

# Cities swap ideas in annual exchange

By Casey Hans  
staff writer

Farmington's traditional "scrumony and pomp" of Mayor's Exchange Day was transformed into a two-day employee idea swap last week, according to officials.

"This year was different," Mayor William Hartsock explained.

Farmington administrative employees Patsy Cantrell, city treasurer, Robert Schultz, administrative

assistant to the city manager, Frank Lauhoff, director of the department public safety, and City Manager Robert Deadman visited the city of their respective counterparts for a day.

Fraser officials returned to Farmington on Wednesday to see firsthand how Farmington is run. Deadman labeled the two-day meeting of municipal minds a "good exchange."

"Remember that this is not con-

fracted to the day of the exchange," Hartsock added. "We can always go back to them. We developed added contacts and enhanced the network for the future."

ALSO VISITING Fraser were council members Alton Bennett, Ralph Yoder and Arnold Campbell. Councilman Richard Tupper also met with the Fraser officials when they arrived in Farmington on Wednesday.

Fraser was chosen as an exchange city for several reasons, including its size, its similarities to Farmington, its decentralized computer system which officials wanted to view, and the learning experience from viewing a failed Downtown Development Authority, according to Deadman and Hartsock.

In Fraser, officials received a traditional city hall tour and other city attractions, visited a new industrial park development and a company ranked recently in INC magazine's Top 500 and met an Italian furniture maker. "It was a really unique operation," Hartsock said of the smaller company. "You don't see that type of craftsmanship anymore."

In Farmington, Fraser officials also received the traditional tours, visited the downtown library, the Farmington Historical Museum, several downtown development projects, took a tour of Mills Products on Eight Mile, and watched a demonstration of the new video sewer inspection equipment.

In addition, they were treated to lunch at the Botsford Inn in Farmington Hills and a dinner at the Huron River Hunting and Fishing Club on Farmington Road.

"THERE WERE a lot of interesting things in terms of development," Deadman said. "They're a very old community like Farmington, and some of their industrial developments are like ours along Eight or Nine Mile. They seemed to have a close relationship."

"I expect both sides took back a little."

Fraser also has a public safety operation, which was started in the 1970s — 20 years later than Farmington's.

Deadman believes staying in the Detroit metro area for the annual exchange is a "good way to do it," allowing it to last more than one day. The more lengthy the visits, the more officials learn. "We learn from each other successes and failures," he added.

Farmington officials viewed

Fraser's decentralized computer system with interest, as they are presently reviewing the city's computer needs. Each Fraser department works with an IBM personal computer, while Farmington's departments work with a centralized mainframe computer.

ALTHOUGH DEADMAN had not received reports back from employ-

ees on their review of the visit, Hartsock had a definite opinion about Farmington's computer operations.

"We have a mainframe — that's the way to go," he said, adding that Farmington departments can draw from a centralized information bank.

With regards to the DDA, Hartsock explained that Fraser does not have a downtown area like Farming-

ton's. He said the lack of a downtown area, the way the DDA was initially structured and "trying to start from scratch," probably caused it to fail.

Depending on the city and circumstances surrounding the 1987 Mayor's Exchange Day, officials voiced an interest in continuing the involvement of administrative employees.

The program is sponsored by the Greater Michigan Foundation.

## Contenders debate

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THE THREE addressed the relationships between the district and surrounding governments.

Inch suggested a policy liaison group of administrators to deal with any communication problems between the groups. "I do not feel we live in a castle on the hill," he added.

"I think the schools have been cooperative," Rolnick said, citing the recent dedication of Farmington Hills ballparks and the "leasing of land for \$1."

"Schools benefit from the services provided by the cities," Blizman noted. "We have to deal with the cities."

Although women presently outnumber men on the school board, the promotion of women to key posts in the district will take place "very slowly," according to Inch, who called for a workshop for potential administrators.

THERE SHOULD be an active attempt to recruit women, according to Blizman. "That's the only way to rectify the situation."

Rolnick believes an effort is being made. "I think it will continue in the future," she said.

She cited appointments in recent years in the special education area and at the high school level.

None of the candidates felt the board was doing an adequate job with community relations or communications, noting that 70 percent of the residents within the district do not have children in the schools.

"I think we need to communicate with those people," Inch said. "Where we're the weakest is in our communication."

"Most of us find information about the schools out of the newspaper," Blizman added.

"I don't think we're doing an adequate job," Rolnick said, pointing to a need for a districtwide community council, involving parents, staff, administration and students at each school.

ALL FELT school facilities could be better utilized by the non-school residents of the community.

Also discussed was the district's involvement in a local city government internship program, a concept supported in theory by all three candidates.



Fraser Councilman Leo Sadowski (left) and Mayor Joe Boris with Farmington Councilman Ralph Yoder and City Manager Robert Deadman exchange impressions while walking along Grand River Wednesday.

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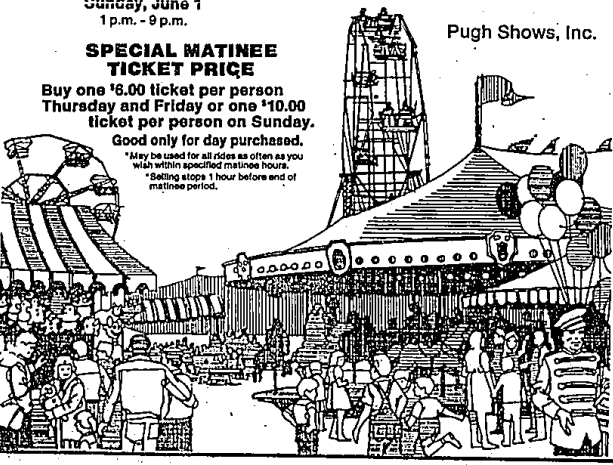
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