

Rub-a-dub-dub,
ahhh, a hot tub, 1D



Prep grid
playoffs, 1C

They can be dirty, but
records are public, 3A

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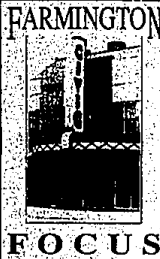
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Farmington, Michigan

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Decision near on school tax hike bid

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By Casey Hans
staff writer

Farmington school trustees are expected to decide this month whether to ask for a special millage election to make up a budget deficit, to make cutbacks without an election, or do a combination of both.

Superintendent Michael Flanagan talked Thursday about the district's need to hold an election to cover the \$5.8 million, or more, expected to be lost because of state budget cuts

approved in the summer.

But the final decision rests with the school board.

Flanagan will meet with the board twice in November to examine the impact of the cuts to state categorical aid, which include money for special education, bilingual education and also the employer's portion of Social Security formerly paid by the state. He will begin by presenting a mid-year proposed budget at Tuesday night's board meeting; the district's options will be proposed and discussed at a second board meeting Nov. 30.

He encourages anyone interested in following the issue to come to both school board meetings.

"I'll be offering figures which are a 'best guess.' If we kept everything the same," Flanagan said. He predicted the bottom line would be "far out of balance" with a deficit which could top \$5.8 million. He will release that figure with the budget Tuesday.

BOARD OPTIONS include budget cuts, going to voters for additional millage or a combination of the two, Flanagan said. In August, Flanagan put a freeze on new hires and filling some replacement positions until the board makes a decision. He said if the board decides to attempt an election, an early December decision would allow an election to be held as early as February.

If a special election were held, February

would be the ideal time because of budget preparation and planning, he said.

A state law was passed in the summer, changing the state recapture formula from \$22 million to \$72 million — taking categorical aid back from out-of-formula districts, of which Farmington is one. That money is to be distributed to in-formula districts, which qualify for state aid. Out-of-formula districts do not fall into the formula for state aid for general operating money, so most of that is obtained through local property taxes.

Of all the districts affected, Farmington lost the most in the state aid recapture measure.

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TRAFFIC IS slow . . . but

Motorists can ponder that rhyme while slowly picking their way along the detours made necessary because of a \$12 million sewer program in Farmington — the largest such project in the city's history.

Work began on the Shiawassee Street segment of the program last week, closing that street between Farmington Road and Warner.

Shiawassee is a busy route that carries traffic through downtown Farmington. Some 18,000 cars a day are driven over the stretch, said Frank Lauff, Farmington's director of public safety.

The Shiawassee portion of the sewer project probably won't be completed until the end of the year.

"It's one of those things where people will have to sit back and have a little patience," Lauff said.

The detour around Shiawassee takes cars east to Power Road, south on Power to Grand River, and west through downtown Farmington.

Lauff suggested that motorists map out other alternative routes through the area, including M-102, Freedom Road, or even the portion of 12 Mile not under construction.

City and county officials are looking into the possibility of retiming the traffic lights on Grand River Avenue — Farmington's main street — to help the traffic flow over the next few weeks.

A low-interest state loan is paying for the project. Voters approved a bond issue last May from which debt millage revenue will be collected to repay the loan.

Motorcyclist killed Friday

A 22-year-old Farmington Hills man was killed Friday when the motorcycle he was riding slammed into the rear of a pickup truck on northbound Merriman in Livonia, police said.

The driver of the pickup truck, a 17-year-old Garden City man, wasn't injured, police said.

Police declined to release the name of either man.

"Traffic and pavement are unforgiving when it comes to motorcycles," said officer George Zellman of the Livonia police department traffic bureau.

The accident occurred at 12:18 p.m. on Merriman at the C&O Railroad tracks, midway between Schoolcraft and Plymouth, Zellman said.

He said the motorcycle was following a 1983 Ford Ranger northbound when the truck slowed and the victim "tried to stop but couldn't make it in time."

The cyclist laid the bike down, but his momentum carried him into the rear bumper of the truck, Zellman said. At that point, the victim was thrown from the motorcycle, he said.

The victim was taken to St. Mary Hospital, Livonia, where he was pronounced dead from massive head injuries at 1 p.m., Zellman said.

The victim was wearing a helmet, and there was no indication of alcohol or drug use by either driver, Zellman said Saturday.

An investigation into the accident was continuing. No tickets had been issued.



SHARON LAM/ELUX/staff photographer

Lori Friedman (center), a student teacher at Farmington High School, shows (from left) Gretchen Clappison, Jeff Smathers and Kim Novak the tools that student voters will use when they cast ballots in the mock election.

So who won?

City mum on results of students' mock election

By Susan Buck
staff writer

Suppose they asked you to vote in an election — and then refused to say who won?

That's what happened Friday at North Farmington, Harrison and Farmington high schools when seniors cast ballots in a mock election.

Apparently, student interest was high. But city officials, who organized the election and counted votes, refused to reveal the results saying they didn't want to influence the real election on Tuesday.

Seniors voted at the three public high schools throughout the day.

'Your vote is private and should not be available to people who have not voted. I don't approve of polls either.'

— Mayor Jean Fox
Farmington Hills

Polls opened 7:15 a.m. and closed at the end of the school day.

Students filled out applications to vote, and used voting booths loaned by the city of Farmington Hills.

Students and government teach-

ers helped set up the mock elections in each school.

OFFICIAL BALLOTS were used and taken to Farmington Hills City Hall for tabulation.

Kathryn Dorman, Farmington Hills city clerk, said it was "the

general consensus" of the city council two months ago, not to re-release the results until after the Nov. 6 election.

Farmington Hills Mayor Jean Fox said the decision was prompted by the notion that the students would vote like their parents — and thus show the results of the real election.

"They (the council) did not want to influence the general election," Fox said. "Your vote is private and should not be available to people who have not voted. I don't approve of polls either. They make people stay home."

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Races go to voters

They settle it Tuesday

Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. tomorrow in the Farmingtons and across the state to allow registered voters to cast their ballots.

One of this year's hot races is the partisan state Senate race in District 15, where state Republicans have spent big dollars to support Denise Alexander, 38, a Southfield City Councilwoman, in an attempt to defeat incumbent Democrat Jack Faxson, 54, of Farmington Hills. This campaign has heated up as it has gotten closer to election day, with each side flinging last-minute accusations at the other. Adding spice to the race is 34-year-old Libertarian Steve Silver of Huntington Woods, who touts his party's philosophy but has said he "really doesn't want the job."

AND IN THE non-partisan race for 47th District Court, where incumbent appointee Frederick Harris faces Frederick Knauer, the race has been fraught with discussions of sign problems and the use of photos in campaign literature. Although an incumbent, Harris was appointed to fill his current seat by the governor, so this is his first go at the electorate.

Voters in Farmington and Farmington Hills will cast ballots in the following major partisan races; only Oakland County Board of Commissioner districts will be different in various parts of the Hills:

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Frederick O. Knauer Frederick L. Harris

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Hills man receives pair of life terms for narcotics violations

By Susan Buck
staff writer

Richard Allen Wakefield of Farmington Hills was sentenced Nov. 1 in Detroit's U.S. District Court to two terms of life in prison on convictions for four counts of violating federal narcotics laws.

Wakefield, 44, who rented a home at 24424 Orchard Lake Road, was also fined \$1 million following the convictions.

He was sentenced before U.S. District Judge Barbara K. Hackett.

Wakefield, who represented himself at the trial, was convicted by a jury on July 18 of one count of conspiracy to distribute heroin, 10 counts of possessing heroin with intent to distribute and one count of attempting to

possess with intent to distribute more than 100 grams of heroin.

"Wakefield has been a major heroin dealer since the early 1970s," said Farmington Hills police chief William Dwyer. "He was a major dealer who got narcotics from outside the state."

HACKETT SAID that she was imposing the maximum possible sentence under the guidelines because Wakefield is a major narcotics trafficker with an extensive criminal record.

Wakefield was on federal parole for a 1975 heroin distribution conviction at the time of the offenses of conviction.

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