

# Farmington Observer

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## Festival financial woes hinder plans for summer

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Saddled with a \$6,000 deficit from the last two years, some Farmington Founders' Festival committee members are casting around for new ways to earn money and save the area's 16-year-old summer event.

Committee members find the debt so pressing that they've slightly delayed setting up a budget for the 1980 festival in order to concentrate on reducing past debts.

Money and coordination among the festival's participants are labeled as the most pressing organizational needs if the event is to continue.

Deficit spending has been part of the festival for at least the last few years. Last year the committee began planning for the 1979 festival by coping with a \$1,800 deficit left over from 1978's event.

Last year's festival committee also projected they would leave their own

budget deficit of \$1,500 from a budget of \$17,100. The 1978 festival was run on a \$14,700 budget.

But the 1980 budget won't be settled until mid-April, according to this year's festival treasurer, Fred Huber, manager of Liberty State Bank and Trust of Redford.

INSTEAD, the committee is hacking away at such debts as the \$4,000 loan with an interest rate of 20 percent, which was given to the festival by the Farmington Chamber of Commerce.

The festival still owes a donation of \$700 to the Shriners Hospital in return for the Shriners marching band's appearance in last year's parade.

The Shriners have been gracious about the debt, according to Huber. "They've been really good," he added.

The committee received extended credit to pay the \$1,000 scholarship won by 1979's Miss Farmington in the

Miss Farmington Scholarship Pageant. The money is paid off in installments when the bills are submitted, according to Huber.

Miss Farmington also received a \$350 wardrobe allowance for this year's Miss Michigan Pageant. That bill was paid off last week. A \$300 entrance fee to the state contest has yet to be paid. The committee awaits the bill.

The entrance fee has risen from \$200 paid last year to \$300 for this year's contest, according to Huber.

In addition, the festival still owes the Livonia Parks and Recreation Department about \$300 for the use of a portable stage.

FACED WITH these left-over debts, the \$12,000 in receipts which the committee has accumulated so far this year looks like more than it actually is. This sum includes a hefty \$2,500 contribution from Metro National Bank of

Farmington, according to Huber.

The bank has traditionally paid 75 percent of the cost of presenting fireworks on the Oakland Community College's Orchard Ridge campus grounds.

That cost has risen from \$900 for fireworks in 1976 to \$2,500 last year.

Although no one wants to axe the popular display, the fireworks may be cut back if the community doesn't contribute to the effort, warn committee members.

Another costly event, the parade may also be cut if the festival's budget fails to gel, warns Huber.

Last year, the parade cost \$4,500, a \$500 increase over the previous year's procession down Grand River.

The sidewalk sales and the scholarship pageant do support themselves. Last year the pageant cost \$4,000 to produce. Ticket sales raised \$3,000 of that money.

But after the pageant has raised money, the festival begins to spend, not earn.

THAT'S A TRADITION which festival chairwoman Betty Huff would like to change. Along with earning money from the numerous booths and sales, Mrs. Huff would like to see a little more coordination put into Farmington's annual summer event.

The booths and socials earn money for their organizers and not for the festival. But Mrs. Huff would like to see the various organizations touting themselves as part of the festival pay a small membership fee in the event.

For that fee, projected to be about \$5 or less, the organization would be listed as an official festival event. With different organizations' reporting to the committee, the festival could earn some money to pay its debts and keep its calendar of events accurate.

Times, places and dates of events have been incorrectly recorded in festival publicity in the past due to a lack of coordination, Mrs. Huff said. She'd like to see more coordination go into the publicity effort.

Another idea being kicked around as a possible money raiser is to hike the fee charged to persons who want to operate booths or concessions around the festival, according to the chairwoman.

The booths are open to the public. Donations from the residents of time or money are also being solicited by the committee.

THE COMMITTEE will make its annual effort at soliciting money from the merchants as well.

This time around, new merchants in town will be asked to contribute, according to Huber.

"The new merchants made out like a bandit" (last year), Huber said. "And

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Edison workers spent last Friday traveling about town to fix many of the wires which fell victim to the spring snow storm. This cold but avid worker is Mark LaFond. (Staff photo by Randy Bors)

## SPRING?

### Electricity blinks out as winter winds blow

Spring was dealt a devastating blow Friday morning that left the metropolitan area reeling in its wake.

Massive power outages due to high winds and icy power lines caused the Farmington Public Schools to declare its first snow holiday of the 1979-1980 school year. Dozens of local businesses and residences also were without power Friday.

Botsford General Hospital, the Farmington Hills police department and city hall operated on auxiliary generator systems for part of the day.

Coal-clad customers at Monk's Cellar in Farmington Hills sipped coffee while waiting for power, which was restored to the restaurant at 11 a.m.

The brunt of the storm came just before morning rush hour, dropping between one and two inches of snow while winds gusted to 48 miles an hour.

"If it would've come an hour or two sooner we'd have called the crews to work early and cleaned the roads before rush hour," said Larry Dahlberg, Department of Public Services maintenance supervisor in Farmington Hills. Dahlberg said the pre-dawn snow/slush was "thick and heavy with cars floating on top of it." Eight salt-scraper trucks worked through the day clearing roads of snow and slush.

FARMINGTON SCHOOL buses, which usually begin operating at 7 a.m. were halted because of a shortage of bus drivers. In addition, six schools lost power which caused Superintendent Lewis Schulman to shut down the district for the day. "No one predicted this weather," he said. "We checked as late as 6 a.m. and nothing was wrong. The buses couldn't get out in time and

that was complicated by the power outage.

"It was an impossible situation." Forty thousand Detroit Edison customers were without service for part of the day, with 18,000 Oakland County customers affected. Two hundred Edison field crews worked to restore power to damaged areas.

"A combination of rain, snow then wind caused wet snow to collect on the lines and equipment," said Lou Layton, an Edison spokesman.

"It's scattered outages, with crews chasing around to restore power."

The blackout wasn't nearly of the same intensity as last April's ice storm which left 300,000 Edison customers without power, some for up to two weeks.

Edison expected all power to be restored by midnight Friday.

"We forecasted thunderstorms Thursday night possibly mixed with snow by morning," said Lee Vandecar of the National Weather Service at Detroit Metropolitan Airport.

"THE FACT that it deepened and moved the way it did was a surprise to a lot of us. It dumped a little more than anticipated."

Even with Friday's accumulation, total snowfall this winter is well below normal — 25 inches to date, Vandecar said.

"For the first day of spring, we ran the gamut of all weather conditions in 24 hours," he said.

"From a nice balmy Thursday morning with temperatures near 60 degrees, then rain and thunderstorms turning to snow and strong gusty winds near morning."

The weather service won't promise Friday's storm was the end of winter's wrath.

"There's a good chance we'll have more snow before it warms up," Vandecar said.

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### GREASEPAIN

Everyone loves a play of one sort or another. To see what's new at the Farmington Players' Barn turn to the Suburban Life Section B.

Farmington Hills Fire Chief John Van de Voort announced his retirement Friday after serving four years as the city's first full-time fire chief.

Van de Voort, 52, cited family priorities as the reason for his departure, which is effective immediately. His tenure continues through June 1 with accumulated vacation and leave time.

Deputy Fire Chief Thomas Johnson will act as fire chief until a replacement is named.

"I've discussed it with the city manager but kept it a private thing to maintain the effectiveness of the department to the end," Van de Voort said.

"I feel satisfied with the condition of the department and all the improvements made over the last four years."

"I'm a planner, organizer and implementer. That role is finished here." Under Van de Voort, the department hired eight full-time firefighters and implemented a paid call-back system of volunteers which the chief said has saved the community about half the cost of a full-time fire department.

On a per capita basis, fire protection costs \$15 a person in Farmington Hills. In neighboring communities with full-time departments the cost is higher: \$35 a person in Southfield and in the high \$40s in Livonia.

IN 1977, programs were implement-



JOHN VAN DE VOORT

ed in basic firefighter training, emergency medical technology, arson control and regular station drills. Numerous tools and fire equipment were purchased.

Two permanent fire stations were manned to replace two leased buildings bringing the total number of fire stations in the city to four. Standardization of equipment, a complete record-keeping system and inventory control were initiated during Van de Voort's tenure.

"I think being a young city, Farmington Hills is starting off on the right foot offering the best service at a low cost," he said.

A resident of Warren, Van de Voort was hired in March, 1976 by the Farmington Hills City Council on the recommendation of former City Manager George Majors. Previously the chief served 3 1/2 years as administrative consultant for the Sterling Heights fire department.

He was the first executive secretary of the Michigan Firefighters Training Council in 1971, standardizing firefighter training for Michigan's 83 counties.

Prior to that, he retired from the Detroit Fire Department at the rank of chief of training for 1,800 employees after 25 1/2 years with the department.

Van de Voort's 46-year firefighting career began in 1934 as a member of a volunteer fire department and included a four-year stint in the U.S. Navy as chief specialist in charge of firefighting and damage control.

Asked if he would consider another job in the field, Van de Voort said he would not do so at this time.

Before his appointment in Farmington Hills, the volunteer firefighters were under the jurisdiction of then Public Safety Director Ronald Holko. In addition to the full-time staff, there are between 70 and 75 volunteer firefighters.

## Police unhampered by federal fund cuts

By MARY GNIEWEK

Loss of federal revenue for upgrading police programs would have a minimal effect on local police departments, officials say.

A congressional recommendation would cut \$163 million from the 1980-1981 budgets and then terminate the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA).

Its only adverse effect in Farmington and Farmington Hills would be to cut off a tuition reimbursement program for college-bound police officers. Currently the LEAA pays a maximum of \$400 a semester for police officers enrolled in law enforcement degree programs.

Annually the federal agency does out almost \$500 million to state and local governments but local police departments don't rely on those funds for day to day operation.

Farmington Hills Police Chief John Nichols said between 25 and 30 percent of the department is involved in the LEAA tuition reimbursement program, mostly at Madonna College and Schoolcraft Community College.

Livonia Police Chief Robert Turner said proposed cuts wouldn't affect a \$1.5 million LEAA grant approved 10 months ago for installation of computer terminals in patrol cars, which is expected to be implemented next year in Livonia.

Both Farmington and Farmington Hills are among eight neighboring communities committed to the Livonia project. Once that system is operation-

al, Farmington and Farmington Hills will decide if it should be implemented here.

FARMINGTON CITY MANAGER Robert Deadman said the computers would give patrol officers direct access to stored data such as arrest records and stolen vehicle information. The federal grant also would finance the Farmington-Farmington Hills system.

"I have not seen an official report indicating the extent of the LEAA cuts," Deadman said.

He said officers taking advantage of the LEAA tuition plan would have to pay themselves for schooling or the city would have to pick up the tab depending on the importance of the schooling.

Though the Farmington Hills department has no LEAA programs now, for three years it operated a federally-funded Special Patrol Operation Team (SPOPT) designed to give the department capability for surveillance of suspected criminals.

The department has continued that program with local funding. "I think most police administrators rather expected it (the LEAA cuts)," Nichols said. "In view of the president's announcement of balancing the budget, many programs probably will go by the boards."

The LEAA was an outgrowth of the presidential crime commission in 1968 which brought a massive commitment to upgrade education and communications levels of police departments, Nichols said.



George Monttekier, a senior at North Farmington, hefts the 16-pound shot in preparation for the track season. To read what's happening, turn to the sports preview in Section D. (Staff photo by Randy Bors)