

New budget head comes highly rated

By L. Brooks Patterson's new staff takes office, the *Observer & Eccentric* is spotlighting appointees and for jobs they will be performing for county residents.

BY RALPH R. ECHTINAW
STAFF WRITER

What do you call a guy who doesn't read for pleasure, doesn't have any hobbies and doesn't own a stereo?

"These days you call him the next management and budget director of Oakland County."

Robert Daddow, 40, of Oakland Township is an accountant with a list of accomplishments as long as your arm, but he's also about as exciting as a library board meeting, if he is to be believed.

"I guess I would have to say I'm your garden variety green-shade accountant," he said, "kind of boring and drab actually."

Having just resigned as the vice president of Troy-based Gordon & Company, Daddow has specialized in audits and consulting projects of and for governments throughout the Detroit area since the late '70s.

"(Bob) understands municipal government and what has to be

done to save money," said Louis Schimmele, the director of the Municipal Advisory Council of Michigan, who worked with Daddow in the late '80s building out the city of Escors when it was in receivership. "He's good at cleaning up messes."

Daddow's biggest challenge, however, was not Escors, but Wayne County. From 1981 to 1990, as an employee of Ernst & Young, Daddow was in charge of a team of accountants that endeavored to bring order to the chaos that was the county government's financial records.

Former Wayne County commissioner Kevin Kelley, D-Redford, was a member of the county's finance committee and worked closely with Daddow.

Kelley said that other accounting firms turned down the work when it was offered because they considered the county books "inadequate."

"Sensitive politeness,"

But Daddow and his team did such an exemplary job that the county hired away some of Ernst & Young's accountants.

"(Daddow) has got a great financial head," Kelley said.

"(And) I found him to be sensitive politically. They put (the county books) on track, and future boards will benefit from the work Ernst & Young did."

Born in 1952, Daddow grew up in Southfield and earned a master's degree in public administration from Central Michigan University in 1974, but not before taking a stab at another major. "I started out to be a veterinarian," he said. "I washed out in invertebrate zoology."

As an accountant, Daddow specialized in government work. He was good enough at it that Ernst & Young made him a partner four years before asking for his resignation.

Ernst was getting out of government-related accounting, Daddow said, as his head had to roll. It didn't roll as though, Daddow said, coming to a stop at Gordon & Company, a Troy accounting firm where Daddow was vice president until his county appointment.

"Cookie cutter" accounting.

Government accounting work, Daddow said, was getting to be boring because it's basically doing one particular procedure over and over with different governments.

Daddow compared it to a cookie cutter.

In his county job, which pays \$47,000 to \$84,000 a year, Daddow will be in charge of 100 people in the accounting department alone.

Although there are some changes he'd like to make, Daddow praised his predecessor, Russell Martin, for keeping the county's financial house in order.

"I've already got a very well-run machine," he said. "You don't get well-run machines if you don't have somebody there with the vision."

As for excitement in his life, Daddow used to be a marathon runner, but gave that up a couple years ago because the demands of work were, well, demanding.

With no hobbies, no reading for pleasure, and no children, the closest Daddow comes to cutting loose is playing Monopoly with wife Maryann on one of his three personal computers. (It's a lot faster, he said, because the computer takes care of your money.)

And what does Maryann do for a living?

"She's an accountant," Daddow said, laughing.



DAN DEAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Typical accountant: Oakland Township resident Robert Daddow, appointed recently as Oakland County's director of management and budget, said he's the stereotypical boring accountant with few outside interests.

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