



Michigan ROUNDUP

Legislative Week in Review

- Senate Republicans announced a plan Wednesday that calls for 5 percent **spending increases for public schools**, community colleges, and universities. The announcement precedes Governor James Blanchard's 1990-91 Budget Message, scheduled for February 8. According to a Gannett News Service report, a Republican senator who asked to remain anonymous said: "The plan is to start with the education budget and then work from there, with everything else dividing up the remainder."
- A bill that would prohibit an **insurance commissioner** from working for an insurance company for two years after leaving office was passed by the House. Rep. Nelson Saunders (D-Detroit), sponsor of the bill, indicated that the measure is an effort to increase the accountability of insurance industry regulators.
- The House passed a nine-bill package that allows health care providers to be fined up to \$5 million if they endanger the public by **improperly disposing of medical waste**. Under the legislation, providers can be fined for contaminating lakes and streams and must develop a plan for the proper transportation and disposal of their medical waste.
- Many opponents of the proposed **low-level radioactive waste facility** to be constructed in Michigan attended a Senate hearing Tuesday to discuss the possibility of withdrawal from the Midwest Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact. In 1987, members of the compact chose Michigan as the first state to provide such a facility. While lawmakers urged withdrawal from the agreement, the compact commission noted that Michigan still would have to handle its own waste and also might have to accept low-level waste from other states under federal law.
- A House Republican task force report states that Michigan's **environmental cleanup** efforts must involve private companies to accomplish what it calls a \$5 billion job. The report concluded that since there will never be enough public funds available for the task, the private sector must be required to take responsibility. The report recommended arbitration and mediation on cleanups to discourage court battles, limited protection from environmental fines and penalties, and a revolving loan fund to assist businesses in cleanup.

Political News

- MSU President John DiBiaggio said Thursday that his disappointment with the Board of Trustees' decision to name George Perles MSU athletic director will not lead to his resignation, the *Detroit Free Press* reports. DiBiaggio indicated that his opposition to the decision was based on the bypassing of MSU's usual affirmative action procedures. The *Free Press* also reports that Governor James Blanchard, an MSU graduate, has offered to assist in mending what he sees as a split in the MSU community over the Perles issue. Blanchard indicated his support for DiBiaggio and encouraged a change in focus from the events of this week to the educational goals of the university.
- The *Lansing State Journal* filed suit against the **MSU Board of Trustees** seeking an injunction to prevent trustees from holding private meetings in the future, contending that the board recently held private sessions concerning the athletic director's position. According to the *Journal*, the suit charges that these sessions did not comply with the state's **Open Meetings Act**. If the law was violated, the suit also asks the court to rescind any action taken during the nonpublic deliberations.
- Representative D. Roman Kulchitsky (R-Warren) was sworn in Wednesday as a member of the Michigan House of Representatives. He has been assigned to House committees on Colleges and Universities, Corporations and Finance, House Oversight, and Insurance. Kulchitsky won a January 16 special election to fill the **25th District** seat vacated by the resignation of Dennis Dutko, for whom memorial services were held in Warren on Tuesday. Former state Representative Dutko took his own life several days after being arrested on drug charges.
- According to the *Detroit Free Press*, in 1989 Michigan lost its position as the leading producer of low-level radioactive waste in the Midwest. The choice to make Michigan the location of a seven-state **low-level radioactive waste facility** was made in 1987, when this state was the leading producer of such waste among the seven. Michigan now ranks second, behind Ohio. The executive director of the Midwest Compact Commission, Gregg Larson, indicated that he expects Michigan's change in ranking to be temporary and that it will not alter the state's designation as host to the facility.