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\$4.6 million business project takes shape



By DICK WESTLUND

Construction workers will be raising the roof this summer—on a car dealership, two restaurants, an office and a warehouse.

A 109-room Red Roof Inn is just one of six businesses coming to Farmington Hills on Grand River just west of the old I-96 expressway. Altogether, the projects will cost \$4.6 million and employ more than 200 people.

THE NEW MOTEL will be built north of Grand River just before it intersects 10 Mile, in the new Sinoacola Industrial Park.

In the development, a new Mountain Jack Restaurant is nearly finished, while site preparation has begun on new headquarters for Dynamic Construction Co., a Detroit firm; a seven-building personal storage area by Nolan Brothers, a Minneapolis business; as well as the Red Roof Inn.

Just west of the industrial park, steel girders have gone up for the new Bob Sellers Pontiac dealership. Across Grand River, a developer is awaiting a construction permit for a new Bonanza Sirlin Pit restaurant.

Except for the Bonanza restaurant, all the businesses will be north of the stretch of Grand River already crowded with a Holiday Inn and the still-growing Farmington Freeway Industrial Park to the south.

Biggest of the new businesses will be the \$1.8 million Red Roof Inn. Concrete for the footings is being poured this week and the motel should be finished by next February, according to Don Wallace, a spokesman for the 34 motel chain.

"It will be a reasonably priced motel," he said. "We're looking forward to opening this one."

THE INN WILL consist of two buildings, 56 and 53 units set side by side, but staggered on the 2.75-acre site.

There will not be a pool or restaurant in the motel.

About 20 persons will be employed full-time at the new motel, the fourth in the greater Detroit area.

The chain has a better than 95 percent occupancy rate in its 11 Michigan motels. All are located on interstate routes.

Wallace said the company picked the site because of its easy accessibility to the old I-96 expressway and the heavy traffic on Grand River.

Although the company opened an inn in Plymouth about a 1½ years ago, Wallace said the company is not worried about saturating the market.

Across newly-paved Sinoacola Drive is the nearly-completed Mountain Jack Restaurant.

The \$500,000 restaurant is owned by Foodmaker Inc. The building has 88,000 square feet and is located on a two-acre site.

Clint Keller, a spokesman for Foodmaker, said the restaurant will open about August 7 and will employ about 150 people. Primarily a steak and seafood restaurant, the new business will not serve breakfasts.

Another Mountain Jack Restaurant is located in Troy, Mich.

RESIDENTS WHO need extra space for storage will be able to take advantage of the mini-warehouses planned for the northernmost portion of Sinoacola Industrial Park.

Seven storage buildings, which will be divided into a number of separate units, are planned for the five-acre site, owned by Nolan Brothers. The warehouse buildings have a total valuation of more than \$500,000.

Moving from Detroit will be the Dynamic Construction Co., which has a \$100,000 office-warehouse building planned for the industrial park.

"We wanted something close to the expressways and we wanted a rela-

(Continued on page 15A)



While a bulldozer prepares the site of the new headquarters of Dynamic Construction Co., (top) work is nearly finished on the new Mountain Jack restaurant on Sinoacola Drive (left). The steak and seafood eatery is expected to employ more than 150 persons and will open in September. Dynamic is moving its headquarters to Farmington Hills from Detroit. (Staff photos by Harry Maunthe)

Residents sought Help create city finance plan

The City of Farmington Hills is looking for residents to serve on the Ad Hoc Fiscal Master Plan Study Committee.

Established by Finance Director Girard Miller, the citizens' group will study and map out financial plans for the city's development. Persons interested should send resumes to Mayor Jan Dolan, 31555 Eleven Mile, Farmington Hills 48024.

"This could be an exciting project for those involved," said Miller of the program which is one of the first of its kind in the U.S.

"I would expect that it will be necessary to meet frequently for six months in order to generate a first draft. The study will probably require a full year's work before it's ready for printing. The time commitment will be substantial."

For the committee, Miller is seeking at least one person with some affiliation with the Farmington Public Schools, either past or present; developers, builders, realtors and commercial members who have knowledge of land use potential, demographics and the local economy.

ALSO HELPFUL would be members knowledgeable of capital markets such as brokers, bankers, analysts or corporate treasurers.

"I intend to spend time acclimating members to public finance and accounting terminology and will pose problems in their broadest policy and conceptual terms," said Miller. "We will be dealing with million dollar questions, however, and it would

be advisable to have people who can deal with that scale."

Although seeking persons with financial backgrounds, Miller cautions that a mix of expertise is needed to grapple with "community attitudes."

"I envision the group as a residents' committee which must be able to comprehend basic financial problems and also represent community values. It would be best if each member had some planning instinct as well as an ability to see beyond present tense and to deal with tomorrow's problems today," he said.

Some of the issues facing the committee will be:

•TAX BASE—its adequacy with present or anticipated property tax limits, the need for more non-residential zoning; financial implications of smaller family sizes and cyclical Michigan economy.

•REVENUE BASE—adequacy of the present charter limitations, a look at the income tax, financing of roads if November millage fails.

•CAPITAL FINANCING—the city's longterm needs relating to such things as storm sewers, roads, buildings and parks and how they should be financed.

•INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION—difficult ways to develop the budget, possibility of issuing an annual report similar to those of private industry, purchase of in-house computers.

•DEBT MANAGEMENT—possi-

bilities in minimizing borrowing costs, feasibility of structuring bond issues differently, paying for the Ten Mile, Rouge and Northwest Water bonds once new development levels off.

•JOINT INTERMUNICIPALITY Services—cooperation with other cities and agencies, continuation of contract with Oakland County for sewer and water.

Residents favor ceiling on taxes

Death and taxes are two certainties in life.

But a growing number of Farmington-area residents seem intent on eliminating at least part of what once was inevitable.

They want to put a lid on taxes. Many are eyeing a proposal to amend Michigan's constitution to allow a ceiling on state and local government spending by instituting a tax limit. Because Taxpayers United for Tax Limitation apparently has succeeded in obtaining enough official signatures, voters will face that issue in the polling places this November.

Another proposal, similar to California's successful proposition 13, would cut Michigan taxes in half. The Tisch amendment still needs 100,000 signatures to earn a place on the ballot.

The idea of limiting government spending and taxes appeals to Farmington shoppers who participated in a recent informal survey.

Most of the area shoppers said they were tired of watching as state spending increased.

"If there were a limit on taxes then a person has a chance to say whether they're going up," said Eunice Christmus of Farmington Hills.

CUTTING TAXES could chip away at services, she said, but many of those services are for people who could live without them.

"Some of the services are luxuries for millionaires. Lots of services are great, but a lot of them aren't necessary. They're for people who could afford it anyway," she said.

"People who have money get the most tax benefits," she said.

Another place money could be saved is to provide work programs for Detroiters on welfare, she said.

Watching government spending, and cutting the size of the bureaucracy are prime reasons some residents are embracing the tax limit.

"Government is running unchecked," said one Farmington resident. "The size of the bureaucracy is out of control."

Any cut in services resulting from the tax limit would be "great," he said because government spending has taken an irresponsible turn.

"I think it (tax limit) would bring a lot of accountability into government spending," said Ed Thebo, of Detroit.

"I think people would to see an assessment on different items as far as spending was concerned," he said.

Assessments clearly earmarked for the salaries of city officials would give taxpayers an idea about where their money was being spent, Thebo said.

"THAT WAY there would be more control over where the money went. The general fund should be limited," he said.

Amidst applause for the tax ceiling, a few shoppers spoke against the movement.

"It's fiscal irresponsibility," said Michael Scherer of Howell.

"I think it will backfire. It's an excellent idea, the tax limitation, but not decreasing taxes. I don't think the individual voters understand what the full impact of the limit will be," he said.

Cuts in taxes would lead to increases in income tax and in sales taxes, according to Bill Newlin of Farmington Hills.

"You're going to pay it one way or another," he said.



Gourmet delight?

School Board Trustee Michael Shpiece had no comment about the lunch sample he tested last week. The Farmington Board is considering purchase of a pre-packaged frozen food program. To see what your children may be eating, turn to page 3A. (Staff photo)

Senior citizens may get help with chores

The City of Farmington may join Farmington Hills in offering programs to aid senior citizens in their homes. Enabled the Chore and Homemaker programs, they are designed to provide elderly residents in doing such chores as laundry, grocery shopping, heavier home maintenance, grass cutting and snow shoveling.

Under the auspices of the Farmington Parks and Recreation Division and the Farmington Area Commission on the Aging, the program will become reality in October if federal grants are approved.

Estimated cost for the two programs is \$25,155, according to Farmington City Manager Bob Deadman.

"In reviewing the availability of grants, we have found that if the program was divided into two distinct programs, federal grants could be filed for each, and if approved, the grants would pay up to 80 percent of the associated costs," Deadman told the council earlier this week.

The City of Farmington's share of

the local match would be approximately \$1,000, he said.

Grants for these two programs are "seed" type programs, with a maximum funding of three years. But application must be made each year, said Deadman.

"Therefore, this program should be viewed by council as a pilot program which may have to be continued with local funding when the federal funding terminates," he said.

"We believe this service fulfills a vital need for senior citizens. Quite often senior citizens must be institutionalized when they are no longer able to care for their homes or personal needs.

"By providing chore and the homemaker service, they may be able to increase the period of time in which they may live independently.

The program, if approved, would provide six part-time persons serving seniors both in the City of Farmington and Farmington Hills.

inside

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