

Rebuilding from the ruins

It was one year ago today that residents of the Valley View Condominium found one of their buildings in the complex set ablaze. For more than six hours, 60 firefighters from both Farmington and Farmington Hills battled the blaze in freezing temperatures which started in the east end of the building and spread throughout to destroy the structure. While firemen aided residents in escaping the fire, which

began about 8:30 a.m. on that Sunday, the fire quickly spread across the roof. As the day went on, walls buckled and crashed to the ground, and the intense heat deformed steel girders. But today, bricklayer Dave Saelens aids in the work of rebuilding the structure which is on Grand River and Power. (Staff photos)

Headlee passage threatens funds for culinary school

By TIM RICHARD

Schoolcraft College officials are scratching their heads for a way to raise nearly \$400,000 more toward construction of a home for its nationally prominent culinary arts program.

"When we filed an application for state funding," said administrative vice-president W. Kenneth Lindner, "we had \$336,000 in the bank. The cost of the project was estimated in January of 1976 at \$1.56 million."

"We applied for state funding of 50 per cent, or about \$750,000. The state funded 40.5 per cent, or \$633,000 plus a share of cost overruns in the 1978 capital outlay bill."

"Our problem now is how to raise \$26,000 now that the Headlee amendment has passed," Lindner said.

THE COMMUNITY college official referred to Proposal E, the tax limitation amendment to the state constitution which voters approved Nov. 7.

The Headlee amendment contained a provision that bond issues would have to be approved by voters if they are to be backed by the government's full faith and credit.

Until Headlee, governing boards could float construction bond issues and raise the property tax rates to pay for them. Operating taxes were another matter; then and now, they had to be approved by voters. Thus, Schoolcraft has floated no recent bond issues, though the board had power to do so, because voters turned down operating millages in three straight elections.

"THE BOARD will get information at the Nov. 15 meeting, and it should decide what to do by Dec. 15," said Lindner.

Without power to float bonds by resolution, the board may either put a \$336,000 bond issue on the ballot or receive a \$336,000 gift. No one knows if any \$336,000 gifts are going begging.

Meanwhile, the cost of the culinary arts addition is rising. In 1974, when Schoolcraft first sought state funding, the price tag was \$1.1 million. As of January it was \$1.56 million.

The Greater Detroit Real Estate Board estimates costs of school type construction have been rising at 6.0 to 10.9 per cent annually in recent years. The addition would cost \$120,000 a year to operate—about one per cent more than Schoolcraft's current \$11 million budget.

THE CULINARY arts addition would be a two-story addition to the north of the Waterman Campus Center on the Livonia campus.

Its upper story would house the two-year certificate program which trains chefs for the growing hospitality industry. Student affairs programs—such as counseling, financial aids and the student newspaper—would be assigned some of the space, although Lindner said exact assignments had not yet been made.

Culinary arts would be able to expand its enrollment from the current 58 to 120. It would also be able to cut its four-year waiting list for admissions, Lindner said.

If the Headlee amendment had lost and the college had been able to bond by resolution, bids could have been taken in March of 1979, and the work could have been completed by

mid-1980, Lindner said.

THE CULINARY arts program currently operates in cramped quarters in the existing Waterman Center. Vis-

itors can sometimes see classes meeting in the cafeteria area.

One high cost item, said Lindner, is refrigeration. "We have 2,800 square

feet in freezers, dry storage, and general refrigeration. It amounts to \$95,000 in specialized equipment, most in stainless steel. That doesn't make it cheap by any means."

Political clout aids in obtaining funds

There are two ways to get state funds out of Lansing—the usual budget process and political clout.

Schoolcraft College used and used political clout to get \$833,000 toward its \$1.56 million culinary arts construction money.

The clout, said President C. Nelson Grote, came from U.S. Rep. Carl Pursell (R-Plymouth), a member of the State Senate from 1970-76, and current senate majority leader William Faust (D-Westland).

In 1975, Grote said, Sen. Pursell called him from Lansing to say that state funds of \$550,000 were about to be cut because of a revenue shortage in that recession year.

But Pursell, a member of the senate appropriations committee and many subcommittees, is a master of the intricacies of lawmaking, Grote said. Pursell had a token \$50,000 inserted in the budget to keep the project legally alive in Lansing.

This year, Schoolcraft asked for the rest of its money. This time, however, the governor's budget director, Gerald Miller, opposed the funding.

"When that happens," said Grote, "you've got to get the project added

through the political process."

Faust went to the joint capital outlay committee and got the funding approved over the objections of the budget bureau.

And even though Pursell was in Congress by this time, he made a number of calls to old friends in key legislative spots, such as Sen. Bill S. Huffman (D-Madison Heights) and Rep. Russell Hellman (D-Dollar Bay). All local legislators supported it.

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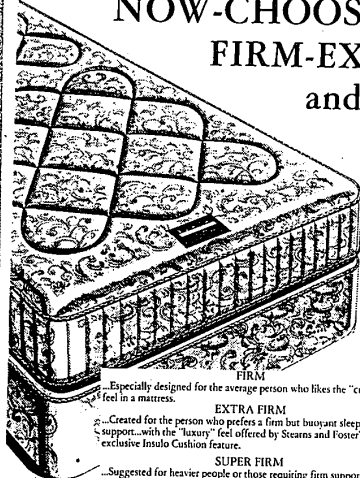
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