

OU '97 enrollment is unprecedented

Enrollment at Oakland University hit a winter-term record of 13,076 students. The winter 1997 enrollment is 1.3-percent higher than last winter's all-time high of 12,901 students.

OU President Gary Russi said the enrollment gain stems, in part, from the Rochester Hills University's increasing emphasis on new market-driven degree programs, academic excellence and commitment to offering graduate programs at convenient times for employed professionals.

"Students and business and industry leaders realize that OU provides an education that reaches employees for the workplace of tomorrow," Russi said. "We're continuing to see the results of all the hard work and effort that have gone into our academic initiatives. Oakland uses state-of-the-art technology in its curriculum to develop the job skills that are necessary in high-tech work environments and it's clear that prospective students are getting the message."

This term's record follows last fall's 8.4-percent increase in graduate student enrollment.

Winter enrollment at universities is traditionally lower than head counts in fall, when more first-year students enroll. Students graduating at the end of the fall term also account for lower winter numbers.

Last fall's enrollment total of 13,956 students is 2.6-percent higher than fall 1995's all-time high of 13,600 students.

Laura Schartman, director, Institutional Research and Assessment, said "the new high winter enrollment is healthy sign that Oakland is continuing its upward trend."

Oakland University is a state-supported institution of higher education. It offers undergraduate programs in 71 areas and graduate programs in 45 areas.

Oakland Digest provides a summary of headline stories from around the county during the past week.

BIRMINGHAM
Stores play retail roulette: February is a transitional time for downtown Birmingham businesses, and while there are fewer leases expiring than in years past, the closing of Crowley's overshadows those figures. Crowley's is leaving its leased space at the North Woodward location. The store is expected to be razed and converted into an entertainment complex, housing movie theaters, restaurants and some shops.

Principal Shopping District chairman Geoffrey Hockman said there is "a very, very strong interest from people wishing to locate to Birmingham. There are a half dozen who want to relocate here but are having difficulty finding space."

Rouge pipe capped: Workers from Dan's Excavating Co. finished up the last bit of work associated with the Acacia Park combined sewer overflow basin



Dan's Excavating Co. crew poured fill into a sewer pipe, permanently closing its route to the Rouge.

in the Cranbrook Road-13 Mile area. The overflow pipe to the Rouge River will be filled with cement this week, assuring nothing from the sewer system will empty into the river. The operation and maintenance of the basin now is turned over to the Oakland County Drain Commission's office.

CLARKSTON
Two trustees won't seek re-election: When their four-year terms on Clarkston's school board expire in June, trustee Bill Craig and president Bill McGregor announced they will not run

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for re-election. The two, who won their seats the first time they ran for board in June 1993, both cited family commitments as primary considerations in their decisions not to run again. Both said they felt good about what they accomplished in their tenures on the board.

Water safety plan proposed: Independence Township's water is safe and George Anderson, township department public works director, wants to ensure it stays that way and save the township money in the process.

Anderson has begun to institute a well head protection program that he hopes to bring before the township board and planning commission in the next few weeks. If implemented, the program would avert businesses from bringing in or storing pollutants near sources of ground water.

FARMINGTON
Superintendent gets high marks: Farmington Public Schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield is keeping his grades up. Maxfield, whose salary is \$128,941, received another positive review from the Board of Education. He joined the district in 1994. "We feel he continues to bring a very positive and a proactive style and very nurturing style to the district," said board President David Troy.

LAKE ORION
Zoning trial delayed: Despite charges that hiring a new attorney at the 11th hour was a stall tactic, Orion Township has earned a reprieve in its dispute with Silverbell South Associates. Orion Township officials hired the Farmington Hills law firm of Kohl, Secrest, Wardle, Lynch, Clark and Hampton to act as co-counsel to defend the township in a law suit filed over a zoning dispute. Silverbell South Associates is seeking a rezoning to put a Meijer store at Silver Bell and M-24. The trial has been moved back 60 days with a new settlement hearing scheduled for the end of this month.

Looking forward: While the cause of Orion Community Schools administration building fire is still unknown, school officials are back to work at The Fred Ehmman Center for Lifelong Learning. In 10 months, administrators are expected to move again, to the old high school building. Now they have to determine the fate of the pile of burnt rubble on Flint Street. "The building doesn't seem to be salvageable," said information services coordinator Edie Paradowski.

OXFORD
Curriculum reworked: The Oxford Area Community Schools Board unanimously approved the addition of K-10 language arts frameworks curriculum and the 9-12 grade math curriculum. This is record breaking, said Superintendent Marion Gionopolis. "We've completed the benchmarks for K-12 social studies, K-12 math, K-10 science and K-10 language arts in about three-and-a-half years." What it offers is a cohesive curriculum to all Language Arts teachers so every class is integrated.

Police probe stepped up: State police have reviewed the information they received from the Oakland County Sheriff's Department concerning allegations of wrongdoing in the Oxford police department, and have decided to step the investigation up a notch. "We assigned an investigator who will look into all of the allegations," said Michigan State Police Insp. John Smiley. The assignment is not a condemnation of guilt, but an indication the state police need more information before deciding whether to pursue charges.

ROCHESTER
Motive for shooting unclear: Rochester Hills sheriff's investigators continue to interview friends and family of an estranged husband allegedly shot to death by his sister-in-law Feb. 12. Michael Hockenberry, a 31-year-old Holly Township man, was going through a divorce with Lydia Nowos, 29, when the shooting occurred. Hockenberry died after Lydia's sister, Monica Nowos, 27, allegedly fired at him with a 12-gauge shotgun while he sat in his pickup in front of the Nowos residence in the Christian Hills Subdivision, according to police.

Nowos has been charged with open murder; investigators are still looking into what prompted the shooting.

SOUTHFIELD
Town Center sold: Prudential Town Center, a landmark in Southfield, has been purchased by a business group from Singapore. It will be renamed Southfield Town Center by mid-March. The four-tower complex, estimated at 2 million square feet, was sold for an estimated \$215 million and is considered to be the largest real estate transaction in metro Detroit in the past decade.

"Prudential was a major force within the community, and based upon our conversations with the new buyer, we're confident they are likewise community-oriented, with an emphasis on maintaining their property to attract tenants," said Donald Gross, Southfield Community Development director.

Then and now: A recent Southfield Public Schools PTA Founders Day dinner displayed teacher contracts and reports of the past among other things. The old documents provided a historical view of the district and drew a comparison between unresolved teacher contracts negotiations today and the working conditions and salaries of teachers in the early 1900s.

Included was a 1914 teacher's report by Sarah Gray who worked for \$40 a month, taught 13 subjects and an average of 32 students a day.

TROY
Juniors decline proficiency test: There is a significant difference between Athens and Troy high schools when it comes to taking the High School Proficiency Test. While about 4 percent of the parents of Athens High School juniors decided to let their students opt out of taking the state proficiency test, 29 percent of Troy High School parents did the same. This is the second year juniors in the state took the test, which replaced the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) test. Last year about 4 percent of students from both schools opted out of the test.

Two plead to murder: Eric Whisnatt of Troy and Darian Hall of Sterling Heights, accused of being accomplices in the 1994 murder of Angela Garcia in a Troy Subway sandwich shop, pleaded guilty to second-degree murder. A third accomplice, Carlton Banks of Detroit, is scheduled for trial before Oakland County Circuit Judge Alice Gilbert. Banks is charged with first-degree murder and conspiracy to commit armed robbery.

Police allege Banks played a key role when former Troy High School student Ming Ho killed 19-year-old Garcia. Ho is serving a mandatory life sentence for Garcia's murder. "The other two (Whisnatt and Hall) are going to testify against Carlton Banks," said Troy police Lt. Dane Slater.

WEST BLOOMFIELD
Student injured in bus: Kindergarten student Spencer Hartley struck his head against the metal emergency door handle of a bus he was riding inside the 6-year-old had to be rushed to Huron Valley Hospital. Spencer, a student at Pleasant Lake Elementary School in the Walled Lake schools is fine.

But his mother, Susan Hartley, wants to make sure that sort of the incident never occurs again. She is leading a campaign to improve bus safety by installing seat belts or through other measures. "After this happened, I must have received 20 phone calls from parents and neighbors," Hartley said. "They are all thinking the same thing. Why aren't there seat belts on school buses?"

Historic chimney dismantled: Someone demolished the chimney at the historic Foster Farmhouse, and Walled Lake officials and supporters of the farmhouse are looking for the responsible party. Walled Lake city manager Philip Vawter said the chimney was "quite damaged," but was unable to place a dollar amount on the destruction.

Archer seeks suburban support: Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer had a message for people who live in the suburbs — don't keep your distance. And it was well received by a gathering of about 375 synagogue members the 65th-annual intercongregational men's club dinner at Temple Israel last week. Throughout the speech, Archer thanked individuals contributing to the revitalization of Detroit and encouraged suburbanites to do business in Detroit.

Compiled by staff writer Jennifer Placinto.

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