

Tax free

End sought to park's status

By SUSAN L. SILK
OAKLAND COUNTY — Oakland county commissioners, through two resolutions, are being asked to seek legislation which will end the county taxpayers' subsidizing the City of Dearborn.

Commissioners Patrick M. Nowak (R-25) and James Dunleavy (R-2) charged during Thursday's (July 18) board meeting that state approval of the existence of Camp Dearborn — 826 acres of private park land in southwestern Milford Township — as a tax-free public park should be halted by state legislation.

Camp Dearborn, founded in 1947, was operated as a private park until about four years ago. Then, by agreement with the state tax commission, the property was considered a public facility and removed from the Oakland County property tax rolls. The camp, open primarily in summer months, is free to Dearborn residents; all others pay a \$5 per car parking fee.

THE 15 MILLS of property tax annually levied against every parcel in the county is divided between the county and township governments and the school districts.

Estimates of Camp Dearborn's cash value range from \$1.5 million (according to Milford Township) to \$5 million (according to the county equalization director).

Nowak estimates, based on the county's \$5 million "guesstimate" that the county, township and Huron Valley Schools are being denied their shares of \$150,000 in taxes — \$60,000 to the schools — by Camp Dearborn's "public" status.

The taxpayers of the whole of Oakland County have been unjustly subsidizing the City of Dearborn and its taxpayers as a result of the removal of the property... from the tax rolls of Oakland County," according to the resolution.

Week set for drive

The Children's Leukemia Foundation and the Michigan Community Blood Center will combine forces in a three-day blood drive from Aug. 4-10 on the Kern Block in downtown Detroit.

August 4-10 has been designated as Michigan Leukemia Week. To add a light note to the serious business of donating blood, there will be celebrities, entertainment, and give-aways for children and adults. Free literature will be available and displays will show where United Foundation dollars go when they reach the Children's Leukemia Foundation.

Blood drive sets record

Oakland County hospitals will share in the record-setting collection of blood by the American Red Cross during 1973-1974.

More than 143,000 pints of blood were donated through the totally volunteer donation program, according to the Red Cross southeast Michigan chapter officials.

"The record collection marks a 13.1 percent increase from the 1972-1973 total of 126,577 pints of volunteer blood," according to Mrs. Agnes Morris, director of donor resources and development.

Mrs. Morris credited recently

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The legal question of Camp Dearborn's status as a public facility is currently before the State Tax Commission in a case brought by township citizens through members of the Huron Valley Schools, said Gene Schnelz, township attorney.

For the past two-and-a-half years, Milford Township has been receiving \$25,000 — in lieu of taxes — from Dearborn to offset any expenses they may have from the camp.

In an Oakland Circuit Court suit, Dearborn, Milford and the schools are arguing the legality of that "payment in lieu of taxes" agreement which excludes the schools.

ALTHOUGH MILFORD is prepared to share its payment from Dearborn with the schools, the lawsuit has complicated that transaction, Schnelz said.

Milford is "vitaly concerned" with the wellbeing of its schools; however, Schnelz concedes the township arrangement with Dearborn is "far in excess" of the camp's costs and approximately \$25,000 more than the township figures it would collect if the camp were returned to the county rolls.

Dearborn officials argue that the Milford payment plan is no different than similar arrangements between that city and the University of Michigan Dearborn campus and Greenfield Village — neither of which pay property taxes to Wayne County but make "pay-

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