

Money woes revive charter talk

By PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER

COUNTY

As the road commission was pleading poverty last week, the Oakland County Board of Commissioners was entertaining a proposal to bring control of the roads more directly under county government.

The board's call for more control wasn't a direct response to road commission chairman Lawrence E. Littman, who said the road commission needs more revenue — either through a hike in the gasoline tax or directly from county coffers.

But it was an indication the financially strapped county board is in no mood to further increase its

contribution for county roads.

"We're servicing more roads with less money and fewer people," Littman said in his annual state of the roads message. "We simply need more money."

As part of its belt-tightening, the commission has been making necessary equipment repairs and taking maintenance measures, but postponing for the most part, new purchases.

Its equipment is so old, and so financially strapped county boards is in no mood to further increase its

stions last year police stopped road commission vehicles, assuming something was askew.

"Police thought license plates had been stolen from road commission vehicles and placed on old equipment," Littman said. "They couldn't believe a government vehicle would be in that kind of shape."

County commissioners, including Lawrence Perneck, D-Southfield, acknowledge more money should be put into roads.

But Perneck and Commissioner Nancy McConell, R-Bloomfield Hills, introduced a resolution calling for revision of Oakland County's charter to, among other things, consider bringing the road commission under direct control of the county board.

The board currently exercises indirect control over the road commission by appointing its three commissioners. But county commissioners have little, if any, influence or control over policies or budget matters.

"With the road commission getting more and more county money, it just might be time to reorganize Oakland's government," said McConell. "That would provide more accountability."

The Perneck-McConell proposal was referred to committee.

OCC promotes Jaksen to new planning post

Dr. Daniel Jaksen, president of Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge campus, has been appointed vice chancellor of planning and development.

Jaksen assumes his new duties June 1.

The new position is designed to support OCC's drive to fulfill its established strategic plans including that for "competency based" curriculum.

In the new position, Jaksen will supervise the college Business and Professional Institute, Office of Academic Services, Office of Institutional Planning and Analysis, and OCC Foundation.

Jaksen has been Orchard Ridge president since 1986. He had previously been planning and evaluation director at Macomb Community College.

County OKs jail alternatives

The Oakland County Board of Commissioners last Thursday finally agreed to a controversial plan to place nonviolent felons in boot camps and other programs instead as an alternative to jail.

The plan — the Comprehensive Community Corrections Plan — calls for Oakland to expand drug treatment programs and community service alternatives. Such measures would give nonviolent offenders alternatives to jail and keep jail expenses down by preventing overcrowding.

The plan is supported by Circuit Judge Alice L. Gilbert and others who see it as a progressive approach to handling criminals, as well as a less expensive approach to keeping people in jail.

The program is opposed, however, by Oakland prosecutor Richard Thompson, who insists there are not enough safeguards to assure sex offenders and other violence-prone felons will not be released.

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