

State legislators balk at '98 budget plan Over 30

from page A5

By TIM RICHARD
STAFF WRITER

Some common questions on Gov. John Engler's budget proposal for fiscal 1998:

Q. A reporter colleague, working on a story on Oakland County roads, asked: "Gov. Engler, in his State of the State, asked \$70 million more for roads - \$40 million for local and \$30 million for state trunklines. Did he know where it's coming from, if we don't have a fuel tax increase?"

A. Engler didn't say on Jan. 28, but budget director Mark Murray did on Feb. 6 when he unveiled the \$8.5 billion general fund budget.

Q. The 15 state universities would get just a 2.5 percent increase for operations (same as the rate of consumer price inflation) versus the 5.5 percent they got in fiscal 1997.

A. The 28 community colleges also would get 2.5 percent more for operations.

That's where Engler will save in order to put more money into state roads.

Q. On local roads, he intends to tap the revenue sharing pot, capping unrestricted grants to local units at 2.5 percent and giving back the rest as road aid - \$18 million to counties, \$12 million to municipalities.

Q. How did that go over with legislative Appropriations Committee members?

A. Badly. Rep. Morris Hood, D-Detroit, House panel chair: "For higher ed, 2.5 percent is inadequate and unacceptable. The current budget (for the year ending Sept. 30) is up 5.5 percent. Tuition will have to go up."

Murray's response: "Universities are up 34 percent for the 1990s."

Sen. Harry Gast, R-St. Joseph, chair of the Senate panel: "If we (legislators) put more money in higher ed, we're going to be held responsible for every pothole in the state. We're gonna get tagged 'the pothole Legislature'."

Rep. Tom Kelly, D-Wayne, in his first term on Appropriations: "I think they (Engler administration) are crazy." He disliked the idea of the state's tapping revenue sharing and earmarking it for local roads. "If it's available, just send it to the locals. They'll know what to do with it."

'We'll try to bring it back to the former level of \$185 million. Rep. Kirk Profit (D-Ypsilanti) has a bill on that.'

Tom Kelly

On the adult education budget plan

Kelly will be a key player - vice chair of the transportation appropriations subcommittee.

Q. Hold it. You're saying state aid to higher education and community colleges would rise just 2.5 percent, but others are saying there's 3.5 more for higher ed and 4.6 more for community colleges. Straighten this out.

A. Sure. There's 2.5 percent more for operations. In addition, Engler is adding in debt service for university building costs and tax credits for families paying tuition and counting it as part of the higher ed budget.

For community colleges, Engler is adding in technology money, building authority money and "renaissance zone" tax reimbursement to the 4.6 percent.

Technically, the accounting change gives a clearer picture of where state resources are going. But in order to make a year-to-year, apples-to-apples comparison, the 2.5 percent hike for operations is a better number.

The college presidents have yet to react, but they are likely to be dismayed. Reason: Engler wants to give them 2.5 percent, the index in the Consumer Price Index, but colleges really operate on the Higher Education Price Index, which is higher. Families and colleges buy different market baskets of goods. Colleges pay health and retirement benefits, which are more inflationary than groceries and clothing.

Q. Rep. Jon Jellema, R-Grand Haven: "We're taking the unprecedented step of using the general fund to fix roads." He referred to the \$8.5 billion general fund budget and the \$30.9 billion total of all the budgets - general fund and restricted. Is that correct?

A. Murray said Michigan dipped into the general fund for roads in the 1980s, but otherwise Jellema was correct - Michigan has long supported roads from a restricted transportation fund fed by gasoline and weight taxes, and few others.

Murray is boosting the road money with something called

"securitization" of child care arrangements - collecting overdue child support payment and plunking \$10 million into roads.

Q. Rep. Hubert Price, D-Pontiac, was fuming about the mental health budget. Why?

A. The continued downsizing of state operated facilities with consolidations slated for Pheasant Ridge, Detroit Psychiatric Institute and Clinton Valley Center, according to the budget text. Translation: "Consolidation" means closing CVC and the Detroit Institute. Murray told Price "state facilities are costly to maintain, and CVC (in Pontiac) is one of the older ones."

Price objected (1) that 600 jobs will be affected and (2) twice tripling to a lot of private facilities with no assurances of quality of care. Sometimes they (private hospitals) throw them (patients) on the street.

Murray: CVC is down to 230 adult patients; other facilities have excess capacity. Early retirees, many in the Community Health and Mental Health areas, will take care of many workers. "There will be minimum layoffs," said Murray.

Q. Democrats protested vehemently last year when Engler and the Republicans cut adult education from \$185 million to \$80 million. Now that Democrats have regained control of the House, what do they plan to do?

A. Kelly: "We'll try to bring it back to the former level of \$185 million. Rep. Kirk Profit (D-Ypsilanti) has a bill on that."

Senate minority leader John Cherry, D-Clia, said the same thing announcing the Senate Democratic Caucus agenda. "Adult ed... must be restored," said Cherry, whose district stretches to northern Oakland County.

Q. Where will the battleground be?

A. Watch the Jobs Commission - it's Engler's favorite department, just as Commerce was Gov.

James Blanchard's favorite in the late 1980s.

Engler has packed in all sorts of programs that used to be in Labor and Education. Look for Democrats to try to raid the Jobs Commission, and maybe get help from Republicans.

Q. You didn't report much last week on Engler's plan to set up "a statewide framework for career preparation," a term he prefers to "vocational training."

A. Under pressure of deadline, it was overlooked, but it's likely to be a big issue.

Engler's speech gave credit for the idea only to Rep. Glenn Oxender, R-Sturgis. In the Senate Democratic caucus conference, Dianne Byrum, D-Onondaga, gave credit to former Rep. Bill Keith, D-Garden City.

Both were right. Keith and Oxender worked on it together. Their bills twice passed the House and died in the Senate.

They got a lot of flak from upscale suburban parents who want to think only in college terms for their offspring.

Perhaps career preparation is a bipartisan idea whose time has come. Engler noted that "better than seven out of 10 jobs in America today don't need a college degree. But more and more high school graduates are attending college - about two out of three do enroll in a college program, but only about half ever earn a degree."

Q. Let's see - your newspaper group has three other representatives on Appropriations besides Tom Kelly. What did they have to say about Murray's budget message?

A. Freshman Patricia Godchaux, R-Birmingham, did a lot of listening and then said, "It's a beginning. It's a roadmap." She will serve on the subcommittees on school aid, corrections (prisons) and judiciary.

Lame duck (last term because of term limits) Shirley Johnson, R-Royal Oak, asked why the cuts in Medicaid. Murray replied that the budget is "extremely complicated," adding that substance abuse is being shifted into other budget programs. Johnson will serve on the community health, consumer and industry services, and joint capital outlay subcommittees.

The three-hour, 16-mile trips (\$68.50 per person) traverse wilderness areas of West Bloomfield, Walled Lake, Wixom and Commerce Township. They feature top-rated five-course dining - with all meals cooked to order on board - and custom-designed murder mysteries or musical reviews by Michael Klier's Theatre Arts Productions of Farmington Hills.

Some guests may want to spend the night in one of the two bed and breakfast cars (\$139 per person, including dinner train features), or others may prefer a one-hour, inexpensive daytime scenery trip (\$7 for children and adults 65 and older, \$8 other adults).

"We've got a lot of senior couples who spend the night in the B&B," Beckham said, "and younger married couples who want to do something that doesn't involve the kids."

The dinner train has a capacity of 270, the third, and that entails use of four dining cars, "and we can do private dinners in private rooms in a fifth car." He said their surveys show that one of every five customers have ridden before.

Coe, a Franklin resident, said much of the trip goes through

West Bloomfield wetlands and bird sanctuary, "which is gorgeous. People from West Bloomfield don't even realize it's there. We have exterior halogen lights and while there's a snowfall it's like going through a fairyland."

The dining has been rated four star by a major rating service of New York, with the overall distinction earning a five-star designation, Coe said.

Klier's current schedule of entertainment includes three murder mysteries, in which patrons try to solve the crime: "Murder Mar nese," "Who Shot the Sheriff" and "What's My Crime?" The music shows include oldies and Broadway show tunes and even special programs targeted to specific events - like the "Hits and Flowers" review for Valentine's week end.

"We can even tailor a program to a particular company or subject we have enough advance notice Klier said."

His company employs more the 100 performers, he said, and usually there are four actors or entertainers in each car's program.

For more information, call: (810) 960-9440.

Under 30

from page A5

Brew & View movie series is the anchor for the week, offering popular films from the recent past ("Animal House," "Dazed and Confused") on the big screen to an always-packed house. Waitresses bearing pitchers of beer squeeze through the bar in the lobby, while high-energy blues plays before and after the show.

Whatever day of the week, the Bag offers a comfortable - though smoky - intimate atmosphere, with an absence of imposing Noir Leather-type. Be prepared: throughout the films, the crowd likes to talk and laugh loudly.

And of course the under-30 crowd to doesn't restrict their entertainment to the weekends. Many are trying to rebuild their childhood toy collections, making speciality stores like Time Traveller in Berkeley, profitable.

Entering the warehouse-like store is overwhelming. It is packed to the rafters with comic

books, baseball cards, and various '70s and '80s toys.

Hours can be spent poring over the endless racks of comic. Matchbox cars, and action figures. Typical of the store's treasures: a still-packaged Sly Stone "Over The Top" action figure, a complete collection of "The Empire Strikes Back" Burge King glasses, and several vintage 1989 Pistons "Bad Boys" T-shirts.

Owner Mike Lester opens Time Traveller and its sister store down the street, the Set-Fi Shop after losing a great deal of money in the Black Monday stock market crash of 1987.

"People walk through there and say 'I had that,'" he said. "They don't remember what the had as kids until they come here... Everyone leaves feeling great because they see the thing that made them feel good as a kid. They might want to kill the parents for throwing them a away, but..."

As each business owner know all trends are fleeting. This set around of "Star Wars" man will eventually run its course, and cocktails and cigars will become outdated again. But for now, yesterday's fun is what packs the under-30s in. Everything old is made again.

Four Generations of Service

Don Pitts
Since 1934

Donna Pitts
873-8300 642-3000

Countryside
Craft Mall & Antiques

Grand Old Antiques & Collectibles

SALE!

The Whole Month of February
DEALS • DEALS • DEALS GALORE!!

Livonia • 35323 Plymouth Road
Between Wayne Road and Livonia • (313) 513-2577

Walled Lake • 1154 E. Maple Road
Between Walled Lake & Livonia • (313) 926-8650

Sterling Heights • Flint
Hours: M-T-W-F 10-6 • Th & Sat. 10-8 • Sun. 11-5

We'll Keep You Smiling in Feb!

Doll & Bear Lovers Sale
extended thru 2-1-97

PLUS YOU NAME IT
SALE!

SAVE 20% on one in
stock items of your choice thru 2-1-97

* Dolls Bears Stuffed Animals not included
* One item per person per day
* Cannot be combined with other discount

The Doll Hospital & Toy Soldier Shop

3047 W. 12 Mile, Berkley (810) 543-3115
M-Sat. 10-5:30; Fri. 10-4 (Conveniently located near 1450)
Dress Store

Valentine's Dinner
Oakland University's
Meadow Brook Hall
Friday, February 14, 1997
7:30 Reception 8:00 Dinner

\$75 per couple includes:
Dinner - Tax - Service

(810) 370-4577 RESERVATIONS

Meadow Brook Hall
Oakland University

FULFILLING HER HEART'S
DESIRE SINCE 1832.

As featured in our Valentine's Day brochure.
Fulfill her heart's desire with a gift from our collection of diamond heart pendants.
Stop by one of our locations today for the best selection.

1815 Woodward Ave. RM 642-2025
Come visit our new store at Somerset Mall 810-649-2000

BAILEY BANKS & BIDDLE
WORLD RENOWNED JEWELERS SINCE 1832

JUST ONE MORE EXAMPLE OF HELPING YOU ALONG THE WAY.

Open a Free Homeowner's Checking Account

...and we'll give you 30 Minutes of Free Long Distance Calls!

A Free Homeowner's Checking account from Standard Federal Bank has many advantages to offer. There is no monthly service charge. No minimum balance requirement. No per-check fees to pay, no matter how many checks you write. You'll start saving money the day you open your account. And now you get even more:

We'll give you a Standard Federal Prepaid Calling Card filled with 30 minutes of prepaid long distance time that you can spend whenever and however you like.

Call a friend. Give it to your kids to call home from school. Take it on a business trip...it's up to you! Use the long distance minutes any way you like. The use of the Prepaid Calling Card will not obligate you to sign up with any long distance service. There are no strings attached!

Stop by any Standard Federal Banking Center today to get a Prepaid Calling Card with your new Free Homeowner's Checking account.

And even if you don't own a home, there are other ways to avoid paying a monthly service charge and other fees on a Standard Federal checking account, plus receive 30 minutes of free long distance calling. Call us at 1-800/643-9600 to find out how.

Helping You Along The Way.™

Standard Federal Bank
Savings/Financial Services
800/643-9600

FDIC © 1997 Standard Federal Bank

Standard Federal