

# Lucas-Engler ticket bouys local delegates

By Teri Banas  
Staff writer

Wayne County executive William Lucas, the state's first black candidate for governor, became the Republican Party's official nominee at its state convention in Detroit Saturday by asking 1,500 enthusiastic delegates to make the "dream" come true in November.

It was a convention fueled by a desire to unseat Democratic officeholder Jim Blanchard and populated with an emerging grassroots force, many of whom were promoted by the Pro-life, fundamentalist followers of the Rev. Pat Robertson.

"We are all one people, one family. Let us go forward as one and make that American dream history," said the Harlem-raised, life-long civil employee Lucas before a noisy Cobo Hall convention center. "Make history in Michigan, history in America." He then added, eliciting a stand-up ovation, "I believe I will be judged by the strength of my character and not by the color of my skin."

INSIDE the clusterings of suburban Detroit congressional districts, even those supporters who bring the Aug. 5 primary strongly backed either Brighton businessman Richard Chrysler, (particularly popular among western Wayne contingents), or "homecoming" candidate, Oakland County CEO Dan Murphy, were now eager to line-up behind Lucas and his chosen running mate, 12-year Lansing veteran, state Rep. Colleen Engler of Mount Pleasant.

Also nominated to key posts were Oakland County insurance executive Weldon Yeager as the GOP pick for secretary of state to face 13-year incumbent Richard Austin and St. Clair County prosecutor Robert Cleland, who will face near 30-year incumbent attorney general Frank Kelley.

Yeager, a staunch Lucas supporter who last year resigned as an Oakland County party finance chairman because of a dispute involving party favoritism toward Murphy, is considered capable of financing his own campaign, and therefore a good candidate, said sources. Cleland, a Lucas fund-raiser in five counties, was Lucas' pick after conservative state Sen. Alan Cropsey withdrew his nomination from consideration on Friday.

"NOW THAT the general election is here, I'm very pleased to support Lucas," said Canton Township delegate Loren Bennett, a supporter and personal friend of Chrysler's. "The ticket is an extremely strong one for the party. It's refreshing to see the party open up to new people, new faces and (Lucas) is a symbol of that new flow of people into the party."



BILL DREGLER/staff photographer

## Orchestrated mayhem at the GOP convention.

Said 17th District Chairman, Alan May of Bloomfield Township, a former Murphy man, who was even more impressed with the Engler factor: "(Lucas-Engler) is a very viable combination. Engler, in my opinion, was the most articulate of the five (gubernatorial) candidates, and lends not only legislative experience but is well spoken on political issues. She is a good complement to Bill Lucas."

Echoing that sentiment was Livonia delegate Art Sippola. "It's a forward ticket. Engler is a natural; she brings a lot of enthusiasm and intellect to the job."

Plymouth Township delegate Ken Hulsing wore a pin, bought by his wife, that exhibited some sentiment on the Lucas-Engler combination. It read: "A man of quality is not threatened by a woman of equality."

TO WIN, though, May noted that Lucas, whose Saturday nomination was particularly noteworthy considering he only became a Republican, switching from the Democratic party in May 1985, "will need to show he can win in the predominantly Democratic Wayne County. With Bill Miliken, the rule of thumb to win was 42 percent of Wayne County. That's realistic. He should be able to get that."

Added another delegate, a retiree from Redford Township, Orlando Cerullo: "(Engler) is an excellent pick. We should be able to counter Blanchard's pick of (female incumbent Lt. Governor) Martha Griffiths and also her vast experience in the legislature."

Said Rochester Hills delegate, Yvonne Strother, "It's a historic thing we're embarking on. This is an example of the Republican Party reaching out to broaden the party base."

Oakland County Prosecutor L.

Brooks Patterson, assessing the kind of campaign the Lucas-Engler pair would project in the months ahead, said there was no doubt that the soft-spoken Lucas would maintain a "statesman- above-the-fray" demeanor and would rely on Engler's pugnacious, aggressive campaign style "to carry the mail."

INDEED, Engler exhibited some of that tenacity, by announcing to the delegate crowd, "Let's go get them this fall. Let's win, win, win. Most agreed the pair should attack the Blanchard record, particularly the 38-percent tax hike Blanchard engineered two years ago, though later turned back.

One delegate, Redford Township's Tom O'Connell, though, called the property tax issue "a cheap shot... any reasonable person knows that it was necessary. That was four years ago. This is 1986." Instead, he said other issues should be addressed.

A 17th District delegate, L. James Hall, 29, and a Lucas organizer in Southfield, said he has been impressed that "we've got a black man running for governor and everyone knows Republicans aren't suppose to nominate a black man and a woman." Hall, though, believes today's GOP platform does address minority and women's needs by "holding down taxes and promoting good common values."

MEANWHILE, in the four-member Garden City caucus, of the 15th Congressional District, caucus chairman Richard Masarik said of Lucas-Engler, "I love 'em both." Adding, "Just take a look at what he (Lucas) has done in Hines Park since he's been in."

Added another Garden City delegate, Robert Stevenson, "I think it's a sure bet."

Party unity was a theme, and one repeated by former Governor George Romney, who looked thinner and more snow-capped than in early days. He called Lucas "a consensus candidate." He said Blanchard was now vulnerable. "He's claimed too much. He's done a snow job on the state of Michigan. And I know a brainwashing campaign."

The so-called much anticipated Robertson influence on Saturday's convention had impact in the selection of GOP nominees to education posts, though failed to get a two-thirds convention approval for



BILL DREGLER/staff photographer

## An exuberant Bill Lucas claps hands with running mate Colleen Engler and his pick for secretary of state, Weldon Yeager.

suspending the rules to consider a resolution opposing school-based clinics that help teach birth control measures. Some said they regarded the issue as a "test vote" for the Robertson followers who guessed they

made up 40-45 percent of the delegates. One Robertson supporter from Wayne County said he wasn't disappointed, though, because he believes the Pro-life, Catholic Lucas, can be counted on to keep so-called state in-

terruption out of family life. Party notable Richard Headlee, a Farmington Hills insurance executive, said the floor fight gave the convention "some excitement. If I get home too early today, I've got to mow the lawn," he quipped.

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