

Wearin' the green

Two area groups were represented at Sunday's annual St. Patrick's Day Parade in downtown Detroit. The Black Rover Pipe Band (left) under the direction of James Kemler of Rochester entertained parade watchers with bagpipes. Also marching was the Birmingham Irish Setter Club. More than 1,500 people from throughout the metro area viewed the parade and got an early start on today's St. Patrick's Day celebration.

FOR KIDS ONLY

SPRING BREAK ADVENTURES

— GRADES 3 to 5 —

— GRADES 6 to 8 —

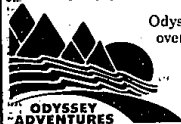
ADVENTURE A (HALF DAY)	ADVENTURE B (FULL DAY)	ADVENTURE C (FULL DAY)	ADVENTURE D (FULL DAY)
Mon. Apr. 4 Tues. Apr. 5 Wed. Apr. 6 Thur. Apr. 7 Fri. Apr. 8	Art Exploration Alice in Wonderland Indian Culture Experience Science Maybury State Park	Candles and Cows Greenfield Village Nature on the Roll Intro. to Theater Star Search	Pie and Pizza Day Day in Motion Candles and Cows Indian Culture Intro. to Theater

SATURDAY ADVENTURES

Sat. Apr. 16 Sat. Apr. 23 Sat. Apr. 30	Museum Madness Bicycle Trip Canoe Trip	Windsor Wildlife Detroit Zoo Bubbles and Buns	Bicycle Trip Creature Feature Windsor Wildlife	Bubbles and Thorns Hands-on Day/Flint Detroit Zoo
Sat. May 7 Sat. May 14 Sat. May 21	Hollerskating Nature Day Belle Isle Zoo	Belle Isle Zoo Canoe Day Hands-on Day/Flint	Play Day Sea World Canoe Day	Canoe Day Bicycle Trip Huckleberry Railroad

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Aug. 2 called 'better' date for road vote

By Tim Richard
Staff writer

A second Oakland County committee is looking at the Aug. 2 primary, rather than the Nov. 8 general election, for a \$18.6 million road funding package.

Majority Republicans on the general government committee of the Board of Commissioners said the state Legislature's own plans for two November ballot issues convinced them the county issue would get better voter attention in August.

"August is better," said Commissioner Don Bishop, R-Rochester, a former state legislator.

"Our concern is the \$800 million environmental bond issue," which Gov. James Blanchard wants to put before voters in November, said Brent Blair, planning director for Oakland County Road Commission, which proposed the plan. Blair added that West Bloomfield Township and other communities are planning to put money issues on the November ballot.

The plan calls for a countywide \$25 vehicle registration fee.

DEMOCRATS WERE unanimously against the Aug. 2 date, though most favored the proposal. "You're programming it for defeat," warned Commissioner Dennis Aaron, D-Oak Park. "A primary is a secret election," said Aaron, referring to lower voter turnout. "You're going to have a gigantic turnout in November."

Aaron said a November date would give county officials more time to raise \$50,000 in contributions to pay for a campaign. County money can't be used for a campaign, he said.

"You'd get a better picture of the voters' opinion with a larger turnout in November," said Commissioner Lillian Jaffe, D-Southfield.

Commissioner Earl McPherson, D-Hazel Park, said the fee could become an issue against commissioners in the party primary. In November, it could become a bipartisan issue, he said.

RICHARD SKARRITT, R-Milford, who chairs the general government committee, said the Michigan Association of Counties in Lansing re-

ported that not only the \$800 million bond issue but a school tax shift might also be on the November ballot.

Lawmakers are considering a variety of plans to reduce school operating property taxes and replace them with a one- or two-cent increase in the sales tax.

The general government committee voted 5-3 along party lines to recommend an Aug. 2 election. Supporting it were Republicans Skarritt, Bishop, Donald Jensen of Birmingham, Robert Page of Birmingham, and Roy Rewold of Rochester Hills. Opposed were Democrats Aaron, Oaks and McPherson.

The vote to recommend the ballot proposal was 7-1 with only McPherson still dissenting.

Last week the transportation committee, chaired by John McDonald, R-Farmington, recommended the same proposal but with a Nov. 8 date. The recommendations will go to the full county board next week.

Although the three-member appointed Road Commission proposed the idea, only the elected Board of Commissioners has power to place it on the ballot.

IF APPROVED, the countywide fee would run for 10 years and be applied to all vehicles registered by Oakland residents.

Residents would include 663,000 passenger cars, 1,542 handicapped vehicles, 102,000 commercial vehicles and 15,000 motorcycles.

It would exclude 69,000 trailers.

The Secretary of State's office would define which vehicles would be subject to the fee, Blair said. Some commissioners wondered whether corporate fleets could be registered in another county that doesn't apply the fee.

Of the net \$18.6 million in revenue, Blair said, the county road commission would get \$10.9 million, using about \$8 million in townships and the rest in cities.

Cities and villages would get a total of \$7.8 million. It would increase their road funds by about one-third.

A road commission list published last week failed to list Rochester Hills as in line for \$346,000 a year.

Replying to a question from Page of Birmingham, Blair said the municipalities' shares would be based on the same formula used in distribut-

ing the state gasoline and weight tax revenues.

Blair said it is impossible for the Secretary of State to determine how much revenue each municipality generates because vehicle registrations are classified by Zip codes, which often cross local and even county boundary lines.

BLAIR'S ANSWERS to other commissioners' questions:

• What can local units use the money for? "Any road or transit use" as defined in the law. This could include public vans for the elderly and handicapped — an answer that pleased Democratic commissioners.

• Who determines what vehicles the tax may be applied to? The Secretary of State's office. Blair said trailers probably will be excluded.

• If the proposal is rejected, can the county ask voters again at a subsequent election? Yes — once a year for up to five years.

• What will the county road commission's share be used for? Each community will be surveyed. Blair said, Northern townships put a high priority on chloride for controlling dust on gravel roads; southern communities prefer paving and widening roads.

• What are chances it will pass? "No one opposes it," Blair said. A Commerce Township survey showed residents there heavily in favor.

The road commission would rather have proposed a two or three cents a gallon increase in the gasoline tax, but the Legislature's 1987 law allowed only the registration fee as a local option.

THE ROAD commission's proposal grew out of a 1986 survey of communities that showed a total "wish list" of \$750 million in projects over a decade — about \$75 million a year over and above existing revenues.

Blair said this year's series of meetings showed that "their priorities are pretty much the same. They aren't generating a longer wish list."

The \$25 vehicle fee would meet only one-fourth of that need, but the state Legislature voted other fee increases that will bring Oakland some \$8 million to \$12 million in new revenue.

So far, Oakland is the first county in the state actively planning to use the new law for a ballot proposal.

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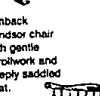
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