

It's set to ring your chimes

Ma Bell pulls a timely switch

By LYNN ORR

A message was typed on a teletype machine and relayed into a computer in Pontiac Sunday, and, within seconds, 5,000 phone numbers of Farmington and West Bloomfield residents were changed.

Although residents only suffered the pangs of learning and relaying a new seven-digit phone number, the change for Michigan Bell involved considerably more trouble, which is why chief switchman Bob Pampreen has been supervising the new installment on Thirteen Mile east of Drake.

"This office is actually going to serve two exchanges," Pampreen explains. 3,150 Farmington Hills numbers and 1,800 West Bloomfield numbers.

"The office will provide new growth in the area with a maximum of 60,000 lines or numbers," Pampreen says. And the new office will alleviate problems for the Farmington office that had almost reached its maximum.

The new office also has the advantage of incorporating a \$3.6 million electronic switching system developed

by Western Electric that practically runs itself.

THE ESS, AS MA BELL tags it, keeps tabs on 2,000 calls a minute, stores six million bits of information in its memory bank, and checks each telephone line five times every second.

"In one second, 24 conversations are transmitted," Pampreen explains. "One 24th of a conversation is transmitted to the other end but the receiver hears everything together because of the speed."

The ESS is expected to develop no more than two hours malfunction in the next 40 years, but to insure reliability, every piece of equipment is duplicated with a built-in failsafe system.

"The call store model (a rectangular box about the size of a bread box) has the capacity to store 32,000 computer words," Pampreen says. "It keeps all the transit information, who's line it is, how many numbers have been dialed, etc."

"If we lose the one call store model, the other automatically takes over. The machine can analyze a problem, and can take that portion of the circuit out of service."

If the whole operation sounds impossible, add to it the idea that only two people are necessary to monitor the operation of the ESS in the Farmington office.

Most problems can be solved from the central office in Pontiac, information can be teletyped to the Farmington office, and operation continues as usual.

All the cables from your telephone line run into the basement of the office, up through the basement into a large block of equipment. And air pressure is constantly fed into the cables to prevent moisture and damage.

When your call gets to the trunk circuits, it will stay in the Farmington office if it's a local call, or be forwarded to toll center offices in Pontiac, Detroit or Plymouth.

IN FACT, BECAUSE OF the sophistication of the ESS equipment, Farmington Hills and West Bloomfield residents with the new exchanges, 553 and 661, will be able to direct dial overseas, without consulting an operator.

"If you misdial a ten digit number, you could get Sydney, Australia," Pampreen advises. "Kids playing with the telephone could conceivably get any place in the world."

However, Michigan Bell will deduct the cost of a wrong number if you inform your local business office of the problem, advises Robert Hunter, cus-

tomers relations manager for the area.

Although the Farmington office is strictly an operations office, it was designed to blend in with the residential area, a low-lying building to be surrounded with shrubs and trees.

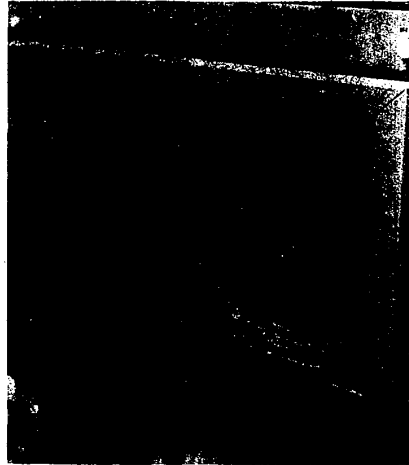
AND MA BELL hopes customers avail themselves of the some of the ESS's special services, such as call forwarding, call waiting and three-way calling.

For \$2.55 a month, customers in the new exchanges can be informed of another call by a brief tone signal; hold the call they're conducting by depressing the receiver; and find out who's on the second call.

For another \$2.85 a month, they can include a third party in the conversation, and for \$1.75 a month more, they can automatically have the calls on their phone forwarded to another number at another location.

And for the real lazes in the communities, your phone can be programmed to remember up to 30 phone numbers, so all you have to do is dial a two or three digit dialing code to reach frequently-called numbers.

Bell's plan is to replace worn equipment with the advanced ESS systems in the future, but presently, the new exchanges are the only ones in the area able to benefit from the new services.



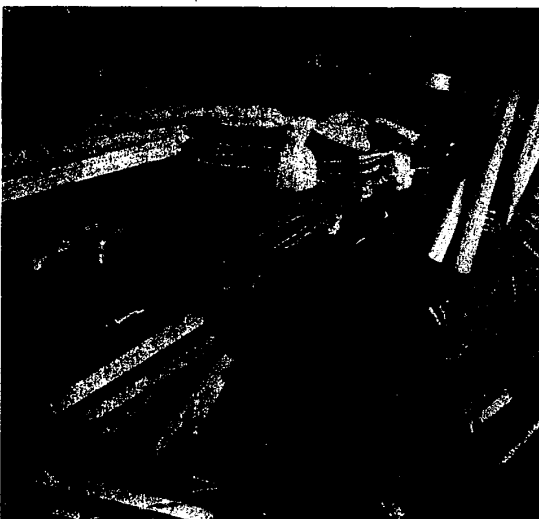
Meet your recording—that friendly voice that tells you to dial one before making a long-distance call and other such information is all on this reel of tape, electronically connected to answer your call when you make a mistake.



Gil Seitz, Warren Anderson, and Dick Wagner can enjoy a laugh now that the work is done and the electronic switching system will take over. (Staff photos)



Chief switchman Bob Pampreen will remain at the Farmington office along with rows of memory cards.



A ganglia of wires like these aren't normally on view. But the cable in question was giving Bell workers trouble in preparing for today's switchover to the new office.

Property tax rebates due for homeowners

Many people who have already filed their property tax credit statement for 1976 have overestimated their household income and are eligible for reimbursement from the Treasury Dept., according to State Rep. Sandy Brotherton (R-Farmington).

Employer-paid health, accident and life insurance premiums, as well as amounts deducted from monthly social security or railroad retirement benefits for medicare premiums, are not considered household income under a newly enacted law.

The law, the first piece of legislation passed in the current session, restores the definition of household income to what it previously was. It also corrects an action by the Treasury Dept. which changed that definition by including employer-paid insur-

ance premiums as household income, Brotherton said.

"It was never the intent of the legislature to include these payments as income when the Property Tax Relief Act was passed," said Brotherton.

"The new law clarifies our intent." In order to receive reimbursement from the Treasury Dept., he advised, those who have filed their tax forms can send a letter to the Treasury Dept. including their name, social security number, the amount included on line 19 and the number of the form they used.

The general form is MI-1040 CR. The senior citizen form is MI-1040 CR-1. The form used by paraplegics, quadriplegics and the totally disabled is MI-1040 CR-3.

Once upon a Springtime



PHILLIP AND PETER FOUND A PATCH OF WILD FLOWERS AND RACED HOME WITH THEM IN THEIR BLUE AND WHITE PIN-STRIPE SUITS BY GOOD LAD.

Mom was delighted with the pretty posies. And so proud of her two little boys. They looked really handsome in their new Easter suits by Good Lad. Phillip's sailor suit has drawstring waist, 2-4, \$17; babe sizes M-L-XL, \$16, and boys 4-7, \$20. And Peter wears a five-piece suit with coat, pants, vest, white shirt and bow tie, 4-7, \$42; toddler 2-4, \$36. All of carefree polyester/cotton. In Toddlers and Boys 4-7 at Hudson's.

hudson's