

Judges nix probe of Patterson

A request for a judicial investigation into the conduct of the Oakland County Prosecutor's Office has been denied by Oakland County Circuit Court judges.

Meeting yesterday morning, the 14-member bench voted unanimously not to impanel a grand jury to look into Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson's office's handling of a utility fraud investigation.

Robert W. Gagnoluk, Patterson's opponent in the recent prosecutor's race, requested the judicial investigation Oct. 30. His petition charged Patterson and two of his chief assistants with "unethical conduct and/or conduct that gives the appearance of improprieties."

THE TROY ATTORNEY'S petition came after a television news report linked auto dealers' campaign gifts to Patterson with the decision by the prosecutor's office not to charge business owners with tampering with utility meters to save energy costs.

Patterson is suing WXYZ-TV and reporter Vince Wade for slander over the prime time news story.

The prosecutor admitted he received \$5,000 from the Detroit Auto Dealers Association during his 1982 attorney general campaign and \$640 from Robert (Saks) Mechiglan, owner of Bob Saks Oldsmobile in Farmington Hills, for his recent campaign for prosecutor.

FURIOUS WITH the Channel 7 report, Patterson denied the gifts were related to the cases being dropped.

Patterson offered to take a polygraph test, but only if Wade would publicly apologize to him afterward. The reporter agreed only to report the polygraph results.

Two of the prosecutor's assistants — Richard Thompson, chief assistant, and Michael Izzo, chief of warrants — took polygraph tests in an attempt to clear Patterson of any involvement.

They passed the examinations, which asked if they were aware of the campaign contributions and if Patterson tried to influence their decision in the utility fraud cases.

DESPITE THE utility fraud controversy, which surfaced just before the election, Patterson still led the county Republican ticket.

Upset by the charges, the prosecutor expressed concern that the Oakland County Circuit judges waited until after the election to make a decision on the grand jury investigation.

outdoors

RV show slates fall sales run

By Lem Mesco
staff writer

There are two new features to the Detroit Camper and Travel Trailer Show this year.

First, America's largest indoor display of recreational vehicles will start its 10-day run in fall rather than late-winter. Show dates are Friday, Nov. 30, to Sunday, Dec. 9.

Second, the site is Cobo Hall on the Detroit riverfront. For the last 17 years, the Michigan Association of Recreational Vehicles and Campgrounds (MARVAC) had held the show in the W. Eight Mile Armory in Oak Park.

"With our new dates for the show, the public will have time to pick out their vehicle, arrange financing and get delivery in time for the first warm days of spring," said David Pickering, director of MARVAC, which has headquarters in Livonia.

SIGNIFICANTLY, there are more Michigan license plates in Florida campgrounds than plates from any other state except Florida, according to show chairman Howard Monston, who should know. He takes his own RV to Florida each winter.

"We'll have booths with information on financing right at the show," Pickering said, "and buyers may get delivery in time to take their RVs to Florida for a winter vacation."

For \$4 general admission (\$2 for senior citizens and kids 6-12), you'll see displays of RVs, accessories, camping equipment, campgrounds, resorts and of course financing.

Gourmet chef Tom MacKinnon, who runs a popular restaurant in Northville, will demonstrate camp cooking on a two-burner Coleman stove at 3 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 5. A camper and outdoorsman himself, MacKinnon will use mostly native Michigan ingredients, many found in the wild, and demonstrate his system of using plastic tubes to store food.

AFTER PLUMMETING during the oil crisis and recession, sales of RVs have been rising the last four years, though they're not yet up to mid-1970s levels. Lighter, more fuel-efficient RVs are the chief reason, Pickering said.

You tend to associate campers with vacation trips. But the fact is, Pickering said, that more than 40 percent of camping trips last three to four days.

Prices? They'll range from \$1,600 for a simple folding camper to \$125,000 for custom-built motor homes. Travel trailers, the most common RV type, often run below \$10,000, and the average price tag for camper which mounts on a pickup truck is a little more than \$4,000.

THE FEDERAL government has come through with a \$119,000 grant for completion of the hike-bike trail at Kensington Metropark in western Oakland County. The National Park Service made the grant from the land and water conservation fund.



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