## **Happy birthday**

## About to turn 80, Sheriff John Nichols considers another term

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As Oakland County Sheriff John F.
Nichols approaches his 60th birthday,
those around him wonder if his health
will enable him to serve the two year
remaining in his term of office.
Nichols, however, wonders about
seeking another term.
'I'm thinking about it," Nichols said
Sandoy when asked about a possible
fifth term. The occasion was a gathering
at the Deer Lake Racquet Club to honor
Nichols who turns 80 on the Monday
before Thanksgiving.

Talk about another term might be
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Others, however, believe this will be his last term. Instead, talk about another is more likely intended to emphasize that Nichols remains firmly in charge of

■ 'He can still bite a head off. But he's almost 80 years old, and he's got some health problems associated with somebody that age.'

Rudy Lozano —Friend

the 850-person department and its annual budget approaching \$70 million. Nichola seemed very much in charge Sunday as he acknowledged the support of fellow police officers, politicians and old friends. Wearing a spiffy camel sport coat, Nichola chatted with people as they came over to the table at which he was sitting in a wheel chair and breathing oxygen.

When \_it

When it came for Nichols to address the 100 or so well-wishers present, his chair was wheeled to

You At

Otalia Jewelry

the microphone where he joked, "This is like a funeral, but I can smoll the flowers." The wheelchair and oxygen are pretty much mandatory these days. Arthritis, omphysema and other health problems have taken a heavy toll.

lems have taken a heavy toll.

"He can still bite a head off," said friend and admiror Rudy Lozano, who organized the birthday bash. "But he's almost 80 years old, and he's got some health problems associated with somebody that age."

Lozano and others are fiercely loyal to Nichols and you their support as long as the sheriff wants it. But even the most loyal followers acknowledge Nichols' health is failing.

Two years ago — when

Considering: White some are considering: White some are considering white some are considering. Two years ago — when he was less dependent on oxygen and a wheelchair — Nichols survived a tough challenge from Democratived about 49 percent of the 471,900 votes can be sharp sharp the serven of support from command of authority about 49 percent of the 471,900 votes can be sharp sharp the serven of support from command of authority about 49 percent of the 471,900 votes can be sharp sharp the sharp sharp sharp sharp the sharp sharp sharp the sharp sharp sharp the sharp sharp

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to chief of police.

Several people have privately said they are considering a bid for sheriff once Nichols' term is finished. There could be a real power struggle, however, if the sheriff's health deteriorates to the point he would not be able to finish the term.

Nichols is aware of a possible power vacuum in either case, "But we've got a lot of good command officeres," he said. "And I have full confidence somebody will take command."

There are so many good candidates, Nichols said he is not endorsing anybody or grooming a particular candidate. "I'll let the voters speak," he said.

A regular election would undoubtedly draw a number of heavyweight candidates, although none have thus far announced plans — partially because doing so might be interpreted as being disrespectful to Nichols.

State Sen. Michael Bouchard, a former police officer, is rumored to be interested. While the Birmingham resident has high political visibility, he could not expect a cakewalk. Somebody from within the department — possibly undersheriff Henry Buffa or Maj. Thomas E. Quisenberry — could be expected to mount a strong challenge, as a Republican in the primary or a Democrat in the general election.

Should Nichols not be able to finish out his term, it would not be voters who elect a successor it of John Nichols, Corryces said. "His health isn't the best, but Nichols is still very mucker." I haven't even thought about the possibility of picking a successor to John Nichols, Corryces said. "His health isn't the best, but Nichols is still very metal it's functioning very well. I see no reason to worry about a successor."

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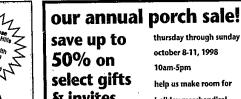


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