

Farmington Observer

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Taxpayers could bear cost

Feds deny drain project funds

By STEVE BARNABY
Farmington editor

Farmington Hills residents could be socked for the cost of finishing the Waldron Drain after the federal government rejected the city's application for a public works grant, the funds of which would have gone for completing the drain.

The city had applied for \$330,000 to aid in paying for the drain, which, when completed, will run through the area bounded by Nine Mile on the north, Eight Mile on the south, Inker on the east and Middlebelt on the west.

City officials expressed dismay over the rejection from the U.S. Department of Commerce, which sent a letter to City Mgr. George Majors last week informing him of the rejection. "We really got the booby prize," said Councilman Earl Oppertshauer at this week's council session.

Oppertshauer lamented the fact that Farmington Hills is one of the communities whose residents pay high income tax, yet receive little of it back from the federal government.

like Dearborn, with a much heavier tax base, received an average of \$1,255 per person.

Majoros told city legislators that an examination of the city's application would have to be made when returned from federal authorities, along with a review of other cities' applications to see why Farmington Hills missed out on federal monies.

The City of Wixom used the same strategy as Farmington Hills and it got funding approval. It's a very complex formula that they use, and you have to second guess the federal government," he said.

Farmington Hills came in 89th for qualifying under the Local Public

Works Capital Development and Investment Act of 1976. The cutoff was set at 46 cities.

Cities were evaluated on a percentage basis criteria after which the information was fed into a computer and those cities with the highest points received the funding.

Twenty-five per cent was based on the percentage rate of unemployment in the project area. Another 30 per cent was based on the actual number of unemployed persons in the project area.

A key factor was placed on the labor intensity factor. How many jobs the project would provide was set at 30 per cent, while 15 percentage

points were given for the per capita income of the jurisdiction's project area.

Farmington Hills officials admit this figure may have set the city back since it has a per capita income of \$8,078, one of the highest in the state.

Per capita income is based on average income for all residents in the city, including children.

Bonus points were given if the project was being applied for by a local general government, if the project provided a new service, and if it related to an existing facility, and if it related to a local community development or re-

(Continued on page 4A)

Schools eye land sales to fight budget crunch

Farmington school officials are contemplating posting a for-sale sign on some of the district's properties. Plagued by budget problems and declining enrollments, the school board has assigned the duty of looking over the district's holdings to a new task force.

Members of the force will be announced at the Feb. 1 school board

meeting, according to School Supt. Lewis Schulman.

Business Mgr. William Frisk will head the group, which originally was commissioned with assessing the commercial value of school property in the north end of the district.

The board will consider the closing of Eagle or Fairview Elementary schools, after discussing the force's findings.

Members of the district's task force on declining enrollments had suggested that Eagle could be sold, since it is located on Fourteen Mile.

"If we include Ten Mile and Farmington Junior High schools in this, the task force will go in a different direction," Spiece argued. "The business office should investigate uses for our surplus land and property."

The surplus property to be examined includes school acreage on Twelve Mile and Drake, which was slated to become the site of a fourth senior high in the days of booming school populations.

Among the school's property is land the district would like to sell, according to Schulman.

Fighting the elements

This Farmington area scarecrow barely managed to survive the snowstorm which hit the area this week. To see how residents fared, turn to Page 3A. (Photo by Cynthia Abatt)

Couple dumps security for business

By LYNN ORR

It's rarely easy to leave security behind, but that's what Walter and Sue Krappf did when they went into business for themselves.

The Farmington Hills couple made the plunge shortly before Thanksgiving and now own the Big Red Q Quick-print shop at 2309 Plymouth Rd. in Redford Township.

"I decided I wanted to go into business for myself," said Krappf. "That's the primary motivation for the business, not wanting to be a printer," the former electronic instrument salesman began.

He now finds himself behind a press, turning out newsletters, fliers, memo pads, resumes and other printed materials.

"There's less mortality in franchises," he said, explaining why he bought into the quickprint operation, a Toledo-based company. Krappf's shop is one of two in the metropolitan Detroit area.

"In Toledo, Big Red Q is almost a household word, but we have to look for the market here," added Mrs. Krappf, the mother of three who's learning to adjust to the business world.

The Krappfs have a Xerox machine in the front of the shop for customers' convenience, but at eight cents a copy, the machine isn't the money-maker.

Krappf manages the offset press, printing business forms, letters and tickets and envelopes. "People just don't yet realize how much you can print in a short period of time," he

added, which is why the quickprint operation news is spreading.

An insurance underwriter brought in a typewritten letter and wanted 10 copies printed. Total cost of the project was \$1.58 as opposed to a cost of 80 cents to have the letter Xeroxed.

"She wanted them to look as much as possible like the original letter," said Krappf, "which is what quick printing is all about."

The break-even point is about 33 copies, so if a customer wants more than that, it's cheaper to get it printed. "Or, if a customer wants a quality printing job, they usually turn to the printing operation."

Size, quality of paper and number of copies determines price, according to Krappf. Large quantities get a discount price.

A \$48,000 INVESTMENT was required to get the franchise, and Krappf chose the quickprint operation over other franchises for a variety of reasons.

"This is a service oriented business as opposed to a product-oriented business like Baskin-Robbins," said Krappf. "There's nothing highly technical in this type of printing, and I'll be able to do a little selling."

ALTHOUGH HE IS independent for all practical purposes, buying a franchise allows Krappf some security at a price—the company gets five per cent.

"You could set up something similar on your own for less money, but you can make some costly mistakes,"

he observed. "We're dependent on a service company to keep the equipment running, and when you have a name behind you, that service is more dependable."

Krappf believes a service oriented franchise is easier to build in terms of customers.

"The biggest problem for fast-food operations is to keep their help," he said. "But here we have a chance to expand the business based on good service at a good price."

Going into business for yourself creates a few problems, Krappf admitted. "The kids want to know when we're going camping, and that's hard to predict. I don't know if we'll get a vacation this year."

For Mrs. Krappf, working five days a week is a big switch from her role as mother and volunteer.

"I'm a nurse by profession, which I did until my oldest daughter was born," she said. "Since then, I've been active in a lot of volunteer

groups, and I'm trying to manage everything so I don't have to give that up."

Mrs. Krappf has been the coordinator for Green Circle, a volunteer program in Farmington schools for five years, and a member of American Women in the Detroit metro area.

"I'm enjoying being here and meeting a lot of nice people," she said, but the family has made some adjustments.

"Everybody pitches in," she said. She's also contributing a domestic touch to the business in addition to service behind the counter. "We plan to have a coffee machine for the customers who are waiting, but with the price of coffee right now, it might break us," she quipped.

"We're having fun" is how the Krappfs describe their daily experiences.

"Anytime I learn something new, it's a enjoyable process," said Krappf.

THE FORCE'S ASSIGNMENT WAS widened to include all of the district's properties after discussion by the board. However, the new force is requested to give special emphasis to the north end of the district.

Trustee Gary Lichtman suggested the broadening of the force's assignment.

"My reason for wanting to add to their directive is suggested in the report from the Task Force on Declining Enrollments," he said.

"The report suggested that we talk to professionals in the field, that is, specifically, Realtors."

"They can't get the entire picture by just looking at those two properties (Eagle and Fairview)," he said.

Although Trustee Michael Spiece has some reservations, he eventually agreed to enlarging the new group's task.

C'ville slates vote

Clarencville school districts voters will go to the polls Monday to decide the fate of two property tax proposals on a special election ballot.

One proposal is to renew an existing five-mill (\$2 per \$1,000 of state equalized valuation) levy for another 10 years. The second is to increase the rate by three mills (\$3 per \$1,000) for five years.

The school board and administration have told voters in printed materials and informational meetings that the two levies are needed just to continue existing programs and services for the nearly 3,100 students.

The five-mill renewal represents about \$420,000 in revenues, while the three-mill increase would generate another \$240,000.

The board expects to have a small increase in the operating budget from

\$4.8 million this year to slightly more than \$5 million next year.

The board also told voters that the proposed tax increase, if approved, would be the first in the district in eight years.

The board last year made personnel cutbacks and modifications in programs to save money and make up for the loss of student enrollments.

The district has about 6,000 registered voters in Livonia, Farmington Hills, and Redford Township.

The board received voters' approval last January for an 11-mill renewal—endorsed by a 55-15 margin.

Absentee ballots will be available Saturday for persons who are expecting to be out of the district on election day from the Clarencville school board office, on Eight Mile, east of Middle Belt.

Middle schools studied as enrollment dwindles

Farmington students could find themselves attending a middle school by the early 1980s if a new task force backs up the findings of the group which studied declining enrollments.

The task force will study ways to reorganize the schools around declining enrollments, which are expected to continue through the 1980s.

Members of the force will be announced at the Feb. 1 meeting of the Farmington school board. Earl Baumgartner, director of vocational education, is expected to head the group, according to School Supt. Lewis Schulman.

The force will study the feasibility of switching the district to middle schools, which would house sixth, seventh and eighth grades in the same building.

Ninth graders would attend high school. Under the present structure, seventh, eighth and ninth graders attend junior high schools.

The group will have other options open to it. It can investigate placing

kindergarten to eighth grade classrooms in one building.

Another option facing the group will be a kindergarten to ninth grade system, said Schulman.

School officials are cautious about making the change to middle schools. "We don't want to blunder into a poorly perceived middle school system," explained Schulman. "There are good middle schools and bad ones in this country."

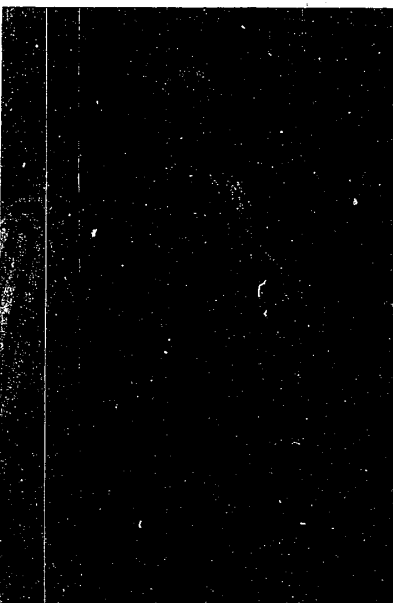
Dr. Stanley Hecker, chairman of the Task Force on Declining Enrollments, which recommended the move, urged the district to consider the formation of a middle school system carefully.

"You don't want a middle school turning into a junior version of a high school, as the junior highs have," he cautioned.

The force will report its findings to the school board no later than March 1, 1978.

That final report could include the

(Continued on page 2A)



Walt Krappf, at the wheel of his press, wears the red and white striped shirt symbolic of the Big Red Q. (Staff photo by Lynn Orr)

inside

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