

# War

## Murphy's minions lead energy charge

By TOM LONERGAN

The poster in the Oakland County Public Works Building doesn't mince words:

"There's a WAR ON," it says. "We are fighting for American energy independence!"

No, it's not a call to send the Marines to Iran, but rather County Executive Daniel Murphy's way of telling county employees why the temperature in county buildings will remain at 65 degrees this winter.

The posters show an oil derrick superimposed over a map of the U.S., which is decked out in Old Glory's red, white and blue.



THE INTENT of keeping county buildings at 65 degrees (78 in the summer months), according to the poster, "is to win America's freedom from foreign oil cartels."

Michael Niemann, director of public information under Murphy, says the posters have been "getting closer scrutiny" since Iranian students seized the American Embassy in Tehran a month ago. The posters have been up since early October.

Niemann, who wrote the poster, said "it's not intended to encourage militaristic thinking or suggest military solutions." But he admitted, "Some people might be able to read (that) into it." He said the poster provides "a little bit of motivation so people will conserve on their own."

"There just about is a war going on if you listen to (Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah) Khomeini," Niemann said. "It's not a shooting war, but it's certainly an economic war, a war of nerves."

THE POSTERS were County Executive Murphy's idea following a speech he heard President Jimmy Carter give this summer to a National Association of County Commissioners meeting in Kansas City. Carter gave the particulars of his energy program, including ordering all buildings to maintain certain temperatures.

Niemann formed a committee which included county commissioners John Peterson, R-Rochester, and Alexander Perinoff, D-Southfield, to develop the posters.

The committee, Niemann said, "didn't want to foster the idea that there is a military solution to the (energy) problem." But he added, if people don't conserve, "military action could be the result."

THE POSTER addresses "the credibility problem that the energy crisis has," according to Niemann.

"We all know most people are extremely skeptical of the energy crisis," he said citing oil company profits, cartels and price gouging.

He said he hopes the poster leads people to not "throw the baby out with the bath water." The country is "not independent" when it imports 50 percent of its oil, he continued.

"That rationale and logic apply no matter who the good guys are or the bad guys are, 50 percent is 50 percent. That's all there is to it."

The posters cost the county \$350 to print.

AND THE printer, Oakland Business Forms of Southfield, was so impressed with the message it is trying to sell the posters to local governments in Oakland and other counties throughout the state.

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