



Mechanic Don Firgon gets a close look at the problem.



Teri Mehrman, a city employee through the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA), does a lot of painting for the DPW department.

New DPW house is a \$1 million baby

Story by Lynn Orr

Photos by Harry Maule

Motorists driving east on M-102 may suspect a close encounter of their own if their gaze happens to wander south near Nine Mile.

But that strange, conical-shaped structure viewed from the expressway is a sign of federal tax dollars at work.

Farmington residents will have a chance to see what their federal bucks can buy this April at the grand opening of the transformed Department of Public Works (DPW) facility.

But curious motorists can get a sneak preview of the \$1.8 million federally-funded project by driving west on Nine Mile from Farmington Road. A glance through the electronic gate might discover a salt truck delivering its load to the inverted, cone-designed salt storage structure.

DPW Director David Jones is proud of the new facility he and his crews will share with the Public Safety Department. The new facility triples the square footage of the old building on about two acres of property.

The latest in energy conservation, technology, and design are combined to make the facility an engineering dream, he says.

With stacks of blueprints surround-

ing him, Jones explains how the old building was expanded and transformed to house DPW facilities, a target range, classroom and fire training tower for the Public Safety Department and the salt storage structure.

Facilities for the DPW include an office section for administration; lunch room, public restrooms; offices for the foremen; the director's office and two large areas for vehicle services.

TO SAVE energy, as well as fuel costs, the entire facility has been designed to minimize heat loss. The office and lunch room and public safety areas are air conditioned and heated, while the temperature in the rest of the facility is kept at about 60 degrees, Jones said.

The old DPW building was remodeled to include a 14-foot-high room for small vehicle storage and an 18-foot high room for storage of large equipment.

Each area includes separate rooms for maintenance, sign painting, and parts storage. Extras are a room for storage of liquid flammables and a wash area, where the trucks can be cleaned before entering the building.

Fluted 12-inch block with a foam

insulation core was used for the exterior of the building.

An innovation that Jones particularly likes is a carbon monoxide detector, which shrills a loud warning and automatically instigates a fresh air delivery tube that runs across the ceiling of the vehicle storage area.

Pipes have been color coded to warn crewmembers of dangerous lines and the garage doors are designed to automatically close after 45 seconds to minimize heat loss.

As a safety precaution, the doors automatically reopen if they come in contact with anything other than the concrete floor, Jones adds.

THE STORAGE bays are equipped with water hoses and other devices so truck drivers can clean their equipment and take care of regular maintenance activities, such as plow changing and minor greasing.

For more extensive repairs of all city-owned vehicles, the maintenance room has been equipped with an overhead trolley to deliver parts from an overhead storage room and a hoist.

The new equipment will enable the city's mechanics to handle more technical jobs on city cars, Jones added.

The police firing range and class-

room are housed in a connected facility at the rear of the property. Public safety officers are expected to begin using the facility shortly.

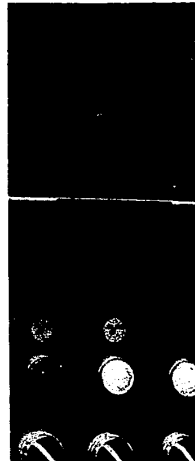
OUTSIDE in the yard, the two most noticeable features are a conical shaped salt storage structure and a three-story fire training tower, complete with water, where public safety officers will be trained in fire fighting techniques.

"We took a message from the Farmington Hills problem and raised the exhaust fan to the top," Jones said to allow trucks to back into the cellar and dump extra salt.

"Most trucks have to dump the salt out in front and push it back in," Jones said. The structure can hold about 2,000 tons of salt, almost twice the number of tons the city usually goes through in one year.

In addition to constructing a passing lane and access lane on Nine Mile to accommodate their expansion, the paving of the formerly gravel yard required a remodeled drainage system.

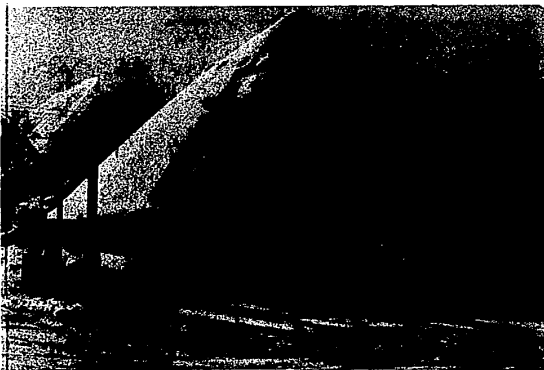
A storm drain system emptying onto Farmington Hills property had to be approved and inspected by the city.



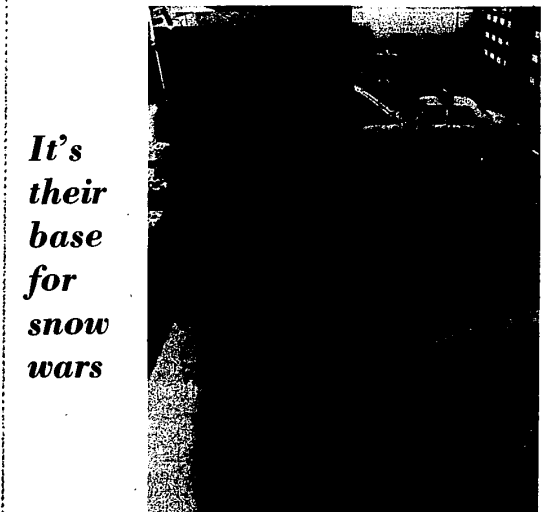
The monoxide detector sounds a shrill warning when the safety level is topped.



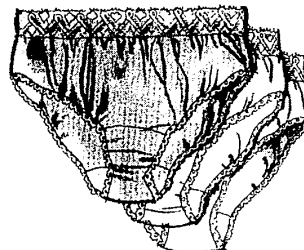
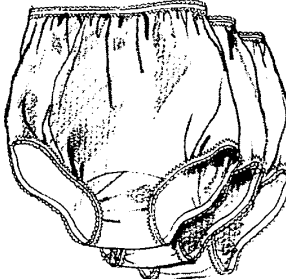
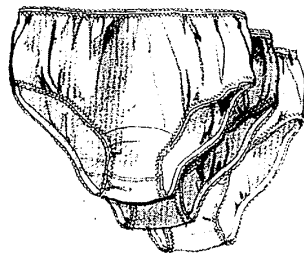
DPW Director Dave Jones.



This strange structure, made eerie by its load of snow, holds the city's salt supply.



DPW driver Bob Hope rolls a tire over to the salt truck lacking one. City of Farmington police cars also take advantage of the new maintenance room.



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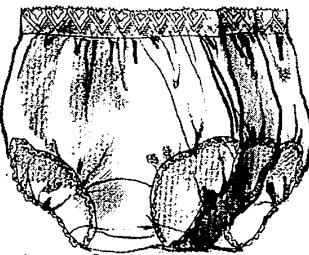
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