

# Oakland parks tax renewal on Aug. 7 ballot

Oakland County voters will be asked to renew a property tax millage which supports nine parks.

Commissioners voted unanimously to place the question on the Aug. 7 local primary ballot. The proposal calls for renewal of a one-quarter mill or 25 cents per \$1,000 equalized valuation property tax.

Every five years, voters pass on the tax which would cost the owner of a home assessed at \$20,000 (\$50,000 market value) about 14 cents weekly.

**VOTERS HAVE** approved every renewal since 1968, when the Oakland County Parks and Recreation Commission was formed.

"County voters have been exceptionally positive and supportive," said Janet Pung, the commission's public communications officer.

"But I believe people feel it's a very low cost service."

**PARKS MANAGER R. Eric Reickel** said the millage always will be needed to maintain an "ongoing, quality system."

"We must keep our current facilities maintained and well operated, but also continue to carry out the master plans for the existing parks."

The Oakland County parks system includes nine parks totaling about 3,700

acres. Attendance has been growing each year, with 1.5 million expected to visit this year.

Total budget for 1984 is \$62 million, with \$3.7 million coming from the property tax. Another \$2.5 million is raised through fees and charges, which are staying the same except for small increases in greens fees and wave pool fees.

About one percent of the budget comes from state and federal matching funds, which parks officials say are getting more difficult to obtain.

**WHILE NO NEW** parks are planned, several additional facilities are in the offing.

Preliminary planning is being done on a fan-shaped wave pool and water slide at Red Oaks in Madison Heights. Funds have already been set aside for the project, with work expected to begin in 1985.

The wave pool would be the second for the parks system. The one at Waterford Oaks west of Pontiac attracted 116,000 people during the 1983 summer season.

"The wave pool and water slide draw a lot of people," explained Pung.

"There's been a lot of interest expressed for one in south Oakland County."

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**THERE ARE** also plans to begin the initial phases of development of Orion Oaks, Orion Township, where a 327-acre parcel of land was acquired in late 1980.

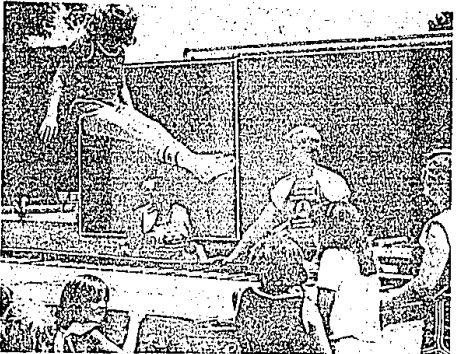
A yet-to-be developed master plan is expected to include facilities for camping, boating, fishing, picnicking and winter sports. Work may also begin on a 15-acre

botanical garden at Addison Oaks, Addison Township. The project will receive assistance from the newly formed \$500,000 "Parks Foundation," a private, non-profit organization composed of citizens committed to preserving and enhancing county parks.

The \$10-million purchase of Orion Oaks also saw developments and projects initiated since the last millage renewal are a two-fixture, giant water slide at Waterford Oaks; an inflatable water course at Red Oaks; Driscoll Slings in Madison Heights dur-

ing the winter months; and modern campgrounds with water and shade trees at Addison Oaks near Orion.

New modern computer news letter developed at Greenford Oaks near Shelby; along with the Racquet Club center on Stewart Lake. A 4,000-square-foot nature center and environmental education program will open this fall at Independence Oaks near Clarkston. A flower trail was also added at Waterford Oaks. A therapeutic program for the handicapped has been established and recreational day camps for youth are offered each summer.



"Most communities can't afford the mobile units we have," says Oakland County parks manager Eric Reickel, citing this sportsmobile, Mindy Baker, 12, of Troy demonstrates the trampoline.

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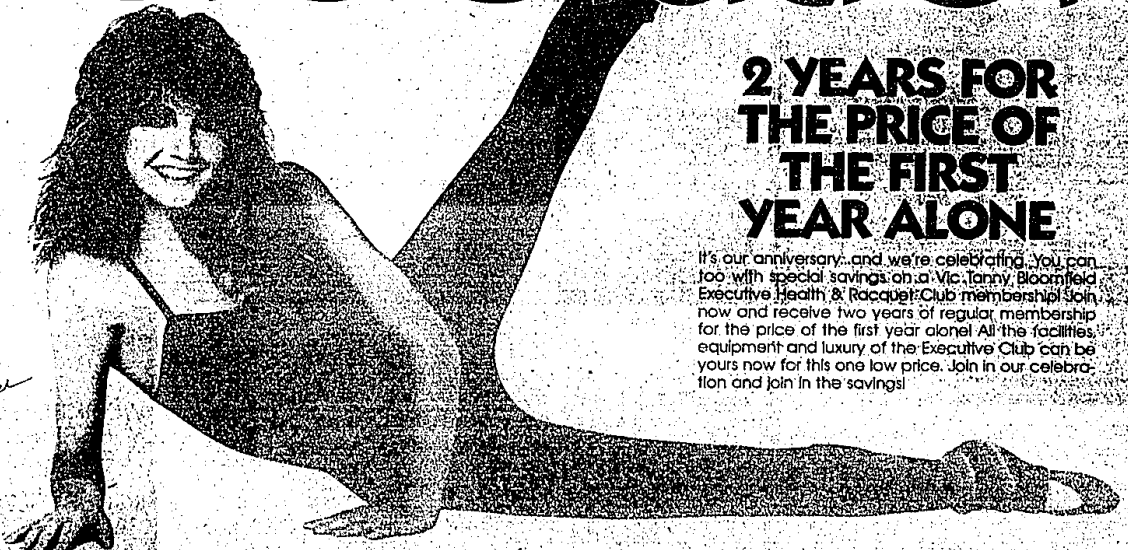
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