

C'ville opts out of lawsuit against state

By Tom Henderson
staff writer

The Clarenceville School District has decided not to join 35 other school districts in a court battle for state money lost after the Headlee tax amendment was passed in 1978.

Instead, the district has voted to take its case before a state review board that has yet to hear a case since being formed in 1980, which didn't hold a meeting its first five years of existence and which has met just once to discuss procedures, which already has a backlog of 400-500 cases pending, and which won't

hold a hearing on its first case until at least March of 1987.

At issue is about \$450,000 the district has lost in special education funds since the 1978-79 school year, according to Edward Salas, the assistant superintendent of school business affairs.

"Our board just didn't want to go out and pay all those legal fees up front not knowing if anything would come of it," said Salas of the board's recent decision.

ACCORDING TO Gary Buckerby, director of the office of the budget of the state's Department of Man-

agement and Budget, the Local Government Claims Review Board was created by the state Legislature, with Gov. William Milliken appointing the first nine-member board in 1980.

But, said Buckerby, Milliken's appointees never met.

Gov. James Blanchard appointed another nine members to the board and, according to Buckerby, they held their only meeting in June of 1985 to adopt rules of procedure.

Those rules were modified by Attorney General Frank Kelley's office and a subsequent public hearing was

held in May of this year, said Buckerby.

Buckerby said the proposed rules of procedure must now be approved by a panel known as the Legislative Service Bureau and then approved by a legislative joint committee.

He said the earliest the board could begin hearing its backlog of cases would be next March.

"They're going to have their work cut out," said Buckerby of the board, which is made up of five people selected to represent the public at large and four others who represent various forms of local government. One board member represents

a township, another a court, another a school board and another a junior college. None are from the Observer area.

BUCKERBY WOULDN'T estimate the amount of money involved in the 400-500 claims. "It's a significant amount," he said.

The claims come from all forms of local government, not just school districts, Buckerby said that in filing a claim, dollar estimates are not required.

At an average of \$10,000 a claim, a minimum of \$4 million would be at stake. At \$100,000 a claim, there

would be \$40 million at stake.

Many of the claims likely would be much higher. Livonia school superintendent James Carli, for example, has said his district could recover up to \$1 million for each of the seven years since the Headlee amendment went into effect.

Livonia was one of the first school districts to file suit, though Carli has said he doesn't expect a result "for quite a long time."

As many as 150 school districts could file claims, an official of the Michigan Association of School Boards has said.

Work program for offenders considered

Continued from Page 1

be found for the numbers of workers expected to join the program, Miller said.

"We've got the work available," Miller said. "Department heads from both cities agreed on that."

According to 47th District Chief

Judge Margaret Schaeffer, the program would operate in the following manner:

- A person arrested for a misdemeanor would be sentenced in district court by Schaeffer or fellow District Judge Michael Hand.
- Based on their discretion, ei-

ther judge would then inform the offender of the alternative work program after reviewing the offender's past record.

• The offender who faces a jail sentence could choose to participate in the work program on weekends only for the period of time he would

have been incarcerated.

• Each worker in the program would pay a fee of \$20 per work day to be applied toward salaries of supervisors, insurance plan, tools and manual equipment.

"THIS IS NOT a money-making proposal," Miller said. "It's designed

to save us money in the long run plus provide numerous free man-hours worth of work."

Housing prisoners in the Oakland County Jail costs both cities \$17.75 a day, officials said.

"Farmers would save those costs if the cities participate in the pro-

gram. But city and police officials were uncertain how much of a savings would be realized.

City, court and police officials are uncertain how many misdemeanor arrests are made each week. But as an example, 250 drunk driving arrests were made in Farmington last year, Lauthoff said.

According to Miller, 45 men have signed up for the program that is expected to begin Aug. 16 and continue until October.

Miller added that arrest warrants will be issued for workers failing to show up for work, consequently excluding them from further participation in the program.

Livonia Deputy Chief of Probations Glen Toy said that the Livonia program, administered by the 16th District Court, is successful.

"Ninety percent of our offenders don't want to go to jail so they choose to work eight hours a day on Saturdays and Sundays," Toy said. "The key to the program is cooperation between the courts, the police and the city administrators."

Asbestos water lines banned in Hills

By Joanno Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills has banned the use of water line pipes made with asbestos.

The decision to ban the use of asbestos cement pipes came as the result of research conducted by the city's engineering staff in light of the U.S. Environmental Protection

Agency's proposal last fall to ban many asbestos products. Director of Public Services Thomas Biasek said.

"Basically, we recommended to go along with the EPA recommendation. And no one (contractors) is really bidding them anymore."

Until the city's decision to ban asbestos pipes was made last week, Farmington Hills was one of several

metro Detroit communities that lagged in suspending the use of the pipes. Medical research, according to the EPA, has shown that when inhaled asbestos fibers can lead to lung cancer. Agency officials are expected to present final rules next year.

Although health concerns about asbestos pipes played a role in the city's ban, much of the decision also

stemmed from the fact that contractors have been prohibited by their insurance carriers from bidding or using such pipes, Biasek said.

Potential health problems stem from the possibility of asbestos particles becoming airborne. Though that doesn't occur once the pipes are in use, it can occur during the manufacture and installation of the pipes.

Consequently, the asbestos cement pipes now in use in Farmington Hills water mains are not hazardous, Biasek said.

"It's the manufacturing and installation that have a cause for a problem so we're not going to use it," Biasek said.

Asbestos cement pipes have been used — until recent difficulties with contractors' ability to bid them — because they were less expensive and easier to maintain than iron ductile pipes, Biasek said.

Last year, Detroit Water and Sewerage Department — providers of Farmington Hills' water supply — banned future use of asbestos pipes but felt existing pipes posed no health hazard.

Asbestos cement pipes contain approximately 20 percent asbestos, which is used as a reinforcement material. Asbestos pipes are generally used as water mains.

The city's asbestos ban does not require changes in the city code or ordinances. But city officials must inform the Oakland County Department of Public Works in writing of the ban, Biasek said.

Nabisco 3-year contract is ratified

Members of Teamsters Local 51 — employees of Nabisco Brands Industries' Farmington Hills distribution center — are back on the job following a 16-day strike.

The 40 union members unanimously ratified a new three-year contract Thursday, July 31, after federal mediator Maurice Chagnone presented the local with the company's latest proposal, said Frank Hall, local 51 union steward.

"We just settled. He (Chagnone) did a terrific job for us. I think both parties can live with it," Hall said.

The Nabisco distribution center's only unionized employees — drivers and warehouse workers — walked off the job at midnight Tuesday, July 15, after twice rejecting company contract proposals, the latest on Saturday, July 13. Union members had been working without a contract since May 1.

"We made improvements in our wages and gave up a little in the way of vacation (time of year when taken)," Hall said, declining to offer details of the new contract.

Company officials at the Farmington Hills distribution center, 24100 Research Drive, and the firm's national headquarters in New Jersey, refused comment.

In the first week of picketing, union members claimed Nabisco had

brought in temporary employees from out-of-state. Union members also claimed Nabisco officials were planning to accept employment applications to fill the union positions.

As the strike continued, union members picketed grocery stores that carry Nabisco products, requesting the public to boycott the company's products, Hall said.

"We received 90-95 percent of the public's support," Hall said.

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The others are:

• **Hepatitis B:** There are thought to be 400,000 to 800,000 infectious carriers of the hepatitis virus in the United States.

• **Diphtheria:** Though this serious disease has been brought under control, hundreds of cases are still reported each year. There is no cure and less than 40 percent of all adults are adequately immunized against this deadly disease.

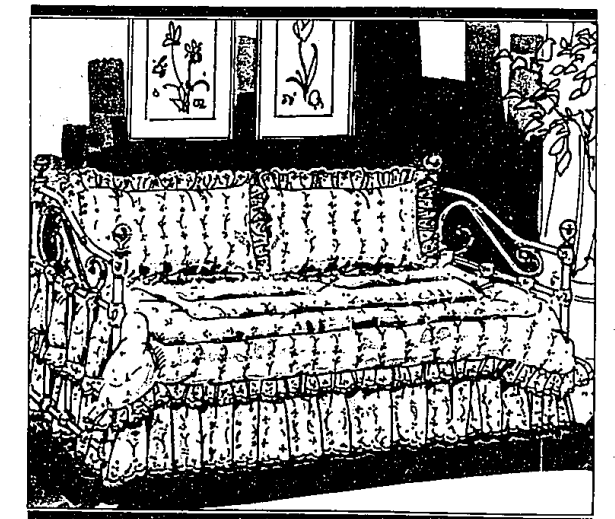
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