

Lt. Gov. Binsfeld to lead Oakland GOP luncheon

Michigan Lt. Governor Connie Binsfeld will be the featured speaker and honoree at the First Ladies Luncheon Monday, Oct. 5, at the Fox & Hounds Restaurant in Bloomfield Hills.

The event is sponsored by the Oakland County Republicans.

Binsfeld is known as an advocate for children. A portion of

the proceeds from the event will be donated to the Child Abuse & Neglect Council of Oakland County.

A silent auction, featuring items — donated by famous people like Sen. Spencer Abraham, Gov. John Engler and actor Clint Eastwood — will be part of the event.

Items for the auction are received on a daily basis, so the list will continue to grow.

The event runs from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Cost is \$75 per person.

To RSVP, no later than Tuesday, Sept. 29, contact the Oakland County Republican headquarters at (248) 640-7262.

Tort reforms praised for limiting frivolous lawsuits

The Michigan Association of Insurance Agents is pleased with the effect of laws that went into effect in March of 1986 — fewer "frivolous" lawsuits are filed over auto negligence in state courts.

The laws: 1) tightened the definition of "serious impairment," 2) allowed judges rather than juries to decide "serious impairment," and 3) prohibited uninsured motorists and those 60 percent or more at fault from collecting non-economic damages.

Statewide, auto negligence lawsuits dropped 64 percent, said Steve Yencich, spokesman for the insurance agents. The effect by county:

■ Clinton — from 72 in 1996 to 21 in 1997, a drop of 70 percent.

■ Eaton — from 124 in 1996 to 45 in 1997, a drop of 64 percent.

■ Livingston — from 233 in 1996 to 89 in 1997, a drop of 62 percent.

■ Oakland — from 3,703 in 1996 to 1,404 in 1997, a drop of 62 percent.

■ Wayne — from 11,993 in

1996 to 4,415 in 1997, a drop of 63 percent.

"This tort reform has had a positive impact on businesses and consumers. Despite opposition from trial lawyers, this is a case where good public policy prevailed," Yencich said.

Insurance bills

Two area Democrats have introduced legislative bills to control auto insurance premiums charged by the Michigan Catastrophic Claims Association.

Sen. Gary Peters, D-Bloomfield Township, has offered a bill to cap MCCA fee increases at \$10 per vehicle per year and to give the Legislature final approval of any increases in the fee.

"The MCCA fee subjects Michigan citizens to taxation without representation," said Peters, noting the industry appoints the board which is subject to neither the Open Meetings nor Freedom of Information acts. "I think it's time to give the Legislature oversight."

Rep. David Gubow, D-Huntington Woods, is sponsor of House-passed bills to require MCCA to observe the Open Meetings and Freedom of Information acts. The bills are stuck in the Republican-controlled Senate.

Gubow and Rep. Bob Brown, D-Deerborn Heights, praised MCCA for not raising its rate this year, but Gubow noted, "No one from the general public was present at the meeting Sept. 16 to observe how the MCCA board arrived at its decision not to raise rates."

U-P Michigan adds Southfield location

The University of Phoenix (U-P) Michigan campus has added a new location at 24700 Northwestern Highway near Ten Mile and Evergreen, Southfield.

The new addition will give the university 21 additional classrooms.

The new site will allow U of P to add programs such as bachelors of science in marketing and project management and MBAs in health care administration and global management.

The campus will add 250

instructors this year and is currently developing other sites in Auburn Hills, Brighton and Novi.

In June 1998, the Michigan campus graduated their first class ever, with 320 students receiving degrees in various business disciplines and nursing.

University of Phoenix was founded by Dr. John Sperling in Phoenix, Arizona in 1976 as a private institution offering bachelor and masters degrees to

working adults 23 and older. The university was accredited in 1978.

The Michigan campus of the University of Phoenix opened in October 1996, and now has more than 2,500 students.

Overall, the university has more than 50,000 students nationwide.

The University of Phoenix is based at 26999 Central Park boulevard in Southfield. For more information, call (800) 834-2438.

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