Utilities duck obligations to senior citizens

Farmington area older persons who are having difficulty paying their ultility bills can expect some budgeting help from power companies, but at least two firms say they are reluctant to give special treatment to elderily customers.

While lauding legislative efforts to help seniors pay for utilities, Detroit Edison and Consumers Power spokesmen say the companies necessive the

neip serioris pay nor udinties, petroit existing as a social problem that is situation as a social problem that is situation as a social problem that is "We have no problem in trying to help seniors but that's a secial situation that is best handled through the state legislature," said Consumers Power Public Affairs Officer Mike Blombach.

Members of the state legislature are readying bills to provide some re-

lief for persona living on fixed or low incomes.

PART OF THE Republican Party's plan for all to the elderity includes a "lifeline" energy rate program and relates which would be administered in a manner similar to tax refunds. Lifeline programs, which have been adopted in several states, calculate a minimum amount of energy which will adequately sustain a household. This minimum lifeline level is priced at the maximum rate that the user can pay, which is lower than standard at the maximum rate that the user can pay, which is lower than standard rates.

Utility spokesmen argue that the program puts the burden of payment on the rest of the consumers and on the companies.

the companies.
"We feel sorry for the seniors, but we don't want to be part of social re-

'We have no problem in trying to help seniors but that's a social situation that is best handled through the state legislature." -Mike Blombach, Consumers Power Co.

form," is the way Blumbach expressed his company's objection to the plan.

If the government would make up the difference between the low lifeline rate and the regular cost, Detroit Edison could support the pragram, according to company spokesman Wesley Kannler

had my own cubicle. I would see a salesman once in a while but I knew I could come in and do my job and not have to see another person all day. I could have been an island," he said. His switch to teaching put a different emphasis on personal contact that affected his outlook. "Teaching demands an ability to communicate with a group. It isn't good enough to do the work yourself, it's the ability to prepare others for that role. You're helping others fulfill their human potential." Davenport said.

Each job has something different to offer to Davenport, who still occasionally does commercial work.

"I GOT A THRILL WORKING with students of all ages. A high percent-age of them are adults. I see them grow and improve. They can relate to me." he said. This older students are doing some-thing that they have wanted to do for while but were forced to postpone. Under Davenport's guidance, a part of their delayed dream comes true.

social agencies, but we're not in favor of special rates," said Kappler. Energy stamps, another approach to the problem, is is supported by the utilities but codd-shouldered by the Republicans. The program, which would operate on the same basis as the food stamp

program is afflicted with the problem of convincing the elderly that it is a

desirable program, according to Kathy DeGrow, of the Republican's senior citizens' program staff. Stamp programs have problems attracting many of the elderly who could qual-tical.

ify.

Trial energy stamp programs were tested by Edison and Consumers, last year. Both programs were termed successful.

cessful.

"We thought we received some viable information from our test program," said Edison's Kappler. "It's hard to say what effect the program Jad on people and if they did associate it with food stamps and stayed away. We felt, from our standpoint, that it was a sucessful program." Consumer's Power described their test program in Pontiac in similar terms.

MEANWHILE THE COMPANIES are faced with helping consumers who are having difficulty in meeting their payments. Since last winter's reports of an elderly man freezing in his ohio home after the power company cut off the heat, utilities are careful to personally contact the customer before pulling the plug.

"We won't turn off the power incompanies of the control of the companies of the plug.

"We won't turn off the power with the customer. We don't want to be a party to something like what happened in Ohio." Blumbach said.

Before relations between a utility and a consumer deteriorate to the point of actually shutting off the power, the companies go through a 90-day series of steps to notify the companies of steps to notify the companies of steps to notify the companies of steps to notify the control of the companies of the power.

(Continued on part 1)

Drab OCC interior gets colorful mural facelift

Changing working environments can affect a person's outlook on life, according to Orchard Ridge graphic arts instructor John Davenport. In addition to switching his own work environment a few years ago. Davenport is helping to change the surroundings of the secretaries at the Oekland Community College Farmington Hills campus by painting a brightly doored design on the administration building's monotonous gray walks.

tration building's monotonous gray walls.

"It all began when some secretaries complained to the deans and the provist how drab the walls look," explained Davenport, who lives in West Bloomfield Township.
Complaints about the drab, gray interfore walls are a frequent complaint at OCC, which is designed in the sleek, plain manner of modern architecture.

seet, pain manner or instern area.

Once 'college administrators tried to alleviate the drabness by hanging pictures in the hallways. The paintings quickly disappeared under the hot hands of misguided art lovers.

AS A 90LUTION to disappearing art, Davenport suggested painting a graphic design on the wall outside Provost Richard Thompson's office.

"I suggested graphics because of the mode of design at the college. It's contemporary and you can do almost

the mode of design at the college. It's condemporary and you can do almost anything with a plain gray wall—it's a natural," said Davenport. Painting brilliant hues of pink, tan, blue, green and white on the wall came about through planning and

"It used two warm tones and two cool tones for balance. I tried to organize the color scheme so that each part of the wall would balance with the other," he said.

He shies away from sweet pastel colors for his graphic, fearing that the finished effect would be "too mushy."

After sketching out the design on paper and on the wall, and taping the edges of the different colored bars of the graphic fire a clean finish Dawn.

edges of the different colored bars of the graphic for a clean finish, Daven-port considers painting the easiest step.

"It's just time consuming. It's not

"It's just time consuming. It's not difficult." He said.
His concern about the appearance of a work area has roots in his professional life. At 49, he is involved in the second phase of his career as a graphic artist. He gave up his first job as a commercial artist working on local and national advertisements in 1965.

"THE YEAR I decided to get out of "THE YEAR I decided to get out of commercial art the country was going through a recession. People werent advertising as much. And more ads were done by camera and not by artists. It got competitive to the point were I just didn't enjoy it anymore." he remembered.

The year after I got out of the business, it started to boom again," he added.

His entry into the academic world pointed out the contrasts between working in an isolated cubicle and dealing with a classroom-full of stu-

John Davenport is finishing up his graphic in Or- timates that the project will be completed by the chard Ridge campus' administration building. He es- first week in June. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

By LYNN ORR If the Farmington School District re-vamps organizational structure to in-clude middle schools (grades six, seven and eight rather than the tradi-tional seventh, eighth and ninth grade structure), here will be plenty of changes ahead for Farmington stu-dents.

changes ahead for Farmington stuchanges ahead for Farmington stuchents.

That's why the Task Force on
School Organization Structure(SOS) is
collecting a wealth of data as well as
seaming as much about middle school
concepts as possible within a limited
time period.

After visiting Brighton and Berkley
school districts last month, the SOS
Task Force looked inward this week
to seek out the advice of Farmington'
staff members and get a first-hand
look at school buildings.

"How do you gear your teaching for
Students' moving on to jusion high?"
Task Force member Suzanne von
Ende asked Forest Elementary teachers Connie Qualman, Barbara Adams,
and Sally Wilson.

Stricter standards about getting
work done and less reliance on the
teacher's reminders were two of the
responses from the sixth grade teachers.

The exchange is an example of the

ers.

The exchange is an example of the

kind of probe task force members are making to determine n and how middle schools could be incorporated into the district.

SOS Task Force seeks staff advice

The SOS Task Force will be presenting an interim report to the Farmington Board of Education at the June 7 meeting and a final report is due before Jan. 1 of next year.

The teachers quizzed at Forest said they like a self-contained classroom for sixth graders, as opposed to mov-ing among teachers under the current junior high structure.

"I feel it's very important to estab-lish good rapport with the students at this age," says Ms. Qualman, and Ms. Wilson agrees.

"You need to be able to follow up in helping children develop responsibility for themselves," she says. "When the seventh graders come in to talk to me, they always mention getting a lot of homework at one time—and they

"With prior planning they could ro-tate big projects and coordinate stu-dent schedules."

Ms. Adams, who currently teaches a fifth-sixth combination class but

who has taught at the junior high level, believes the current method of blocking students (the same group of students moving from class to class) often disrupts teaching.

"Whatever took place in the class before mine was carried into my class," she says. "This didn't occur in the eighth grade because the students weren't blocked."

Task Force members made notes of the teachers' concerns and were pleased with the frankness and willing-ness of staff members to commu-

"The fact that some of these teachers are requesting copies of our re-port tells me that instructors do want input into our data," says Dr. Fred Ig-navotich, Michigan State University education professor and consulting chairman of the SOS Task Force!

Ignavotich would like to make a sur-ey of teachers, students and parents o receive further information about

The SOS Task Force was appointed as the result of the Task Force on Declining Eurollment's recommendation. Declining enrollment will most drastically affect the junior high age level, the task force's findings projected. Janatovich, currently on subbatical from MSU, is working on the Farmington task force as part of MSU's field-oriented study, he explains

"It's an exciting kind of thing to do, and the Farmington work will spill over into other projects," he says.

Other task force members include: Chairman Earl Baummk, director of vocational and carer education; resident representatives Betty Nicolay and Jack Inch; administration representatives Donald Keen and Al Laniagn; Farmington Education Association representative Douglas Cooper; and Parent-Feacher Association representative Ms. von Ende.

City alters schedule for garbage pickup

Some residents of the City of Farmington will have to break old habits onext weeks the city is altering the sixten which has been considered with the city in altering the sixten which has been as when the city is altering the sixten which has been considered will be hauling the above the curb on a new day. Changing from Mendama. "If anyon day-Friday five-day schedule," says exceeding the curb on a new day. Changing from Mendama. "If anyon day-friday five-day schedule," says to the curb on a new day. Although the city does not contract the curb of the c

ing on the north side of Grand River he added.

and the south side of Shivassectirom forchard Lake Rd. to the city limits).

Tall Oblas subdivision homeowners.

Tall Oblas subdivision homeowners of Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Least of Farmington Rd. between the converse are advised to put trash Eight and Nine Mile) are scheduled out early, because pickup often starts for Tassifay pickups efter next week.

All commercial and industrial stops normal 7 a.m. starting time.

Sewers prime target

South end to reap federal rewards

processed by the Soldwal River.

Stand, Trees 127 hall the regulation hold a continue to the regulation of t

storm sewer running approximately 1% miles, from just east of Middlebeit to Whitlock, brodering on the City of Farmington and south of Grand River.

levied the tax to aid in paying for sewer improvements.

The grants and ioan program will continue for the second year if the funds are approved with a helly rate-making more funds available for resi-dents to improve their hornes. The city administration has allocated \$110,000 to the grants brogram, an in-crease of \$55,000 over last years of fort.

The program is established to aid persons of low and moderate income to fix up their houses, according to Doman. In addition, the area of eligibility has been elipsoided to include the area bounded by Ten Bille out the north, Right Bille out the worth, City of Partinigation boundary on the east and falsater Road on the east.

Last year, the program was con-fined to senth of the fittle. The nest of the fines will an to-ward language Washes Park

inside

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CAR SELLS WITH ONE AD

Hank Liese did it the easy way when he wanted to sell his car. He placed an ad in the Observer & Eccentric classified section. "I was surprised how quickly it sold!"

DIAL DIRECT 644-1070