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## THE WEEK AHEAD

### SUNDAY

**Closing a door: Seniors at Farmington, Harrison and North high schools graduate today. Graduation is also scheduled for adult education students. Congratulations!**

### MONDAY

**Lend a hand: Volunteers are sorely needed for the "Kids World" PlayScape construction later this month. For more information, call (248) 474-5500.**

**Meeting: The Farmington Hills City Council will meet at 6 p.m. to hear presentations from potential developers for the Eleven Pines project. The meeting is open to the public and is in council chambers, 31555 11 Mile.**

**Agenda: The Farmington City Council meets at 8 p.m. in council chambers, 23600 Liberty.**

## Botsford could fall off tax rolls

The city assessor's office hasn't received any notice, but it's possible the landmark inn could go off tax rolls depending on its use.

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
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With a new owner, The Botsford Inn's tax status could get a lot less taxing.

Botsford Hospital is buying the historic inn. The \$1.4 million deal is expected to be finalized July 30. As a medical facility, Botsford Hospital and its associated offices are largely exempt from paying taxes under law.

Botsford Hospital officials have said architectural and engineering studies are being done to look into possible uses for the landmark hotel. The historic inn is where automaker Henry Ford regularly held square dances on its ballroom floor.

"We haven't seen anything yet," said Dean Babb, Farmington Hills city assessor. "I guess if they convert it to medical offices or a classroom, it would eventually go off the (tax) rolls."

Botsford Inn's real property taxable value is \$17,900, which includes state, county and schools. The portion going to the city treasury is slightly less than \$4,900, Babb said.

Botsford Inn's listing on the National Register of Historic Places carries its own tax benefits.

Properties listed in the registry are

Please see BOTSFORD, A5



STAFF PHOTO BY DEB BRESLER

**Active:** Jeanne Jones of Farmington Hills is a spokeswoman for those residents who are suing the city of Farmington Hills for flooding. She also runs an auto dealership in Brighton.

## She won't give up Come hell or high water

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
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When flood waters hit, the course of action has either been to build an ark or simply clean up and get on with life.

Jeanna Jones doesn't plug for either.

And though she's not building a ship in a biblical sense, the Hills resident and Brighton auto dealer is amassing two of a kind in terms of angry couples and homeowners fed up with basement backups. Jones and others are suing the city of Farmington Hills for flood damage resulting from heavy rains in August 1998.

Jones is one in a crowd of plaintiffs, but she stands out as a forceful — if not blunt — spokeswoman.

"I'm trying to get (NBC) 'Dateline' to do a story," she said outside Oakland County Circuit Court after a recent hearing. "They're injecting s--- into our homes."

At a recent city council meeting, Jones questioned why more development is going up along Middlebelt Road, especially with an already overtaxed sewer system.

Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi, seldom at a loss for words, admitted he couldn't say much because of pending litigation. City attorney John Donohue stepped in and

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## Tired of roadwork? Here's more

BY KEN ABRAMCZYK  
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Motorists who use the ramp from westbound I-275 find yet more inconveniences starting today, when that ramp will be closed until July for construction.

Traffic will be detoured to a new unused portion of M-5 (the Haggerty Connector) south of 12 Mile Road, then on a temporary ramp to turn traffic southbound to access the 12 Mile Road ramp to southbound I-275. The detour is adjacent to the current M-5 ramp to 12 Mile Road.

Earlier officials at the Michigan Department of Transportation had expected that only one lane would be closed and the ramp open while it was reconstructed, but since have re-thought that strategy.

"We've decided to close that ramp because of the space on top (of the freeway ramp) and the safety of motorists and workers," said Robin Pannecouk, MDOT spokesperson. "We'll have the ability to get it done faster if we close it."

"It is a safety issue for workers pouring concrete and operating vehicles." A construction worker from Taylor remains hospitalized after he was struck in early May while working on that ramp.

An estimated 20 signs will direct motorists to the two-mile detour, Pannecouk said. Detoured motorists and

drivers coming from I-275 to exit to 12 Mile need to "work together" while driving, she said.

"Speed limits will drop down from 60 miles per hour in 10 mile per hour segments until it reaches a 10 mile-per-hour limit for the turnaround," Pannecouk said.

"As they come up to merge with traffic from I-275, they will have to watch to make the crossover to the left lane. They will have to pay attention."

The five-mile segment of the I-275 construction is expected to cost \$50 million. The five-year, 31-mile total project to pave the entire length of I-275 was estimated at \$150 million.

### Paving the way

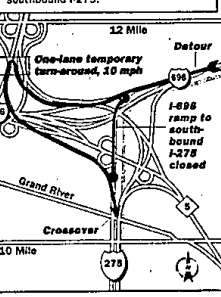
Work crews from John Carlo, the primary contractor of the I-275 construction, were expected to pour concrete this week for the new southbound lanes near Grand River and work their way southbound.

Contractors will use equipment that will pave three lanes simultaneously at about a half-mile pace each day. "We'll pave 15 miles in one pass where typically we make three passes," Pannecouk said.

When the southbound side is paved and concrete cured by mid-July, both directions of I-275 traffic is expected to be crossed back over to the southbound side for work to begin on the northbound lanes.

### I-896 ramp closed to I-275

Starting today (Sunday), the ramp from westbound I-896 to southbound I-275 will be closed for approximately 25 days so a new ramp can be constructed. Motorists will be detoured onto a new unused ramp of northbound M-5 (the Haggerty Connector) north of I-96 and south of 12 Mile Road. The detour is adjacent to the current M-5 ramp to 12 Mile Road. Westbound I-896 motorists who drive the detour should watch for posted signs, look for exiting traffic from I-275, then enter the left lane to access the new detour ramp. Those motorists will need to decelerate from 50 miles per hour down to 10 miles per hour to a temporary turn-around. That traffic will join southbound traffic originating from 12 Mile, joining up with eastbound I-96 traffic and leading to southbound I-275.



## You have time to vote absentee

Farmington school district voters will only have one choice to make at the polls next Monday, June 14, increasing chances that business will be light at the eight precincts.

### JUNE 14

For those who show up among the estimated 58,500 registered voters — probably less than 3 percent — that choice will be to decide a one-year stint on the Farmington Board of Education, a race between incumbent Gary Sharp and challenger Melody Jaske. Linda Enberg faces no opposition in her quest for re-election to a second four-year board term.

Sharp was appointed in September 1998, shortly after the resignation of board member Joseph Svoke. Enberg was first elected in 1995.

Polls will open at 7 a.m. June 14 and will remain open until 8 p.m.

According to Cheryl Cannon, assis-

Please see VOTE, A5

## Neighbor comes to the rescue

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
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A quick-acting neighbor likely saved the lives of people inside a burning trailer Sunday night.

Colleen Bradley believes a higher power wanted her to hear the crackling noise that led her and daughter, Sarah, 11, to investigate. They saw smoke billowing from the unit next door at Flamingo Trailer Court on Middlebelt Road.

While her daughter phoned 911, Bradley rapped on the door and repeatedly screamed fire.

She roused the two people inside, who escaped through a bedroom window.

"You kept hearing it

**Colleen Bradley believes a higher power wanted her to hear the crackling noise that led her and daughter, Sarah, 11, to investigate.**



STAFF PHOTO BY DEB BRESLER

**Looking ahead:** David Davries, Matthew Koenig, Crystal Walker and Karri Couva listen to English teacher Jennifer Goshorn's plans for next year.

## They're moving on up

BY TIM SMITH  
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Middle school students Thursday visited Farmington, Harrison and North high schools and received an early taste of prep life.

Activities differed at the high schools for what was dubbed "Moving Up Day." But the goal was the same at each campus: ease the transition from eighth-to-ninth grade and enhance chances for academic success next year and beyond.

The most ambitious program was at Farmington High School, where about 250 eighth graders walked through their schedules for the fall, meeting future teachers and classmates. Students spent 15 minutes in each class, with seven-

minute pass times between each mini-

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session. An extended SMART session enabled the walk-through program, said Principal John Barrett.

For East Middle School eighth grader Jayme Vainer, 14, the "Moving Up Day" helped her get a better idea what to expect in late August.

"It's different than middle school," said Jayme. "There's a lot of older kids, and it's a much bigger school."

Hectic and crowded was the way other students described the morning, with kids scrambling from room-to-room, avoiding bulky book bags while looking

Please see MOVING, A6

