

Dolan sings the blues over state budget deficit

By Joanna Maliszewski
staff writer

"Day of reckoning" and "paying the piper" are two phrases that Jan Dolan uses a lot when she talks about the state budget.

"I think there's more pork up in Lansing than on the farms," said the Republican state representative from Farmington Hills.

Dolan offered her thoughts on the state budget and financial crisis to members of the Farmington-Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce Jan. 24.

Chamber president Bob Heinrich called her talk, "Taxes, Turmoil and Whatever."

Dolan, a 14-year Farmington Hills City Council veteran, said she supports putting the state budget on a strict diet, despite the pangs that will be felt along the way by many programs, including the arts.

Though she supports Gov. John Engler's intentions, she says, "I think he has to back off a bit. This has gotten everyone's attention. No one —

until now — has said, 'We have a problem,' and really meant it."

With \$1 billion state budget deficit, the hatchet must be used, but not with the immediate force Engler is seeking, Dolan said.

CONSIDER THAT in the past 10 years state outlays have increased 102.4 percent while inflation has increased 22 percent. Also consider that during economic downturns Michigan is hard hit, yet the Legislature must balance the budget.

As states go, Michigan receives the least federal money in the country. "We are on the bottom of the list and have been for quite some time," Dolan said.

On top of that, Michigan has one of the heaviest tax burdens in the country, Dolan said. The state has the fourth-highest property taxes and the tenth-highest personal income taxes.

The state's working poor and middle class pay more taxes than in any other state, she added.

But the budget must be balanced.

"It will be resolved. We don't have a money tree up there (in Lansing). It will be balanced on some worthwhile programs."

One of the programs may be the arts. The proposed cuts have prompted many calls of complaint to Dolan's office. She doesn't want to see the arts eliminated but understands why such programs are targeted for cuts. "Do you eat or go to the movies?" Dolan asked. "First things first."

Starting her second two-year term in Lansing, Dolan said she has seen far too much excess "on both sides of the aisle."

Her favorite story is of a legislator who managed to get \$1.5 million state financing to build a fire station in his district. When she asked the legislator about it, he responded: "I put it in (budget) and they approved it."

"HE VOTES for theirs (projects) and someone else votes for his (project)," Dolan said, describing the process that appalled her.

Part of the problem in Lansing, she continued, is the lack of accountability. Legislators, finance programs and never bother to see if the programs are successfully doing what they are supposed to when budget times roll around.

"Are we just keeping people employed or is a goal being achieved?" Dolan asked.

Under Engler's plan, mental health and social services, such as Aid to Dependent Children, will be hard hit. But education will remain a high priority for Engler, she said.

"We have to have the children taken care of and healthy before we can educate them," Dolan said.

Relying more on the private sector and the importance of families are high on Engler's agenda. If social programs are cut, there will be more dependence on private institutions, such as the Community Living Centers, Inc., Farmington, to provide group-home services, for example.

Child welfare programs, Dolan said, will probably be reviewed and

perhaps revamped if it is found that some are providing duplicate services.

DOLAN ALSO expects cuts in the state commerce department. She would like to see an end to the what she calls the abuse of tax abatements for businesses. Farmington has offered no tax abatements and Farmington Hills has offered two. Auburn Hills, by comparison, has 62.2 percent of its taxes tied up in abatements.

Dolan also foresees a push toward the privatization of some government services.

Dolan's "maybes for the future" include reductions in assessments against school property taxes, an eventual cap on assessments that would limit them to the rate of inflation, a gradual increase over a period of years of the maximum \$1,200 homestead rebate, a reduction in the small-business tax, and exempting poor senior adults from school taxes, which is the single largest amount of taxes paid by homeowners.



Jan Dolan

police/fire calls

Listed below are some of the Farmington area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week:

● POLICE CHASE

A 21-year-old Detroit man was arrested and ticketed for speeding and fleeing police, after a 100 mph high speed chase through the cities of Farmington and Livonia Jan. 27.

According to a Farmington Department of Public Safety report, Farmington Officer Terry Purves was on patrol when he spotted a car westbound on Grand River, driving at a high rate of speed. When he gave chase, the suspect vehicle drove southbound on Farmington Road, westbound on Eight Mile, and southbound on Gill into the city of Livonia where the driver went through four stop signs. He was later stopped by Livonia police near Seven Mile and Norwich where he was arrested and ticketed.

● ASSAULT REPORTED

A 37-year-old Farmington woman was knocked down and injured at a Farmington shopping center Jan. 26, after a man pushed a shopping cart into her.

The woman reported exceptional pain, because she had recently had surgery.

According to a Farmington De-

partment of Public Safety report, the woman was leaving the Farmer Jack store at Nine Mile and Farmington, when an unidentified man approached her and shoved a shopping cart into her, knocking her to the cement.

No one is in custody.

● GAS AND GO

Three Farmington Hills gas stations were left in the lurch as motorists stopped to put gas in their tanks and drove away without paying, according to Farmington Hills police reports.

A Shell gas station, 31529 Northwestern Highway, lost \$5 when a motorist failed to pay Jan. 21. Amoco, 31380 12 Mile, lost \$24 Jan. 25 and \$20 Jan. 27. Jerry's Marathon fare no better when someone pumped \$12.07 in gas and drove away, Jan. 25.

● SKINNED ANIMALS

The carcasses of two large animals which had been skinned and gutted were discovered in a northwest side shopping center dumpster in Farmington Hills Jan. 28.

An employee at the Country Ridge shopping center on Haggerty south

of 14 Mile called the Farmington Hills police after seeing blood dripping from the bottom of the dumpsters. Police reports indicated the animals, which included the skinned torso, were quite large and appeared to be deer or horses.

According to police reports, no one at the state Department of Natural Resources could be reached to report the matter.

● THEFTS REPORTED

A tire and rim valued at \$400 was reported stolen from a vehicle parked on Stockton in Farmington Hills Jan. 27-28.

A car stereo valued at \$300 was reported stolen from a vehicle parked on Fairmont Drive in Farmington Hills Jan. 26-28.

A stereo, driver's door and other items valued at \$450 were reported stolen from a car parked in the 32000 block of Eight Mile in Farmington Hills Jan. 21-28. Damage of \$250 was also reported in the incident.

A video recorder and two statues valued at \$350 were reported stolen from an apartment at Hunters Ridge in Farmington Hills Jan. 28.

Cash totaling \$800 was reported

stolen from the purse of a resident at Hampshire House Apartments in Farmington Hills Jan. 28.

A 1987 Buick valued at \$10,000 was reported stolen from a carport at Greenhill Apartments on 9 Mile in Farmington Hills Jan. 24-25.

A stereo equalizer valued at \$50 was reported stolen from a car parked on the 20000 block of Tuck in Farmington Hills Jan. 29. A total of \$100 in damage was done to the car.

Two lamps, table clock, earrings and a ring valued at \$600 was reported stolen from a house on Fleetwood in Farmington Hills, Jan. 25-27.

An AM/FM cassette radio valued at \$500 was reported stolen from 1980 Mazda parked in a carport at Fairmont Park Apartments, Nine Mile Road, between Gill and Drake roads in Farmington Hills, Jan. 27.

An equalizer powerbooster valued at \$200 was reported stolen from a car parked on Fairmont Drive in the Fairmont Park Apartments complex in Farmington Hills, Jan. 27-28.

● DAMAGE REPORTED

A vehicle drove into a mailbox in the 23000 block of Gill in Farmington, knocking it over and causing

some \$100 in damage Jan. 26. The tail lights of a vehicle parked at Drakeshire Apartments in Farmington were knocked out Jan. 25, causing \$100 in damage.

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REGISTRATION FORMS are available at the Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation Department or at the Farmington YMCA. Deadline for receiving registrations is March 1, 1991!

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