

Property taxes drop**Murphy to reduce county operations**By Kathy Parrish
staff writer

Oakland County's chief executive wants to slow down the growth of government spending.

In his 1984 budget recommendation, Daniel T. Murphy Thursday told county commissioners that if present programs are merely extended, the county is now spending at a rate of \$129.7 million a year.

In 1984, he'd like that to be \$129.2 million — a reduction of \$483,000.

"This recommendation reflects spending constraint and service delivery at levels demanded by your constituents," the executive told his audience.

IN HIS MESSAGE, Murphy also proudly reported that Oakland property owners as a whole will pay \$1.1 million less in county property taxes in 1984 — \$4.4 million compared to last December's \$5.5 million.

Reason: While the tax rate will remain at 4.6391 mills, assessments will drop, reflecting depressed property values. On balance, the reduction is 2 percent.

And for the first time in history, property taxes will bring in less than half of the total county budget — 49.8 percent. In 1983, property taxes raised 53.5 percent, he said.

To reduce programs, Murphy recommended cutting 25 positions from the county executive operations and 18 vehicles from the fleet.

'I am now, have been, and always will be opposed to the philosophy of tax and spend.'

— Daniel Murphy

He also cited near completion of funding for the solid waste plan and elimination of payments for the east wing of the courthouse due to sufficient reserves to pay off the bonds.

THOSE COST reductions would offset substantial increases in mental health, utility and election costs, he said.

If approved by the commissioners, who will meet it over for a month, the budget would not mean layoffs. With 3,000 county employees, there is expected to be enough turnover to avoid cutting positions.

Murphy hopes to achieve the lower spending rate through willingness of employees to absorb additional workloads, efficient management, a cost control program and reluctance to expand government.

"The budget I am recommending is a balanced one and one that restrains growth in government," explained Murphy. "As I have told you in the past, I am now, have been, and always will be opposed to the philosophy of tax and spend."

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Sale ends Sunday, Oct. 16.

**Best painting**

David Conklin, 34, of Kincheloe in Michigan's upper peninsula is winner of the fourth annual wildlife artist of the year competition sponsored by the Michigan United Conservation Clubs. His oil painting of an encounter between a black bear and a red fox won him a \$1,000 check. The painting will be on the cover of MUCC's monthly magazine Michigan Out-of-Doors in December.

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