



# Farmington Observer

Volume 95 Number 28

Monday, January 10, 1984

Farmington, Michigan

28 Pages

Twenty-five cent

## Installation raises doubts over cable fee

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Farmington Hills resident Sandy Hoing received the same MetroVision letter as her neighbors in the sparsely populated Power Road neighborhood. The letter said they would have to pay a \$200-\$800 installation fee before the cable television firm would install cable lines.

But unlike the more than 30 other people on Power whose homes have yet to be wired for service, Hoing received free installation and has been watching cable television in her home since October.

"I received the little blue flyer from MetroVision, kept the number and called them," Hoing said. "But they said I couldn't get it."

Hoing, however, didn't give up. Instead, she called MetroVision when she realized that her house, sitting 900 feet off the east side of Power, was approximately 30 feet from a cable box serving houses in the abutting Pasadena Park subdivision.

"It is almost like we are a part of that subdivision," Hoing said.

"We'll send some workmen," Hoing said MetroVision had told her. "They saw that we were 30 feet from the hookup box and they said they would hook up."

Sympathetic with her neighbors' dispute over the installation fee, Hoing nonetheless says she is the nearness of her house to the hookup box is "the only reason we have cable."

"People on our street are getting discouraged," said Edna McClelland, who lives on the west side of Power, south of the Hoing home.

"Granted, I understand the home is close to another subdivision. But why can't we be wired through the same sub," said Edna McClelland, who lives on the west side of Power. "If it is good for one, it is good for another. There are probably other homes on that side of the street (the east side) that can be wired from that area (Pasadena Park)."

But Tom Bjorklund, MetroVision general manager, wearily says, "We have explained this to the people on Power Road hundreds of times."

"It is one home that can be served from an extension," he added, referring to the hookup box behind the Hoing house that cannot be used to hook up any other houses on Power.

The monthlong dispute between res-

idents and MetroVision stems from the cable firm's "line extension policy" under which customers are charged for cable installation in areas which have fewer than 30 homes in a linear mile.

OUT OF the 21,000 potential cable subscribers in Farmington Hills, 95 percent meet the firm's density requirements and are receiving free installation. But about 500 houses throughout the less densely populated sections of the city are out of luck unless the residents are willing to pay an installation fee.

Economics is the culprit from both the residents' and MetroVision's points of view.

The residents are dead set against paying the estimated \$200-\$800 fee, which varies depending on the number of residents who subscribe to cable television.

MetroVision, on the other hand, says it is not a charity. To break even financially, cable television must be installed in at least every 25 homes per mile, Bjorklund told residents last October.

Average overhead for cable construction is about \$12,000 for every mile of cable. Unless there are enough households along a cable route, the firm loses money, he said.

BUT FARMINGTON and Farmington Hills officials, members of the Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission (SWOCC), say that some of the confusion over MetroVision's policy stems from what constitutes a mile. Instead of determining that 30 homes are located along a linear mile, the measure is based on 30 homes for each mile of cable, depending on how a street is laid out.

"They (MetroVision officials) are doing what they can to push the density," said Lark Samouelian, SWOCC executive director, to allow more residents in less populated areas to have cable television without paying an installation fee.

Meanwhile, residents and the SWOCC are awaiting the results of a compliance study and density review being conducted by the tricity cable consortium's consultant, Harold Horn.

"We sent a proposal to the cities (Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi)," Bjorklund said. "It is still at the consultant."

Once Horn completes the study, the SWOCC must review it and make a decision on what should be done, Samouelian said.

staff assistant. "There is enough money to cover (the Hills project)."

MLTF officials formally adopted a resolution Jan. 11 recommending the matching grant for Farmington Hills, Hagen said. The priority list will be sent to the state Legislature before the month's end. Final word will come when the state Legislature appropriates the money, sometime in early fall.

"Once the (state) Legislature approves the list, the usual process, from what I understand, is that we will receive a contract from the MLTF,"

cause it was highly critical of American public education.

The national report was followed by many others, including the latest one by the state board of education.

"We have no objection to the state board of education wanting higher standards," Schulman said. "Ours are already high."

"Their motives are fine. Their motives make sense. But they'll have little effect on this district."

THE STATE'S proposal for a longer school day — at least six-hour class days for senior, middle and junior high students — struck Schulman as something that shouldn't be needed in the Farmington district.

"We're not campaigning for a longer school day," he said. "Most of the par-



Janice Mancuso has turned what many persons just dream about into a profitable business which is flying high.

## Flying high! Sister act makes airport business go

By Tom Baer  
staff writer

As long as the weather is brisk, Janice and Marilyn Mancuso's business probably won't be.

The Farmington-reared Mancuso sisters operate Renaissance Air Inc., which provides services to light aircraft and the pilots who fly them out of Mettetal Airport in Canton Township.

And cold weather is death on business. "Bad weather definitely hurts the business," said Marilyn, who trains would-be pilots and sells aviation fuel for the more than 200 airplanes hangared at Mettetal.

"It's a little cold for flying," Marilyn said on a bitter-cold day last week. You have to pre-flight your aircraft, and it's kind of cold to stand outside and do that kind of thing.

"When it's cold, my training program doesn't go, and I can't sell fuel if

people aren't flying. These are our two basic sources of income."

Another, more glamorous, one is the Bell Ranger helicopter which rests in the Mancuso's hangar at Mettetal when it isn't rented out for \$350 an hour, including the pilot and fuel.

The Mancuso's best customer for the helicopter is WXYZ-TV, which uses it to track down big news stories. Ashley Helmbaugh, the helicopter's pilot, is employed by Renaissance Air, as are the six airplane pilots who give flying lessons and the two full-time mechanics who perform the required maintenance on the aircraft.

RENAISSANCE AIR has turned into quite a success story for the Mancusos, who never dreamed they'd be running an aircraft-oriented business (and even flying the planes themselves) back when they were attending Farmington High school in the early 1960s.

"I never wanted to be anything but a

housewife," said Janice, now 40. "In fact, I got married a few weeks after I graduated."

The Mancusos are sisters who married brothers, accounting for the same last name even after marriage. Janice married Ed; Marilyn married Dan. The brothers, like their wives, operate a business together — M & B Contracting in Novi. Ed and Janice live in Farmington. Dan and Marilyn call Novi home.

The sisters have juggled their business activities with raising their families. Janice and Ed have four children; Marilyn and Dan have three.

Janice and Marilyn have their husbands to thank for the business getting started — even though the men show little interest in flying. The Mancuso brothers purchased the helicopter several years ago, though it would just be the thing to carry them from job site to job site around the Detroit area.

"But their need for it just didn't keep up," Marilyn said, "and we wanted to

do something else with it." That something else turned out to be renting it to corporations, which use it for aerial photography and hauling executives, and Channel 7.

Meanwhile, the predecessor of Renaissance, Plymouth Aero, went out of business. The sisters jumped at the chance to fill the void. "It just sort of fell into our laps," Marilyn remembered.

THE BUSINESS, in existence for four years, has been at Mettetal for the past two.

"We're not making a million dollars, that's for sure," Janice said, "but business is good, and it's getting better all the time. I'm proud of the services we provide on the field. For years, they didn't even have fuel here. The old owners couldn't afford to keep it in the tanks."

Please turn to Page 3

## State narrows field in funding sweepstakes

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Farmington Hills' chances of receiving a \$1.2-million state land grant to help buy the \$2-million, 211-acre Spicer property was all but assured last week when state officials listed the planned purchase as the 18th highest priority project out of 44 projects expected to be funded this year.

"There is no problem with receiving the Spicer estate," said Edward Hagen, Michigan Land Trust Fund (MLTF)

director of special services.

THE CITY Council, Gaynor said, will then have to approve the contract which details what the city may do with the property.

Receipt of the state grant later this year will represent the culmination of a long, hard-fought battle by community leaders to acquire a city park. The acreage is owned by Birmingham attorney Nicholas Spicer, who inherited it from his late mother, naturalist Eleanor Spicer.

MLTF officials have \$18.4 million to spend on land acquisition this year, Hagen said. The \$18.4 million includes \$14 million in state money and \$2 million in local money each project sponsor pays to receive the matching grant.

But the grants requested from the 44 project sponsors total about \$22 million more than the MLTF can award, he said.

But that doesn't bother MLTF officials, Hagen said, because typically some projects fall to the way side by being sold before sponsors receive

funding or through attrition.

City officials have been keeping their fingers crossed since they were asked in November to reduce the grant request because the city's original \$1.6-million request represented about 15 percent of the MLTF's total funds.

MLTF trustees told city officials that the trust fund could not afford the original 80-percent matching grant but would consider a 60-percent matching grant.

THE STATE would pay 60 percent of the purchase price if the city could

pay 40 percent.

To avoid losing the state grant, city officials in November added \$400,000 toward purchasing the acreage bordered by Farmington Road and 10 and 11 Mile roads. At that time, city officials also requested the smaller \$1.2-million MLTF grant.

The city's total share of the Spicer land purchase is \$800,000.

Meanwhile, in the next couple of months, Gaynor said, city staff will be adding to existing plans for uses of the planned park.

## School chief says district OK

By Tom Baer  
staff writer

Thanks for your concern, but it doesn't really apply to us.

That's what Lewis Schulman, Farmington's superintendent of schools, seems to be saying to the state education officials who last week unveiled a plan to improve Michigan schools.

Outlined in a 39-page report, "Better Education for Michigan Citizens: A Blueprint for Action," the plan calls for many changes, chief among them: tougher graduation standards, a longer school year and days, more money for teachers, and tougher college entrance requirements.

"It's unusual for this state to mandate requirements," said Schulman, explaining that local districts have al-

ways had control over such things. "We prefer doing it ourselves."

"This district feels that those selections are best left to the local board of education and the community it serves."

Schulman, who heads the 9,858-student Farmington district, said that he and his fellow administrators had interviewed 41 parents of students in 12 schools to gather opinions on the well-publicized critique on American education by the National Commission on Excellence in Education.

The comments of the interviewed Farmington parents will be examined at a curriculum meeting at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday at the board's central office, 31500 Shilwassee.

Issued last spring, the national report was titled "A Nation at Risk" be-

cause it was highly critical of American public education.

The national report was followed by many others, including the latest one by the state board of education.

"We have no objection to the state board of education wanting higher standards," Schulman said. "Ours are already high."

"Their motives are fine. Their motives make sense. But they'll have little effect on this district."

THE STATE'S proposal for a longer school day — at least six-hour class days for senior, middle and junior high students — struck Schulman as something that shouldn't be needed in the Farmington district.

"We're not campaigning for a longer school day," he said. "Most of the par-

ents we interviewed said they thought the school day is long enough. They seemed to be saying that they're interested in quality over quantity."

State officials have said that the longer school year — the state wants it extended from 180 to 200 days — plus the longer school days will carry a hefty price tag.

State education officials have estimated that lengthening the school year alone would cost \$500,000. An important issue is who will pay for the plan, the state or local districts. Legislators have said chances of state funding are slim.

The state board's plan also calls for:

- Foreign-language courses at the

### what's inside

Community Calendar . . .	4B
Editorials . . .	4A
Inside Anglos . . .	3A
MM Memos . . .	3B
Obituaries . . .	2A
Oral Quarrel . . .	4A
Shopping Cart . . .	Section B
Sports . . .	Section C
Suburban Life . . .	3B
NEWSLINE . . .	477-56450
HOME DELIVERY . . .	591-0500
WANT ADS . . .	591-0900

Big family homes, beginning homes, retirement homes, country homes, city homes, townhouses, apartments, condominiums...there's a built just for you.



And we have it. Every Thursday in our Creative Living Real Estate Section. You're sure to find what you're looking for advertised by qualified Realtors.