

Murphy ready to hire a corporation hunter

By Suzie Rollins Singer
staff writer

It takes money to get money, Oakland Executive Daniel T. Murphy told the county commissioners Thursday, convincing them to spend \$500,000 to attract new businesses, especially those dealing in high technology.

The first phase of Murphy's program will begin when he hires a consultant.

"We're looking for a consultant who knows how to find these firms and attract them to this county. There are only a few of them in this state, and we're interviewing them all," Murphy said.

He said the program will be patterned after other successful West Coast business recruitment programs.

COMMISSIONERS adopted the jobs plan by a 17-0 vote, with all the Democrats except Hubert Price of Pontiac opposing. Commissioner Ralph Nelson, D-Rochester, didn't vote.

"There is plenty of good land, highly skilled labor, roads, highways, airports, energy, water, universities and a professional government willing to assist new businesses," Murphy told the board.

He said that the bulk of the \$500,000 will be used in travel and promotional expenses to bring corporation presidents to Oakland County.

DEMOCRATIC commissioners criticized Murphy for requesting the money, which will come

from the county's contingency funds.

Commissioner Alexander Perloff, D-Southfield, argued that the money should be spent on summer jobs for youths and suggested Murphy spend time — not money — on keeping businesses in the county.

"The intent is very noble, but we have enough talent right here in the county. I don't understand why we have to hire a consultant," Perloff said.

"We also have plenty of Fortune 500 companies right here, and our job should be to try and keep them here. We don't have to worry about getting new ones so fast," he added.

COMMISSIONER James Doyon, D-Hazel Park, was angry that Murphy refused to consult the board about every conversation he will have with corporation presidents. Murphy said he would keep the board apprised of new developments and not spend any money — beyond hiring the consultant — without discussing it with the commissioners.

"I'm going to bring the name of the consultant to the board, but I will appoint the consultant. We can't have businesses involved with the legislative branch and red tape. We're not trying to hide anything," he added.

Commissioner John Calandaro, R-Novi, emphasized the need for attracting new businesses and called the \$500,000 "seed money."

"Let's allocate the money, and let's build our tax base. Let's stop our college graduates from going out of the state for jobs," he added.

Child fingerprinting begins

The Oakland County Sheriff's Department will provide a voluntary children's fingerprinting service which may some day assist parents in finding missing children.

The program, run by volunteers, allows parents to bring their children to the sheriff's Department during regular business hours to be fingerprinted.

The program was approved last week by the Oakland County Board of Commissioners.

Parents will be given the child's fingerprint card for their own records. The sheriff's department will not maintain any records. If a child is ever missing, parents can bring the fingerprint card to the sheriff's department for assistance.

Sheriff's department employees must submit written quarterly reports to the board's public service committee on the program's progress.

Oakland group buys Sugar Loaf

A group of Oakland County businessmen have purchased Sugar Loaf Mountain Resort in western Michigan from Empire-National Bank of Traverse City.

James E. Dutmers Jr., vice chairman of Empire, said the sale to Sugar Loaf-Associates was completed as scheduled on April 29.

Principals of Sugar Loaf Associates are Charles F. Yearn, a Birmingham insurance executive with background in resort and recreation management; John D. Sills, a Birmingham attorney; and Edward T. Boutros, a Bloomfield Hills real estate developer.

Sale price and terms were not disclosed.

YEARN, WHO will be general manager, said, "We do have new directions in mind that will significantly improve the three primary recreational activities at Sugar Loaf — golf, tennis and skiing."

"Our big goal is to balance the traditionally excellent occupancy rates of the ski season with an equally strong summer season and group business in spring and fall."

"A better occupancy balance between the seasons," he continued, "will take the sting out of a bad snow year like the one this area just experienced. Most importantly, it will enable us to provide a more dependable employment base and career opportunities, and therefore a stronger, more experienced staff."

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