

Patterson paints glowing county picture

BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER
pmurphy@ooh.homecomm.net



Rosy outlook: County Executive L. Brooks Patterson is enthusiastic about economic forecasts, but road congestion remains a concern.

"As laudatory as it was, the executive's glowing speech about the state of Oakland County might not have gone far enough," according to an executive from Moody's Investor Services, Inc., on Wall Street.

"There are no dark clouds on Oakland County's economic horizon," said Angela Connelly, vice president and senior credit officer at Moody's. "Economic downturns are inevitable, but we anticipate Oakland may be able to manage that, too."

Connelly is a spokesperson for one of the Wall Street companies that evaluated Oakland County's economic condition last fall. She was mentioned specifically by Patterson Thursday in his annual "State of the County Address" before a near capacity crowd at the Michigan State University Management Education Center in Troy.

The address — with supporting pie charts, bar graphs and illustrative pictures — was a full hour of superlatives about Oakland's business climate and government structure.

Early in the 34-page address, the executive cited a newspaper article in which the Moody's vice president was quoted as saying "Everything about them (Oakland County) is stellar. . . they are not just better than most counties, they are better than all."

"When contacted about her comments, Connelly said the newspaper account — and Pat-

"If we don't take quick and decisive action to relieve congestion and fix our roads, we could see an exodus of business from Oakland County."

L. Brooks Patterson
—Oakland County executive

it reflected on the local business climate and his administration. He said the AAA rating enables the county to borrow money through the sale of bonds — at a 3.89 percent interest rate, well below rates available in any other county in Michigan.

That rate is so favorable, Patterson said, the county intends to refinance 12 existing bonding projects involving \$60 million, thereby saving an estimated \$25 million in interest payments.

Patterson admitted he was bragging. But he said the pride is justified in light of factors such as:

- Per capita income. "When compared to more than 3,000 counties in America, only two counties have a higher per capita income. . . New York County and Nassau County," Patterson said, "better known as Manhattan and Long Island."

- Housing values. Homes in Oakland are valued 60 percent higher than the state average, Patterson said, with the average residential sale price in 1998 being \$185,000.

- New construction permits. In 1998, they totaled \$1.6 billion, Patterson said, down slightly from each of the two previous years when permits totaled \$1.8 billion.

- "Automation Alley." The executive characterized it as an ambitious national marketing strategy that will enable Oakland to compete with Silicon Valley in California. Route 128 in Boston and Research Park Triangle in North Carolina in recruiting high tech companies and the workers needed to operate them.

- Oakland County International Airport. Corporate flights make what was once known as the Pontine Airport the 30th most busy in the county, Patterson, and a hub for national and international traffic. Since the DaimlerChrysler merger, Patterson noted, the corporation has initiated four weekly flights between Oakland and Stuttgart, Germany, utilizing an air bus that can accommodate 60 to 60 passengers.

Throughout his address, Patterson credited county employees, individually and collectively, for innovations within government.

In the area of technology, for example, the executive noted Oakland County will be "Year 2000 compliant" by the end of April. He was referring to the widely held concern that computers will crash on Jan. 1 because they can't register the turn of the millennium.

It cost about \$5 million, Patterson said, but Oakland computers will be ready for the new

century. Patterson said the county is torn between two expensive building projects — the proposed \$100 million courthouse expansion and the \$90 million jail addition.

The courthouse expansion — adding 235,000-square foot to the existing building and a 5,000-square foot addition to the commissioners auditorium — would improve public access and improve overall conditions, he said.

Impetus for the jail addition, Patterson said, is the ever present threat of overcrowding — which could trigger a federal court order to release some inmates. Any such court order would take decision-making power out of local hands, said the executive, leaving us only with funding obligations.

"That is not our style," he said, and the county will examine arguments for expanding jail capacity.

"Let me be very clear tonight about these two projects," Patterson said. The county will not proceed on either project until all the cheaper alternatives are explored, he said.

On the subject of roads, Patterson was adamant. "Perhaps nothing threatens Oakland County's future economic viability more," he said. "It hangs over us like an economic sword of Damocles, waiting to sever our ability to retain old business and attract new business."

As an example of how congested and pot hole-riddled roads affect local businesses, Patterson cited the case of one company, Control Power Reliance of Troy, that moved because officials were frustrated about not being able to move trucks because of gridlock in the Fourteen Mile and I-75 area.

"If we don't take quick and decisive action to relieve congestion and fix our roads," Patterson said, "we could see an exodus of business from Oakland County."

That could be detrimental, the executive said, because business provides jobs and tax base, and it underwrites the quality of life residents enjoy in Oakland County.

Dem says exec missed key issues

BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER
pmurphy@ooh.homecomm.net

Democrats did not formally offer an opposing view following the executive's "State of the County" address in which executive L. Brooks Patterson gave a glowing account of the local business climate.

But one of the highest ranking Democrat in county government — County Commissioner Eric Coleman of Southfield — said Patterson's hour-long speech did not address some important topics.

"He didn't talk about the homeless," Coleman said. Nor did the executive talk about redeveloping some of the older communities in the southern portion of the county.

"I generally liked the address," said Coleman, chair of the county board's Democratic Caucus, which is composed of seven commissioners. There are 18 Republicans on the 25-member board of commissioners.

Coleman said he concurs that the county's booming economy is reason for optimism. "But I was hoping to hear the executive's vision of where the county is going."

When informed of Coleman's comments, Patterson said he did allude to the homeless — or at least housing — in one of the final paragraphs. That was when the executive noted how the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) had awarded its "Blue Ribbon Practices Award" to the Oakland County Community Development Division.

The award is recognition by HUD that Oakland is concerned about low cost housing, said Patterson. The county received the award because it rehoused 247 HUD homes in a single year, compared with the national average of 67.

As for not mentioning redevelopment in the county's southern communities, Patterson said increased property value "benefits Ferndale as much as it does Bloomfield Township."

STORAGE USA NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that on March 23, 1999, LeRoy Elfrank Auctioneers, Executive Administrator for Storage USA, will be offering for sale under the Judicial Lien process, by public auction, the following storage units:

UNIT #	NAME	ITEMS FOR SALE
A-43	Southfield Oncology/Dr. Vaughn	Misc. Office Furniture & Medical equipment
A-44	Southfield Oncology/Dr. Vaughn	Misc. Office Furniture & Medical equipment
D-59	Southfield Oncology/Dr. Vaughn	Misc. Medical equipment
A-64	HMC Software	Household goods
B-74	Kristen T. Wies	Household goods
B-36	Catherine R. Baril	Household goods
B-213	George Grant	Household goods
F-11	David R. Hurlbert	Household goods

The terms of the sale will be cash only. Storage USA reserves the right to refuse any and all bids. The sale will be held at the following location, 38876 Grand River, Farmington Hills, MI 48335 and will begin at 1:00 P.M. and continue until all units are sold.

Public: February 19 and 23, 1999

The Willows
Specializing in Memory Loss
Licensed Assisted Living Facility

- 15 Years of Experience
- Seven rolling, private acres
- Secured Environment
- Six Private Accommodations
- Family Style Meals
- 24 Hour Trained Personnel
- Respite and Adult Day Care
- Conveniently located near major shopping areas and freeways

40705 Thirteen Mile Rd • Novi
(248) 374-2088

CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
31565 ELEVEN MILE ROAD
FARMINGTON HILLS, MI 48336-1185
(248) 474-6115

ADVERTISEMENT

The City of Farmington Hills Purchasing Division will solicit sealed bids during the next forty-five (45) days for the following products and/or services:

1998/99 Sidewalk Replacement Program
Audio Intelligence Equipment

Specifications may be obtained by contacting the Central Services Department. All bids must be submitted in accordance with the bid specifications.

The City of Farmington Hills reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, either in part or in whole, to waive any formalities and to accept the bid which it believes to be in the best interest of the City.

Kathryn A. Dorman
City Clerk

Public: February 23, 1999

Redford Jewelry
Fine Jewelry • Diamonds • Expert Repair

25950 W. Six Mile • Redford Township
(2 BLOCKS WEST OF BEECHDALE)
(313) 592-8119

Romancing the Stones

VALENTINE'S DAY: The most romantic time of the year. What better opportunity to present the one you love with a beautiful engagement ring or exquisite anniversary band?

Save 30% on all Diamonds & Wedding Rings

Mai Thai
RESTAURANT

Featuring Authentic Thai Dishes

- LUNCH SPECIALS FROM 11-4 PM
- CARRY OUT & CATERING AVAILABLE

Cocktails Now Available
Reservations (248) 626-6313

6635 Orchard Lake Rd. at Maple • Old Orchard Shopping Ctr.
HOURS: Mon.-Thur. 11 AM-10 PM, Fri. & Sat. 11 AM-11 PM, Sun. 12-9 PM

THINKING OF REMODELING?

BOB STERN
BUILDING COMPANY
855-3880

WE ARE COMMITTED TO QUALITY AT AFFORDABLE PRICES

WE DESIGN AND BUILD ADDITIONS • KITCHENS • BATHS AND MORE

REMODELING IN OAKLAND CO. SINCE 1965

CALL FOR A FREE CONSULTATION
855-3880
6190 DUMORE • WEST BLOOMFIELD

Cosmetic & Restorative Dentistry

Comprehensive, thorough treatment with quality care.

- The most recent advances in dentistry practiced
- Member of: ADA (American Dental Association), MDA (Michigan Dental Association), ACD (Academy of General Dentists), AACD (American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry)

Are YOU A Candidate For Esthetic Dentistry?

- Do you wish your teeth were more attractive? Yes No
- Do you have black lines above old crowns? Yes No
- Are dental fillings noticeable or unsightly? Yes No
- Is one or more of your teeth stained or discolored? Yes No
- Do you have a gap between your front teeth? Yes No
- Are any of your teeth chipped, broken or rough? Yes No

If you answered YES to any of the above questions and would like to discover how cosmetic dentistry can quickly, safely and painlessly correct the problem, please call our office for a FREE Consultation Appointment.

Terri L. Todaro, D.D.S.
Cynthia M. Todaro, D.D.S.
31395 Seven Mile Road, Ste. B, Livonia
(248) 477-7905

A Room For All Seasons
And All Reasons!

The "Michigan Room"

Have you been dreaming of escaping the pressures of everyday life? Well now you can...and right in your own back yard!

NO MONEY DOWN FINANCING AVAILABLE

PRE-SEASON SALE 20% off

Call us for a FREE ESTIMATE!

We Sell. We Supervise. We Finance. DEAL DIRECT...NO COMMISSIONS!

Brody Bill
(313) 387-1215

The "Great Lakes Room"