

Farmington Observer

Volume 92 Number 68

Thursday, June 4, 1981

Farmington, Michigan

68 Pages

Twenty-five cents

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County asks two-mill hike

By Mary Rodrigue
staff writer

A two-mill increase that would generate \$22.5 million for special education in Oakland County will be on the Farmington school ballot June 8.

If a majority of voters in the 28 districts comprising Oakland County Intermediate Schools support the measure, the county will have its first millage increase for special education since 1955.

"Since 1955, the Legislature has required public schools to serve a greater number of handicapped students, up to age 26," said Graham Lewis, director of special education for Farmington Schools.

While the number of students enrolled in county schools is declining, the number of students eligible for special education program and services is increasing.

Almost 1,300 students in the Farmington Schools receive some type of special education. About 20,000 special education students in Oakland County are currently being serviced.

"As costs increase, we're receiving less state aid," Lewis said. "The amount is also limited at the county level because only one mill is levied."

ONE MILL provides \$11.5 million this year. The balance will have to be paid by local districts. In many of the

districts, the funds will come from money earmarked for general education.

"Farmington hasn't had to cut or reduce programs to meet its special education budget, but other districts have had to do this," Lewis said.

It's estimated that the cost for special education this year will exceed \$70 million in the county. State and federal revenue will fund about \$36 million, leaving a \$34 million balance to be funded at the intermediate and local district levels.

"(Passage) will take the pressure off of the general fund and will assist every area of education," Lewis said.

Taxpayers in the county would pay \$2 per \$1,000 of equalized valuation if the millage request should pass. Funds would be allocated on the number of children countywide identified for special education services.

"If the millage doesn't pass, the bulk of expenses will be paid by the local school districts."

Supporting the millage increase are the Farmington Board of Education, Superintendent Lewis Schulman and the Farmington Education Association, the union representing district teachers.

Special education students in the district are serviced at Cloverdale and Farmington training centers and at the orthopedic center at Eagle Middle School.

Alameda childhood center

New use for school

By Mary Rodrigue
staff writer

When Alameda School closes on June 18, it won't stand as another boarded monument to declining school enrollment.

Joining the ranks of seven other Farmington schools closed since 1973, Alameda will be converted for use as an early childhood center.

While Alameda students are shipped off to four other elementary schools next fall, the building will reopen for the Head Start program and preschool classes.

The school, on Power between 10 Mile and 11 Mile, will accommodate children living in the south end of the district.

Currently Fairview School, a past victim of declining enrollment, is serving as an early childhood center near 14 Mile and Middlebelt and will continue to do so.

"This program is community education based on fees, servicing prekindergarten children," said Graham Lewis, special education director.

"Fairview's program has been extremely successful. Alameda's success will depend on parents registering children.

"Alameda will have a renaissance, in essence. It will again be serving children."

The early childhood centers stress language, art, music, science and physical education. Classes are filled on a first-come basis — 3- and 4-year-olds are 15 in a class, 4-to-5-year-olds are 16 in a class.

FIVE-DAY SESSIONS are available and tuition averages \$1.50 an hour.

"We've outgrown the facility at Fairview," said Richard Ruitter, early education supervisor.

"With Alameda closing, we thought it would be a good place to expand, particularly to serve the south end."

"It's hard for parents to get their youngsters out here if they have to drive six or seven miles."

Some special education offees will be moved to Alameda. Organization will begin as soon as the building is vacated.

The Farmington Board of Education voted last Feb. 3 to close the school, which has 195 students enrolled, making it the smallest elementary school in the district.

Experimental aircraft Planes land at shopping mall

By Mary Rodrigue
staff writer

Almost a dozen airplanes are grounded at Twelve Oaks Mall in Novi and it has nothing to do with weather conditions.

The aircraft are on display through Sunday in an exhibit sponsored by the Experimental Aircraft Association, Brighton chapter.

All custom built, the flying machines include a 1932 Corben Baby Ace, two ultra-light representative of the fastest growing segment of sport aviation, the fuselage of a Corben Junior Ace helicopter, and two wooden and two fiberglass planes.

"We thought this would be a good way to promote sport aviation," said Patrick Quain, a Farmington pilot and exhibit coordinator.

Quain's ultra-light plane which has clocked 25 hours of air time this year is on display.

"There are so many people that didn't know the club existed, people who used to fly," he said. "Lots of people are very enthusiastic about it."

Quain's plane, in which the pilot is strapped into place in a harness in lieu of a cockpit, can fly at 35 miles an hour.

One of the sleek fiberglass planes on display, which has a molded plastic foam core and wings like surfboards, moves at 170 miles an hour.

MOST OF THE planes were constructed from kits (engines not included) at an average cost of \$10,000. It took Quain three months to build his plane. One of the fuselages on display took five years to make.

The interest in experimental aircraft over conventional planes like Cessnas or Cherokees is that these pilots find

All custom built, the flying machines include a 1932 Corben Baby Ace, two ultra lights representative of the fastest-growing segment of sport aviation, the fuselage of a helicopter, two wooden and two Fiberglass planes.

building the planes is half the fun.

"Many members have built eight or nine planes. They enjoy building as much as they enjoy flying," Quain said.

"To get the aircraft into the mall's center court, wings were disassembled and glass doors were removed from one mall entrance. With just a 10-foot wide clearance, a couple of biplanes were prevented from getting into the show."

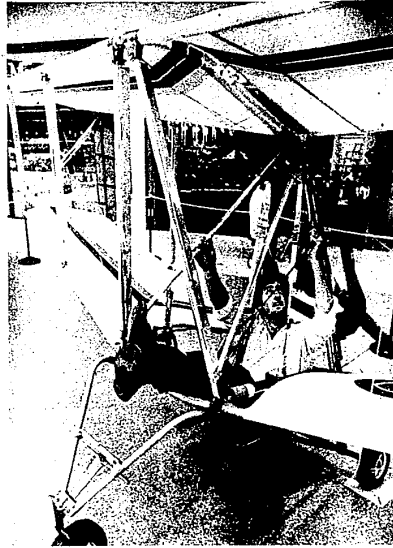
Quain drove 450 miles to Oshkosh, Wis., site of the annual EAA air show and air museum, to borrow stanchions to cord off the planes in the exhibit.

Still, he can't keep all of the curious shoppers' hands off the merchandise. Four EAA pilots guard the planes on a rotating schedule, and answer whatever questions pop up from passersby.

Quain, who just graduated from the University of Detroit dental school, spends most of his time at the mall.

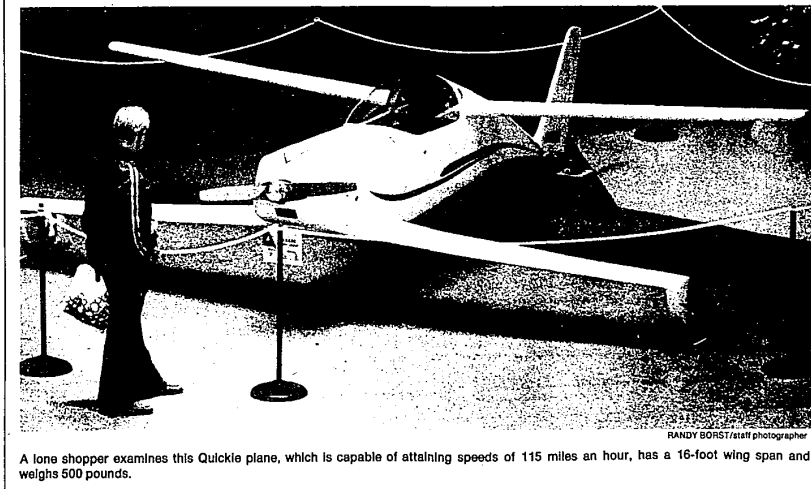
In addition to the planes, literature and a two-hour film are part of the exhibit.

The exhibit runs through Sunday at the mall on Novi Road north of I-96.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Patrick Quain strapped into the seat of his ultra light plane demonstrates his technique for shoppers.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

A lone shopper examines this Quikie plane, which is capable of attaining speeds of 115 miles an hour, has a 16-foot wing span and weighs 500 pounds.

County approves EDC project-office complexes

By Mary Lou Callaway
special writer

The first project approved by the Oakland County Economic Development Corp. (EDC) will be occupying this fall in West Bloomfield.

WBT Associates are building four one-story offices in a campus type complex on the east side of Orchard Lake Road, north of Northwestern Highway.

The Oakland EDC was established to enable private business to build or expand by selling tax-exempt bonds. The bonds allow lower interest rates than conventional financing would provide.

Developer Arnold Mikon, vice president of Terra Development Corp., a WBT Associates partner, says "financing is provided by \$3.5 million in tax-exempt bonds issued by Aetna Life & Casualty Co. and construction financing of \$3.5 million by the National Bank of Detroit.

The West Bloomfield Township Board approved the project for EDC financing last September on a 5-2 vote.

Trustee Dennis Vatis and Thomas Law voted against approval of the project as they have on every EDC plan coming before the board.

THEY CRITICIZE EDC calling it a "taxpayer subsidy."

Vatis refers to a Newsweek article of similar projects in other states where critics say the tax exempt financing is being misused.

The misuse cited is a claim that many private businesses can easily afford conventional financing.

EDC supporters say the projects provide jobs, keeping workers off welfare. "It's a needed public service," says Jeffrey Kaczmarek, Oakland County EDC spokesman. "There is no county, township or EDC liability in any case of default. The county merely offers a vehicle, a break on the interest rate usually a couple of points below the normal negotiated rate."

The whole concept upsets Vatis. "Isn't the intent for economically depressed areas? This is essentially a subsidy for private development."

Law adds: "I think this is competing with developers using private money. We have a lot of (township) office vacancies now."

Township Supervisor John Doherty says allowing EDC financing enables the township to get certain concessions from developers which benefit the community.

FOR EXAMPLE, he says under present zoning, the WBT building would have been allowed as a three-story office instead of the one-story it agreed to build.

Trustee Weldon Yeager argues the township gains an additional tax base on EDC projects.

Jervis Webb Co. hosts foreign representatives

Thirty-three industrial engineers and executives from 11 nations will meet in Farmington Hills this month to be brought up to date on recent advances in materials handling technology.

The 1981 Jervis B. Webb International Engineering Seminar, June 15-19, will convene representatives of Jervis B. Webb Co. licensees in Australia, Brazil, England, France, Italy, Japan, Mexico, The Netherlands, New Zealand and Taiwan.

According to Steve Kurtis, vice president of the Jervis B. Webb International Co., the 33 foreign engineers and executives will be briefed on new technology, concepts and products in the materials handling industry, including such

when the offices are leased.

He expects tenants to include accountants, attorneys, manufacturers' representatives and other small service-oriented businesses.

The brick veneer buildings are grouped around landscaped courtyards.

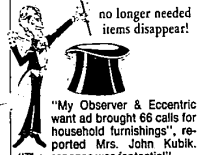
Hobbs & Black of Ann Arbor are the architects. Leasing is handled by William E. Cramer, a partner in the venture.

Mikon told the board some 100 persons are employed on the project which will open up 75-100 permanent jobs

what's inside

- Club circuit 6C
- Community calendar 3C
- Editorials 18A
- Inside Angles 3A
- Obituaries 2A
- Sports Section B
- Suburban life Section C

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