

# Farmington Observer

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## Auto consumers are undaunted by energy scare

By MARY GNIEWEK

A random survey of auto dealerships shows that rising gas prices and a prediction of a severe drop in the sale of American made cars has not affected automobile sales in the Farmington area.

Though dealers report a move by consumers to smaller economy models that get better gas mileage, they predict an upturn in big car sales by spring.

One dealer claims his sales for the first two months of 1979 are up over last year, with full size luxury models leading the pack.

"We're short on 98's, Regencies and Toronados," said Bob Saks of Bob Saks Olds. "I think it's a psychological catch, an overreaction. People think this may be the last year they can buy a big luxury car."

Saks said his dealership is 150 sales ahead of 1978 for the months of January and February.

"Our cars are hot from the top of the line to the bottom. It's unbelievable. The Olds diesel is the hottest thing going. That is a direct relation to the gas crunch."

Diesel fuel now sells about 10 cents less per gallon than regular gasoline.

The diesel line runs from the \$8,000 Outback to the \$12,000 Toronado.

Bob Greiner, sales manager at Roger Peck Chevrolet, said sales have remained constant through the gas rationing scare.

"CHEVROLET is already downsized. Our biggest car, the Caprice, gets 20 miles to the gallon. That's our best seller, along with the Camaro, Chevette and Malibu."

Some dealers say slow moving stock is common this time of year.

"Everything is slow in winter. Big car sales are down, but they'll bounce back by the end of May," forecasted Bill Nova, sales manager of Dameron Chrysler-Plymouth.

Engines in Chrysler's luxury models have also been down-sized to stay in line with fuel economy. Chrysler's Newport is now available with a six cylinder engine, the New Yorker has a 318 engine, down from 360.

"Cars are like everything else. Bread, milk and gas prices keep going up. It's a way of life, the American way," Nova said. "By the end of May, there will be no big cars left."

Best sellers now are Plymouth's Horizon and Arrow (both small models) and Chrysler's Cordoba and LaBaron (both mid-sized).

One place where sales are down is at Town and Country Dodge, where new car sales dropped 25 per cent over last year.

"People don't even know what big cars are anymore," said Paul Moran, salesman. "We're moving the Omni and imports that get 25 to 30 miles to the gallon. Full-sized models like the St. Regis aren't selling."

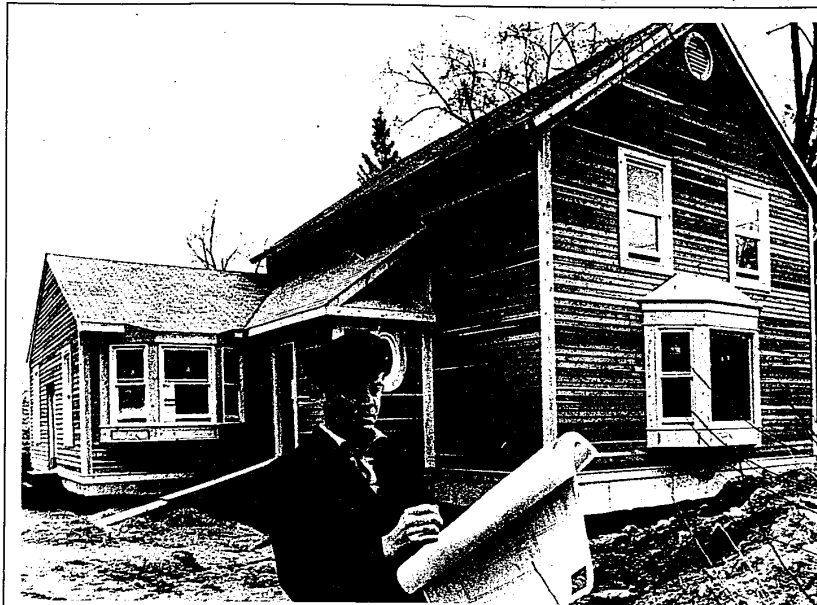
Moran won't predict the future. "We take this business one month at a time," he said.

Coon Brothers American Motors of Redford report their best seller is Renault's Le Car, an economy model. The French Renault and AMC entered a joint sales agreement earlier this year. The small Spirit and mid-sized Concord are also big sellers.

"Jeep sales are spotty. They dropped a few weeks ago, but they've picked up again. Jeeps aren't built for economy. People buy them for recreation or driving over rugged terrain," said Jerry Parrish, sales manager.

Despite fluctuations, Coon Brothers reports sales are the same for the first two months of 1979 as last year.

In the foreign car market, a salesman for Leo Adler Datsun said business is picking up. With eight customers crowded in his showroom Tuesday, he didn't have time to elaborate.



Dick Eades reviews the plans for the house he's building on Grand River in Farmington's historic district. Eades' home combines 20th century ideas with late 19th century design. (Staff photos by Harry Mauthe)

## Historic area gains counterfeit

### 19th century facade hides new home

Dick Eades' resolve to build a "nice house for persons who want to live in a nice home" led him to mix 19th century architecture with 20th century conveniences.

For \$122,500 a family can call the Victorian style house a home and become owners of a piece of instant history in the middle of Farmington's historic district.

The location of Eades' land demanded something different than an ultra-modern quad-level home. Plans for homes in the historic district are reviewed for style by the Farmington Historic Commission before property owners can secure building permits.

Eades, who lists himself as a custom builder, enlisted Carl Gaiser, of Farmington Hills as an architect to design the building. The results include a facade with bay windows looking out on Grand River and window seats offering cozy corners inside.

The final finished home, made of

red cedar, is obviously Eades' pride and joy.

"For 50 years, people will pass by here and say, 'that's the house Dick Eades built,'" he says as he paces the floor boards of his half finished house.

"I LIKE THESE houses," he says of the historic district. Their prominence on Grand River is attractive to him, too.

"I didn't want to build a ranch house in the woods," he says.

"I want it to be seen." Eades' house on Grand River has attracted attention from prospective buyers and future neighbors. Originally, some of the neighbors feared that Eades would build a home which would clash with the row of late 19th and early 20th century houses.

"Little old ladies call me up. They don't want to buy the house. They just want to talk about it," Eades says.

"I wanted to build a nice looking house on this street," he said.

Eades, who lives in Farmington Hills' Chatham Hills apartments, used the turn of the century for inspiration for his structure. The interior has 19th century farmhouse roominess combined with 20th century concerns for conserving energy.

The floor, walls and ceiling will be insulated by the late Eades is finished.

LARGE BAY WINDOWS easily noticed by passers-by on Grand River are part of the first floor master bedroom which measures 16-by-13 feet excluding the walk-in closet and bathroom.

Upstairs, there are three more bedrooms with walk-in closets. Eades plans to install a sauna in the basement.

The walls will be made of plaster

rather than dry wall sheets. Eades finds plaster sturdier if somewhat more expensive.

"If you pay more than \$100,000 for a home, you should have plaster," he says.

The construction of the pseudo-19th century house will cost Eades \$100,000, he says. He hopes to have it completed by June 1.

The house is one of Eades' first projects as a builder. He managed his own ventilation installation business for 10 years before turning to building last year.

WEARING A DARK blue billed cap and a jacket, Eades gazes out at the mounds of dirt still heaped up in the back yard. With arms akimbo, he looks around the neighborhood.

"You know," he says, turning slightly, "an old man came up to me here one day. He said, 'this is the first house that's been built in this neighborhood since 1915.'"

## Payroll charges denied

By MARY GNIEWEK

Though Little Caesars Enterprises of Farmington Hills has agreed to pay \$69,000 in back wages to hundreds of employees who were paid below the minimum wage in 1977, a spokesman for the pizza firm says the underpayment was unintentional.

Larry Sheehan, Little Caesars executive vice president, said the company was unaware at the time of a change in the federal Fair Labor Standards Act which extended minimum wage coverage to employees in the firm's carryout pizzerias.

A consent judgment in which the firm agreed to the repayment was signed by federal District Judge Philip Pratt last month. A complaint had been

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## Seniors await housing while state debates aid

By MARY GNIEWEK

While Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) officials decide which precious few communities will be the recipient of this year's limited funds for public housing, senior citizens in Farmington Hills continue to wait for some word from Lansing.

Evelyn Cairns, 66, has lived in the area since 1931. She's getting tired of waiting.

"I hope the city gets moving. Farmington Hills is slow in helping its seniors," she said.

Mrs. Cairns lives alone in the Woodmont Trailer Park, Inkster Road near Eight Mile. She survives on Social Security checks and help from a daughter who lives nearby.

"I don't like to ask the children for help, they have their own problems. So you learn to squeeze through. It's hard, but you get used to it."

Arthritis keeps Mrs. Cairns from pursuing a job outside the home.

"YOU HAVE GOOD days and bad days. I don't have enough good days to have a job."

"It's hard to make ends meet. I manage to pay the rent, utilities and buy a few groceries. But then there's always insurance or something. You never catch up."

Mrs. Iva Galusha, 76, never catches

up, either. She moved to a house on Shawnee near Middlebelt two years ago to be near her married son.

"My husband had multiple sclerosis and I needed help taking care of him. He was dead weight. I couldn't lift him myself," she said. "He died shortly after we moved. Now I'm stuck with this big house."

"The oil heat bills are terrible. I paid \$101 last month, then I got a bill for \$80 three weeks later. I haven't paid it yet."

"This place needs 101 things. It needs roof shingles, and the sink has been stopped up for months. On and on it goes. I don't have money for repairs, I'm too old to do it myself."

"The place is going to wreck. I need help. I have to find a smaller place."

Mrs. Cairns and Mrs. Galusha are among 8,540 senior citizens living in Farmington Hills.

"The average income for senior citizens in our community is \$350 a month per couple. That equals \$4,500 a year. Which means that half of our senior population is at or below the poverty level," said Jean Crane, secretary of the Committee on Aging, a citizen's group appointed by the Farmington Hills City Council to study the needs of the city's elderly population.

IN ITS LATEST drive, city council scrapped a proposed bonding election earlier this month and applied to MSHDA for senior and low income housing. Although senior housing won unanimous support from city leaders, implementation of the project rests with MSHDA, which finances public housing with state and federal money.

"They ask me all the time when the

city is going to build senior housing," said Mrs. Crane. "They don't know if they can make it another year. They have a pension and they planned for

retirement, but they never thought the cost of living would rise so high."

She cited the case of an auto executive's widow.

"The woman said her husband would turn over in his grave if he knew of her financial woes. This woman lives in a

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Connie McBeth waits for opponent Arvo Lokojarvi to play his hand in a game of pinochle at the Gathering Place. Mercey's center provides a variety of services for Farmington Hills senior population of nearly 10,000 residents. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

## inside

### Drop Dead Red? Chrome Yellow?

Yes, these "colors" are "in" for spring '79 and Thursday, March 22, our annual Spring Fashion section will appear in your hometown newspaper. Don't miss it!



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