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Eastern Cities

Business nerve center lodged in Farmington

By SUSAN AVERILL

Nestled in an industrial section of Farmington Hills is a nerve center which controls and monitors every movement within 11 buildings in southeastern Michigan.

This nerve center is Honeywell's BOSS, or Building Operations Services System. As the name implies, it's a service which automatically controls building operations, including heating, air conditioning, vacuuming, lighting, air pressure and humidity while it checks for electrical and mechanical failure.

Although it sounds expensive, what makes BOSS attractive is its reduction of energy costs. An average-sized building can be automatically operated for less than \$1 per hour. The same service for an entire skyscraper complex would cost about \$2 per hour.

Savings for the LTV Aerospace Co. in Sterling Heights came to \$14,000 for the first year. In nine months, the savings they garnered through the system paid back the initial connection cost and their monthly service payment.

"WE EXPECT THAT five years with BOSS will save the company \$178,000," said Honeywell's Farmington Commercial Service Manager Robert Schaible.

"And that was using 1974 costs for energy. Naturally during 1975, it'll be higher, which may mean more savings for the companies."

Beside LTV Aerospace, buildings connected to BOSS include the One Northland Drive building of Urban Realty Co. in Southfield, the Computer Facility of Henry Ford Hospital, Campbell Ewald's Warren Office Plaza and Michigan Bell Telephone's Oakfield office in Southfield.

Other buildings hooked up include Plymouth General Hospital in Detroit, Bingham Farms' Burton and Shore line building in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan Bell Telephone's Fort division in Livonia and the Ellis Naeyer Building in Warren.

From a desk-top console which looks like a large calculator, a BOSS operator can punch in a code and learn the temperature conditions on any side of a building.

If the area is too hot or cold, the operator can activate other machinery in the distant building which will remedy the situation.

This has proved valuable in preventing computer problems at Michigan Bell's Oakfield exchange building, O'Brien said.

NOT ONLY CAN the system sense temperature fluctuations, but it will immediately advise of mechanical or electrical failures.

When a broken fire sprinkler head on the seventh floor of the Down River Federal Savings and Loan in Taylor began pouring water into an unoccupied office area, a sensor spy on the roof and the BOSS operator notified a guard on the bank's main floor.

"It would have caused a lot of damage if the guard didn't find out about it until the water started dripping on his head," O'Brien said with a smile.

But the point stands. While a guard couldn't possibly be in several places at once, BOSS can.

Access to buildings can also be controlled by the nerve center in Farmington Hills. Of-hours visitors to a \$7 million office complex in Warren must identify themselves personally by code, using a direct line to the Honeywell Center.

Inside, their movements can be monitored. Big Brother-style by delicate air movement sensors.

Maintenance people who might otherwise constantly adjust temperatures, humidifiers, and other machinery are freed to do preventative maintenance.

"That way they are able to spend the time extending the life of their machines. It makes them feel a lot more useful. It's a whole different feeling," O'Brien explained.

"**THEY CAN TAKE** it on as a challenge thing. It's sort of like the difference between someone who works on an antique car and someone who has an old car and must spend his money on nickel and dime repairs."

BOSS will turn on lawn sprinklers for some buildings and activate snow melters for others.

To prevent unauthorized people from making calls to the BOSS operator, the center has an unlisted number. It is available only to those who are directly responsible as liaisons between the center and its customer.

In turn, the BOSS operator has three or four numbers that he or she may call in an emergency. Operators may also call police and fire departments if BOSS indicates trouble.

In the Detroit area, 406 services are carried out by BOSS through leased telephone lines. And Honeywell executives say they've never had a complete systems breakdown. For that matter, they've had very few problems with the machines, they say.

Cost for linkage with BOSS is charged on an hourly fee. The fee is determined by the building size, systems complexity and the number of "check points" or services which are expected.

The initial connection fee includes the installation of special equipment, absorbing the building into the network and programming the BOSS console. Other charges are for the telephone usage.

ACCORDING TO O'Brien, the network can shoulder the automation of every major building in the Detroit area.

A unit similar to BOSS maintains the ballooning ceiling of the Portage Stadium. The New York World Trade Center and the Canadian National Tower in Toronto are also handled by BOSS-related systems as is the Renaissance Center in Detroit.

Schaible said the Farmington Hills BOSS center could control buildings as far away as Lansing, Jackson, Battle Creek and even Toledo, Ohio.

Of the five BOSS operators here, only one is a woman, but BOSS chief Gordon Przystulski added that they really had no problems with women. At the BOSS center in Atlanta, Ga., one of the night shift operators is a woman, he said.

Besides office buildings, O'Brien said that benefits could be reaped by computer centers, manufacturing plants, hospitals, banks, laboratories, colleges and schools.



Trying a puppet for the first time brings a smile of delight from Donna Guindner. To see why, turn to Page 3A. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthner)

Apathy shrouds budget hearing

Only a handful of people showed their interest in the airing of the Farmington School District's proposed 1975-76 budget Tuesday evening at Farmington High School.

Beside board of education members, the school superintendent and his two assistants, 20 people were there. Most of those were directly related to school activities.

"Let's see," said board treasurer Emma Makinen. "By my count there were two or three students, four administrators, two teacher's union representatives, three former board members, a newspaper person, six parents and the wives of two administrators."

Although the turnout was somewhat disappointing, Mrs. Makinen said she is sure the community is interested. Perhaps the inattentiveness showed more satisfaction with the school board.

"The rest are concerned, but may have other things which took them away."

The board members, administrators and business manager William Prisk answered questions and took comments from the audience during the relatively short hearing.

"**WE WERE THERE** mostly listening to what people had to say," Mrs. Makinen said. The board will consider the questions and comments at its next meeting, Oct. 21, when members hope to adopt the budget.

"The budget has to be adopted prior to Nov. 1 and submitted to the state. We expect to adopt it at one of the

next two meetings," said board president William Corliss.

Board members said questions from former board member Aldo Vagnozzi and others may make them take another look at girls athletics and the suggested inequity between money for student athletics and student activities.

"This (financing girls sports) has been improving in the district," Corliss said. "There are other limiting parameters than just dollars (for establishing a more comprehensive girls sports program). You can't just pour in dollars and get instant results."

Vagnozzi turned the board's attention to the financing of non-athletic activities. "That's one of my concerns," Corliss said.

Discussion centered around the effect of state aid cuts to the \$22 million Farmington school budget. Vagnozzi suggested board members contact their state senators and urge that no further cuts be made.

"We're already doing that," Corliss said.

More than \$16 million of the budget (80 per cent) is composed of local taxes, with approximately \$5 million in state aid.

THE BALANCE COMES from other sources, including building rental and gifts to the school district.

Mrs. Makinen said rough figuring indicated the school district was getting only 83 percent of the state money available to it last year, for a per student loss of 17 per cent.

"While our SEV (State Equalized

Valuation) increased, our allowance from the state decreased. Last year we were getting \$277 per student from the state. We're getting \$229 this year," she said.

"When you look at these numbers, the support we get from the state is considerably less than it was before."

The amount gained by the increased SEV is a little more than the amount lost in state aid, but increased costs are expected to absorb much of it.

"The SEV was up, but when you take away the state aid," the district doesn't have the money it counted on," she said. "We get more, but our costs go up, too."

"What it means is that people are supporting the schools more with their property taxes than they ever have before," she said.

Questions may have sparked interest in changing certain portions of the budget.

"Changes may be made. I'm sure that the student activities are things that the board members would like to look into," Mrs. Makinen said.

CORLISS SAID that while the board may not immediately make the changes, the budget's flexibility in categories like spring sports would allow it to make changes later.

Referring to the light turnout, Mrs. Makinen said, "I think more people have become more satisfied with the school district. Of course, there's always an area for improvement in school finance and Mr. Prisk and the board members continue to work on it."

Farmington O&E conducts seminar

There is still time to register for the Farmington Observer & Eccentric public relations seminar to be conducted on Thursday, Oct. 23, at 7:30 p.m. in the Holiday Inn, Ten Mile and Grand River.

If you wish to attend, fill out the registration form and mail it to the Farmington Observer & Eccentric, P.O. Box 69, Southfield, 48075.

The seminar is free and open to public relations, club presidents and interested individuals from civic groups. Each participant will receive a pamphlet of general information on

how to prepare stories and pictures for a newspaper or other publication.

During the seminar participants will be able to sit in on three informal discussions.

One discussion will cover how local news editors work and the type of articles they will consider for publication. The second is handled by the editor of the Farmington suburban life section.

The third is devoted to photography—how to work with a photographer and what makes a good photograph.



Congratulations

Dr. Ellis Siofor (right), director of surgical services at Botsford General Hospital, and a Farmington resident, recently received the Distinguished Osteopathic Surgeon's Award from Mrs. Charles Ballinger, widow of the former executive secretary of the college. The award was given in memory of her husband.

Homeowners have candidates night

The Council of Homeowners Associations of Farmington Hills will hold a candidates night for the six candidates for council of the City of Farmington Hills on Wednesday, Oct. 22 at 8 p.m. at Power Junior High School cafeteria. The school is located at

34740 Rhinwood, west of Gill between Eight and Nine Mile.

All candidates will be given the opportunity to speak, after which they will answer questions from the audience.

inside

News	Section A
Obituaries	2
Men in Service	8
Editorials	16
Columns	16
Suburban Life	Section B
Sports, Classifieds	Section C

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