

Whoever wins, Oakland faces big changes

By Tim Richard
Staff writer

"Big changes are in store for economically booming Oakland County, even if voters stick with incumbents Tuesday.

A new prosecutor, six new county commissioners, at least two new county judges, two new Court of Appeals judges and six new county commissioners — at a minimum — will be elected.

Whoever is elected county executive will push the issue of a home-rule charter.

A road money issue is at stake. A \$1 billion trash disposal system is on next year's agenda. A court house wing, a computer center and a law library will be ready for the drawing boards.

Some 711,000 people are registered, up 31,000 from July, according to Howard Altman, county elections director. If 58 percent vote, as in 1984, some 454,000 will go to the polls.

Oakland turnouts have been as low as 58 percent and as high as 77.

election '88

Here's the outline:

COUNTY OFFICES — Even if chief assistant Dick Thompson succeeds the colorful L. Brooks Patterson as prosecutor, there will be changes. Thompson, the Republican nominee after a four-way primary, is less likely to push issues, blister unfriendly judges and stir up the GOP as the man in whose shadow he labored for 16 years.

Democrats are working for Barry Kraemer, an Oak Park public safety officer and lawyer.

The Democratic county ticket is campaigning mostly with yard signs due to funding. For example, Tommylie Dizotti, a records clerk who is running for sheriff, had barely \$10,000 in her war chest, as of Oct. 23 expense filings. Incumbent Sher-

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iff John Nichols, a Republican seeking a second term, had nearly \$109,000.

HOME RULE — Both County Executive Dan Murphy, a four-term Republican, and Democratic challenger Bill Wolfgram, a Franklin lawyer, are committed to seeking a home-rule charter for Oakland County.

The usual goals of a charter are to eliminate some offices, increase the role of the executive and reduce size of the county board. Some changes in state law will be needed to allow such broad charter reform — a battle in itself.

As of Oct. 23, Murphy had raised \$101,000 and Wolfgram just under \$20,000.

ROAD MONEY — A county ballot proposal to charge a \$25 fee per motor vehicle is widely believed to be doomed, even though it would raise \$20 million a year to improve narrow, bumpy roads.

But leaders of both parties feel voters deserve a chance to say "no" so that they can go back to the state

Legislature and ask for a more palatable revenue plan — a fuel tax and developer impact fees.

Tuesday's vote will be only one chapter in a long book that's getting longer.

COMMISSIONERS — Usually there is a big turnover on the 27-member County Board of Commissioners when there is redistricting after a census.

This year at least six new commissioners will be elected. Two left to seek higher office — John McDonald, R-Farmington Hills, and John Rowland, D-Pontiac. Two veterans lost Republican primaries — Robert Page of Birmingham and James E. Lanni of Royal Oak. Two other veterans retired voluntarily — Richard Wilcox, R-Orionville, and James Doyon, D-Madison Heights.

Republicans hold an 18-9 majority that has been fairly solid for most of the decade.

CONSTRUCTION — Millions of dollars in contracts will be voted in county board rooms in the next few years.

Plans for up to three trash incinerators and resource recovery facilities are coming to a head, possibly with a tussle between the executive and board over watchdogging powers. The spending will continue well into the 1990s.

Commissioners will debate whether to add six courtrooms for new judges or build a whole new court wing for \$20 million or so. A computer center and law library will be less controversial.

JUDGES, JUDGES — Circuit Judge James Thornburn is retiring. District Judge Edward Sonnick is campaigning vigorously to succeed him, challenged by Robert Houston, an administrative law judge in the state Department of Social Services.

Probate Judge Sandra Silver, appointed in June by the governor, is working to keep her seat, challenged by attorney George Fulkerson. Both have histories as public administrators and in Democratic politics, but this year Fulkerson has many Republican allies in his corner. Winner completes a four-year term.

Probate Judge Norman Barnard is retiring. Joan Young, the Circuit Court administrator, raised \$89,000 for the primary alone and is conducting a heavy billboard and media campaign. Thomas M. Brennan, Uica attorney who lives in Troy, has barely campaigned but has a name popular in Michigan politics.

There's more to come: four more circuit judges and two more probate judges by 1992.

APPEALS COURT — Oakland is the biggest of 15 counties in the 2nd District Court of Appeals race and is home of three of the four candidates.

Candidates are Oakland Circuit Judge Richard Kuhn; Marilyn Kelly, a Bloomfield Hills attorney and leader in Oakland Bar circles; Mark Cavanagh, Rochester Hills resident and relative newcomer; and Macomb Circuit Judge Kathleen Jansen.

Kuhn has the Republican endorsement, Kelly and Jansen the Democratic endorsement.

If Kuhn wins, he would vacate his circuit judge seat, opening that for another appointment by Gov. James J. Blanchard.

Kuhn omitted in court story

The biography of one candidate was cut from Thursday's story on the race for two new state Court of Appeals judgeships. Here is the missing information:

* Richard D. Kuhn, 59 — circuit judge in Oakland County for 15 years and chief judge three years. He has been a visiting judge assigned to the Court of Appeals, a delegate to the

Michigan Constitutional Convention and a Republican candidate for several offices in the 1960s. Kuhn, of Drayton Plains, has a bachelor's degree in political science from Michigan State University and law degree from Detroit College of Law.

The other candidates are Mark Cavanagh, Kathleen Jansen and Marilyn Kelly.

State jobs at record

The number of people working in Michigan rose to an all-time high in October of 4,255,000, and the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped by 0.1 percent to 7.2 percent, according to the Michigan Employment Security Commission.

MESC director Richard Simmons said labor market conditions have been stable and healthy throughout the state over the past several months. The state's jobless rate, for example, has stayed in the 7.2 to 7.4 percent range since July.

In October, there were employment gains in education with the

start of fall classes, along with small increases in manufacturing jobs.

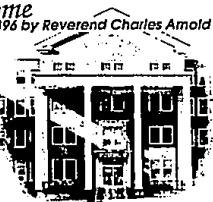
EMPLOYMENT in other sectors of the state's economy also rose or held steady during the month.

According to labor force estimates prepared for Michigan by the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of jobs workers in the state fell by 6,000 to 328,000 in October. In September, unemployment totaled 334,000 or 7.3 percent of the labor force. A year ago, October 1987, Michigan's jobless rate was 7.4 percent with 333,900 out of work.

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Deane Baker has earned "highest honors" after two terms as U-M Regent.



Deane Baker's leadership as Regent to The University of Michigan during the past 16 years is supported by leaders in all walks of life. Here are some of their comments:

- "I just want you to know that I deeply appreciate your efforts. The rights of academic freedom go to the very heart of the ideals upon which our democracy is based. Thank you and God bless you."
— RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States
- "He has been responsive to student needs . . . and worked with the faculty and the administration to maintain the high academic standards of the University. I endorse Deane Baker's re-election."
— GERALD R. FORD, Former President of the United States
- "Deane Baker has served with distinction during an important era in the history of the University. His continued service will be valuable in the complex times confronting higher education in the future."
— WILLIAM G. MILLIKEN, Former Governor of the State of Michigan

DEANE BAKER
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On November 8th, vote for the re-election of Regent Deane Baker. He has provided the leadership the people of Michigan deserve, and the 16 years of experience U-M demands.

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Paid for by the Committee to Re-elect Deane Baker, Regent of the University of Michigan, 100 Tower, 32nd Floor, Renaissance Center, Detroit, Michigan 48226

"When he was 10," Joan Young said, "we should have stopped him from becoming a killer at 15."

"He was being tried as an adult. I was appointed to defend him on two counts of armed robbery and two counts of assault with intent to commit murder. It was too late for him. Five years and 24 police contacts earlier, he should have been put into one of Oakland County's effective rehabilitation programs. At 10, we could have saved him. At 15, all we could do was warehouse him. He got eight years."


If you talk with Joan Young, she'll tell you that children are the biggest concern of the Oakland County Probate Court. More than half the court's cases have to do with the well-being of children, with the stability of their lives, with the illegal things some of them do, and with the possibility of their futures.

Joan Young began preparing for the job of probate judge when she started her public service career 19 years ago as a social worker. She's been a trial lawyer, a family law attorney, and administrator of Oakland County's Circuit Court, Michigan's busiest.

She wants you to think about the children of our communities. She wants you to think about our responsibility to protect those children from abuse and neglect and mistreatment; our responsibility to provide those children with guidance and hope and opportunity. That's so much of what a probate judge's work is all about. And she's ready and prepared to go to work for you.

Put Joan Young to work for you and your family and all the families of Oakland County. Vote for her for Oakland County Probate Judge, Tuesday, November 8.

TAKE A CHILD WITH YOU WHEN YOU GO TO VOTE.



Joan YOUNG

for probate judge

Rated WELL QUALIFIED by Civic Searchlight and Oakland Citizens League

Authorized and paid for by Joan Young for Probate Judge Committee, 5435 Corporate Drive, Suite 275, Troy, MI 48068, Fenei Greenwald, Treasurer.