

The Farmington ENTERPRISE & OBSERVER

today's
hot line

what's inside

Our Investigation

The Housing and Urban Development department in Washington, D.C. is beginning an investigation of housing complaints in Farmington Township. The Farmington Enterprise & Observer has completed a four-week investigation of those complaints and gives its report in today's issue.

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All But Dead

That second MSU study is just about dead and all that's left is the execution. Instead, the four governmental units will conduct their phase of the consolidation education campaign on their own. A report on MSU's proposal and the governments' reaction is told this week.

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Jamboree Report

Steve Pierdon is attending the National Scouting Jamboree as a correspondent for The Enterprise & Observer. His first report has been filed and printed.

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Jobs For Teens

Teenagers, need help in finding jobs? For expert advice on the best approach, read a special letter from the Michigan Department of Labor.

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A Second Astrodome?

The City of Southfield has completed its feasibility study for a new domed stadium to house the Detroit Lions and Detroit Tigers. Their plan includes some new ideas including office facilities.

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Murder Gun

The new State Police Crime Lab in Plymouth played a dramatic role in identifying the gun used to kill a University of Michigan coed. Observer photographers covered the story, and returned with some closeup shots.

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"...where yesterday meets tomorrow."



Farmington Founder's Festival
Special Edition Coming July 20-23

HUD Investigates Charges Against Cousins Construction



PILES OF DEBRIS—The tangled remains of a tree leftover from the appetite of a construction bulldozer lies unclaimed in Garry Hendrikson's backyard at 21609-Colgate. Hendrikson recently launched a petition drive calling for an investigation of Cousins Construction Company for violation of construction codes. (Evert photo)

by HOWARD KOHN

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is investigating a Detroit construction company which has built more than 50 homes in Farmington Township.

HUD is looking into charges against Cousins Construction Company, 1541 McNichols, alleging faulty and illegal construction practices.

Sources said HUD ordered the investigation after a preliminary probe by the Federal Housing Administration's (FHA) insuring office in Detroit. The report from the insuring office said "further investigation is necessary."

HUD'S ACTION is in response to a petition signed by 35 homeowners accusing Cousins of unredeemed promises to correct faults.

Garry Hendrikson of 21609-Colgate circulated the petition last month. He presented it to Congressman Jack McDonald (R-9th District) who referred it to HUD.

According to sources, the investigation was ordered by Sherman Unger, general counsel, and Norman Koettger, deputy general counsel. Unger and Koettger say they will not comment until the investigation is finalized.

If HUD confirms the charges, it can label Cousins as an "unsatisfactory risk" which would cut it off from FHA approval.

Almost all home mortgage purchases must be okayed by FHA.

HELEN THEOFILIS, assistant to the FHA director, admits homeowners have been chastising Cousins.

"But it hasn't been anything out of the or-

dinary," she says, "except for a few people who act like it's a personal feud."

Hendrikson asked FHA to re-inspect his home in April and again in June after FHA had originally passed on it to close the mortgage. Hendrikson bought his home from Cousins in January.

On both re-inspections FHA found justifiable complaints. Cousins has since made necessary repairs.

However, Cousins has not yet removed debris from Hendrikson's backyard or cut a ditch for sump pump water — in violation of Oakland County ordinances.

COUSINS IS a two-year-old firm co-owned by Harvey Fink and Allen Zager, both of Detroit.

Fink and Zager refused to talk to the Enterprise & Observer.

FHA has the authority to issue a "stop process" order against a construction company, which would also mean forfeit of FHA mortgages. But Mrs. Theofilis says FHA has no plans to penalize Cousins.

Cousins would lose its contracting license only if the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulation received formal charges from Farmington Township's building inspector.

Paul Snover, township building department supervisor, has recently completed a personal probe into Cousins and reports "everything looks like it's getting straightened out."

Snover says he will not file a complaint with the licensing department.

The Enterprise & Observer has also conducted a four-week investigation into Cousins's construction habits. For the unabridged story, turn to page 3A.

Three Recruits Report

Police Grants' Big Dividends Arrive

By EMORY DANIELS

After screening 50 applicants, the Farmington Public Safety Department hired four new policemen and have sent three away to attend police academy.

Three of the four recruits reported for fittings and orientation on July 11 and left for the academy Monday.

THE FOURTH, Robert Smith, 24, is living in Long Island, N.Y., and employed with the West Hampton Town police department.

Since he has had previous police experience, Smith will not attend the academy but instead will report to the city police department on August 11. He is a former Michigan resident.

The other new officers, none with prior police experience, are: Robert Mitchell, 35, of Farmington; Neal Vorbeck, 24, of Livonia; and John Santomauro, 20, of Garden City. The four were hired through a federal grant of \$42,800 from the Office of Highway Safety Planning. The addition in personnel increases the force's manpower by 25 per cent.

Hiring of the recruits, financed by the federal grant, makes possible the establishment of a Traffic Safety Unit. The unit was started with one sergeant (Sgt. Richard Miller), four officers and a clerk.

THE GRANT provided half the costs in financing the unit, including salaries, fringe benefits, equipment and operating costs.

One officer will be assigned to each duty shift to increase the present patrol car coverage from two vehicles to three. Although the unit's responsibility will be primarily in accident prevention, the officers will also be available for other police and fire duties.

"Officer response time to police and fire incidents will be reduced because the patrol district that each officer is assigned will be smaller," explained Robert Deadman, director of the Public Safety Department.

Deadman adds that the number of officers responding to a fire will increase from the present three to four. "This will improve our capabilities for establishing a sound fire fighting attack on a working fire."

NEED FOR the Traffic Safety Unit becomes apparent by examining the traffic accident section of the 1968 annual city police report.

In 1968, there was a 14 per cent increase in personal injury accidents over 1967. During that period, injury accidents increased from 78 in 1967 to 89 last year.

An overall picture is seen by examining a four-year study of vehicle accidents from 1964-68 in the City of Farmington.

During this period, ordinance violations rose from 83 in 1964 to 283 last year. Persons arrested increased from 372 to 549. Parking violations from 175 to 291 and moving violations from 1,200 to 1,650. A peak in moving violations was reached in 1966 when 2,100 were recorded.

Of the total accidents in 1968, the types were: injury accidents, 22 per cent; private property, 33 per cent; and property damage accidents, 45 per cent.

SERGEANT MILLER says the additional personnel will be a tremendous boost to accident prevention because "most of the accidents are preventable."

Miller says accidents will be reduced with more officers on the road issuing violations to careless drivers. And Miller can back up his argument that more officers in patrol cars will reduce accidents. He points to a section of last year's report which shows "driver violations contributing to accidents."

Drivers shown in the 1968 report are: failure to yield right-of-way, 21 per cent; improper backing, 17 per cent; failure to stop, 15 per cent; drinking, 11 per cent; defective equipment, 10 per cent; and speed, six per cent.

And since Miller is especially interested in reducing injury



RECRUITS REPORT - Three of the City of Farmington's new police recruits report for duty Friday before enrolling in police academy. Sgt.

Richard Miller (left) shows the uniform and shoulder patch to (from left) John Santomauro, Robert Mitchell and Neal Vorbeck. (Evert photo)

accidents, he points also to causes of injury accidents: failure to yield, 30 per cent; failure to stop in assured clear distance, 25 per cent; speed, 15 per cent; drinking, 15 per cent; improper turn and improper overtaking, six per cent.

ALSO FINANCED by the grant is a new station wagon which will double as an ambulance and patrol car. Delivery of the ambulance is expected at any time.

Cost to the city for the ambulance was only \$2,700 because the federal government picked up half the bill. Farmington has been dependent upon services of a commercial ambulance firm which also serves a number of neighboring communities.

This arrangement has caused delays of as much as an hour in moving accident victims to hospitals when the commercial vehicles were unavailable.

"This highway safety project provides an opportunity to demonstrate the response capability of a dual purpose emergency ambulance-patrol vehicle operated within a local police jurisdiction," says Deadman. Two public safety officers will man the ambulance, which, when equipped with emergency apparatus, will operate 24 hours a day maintaining constant com-

munication with police headquarters by two-way radio.

Comparison of response time between commercial and city ambulance service will be kept to evaluate the project's worth to Farmington, said Deadman.

THE AMBULANCE project will serve the city's estimated 11,000 population as well as motorists traveling 31 miles of state and local roads in the 3.5 square mile area.

"The implementation of this program will benefit the community through the increased crime and accident prevention capabilities of the Public Safety Department," says Deadman.

"The department hopes to reduce the suffering of injured persons at accidents by providing the manpower and equipment to rescue and transport the injured to medical facilities quickly."

The grant covers a period of one year but Deadman expects the federal government will agree to share in costs for two more years, making a three-year pilot program.

Cost of the unit, however, may have to be absorbed by the city at the end of the three years.

Farmington was one of the earliest cities in Michigan, and the nation, to apply for and receive funds through the grant.