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Statewide Headlines

- Bond could be a tough sell to lawmakers
- Marlinga, 2 others try to trim charges
- DESIREE COOPER: Filling our prison system isn't likely to unlock justice
- German firm to add 240 workers
- Detroit may close 40 schools
- Ontario demands tougher water protection in Great Lakes agreements with U.S.
- Number of Canadian trash trucks doubles in 2004, lawmakers say
- Perrigo says deal vaults it into world market
- Unknown illness hits students in Fowlerville
- State could lose Cabinet clout as Abraham quits

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House Action Report

11/10/04 Vol. XLI Rpt. 169

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Messages from the Senate:
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MIRS Capitol Capsule, Tuesday, November 16, 2004

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QUOTE OF THE DAY:

"I'm still very young and energetic."

—Rep. Dianne **BYRUM** (D-Onondaga) when asked her feelings about being one of the two most experienced members of the House.

INSIDE TODAY'S MIRS:

- [Interview With House Democratic Leader Dianne Byrum](#)
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Interview With House Democratic Leader Dianne Byrum

In January, House Democratic Leader Dianne **BYRUM** (D-Onondaga) will be

MIRS Capitol Capsule

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MIRS Events Calendar

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Latest Forum Posts

- [Interview With House Dem...](#)
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SB 1155, SB 1156, SB 1157, SB 1185, SB 1341, SB 1416, SB 1434, SB 1447, SB 1448, SB 1449, SB 1450, SB 1453, SB 1463, SB 1464, SB 1465, SB 1466, SB 1467, SB 1468, SB 1469, SB 1470, SB 1471, SB 1472, SCR 0046

Reports of Standing

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Senate Action Report

11/10/04 Vol. XLI Rpt. 190

Messages from the House:

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General Orders:

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Reports of Standing

Committees:

SB 0823, SB 1434, HB 5832, HB 5971, HB 6008, HB 6009, HB 6010,

entering her final term in the House with a sense of momentum following the five-seat pick up by her caucus in the Nov. 2 election.

Although the Democrats will still be the minority party in the House, the margin is a slender 58-52, compared to current GOP stronghold of 63-47. Those 52 Democrats represent a number that's only four votes short of the 56 that will be required to pass, or kill, legislation.

MIRS interviewed Byrum via telephone today. The following are excerpts from that conversation:

Q. How would you describe your relationship with House Speaker-Elect Craig DeROCHE (R-NOVI)? Have you even had a chance to talk with him much yet?

A. We had some brief conversations before the leadership elections. We actually have a meeting planned for next week. I'm looking forward to it. I'm looking forward to working with a new Speaker and looking forward to a new session.

Q. How would you describe your relationship right now with House Speaker Rick JOHNSON (R-LeRoy)?

A. I think it's cordial. I mean, I don't take anything personally about the last campaign cycle. We do have lame duck, and he's on his way out, but we do have six days of session left and we're going to conduct ourselves professionally for the next couple weeks here.

Q. Over the last two years many people observed that on key House votes . . . on issues like the cigarette tax hike etc., passage was obtained with a combination of a majority of the Democratic caucus coupled with a few Republicans. Was the House Democratic caucus part of the working Majority on those major issues?

A. I think that was true. The House Democratic caucus stood with the Governor. I think we did deliver the majority of the votes on the major policy initiatives that the Governor asked the Legislature for.

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Public Acts Listing

Report Date: 11/15/04



- [PA 402 - SB 1149](#)
- S-11/12/04 F-11/15/04, IE

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Political Poll Cross Tabs

Oct. 2004 - Oakland County Presidential Poll

Denno/Noor Survey - 400 Sam
+ or - 5 percent

-  [- Questions and Results](#)
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HB 6173, HB 6174, HB 6177, SB 1463, HB 4450, HB 5544

Third Reading:

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House Cmte Schedule

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2004
(UPDATED: 11/05/04)

- 8:30 AM - JUDICIARY
- 9:00 AM - ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY
- 9:00 AM - HEALTH POLICY
- 10:30 AM - AGRICULTURE & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
- 10:30 AM - COMMERCE
- 10:30 AM - REGULATORY REFORM
- 1:30 PM - ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY: ANTI-TRUST

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2004
(UPDATED: 11/08/04)

- 9:00 AM - ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY
- 9:00 AM - COMMERCE
- 10:00 AM - LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENT
- 2:00 PM - LAND USE AND ENVIRONMENT
- 10:30 AM - TRANSPORTATION
- 11:00 AM - APPROPRIATIONS
- 11:00 AM - HIGHER EDUCATION

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Senate Cmte Schedule

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2004

Q. Do you expect that dynamic to continue over the next two years?

A. I think you're going to continue to see our House Democratic Caucus supporting the Governor. I think what could be different the next session is that I hope we'll be able to build coalitions in the middle.

I hope we'll be able to reach over to the Republican side of the aisle to build those coalitions. I think that would be a way for us to work together for the people of Michigan.

Q. It sounds like you're hoping to actually create some policy and pass some of your policy items?

A. Well, I think it's going to be a give and take on both Republican and Democratic policy initiatives. Now I've had some initial conversations with the new Majority Floor Leader Chris **WARD** (R-Brighton). I'd like to work with him on some new election reform legislation. It's something that I started in the Senate and would like to see it reach fruition — things like early voting, increased accountability on how elections are handled, no excuse absentee voting, and you know a variety of good government election reform issues that shouldn't be partisan in nature.

Q Do you feel that he was interested in some of those issues?

A. Yes I do. In fact I had a good working relationship with Chris Ward on the election consolidation package that moved through the Legislature.

Q. I know this will be hard for you, but which legislator, that you're going to be missing due to term limits, are you going to really miss most?

A. Oh gosh, I hadn't even thought of that question. I was close to all of them, but the one who had a leadership role would be Rep. Jack **MINORE** (D-Flint). He was also the Assistant Leader of the House. Jack was very helpful in a number of ways behind the scenes. He didn't always get credit for that.

(UPDATED: 11/05/04)

- 1:00 PM - JUDICIARY
- 1:00 PM - TRANSPORTATION
- 2:00 PM - APPROPRIATIONS
- 3:00 PM - COMMERCE & LABOR
- 3:00 PM - FAMILIES & HUMAN SERVICES
- 3:00 PM - NATURAL RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2004

(UPDATED: 11/09/04)

- 1:00 PM - FINANCE
- 1:00 PM - LOCAL, URBAN & STATE AFFAIRS
- 2:00 PM - EDUCATION
- 3:00 PM - TECHNOLOGY & ENERGY
- 3:00 PM - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, SMALL BUSINESS & REGULATORY REFORM

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Q. Do you pretty much know already what your agenda is going to be for the upcoming year?

A. I think we have some good indications but we don't know exactly what our agenda is going to be.

We're going to be working with the new freshmen legislators to help formulate that. They're all coming in with their ideas and concerns and the things they're hoping to get accomplished. So we'll be working with them. We'll be doing a retreat early in the year where we'll start to build the new relationships of the newly seated Legislature.

So we're going to be missing very much those who are leaving, but we're also going to be welcoming in those new legislators. We need to get to know each other to start building a working relationship. That takes some time.

Q. Those retreats are becoming automatic and just a part of the process?

A. They're very important, too.

You know, we always did the retreats, even in the pre-term limited Legislature. But, they're becoming more important now because you have such a short time frame to build those working relationships. When you're working in a body of 110 people, group dynamics are significant.

Q. You and Rep. Bill VAN REGENMORTER (R-Hudsonville) are now the most experienced people in the Legislature — at least in the House. What's that say?

A. I don't want to be called the Dean of the Legislature. That term belongs to Bill Van Regenmorter. That's not the title I want. I'm still very young and energetic.

Q. Since 2006 is going to be such a political year, with Gov. Jennifer GRANHOLM, U.S. Sen. Debbie STABENOW (D-Lansing) and the Senate up, does that mean we should be looking at 2005 as the year in which to get things done?

A. I really hope so. We have a real opportunity, and that's the spirit by which I'm going to start the year in terms of working with Republican leadership. We have a real opportunity here to come together and try to do right by the people of Michigan.

We'll be working under some very difficult circumstances in terms of dealing with state revenues and the budget, with the structural budget problem we have. On those structural budget issues, we're not going to lay the blame on anyone. We have to work together collectively to solve it.

Q. Do you expect the budget to dominate legislative activity again?

A. I do. We are going to have to do some policy initiatives as well, because they'll have some budgetary impact.

We're wrestling with the high cost of healthcare currently in our budget. I would like to see some more help from Washington, D.C. quite frankly because they need to play a bigger role in helping the states in general with the high cost of healthcare. It's not just a Michigan problem. It's going on across all sectors of the economy in all of the states.

Q. We received a news advisory recently that featured Democrats calling for action on the federal level on the Canadian trash import issue.

With the Republicans signing off on that, reluctantly, and passing the legislation Gov. Granholm wanted — that issue could now be considered bipartisan. So, now that we're seeing a call for action on the federal level, does that show that maybe it was always primarily a federal issue, not a state issue?

A. I think the public does not want the state of Michigan to be the dumping grounds for Canadian trash. We always believed that the most complete solution was a federal solution. But Michigan also realized that nothing was getting done on the federal level and that we had to kind of take the sovereignty issue, in terms of state's rights. So that's why we pushed as hard as we did - because we

knew we were on the side of the people of Michigan.

So, when we were stalled in the state legislature, we took it to the public. Ultimately that decision at the end of the day is what created the public policy we could get to the Governor's desk. It was the strong public support that the House Democratic caucus was able to generate by going statewide with the issue and build up the court of public opinion on it.

So we saw the success of having legislation passed and signed into law and then when the presidential campaigns came to Michigan we were able to put them on the record in terms of what they were going to do with federal policy in regard to the trash issue.

So, I think we have the President on record in favor of trying to work out a system to deal with the importation of trash, as well as the Great Lakes issue — the Water Legacy Act. Those issues track quite similarly.

Q. Are you looking ahead at all, beyond the next two years, as to where Dianne Byrum will be going?

A. No. It's my anticipation that I will not be running for public office. My full focus right now is to make sure we have a very successful House Democratic caucus. I want to make sure that when I leave the Legislature at the end of this next term that I leave the Michigan House a better place than when I walked in.

[**\(Discuss This Topic | 0 Comments\)**](#)

Olds School Versus New School Budgeting - Will New Approach Work?

Commenting on predictions that Michigan will face a \$1 billion budget deficit in Fiscal Year 2006 (See *MIRS 11/15/04* edition), Senate Majority Leader Ken **SIKKEMA** (R-Wyoming) warned that the old school of budgeting won't get the state through its crisis.

"These predictions are based on how government has always worked, but we

need to realize that system isn't working," said Sikkema. "Suggesting that automatic spending increases and premature budget commitments are the way to do business just won't fly anymore. It's time to wake up and smell the red ink."

As reported in *MIRS*, Citizens' Research Council Director of State Government Affairs Tom **CLAY** is predicting that the combination of a series of new spending pressures and federal revenue reductions mean Michigan lawmakers will be facing a \$1 billion hole in the Fiscal Year 2006 — the budget that Gov. Jennifer **GRANHOLM** must develop and present to the Legislature next February.

"Huge spending increases or committing to spending increases with no clue how to pay for them is what leads to monster deficits," Sikkema said. "Albert Einstein once said, 'Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.' It's time we stop the insanity in Lansing."

Sikkema has asked his fellow caucus members to read the book *The Price of Government*. Written by David **OSBORNE** and Peter **HUTCHINSON**, the book essentially argues that the standard government budgeting process in the United States simply won't work. Gov. Jennifer **GRANHOLM** has also asked her cabinet to review that book and work in subgroups on how the state's departments can work more effectively together to provide services (See *MIRS Nov. 1, 2004* edition).

The gist of the book is outcome budgeting. The authors describe a collaborative process where priorities are identified and then funded with available resources from the top of the list on down.

During an interview with *MIRS* in August, co-author Hutchinson described the difference between his view of budgeting and traditional budgeting:

"The way I explain to people is the following: In traditional budgeting, agencies are invited to propose how they would spend money in terms of the costs to run their agencies. When they're told that in traditional budgeting the focus is

on cost, what they get from that is: "OK, we need to create as much cost as possible because it's a contest to see who can get the most costs covered."

"My smart aleck way of putting it is, 'if you budget for costs, you always get more of them.' The incentive is built in to make things look like they cost more and to hide cost and to kind of make cost the name of the game. It's [the traditional budget process] all about the agencies and it's all about their programs.

"What budgeting for outcomes does is it turns that whole thing upside down and it says to agencies what matters are results and we want the most results we can get for the price. So the intent the agencies have is, instead of inventing and piling up and ascribing costs in all these bizarre ways, is to figure out how they can produce the most results for the money. To put on the table proposals every year, and every time they get an opportunity to create more results."

According to long-term observers and participants of the budget process, it is time for some frank debate and discussion about the state's budget.

"It's so abundantly clear we're trying to provide more government than we can afford and we're going through a very painful period of adjustment," said former State Budget Director turned Kalamazoo County Administrator Don **GILMER**.

Gilmer said the idea of lawmakers sitting down with the governor and her staff and having a collaborative, cooperative look at priorities and budgeting for the state is a good one.

"We're going to have to decide whether poor people are going to have a lot less health care," Gilmer remarked. "We're going to have to decide whether we're going to have as many state troopers on the road."

Viewing the world now from the perspective of local government, Gilmer argued the one thing that has yet to happen at the legislative level is a genuine look at the mandates that the state imposes upon local government and some "real repealer" bills moving

through the process.

"We're seeing the taxes [and revenues] cut, but we're not seeing the demands on state and local government decreased," Gilmer notes. "So we're going to have these services that are all well and good but we don't have the money to pay for them. Either we can raise taxes to fund them, or we need to start repealing those [services] commensurate with the tax [revenue] cuts."

Craig **RUFF**, president of Public Sector Consultants, said the process Hutchinson outlines is "nothing new."

"There's nothing new about zero based budgeting," Ruff said. "This is something that gets re-treaded about every 10 or 15 years. It's always good for an organization -- including government -- to set priorities."

However, Ruff warns that the process of "doing a cross walk from a typical way state budgets are set to this new zero based budgeting" is a complex one.

"I'm sure the agencies are going through bedlam to build a budget from the bottom up and I assume at the same time they are being asked to build a budget the old way," Ruff remarked.

Bill **BALLENGER**, editor of *Inside Michigan Politics*, said outcome, or zero-based budgeting dates back to the late 1970s in the federal government. Despite the fact that it's an old idea, Ballenger said that doesn't mean it's a bad one.

"Frankly, it's the way a budget ought to be put together every year," Ballenger said. "The problem with zero based budgeting is it requires such rationalization skills and such effort for one year that after that they [budget officials] sort of put things on auto pilot."

Ballenger added that the concept is just placing government on the same plane as most residents.

"Zero based budgeting is just asking government to do what most practical, common sense Americans do in their own households," he said.

[\(Discuss This Topic | 0 Comments\)](#)

Stabenow In The Crosshairs?

If you thought the battle over banning gay marriages was over, think again. There are multiple signs that the anti-gay and pro-marriage groups are preparing to trot out the issue again in the 2006 elections and U.S. Sen. Debbie **STABENOW** (D-Lansing) is on the hit list.

Last week Oakland County ultra-conservative Tom **McMILLIN** warned that Stabenow would be targeted because she did not back the U.S. Constitutional amendment when it went down in defeat 50-48 last summer.

McMillin expects another vote. Then an e-mail came out this week from a Michigan group, which forwarded a *Boston Globe* story by Anne **KORNBLUT** suggesting the pro-marriage forces have been "emboldened by the 11-state sweep of bans on same-sex marriage Nov. 2."

Later on in the newspaper article, Stabenow is mentioned by name —

"In the Senate, at least five Democrats are expected to face close races in the next election, putting them in the crosshairs of Republican strategy every time there is a vote on same-sex marriage. One of them, Debbie Stabenow of Michigan, represents a state that voted to ban same sex-marriage Nov. 2...If the Nov 2 vote unsettled Democrats anywhere, it was in Michigan and Oregon, which supported Kerry and voted to ban same sex marriage at the same time."

McMillin, speaking on the *Off the Record* Public TV broadcast, said:

Proposal 2 "excited the party base" and it will be used again to do the same thing down the road. He sighted a broad-based coalition of African-American, Union households, and conservatives who help to pass the amendment.

"That's the kind of crossover support

you need to pass a ballot plan," he said.

He is hoping it will also spell trouble for Stabenow in 2006.

*(Contributed by Senior Capitol Correspondent Tim **SKUBICK**)*

[**\(Discuss This Topic | 0 Comments\)**](#)

Ad Board OKs Canadian Contract

The state Administrative Board today approved a \$213,000 state contract with an Ontario, Canada firm to purchase 14 bomb squad suits for the Michigan State Police.

The suits, which cost \$8,853 each, are bomb disposal suits and helmets with chemical and biological visors.

The contract request to the Finance and Claims Committee of the Ad Board was described as a sole-source, best source contract that triggered a request from the board for the contract request to be re-written to include a listing of any other companies that could provide the clothing (*See MIRS, Nov. 9*).

Sean **CARLSON**, director of the Department of Management & Budget Acquisition Services, told *MIRS* the purchase was made from a list of contractors that had been approved by the federal General Services Administration (GSA) in a competitive bid.

According to Carlson there were three approved vendors, two Canadian manufacturers of clothing and one American distributor. The distributor, however, no longer carried the suit. Carlson said the state went with the lowest bidder and negotiated another \$200 reduction in the cost of each suit.

The cost is 100-percent federally funded through Homeland Security money.

Carlson said the state is currently using GSA contract lists more frequently to ensure the state doesn't let any federal funding lapse. He told *MIRS* the state acquisition services division is also in the process of creating a state homeland

security-purchasing program similar to MiDEAL that allows local units of government to purchase goods and services through state contracts.

"We are working with the State Police and Department of Military Affairs to create purchasing categories that mirror the GSA groups with a list of multiple state vendors in each category for homeland security purchases," Carlson explained. "This would help local units of government to effectively and efficiently purchase homeland security equipment off state contracts. The system would be patterned much like the GSA schedule only at the state level," he said, adding that the goal is to leverage the most federal dollars and optimize taxpayer dollars. "When it comes to security, purchases need to be made in a timely fashion."

[\(Discuss This Topic | 0 Comments\)](#)

Survey: MEAP Doesn't Help Our Kids

A new survey released today by the Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice suggests that parents don't hold dear the so-called Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) test.

The survey found that parents generally don't view the MEAP as something that is used to help their child. The Center is arguing that what is driving a lot of the lack of enthusiasm for the test among parents is a lack of knowledge.

For example, only 5 percent of survey participants claim they know what such standardized tests are for. Only 1 percent of those asked listed standardized test scores as being an important indicator of whether a child is getting a good education.

"Standardized tests alone don't meet the needs of students and parents, yet teachers and schools are spending more time, energy and money on them than ever," said Teri **MOBLO**, director of the Lansing-based Great Lakes Center. "Standardized testing is not a bad thing if it is one of many ways that student progress is assessed. But we must find

better ways to use such tests to help individual children, and we must address the other things that parents believe are even more important for their kids."

The survey found that parents rate grades, report cards and classroom tests as the most important indicators of whether their child is getting a quality education. Their child's interest in and attitude about school come next.

Conducted by EPIC/MRA, the study included interviews with 1,700 parents in early October and has a margin of error of 3 percentage points.

The following are some of the findings of the survey:

- 20 percent of parents believe their child's test results will actually be used to specifically help their child improve his or her performance.
- Only one-third of all parents believe that such tests provide a good measure of their own child's abilities.
- Two-thirds of parents do not discuss standardized tests at parent-teacher conferences. This is a fact the center argues raises the question of how valuable the tests are since they're not being discussed.
- Only one percent of parents listed standardized test scores as being an important indicator of whether or not their child is getting a good education.
- 5 percent of parents claim they know what such tests were designed for and 30 percent of parents do not know what the results of such tests are used for.
- When asked what their child needs in order to be successful, parents did not mention standardized tests.
- One in four parents say schools spend either too much or too little time prepping kids for tests.
- A large segment of parents still don't seem to be in agreement on how standardized test results ought to be used.
- One in three parents said they feel that

rewards such as increased funding from the state or higher property values based on a school's test results is a bad idea.

- One in three parents asked feel that the current state and federal government consequences under the No Child Left Behind Act for schools that perform poorly on such tests are a bad idea.

"What this study suggests is that while parents don't reject standardized tests, they don't seem to be in agreement on how useful the tests are or how they benefit their individual children. Parents are concerned that time and energy spent on tests ought to directly benefit their children today instead of children in the future," according to Ed **SARPOLUS**, Vice-President of EPIC -MRA.

[\(Discuss This Topic | 0 Comments\)](#)

Higher Ed Fearful Despite High Level Of Financial Aid

The growing financial aid opportunities for Michigan college students couldn't dispel a looming sense of dread at a press conference today held by the Presidents Council for the State Universities of Michigan.

Executive Director Mike **BOULUS** and Western Michigan University President Judith **BAILEY** eagerly pointed out that increases in college financial aid have outpaced increases in college tuition in the past few years. However, they also warned that continuing trends of limited state assistance and tuition caps may leave both universities and students high and dry.

"When the government places a cap on tuition, it makes it harder for universities to provide resources," Boulus said. "It's not sustainable for growing enrollment and higher quality."

A recent study of Michigan's public universities conducted by Hank **PRINCE** found that in last few years, financial aid has made the actual cost of college education dramatically lower than its sticker price. In FY1998, the real cost was 60 percent of the cost of tuition

while in FY2003, the real cost was 45 percent. Boulous and Bailey both maintained that Michigan may not be able to enjoy these same opportunities if the state doesn't offer sufficient assistance.

It should be noted that these promising numbers do not include any data after December 2003, when funding for higher education was hit especially hard in Michigan. Boulous said that since that time, higher education appropriations have been cut \$289 million, which he said is the equivalent of 100 percent funding for 7 of Michigan's universities.

Furthermore, although the report shows that students have consistently enjoyed good deals in the cost of their education, the financial burden on the student has steadily increased since FY2001. In that year, the net average tuition rate was \$2,058, in FY2002, it was \$2,251, and in FY2003, it was \$2,495.

Despite their concerns, the speakers at the conference said that the report demonstrates that the cost of higher education is significantly less than what the public perceives. They suggested that Lt. Gov. John **CHERRY**'s Commission on Higher Education could use the report to help inform Michigan residents that a college education is closer in reach than they might think.

Bailey asserted that Michigan must draw in more students to universities and offer abundant resources to them if the state wants greater economic success.

"We're investing in the brain trust of Michigan, and that brain trust is the economic development of this state in the future," she said.

[\(Discuss This Topic | 0 Comments\)](#)

Administration Announces Economic Development Projects

The administration of Gov. Jennifer **GRANHOLM** today announced two company expansions and three brownfield redevelopment projects that are expected to create or retain more than 800 jobs to the state and generate

more than \$207 million in private investment as a result of assistance offered by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC).

"These projects bring new investment to our state and new jobs for hundreds of Michigan workers," said Granholm. "Companies and developers continue to invest in our state and create jobs, proving that Michigan's business climate remains among the most competitive in the nation."

The company expansions include:

- Hemlock Semiconductor (HSC), in Thomas Township: A producer of polycrystalline silicon, the firm will expand operations in Hemlock, near Saginaw in Thomas Township. The township is expected to see 122 new jobs including 60 high-tech jobs directly by the company. The state offered tax credits worth more than \$1.1 million. The company plans an initial private investment of more than \$40 million for the expansion.

- pgam, Auburn Hills, in Auburn Hills. The company is a German-based producer of automotive tools and parts. The administration announced the firm will be expanding its North American headquarters in Auburn Hills. The expansion will create 240 new jobs including 117 directly by the company. The state offered the firm a tax credit worth an estimated \$1.7 million to choose Michigan over a competing site in Ohio. The expansion is expected to generate more than \$15.3 million in private investment.

The brownfield redevelopments announced today include the following:

- Dow Chemical in Midland will be retaining 41 jobs, thereby securing future resin production at the site. The company will use a brownfield Single Business Tax (SBT) credit valued at more than \$4.5 million to upgrade obsolete buildings and infrastructure within its Saran Products Suspension Facility and modernize its resin manufacturing production capacity. The project, according to the administration, is expected to create \$45 million in private investment by Dow.

- In Detroit, the 1001 Woodward Office LLC will take advantage of a SBT brownfield credit valued at \$3.8 million and local and state tax capture valued at \$308,334 to redevelop functionally obsolete and blighted property located within the 1001 block of Woodward in central Detroit. The developers will demolish vacant buildings to make way for a multi-level parking structure featuring up to 18,000 square feet of retail space on the first floor. The project includes upgrading an adjacent 21-floor office building on the northwest corner of Campus Martius and the conversion of the upper floors into residential condominiums.

- The River Pointe Development company in Detroit will be redeveloping a seven-acre former mobile home park located at 14630 Riverside Boulevard. The developer plans to build a combination of low and mid-rise buildings to accommodate about 300 market-rate residential units. The development will also feature boat slips along a canal bordering the property.

[\(Discuss This Topic | 0 Comments\)](#)

Stabenow Elected To Leadership Team In U.S. Senate

U.S. Sen Debbie **STABENOW** was elected today by her colleagues as caucus secretary, the third highest-ranking leadership post in the Senate Democratic caucus.

Stabenow joins U.S. Sen. Harry **REID** (D-NV), the new Senate Minority Leader, and Sen. Richard **DURBIN** (D-IL), the new party whip, as the new leadership team of Senate Democrats.

"Debbie Stabenow brings to this leadership position her years of congressional leadership, a willingness to work across the aisle, and a great knowledge of the important issues facing American families," Reid said. "Her relentless efforts to lower the price of prescription drugs are unmatched. She is an essential part of this leadership team, and I count on her to help ensure that the basic needs and concerns of the

American people form the basis of the legislative agenda of Democrats in the U.S. Senate."

"I look forward to taking on this leadership position which will allow me to more effectively fight for the things that matter most to the people of Michigan and get the job done," Stabenow said. "We have important work ahead of us on critical issues like stopping Canadian trash, making health care and prescription drugs more affordable, protecting our manufacturing economy and creating good paying jobs. I look forward to continuing to lead the fight on these important issues."

[**\(Discuss This Topic | 0 Comments\)**](#)

Community Health Announces Lead Poisoning Report

The Michigan Department of Community Health today unveiled a new policy direction for the prevention and ultimate elimination of childhood lead poisoning throughout Michigan at Children's Hospital in Detroit.

The report of the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Task Force was commissioned by Gov. Jennifer **GRANHOLM** last year. The main goal of the task force is to eliminate childhood lead poisoning by 2010. For Fiscal year 2005, Granholm, through the Department of Community Health, has put more than \$1 million toward addressing lead poisoning prevention.

"Childhood lead poisoning represents a significant health threat to thousands of children across the state, and these new recommendations represent our best efforts to move Michigan forward and reduce lead poisoning statewide," said Janet **OLSZEWSKI**, MDCH Director. "Legislators, in a bi-partisan manner, continue to work together to pass laws implementing these recommendations."

Among the recommendations of the 170 member Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Task Force were:

- Michigan should establish a public health trust to serve as a repository for a variety of potential revenues in order

to provide a stable ongoing funding stream for the prevention of lead poisoning in children as well as lead control and remediation activities.

- Michigan should develop and maintain a mandatory lead status housing registry for pre-1978 rental properties with a voluntary component for post-1978 rental properties.

- Michigan should develop and implement a major public policy awareness campaign to assure that parents understand the dangers of lead exposure and are encouraged to seek lead testing of their children at appropriate times.

- Michigan should identify and establish a commission to evaluate and coordinate lead poisoning prevention resources and activities statewide.

- Michigan should create the capacity to assist communities in building effective coalitions and obtaining grant/foundation funding to address lead poisoning.

- The state should assure the provision of case management for children with elevated blood lead levels.

- The state should expand the remediation and control of lead hazards in residential environments.

[\(Discuss This Topic | 0 Comments\)](#)

Schwarz Unveils Transition Web Site

Today, U.S. Rep.-elect Joe **SCHWARZ** (R-Battle Creek) unveiled the Web site of his Congressional Transition Office.

"As I look forward to my swearing in on January 4, 2005, I am using the interim period to make sure I hit the ground running as soon as the 109th Congress begins," Schwarz said. "I am currently attending New Member Orientation in Washington and seeking committee assignments where I can be of service to my constituents in the 7th Congressional District.

"It is important that I have an open line

of communication with my soon-to-be constituents, and I have created the Web site, www.schwarzforcongress.com/transition, to accomplish the following:

- Keep constituents apprised of my activities as an incoming member of Congress
- Solicit constituents' suggestions for policy initiatives and legislative goals
- Assemble a staff to assist me in our nation's capital and in the 7th District

"A critical component of this transition process is the hiring of staff for my Washington and district offices. The Web site allows visitors to submit their résumés electronically, but we are also accepting résumés by fax and postal mail. I am very pleased that many qualified individuals have already expressed an interest in working for me, and we have already begun interviewing them. We expect to make some staff announcements next month."

[\(Discuss This Topic | 0 Comments\)](#)

Trauma Care Given OK By The House

Last week, the House passed a series of bills that would create a coordinated statewide trauma care system, ensuring that Michigan residents who suffer severe injuries are taken to appropriate care facilities.

Rep. Gary **NEWELL** (R-Saranac), the sponsor of the bills, **HB 6102**, **HB 6103**, and **HB 6104**, said that the legislation is necessary because in many instances, injured persons are sent to a particular hospital merely because they are in that hospital's jurisdiction. Newell said that sometimes there could be closer facilities or that other nearby facilities have greater expertise in addressing the injury. The House member said with this coordinated care structure, local emergency responders could be certain they are taking injured persons to the best care facility available.

"Michigan's move to a trauma care system will pay huge dividends for

residents by reducing the mortality rate and saving people from life-altering injuries," Newell said. "Trauma care in that first hour is so important, and this plan will cut response times and ensure proper care for everyone."

Newell said that he heard reports indicating that if this legislation were in place last year, around 60 lives could have been saved.

To support the statewide care system, the legislation would also set up a trauma care advisory subcommittee under the Department of Community Health. Trauma surgeons and others involved in trauma care would make up the ten-member panel. Each member would serve three-year terms.

Newell said the cost of this legislation would be around \$2 million, but added that the Department of Community Health had agreed to absorb this expense in its budget.

The lone vote of opposition to this legislation came from Rep. Leon **DROLET** (R-Macomb Twp.), who has a history of voting against any legislation that would increase state expenses.

[\(Discuss This Topic | 0 Comments\)](#)

Auditor General Releases Report On Michigan Justice Training Fund

The office of Auditor General Thomas **McTAVISH** today released its Performance and Financial Audit of the Michigan Justice Training Fund (MJTF), Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES), Michigan Department of State Police.

According to the audit, MCOLES is responsible for distributing funds from the Michigan Justice Training Fund. MCOLES makes distributions to law enforcement agencies totaling 60 percent of funds on a per capita basis to be used for in-service criminal justice training. MCOLES is also responsible for distributing 40 percent of the funds on a competitive grant basis to state and local agencies providing in-service criminal training programs.

Findings from the audit included the following:

- MCOLES needs to improve its monitoring process to verify expenditures reported by recipients of law enforcement distributions and competitive grants.

- MCOLES lacks an effective and efficient grant process to ensure the timely receipt of required reports and the timeliness of payments to its grantees.

- MCOLES failed to verify that MJTF revenue received was complete.

In total, the audit report included three findings and three corresponding recommendations. The agency said it agrees with all findings and will comply with all of the recommendations.

[\(Discuss This Topic | 0 Comments\)](#)

Flags to be Flown at Half-Staff To Honor Those Killed In Line Of Duty

Today, in his capacity as acting Governor, Lt. Governor John D. **CHERRY** ordered that United States flags throughout the state of Michigan and on Michigan waters be lowered this week in honor of Michigan servicemen who lost their lives while on active duty in Iraq.

Flags will be lowered:

Wednesday, Nov. 17 to honor Lance Corporal Justin D. (J.D.) **REPPUHN** of Hemlock. Lance Corporal Reppuhn, 20, was killed by an explosion as he fought his way into Fallujah, Iraq on Thursday, Nov. 11. He fought in the 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Marine Division, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force of the United States Marine Corps.

Thursday, Nov.18 to honor Private First Class (PFC) Dennis **MILLER**, Jr. of LaSalle. PFC Miller, 21, was killed on Thursday, Nov. 11 while serving near Ramadi, Iraq. The circumstances of his death are still unknown. He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 72nd

Armor Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division of the United States Army.

Friday, Nov. 19 to honor Lance Corporal Justin M. **ELLSWORTH** of Mt. Pleasant. Lance Corporal Ellsworth, 20, died Saturday, Nov. 13 as a result of enemy action in Al Anbar Province, Iraq. He served with Combat Support Service Battalion 1, Combat Service Support Group 11, 1st Force Service Support Group, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force of the United States Marine Corps.

[\(Discuss This Topic | 0 Comments\)](#)

DLEG Sending Out Fee Notices To Residential Builders

The Department of Labor & Economic Growth (DLEG) is mailing out \$50 special assessment notices this week to licensed residential builders and contractors to replenish the Homeowner Construction Lien Recovery Fund, as required by state law.

The state law requires this assessment to replenish the Fund's balance to cover judgment payments, legal costs and administrative expenses to continue operation to protect homeowners and licensees.

"In the early years, the Fund saw little activity. However, claims have continued to climb over the years. Just in the past five years, the Fund has been averaging 187 claims and paying \$512,000 a year," DLEG Director David **HOLLISTER** said. "While no one likes receiving notice of an assessment, this \$50 fee is required by law and allows the state to provide a much-needed safety net for the consumers and licensees we serve."

[\(Discuss This Topic | 0 Comments\)](#)

Supreme Court Announces Second Annual Adoption Day

The Michigan Supreme Court and the Family Independence Agency (FIA) today announced that Michigan will hold its second Adoption Day on Tues., Nov. 23 with a theme "Giving Thanks for Families."

The event is co-sponsored by the FIA and the Michigan Supreme Court. Local FIA offices and private adoption agencies will be collaborating. More than 40 counties in Michigan will finalize adoptions of more than 250 children that day. Additional celebrations and informational seminars for adoptive families will take place following the court hearings.

"Adoption is one of our most important connections between families, government, the courts and children," said Gov. Jennifer **GRANHOLM**. "Adoption Day celebrates the success of connecting children from broken homes with new loving families."

Michigan has been recognized as a leader for its innovative approach to adoption and our high number of adoptive placements. Along with the celebration of Adoption Day, Granholm has declared November as Adoption Month.

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On This Day In Michigan History

On Nov. 16, 1999, news media across the state bashed the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) over a proposed administrative rule that would limit the ability of reporters to conduct on-site audio or video interviews with prisoners.

According to DOC, moving prisoners around excessively to accommodate dozens if not hundreds of media requests would unnecessarily erode prison safety and security.

Ultimately, the rule was adopted.

—Source: *MIRS Archives*.

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