

A bushel of gift ideas
at Eastern Market, 1D



Basketball
results, 1C

Council debates merits
of park building, 8A

Farmington Observer

Volume 99 Number 20

Monday, December 14, 1987

Farmington, Michigan

46 Pages

Twenty-Five Cents

© 1987 Spherika Communications Corporation. All Rights Reserved.

Freeway sound barriers eyed

'You people have never lived a quarter-mile from your expressway, evidently. We don't want or need 100 percent increase in noise.'

— Councilwoman Jean Fox

State cites I-696 widening plans, 4A

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills and Southfield residents and city leaders promised the Michigan Department of Transportation they plan to fight long and hard for sound barriers along I-696.

"We in Farmington Hills are rather surprised, if not even a little chagrined, that MDOT would make such a statement that there will be

no noise barriers," Farmington Hills Mayor Ben Marks said.

"Please do not think Farmington Hills is going to sit back . . .," Marks told MDOT public hearings officer Philip Chisholm Wednesday at a public hearing on \$34 million proposed improvements to I-696.

For two hours, residents in Farmington Hills and Southfield disputed MDOT's findings of no need for noise barriers. They demanded relief from what's expected to be a great increase in traffic noise to residential areas abutting the Interstate freeway.

Complaints also extended to the MDOT's lack of study on how the improvements will affect historic areas, particularly in the village of Franklin.

BY FAR, the most complaints embraced expected increased noise levels and the lack of planned barriers.

"You're not going to rape our city with noise without doing something about it," said Farmington Hills resident Bruce Doolittle of Farm Meadows subdivision, south of I-696.

One after another, residents agreed with Doolittle, an engineer,

who chided MDOT officials for their reported findings of expected noise levels when the freeway is improved.

"With progress sometimes go problems and we've got one in this community," Farmington Hills city councilwoman Jean Fox said.

"You people have never lived a quarter-mile from your expressway, evidently. We don't want or need 100 percent increase in noise."

Mayor Marks presented MDOT officials with a resolution recently

Please turn to Page 4

Farmington FOCUS

To write the Observer: 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024. To call: news line, 377-5450; sports line, 591-2312; home delivery, 591-0500; classified ads, 591-0900; display ads, 591-2300.

REACTION sought. Recommended changes in school boundaries and facilities will be presented to the Farmington school board at a study session Tuesday, Jan. 19, said Superintendent Graham Lewis.

"This will not be done to approve any recommendations," he stressed, "but a time when the board will receive the full report on the findings and proposals."

Parent questions will be handled at that meeting. "There is always a concern that decisions will be made without opportunity for community input. We want to assure our community this is an open and meaningful process to resolve some very difficult problems," Lewis added.

BIDS for the first phase of the Downtown Development Authority's five-year civic improvement plan are expected to be opened Jan. 22.

Construction is expected to start in spring, according to city planner Chris Wzaczny. Instituting the plan was delayed by one year when the DDA received only one bid early this year.

The first phase will include pedestrian lighting, sidewalk and streetscape improvements along Grand River and Farmington roads and adjacent side streets. It also will include parking lot improvements on the north side of Grand River.

FOOTNOTES: One year ago this week — Beware of cars following you home, warn Farmington Hills police after four homeowners reported having their purses stolen shortly after arriving home in recent weeks.



Eric Simcox (left), 10 months, and Kristin Jackson, 7 months, hug. The children attend Botsford Hospital's on-site child care facility.

RANDY BDRST/staff photographer

Day care at workplace hard to find

By Casey Hens
staff writer



Just as the day care issue pervades family life, it also is becoming an issue in other areas — especially the workplace.

Recent statistics show only 3,000 U.S. businesses out of six million have some sort of child care benefits. That is changing, according to those who deal with the business community.

The issue today is not whether companies will offer day care benefits for employees, but when and how they will implement them.

Please turn to Page 3

Legislated maternity leave leads to debate

By Neal Haldane
staff writer

In Upper Volta, the government requires business to provide workers with 14 weeks of maternity leave.

Employees in Chad receive 14 weeks.

Canadians earn 16 to 18 weeks. Soviet Union workers have 16 weeks.

The United States, however, does

not require companies to provide any leave for employees.

This country is the only Western industrialized nation without a federal policy on maternity leave.

Although many American firms do provide maternity time off for employees through temporary disability programs, this benefit varies depending on the company.

And federal studies show small firms and workers on the job for a short time are the most likely to be

without parental leave benefits.

Legislation has been introduced in both Lansing and Washington, D.C., to require business to provide parental leave.

As can be expected, the issue has sparked debate.

"IT'S FOOLISHNESS for the Michigan Legislature to act as a 148-member personnel committee," said Rich Studley, vice president for government relations for the Michigan

Chamber of Commerce.

"We think government-mandated benefits are an unwarranted intrusion into employee-employer relations," he said. "Wages and benefits should be established in the marketplace or through collective bargaining."

The chamber's view is not shared by Marian McCracken of Farmington, president of the National Organization for Women in Michigan.

"This is an absolute top priority,"

McCracken said of the legislation. "We are working to get co-sponsors and to get it moving."

"It's essential that fathers or mothers should have some time with their child."

A major push at the legislative level is for parental leave.

Three bills, two in the U.S. House and one in the U.S. Senate, have been proposed regarding parental leave.

Please turn to Page 3

what's inside

- Around Farmington . . . 3C
- Business briefs . . . 4A
- Classifieds . . . Secs. C, E, F
- Index . . . 7E
- Auto . . . C, F
- Real estate . . . 2E
- Employment . . . 7E
- Creative living . . . Sec. E
- Crossword puzzle . . . 3E
- Entertainment . . . 5B
- Obituaries . . . 4B
- On the agenda . . . 2A
- Police/fire calls . . . 2A
- Sports . . . Sec. C
- Street Scene . . . Sec. D
- Taste . . . Sec. B

The CLASSIFIEDS

One call does it all!



Retiring Businessman blends work, family

By Casey Hens
staff writer

It's only 6 a.m. when the sun peeks over the horizon, and Vernon Lunn begins his daily routine at the Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Co. of America, one of Farmington Hills' largest employers.

A few hours of uninterrupted work, and he's ready to begin a full

people

day with the company's 640 employees.

"I enjoy working with people," the Farmington Hills resident said. "I have a lot of faith in people. If you

treat them honestly and fairly, you develop a good relationship."

He is pleased to have spent much of his career with a company that has a "family atmosphere" and one in which he can speak his mind.

Lunn holds the position of senior vice president for human resources and corporate services, which includes overseeing a variety of areas from personnel, advertising and public relations to the company's food service program. He has worked at Alexander Hamilton and raised a family in Farmington Hills during the past 23 years.

LUNN CARRIES the "faith in people" motto with him, from his relationships with family and employees, to his regard for the community and his strong spiritual beliefs.

Business and individual participation makes a community a better place to live, he said. "I think a corporation has a responsibility to a community. We should have a conscience."

His actions speak louder than words. Lunn has served on a variety of community boards, including the Farmington/Farmington Hills



Clifford Culham Jr.



RANDY BDRST/staff photographer

Vernon Lunn, a senior vice president with Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Co. in Farmington Hills, plans to retire next year and return to his hometown of Kansas City.

Judge to decide on man's 'right to die'

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

A Farmington Hills man suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease wants the right to die and a physician willing to remove him from his life-sustaining ventilator wants legal immunity.

Whether the two men will get their wishes is in the hands of Oakland County Circuit Judge David Breck, who will render his opinion Tuesday, Dec. 15.

"We would like to have this done legally," said Joan Culham, wife of Clifford Culham Jr., who has petitioned the court for the right to be removed from the ventilator he has been connected to since April 1986.

Please turn to Page 7

Please turn to Page 7