

# Kuhn from page 5A

That could increase by another \$2 million after a recent federal court ruling against Vista Disposal, the subject of a 1980s water and sewer system controversy.

Despite the millions of dollars involved, Kuhn is the first to acknowledge drain issues are relatively low key.

"They aren't very sexy," he said. "Unless, of course, your backyard is flooded."

Preventing such domestic mishaps is the drain commissioner's chief goal.

Acting upon requests from local units of government, Kuhn authorizes Chapter 20 drain projects.

The state's Chapter 20 code, dating back some 150 years, is given credit for changing Michigan from unbuildable swampland into a thriving industrial and agricultural state.

Though much of Oakland has been heavily developed, Chapter 20 projects remain active in such still-growing areas as Rochester Hills and Novi.

## Department grows

Department staff is also growing, reversing a trend that saw staffing fall from 268 to 57 between 1979-86. There are now 88 staff members, with another 12 positions contained

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In that latter post, he was part of a coalition of GOP senators who backed Richard Nixon in his 1968 presidential nomination battle with former New York Gov. Nelson Rockefeller.

A Navy veteran of World War II and the Korean War, Kuhn eventually rose to captain before retiring from the Naval Reserve.

Prior to becoming drain commissioner, Kuhn worked in the product development staff at Ford Motor Company, helping the company introduce the Thunderbird, Mustang and other 1950s and 60s models.

During that period he also served as mayor of Berkley and state senator.

While in that latter post, he was part of a coalition of GOP senators who backed Richard Nixon in his 1968 presidential nomination battle with former New York Gov. Nelson Rockefeller.

# Patterson from page 5A

"We visit construction sites," he said.

Salary aside, environmental issues play a key role in Patterson's bid to unseat the 20-year incumbent in the Aug. 4 primary.

Active in last year's effort to block the Auburn Hills Incinerator, Patterson vows to continue fighting the now-uncertain waste-to-energy incinerator.

"People look at the drain commissioner's office as something that's expendable," Patterson said. "But the way I see it, the drain commissioner has more direct im-

act on people's lives than almost any other county official."

Patterson, like Kuhn, would fight increases in Detroit water and sewer rates.

While Kuhn has been party to several lawsuits against the Detroit system — and is currently backing legislation that would broaden suburban control, Patterson said he has a "secret" plan of his own.

"I don't want to reveal it just yet," he said. "I want to spring it on them."

In addition to fighting Detroit, Patterson said he'd urge municipal-

ities to keep their own surcharges low.

"Everybody talks about Detroit, but we have to be aware of what our own cities and townships are doing," he said.

He's no fan, however, of SEMCOG's regional development initiative — in part because he believes it would render the drain commissioner's office obsolete. But he also believes it would take development issues out of local hands.

Drains often, but not always, precede development.

The controversial regional development plan put forth by the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments was rejected this year by Oakland County Commissioners.

This isn't Patterson's first try for elective office. He ran unsuccessfully last year for a Rochester Hills City Council seat.

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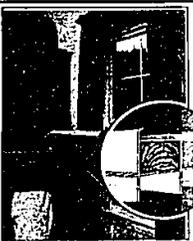
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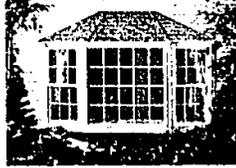
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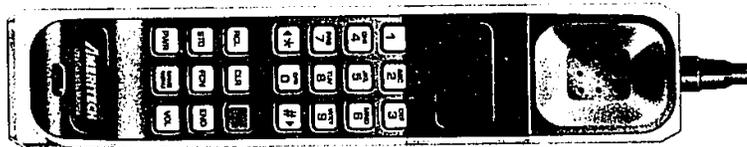
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