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Farmington FOCUS

If you have a news item or an idea for a feature story or an action picture with a Farmington-area connection, send a note to our downtown office at 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

JUST how rundown are the farmstead buildings at Heritage Park, the former Spicer estate in Farmington Hills?

The city has hired Kirk & Koskela Architects of Detroit at a cost of \$5,000 to determine the buildings' potential for restoration and possible adaptive re-use, said Dan Potter, Farmington Hills Department of Special Services director.

The 212-acre estate, settled in 1926 by Elcanor and John Spicer, features an English Renaissance-type lodge, designed in 1925 by architect Marcus Burrows. He also designed Brookside School at Cranbrook Educational Community in Bloomfield Hills and MacGregor Public Library in Highland Park.

Farmstead buildings at Heritage Park also include a sheep barn, a stable and a caretaker's house.

J. Michael Kirk, president of Kirk & Koskela, has nine years of building preservation experience. His restoration of the Kresge Foundation Headquarters in Troy and the Utton House Conservation Program in Sterling Heights earned American Institute of Architects awards.

Kirk's firm recently undertook restoration of the 150-year-old McIntyre Farmhouse in Orchard Lake, the Detroit Urban League Headquarters in the historic Albert Kahn House in Detroit, the 1888 L.E. Timmis Early School in Grosse Pointe Farms and the 1848 Sibley House in Detroit.

WHAT'S the state of Michigan's economy?

State Treasurer Robert Bowman will provide some insight when he addresses the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce at noon Thursday, Jan. 22, at the Roman Terrace Restaurant, Farmington Hills.

Cost for the luncheon is \$10 per person. Call the chamber for reservations: 474-3440.

KEEP these numbers handy for reference when calling the Farmington Observer: 477-5450; sports line, 591-2312; home delivery, 591-0500; classified ads, 591-0900; display ads, 591-3300.

FOOTNOTES: One year ago this week — Inquiries from several massage parlor operators interested in Farmington business locations prompted regulatory action by the Farmington City Council.

Two ordinances were introduced, fees and investigative measures implemented and a 90-day moratorium placed on occupancy permits for massage-related businesses.

The moratorium gives city officials time to consider potential locations and restrictions for massage-related businesses in Farmington, City Manager Robert Deadman told councilmen. There are no massage parlors operating in Farmington.

Hills roads are among the busiest

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

The survey confirms pretty much what Farmington Hills officials and motorists have suspected for quite awhile — traffic congestion is an acute problem.

A survey — conducted by the Oakland County Road Commission — of nearly 300 two-lane road segments throughout Oakland County puts Farmington Hills at the top of the list for most-congested roadways.

Eleven road segments in Farmington Hills were among the top 52 segments with average daily traffic counts of 20,000 or more vehicles.

It probably won't surprise most Farmington Hills motorists, but Haggerty Road, from 13 to 14 Mile, came in second place — with a daily traffic average of 27,973 vehicles — as the most congested two-lane stretch in the county. Taking first place was Dequindre, from 14 Mile to Lovington in Troy, with 30,613 vehicles.

In fact, segments of Haggerty in Farmington Hills take fourth and fifth place in the county survey. The 12 to 13 Mile segment of Haggerty Road — fourth place — has an average daily count of 26,976 vehicles. In fifth place is the thoroughfare's Nine to 10 Mile segment, with 26,988 vehicles.

THE SURVEY results, however, don't surprise Farmington Hills officials, who have been in the forefront of drawing attention to the growing need for major road improvements in the community.

Armed with the survey's results, assistant city manager David Call compared Farmington Hills' congested road segments with those in other cities. Ten segments in Troy and West Bloomfield Township were in the top 52 of heavily congested two-lane roads. Novi followed with seven, Call said.

Because some of the counts in the OCRS survey were not necessarily taken within the last few months, Call expects to compare Farmington Hills traffic counts with those taken by the OCRS.

"There are some that I question," Call said. For example, he's skeptical about the higher count for 12 Mile, Halsted to Drake, than for the Drake to Farmington Road segment.

The traffic counts along Middlebelt, from 14 to Eight Mile, also should have been higher — at least if watching the congestion along the



John Grubba as the most congested road watcher

Instinct led him to safety

By Bob Sklar
staff writer

Shot in the face at point-blank range in an aborted robbery Sunday night, Steak and Ale Restaurant co-manager Jeffrey Pechauer reacted instinctively.

The 24-year-old Canton Township resident got up and ran to a nearby Mobil gas station, where the attendant called Farmington Hills Police. The robbery attempt took place after closing.

"Jeff was stunned by it all, but he held together real well, having only a couple of seconds to think," co-manager Howard Grinsell said Monday, shortly before the Steak and Ale lunch crowd started to arrive.

An employee of the Steak and Ale chain for the past six months, Pechauer joined the staff at the Farmington Hills restaurant, 27590 Orchard Lake Road, on Dec. 1.

Pechauer was recovering "quite nicely," said Russ Tuttle, community relations director at Botsford General Hospital, Farmington Hills, Wednesday morning.

He was shot in the upper right

Please turn to Page 8

Employee of the Year



Mayor Ben Maritz with Eisle McKeown, honored as Farmington Hills' top employee for 1986.

She's special Hills honors assessing clerk

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Walk past the Farmington Hills assessing division in city hall and it's Eisle McKeown who waves, smiles or gives an acknowledging nod.

She's the one you'll probably see after city hall's doors close for the day. She's known for giving that little extra — planting flowers in the city hall courtyard or serving on the city's beautification and energy commissions.

McKeown was honored Monday night by the Farmington Hills City Council, administrators and colleagues as the city's first Employee of the Year.

The eight-year city veteran was nominated and selected for the

'I feel like a part of this. This is my home. And I come to this building as my second home. I do have an interest in the community and it's genuine.'

— Eisle McKeown
Farmington Hills

honor by her fellow employees and supervisors from a field of 370 full-time and 200 part-time city employees.

"It's overwhelming. I have never had that happen to me," said McKeown, who accepted her honor

with tear-filled eyes.

A clerk in the assessing division, McKeown is known for preferring "to remain in the background but she'll do anything to make things run smoothly," according to those who nominated her.

"SHE HAS a good heart and helps her neighbors and those less fortunate without looking for recognition or reward," according to nominations. "She goes out of her way to help the public and quite often does more than her share of work. And she makes people feel welcome."

The Farmington Hills resident makes no bones about feeling as comfortable in city hall as she is in her own home.

Please turn to Page 4

Lifesavers: Mother, daughters save man from fire



Elizabeth Cowan (center) and her daughters, Vida (left) and Mia Butler. All helped save a 32-year-old Detroitter from his burning house Dec. 28.

By Christine Rizk
staff writer

Elizabeth Cowan and her two daughters emerged from the Christmas holiday just as they always had, with the typical return to work and fading memories of December 25, 1986.

In fact, everything seemed comfortably in place as Cowan drove daughter Vida to work down Stout Street in Detroit in the early morning hours of Dec. 28. Everything that is, except for the smoke that engulfed a house and caused Vida to cry out for her mother to stop.

What followed for Cowan, Vida and Mia Butler will make this past holiday season more memorable than those previous.

The three helped save the life of Reginald De Priest, a 32-year-old Detroit postal carrier who had passed out — just inches from the front door — from the smoke that filled his home.

Cowan, 45, and her daughter Mia, 20, are both familiar with life-saving techniques. Cowan works as a census clerk for Botsford General Hospital in Farmington Hills and as a secretary at Sinal Hospital in Detroit. Butler works as a nurse at the Farmington Nursing Home and at Sinal.

BUT NOTHING, they admitted, prepared them for the enormous

'I certainly don't feel like a hero.'

— Mia Butler
nurse

task of being the only people immediately available to bring the seemingly lifeless De Priest back to life.

"We were scared. That's for sure," Cowan said. "All you could see was rolling flames coming up from the basement."

With split-second timing, Vida raced down the street to the house where her sister lay sleeping at 6:30 a.m., called the fire department and followed Mia to De Priest's house.

Cowan was busy waking neighbors in the adjoining homes to warn them of the fire — a task that sounds easier than it is, she said.

Apparently wary of her knocking on doors at so early an hour, many neighbors were hesitant to come out of their homes. But one look to the burning house changed their minds, she said.

Meanwhile, Vida had charted a way into the home, and while her mother warned the neighbors, she struggled to pull the 175-pound De Priest to safety.

Please turn to Page 4

what's inside

Around Farmington Business	2B
Crossword puzzle	1-3C
Entertainment	7E
Footprints in history	4-6C
Obituaries	7D
Opinion	10A
Police/fire calls	12A
Readers' forum	11A
Sports	1-14D
Travel	6D
Classifieds, Sections C,E,F	
Index	9C
Auto	6F
Real estate	2E
Employment	9C

THE DETROIT AUTO SHOW

SPECIAL SECTION

IN TODAY'S ISSUE