

Trustees say thanks, but more needed

By TIM SMITH
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Several Farmington Board of Education members applauded the state Legislature's adoption of a school aid package that will increase the foundation grant for per-pupil spending.

In a year of record surpluses for the state government, however, they don't think enough is being done in the 2001 school aid bill to pay for the special education programs the state demands local school districts offer.

Under the bill, awaiting a signature from Gov. John Engler, the foundation grant for Farmington district students will be increased by \$801 (from \$9,287 to \$10,088) through the 2002-03 school year. For the 2000-01 year, the allowance will be \$9,568.

What it amounts to is \$380,000 more money for the 2000-01 budget, said Linda Enberg, Farmington board trustee.

"It's a little more than we were budgeting, so that's good news," Enberg said. "It may just keep some programs in that maybe would have had to go."

School board Vice-president Frank Reid, who is the board's Legislative liaison, said he was "happy to get an increase. But there are some big disappointments in their bill as well."

First and foremost, Reid said, is the removal of \$250 million from the school aid fund, to be used elsewhere in the 2000-01 state budget.

And there also was the Legislature's "non-action" on special ed underfunding, which will amount to \$3.8 million for fiscal year 2000-01 in the Farmington district alone. According to the 1978 Headlee tax-limitation amend-

Please see PUPILS, A6



Until next year ...

Lighting up: Bright colors and explosive sounds brought the festival to a conclusion Sunday night with the annual, successful fireworks show in Founders Park on Eight Mile.

Changes boost fest parade

By JONI HUBBARD
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Botsford General Hospital took top honors in Saturday's Farmington Area Family Fun Fest Parade, which drew large crowds up and down Grand River

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Boulevard in Farmington. Botsford and Queen's Trophy winner Harvest Temple Worship Center were among more than 60 parade entries, including a dozen units from Detroit area Shriners. Festival coordinator Mike Watts of Watts Up! said a few adjustments made this year's event even better than last year's.

"We moved the starting point up to Mooney Street, and the people in the parade really liked that," he said. "It seemed to run more smoothly, there were less gaps and it wasn't two and a half hours long."

Parade entrants seemed to appreciate shortening the route a little because last year's starting point farther east on Grand River meant an uphill climb in an area with few spectators.

While Executive Director Carleigh Flaherty usually walks with the Farm-

Please see PARADE, A5



PHOTOS BY JULIA HUBBARD

Parading: Fun was in store for everyone, including clowns.

Court looms for city, church

■ The Family Fest has led to a disagreement between the festival board, the city and a local church.

By TIM SMITH
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The economic future of the Farmington Area Family Fest, formerly known as the Founders Festival, could hinge on a simple civil infraction. Bill Richards, assistant Farmington

FAMILY FEST

city manager, said a lot is riding on what transpires on Thursday, July 13, in 47th District Court.

At 9 a.m. that day, a court magistrate is scheduled to preside over a hearing in which First United Methodist Church of Farmington will likely fight a ticket it received last Thursday for not complying with a 1999 city ordinance requiring a permit for special events — such as the Farmington Area Family Fest. A second ordinance cited for a violation was one which prohibits outdoor activities within the central business district require council approval.

The ticket was issued to the Rev. Wayne Large, who Wednesday said he could not comment until after the hearing. About 30 craft vendors set up shop on the grounds of First United Methodist, 33112 Grand River. The church collected \$100 from each of those vendors, as part of an independent arrangement; but each vendor did not pay mandatory \$50 participation fees to the festival board, money needed for costs such as insurance and promotions.

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Weekday matinees scrapped

By TIM SMITH
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Call it poetic justice, if you will. Three days after the Farmington Civic Theatre went dark, due to a power failure, so did an experiment to bring weekday matinees to the screen.

Thursday afternoon will be the final weekday matinees, quickly ending a three-week trial run. Today's shows are "My Dog Skip,"

at 2:15 and 4:05 p.m., and "Keeping the Faith," at 2 and 4:25 p.m. Tickets are \$2.50 for patrons age 12 and older and \$1.50 for those under age 12.

"It was kind of an experiment, done on a trial basis," said Bill Richards, assistant manager for the city of Farmington, which owns the theater. "It doesn't appear there's a significant enough market to justify leaving it open on weekdays."

That news was disappointing to Civic manager Heath Lowrance, who on Tuesday still welcomed the small number of movie-goers into the Grand River theater's lobby.

"I was sorry to hear about it," Lowrance said. "I guess it was a matter of cost versus practicality."

Meanwhile, Saturday and Sunday matinees will be continued, Richards said.

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IN THE PAPER TODAY

Millions: The Farmington Community Library topped a million in circulation Wednesday. An 11-year-old student pushed it over the top for the library. /A9

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