

Senator pushes for showdown with foes of new tourism bureau

By Tim Richard
staff writer

A turning state Sen. Harry DeMaso is gunning for an open showdown with state administrators who are quietly resisting his bill to create a Department of Recreation, Tourism and Culture.

"Next meeting I'm gonna have every one of the departments in here and ask them what they're doing. Let's lay it on the table. They're saying, 'I hear privately it's going no place,'" said DeMaso, R-Battle Creek.

Chairman of the Senate committee on economic development and tourism, he is author of a package of bills to create the 20th department of state government. DeMaso interrupted speakers frequently during a two-hour hearing in Lansing Tuesday to vent his frustration at the quiet opposition of state administrators.

His bills, subject of recent public hearings in Detroit and outstate cities, would strip powers from the Commerce, Natural Resources, State and Public Health departments.

"I HEARD nothing but favorable comments (from non-state sources) in those hearings. But from state government itself, there's opposition to anything called change."

His tentative date for the showdown is the afternoon of Tuesday, Nov. 8.

Supporting the package were spokesmen for county and local governments in Wayne and Oakland counties. Current Wayne County parks chief William Wayne County said he had the same job previously in Oakland County.

"I'm going to pursue the 20th department, by hook or by crook," vowed the 29-year veteran of the Legislature.

MICHIGAN'S 1964 Constitution required that 135 some state agencies, bureaus, commissions and departments be reorganized under no more than 20 department headings. The Legislature previously created 19, leaving one in reserve.

Many proposals to create the 20th department have been voiced in the state capital, but DeMaso insists the honor belongs to the state's third largest industry — one which grew in a recession as thousands of manufacturing jobs were lost.

He argues the state's efforts to pro-

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Battle Creek Republican

motivate tourism are strewn across several existing departments and therefore ineffective.

While Sen. Jack Welborn, R-Kalamazoo, a doctrinaire foe of state spending, continually asked what a department of tourism would cost, DeMaso insisted, "It's not a matter of more dollars. It's a matter of their being under one roof."

LOUIS F. TWARDZIK, Michigan State University professor of recreation and resources, gave DeMaso some ammunition. Items:

- The state's 253 roadside parks serve 40 million visitors a year but aren't promoted by the Michigan Department of Transportation.
- State highways along the free sand beaches of Lakes Superior and Michigan are unadvertised.
- Underwater state parks, at which scuba divers can visit sunken ships, in Lakes Huron and Michigan are unadvertised except by local groups. "Creation of underwater parks is one of the greatest movements in the United States. Japan has 33 underwater parks," said Twardzik.
- Responded DeMaso: "I worked on one (underwater park proposal) at Alpena, and I don't get a single vote out of Alpena, and it sits in limbo. I can't get any help out of the state department."

BESIDES CREATING the tourism department, his bills would place under it:

- The State Council for the Arts, now under the Office of Management and Budget.
- The Mackinac Island State Park Commission, now under DNR.
- The Michigan State Waterways

- Inspection of swimming pools, now under Public Health and local officials.

CAROL WOODS, executive director of the 6,000-member Michigan Tourism United, said her Lansing-based group is "in favor of any legislation" on tourism policy.

She said MTU wants the state to "assign a significantly higher priority to the tourism and recreation industry."

DeMaso's frown broke into a smile.

Woods said the group includes the Michigan Lodging Association, Michigan Restaurant Association, Michigan Association of Recreational Vehicles (headquartered in Livonia), Michigan Association of Private Campgrounds Owners, Recreational Canoe Association and three of the regional tourism associations.



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BIRMINGHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 1985

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public meeting will be held by the Citizens Advisory Committee on Transportation to the Birmingham Board of Education on Monday, November 4, 1985 from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. in Board Room A of the Birmingham Board of Education Administration Building, located at 650 West Merrill, Birmingham, Michigan 45201. The meeting is for the purpose of having a public forum, inviting public comment, to assist the Advisory Committee in:

- understanding the current student transportation system and problem(s);
- considering the feasibility of providing student transportation because of safety; and
- considering the transportation of a student anywhere other than to and from his/her home.

Any interested person may submit his comments in writing if unable to attend. Written comments of those who intend to speak at the public hearing are requested, but not required. In order to assist the committee in its preparation for the meeting these comments are to be submitted to the Committee at the above address by noon on October 30, 1985. Oral comments will be limited to three minutes per person. Representatives of the District's PTAs and parent groups are being invited to submit a summary of their respective organization's views and to also attend an open meeting of the Committee to discuss them, on Wednesday, October 30, 1985 at 7:30 p.m. in Board Room A.

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Joshua Wayne, M.D., Professor of Internal Medicine, and Chief of the Division of Cardiology, Harper-Grace Hospitals and Wayne State University School of Medicine.
Kenneth M. Aschard, Ph.D., Chief Psychologist, Department of Psychiatry, Harper-Grace Hospitals; Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry/Psychology, School of Medicine, Wayne State University.

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