

City, couple clean up on land sale to allow car wash

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

A Farmington couple wants to expand their car wash business. City land — initially meant to provide extra right-of-way to an adjoining highway — is the road to see the pair's dream come true.

Colonial Car Wash owners Mark and Holly Owen will buy 11,950-square feet of city property for \$5,000, which allows them to build a three-bay oil change center and a self-service car wash at their Nine Mile facility.

The Farmington City Council was to approve the sale at Tuesday's meeting.

The couple is buying a majority of land needed for the expansion from a private owner but also requires the city's parcel to see the project through. Farmington bought the parcel in the early 1960s as excess highway right-of-way.

The property is not worth putting on the market, a city assessor said.

"It's a small triangle the city never developed into anything," Mark Owen said. "It's kind of

FARMINGTON

useless to the city."

By selling the parcel, the city gets to tax the property. A new development on the land is expected to generate more money in tax revenues than the city would have gained from its market value, city officials said.

And the car wash owners get to expand their business. Mark Owen is a certified mechanic and previously worked at Pat Milliken Ford. The new facility would take three months to build, Mark Owen said. Construction is expected to start this spring or the spring of 1998.

"The oil change and car wash business blend quite nicely together," Mark Owen said. "A lot of people wash their car every week and most people have their oil changed every three months and you can cross-market the two."

The Owens have operated Colonial Car Wash since 1989. The couple has two boys who attend Farmington High and has been involved as school music patrons.

The Owens are also involved in several fund-raisers for Farmington Families in Action.

"It's been a real pleasure to operate a business in Farmington," Mark Owen said.

Rainbow from page A1



STAFF PHOTO BY SHARON LAMERIE

Performing: *Freshman Eric Phillips sings and dances at the breakfast as part of the Northern Lights Choral group from North Farmington High School.*

ferent cultures," Saad said. "The real difficulty was Arab Americans dealing with their own people and Jewish Americans dealing with their own community."

Members agreed not to discuss Middle East politics and, for awhile, there was a dormant period.

With persistent efforts, though, the friendship group melded into the Interfaith Roundtable. Since then, members have been involved in interventions and school programs.

The friendship group took 16 years to reach that point, Saad said, offering the Farmington community council some perspective.

"Doing what you're doing is a battle because it's much easier to hate, stereotype people and point fingers," Saad said. "... The thing I find that works is to have people sit down together and get to know one another."

The Multicultural/Multiracial Community Council used Tuesday's awards ceremony to bang the drum on a few accomplishments since forming three years ago.

The council — at the urging of Farmington and Farmington Hills city councils and Farmington Public Schools — wrote a set of guiding principles to ensure a diverse community.

Also, clergy from two of the area's prominent religious institutions — Adat Shalom Synagogue and Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church — recently joined the council's steering committee.

People honored at Tuesday's breakfast included city and school officials, community leaders and students.

Boys and Girls Republic Principal Bill Miller was recognized posthumously. Miller died of a heart attack during the holiday break in December. His wife Joan accepted the award.

The annual awards are about recognizing those people who are "building our bridges" for a diverse community, said Farmington Mayor JoAnne McShane.

"This is an affair I look forward to every year," Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagozzi said.

Here's the list of Rainbow award winners

Rainbow Recognition Award
Recipients for 1997:
■ Linda Arndt
■ Carla Barrett

■ Mary Brown
■ Parini Doshi
■ William Dwyer
■ Eddie Flournoy
■ Angela Fodor
■ Will Gervais
■ Mary Grayson
■ Samir Haddad
■ Nancy Heilman
■ Edward Hodges III
■ Rande Horn
■ David Jones
■ Fay Kinaya

■ Judy Laidlaw
■ Al Lanigan
■ Frank Lauhoff
■ Todd Lips
■ Richard Lobenthal
■ Bob Maxfield
■ Bill Miller
■ Denise O'Neal
■ Janet Patton
■ Marcia Phillips
■ Lovely Tom
■ Brenda Wickline
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Free family night is Friday

Friday is Family Night at the William Costick Activities Center where activities will include swimming, crafts, stage and comedy entertainment and some unusual animals.

The event, which runs from

6:30-9:30 p.m. is sponsored by the Farmington Hills Commission on Children, Youth and Families. It will be the fourth year that the commission and city have offered the free event. One-hour swimming sessions will begin at 6:30 p.m. A "Make It and Take It" craft area will give kids the opportunity to make crafts and take them home.

The popular children's play "Charlotte's Web" will be performed at 7:30 p.m. by September Productions. Ben Spitzer and sons Comedy, Magic and Juggling Show is at 8:30 p.m.

City Naturalist Joe Derok will present his wonderful world of animals during the evening and there will be several other free activities.

The Costick Center is on 11 Mile Road, a quarter mile east of Middlebelt. Gates 3 or 4 can be used.

For further information, call 474-6115.

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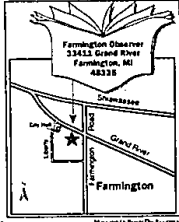
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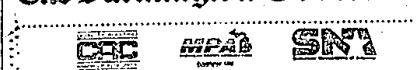
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