

Traffic deaths are related to alcohol

There were 93 traffic deaths reported in Oakland County in 1993, according to the Traffic Improvement Association of Oakland County.

These fatalities represent an 8 percent increase over the 86 record low fatalities in 1992.

TIA president Frank Cardimen reported that the trend for the past few years in Oakland County continues to remain low compared to previous years.

"In spite of the fatality increases in 1993, the trend-line continues downward when compared to the increased traffic volumes — more than 150 percent in the past 30 years," Cardimen said. (Figures for traffic volume are extrapolated from the number of gallons of gas sold in the county in a given year.)

TIA also reported that 36 of the 93 traffic fatalities in 1993 were alcohol-related.

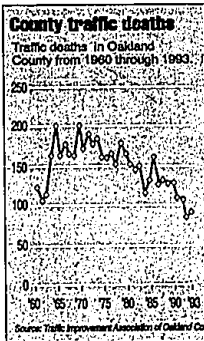
These 36 individuals represent nearly 39 percent of the total

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Frank Cardimen
TIA president

county fatalities compared to a national average of 45 percent alcohol-related deaths.

"The work of the county's alcohol enforcement teams, widespread police training, combined with public awareness campaigns by organizations such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving and national promotion campaigns by federal agencies have had a positive impact in deterring this offense," Cardimen said.



Source: Traffic Improvement Association of Oakland County

In spite of this progress in Oakland County, however, "zero fatalities as a result of drunken driving must be our goal and anything less is unacceptable," Cardimen said.

In Michigan, 1,361 lives were lost in traffic crashes in 1993, a 4.7 percent increase from the 1,300 in 1992.

Friend of Court irks parents

By TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

Friend of the Court child support payment procedures are often criticized, but you'd never hear that from the official state court administrator.

"The money is disappearing. No one really seems to know where it is," a Charlotte man wrote to Sen. Robert Geake, R-Northville.

Geake, chairman of a Senate appropriations subcommittee, was flooded with 115 speakers at last Saturday's hearing in Livonia, plus 100 letters and telephone calls in which people poured out stories of personal suffering, frustration at being put on "hold" and plain rudeness by Friend of the Court workers.

FOC handles court-ordered

child support and alimony payments. The payer writes a check to FOC, whose staff deducts a small handling fee and sends the money to the ex-spouse with custody of the children.

That's what it says on paper. That's not the way it works, say the people — especially those who deal with Wayne County FOC.

In a report to the Legislature last month, Marilyn K. Hall, state court administrator, said 881 grievances were filed during the fiscal year and all but 34 (3.9 percent) were "resolved."

Some \$1 billion in payments were ordered by the circuit courts, and about 80 percent was collected, Hall said. But her official report, with columns of statistics, gave no hint of the seething anger felt by people who deal with FOC.

A West Bloomfield woman said she left voice mail messages but got no calls back from FOC. When her husband overpaid, he got a refund check faster than his ex-wife got her arrearage.

"Right now I'm down to my last \$3," said a Rochester Hills woman, whose ex-husband's wages were garnished.

An aide to Geake said the Senate subcommittee would explore setting up electronic fund transfers directly from payer to payee, with minimal FOC work.

Another remedy may be to contract out FOC work to a private company, the aide said.

The Senate subcommittee was expected to hear more public testimony Saturday in the Oakland County Board of Commissioners auditorium in Pontiac.

Quake donations accepted

Donors who wish to make financial gifts to the California Earthquake Relief Fund may send their contributions to the Salvation Army, 16130 Northland Drive, Southfield 48075.

"Citizens whose homes have been destroyed or damaged in many cases have elected to remain on their property or community, making their own temporary shelters," said Col. George F. Church, who is coordinating the group's relief efforts in southern California.

"We are working to provide food and emergency service needs by way of canteens to these families."

Seven Salvation Army mobile kitchens were dispatched to locations throughout Los Angeles, providing on site support to victims, police, firefighters and relief workers. In addition, The Salvation Army's Burbank and Glendale Corps Community Centers are serving as a shelter sites.

Volunteer support is being coordinated through The Salvation Army Please call 1-800-725-9005 for volunteer information. At present, however, financial support is of greatest need.

Recognizing the number of catastrophic disasters occurring in our country during the past two years, emergency disaster funds have been seriously depleted.

Foster board volunteers are sought

Volunteers are being sought to serve on the Oakland County Foster Care Review Board.

The board meets on the third Tuesday each month to look over a sampling of cases of children who are placed in foster care as the result of abuse or neglect. Board members will be selected to reflect a cross section of the population of the county. Volunteers must live in Oakland County.

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