

# Farmington Observer

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## Farmington opens doors to seniors

By MARY GNIEWEK

Farmington's tallest building is almost ready for occupancy.

Tenants will begin moving into the six-story, 153-unit senior citizens apartment building on School Street Nov. 1.

"It's beautiful," says Dottie Curry, property manager.

She and her husband, Clarence Curry, maintenance supervisor, moved in a few weeks ago.

A model apartment is open for public viewing from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Mrs. Curry reports several curious Farmingtonians have had a sneak preview.

What they've seen is a one bedroom, carpeted apartment with plenty of closet space, built-in kitchen appliances and a terrace.

Each unit has a telephone intercom which will allow tenants to screen visitors. Emergency strings in the bedroom allow a tenant in need of help to alert apartment management. A pull on a string turns on a light in the first floor office.

Forest City Dillon built the project, which is sponsored by the department of Housing and Urban Development.

TO QUALIFY, prospective tenants must be at least 62 years old and earn no more than \$11,000. For two persons, the income limit is \$13,000.

Each tenant gets a one-year lease and pays 25 percent of his or her in-

come for rent. Rent includes heat and utilities, but not the phone bill.

The majority of units are one-bedroom. Only five are two bedroom apartments. Some are equipped for handicapped tenants.

"The tenants will move in five a day until the building is filled," Mrs. Curry said.

They were selected from a list of 2,500 names.

"They were numbered according to the order in which the applications were taken out of mail bags," she said.

Farmington residents were given no special preference.

Once the building is settled, the senior tenants will form their own governing council to oversee activities. There's a game room on the first floor that will have pool tables and card tables. It overlooks a grassy courtyard with park benches and newly planted dogwood, maple and evergreen trees. A wooded area provides a natural barrier from Farmington City Park.

The game room is attached to a kitchen to be used for birthday parties, banquets and special events. Across the hall is an arts and crafts room. Mrs. Curry says a library is also in the offing.

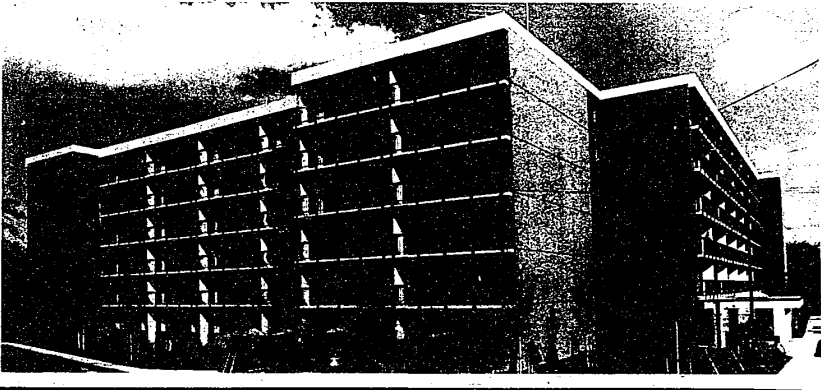
She's still wondering where to place the giant bulletin board that will announce special events.

The Currys have been deluged with calls from tenants anxious to move into their new home.



### Welcome seniors

For months Farmington residents have been watching, and senior citizens waiting, for the completion of the new senior citizen apartment complex to be completed. Despite some delays due to labor disputes, the apartment complex on the old Farmington Junior High School site is ready to open. On left is a model apartment, typical of what seniors will live in. At bottom is an outside view of the apartment. (Staff photos by Randy Borsl)



## Legislature debates foster care home fate

By MARY GNIEWEK

The state Legislature has proposed several bills that would give local government almost total control over placement of foster care homes for the mentally retarded.

Two companion bills introduced by state Rep. Claude Trim, D-White Lake, and a third introduced by Rep. Thomas Brown, D-Westland, will be addressed in public hearings across Michigan each Friday in October.

The next hearing is slated Oct. 10 at 10 a.m. at the Oakland County Courthouse in Pontiac.

Trim's package, HB5905 and HB5906, would set up local panels comprised of township supervisor, city council member, two persons from the regional office of the state Department of Social Services, two from the local

mental health center and one local resident.

The panel would be responsible for devising an annual plan to include the number of foster care sites the city could handle, location of those sites and the reasons and logic behind the choices.

The plan would be sent to the state departments of Social Services and Mental Health for recommendations, but the final decision would rest with the panel.

HB5905 deals with adult homes and HB5906 with children's homes. Both are presently in the House Towns and Counties committee.

THE BILLS, which were introduced before summer recess, were prompted by an outpouring of correspondence from residents across Michigan requesting more control of foster care

homes, according to a Trim aid.

"They say 'We know they (mentally retarded) have rights, but we feel our rights are being ignored,'" said Carol Goolab, a Trim aid.

Under the current setup, if the department of Social Services approves an application from a licensee, a foster care home is established regardless of local zoning ordinances.

The only other stipulation is that the home can't be within 1,500 feet of another foster care facility.

West Franklin Estates subdivision homeowners are keeping a careful watch on Trim's bills. The homeowners, concerned about placement of five severely retarded adults in their neighborhood near 14 Mile and Farmington roads, hear conflicting reports from various government agencies on operation of the homes.

"I don't think anyone has a quarrel with mentally retarded," said Annette Lynd, a subdivision resident for more than 25 years.

"These bills are designed to slowly re-evaluate foster care homes. They sort of sneak into the community and there are so many things the public doesn't know about them."

"The more positive things we can hear, the more positive it makes me feel as a homeowner," she said.

SOCIAL SERVICE Director John T. Dempsey has attacked the Trim packages on several fronts. He says their passage would create two panels per township — one for adult and one for children's homes — or the establishment of 2,490 panels.

"It would be an elaborate and costly approach and inappropriate for the

state to undertake," Dempsey said.

The bills would create "an impossible task for mental health and social services because it would require appropriate review and evaluation of 1,425 plans in a 30-day period."

The bills would require Social Services to establish three new professional staff positions and one clerical for the review process. It would cost \$125,000. Mental health would also have to increase its staff, Dempsey said.

State Rep. Sandy Brotherton, R-Farmington, isn't sure the Trim bills are on target, but he sees need for revision of the present system.

"I want foster care homes in communities, but where they are properly supervised and where they are wanted," he said.

A better system would ensure that home supervisors are well trained.

Brotherton is concerned because current law says home caretakers can be as young as 18 years of age. They are paid minimum wage.

HB6053, introduced by Brown, would require a licensee to be a permanent resident of the home. Brown's argument is that employees changing shifts every six hours aren't providing a homelike atmosphere for residents.

THE BILL would ensure that licensee of the profit-making home venture live in the home. But, Brotherton says, some licensees operate several foster care homes and obviously can't live in all of them.

"I think the hearings will get a lot of problems out on the table," Brotherton said.

### Says aye reluctantly

## Budget bothers Brotherton

State Rep. Sandy Brotherton, R-Farmington, reluctantly supported a move Friday in the House to extend the current state budget through the remainder of the year.

Restating his pledge to fight any tax increases this year, Brotherton said he believed the decision to vote for a temporary three-month budget "was the right move at the right time."

House members voted 55-37 to continue the current budget through December. Legislators will debate a January-September budget when they return in mid-November.

Brotherton said he "adamantly" opposed several revenue-raising proposals which were debated during the days prior to the decision to go with a temporary budget. The proposals included measures to eliminate tax exemptions on military pay and capital gains, deregulate the state's liquor industry, increase the cigarette tax, and start a new lottery game.

"I simply would not go back on my word to hold the line on taxes," he said. "I could not have voted for a full-year budget in good faith with any of the tax increases included in the budget package."

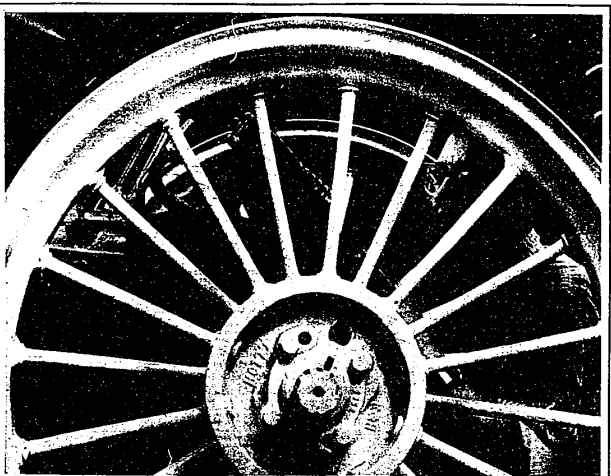
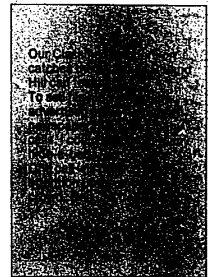
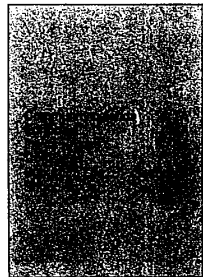
"It boiled down to those like myself, who do not want any tax increases this year, and those who were not willing to

make the cuts necessary to balance the budget," Brotherton said.

"I have pledged to fight tax increases every loch of the way. I was not willing to give in, and neither was the other side."

"It was with great reluctance that I supported a temporary three-month budget, but I believe that we will have a more accurate picture of our financial condition in a few months," he added.

### what's inside



### A new beginning

Lawrence Burmaster has found a hobby steeped in Americana. Through that giant spoked wheel is the tale of this country's agricultural history. To see

what Burmaster's hobby is, turn to Page 3A. (Staff photo by Randy Borsl)