

An auto baron's Christmas, 1B



Hawks vs. Vikings, 1D

Downtown merchants slate holiday walk, 2A

# Farmington Observer

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## Cities crack down on car thefts

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

**'A number of the people stealing the autos for the chop shops are addicted (to crack cocaine).'**

— Chief William Dwyer

from the Auto Theft Prevention Authority, the communities are forming a special auto theft unit to conduct long-term investigations in those operations that receive and profit from stolen cars. Farmington Hills Police Chief William Dwyer said.

"It will be a conspiratorial-type unit. They will investigate chop shops, collision shops and towing yards," Dwyer said. "The unit will enhance the county's efforts in identifying and prosecuting those people

responsible for auto thefts on a conspiratorial basis."

A side line to the growing car theft industry is the accompanying crack cocaine business. "A number of the people stealing the autos for the chop shops are addicted. They're stealing the vehicles to sustain their habits," Dwyer said.

Detroit leads the state in the number of stolen cars despite a 15-20 percent decrease in the last two years. Oakland County is right behind Detroit. In 1986, Farmington

Hills ranked seventh in the highest number of auto thefts in Oakland County. Southfield and Troy captured the first and second rank.

EACH OF the three communities and the sheriff's department will appoint an officer to serve on the unit. Farmington Hills officer Tim Swanson has been appointed to the unit. No one has been appointed yet from the Farmington Department of Public Safety.

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## State planning forum on I-696 improvements

- 12 miles of roadway improved, 4A
- Future road projects in works, 4A

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

State highway officials have scheduled a public hearing to discuss proposed improvements to I-696.

Meanwhile, Farmington Hills officials aren't giving up hope that the county will widen the 12 Mile Road office corridor west of Farmington Road.

Plans to improve the Haggerty Road corridor north of I-696/I-275 also are in the works. The Michigan Department of Transportation has scheduled a public hearing for 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 9, in the Farmington Hills City Council chambers, 31555 11 Mile, to describe plans to improve I-696.

Widening the 12 Mile office corridor isn't on the Oakland County Road Commission's three-year improvement program. But Farmington Hills city manager William Costick isn't giving up hope.

"I'm still optimistic," he said, holding out hope for state legislative changes that will increase road funding for Oakland County. "We need relief at the state level, and I'm optimistic it will still happen in 1987. But it's still not enough to solve the county's problems."

Above and beyond whatever the state Legislature can do, Oakland County will need another \$15 million-\$20 million annually "to attack the problem of inadequate roads. We still need something within the county in addition to the state Legislature," Costick said.

WHILE WAITING for the county to turn its attention and money to 12

Mile Road Improvements, a necessity for planned Haggerty Road improvements, city officials have done what they can.

The city's Economic Development Corporation has used some of its money for a computerized rights-of-way plan along 12 Mile, based on widening the roadway into a boulevard. Changes in the plan can be made if boulevard plans are dropped.

Because the county doesn't have enough money to improve 12 Mile,

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## Boards tap new leaders

By Joanne Maliszewski and Casey Hens staff writers

There were no surprises in the election of officers on the Farmington and Farmington Hills city councils this week.

In an expected move, the Farmington Hills City Council elected current Mayor Pro Tem Jody Sorenson mayor and councilman Terry Sever mayor pro tem Monday. The elections were unanimous and made on single nominations.

In Farmington, 12-year veteran councilman Richard Tupper moved into the mayor's seat Monday, as the council convened for its first meeting following the November elec-

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## Smoky encounter



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Firefighter Wally Kurzeja watches the old farmhouse burn during a training exercise in Farmington Hills last week. Steam can be seen rising from his fire coat. For a closer

look at the training burn, the first involving a donated house since the deaths of three western Oakland County firefighters in Milford Township, see Page 3A.

## Farmington FOCUS

To write the Observer: 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024. To call: news line, 477-5450; sports line, 591-2312; home delivery, 591-0509; classified ads, 591-0900; display ads, 591-2300.

### HELPING keep Michigan beautiful.

The Farmington Beautification Committee received a 1987 Keep Michigan Beautiful Distinguished Service Plaque at an awards banquet Oct. 15 in Lansing.

The city was honored for its 19-year-old city beautification awards program. Among those representing the city were Mayor William Hartscock and committee chairwoman Carol Kurth.

Kurth also received an individual Distinguished Service Plaque for 20 years of service to the beautification committee.

Keep Michigan Beautiful is a non-profit, educational organization dedicated to encouraging and promoting projects that educate residents against littering and for outdoor beautification.

CRIME is down. Major crimes in the city of Farmington have decreased slightly, along with residential break-ins and non-fatal traffic accidents, according to Director of Public Safety Frank Lauboff, quoting figures from his third quarter report.

He attributes accident decreases to increased speed enforcement by public safety officers. "Normally, speed is related to accidents to some degree," he said.

FOOTNOTES: One year ago this week — Farmington Hills police have ticketed 45 young people since cracking down on disorderly and disruptive behavior along the Orchard Lake Road business stretch of 12 Mile.

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### EARLY DEADLINES

Due to the holiday, we will be closed Thurs., Nov. 26, 1987. To place your classified ad for our Wed. (Thurs.) edition, please call before 5:00 Monday, Nov. 23, 1987.

WAYNE CO. 591-0900  
OAKLAND CO. 644-1070  
ROCHESTER 852-3222



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

## Bosses Day

Members of the U.S. Air Force Reserves spent a recent Saturday familiarizing their bosses with the work they do in support of our national defense. Among the bosses invited to the Selfridge Air National Guard Base near

Mount Clemens were Leo Blizman, shown above peering through the window of an airplane. For a closer look at Bosses Day, see Page 10A.

## School borders: discussion theme

By Casey Hens staff writer

More than 70 Farmington-area residents, mostly parents, converged on Harrison High School Monday to brainstorm about the future of high school education.

Alternative, or "magnet" schools, parent and student choice in selecting schools, and traditional high school formats with possible boundary changes were all discussed during the first of three "town meetings" scheduled by the district.

Each meeting is being run by a parent panel and chaired by a school principal, who are seeking feedback on boundary and building use issues in light of student growth on the west side of the district.

"The only way to resolve this is if you look at a radical approach of changing the orientation of the schools," said one parent, supporting the "magnet" school concept. "You may satisfy more people with that approach."

A "magnet" school would special-

**'There's plenty of room to house our youngsters. What our dilemma is, is the so-called equal educational opportunities.'**

— Clayton Graham  
Harrison principal

ize in certain types of education, leaving the other schools to maintain a traditional format.

OTHER PARENTS said student wishes should be in the forefront of committee members' minds as they consider options for the high schools. Still others wanted to ensure their children could attend the same high schools they now attend and urged

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