

Local innkeeper decries plan to tax hotel rooms

Continued from Page 13

for a boycott in the State of Michigan call to their establishments," she said.

John Anhut, owner of the Botsford, and her employer fear the idea may "rub off" across the state. "Once they find out they can put it (the tax) on, they will put it on. I'm vehement on it. I think it's a fraud. It soaks the poor sucker from out-of-town."

Mike Duggan, deputy Wayne County executive, is well aware of Anhut's disgust. "I had dinner at the Botsford Inn not too long ago and John Anhut chewed me out," Duggan said.

It will be another three months before Wayne County can put together a financing package, Duggan said. "There's no site and no stadium cost yet."

There's "statewide support," from the hotel industry in opposing such a tax, according to David Field, president of the Hotel Association of Greater Detroit. "We're opposed to taxes on rooms for brick and mortar developments," Field said. "This sets a dangerous precedent. We've had boycott threats and have had reser-

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HOTELS IN THE Detroit area are "severely depressed" with a low 49 percent occupancy rate, according to Barry Toms, general manager of the Holiday Inn at Detroit Metro Airport. "In an effort to increase occupancy, local hotel rates are significantly lower than comparable metropolitan centers in around the nation. The result of a new tax for Wayne County could be the closing many Wayne County hotels and the loss of many jobs.

Since this tax is currently for

Wayne County hotels only, the tax would interfere with competition of surrounding counties that would not be hit with the tax, Toms said.

The addition of a five percent tax on top of existing taxes would place Detroit hotels among the highest taxed hotel rooms in the nation, Toms said. "As an example, the total tax currently collected at the Westin Hotel is 12 percent and at the Hyatt Regency it is 11 percent."

An increase to 17 percent and 16 percent, respectively, would place them second only to hotels in New York which are taxed at 19.25 percent plus \$2.

Merchants mum as Kohl's opens

Continued from Page 13

Marx," she added.

Greg Hohlner, who owns Civic Theater tried to cushion the blow by adding a second screen 18 months ago. West River Centre has a 10-screen United Artists Theater.

Despite that Civic Theatre patrons always pay \$2, "business is down five percent from the year before they (the center) was opened," Hohlner said. "I have no doubt that it has impacted the downtown area. It's the old slice of the pie argument."

While the number of stores have

grown, the number of people living in the area has not, Hohlner added. Alvin Wander, owner of nine Maple Drug stores in the metro-detroit area has three stores in Farmington — one downtown, one uptown and one in Drakeshire.

The inclusion of an F&M store in the West River Centre has made "no large impact" on his neighborhood drug stores, Wander said.

"I don't know if your traditional Farmington customer goes there," Wander said. "It (West River) draws more the east and south, from Redford and Detroit."

The Kohl's company also hosted a

grand opening Aug. 16 at Southland Mall in Taylor, bringing to 10, the total number of stores in the Detroit area.

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