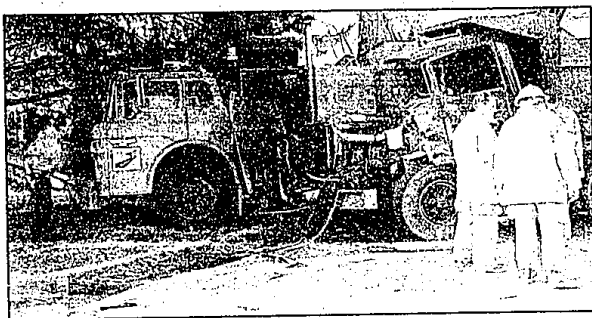


Aftermath



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BUCKLER

Crash: A 38-year-old White Lake man was hospitalized after the dump truck he was driving crashed into an unoccupied contractor vehicle on southbound Farmington Road near 12 Mile Road around 2:30 p.m. Wednesday. The driver's injuries are not believed to be life-threatening. Hills police said. The contractor vehicle was being used to put in reflective markings on the road and had a large arrowboard on the back. Police have been unable to question the driver, who was taken to Botsford Hospital. "Why he didn't see that huge truck with the big arrow is a big mystery," said Lt. Dennis Green of Farmington Hills Traffic Bureau.

Business leaders want revenues preserved for state's older cities

By TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER
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Business people are weighing in on behalf of older cities to preserve their state-shared revenue. It promises to be a fight down to the closing hours of the Michigan Legislature.

The Republican-controlled Senate in June passed a bill that cuts Detroit's share and gives more to growing suburban cities and townships (SB 1181). The House has passed HB 5989 giving Detroit \$62.5 million a year for the next six years.

"Revenue sharing should reward those municipal governments that attempt to keep taxes low, provide efficient services and improve economic competitiveness," said Sarah Hubbard of the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce.

She was joined by Gretchen Courand of the Lansing Regional Chamber and Kevin Korpi of the Michigan Chamber. In a State Capital news conference, they called for a new and "more evenly weighted formula" protecting cities with old infrastructure.

"Additionally, the chambers will remind legislators that shifts of funding away from urban centers could hurt business efforts to revitalize downtowns and support renaissance zones."

Born in 1971, state revenue sharing has rewarded cities with "high local tax effort" — specifically Detroit with its high property taxes, personal income

taxes on commuters and residents, and utilities tax.

Critics — usually conservative Republicans and the Michigan Townships Association — say it amounts to looting the treasury to reward high taxes and inefficient bureaucracy.

The chambers actually appear to be steering a middle course by giving more state aid to cities that cut taxes and become more efficient, particularly in the permitting process.

Korpi of the state chamber said he had no new formula but encouraged work on a formula that would "encourage better utilization of existing infrastructure and discourage unplanned growth into undeveloped areas."

Pat McAvoy of the Michigan Townships Association denounced the chambers' approach. "This statement merely supports the continued distribution of revenue sharing to urban areas without regard to the migration of citizens from central cities due to poor schools, high crime and tax rates and burdensome regulations."

Sen. Dave Joyce, R-Macomb County, issued a bitter blast against "corporate thieves who are promoting this Robin Hood plan."

Said Joyce: "The chamber is attacking suburbs as a payback for special Detroit corporate welfare." Author of the Senate bill is Glenn Steil, R-Grand Rapids. "For a quarter century," said Steil, "Michigan's cities, townships and villages have been

shortchanged by a revenue sharing formula that is biased toward one city — Detroit."

The Senate approved 30-6 Steil's new formula for sharing \$1.4 billion with local units. It limits any local unit to 8 percent in one year. Most importantly, it crimps the "relative tax effort" standard, a formula that benefited units with already high taxes — namely, Detroit.

SB 1181 was supported by all area Republicans along with Senate minority leader John Cherry, D-Ohio, and Alma Wheeler Smith, D-Salem.

Opposed were George Z. Hart, D-Deerborn, and five other Wayne County Democrats.

Detroit won't be the only loser, objected Sen. Virgil Smith, D-Detroit. Once SB 1181 is fully phased in, South Lyon, Southfield and even Northville would lose significant chunks of aid down the road.

The Senate Fiscal Agency said the next year's pot will be up 2.5 percent from the current year and estimates future annual increases at 3 percent.

Steil's formula would give Oakland County a boost of 7.4 percent or \$23.7 million.

Wayne County would take a cut of \$46 million, or 9.1 percent; Detroit would lose \$306 million, or 7.5 percent. Due for the full 8 percent increases are Livonia, Northville Township, Garden City and Westland.

Other winners would be townships and "growing cities such as Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor, East Lansing, Sault Ste. Marie, Escanaba, Mt. Pleasant, Lapeer, St. Clair Shores, Midland, Farmington Hills and dozens more," said Steil.

Hills man will share winnings

On "Road to Riches," the Michigan Lottery game show, Thaddeus Popiel, 77, of Farmington Hills, recently won \$900, plus the \$100 Quick Cash bonus.

Popiel plans to share his winnings with his three children and take a vacation. The grandfather of five and great-grandfather of one is retired from the

Detroit Police Department after 29 years of service. He is also an avid swimmer and has managed to swim at least three times a week for the last 12 years.

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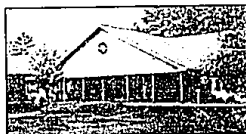
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