

# County budget slated for adoption

BY PAT MURPHY  
STAFF WRITER

It has some irony — like a \$3 million appropriation to benefit the Chrysler Corp. and a 3-cent tax cut for home owners.

But the fiscal 1998 budget for Oakland County has been approved and slated for adoption in three weeks.

"It's the closest thing I've seen to a love-in," said county executive L. Brooks Patterson, referring to budget hearings that concluded Thursday at the Finance and Personnel Committee of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

The committee approved next year's budget and referred it to the entire board for adoption at its Sept. 25 meeting.

Adoption is by no means a foregone conclusion, according to county commissioner Sue Ann Douglas, chair of the finance committee. "I think there will be some serious discussion before then," said the Rochester Republican. "But there's a good chance it will be approved."

Douglas agreed this year's hearings were harmonious, the most harmonious since 1993, when commissioners had to cut expenses by about \$20 million.

"Actually, there was nothing to disagree

about," Douglas said. Then, after a pause she said, "not much to disagree about."

For commissioner John Garfield, R-Republican, however, there was plenty about which to disagree. He called the \$3 million allocation on behalf of Chrysler "corporate welfare."

The county's director of community and economic development referred to the allocation as "keeping a promise." The county had promised the money as an incentive Chrysler was relocating its world headquarters, explained Jeffrey Kuczmarski.

Both were referring to the county's share an interchange on I-75 at the new Chrysler headquarters in Auburn Hills. Chrysler will use the \$3 million to leverage additional money from the state to connect the company's tech center with northbound I-75.

Garfield objected to giving tax dollars to a private corporation, particularly in good times. "Why should the county give a profitable corporation tax dollars?" he asked.

"It's not a bad precedent," Garfield continued. "What about Ford in Wixom? What about GM in Pontiac?"

Commissioner Donald Jensen, R-Birmingham, said precedent is very important. "If the county doesn't keep its word, we'd never be able to negotiate again," he said.

Allocating \$3 million for Chrysler was particularly ironic in light of the commissioners' discussion about the future of the so-called millage stabilization fund — that has accumulated \$4.3 million since being established last year.

Since commissioners generally agreed the fund should be eliminated, the question became: how quickly?

Some commissioners a one-time cut — about 11 cents per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. Others wanted to spread the tax cut over a period of years.

The end result was a compromise. Next year's millage rate will be \$4.35 per \$1,000, down from this year's rate of \$4.38.

The irony of allocating \$3 million to Chrysler while quibbling about a 3-cent tax cut for home owners was not lost.

"I'm not totally happy," said commissioner Douglas. "But government works like that on occasion."

Garfield had a different bent. "I'm ashamed of my party," he said.

Commissioner Lawrence R. Pernick, D-Southfield, however, offered this perspective: "We'd all like to cut property taxes," he said. "But I think we are doing the best we can with the resources we have."

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## United Way prepares for Day of Caring

United Way of Oakland County has mobilized 1,100 volunteers to complete more than 40 community service projects at local non-profit organizations and schools on Saturday, during its sixth annual day of caring.

The area's first year-round school, Waterford Leggett Elementary, will get a facelift while the kids get physicals from St. Joseph Mercy Oakland.

The event will kick off United Way's annual fundraising campaign. Last year, United Way of Oakland County raised \$5.9 million. Robert Griffiths, executive vice president of Great Lakes National Bank and United Way

campaign chair, will announce the goal for 1997.

Volunteer teams are coming from: Road Commission, Oakland Schools, GM Orion Assembly Plant, Central United Methodist Church, St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, Kiwanis, Community Presbyterian Church, Lake Orion High School, Birmingham Junior League, Auburn Hills Rotary Club, Timber of Lake Oakland.

Also Communication Workers of America, Holly High School, Clarkston High School, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Huttenlocher Group, Oakland Christian Academy, Pontiac Police Athletic

League, City of Auburn Hills, Oakland Medical Society, Bethany Catholic Parish, Lancaster Community Life Center, Pontiac Central Key Club, Smart Middle School, Pontiac Education Association, West, St. Joseph High School, Pontiac Civitan Club, UAW Local 5960, Hispanic Mentors, and La Amistad.

Sponsors include: Great Lakes National Bank, Detroit Lions, First of American Bank, North Oakland Medical Center, St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, Knott, Hanes Immune Deficiency Foundation, Home Depot, NBD Corp. and Ottman's Advance Asphalt.

Day of caring sites include:

Baldwin Center, HAVEN, Food Bank of Oakland County, Frost Elementary, CANCO, Herington Elementary, Lighthouse Pontiac, Leggett School of Waterford, Metro Retiree Services Center, New Directions Institute, Donelson Elementary, Pontiac Rescue Mission, Meals on Wheels, United Way of Oakland, Webster Elementary, Women's Survival Center, Boys and Girls Club, Focus: HOPE, La Amistad Seniors, Campfire Boys and Girls of Auburn Hills, Community Activities, Inc. of Waterford, Waterford Senior Center, Easter Seals, Lighthouse Clarkson

## OU reaches tentative pact with faculty

The 450 members of the American Association of University Professors were expected to learn Wednesday details of a new agreement with Oakland University in Rochester Hills.

Agreement on a new pact came early Tuesday morning, just hours before the union was expected to take a "job action" or

strike on the planned first day of class at the 14,000-student university.

"We're simply pleased that a contract has been reached," said Ron Tracey, an economics professor and spokesman for the AAUP.

While details were not immediately available, it's thought to be a three-year pact, as in the

past. At the end of last week, the university was said to be increasing its overall compensation package, while the faculty was offering concessions in health care benefits for disabled and retired professors.

Oakland Vice Provost William Connellan, in a prepared statement, commended both sides for

reaching agreement "so we could concentrate on the reason we're here: to educate. We have an excellent, talented and innovative faculty here at Oakland, and we're pleased that we were able to provide a compensation package that reflects their talents and professionalism."

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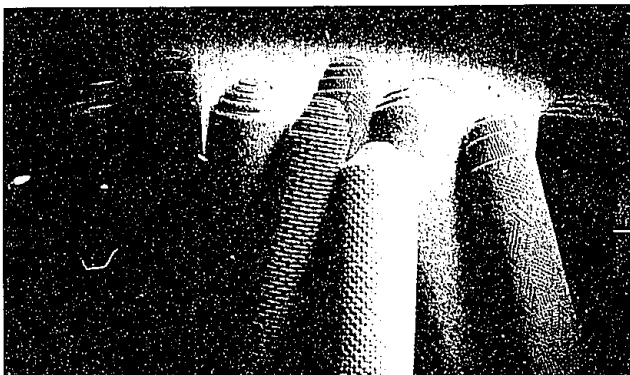
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