

Dem spokesman blames GOP

By Carol Azizian
staff writer

A Democratic Oakland County commissioner accused Republicans of "repeatedly refusing" to alleviate the burden on taxpayers and making "big spending demands."

Hubert Price Jr., D-Pontiac, chairman of the Democratic caucus, made the accusations in his minority party's state of the county address last Thursday.

"There is much lip service paid to the notion of property tax relief, but when Democrats advocate reducing the tax rate to match the rate of increases of valuation, the Republicans are quick to find reasons for inaction," Price said.

Although the county's property valuation has gone up by 53 percent since 1978, the tax rate has been lowered by only 7 percent, he said. Price urged his colleagues to "adopt the Democratic position that the tax rate (\$4.5 per \$1,000 equalized valuation) be rolled back and the surplus be returned to taxpayers."

THE ACCUSED Oakland County Executive Daniel T. Murphy of painting a "rosy picture" of the state of the county.

"Mr. Murphy, in his recent state of the county address, said that Oakland County is a great place to live. That's true.

"Unless, of course, you happen to be one of the 1,281 families who lost their homes to foreclosure in 1982.

"Or unless you're one of the 98,022 people who are without health insurance because of an employment rate of 14.4 percent in 1982."

Price blamed Republicans for mismanagement and "waste in county government."

"It is not good management to create un-

necessary new departments and positions. It is not good management to give salary increases at the highest-paid levels of county government, while reducing staff and freezing wages at the lowest-paid levels."

Democrats will continue to "resist these big spending demands," Price said. He called for elimination of wasteful spending in operations conducted by the private sector, such as food services.

DEMOCRATS, NOT Republicans, have repeatedly led the way for cost-cutting measures in county government, Price said. His examples:

Democrats opted for bidding out the county's insurance coverage. That saved the county nearly \$500,000.

Democrats pushed for an independent audit. "It was Murphy, however, who insisted on awarding the contract for that audit to a firm whose bid was \$300,000 higher than the low bid."

Democrats urged creation of a millage reduction fund and a freeze on hiring, he said.

Price accused Republicans of "systematically disenfranchising" Democrats. Even though half the voters in Oakland County cast ballots for Democratic candidates, no Democratic commissioners serve in leadership positions on boards and commissions, he said.

That's why Democrats have appointed their own chairman and vice-chairmen to committees, Price said.

IN ADDITION, Republicans voted to limit evening meetings to four per year, "ensuring that attendance at county board meetings will be accessible only to a few," Price said.

"Government of the people and for the people does not seem to be a high priority in Oakland County government."

Aging class at MSU center

"The Aging Years," a class focusing on social issues facing the elderly, will be conducted 6:30-8:30 p.m. Wednesdays, March 30 through June 1, at Michigan State University's Birmingham Center, 20500 W. 13 Mile.

The class is designed for social workers, hospital personnel and other professionals in related fields.

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