

Sisterhood hosts a fashion show, 1B



Hawk batters top Chiefs, 1D

Hills training burn proves popular, 6A

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SPECIAL values by local merchants will be part of the Farmington Beautification Committee flower sale Saturday and Sunday in the Downtown Farmington Center. Participating merchants will provide cake, punch and balloons from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday at the center's fountain.

THEY jumped to help others breathe easier. American Heart Association (AHA) honored Farmington Public Schools' Power Middle School for raising \$13,500, the most ever raised through Jump Rope for Heart in Michigan. More than 500 students took part in the February fund-raiser.

"Our students and school should be proud," wrote Nancy Brown, AHA statewide special events coordinator, to Power's Jump Rope for Heart coordinator, Pat Messina.

THIS is National Hospital Week.

As part of the festivities, many employees, including president George Cooper, sported Botsford General Hospital sweatshirts Monday. The Farmington Hills hospital gave the sweats to employees last Christmas.

FOOTNOTES: One year ago this week — Farmington Hills City Councilwoman Joan Dudley wants to decriminalize the penalties under the city's controversial host liability ordinance.

Hills eyes reduction in tax rate

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Farmington Hills taxpayers will pay less in city taxes in 1987-88.

If the Farmington Hills City Council approves a proposed \$21.4 million budget, taxpayers will pay 1.05 mill less than they did last year.

"Even if their homes went up 6 percent (the average increase in assessments), they will pay less taxes this year," city manager William Costick said.

Costick is proposing a \$21.4 million budget based on 9.2 mills — approximately 10 percent less than the 10.3-mill rate levied in 1986-87. The proposed tax rate includes millage for parks development and millage designated for road improvements.

The average taxpayer who owns a \$100,000 house, assessed at \$50,000, who paid \$516 in city taxes last year would pay \$491 in the coming year if the city council approves the proposed budget and tax rate, Costick said.

Budget meetings are scheduled

'Even if their homes went up 6 percent (the average assessment increase), they will pay less in taxes this year.'

— William Costick city manager

prior to the expected adoption of the budget in early June. In addition to a meeting scheduled for Wednesday, council will discuss the budget again at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 20, in council chambers, 31555 11 Mile.

THE PROPOSED tax reduction comes as a result of a more than \$278 million increase in the city's state equalized value (SEV). The city's SEV increased again this year because of new construction and the results of a major reappraisal of commercial and industrial property.

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Capital projects, new posts slated

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

For Farmington Hills, 1987-88 will be a year of major capital improvements and keeping pace with growth. It will also see the city add more than 11 new positions.

That's the picture painted by the city's proposed \$21.4 million 1987-88 budget, which is supported by a 9.2-mill tax rate.

Of the total proposed 9.2-mill rate, revenue from 6.7 mills is devoted to general operations; revenue from almost 1.5 mills goes to capital improvements (including roads); 0.3 mill is allocated to allowable debt within the 10-mill charter limit (excluding Headlee amendment adjust-

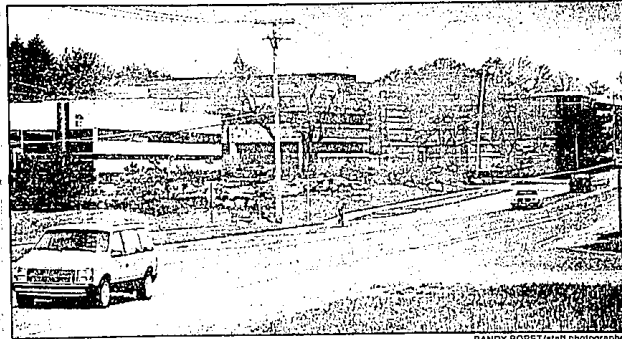
ments); there is a 23-mill debt levy outside the charter limit; and revenue from .45 mill is earmarked for parks and recreation development.

In addition to more than \$8 million in road improvements and almost \$2 million in parks and recreation development, the proposed budget will address items — personnel, equipment and maintenance — necessary to keep pace with the city's growth.

In 1987-88, 11½ positions are expected to be added, plus various temporary seasonal workers in departments, such as special services for the parks and recreation division.

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Boon or bust?



A view of office building-lined Northwestern Highway, just east of Middlebelt.

Hills office growth: A matter of perspective

Office tenants flock to Farmington Hills, 12A

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

IT'S A familiar complaint that's getting louder and louder.

Residents — those who are new to Farmington Hills and those who came here long ago — are bemoaning the booming growth that has put the city on the map.

"I feel that uncontrolled development is making a mess of this city," said resident Lisa Goldstein in a letter to the city council and the Observer.

"The spontaneous growth of unnecessary office buildings is creating numerous traffic problems and an aesthetic nightmare. If the current trend continues, there will be no distinction between the overdeveloped Southfield, with its plethora of mismatched offices, and Farmington Hills," Goldstein continued.

And she's not alone in her feelings. Others may not be quite so elo-

'We have done our very best to control the changes through land use. I don't think the city has let growth go unbridled. The development that has occurred is good development.'

— William Costick, city manager

'If the current trend continues, there will be no distinction between the overdeveloped Southfield, with its plethora of mismatched offices, and Farmington Hills.'

— Lisa Goldstein, Hills resident

quent. They just want the building and the accompanying traffic congestion to stop.

Few, if any, would deny traffic congestion. Whether Farmington Hills is overdeveloped depends on perspective.

CITY MANAGER William Costick says he wouldn't be upset if development allowed so the city can catch up with the growth.

"Despite complaints, people are still coming here. Oakland County is a resurgent area in the state. With that kind of

growth, you have problems," he said.

Bill Bowman Jr. of Farmington Hills-based Thompson-Brown Realtors doesn't believe Farmington Hills has outgrown itself.

"I certainly don't think it's overdeveloped. Southfield has a definite problem. They have overbuilt tremendously."

Joel Feldman, vice president and office analyst for the Southfield-based Hayman Co., agrees.

"By far, Farmington Hills is not overbuilt at this time. There

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Learning by doing

Staff members at Oakland Community College spent an hour Tuesday morning touring the Orchard Ridge campus in wheelchairs to help them understand the needs of handicapped students. Above, Sylvia Berggruen,

health services and special needs coordinator, pushes Dr. Dan Jaksen, campus president. For a closer look at the event, see Page 5A.

Sexual assaults similar to others

By Carolyn DeMarco and Dave Varga staff writers

A 42-year-old woman on a business trip to the area was raped at knife-point by a man in a ski mask early Saturday as she returned to the West Bloomfield condominium where she was staying.

Police believe the incident may be connected to recent sexual assaults in Bloomfield Township and Birmingham.

The victim lives out of state but frequently travels to the area, according to West Bloomfield police Sgt. Mike Madigan. She returned shortly after midnight to the condominium she shared with a female friend at 14 Mile and Orchard Lake.

The woman drove up to the condo, entered the house, then went through the house to open the garage, according to police. As she pulled her car into the garage she noticed a man crouched by the car. She screamed and attempted to run away.

She was stopped by the knife-carrying, ski-masked attacker who closed the garage door and forced the victim face down on the car seat while he searched her purse, Madigan said. He then ordered her inside into an upstairs bedroom where he bound her hands with a ladies' necktie and sexually assaulted her.

HE REPEATEDLY demanded money and jewels and threatened to kill her if she looked at him. After stealing a wedding ring, watch and camera he sexually assaulted her

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Traffic debate is short

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Is anyone interested in Oakland County's road problems? If the 12 residents who turned out for a public hearing Tuesday — on proposed road improvement financing options — are any indication, the answer could be no.

"I am disappointed," said Oakland County commissioner Jack McDonald, R-Farmington Hills.

McDonald heads a new Oakland County Board of Commissioners' five-member transportation com-

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