

State of the county

Oakland's top official targets global market in annual message

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

Oakland County isn't interested in buying the Pontiac Silverdome, but might give assistance to the young, the elderly and businesses competing in the global market, according to County Executive Daniel T. Murphy.

The county will also seek more development for older communities in the southern part of the county and continue its efforts to implement a "model" solid waste program, Murphy said Thursday in his annual state of the county message to the board of commissioners.

Following his 20-minute speech, the executive met with reporters to answer any questions about the speech he said is offered as a "blue print for the coming year" and a general update on the state of government.

Commissioners had varied responses, with some calling it "upbeat and informative."

Others, including some Republicans, said they were disappointed by a lack of specifics and the fact there was no mention of roads — or plans — to ease traffic congestion.

"THERE WERE NO big surprises," said board chairman Roy Rewold, R-Rochester, who said he was not particularly impressed with the executive's address.

"It didn't do anything for me," said Rewold. "Most of us were aware of the topics he covered and



Daniel T. Murphy
Oakland County Executive

there were not big impact issues."

Murphy noted extensive changes that have occurred over the last 30 years and took pride in some developments.

"I can still remember the sparsely populated rural county, without a diverse tax base, with plenty of room to dispose of its garbage," Murphy said. "Those days sure have changed."

"Today... I will share my views with you so we may travel the road into the 90s with ease — comfortable that we have a plan."

THE FOLLOWING are some of the topics in the executive's state of the county address:

- Solid waste. "I am committed to a comprehensive solid waste management program incorporating recycling, resource recovery, composting and incineration and minimizing landfilling," Murphy said.

The executive did not reiterate his demand that the people of Oakland County vote on funding the \$470 million solid waste program.

"I didn't think that belonged in the state of the county address," Murphy said. "People know my position. The next step (deciding to schedule a vote or not) is up to commissioners."

- Economic growth. Since 1982, (when the county's — as well as the country's — economies were in shambles) Oakland County businesses have created 170,000 new jobs and reduced the unemployment rate from 15.3 percent to an average of 6 percent, Murphy said.

"The engine for this growth has been the reindustrialization of our automobile industry; the emergence of robotics and automated manufacturing and our successful attraction of new high technology research and development companies," he said.

- Growth in the I-696 corridor.

"During the past few years, we in county government focused on Oak Park, Royal Oak, Southfield, Berkeley, Ferndale, Hazel Park and Madison Heights and other communities along I-696," Murphy said. "Our community and economic development specialists have pursued busi-

ness investments as well as neighborhood revitalization to turn that area into Oakland County's newest corridor of opportunity."

- Economic development. "Last year, I joined the other chief elected officials of Greater Detroit to help manage our economic growth more

effectively," Murphy said. "To assist our companies prepare for entry into the international marketplace, I

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The Oakland County Executive's state of the county message prompted comments ranging from "upbeat" to "ho-hum" from Republican commissioners and from "good speech" to "disappointing" among Democrats.

"I was really impressed," said Thomas A. Law, R-West Bloomfield. "I was impressed by the statistics on

economic development and the number of jobs created over the last seven years."

People have been talking about promoting world trade for years, said Law, an attorney. "Now it looks like we might get something done," he said, referring to the county's participation in the Greater Detroit World Trade Association.

Commissioner John G. Pappageorge, R-Troy, said he was "delighted" at the executive's call for

long-range, strategic planning.

"We know the size of the square (Oakland County), the number of people in it and the services we must provide," Pappageorge said. "Strategic planning is the key to making government effective."

ANOTHER TROY commissioner, Mark W. Chester, said he wanted to study the text of Murphy's message before offering any evaluation.

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