

Cable rate hikes scramble rules



New government regulations could reduce cable TV rates for some subscribers. However, more than 60 percent of MetroVision's customers will be paying more for the service.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

The news? Many Farmington area residents will see an increase in their monthly cable television bill Sept. 1. The surprise? New Federal Communications Commission regulations were intended to reduce rates nationwide.

That's not going to happen to more than 60 percent of MetroVision subscribers in Farmington and Farmington Hills, who will see increases ranging from \$1.53 to \$10.54 a month. The hardest hit will be some 300 broadcast basic service subscribers, who paid \$1 a year for 22 broadcast and public access channels. After

Sept. 1, the rate jumps to \$10.62 a month.

Full basic service goes up to \$21.73 from \$19.95.

"We don't have any choice but to charge that," said Tom Bjorklund, vice president and regional manager for MetroVision.

Some 30 percent of subscribers, though, will see a drop in rates. Satellite cable service decreases from \$19.87 to \$11.11 under the new regulations. The cost for remote controls is being cut from \$3 to 19 cents a month.

Also, MetroVision will no longer be

able to charge \$3.95 for each additional outlet.

To make up part of the difference, rates were increased.

Also, new FCC regulations require cable companies to price their cable service on a per-channel basis along with their equipment and actual costs. MetroVision adjusted prices according to the FCC formula, Bjorklund said.

The FCC regulations were designed to prevent companies from overcharging. Bjorklund said MetroVision's

See CABLE, 4A

SMART START

C all our back-to-school line to hear when school bells ring in your local district. You will get the information you need for that important first day back.

For school districts in Oakland County, call **901-4723**

For school districts in Wayne County, call **953-2036**

Access O & E ON-LINE

IN THE PAPER TODAY

SMART-en up, drivers: The Farmington police will be letting drivers know how fast they are going. /4A

It's a boy! Farmington Hills firefighters helped a mother give birth recently. /6A

Longtime resident dies: Paul H. Button, who owned Button Orchards on 12 Mile, died in Georgia Friday. /3C

COUNTY NEWS

Signed, sealed: Engler signs the property-tax-cut bill, but proposals to replace funds and change the educational system remain undelivered. /12A

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

Back to school: Shoppers find prices about the same as last year for those jackets, jeans and backpacks. /7A

OPINION

Firefighter Bill: Farmington Observer reporter Bill Coutant wore the garb and carried the ax at a recent fire department training burn. /11A

TASTE

Fat Fighters: Recipe Makeover expert Laura Letobar explains how one couple is working together to lower their cholesterol. /1B

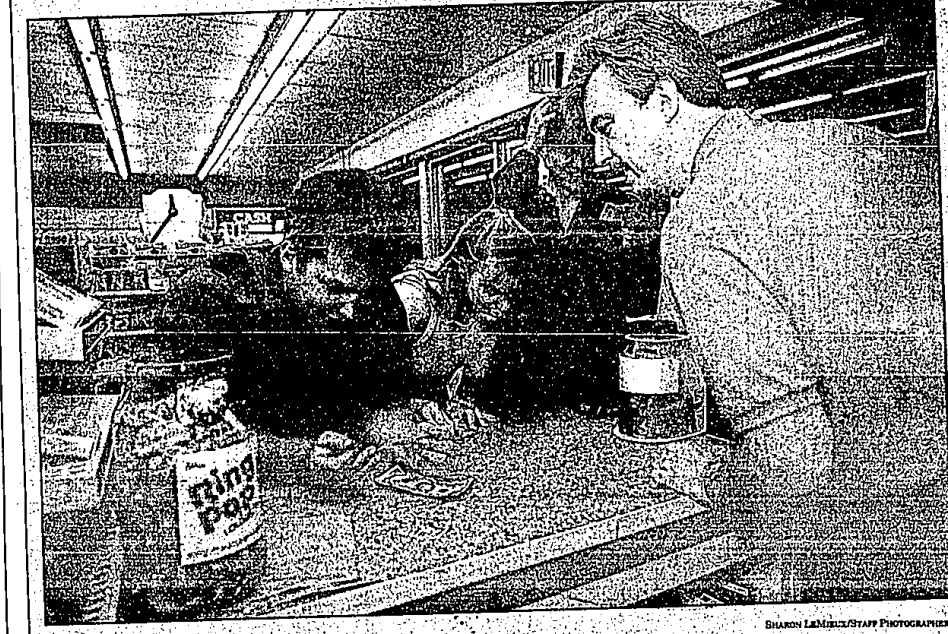
INDEX

Classifieds	B-D	Agendas	9C
Auto	B-D	Opinion	11A
Employment	C-D	Personal Scene	10A
Real Estate	B-C	Police, fire calls	2A
Crossword	6B	Sports	1C
Malls	7A	Street Scene	8A
Obituaries	3C	Taste	1B

HERE'S HOW TO REACH US

Newsroom: 477-8450
 Newsroom Fax: 477-9722
 Sports: 853-2141
 Reader Comment Line: 853-2342
 Classified Advertising: 591-2360
 Display Advertising: 591-2300
 Home Delivery: 591-0500
 Cable/TV Weekly: 853-2199

All-nighter at 7-Eleven



Instant riches? Customers (from left) Phil Pointer, Renita Smith and someone identified only as Day buy instant lottery tickets from clerk Don Zwirner.

Working 11 to 7 shift at 7-Eleven

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

The 11-to-7 shift at the 7-Eleven illuminates the nocturnal side of human existence. People are drawn to the glowing green, orange and red facade and its fluorescent interior like moths to a street lamp. They file into the store, on Farmington Road near Nine Mile, producing a vortex of colliding images

of weariness from a day just past and a resilience to the next. There's a void and a tranquil uncertainty. The gap is often filled with a pack of cigarettes, a case of beer or a 64-ounce Big Gulp. They quench thirsts, mollify urges and supplement vices. They're also essentials for passage into tomorrow's grind. Once inside, it's a perfunctory march. They search and locate the

goods and, often without looking up, place the money on the counter. Then they're gone. Don Zwirner stays, though. He has to. He's the clerk whose day begins when someone else's ends. From 11 p.m. to 7 a.m., he rings up their goods, smiles and waits for the sun to come up. In between darkness and daylight, the hours go like this:

11 p.m. — Zwirner starts his shift, paired off with Bob Gloetzer who will work until midnight stocking the cooler. Gloetzer is rather giddy as his shift winds down. He feels license to comment on what his colleagues will endure during the next eight hours. "You keep busy," Gloetzer said. "There's always plenty of work to be

See 7-ELEVEN, 8A

Gill residents: City's walking all over us

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Even though a lot of suburbanites would love sidewalks, about 20 residents who live along the east side of Gill Road between Nine Mile and Colfax in Farmington Hills want nothing to do with them. "We've lived here for 35 years," said Pat Schmidt. "We were never asked about it. We were mowing our

grass one day when we saw a man putting down markers. We asked him what they were for and he told us they were for a new sidewalk. City officials said the sidewalk, which is budgeted at about \$40,000, will provide a safe walkway for children, walkers and joggers. It is also part of the city's long-range plan to have sidewalks along major roads, such as Gill.

But residents like Margie Blake see only problems with sidewalks. "It's a big headache," she said. "My husband is 77 and we have a long piece of property. Even with a snowblower, I don't think he could handle it." Blake said the sidewalk, which was requested by the Farmington Public Schools to provide safe access to Gill Elementary, will also displace trees

and bring on people who will dump trash on her property. Resident Jan Day said the sidewalk will also raise property values, adding to the tax burden for her and her neighbors. "None of us want it," she said. "The older people will have a hard time taking care of it and it's being

See GILL, 4A

A promise . . . a festival

How did the annual Power Road Festival to fight muscular dystrophy get its start? "Three years ago, I quit smoking," said festival organizer Keith Schemmel, who lives on Power Road in Farmington. "I promised myself and God — that if I could make it I would do something for somebody. Then I started hearing and reading a lot about MD and the Muscular Dystrophy Association. And so was born the festival. This year's edition is scheduled for 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 5, at Silverwood Park in Farmington. There will be a raffle with the grand prize being two American made Trek mountain bikes, a hot rod car show, food (corn roast, hot dogs and pizza),

FARMINGTON FOCUS

games for kids, a moon walk, clowns and face painting. "We're hoping to raise \$5,000," said Schemmel, a construction supervisor. "The first year (1991) we raised \$1,600 just holding it on our street." For more information on the festival or to volunteer to help on Sept. 5, call Schemmel at 476-1219.

On the (Welcome) Wagon

The Welcome Wagon Club of Farmington/Farmington Hills will kick off the season with its annual Activities Fair beginning at

7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 7, at Palth Covenant Church, 14 Mile and Draks roads, Farmington Hills.

Women new to the area are invited to attend along with present members to get acquainted and learn more about the club.

Some activities offered are a toddler group, quilting and sewing clubs, day and night book groups, pinochle, bridge, euchre, and a golf league.

New Welcome Wagon officers were elected recently. They are: Marti Hall, president; Carol Danstrum, first vice president; Nancy Zurak, second vice president; for membership: Arlene Ewert, treasurer and Linda Janis, secretary.

For more information on Welcome Wagon, call 788-1820 or 553-3572.