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Fear of flying?

Travelers irked, but still take to skies

By Mary Rodrigue
staff writer

A limited, non-scientific sampling of Farmington residents shows most trust the FAA air traffic controllers, despite the nationwide strike by the controllers' union.

Though some travelers have been inconvenienced to the point of flight cancellations, none interviewed were reluctant about flying, or had fear about safety.

As president of an auto parts supply firm, Robert McConnell of Farmington Hills flies to business meetings across the country several times a week. Sometimes he takes commercial flights but he also flies a private plane.

"I've had several disruptions," he said. "The first day of the strike I had a business meeting in Grand Rapids which is normally a 45-minute flight. It was cancelled and the trip turned into a five-hour drive."

"The following Tuesday, I had a one-hour delay leaving Detroit Metro (airport) to Atlanta, and later an hour and a half delay from Atlanta to Wilmington, N.C."

"I've noticed a significant improvement this week," he added. "Wednesday, I left Pontiac airport for a meeting in Pittsburgh and got back home in time for an EDC (Economic Development Corp.) meeting at Farmington Hills City Hall."

"The controllers have been very courteous, effective and efficient."

RABBI SHERWIN WINE of the Birmingham Temple in Farmington Hills was on his way home from vacation in Alaska when the air controllers' strike came Aug. 3.

"I was in Vancouver (British Columbia) when the strike began," he said. "I was to fly from Vancouver to Chicago, then to Detroit."

"The Chicago to Detroit flight was cancelled so I changed my plans. I took a flight from Vancouver to Windsor."

"Actually it was a pleasure coming into Windsor airport because it's so small. I enjoyed it better than (Detroit) Metro airport."

U.S. Rep. Bill Brodhead, whose 17th District includes Farmington Hills, has only made one Detroit-Washington round trip flight since the strike began.

"I had no problem whatsoever," said Brodhead in a phone interview from Washington.

Brodhead is leaving for a two-week vacation (traveling by car) and doesn't expect to get back in the air until September.

Other Farmington residents expressed concern over travel plans to Europe, where the worst delays are occurring.

"My son-in-law and daughter are

leaving for Italy in two weeks," said Mrs. Everett Bird, 87, of Farmington.

"I hope they don't have any problems."

Though Mrs. Bird doesn't plan to be airborne soon, she's a veteran of dozens of flights.

"I love flying," she said. "I've always had very pleasant experiences."

"MY HUSBAND'S aunt and uncle were supposed to come in next week from France," said Debbie Pothoff of Farmington. "But they can't because of the strike."



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

The control tower looms over arriving passengers at Detroit Metropolitan Airport.

Air strike slows business slightly

By Gary M. Cates
staff writer

Air-travel-related businesses in Farmington say the air traffic controllers strike hasn't seriously affected them.

The Red Roof Inn of Farmington Hills reports it's business as usual.

The Holiday Inn of Farmington Hills isn't certain if the strike has affected business.

"It's difficult for us to tell because the state has had the road closed in front of us for several weeks now," said Joe Arrnbrust, the hotel general manager.

"In general, the public, both business travelers and vacationers, have accepted the new reduced flight schedules (which have been caused by the strike)," said Phil McGraw, president of McGraw Travel in Farmington Hills.

"We have not had a great influx of cancellations, although at the onset of the strike we had some," he said.

Local travel agencies report although flights are continuing at a reduced level many passengers are having to wait for departures.

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Long distance dialing

Alternative phone companies undercut Ma Bell

By GARY M. CATES

Reaching out and touching someone can cost less, depending on what phone company the call is made through.

No longer does the Bell system hold a monopoly on the long distance phone

market. The phone consumer can choose to use one of several different alternative long distance companies which have entered the market.

The new long distance phone companies offer similar rates, all guaranteed to cost less than Bell.

The alternative services are tied into the Bell system at the local level, but bypass the Bell long distance lines by sending the calls on their own microwave networks.

"Microwaves is the reason we can be cheaper," says Greg Jones, of MCI, a

leading alternative system. "Our equipment is the highest state of the art."

When a customer decides to use an alternative service, there is no installation of equipment, as long as the customer has a push-button phone.

The customer is given a local number and identification code to dial before making the long distance call.

"Our customers dial a local MCI computer number, then they receive a dial tone. They then dial in their five-digit code, and the number they are calling," says Jones, MCI's Southfield office business manager.

A PERSON CALLING from Farmington to New York on an alternative system would first call the computer, using Michigan Bell lines. The call is

then sent by microwave to a computer in New York. From that computer the call is sent by Bell lines to the number being called.

"You get on and get off the Bell system with every call," says Bill O'Riley, president of Lexitel, another alternative service of which Farmington Mayor William Hartscock is chief financial officer.

One of the complaints against the alternative systems is that customers can't call phones outside a network city.

MCI, which is one of the largest alternatives, currently services 70 percent of the phones on the Bell system.

"We (MCI) are constantly expanding, by 1985 we plan to service 90 percent of the Bell system," says Jones.

he calls don't lose out.

"If no one answers the door, I leave a note on a card that has my phone number on it. So at least they know I did what I said I was going to do and stopped by," he said, slipping one of the messages in a screen door.

Many of those cards are not left in vain. Ross said, "Frequently, people will write back and respond or phone."

In July and Ernie McGlothlin's den, Ross leans back in a rocking chair and asks the Novi residents what they're most concerned about.

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A day in the life of Doug Ross

By Stephen Cvengros
special writer

It's about 82 degrees and humid as Doug Ross goes door to door in one of the subdivisions encompassed in his state senatorial district.

This time it's Novi's Village Oaks.

Last week, the Oak Park Democrat was pounding the pavement in Farmington. Next week, it'll be Commerce Township. And after that — who knows?

It could be any door between Milford and Southfield in Ross's annual attempt to meet and hear his constituents.

Oddly enough, this is not an elec-

tion year. Ross' senatorial seat will not be up until next November. And even then, the boundaries of his 15th district could be altered enough via reapportionment to exclude some of the very homes he is visiting.

Ross insists his yearly visits, which coincide with warm weather, have nothing to do with his 1982 aspirations. But the visits do have a political aspect that could bear on Ross's future.

FOR ROSS just doesn't visit just any house at random. He's interested in meeting the people who have demonstrated a concern for the political system. All of the homes Ross approaches — Democrat or Repub-

lican — have that one thing in common: the residents have good voting records.

Still the drop-in visits are not heavily political. He listens to the residents, writes notes regarding what each is interested in and promises to send relevant literature as a follow-up to his visit.

The state senator said he's learned his lesson about going door-to-door "cold." Now, visits to neighborhoods are preceded by a letter several days prior notifying constituents that Ross hopes to speak with them personally.

And even those not at home when



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Farmington Mayor William Hartscock (right) stands in the switching room of Lexitel Communications while technician John Petrosky (left) installs some new telephone lines.

Boy shoots sister, 4

A 4-year-old Farmington Hills girl was listed in stable condition on Friday after being shot by her 6-year-old brother.

Violet Kalajaj of 21522 Hancock was taken to Bolsford General Hospital on Wednesday after being shot in the stomach by her brother Victor.

Victor told police he accidentally shot his sister while getting a .32-caliber pistol down from a closet.

"The shooting was definitely accidental. It's just another case of a gun being placed where children have access to it," Sgt. Richard Murphy said.

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