

# Michigan companies play host to GOP in San Diego

**SAN DIEGO** — The cost of attending five days of a Republican National Convention is softened considerably by receptions and goodie bags provided by friendly companies.

Chrysler Corp. held a Sunday brunch for Gov. John Engler (closed to guests and the media). The No. 3 automaker was ill-rewarded. Monday night, former President Gerald Ford made an unflattering reference to President Clinton as "a convertible Dodge."

Monday morning, delegates and alternates had breakfast (behind closed doors) as guests of Ameritech.

Monday night, the Michigan, Tennessee and Minnesota delegations and guests were hosted by Northwest Airlines (whose aubs are in those states) and Visa at Party '96 with a beach band.

A long list of companies put on a Wednesday luncheon aboard the historic "Berkley" at its dock in the harbor. Six mid-Michigan officials were hosts, with the tab picked up by the Fourth District San Diego Fund of Midland, Spaworth.

Ameritech, Consumers Power, Detroit Edison Co., Dow Chemical, Enron Corp., Michigan Consolidated Gas Co., Michigan

Beer & Wine Wholesalers and Three Rivers Construction Co.

Others, credited in smaller print, were Ackerman & Ackerman PC, Anheuser-Busch, Associated General Contractors, Bay Cast Inc., Bay Cast Technology Inc., Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Central Asphalt Inc., Central Concrete Products Co., Inc., Edw. C. Levy Co., Jackson National Life Insurance Co., Joseph E. Seagram & Sons, and Muchmore Harrington Associates.

U.S. Sen. Spencer Abraham, of Lebanonese descent, was honored at a "gala reception" of the Arab American Institute. Its purpose:

"to promote community involvement in all phases of the presidential elections."

Those registering in the Republican State Committee office got a Northwest Airlines tote bag containing:

An American coffee mug with a levered lid, a plastic soup jug, a bottle of Nature's Glo sunscreen, a Detroit Lions' key ring, Lions' decals from Big Boy, a stick of Stain Stain stain remover, three 10 percent coupons from Macy's, a box of Ryobi's Mackinac Island shape, cookie cutters in the shape of Michigan's two peninsulas from Lt. Gov. Connie Binsfeld, a convention souvenir tee shirt, a Detroit Tigers pin, and a

penlight from MCI.

Also a Michigan Retailers Association teach bag with a Home Depot drink cup, Toys 'R Us coloring books, a Rite-Aid tooth brush and disposable razors, Amway hand and body lotion, an Electric Ave. Jackknife, two bottles of Arbor aspirin and a package of Maxol.

The media got their own goodie bags, at the convention headquarters, with an emphasis on printed matter:

Copies of Congressional Quarterly, New Republic (a liberal magazine with a highly unflattering caricature of John Engler in a gorilla suit on the cover), Investor's Business Daily, the

American Spectator, The Hill (a Washington paper), Human Events, two packages of Dole raisins, a Kraft macaroni and cheese dinner, a box of Hefty "one-zip" storage bags, a Budweiser beer mug, a vegetable and fruits cookbook for kids, three promotional floppy disks.

And a guide for reporters on what to do and how to get help if arrested.

General Motors provided a whole lot of vehicles, but the sheet of paper with the exit number got lost in the shuffle. GM was allowed to display a vehicle, with a sign denoting its official sponsorship, on the convention center tree lawn.

## County considers testing groundwater for arsenic

BY TODD WICKS  
STAFF WRITER

Arsenic is a poison usually found only in Agatha Christie novels and crime movies.

But this naturally-occurring chemical is making an unwelcome comeback — in Michigan's groundwater.

"Sometimes when companies dig a well in sandstone, they accidentally tap into arsenic," said Rosemarie Rowney, manager and health officer of the Oakland County Health Division. "We don't know of any fatalities yet, but we have water tests that show arsenic in Oakland County groundwater."

Fortunately, the Michigan Department of Community Health is working to make sure that fatalities stay at zero. They have approached 11 local counties, asking for funds to aid in a half-million dollar study in southeast Michigan.

The study will be conducted by the United States Geological Survey (USGS), to determine where and why arsenic occurs in groundwater. A 2-year study is planned to begin Oct. 1 and end in September 1998. The USGS will contribute more than \$500,000 to the study, a large

portion of which comes from a new national program, the Drinking Water Initiative, which stresses groundwater research to solve related health problems.

The counties involved are being asked for a total of \$81,500, or \$7,410 individually. That was the figure presented by Rowney to the Oakland County Finance and Personnel Committee Thursday, asking that the allocation of those funds be recommended to the Board of Commissioners. The motion passed unanimously.

"Arsenic has no taste, so you would never know that it is in your water," she said. "It has serious consequences. We're especially worried about children and infants. Their bodies can't take a dose as well as an adult body."

For Oakland County, the end result of the USGS study will be reports and maps marking the distribution of arsenic throughout the area, explaining the reason for high areas of concentration and suggestions on well placement to avoid future problems.

People who would like their well water checked for arsenic should go to their county health

department for a sample container and instructions. From there, a sample is sent to the Michigan Department of Community Health.

"We prefer to do the analyses," said John Hesse, of the Division of Health Risk Assessment there. "By them getting it done here, we can also use data from it to document the contamination in each county. If they went to a private laboratory we couldn't, so we're proud to have them come here."

"When we first heard of the arsenic problem, the state lab couldn't keep up with the number of requests, we had to refer people to private labs. But now we're geared up for all the requests."

"People should understand that there are no water well regulations," said Rowney. "There's no well code in the county. Water sampling and the installation of wells are very important to their and their family's health. There's nothing more basic than safe drinking water."

"You want your water to be free of both biological and chemical contamination, and you certainly don't want any arsenic in it."

## CMH seeks additional staffers

BY TODD WICKS  
STAFF WRITER

As director of the Oakland County Mental Health Center (CMH), Sandra Lindsey has always had more than enough to keep her busy.

Now she would like a little help. The State Department of Community Health recently put all of the county's mental health consumers on Medicaid under CMH care and turned one of its major county centers into a private, nonprofit organization which the CMH must now contract services from.

It meant all the responsibility was on the county's shoulders," said Lindsey. "Now we have to enter into a new obligation. There is a great amount of additional responsibility."

For this reason, she recently submitted a request for the creation of two new positions. Deputy Director of CMH Services and Assistant Administrator of Children's Services, to take on some of the extra work. These new employees would assist in overseeing new contracts, preparing the 1996-97 budget, and adapting to any of the state's upcoming changes in health care.

But Lindsey has been

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Sandra Lindsey  
CMH director

putting in 14-hour days for years. The CMH has been overextended since 1993, when the Full Management Contract took all of the state mental health dollars being spent in Oakland County and gave it to the county to buy its own services.

"Oakland County's been absolutely bombarded," said Finance and Personnel Commissioner Shelly Taub. "It took us a year to bring a transition team in to study the change. . . It turns out the state's records were never computerized. When Oakland County took over, all the patients' names were written on 3-by-5 cards," she marveled.

"It was like getting married one day, starting a new job the next day, and getting married

the next — Whoa!"

Last Thursday, Lindsey went before the Finance and Personnel Committee with her request, agitating at least one commissioner by proposing another dip into the county's General Fund. "This time of year, most county departments are pretty quiet, working on their budgets for next year," she explained. "At this time, when the commission is used to quiet preparation, I've come to them with a lot of changes in my program. It is out of the ordinary, and it does tend to make them a little concerned." The motion ended up passing easily.

Her proposal still has to go before the Board of Commissioners, but Lindsey is optimistic. It was supported at Public Services and by the Finance Commission, so that's a good indicator that things are moving ahead. Today's vote was a good sign.

But even if the positions are denied, she vowed to continue working breakneck days to get the job done. "We're serving 9,000 of the most critically disabled people in this county," she said. "I won't cut service. I will continue to struggle."

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