

GOVERNMENT CUTS

Economic woes hit Bedford Township

By **MARK REITER**
BLADE STAFF WRITER

TEMPERANCE — The economic slowdown that has turned upside down the city of Toledo's budget has reached its most populous suburb to the north.

Flattening revenues and Michigan's staggering economy are behind recent layoffs in Bedford Township government.

Pink slips were given earlier this month to the receptionist in the township government offices and two employees in the building inspection department. Also, the hours of another worker in the township were cut in half.

The layoffs stem from a preemptive move taken by the township's board budget review committee to get a handle on a growing deficit, said Trustee Paul Francis, a member of the com-

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mittee.

The layoffs are expected to save the township about \$150,000.

While nowhere near the \$27.7 million deficit faced by Toledo officials, the township took action to cut spending after the nearly \$428,000 deficit that was projected last June grew recently to more than \$750,000.

Mr. Francis said that the magnitude of the size of the deficit was such that Bedford Township had to do something.

The budget trimming may not be over yet. Township officials are considering doing away with the finance director at the end of the fiscal year in June, saving about \$80,000 a year.

The duties of the finance director would be absorbed by another employee in the clerk's office.

"I am nervous about that change," Mr. Francis admitted. "But I am nervous about any personnel change."

Township officials said the layoffs in the building inspection offices are because, in part, of the slowdown in housing construction.

Last June, overall building inspections had plummeted 50 percent since 2006, dragging department revenues down with it, the township said.

Mr. Francis said that employees affected in the cost-cutting moves could be called back to work if the financial situation improves.

The budget review committee, which includes Supervisor Walt Wilburn and Trustee Larry O'Dell, took steps to cut costs last year tafter the deficit began growing.

"We thought we needed to be fiscally prudent or [we would not be] doing the job that the residents of the township elected us to do," Mr. Francis said.

Mr. Wilburn requested that every department present a plan to trim its spending by 5 percent.