

Moving day

GOP packs bags for township

By Kathy Parrish
Staff writer

After two decades in Birmingham, Oakland County Republicans are moving west to Bloomfield Township.

Concern over the wrecking ball hitting its vintage headquarters during a busy election year prompted the Republican Committee of Oakland County to find a new location.

Volunteers are organizing a move April 14 or 15 from 325 N. Woodward in Birmingham to 1877 Orchard Lake Road in Bloomfield Township. One of two almost identical buildings sharing a parking lot, the new headquarters is just west of Telegraph Road on the south side of Orchard Lake Road.

"Our situation was just too uncertain, especially during a campaign year," county chairman Joe Knollenberg said. "We couldn't take that gamble, that risk." The new location also offers more for the money, he added.

SEARCHING FOR a more permanent location, Republicans have checked out 100 locations in the past five years.

"It's run hot and cold," Knollenberg said. He has looked at sites all over the county, from Farmington Hills to Waterford, Troy and Royal Oak.

Two years ago, the Republicans moved from 245 S. Woodward when that Birmingham building was torn down and replaced by a new office building and parking garage. There was the option of moving into the new space, but at higher rent.

When Knollenberg recently was re-elected chairman, the hunt stepped up. The Bloomfield Township resident has not been notified that the World War I-era building will be torn down, but he convinced it will be soon.

"OUR INVESTIGATIONS showed the headquarters won't last through the season. 'We're sure the first break in the weather will find the wrecking ball on the scene.'"

A new building has been proposed for the headquarters location, Birmingham city planner Bonnie Cook said. A preliminary site plan for a three-story office building was approved Nov. 2, 1983, by Birmingham.

"But we haven't heard anymore. They must get final site plan and design approval," she said. Birmingham Mayor Barbara Jesse said she regrets that the Republicans are leaving the city. "Like any business or enterprise that leaves the community, we'd prefer to have them here. But there are obviously economic reasons, and they do serve the whole county."

BECAUSE SO many party volunteers live in Birmingham, Bloomfield and Royal Oak, there was concern about moving from the area. But Knollenberg believes longtime volunteers will stick and the move will provide an opportunity to attract more workers.

"We think the geographic center is moving out from Birmingham. And we're still in position at Oakland County — which is where most of the people are," he said.

'We think the geographic center is moving out from Birmingham. And we're still in southeast Oakland County — which is where most of the people are.'

— Joe Knollenberg
GOP County chairman

He also likes the fact that the new location is just down the road from the "seat of county government" in the Oakland County governmental complex in Pontiac.

"I think this move will better serve the whole county. I don't think we'll lose on that at all."

AN OPEN HOUSE is planned for early May in the new headquarters, which has five offices and a machine room, a conference room, reception area and small kitchen.

At \$1,170 a month, the 1,600 square feet will cost more than the similar size Birmingham space. But the new accommodations are just 10 years old and the \$9-a-foot price includes utilities.

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New director for bar association

Kathryn A. Gilbert has been named new executive director of the Oakland County Bar Association (OCBA).

Her duties will include planning, coordinating, and assisting in the development and execution of the association's current and long range programs. She will also represent OCBA in public relations endeavors. Gilbert spent seven years with the Construction Association of Michigan (CAM), most recently as manager of the Institute of Construction Management.



Kathryn A. Gilbert

Her accomplishments included development of an Annual Call for Technical Papers, the organization of classes into certificate programs, and involvement in efforts to begin an International College of Construction through Lawrence Institute of Technology.

The Warren resident has a bachelor's degree in management from the University of Detroit.


She has earned designation as a certified association executive through the American Society of Association Executives. Gilbert also is president of the Association Executives of Metro-Detroit and is a member of the Michigan Society of Association

Executives.

OCBA is a voluntary group of attorneys which conducts programs for the legal community and the public. The association helps finance Oakland Livingston Legal Aid Society and Adams-Pratt Law Library. Its daily activities include Lawyer Referral Service and Tel-Law Library.

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