



The weather is cooling, but many Oakland County road projects will be ongoing for months to come including:

■ **Bingham Farms** — Due to deteriorating roads, all five miles of local roadway are being repaved with a layer of chip seal to be completed by the end of September. Thirteen Mile and 14 Mile roads will not be repaved since they are not local roadways.

■ **Birmingham** — Pierce between Brown and Lincoln and Adams, between the northern city limits and Madison Avenue are being resurfaced. Both projects are set for a mid-September completion. Detours for the Adams project will route northbound traffic along Woodward and southbound traffic will be reduced to one lane.

■ **Bloomfield Township** — Squirrel Road, between Long Lake and Westview, will be resurfaced and reconstructed at the north end, beginning in mid-September. A detour will route drivers along Adams and Square Lake roads.

■ **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 which should be completed by Sept. 30. The I-96 business loop, between Gill and Shiawassee, is being widened to include a center turn lane. On Woodward and North Woodward and southeastbound Grand River will be closed at any time. Shiawassee will be closed and traffic detoured for a maximum of 45 days. One lane of westbound Shiawassee at the south leg of Farmington Road will also be closed.

■ **Farmington Hills** — Expansion of the Haggerty Connector (M-5) has closed 13 Mile Road, between Haggerty and Meadowbrook, until Sept. 13. 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. Paving and drainage improvements have started at the west end of the Meadowbrook Hills subdivision near 8 Mile and Halsted. All streets will be repaved with the project to be 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-6) has closed 13 Mile Road, between Haggerty and Meadowbrook, until Sept. 13. 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 southbound lane of Haggerty Road north of 8 Mile will be extended. Work is scheduled to start Sept. 8.

■ **Orion Township** — Silverbell Road at M-24 will be widened to include a left-turn lane and the right turn lane on westbound Silverbell at M-24 will be extended. The projects are expected to be completed by November. The changes will help with drainage problems.

■ **Rochester Hills** — Hamlin Road is being reconstructed to a four-lane boulevard from M-69 to Crooks Road. The project, which is expected to be completed by the spring of 1998, will include the completion of the east-west link from the new M-69 ramp to various business facilities. The roadway is closed, except for local traffic, with detours across M-69 and Avon Road. Old Perch, between Avon and Walton Boulevard, is closed for asphalt overlay and reopen in mid-September. Access for Old Perch residents and necessary services will be maintained.

■ **Southfield** — Greenfield bridge over the Northwestern Highway (M-10) is under construction for deck replacement with southbound Greenfield closed and traffic detoured along Pembroke. Lanes are expected to reopen Oct. 30, 1997. Residential roadway east of Leland and 11 Mile are undergoing spot concrete replacement to be completed by Oct. 31.

■ **Troy** — Adams, between the northern city limits and Madison Avenue is being resurfaced with a mid-September completion. Northbound traffic will be detoured along Woodward and southbound traffic will be reduced to one lane.

NOTE: Unless otherwise stated, detours are unknown or not planned.
Source: Local, county, city and village road officials.

— Compiled by staff writer Jennifer Pleasants

Both sides drop demands for new OU pact

BY SANDRA ARMSTRONG
OAKLAND COUNTY EDITOR

It will take six weeks to vote by mail, but when they do, the 450 members of the American Association of University Professors at Oakland University are expected to approve a contract reached just hours before school began on Tuesday.

At least one professor, however, is unhappy with what he heard from the bargaining team last week.

"I'm a bit disappointed. We wanted to be on a parity with other groups and have our medical insurance paid upon retiring," said Joel Russell, a professor of chemistry at the university. He explained that administrators and clerical groups have such coverage, with the administrators having life-time coverage.

"They thought we didn't deserve it," he said. "From the way the (bargaining) team presented it, it was hard to characterize negotiations. It appears they (university) just

kept the bargaining team there the whole summer so we would settle for the same thing (as in past years)."

The financial package was "perfectly fine," he added.

That package calls for wage increases of 3.15 percent the first year, 3.2 percent the second year and 3.25 percent in the third year of the pact.

A faculty bargaining team press release described the increases as modest, compared to Western and Eastern Michigan Universities and Wayne State University where wage rates ranged from 3.8 to 4 percent this year.

University Vice Provost Bill Connellan characterized the pact as fair and said he was glad the two sides reached agreement. "Settlements are all over the ball," he said. "Most are from 2 to 4 percent nationwide and from 3 to 4 percent in Michigan."

He acknowledged that OU's long-term disability package offers 60 percent compensation and that there was no medical insurance for

retirees.

Other provisions of the new pact called for no changes in medical benefits for faculty until years two and three when the university will increase its contribution by five and seven percent, respectively. Also, there is no change in dental benefits until year three of the pact when OU will increase its contribution by 4 percent.

Perhaps more troubling than the eventual settlement were the negotiations themselves. "Bargaining over the four months was disagreeable and non-productive due to the administration's tactics of negative bargaining," according to the AAUP press release. To remove the university's for a \$1 million decrease in medical benefits and summer compensation, the union said it gave up medical benefits for retirees and faculty on disability income.

The union made its final offer to the university at 6 p.m. Monday, telling them that a decision was

needed by 7:30 p.m. At 9 p.m. a strike was called. Later OU made a counter-offer and bargaining continued until 1:45 a.m. Tuesday. The AAUP then served the university with an Unfair Labor Practice charge, which was later withdrawn.

According to the bargaining team, as they began leaving the parking lot, the administrative team asked them to return to the table. "A tentative agreement was reached five minutes later," the team said.

Connellan said what made that possible was OU withdrawing a demand from the table. He would not disclose what that demand was, but he said one non-economic and several economic items had been on the table Monday evening.

While Connellan said that faculty and students he has talked with are glad to be in class, Russell said he doesn't yet know how he will be voting on the contract.

"I'm seriously considering that," he said.

\$10 million M.E. facility coming for county

BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER

When Oakland officials officially break ground for the new Medical Examiner's office, they will do more than commemorate a \$10 million facility.

They will, in a sense, be burying the term "morgue," at least as far as Oakland County is concerned.

The 38,000-square foot facility will still be a "morgue" in the sense of being a place where bodies are kept temporarily, according to county commissioner Charles Palmer, R-Clawson.

"But it will be much more," said Palmer, one of a handful of people scheduled to attend ground breaking ceremonies Tuesday.

The new building will be formally known as the Medical Examiner's Facility, a name Palmer said is more appropriate. "It's much more than a place where bodies are kept. It's a

place of science."

The present facility is also a place of science, said Medical Examiner Ljubisa J. Dragovic. But over the last decade or so, it's been a crowded place of science — reflecting the county, as well as the medical examiner's work load, has grown.

In the early 1970s, for example, the office typically did fewer than 200 autopsies a year. "Now, we're approaching 1,200," said administrator William MacDonald.

Nobody in the office considers the term "morgue" to be particularly offensive, just a little antiquated. "We still have a 'morgue' sign on the building," noted MacDonald. "But you don't hear that term as often."

That sign, however, won't likely be on the new facility when it is scheduled to open next year, said Dragovic.

"The main reason we have a morgue sign is to direct people," said the forensic pathologist. "We are physically attached to the sheriff's

facility, so people routinely come here when they wanted to bail somebody out of jail."

The "morgue" sign was to advise people the office is not part of the sheriff's department, said Dragovic. Commissioner Don Devine Jr., R-Bloomfield Hills, said the new medical examiner's facility is long overdue. "I don't know how they worked over there," he said, "it was terribly overcrowded."

Typical of the crowding, Devine said, was a room referred to as the "conference/library/staff lounge." "That may have been a light-hearted reference, he said. "But it does indicate the crowding."

The new facility will have five autopsy rooms (compared with two at the existing facility), conference rooms and state-of-the-art technical facilities, said Devine.

It will also have an appropriate bereavement area. "Right now, loved ones often wait in one room, while the deceased is in the next," Devine

said. "The new bereavement area will be more suitable."

The new medical examiner's facility has almost been talked to death over the last five years, according to commissioner Palmer. "There was a lot of discussion about comparing with other counties on a joint facility," he said.

But like so many other proposals, "nobody wanted to spend any money," said Palmer. "Nobody wanted to commit, and Oakland County couldn't wait."

Even so, the county is looking ahead, insisted Palmer. "We have facilities that would enable us to contract for services with Genesee, Livingston or other counties," he said.

The new medical examiner's facility will also have a new location, about a quarter mile away from the present office. The new building will be at the southeast corner of County Center Drive and Hospital Drive in the Oakland County Complex at 1200 N. Telegraph.

OAKLAND DIGEST

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

BIRMINGHAM
Schools Downplay MEAP: Birmingham school officials warn parents to not place too much importance on one set of tests to assess students' or schools' performance, on this year's MEAP science and writing exams. In the Birmingham district, 1997 "proficiency" or top scores dropped in three of the four categories tested across two grades. Fifth grade students' writing scores were up to 91.4 percent, but their proficiency scores in science fell to 54.7 from 64.6 in 1996. Eighth grade students' writing scores fell slightly to 92.3 percent from 94.2 percent last year, and in science fell to 31.3 percent from 39.7 in 1996.

Art Fair today: Shain Park is the site for the 23rd Annual Common Ground Art in the Park runs Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. featuring paintings, photography, sculptures, jewelry, metalworks, ceramics, basketry and glass. Admission is free.

CLARKSTON
Revolutionary War soldiers honored: In a continuing effort to remind us that real people fought

and died to create this country, the Daughters of the American Revolution are marking patriot graves in Independence Township. Members of the Sashabaw Plains DAR marked the graves of Caleb Merrell and Jeremiah Clark in Lakeview Cemetery for Labor Day.

FARMINGTON
Newest Fire hall saving lives: Farmington Hills Fire Station No. 5 was officially dedicated with festivities over the weekend. City officials said the station, operational since July, has helped to cut response time in two major fires recently. Response time, once logged as seven or eight minutes, was cut to three minutes and one minute.

Schools pursue bond: Farmington Hills Public Schools explained the rationale behind the proposed \$93.1 million plan going before voters Sept. 16, but many in the audience weren't over. Voters report they are happy to see a reduction in the price tag from \$110 million, as on the March ballot, but want more concessions.

LAKE ORION
Lake Orion Village Council debates privatization of DPW: Council voted against the idea to turn Orion's Department of Public Works into a private company, similar to operations in Plensant Ridge. Supporters argued that the plan could save money and improve operations for the small community.

ROCHESTER
Art & Applies this weekend: The 32nd annual event runs 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday in downtown Municipal Park. Supporters from Paint Creek Center for the Arts and 24 service organizations join to feature 300 artists from 34 states show casing paintings, ceramics, sculpture, jewelry, glass and wearables art. Admission donation supports the art center. The fair offers free entertainment and food booths.

SOUTHFIELD
MEAP scores mirror state: Changes in Southfield's MEAP scores mirror changes exhibited by school districts throughout the Michigan. Southfield students' writing proficiency increased but science proficiency decreased from the previous year, following state wide trends. Eighth grade scores for writing are up to 77.4 percent, while science scores fell to 11.9. Fifth grade proficiency scores in writing are up to 83.3 and in science, fell slightly to 34.2.

Evergreen Hills closes for season: Evergreen Hills golf course will close Sept. 14 for renovations, and reopen next year. The course is slated for a new clubhouse with a sales counter for merchandise display and a food preparation area. The city's other course, Beech Woods, will remain open this season as long as weather permits.

TROY
St. Lucy hosts Croatian Festival: Croatian-Americans will host a cultural and musical fair today to celebrate 13 centuries of Croatian heritage, a recent independence for their motherland, and a new Troy church and cultural center, St. Lucy's. The festival and exhibition of Croatian artifacts runs noon to midnight for a donation of \$2 to the church.

WEST BLOOMFIELD
Area MEAP scores par state: West Bloomfield and Walled Lakes students generally scored well in the writing portion of the state test, but scores are low in science. In West Bloomfield, only 20.3 percent of the eighth graders at Orchard Lake Middle School and 31.6 percent of students at Abbott posted a passing grade in science. At Walled Lake Middle School 12.8 percent posted a passing grade and at Clifford Smart Middle School, 16.7 percent had a passing grade.

— Compiled by staff writer
Vivian DeGai

New area code is enforced on Saturday

BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER

For diehards who still dial 810 for calls to Oakland County, the day of reckoning is near.

After Friday, people will be required to use the 248 area code in order to complete calls in most of Oakland County. Callers have had it easy over the last year when Oakland calls could be completed using 810 or 248.

But no more. Beginning Sept. 13, callers in the habit of using 810 — instead of 248 — will get a message saying the area code has been changed.

Actually, using 248 exclusively won't be a major adjustment for most people, according to Ameritech spokesperson Sara Snyder. An "awareness and usage" sur-

vey taken last month indicated that six of 10 callers in southeast Michigan already use 248, instead of 810, she said.

The percentage is much higher in those areas encompassed by the 248 area code (Oakland County and fragments of Wayne; Washtenaw and Livingston counties), roughly 86 percent of the callers already use the new prefix, she said.

"We're way ahead of 1993 in terms of user awareness," said Snyder, referring to the year Oakland became part of the newly created 810 area code.

A comparable study conducted about four years ago indicated that four out of 10 callers were using the new number, Snyder continued.

She credits the heightened awareness to more publicity about the change and greater flexibility on the part of callers. "I think people are more receptive to change," Snyder said.

While people and companies may be getting used to the new area code, it's still a "pain in the neck," according to Eric Shulte, of Metro Aircraft Instruments, Inc., at Oakland County International Airport. A new area code requires new letter heads on business stationery as well as business cards, he said. "Furthermore, it causes confusion. I don't know where 248 ends, and 810 begins."

People who call 810 for an Oakland call after Friday will get the operator's message about having to redial. That will be for about three months, Snyder said. After that,

the numbers will have been assigned to somebody else.

The need for new area codes has been triggered by "insatiable demand" for new phone numbers, Snyder said, as more people use pagers, faxes, mobile phones and other electronic marvels.

Nationwide, about 70 new area codes have been introduced, many derived from those already existing. Oakland, for example, was part of the 313 area until four years ago when it became part of 810.

And, there will undoubtedly be a demand for one new area codes.

Next year, for example, portions of the Washtenaw and Monroe counties will be in new 734 area code next year. Their optional dialing period will begin Dec. 13 and continue through most of July.

