



The end of the 1997 road construction season is nearing, but many projects are still in the works including the following:

- **Beverly Hills** — The intersection of 13 Mile and Evergreen is being reconstructed. Work is expected to be completed this week.
- **Birmingham** — Adams between the northern city limits and Madison Avenue, is being resurfaced. The project is expected to be completed this week. Detours route northbound traffic along Woodward and southbound traffic is reduced to one lane.
- **Bloomfield Township** — Squirrel Road, between Long Lake and Westview, is being resurfaced and reconstructed at the north end. A detour routes drivers along Adams and Square Lake roads until the roadway reopens in mid-November.
- **Farmington** — Grand River will be widened to include a left turn lane and traffic signal at the Shawwassee intersection. Shawwassee, from Grand River to Farmington Road, will be closed during construction, which should be completed this month.
- **Farmington Hills** — Expansion of the Haggerty Connector (M-5) has closed 14 Mile Road, between Haggerty and Welch until October 1998. A detour routes drivers along 13 Mile. Paving and drainage improvements at the east end of the Meadowbrook Hills subdivision (M-5) and Haggerty will be completed Nov. 1. Farmington Road bridge over I-696 is under repair. Intermittent single and double lane closures are scheduled on east and westbound I-696 at Farmington Road until Oct. 10.
- **Independence Township** — White Lake Road near Andersonville Road is closed to through traffic. It is being widened to three lanes and realigned with Valley Road. Detours route drivers down Dixie Highway to Andersonville until the expected completion in November when the southern portion of White Lake Road will be turned into a cut-through instead of intersecting Andersonville. Paving of the approach of Clement Street to Andersonville will be completed in mid-October.
- **Novi** — Expansion of the Haggerty Connector (M-6) has closed 14 Mile Road, between Haggerty and Welch, until October 1998. The southbound lane of Haggerty Road north of 8 Mile will be extended. A detour routes drivers along 13 Mile.

NOTE: Unless otherwise stated, detours are unknown or not planned.

Source: Local, county, city and village road officials.

— Compiled by staff writer Jennifer Placinto

## 'Most dangerous?'

### No fatalities: 12-Telegraph still gets label

BY PAT MURPHY  
STAFF WRITER

For the last three years, the intersection of Telegraph and Twelve Mile Road has acquired the reputation as the most dangerous intersection in Oakland County — statistically speaking.

That intersection has been, after all, at the top of the list compiled by the Oakland County Traffic Improvement Association (TIA) showing the frequency of crashes.

But the intersection hasn't had a fatal accident in those three years, even though the last traffic count shows it to be the busiest in the county. The intersection had 137,838 vehicles travel through it. It had 131 accidents last year, down from 140 in 1995 and 101 in 1994.

The apparent contrast can be explained in the complexity of the traffic statistics compiled by TIA and funneled into agencies that interpret them, according to Robert V. DeCorte, TIA vice president and traffic engineer.

"The statistics are important," said DeCorte. "But they must be interpreted carefully."

Interpreting those statistics — and making changes where possible — is the function of local governments, the Road Commission for Oakland County and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

The most graphic example, DeCorte said, is the intersection of Twelve Mile and Beck roads in Novi which had more than 30 people injured in each of 1993, 1994 and 1995.

MDOT had plans to change the intersection within the next decade, said DeCorte. "But after seeing the number of injury accidents for three consecutive years, MDOT accelerated its plans."

The intersection was reconstructed and rebuilt, DeCorte said. Consequently, in 1996, five

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people were injured in accidents compared with 20 the previous year.

While the statistics, released last month, indicate high-volume areas and trouble spots, Oakland still has the safest roads in the world, according to Frank P. Cardimen Jr., president of TIA.

#### Safer on average

Figures compiled by TIA indicate Oakland has 0.7 fatalities for every 100 million vehicle kilometers traveled, compared with 0.9 in the United Kingdom, 1.1 fatalities in the United States and 1.3 in the Netherlands.

In Oakland, the intersections with the highest number of crashes usually have the highest volume of vehicles, according to Cardimen.

Here are the other Oakland County intersections the TIA reports with the highest number of crashes:

- Southfield and Twelve Mile roads in Lathrup Village and Southfield, 99 crashes and a daily traffic count of 73,686 vehicles.
- Auburn and Rochester roads in Rochester Hills, 96 crashes and a daily traffic count of 70,413.
- Big Beaver and Crooks in Troy, 95 crashes and a daily traffic count of 92,958.
- M-59 and Williams Lake in



STAFF PHOTO BY LAWRENCE R. MCKEE

Sheer volume: Statistics tell this intersection's story.

Waterford Township, 86 crashes, and a daily traffic count of 64,030.

• Eleven Mile and Southfield in Lathrup Village, 83 crashes, and a daily traffic count of 74,995.

• Big Beaver and Rochester in Troy, 82 crashes, and a daily traffic count of 90,134.

• Southfield and Ten Mile in Southfield, 82 crashes, and a

daily traffic count of 93,349.

• Maple and Telegraph in Bloomfield Township, 80 crashes, and a daily traffic count of 95,040.

• Elizabeth Lake and M-59 in Waterford Township, 79 crashes, and a daily traffic count of 86,102.

• Hamlin and Rochester in Rochester Hills, 79 crashes, and a daily traffic count of 63,133.

## Opening arguments in Tobin suit focus on tainted blood

BY SANDRA ARMBRUSTER  
OAKLAND COUNTY EDITOR

A verdict in the medical malpractice lawsuit against Providence Hospital in Southfield filed by the family of Southfield's former public safety director ultimately will depend on whether jurors agree that hospital officials should have known that blood administered in a hip replacement operation was tainted with bacteria.

That contention topped the list of arguments between both sides during opening arguments in the case heard Thursday in the Oakland County circuit courtroom of Denise Langford-Morris. The trial is expected to take three weeks.

Rollin G. Tobin, a West Bloomfield resident and former police chief in Birmingham, entered Providence Hospital for the operation Nov. 12, 1993. He died the following day. Tobin had donated three units of his own blood for the procedure; another 17 units were administered during the course of two operations, according to the family's attorney. The second operation took place after Tobin started bleeding and his blood pressure dropped.

While his death originally was attributed to natural causes, the Oakland County medical examiner later issued a new death certificate, citing the bacteria as a cause of death.

Jurors also will have to decide whether antibiotics could have saved Tobin's life after the fourth unit of blood was given, which both sides agree was tainted. That unit was donated by a Wisconsin farmer at the American Red Cross, which deduced test for the rare bacteria. The antibiotics were ordered

at 8 p.m., according to both sides, but not administered until midnight.

Opening statements by Providence attorney Jerry Kenney also indicated that he will try to introduce doubt on the credibility of witnesses in the trial. Kenney claimed that expert witnesses for the Tobin estate were

either not provided with enough information to make a conclusion or they did not ask for enough information.

"None saw the complete results of the Center for Disease Control results," Kenney said. "Records suggest the inescapable conclusion that once he received the bag of blood" bacteria were present in sufficient numbers "to be lethal by the time the bag was empty."

Also in dispute is the point when the color of the blood would have changed, indicating the presence of the bacteria. Known as *Yersinia Enterocolitica*, the bacteria is unusual in that it grows in a cold environment, such as provided by the way blood is stored.

George Googasian, attorney for the Tobin family, will claim that the 31-day-old blood Tobin received should have shown a deep purple color indicating the contamination.



Rollin G. Tobin

Kenney, however, said he will show on cross examination that the blood could have gone another four days before a color change.

But Googasian noted there were other signs of the patient being in trouble: a drop in white cell count from 6,000 before the surgery to 900 and a body temperature of 109.4 degrees, both recorded during the second operation to stop the bleeding.

"The body was fighting with all its might to stave off a massive infection," Googasian said.

Seizing on that point, Kenney repeatedly stressed that the infection was too invasive to have been controlled by antibiotics.

Testimony for the plaintiffs was to begin with a recorded deposition from an doctor who has studied the bacteria in question. A computer-generated video which the defense wished to submit was disallowed by the judge upon the objection of Googasian.

Judge Langford-Morris allowed cameras in the courtroom over objections from the defense's Kenney. She also overruled his motion for a mistrial, after Googasian told the jury that members of the family would be excluded from the courtroom, since they are potential witnesses.

Googasian concluded his opening statement by saying that Tobin's wife, Janet, has "quiet recognition that she needs to do this for herself and for her protector" and that the family was asking for "nothing more than what the law allows."

Damage, according to Googasian, are based on Tobin's wish that only his own blood be used, economic damages and loss of the father to his children.

### OAKLAND DIGEST

Oakland Digest provides a summary of headline stories from around the county during the week leading up to Oct. 5.

**BIRMINGHAM**  
School bond passes easily: Bloomfield Hills School District residents Sept. 29 approved a \$24.5 million bond issue to improve school facilities. Each of the bond issue's four parts passed by about a 4-to-1 margin.

**WARREN**  
Drive for assisted-suicide: The founder of Merian's Friends, a grass-roots organization that favors physician-assisted suicide, will speak at 7:45 p.m. Oct. 16 at the Farmington Library. The group is trying to collect 850,000 petition signatures by the end of

the year and place a "Right to Physician Aid in Dying" proposal on the 1998 ballot.

**ROCHESTER**  
Murder motive sought: Local investigators are working with San Diego police in search of a motive for the fatal shooting of Elizabeth Grub. The Rochester Hills woman in August moved to San Diego from San Diego to take care of her sick mother. She was found dead in her apartment Sept. 27.

**Novos gets manslaughter**  
Monica Novos, the Rochester Hills woman accused of killing brother-in-law Michael Hockberry, was convicted of manslaughter Sept. 30 by a jury in Oakland County Cir-

cuit Court. Novos' sentencing is set for Oct. 23.

**SOUTHFIELD**  
City complaint brings action: The Michigan Public Services Commission Sept. 30 ordered Ameritech Michigan to correct problems with its 911 database. The decision follows a complaint filed by Southfield officials alleging the database provided incorrect addresses for 911 calls received by the city's emergency department.

**TROY**  
GM sponsors school court: The General Motors Foundation recently donated \$25,000 to the Troy Community Coalition. The money is earmarked for the

"Courts in the Schools/Critical Life Choices" program that will be presented to area students by District Court Judge Michael Martone.

**WEST BLOOMFIELD**  
Mom goes to ACLU: While an advisory committee at Walled Lake Western High School is considering dress restrictions for the pom-pom team and other athletic groups, the mother of a pom-pom team member plans to take the issue to the American Civil Liberties Union. The school's principal recently ordered pom-pom squad members to wear flesh-colored body suits under their midriff-baring tops.

— compiled by staff writer Nicole Stafford

## Wreckage could play role in limo driver's defense

BY PAT MURPHY  
STAFF WRITER

The wreckage of the limo in which two Detroit Red Wings were disabled could play a crucial role in the defense of the driver charged in the crash, according to his defense attorney.

"I haven't been allowed to see the wreckage," said James D. O'Connell of Highland Park, who represents Richard A. Gnida, who could face up to a year in prison if convicted of charges stemming from the June 13 crash in Birmingham.

"I don't know if there is a good defense (for Gnida)," said the attorney. But if there is, the wreckage would be a good starting point, he said.

Gnida, 28, of Westland was released from jail late Thursday after posting \$2,000 bond. Earlier in the day he had been arraigned in 48th District Court on a single count of driving on a suspended license, second offense.

Birmingham police Thursday also ticketed Gnida for careless driving.

Oakland County Prosecutor David G. Gorceyca said that charge, a misdemeanor, was the most severe his office could justify on the basis of toxicology reports.

The prosecutor said a leading forensic toxicologist had informed his office that he could not find trace amounts of marijuana found in Gnida's system after the crash were enough to impair his driving.

Gnida pleaded not guilty before magistrate Judith Gracy, who posted bond over the objections of assistant prosecutor Jennifer

Stout.

"His (Gnida's) driving record shows a blatant disregard for the law," said Stout. Placing Gnida in jail was the only way to assure he would not again get behind the wheel of a car despite not having a valid license, she said.

Gnida posted the \$2,000 cash bond and was released about 11:30 p.m. Thursday. A pretrial hearing has tentatively been set for Oct. 20.

Gnida's defense attorney did not accompany him to the arraignment. "That's because I wasn't informed of the time or date, and I was in another court," said O'Connell.

Normally the defense gets better notice, the attorney said. "But this is a high publicity case, and they (the prosecutor's office) isn't doing things normally."

"That's garbage," responded chief assistant Prosecutor John N. O'Brien III. "We notified his client in plenty of time, but apparently he (Gnida) didn't notify his lawyer. He said something about hiring a new attorney away."

O'Brien did acknowledge one condition he said warranted a different approach to prosecuting Gnida. "He's dangerous," said O'Brien. "He's had six suspensions of his license, and he must be kept off the road."

Red Wing Vladimir Konstantinov and team masseur Sergei Mnatsakanov have been in William Beaumont Hospital since the crash on Woodward near Sixteen Mile Road. Both have made "steady progress," according to doctors, but they must undergo "months and months" of therapy before they can walk again.