



Seeking: Two-term Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson announced this week he will seek re-election to another term at the helm of the county.

BY PAT MURPHY
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How's this for a political objective: A "recession proof" Oakland County.

When he announced his bid for a third term as Oakland County Executive Tuesday, L. Brooks Patterson said a recession proof Oakland County — along with better roads and more technology — would be his goals over the next four years.

"I know that's probably unrealistic," Patterson said privately when asked to elaborate. "But it's something we can shoot for."

Oakland can, for example, create a business climate that attracts quality companies which are less affected by the cyclic ups and downs normally associated with economic swings, he said.

"If we can't make Oakland recession proof, we can at least create a climate in which the county doesn't feel the effects of an economic downturn as much as other areas," Patterson added.

"We can shoot for a county that is the last to feel the impact, and the first to benefit when the economy turns around again," he said.

Patterson, of course, has been riding the crest of what is considered the most prosperous period in Oakland history —

'If we can't make Oakland recession proof, we can at least create a climate in which the county doesn't feel the effects (of an economic downturn) as much as other areas. We can shoot for a county that is the last to feel the impact, and the first to benefit when the economy turns around again.'

L. Brooks Patterson
—County executive

ELECTION 2000

much like President Bill Clinton is enjoying the most bountiful economic booms in U.S. history.

Patterson took note of that prosperity Tuesday when he announced his re-election bid at a kickoff breakfast at the Kingsley Inn in Bloomfield Hills before about 150 avid supporters.

Perhaps the most enthusiastic of these supporters was Fred Hoffman, director of state relations for DaimlerChrysler, who introduced Patterson. "During the past seven years of the Patterson administration, Oakland County has earned national recognition and respect as one of America's premier counties," he said.

"Under his leadership, Oak-

land County businesses have been afforded the opportunity of initiating or expanding trade opportunities that will allow them to compete on a global scale, Hoffman said. "... transforming Oakland County into a global technology center that can compete with the likes of California's Silicon Valley and Boston's Route 128."

Hoffman was referring to "Automation Alley," developed as a Mecca for high tech companies and their highly skilled employees.

Patterson cited upgrading the county's bond rating to AAA — the highest available to a governmental entity — and Automation Alley at the top of

accomplishments over the last four years. Because of the lofty bond rating, communities can finance improvements at the highly favorable interest rate of 3.89 percent, saving thousands of dollars.

"Compare that with your mortgage rate," the executive quipped.

Patterson also cited the opening this year of "Little Oaks," the county's premiere childcare center, initiating full time customs service at Oakland County International Airport and establishing the "Arts, Beats and Eats" festival in downtown Pontiac as examples of innovation under his administration.

If re-elected, Patterson said he would continue to fight for better roads and quality development and to push Oakland's technological superiority to greater heights. That superiority is evident, he said, in CLEMIS (County and Law Enforcement Management Information System) that enables participating police agencies to quickly exchange finger prints, mug shots and other information.

CLEMIS was originally designed for Oakland County, Patterson said. But law enforcement agencies from Lapeer, Macomb, Livingston and Wayne Counties have become willing participants, he said.

And now the Democrats...

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So who's going to challenge incumbent L. Brooks Patterson in his quest for a third term as Oakland County executive? Patterson, who filed nominating papers with the county elections bureau Tuesday, may or may not face a challenger in the Republican primary on Aug. 8.

But he will most certainly face a Democratic challenger in the Nov. 7 general election, according to Gary L. Kohut, chair of the Democratic Party in Oakland County.

"Mr. Patterson's leadership has been weak in key areas," Kohut said. "He hasn't done anything about roads, and he hasn't done anything to assure that infrastructure (sewers, drains and roads) keeps pace with development."

"Roads aren't congested mere-

Tuesday (May 16) is the deadline for filing as a candidate in this year's election.

ly during rush hour," said the Troy attorney, "they're congested all day long."

Kohut said he'd also like to see some leadership that would help people. "What about a county wide program to provide free prescription drugs for senior citizens?" he said.

"Or what about a county program to help small companies provide health care for workers? Wayne County has such a program."

Tuesday (May 16) is the deadline for filing as a candidate in this year's election. As of late Wednesday, no candidate other than Patterson had filed for county executive. But there's

still time for a challenger to get on the ballot — Republican or Democrat.

Since the first of the year, Democrats have been evaluating and recruiting possible candidates for county executive as well as other posts including prosecutor, sheriff, county clerk, treasurer, drain commissioner and county commissioner.

"We will definitely have some strong candidates," Kohut said. "But we probably won't announce them until Tuesday (the filing deadline)."

Also confident about the Democratic slate this fall is State Sen. Gary L. Peters of Bloomfield Hills. "Some people approached me about running (for executive)," he said Tuesday. "But I'm committed to finishing the job voters gave me."

"I'm also exploring a bid for governor (in 2002) when my term is finished," he said.

It pays to get ticketed!



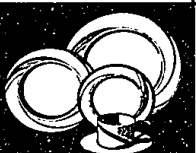
MONDAY-THURSDAY • MAY 8-MAY 25, 2000

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