

IN THE PAPER

TODAY

Gas and relief: Some officials think a gas tax could spell relief for area highways. /2A

Assault reported: A teenage girl told police she was sexually assaulted in a downtown Farmington parking lot Thursday night by a naked man wearing only a black stocking over his head. /4A

Road closed: Farmington Hills firefighters closed a section of Power Road between Alameda and 11 Mile Friday afternoon as a precaution after a gas leak. /7A

Working it out: The Oakland County Health Department and the Wing Hong restaurant in Farmington Hills are trying to work out an agreement that would avoid revoking the eatery's license. /8A

BUSINESS

Currency chatter: Derivatives — 'plain vanillas' or 'exotic' — are discussed by Observer columnist Sid Mittra. /9A

Business decisions: The Business Milestones column lists some Farmington-area folks and firms that were involved in recent moves. /9A

TASTE

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Tasty event: Cooking seminars, grand tasting, and marketplace await Saturday at Oakland Community College's first Culinary Classic. /1B

SPORTS

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Top flight: The best players in Observerland girls golf are recognized today. /1C

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Students show skills on tests



Farmington school officials have to be smiling — if not crowing — after reviewing results of the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills. Increases were reported in reading, math and language skills.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Public School students can read, write and add. And they do it better than the average American child.

At least that's one interpretation of the Comprehensive Tests of Basic

Skills results. Third, fifth and eighth graders were tested in reading and math. Language tests are also given to third and fifth graders.

Increases are reported in all three areas, including reading where more than half of all Farmington schools scored 15 points above the national

median. A comparison with last year's results mirrors stability and improvement, school officials said. School officials are pleased, but stop short of crowing.

CTBS and the Michigan Educational Assessment Program tests are only one element for measuring student achievement, they said. Scores are not intended to compare districts.

"I think it's important we keep in mind no child attends a district average school," trustee Dave York said. Added trustee Helen Prutow: "I get concerned when people get hung up

looking at the test scores . . . and evaluate an entire school system on them."

Instead, standardized tests are used for informational purposes. CTBS results help identify those for special programs like summer kindergarten through Grade 3 instruction or Delta for gifted students.

CTBS reading results are accurate barometers on how children will perform on the MEAP reading test, school officials said.

See TESTS, 8A

Hats off to the graduates



JOHN STONKLAND/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Adult ed commencement: Graduates of Farmington's adult education program, including (from left) Larry Hegwood, Douglas Julet, Michelle Hood, Diane Smith and Gianina Aceti, whop it up after the ceremony. For a story and more photos, see Page 3A.

Board gulps at nutrition service costs

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

A transfer of money from the general fund to nutritional services has a few Farmington school board members chewing on salaries and hourly wages.

The \$1.7 million fund is projected to run at a \$180,000 deficit for the 1995-96 school year, and needs an infusion from other fund to subsidize it. Sale of lunches is expected to generate \$1.3 million of revenue. State and federal money makes up another \$224,000.

One option is raising lunch prices for students. Board president Cathleen Webb nixed the idea at Tuesday's board study session, calling it a Band-Aid for a larger problem.

Labor costs — \$909,884 — account for more than half of the program's expenses, and continue to rise, Webb said. Meanwhile, food costs are staying within the rate of inflation.

"Hopefully, the increased size of the deficit will capture the attention of the board, the administration, and the employees," Webb said.

"So, we all realize we all have a responsibility to reach some sort of solution to this or it's not going to go away."

Webb said pay and benefits for nutritional program employees are "highly unusual" compared to other districts in the state and don't reflect those in the private sector.

Trustee Helen Prutow echoed Webb's sentiments. "They are way over the private sector . . . We're way over it," Prutow said.

The district and its employee unions — including Custodial Maintenance and Cafeteria Workers — recently agreed to a three-year contract. The board approved the deal, which calls for annual 2-percent increases through the 1997-98 school year.

Union spokeswoman Zen Alley said she didn't hear the board members' comments and was reluctant to make a statement. Comparisons to the private sector are entirely not accurate, she said.

"I think they do something different than in the private sector," Alley said.

Nutritional services program

See NUTRITION, 8A

YMCA to break ground on expansion plans Wednesday

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

After an ambitious fund-raising campaign, and changes to the building and landscaping, the Farmington Area YMCA is ready to expand.

Groundbreaking ceremonies for the \$1.6 million expansion in conjunction with the 30th anniversary of the

YMCA in the community will be at 5 p.m. Wednesday.

Hills Mayor Joanne Smith, Farmington Mayor Arnold Campbell and Farmington Area YMCA Board Chairman Gary Jonna will turn over the earth for the project.

"We were always optimistic," Jonna said of the project. "We had some

major corporate support and the membership supported us."

Those members' support was tangible and the Y raised fees that will account for \$500,000. Corporate and individual contributions totaled about \$600,000, and the Y borrowed the rest.

"This was part of a long-range plan

to better serve teens, seniors, the physically challenged and provide child care," Jonna said.

In addition to an ambitious task of fund-raising, the Y had to overcome some opposition by neighbors concerned about increased noise and less

See YMCA, 8A

Hills sprinkling ban

Restrictions on water use went into effect for Farmington Hills residents Friday afternoon. Restrictions include:

■ Hours for sprinkling lawns and landscaping. It's allowed only between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. and 8-11 p.m.

■ An odd-even address system for watering. Residents with even-numbered addresses can sprinkle on even-numbered days. Those with odd-numbered addresses can water on odd-numbered days.

"The city of Detroit has been unable to supply adequate flow and pressure in the public water system to the city of Farmington Hills," said Thomas Blasell, director of the Farmington Hills Department of Public Services, in a letter.

"In response, the Michigan Department of Pub-

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lic Health has determined that sprinkling restrictions are required. If the above is not sufficient to restore adequate flow and pressure, then a total sprinkling ban will be required."

Blasell stressed that the restrictions apply only to properties connected to the municipal water system.

An official from the city of Farmington, which like Farmington Hills gets most of its water from the Detroit system, said he didn't know if restrictions would apply to Farmington, too.

No office hours for Dolan

State Rep. Jan Dolan, a Republican whose district includes Farmington and Farmington Hills, announced that she will not hold office hours locally during July and August.

Office hours will resume on the second and fourth Fridays of the month, from 1-2 p.m. beginning Friday, Sept. 8, at the Farmington City Hall, and from 2:30-4 p.m. at the Farmington Hills City Hall. To call Dolan's Lansing office, call 1-517-373-1793, or write P.O. Box 30014, Lansing 48909.

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