

Farmington Observer

Volume 93 Number 45

Thursday, March 18, 1982

Farmington, Michigan

72 Pages

Twenty-five cents

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Cable firm sets feet for launch

By Craig Piechura
staff writer

It'll be at least another month before MetroVision cable television can begin the process of stringing cable along utility lines in the cities of Farmington Hills, Farmington and Novi.

Henry Harris, president of MetroVision in Atlanta, Ga., said his firm is anxious to start, but must wait until the three cities approve a franchising ordinance.

"I have seen the second draft of the franchising agreement from (Farmington Hills City Manager Larry) Savage and we're in agreement with it," Harris said. "It's at CTC (Cable Television Information Center) — paid consultants for the cities) right now to have them look at it. We're anxious to get going. We're getting into the spring construction season."

The franchise ordinance essentially nails down the commitments which were pledged by MetroVision when it won a 15-year non-exclusive franchise to provide cable to residents of the three cities. The proposed ordinance was drafted before the cable company bid. The work now involves tailoring the proposal to fit specifications of the ordinance.

Another administrative hurdle that must be cleared is the question of who will be in charge of administering the cable authority.

A committee must be selected by the three cities to supervise the administration, handle complaints and consider possible rate increase requests. Terms of the agreement preclude the company from raising rates in the franchise's first two years.

ANOTHER COMMITTEE or sub-committee will have to be appointed to handle requests for public access air time and to control television equipment set aside for public use.

"Their authority would be from the three city councils which would give them duties, powers and functions," Savage said. "But we have to put all that into the agreement."

The day-to-day chores of storing equipment, helping citizens produce programs and following up on citizen complaints, should be the responsibility of the cable committee, Savage said.

"Let's leave the city councils out of it, is our feeling," the manager said. Savage and city managers Robert

Deadman of Farmington and Edward Kriewall of Novi took a trip March 2 to Kettering, Ohio to see how six communities south of Dayton run their joint cable television authority.

"One of the things we were interested in is how they divided the responsibility between officialdom and public effort and cable-casting (done by the cable company)," Savage said.

THE TRIP was helpful in terms of showing how different communities regulate the franchise, but Savage said he thought there would be more public access programs being aired than there was. Local officials hope civic groups and individuals exercise their public access right more than has been done in communities which have cable television.

The cable consulting firm rated MetroVision high in the bidding process for setting aside 2 percent of its gross revenues for community access broadcasts and equipment.

Harris said he'd like to see the three cities pass the franchise ordinance within a month to allow construction to begin and take time in deciding who will serve on the various advisory committees.

Savage thinks it's vitally important to get 2 percent for public access and let the city governments decide how to do it," Harris said. "We can settle that later."

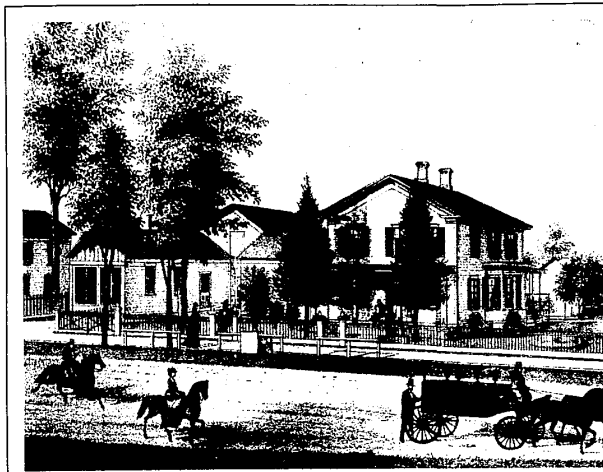
Another administrative hurdle that must be cleared is the question of who will be in charge of administering the cable authority.

"We've been promised \$150,000 for (public access) programming," Savage said. "Right now we don't know who they write the check out to for it. Organizationally we're not set up for it."

Harris said MetroVision can "live with" whatever authority the cities establish. He said engineers from his company have already been in Farmington Hills mapping out cable routes.

The three city councils must approve the franchising ordinance before any cable is strung up on telephone or electrical poles.

If the three councils approve the franchising ordinance by early April, cable customers in the first 30 miles of the eventual 350-mile system should be watching cable television in September, Harris said.



The home of Sergius Lyon is one of the illustrations in a history of Farmington Township originally published in 1877 by Samuel W. Durant. Reprints are available at Farmington and Farmington Hills city halls and were provided by the Farmington Historical Society.

Township memories

Old document gets new life

There's a history book of old Farmington Township available in both Farmington and Farmington Hills that is a historical document itself. And it's free for the asking.

Printed in 1877 by L.H. Everts & Co., the history book covers a 60-year period from 1817 to 1877. It was published by Samuel W. Durant, who chronicled all of Oakland County, as well as other areas of the country.

It was republished this year by the Farmington Historical Society through a combined \$300 grant from the Farmington Arts Commission and the Michigan Council for the Arts. Two hundred copies of the history book are available at Farmington Hills city hall and another 100 were left at Farmington city hall, says Kathryn Briggs, coordinator of the project.

The ancestors of many persons still living in the area — including the Buttons, the Fairfields, and the Spragues — are described in detail in the pages of the book formally entitled, "History of Farmington Township,

Michigan — With Illustrations Descriptive of its Scenery, Palatial Residences, Public Buildings, Fine Blocks and Important Manufactories."

Eight illustrations are included in the book along with editorial comments about some of the city's still-standing landmarks.

The Clarenceville district is described in this manner:

"CLARENCEVILLE contains one general store, one wagon-shop, and two blacksmith-shops, and the hotel now kept by Milton G. Botsford; but the travel which supported it in the old time is no longer there, and its consideration as a public-house has departed with the stage-lines that supported it."

"The book tells how the township supported 10 schools, noting that male teachers in Farmington village received an annual salary of \$1,000 per year while female teachers were paid \$400 a year for performing the same."

Business activity, including grist and saw mills and a large cheese fac-

tory, are mentioned as well as the Farmington Foundry "formerly used in the manufacture of stoves; but, at present, its chief production is that of agricultural implement casings."

While many will enjoy the antiquated language and antique artwork contained in the book, Mrs. Briggs says the history book is an invaluable resource for historians interested in tracing the town's early heritage.

"It gives, in very good detail, the history of the beginnings of Farmington Township. What I found interesting is the chapter about Clarenceville that talked about how decrepit the Botsford Inn had become and how it was on its last legs."

Records show a tavern on the Botsford Inn site dating back to 1839.

The Inn remains in operation today thanks to Henry Ford's efforts in the 1930s to preserve vanishing bastions of old Americana and through the restoration of the Anburt family.

The book is also available in Farmington schools and copies will be set aside for distribution at the May 22-23 dedication of the Warner Mansion.

Mansion featured in gala

By Craig Piechura
staff writer

A tuxedo with tails topped off by a too-tight top hat helped a member of the Farmington-8 Lions Club win unanimous City Council approval Monday night for a \$100-per-person benefit banquet and ball.

The event, to be held on the grounds of the Warner Mansion and the Masonic Temple May 22, will be called the 1970 Governor's Ball. It will be the highlight of ceremonies scheduled the weekend of May 22-23.

Festivities begin at noon Saturday, May 22, with the official dedication of the late Gov. Fred M. Warner's mansion as the site of the Farmington Historical Museum. Warner was a Farmington resident. Only invited "dignitaries" will attend the private dedication, said Margaret Walker, chairman of the Farmington Historical Commission.

Other residents can enjoy a free open house and ice cream social at 2 p.m. Sunday. A circus calliope stationed at the town triangle May 22 is for the enjoyment of all. And a minstrel show and medicine show also are being considered on downtown streets.

Saturday evening 5-7 p.m. there will be a preview tour of the mansion at a champagne reception for patrons of the museum who buy \$100 tickets for the banquet and ball. The banquet is scheduled 7-9 p.m. under a tent on the mansion grounds. Menus from governor's balls of the 19th century have been obtained, said Mary Howard Stoberg, chairwoman of the museum decorating committee. Plans are to duplicate the fare of the era including such things as servings of oysters and clams on the half-shell.

Guests are expected to dress in period costumes at the banquet and ball, which will begin at 7 p.m. and will end at 1 a.m. inside the Masonic Temple, the city's former town hall.

SIX HORSE-DRAWN antique carriages from the Michigan Historical Carriage Club are tentatively committed to ferry guests from the banquet to the ball. Walter Koning, treasurer of the Lions Club and co-chairman of the ball project, told council members.

At one point Koning even let Mayor Alton Bennett try on his top coat and offered to let Bennett keep it because it fit him.

Councilman Ralph Yoder asked Koning why ticket prices for the banquet and ball were so high. "Why not charge \$100 per couple?" he asked.

"I appreciate what you're doing," Yoder said, "but I wonder if the \$100 bill is going to scare a lot away."

Koning and the co-chairman of the event, Don Adams, replied that charging less would mean more people, more expense and less profit for the museum trust fund and refurbishing program.

"I worked the bar booth at the Silverdome for the Lions Club recently," Koning said, "and even with the recession we're in I never saw so much money in my life."

Just as 1870 was "a time of poverty and a time of richness," Koning said, so is 1982. And those with money are willing to spend it on such a worthy cause.

Persons who can't attend the banquet and ball are urged to attend the free open house and ice cream social to be held Sunday on the grounds of the mansion, said the Farmington Historical Commission's Walker.

Residents luck out this flood season

By M.B. Dillon Ward
staff writer

Despite last weekend's snow melt-down and Tuesday's flash flood watch, the Farmington area so far has escaped major flooding.

Officials said flooding was avoided primarily because of the area's upstream location relative to the Rouge River.

Isolated problems with basement back-ups and frozen culverts were reported in the Lincolnshire, Westbrook and Kendallwood subdivisions and in Sections 34 and 35.

Section 34 and 35 are bounded by Farmington and Middlebelt and Eight

and Nine Mile roads.

"Most problems result from surface water somehow getting into the sanitary sewers," said Jim Porter, assistant chief engineer of Oakland County's water and sewer operation.

"Run-off from the snow melt has overloaded the system and backed up into basements."

"The sewers are very full. Substantial rainfall could create a more severe flooding problem," Porter said.

Subdivisions in low-lying areas and older subdivisions without modern sewer pipe are experiencing the most difficulty, Porter said. Other areas could be flooded in the event of heavy rains, he added.

The interceptor sewer centered near Nine Mile and Middlebelt roads that carries sanitary waste from the Farmington area, West Bloomfield and Keego Harbor into the Detroit system was filled to capacity over the weekend.

But because 80 percent of the snow has melted, Farmington Hills Department of Public Works Superintendent Walter Karolak anticipates few problems, provided the weather cooperates.

"If the weather stays cool at night, and the ground doesn't defrost, we might anticipate some flood problems if we get heavy rain," he said.

"What we've had so far is minor flooding over the roads and frozen culverts. The deepest flooding occurred on

Sunnydale (in Section 34) where water was three or four inches over the road."

"We suspect a water-main break because there was an unusual amount of water," Karolak added. "That's been corrected. Either the water is down, or they've repaired the main."

A master drain plan (currently being drafted) is necessary to correct flooding problems that consistently arise in flat areas, Karolak said.

"Where the land is flat or creeks are nearby, surface water has a tendency to drain very poorly. To correct it we need more than just ditching."

In Farmington, plentiful trees have hampered drain flow, and some flooding has occurred in subdivisions, City

Manager Bob Deadman said.

"In a city full of trees, drains become blocked by tree roots. What happens during a heavy rain is that the weeping tile system fills up, and there is a back-up into people's basements," he said.

Weeping tiles surround basements and are connected to the sanitary system.

"Unless (we get some) heavy rains, the worst of it's over," Deadman added. "Unless there's something upstream we don't know about, that is."

"So far we've been lucky. A slight ice jam at the Shiawassee bridge held the creek into the park system."

Spring energy

Leave your winter blues behind and gear up for an action-packed season ahead. This spring, the clothes are full of energy and totally fun to wear. They're bright, beautiful and diverse. There's something for everybody. For a closer look at all the latest and greatest, be sure to check out the Observer & Ecenric's Spring fashion guide in today's paper.



DICK KELLEY/staff photographer

Farmington joins water rate protest

Farmington City Council members joined the suburban coalition led by Livonia Mayor Edward McNamara to appeal a recent court decision which upheld Detroit's 39-percent water-rate increase of 1978.

Acting on the recommendation of City Manager Robert Deadman that "the amount of funds necessary to move this case through the appellate system is relatively small and the benefits could be substantial," City Council members Monday night unanimously agreed to continue the water fight.

Communities participating in the appeal to the Michigan State Court of

Appeals are being asked to voluntarily pledge 2 cents per resident to cover court costs. Based on the 1980 census, the city of Farmington's share of court costs is \$220.44.

Deadman concedes that Detroit changed its method of allocating water-rate increases after suburban customers complained about the 1976 rate increase. But, he added, "It is our allegation that the 1976 water rates appear to have no reasonable relationship to the costs incurred for supplying water and, therefore, were unjust and inequitable."

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