

New political season opens for Alexander

By Tim Richard
staff writer

The presidential election is over. Politicians can go to sleep for awhile — right?

Wrong. "We've got to do the groundwork for the next two years. I have to get out and meet with the grass roots people and the people in the finance community," said James M. Alexander.

The Birmingham attorney, who has spent half his 40 years in political work, is the new chairman of the Republican Committee of Oakland County.

"I'M MORE of a candidate person than Larry," he said, referring to his predecessor, Larry Dickerson, a finance person. "I've got to get involved in finance. I have to impress them (contributors) with me and the tone of the organization."

Oakland County, with one-tenth of

Boom-bust days over — Blanchard

AP — Experts said auto layoffs would mean higher unemployment this year in Michigan, but it didn't happen, Gov. James Blanchard noted.

Economic diversity was the key to Michigan's jobless rate of 7.4 percent in November, rather than predicted levels above 9 percent, Blanchard said last week.

The governor held a news conference at the North American sales and engineering center for West Germany's Robert Bosch Corp., which he called an example of the high-tech companies that are stabilizing Michigan's economy.

The Farmington Hills center, which started six years ago with 25 employees, soon will employ 300 after a recent expansion. The company designs and markets fuel injection, anti-lock braking systems and other electrical products for the U.S. auto market.

SUCH HIGH TECH industries — along with new businesses and professional service companies — enabled the state to weather layoffs last year of about 30,000 workers in General Motors Corp.

"After all the General Motors plant closings and layoffs last year, the experts were unanimous in their predictions that Michigan's jobless rate would rise to the 9 percent to 10 percent level this year," he said.



James M. Alexander
GOP chairman

the state's population, produces about 15 percent of the statewide Republican vote, Alexander said. The county has about 540 precincts, and about 450 of them elected GOP precinct delegates last August.

Part of Alexander's job will be to convince those delegates that not only do they vote their candidates' interests in conventions, but they also work their precincts for the party.

Despite the nearly 2-1 victories of some candidates Nov. 8, Alexander wants to increase the Republican vote next election. "The voter turnout has been less and less each election. I'm very concerned about that," he said.



David Lambert
YR president

THE GRAND Old Party saw heavy competition for control of party levers in the last two years, with an influx of new people supportive of evangelist Pat Robertson and a cadre of younger conservatives backing Rep. Jack Kemp for president.

The question on many political minds is whether the Robertson people who become a permanent part of the party. With George Bush in the White House for at least four years, the county chairman will seek to turn candidate-oriented Republicans into general Republicans.

"I'm committed to rewarding people who work," said Alexander. "We ask a lot of them, and we will give back some recognition."

In addition to the newcomers, he will have a cadre of longtime partisans, some of whom have been precinct delegates for 10 or 11 elections.

ELECTED AT a recent meeting of the county Republican committee, Alexander has a full agenda of activities in the months ahead, which politicians call crucial to the 1990 elections.

Congressional district conventions are scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 31. These meetings pick delegates to the state convention. That may sound simple, but 18th Congressional District Republicans will remember for years that the 1988 convention dragged on 'till 5 a.m. the next day.

The Republican state convention is scheduled for Feb. 10-11, when start party officers will be picked.

The 1990 election year will be easier in one way, Alexander said —

Lambert to head county YRs

David Lambert of Farmington Hills is the new president of the Oakland County Young Republicans Club.

A program development specialist for the Michigan Credit Union League, Lambert has been an at-large board member of the group and also is national committee member for the state Federation of Young Republicans. He is a graduate of Michigan State University.

The Young Republicans are open to interested persons from ages 18 to 40. Lambert was elected at the group's meeting last week.

there won't be demands on local staff time from national candidates. It's also the year when a governor, a U.S. senator and a full state Senate will be elected.

ALEXANDER'S first taste of Republican activity came 20 years ago when he was a national convention coordinator for Nelson Rockefeller for president.

Then came two judicial campaigns — he was western Oakland coordinator for Francis X. O'Brien for circuit court in 1976 and speechwriter and advance man for Judge Alice Gilbert when she ran for the state Supreme Court.

In 1980 he was Southfield chairman for the Reagan-Bush ticket and a presidential elector from the 17th Congressional District; from 1981 to

1983, a vice chairman of the 17th District; and in 1984, executive director for the Michigan Jewish Community and Oakland chairman of the Jack Loumsa for U.S. Senate campaign.

For the past six years, he has been campaign chairman for the county and co-chairman of the 1988 Bush-Quayle committee. He also served on a Lawyers for Bush committee.

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