

Candidates reveal differences over plans for college's growth

The pending and proposed expansion of Oakland Community College's (OCC) physical plant and course offerings has split the candidates for the board of trustees.

Under Interim President Derek Nunney, the college is in the midst of an unprecedented, ambitious expansion of program offerings. The multi-campus college is well underway in renovating its Southeast Campus System. OCC will also build a new police academy in Madison Heights.

Speaking at a recent meeting of the college's major faculty organization, the Faculty Forum, some candidates criticized the planned expansion and argued about the direction of that expansion. Other candidates avoided the issue.

Candidates Robert L. Newton of Orchard Lake and Peter V. Tenuta of Pontiac did not attend the faculty-sponsored meeting.

LILA JOHNSON, one of two incumbents up for reelection and a member of the board of trustees since

1964, defended OCC's recently unveiled plans.

She said the new Southeast Campus facilities are merely replacing outmoded classrooms, labs and libraries.

"The facilities in the southeast section of the county will house students who are already there," she said. "They're now being housed in old supermarkets and a 50-year-old school. They're being denied good chemistry labs. Libraries—forget it. I'd go over to the Huntington Woods library," said Mrs. Johnson, a Huntington Woods resident.

JOHN BOWKER of Bloomfield Hills immediately challenged those premises.

Bowker said facilities should be leased first to test how marketable the programs and the areas will be. "There's always the possibility of buying existing facilities and remodeling them to suit our purposes," Bowker said.

"It's the easiest thing to spend

money. But the national landscape is dotted with million-dollar blunders," he said.

Instead of expansion, he suggested some of OCC's capital improvements budget be allocated to maintaining the campus grounds. "I'm appalled by the condition of the (Orchard Ridge Campus') sidewalks and parking lots. It's quite depressing," he said as the audience broke into a round of applause.

SANDRA RITTER, a 31-year-old Detroit public school teacher who lives in Waterford, said the college does not need to expand. Instead, she said, OCC needs to improve its current programs and facilities.

Speaking specifically of the Highland Lakes campus in Union Lake, Mrs. Ritter said, "I know what's there and I know what should be there. They definitely need some improvements."

Other candidates vying for the two six-year terms are Dennis Rogers, an incumbent from Troy and Marilyn Levinson of West Bloomfield.

Northwestern traffic plan ready

The state will test public reaction to an interchange for Northwestern Highway (M-4) and Twelve Mile in a special, informal public meeting next week.

The meeting is scheduled for 4:30 p.m. Thursday, June 9 in the lower level lounge of the Southfield Parks and Recreation Building, 2000 Evergreen.

Northwestern currently intersects Twelve Mile at grade. The result, in rush hours, is massive traffic backups among commuters in western Southfield, Franklin Village, West Bloomfield Township and Farmington Hills.

An interchange would allow traffic

to flow over or under the Twelve Mile intersection.

REPRESENTATIVES from the Michigan Department of Highways and Transportation will discuss the interchange idea.

Said Jack E. Morgan, manager of the department's public involvement section: "The primary purpose of this meeting is to obtain the views and opinions of all area residents at this earliest stage in the planning process."

It is not a public hearing on a specific proposal, Morgan said, because none has been selected.

Preliminary proposals, maps and other pertinent information will be available at the meeting.

A brochure describing the proposal is available free at Southfield City Hall.

Questions can be directed directly to the highway department's transportation planning office in Lansing by calling a toll-free number: 1-800-292-3676.

IMPROVING traffic flow on Northwestern is a high priority for the department staff now that its governing board, the four-member State Highway Commission, has cancelled the extension of Northwestern.

The Twelve Mile interchange is only one of several ideas under consideration. Others involve what to do with Orchard Lake Road, where Northwestern abruptly ends, and westbound Maple immediately to the north.

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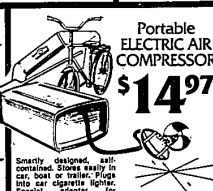


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