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[2/17/76]

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Ford Flight Plans Snowballing

By Maury DeJonge

A snowball fight in Orlando, Fla., and the possibility of participation by President Ford's three half-brothers will highlight a visit by local residents Feb. 21-22 to the Sunshine State.

Purpose of the trip is to drum up support for the President in the crucial March 9 Florida primary.

Peter Secchia, local business executive and close friend of the President, feels Grand Rapids residents are better able than anyone to tell Florida residents why they should support Ford.

A charter flight of campaign volunteers will leave Kent County Airport the morning of Feb. 21 for Orlando. The trip is being arranged by Friends of the First Family. Everyone taking part will pay his own way.

"We're going to take some Michigan snowballs with us and have a snowball fight right at the Orlando airport," Secchia said. The group also plans to pass out Michigan apples and litter bags with the slogan, "Keep it Clean with Jerry."

Thomas G. Ford, one of the President's half-brothers, will be on the plane, and brother Dick will make an effort to go along, Secchia said. The third brother, James, is scheduled to

meet the Grand Rapids delegation in Orlando.

Another special guest who has signed up for the trip is Lt. Gov. James Damman.

To keep the cost down, some travelers will take sleeping bags and sleep on the beach or in a public park in the Pompano Beach-Ft. Lauderdale area. For those who aren't used to roughing it, there will be motel accommodations.

Secchia said more than 40 persons have signed up to date, but added that the group may be as large as 80 or 90. He said the trip is more personal than political.

"We just like Jerry Ford, and we feel that some people in Florida don't know what a bright and totally dedicated guy he is."

Participants will represent a cross-section of local residents. Checks for \$200 per person have been requested. If the cost is less, refunds will be made. Checks must be made payable to Friends of the First Family, 3153 Three Mile Rd. NE.

The delegation will pass out Ford buttons and campaign literature at shopping centers in the areas visited. The group will return home Sunday night. Reservations may be made by calling 949-6221.