

Oakland's growth problems to spread to '90s

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tical significance. "It meant that judges wouldn't have to turn felons loose because there wasn't enough space to keep them in jail."

Lawrence R. Pernick, D-Southfield, and John G. Pappageorge, R-Troy, were both concerned about the absence of a master plan or strategy for dealing with growth and related problems in the 1990s.

"We need to develop a county-wide development plan so growth is based on our ability to provide services," said Pernick. "Oakland County is endowed with parks, open spaces and a good quality of life. If we leave everything up to the develop-

ers we will lose all that."

COUNTY GOVERNMENT handles individual issues well, said Pappageorge. "Solid waste, for example," he said. "The county tackled that problem head-on."

"But as the 1990s approach, I worry that we don't have an overall plan or strategy," he said. "We can't have a master land use like Troy has. But we should have a general idea about where we are and where we're going. That way we can handle change better."

Don L. Wolf, R-Farmington Hills, said growth was the dominant issue of the 1980s and consequently roads to accommodate that growth would be the main concern of the 1990s. "It's a matter of catching up, especially in the southwest part of the county," he said.

Mark W. Chester, R-Troy, agreed that solid waste was an important issue of the 1980s. But an equally problem, in his opinion, is sexual abuse of children.

"That's why I think developing the child sexual assault unit within the prosecutor's office (at a cost of about \$400,000) was equally important," Chester said. "It's on a different scale. But that's an area where the county can make an impact."

In the next decade, Chester said, the county will have to grapple with spending, particularly if a recession

develops and the county must function with less tax revenue.

MARILYNN E. GOSLING, R-Bloomfield Hills, said one pressing problem of the 1990s — building a new court house — will begin making its impact soon, possibly as early as next month.

A task force is expected to make its recommendations in late January or early February on an \$80 million structure to be built across from the existing courthouse in the 1200 block of Telegraph Road.

Commissioners balked earlier this year when the projected cost of the new courthouse was more than \$130 million. Commissioners appointed a task force composed of Oakland circuit judges, the executive, the sheriff, the clerk, the treasurer and three commissioners to trim costs.

The new courthouse is an offshoot of continued growth, Gosling said, as Oakland County adds four new judges (and supporting staff) over the next three years to handle more civil and criminal cases.

David L. Moffitt, R-Bloomfield

Township, said the county's continued growth will force more and more people to live closer together and thus be more dependent upon each other.

"The problems of the 1980s related to growth," Moffitt said. "That's not going to change in the 1990s. Consequently we will need a more regional approach to solving problems."

"Communities are so close and our infrastructure is crumbling so badly that we will need new approaches and new solutions."

County's top stories

'D' for development headed the list for '80s

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tired. But the other five countywide officeholders all are in their mid-60s, so the rest of the county slate is likely to turn over, beginning in 1992.

In the '80s, Republicans gained a stronghold on the county slate and county board, in part because they controlled redistricting. In part because the computerized GOP machinery and volunteers were so efficient. Democrats have 45 percent or more of the vote — but can a weak union movement help them

win their proportion of the offices? And then there were two extremely important nonpartisan institutions.

8. Oakland University. The economic boom occurred around what used to be considered a "regional" university, and also because of OU's president, Joseph Champagne, who says OU's product is "knowledge in the form of graduating students, knowledge in the form of research, knowledge in the form of application and service."

OU scrambled for status (and state money) as a research universi-

ty. Although enrollment stabilized in the 12,000 ballpark, OU won funds for a major new library in the '80s. Its '90s target: a science building.

9. Oakland Community College. Under former industrialist Robert F. Roelofs, the two-year college developed its vocational-technical offerings in the early '80s. It became a major player in job-training for new and existing industry.

Later in the decade, OCC developed a major new constituency — women. Displaced women. Women seeking to enter the market place and the professions. They became a

majority of the student body and gave a new flavor to the four campuses.

R. Stephen Nicholson came along as the new chief executive in 1985 and began adding still another thrust — computer literacy, emphasis on the arts and Oakland's role in a world economy. OCC made itself a visible presence in downtown Pontiac. The changes are just beginning to show up.

OCC celebrates its 25th anniversary in 1990. Its 27,500 enrollment makes it the nation's fourth largest community college.

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