

County gets \$300 million piece of road package

BY PAT MURPHY

Road construction will again be a fact of life for Oakland County motorists under the \$2.1 billion, three-year transportation improvement program approved by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

Oakland's share of the program is about \$300 million, according to officials from SEMCOG and the Road Commission for Oak-

land County.

"This is a very ambitious program that will touch a lot of drivers," said Christopher R. Mann, SEMCOG coordinator of transportation planning.

The program, or TIP, covers 1996, 1997 and 1998. It coordinates efforts from local communities as well as the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

About 80 percent of the pro-

gram will be financed with federal money, according to Mann, with the remaining 20 percent match provided by the state, county or local governments.

While most of the projects are utilitarian in nature, at least one — replacing the Kirtland Road Bridge in Bloomfield Township — involves esthetic considerations, according to Dennis Kolar, design engineer for the Road Commission for Oakland County

(RCOC).

The one-lane bridge, built in 1930 over part of Lower Long Lake, includes a high spot, or hump, that obscures driver vision, Kolar said. The TIP calls for replacing the 20-foot span with a concrete structure.

The problem, however, is that the standard replacement bridge may not be considered as "quaint" as the existing structure. "It will provide greater safety,"

said Kolar, "but some people think it won't fit into the community as well as the existing structure."

Kolar said an informational hearing will be scheduled later this year to give residents the chance to review plans and possibly select a more esthetic structure, possibly sandstone or fieldstone facade.

Most communities in Oakland will be affected by the TIP. Some of the major projects are:

■ Widening Fourteen Mile Road from Greenfield to Coolidge in Birmingham and Royal Oak from four to five lanes. Estimated cost, \$2.4 million.

■ Widening Eight Mile Road from Halsted to Farmington Road in Farmington Hills from two to five lanes. Estimated cost, \$6 million.

■ Widening Maple Avenue from Hunter to Eaton and from Eaton to Coolidge in Troy and Birmingham from four lanes to five. Estimated cost, \$1.5 million.

The improvements place crash

barriers around the railroad bridge at Eaton and Maple, but plans do not call for removing the bridge itself. Thus, the current bottleneck will still exist.

■ Construction of Sheldon Road, from Second to Parkdale in Rochester. Estimated cost, \$1.5 million.

■ Construction of White Lake Road from Andersonville to Clement in Clarkston in Independence Township, connecting White Lake with Nelsco. Estimated cost, \$2 million.

■ Widening Rochester Road from 1-75 to Torrey in Troy from five lanes to six. Estimated cost, \$3 million.

■ Widening Big Beaver Road, from Adams to Coolidge and 1-75 to Livernois, to six lanes, in Birmingham and Troy. Estimated cost, \$3.7 million.

■ Widening Dequindre from Big Beaver north to Long Lake Road, in Troy and Macomb County from two to five lanes. Estimated cost, \$3.5 million.

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Alliance, McD's mount campaign to immunize kids

BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER

Have your youngsters been fully immunized?

If not, September would be an ideal time to get the immunization shots that could protect your own youngsters as well as those he or she might contact.

McDonald's restaurants and the Health Alliance Plan (HAP) are cosponsoring a campaign to encourage parents or guardians to make sure youngsters are immunized.

Specifically McDonald's and HAP are encouraging vaccinations for diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, influenza, polio, measles, mumps and rubella.

Concerned is heightened because of survey that indicates Michigan has one of the lowest immunization rates in the country.

The survey, conducted by the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), indicated that nationally, the percentage of children between 19 and 36 months old immunized for common childhood diseases was greater than previously indicated.

The survey, conducted by telephone from April to December 1994, showed that about 75 percent of children are vaccinated, compared to the previous estimate of 67 percent.

Michigan, however, with a percentage in the mid 60s, was among the states with the lowest immunization rates. Only Missouri and Idaho had comparable

rates, according to the survey.

Vermont, Connecticut and Hawaii, with rates in the 80s, were the states with the highest immunization rates.

"Naturally the percentage in Michigan is surprising and concerning," said Dr. Carolyn W. Bird, Oakland County's chief of medical services.

Bird said the survey did not break the percentage of immunizations down according to county, so there is no way of comparing Oakland's rate to those of other communities. "But Michigan's rate is far too low," she said.

Children must be immunized before they can start school. But preschool youngsters are dependent on their parents or guardians.

"Michigan's poor immunization rate is putting our children at risk," said Susan Schwandt, spokesperson for HAP.

A HAP study last year indicated that physicians were partly to blame for the state's low immunization rate because they failed to administer all the needed vaccines to youngsters under age 2.

As part of the program to correct the problem — and safeguard more children — HAP and the Henry Ford Health System are disseminating information on immunizations to physicians and the general public.

In September, youngsters who can show proof of immunization will be able to get a free dessert at participating McDonald's Restaurants in Southeastern Michigan.

Spiders exhibit at Cranbrook spins 'Charlotte's Web'

The friendship between an insecure pig named Wilbur and a talented spider named Charlotte is a treasured childhood memory for many.

With Cranbrook Institute of Science's presentation of "Charlotte's Web," 2 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 10, in the outdoor Greek Theatre, children of a new generation will fall in love with E.B. White's endearing story of trust and devotion.

Charlotte's Web is being held in conjunction with Spiderland, an exhibit organized by the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History. The hands-on exhibition explores the wonders and mysteries of spiders, one of the most unique life forms on Earth. Spiderland continues at Cranbrook Institute of Science through Sept. 24.

Charlotte's Web will be presented by September Productions, a Michigan-based touring company specializing in children's theater. Composed of metro-Detroit actors, directors and technical staff, this acclaimed group creates theater that is enjoyed by children and adults alike.

Spiderland, which is circulated by

the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service, is made possible through the support of Marbel Entertainment Group, Inc. with additional funding from the Smithsonian's Special Exhibition Fund. At Cranbrook, Spiderland is made possible in part by Comerica Inc., Mitsubishi Motor Sales of America, ABC Inc., Target, Snapple and D'Arcey, Masius, Benton & Bowles.

Reservations for Charlotte's Web can be made by calling (810) 645-3230. Admission is \$6 per person and \$5 per person for members of Cranbrook Institute of Science. The fee doesn't include museum admission. In case of inclement weather, the production will be held inside the Institute of Science auditorium.

Cranbrook Institute of Science is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday and 1-5 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$6 for adults, \$4 for children age 3-17 and senior citizens over age 65. Children younger than 3 are free. Planetarium shows are an additional \$1 and Laser shows an additional \$2. For information, call (810) 645-3200.