend \$942,000 to comply with a U.S. District Court order to reduce the jail inmate population.

"We've been spending \$40,000 a month to put prisoners out of the county. The sheriff has run up \$640,000 worth of overtime costs, of which \$240,000 appears to be unauthorized. It appears we'll have to build additional facilities (for house inmates). So we have to make cuts," Moffitt said.

RESPONDING to the commissioners' actions, Spreen said he could lose as many as 16 more positions if the county loses a state grant under Public Act 416, which funds salaries for patrol officers on secondary roads and for alcohol enforcement.

"Your moves to delete these positions will not only eliminate the 416 and alcohol enforcement grants, but will leave no alternative but to provide further cuts in operations and services presently being provided," Spreen said.

"I had planned on expanding the present traffic 416 and alcohol enforcement teams, as well as the forces investigating arson, homicides and burglaries with these budgeted positions, thereby making supportive services available to the entire county," Spreen

said.

"Apparently, this, like all other plans, is being thwarted," he added.

SPREEN ACKNOWLEDGED the department's allowance of unauthorized overtime charges by instituting policies last week regarding overtime payments.

In a memo to his captains he said overtime no longer will be given to officers who staff the south-end prisoner transport, bonding window or transport inmates to Allegan and Washtenaw counties. It will not be used to cover for sick leave or annual leave as was recently allowed.

No longer will overtime payments be authorized for persons filling in for employees on personal leave, floating holidays, authorized leave without pay or military leave, Spreen said in his memo.

Commissioner Marilyn Gooling, R-Bloomfield Hills, said in the face of economic realities budget cutting had to begin.

Stores curb theft with tough security

Employee theft, shoplifting and other forms of loss cost retailers \$1.7 billion in 1981.

How stores are handling the problem was reported in the Fourth Annual Retail Security and Shrinkage study conducted by Arthur Young & Co. for the National Mass Retailing Institute (NMRI).

"In one form or another, the cost of these losses or shrinkage is passed along to consumers," said Richard I. Herah, president of the NMRI. "However, our study results indicate that the rate of shrinkage remained constant from 1980 to 1981. Therefore, retailers responding to our survey are incorporating more stringent security measures to reduce these forms of theft and, judging from the level of shrinkage figures and especially in view of high unemployment, these retailers are holding their own in combatting shrinkage."

"Most of the companies participating in our study this year attribute 50 percent of their shrinkage losses to employee theft, and 37 percent of that theft occurs at check out. Many of the retailers surveyed are implementing employee education and screening programs to aid in the fight. Security techniques, including polygraphing, are being implemented by retailers and have resulted in the constant shrinkage levels," said Robert E. Holsing, Arthur Young partner and director

of the Detroit office's management services department.

STUDY FINDINGS indicate that retailers are limiting prosecutions in favor of increased security measures.

Although the percentage of prosecutions was down substantially in 1981, costs of prosecuting customers and employees accused of theft increased by 23 percent.

More than 430,000 apprehensions were reported by the participating companies of which 48 percent were apprehended with 77 percent resulting in convictions.

Fewer than 22 false arrests were reported for each 10,000 apprehensions.

To combat theft, retailers spent \$408 million in 1981, a 14 percent increase compared to security expenditures reported in 1980.

According to 47 percent of the survey participants, electronic tags continue to be the most effective security device used on the selling floor.

"Because of the high cost of prosecutions, retailers are placing their emphasis on theft prevention. This is reflected in the study results which show an increase in security expenditures. Although there is no one method or technique used by all retailers, the overall increase in security measures will benefit consumers by reducing costly shrinkage," Holsing said.

Take SEMTA to Thursday parade

The Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) will offer buses from the suburbs to downtown Detroit for the Thanksgiving Day Parade.

Advance tickets are now on sale with round-trip TRAILBLAZER fare at \$4.50 and round-trip SEMTA-CLAUSS bus fare at \$3. Children under 6 who do not occupy a seat may ride free. All tickets must be purchased in advance. For additional information or group charters call 236-8782.

Bus and train tickets may be purchased at the SEMTA Transit Centre, First National Building lobby, 650 Woodward Avenue, Detroit. Train tickets may also be purchased at the Greyhound Bus Terminal in Royal Oak, 202 Sherman Boulevard; Hudson's in Pontiac and Oakland malls and at the

SEMTA Renaissance Train Station at Franklin and St. Antoine.

Ticket outlets for SEMTA-CLAUSS bus service are at Hudson's Westland, Southland, Northland, Eastland and Lakeside Mall and the Livonia City Hall.

One train will be operating, departing Pontiac-Jackson Street at 7:45 a.m., Bloomfield Hills at 8 a.m., Birmingham at 8:10 a.m. and Royal Oak at 8:25 a.m. The train will arrive at the Renaissance Center at 9 a.m. Shuttle buses will be on hand to take riders to the area near Hudson's. The fare is 65 cents with exact change required. The train will depart 45 minutes after the end of the parade. No shuttle service will be available back to the Renaissance Train Station for the return trip.

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