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RANDY BORSI/staff photographer
Jean Puchowski, (front) a certified addiction counselor, together with Jim King-Knorp, (left) also an addiction counselor and social work technician, and Joe Feinstein, a substance abuse therapist and clinical psychologist, help patients through the new 3-5 day chemical abuse program at Botsford Hospital.

Botsford unit treats all types of chemical abuse

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

A family with an alcoholic member uses 10 times more health benefits than a family without a chronic drinker. In 1980, \$2.5 billion was spent nationally in the treatment and rehabilitation of alcoholism. The bill increased in 1983 to almost \$15 billion. For every individual alcoholic, four other people, either family or friends, are affected. While the list of facts and statistics continue to grow, few physicians in the country have the training and knowledge to diagnose and treat alcoholism,

said Dr. Morris Fineman of Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills. Fineman is the medical director and one of the moving forces behind the almost three-month-old alcohol and drug care unit in Botsford. Since the opening of Botsford's chemical dependency unit, about 200 people have gone through the three-to-five-day program, said Dan Chambers, site supervisor. Unlike the stereotype of the down-and-out alcoholic or the drug user, most of the patients in Botsford's program have been men and women between the ages of 25 and 40 who are married and employed.

Because many hospitals in the country do not admit alcoholics, chronic drinkers with, for example, recurring stomach ailments — the result of heavy drinking — are diagnosed and treated for something other than alcoholism. So the patient's alcoholism continues to go untreated. And he'll be back "simply because he has not been diagnosed as an alcoholic," Fineman said. Unlike some hospitals which will not admit alcoholics, and other agencies which treat only alcoholics or only other drug users, Botsford's care unit

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Agreement to speed road fix-up strategy

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

The Oakland County Road Commission has resurrected a tri-party financial program that will help Farmington and Farmington Hills improve county roads within their boundaries. "There is a crying need throughout Michigan for maintenance and safety programs on the roads," said Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman. The tri-party road program allows safety improvements to be made on county roads with project costs shared between city, county and county road commission.

AREA PROJECTS awaiting county approval under the tri-party program are:
• Replacing the intersection of Leeland and Orchard Lake Road in Farmington at a preliminary cost of \$12,472.
• Installation of an additional lane on the west side of Orchard Lake Road from 11 Mile to Oakland Community College to provide for left turns. The preliminary cost of this project is estimated at \$18,000.

County officials must approve each of the projects before cost estimates and finally construction begins. In this resurrected first-year of the program, the county board of commissioners and road commission will each provide \$500,000 for countywide road improvements. The county is expecting a similar match from cities, villages and townships. The distribution of money to the local jurisdictions is based on the number of miles of county roads within each jurisdiction. Because Farmington has only portions of Orchard Lake and 10 Mile — county road — within its boundaries, the money available for its project totals about \$10,000, including the city's share. With a greater number of miles of county roads running through it, Farm-

ington Hills will have approximately \$89,000 for the Orchard Lake Road project. Because the proposed projects in both cities would cost more than is available through the tri-party program, Farmington and Farmington Hills would have to make up the difference with additional local funds. But the decision of the Farmington Hills council to target Orchard Lake Road for repairs is contingent on the county road commission resurfacing the road from 11 Mile to OCC.

FARMINGTON HILLS officials asked the road commission to resurface both Farmington and Orchard Lake, said Tom Biswell, director of public services.

But when county officials conducted a countywide analysis of needed improvements, only Farmington Road remained on the 1984 priority list, he said. It was anticipated the resurfacing of Orchard Lake would be on the county's 1985 priority list, Biswell added. If the county road commission does not agree to resurface Orchard Lake, Farmington Hills council is expected to submit an alternate project to the county, Biswell said. This is the first time in several years that money will be distributed countywide under the tri-party program. In recent years, the money that would have been allocated to local jurisdictions was diverted for improvements near the Silverdome in Pontiac, Biswell said.

Assistant named by Hills manager

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Huntington Woods' 27-year-old assistant city manager is the new assistant to Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick. Karen Birkholtz, a five-year veteran of city government in Huntington Woods, will assume her new duties in Farmington Hills on Jan. 14. "I'm really excited," said Birkholtz, a Union Lake resident. "The opportunity in a larger community will be a challenge. I can't wait." The position Birkholtz will fill has been vacant since July when then-assistant manager Costick was appointed as city manager. He filled former City Manager Lawrence Savage's post when he retired.

Costick has since realigned the assistant city manager's position, transforming it into an assistant to the city manager, he said. "I've evaluated where we should put our resources," Costick said. Birkholtz will carry the same power and authority any other department head in the city has. But she will not have supervisory authority over the department heads. "The assistant city manager, as I was, whether Larry (Savage) was here or not, was second in command. Birkholtz will be on an equal footing with other department heads," he said. "I'm very enthused about her coming (to Farmington Hills)," Costick said, adding he chose her out of about 15 inquiries for the unadvertised job.

Old school will be outfitted for senior housing



The hallways of Middlebelt School, once populated by children, soon will be the home of area senior citizens

By Tom Beer
staff writer

A building once dedicated to children someday may serve as a residence for their elders. At least that's the plan put forth by developer J. Robert Gillette, who recently purchased the former Middlebelt Elementary School on Middlebelt Road in Farmington Hills. Gillette, who said he paid \$580,000 for the brick structure, plans to spend \$2 million to renovate the building into something he calls "congregate housing" for senior citizens. His project involves turning Middlebelt into 61 apartments with central dining and activity areas. "The key here is companionship and security for senior citizens," said Gillette, president of American Home Retirement Residences. He has started eight similar senior projects — including two in former schools — in the Detroit suburbs. Gillette said he had filed a site plan with Farmington Hills' Planning Department. City officials said they see no problems with the proposal. "I don't think he (Gillette) has any

problems," said Zoning Supervisor Hal Rowe, who added that no re-zoning would be necessary if the project were called a convalescent home. Convalescent homes are allowed under office zoning regulations, and the property is zoned for offices, Rowe said. Added Gillette, "I would say that it'll be some time around the first of May before we get our plan approved." GILLETTE PAINTED A rosy picture of his project, which would include rooms, each with a private bath, three meals a day and housekeeping and transportation services. "Each classroom we'll cut in half," he said. "We make two apartments out of each classroom for all practical purposes. People can leave their apartments, walk down the halls to the libraries and lounges, coffee and activity rooms." "What we do is leave the shell of the building, put on a new roof, put in a whole new heating system and plumbing. We'll start with a brand new building when we're done." For example, on the front of the school facing Middlebelt Road, there'll

be a front porch. Residents can come out and sit and enjoy a cup of coffee after dinner. Their dining room will be where the gymnasium is now. The interior "will all be done in colonial with reds, whites and blues," Gillette said, "it'll be like going back to the 1700s." Rent, Gillette said, will range from \$85 to \$1,100 a month. Using a "partnership" agreement, American Homes operates retirement centers in Royal Oak, Livonia, Westland, Lincoln Park and Rochester Hills. The two Rochester Hills locations are former elementary schools. "We plan to do two projects a year and schools make excellent sites," Gillette said. Gillette called Middlebelt's renovation "a piece of cake compared with what we've been through in other places. It's well laid out... it presents no problems at all." BUILT IN 1949, the school was the oldest in the Farmington District when it was closed because of declining enrollment at the conclusion of the 1982-83 school year. Population had declined from 700

students and 22 teachers in 1969 to 220 students and eight teachers when it was closed. The building, which includes 18 rooms and 39,000 square feet, languished on the market. A plan to turn it into a Farmington Hills police station was voted down by city council in June of 1983. Finally it was purchased the following September from the district by Anthony Gallina, who said at the time he intended to renovate the inside "for general office use." Gallina, who said he paid \$410,000 for the property, sold out to Gillette and American Home for the \$580,000 figure. "That includes all of his (Gallina's) expenses and interest so that the school district gets its money and he lives up to his obligations," Gillette said. Added William Frisk, assistant superintendent for finances and services for the Farmington District, "Our deal is with Tony Gallina, and he's paying us off completely. He's up to date on his contract with us." A similar senior-citizen residence is located directly behind Middlebelt.

Property donation accepted by Hills


By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Approximately six acres of property along Freedom Road has been donated to Farmington Hills. In a 6-1 vote last Monday, the Farmington Hills council accepted the donation from John and Ronald Hanaway. The longtime residents are owners of three local firms, including General Bearing Corp. Councilwoman Joan Dudley voted against accepting the donation because

of two provisions that accompanied the donation. The first was that council could not sell the land for two years because of tax purposes. The Hanaways also requested that after the two-year period the city must develop the property for senior citizen purposes. "I have to tell you that I have some reservations," Dudley said. "I can agree to accept it only with no strings attached. I don't like tying us down for two years." Please turn to Page 5

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