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Loehmann's store opening draws big crowd

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Loehmann's, the product of many demographic studies, unusual architectural planning and the shopper's never-ending desire for a bargain, opened in Farmington Hills this week.

While crowds milled around the doors of the discount fashion center waiting for a chance to get inside, long-time business leaders mused over its effects on area merchants.

Farmington Chamber of Commerce Director Ed Lane was among the speculators.

The economic impact of the 15,000-square-foot store, said Lane, on other merchants can only be measured after Loehmann's novelty wears off.

"I'm sure it will affect some women's stores, initially. They (Loehmann's Inc.) spent a lot on advertising," said Lane. "I even heard Arlene Francis on the radio talking about them. They're bound to have a lot of business."

And while it may money away from competing merchants, Loehmann's could act as a consumer drawing card, he said.

Adding to Loehmann's strength is the adjoining mall with its Tally Hall.

Planned as an open air market, it will house a series of 400-square-foot stalls in which various type of ethnic foods will be sold. Tally will be 46,000 square feet.

THE COMPLEX could provide competition for shops as far away as the Downtown Farmington Center on Grand River and Farmington Road. Loehmann's is located on Orchard Lake and 14 Mile. The Orchard Lake corridor is considered by many to be Farmington Hills' developing downtown area.

The site was chosen on the basis of what is known as Loehmann's success formula.

It's that formula which is credited with earning the company an estimated \$159.5 million in sales for the 1979-80 fiscal year. The final total has yet to be

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Shoppers swamped Loehmann's on opening day Monday. Outside, a line of 80 would-be shoppers waited up to 20 minutes to get into the store. (Staff photos by Randy Borst)



GEORGE J. GREENBERG

43 languages in school district

Bilingual program is a mini United Nations

By MARY GNIEWEK

"What we have here in our district is a mini-United Nations," says Haroun Alameddine, coordinator of the bilin-

gual program in the Farmington Public Schools.

Alameddine, who is Lebanese and speaks Arabic, Tuesday gave the Farmington School Board an overview

of the program now serving 400 students in 12 different languages.

Farmington's bilingual program is the second largest in the tri-county area, second only to Detroit's, accord-

ing to Assistant Superintendent Lawrence Freedman.

State law mandated bilingual education for foreign-born students four years ago.

"We had a real need," says Superintendent Lewis Schulman.

The 43 languages represented in the district attest to that. In September, each student in the district receives a home language survey. Parents of foreign-born students receive forms in their native language.

Through the forms, the bilingual department tabulates the number of families where a language other than English is spoken at least half of the time in the home.

The children in those homes are given an English assessment test. Students who fall below their grade level qualify for the program.

"WE TRY to service the most we

can," Alameddine says. "Some languages, we have only one or two youngsters. It's next to impossible to service."

The ones who receive no direct help through a bilingual aide are given special attention by the classroom teacher and an aide specializing in English for the foreign born.

Currently the district has aides where the greatest needs exist. The primary emphasis centers on Arabic, Chaldean and Albanian.

There are also aides who speak Chinese, German, Indian, Parsi, Italian, Japanese, Spanish and Korean. Students are eligible to take part in the program for three years.

"The aides help the youngsters understand, be it grammar, reading or comprehension," Alameddine said. "Students are serviced as long as they need it."

The staff specializes in their native language, but they try to use English at all times.

"Only as a last resort, when the student just doesn't comprehend English, they use their native language," Alameddine said.

The bilingual aides, ranging from Chinese to Indian to Arabic, are intended as a supportive measure during the transition period.

The staff is used as interpreters for parent-teacher conferences. They also volunteer time to transport parents to and from school meetings.

"They have been invaluable sources of cultural information to the teachers of bilingual children," Alameddine said.

"They have helped bridge the gap which has existed between the school and homes of the bilingual children in our school district."



Roll over, Great Pumpkin

Eddie Cassar, 9, proudly shows off his very own contender for title of Great Pumpkin. The Farmington Hills youngster and his brother, Mike, 11, grew

the mammoth squash in their own backyard. Eddie attends Our Lady of Sorrows where he is a fourth-grade student. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

Ross campaigns for sunset

By STEVE BARNABY
Farmington editor

Statewide sunset legislation has failed to pass the scrutiny of Michigan lawmakers in the past, but State Sen. Doug Ross, D-Southfield, is attempting to revive the issue.

Although Senate Bill 786 is aimed at eliminating some of the estimated 20,000 forms used by state government, its primary goal is to act as a testing ground for future abolition of laws regulating industry.

Kids counted

Farmington school personnel will submit fourth Friday enrollment figures to an outside team for analysis and projections that will help the district determine if another school should be closed permanently in June 1981.

The district lost 464 students since last year — a 5 percent loss attributed to reduced birth rate, lifestyles and families leaving the district.

In a report to members of the Farmington Board of Education, Superintendent Lewis Schulman compared Farmington's progress to 10 other Oakland County school districts.

It shows Farmington second-in size with 12,959 students but fifth in overall declining enrollment.

Royal Oak, with 9,663 students, topped the list with 901 fewer students this year. It was followed by Birmingham which lost 750 students, Southfield, 538, and Waterford, 531.

Walled Lake, with 10,160 students — third in size in the comparison study after Waterford and Farmington — lost 402 students to declining enrollment.

Other districts in the comparison study, Bloomfield Hills, Huron Valley, Rochester and West Bloomfield, lost

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Under Ross' bill, all forms would be abolished unless approved by the joint legislative committee on administrative rules by Jan. 1, 1983.

Emergency forms could be issued if public health, safety or welfare warranted it for a six-month period.

Ross is chairman of the joint committee.

He looks upon this as a "broad experiment" with the sunset concept.

"If we can't do this with forms, it raises serious doubts about doing it in other areas," he says.

The other areas to which Ross refers are state regulations which he feels are beneficial to a selective group of businesses and their employees.

"WE'VE NOT BEEN able to master the politics of deregulation," says Ross. "The regulated groups are getting higher incomes because of the regulation."

Some of the industries Ross targets are trucking, liquor and health insurance.

Opposition to deregulation comes from both business and labor, according to Ross.

"In trucking, for instance, both the industry and the Teamsters benefit. The steel industry is the same," he says.

Such regulations should be reevaluated periodically to determine benefit versus cost to consumer because of higher prices due to regulation.

"All they have to do now (regulated industries) is block action," he says. "The potential of sunset is that they would have the more formidable task of making something happen."

Ross has set a 1982 deadline for exploring techniques to deregulate certain industries.

what's inside

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Mrs. Audrey Chute tried other papers to sell her Ethan Allen headboard but didn't hear from even one interested buyer. Then she called the Observer & Eccentric Classifieds. "I sold my headboard the first day the ad ran. The response was immediate and tremendous. Now I know where to advertise!" Call us when you have a selling job to do. Remember one call does it all.

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