

Farmington Observer

Thursday
June 19, 1997

VOLUME 110 NUMBER 76

FARMINGTON, MICHIGAN • 38 PAGES • http://www.ocoonline.com

SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

IN THE PAPER TODAY

Spruce up: Farmington City Council is encouraging plazas and strip malls to enhance their appearance. /A2

High emotion: Suburban Red Wing fans flocked to the site of an accident that injured players and left police puzzling over how it happened and whether the driver of a limousine should be charged. /A7

SPORTS

Soccer all-stars: Observerland was represented by a large contingent of recently-graduated seniors Saturday in the annual prep all-star games. /C1

AT HOME

Artistic address: Get a feel for living with fine art and furnishings by visiting the Artful Home in Ann Arbor, which is filled with works by Michigan artists. /D12

ENTERTAINMENT

Movie time: Summer movies promise action, romance and comedy. /1E

INDEX

At Home	D	Real estate	G5
Beliefs & Values	D7-8	Rentals	H2
Brides	B4-5	Editorials	A14
Cable Connection	A12	Entertainment	E
Calendar	C7	Community Life	B1
Campus Pipeline	A3	Movie Guide	E6
Classifieds	F-J	Oakland Digest	A9
Crossword	G6	Obituaries	A13
Index	G5	Police calls	A4
Employment	H5	Recreation News	A12
Service guide	J3	Sports	C

Pony up: City revises its fees

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

People who peddle flowers outdoors or bounce a check can expect to hand over more money to the city of Farmington.

The increases are part of an overall revised fee schedule approved by Farmington City Council at Monday night's meeting. The fee schedule hadn't been reviewed in nearly 20 years and was pock marked with inconsistencies, city officials said.

The fee schedule covers such things as registering a business, outside sales and vending machines as well as licensing and permits. It also includes miscellaneous items such as the fee for getting married by the mayor.

Outside sales by businesses will cost \$100 annually whereas no fee was charged in the past.

"We believe this is extremely reasonable as far as the amount of staff time involved in monitoring these sales," City Manager Frank Lauff said.

Mayor Jo Anne McShane agreed.

"I think it's a good idea to have fees for outside sales because I know the guys are always over there monitoring things," McShane said.

Fees on returned checks increase \$5 to \$35 under the revised schedule.

The city used to charge new businesses an average of \$60 as an initial start-up fee, but that's scrapped under the revised schedule.

"We want new businesses to come here; we don't want to charge them a higher fee," Lauff said.

Businesses will continue to pay a \$40 annual fee. Establishments that require code enforcement and investigation — such as those selling alcohol, operating a bed and breakfast, auctions, carnivals or coin-operated amusement devices — will have to pay additional licensing and permit fees.

Changes in fees are an attempt to recoup some of the costs associated with enforcing ordinances and conducting business.

"We think it's a more equitable fee schedule," said Paty Cantrell, Farmington city clerk and treasurer.

By the way, the price tag on getting married by the mayor is \$50.

Having a ball



STAFF PHOTO BY SHARON LEMKE

Hands on: 11-year-old Katie Muir plays a ball game of "finch" at Heritage Park during a Farmington Hills Parks and Recreation day camp. The group of kids, ages 9-12, called the "Com-On-A-Wonna" plays games, go on nature walks and a weekly field trip. For more on kids' summer fun, please see today's Community Life section on Page B1.

Students show improvement on state test

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Farmington high school juniors did a little better on this year's Michigan High School Proficiency Test.

The percentage of students reaching "Proficient" status — scoring 400 or above — jumped significantly in math and science when compared to last year's results. Those achieving Proficient in reading and writing dropped slightly.

Farmington remains above the

state average and compares favorably to other Oakland County districts.

However, some school officials are still grappling with the relevance of the annual state test, which provides diploma endorsements in three of four subject areas. Students have to earn Proficient scores in both reading and writing to receive a communication arts endorsement.

The exam, currently in its second year, is not a basic skills test, but is

designed to measure students' problem solving abilities. It recently received a stamp of approval from the president of the International Center for Leadership in Education.

Trustee R. Jack Inch complained about the five school days devoted to taking the test, saying it is valuable instruction time lost. It doesn't make sense to have kids tested in the middle of the school year either, he said.

Inch is also concerned about the

City reins in cellular towers

By TODD WICES
STAFF WRITER

A last-minute amendment to a Farmington Hills cellular tower ordinance has homeowners rejoicing and cellular service providers frustrated.

Introduced by Councilman Jerry Ellis at Monday night's city council meeting, the amendment prohibits new cellular towers and antennas in residential areas. It also places severe restrictions on the location of such facilities, and urges the placing of more than one company's antennae on existing towers.

Ellis outlined the amendment in a memo given to council members shortly before the meeting.

In contrast, the planning commission spent more than a year developing the cellular tower ordinance the council had been considering.

Council unanimously approved the introduction of the ordinance and the Ellis amendment to applause from residents' groups in the audience.

"It adds a few provisions, is more

Please see TOWER, A2

Kmart plan sent to council

By TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

It could be six months before Farmington Hills city officials decide the fate of a proposed Super Kmart anchored mega development. But concern from residents about the project — mostly how it would impact traffic near their homes — is already starting to build.

That potentially controversial \$100 million development at least got off to a good start Tuesday night.

Following a public hearing, the planning commission unanimously recommended that the area intended for the commercial-residential center qualifies as a Planned Unit Development. The parcel is one of seven special planning zones permit-

Please see PLAN, A8

Gas it up

SMART officials presented the keys to a new \$37,000 mini van to Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi at Monday night's city council meeting.

The vehicle will be used by the Senior Adult Division of SMART for its transportation program, which currently gives rides to 1,600 needy seniors annually for doctor, hospital or medical visits. The program will now be expanded from four days a week to five, and can now handle an increased number of requests.

"I kind of feel like Monty Hall, and that the city of Farmington Hills has picked the right door," said Rick Knuffman, general manager of SMART. "And behind that door is a van."

A mileage approved by voters two years ago is funding several new SMART vehicles for the city. The first was a bus, currently being used to

FARMINGTON FOCUS

transport area youth to local after school programs. Another will be delivered at the end of August, and a 21-passenger vehicle for youth and elderly will be delivered in seven to nine weeks.

Vagnozzi joked that city council planned to use the new mini van as "a getaway car" after its public hearing of a controversial cellular tower ordinance that night.

The mini van will be in service by July 1. To make a reservation, call SMART at (248) 473-1804.

Head of the class

Those awards keep coming for Hillside Elementary teacher Dodie Harris. She was named both the Farmington district and Oakland County "Elementary Teacher of the Year." Radio station WKQI-FM 95.5 has named Harris as its "Teacher of the Year," too. Dana Katz, a student in Harris' fourth-grade class, nominated her teacher for the honor.

Harris will be awarded with a "Shanty Creek Summer Getaway" at Shanty Creek Resort in Northern Michigan.

Mail items to Farmington Focus, 33411 Grand River, Farmington 48335; or fax them to: 1-248-477-9722