

Group to visit Mexico

BY BEBECCA WALDMAN STAFF WRITER

Oakland County government officials, business people and educators are going south to take full advantage of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

About a dozen local companies will join county officials and a consortium of administrators from Oakland Community College, Oakland University, Walsh College and Lawrence Technological University to visit their Mexican counterparts Oct. 2-4, as part of a second trade mission.

Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson led the first trade mission to Mexico in April, which opened discussions about hooking up local, mid-sized businesses with Mexican companies as trading and development partners. He is also leading the October trip, during which the Oakland and Mexican sides will try to evaluate and pool their respective assets and create mutually beneficial trade arrangements.

"Oakland County leads Michigan in exporting now," said Ken Rogers, Oakland County's Director of Community and Economic Development, who has been involved in both missions. "With Michigan the second largest trading partner with Mexico, combined with NAFTA, you have to pay attention to exporting."

Rogers said there are more than 450 foreign-owned partnerships in the county, and 60 percent of all Japanese firms in Michigan make their headquarters here. Additionally, NAFTA has helped Mexico become a stronger trading partner.

"As a new and emerging marketplace, Mexico and South America are a dynamic place for us to be in," he said.

The mission participants' long term goals are to capitalize business and educational resources, and using government officials to help smooth any logistical problems.

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Record number of kids to hear school bell ring

BY PAT MURPHY STAFF WRITER

A sense of optimism prevails in the Walled Lake Consolidated School District as a record number of students prepare to report for the opening of school Tuesday.

"We're expecting another great year," said David Flammer, a former Walled Lake administrator who is now president of the board of education.

As many as 11,666 students are expected to report for a half-day session Tuesday and all-day sessions the rest of the week. That's a projection of about 620 students more than the 1993-94 year.

"This is a high-growth area," said Flammer, who now works in sales and marketing for Jostens Learning Inc., an educational technology company based in San Diego, Calif. "And the growth is expected to continue."

Walled Lake has been part of a growth surge since 1988. In each year since then, the average increase in students has ranged between 400 and 600.

Growth has been so spectacular, Flammer said, the district is again in the unenviable position of seeking a millage increase. On Sept. 27 the district will ask voters to approve a 3.5 mill bond issue to finance a \$116 million building and renovation program.

That program would include a new elementary school, two middle schools and extensive renovation at many facilities.

WALLED LAKE SCHOOLS

Flammer said neither he nor other school officials are discouraged by the fact that a similar proposal was rejected by voters last year. On the contrary, he said, officials are optimistic.

The district commissioned studies showing voter uncertainty was part of that rejection, Flammer said, and "things will be different this time."

Many property owners recently got their latest tax bills, he explained. "And we expect voters to be more receptive."

While that vote is about a month away, Flammer said the spirit of optimism is a current ongoing and growing. "It's always exciting... new students, new teachers and new optimism."

Several personnel changes have been made. They include:

- Steven Gaynor, a former special education and elementary principal in Holly, is the new assistant superintendent of schools.
- Thomas Spocinski, former assistant principal at Western High School, is the new principal at the Oakland Technical Center-Southwest Campus.
- Linda Ayres, the former language arts coordinator, is the new principal at Commerce Elementary.
- Ronald Thorin, former principal of Village Elementary in Hartland, is the new principal at Hickory Woods Elementary.
- Patricia Yarbrough, a former high school administrator in suburban Chicago, is the new assistant principal at Western High School.
- Kevin Clarke, former teacher at Annapolis High in Dearborn Heights, is the new assistant principal at Western High School.
- David Schreiber, former chair of the math department at Rochester Adams High School, is the new assistant principal at Central High School.
- Roderick Reese, former teacher in the Southfield schools, is the new assistant principal at Walled Lake Middle School.

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