

OAKLAND DIGEST

Oakland Digest provides a summary of headline stories from around the county during the week leading up to Aug. 5.

BIRMINGHAM

One more time: Birmingham's Fourth of July fireworks show will apparently continue next year despite concerns from city fire officials. Fire officials said there were safety problems at this year's show at Lincoln Hills Golf Course, but noted they could be alleviated by moving spectator seating areas further from the site where fireworks are set off.

CLARKSTON

Classes coming: Lawrence Technological University has announced plans to hold Clarkston-area classes beginning this fall. Southfield-based LTU will hold classes at the Oakland Technical Center in Springfield Township.

FARMINGTON

Racial slurs: Three teenagers face ethnic intimidation charges in Oakland County Probate Court for posting two cardboard signs filled with racial slurs outside Rainbow Rehabilitation in Farmington.

LAKE ORION

Traffic concerns: Orion Township Supervisor Colette Dywuk said she is worried development in neighboring Auburn Hills will cause traffic tie-ups at Brown and Joslyn roads. She said she will meet with representatives of the Road Commission for Oakland County and the Michigan Department of Transportation to discuss the issue.

ORCHARD LAKE VILLAGE

Stanley and Vladdy: Hockey's Stanley Cup is coming to town, accompanied by injured Detroit Red Wing Vladimir Konstantinov. The cup is expected to be displayed from 3-5 p.m. Friday outside Orchard Lake Village

Hall, 3955 Orchard Lake Road. Konstantinov, who maintains a home in the area, is expected to make a limited appearance. The Red Wings defenseman is still recovering from injuries suffered in a June 1997 limousine crash.

OXFORD

No takers?: Despite the offer of a free one- to two-acre parcel at Dunlap Road and M-24, the Oxford Emergency Safety Authority hasn't made up its mind on whether or where to build a new fire station there. Real Estate Interests, Inc. is offering the land to the community.

ROCHESTER

Dockleight: The Grand Trunk and Western Railroad is filing abandonment plans for track stretching between Adams and Dequindre Road in Rochester and Rochester Hills. Local officials are considering whether to convert it into a hiking trail or keep it open for a proposed dinner train or continued freight transport.

SOUTHFIELD

Good neighbor: Carolyn Armstrong is credited with saving the life of neighbor Herbert Andrews after he failed to respond to her knock on his door during a sweltering June day. Armstrong said she was concerned the 79-year-old Andrews was locked inside his Westland Street home without air conditioning or open windows. She then called paramedics who found the man collapsed on the floor, unconscious from dehydration.

TROY

Nursery games: More than 150 children age 3-5 participated in Troy's Nursery School Olympics last week at the city community center. Youngsters participated in such events as the M&M marathon, marshmallow shot put and toddler trot.

SEMCOG says it won't 'subsidize growth'

BY TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

Regional leaders are wrestling with the question: What's the difference between a "health problem" requiring governmental capital and "urban sprawl" which is a no-no?

The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments tossed that problem into the lap of its Environmental Policy Advisory Council. Specifically, EPAC will recommend whether to amend the seven-county region's water and sewer service map to expand in three outlying areas.

EPAC is chaired by Marysville Mayor Deem Boldyreff, and vice chairs are Plymouth Township Supervisor Kathleen Keen-McCarthy and Professor Orin Golderos of the University of Michigan-Dearborn.

"We will not support policies which subsidize growth," said SEMCOG executive director

Paul Tait at the July 31 executive committee meeting, restating SEMCOG's policy against "urban sprawl."

"There are legitimate health problems," Tait added, underlining the other side of the problem.

Under consideration are applications for federal and state aid for 1) sewers in the southern Huron Township in Wayne County and a neighboring part of Monroe County; 2) water extension for Oxford Township in northern Oakland County; and 3) water extension in East China Township in St. Clair County.

"There's definitely a need," said Elaine Kirchgatter, SEMCOG executive committee member from Canton Township. "We probably made a few people rich (in deciding for extensions)."

James Murray, Wayne County's director of the Department of Environment, said the line

between two policies was gray.

"South Huron is under (sewerage) capacity. They have to comply with federal and state standards," Murray said. But when they comply, they allow expansion.

"Oakland County has 200,000 septic systems. Wayne County has 30,000 to 40,000," Murray added.

SEMCOG's executive committee voted \$25,000 for a staff report on "sustainable development" in the region to resolve the question. "That would give us an inventory of best practices," said Tait. The study would be published and sent to SEMCOG's 140 governmental unit members.

SEMCOG chair Douglas Woolley, supervisor of Pittsfield Township in Washtenaw County, said "sustainable development" will be his "signature project" for the region.

In other business July 31, the SEMCOG executive committee endorsed:

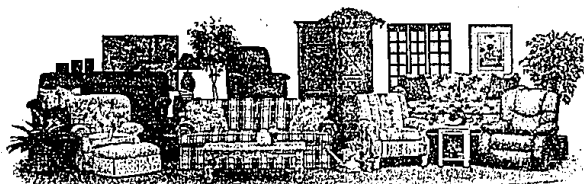
■ "A Proposed State Policy for the Rouse of Obsolete Buildings." If enacted into state law, the policy would allow local governments to eliminate property taxes for 12 years on improvements made to buildings officially declared obsolete, in order to bring them back into use at reduced tax cost.

■ A similar policy for "blighting buildings." Local units could condemn property, relocate residents, and adopt redevelopment plans.

Currently, the owner of a blighting building could donate it to the local unit, to a local economic development corporation, or a nonprofit organization. The new policy, if enacted into law, would allow local units to give owners incentives to donate a blighted building — such as forgiveness of fines and fees.

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OCC, EMU join forces for classes

A partnership between Oakland Community College and Eastern Michigan University will enable OCC students to acquire the technical and management skills and qualify for employment in the general contracting field.

The new construction management option of OCC's management development program can lead to an associate's degree in applied science. It was developed by the two schools in cooperation with industry experts, and follows guidelines established by major construction

associations. Graduates will qualify to work in such entry- and middle-level management jobs as scheduling, planning, surveying, construction safety and assisting project managers.

Students will be able to take the OCC classes at any of the college's five campuses. Twenty credit hours of major requirements in construction are taken through EMU, but those classes are all offered at OCC's Orchard Ridge campus in Farmington Hills. Two EMU classes will be presented at Orchard Ridge this fall.



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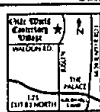


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