

In the swim



Camp Oakland: This quartet is among 500 Oakland County children who received camping scholarships for a summer week at Camp Oakland in Oxford. Children from Birmingham, Farmington, Southfield, Troy, West Bloomfield and Rochester enjoyed swimming and boating in Handsome Lake, plus other activities such as archery, arts and crafts. Camperships are subsidized by Camp Oakland, a private, non-profit corporation, with help from Oakland County Youth Assistance, an arm of Probate Court.

Bouchard behind giving economic tools to cities

Gov. John Engler has signed into law bills empowering cities to deal with downtown shopping and abandoned buildings, as well as a bill correcting a single business tax flaw.

Sen. Michael Bouchard, R-Birmingham, was author of the bill allowing principal shopping districts to promote economic activity. They may engage in marketing research, promotions, special events and such physical improvements as walkways, roads and parking lots.

A city is required to appoint a board to manage the projects, paid for by special assessments.

"Many businesses in shopping districts are unique enterprises," said Bouchard. "At the same time, these small enterprises don't usually have large budgets for advertising and promotion. We need to revitalize struggling urban areas by giving them economic tools they need to compete in the 1990s."

The bill by Sen. William Faust, D-Westland, amends the state Housing Law to allow local units to demolish abandoned residential and commercial buildings. It defines "dangerous" buildings to include those that are deteriorated and those unoccupied for six months without being listed for sale.

The city would have to serve notice and hold a public hearing before ordering a building torn down. Faust said the law "will make it much easier for communities to deal with abandoned buildings and, therefore, to curtail crime and maintain attractive residential neighborhoods and commercial areas."

Sen. Robert Geake, R-Northville, was author of the law correcting an error in the Single Business Tax Act that extended the tax year. The original law failed to account for credits allowed during the extended period.

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