

Spreen suit threat puzzles board

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Sheriff Johannes Spreen's latest blowup left Oakland County commissioners scratching their heads with puzzlement.

The Democratic sheriff told commissioners he would sue them over the jail crowding issue, accused them of destroying and demoralizing his department, and then offered to "work together" to solve the problem.

ASKED BY a reporter what legal action would be taken and who was his attorney, Spreen replied it would be in U.S. District Court and that his attorney is Stephen Hitchcock.

A call to Hitchcock's Southfield office revealed Hitchcock is out of town until July 25.

In his prepared remarks, Spreen said, "Soon our doors of our Oakland County Jail will burst open from overcrowding." He said neighboring counties had built new jail facilities.

And he noted that a jail study committee had "adopted my plan with one deletion," without mentioning the deletion, then issued his threat of legal ac-

SPREEN PREDICTED that "a coun-

ty police department is coming. I don't believe in one, and I would never serve as chief of one. I believe in consolidation of services, not in consolidation of departments."

He repeated a theme that appears in all his speeches before any audience: that he is a professional with more than 40 years of experience, and that "self-serving politicians, self-serving chiefs of police and self-serving media" are out to destroy his work.

The remark about a county police department puzzled Board of Commissioners Chairman Richard Wilcox, R-Ortonville. The veteran county board member said he never had heard the idea discussed and wondered aloud whether "he's laying the seeds for a countryside police department."

The lawsuit remark, Wilcox said, "was right out of the blue. The man is a mystery to me."

And Willcox found it "contradictory" that Spreen would denounce commissioners so bitterly in public, then offer

Hertel forms Great Lakes advisory unit

U.S. Rep. Dennis Hertel, D-Detroit, has announced the formation of a Great Lakes Advisory Group to the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee.

"This is an unprecedented and historic development for the Great Lakes region," said Hertel, 14th District congressman whose district includes part of Troy. "There has not been a comprehensive examination of the unique con-

to "work together" with them.

"I DON'T know what the hell he means" by legal action, said Commissioner John McDonald, R-Farmington, recalling that in 1978 he was named to a Spreen hit list of commissioners who should be defeated.

"I don't know what precipitated that. It was off the wall," said McDonald, who chairs the county board's personnel committee.

McDonald and board Vice chairwoman Lillian Moffitt, R-Bloomfield Township, noted the board that day voted to increase the sewage capacity of a trusty camp, which would relieve pressure on the overcrowded jail.

"It will be ready in 60 days," said Moffitt, who shook her head and added, "I don't understand where he's coming from."

DEMOCRATIC Caucus Chairman Larry Pernick of Southfield said Spreen was "pointing out that he can't



**Sheriff Johannes Spreen
"take legal action"**

do what the federal court wants him to do" to achieve better jail conditions.

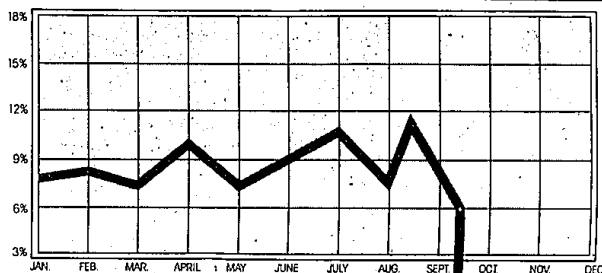
Pernick said Spreen prefers construction of new facilities over alternative measures being considered by the board.

cerns of the Great Lakes by the Congress."

• The Great Lakes Advisory Group will consider such special problems of the Great Lakes as water quality and diversion, marine transportation, navigation, fisheries, shipbuilding, the St. Lawrence Seaway and a variety of shipping matters.

The Great Lakes Advisory Group will conduct hearings in the Great Lakes Region in August under Rep. Hertel's coordination.

Hertel, who proposed the institution of this special group earlier this year, called it "important the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee has recognized that the economy of the Great Lakes Region has been ravaged by the recession."



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