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oakland county employees newsletter

Telegraph



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1999 State of the County Address Highlights Employees, Roads & Technology



County Executive L. Brooks Patterson emphasizes a point delivered during his 48 minute 1999 State of the County Address.

Nearly 300 people packed the auditorium of the Michigan State University Management Conference Center in Troy on Thursday evening, February 18, to hear Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson deliver his annual State of the County Address. During his 48 minute speech, Mr. Patterson called upon the state to provide more funding for roads, voiced concern over Oakland's continuing status as a donor county, praised county employees for their many and significant contributions and enumerated the numerous high-tech programs which are being developed or have been implemented.

After being introduced by his daughter, Mary Margaret, Mr. Patterson led off his remarks with a quote from Theodore Roosevelt who said, "The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what he wants done and self restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it."

Mr. Patterson said that based on that standard, he might just rate as a good executive because he has picked an array of bright, talented and creative men and women to guide Oakland County's fortunes over the past six years. Later in his speech, Mr. Patterson took the opportunity to heap well deserved praise on the men and women of county government.

"These last six years as county exec, the successes I have been privileged to chronicle in the course of my State of the County Addresses, are due in every instance to the talented and dedicated county employees who work long and hard every day to serve the needs of our citizens," Mr. Patterson said. "These employees produce a high quality product which is cost effective, efficient and all too often they do it without any praise or recognition."

He then went on to recite a litany of honors county departments and individuals had compiled over the past year such as the Fiscal Services Division's Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, the Annual Financial Reporting Award and the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting. The county executive also mentioned the NACo Achievement Awards received by the Health Division for its Womens, Infants and Childrens Interactive Electronic Learning Room Program, Children's Village for its Secured Treatment Program for Chronic Juvenile Offenders and the Planning and Economic Services Division for its Reichhold Site Program. Community Development was also singled out for receiving the Blue Ribbon Practices Award for its Home Improvement Program from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

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PATTERSON / *Person to Person*

During my annual State of the County Address this year, I tried to discuss as many important issues as I could in the limited amount of time I had available. Needless to say, a number of things which I would like to have mentioned I couldn't because of time constraints.

One of the items I left out of the speech, I would like to talk about here because it directly affects our employees.

This past year, the Department of Information Technology completed the implementation of its Project Management System which creates a sound mechanism for processing work orders and establishing priorities for the many technology projects which are requested.

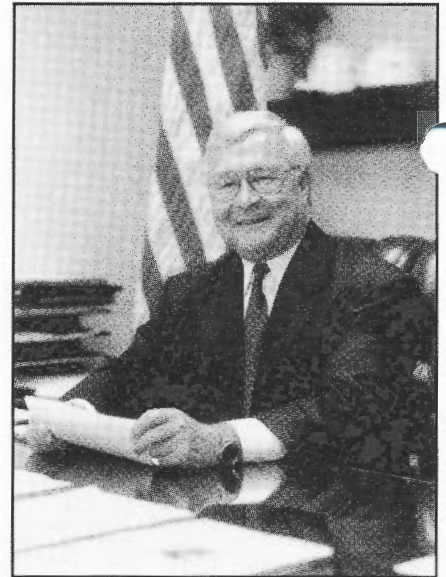
Prior to this system being put in place, there were some 900 outstanding work orders in the department's pipeline. The sheer volume of requests put a strain on manpower and the department's limited financial resources.

Faced with the daunting challenge of putting its house in order so it could better serve the needs of the various county departments and its other customers, Information Technology formed six leadership groups, covering the broad spectrum of county government. Their mission was to establish priorities which would rank technology projects in order of importance to insure the county

receive the best return on its investment of time and dollars.

This Project Management System has taken pressure off staff and increased productivity by eliminating the wasteful "start and stop" process which plagued I.T. projects in the past. The improvements made and the efficiencies gained in this critical area of county government could not have occurred without the cooperation and hard work of our Information Technology group representatives. I would like to publicly thank each and every one of them for the significant and meaningful contribution to this strategic initiative.

Another important county project benefiting the various departments is our ongoing data warehouse project. With assistance from the Department of Community & Economic Development, Information Technology has successfully built a data warehouse where initially land related information has been stored. This is a computerized warehouse as opposed to one constructed of brick and mortar. The data warehouse virtually unlocks data which previously had been difficult to access. To use a metaphor, information once locked up in jail has now been freed. As a result, the Equalization Division, for instance, will now find it easier and quicker to get their hands on land assessment information



L. Brooks Patterson
Oakland County Executive

which will ultimately allow them to improve the uniformity of property tax assessments county-wide. Data warehousing also has implications for other county departments, businesses and residents who may need access to land information in the future.

One thing I did mention in the speech was the value of our county employees. I meant it when I said the successes we've enjoyed during my six years as County Executive have been due in every instance to the talented and dedicated county employees who work long and hard every day to serve the needs of our citizens.

Hurricane Mitch Victims Receive a Helping Hand

With a "can do" spirit that exemplifies Oakland County government employees, Claudia Gooden, accountant clerk II in the Probate Court's business office, swung into action immediately after learning of the devastating toll Hurricane Mitch had taken on its victims.

Gooden, a thirteen year veteran of county government, organized and spearheaded a fundraising drive to help flood victims. She sent a flyer to county departments asking for donations and personally solicited funds from the people she works with, administrators, judges and attorneys who come into her office. Over a two and a half day period, Gooden collected \$1,032 which she handed over to the American Red Cross to help the flood relief effort.

"I got it done as quickly as I could because I thought it was something that needed to get out right away," Gooden said. "If we kept the drive open for a week, we probably would have

doubled or even tripled the amount."

In the past, Gooden said, she has raised money for the March of Dimes and other flood relief efforts, albeit on a smaller scale.

"I just feel very strongly about other people and it could be me who needs help some day," Gooden said explaining why she gets involved in fundraising efforts such as this one.

The Oakland County Probate Court/Circuit Court Family Division showed its appreciation for what Gooden did by presenting her with a Certificate of Recognition which reads in part: "This certificate is presented in recognition and grateful appreciation for your collection of donations on behalf of the American Red Cross Hurricane Mitch Relief Fund . . . your willingness to champion this collection effort for this very worthy cause is an inspiring example of your unselfish and caring spirit".

Medical Examiner Moves Into New Home

Amid the pomp and circumstance of a 3 day celebration, Oakland County dedicated its new \$10.2 million, 38,000 square foot Medical Examiners Building the week of March 22, 1999. The ribbon cutting on Monday, March 22 featured Deputy County Executive Ken Rogers, standing in for Mr. Patterson; Medical Examiner Dr. L. J. Dragovic; Board of Commissioners Chairperson John McCulloch and Dr. Thomas Gordon, director of Human Services who each used a pair of scissors to cut the ceremonial ribbon.

On Tuesday, March 23, rooms in the new facility were dedicated to honor the memories of two former Oakland County Medical Examiners, Drs. John F. Burton and Thomas J. Petinga. Proclamations signed by Mr. Patterson honoring the two distinguished doctors who are deceased were presented to family members by Dr. Gordon. Then Dr. Dragovic unveiled pictures of Drs. Burton and Petinga which will adorn the walls of the conference room and library respectively.

Day three of the celebration, Wednesday, March 24, was highlighted by an open house and the dedication of three more rooms of the facility in recognition of the significant contributions made over the years by Howard A. Whaley, Goebel Baynes and William MacDonald who served as administrators for the Medical Examiners Office. They were also presented with proclamations signed by the County Executive.

The new facility, which former Wayne County Medical Examiner Dr. Werner Spitz described in remarks as a "Taj Mahal", will give Dr. Dragovic and his first class staff much more room in which to do their work. In 1970, when the old facility was built at the rear of the law enforcement complex, only 200 autopsies were performed annually. But since then, the M.E.'s office has registered a 500 percent increase in its workload and now performs about 1,100 autopsies on a yearly basis.



Ribbon cutting marks opening of the new Medical Examiners Building. L to R: Steve Palermo, LaSalle Group; Dr. Pragovich; John McCulloch; Ken Rogers; Dr. Tom Gordon and Dave Lawrence, Harley Ellington Design.

The new two story Medical Examiners Building features histology, toxicology and anthropology laboratories, an organ procurement room, and a contaminated autopsy room and two bereavement rooms.

In his State of the County Address in February, Mr. Patterson said the new Medical Examiners Building "will position Oakland County to become a regional forensic center. We will be able to serve our residents, not only in a more timely and professional manner, but we will also have the ability to extend our service to jurisdictions within southeast Michigan."

The architect on the project was Harley Ellington Design of Southfield and the LaSalle Group of Canton, Michigan served as the general contractor.

Probate Court Employee Honored



Kal Engelberg, Probate Court, displays his Pamela G. Voss-Page Award as Ms. Voss-Page looks on approvingly.

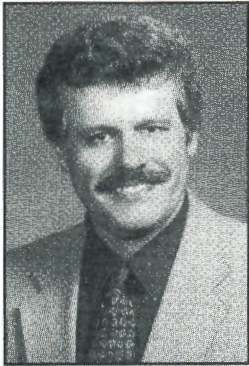
Kal Engelberg, manager of the Oakland County Probate Court's Youth Assistance program, has received the Pamela G. Voss - Page Lifetime Achievement Award for 1998.

"This award recognizes individual dedication and lifetime commitment to developing strong, capable and contributing young leaders," said Ami Pattison, a Milford High School senior who presented the award to Engelberg during the Oakland County Youth Summit which was held recently in Southfield.

Engelberg, who began his career with Oakland County in the Health Division in 1969, was recognized for his nearly 30 years of commitment to young people, families and the Oakland County community.

"While I sincerely appreciate this honor and recognition, I know that anything good that I have been associated with over the past thirty years has been the result of a team effort," Engelberg said. "I've been blessed to have had the opportunity to work with many talented, dedicated and supportive people."

Engelberg has received numerous honors over the years including the 1998 Prevention Worker of the Year Award presented by the Michigan Association of Substance Abuse Coordinators and the prestigious 1990 Pioneer Award, presented by the National Center for Health Education.



The View from Here

Bob Dustman
Media and
Communications

Aloha. They call Hawaii the Land of Paradise and now I know why. After spending two weeks on Oahu and the Kona Coast with my wife and three other couples soaking up our share of sand, surf and sea air, I have fallen head over heels, madly in love with our fiftieth state. Hawaii is truly a land of beauty, enchantment and easy living.

We spent our first ten days at the Hale Koa in Honolulu, which is a first-rate, top-of-the-line military resort, available only to military personnel and their

families. This place had everything: two large swimming pools, a jewelry store, flower shop, banquet rooms and an assortment of bars and restaurants. It was situated on about 62 acres of prime ocean front property.

One of the highlights of our first week on Oahu was a lavish luau, complete with roast pork, beef teriyaki, fried bananas, sweet potatoes, salads and of course poi. By the way, poi is a food I just don't get. I like to taste new things, but this staple of the Hawaiian diet leaves me wondering what the attraction is. It's made of taro root mixed with water, cooked, pounded into a paste and slightly fermented. No offense to our Hawaiian friends, but it really has little or no taste.

One of our excursions took us to the Polynesian Cultural Center where we received a fast-track education on the customs and lifestyles of the people who inhabit the other islands in the Pacific, such as Fiji, Samoa, New Zealand and Tahiti.

No trip to Hawaii would be complete without a visit to Pearl Harbor, which the Japanese attacked during the early morning hours of December 7, 1941. At the bottom of the bay lies the USS Arizona which on that day of infamy, became the eternal tomb for more than 1,700 brave American servicemen. It was an emotional experience to say the least. Prior to taking a boat out to the memorial site, we viewed a film which provided the historical background and perspective on the sneak attack. You see the Japanese planes taking off from the aircraft carrier and heading toward Oahu and then the bombs falling. If that isn't enough to put a lump in your throat, stepping onto the site itself where the USS Arizona was sunk will. Looking down, you can see what's left of the battleship. In another part of the memorial, the names of the dead are listed on a wall. It makes one both profoundly proud and extremely sad at the same time.

One of the mysteries of the trip was why I decided to leave my suntan lotion, Mai Tai's and chair by the pool to climb a mountain. Curiosity can be a dangerous thing. But the challenge of conquering Diamond Head was just too much to resist. This magnificent piece of rock is 760 feet above sea level and stretches about a mile from its base to the summit. Much of the terrain is rocky and uneven. Although guardrails are in place all the way to the top, sure footing and close attention are required to make the trip safely.

About halfway up, I started wondering what possessed me to lug my 300 pound frame up this mountain. How were they going to get paramedics up here in time to save me? It wasn't real smart either leaving our water bottles behind in the car, because there are no refreshment stands along the way to the peak. The walk

up wasn't made any easier either by people coming back down the mountain. We had to pass each other in narrow and often confined spaces, which made for some interesting moments. At times like this, you get to know your fellow walkers pretty well. Anyway, after about an hour we made it to the top and the view was worth the effort. We had a bird's eye view of downtown Honolulu and much of the coastline.

On Tuesday, March 16, we packed our bags and hopped on an Aloha Airlines flight for the short half hour plane ride to the big island of Hawaii. Stepping off the plane, I could sense a more laid back and easy going lifestyle than we had experienced on Oahu. Less traffic and plenty of beautiful open space greeted us. We stayed in a spacious condo on the Kona Coast which overlooked the Pacific Ocean.

The four days here were spent by the pool and touring the island. However, we did venture north to Hilo to see the volcano and rain forest. What a trip that turned out to be. When we left Kona on that Thursday morning, the temperature was about 82 degrees, but up near the volcano it wasn't quite as warm, which may be the understatement of a lifetime.

People had warned us to take warm clothing, but macho man here, who never gets cold made the trip in his shorts and tank top. That was a decision I would live to regret. We made the journey in a Jeep Rambler which had removable sides, which we left behind, and a convertible top. As we were heading north, I felt a blast of hot air and then a blast of colder air. By the time we reached the volcano, it had become overcast and started to drizzle. The temperature had also dropped about 30 degrees. My wife, in her infinite wisdom, had thought to bring along my windbreaker which may have saved me from freezing to death.

Anyway, we spent the afternoon touring the volcano and the rain forest, which was a little like walking into a Disney fantasy. It was simply beautiful with all the different plant life, flowers and trees. The Akaka waterfall was gorgeous as it spilled to the pond some 420 feet below.

As the sun set and we began our trip back to Kona, the rain and wind started to pick up and the temperature plummeted another 10-15 degrees. So here were my wife and I huddled together in the backseat of this Jeep which was completely open, except for the roof over our heads. I pulled my windbreaker up over my head and we wrapped ourselves in towels. To shield the cold and rain, my wife did her best impression of Darla, from the Little Rascals and pulled a baseball cap down sideways to protect at least one of her ears from the elements. Quite a fashion statement we were if you get the picture, which was not an altogether pretty one. It was not a pleasant journey back. The rain pelted us and the cold night air chilled us to the bone. Funny how long an hour and a half trip in these kind of conditions feels. It seemed like forever. My buddy who was driving and teaches water survival to the military kept warning us that people who freeze to death start yawning and eventually fall asleep. Not a comforting thought since both my wife and I were on the verge of doing both.

All the way back, I'm thinking to myself how I'm going to tell Brooks I caught pneumonia in Hawaii and need another two weeks off.

Mahalo (thank you) and hang loose.

Quick Action Saves Heart Attack Victim

When Bob Green, an accountant with the Drain Office, got out of bed that Friday morning in January, he knew he didn't feel one hundred percent. But he got ready for work anyway and made the half-hour trip from his Davisburg home to his office. While working at his desk, Green's arm began to ache, but he thought it might be the onset of the flu.

When the woman in the next office came in to ask a question, Green told her he was feeling lousy and didn't know whether or not he should go home.

The woman acted quickly and called 911 when Green told her his arm and chest were hurting.

"For some reason, I stood up and got so dizzy I had to sit back down again," Green recalled. "Then I started to sweat profusely."

A Sheriff's deputy arrived almost immediately and paramedics weren't far behind. By this time, eight or nine people including coworkers had come to Green's aid. Green was placed on a stretcher and transported by ambulance to the emergency room of St. Joseph Hospital in Pontiac where doctors were waiting for him.

"I remember thinking, boy this is just like

on ER," Green said. "There must have been twenty or more people hovering over me at one point."

After doctor's determined there was a blockage in one of Green's arteries, they debated momentarily whether to let it dissolve on its own or go in and perform surgery. Eventually the decision was made to perform an angioplasty which involved placing a stint in the artery to keep it open and the blood flowing. Within a span of just three hours, Bob Green had gone from suffering a heart attack to getting a new lease on life.

"I didn't hardly feel a thing," Green recalled. "There was never any real pain from the incision or the tubes that were inserted."

Green was moved from the coronary care unit and into a semi-private room on Saturday. He ran a slight fever, so doctors delayed his release from the hospital until Monday morning.

"I've always been conscious about what I eat, but not to the extent I am now," Green said. "I've definitely changed my eating habits."

Green spends a lot of time these days shopping for low fat foods and carefully

reading the labels on packages. He's been meeting with a dietician to devise a proper diet to go with his new life style which will include more regular exercise. His new motto is: If it tastes good, spit it out.

Green has nothing but high praise for his coworkers, the Waterford Township paramedics and the Sheriffs Department. He truly believes it was their quick response which may have saved his life.

"Everybody was just great," Green said. "Had I decided to go home when I felt sick, I might have been in a lot bigger trouble. If something like this is going to happen, it's probably good it happened when it did because I was in much better hands."

Bob Green returned to the job he's held for the past 31 years on February 24, after five weeks of convalescence at home. He still does cardiac rehabilitation three mornings a week, which involves being hooked up to a heart monitor and exercising on a variety of machines.

"This is really good for me because it keeps me exercising, which I've learned is an important key to good health," Green said.

New Health Insurance Plan Addresses Unmet Needs

Michigan has a new health insurance program for children and adolescents under 19 years of age whose family meet the income guidelines listed on the right.

- Live in Michigan and be a U.S. citizen or legal immigrant
- Have no health insurance
- Not voluntarily dropping employer health insurance coverage in the last six months
- Family with monthly income under:
 - \$1,800 for a family of two
 - \$2,300 for a family of three
 - \$2,800 for a family of four
 - \$3,200 for a family of five

The MICHild application is designed to be family friendly and is used to decide whether the family should receive MICHild or Healthy Kids (full Medicaid) insurance. There is a \$5 monthly premium cost per family no matter how many children are approved. MICHild insurance covers: regular check ups; vaccination shots; emergency care; dental care; medicines; hospital care; pregnancy care and delivery; vision and hearing; mental health and substance abuse services.

Applications are also available in Arabic and Spanish. Thoroughly answering application questions determines how quickly the family is notified if they are eligible. Families that have questions or need help getting or completing the application can call the MICHild help line at 1-888-988-6300.

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In addition, Mr. Patterson spotlighted Cynthia Gomulka, youth specialist at Children's Village, for being selected State of Michigan Child Care Worker of the Year and Larry Falardeau, chief planner in the Planning and Economic Services Division, for earning the first ever Pioneer in Public Service Award for his efforts in promoting a trailway and greenway network in Oakland County and for receiving the Johanna Roskopp Award in recognition of his work in restoring and protecting the Clinton River Watershed.

He also recognized Jean Chamberlain, south oakland government liaison, for being chosen by the Michigan Women's Commission to receive the organization's "Thirty Years - Thirty Women Award" for her many and significant contributions to the state of Michigan.

Proudly pointing out that Oakland County would be Y2K compliant by the end of April this year, Mr. Patterson asked John Mahoney, director of Information Technology, and Joe Maletta, the point man on the project, to stand up and take a bow for the truly outstanding job they and their team have done in making sure the County's computer system doesn't crash at the stroke of midnight on January 1, 2000.

Mr. Patterson spent a fair amount of his time talking about the many successful programs which had been implemented by his Community Corrections Division under the able leadership of George Miller.

"It seems that every time I turn around, George and his people are coming up with a new program to save money, even produce revenues sometimes, but always relieve jail overcrowding," Mr. Patterson said.

In the area of future challenges, Mr. Patterson cited roads as an issue that threatens Oakland County's future economic viability. 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.

"Our congested and often pothole riddled roads have already claimed one victim, Control Power Reliance of Troy," Mr. Patterson said. "Frustrated by its inability to get trucks in and out of their site after 3:00 p.m. due to gridlock in the 14 Mile



A portion of the 280 plus person audience listens to the 1999 State of the County Address held at the MSU Conference Center in Troy.

Road/I-75 area, Control Power has decided to move its operation from Oakland County over to Macomb County."

Emphasizing that good roads are an economic development issue, Mr. Patterson warned that if quick and decisive action is not taken to relieve congestion and fix the roads, we may see an exodus of business from Oakland County. That's something, he said, we can't afford to let happen.

Technology issues such as GIS, the new Mortgage Application Acceleration Program and upgrades to the CLEMIS network comprised a central theme in the speech.

The Mortgage Application Acceleration Program (MAAP), which went on line February 1, allows banks and other lending institutions to access property record

information from the Internet to begin the loan application process. It cuts down the time required for loan approval and/or review from several weeks to, in some cases, just a day. In fact, under this easier and faster loan process, it's possible for an applicant to walk into a lending institution in the morning and walk out with money in hand that same afternoon. No other county in America has a similar program in operation.

The Geographic Information System (GIS), Mr. Patterson explained, is a

computerized base map which will replace the 4,500 paper base maps that have been manually maintained for many decades.

"When the GIS is fully operational later this year, the range of information and the levels of utilization that can be made available to the public and to the local units of government will be staggering," Mr. Patterson said.

For instance, GIS will be able to track gypsy moth infestation

and crime trends, depict sewer and drain locations and pinpoint sources of illness.

Woven throughout the text of his speech was the impact Oakland County's sound and prudent fiscal management practices has had on the county's ability to receive and retain a prestigious AAA bond rating from Wall Street. This premier rating, Mr. Patterson noted, will allow the county to refinance twelve separate bond issues, involving over \$60 million at a lower 3.89% interest rate. As a result, the taxpayers will enjoy a \$28 million interest savings over the next twenty years.

During his speech, Mr. Patterson revealed that for the first time ever in southeast Michigan crime fighting data would be shared across county lines.

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"The Macomb County Sheriff's Department, the Livingston County Sheriff's Department, the cities of Harper Woods and Fraser and the township of Plymouth will join us as partners in our state-of-the-art, high-tech crime fighting (CLEMIS) network," Mr. Patterson said. "Negotiations are presently under way to add twelve other jurisdictions outside of Oakland County."

Mr. Patterson closed his remarks by paying tribute to former County Clerk Lynn Allen who retired last year and Sheriff John Nichols who passed away on December 18. Mr. Patterson credited Mr. Allen with being an innovator who brought technology into an office laden with hundreds of thousands of paper transactions. He said Sheriff Nichols' achievements were "too numerous to mention and his impact on law enforcement too far reaching to chronicle tonight." Then Mr. Patterson introduced the Sheriff's widow, Jean Nichols, who received a thunderous ovation from the assembled guests.

"We do live in a world class community," Mr. Patterson said in closing his speech. "It is a great place to work, invest, recreate and raise a family. And it's a privilege to serve you and the good people of Oakland County."

Have You Overlooked an Important Employee Benefit?

As an employee of Oakland County, you can become a member of Oakland County Credit Union. We are a full-service financial institution committed to the credit union philosophy of "People Helping People."

Are bank fees eating away at your money? We offer free checking with overdraft protection, ATM and ATM/MasterMoney debit cards, no-surcharge ATM's at both credit union offices. Loans for all needs with no down payment required on any installment loan, mortgages and home equity lines of credit and closed-end loans are available. Savings programs from money market accounts to certificates of deposit and IRA programs are available to help you plan your financial future. We also have the Saver-Saurus Kids club to encourage our young savers to learn about managing money.

Call or stop by either office today.

Oakland County Credit Union is conveniently located on the County campus across from the Road Commission and in the Waterfall Plaza on Dixie Highway at Andersonville Road. Call the main office at 858-0010 or 332-9171 or the Lakeland branch at 623-9855 for more information.

Walk the Walk for Healthier Babies: Walk America April 24 & 25

All the proceeds will go toward research, community services, education and advocacy to prevent birth defects and infant mortality.

"Saving Babies Together" is the theme for the 29th Annual March of Dimes Walk America campaign which will be held this year on Saturday, April 24 and Sunday, April 25 at 15 sites throughout southeast Michigan, three of which are located in Oakland County.

This year Oakland County employees will walk on Saturday, April 24 at the Auburn Hills campus of Oakland Community College. Registration starts at 8:00 a.m. with the walk commencing at 9:00 a.m. An array of 1950's memorabilia will be set up at the various check points around the eight-mile course.

"Walk America is the original and largest event of its kind in the country," said Laurie Van Pelt, chairperson of the Oakland County Walk America Steering Committee. "All of the proceeds

will go toward research, community services, education and advocacy, all of which are aimed at preventing birth defects and infant mortality."

Last year, the Oakland County team fielded 300 walkers who raised more than \$33,000, a nearly \$5,000 increase over the previous year's total. The performance was good enough for a 4th place finish among teams from southeast Michigan, behind EDS, Kroger and Kmart. This year's goal for the Oakland County team is 325 walkers and \$36,000 in contributions.

"The steering committee and I need your support if the 1999 Walk America is to be a success," said Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson. "Every department should actively participate and I urge everyone to get involved in some capacity."

Over its long history, the March of Dimes has saved millions of babies from death or disability. For example, an estimated 135 million children have been spared from the ravages of polio by polio vaccines. Nearly 15,000 babies have been saved from mental retardation by the PKU screening test and more than two million babies have been cared for in neonatal intensive care units since 1990.

But much more can and must be done to help those who can't help themselves. Each day 81 babies die before their first birthday, 411 babies are born with birth defects, 144 babies are born with a low birth weight and 1,163 babies are born prematurely.



Bea Stitt

She's known affectionately to the District Court judges she works with as Aunt Bea, probably because of her organizational skills which keep everything neat and tidy. Bea Stitt is a lead investigator with Pretrial Services and her exceptional job performance has earned her Employee of the Month honors.

"Bea is always there for us," said her boss, George Miller, manager of the Community Corrections Division. "She is someone who goes the extra mile."

Bea spends most of her time on the road visiting seven different district courts. Her day starts before 6:00 a.m. when the other investigators she supervises begin calling to tell her what their needs are for the that particular day.

"The best part of my job is meeting so many different people," Bea said. "I really love helping other people."

Bea relishes the challenge and opportunity to provide assistance whenever and wherever she can. She began her career with Oakland County ten years ago and was intimately involved in implementing the Pretrial Services program.

As a single mom, Bea spends a lot of her time away from work tending to the needs of her 14 year old son and 21 year old daughter. In those rare instances when Bea has some leisure time on her hands, she likes to read and travel.

"During one of my free summer months, I would really like to take my first ever trip out of the country," Bea said.



Allan Robbins

Allan Robbins, technical assistant for the Health Division, learned of his selection as Employee of the Month by way of some chicanery. Allan was lured to the second floor conference room in the EOB under the premise he would be meeting with Health Division Manager Rosemarie Rowney and Human Services Director Dr. Tom Gordon to discuss an ongoing GPS project. But when he walked into the room, Allan came face to face with Mr. Patterson and his directors.

"It was kind of a shock," Allan recalled. "I didn't realize this kind of thing was going to happen."

Allan handles management information system issues for Health such as GIS and GPS, database development and hardware/software support. Allan began his ten year career with Oakland County as a storekeeper for Health in 1990. But for the last three

years he's worked as a technical assistant.

"Allan has a natural and innate technical ability," Rowney said. "He possesses a can-do attitude and goes above and beyond to help others."

According to Allan, the best part of his job is the people he works with.

"The technology is really something I enjoy," Allan said. "It's more than a job with me; it's my hobby."

Allan has been interested in computers ever since he was twelve years old. As he puts it - "It's nice to do something you actually enjoy."

Rest and relaxation for Allan involves plenty of fishing and playing softball. Allan and his wife Jennifer, who owns an antique shop in Clarkston, are the proud owners of a trio of Jack Russell terriers.



Mark Slankster

"An outstanding employee" is the way Mark Conner, chief of Maintenance and Operations, describes Mark Slankster who works as a general maintenance mechanic at the Jail.

The six people who work with Mark went to Conner and suggested that Mark be recognized for his extraordinary job performance. So, Conner nominated Mark for Employee of the Month honors.

"I was very happy and surprised by the whole thing," Mark said.

Mark, who has worked for the county the last three years, the first thirteen months of which were spent with the Drain Office, does plumbing, electrical, mechanical and some heating and cooling work at the Jail. The best part of his job, says Mark, are the guys he works with. He says they're a good crew who work together extremely well.

A sports enthusiast, Mark spends his winter weekends snowmobiling in lower Michigan and the UP and his summer weekends boating on Lake St. Clair, Torch Lake or one of the many lakes in Waterford where he lives.

Youth Assistance Worker Fondly Remembered

by Kal Engelberg, Chief of Probate Court Youth Assistance Unit



Carol Anne Ripley

*A mentor, a Teacher,
a Scholar, a Colleague
and a Friend.*

*A Child Advocate,
a Volunteer, a Supervisor,
and a Computer Guru.*

*A lover of flowers and
family . . . who left us*

On January 13, 1999, Carol Anne Ripley, a 21 year veteran employee of the County, suddenly passed away at the age of 46. Carol began her career with the county in 1976 as a children's supervisor at Children's Village. In 1979, she transferred to the Probate Court as a child welfare worker. After taking a year off to complete her masters in social work, Carol returned to the Court in 1985 to be a part of the Youth Assistance Program where she soon became a supervisor. Youth Assistance is the county's unique, award-winning delinquency prevention program. She was the recipient of a Probate Court Certificate of Recognition for her leadership activities in a retail fraud study (1990), quality control efforts in Youth Assistance (1992) and for her involvement on a Guardianship Work Team (1993). In 1995, she was nominated for the Probate Court Employee of the Year and in 1996, was honored as the Probate Court Employee of the Year Creativity Award recipient.

No chronology of events can adequately describe the contributions Carol made to youth, families, college student interns, staff and administration of the Court. While she will be deeply missed, she will not be forgotten.

To that end, in keeping with her belief in education and her commitment to disadvantaged

youth, a skill building scholarship fund has been set up in her name. It is designed to help young people gain success and recognition by learning or enhancing a skill that will promote their self esteem, and ultimately their quality of life. Promoting self esteem is a proven delinquency prevention strategy. These funds will be used to provide academic tutors, to assist young people to get back to their grade level so they can compete with their fellow class mates. It will also be used to pay for such things as dance, music instrument, karate, etc. lessons and materials needed to participate in these activities.

Because of the unique structure of the Coordinating Council, every penny received for this scholarship fund will go to pay for lessons or materials. There is no administrative/indirect costs.

Please address any contributions to this fund to: Oakland County Youth Assistance Coordinating Council, 1200 N. Telegraph Road, Building 14 East, Pontiac, Michigan 48341-0452. Note on the check that it is for the Carol Ripley Fund. If you have any questions, please contact Kal Engelberg, Chief of Youth Assistance at 858-0055.

Oakland County Parks Lose a Friend

For nearly a quarter of a century, George Lekas, owner of Oak Management, took great pride in providing the best food service possible to Oakland County Parks. According to those who knew him, George would rather lose money than sacrifice quality. It's a philosophy and way of doing business he carried with him until the day he died. George, an Orchard Lake resident, lost his twelve year battle with cancer during the early morning hours of March 2.

"George was the kind of guy who would give you the shirt off his back," recalled Ralph Richard, manager of Parks & Recreation. "He ran a first class operation. In the fifteen years I knew him, I only received one complaint about food service, which is quite a tribute to the way he ran his business."

Richard also noted that George was very active in the community, coaching hockey, soccer and baseball, which was his real passion. In fact, George's West Bloomfield

Little League team won a championship a couple of years ago, Richard noted.

Oak Management is an independently owned company which holds the concession lease for all Oakland County Park operations. But the 400 full time and seasonal staff who are the heart and soul of the business also provide food service in other parts of the Detroit area including St. Clair Shores. Over the years, Oak Management has also had food service contracts with Bay Pointe, the Links of Pinewood and Meadowbrook. Dan Shaw, who had been with George for the past twenty-one years, will now run the business.

George, who was 49 at the time of his death, leaves behind his wife, Janet, and their two children, 11 year old Andrew and 8 year old Annalise.

Memorials may be made to the Kamanos Cancer Institute.

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Gerald Bannasch of Operation & Maintenance received a S-1 Classification waterworks system operator from MDEQ.

Suzanne Reynolds of Water Maintenance received S-3 Classification waterworks system operator from MDEQ.

Ruth Allor of Water Maintenance received a S-4 Classification waterworks system operator from MDEQ.

Larry Falardeau, Planning & Economic Development Services Division, received the Johanna Roskopp Award at the Clinton River Watershed Council's annual meeting and awards dinner on February 16.

Jennifer Mason, senior personnel analyst, completed an eleven week course and passed a certification examination to receive her Senior Professional Human Resource Certification.

For creating a positive impact on tomorrow's workforce, **Ray Delasko**, Parks & Recreation, recently received a "Clarkston Cares Award". He was praised for promoting positive youth development in the high school and college-age students who are his charges each summer.

Oakland County Parks employee **Brad Baker** won MRPA's Maintenance Leadership Award.

Jan Pung, public communications for Parks & Recreation, has been re-elected to a three-year term on the Leadership Oakland Board of Directors. Jan is a 1991 graduate of the program which educates participants about trends, issues and services in Oakland County.

Thumbs up to our **Grounds crew** for keeping the county complex clear and safe through all the snow this winter.

promotions

Timothy Bliszack was promoted from maintenance laborer at Eight Mile Water Department to maintenance mechanic I to the Pump Maintenance Department.

Jerry Seawright, Children's Village, was promoted from youth specialist supervisor to program supervisor, effective February 13, 1999.

Sherry Forrester, Children's Village, was promoted from youth specialist II to youth specialist supervisor, effective February 13, 1999.

John Worthington, SOCSDS was promoted from pump maintenance mechanic I to pump maintenance mechanic II on January 30, 1999.

David Schlak, Sewer Drain Maintenance, was promoted from maintenance laborer to maintenance mechanic I on January 30, 1999.

Samuel Turner, Pump Maintenance, was promoted from maintenance mechanic I to maintenance mechanic II on January 30, 1999.

Douglas Buchholz, Drain Commission, was promoted from assistant chief engineer to deputy and manager of Operations & Maintenance on November 7, 1998.

Gary Aho was promoted from civil engineer III to assistant chief engineer of Wastewater Treatment Operations on November 7, 1998.

Jearl Hoisington was promoted from construction inspector IV to cross connection & pretreatment coordinator on September 12, 1998.

Donna Genre, Risk Management & Safety, was promoted from clerk III to secretary I on August 29, 1998.

Suzanne Reynolds, Drain Commission, was promoted from maintenance laborer to maintenance mechanic I on January 16, 1999.

Carlton Samson, Drain Commission, was promoted from maintenance laborer to maintenance mechanic I on January 16, 1999.

Chris Hamilton, Drain Commission, was promoted from engineering aide I to engineering aide II on January 16, 1999.

Kim Hutchison of Operation & Maintenance, Drain Commission, was hired from general clerical-PTNE to general clerical-FTE on October 10, 1998.

Roger Lowery, Custodial, was promoted to custodial worker II on 1-16-99.

Jack Willis, Maintenance, was promoted on 8-1-98 to skilled maintenance mechanic II.

John VanCamp, Maintenance, was promoted to maintenance supervisor II on 2-27-99.

Terry Stefanovich, Custodial, was promoted on 2-27-99 to mobile unit custodial worker.

Donald Wood, Maintenance, was promoted to maintenance planner I on 3-27-99. **Cherylyn Spencer**, Custodial, was promoted on 12-5-98 to custodial worker II.

Michael Rana, Maintenance, was promoted to skilled maintenance mechanic III on 3-27-99.

ning & going swap shop

new hires

Jeffrey Inglsbee was hired at Eight Mile Water Department as general helper on March 1.

Alan Wirehaugh was hired as SOCSDS as general helper on March 15, 1999.

Corinne French of Sewer Drain Maintenance was hired as student on November 9, 1998.

James Wineka of Operations & Maintenance was hired as civil engineer III on January 25, 1999.

Loretta Davis-Brazil of Water Maintenance was hired on January 19, 1999 as general clerical.

Adam Hopper of SOCSDS was hired as pump maintenance mechanic on January 21, 1999.

Children's Village welcomes new youth specialists **Matt Bainbridge, Steven Wood, Matthew Nagy, Tammica Dotson, Allen Timney** and **Keith Miller**.

Beverly Green has been appointed clinical psychologist at Children's Village.

Kara Campbell was hired as a intern for the Operation & Maintenance Department on February 15 1999.

Dean Hetherington, Pump Maintenance, was hired as pump maintenance mechanic I on February 16, 1999.

William Willis was hired into Custodial as as general helper on 3-8-99.

Willie Burkett, was hired into Custodial as general helper on 2-1-99.

Marie Caperton, was hired on 2-8-99 as general helper in Custodial.

Joseph Murphy, was hired as facilities engineer II in FM&O Administration on 2-22-99.

Michael Hughson hired into Facilities Management on 2-2-99 as property management specialist.

transfers

Kell Rice transferred from Sewer and Drain Maintenance to Pump Maintenance on February 27, 1999.

Mary Mitchell transferred to Children's Village from Community Mental Health on January 4, 1999as a typist II.

Jean Tingue transferred to Children's Village from the Oakland County Jail as a general staff nurse on January 16, 1999.

Donyale Seay transferred from the Sheriff's Dept. to Children's Village as an Intake Clerk on January 19, 1999.

Jamie Lyon transferred on February 1, 1999 to Children's Village from Community Corrections as employee records specialist.

Corinne French, student in the Sewer & Drain Maintenance Unit transferred to Circuit Court on January 30, 1999.

resignations

Douglas Stover of SOCSDS resigned on October 16, 1998.

Jon Kohnert of Sewer & Drain Maintenance resigned on November 9, 1998.

Barbara Percoulis of Water Maintenance resigned on November 6, 1998.

John VanCamp, Maintenance, resigned on 2-26-99 for an aviation career.

Teresa Chapman, Custodial, resigned on 1-1-99.

Greg Gagnon, Facilities Management, resigned on 2-10-99.

marriages

Annette Zian, Oakland County Prosecutor's Office and **Michael Krecek**, Health Division, were married on July 11, 1998.

Lisa Tomko, Oakland County Prosecutor's Office, married Larry Halushka were married on July 25, 1998.

David Cook of Water Maintenance married Anne Stahl on October 24, 1998.

Samuel Turner of Pump Maintenance married Carolyn Yables on November 27, 1998.

Rich Cook of Metering married Anita Vaughn on August 7, 1998.

Mike Donnellon, Parks and Recreation, married Connie Habersetzer on October 10, 1998.

Brett Battishill, Facilities Maintenance, married Nancy Needham on 12-18-98.

births

Donovan McCabe and his wife Cynthia welcomed Kyle on October 26, 1998.

Steve Stuart and his wife Kara welcomed Sebastian Cavanaugh on October 28, 1998.

Tim Bliszack and his wife Cathy welcomed Morgan Kelly on January 8, 1999.

retirements

Henry Roehl, FM&O maintenance supervisor II, retired on 2-26-99.

Employee of the Month



Larry Senkowski

For twenty years, Larry Senkowski, December Employee of the Month, has traveled a dual track career path. He was a full time biology teacher in the Ferndale School District and also worked part time, summers and weekends for Oakland County's Equalization Division. In 1991 when Senkowski retired from the school district, he was elevated to full time status in Equalization.

"I was surprised, I guess," Senkowski said with a chuckle when asked how he felt about being chosen as Employee of the Month. "It's something most people don't anticipate. I was pleased."

As a real property appraiser, Senkowski performs assessments for some twenty units of government, making sure tax records are accurate and up to date.

For the past twenty-five years, Senkowski has spent much of his spare time refereeing high school basketball, football, softball and baseball games. Although, since retiring from his teaching duties, he has limited his officiating to just football games.

"He's one of the most dedicated people we've got," said Robert Vandermark, manager of the Equalization Division. "Larry's the kind of guy who exceeds production estimates and quality requirements without being asked."

Senkowski and his wife, who live in Macomb Township, have four grown children and five grandchildren with a sixth one on the way.



Rose Marie Rottenberg

A rose has bloomed at the Medical Care Facility and blossomed into one of January's Employee's of the Month. Rose Marie Rottenberg, typist I, better known as Rose to her coworkers at MCF, is a bit taken back by the honor which has been bestowed upon her.

"I think there's a lot of other people who deserve this, not me," Rose said. "I don't feel I'm so outstanding."

Her boss, Shirla Kugler, manager of the Medical Care Facility, begs to disagree. Kugler uses words like hardworking and diligent to describe Rose's job performance.

"Rose is always willing to help no matter what the task might be and do whatever she can to alleviate any kind of problem," Kugler said. "It

can be a mundane task, but Rose will get right in there and do a good job with it."

Rose has worked for the county four years full time and three years part time. Prior to that, she and her husband, who is now retired, owned a chemical company for twelve years.

In her spare time, Rose is involved with her church, St. Daniels. But she and her husband have also acquired an interest in becoming foster grandparents for Catholic Social Services on the weekends.

The Rottenbergs, who live in Waterford Hills, have three sons, one of whom is married and the other two will be walking down the aisle this year.

As with the one son, mom and dad plan to send the other two on honeymoons to Jamaica.

1999 Totals

\$5,962.55

30

78%

Casual Day Fund

ESP Suggestions

Direct Deposit