

County eyes proposal for more road funds

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

Oakland County is expected to spend more money than it takes in over the next decade, according to Russell D. Martin, county director of management and budget.

Martin's assessment is part of a report that mitigates revenue predictions from the Oakland County Road Commission which is lobbying for a tenfold increase in the amount of money the board provides for road improvements.

Even with Martin's warning, however, commissioners say the county will likely increase the amount of money it provides for roads as means of easing traffic congestion.

"I'm sure we can come up with more money for roads," said Marilyn E. Gosling, R-Bloomfield Hills. "But it's a matter of adjusting our priorities."

AT ISSUE is how commissioners respond to a proposal made last No-

vember by John Grubba, managing director of the road commission.

Citing predictions that Oakland's tax base would grow over the next decade, Grubba asked the county to increase its yearly contribution for roads from about \$1 million to \$10 million.

While agreeing to review the proposal, commissioners privately criticized the proposal. They also complained that the road commission should come under more direct control of the board — something that would require legislative action to change existing law establishing road commissions as independent entities.

If the county is going to provide more money for roads, they argued, commissioners should have more direct control over the commission to assure the funds are spent wisely.

While the board has done little about the request for more road funds, the road commission has been quietly lobbying individual communities on behalf of its proposal and the

'I'm sure we can come up with more money for roads. But it's a matter of adjusting our priorities.'

— Marilyn E. Gosling
R-Bloomfield Hills

increase commissioners tout as the cornerstone of a \$200 million plan to ease congestion and avoid gridlock.

Twenty-four communities, including Bloomfield Hills, Clawson, Farmington Hills, Rochester, Southfield, Walled Lake and Wixom have endorsed the road commission's 10-year plan.

THOSE endorsements have prompted commissioners from those respective communities to take a harder look at the plan and what it would mean to their constituents. Some commissioners complain the

road commission's talks with individual communities is an "end run" designed to circumvent the board. But others, like Donald E. Bishop, R-Rochester, see the commission's approach as reasonable. "They (road commissioners) are supposed to keep citizens informed on traffic matters," he said.

Martin's report — and the road commission's proposal — came up last week during a meeting of the board's general government committee.

In it, Martin doesn't disagree with the commission's assessment that real revenue for the county will increase by about \$150 million over the next decade because of growth and a steadily rising tax base.

Martin says, however, road commission figures do not adequately take into account increases in county expenditures that will more than offset higher income.

"THE ROAD Commission proposal asks the County to redirect \$10

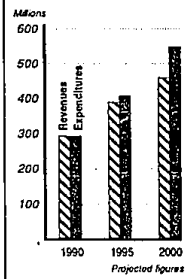
million of its 1991 budget," Martin said in his report. "This can only be done by reducing some mandated services which comprise less than 10 percent of the budget. Such programs as Road Patrol, Economic Development, NET (Narcotics Enforcement Team), SEMCOG (Southeast Michigan Council of Governments) Youth Assistance, Medical Care and Solid Waste would have to be reduced or eliminated."

Martin's assessment is seen as a fairly accurate appraisal of the county's financial picture, said Gosling. "Martin's pretty conscientious and he has a good handle on our financial situation."

But commissioners will have to take a close look at what Martin says and compare it with the Road Commission's proposal, Gosling said. "It's a matter of priorities."

The general government committee voted 6 to 1 to endorse the road commission plan in concept. It then referred the matter to the finance committee for additional discussion.

Oakland County Revenue and Expenditure Forecast
Comparing 1990, 1995 and 2000



Source: Oakland County Office of Management & Budget

Oakland fugitives beware, FAT is relentless

By C.L. Rugenstein
staff writer

The word is out to suspected felons in Oakland County who try to escape justice: "If you can't do the time, don't do the crime."

Those who still try face an effective county crime-fighting unit, the Oakland County Fugitive Apprehension Team.

Its mission: To locate and bring back fugitives who have fled the county after being charged with felonies in Oakland County.

The FAT is relentless. One convicted cocaine lord who fled after being sentenced to life in prison was finally located and brought back from Hawaii after a 14-month pursuit, said chief investigator James A'Hearn, leader of the team.

The team was created in January 1986 by then-chief assistant county prosecutor Richard Thompson. The county sheriff's department came on board when Sheriff John Nichols assigned a team of four deputy

sergeants to work with the five investigators from the prosecutor's office.

"I can't say enough about the effectiveness of the team," Thompson said.

AT THE TIME, Thompson said, the prosecutor's office had a backlog of approximately 800 alleged felons who'd failed to show up for their day in circuit court.

Nothing specific was being done to re-arrest them.

"In most cases we rely on the local police departments for the initial investigation — and they didn't have time to go back and look for the criminal again," Thompson said.

The only way most of them would be recaptured is if they were stopped for a traffic offense and their names turned up in a police computer check.

With the FAT team, however, the prosecutor's office is able to find and return about 250 fugitives a year.

In four short years, the team has

developed such a cooperative network with other law enforcement groups that its reach is international, Thompson said.

The team works from a list of fugitives compiled from bench warrants issued by the circuit court judges.

A'HEARN SCREENS the list, looking for habitual offenders, violent criminals or those involved in serious crimes.

Then in most cases they get a second warrant on the person for abandoning on bond.

Then they find them, through tracking and surveillance, said Chief Investigator A'Hearn.

Two notable fugitives to be returned recently were Robert D'Arcy, Jr., and Sally Smith, who fled after they were indicted by a grand jury for their alleged involvement in a Troy drug ring.

The team was also just 15 minutes behind Bruce Michaels, convicted recently of the murders of Glenn and Wanda Tarr, when Pontiac police found and arrested him in Pontiac last year, A'Hearn said.

But the team usually concentrates on finding fugitives that flee circuit court bench warrants. They cooperate with local units, like the Troy, Hazel Park and Rochester police departments.

He likes a "laid-back operation," A'Hearn said, and he doesn't talk to the press often. "But, I think people should know that utilizing the prosecutor and sheriff's department, these warrants will be pursued," A'Hearn said.

Even those who help or try to hide criminals often end up in trouble with them.

"Criminals usually run with other criminals," A'Hearn said.

WHEN FAT team members go into a house after one criminal — or two for example, like the recent case in Pontiac in which they helped an out-of-state police department track down and arrest a homicide suspect — they sometimes come back with more.

In that instance they "ran into three or four other people and ended up arresting them on misdemeanors," A'Hearn said.

Detective Sergeant Douglas Hummel, a 20-year sheriff's department veteran, said they've also followed and set up surveillance on felons who've left the county.

Hummel, who's in charge of the "street crews" that do surveillance, said once a person is identified as a suspect in a crime such as breaking and entering, they build a file and observe them.

Hummel said that his team recently followed one such suspect up to Grand Blanc. They watched the man change cars, case several houses, then go up to one and start kicking in the front door.

"In such a case, when it's outside our jurisdiction, we call the local police by phone and ask them to send in marked cars quietly to be ready."

While Hummel and his team observed, the suspect and his accomplices carried several items out to a van.

"After they loaded up, we (assisted the local unit) and arrested them," he said.

"We're not 100 percent successful all the time," Hummel said, but so far their rate has been good enough to compare to the famed Royal Canadian Mounted Police, whose motto is "We always get our man (or woman)."

OU offering test workshops

Students planning to take the May 5 Scholastic Aptitude Test can increase their chances of scoring well by taking personalized workshops at

Oakland University beginning April 7. Additional information is available at 370-3120.

See them in a department store. Buy them at Parade of Shoes for \$17.98.

Every pair. Every day.

National brands. Fine leather. The same top quality you find in department stores. Over 200 of the best new styles for spring. Sizes 5-11, including wide widths. Just \$17.98 for every pair! Why pay more? Come to Parade.

Parade OF SHOES
A lot more than a low price!

Farmington Hills • Orchard Place Shopping Center — between 13 & 14 mile
Birmingham • Southfield — on 13 mile Road (The Corners Plaza)
Livonia • New Livonia Plaza — 1 block east of Meritway (next to ICBY)
Rochester Hills • Hampton Village Center

*Except athletic shoes

Professional Computerized Tax Preparation

For A Free Tax Consultation Call 1-800-258-9191

Michael C. Saine, C.P.A., P.C.
355 N. Woodland, Suite 115
Birmingham, AL 35209

Former members and friends of National Lutheran Church Calumet, Michigan are invited to attend the congregation's 100th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

During Calumet's "Keweenaw Heritage (GIPP) Week" (The week of August 12, 1990) For further info. Pastor Richard Voswinkel 804 Elm Street, Calumet, MI 49913 (505) 337-1450

SPECIAL ORDER YOUR SOFA & GET IT IN 35 DAYS

Brent Furniture

Bloomfield Hills Showroom
338-7716
Clawson Clearance Center
583-1475

JOIN US FOR AN HISTORIC OCCASION

Our Largest Showing of Estate Jewelry Here for One Week Only.

For those of you who appreciate one-of-a-kind estate jewelry, we're proud to present a very special event. It's our Estate Jewelry Show, featuring an expanded collection of Victorian, Edwardian, Art Deco and Modern styles gathered from across America and Europe. Each is unique. And all are priced far below replacement values.

COME MEET OUR NATIONAL ESTATE JEWELRY SPECIALIST FOR PERSONAL ASSISTANCE IN MAKING YOUR SELECTION.

ESTATE JEWELRY SHOWING

SOMERSET APRIL 2-7

CHARLES W. WARREN
JEWELERS SINCE 1941
SOMERSET HALL, (513) 649-2414