

# Farmington Observer

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**'Vindicated':** *Dr. Jack Kevorkian said he was never intimidated by previous charges by the previous county prosecutor.* /A5

## MALLS & MAINSTREETS

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## Ameritech's long distance ring sounds sweet to officials

**BY WILLIAM COUTANT**  
STAFF WRITER

Farmington and Farmington Hills officials are joining others in cheering the potential competitive benefit for consumers by Ameritech's entry into the long distance business in Michigan.

Ameritech became the first major communications company to apply to the Federal Communications Commission for permission to provide long distance service under terms of the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996.

Under that law, companies like Ameritech can provide long distance once they've complied with a "checklist" of requirements and signed interconnection agreements with competitors. The Jan. 2 FCC filing was hailed as "another major step toward fulfilling our customers' wishes," according to Richard C. Notebaert, Ameritech chairman and CEO.

"To all those who say the long distance market is already competitive, I say: Take a look at Thanksgiving eve, when the three leading long distance companies raised their prices in lock-step for the second time this year, the eighth such increase since 1990," Notebaert said.

Gov. John Engler hailed the filing.

"This action is reflective of Michigan's pro-competitive telecommunications policies and I applaud Ameritech for making this historic filing," Engler said.

New 37th District state Rep. Andrew Raczowski didn't try to contain his excitement at the news.

"This is tremendous," he said. "Michigan is the first state and, I think, Illinois will probably follow."

Raczowski said Ameritech has two facilities in Farmington Hills and has the largest number of company employees in Michigan. But more importantly, consumers will benefit, he said.

"They just want an even playing field into the long distance market," he said. "This will allow Farmington and Farmington Hills residents greater competition and lower rates."

Raczowski said the other long distance carriers — AT&T, MCI and Sprint — have been in the Michigan

See AMERITECH, A2

## Snow problem



Scraping by: Janelle Horton, a senior at Farm High School, clears her car windows of ice and snow after class was dismissed Thursday afternoon.

## Winter's fury brings flurry of accidents

**BY WILLIAM COUTANT**  
STAFF WRITER

Old man winter hit hard Thursday, keeping Farmington Hills police officers busy responding to accidents.

"We normally have eight or nine accidents in a 24-hour period," said Hills police Traffic Supervisor Sgt. Dennis Green. "We had 23 (from 7 a.m. Thursday to 7 p.m. Friday)."

The most serious accident involved a 49-year-old Bloomfield Hills dentist, who's 1992 Cadillac Seville crossed the centerline while

going east on 12 Mile near Rollcrest in front of Harrison High School at about 10 p.m. Thursday. The Cadillac spun around and was struck in the rear driver's side by a 1991 Ford Explorer driven by Steven Brown, 33, of Farmington Hills.

The dentist, Michael Breyer, was listed in critical condition Friday at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak where he was taken after first being transported to Botaford General Hospital in Farmington Hills.

See WINTER, A2

## District's 'sibling policy' on the block



**BY LARRY O'CONNOR**  
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Public Schools is expected to do away with a controversial policy where brothers and sisters of Highmeadow Common Campus students get the nod over others to enroll in the school of choice.

A proposal presented during the board of education study session Tuesday would eliminate the policy starting in 1997-1998. Siblings of students already enrolled at the grade 1-5 school would be grandfathered in.

Trustees will decide on the recommendation at its regular meeting Jan. 21. Board members expect protests.

Three parents spoke in favor of continuing the policy, which they say helps keep families together. Opponents argue the policy is discriminatory and limits access to the district's most popular school of choice.

Highmeadow — which was named a national exemplary school — fills openings through an annual lottery.

Last year, 46 of the 60 openings went to brothers and sisters of current students, leaving only five

See POLICY, A2

## Board fields questions on its bond plan

**BY LARRY O'CONNOR**  
STAFF WRITER

Some residents are questioning the \$110-million bond issue, and Farmington school board members almost sound relieved.

Two parents spoke out during Tuesday's study session, which is two more than have commented publicly since the report was presented in late November.

One parent believes the district needs to look at more cost-efficient ways to educate children. Another said he favors the bond, but wanted some financial information clarified.

The board is expected to approve the preliminary application for the bond at a special meeting 6:30 p.m. tonight at the Lewis Schulman Administration Center. The board is considering an election date of March 24 or 25 to ask voters to approve the bond and a millage renewal.

"I wanted to check up on you: I want to make sure we don't get yapped," said Bill Steiber of Farmington Hills, who said he backs the bond.

The district intends to spend \$92 million on build-

See BOND, A2

## District wants answers to MEAP decline

**BY LARRY O'CONNOR**  
STAFF WRITER

Lower Farmington Public School fourth and seventh graders are proficient in math and reading, according to MEAP test results released Friday.

And school officials intend to seek the answers as to why.

Students took the MEAP in September.

Fourth graders achieving 75 percent or better in reading slipped from 87.4 percent in

1995 to 62.7 in 1996 while those making the grade in math plummeted from 82.3 in 1995 to 77.8 percent in 1996. Some 832 fourth graders took the tests.

Seventh graders scoring 75 percent or better in math dropped from 77.4 to 67.3 percent in 1996. Satisfactory scores dipped in reading from 57.2 to 52.9 percent.

"The overall results of the district are disappointing,"

Superintendent Bob Maxfield said. "We've had a nice five-year trend upward. Last year was a more dramatic jump than in the past."

"It's been a top priority with us to improve the test scores and get them up where I think they ought to be."

Farmington results correspond with a statewide trend, though. Percentage of satisfactory scores dropped in reading

See MEAP, A2

### MEAP Results — Farmington Schools

Below are the district and statewide scores for 4th- and 7th-graders taking the reading and math portions of the Michigan Educational Assessment Program. The figures represent the percentage of students achieving a satisfactory score.

	READING	MATH
District	62.7	77.8
4th GRADE		
District	49.0	60.5
State		
7th GRADE		
District	52.9	67.3
State	40.4	51.4

SOURCE: FARMINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, DISTRICT. ITEM #14386 (Source)

### New food in town

Downtown Farmington is host to two new eateries, the Big Apple Bagels store and Thai Kitchen of Farmington.

Big Apple, at 23334 Farmington Road, offers 5-ounce, doughy, fresh bagels in varieties from cheddar herb and chocolate chip to standard cinnamon raisin and salt.

Owners Catherine and Tom Henninger, and their son, David, also offer fresh-ground gourmet coffee, sandwich bagels and many choices of cream cheese.

Thai Kitchen, in the Village Center mall, will replace It's Greek to Me Cafe. Doors will open today, after a ribbon cutting Sunday, Jan. 12.

Thai Kitchen is owned by George Yang and Choo Yang.

## FARMINGTON FOCUS

### Attention homeowners

The Council of Homeowners Associations of Farmington Hills will hold its annual membership meeting at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 14 at the Farmington Hills Library.

Entitled "Calling All Homeowners," the meeting will include the election of officers.

### Goodfellows wrap up

The Farmington Area Goodfellows came even closer to their goal of "no child or senior without

a Christmas" in 1996.

The nonprofit organization recently released its year-end statistics. According to their figures, 186 families, 331 children, 115 senior adults and 26 disabled residents received food, toys, gift certificates, and health supplies in the form of donations from the community.

Over 20,000 canned goods came from Farmington Public Schools, 1,283 toys from various individuals and groups, and \$51,095 came from all community mailing.

Recipients qualified after a clearing process with Neighborhood House, Salvation Army and St. Alexander Church.

The Goodfellows wish to thank the many individuals and companies who donated their time, money and resources.