

IN THE PAPER
TODAY

Let 'em roll: What bowlers at the fourth-annual Team Farmington Special Olympics Bowl-a-Thon lacked in skill they made up for in enthusiasm. /3A

OPINION

Sibling ailiness: The Farmington Schools have a good thing in Highmeadow Common Campus. Why spoil it with a wrong-headed policy on siblings? /8A

AT HOME

Scrub team: Today's section is devoted to spring cleaning and offers some tips to help with that seasonal chore. /Section D

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DDA loans pique interest of existing businesses

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Downtown Farmington businesses — those already open, that is — could be eligible for subsidized loans.

The Downtown Development Authority is already offering \$200,000 in subsidized loans as an incentive to relocate to its district. The DDA offsets 1-percent of the interest in the program through MetroBank.

Expanding the program to include existing downtown business has not been approved, but the authority took the first step by including an additional \$1,000 to offset interest payments in its 1996-97 budget.

DDA board members are expected to discuss expanding the program at its meeting May 7. "I've had several (businesses) asking about it," City Manager Frank Lauthoff said. "They recognize it's not a terrible reduction in interest costs, but every little bit helps."

The loan program was started this year as an incentive to bring new businesses downtown. Businesses could borrow up to \$25,000 to pay for relocation costs. An additional \$1,000 was added to bring the total of \$3,000 earmarked for interest payments on loans in the DDA's 1996-97 fiscal year.

The DDA expects to spend \$258,301, which is less than \$320,570 in the 1996-98 budget. Completion of streetscape improvements along Grand River and a park on Orchard Street accounts for most of the reduction: \$10,085 compared to \$140,247 in the 1995-96 budget.

Offering loan subsidies is part of an overall business recruitment drive by the DDA. So far, response has been less than overwhelming. Only one loan application has been taken out at MetroBank, Lauthoff said.

"I don't find that so discouraging," Lauthoff said. "Everyone I've talked to recognizes, that because the board has done this, it reflects on the attitude the city has towards bringing new business to downtown."

Safety looms over cell tower study



By BILL COLTANT
STAFF WRITER

After conducting a lengthy study on the effects of cellular towers in Farmington Hills, there is now a question as to how much weight it will carry.

At a study session in the Farmington Hills City Hall Monday, members of the Cellular Tower Committee

talked about their findings before the city council, answered questions and, at times, debated with cellular industry experts as to the safety of cellular towers.

The issue first took hold in Farmington Hills in 1994 when Cellular One attempted to lease a site for a cellular phone antenna in a residential subdivision common in the

northern part of Farmington Hills. Residents became concerned about the health effects of a tower in a residential area and the effects on property values.

Another plan to put a cellular antenna on a church steeple in the area was turned down by the congregation. Cellular One had wanted a tower located in the area north of I-696 because of the heavy phone traffic along freeway and points north, including West Bloomfield, which has a large amount of cellular traffic, has not allowed construction of cellular towers

there. The Hills city council appointed 14 members to the Cellular Tower Committee in May of 1995 to study the issue and report back to the council. The members include residents concerned about the towers along with representatives of the council of homeowners, members of the scientific community and the cellular industry.

A moratorium on new cellular tower construction has been in effect and remains in effect in Farmington Hills.

See STUDY, 6A

Baskets of fun at Jaycee Easter Egg Hunt



At Heritage Park: An early spring day brought out hundreds of youngsters to Heritage Park March 30 for the Farmington Area Jaycees Easter Egg Hunt. Above, 3-year-old Max Shelley shows his dad, Doug Shelley, contents of a plastic egg. At right, 2½-year-old Zachary Muncie keeps a sharp eye out for candy. In the stroller is 6-month-old Jason Muncie.



School bus crashes at gas pumps

By BILL COLTANT
STAFF WRITER

Remarkably, there were no injuries when a Mercy High school bus crashed into the Shell gas station at 12 Mile and Middlebelt early Monday morning, hitting two vehicles and crushing a gas pump.

The rear of the bus caught fire at 5:55 a.m. and Farmington Hills firefighters from Station 2 arrived at 6:01 and put out the flames and shut off the emergency valves to the pumps.

The 1994 GMC bus was headed north on Middlebelt and crossed 12 Mile, then made a right turn into the station from the middle lane, police said. The driver, Coleen Joyce Lawson, 62, of Redford Township, did not realize there was a pickup truck in the far right lane.

The bus collided with the 1992 Dodge truck driven by Douglas Alan Kohl, 42, of Farmington Hills, and then drove into a parked 1987 Nissan Sentra before settling over a gas pump.

The rear of the bus caught fire at 5:55 a.m. and Farmington Hills firefighters from Station 2 arrived at 6:01 and put out the flames and shut off the emergency valves to the pumps.

The driver of the Nissan, Kevin Quiles, 20, of Pontiac, was not in the car when it was hit. The bus driver and Kohl were not injured.

Damage to the station and property was estimated at \$25,000.

"The driver apparently thought that the pickup (in the right lane) had to turn right," said Farmington Hills Traffic Supervisor Sgt. Dennis Green. "She didn't realize the pickup was next to her."

The bus had stopped to gas up before picking up students. There were no students aboard at the time of the incident.

Lawson was cited for making an unsafe turn.

Maxfield achieves high marks with school board

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

No sophomore slump for the Farmington Public Schools superintendent. Bob Maxfield received high marks in his second evaluation by the board of education.

Maxfield, 54, was hired as superintendent in 1994. He was previously the school chief of the Berkley district for six years.

As last year, Maxfield had to present the board's superintendent evaluation committee with a portfolio with

his accomplishments during the past year. He had plenty to show, board members said.

"We feel he's doing a great job," Trustee Dale York said.

Maxfield has met with the evaluation committee twice, including a ses-

sion recently on future goals. Those are not expected to change much from the previous year, York said.

Maxfield and the board will meet soon to discuss salary and contract.

See MAXFIELD, 6A

Up goes the Tri-Color

The French flag will be flying along side the Stars and Stripes at O.E. Duncel Middle School in Farmington Hills April 17-30 to honor 17 French students visiting from the Collège des Touleuses in Cergy, France.

The students and two adult chaperones will stay with families of Duncel students in Farmington Hills. On May 7, 13 Duncel students and two adults will fly to Cergy for a three-week visit.

The families on both sides of the Atlantic have been corresponding since November. The program, called "French — Back to Back," is administered by the Association of French American Classes in Illinois.

FARMINGTON FOCUS

All about ancestors

Susan Oliver will speak on "The Essence of the Ancestor" at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 16, at a meeting of the Farmington Genealogical Society at the Downtown Branch of the Farmington Community Library, Liberty and State streets.

The event is open to the public. For more information about the group, call Kay Briggs at 474-4606.

Adoptive parents needed

The St. Vincent & Sarah Fisher Center of Farmington Hills is looking for dedicated parents living in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties to become foster or adoptive parents of children with special needs.

Interested parents are invited to attend the center's Foster Care and Adoption Orientation at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 18, at Sarah Fisher's Foster Care Building, 24725 Inkster Road between 12 Mile and Northwestern Highway.

For more information, call 626-3025.