

# County asks for 4-lane Haggerty

Monday, February 24, 1986 O&E (D&A)

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

Oakland County commissioners added 23 unanimous voices to the request for a highway in the Haggerty Road corridor in the west side of the county. At the same time, the county board said a wider Haggerty "does not by itself solve the north-south traffic problem in western Oakland County, nor does it address the need for a thoroughfare from I-275 in Farmington Hills/Novi north to M-59 and beyond."

Four commissioners were absent when the resolution sailed through the board without discussion last Thursday.

**BUT PROSPECTS** for action on the freeway extension — known as M-275 — are dim, according to state Sen. Richard Fessler, R-West Bloomfield. "M-275 is dead," said Fessler, in an interview on the Senate floor last week. He said James Pitz, director of the Michigan Department of Transportation, didn't put it in state freeway plans.

Pitz and Gov. Blanchard's administration have emphasized improvement and renovation of existing freeways, shying away from new construction such as M-275.

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**DESPITE VEHEMENT** opposition from environmentalists, local and county officials have advocated M-275, which would link the stub of I-275 along the Farmington Hills-Novi border to I-75 near Clarkston.

The former State Highway Commission shot down the project in the late '70s.

The county board endorsed a plan by Fessler to widen Haggerty Road from two lanes to four and turn it into a limited-access parkway. Their resolution calls for entrance and exit ramps to I-696 "as an immediate action to relieve a localized portion of this traffic congestion."

It also asked for "a review and recommendation" on a north-south freeway.

**IN OTHER** action last week, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners:

- Scheduled April 8 for a special primary and May 6 for a special election in the 7th County Commissioner District, in Pontiac. Democrat Walter Moore vacated the post after he was elected Pontiac mayor last fall.

The county board's Republican majority replaced him with the man he defeated — former Mayor Wallace Holland. If Holland can hang onto the seat, the GOP will have a 20-7 majority.

- Unanimously condemned the practice of apartheid in South Africa, calling the system "offensive" and saying it "deprives persons of their civil rights."

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# Auto insurance bill clears house

A bill to end rate controls over auto insurance has cleared the state Legislature with strong suburban support, and Gov. James J. Blanchard promised, "I will sign this version."

The bill amends the Essential Insurance Act of 1979. Effective in April, it ends a system whereby auto insurance rates in the suburbs are tied to Detroit's rates.

The bill would limit rates only in Detroit, capping annual increases at 4 percent above the rate of inflation. It also sets up a fund to combat auto theft, one of the causes of soaring costs in the metro area.

**THE HOUSE** Thursday gave the bill 69-26 approval. While most Republicans supported it, Democrats were badly split.

In the Observer & Eccentric area, only Democrats Maxine Berman of Southfield and William Keith of Garden City were opposed.

Berman said she distrusted insurance companies, fearing the bill would open the door for them to raise suburban rates to cover losses in Detroit.

Also voting in the minority were House Speaker Gary Owen of Ypsilanti and Majority Floor Leader Lewis Doka of Flint.

Oakland representatives supporting it were Republicans W.V. Brotherton of Farmington, Mat Dusak of Lake Orion, Gregory Gruse of Madison Heights, David Honigman of West Bloomfield, Judith Miller of Birmingham and Gordon Sparks of Troy.

Western Wayne supporters included Lyn Banks, R-Livonia; Justine Barnes, D-Westland; John Bennett, D-Redford; James Kosteva, D-Canton; and Gerald Law, R-Plymouth.

**SIGNIFICANT** support came from Rep. Matt McNeely, D-Detroit, who chairs the House Insurance Committee

and is rarely friendly to insurance companies. McNeely and Senate Commerce Chairman Richard Possumus, R-Lowell, put together the compromise.

McNeely was the only Detroit to support it.

Insurance companies were unable immediately to say how much rates might be affected up or down, but they did promise more competition.

The Essential Insurance Act, by tying rates from one territory to another, had the effect of breaking the state into two markets — metro Detroit and the rest of the state.



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