

EMU to make campus pedestrian-oriented

Few people have jobs that let them discuss the effects of acidic soil on little leaf lindens one moment and make parking lot access barrier free the next.

But it's all in a day's work for Dr. Susan Kirkpatrick, Eastern Michigan University's campus planner.

Kirkpatrick, who came to EMU in May, said "one of the reasons I was so attracted to Eastern's campus planner position was that it combines almost all possible aspects of planning. There are so many possibilities working in this position."

For instance, Kirkpatrick currently is involved with the proposed EMU Campus Master Plan, a policy-level document developed by an Ann Arbor landscape architectural firm.

The plan recommends 33 projects to achieve a pedestrian-oriented

campus. "The master plan is strictly policy in nature. It gives direction so everything that is or will be done from this point on will be consistent with it," she said.

KEEPING THE campus pedestrian-oriented is a goal Kirkpatrick is strongly devoted to.

This means locating available parking on the exterior of campus as much as possible, correcting present parking problems and ensuring a safe separation between pedestrian and vehicle traffic.

"Ideally, students should be able to get around campus without even being in the high volumes of vehicle traffic," she said.

Kirkpatrick also is determined to safeguard the pedestrian-oriented campus philosophy in light of the university's growing population. One

of the first projects being considered is to eliminate traffic in the "Pittman-Ford Bowl," or on the diagonal section of Ford Road, north of the library. This would create new sidewalk space and discourage auto traffic cutting through campus.

THE PHYSICAL plant also is planning to widen existing sidewalks as renovations occur.

"This is being done primarily for snow removal reasons. But there also is an extra benefit in that it will allow more pedestrian traffic at peak times," Kirkpatrick said.

Kirkpatrick already has applied herself to the renovation of North Campus Lot II and the Peace Parking Lot. That involved not only the reconstruction of the parking lots, but a complete study of pedestrian

and auto traffic in and around the lots and lighting systems to make the lots safer.

A new traffic sign system, according to Kirkpatrick, will employ the use of symbols instead of words as much as possible and will be erected gradually, as soon as the old ones need to be replaced.

Currently, EMU is looking into an emergency telephone system that could be used to contact police when needed. It's searching for a voice box that is operated by push-button and would connect directly to campus police.

ANOTHER CAMPUS safety measure Kirkpatrick advocates is a "tree canopy," replacing many bushes on campus with trees. Trees will eliminate the "hiding places" that

bushes provide and trees also require less maintenance.

"The correct trimming of specific shrubs is typically a high maintenance item. The emphasis on a tree canopy will open up more space while reducing maintenance," she said.

"Aesthetically, EMU has a lot to offer as far as topography. Much can be done with this campus's rolling hills and beautiful views, especially if we emphasize a tree canopy," she said.

HER INTEREST in architectural landscaping goes back to childhood. Her father was a developer. "I always knew that this type of work

was what I wanted to do," she said.

After receiving a bachelor of science degree in landscape architecture from Michigan State University, Kirkpatrick earned a bachelor of arts degree in elementary education there. In 1975, she earned a master's degree in education from MSU, and completed her doctoral degree in educational administration there in 1984.

Before coming to EMU, Kirkpatrick worked as a city planner, elementary school teacher and adult education instructor for Charlotte public schools. She was a program administrator for the state Department of Management and Budget and was a consultant there.

State asks U.S. penalty waiver

Gov. James J. Blanchard is seeking a \$166 million unemployment insurance savings for Michigan businesses on top of savings of \$20 million the past two years.

The governor asked the U.S. Department of Labor to waive the 1986 federal unemployment penalty tax assessment, that all Michigan employers would otherwise have to pay in January 1987.

The state's economic resurgence and strengthened unemployment insurance trust fund enable Michigan to apply for the waiver, Blanchard said.

"This waiver will ease further the unemployment insurance tax burden

that Michigan employers have carried during the past several years," the governor said.

"WITH A WAIVER of the 1986 penalty tax, the state will have saved Michigan employers approximately \$456 million over the past three years through limiting and waiving the federal unemployment penalty tax."

The penalty tax is expected to be 0.3 percent of the first \$7,000 in taxable wages paid to each employee—or \$56 per worker. If the waiver is approved, Michigan employers will not have to pay the penalty tax for 1986 and will realize a savings of \$166 million.

Also if the waiver is approved, it will be the second straight year that Michigan employers have not had to pay the federal penalty tax. Last year's waiver saved employers \$152 million on federal unemployment taxes.

THE CURRENT federal penalty tax grew out of the 1980s recession, when high unemployment caused

hundreds of thousands of Michigan workers to claim jobless benefits that drained the state's unemployment insurance trust fund.

According to federal law, employers in a state are assessed the federal penalty tax if the combined debt to the federal government for payment of unemployment benefits is outstanding for more than two years.

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