County, state both covet gas tax hike

strong ally for at least part of their formula to fund the county's traffic-congested roads.

Lewis N. Dodak, Michigan's newly elected speaker of the House, said last week that he would urge Gov.

James Blanchard to support a 2 cents a gallon increase in the gas tax for the repair of state roads and bridges.

"I would think that that would bridges.
"I would think that that would bridges probably an appropriate approach if in fact we want to keep our road system an adequate system," said Dodak, a Democrat from Montrose which is near Saginaw.

"If you look at Michigan roads, you know that it's something that's very important to us economically, and I don't know how we can get around not looking at that in the long run," said Dodak in an appearance on WKAR-TVS "Off the Record" pregram.

A 2-cent locrease would raise \$30

Important to us economically, and undon't know how we can get around to folding at that in the long run, said Dodak in an appearance on WKAR-TVS "Off the Record" program.

A 2-cent increase would raise \$90 million annually and cost the average motorist \$15 a year, according to Lawrence Martin, executive divers Association.

COUNTY ROAD officials have targeted a gas tax hike as one of the building blocks for raising money to improve roads. They also want the right to place a county road tax on each gallon of gasoline. Such a request was turned down earlier this year largely because of opposition from the governor.

Instead, Lansing gave counties the right to ask voters for a \$25 vehicle

registration fee. Oakland County picked up on the option, but voters rejected the idea by a 4-1 margin on

Nov. 8.
County executive Daniel Murphy,
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Fairer, He

County executive Danlel Murphy, who opposed the registration fee, argues that the gas tax is fairer. He also wants the road commission to be absorbed by county government. Road department officials said last week that with the defeat of the registration fee they will concentrate on the rest of an omnibus funding package in order to raise the \$900 million they say is needed to improve Oakland County roads over the next 10 years.

That package includes:

• An increase in the Michigan fuel tax.

• A local fuel tax.

• Impact fees on developers to

BUT ENGLER said he'd prefer to see a portion of the funds earmarked for a few high-priority projects, such as completion of the beltway around Grand Rapids, M-59 and M-20, and construction of an east-west route in southern Wayne County.

Dodak said if the state fails to in-crease the gas tax now, it might not be able to do it later.

The federal government, he said, might use a gas tax increase to trim

the federal defleit, making it politi-cally difficult for the state to add an increase of its own.

Lawmakers would have supported

"I can't very well push it down the governor's throat. He's the governor

Lawmakers would have supported a 2-cent increase last year when they passed a \$109 million package of driver license and vehicle registration fee increases, Dodak said, adding that opposition from Gov. James Blanchard blocked consideration of

Blanchard blocked consideration or a gas tax increase.
"I will personally talk to the gov-ernor and indicate that I think it's extremely important for the road system in Michigan," he said.
If Blanchard refuses to change his

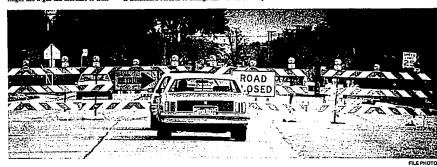
on the idea of nigher gas taxes.
"I can't very well push it down the
governor's throat. He's the governor
of this state and if he decides he
doesn't want it, that's the reason we
didn't deal with it in this last session," he said.

Michigan's 15-cent-a-galion gas tax last went up in 1984 as a result of a change in the formula made in 1982.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

'I can't very well push it down the governor's throat. He's the governor of this state and if he decides he

doesn't want it. . . .' -- Lewis Dodak state representative



Oakland County's resounding defeat of a \$25 vehicle registra-tion fee closed the road on one avenue to raise money for road

MET: Only 1 of 10 signs as date nears

Only one out of 10 applicants for an innovative prepaid college tuition plan has signed a contract with the state, but state officials say they are still ahead of projections and expect last minute run before the Nov. 30 deadline.

"We're a nation of procrastinators," said Robert Kolt, spokesman for the Michigan Department of Treasury which is administering the plan. "We're way above projections for this time."

A late rush may be in store if Oak-

'If your child is 2 years old, you're thinking about what to get him for Christmas, not college."

– Vince Carducci



At County Galleria

"Animals in Art II." Is at the County Galleria through Dec. 15. The painting, "Leopard," is by Julie Dawson of Birmingham. This exhibit includes paintings, photos, textiles and sculpture. Hours are 8:30 s.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday, Executive Office Building, Oakland County complex, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontlac.

