

Oakland roads to get major state grants

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Oakland County will receive the lion's share — 76 percent — \$8.4 million in state transportation economic development grants.

The new state program, authored by Sen. Richard Fessler, R-Union Lake, uses increased driver license and vehicle registration fees to pump road money into economic growth areas.

"We look at jobs to be created, potential tax revenues, the transportation need — and just common sense," said Jim Dressel of the state Transportation Department.

AFTER STUDYING 70 applications, the state Transportation Commission awarded 19 grants including two in Oakland.

• \$8.5 million for work around the Chrysler Corp. high technology center in Auburn Hills, to be performed by the Oakland County Road Commission, where an estimated 6,950 jobs are to be created.

• \$32,800 in the city of Southfield for preliminary engineering and design work on Swanson Road, between Telegraph and Franklin roads, where a BASF research facility is being located.

"We haven't seen the paper work on it yet," said John Joy, information officer for the Oakland County Road Commission. He said that the grant was "part of the category A money for the Oakland Technology Park."

Special event is talk topic

"Planning and Promoting the Special Event" will be the topic when the Detroit chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators meets Wednesday, Nov. 9.

The session runs from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the St. Regis Hotel on West Grand Boulevard in Detroit. Speaker will be Mary Cassard, president of Cassard & Cassard, Grand Rapids.

Reservations may be made until Nov. 7 by calling Kim Welch at 588-7600 during business hours. Charge is \$13 for members, \$16 for non-members.

DRESSEL SAID the state grant for the Chrysler project would fund major improvements to Featherstone Road from Odyke to Squirrel and Hamlin Road from M-59 to Walton Boulevard. That work is to be done in 1989.

It also will pay for engineering work on improvements to Squirrel from M-59 to Walton, University Drive and Walton. Local timetable for that work is in 1990-91.

The law requires a minimum local match of 25 percent of the project cost.

General gasoline and weight taxes are divided according to a complicated formula that weighs population, primary roads and secondary roads mileage. Fessler's legislation, however, sought to allocate new

money to serve economic need — particularly in Oakland County, where one-third of all new state office construction has occurred.

The law targets specific industries: agriculture or food processing, forestry, manufacturing, high technology research, and specific types of office centers.

Eventually, the state fund will produce \$53 million a year.

"I'm extremely gratified with the interest taken in this important new program," said William C. Marshall, who chairs the state Transportation Commission. "Similar programs exist in a handful of other states, but they are not the same dimension as ours. The eyes of other states and the federal government are on the Michigan program."



STEPHEN CANTRELL/staff photographer

U-M campaign hits street

F. Thomas Lewand, Democratic candidate for the University of Michigan Board of Regents, brought his maize-and-blue campaign to downtown Birmingham. The one-time Oakland County commissioner leafletted Ruth Plew at Maple and Woodward. Voters Nov. 8 will pick two members for each of the "Big Three" state universities.

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