

Computer, credit cards will plug leak at county's gas tanks

By Suzie Rollins Singer
staff writer

In an effort to stop county-owned gasoline from leaking into the wrong hands, Oakland County will soon begin using an automated dispensing system. "It is long overdue," said Commissioner Lawrence Pernick, D-Southfield. "It's a recognition that a problem existed and that they (the county executive staff) are willing to do something about it."

A credit card with an identification number will be issued to each county vehicle. The card will remain in the vehicle and is needed to activate county-owned fuel pumps. Every time the card is used, the identification number and the amount of gasoline pumped will be logged into a central record-keeping computer.

THE COUNTY owns approximately 550 vehicles which have access to the gasoline pumps. This system will replace a key-activated operation. The key system was widely criticized because keys were frequently duplicated and gasoline was stolen.

The new plan was approved last week by the county board's finance committee. The proposal was developed after several members asked Oakland County Executive Daniel T. Murphy about missing gasoline. Gas use, which is under Murphy's control, was discussed at finance committee, the group which appropriates funding for gasoline purchases.

"UNDER THEIR old system, an awful lot of gas was disappearing, and it was evaporating," Pernick said.

The computerized method was designed by the county auditing department. All fueling information will be logged and placed into a terminal at the county garage. The terminal will be placed in a secure location inside the garage and will only be accessible to the chief of garage operations, his assistant and the garage account clerk.

DATA GLEANED from the computer will be able to cross-reference gas purchases.

Under the system, the county will purchase fuel from the Oakland County Road Commission and its five sub-sites. Fuel also will be dispensed at the central garage and the DPW building in Avon Township as soon as the new gas monitoring equipment is installed at the locations.

Installation of the new pumps is being phased in as the old key-operated pumps run out of gas.

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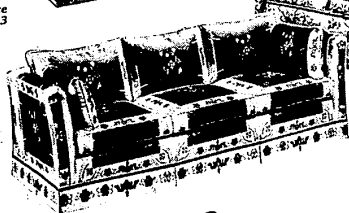
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