STATE OF MICHIGAN
Washington Report

June 16, 2000

Volume 106, No. 28

Editor: Melissa Hess

What's Happening in Washington?

Washington Office Welcomes Summer Intern

The State of Michigan Washington Office welcomes Mike Voutsinas as our summer intern. Mike, a resident of Livonia, Michigan, will be entering his junior year at the University of Michigan this fall. He has been accepted into the business school and plans to focus on international business.

What's Happening in Michigan?

Senator Dole Accepts Michigan Check for WWII Memorial

On the day before the 56th anniversary of D-Day, Governor Engler and Senator Abraham presented former Senator Bob Dole with a $653,000 check on behalf of the people of Michigan for the National World War II Memorial. The amount was significant as to represent each state resident that served in the war with one dollar of the final check.

Engler spoke to the importance of a monument recognizing the millions of Americans who served and the more than 400,000 U.S. soldiers who gave their lives during World War II. "The time has come for a permanent memorial to be installed on the Washington Mall, to remind us of the men and women who saved the world and to inspire future generations that they, like those before them, are the guardians of freedom and democracy on the earth," the Governor said.

The ceremony was held at Selfridge Air National Guard Base in Mt. Clemens and was attended by hundreds of veterans, as well as the family of the Roger Durbin, the man responsible for initiating the $100 million Memorial project. Crews expect to break ground on Veterans Day weekend this year for the 7.4 acre Memorial between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC. The bill to create a memorial became law in 1993, and the campaign to finance the Memorial has brought the project close to its construction phase.

What's Inside

- **Michigan to Offer AP Classes Online**
- **Safety Belt Shows Increase with Primary Enforcement**

For more information on the National World War II Memorial project, please call The American Battle Monuments Commission at 1-800-639-4WW2 or visit the Memorial website at www.wwiimemorial.com

Build Michigan III Accelerates Road Projects

This week, Governor Engler and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) revealed a $900 million package of additional road improvements to be funded as a result of the passage of Build Michigan III.

"The *Build Michigan III* package will work for Michigan taxpayers, enabling us to meet immediate needs, bring about genuine reform in the transportation system, and create jobs for Michigan families," noted Engler. The project is expected to create nearly 24,000 new jobs.

Improvements included in the package of projects include: the acceleration of construction of the Paul B. Henry Freeway (M-6) in Kent County; the acceleration of design for improvements on I-94 and I-75 in metro Detroit; widening of US-23 in Washtenaw and Livingston counties; improvements on I-94 in Kalamazoo County; a new US-31 freeway in Ottawa county; and several other state and local road projects to support and foster economic growth across the state.

For more detailed information on any of these or other MDOT projects, visit the website at www.mdot.state.mi.us/

Electric Restructuring Leads to Rate Cut for Customers

Governor Engler signed a bill package this month that cut electric rates for residential customers will create more competition in the industry. The new law gives an immediate five percent rate reduction through the end of 2003 to every residential electric customer of Detroit Edison and Consumers Energy. A rate cap that will last at least two additional years follows the cut. Rates for large commercial and industrial electric customers will be capped at current levels through 2003, while rates for small business customers will be capped at current levels through 2004.

Engler thanked the Michigan Legislature for putting his restructuring plan on the "fast track" and passing it with bi-partisan support. "Today, electric customers are the clear winners. There's choice for those who want it and protection for those who need it," he noted. Another benefit of the legislation is that the state will have both increased electrical generation and reliability of the power supply.

Today, electric customers are the clear winners. There's choice for those who want it and protection for those who need it."

-Gov. Engler

In addition, the bill also: authorizes refinancing to allow customers to have significant rate reductions; creates a customer education program; creates shut-off protection for seniors and low-income customers; and gives customers the ability to choose an alternative supplier by 2002.

Students to Benefit from Virtual AP Academy

Starting this fall, all Michigan high-school students will have the opportunity to participate in advanced placement classes. The Michigan Virtual University (MVU) in conjunction with Michigan State University and APEX Learning, a Seattle-based company that specializes in creating high-quality online courseware, will develop the initial AP course offerings.

Currently, only about 60 percent of Michigan's high schools offer advanced placement courses and only 3.5 percent of Michigan public high school students participated in AP exams last year. Now any student will have the opportunity to take advantage of AP coursework; scholarships for the online courses will be available to students from around the state to expand access.

The MVU will coordinate this project and will also work with the exten-

sive network of Michigan colleges and universities that will serve as online instructors and help bring advanced placement to Michigan students. AP classes offer a number of advantages to participants, including: the chance to challenge themselves with college-level material; the means to improve their eligibility for the college of their choice; and the option of earning college credit while in high school.

State Safety Belt Use Climbs

Safety belt use in Michigan reached a record 83.5% after the new standard enforcement law took effect in March of this year. Last year, legislation passed changing safety belt enforcement from secondary to primary.

A special observation survey, conducted by the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute, documented the dramatic increase in safety belt use. Michigan launched a massive public information campaign to promote the new law, utilizing radio and television public service announcements, billboards and special messages at service stations. Special efforts were made to target low belt use groups, particularly young men and drivers in the Wayne County area. Belt use has climbed although lower belt use rates continue to be observed among the same group, i.e., young men and pick-up drivers.

Efforts to promote the law will continue throughout the summer and into the fall. The Office of Highway Safety Planning is working on a plan to continue publicity efforts. Division Director of OHSP, Betty Mercer explained that the rise in seat belt use reinforces the experiences of other states that have changed seat belt laws. She noted, "Our work will be to continue these high levels of safety belt use for years to come and to document the lives saved and injuries prevented."

State Responds to Gasoline Spill

Governor John Engler declared a State of Emergency for Jackson County, Michigan after a gasoline pipeline ruptured on June 7th. A Wolverine Pipeline Company pipeline ruptured in Blackman Township, releasing thousands of gallons of gasoline into a nearby drain that carried it into the Grand River. The spill forced the evacuation of approximately 450 homes in two subdivisions to the north and east of the company's storage facility. The leak was detected when a drop in pressure was recorded at a metering station along the pipeline. The threat of explosion prompted Engler to declare the State of Emergency in the area. The American Red Cross in Jackson housed evacuees, although many chose to stay with nearby family and friends, or in hotels.

Clean-up crews in the next few days were able to make considerable progress in removing gasoline from the county drain, the Grand River, and the surrounding environment. Explosivity and benzene levels in the area were closely monitored and by June 12th, test levels near structures were low enough to allow for safe reentry of evacuated residents. Repair crews focused on repairing the break, which was then pressure tested and restarted on the 11th of June. Timely resumption of full operation of the pipeline was important to the state because it supplies roughly one third of the state's daily gasoline consumption.

Environmental monitoring and remediation efforts are expected to continue into the foreseeable future. Officials from the U.S. EPA, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Jackson County Health Department, and Wolverine Pipeline Company participated in the plans for the completion of repair to the pipeline, clean-up and restoration of impacted areas, and the provision for short and long-term environmental monitoring.

For more information on any story in the Washington Report, please contatct our office.

State of Michigan
Washington Office
444 North Capitol St. NW
Suite 411
Washington, D.C. 20001

(202) 624-5840
(202) 624-5841

LeAnne Wilson
Director

Bryan Roosa
Deputy Director

Debbie Marshall
Federal Legislative Liaison

Melissa Hess
Executive Assistant



State of Michigan
Washington Office
444 North Capitol Street, NW Suite 411
Washington, D.C. 20001