



## Michigan ROUNDUP

### Legislative Week in Review

- The 1989-90 legislative session began Wednesday with ceremonies in both houses. Lewis Dodak (D-Birch Run) was officially elected Speaker of the House and immediately called for improved cooperation between Democrats and Republicans. Dodak said he expected the most difficult issues before the legislature this session will be the budget, finding a way to reduce the frequency of medical malpractice suits, and creating a new product liability code. After members were sworn in, the House adjourned until February 1 to give Dodak and his staff time to make committee assignments. Senators, who were not up for election in 1988, also conducted routine business and then adjourned until January 31. Before setting priorities for the session, both houses will wait for Governor Blanchard's State of the State Message, to be delivered at 7:30 p.m. on February 7 and his 1989-90 budget proposal on February 9.
- Most observers expect the battle over the 1989-90 state budget to be the most contentious since the recession of the early 1980s as advocates of expensive corrections, education, and social services programs argue over scarce resources. Shelby Solomon, director of Management and Budget, says the federal spending plan submitted by President Reagan would reduce Michigan's budget by \$200 million. Others say that because Congress and President Bush soon will make Reagan's budget irrelevant, Solomon's complaints are premature. Democrats are expected to renew Governor Blanchard's efforts to eliminate several tax exemptions and loopholes in order to increase revenues, while Senate Republicans again will attempt to eliminate the state inheritance tax.
- Seven of the ten "new" members sworn in Wednesday have never served in the House, two are returning veterans, and a third has just two months of seniority. Nancy Crandall (R-Muskegon), David Camp (R-Midland), Jan Dolan (R-Farmington Hills), David Jaye (R-Utica), Greg Pitoniak (D-Taylor), Kirk Profit (D-Ypsilanti), and Bart Stupak (D-Menominee) are the new members. Terry London (R-Marysville) and William Runco (R-Dearborn) return after one-term hiatuses. Ted Wallace (D-Detroit) won a special election in November to fill the remaining two months of former Rep. Virgil Smith's 1987-88 term and a concurrent vote to represent the 10th District for 1989-90. Smith had won a special election to the State Senate in March.

### Political News

- Some believe that Senate Majority Leader John Engler (R-Mt. Pleasant) drew first blood in the 1990 gubernatorial campaign Wednesday by persuading 18 fellow Republicans and Sen. Gil DiNello (D-East Detroit) to reject two of Governor Blanchard's appointments to the Liquor Control Commission. The governor had two partisan positions to fill and chose Republican Francine Pergues and Democrat Betty Pulliam, both blacks from Detroit. Pulliam was to replace fellow Democrat Gary Vanek, who quit a year ago. Blanchard chose Pergues to replace Republican Maxine Perry, whose term had expired. Engler said Blanchard chose Pergues in order to punish Perry, another black from Detroit, for assisting George Bush's candidacy in Michigan. Pergues had already started work on the board, and Perry has left. Senate Minority Leader Art Miller (D-Warren) and Sen. Mitch Irwin (D-Sault Ste. Marie) lost on a motion for a 60-day delay in the Senate vote on Blanchard's nominees. Irwin accused Engler of assaulting both candidates "in a racist, sexist attack." Engler is expected to challenge Blanchard in 1990.
- The national organization of the AFL-CIO has endorsed Ron Brown, a close ally of Rev. Jesse Jackson, for chair of the U.S. Democratic Party. Brown is opposed by Rick Wiener, former Michigan Democratic chair, and former U.S. Reps. Michael Barnes of Maryland, Jim Jones of Oklahoma, and James Stanton of Ohio. Brown and Wiener are viewed as frontrunners for the position, which 404 members of the Democratic National Committee are expected to fill in February. Wiener has the support of state party chairs, while Brown and Stanton appear to be sharing the labor vote.
- Cherry Jacobus (R-East Grand Rapids) has been elected chair of the State Board of Education. Jacobus, who has been a member of the board since 1984, will serve a two-year term. She succeeds Barbara Roberts Mason (D-Lansing). Because the board is split 4-4 between Democrats and Republicans, some observers were surprised at Jacobus's 8-0 victory. After the vote Jacobus said she still believes a legislative solution to school finance reform is possible but is prepared to lead a petition drive if legislators fail to act and the board can decide on a proposal. State Sen. Dan DeGrow (R-Port Huron), a key negotiator on the issue, says that he doubts the legislature will be able to approve a proposal and expects to draft a petition taking a tax shift directly to voters.



Public Sector Consultants, Inc.

Knapp's Centre • 300 S. Washington Square  
Suite 401 • Lansing, MI 48933 • (517) 484-4954