

'Futuristic' OU tech park bill passed

By Kathy Parrish
staff writer

A bill allowing creation of technology park districts near universities has passed the Michigan Legislature after being changed to benefit more areas.

As first written, Senate Bill 753 let municipalities give tax breaks to areas like Oakland Technology Park, next to Oakland University. It also could have affected University of Michigan, Western Michigan University and Michigan Technological University.

As amended in the House, it now could also help Michigan State University, Wayne State University, and even such private colleges as Lawrence Institute of Technology, General Motors Institute and University of Detroit.

"The bill applies to several colleges and universities now," said Sen. Rudy Nichols, R-Waterford, a supporter of the legislation.

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APPROVED 98 to 5 by the House, the rewritten bill passed the Senate 30 to 0 last week.

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The districts could grant 50 percent personal tax abatements for new, real and person property improvements. Communities would be able to allow companies locating there to pay only half their assessed property taxes for up to 12 years.

The first bill called for a technology park district to include at least 250 acres of undeveloped land. Now it is 100 acres, which allows Michigan State University to take part.

The measure also specifically includes Wayne State University and three private colleges — Lawrence Institute of Technology in Southfield, General Motors Institute in Flint, and the University of Detroit.

A TAX ABATEMENT would have to be sought by 75 percent of the affected landowners and a four-year university.

To keep communities from using the incentives to lure businesses, exemptions would not be granted to anyone who moves more than 30 employees from one area city to another.

The bill's author, Sen. Harry DeMaio, insisted the legislation shouldn't "create fighting within the state for business."

"Michigan cities should be helping each other," said the Battle Creek Republican.

NICHOLS SAID he originally had reservations about tax abatements because of reports that they were being abused.

"But local governments still can renegotiate the agreements. And there are legitimate situations where businesses are not able to live up to their promises," he said, adding that the land otherwise would remain undeveloped and of no use.

"The key is to closely monitor the promises and performance on a local level."



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Meadow Brook riding ring under way

A small convention center in the Meadow Brook Hall riding ring of Oakland University is a step closer to reality. OU has awarded a \$57,790 construction contract to Leo Corp. of Troy.

The contract is for a concrete floor, grain and electrical conduit. Work is expected to be completed in 30 days, the university said.

The riding ring is part of the Meadow Brook estate on the OU campus. The new floor is a first step in the uni-

versity's plan to refurbish the facility for small exhibitions and convention meeting space. It can be used by the university and the public.

The riding ring also will be used as part of the Meadow Brook health-enhancement program, which is to be conducted in the adjacent north stable.

The health-enhancement program will include cardiac rehabilitation, health-maintenance programs and re-

search. Participants will be able to use the floor area of the riding ring as an extra running/training area.

The Meadow Brook health-enhancement program will be run by Fred Stransky, exercise physiologist. The health-enhancement facility is in the

design stage. OU will probably call in bids on the construction early in 1985, a spokesman said.

OU has committed approximately \$500,000 to help launch the project, which will serve residents throughout southeastern Michigan.

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