

County in skirmish over south end aid

By Tim Richard
staff writer

No sooner had Oakland County commissioners applauded county executive Daniel T. Murphy's economic message than they were in a skirmish about how to get the ball rolling.

"I'd like to welcome the executive aboard," said Commissioner Larry Pernick, D-Southfield, leader of the Democratic caucus.

Murphy, in his 13th annual state of the county address last week, pledged to order his Economic Development Group "to focus more strongly on business and economic development" in two lagging areas — Pontiac and the southeast corner communities along the forthcoming I-695 freeway.

"It's the direction we (Democrats) have been advocating," said Pernick. "It makes me want to hurry home and look up past Democratic state of the county speeches."

THE SKIRMISH occurred when some "south end" commissioners sought passage of a resolution ordering the executive to assign one economic staffer full time to work out of the Royal Oak Chamber of Commerce office.

But the board voted 16-11 to send the plan back to the public services committee.

"There will be a proliferation of resolutions from chambers of commerce asking for help," said commissioner Marilyn Gosling, R-Bloomfield Hills, who suggested sending it back to committee.

"It's an unacceptable precedent," added commissioner Ralph Nelson, R-Rochester Hills, "to force allocation of county executive staff hours to a particular project. Let's send it

back to committee and monitor it (EDD performance)."

But freshman commissioner Donald Jensen, R-Birmingham, disagreed. "It's not unknown for this county to put its resources in an area where it's needed," Jensen said, asking immediate passage.

Ann Scott, president of the Royal Oak Chamber, and John Vredenburg, executive manager of the Berkley Chamber, asked for a show of county help in economic development of their areas.

The resolution was sent back to committee on a vote of 14 Republicans and two Democrats against four Republicans and seven Democrats.

DESPITE THE flap, Democratic commissioners were uniformly pleased with Murphy's emphasis on Pontiac and the southeast corner, after four years of emphasis on the Oakland Technology Park in Auburn Hills and Rochester Hills.

"I like the whole tenor of his remarks," said commissioner Alex Perinoff, D-Southfield, "provided he carries it out."

"Cooperation is the glue that holds this county together," said Commissioner James Doyon, D-Madison Heights. "I'm cautiously optimistic."

"The county should have a pivotal role so communities don't get into competing with each other for one or two businesses," said Doyon, whose district includes part of Troy.

"I HOPE this argues for greater participation of Pontiac," said commissioner Robert Price, D-Pontiac.

Price noted he had asked for greater EDD involvement in Pontiac last year, when 6,500 auto workers

faced layoffs. Since then, the total facing layoffs has risen to 9,000, he said.

"Overall, very good," said Pernick of Southfield. But he criticized Murphy for "failure to address internal Oakland County problems — consolidation of the drain and public works offices, continued existence of the public safety division and a 'lack of direction' on roads and public transit."

REPUBLICAN Murphy, in a news conference, and Democratic commissioners in interviews also praised the breaking down of partisan barriers under new board chairman Roy Rewold, R-Rochester.

"It's not Utopia," said Pernick, "but since the first of the year there's a better sense of working together, of putting partisanship aside."

"Like a breath of fresh air," said Perinoff.



New ranger

Richard H. Sober is the new chief park ranger for five of the smaller Huron-Clinton Metroparks — Indian Springs, near Clarkston; Huron Meadows, near Brighton; and Hudson Mills, Dexter-Huron and Delhi, near Ann Arbor. Sober, who joined the metroparks system in 1976, previously was a deputy sheriff in Washtenaw county.

Oakland seeking state AIDS grant

Oakland County is seeking \$33,500 in state money for an AIDS testing program.

If approved, the money would come from the state Department of Health, which provides full funding for a counseling and testing program.

"AIDS is a relatively new disease that has been found to have severe consequences in terms of both morbidity and mortality," said a resolution of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

"This viral disease is not yet able to be controlled to a maximum extent through medical therapy," said the resolution, presented by human services chairperson Susan Kuhn, R-Clawson.

AIDS stands for Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. The disease attacks the body's immune system,

opening the infected person to many forms of cancer and glandular disease. It is transmitted by sexual contact, most frequently homosexual, and by needle drug needles.

In other business, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners last week:

• Accepted \$50,000 from the state Aeronautics Commission to complete a land acquisition program and Oakland/Troy Airport. The county already has budgeted its half of the cost.

• Asked the state Department of Health to hold its 1988 statewide conference in Oakland County.

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A copy of the speakers bureau brochure is available from OCC's college communications office at 540-1940.

Emerald tea is March 1

The Irish American Cultural Institute will hold its annual Emerald Tea 2-4 p.m. Sunday, March 1, in the Farmington Community Center, 24705 Farmington Road.

Live music, staged readings from Irish drama and refreshments will be offered. Donation is \$15. Make reservations with the Metro Detroit Chapter of the IACI at 555-7425 after 5 p.m.

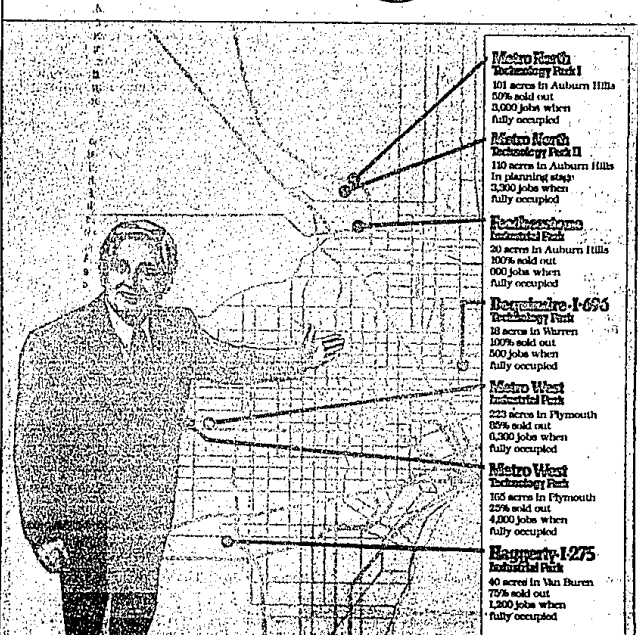
Siena Heights to celebrate

Siena Heights College's Southfield Center will hold a 10th anniversary celebration beginning at 7 p.m. Friday, March 6, in Fairland Holiday Inn, Southfield Freeway (M-39) at Ford Road in Dearborn.

All graduates of Siena Heights' Adrian campus and its Southfield Center may attend. There will be hot hors d'oeuvres, an open bar and live band. Faculty and staff will be on hand.

Ticket information is available from the college's alumni office, 1-800-521-0009 ext. 230.

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