



Michigan ROUNDUP

....Amid growing signs of impending hard times, Governor Blanchard announced a partial hiring freeze to reduce the state work force by more than 2,000 employees during the next two years, saving \$18 million in the current fiscal year and \$70 million in FY 1988-89. The departments of Corrections (which accounts for most of the growth in state employment in recent years) and State Police will be exempt. Many state economists are predicting a slowdown in the Michigan economy, requiring budget cuts in addition to those Blanchard proposed in July. Blanchard stated during a press conference that the hiring freeze was planned before the drastic fall in stock prices on Wall Street.

....A bill that would raise the speed limit to 65 mph on rural interstate highways was signed into law by the governor Thursday and will take effect on November 29. The law includes a \$5 ticket surcharge to raise money to hire 120 state troopers for traffic law enforcement and assesses violators the following points and minimum fines (in addition to the \$5 surcharge): for speeds between 56 and 60 mph, no points and a \$10 fine; between 61-70 mph, one point and a \$20 fine; between 71-80 mph, three points and a \$30 fine; between 81-85 mph, three points and a \$40 fine; and for 86 mph and over, four points and a \$50 fine.

....The House passed two bills in the transportation funding package, but defeated two others. Legislation to establish a transportation economic development fund to help local projects (HB 4735) and to tax off-road vehicles (HB 4169) went to the Senate. Bills raising driver license fees and imposing fees on new development were defeated.

....Governor Blanchard has named William C. Kandler as his assistant chief of staff and director of government relations. Kandler had been serving as assistant secretary of the Senate. Stanley Fedewa, Blanchard's current director of government relations, has been named special assistant to Eugene Kuthy, commissioner of the Financial Institutions Bureau.

....Department of Public Health Director Gloria Smith will resign her post effective December 31 to become dean of the Wayne State University College of Nursing. Smith, appointed by Governor Blanchard in 1983, was the first woman and second nonphysician to head the department.

....Shelby Solomon will become director of the Department of Management and Budget officially on November 9. The Senate Government Operations Committee did not take a vote during a confirmation hearing, making the appointment automatic. Solomon told the committee he will try to improve communications between the governor and legislature.

....Most Michigan voters prefer a return to a presidential primary over the current nominee selection system of party caucuses and conventions, according to a survey recently released by Marketing Resources Group and cited in the Detroit News. The poll of 800 voters indicated that 60 percent prefer the primary system and 30 percent favor the current system implemented by Democrats in 1980 and Republicans in 1984. Legislation to authorize the switch back to presidential primaries was introduced in the Senate, but passage this session is unlikely because the 1988 presidential campaigns are already under way.