

Griffiths sees future for ERA and state

by Judith Doner Barnes
staff writer

LA Gov. Martha Griffiths painted an optimistic picture of Michigan's future to almost 300 people attending the annual Michigan Week Community Awards Breakfast Friday at the Orchard Lake Country Club.

And she got in her traditional lecture on women's rights, as well.

"Really, the auto industry is the biggest hope — but we're trying to diversify," said Griffiths, who is co-chair-

woman of a state task force on high technology.

She urged a coalition of labor, business and government, such as the Japanese have molded, to move the auto industry.

High technology never will replace the auto industry, she warned. At best, it could employ 100,000-200,000 people over the next 10-15 years, she said.

"And it will never employ them at auto industry salaries. Nevertheless, we (Michigan) have to have our share."

ROBOTICS and molecular laboratories, particularly in the East Lansing (Michigan State University) and East Lansing Creek area, are eyed for the state, Griffiths said.

"It is natural for us to encourage robotics. When Europe thinks mechanization, it thinks of Michigan."

The clothing industry is fifth largest in the United States, she told the breakfasters. "We have been supplying more than our share of the designers."

She described a significant number of Detroit's Cass Technological High

School graduates as headed for New York design schools and then off to jobs in Europe.

"We would like to bring them home, create a Michigan School of Design. We should look at all of this and use the creative people we have in the state."

"It should work out to create a really solid area of employment."

Food processing and awarding long-term contracts to timber companies to manage state-held forests are other areas of diversification, she said.

"IF YOU ASK me to speak, you are obligated to hear a few words about women," said Griffiths, who introduced the Equal Rights Amendment when she represented Michigan in the U.S. House of Representatives.

She urged women (and men) to lobby:

- To abolish inheritance taxes on goods and property passed between husband and wife.
- To allow deductions for domestic help.
- Property and goods can't pass untaxed between husband and wife, but

any church, foundation or educational institution can inherit every dime you have made and saved.

"The only person who can't be the wife who helped earn it and save it. The federal government will tell you she's valueless. But every minister, priest and rabbi will tell you she's priceless."

"If the tax code doesn't recognize the work of the wife, then they're not going to recognize the work of her substitute," she said on her proposed deduction for domestic help.

Bikers could benefit from rail abandonment

by Mary Lou Callaway
social writer

The nostalgic wall of a train whistle may never be heard again if plans are carried out to abandon the Grand Trunk Railway.

The 32.8 miles of track, from Pontiac to Lakeland in Livingston County, has 7.88 miles running through West Bloomfield.

And some township officials are interested in turning the track into a bike or walking path.

Abandonment only would occur after legal notices and public hearings determine the line no longer is cost effective, said John David Williams, Grand Trunk public relations spokesman.

Stressing talk of abandonment as "only potential," Williams said it could

happen in "six months, 10 years or never."

Gearing of the possibility, West Bloomfield Township Trustees Raymond Holland urged township officials to get together with the land conservation board and the parks and recreation

commission to dedicate the rail path.

"It's a beautiful scenic pathway that could be turned into a bike and walking path," Holland said.

Township Supervisor John Doherty agreed.

"It should be looked at," he said. "We've already talked to the (Oakland County) road commission to look at the possibility of correcting the Orchard Lake Road alignment," said Doherty.

Township attorney Paul Bibeau said

he believed Grand Trunk would sell the railway.

"It's a valuable piece of property," he said. "They pay taxes on it."

WINDING FROM Pontiac to South Lyon to Lakeland, a train travels through West Bloomfield only twice a week. It crosses Haggerty, Walnut Lake, Halstead, Orchard Lake, Long Lake and Maple roads in the township area.

Hills woman succeeds in business

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fect men, Laforet said. It's important for any person to have a marketable item to sell before opening a business, she advises.

"It's no good to have an idea that won't fly. So it's best to do some solid market research to make sure you can survive in business after you've sold your wares to your family and friends."

"You must have the entrepreneur spirit and be willing to risk your own money, time and overtime. It's a mistake to believe a banker will take a chance on your investment if you're not willing to put up your own money. Finance yourself for six months, establish a track record and then go to the bank."

Laforet warns women not to fall into the trap of the "do-it-yourself syndrome. Delegating authority and paying for legal and financial expertise leaves more time for doing what the businesswoman does best, she advises."

LAFORET DECIDED in 1975 to go into her health care business. She and her partner started in a one-room office and did everything from screening and interviewing nurses to marketing and payroll functions.

She now employs about 40 persons to perform these tasks and maintains her business couldn't grow if she continued to attend to all the details.

Developing personal, professional and business goals is another key to success, Laforet said.

"You've got to be sure your investment will pay more than a money market certificate in a local bank. If you decide to do your own thing, you can't take off at 2 p.m. for the golf course."

"Nine out of 10 businesses fail in the first year. Five years is the next critical line. Nobody wants you to fail and be one of these statistics. A dream isn't enough. The risk is yours and so is the potential. Set goals, make decisions and keep balance in your life."

Laforet opened one of her agencies in the height of the recession. Despite

that, the "bad" single business tax and other high costs of doing business, she runs a successful, \$4 million operation with a staff of more than 1,500.

ABOUT THE SBA, Laforet says the agency doesn't provide direct government financing for new businesses. But, working with the private sector, the SBA guarantees loans for women who qualify.

The SBA provides management assistance. Other resources for potential women entrepreneurs are colleges and universities, chambers of commerce, trades and professions and the Michigan chapter of the National Association of Women Business Owners.

Housing project still on

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live in the proposed housing complex. About 10 percent of all the units will be subsidized housing, according to Peck's plans.

"It's interesting how quickly we got to 200 names," he said. "That proves there is a market here for senior citizens."

"But right now, we are not legally able to give anybody an application."

In-house stores and shops, walking paths, a duck pond, courtyards and greenbelts would render the housing development a departure from the typical senior citizen complexes, Peck said.

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