

# Businesses learn lesson

By Penny Wright  
special writer

Russ Webster owns a deli in downtown Plymouth. Webster's dependence on cooking and refrigeration equipment makes him vulnerable to rising gas and electricity costs.

Despite his efforts to modernize and tighten air leaks, his utility bill continues to run \$500 to \$650 per month. Said Webster, "Whether business is good or bad, the utility bills are always there."

Webster is seeking ways to reduce that burden. He is not alone. Around the state, other commercial and industrial energy users are asking for help in shaving utility costs.

Many building operators lack a clear

understanding of how energy is used in their facility or what cost-effective options are available to improve usage. Each year power companies like Consumers Power and Detroit Edison receive hundreds of requests for some type of energy audit service.

**HELP IS on the way.** The impetus began in 1976. Amid mounting concerns over the availability of Middle East oil supplies, Congress passed the National Energy Act.

This act consisted of five separate laws. One initiated the RGS (Residential Conservation Service) and the CACS (Commercial and Apartment Conservation Services) energy audits.

Michigan began the RGS program in 1981, and it has been one of the most

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— Janet Hanneman  
Program analyst

successful programs in the nation. More than 500,000 home energy audits have been conducted.

And now the commercial program is beginning to move. After final federal rules were issued last December, all states were directed to file plans of implementation of those rules. Each state was also required to designate one agency to oversee the program. The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) is the lead agency in Michigan.

**AWAITING APPROVAL** by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is an audit program called the Michigan Business Energy Efficiency Program (MBEEP).

When approved, the program will make available energy audit services for commercial buildings used for profit or non-profit business including schools, churches, and state and local government facilities.

The program also covers apartment, and industrial buildings. In all cases, the audits will be expected to bring lower costs, improved profitability and competitiveness to the businesses involved.

Janet Hanneman, senior program analyst at MPSC, said, "The goal of the MBEEP is to help business customers who are having their profits eaten away by energy costs."

She added, "Basically the commis-

sion is interested in ensuring that the plan will be cost-effective and worthwhile to customers."

**HANNEMAN, PROJECT manager** for MBEEP, noted two unique aspects of the Michigan plan:

1. The state expands the definition of eligible customers.

2. Michigan is one of the few states with an unbundled program.

According to Hanneman, the federal rules applied only to small commercial customers. "We thought the distinction was artificial. We wanted to help out all businesses in Michigan."

The Michigan plan has two phases. The first phase includes customers defined by the federal guidelines. Phase II customers include larger energy users and those using energy for industrial manufacturing.

**ALSO UNIQUE** to the Michigan plan is the fact that costs for the audits will be paid by the businesses receiving the service.

"The trend will be to get away from subsidized services," said Hanneman. The move toward a self-supporting program was the result of a 1982 pilot program of commercial auditing conducted in the state. Commercial and industrial customers expressed a willingness to pay for services rendered.

## Spending county dollars on pledge cards opposed

By Kathy Parrish  
staff writer

People willing to circulate petitions to reinstate capital punishment in Michigan are being asked to sign pledge cards.

Those postcards are then sent to Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson's office at 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac.

A resolution proposed by two Pontiac commissioners would ban that practice and others which they see as spending county resources to promote a personal interest in a proposed law.

"I personally oppose the death penalty, but the more overriding concern is misuse of county dollars," said Commissioner Hubert Price (D-Pontiac), who introduced the resolution.

"Why not maximize use of taxpayers' dollars?"

**THE RESOLUTION** to restrict elected officials from using public resources to promote proposed laws was introduced to the board by Price. He and fellow Pontiac commissioner Walter Moore sponsored the bill, which prohibits use of county equipment, funds and resources to promote a personal interest in a proposed law.

It must be discussed by the General Government Committee before the whole board votes on it.

The prosecutor's campaign to get the death penalty on the ballot by June 1986 wasn't mentioned at the meeting.

But the two commissioners, who are the only blacks on the board, have been vocal in opposition to the drive.

"People of low and moderate income are disproportionately represented on death row," explained Price, who expressed similar concerns during Patterson's 1982 capital-punishment drive.

**THE COMMISSIONERS** said he is not aware of the prosecutor spending county money on the drive, but wants to make sure he doesn't.

"I don't know if he's spent any county money, but there were intimations during the previous drive. We know it's getting off the ground and want to deal with it at this juncture."

At a press conference in his office to announce the statewide campaign, Patterson said the drive is being financed by private sources. But since he sees it as part of his law-enforcement job, he intends to oversee it in his capacity as prosecutor.

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(12A)

## Region's economy up, save bank

The metropolitan Detroit economy, as measured by the Manufacturers Bank business activity index, expanded in May.

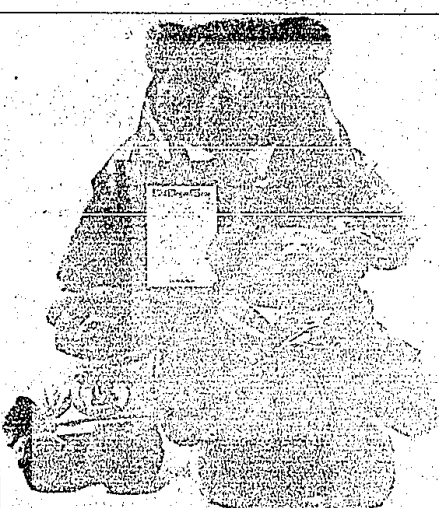
The index rose 2 points to 126 from April's 118, fully 30 percent above the year-ago level of 100.

Employment gains increased auto and truck production, and a large jump in financial activity led the rise. Manufacturers Bank Staff Economist Patrick L. Anderson explained:

"The Detroit economy has operat-

ed on a high plateau since the beginning of the year. The continuing growth in the national economy has added the sale of Michigan products, causing employment and production to increase over last year's levels."

Anderson predicted that the Detroit and Michigan economies would continue to grow in 1984 along with the national economy, but that uncertainty over national fiscal and monetary policy may cause problems in 1985.



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