

Federal bungling cheats Hills of funds

By STEVE BARNABY
Farmington editor

Farmington Hills was the victim of a colossal bureaucratic error in being rejected for a \$530,000 federal grant to help complete the Waldron Drain, according to city officials.

Officials learned of the error recently after investigating why other surrounding communities which scored

lower received their allocations. "It was human error," said Finance Director Girard Miller. "Someone in the Chicago office got Farmington and Farmington Hills confused."

Because of the mix up, a Department of Commerce official thought Farmington and Farmington Hills was the same city applying for two grants, Farmington Hills was cut out by the bureaucrat, said Miller.

"This kind of thing could have been avoided. Each city has its own revenue sharing account number. But names, rather than numbers are used," he said.

"Things like this invariably happen. But it still is very exasperating. The rejection was a hard pill to swallow in the first place," he said.

ORIGINALY, after being rejected

last month, Farmington Hills officials were dismayed because the city seemed to meet all of the qualifications for receiving the funds.

The grant, when completed, would run through the area bounded by Nine Mile on the north, Eight Mile on the south, Inker on the east and Middlebelt on the west.

After the grant was rejected, officials said city taxpayers might have

to foot the bill to complete the much needed drain. The area has had flooding problems over the years.

But Miller says relief may be in the offing if the new bill in Congress is passed.

"The pending legislation provides for \$30-\$40 million for errors made in previous allocations," he said. "There is a section in the bill which would 'grandfather' our request if we run

into problems because of our high per capita income."

Farmington Hills has one of the highest per capita income, \$6,078, in the state. Pending legislation will be more restrictive to communities with high income levels, said Miller.

"The only other chance we have is if some other government agency misses their deadline for this year's grant."

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City, businesses join in downtown alliance

Businessmen and absentee landlords in Farmington's downtown business district will find themselves in closer contact with city officials when the Downtown Development Authority is established, according to City Manager Robert Deadman.

The authority, which will be supervised by an eight member board and the mayor, will deal with the development and economic growth of the downtown business area, according to Deadman.

The plans will be reviewed at a public hearing, yet to be set.

But the authority also will be a tool to get out-of-town landlords involved in concerns of the business district.

Five of the authority's board members will have to own property in the district. Three members will be exempt from the requirement. All members will be appointed by the city council.

"Now we have a method to bring the absentee landlords back into the community," Deadman said at this week's council meeting.

Councilman Richard Tupper expressed concern over the possibility that tenants' problems could be overlooked in the arrangement.

"WE MAY HAVE a combination tenant-owner on the board," Deadman

added, "such as Roger Walker and Sundquist."

The tenants and owners could rent or lease property, fix charges, collect for the use of property or buildings the authority controlled and improve land by construction, according to Deadman.

"The purpose of the authority is to promote economic growth in the central business district with the development and implementation of plans which may improve street layouts, structures and public utilities which service the central business district," he said.

"The board may make and enter into contracts necessary to exercise its powers," he said.

This could give the authority the right to contract for the use of privately owned parking lots in the downtown district, Deadman suggested.

"The authority will be able to discuss problems that the government can help with and which money can solve," Deadman said.

The money to solve those problems could be raised through donations to the authority or by a two-mill property tax on land within the downtown district.

The two mill tax would have to be approved by city council.

THE THREAT OF AN addition-

ary two mill tax on the downtown property owners could encourage businessmen and landlords to donate money to the authority, according to Deadman.

"If interest isn't shown, the authority can come to council and ask for the assessment," he said.

The two mill tax would amount to about \$7,000, according to the city manager.

In addition to donations and taxes, the authority can get additional funds by borrowing money and issuing revenue bonds.

The city, with approval of the council, could sell general obligations bonds to help meet the expense of authority projects.

But the value of the authority goes beyond that of a money raising group, according to Deadman.

"It's important to the well-being of the total community," Deadman said. Mayor John Richardson agreed with Deadman.

"We've been giving this a lot of lip-service over the years. It's about time that we sink our teeth into it," he said.



Liz Kavieff shows Kevin Rovietz and John Campbell how her project demonstrates binary counting. (Staff photos by Harry Mauthe)

Watch out Dunckel, Warner's on the move

Students shine in science fair

By LYNN ORR

Watch out, O.E. Dunckel Junior High science enthusiasts.

Warner Junior High students went public with their first science fair last week, and despite Dunckel's years of experience, Warner students are anxious to catch up.

Exploring solar energy and laser technology are just two of the scientific areas explored by about 100 students.

"Strictly volunteer" is how Warner science instructor Mrs. Rosalie Hebler described the student-managed fair, exhibited Friday.

"These kids had a lot of motivation," she said, and the scope and display visible in the projects on display confirmed her statement.

About 100 seventh and eighth graders and one ninth grader entered projects in the fair, although one display table was marked "fl" because 30 students were among those Farmington pupils condescending last week.

That bias failed to dim the spirits of Liz Kavieff, one of the fair's publicity workers, who entered two projects

herself and hopes to move on to the all-area fair at Cobb Hall in March.

"This is only our first one, so next year I hope we get a better turnout," she said.

"The kids used a lot of imagination," said Morris Neuvirth, whose daughter Sandy entered an energy use project.

"It's very educational for the parents as well, and it's a good beginning for Warner."

Mrs. Vicki Deshaw was equally pleased and proud of the work her daughter, Deanna, exhibited.

"She didn't win a first or a second, but we know she did every bit herself," Mrs. Deshaw said.

And that was the goal of the fair, according to the advisors. They wanted the students to work out their own projects and learn how to manage the exhibits without a lot of parental or teacher supervision.

Science teachers Thomas Van Horn and Doug Cooper presided as judges, as objectively as possible because their students weren't entered in the fair.

"The ninth graders didn't want to

get involved," said Liz, but next year the fair should be an all-grade affair since most of the present eighth graders plan repeat performances."

Kevin Rovietz entered an electronic telescope and had "a lot of fun" doing it. John Campbell, who's moving to Indiana soon, entered a power transformer and rectifier and hopes his Indiana school has a science fair.

IF NOT, perhaps he'll start one, he says.

Sean Deason suffered a minor tragedy when his balsa plane was knocked over, partially obscuring his "Aerodynamics" project.

But Dennis O'Neill was pleased with the "Outstanding" ribbon his "Print Developing" project captured.

It was an all-girl sweep for the seventh grade, with Jenny Larsen and Sara Wahrman taking second and third prizes, respectively.

Renee Flam captured the top prize with her "Are you eveready?" project, research on the temperature effects of batteries.

"From this experiment, I found out that the higher the temperature of a battery, the better it will light, the colder the battery, the weaker the light," Renee concluded.

She constructed an exhibit showing her experiments, including the three flashlights and a black background so browsers could see the results for themselves.

Eighth grade competition was divided into two categories, life and earth science and physical science.

Julie Burland, Greg Alex and Chris Spasoff took the top three prizes in physical science, while Jim Gasser, Kay Temple and Nancy Wyle won in the life and earth science category.

OUTSTANDING AND HONORABLE MENTION ribbons were awarded to other exhibitors.

And the students weren't resting on their laurels during the fair. Leslie Rydell and Jane Scott were busy selling candy to raise money for the student council.

"We want to be able to get some better things for our school," Jane said.

And there was already talk about next year's fair, especially among the student management committee. Ann Blume, Shari Adelman, Mary Friedman, Lori Lichtman and Liz Kavieff. "Just wait" is the word we received.



Story time

Alameda Elementary School students Matt Von Ende, Cathy Quick and Robbie Lewis gathered to hear their favorite stories and poetry read by Farmington reading consultant Dingy Sharp. The students especially enjoyed Mrs. Sharp's extensive collection of favorite books with matching characters, including dolls like Curious George and Pooh Bear, a statue of Mark Twain and a stuffed mouse and toy turtle. The collection is now on display at the Farmington Public Library, on Liberty in downtown Farmington.

M-275 alternates, Northwestern to be debated

The four-man state highway commission will come to Oakland County April 27 to hear alternative proposals to the cancelled M-275 freeway and the pros and cons of the Northwestern Highway extension.

Although Oakland County and local governmental officials pleaded for two hours Wednesday for the commission's reconsideration of its Jan. 26 decision to cancel the M-275 plan, Chairman Peter B. Fletcher of Ypsilanti said the threat would be to consider alternative routes for handling north-south traffic in western Oakland County.

The commission took no action on the highway department staff's proposal to cancel plans to extend Northwest beyond its dumping-off spot at Orchard Lake Road. It simply received the proposal and tabled it until April 27.

Fletcher said he would convene the highway commission, which usually meets in Lansing, at an Oakland County site because of high interest in the routes. The sites will be announced later.

STATE REP. Richard Fessler (R-

Union Lake) accused the commission of "acting hastily" when it cancelled M-275. "We were told a decision would not be made that day. We thought you'd wait for the Michigan Environmental Review Board to act."

But Fletcher recalled the commission had repeatedly promised to decide the fate of M-275 in January 1977. Then Fessler got to the heart of the matter: "Whether people want to admit it or not, the traffic problem is there. Provide us with an alternative to M-275. Don't just say the people don't want it."

M-275 was to have run through the western lakes area of Oakland County from I-96 at Novi to I-75 in Springfield Township.

Local officials said they had based their master plans—most involving three years of work—on the contemplated existence of M-275. They said the environmental impact of the freeway would have been less than the cost and impact of widening local and arterial roads to accommodate the same amount of traffic.

Alfred J. Nelson of Dayton Hudson Properties, developers of the forth-

coming Twelve Oaks regional shopping center in Novi, joined them in asking reconsideration of M-275.

In an interview, John Grubba, managing director of the Michigan Road Commission, said cancellation of M-275 would have a tremendous impact on other roads. He said the number of lanes in Telegraph Road, for example, had been reduced in the expectation M-275 would absorb some of that traffic.

Grubba held out the prospect that the I-696 leg from Southfield to Roseville might also be cancelled.

JUMPING THE GUN on the April 27 hearing were officials and citizens from West Bloomfield Township concerned about the future of the Northwestern extension.

Supervisor John Doherty, pleading for construction, said Northwestern had been part of West Bloomfield's planning for 40 years. Building setbacks, sewer plans, water lines, utility locations and local roads had all been based on the idea Northwestern would be extended, he said.

Donald Gross, Southfield city plan-

ner, said that because Northwestern now terminates at narrow Orchard Lake Road, traffic tieups in rush hour back up vehicles all the way into Southfield, clogging highway intersections there.

On the other side, Sheila Oatley, representing Concerned Citizens of West Bloomfield, called for improvement of local roads.

And a representative of the West Bloomfield-Farmington Area League of Women Voters called for cancelling the Northwestern extension in light of the M-275 cancellation.

Janet Lynn of CLURE (Citizens for Land Use Research and Education) said Northwestern's extension would result in more urban sprawl with a negative effect on established communities.

Patrick Nowak, deputy to Oakland County Executive Daniel T. Murphy, said the county could adopt as its motto: "Oakland County—Where Major Highways End in Fields."

Nowak said I-696, the southern portion of M-275, the Southfield freeway,

and Northwestern all end abruptly, and even M-59 is not committed for widening beyond Bogie Lake Road. "I

don't know why Oakland has to be treated differently from the rest of the world," he said.

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