

Local units plead for U.S. aid

By Carol Azizian
staff writer

Local governments in Michigan will suffer great hardships if the federal government fails to renew revenue sharing, according to spokesmen from Redford Township, Wayne County and the city of Southfield.

They told a congressional subcommittee Monday that they would be forced to raise property taxes, cut services and lay off employees if revenue sharing was discontinued.

Three congressmen — John Conyers, D-Detroit, Sander Levin, D-Southfield and Ted Weiss, D-New York — from the U.S. House of Representatives Government Operations Subcommittee conducted a hearing on the subject in Ferndale.

Congress must act to renew revenue sharing funds, which are derived from the personal income tax, before the program expires Sept. 30.

TOWNSHIPS would feel the pinch. In Redford, "drastic cuts caused by Michigan's depressed economy already have skeletonized all of our township's operations," Supervisor James P. Kelly said.

The loss of federal dollars will mean two of the township's three fire stations would be shut down, Kelly said.

The remaining fire department personnel would only have one fire truck

to protect 20,000 homes plus businesses and public buildings, he said.

In addition, the township's safety patrol division would be eliminated, Kelly said.

"EVERY ONE of Michigan's 83 counties has suffered because of revenue sharing inequities," said Wayne County Commissioner Kay Beard, D-Inkster.

In Wayne County alone, revenue sharing dollars have dropped from \$15 million in 1972 to slightly more than \$11 million today, she said.

The loss of shared revenue would force counties to raise property taxes by as much as 15-25 percent, said Beard, who is chairwoman of the Michigan Association of Counties Committee on Social Services and Aging.

But raising taxes poses "monumental problems," she said.

That's because the constitutional limit for county tax rates is \$15 per \$1,000 of equalized valuation, and many counties, including Wayne, are already at that limit, Beard said.

To raise taxes beyond the constitutional limit, counties must go to the voters.

"To ask counties to absorb this kind of revenue loss through the so-called gross roots raising of revenue without proportionate compensation from the federal level would be totally unacceptable to taxpayers," she said.

SOME 532 cities and villages, 1,245 townships and five Indian tribes in Michigan would be affected by the loss of federal dollars.

A survey of nearly 200 Michigan cities and villages, conducted by the Michigan Municipal League in February, shows that local governments will face difficult choices if they no longer receive checks from Uncle Sam.

Federal revenue sharing dollars account for an average of 6 percent of the general fund budget in those cities and villages, said Del Borgdorff, chairman of the Michigan Municipal League's Finance and Taxation Committee. He is Southfield's city administrator.

Borgdorff said most municipalities use half of the federal money they receive for current operations — police, fire, solid waste — and the other half for building projects — roads, bridges, parks, water and sewer facilities.

ACCORDING TO the league's survey, cities and villages would take the following steps to offset the loss:

• 50 municipalities (25 percent) would raise taxes. The increases would range from 87 cents per \$1,000 of equalized valuation for municipalities with 10,000 to 25,000 residents to \$1.66 for

municipalities with under 10,000 population.

• 45 cities and villages (23 percent) would lay off employees. The layoffs would add up to more than 200 employees and represent 7.5 percent of the total municipal work force.

• 114 cities and villages (58.2 percent) would cut back programs or services. The cuts would cut across a wide range of services — police, fire, parks, recreation, street maintenance, crime prevention, library services, summer recreation, equipment maintenance and replacement.

• 108 cities and villages (55 percent) would postpone or reduce capital expenditures for parks, water projects, bridges and storm and drainage projects.

WAYNE COUNTY Executive William Lucas added that the loss of federal dollars would have a severe impact on the county's public safety and health care services.

Wayne County, he said, would be faced with reducing its general fund expenditures by 6 percent or \$10.8 million.

"Specifically, elimination of general revenue sharing funds could result in severely impacting on care to the medically indigent — 24,000 patient days of care would be eliminated," Lucas said.

OU counsels adults on jobs

Oakland University has opened a new Adult Career Counseling Center for persons who are unemployed or seeking a career change.

The center has a computer system which allows participants to answer questions about background, skills and values.

The computer matches careers suited to the participant and provides information about salary and working conditions. Information about more than 400 occupations and educational/training opportunities is available.

"The program is not meant to make decisions. It is designed to help individuals gather the information they need to make informed career decisions and plans," said Howard Spite, center coordinator.

For an appointment, call 377-3092. Center hours are from 9 a.m. to noon and 1-5 p.m. Mondays through Fridays.

The new facility — operated by the OU School of Human and Educational Studies — is located in Room 147 of O'Dowd Hall.

Cable TV topic of club forum

Cable television in Detroit will be discussed at a free forum presented by the Detroit Chapter of Women in Communications.

It will be at 8:30 p.m. Tuesday in the Royal Cadillac Hotel, Detroit. Representatives from three cable companies will make presentations.

They are: Don Barden, president of Barden Cablevision; Oscar King, vice-president of Detroit Inner-City Bell Cable Systems and Gil Maddox, vice-president of City Communications.

Reservations may be made by calling the WICI office, 982-7225.

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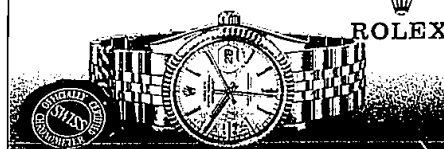
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