

Pompo: Improve Kensington for winter

By Philip A. Sherman
staff writer

Development of a "refrigerated" sports complex at Kensington is a priority that should be pursued by the new executive director of the Huron-Clinton Metropolitan Authority, according to the outgoing chief.

James J. Pompo, 66, is scheduled to leave the \$60,000-plus executive director's job early next year. The HCMA board has interviewed six internal and three external candidates for the post. A decision is expected today at the board's regular meeting.

The complex would be complete with toboggan runs, ice rinks and snow-making equipment, Pompo said.

Kensington and several other metroparks have winter sports that rely on natural snow — a rarity in many of southeastern Michigan's mild winters.

Oldest of the metroparks, Kensington is located in western Oakland County north of the I-96 freeway. The 4,300-acre park surrounds Kent Lake, an impoundment of the Huron River.

REFLECTING on his career with the HCMA, Pompo said "financial

restrictions haven't made it possible" to build the sports complex. However, he said, he believes the complex could make the parks even more attractive to Michigan residents during months when attendance typically is low.

Pompo was a teacher and administrator in the early 1950s for Harper Woods High School. He started with the metroparks as a summer employee on the grounds crew and was eventually promoted to Metro Beach superintendent in 1955.

He went on to become HCMA's first deputy director in January 1969 and was promoted to executive director in 1984. During the regular

season, about 200 employees report to Pompo; 800 more are added as needed on a seasonal basis, he said.

When asked how he convinced the board that he would make a good executive director, Pompo said, "I was the first and only deputy, so the board knew me and my work."

Candidates for his job have undergone more thorough questioning because some are unfamiliar to the board, he added. Each internal candidate was interviewed by the board for 20 minutes. External candidates were interviewed for 45 minutes.

EDUCATING THE public about park facilities and what each has to offer is his greatest accomplishment, Pompo said. He also worked toward development of marinas for park patrons.



'I used to go around to the parks and tell them (employees) that everybody has to be alerted to the idea that John Q. Public gets the recreational day he wants.'

— James J. Pompo
retiring HCMA chief

Peregrine print aids bird's return

Michigan's effort to re-establish the peregrine falcon as a breeding member of the wildlife community is receiving a financial and artistic boost.

A special edition print, limited to 500 copies, will be sold to the public at \$75 apiece. Proceeds will help finance future releases of the endangered species, according to Gordon Hayer, director of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources.

"Return to Pictured Rocks" was painted by Livonia wildlife artist Robert Perrish. It captures an adult peregrine sitting up prey from the Pictured Rocks cliffs along Lake Superior, according to Detroit Audubon

President Robert Healy, chairman of the Peregrine Return Committee.

The 350 full-color, signed and numbered prints, along with 20 conservation prints and 35 artists' proofs, are 21 inches wide by 14 inches high. Cost is \$75 plus \$5 for postage and handling. A portion of the cost may be tax deductible.

To order prints, make check or money order payable to: Peregrine Return, P.O. Box 505, Detroit 48231.

Supporters of the Peregrine Return effort include DNR, Michigan United Conservation Clubs, Stroh Brewery Co., Audubon Society, and Michigan Consolidated Gas Co.

Zoo open in winter

The Detroit Zoo's winter operating hours are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday.

Admission is \$5 general, \$3.50 for senior citizens 62 and older, \$2.50 for children under and free for children under 5.

The zoo will be closed Dec. 21 to Jan. 1. Winter hours resume Jan. 2.

He also pointed to an attitude he promoted among employees. "I used to go around to the parks and tell them that everybody has to be alerted to the idea that John Q. Public gets the recreational day he wants," Pompo said.

Several candidates have said they would market the system more aggressively if given the opportunity. Overnight camping — something not

available in any HCMA park — is an idea many expressed during their interviews before the board.

Strategic planning, paying more attention to the needs of special interest groups such as the elderly, and facility improvements were other recommendations often re-

peated during board interviews.

The HCMA is a five-county agency operating 13 metroparks including Kensington, Stony Creek and Metro Beach. Projected revenues for 1988 will total \$24.3 million, a 2 percent increase over this year, according to controller David Wahl.

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The foundation's principal office is located at 31000 Northwestern Highway, Farmington Hills, Michigan 48334. The principal manager of the foundation is Diane Chambers Lutz. The telephone number of the principal office is 851-3778.

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