



Public Sector Reports

Michigan ROUNDUP

Legislative Week in Review

- Michigan's House and Senate leaders were named in party caucuses this week as the legislature returned to lame-duck session. With partisan control unchanged in both chambers (Republicans retain their 20-18 Senate edge; House Democrats gained one seat, boosting their margin to 61-49), Senator Dick Posthumus (R-Alto) was named to succeed Governor-elect John Engler as majority leader. Phil Arthurhultz (R-Whitehall) was reelected majority floor leader. Senator Art Miller (D-Warren) was renamed to his minority leader post, with John Cherry (D-Clio) picked as minority floor leader. House leadership remained the same. Speaker Lew Dodak (D-Birch Run) will be the second-ranking Democrat in state government (after Secretary of State Richard Austin), and Pat Gagliardi (D-Drummond Island) remains majority floor leader. Also unchanged are the minority leader and minority floor leader of the House, Republicans Paul Hillemonds of Holland and Donald Van Singel of Grant, respectively.
- Lawmakers spent much of the week agonizing over ways to eliminate a projected \$1 billion state budget deficit for FY 1990-91, with many predicting major cuts in the departments of Commerce, Labor, Corrections, and Social Services. According to the Senate Fiscal Agency (SFA), there was a budget deficit of \$373 million in FY 1989-90. It is expected that this shortfall will be covered by bookkeeping adjustments. PSC has been projecting a FY 1990-91 deficit of at least \$750 million for several months, and we concur with the nearly \$1 billion deficit projected by the SFA.
- A four-bill package on firearms restrictions sped through committee to the floor of the House this week. The provisions, which would strike down any local gun ordinances tougher than state law, are said to have the strong support of the NRA.
- **Errata:** A September 28 *Roundup* item on the State Bar of Michigan should have read: The State Bar of Michigan adopted ethics rules for use in disciplining lawyers and judges who engage in invidious (not unlawful but offensive or unfair) discrimination. The proposed rules require state Supreme Court approval before becoming effective. In the same issue, we commented that an audit report on state appropriations and grant practice had been released. Auditor General Thomas McTavish brought to our attention that such a report has been neither prepared nor released by his office. The auditor general has sought guidance from the attorney general on constitutional issues that will help ensure accountability for state funds.

Political News

- Okemos resident Dan Pero this week was named chief of staff for the incoming administration. Pero, who masterminded Engler's come-from-behind campaign, says he expects to be heavily involved in policy issues in addition to the administrative responsibility of managing the executive office. Also this week, Governor Blanchard named his assistant chief of staff, William Kandler, to head his transition team in the final weeks of incumbency. Lansing attorney Richard McClellan has been tapped to lead the Engler transition team, which includes campaign press secretary John Truscott as transition communications director and Le Anne Reddick, campaign political director, who will oversee planning for all inaugural activities and ceremonies.
- Televised public hearings involving U.S. Senator Donald Riegle, Jr., and four colleagues began yesterday in the Senate Ethics Committee probe of their connections to the savings and loan crisis. The committee is authorized to recommend sanctions ranging from a rebuke to expulsion from the Senate. Detroit *Free Press* polls earlier this month showed that most Michigan voters would not vote for Riegle today; his term runs through 1994.
- Wrangling over the state's toxic waste disposal program warmed up over the weekend when three other states, disgruntled by Michigan's failure to identify an in-state site for regional dumping, refused to receive Michigan's low-level radioactive waste at their facilities. This week, a Michigan group filed suit in U.S. District Court contending that the three states (South Carolina, Washington, and Nevada) lack authority to deny Michigan access to their dump sites. Michigan was designated in 1987 as the regional location for a low-level radioactive waste depository. The state has been criticized for adopting criteria so strict as to preclude approval of an acceptable site.
- Former Rep. Don Koivisto (D-Ironwood) has won his second 38th Senate District election in as many weeks. In the November 6 general elections, Koivisto was elected to a four-year term in the seat vacated last summer by Joe Mack. On Tuesday, the Board of State Canvassers certified Koivisto's victory in a special election which permits him to assume the seat for the balance of the fall legislative session.
- *Roundup* will be published next on November 30, following the legislature's return from Thanksgiving recess.



Public Sector Consultants, Inc.

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