



STAFF PHOTOS BY ANN HEALAY

Keeping it short: At the Farmington groundbreaking, Gov. John Engler praises Motorama's Fred Watson in a short talk.

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plause before he spoke under the tent where Motorama headquarters will stand.

The office/manufacturing complex at Nine Mile and Gill roads will serve as headquarters for the automotive contractor and three sister companies. Completion is set for June 1995.

Attending the ceremony were Motorama president and owner Fred Watson, developer Robert DeMatteis, Farmington city officials and Republican senatorial candidate Spencer Abraham.

Engler, who is seeking a second four-year term, trumpeted the development as an example of the state's reversal of fortunes.

"It is the policy of this state to build from within and take care of our customers," Engler said. "Motorama is an outstanding customer for the state of Michi-

'In the Farmington and Farmington Hills area, we've got tremendous support. Obviously, one of the key things we want to do is to make sure everyone gets out and participates in the election.'

Gov. John Engler

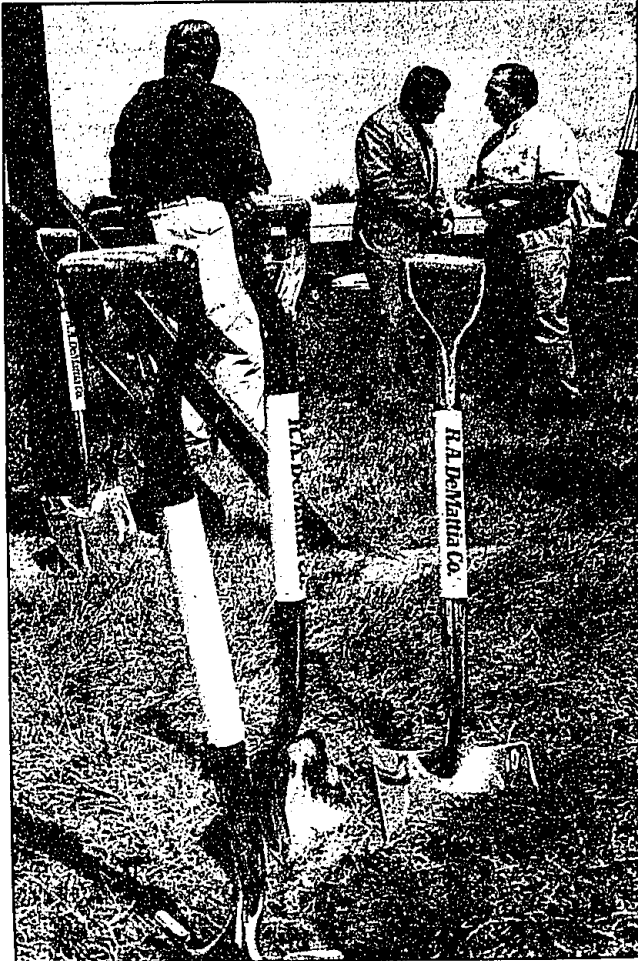
gan. "The state has to take care of its customers. Our customers are not only taxpayers they are the job providers."

Motorama's expansion is part of a statewide trend, Engler said. Businesses are staying in the state and growing, he said.

The incumbent cited statistics: 450,000 jobs have been created since August 1991 and last year Michigan led the nation in new manufacturing jobs.

Engler's Farmington visit was part of a four-day campaign tour to "meet the people." The trek started at 5 a.m. at a Chrysler plant in Warren.

He's not expecting fallout from Proposal A, though some Farmington area homeowners have grumbled they didn't get the property tax relief expected. Homestead mills have dropped 12.8 mills, Engler noted. "That's pretty significant," he said.



Ready to dig: Ceremonial shovels are shined up and ready to go as Gov. John Engler chats with people at the groundbreaking.

Motorama sparks interest

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Monday's groundbreaking ceremony for the new Motorama facility was preceded by an impromptu town hall meeting.

Residents from nearby Farmington Village apartment complex wanted to see what is being built across the street. They scanned the site plan and artist's rendering.

They also drew the attention of city officials in attendance.

Overall, they appeared pleased with the development. Some said they were disappointed, though, because they didn't hear about the office/manufacturing center on Gill and Nine Mile until reading about it last week in the Farmington Observer.

"One small street separates us,

and they didn't notify us," said Janice Alder, who lives in Farmington Village. "That's just courtesy."

Farmington Village is in Farmington Hills. Motorama's new facility is in Farmington.

No alight was intended, said Farmington City Manager Frank Lauffoff.

Time was a factor, Lauffoff said. Also, he added, a public hearing was not needed.

Cities are not required to notify nearby residents unless there is a change in the zoning ordinance. The vacant lot is zoned for heavy industrial use.

The planning commission approved the plan Aug. 8.

"One thing we've continually asked is, 'How can we make it pleasing for the residents next door?'" Lauffoff said. "That's what we've done from the onset."

Increased traffic is another concern. Lauffoff said he'll be looking into doing a traffic survey, which might include changing the cycle at the Gill and Nine Mile signal if necessary.

"When you're going to have 150 more people using little Gill Road you're going to have a mess," said resident Patricia Luffoff.

Some residents met Motorama president and owner Fred Watson. Alder had his business card. "Mr. Watson is very nice and said he is very willing to listen to us if we have any concerns," Alder said.

Democratic convention: Breshgold, Wolpe knock opponents for records

Mike Breshgold, candidate for Congress in the 11th District, shared the platform with gubernatorial nominee Howard Wolpe at Saturday's Oakland County Democratic convention attended by 25 Farmington and Farmington Hills delegates.

Breshgold was critical of his Republican opponent, U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg, for voting against the economic package in 1993 and the crime bill in 1994 and for opposing improvement in health care.

"Like Chicken Little, who kept predicting that the sky would fall, my Republican opponent justified his vote against the president's economic package by claiming that the nation would go into a tailspin if it passed," Breshgold said.

"How wrong he was. The package has resulted in a robust economic recovery tied in with a substantial reduction in the budget deficit."

Making one of his many promised visits to Oakland Coun-

ty, Wolpe was highly critical of Gov. John Engler's response to the escape of 10 dangerous criminals from a Detroit prison facility.

Wolpe said that instead of trying to respond to an obvious bad prison policy, Engler is blaming everyone else but himself. "He (Engler) has elevated scapegoating to an art form," Wolpe added.

"If judges put these guys away, the least the governor can do is keep them there. You don't put hardened criminals, including murderers, in this kind of facility. People want solutions to tough crime issues, not excuses and shifting of blame."

Wolpe also criticized Engler for his many deals that take millions of dollars away from Oakland and other school districts.

The latest deal to surface, Wolpe said, is nearly \$43 million in cigarette tax money that will go into the pockets of retailers instead of into the school fund.

Wolpe said that Engler's claim that he was unaware of the latest deal is belied by the fact that his office sent letters to retailers tell-

ing them how to take advantage of the loophole.

The Oakland County Democratic meeting was followed by the convention of the 11th Congressional District Democratic Organization, chaired by Vicki Barnett of Farmington Hills, who is running for state Senate from the 16th District.

Barnett entered the race when longtime state Senator Jack Faxon, a leading advocate for area schools and the arts, decided not to seek re-election.

In remarks to the convention, Faxon had high praise for Barnett and her leadership last year in the petition drive to safeguard adequate funding of public schools.

Aldo Vagnosi, Farmington area campaign coordinator, spoke to the convention on behalf of U.S. Rep. Bob Carr, who is running for the U.S. Senate.

He said that as a key member of the House Transportation Committee, Carr obtained funding for the 12 Mile boulevard and the Grand River/M-102 intersection in Farmington Hills.

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