

# Need for county service varies among communities

By SANDRA ARMBRUSTER  
OAKLAND COUNTY EDITOR

Neither snow, nor slush, nor dark of night could keep Oakland County commissioners from being sworn in recently at their appointed time during the height of the evening rush hour, which was complicated by a day-long snow storm.

And well it should, with some Oakland communities heavily dependent on the county for a number of services.

"We use the sheriff's department and the 52nd District Court," said Frank Millard, a Republican from Clarkston. "We depend on a lot of county services. I can understand how other areas feel shortchanged."

Millard returned to the Board of Commissioners on Thursday, representing the fourth district which includes Clarkston, Independence and part of Waterford townships. He had been re-elected in November after a brief hiatus.

The 25-member body, keeping its overwhelmingly Republican makeup, saw one Republican returned to office after a brief hiatus and a Democrat, who was elected in November, taking his place with other board members.

The new Democrat on the board, Eric Coleman, presents a familiar representation of Southfield on the board to residents of that city, since he formerly served as a school board trustee there.

But one Republican, whose 13th district includes Farmington Hills and West Bloomfield Township, argued that most complaints by southern officials about county service are unfounded. Thomas Law said that townships pay the county to plow their roads.

As far as service by the sheriff's department goes, it used to be provided free of charge in the northern section of the county. Law said he raised that as an issue because "resident in the

southern end of the county were paying for their own police service in addition to county taxes. So that practice changed. Now all townships pay so much per deputy."

Whether costs have continued to be equalized, however, continue to be another matter, Law said.

In terms of parks and recreational opportunities in Oakland County, among the opportunities are two golf courses and a wave pool. A proposal for county acquisition of the Carpenter Lake area in Southfield failed to make county muster, largely due to mixed response from local officials and the community, size of the property and improvements that needed to be made.

Now most park land is being purchased in northern Oakland County, where tracts of land are available and reasonably priced, Law said.

One former commissioner, who this year has traded in her post

with the county for a position as state representative, is Nancy Quarles, a Democrat from Southfield. When Quarles first became a commissioner, her "main concern was making sure that services were distributed equally because we are the backbone of the tax base," she said.

During her tenure, she sought to have a county satellite office located in Southfield, she said, but it was located in Troy instead. Quarles also hoped to have individual county departments move into vacant office buildings in the Southfield/Oak Park area.

Many of the concerns of residents and businesses were relieved, however, when they learned through meetings with Quarles what services were available, she said.

"I found that many didn't know what services and resources were offered through lack of awareness," Quarles said. "We held forums in the south

end for residents and making business owners aware there was financial and business planning help available."

Quarles said she also went to homeowners' association meetings, explaining cultural programs of the county and grants that are available.

Looking ahead to the new year, Law said that what will concern commissioners most is the switch in the Community Mental Health program from supervision under the county board to an independent authority, a move which Law opposes.

"I think it will be a bad thing for the recipients, but time will tell," he said. "Formerly the program was watched closely by everyone. If I got a call, which I have gotten, I could bring it to their attention and have input. Now the Community Mental Health Board will do it alone."

"Oversight is gone; I'll be interested to see how it works out."

## Campaign helps to lower fatalities

Traffic fatalities were down over Oakland County during 1996. Preliminary figures show 88 deaths were reported during 1996, compared to 114 deaths during 1995.

"This is good news, but we have a long way to go," said Eileen Weisse, project director of Safe, Sober and Secure - Oakland County. "Our goal is for there to be zero deaths because of automobile accidents."

Oakland County Safe, Sober and Secure is a campaign targeting dangerous and aggressive drivers. About \$90,000 will go toward selective law enforcement and education over the next year in Oakland County. The task force consists of five law enforcement agencies in Novi, Farmington Hills, Southfield, Royal Oak and Waterford along with the Oakland County Sheriff's Department, Michigan State Police, AAA Michigan, MADD-Oakland County and the

Traffic Improvement Association of Oakland County.

The project is part of a statewide campaign in which approximately \$1.76 million will go toward enforcement and education over the next year.

Over the past two enforcement periods (holidays), law enforcement agencies made a collective 1,763 traffic stops, issuing 484 safety belt citations, 440 speeding citations and making 35 drunk driving arrests. In addition, the traffic stops resulted in 36 misdemeanor arrests and 3 felony arrests.

Nearly one-third of all citations were for safety belts and child restraint violations.

*Apply now for help with college costs*

Oakland Community College students should apply now for financial assistance. Students who plan to attend Oakland Community College during the 1997-98 academic year should fill out their applications for financial assistance in the month of January. The applications that are now available for the 1997-98 academic year will apply to the summer and fall semesters of 1997, and the winter and spring semesters of 1998 at OCC.

Students must complete and OCC Financial Aid Application as well as the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). High school students can obtain the FAFSA at their high school guidance offices and/or from any of the financial aid offices at OCC's Highland Lakes, Auburn Hills, Royal Oak/Southfield and Orchard Ridge campuses.

All students considering OCC can call (810) 540-1523 to request a complete OCC financial aid application packet or more information.

During January, Financial Aid Awareness Month, the Michigan Student Financial Aid Association is providing a hotline for assistance in completing the application. The toll-free number, (800) 253-0023, is available 2-7:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday, Jan. 20-23, and from noon to 5 p.m. Friday, Jan. 24.

## Walk will warm poor this winter

Oakland Livingston Human Service Agency's annual Walk for Warmth is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 22, at the Pontiac Silverdome. For the first time in the event's history, the Silverdome will open its gates to help OLHSA raise money for Oakland County residents struggling to pay their utility bills. OLHSA is currently recruiting participants for the event.

Doors open at 9 a.m. with registration and a continental breakfast for participants. This year's Walk Marshal and Detroit Lion Luther Ellis and Honorary co-chairpersons Robert Davis, president for the Medical Center of North Oakland, and Fran Anderson, community advocate, will help officiate the kickoff rally prior to the walk.

This year, participants have the option to skate their way around a six-mile track or walk around a three-mile course. Skaters may bring their own inline skates or rent them upon arrival.

The Walk for Warmth fundraiser is a state-wide event. It was designed to help replenish the funds allocated for heat-related emergencies.

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fare, and deluxe accommodation for 7 nights. If you're not part of the jet set, first place winners can choose **\$10,000 U.S. CASH**. We'll also be drawing for **4 cash prizes totaling \$3,000 U.S.** So, pack your bags and head for Casino Windsor and Northern Belle Casino. **It's worth the trip weekdays this January 6 - 31 1997.**

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