

New book sells Oakland County's resources

By Pat Murphy
staff writer

Here's a last minute tip for someone shopping for the person who already has everything: "Making it Work in Michigan."

It's a 192-page book extolling the charm of Oakland County... the kind someone would display on their coffee table at home or in the waiting room of a corporate headquarters.

"It's a very nice pictorial portrait of Oakland County," said Jeffrey A. Kaczmarek, manager of the county's Economic Development Division. "Researchers and market analysts have a new reference."

Kaczmarek was one of the people contacted two years ago by Windsor Publications, a Los Angeles area publishing house. The company offered to put together what amounts to a limited edition, hard-bound public relations brochure for Oakland County.

"The company is very good," Kaczmarek said. "It's done books like that for many of the major cities in the country."

IT DIDN'T COST the county money, he said. It was financed by corporate contributions from companies wanting to be included in the book.

The book is written by Trout Pomeroy with photographs by Balhazar

'The book is designed to give someone a stronger sense of identity.'

— Trout Pomeroy

Korab and a number of contributing photographers.

Pomeroy is a free-lance writer who grew up in Birmingham, works in Rochester and lives in Waterford Township. Korab owns and operates a studio in Troy.

"The book is designed to give someone a stronger sense of identity," said Pomeroy. "It provides a very personal glimpse of Oakland County" to go along with the statistics and demographic data.

The book is indeed a strong profile with exceptionally good photos that both humanize and personalize life in Oakland County.

The text takes a historical perspective in the beginning chapters,

noting how much of Oakland County and southeast Michigan were covered with sea water at one time, as evidenced by the existence of salt mines under Detroit.

It also points out how the county initially got a bad public relations rap that stifled economic development.

Early explorers complained about "wet winters, thick dark forests, buzzing mosquitoes and packs of wolves."

"MOST PLACES are literally 'afloat,'" complained one explorer, with half the area being lakes or marsh and the other half poor, barren sandy soil.

"The country is so altogether bad

that not more than an acre out of a hundred... would be fit for civilization," according to a report submitted in 1816 to U.S. Surveyor General Edwin Tiffin.

The problem, according to information compiled by Michigan's first boy-governor, Lewis Cass, was a thick, dense bog about six miles deep in what would later become the Oak Park area.

Determined to move people into Oakland County... thus hastening statehood... Cass commissioned exploring teams that... once past the bog... found oak groves, rich soil and a succession of sparkling lakes.

The book notes how Pontiac developed rapidly, even rivaling Detroit

as the major city in Michigan... even with the fire of 1840, that destroyed much of Pontiac's downtown area.

Even in the 1800s, Pomeroy notes, Oakland with its beautiful lakes was becoming a favorite place for Detroit residents to maintain summer cottages.

The author highlights some of the county's economic development, including how it was bolstered by defense spending and crushed during the Great Depression. Some of the economic casualties in the early 1930s were the electric interurban railroad network as well as a General Motors product called the Oakland.

OCC registers Jan. 3-4

Registration for the winter semester at Oakland Community College is scheduled for Thursday and Friday, Jan. 3 and 4, on four campuses.

Students may register from 9 a.m. through 8 p.m. at any of the following locations:

- Auburn Hills Campus, 2900 Featherstone Road, 240-8500.
- Orchard Ridge Campus, 27055

Orchard Lake Road, Farmington Hills, 471-7500.

• Highland Lakes Campus, 7350 Cooley Lake Road, Union Lake, 360-3000.

• Royal Oak and Southfield campuses, 739 S. Washington, Royal Oak, 544-4900.

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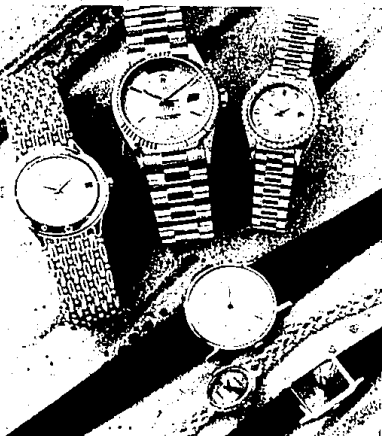
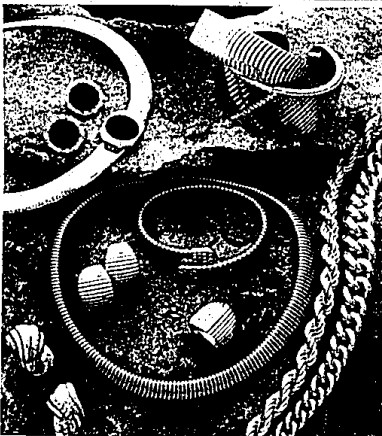
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