

State budget gives more to community colleges

BY TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

Community colleges will get \$282 million in state aid, up \$11 million from what Gov. John Engler proposed last winter and good news for Oakland Community College and Schoolcraft College.

"This budget reaffirms my commitment to make more resources available to more students," Engler said as he signed the bill.

The governor had asked no dollar increase for state aid, arguing that the two-year colleges would reap a cost cut by having to pay 6.9 percent less into the retirement system.

But lawmakers refused to buy his argument. The Senate voted \$279.1 million, the House \$283.6 million, and the final conference report compromised at \$282 million.

OCC will get a 1.94 percent hike to \$20.2 million — "unexpected good news," said Clarence Brantley, vice chancellor for administrative services and chief budget man.

"We constructed our 1998-99 budget with no increase in state funding. We will place this (new) money in the fund balance as a buffer against unexpected shortfalls."

Schoolcraft will get \$10.98 million, up about 3.7 percent.

Engler hoped aloud that community colleges, "with this extraordinary support," would hold down tuition increases.

OCC will raise tuition this fall for the first time in four years.

It will charge in-district students \$47 per credit hour, up \$1 or 2.2 percent. Out-of-district Michigan residents \$70.60, up \$1.50 or 1.9 percent; and non-Michigan residents \$111.50, up \$2.50 or 2.3 percent. Since the rates are below consumer price inflation, students' families will be eligible for state personal income tax credits.

The state aid bill is used to cover base operating budgets.

In addition, Engler signed a bill to provide \$20 million for scholarships to community college students enrolled in technical training programs leading to either a certificate or associate's degree.

OCC will get \$1.6 million of the \$20 million pot. It will help pay for 1,800 scholarships — more than double the number of the next highest provider, neighboring Macomb Community College. It is "a lion's share," in the words of OCC Chancellor Richard Thompson.

Thompson said the 1,800 scholarships will cover a two-year cycle and be given to about 750 students because some will be in two-year associate degree programs and others in shorter

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certificate programs.

The Engler program also provided \$30 million for five new technical training centers statewide. OCC is expected to apply for some of those funds.

Technical training centers are part of the \$108.6 million in state funds going to the Michigan Jobs Commission, a successor to parts of the Labor and Commerce departments. The Legislature cut about \$500,000 from Engler's request.

Engler also signed an \$870 million bill for the Department of Education, about one percent more than he had requested.

New is \$5 million for a Governor's Reading Plan, a comprehensive literacy program to reach the first three grades. It will provide \$300,000 in matching funds for a National Geographic Society endowment for geography education.

Budget bills increase state spending on roads, environment, prisons

Here are highlights from some of the other budget bills Gov. John Engler signed since the Legislature adjourned July 3:

■ **Roads** — \$2.8 billion to the Department of Transportation, including more than \$300 million in new federal funds under the TEA-21 law. The total is \$120 million more than Engler had expected when he presented his budget Feb. 12.

■ **Jobs Commission** — \$108.6 million, including a \$550,000 increase (to \$3 million) for the Travel Michigan program. Lawmakers cut about one percent from the governor's overall request.

■ **Revenue sharing** — \$1.4 billion for local units in the general government budget. Sen. Glenn Steil, R-Grand Rapids, complained that no action was being taken under his Senate bill that would more evenly distribute aid to townships as well as older

cities.

■ **Natural Resources** — \$48.7 million, about \$500,000 more than he had requested, as the state's share of a total \$228 million DNR budget. New: a video and youth outreach program of \$1.4 million; portable radios for conservation officers for \$600,000.

Also: another \$1 million for the Michigan Civilian Conservation Corps (to a total of \$3.4 million) to reopen Camp Alberta at Baraga; a new fish hatchery at Gaylord; and \$85,000 for a Michigan State University study to control "swimmer's itch" in lakes.

■ **Environmental Quality** — \$92.6 million in state money, up nearly 8 percent over the current year and almost one percent more than the governor recommended. New items: \$53.4 million for cleaning up contaminated sites with priority for public health dangers and redeveloping contaminated "brownfield" properties.

■ **Welfare** — \$2.9 billion total for the Family Independence Agency, including \$1 billion from the state and the rest from the federal government. It's about what Engler had proposed.

Engler said that since March of 1994, welfare caseloads have dropped 50 percent to the lowest point since August 1971. The June caseload was 115,737. Meanwhile, day care costs are rising as former welfare clients go to work.

■ **Prisons** — \$1.44 billion, up 6 percent from the current year. Engler said the Department of Corrections will need 5,400 more prison beds in the next four years, the state has saved \$1 billion in infrastructure costs due to double bunking and other efficiencies, he added.

■ **State police** — a total of \$361.5 million, one percent more than he had recommended. Included is \$5.1 million for trooper recruit schools.

Women's organization is seeking community assistance

Women's American ORT is asking our community to participate in project REACH, an area-wide Jewish women's response to domestic violence and children in crisis.

For one month, beginning at the end of August, Project REACH receptacles will be located throughout our community, at special drop off sites, including the Jewish Community Center (JPM and Kahn buildings), most area synagogues and temples and local retail establishments.

The purpose of the project is to collect a wide variety of educational and parenting materials. In addition to educational toys, books and videos, they hope to collect a variety of school supplies, backpacks, art supplies, business supplies, resume preparation guides and parenting, personal development and career guidebooks and videos.

The collected supplies will benefit a variety of women, children, and teens in three local shelters: Windows, Orchards Children's Services and Pontiac Rescue Mission.

For more information about Project REACH or ORT call (248) 855-9820.

Traffic patrol boost leads to 11 arrests

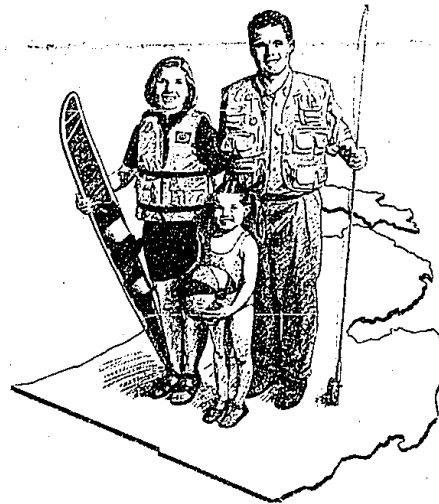
In an effort to reduce traffic crashes and injuries, Oakland County Sheriff's Suber law enforcement agencies increased traffic patrols during July. These selective traffic patrols targeted speeders and aggressive drivers through enforcement and public education and awareness.

With more than 315 hours of enforcement performed by nine law enforcement agencies during the month, a total of 620 traffic stops were made, resulting in 11 drunken driving arrests, 270 speeding violations and an additional 162 citations issued for motorists violating Michigan's seat belt laws.

Safe & Sober — Oakland County is part of a statewide, year-long enforcement campaign funded by the Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning.

Grin & Win

Announcing The Great Lakes Crossing \$1,000 Photo Contest



The extraordinary new shopping mall opens November 12 at I-75 in Auburn Hills.

Enter the Great Lakes Crossing "Grin & Win Photo Contest" and you could win a \$1,000 shopping spree. Shop at stores like Saks Off 5th, Rainforest Cafe, Gameworks, Mikasa, JCPenney Outlet and hundreds more. Thirty photos will be enlarged and on display at

Great Lakes Crossing. To enter, get a photo, current or old, of your family having fun in our great state—from summer picnics to winter ski vacations. Fill out the entry form and mail it in by September 16, 1998. And, don't forget to say "cheese."

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GRIN & WIN PHOTO CONTEST

Name: _____
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Phone: _____
Date photo was taken: _____
Where photo was taken: _____
Name of people in photo: _____

Upon returning this entry form, I irrevocably consent to the use of my name and photograph for use by Great Lakes Crossing in all manners, including corporate or donated representation, for advertising, trade or any other lawful purposes, and I waive any right to inspect or approve the finished product. Entry up to five photos. Photos will not be returned. All decisions for winners of contest are final. Mail entry to: Great Lakes Crossing c/o The Taubman Company 700 East Long Lake Road, Suite 100, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48301-0700

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