

STATE CAPSULES

TAX CUT UNVEILED

Gov. John Engler was scheduled to unveil plans in Lansing for a new tax cut this week.

The cut, if enacted by the Legislature, would count as the 26th cut adopted under the Engler administration. The last was a trimming of the income tax rate from 4.4 percent to 3.9 percent earlier this year. That cut is to be phased in over the next five years.

Nonetheless, House and Senate fiscal agencies have been predicting rises in Michigan tax revenues due to the state's strong economy.

A Senate Fiscal Agency analysis recently concluded that revenues would be \$717 million over estimates drawn just last January. Even with the previous tax cuts, the analysis had concluded revenues would still be up \$463 million over January estimates.

SEATBELT BILL SIGNED

Gov. Engler has signed legislation allowing for primary

enforcement by police of Michigan's mandatory safety belt law.

"Make no mistake, safety belt use is the best defense vehicle occupants have to prevent death or serious injury," Engler said. "We know this bill will save lives."

Currently, safety belt usage in Michigan is at 70 percent. Under Senate Bill 335, which goes into effect during the spring of next year, usage is expected to improve by 10 to 15 percent. Sponsored by State Sen. Bill Bullard (R-Highland) the bill allows for enforcement of Michigan's seatbelt law as a standard — or primary — action. The enforcement of the safety belt law has been limited as a secondary action, when a driver has been detained for some other traffic violation.

SB 335 requires:

■ The driver and all passengers in the front seat must wear a seatbelt.

■ All children under age 4 must be in a child restraint seat.

■ Violators get a civil infraction,

but no points will be assessed.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that primary enforcement of Michigan's safety belt law will save 100 lives and prevent 3,000 serious injuries per year.

LIVINGSTON GROUP ON WEB SITE

The Livingston County Human Services Collaborative Body is among the first local groups to be featured on the state's new human services web site, Putting It Together With Michigan Families, at www.michigan.state.mi.us/pit.

The Livingston County Human Services Collaborative Body, an interagency group dedicated to providing family support, prevention and family preservation services, is featured because of its services for children and families. It has been recognized by the state and the federal government for its innovative approach to providing care for families.

"Livingston County's outstanding collaborative efforts are proof

that agencies can put aside their own interests and work together for better outcomes for children and families," Engler said.

The PIT Crew (Putting It Together With Michigan Families), author of the web site, was formed as a result of the collaboration of the directors of the state's human services agencies. The web site is intended to share information among those delivering services to children and families at the local level.

The PIT Crew represents the directors of the Family Independence Agency, the Michigan Department of Community Health and the Superintendent of Public Instruction, as well as the Children's Trust Fund, Michigan Department of Career Development, Department of Consumer and Industry Services, Department of Transportation, Office of Services to the Aging, Office of the Children's Ombudsman, and Department of Management and Budget.

It is an on-going interagency group that works to coordinate efforts, collaborate on common issues, and recommend policy to improve services for families and children.

Invited

Preview grants

The public is invited to the Oakland Schools headquarters 6-8 p.m. Thursday, June 10, to preview the first Oakland Schools Equity and Excellence challenge grants.

Nearly \$3 million in grants was awarded to local school districts by Oakland Schools last October to promote school restructuring initiatives that addressed special needs of students, career preparation and the use of technology in education.

"Our economized operations and responsible fiscal stewardship have given the Oakland Schools Board the opportunity to further promote equity and excellence in education to Oakland County students," said Jim Redmond.

Oakland Schools was able to award a total of \$2,989,612 to all 28 local school districts and seven charter schools.

Funded projects range from a new alternative middle school to a computer networking curriculum to sound field amplification installation to technology-enhanced bilingual communication to choice theory instruction to Reading Recovery sharing to interactive video and more.

Proposals were read by Oakland Schools staff and Education Advisory Group members from Beaumont Hospital, Consumers Power, Kelly Services, and New Horizons (non-profit rehabilitation agency that provides work force development services for the physically and mentally impaired).

ISVP to Sandra Lee, Project Manager, at 248.209.2406, if you wish to view the displays and talk with district representatives about their projects.

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