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# Farmington Observer

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## TODAY

**Death: Farmington Hills man and former football player and coach loved his Fighting Irish of Notre Dame. /A4**

## OPINION

**To do: Farmington Observer gives some tasks for elected officials to accomplish in the new year. /A6**

## ENTERTAINMENT

**Festival: The Plymouth International Ice Sculpture Spectacular in downtown Plymouth, Jan. 13-18, is the oldest and largest ice carving event in North America. /E1**

**Music: Blues singer/boogie woogie pianist Al Hill has been told he should put his music to CD. /E1**

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# Cable viewers asked to speak out



**Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission wants to hear from cable subscribers about what they think of Time Warner's performance. Hearings take place 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 12, at Novi City Hall.**

By TIM SMITH  
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Farmington-area residents will have their chance to put down the remote and rate the job being done by area cable operator Time Warner, and in the process help determine whether a "non-exclusive" franchise be renewed or not.

The opportunity is at Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission's public hearing, set for 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 12, at Novi City Hall, 46175 W. 10 Mile.

"We're trying to reach the person sitting on the couch grumbling about cable," said Caron Collins, SWOCC executive director. "Get off that couch and speak up."

According to Collins, people should not hold back comments if others at the hearing say what's on their mind. "If 100 people get up and say the same thing, that sends a different message than one person saying it," said Collins.

The hearing, said SWOCC community relations coordinator Melanie Young, is "part of the franchise renewal process," one that must follow strict federal cable act guidelines.

Collins said that the cities of Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi continue to be served by Time Warner — even though the original 15-year non-exclusive franchise agreement expired

in May 1997. With a non-exclusive agreement, "any other cable operator can come in here ... however, competitive cable operators (in an area) are pretty rare."

Since the pact expired, Collins said, "We have had a number of extensions, mutually agreed upon, which are now day to day, pending resolution" of the franchise renewal process.

During Tuesday's hearing, questions and comments from the public will be answered by Time Warner representatives. All SWOCC commissioners and officials from the three cities will be on

Please see CABLE, A2

## Frolic in the flakes



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BEZLER

**Blast off** Not all was gloom and doom when heavy snow hit the area. Students Leah Taber and Kristen Greyson took advantage of the weather and snowboarded down the sledding hill behind the Farmington School Board office.

# Farmington folks cope with snow blitz

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
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Farmington area residents dug hard and deep, but managed to shovel their way through the first snowblast of 1999.

The 14 inches of white stuff dumped on the area Saturday and Sunday brought a halt to post New Year's Day activities and travel plans. Farmington Public Schools

shut down Monday, extending the holiday break another day (see related story).

Besides kids yipping and yelling while careening down the sled hill on Shiawassee, the metallic scrape of snow shovels could be heard throughout both cities.

Farmington Hills Public Works tapped mechanics, supervisors, equipment operators, laborers and engineering inspectors to plow subdivision streets. By noon Monday,

crowds had cleared 75 percent of 293 miles of roadway.

Road Commission of Oakland County and Michigan Department of Transportation handled the county and state roads, respectively.

"The snow depth is a problem. A foot of snow in one day is out of the norm," said Dan Rooney, Hills Public Works director. "That slows you down."

And, summed up Gary Gess, director of the Farmington Public Safety

Department, "There's no place to put this stuff."

According to Farmington Department of Public Works Director Kevin Gushman, the small city did "very well compared to some other areas."

By Monday afternoon, most Farmington subdivisions were plowed, as were 10 city parking lots, with DPW crews working continuously from 8:30 a.m. Saturday to 8 p.m. Sunday, Gushman said. They were back

Please see BLITZ, A3

## 1 injured in pair of New Year's shooting incidents

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
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Two New Year's shooting incidents in Farmington Hills left one man injured and another feeling fortunate he wasn't hurt.

A Hills man, 20, was taken to Botsford Hospital after accidentally shooting himself in the foot New Year's Day morning. Another man reported a stray bullet coming into house, likely part of the New Year's celebration of shooting guns into the air.

The man injured by a gunshot was not involved with any holiday revelry, Hills police said. The victim suffered a shotgun wound to his right foot, which entered the instep and exited the bottom. Buck shot was still in the wound when police arrived at the hospital.

Initially, the victim told police he was wounded while walking on westbound Independence when he heard gunfire. Officers doubted the story because the wound appeared to be caused by a shot from close range.

He later told police the shotgun went off while he was unloading it.

"He admitted later in the afternoon it was a false police report," said Assistant Chief Chuck Nebus, who added investigators are reviewing the matter.

The victim was able to move the foot but had no feeling in his toes. Botsford Hospital brought in a specialist to examine him.

A Coteland Street resident had a stray bullet come into his house New Year's Eve. No one was injured.

A homeowner told police he noticed a bullet hole after one of the bedroom lights didn't work. He saw debris on the carpet and noticed a bullet hole in the wall.

Police determined the shot traveled through the north exterior wall, through an open closet door and hitting the cover plate on the outlet box.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BEZLER

**Eager: Special Services Director Dave Boyer has a lot on his plate in the new year.**

# New director hits ground running

By LARRY O'CONNOR  
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From devotees of impressionistic art to those who merely want to leave an impression of a bat on a baseball, Dave Boyer's job is to keep them busy.

The Farmington Hills special services director is a pied piper to dissimilar tastes and interests, which ranges from figure skaters to bird watchers, from senior Olympians to art aficionados.

Only two months on the job, the former Southfield assistant parks and recreation director found the Hills department a well-run outfit, despite being without a permanent leader for several months.

The previous director, Dan Potter, retired earlier in the year. In the interim, then-Assistant City Manager Steve Brock filled in until Boyer was hired.

"I'm really pleased with the operation that is here," Boyer said. "Dan Potter did a nice job establishing the department and getting it to the point where it is."

The new man is kicking-starting a few things, though. Within the year, the city will formalize plans to develop

## HILLS SPECIAL SERVICES

the Eleven Pines property into a sparkling addition to city-owned San Marino Golf Course, which is going to increase from nine to 18 holes. Boyer and the Parks and Recreation and Beautification commissions are expected to offer advice during the process.

Boyer will also be hiring a new cultural arts director. The position will be bumped up from part time to full time; which is one of four Special Services jobs upgraded to 40 hours this year.

At present, the department has 38 full-time staff members and twice as many part-time employees.

Boyer has a watchful eye on a few other proceedings: Founders Sports Park soccer fields are getting an overhaul. With the addition of three new pitches, the city will boast six premier fields at the Eight Mile Road site, which could lure top-flight tournaments and teams.

Please see BOYER, A2

