

Few suburban programs face the budget ax

By Tim Richard
staff writer

A state program that doesn't help economic competitiveness faces a cut.

Gov. John Engler's revised state budget will dismantle many of the Commerce Department programs of the Milliken and Blanchard years, slashing aid to the Detroit Institute of Arts, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, state promotional programs, the Neighborhood Corps and the Youth Corps.

Suburban programs facing the ax are one prison in western Wayne County, two proposed metro area State Police posts and a social services program for Arab-Chaldean families.

"I don't think the average Michigan resident will notice the difference," said Patricia Woodworth, budget director. "The effect will be positive compared to the alternative — a 2.2 percent income tax increase to 6.6 percent."

"We think the public is made up of a lot of taxpayers," she said. The Engler philosophy is that Michigan's position in a world economy is served by holding down expenses and cutting taxes rather than state spending on promotions. "These are permanent cuts. We believe we have a permanent problem."

Woodworth said Engler's revisions will result in layoffs of only 3,300 state workers compared to 8,000 who would be laid off if across-the-board cuts were made.

"WE'VE CLEARLY exempted education," Woodworth told a news conference Monday.

State aid to local schools won't be cut, but treasurer Douglas B. Roberts wants to stretch out payments. For example, the final payment of the year would arrive Sept. 15, instead of Aug. 1, under Roberts' schedule.

"Computers in the classroom is gone," said Woodworth, referring to a highly publicized program of ex-Gov. James Blanchard. A Woodworth aide said many teachers took the computers home and used them as personal computers.

The program stirred much controversy in the 1990 campaign when Engler and Republicans accused Democrat Blanchard of staging classroom computer presentations as "media events."

Sen. Doug Cruse, R-Troy, had criticized Blanchard's Commerce budget as being padded with contractual goodies for political friends.

BY EXPANDING double-bunking of pris-

oners elsewhere, the Department of Corrections will be able to close Phoenix prison (311 beds) on Five Mile road in Northville Township.

Phoenix prison in Northville Township would be converted to a women's prison to relieve overcrowding at the Huron Valley prison in Ypsilanti. Woodworth's budget text said.

Camp Pontiac, a 62-bed women's prison, would be closed and inmates transferred to Phoenix, saving 21 positions and \$450,000.

Opening of a Mount Royal prison in Detroit would be delayed until the end of 1992.

On balance, the Corrections Department would get a 5 percent budget increase — to \$609 million.

THE SOCIAL SERVICES budget also will rise — from \$2.36 billion to \$2.44 billion — because the administration said many programs were underfunded.

Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) will be increased from \$543 million to \$583 million under Engler's revisions.

But General Assistance — a program aiding non-working people without children — will be cut by more than half: from \$215 million to \$97 million, to the applause of Sen. R. Robert Geake, R-Northville.

Woodworth said 30,000 able-bodied peo-

ple would be eliminated from the GA rolls. Handicapped people would be kept on.

"Federal programs (AFDC) protect the most needy. They will be protected," she said. "But state programs (GA) take in the next level (of need). Those programs have really skyrocketed."

TAKING ONE of the hardest hits of all will be the "equity" program in the Commerce Department — a 64 percent cut from \$4.7 million to \$1.32 million.

The equity program is a series of grants, mainly to arts groups, to aid in arts programs.

Woodworth's lump-sum figures didn't reveal how much of the \$1.7 million going to the Detroit Institute of Arts would be cut. DIA is operated by the city of Detroit but has been almost 100 percent funded by the state.

Under Blanchard, the state also stepped in to help the Detroit Symphony Orchestra when the city eliminated aid from its budget.

Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, for years has been protective of arts funding. Aid to regional multi-county planning will be cut from \$296,000 to zero.

THE LEGISLATURE last year passed a

\$7.8 billion budget for fiscal 1991, which began last Oct. 1.

But Engler now calls the budget picture "grave." He says the recession is cutting revenues, and expenditures were underestimated, throwing the entire picture \$1.1 billion out of kilter.

In December the Legislature made \$560 million in across-the-board cuts in every area except education. Now Engler has (1) revised the cuts, slashing Commerce in particular, and increasing other areas, and (2) made executive cuts.

The Constitution requires: "The governor, with the approval of the appropriating committees of the House and Senate, shall reduce expenditures . . . whenever it appears that actual revenues . . . will fall below the revenue estimates . . ."

Engler's executive order Wednesday went to the two appropriations committees. The committees have five working days to act. The House panel, controlled by Democrats, is likely to give Engler more flak than the Republican-controlled Senate panel.

Engler also unveiled his 20 percent local property tax proposal. Its impact on the 1991 budget will be minimal, treasurer Roberts said.

recreation news

Each week, the Recreation Division of the Farmington Hills Department of Special Services presents a synopsis of upcoming activities in this column. For further information regarding programs, please contact the Recreation Office at 473-9570. Pre-registration is required for most activities. For matters regarding city council agenda items, call the city's Newsline at 476-3838.

• DADDY-DAUGHTER DANCE A memorable evening is awaiting dad and his daughter on Saturday, Feb. 8 from 6:30 p.m. at the Metro Center. This full-filled evening includes dancing, refreshments, corsage for daughters, boutonnieres for dad and a picture of the couple. Pre-registration is required, as space is limited.

• ICE RINKS AND SLED HILL Winter is here and the Department

of Special Services welcomes you to use the sled hill and ice rinks at Heritage Park, weather permitting. A hockey rink is available adjacent to the comfort station, while ice skaters can enjoy skating on the pond near the Visitors Center. The park is open from 8 a.m. to dusk.

• PARKEY'S VALENTINE CELEBRATION

Children ages 5-10 can join the Recreation Division's mascot, "Parkey, the Panda" for a morning of games, arts and crafts and other fun activities in celebrating Valentine's Day. The activity will be held at the Visitors Center at Heritage Park Saturday, Feb. 9, from 10-11:30 a.m.

• VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE

Registration is still being accepted for a men's volleyball league that will begin play on Wednesday evenings, Jan. 23. Fee is \$195 per team.

for a nine-week season and playoffs for the top four teams. Further information can be obtained by calling Geoff Middleton at 473-9570.

• SOFTBALL LEAGUES

Registration is now being accepted for returning softball teams from the 1990 season through Jan. 31. New teams may begin registering on Feb. 1. Leagues will be filled on a first come-first serve basis. Teams will play a 14-game schedule except co-ed who play 10 games and playoffs. Fees are \$325 for co-ed leagues, \$365 residential and industrial leagues and \$405 for open leagues.

• MOONLIGHT SKI TOUR

Enjoy an evening of cross-country skiing at Heritage Park from 7-10 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 1. No pre-registration is necessary however, rentals will be available at \$7 per person for those who do not have equipment.

• BILL KOCH SKI LEAGUE This activity for children ages 7-13 will offer lessons, races, club patch, poster and more. The second session will be held on Saturday, Feb. 2, 9 and 16 from 9:30-11:30 a.m. at the Glen Oaks Ski Center. Fee is \$30 with rental and \$20 without rental.

The Hometown and Observer and Eccentric "Creative Living" section has the largest selection of suburban display real estate ads in the metro area.

Hills homeowners group elects officers for 1991

Gill Haynes replaces Marty Krohner as president of the Council of Homeowners' Associations of Farmington Hills.

Other 1991 officers elected Jan. 8 are Bob Bruckner, first vice president; Betsy Ganatra, second vice president; Marcia Van Creveld, secretary; and Fred DeLong, treasurer.

Trustees are Krohner, Jim Atkin, Jim Jack Hajkovich, Harry Stulberg, Jim Vandenberg, Jack Joynt and Edward Smith.

All officers and trustees are Farmington Hills residents.

The council is an umbrella group that represents the city's homeowners' associations.

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