

Motor from page A1

quate funds to offset the cost of the program, they may have to take a hard look at whether to continue it.

According to Rep. Andrew Raczkowski, however, the state isn't interfering with local budgets. He pointed out the state gave cities the right to issue commercial vehicle tickets.

"The state's commentary will be that there is a problem right now with the enforcement of trucks and commercial vehicles," he said.

Complaints have come from trucking industry representatives who are concerned that some cities are taking advantage of the ability to write tickets to raise public funds. Lobbyists for libraries funded through criminal fines, rather than local millages, have argued motor carrier laws should never have been decriminalized six years ago.

While Raczkowski opposed the House version, which called for libraries to receive all of the fine proceeds, Sen. Bill Bullard was among those who supported the Senate version. It was changed in the Transportation Committee, which he chairs.

"It was my responsibility as chair... to get that issue resolved with as little

bloodshed as possible, especially my own," he joked. "The bottom line is, I don't think anybody was totally happy."

Compromises include forbidding more than one ticket for an offense per day and changing the way weight is measured. The bill requires new motor carrier officers to be trained to Michigan State Police standards, Bullard said. Violations will be split up into lesser and more serious offenses, and vehicles may be impounded for serious safety problems.

The new revenue split will cost cities 30 percent of their motor carrier budget. To make matters worse, fines have also dropped in the past year, according to 47th District Court administrator David Walsh.

In the first nine months, from 1997-99, the court collected \$43,884 in fines. The following fiscal year, 1998-99, fines topped \$95,000.

Walsh said fines may hit just \$50,000 this year. He believes that shows the enforcement program has made a real difference.

"It's a significant drop, and I would argue it's not

because of any change in enforcement," he said. "You don't see as many trucks coming through these neighborhoods that are overweight or have faulty parts. Obviously, that's just a guess."

Council member Vicki Barnett stressed the dangers of overweight or badly equipped vehicles.

"The reason local communities started enforcing the laws is the state wasn't," she said. "We're talking about safety on the roads. We're not just complaining about the local control and the money."

Bullard expects the bill to reach the governor's desk after the House signs off on the new version.

Merchants from page A1

want more than anything. Being teamed up with the chamber is the best way to organize."

Watson, however, did not know whether the association would retain its name. Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff said the merchants' decision would help promote the sense of community teamwork that is needed for downtown to grow and prosper.

"It's a very positive step and it's a step that shows, collectively, that the group understands it can do more with the help of the chamber," Lauhoff said. "And it will help all of us with the communication effort that before we had a problem with."

The communication prob-

CHAMBER

lems that led to the re-formation of the association occurred between merchants and the FAFB board of directors, about issues relating to the annual festival and parade.

The DFBA previously was a chamber sub-committee, with bylaws and officers, from 1986 until it went dormant a decade later. With the decision to again join the chamber, Watson said, new bylaws will need to be crafted (with Flaharty's help) and new officers selected.

How Anxious Are You?

Answer the following questions based on the last 2 weeks or more.

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If you answered "yes" to 3 or more statements, you may be suffering from an anxiety disorder, a serious condition affecting millions of Americans. The Institute for Health Studies is currently looking for individuals experiencing the above symptoms to participate in a research study of investigational medication for anxiety. If you are selected, all research related care and study medication are provided at no cost. Get answers and information about anxiety.

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A cellular phone for every public school employee

A lifeline for every child



Lu Battaglieri
 MEA president

Kayla Rolland had one lifeline the morning she was shot by a classmate. That was the cellular phone her teacher brought to school.

Seconds after a single shot was fired, the second-year teacher used her personal cellular phone to call 911. EMS was on the way to Buell Elementary School in the Becher Community Schools within 10 seconds. The 911 operator stayed on the phone with the teacher as she administered CPR.

Working together, they kept Kayla breathing for the six minutes it took for help to arrive. We lost Kayla.

Clearly, cellular technology won't stop the violence in our society from seeping into our schools. And it won't eliminate the need for good crisis response plans in all of our school districts.

But it will make help available in the critical first seconds of a crisis—whether it occurs in a classroom, on an athletic field or on a field trip.

MEA calls for emergency response

A quick-thinking teacher with a cellular phone. Every child should have at least that.

But like many school districts in Michigan, Becher doesn't have telephones in the classrooms—or a school nurse in every building. Indeed, in a school emergency, the route to help in many districts is an obstacle course created by budget limitations and other priorities.

Maintaining safe schools requires that we first create safe communities. Until that happens, we must equip our public schools with the tools necessary to save lives.

The MEA has drafted the following bill to give each public school employee across the state a cellular phone with walkie-talkie and 911 capabilities.

We challenge our lawmakers—and "Corporate America"—to heed our call. AirTouch Cellular, Nextel Communications Inc. and AT&T in partnership with Ericsson Mobile Phones already have donated thousands of cellular phones and free airtime to schools across the country.

MEA's phone bill for safer schools

A bill to amend 1976 PA 451, entitled "The Revised School Code."

(MCL 380.1 to 380.1852) by adding section 1304.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MICHIGAN ENACT:

SEC. 1304. (1) THE BOARD OF A SCHOOL DISTRICT, INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT, OR PUBLIC SCHOOL ACADEMY SHALL PROVIDE EACH EMPLOYEE A CELLULAR PHONE WITH A TWO-WAY TALKING FEATURE AND 911 ACCESS FOR THE PROTECTION AND SAFETY OF STUDENTS AND STAFF. (2) THE BOARD MAY OBTAIN THE MOBILE PHONES THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS WITH COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES FOR A SAFE SCHOOLS PROGRAM.

All of Michigan's children deserve at least one lifeline in an emergency. Who will give it to them?

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