

The governor's economics

Comparison of Blanchard, Milliken shows surprising similarities

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Conservative Republicans used to grumble that Bill Milliken was so liberal as governor (1983-85) that he didn't belong in their camp.

Labor leaders and blacks lament that Gov. Jim Blanchard isn't a true Democrat — that he is quick to join the GOP in genuflecting to big corporations.

You decide.
Here are excerpts from Milliken's 1981 special message to the Michigan Legislature on economic development and Blanchard's 1986 state of the state address.

HIGH TECHNOLOGY

Milliken: "There is a proposal to develop high technology industries in Michigan. . . . And I propose that we begin our efforts with specific programs in robotics and molecular biology."

Blanchard: "We must remain diligent in our efforts to strengthen our industrial base and make sure we lead the world in advanced manufacturing . . . while capitalizing on the emerging field of biotechnology."

FARMS, FORESTS

Milliken: "But it is also true that Michigan agriculture grew by better than 10 percent a year throughout the 1970s. . . . The first goal is expansion of



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— Gov. William Milliken 1981

well . . . New state-assisted forest industry investment in Michigan during 1983-84 exceeded \$100 million and created 600 jobs."

OMBUDSMAN

agri-business . . . soybean processing plant, establishing a regional beef processing plant, increasing hard cheese production.

"The forest products industry has nearly \$1 billion in new plant capacity under expansion."

Blanchard: "We must diversify our economy, continuing to expand our agriculture, forest products . . . Agriculture and food processing remain a vital part of Michigan's economy."

"New forest products industry development programs are working very

Milliken: "During the past year, an inter-departmental task force made recommendations for a 'one-stop' business license and permit center. This center would provide a single point of contact in state government to assist both new and existing businesses with applications."

"I have asked the lieutenant governor to chair a task force . . . to review state laws, rules, policies and processes that may inhibit economic development." He said efforts already were under way to reduce regulations in the

Natural Resources, Public Health and Agriculture departments.
Blanchard: "We have taken steps to reduce the hidden costs of business imposed by state government. Our business ombudsman has serviced more than 200,000 business calls in two years. Our paper reduction effort has had dramatic results."

TOURIST PROMOTION

Milliken: "I propose that we tell the world about Michigan. . . . that Michigan embark on a high caliber, extensive and long-term awareness program designed to proclaim Michigan's many positive aspects through the best promotion techniques."
"It is gratifying to know that (tourism) is strong and growing."

Blanchard: "We are a leading vacation destination. The job of state government is to help the travel industry show even more travelers what we have to offer."

"John Savich and the travel commission and staff have developed extensive and comprehensive marketing strategies to meet the changing needs of this travel market."

SMALL BUSINESS

Milliken: "The small businesses sector is the primary source of new jobs. Early this year, I signed a law providing for a network of small business development centers. To assure that we



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— Gov. James Blanchard 1986

design the most effective centers, I have directed the Department of Commerce to establish two pilot centers this year."

Blanchard: "And we'll expand our small business agenda through our Entrepreneurial and Small Business Commission."

ENTERPRISE ZONES

Milliken: "I propose that we adopt state enabling legislation complementing and supplementing the proposed

federal urban enterprise legislation. This legislation would identify cities where private investment and development can be fostered through such state and local tax incentives. . . ."
Blanchard recently signed such an act benefitting the city of Benton Harbor, but didn't mention it in his speech.

BANKING BOUNDARIES

Milliken: "I urge the Legislature to promptly pass legislation permitting statewide branch banking. . . ."
"I urge passage of legislation to remove the prohibition against foreign banking in Michigan."

Blanchard signed the act to allow statewide branch banking and recently took steps to license a Japanese bank, but didn't mention them in his speech.

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