

# Michigan voters will have their say on environmental bonds

BY TIM RICHARD  
STAFF WRITER

Michigan voters Nov. 3 will see a \$676 million environmental bond proposal on the ballot. That's \$126 million more than the Engler Administration and the Senate proposed and \$238 million more than the House wanted. Lawmakers reached a compromise in the wee hours of the July session when they adopted a 355th House-Senate committee report chaired by Sen. Loren Bennett, R-Canton.

"This proposal will provide critical funding for clean-up projects around the state," said Bennett, "as well as funds to enhance and improve Michigan's outdoor resources, such as our lakes, rivers and state and local parks."

"The administration moved in our direction," said Rep. Tom Alley, D-West Branch, one of the conferees. "This has been an incredible process that began back in January."

"While the details have changed slightly from what I proposed," said Gov. John Engler, "the intent remains intact."

The major components, if voters say yes:

- \$335 million for urban industrial brownfields.
- \$50 million to upgrade facilities and roads at 53 state parks.
- \$50 million for nonpoint source pollution control (runoffs).
- \$25 million for sediment cleanups of nine rivers.
- \$50 million for waterfront

redevelopment.

- \$60 million for local parks and recreation.
- \$20 million for pollution prevention.
- \$5 million for lead contamination abatement.
- \$90 million for clean water to protect rivers, lakes and streams.

The Senate vote on the main measure in the package was 31-3 with three excused absences. Here's how area senators voted:

**YES** - Bill Bullard Jr., R-Milford, Mat Dunsakias, R-Lake Orion and Gary Fetters, D-Bloomfield Township.

**NO** - Mike Bouchard, R-Birmingham. He made no formal protest in the Senate Journal.

Most vocal opponent was Sen. Dave Jaye, R-Macomb County. He blamed "big corporate polluter and their million-dollar lobbyists" for the mess. Noting half the money will go into Detroit, Jaye said, "These sites were contaminated by big corporations who pulled up take and moved their factories and offices out of town."

The House passed the measure 94-4. All area lawmakers voted yes except Greg Kazza, R-Rochester Hills, and Shirley Johnson, R-Royal Oak, who were absent.

# O&E's parent company purchases Royal Oak-based newspaper chain

Richard Agnina, president of HomeTown Communications Network, today announced the purchase of the assets of Onk Communications Inc., publishers of the Mirror newspapers. George S. Willard founded Onk Communications in 1992 when he began publishing the Mirror of Royal Oak. The Mirror of Clawson followed in 1993, the Mirror of Ferndale/Pleasant Ridge and the Mirror of Berkley/Huntington Woods in 1994 and the Mirror of Birmingham in 1997.

Willard, a former publisher of the Mount Clemens-based Macomb Daily and Royal Oak Daily Tribune, began his newspaper career at the Observer & Eccentric newspapers, owned by HomeTown Communications Network (formerly Suburban Communications Inc.). Willard is currently serving his second

term as president of the Greater Royal Oak Chamber of Commerce. He also serves on the advisory committees of the Boys & Girls Club of South Oakland and the Coalition for Healthy Communities. He and his wife, Juanita, are residents of Royal Oak.

Willard will join the staff of HomeTown Communications Network, where he will continue as publisher of the Mirror newspapers. "Our focus has always been on community journalism, and that is true of the HomeTown newspapers as well,"

Willard said. "Our local focus will continue and be strengthened by this sale."

"This acquisition will solidify our presence in Michigan's richest county," according to Agnina. "Our combined Oakland County circulation is now 272,770; far greater than any other newspaper group circulating here."

HomeTown Communications Network, headquartered in Livonia, publishes more than 60 weekly and twice-weekly community newspapers, as well as a variety of specialty publications

for target audiences. Its wholly-owned subsidiaries include the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers in Oakland and Wayne counties, HomeTown Newspapers in Livingston and Oakland counties, Community Newspapers in suburban Lansing, Community Press Newspapers in Cincinnati and Kentucky, Camden Publications and Specialty Communications. The corporation also includes the Michigan Directory Company, which publishes 26 telephone directories in Michigan and northern Kentucky.

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