Foresight needed in outstate farmland development

By WARREN M. HOYT Michigan Press Association

The governor's Community Develop-

ment Cabinet recently released a re-port indicating new, state agricultural development bonds to provide low-in-terest farm loans, treatment of agricul-

TD service helps

A free program for unemployed peo-ple suffering stress-related problems is available through the cooperative ef-forts of the Family Service agencies of metropolitan Detroit. Called Operation FAST, this Torch Drive service provides small group settings where families meet together for support yand understanding and work often show up in heavy drinking, sleeplessness, fatigue or in depression, marital problems and troubled chil-

jobless face stress

dren."

According to Carr, families hit by unemployment are too close to their

we carr, ramities hit by unemployment are too close to their own situation to find new directions. "But with the support of others who share their predicament and under the guidance of a professional counselor, they may turn a potentially destructive experience into a creative opportunity," he said. for support 'and understanding and where they can receive professional help.
"Experiences connected with unemployment can be very stressful for the individual and the family," explained Virgil Carr, executive director of Family Services of Detroit and Wayne

Operation FAST groups are available throughout the tri-county area and each one focuses on the particular needs of the participants. To join a group, or to get more information, interested persons are being urged to call Operation FAST at 833-3733.

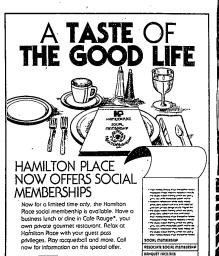
illy Services of Detroit and County.

County.

"Usually income is reduced, savings are gone, and debts mount up fast. Time hangs heavy, relationships change and the effects of being out of







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ture as a target industry for economic and job development and establish-ments of exclusive agricultural zones are needed to preserve state farm

lands.

The report noted Michigan is losing farm land at the second greatest rate in the nation at 115,000 acres per year.

Lt. Gov. James Brickley, who chairs the cabinet, said, "When we usurp farmland and build on it our cities and villages, we move food production farher and farther away from our population centers. We also pay little need to the need for great food production for future generations."

RELEASE OF the farmland presen vation report came on the heels of a recommendation by outgoing U.S.

Transportation Secretary Neil Goldschmidt that the state drop plans to build a

follow instead an existing highway cor-ridor.

The Transportation Commission ap-proved the freeway rather than destroy homes and businesses along the high-way, but critics, say the proposal will open 16,000 acres of farmland to devel-opment.

The report, however, does not direct-The report, however, does not direct-ly address highway development as a factor in opening farmland to develop-ment.
The report does urge that "develop-ment should be directed away from es-sential farmland."

"Farmland preservation does not en-tail the prohibition of all future devel-opment but requires the directing of growth to ensure that there is land

ant economic activity," the report noted.

AMONG WAYS to channel develop-ment, the report continued, are to amend the subdivision control act, to make it more effective in preserving land. This could be done by extending he law to cover any subdivision of land in unincorporated areas and imple-menting the community development impact assessment process, which in-cludes consideration of the effects of state actions on farmland and agricul-ture.

tare.

The low-interest loans urged by the cabinet would be provided through new powers of the Job Development Authority, which through agricultural development revenue bonds, would pur-

chase loan guarantees.

In order to qualify for the low-inter-

isting state program providing tax breaks in exhange for a 10-year commitment to keep land in agriculture production or in the proposed exclusive agricultural zoning. The zoning proposal would establish agriculture as the highest and best use of land in designated areas. Other recommendations include. Funding for the Department of Commerce to designate agriculture as a target industry, and conduct a study of agribusiness to determine how it can be strengthened.

A farm transfer program by establishing a state authority for the morthishing a state authority for the morthisms.

A farm transfer program by estab-lishing a state authority for the mort-gage, purchase or lease of farmland to keep family farms intact, make capital more available and to enable prospec-tive farmers to more easily get started.
 Increased technical assistrone, more agricultural research and promo-tice.

loans, the report says farmers tion of the development of the agricul-uld be required to enroll in the ex-

