



Farmington Observer

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Farmington FOCUS

If you have a news item, feature story idea or an action picture with a Farmington area connection, send a note to our downtown office at 3203 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

FARMINGTON Hills will continue to provide emergency dispatch services for Franklin, Bingham Farms and Southfield Township under Oakland County's new E-9-1-1 emergency telephone dialing system. The designation as the E-9-1-1 public service answering point for the three communities covers police, fire and medical dispatch calls. It will remain in effect as long as Farmington Hills maintains a police emergency dispatch services contract with Franklin. The contract began in 1984. Franklin provides police services to Bingham Farms and Southfield Township.

SUCCESS. The controversial middle school language program introduced in Farmington Public Schools several months ago appears to be successful, reported assistant superintendent for instruction Lynn Nütler. "The numbers are very high," he said. At least three of the middle schools have introduced elective Spanish, French and language orientation programs, due to popularity, he said.

THEY helped. Twenty Easter-season food baskets donated by the K-mart store at Orchard Lake and 14 Mile roads in Farmington Hills will be distributed to the needy later this month through the Farmington Public Schools, district officials report. The food baskets are part of a K mart project that will bring holiday meals to 21,000 families nationwide.

PAVING awaits three Farmington Hills streets following city council approval last week. Sunnydale, Bridgeman and Geraldine are each scheduled for paving this year. The cost will be met by the city as well as property owners along the streets.

BUDGET meetings and hearings for the Farmington Public Schools have been set. A board study session on the budget is scheduled for Tuesday, April 16. A public hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, May 20. Budget and millage adoption is set for Tuesday, June 3.

STUDENTS in Farmington Public Schools are getting ready for spring break, which begins Thursday, March 27. School reconvenes Monday, April 7.

FOOTNOTES: One year ago this week — As part of the local, state and national press toward educational excellence, the Observer & Eccentric will name its first Academic All-Stars in early May. A committee of Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals, co-sponsor of the O&E Academic All-Stars, will use test scores and grade averages to select 12 high school students from the communities served by the Eccentric newspapers and 12 from the area served by the Observer newspapers.

Potholes are a jolting sign of the season

By Susan Steinmueller staff writer

If driving over potholes makes your blood pressure rise, this may be a bad year for you — at least if you are driving on county roads. "This is the worst spring ever," said Dennis Pajot, Oakland County Road Commission communications officer. He said two factors are involved: the further deterioration of county roads as a result of a lack of money for major resurfacing projects, and a rainy autumn followed by an early freeze of saturated ground.

Council — no to hotel bid

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Despite a spurt in the growth of hotels and motels in Farmington Hills, a request to rezone land on Orchard Lake Road, across from Oakland Community College for a hotel and retail shopping center, has been denied. Farmington Hills City Council denied a request last week to rezone approximately 6.5 acres on the east side of Orchard Lake, north of Springland subdivision, from single-family residential to general business. Although developer Michael Horowitz for the Selective Group Inc. requested postponement of the scheduled public hearing until April 21, council acted on the request following residents' comments opposing the construction of a hotel near their neighborhood. In his letter, Horowitz told council he was unaware of the public hearing scheduled for March 17. Councilmembers Jan Dolan and Joan Dudley opposed denying the request until Horowitz had an opportunity to explain his request for rezoning. "We owe a courtesy to the respondent whether we agree (with the request) or not," Dolan said. Rezoning requests

Generally, potholes are produced by freeze-thaw cycles. When temperatures rise, or salt is added to roadways causing snow and ice to melt, water seeps into cracks in pavement. As the water freezes again, it expands and breaks the edges of pavements, creating a pothole. Often, potholes don't show up until driven over by a car.

ADDITIONAL problems have been caused by this spring's melting snow and the rain's inability to percolate into ground already saturated in November, when there were 20-odd days of rain, Pajot said. "Water is the chief enemy of roads, and we have had spades," Pajot said. "All of which compounds to cause break-up, sogginess, and the inability to go in and do a whole lot with repairing roads. The whole region is at its worst condition right now."

Oakland County maintains 2.8 miles of road in the City of Farmington and 30.3 miles in Farmington Hills. Those include parts of 10 Mile, 12 Mile, Haggerty, Farmington, Orchard Lake and Middlebelt roads. The county also maintains all state highways in the county, including I-696 and I-275. Although it may not be any consolation for those who have had potholes grabbing and twisting their tires, Pajot said, "I don't think any of these roads are the worst problem spots in the county."

THE ROAD commission is, however, hard at work repairing the potholes that will continue to keep cropping up as long as the freeze-thaw cycles continue. Priority is given to roads with high traffic volume, but higher priority is assigned large potholes deemed hazardous, he said. An annual \$1.3 million cost for pothole patching, including about 4,000 tons of patching material, will be exceeded this year, he said. The best solution, according to Pajot, would be to resurface roads every 12 years — a goal that has not yet been met. Prior to 1979, approximately 15 miles of the county's 2300 miles were resurfaced a year, sufficient to resurface the system every 33 years. But since then, lack of money has made it difficult to resurface even three or four miles annually. "We need to do something in the area of over 40 miles just to catch up," The road commission has been bond-

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Farmington Hills Senior Adult Center leader Loretta Conway (left) confers with Stella Murphy, one of the center's 200 volunteers. Different days have different flavors on the something-for-everybody calendar, some quiet, some quite active.

Always on call

She's a great friend to elderly people

By Loraine McClintch staff writer

Loretta Conway oversees operations of the Farmington Hills Senior Adult Center, where 200 people pass through the doors five days a week, lured to the gathering spot in Mercy Center by the diverse calendar of activities and events. The senior adult supervisor works with a small staff and a large cadre of volunteers who help with the fun and games, dispense meals to the homebound, head up educational, cultural and exercise classes, plan trips, and meet numerous needs on a personal basis. More often than not, there will be interns on the premises, apprentices for careers in gerontology on the site that has come to be thought of as a model. And it is not uncommon for the staff of other centers to visit,

people

'We do everything we can to prevent premature institutionalization.'
— Loretta Conway, supervisor Senior Adult Center Farmington Hills

seeking Conway's advice on how she got one or another of her many programs under way.

"I only get into the center about once a week now, and then it's a bit-tweet experience, because I hate to leave. These are my friends," Conway said. "I spend most of my time in my office now, swamped with the paperwork. Still, it's nice to see the center grow." Being administrator of the fast-growing program and being swamped with the paperwork today is a long way from the center's beginnings, which Conway started with \$50, a borrowed coffee pot, and some borrowed card tables 11 years ago.

WHEN CONWAY was asked if that was typical of how most senior centers got started around the country — at that time when the field of

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Safe rides

Students are uniting against driving drunk

By Casey Hans staff writer

The number of students driving drunk is increasing, and a local group of students wants to help. The students — from at least four area high schools — hope their efforts will keep peers from dying in drunk driving incidents. According to a local Students Against Driving Drunk (SADD) survey,

more than 70 percent of area students drink on weekends. Farmington-area high school students from Mercy, an all-girls private school, and the Farmington Public Schools senior highs of Harrison, North Farmington and Farmington are forming a Safe Rides program for a 10-mile radius surrounding the area. They hope to also include Catholic Central High School, an all-boys private school in Redford.

Many of the student organizers are members of SADD, and belong to chapters in their respective high schools.

COVERAGE AREAS being considered for a Safe Rides program include Farmington, Farmington Hills, Southfield, Livonia, Northville, West Bloomfield and Redford. There are already active Safe Rides programs in the Grosse Pointe and Birmingham areas, organizers said.

At an organizational meeting March 19 at Mercy, about 30 students heard from two representatives of the Boy Scouts of America Explorer Division, who talked about the importance of the program and that it be organized properly.

The Safe Rides program is organized nationally through the Explorer program, which sets up students as members to cover the needed liability insurance.

Explorer staff members and community volunteers will train the students in specific program rules and responsibilities, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and medical information, alcohol awareness, how to handle a drunk driver and other extras such as defensive driving.

"WE HAVE to make sure you're trained," Beverly Beltramo, explorer executive, told the students. "We've built in so many rules that the 'what if's' don't happen."

"We're going to try to give you the skills to make your own decisions." Safe Rides program in the Farmington area would be run on Fridays and Saturdays with five-person teams from a base station, where two persons per

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CLASSIFIED EARLY DEADLINE
Due to our new SAU format, we will have an early deadline for our Monday, March 31st issue.
Please place your Classified ad by 5:00 p.m., Thursday, March 27, 1985.
OAKLAND COUNTY 844-1070
WAYNE COUNTY 591-0900
ROCHESTER 852-3222

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New corporate center planned

The W.W. Group Inc., the largest franchise of Weight Watchers International, will break ground April 9 for a new corporate headquarters in Farmington Hills.

The opening is set for Oct. 21 in conjunction with The W.W. Group's 20th anniversary. Hills-based Joma Construction Co. will construct the 60,000-square-foot, three-floor building at 28555 Orchard Lake, north of 13 Mile. Victor Saroki & Associates of Birmingham is the architect. Building features will include a two-story atrium, an employee exercise fa-

city, a test kitchen and classrooms. The 50-employee W.W. Group Inc. currently occupies a 12,000-square-foot building on 12 Mile Road in Southfield. The building has been sold to a Southfield insurance agent for development into a financial center.

"WE'RE GROWING just too fast!" said Susan Loren, public relations director of The W.W. Group Inc. "We're bursting at the seams."

With the larger square footage, Loren said, "We'll be able to increase services through more office space and better facilities."

The Southfield-based Weight Watchers resorts and spas operation, in which Marks is a principal, also will move its international headquarters to the building. A small general medical practice will open in the building as well.

The move to Farmington Hills is the result of the city's growth and its proximity to Detroit Metropolitan Airport, said Mark, a long-time Farmington Hills resident.

The W.W. Group holds 1,000 classes a week for 50,000 Weight Watchers members. Classes are held in seven states, Ontario and Mexico.