

New county position

Nowak garners executive post

They'll be seeing a lot of Patrick Nowak in the Michigan Legislature, Congress, the Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority and the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

County Executive Daniel T. Murphy announced formally that Nowak, a former county commissioner from Farmington Hills, would fill the \$33,000 executive officer post created by the county board at Murphy's request.

The board vote Jan. 6 was 18-7 as three Democrats crossed party lines to back creation of the post. Two attempts by Democrats to cut the salary were beaten down.

When Commissioner Dennis Aaron (D-Oak Park) charged the resolution should be entitled "the unemployed politicians relief act," Commissioner Paul Kasper replied that Nowak had voluntarily declined to seek re-election to the board and was actually taking a pay cut from his life insurance company job "to be in public service."

side in charge of day-to-day operations.

Nowak's title will be executive officer—administration while Spinelli will be executive officer—operations when the board approves the latter title change. They will make the same salary as the prosecutor, \$33,000. Murphy's salary is \$45,000.

Nowak's list of duties is lengthy:

- Coordinating activities between the executive and all outside agencies such as the transportation authority, state agencies, federal offices and citizen groups. The board eliminated funds for a county lobbyist, and Nowak will pick up those tasks.
- Coordinating activities with private industry, including location of new business in Oakland.
- Handling special projects, such as a county plan and the solid waste plan. The board eliminated the job of special projects director Leo Hazen, who was then transferred to the Friend of the Court office at a \$10,000 salary cut to \$17,800.

Some Democrats still contended Murphy was fattening his staff and budget. But Murphy's request for the new post noted he wanted to eliminate four other posts—the special projects job and three unfilled posts in the health department. The savings from eliminating those four jobs is \$78,700, and the net savings (counting the addition of Nowak's salary) will be \$11,700, Murphy said.

tives on which Murphy can make major decisions.

"Having sat up there ad hoc for two years, I can say that by no means are we overstaffed," Nowak said.

As the issue was debated in the personnel committee, freshman Commissioner Robert Gorsline (R-Milford) agreed with that assessment.

"The county executive needed more staff. It's to his credit that he recognized it," said Gorsline.

Gorsline was an aide to then-State Sen. Carl Pursell (R-Plymouth) when Pursell sponsored Act 139 allowing counties to create the county executive system of government.



PATRICK M. NOWAK
Murphy's 'Mr. Outside'

NOWAK WILL BE in effect Mr. Outside as a deputy to Murphy while William Spinelli will continue as Mr. In-

NOWAK SAID in an interview he is expected to present Murphy alterna-

Cost of food in '77 to increase—slowly

Consumers will spend only slightly more at the retail food counter in 1977 than they did last year, but prices on the whole are expected to be less than the general inflation rate.

"A general increase of three per cent in groceries and an increase of four per cent on food eaten away from home in 1977 over 1976 would be likely," says Dr. John N. Ferris, Michigan State University economist.

"Inflation will continue in 1977 at about a five per cent pace and we assume marketing spreads will increase in a similar fashion. With substantially lower pork prices and higher beef prices, meat prices in total will increase very little above 1976 levels," Ferris predicts. "Retail prices on poultry will be higher and eggs will be lower than in 1976. We would expect retail prices on most other major food items to increase on the order of about five per cent in 1977."

The Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that the All Food Price Index (AFPI) rise was about three per cent last year. In the third quarter of 1976, the farm value of a "typical food market basket" was 10 per cent less than a year before while the marketing spread was up six per cent. When added together, the retail cost was

down slightly from the year before, Ferris explains.

The market basket contains the average quantities of domestically farm-originated food products bought annually per household, in 1950 and 1961, by consumers. The computations are made by the USDA.

Inflation has been more pronounced on food eaten away from home than on food purchased at grocery stores. In October, the Consumer Price Index on food at home was nearly the same as the year before while prices away from home were up six per cent.

This reflects the impact of general inflation on marketing services which represents a greater proportion of the cost of food eaten away from home than for food at home.

While farmers normally receive about 40 per cent of what consumers spend on food at the grocery, this share varies greatly by commodity groups.

In 1975, this share ranged from 19 per cent on cereal and bakery products to 66 per cent on eggs. Farmers receive, per cent, the average of 59 per cent on the retail cost of meat and poultry, 45 per cent on dairy products, 30-35 per cent on fresh fruits and vegetables, 25 per cent on processed fruits and vegetables and 33 per cent on fats and oils.

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