

Metrovision survives in cable battle

By Craig Piechura
staff writer

Metrovision Inc. cable television company is the unanimous choice of three cities — Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi — following a vote Tuesday night at a joint city council meeting in Farmington Hills.

The combined vote tally was 18-0 to award the franchise to Metrovision, contingent upon final approval of a franchise agreement and details regarding public access to certain channels. Only William Mitchell, Farmington councilman, was absent at the unique tri-city council meeting.

Henry Harris, president of the Atlanta-based Metrovision cable company, said he hopes to complete the franchising and public access agreement within 30 days and begin broadcasting to the first customer six months after that. The entire system must be wired within 18 months after construction starts.

RESPONDING TO competitor's complaints that Metrovision may be forced to raise subscriber rates soon, Harris said the company has promised a three-year price freeze. The average cable customer receiving 48 channels (including all local TV stations, satellite offerings and super-stations in Atlanta, Chicago and New York) with one pay-TV movie option such as Home Box Office would pay \$14.75 monthly — \$7.25 for full, basic cable and \$7.50 for HBO.

UNDERSTANDABLY, representatives of the two unsuccessful firms bidding for the franchise tried to convince council members from the three cities to take more time to study the three offers in hopes of convincing officials that their proposal would be better for those municipalities.

Metrovision, like all three companies, is offering each community 3 percent of the revenues of all cable ser-

vices sold in that city as a franchise fee. Metrovision estimates that by the fifth year of the 15-year franchise \$225,000 will be divided by the three cities depending on their percentage of cable subscribers.

IN ADDITION, 2 percent of the gross revenues will be set aside for public access programming under Metrovision's offer. A sum of \$150,000 is pledged for the initial year of operation to go toward public access.

Samuel Street, national franchising director for United-Niederlander and Peter Newell, Michigan president of

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'Metro' rated

By Bill Casper
staff writer

The firm consulting with Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi has recommended that Metrovision be selected to serve this area's cable television needs. A six-member committee comprised of local officials also has recommended Metrovision. Following is a story of how Metrovision operates in Redford Township.

You can be the writer, producer, director and star of your own local television show. No previous experience, no inside connections, and most importantly, no money are required.

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RANDY BORSY/staff photographer

Firefighters from both Farmington and Farmington Hills fought off the winter cold this week to beat this blaze which started in a Farmington Hills garage.

Flash blaze is beat

Officials are investigating a fire that caused \$25,000 worth of damage and gutted the garage adjoining a Farmington Hills home Monday evening.

No one was injured in the fire. The two-story colonial home, located at 3519 Cadillac Drive, belongs to Paul and Mona Konfara.

At this stage of the investigation, Richard Marinucci, on-duty investigator for the Farmington Hills Fire Department, is calling the fire accidental.

"We know the fire originated near the north wall, where paper and wood products, newspapers and garbage were stored," he said. "But that's all we know at this point."

Arson has been ruled out, Marinucci added.

The couple were eating dinner at approximately 6:30 p.m. when a passerby banged on the door and told them their garage was on fire.

Konfara entered his garage to discover flames spreading from the dry wall to the insulation on the north side of the building.

"I tried using an extinguisher," said Konfara, "but that didn't work. By the time I got the two cars out (of the garage) that was it. You could see the whole thing go right up."

"The dry wall and insulation in between were burning," he added. "The flames were knee-high and then spread right across to the ceiling. I slammed the door and saved the rest of the house."

The Konfaras, who have no children, then grabbed their dog, Ben, and went to a neighbor's house to call the Fire Department.

THE KONFARA'S DELAY in reporting the fire was responsible for the extent of the damage, Marinucci said.

"They should have called sooner," he said. "A lot of time was wasted removing contents from the garage and the home. If the Fire Department could have gotten there sooner, there wouldn't have been as large a fire."

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Sex bias case settled out-of-court

By Sherry Kahan
and Margaret Miller
staff writers

The South Redford school district has agreed to pay \$22,500 to music teacher Janet Evans because in 1978 it chose to demote her from junior high to elementary level.

Wayne County Circuit Judge John O'Hair last week signed a consent judgment, to which both parties agreed, settling the case without going to trial.

Mrs. Evans' suit charged she was denied the position of orchestra director at Pierce Junior High School after she had gained experience as both band and orchestra director at Marshall Junior High, a school which the district closed.

FOR MRS. EVANS, a Farmington resident, it was the second discrimination suit she had filed against South Redford. An earlier action through the Michigan Department of Civil Rights led eventually to her becoming part of the Marshall Junior High faculty.

Now employed in another district, Mrs. Evans said of the recent settlement she is "relieved it is behind me" and "happy I filed the case and carried it to a successful conclusion."

But Dr. Jan Jacobs, South Redford superintendent, said there is "no admission of guilt" on the part of the district.

"We have settled in a pretrial settlement," he stated. "She agreed to terminate employment and not reapply."

REGARDING the settlement, Mrs. Evans noted it included \$850 for back pay and the remainder for damages.

Dr. Jacobs said "the money was a compromise to settle the case and end our expenses."

"Our position," he added, "is that what she charged is not the case. We are not admitting the kind of guilt claimed in the suit. It is correct that we put a man in that position, but this is not an admission of guilt of the type we were charged with."

"Our position is that we haven't discriminated against Mrs. Evans."

In the suit, the music teacher had charged that the district ignored her written application for the Pierce position and offered it instead to a male teacher who had no junior high level experience and had not applied for it.

She said she was asked to return — at lower pay, to the elementary school level vocal and instrumental teaching she had done previously.



Janet Evans

MRS. EVANS, now president of the Northwest Wayne chapter of the National Organization for Women, said she became part of NOW and the feminist movement because of her involvement in the employment struggle, rather than the other way around.

She joined NOW, she said, seeking support after she filed her first legal action and because she felt there had been discrimination in her earlier attempts to gain full-time employment in instrumental music teaching in the South Redford district.

"PEOPLE THINK women have equality and all these rights," she said. "But we do and we don't. Their continuing choice of men for any openings in instrumental music would indicate their preference for male band and orchestra conductors."

She also said her experience underlines the importance of the proposed Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

"Most executive orders can be amended or changed at whim," she said. "If it's in the Constitution, it's harder to discriminate."

JANET EVANS said she was hired by the South Redford district in 1959 as a vocal music teacher at the elementary school level.

When she had nine years' seniority, she said she learned on the first day of a fall term that a junior high instrumental position had opened up during the summer.

"It was filled by a male teacher with no prior experience in the district," she said.

That move on the board's part led her to file the discrimination action with the Michigan Civil Rights Department, she said, and two years later a favorable ruling led to her appointment to the Marshall job.

Carrier is killed on M-102

A 15-year-old Detroit News paperboy was killed Friday evening when he was struck by at least two cars as he attempted to cross the M-102 expressway on foot.

Accident victim Christopher Berard, 15, of Farmington Hills was heading home after collecting from 37 customers on his paper route and took a shortcut to save time on the bitter cold, snowy evening.

He was struck by at least two cars, said Farmington Hills Police Lt. Ernest Miller, at approximately 7:25 p.m. on the eastbound lanes of the freeway. It was the first traffic fatality of the year in the city.

The first driver who hit the young man has been identified by police as Donald Heilmann, 42, of Howell. Names of the other driver, or drivers, are being withheld pending further investigation, Miller said. No tickets had been issued to any of the drivers, because it appears the boy walked out in front of Heilmann's car, Miller said.

The accident site is only 300 yards from a pedestrian overpass spanning the expressway and 1/4-mile west of Orchard Lake Road.

The boy's father, Roger Berard, said he'd warned his son and three daughters in the past about crossing the expressway on foot "but you can't be there to watch them all the time."

THE TRAGEDY of the boy's death was compounded by the fact that his father happened to be driving by the accident scene minutes after it happened.

"I was going to gas up the car," Berard said. "I saw all the commotion on the freeway, and I backed up (on the service drive) and stopped the car. From my view of the road something inside me told me it was my son. I started yelling (to persons who stopped to help) if it was a young boy. I saw him before he was covered up."

The Oakland County Medical Exam-



Christopher Berard

iner's office listed cause of death as "cerebral injury due to a crushed skull."

Christopher was a sophomore at Farmington High School.

His English teacher, Eleanor Lamos, was his favorite instructor, according to family members.

"He represented everything I try to emphasize," said Mrs. Lamos. "Good preparation, enthusiasm for learning, beautiful manners, an inquiring mind. He was very thoughtful of others."

"Something very special was his attitude," she added. "It was always 'How can I improve on this?' 'What can I do to make it better?' That was his attitude about everything."

Christopher was active in the Cycle Club at the school, a group of 10-speed and dirt bike racing enthusiasts.

The young man was beginning to outgrow his model trains, his father said, and starting to tinker with used cars.

"CHRIS KEPT bugging me about this or that \$120 used car he could fix up," Berard said. "I kept telling him it up," Berard said, "you can't work on it during the winter."

Berard said he doubts whether other youngsters will learn from the tragic lesson, saying "I'll wear off a month from now."

Customers on the boy's paper route stopped at the house to offer condolences.

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Employee dies in parking lot

Burnam Ledford, 68, died of a massive heart attack at 10:24 a.m. Saturday in the parking lot of Diamond International in Farmington Hills.

Ledford had just arrived for work and exited his car when he collapsed and died alongside it.

At first, it was suspected by Ledford's fellow workers that his death was brought on by the bitterly cold weather.

The possibility was later eliminated by Medical Examiner Thomas J. Pettinga of Pontiac, according to Jim Petlad, general manager for Diamond International, a manufacturer of packing machinery for the food industry.


Ledford had been employed for 11 years at the firm.

The Kentucky-born Ledford is survived by his wife Effie; son Raymond Budnick of California; daughters Mrs. Ralph Barlow of Taylor and Mrs. James Morrison of Northville; brothers John Ledford of Witom and General Ledford of Witom; sister, Ida Lee Thomson of Cadillac; 14 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

He had been a resident of Walled Lake for 12 years. He will be buried today from the Richardson-Bird-Lynch Funeral Home in Walled Lake. Burial is in Rural Hill Cemetery in Northville.

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