

# Farmington Observer

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## Tax-free money is on horizon for new stores

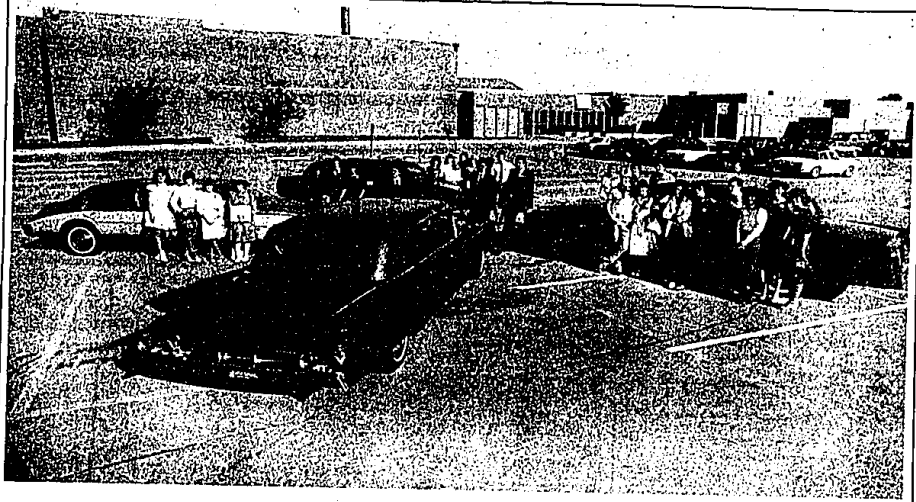
By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

review developer's proposals for financing.

Weatherford-Walker developers have asked Farmington's new Economic Development Corporation (EDC) for \$4.8 million in tax-exempt bonds to help finance a small shopping center. The shopping center would allow the Farmer Jack supermarket to move from downtown Farmington to the corner of Nine Mile and Farmington roads. Farmington's newly appointed EDC board recently approved the request. The Farmington City Council now will be asked to approve the project plan and appoint two additional directors to the EDC. The new directors would represent residents near the proposed shopping center and the business community, said city manager Robert Deadman, EDC secretary. Designed under state law to stimulate economic growth, Farmington's EDC may issue bonds to finance or refinance the cost of commercial or industrial projects. The EDC's task is to

**THE LONG-DEBATED** shopping center on the southeast corner of Nine Mile and Farmington roads is the first — and so far only — project awaiting EDC financing. The new center would be dominated by a 41,000-square-foot Farmer Jack supermarket and a Perry Drug Store. Originally, plans called for the supermarket, plus 10 retail stores and a restaurant. But the city's planning commission changed the shopping center's site plan to include the large discount drug store chain. Although the fate of the 20,000 square-foot downtown Farmer Jack on Farmington and State roads is still unknown, city officials have indicated that the store could be renovated for other stores, thus keeping the downtown competitive with surrounding communities. With an EDC, a developer can finance projects, including building and

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### Going in style

The Farmington High School Class of 1984 took the long way to school yesterday. Twenty-four students piled into four limousines that took them on a two-hour drive before the start of school. One

of the objectives of the motorcade was a trip to rival North and Harrison high schools. The students collected \$270 to rent the limos.

## Group continues battle against formaldehyde

By Tom Henderson  
staff writer

It may grow cysts on the heads of small children. It is blamed for headaches and respiratory problems. It allegedly scars bronchial tubes. It has turned hundreds of home purchases — maybe thousands — from the culmination of a dream into the fulfillment of a nightmare. It lurks in possibly 500,000 homes nationwide and 70,000 in Michigan, a synthetic demon made of urine and embalming fluid that has become, for

many families, even a more unpleasant concoction than it sounds. It is urea-formaldehyde foam, and, exactly two weeks ago today, the federal government again made it legal to sell it as insulation for homes. But many believe the foam won't attract homeowners in the future. "Urea formaldehyde, at least as a home installation, is a dead product," said Susan Carlson, a former Troy resident who is founder and president of Citizens Engaged in the Removal of Toxic Substances (CERTS). "I mean, after all the problems and all the attention, who's going to buy it?

But the formaldehyde lobby is very strong." Carlson, who began CERTS in January, claims more than 1,000 members, 275 of them in Oakland County. "And we sign up more every day," she said. CARLSON'S CONTACT with urea-formaldehyde foam began 2½ years ago when she, her husband and four children moved into their new home, which they'd purchased on a land contract. It already had the foam when they moved in. Soon, everyone in the family was having respiratory problems. It was

worse for the children. "All the children had tremendous medical problems — nausea, hives, upper respiratory infection," explained Carlson. Jeffrey, now 16, suffered what doctors say may be permanent bronchial tube damage; Jennifer, now 15, chills from asthma; the ugly cyst on Joey's head cleared up only after the family left the house. "They'd never had any problems before we moved into the house," said Carlson. "Joey (now 11) grew the cyst. He had it for seven months, and it was gone less than a month after we moved."

The Carlsons tried to sell their house, but found that because it had urea-foam insulation, it was impossible to sell. Unable to continue living in the Troy house, they let the house revert on the land contract to its original owner and moved out last September. They now rent. "We lost our entire investment," said Carlson. "About \$20,000."

Not just small companies, I'm talking big companies, successful companies," Moonan said. "You should see the house we're working on, now. It was installed all wrong. They installed it in the air space between the bricks and the sheathing, instead of the wall cavity itself, where it was supposed to go." As a result, the house in West Bloomfield, required approximately \$10,000 in repairs, double the normal price. Each brick in the house had to be removed and then reinstalled.

DAN MOONAN has made a lucrative living lately, thanks to urea-formaldehyde foam. He owns All Pointes Construction Company, Detroit, and guesses he has removed the foam from 48-52 homes in the last couple of years — at an average of \$5,000 for a brick house and \$3,000 for wood or aluminum.

ANOTHER WEST BLOOMFIELD couple, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Seel, had urea-foam installed in their house in 1976 at the recommendation of Consumers Power, which even recommended the contractor, the Seels said. "I've always had allergies," said Mrs. Seel, "but they grew into asthma. And my daughter and husband developed rashes."

"It's cat urine and embalming fluid, and that's what it smells like. It stinks," said Moonan of the foam. "The stuff was real big in '75-'79-'80, during the energy crisis. But it's had staff. It hardens too quick (after being blown into the walls of the house), it doesn't get to all the cavities and then it shrinks so damn much."

Over the years, Mrs. Seel said she noticed she felt better when they'd get out of the house on vacations, and son Tom found his allergies improving when he

"Not only that, but a lot of them (installers of foam) did such a sloppy job."

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## For new lighting

## Residents take cause to city hall

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

If you are planning to fight city hall, first talk to Farmington Meadows Homeowners Association secretary Jeanne Liming. She can shed some light on the subject. For example, concerned for the safety of the neighborhood's children, pedestrians and bicyclists, the homeowners association 10 months ago decided it was time to ask Farmington City Council for some street lights to brighten the entrance of the subdivision along Farmington Road, between Eight and Nine Mile.

have Detroit Edison install 16 new high-pressure sodium lights on both sides of Farmington Road, near the subdivision. Since the border between Farmington and the Hills lies down the middle of Farmington Road, both cities had to approve the request. The lights will cost each city about \$400 a month. "I'm really amazed that two cities could get it done as fast as they have," Liming said about the final approval last week for the new lights. But she is convinced that as badly as homeowners wanted the lights, the final nod of approval would have taken much longer if residents had blown their fuses waiting for both cities and Detroit Edison to work out agreements for the new decorative lights.

INSTEAD, A little professionalism, patience and cool tempers go a long way in getting what you want, according to Liming. Her husband, Dave, the association's governmental affairs chairman, took the lead in writing to Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman requesting the street lights. "You have to realize they have a system," Liming said, about local city government. "If you want something you have to go through the proper channels." And officials in both Farmington and Farmington Hills won't argue with that. "There are certain things that are done," Deadman said. "Farmington does light the major arteries and Farmington Hills doesn't."

"It's been a long process primarily because Farmington Hills doesn't have a great deal of street lighting," Deadman added. But finally both Farmington Mayor Alton Bennett and Farmington Hills Mayor Fred Hughes got together and decided to move ahead with the requested lights. And because Farmington already has installed sodium lights along Grand River, Farmington Hills has also agreed to install another five fixtures on the south side of the road, between Hawthorne and Lilac streets. "It does show a decent relationship," Deadman said, referring to the two cities working together with Detroit Edison.

## Shpiece appointed policy deputy

State Licensing and Regulation Director Elizabeth P. Howe has announced that Michael R. Shpiece, 28, of Farmington Hills has been appointed as her director for policy development. Shpiece is presently working toward a law degree at the University of Michigan, having completed a summer associateship with the Detroit law firm of Honigman, Miller, Schwartz and Cohn. Among his responsibilities will be liaison duties with the Michigan Insurance Bureau, a part of the Department of Licensing and Regulation.

degree from Wayne State University, specializing in gerontology; has done graduate work in economics at the University of Michigan; and has a bachelor's degree from Wayne State Montclair College, where he specialized in political science, survey research and public administration.

He was formerly a policy analyst for Insurance Commissioner Nancy A. Barwood and committee administrator for the Michigan Legislature's Joint Legislative Committee on Aging, where he helped develop Blue Cross-Blue Shield and nursing home reform legislation.

He previously served House Majority Leader Joseph Forbes as legislative assistant from 1976-77 and more recently served the United Auto Workers' Community Action Program (UAW-CAP) as a legislative consultant.

A past president of the Farmington Board of Education, he is a candidate for a master of public administration



Michael Shpiece

## oral quarrel

## Was Reagan too soft on Soviets over jet?

Many Americans, especially political conservatives, have demanded harsher steps than the measures President Ronald Reagan has outlined in retaliation for the Soviet downing of a Korean airliner with 269 people aboard. Today's Oral Quarrel question are: DID PRESIDENT REAGAN CRACK

DOWN HARD ENOUGH ON THE SOVIET UNION? HOW WOULD YOU HAVE HANDLED THE SITUATION? To respond to these questions, call the Farmington Observer at 477-5498. You have until 1 p.m. Friday to answer. To learn your neighbors' opinions, read Monday's Farmington Observer.

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