

# To the streets

## Census workers target county homeless

By Pat Murphy  
staff writer

Hoping to minimize undercounting that could cost Oakland communities millions of dollars in lost federal aid, the U.S. Bureau of Census is taking to the streets.

Beginning Tuesday at 6 p.m. census takers — renamed "enumerators" — will begin going to shelters and low-cost hotels and motels looking for people who might otherwise be missed in the normal counting process.

While most Oakland County residents will get census forms in the

mail this week, enumerators are reaching out to count people who don't have permanent addresses, or any address at all.

The bureau is hoping to correct undercounting acknowledged in the 1980 census, when from 3 to 6 percent of the population was not counted.

That undercounting cost communities — particularly larger cities like Detroit — millions of dollars in federal aid that is generally calculated and distributed on the basis of population.

But Pontiac and other Oakland county communities could also be

affected by undercounting this time, according to the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments.

AT STAKE is about \$170 per year in money from the federal government for each person not counted and not reflected in financing formulas, according to SEMCOG estimates. Another undercounting like the one in 1980 could cost the city as much as \$6 million over the next decade.

While much of Oakland County is considered affluent — with fewer homeless to be missed in the census — Pontiac and other Oakland communities have asked the census bureau to reach out to the homeless in their areas.

"I can confirm that we will be trying to count the homeless in other (Oakland County) cities besides Pontiac," said Jerry Blocker, the census bureau's media specialist at its regional office in Southfield.

"But we can't name specific areas or communities," he said.

Confidentiality is part of the concern, Blocker explained. But officials are also concerned that saying where enumerators will be looking could lead to homeless individuals avoiding those areas.

But there will be a concerted effort to reach the homeless in Oakland County beginning Tuesday, Blocker confirmed.

HERE'S THE schedule:

- From 6 p.m. to midnight, enumerators will be at shelters and low-cost hotels, motels and boarding houses.

- From 2 a.m. to 4 a.m. Wednesday enumerators will go to predetermined streets and other outdoor sites where people are known to sleep. Enumerators are prepared to estimate age, race and sex if necessary.

- From 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. Wednesday enumerators will wait outside abandoned or boarded up buildings believed to be used for sleeping.

Enumerators will not enter the buildings but will count and attempt to question people coming out. Enumerators will also try to get information about other people inside.

Homeless people will not be asked for their names, said William T. Crysler, manager of the bureau's district office in Rochester. But they will be asked to respond to questions about basic demographics.

Enumerators, operating in teams of two or three, will not awaken people who are sleeping, he said. Nor will they persist in questioning people who are apparently not in a state of mind to respond.

COUNTY RESIDENTS with permanent or stable residences will receive in the mail questionnaires with 14 or 59 questions, depending on whether they receive the short or long form, Crysler said.

Residents are urged to complete the questionnaires and return them in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided by April 1, he said.

Census takers may call or visit residents who submit incomplete questionnaires, Crysler said.

"Hopefully we will get full cooperation," he said. "That's the only way we can get an accurate count."

# OU approves air for Lions' dorm

By Pat Murphy  
staff writer

Oakland University has cleared the way to negotiate a \$250,000 contract — by accepting what amounts to a \$100,000 gift.

The OU Board of Trustees last week approved air conditioning HHL House, which is home to the Detroit Lions each year when the team opens training camp.

The dorm houses rookies, returning players and some coaches from July 15 until the end of August when the team moves into the Pontiac Silverdome, according to Jack Wilson, OU associate vice president of student affairs.

Even though the Lions agreed to pay for the air conditioning, action by the board of trustees was required because of the money involved, explained Wilson, who is involved in negotiating this year's contract.

Air conditioning the dorm was a procedural step requested by the Lions so negotiations could continue, he said.

The Lions initially asked for air conditioning, and OU agreed, in the searching summer of 1988, Wilson said. Approval by the board at last Thursday's meeting assures that it can be in place by July 15.

THE RESOLUTION approved calls for the Lions to pay \$150,000, and subsequently receive rebates amounting to a maximum of

\$50,000 over the next five years.

It's a sweetheart deal for the university, acknowledged Wilson. But it's typical of the good relations OU has had with the Lions since they moved to the Silverdome in 1975.

"It's a pretty lucrative contract for OU," he said. "But we also get a lot of side benefits like increased public awareness and exposure on television."

"The Lions are a big part of this community and we like being associated with them," he said.

Other residence halls at the Rochester university also came to the attention of trustees, but in less favorable circumstances.

Trustees voted to hike residence hall rates by 6.5 percent, increasing the cost of room and board by \$188 per school year. Room and board next September will be \$3,257 for fall and winter semesters, including 19 meals per week.

The rate hike will affect about 15 percent of the student body. Most of the school's 12,000 students live at home and commute to classes.

In return for higher dorm fees, OU will install a \$52,000 computer center in Hamlin Hall and refurbish lounge and study areas of the university's six residence halls.

OU trustees recently postponed action on a proposed 6.5 percent hike at George T. Matthews Court, the university's family complex with 48 units for married students. Families currently pay \$350 per month.

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