



Improvements and changes are scheduled for the following Oakland County roadways. Drivers may wish to take alternate routes during the road construction periods:

- **Bingham Farms** — Due to deteriorating roads, all five miles of I-96 from I-75 to I-275 will be repaved with a layer of chip seal the end of July with a completion in late August. Thirteen Mile and 14 Mile roads will not be repaved since they are not local roadways.
- **Birmingham** — Derby between Adams and Coolidge and Birmingham between St. Andrews and Coolidge are being resurfaced with an expected completion date of late July. Derby will be closed during construction except to residential traffic.
- **Farmington** — Grand River will be widened to include a left turn lane and traffic signal at the Shiawassee Intersection. Shiawassee, from Grand River to Farmington Road, will be closed during construction. Work is scheduled to begin July 16 and be completed by Sept. 30.
- **Farmington Hills** — Eight Mile, between Halsted and Farmington roads, is being widened to five lanes. The project, which extends through the Farmington Road intersection, is expected to be completed Aug. 22. Intermittent lane closures are possible. Expansion of the Haggerty Connector (M-6) has closed 13 Mile Road, between Haggerty and Meadowbrook, until Aug. 1. Beam repair work has started on the 10 Mile bridge over I-96/I-275 with an expected completion in late October. There will be hourly closures on I-96/I-275. The 10 Mile will be restricted to one lane in each direction until July 30. Rhonswood, off of Gill Road and south of 9 Mile, has been paved with the final layer of asphalt to be added this week. The Farmington Road bridge over I-96/I-275 is shut down for deck replacement and will remain closed until Aug. 10. Traffic will be detoured along 11 Mile, 12 Mile and Orchard Lake roads and a lane shift will be in place for east and westbound I-96/I-275 travelers with intermittent lane closures. Paving and drainage improvements have started at the west end of the Meadowbrook Hills subdivision near 5 Mile and Halsted. All streets will be repaved with east end work beginning in mid-July and the project completed Sept. 16.
- **Independence Township** — White Lake Road near Andersonville Road is closed to through traffic. It is being widened to three lanes and realigned with Nelsky Road. Detours route drivers down Dixie Highway to Andersonville until the expected completion in November when the southern portion of White Lake Road will be turned into a cul-de-sac instead of intersecting Andersonville.
- **Novi** — Expansion of the Haggerty Connector (M-5) has closed 13 Mile Road, between Haggerty and Meadowbrook, until Aug. 1. Beam repair work has started on the 10 Mile bridge over I-96/I-275 with an expected completion in late October. There will be hourly closures on I-96/I-275. The 10 Mile will be restricted to one lane in each direction until July 30. Rhonswood, off of Gill Road and south of 9 Mile, has been paved with the final layer of asphalt to be added this week. The Farmington Road bridge over I-96/I-275 is shut down for deck replacement and will remain closed until Aug. 10. Traffic will be detoured along 11 Mile, 12 Mile and Orchard Lake roads and a lane shift will be in place for east and westbound I-96/I-275 travelers with intermittent lane closures. Paving and drainage improvements have started at the west end of the Meadowbrook Hills subdivision near 5 Mile and Halsted. All streets will be repaved with east end work beginning in mid-July and the project completed Sept. 16.
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NOTE: Unless otherwise stated, detours are unknown or not planned.
Source: Local, county, city and village road officials.

— Compiled by staff writer Jennifer Placinto

Politics mangle road deal

Patterson on roads: Not enough

BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER

Like others concerned about potholes, Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson must wait until next week to see what plan, if any, the Michigan Legislature finalizes on raising the gasoline tax to finance road construction.

But from what he saw of the plan discussed by lawmakers and the governor, Patterson said the final package will undoubtedly be "woefully inadequate to address the needs of Oakland County."

State lawmakers this week were scheduled to resume efforts to reach agreement on raising the gasoline tax. Efforts stalled last week after legislators failed to reach an agreement on other aspects of the package, such as setting a reduction in the sales or income tax to make it "revenue neutral" for motorists.



L. Brooks Patterson
County Executive

Even so, Gov. John M. Engler was reportedly optimistic that the proposal under consideration would provide the framework for a solution next week.

"We don't know what that final package will look like," said Patterson. "I accept what they come up with as a beginning. But we still have a long way to go."

This much seems certain, Patterson said, "Oakland will not get enough money to meet its road needs. They're talking about a 4-cent per gallon increase, which will raise \$200 million a year."

"That's simply not enough," said the executive, who earlier proposed raising the gasoline tax 5 cents a gallon as the core of his road proposal. It also included Michigan getting more federal funds and shifting part of the gasoline sales tax from the general fund to road improvement.

Motorists currently pay a 6 percent sales tax on gasoline. A shift of one percent (or 1 cent) would generate \$57 million a year for roads.

"Michigan might get more money from the federal government (as the governor requested), but I don't think it will be enough."

Patterson said from what he knows of the package under consideration, Oakland County would receive less than \$5 million dollars for roads and highways. "We will need more than \$1 billion in the near future, or we'll fall further behind," he said.

The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) estimates southeast Michigan will need \$23 billion for roads over the next 20 years, said the executive. "The legislature is taking a Band Aid approach to a major problem."

Patterson said he didn't necessarily disagree with those in Lansing who predict there will be no road plan this session — despite pressure for an agreement before the legislature adjourns for the summer session.

The governor wants the hike in gasoline taxes to be "revenue neutral," said Patterson. "I don't know if lawmakers and the governor can agree on a plan that does that."

One area not addressed by legislators is road jurisdiction, or which agency — The Michigan Department of Transportation or county road commissions — has control over local highways.

One of Engler's proposals called for shifting control of 23,000 miles of local roads to MDOT — something Patterson opposed because he said local authorities are better suited to deal with related responsibilities such as issuing permits for curb cuts and installing traffic signs.

BY TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

Parked on a trailer outside the State Capitol in Lansing last week was a trailer with a flashing sign that said, "Just Fix the Roads."

Sponsored by a coalition of the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, Michigan Manufacturers Association and 88 other groups, the sign summed up what the Michigan Legislature failed to do in an entire week of back-room negotiations. Instead:

■ Senate Republicans had an agenda dominated by cutting the overall tax load.

■ House Democrats had an agenda dominated by tax breaks for college tuitions and child care.

They will try again Tuesday with a second week of overtime sessions. It will be harder than ever. "We'll be down some members," said Rep. Deborah Whyman, R-Canton, ticking off a list of lawmakers who are scheduled for family trips, children's weddings, anniversaries and the like.

In a nutshell, the Senate passed a package of bills featuring a net tax reduction over five years, but the House passed only one in return.

Senate OKs bills

The Senate's package called for:

■ Increasing the state gasoline 4 cents per gallon effective tax Aug. 1. The diesel tax was not changed. A bare minimum of 20 senators voted yes.

■ Cutting the 6 percent sales tax on gasoline to 4 percent over four years. The rate would fall to 5 percent on the first day of 1998, 4 percent in 1999, 3 percent in 2000, and 2 percent in 2001. That final 2 percent is constitutionally dedicated to public schools and wouldn't be lowered.

■ Cutting the personal income tax by raising the per-person exemption \$100 next year. Currently the exemption is \$2,600. It is indexed to inflation and is scheduled to go to \$2,600 next year. With the \$100 increase, the new exemption rate would be \$2,700 per household member. The House also passed this bill.

Takeover killed

The Senate killed portions of SB 303 that would have allowed the state to take over control of 9,200 miles of county and local roads. The takeover, sought by Gov. John Engler, never came to a vote.

"It was opposed in all four caucuses (House and Senate, Democrat and Republican)," said Sen. Robert Geake, R-Northville.

"It's a shell game. I'll never vote for it," said Rep. Tom Kelly, D-Wayne.

"I have no problem with giving maintenance of some local roads to the state," said Sen. Michael Bouchard, R-Birmingham. "But should Maple Road be made six lanes? Should there be capacity changes, curb cuts, new speed limits, traffic lights? Those should be local decisions."

Fuel tax key

The key bill was HB 4832, the fuel tax hike, which passed with 19 Republican senators and one Democrat. The House has yet to vote on it.

Two senators were absent, including Gary Peters, D-Bloomfield Township. His absence had the effect of a no vote — which was how he had planned to vote anyway. His staff said he departed late Wednesday on a long-planned family trip.

Two Republicans, including Loren Bennett of Canton, voted no.

"I have said from the beginning that I will not support a tax

increase for Michigan residents," said Bennett, "and I intend to keep that promise. Higher gas taxes are not the answer to fixing Michigan roads. We need to look more closely at reforming the transportation system."

Bennett boasted that he won an amendment to SB 303 that "compels counties and townships to sit down together and decide how best to fix the roads. It is important that townships have a say in how road funds are allocated."

Bennett's defection had been predicted two days earlier by Peters. "It looks like they'll have to put up 20 votes themselves. I may be Bennett. That's the seat they're trying to protect."

Bennett's seat had been held by Democrats for 30 years until he won it in 1996. He is considered "leaning Republican" in the recent issue of Inside Michigan Politics newsletter.

Net tax cut

Sen. Dale Shugart, R-Portage, said the net effect of the Senate package, after four years, would be a \$110 million tax cut. In those five years:

■ The higher gasoline tax would yield \$960 million.

■ The sales tax cut on gasoline would save drivers \$910 million.

■ The higher income tax exemption would save families \$150 million.

"Senate majority leader" Dick Poethum was insistent on that, said Shugart.

In the first year, there would be a \$90 million net tax hike — \$190 million more for gasoline, \$30 million less for income taxes and \$70 million less for sales tax on gasoline.

Dems' plan

House Speaker Curtis Hertel, D-Detroit, on July 8 announced his caucus would support a 4-cent hike in the gasoline tax — on these conditions:

■ A reduction in the personal income tax rate from 4.4 to 4.325 percent, saving the average family of four \$26.25. Statewide tax cost: \$122 million.

■ Expanding the college tuition tax credit from a maximum of \$250 to \$500. Savings to families of college students: \$36 million.

■ A child care income tax deduction of up to \$5,000 per child for working parents. Tax savings: \$17 million.

Total one-year tax cuts under the Democratic plan: \$175 million versus \$190 million increase in the fuel tax.

Hertel said his plan was backed by County Executives Ed McNamara, a Wayne County Democrat, and Brooks Patterson, an Oakland County Republican.

'Breakdown'

Two lawmakers said part of the breakdown had to do with communications to the Senate Democratic caucus.

"If the governor were serious, the dialog would be there," said Senate minority leader John Cherry, D-Clio. "Our conclusion is that they're not serious about getting out of here."

"Their feelings were hurt," said Rep. Andrew Raczowski, R-Farmington Hills, of the Senate Democrats. "We had a deal, but the deal broke down. Senate Democrats felt communications to their lines weren't there."

Raczowski had a list of amendments, including improved revenue sharing for local units. "But we never got to vote," he said.

Raczowski promised to attend Tuesday's session but hoped it will be short because he has been accepted to a University of Virginia program for emerging political leaders.

Nature center offers fun for family summer activities

Independence Oaks Nature Center is offering several summer activities including a garden seminar from 7:30 - 9:30 p.m., July 17, and the art of aromatherapy will be featured from 7:30 - 9:30 p.m., Aug. 21.

Pre-registration is required for all nature programs. A vehicle entry fee of \$8 will be charged for programs beginning before 4 p.m.

Independence Oaks County Park is on Shashabaw Road, 2-1/2 miles north of I-75 near Clarkston.

For more information, call (248) 626-6472 or TDD (248) 858-1884 for more information or to visit the Oakland County Parks website at www.co.oakland.mi.us.

— Compiled by staff writer Jennifer Placinto

Legislature delivers state aid hike to OU in new budget bill

BY TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

State universities will average about 4 percent more in state aid under a budget bill that finally cleared the Legislature July 3.

Biggest winners were Oakland University, up 5 percent; Central Michigan University, up 6.6 percent, and Grand Valley State University, up 8 percent.

Also faring above average were University of Michigan-Flint at 4.8 percent and Saginaw Valley at 4.4.

The "big three" — University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, Michigan State and Wayne State — were boosted 4.2 percent. Most other universities got a flat 4 percent, including U-M Dearborn.

Sen. John J.H. Schwarz, R-Battle Creek, had sought across-the-board hikes of 4.5 percent for all universities and better treatment for U-M Dearborn in his version of the bill. But amid competing interests during House-Senate conference committees, his plan was scaled down.

There was a big promise for the future: "It is the legislative goal to achieve a \$4,500 per student funding floor for master level universities and a \$6,000 funding floor for doctoral level universities."

That should have given warm feelings to Eastern Michigan University, which last year was funded at \$4,195; Oakland University, at \$4,086; and University of Michigan-Dearborn, at \$4,135.

In the closing hours of their session, lawmakers quickly adopted a \$1.55 billion budget bill. The Senate vote was 36-0 with two absent, and the House vote was 99-1 with 10 absent.

All area members voted yes.

The lone protest came from Rep. David Jaye, R-Macomb County, who complained of "taxpayer paid programs for minority students only, including child care and foreign travel." He cited the Martin Luther King Select Student Program at \$1.9 million and the "minority only advance technologies engineering tuition" line item at \$4 million.

There was evidence House

■ In the closing hours of their session, lawmakers quickly adopted a \$1.55 billion budget bill. The Senate vote was 36-0 with two absent, and the House vote was 99-1 with 10 absent.

Democrats were hearing down on the U-M Ann Arbor for admitting so many non-Michigan residents.

One section said: "The U-M Ann Arbor recognizes its responsibility to Michigan resident students. It is the intent of the university to recruit and admit qualified Michigan students, and to establish financial aid programs and scholarships to achieve a resident level of undergraduate enrollment of 70 percent."

Here are gross appropriations for some area universities:

- Oakland U. \$42.9 million.
- U-M Dearborn \$23.1 million.
- Eastern Michigan, \$76.1 million.
- Wayne State, \$223 million.
- U-M Ann Arbor, \$315 million.
- Michigan State, \$279 million.

Dropped from the final version was Schwarz's pet project: \$1.5 million for public policy research — the effect of term limits on state government.

House members elected in 1992 are completing their third and final terms, and nearly 70 new faces are expected in the 110-member body Jan. 1, 1999. Senators elected in 1994 must leave in 2002.

Most of the \$1.55 billion will go directly to the 15 public universities. Several items are for more general programs: \$66 million for agricultural extension and cooperative extension programs, \$2.7 million for the King and selected student support programs; and \$118 million for various scholarship, tuition grants, work-study and federally aided scholarship programs.

OCC nets 3 percent aid hike

BY TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

Community colleges will get 3.4 percent more than last in state aid.

The House and Senate put the finishing touches on the \$276 million compromise package before its Fourth of July break and sent it to the governor.

It stripped out language that would have prohibited use of college funds for employees' or dependents' abortions, replacing it with a non-binding statement of the Legislature's "intent" not to fund abortions.

That result had been predicted publicly by Reps. Tom Kelly, D-Wayne, and Hubert Price, D-Pontiac. Most lawmakers saw the anti-abortion language as interfering with the elected boards' right to govern and unions' right to negotiate wages and fringes.

Here is how some area colleges will fare in the next fiscal year:

■ Oakland Community College — \$19.8 million, up 3.1 percent from the current year.

■ Schoolcraft College — \$10.6 million, up nearly 6 percent from the current year.

■ Wayne County Community College — \$15.9 million, up 3.2 percent.

■ Henry Ford, Dearborn — \$19.2 million, up 4.3 percent.

■ Lansing, \$28.9 million, up 4.7 percent.

The House passed its more generous version May 13, and Senate action followed early in June, but negotiators waited until the last minute to put forth a "conference report" to reconcile the differences.

The House vote was 97-1 with 12 absent, and the Senate vote was 32-4 with two absent. All area members voted yes.

In other action, the House approved 89-0 a bill broadening the powers of community college boards.