

OCC authorizes operations tax levy

When residents living within the Oakland Community College district pay their 1998 city or township taxes, they will also pay a property tax assessed to pay for the college's operating expenses.

Originally, a one-mill property tax was approved by college district voters in 1984 when OCC was established but the Headlee Amendment limited the collectable amount to 0.8522 mills. In June 1995, the voters approved collection of an additional 0.8 mills limited to seven years bringing the total levies to 1.6522 mills.

The OCC Board of Trustees, Monday, voted unanimously to levy all current operating mills.

"These taxes shouldn't surprise anyone," said George Cartsonis, director of college communications. "It has been appearing on their tax bills for some time. (The renewal) is a standard annual event."

The OCC district has boundaries similar to the Oakland County Intermediate Schools.

Residents living in the OCC district are charged a lower tuition rate than other residents, Cartsonis said.

"It is because of their local contributions that district residents pay a lower tuition," Cartsonis said. District residents pay \$46 per credit hour compared to \$78 paid by other Michigan residents and \$109 paid by out-of-state and foreign students.

George Cartsonis
—director of communications

(District) residents have always been extremely willing to help support this college.

Along with the property tax, OCC operations are funded through tuition and fees paid by students and annual appropriations from the state.

During the 1996-97 fiscal year, OCC collected \$56 million from property taxes, which was about 55 percent of the college's \$101.3 million income.

City and township taxes are collected in July or August and again in December, Cartsonis said.

Schools to get fine arts consultant

Schools across Michigan will have access to a fine arts consultant after State Sen. Gary Peters, D-Bloomfield Township, successfully added funding to the Department of Education budget.

Peters said the request for this position grew out of discussion in the bipartisan Senate Arts Caucus. Peters is the founding member and co-chair of that caucus.

His district includes Southfield, Beverly Hills, Bingham Farms, Franklin Village and Lathrup Village, among other communities.

"Art education develops critical thinking skills which strengthen a child's ability to problem solve and make decisions," Peters said. "Art education is a critical part of our children's education."

The Michigan Department of Education has completed a working draft of a fine arts curriculum. The fine arts consultant will work with the department to complete that curriculum and help schools implement it.


"Statistics show that students who study the arts do better in school," Peters said. "Standard Achievement Test (SAT) scores for 1995 bear this out. Students who had studied the arts scored 59 points higher on the verbal portion of the SAT, and 44 points higher on the math portion than students who had not done course work in the arts."

"We owe it to our students to give them the best possible education by making arts courses available throughout their school years. Fine arts courses will give our students the additional skills they need to be better students and successful people."

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Open house set

OCC Orchard Ridge is holding an open house 6-8:30 p.m. today. Admission is free, refreshments will be provided. The campus is at 27055 Orchard Lake Road.

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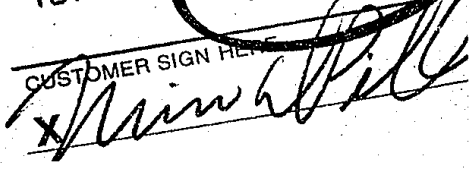
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