

Agencies list building, road needs

Southeastern Michigan's infrastructure needs range from road, bridge and water system improvements to \$28 million in maintenance at Wayne State University.

That was the picture outlined by more than 40 speakers who testified at public hearings last week in Detroit's City-County Building and Macomb Community College, Warren.

The hearings were sponsored by Gov. James Blanchard and the Michigan Infrastructure Coalition, a 70 member association which he formed to gather ideas on how the state can begin replacing and replacing its aging infrastructure.

CHAIRING THE two area hearings was Robert L. Mitchell, the state's coordinator of public investment. Panelists included Gloria Smith, Michigan Department of Public Health director; Michigan Infrastructure Coalition Vice-Chairman Stan Arnold, State Treasurer Robert Bowman, and State Transportation director James Fitz.

Agreeing that local needs overwhelm available local revenues, local officials called for state assistance to help meet their needs.

They said the revenue dilemma would be aggravated by passage of Proposal C, which would roll back property taxes to 1981 levels.

OAKLAND COUNTY Road Commission Managing Director John L. Gruba said Proposal C would reduce the county's estimated 1988 state gasoline and weight tax revenues by \$7.6 million and force a 25 percent staff cut. "Without this staff, many of the services that Oakland County citizens consider routine will not get done," Gruba said.

In written testimony, Gruba said almost 39 percent of Oakland County roads are in poor or very poor condition.

'Infrastructure'? What's that?

Just what is this thing called "infrastructure" which is becoming a new buzzword in urban aid circles in Washington?

It refers to the public works needed to make an urban area go. Infrastructure includes highways

and roads, railroads, airports, public transportation, water and sewer systems, wastewater treatment, hazardous and solid waste disposal facilities, schools, colleges and universities, housing stock and public buildings.

control facilities in Dearborn.

During the Warren hearing, the executive secretary of Associated Underground Contractors Inc. in Bloomfield Hills spoke of the "hidden but potentially devastating crisis of the state's crumbling underground infrastructure."

Gilbert A. Rice noted that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) slashed funding Oct. 1 for underground

infrastructure projects from 75 percent to 55 percent of the project's costs. He added that the state's Headlee Amendment also stymies funding for underground projects like the \$1.3 million Bear Creek and \$350,000 Murtham drain projects in Warren.

Rice said a major state funding source must be developed for rebuilding Michigan's crumbling underground municipal water and sewer systems.

"Although we cannot see it, a crisis which could devastate our economic recovery and future prosperity - is upon us."

Bernard C. Giampetroni, director of Macomb County Planning Commission, said that county's needs include early completion of improvements to M-59 in central Macomb, upgrading of the county's industrial rail system and replacement of deteriorated bridges.

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