

# Farmington Observer

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## Med service switch eyed by cities

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Community Emergency Medical Services, Inc. (CEMS) has moved one step closer to replacing Novi Ambulance Service (NAS) in providing Farmington residents with emergency and ambulance care.

"It's a political move by the 'powers' to force a small businessman out of business," said John Early, NAS owner. "We have proof of a conspiracy to put me out of business."

The switch from NAS to CEMS is dependent on whether Northville and Northville Township — two members of a four-member municipal consortium — follow Farmington and Novi's lead in approving the CEMS emergency service proposal.

"WE FELT THAT to get the best service, we had to provide a service area that was wide enough," said Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman, indicating the reason for forming a consortium.

Farmington and Novi officials approved the CEMS emergency services proposal Monday. The issue is scheduled for debate April 14 in Northville Township. The Northville City Council has yet to schedule discussion.

AN AD HOC committee of representatives from the four municipalities recommended the CEMS proposal over a bid from NAS which has served Farmington residents for 11 years.

The committee was formed approximately 18 months ago in response to public concern about the delivery of NAS ambulance and emergency service, Deadman said.

"We felt the best way to solve the dilemma was to seek proposals (from the emergency service firms) and pick the best proposal," he said.

BESIDES THE CEMS and NAS proposals, the ad hoc committee received a proposal from Fleet Ambulance Service. Committee members rejected the Fleet proposal because it would serve only Novi and failed to meet required specifications.

"Hopefully, there'll be an orderly transfer from one company to another," Deadman said.

But Early said he will fight what seems to be expected approval from all four communities to go with CEMS. He said that officials of local government and Botsford Hospital (CEMS is a non-profit subsidiary of the Farmington Hills hospital) conspired to put him out of business despite "having lived up to every criteria they (the ad hoc committee) put out (in the bid specifications)."

"IT'S RIDICULOUS," Early said. "It's simply nitpicking."

Early charged the municipalities and Botsford with trade restrictions, violation of anti-trust laws and conspiracy. He also claims "unfair competition" because Botsford is both emergency service firm's sponsoring hospital.

Although NAS offered less expensive rates, committee members said in an evaluation report, that they recommended approving CEMS because they felt the firm offered better service, more equipment, more qualified personnel and agreed to train city personnel free of charge.

IN ADDITION, THE report said that committee members are concerned about NAS' two rate reduction in the past nine months. Committee members said in their report, that those reductions "raise some questions concerning the basis of the rate structure."

Early said that he reduced NAS' rates because Farmington officials told

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RANDY BORGST/staff photographer

## Winter is back

Just as last week's warmer temperatures brought thoughts of spring, Mother Nature fooled us again. But pulling out boots and

gloves again seemed pretty easy for some folks taking a stroll through the snow at the Farmington City Park.

## Curses, foiled again

## Spring storm hits with gusto

By Diane Gale  
staff writer

It was too good to be true.

Michigan's balmy winter was just as unexpected as the snowstorm that ushered in the first day of spring.

Farmington area residents woke to about six inches of snow Monday morning, and school children were told to stay home for the first time this year.

The snow was a shock to most, but Tom Blaisell, Department of Public Services director in Farmington Hills, said his workers were prepared.

"I sat down with the supervisor to try to decide if we should put the equipment away," Blaisell said. "But we decided on after Easter."

"PUTTING THE EQUIPMENT away now would be like doing a snow dance."

By Monday afternoon a full staff of Farmington Hills DPS workers were out clearing the snow and ice. Blaisell estimated the storm cost taxpayers about \$7,400.

Both Blaisell and Farmington Hills Director Earl Billing reported their de-

partments are under budget for winter maintenance. "Up to this storm, we only used about 20 percent of our budget," Billing said.

BOTH MEN AGREE budgeting for winter maintenance isn't easy because of Michigan's unpredictable weather. National Weather Service at Detroit Metropolitan Airport reported that last year was the second snowiest on record. For the 1981-82 year, 74 inches fell on Michigan residents. Compare that with 16 1/2 inches accumulated this

year. If not for Monday's storm, the 1982-83 winter would have broken records for the least amount of snow. But the National Weather Service reports the season will still be listed in the top six for snowless winters.

Schools reopened Tuesday, and no major accidents due to the storm were reported by Farmington or Farmington Hills police.

Spring may be in the air, but so is the snow.

## Bar owners' opinions mixed over new drunk law

By Diane Gale  
staff writer

Local bar owners fear the new drunk driving laws that go in effect March 30 will put a damper on their liquor sales.

Since drinkers may think twice before slurping "Gone with the Wind" when they remember the heavy penalties and fines, most bar owners agree it will put a dent in their gross sales.

The new law includes stricter arrest procedures and higher penalties.

The bar owner's responses about the law vary. "I think it will have an effect on the liquor industry. More people might buy at liquor stores and drink at home. They'll be gun shy and afraid to go into a bar and have a couple of drinks," said John Ginopolis, co-owner of Ginopolis on Middlebelt.

PEOPLE HANDLE their liquor in different ways, and it makes it difficult to determine who has had too much to drink, Ginopolis said.

They may offer a housewife service for drunk customers, Ginopolis said.

"I have customers who can drink 10

beers an hour and drive home, but they'll be legally drunk on the breathalyzer test," said Greg Cowley, night manager at the Old Village Inn on Grand River.

Cowley's opposed to the law because it forces drinkers to buy their liquor at party stores. The small bar owners will be hurt the most, he said.

"It will hurt the state of Michigan, too, because it will put a lot of small businesses out of business," he said.

Diane Debold, day manager at McFrocks', disagrees. She doesn't believe there will be a drastic decrease in alcohol consumption at bars.

"I THINK people will go ahead and take their chances," she said. "Some people can only handle two drinks and others can have five and handle it."

"Personally, I feel responsible, because I think these are good people, and I wouldn't want anything to happen to them," Debold said. "I try to make sure they still have their wits about them before they leave."

The new law could hurt bars enough to put them out of business, said Linda

Elias, manager at the Rustic Pub on Grand River.

"More people will be afraid to drive, especially when you only have to have a couple of drinks to be legally drunk," she said. "We'll monitor people more for their own protection, and we're going to serve more coffee."

Elias doesn't believe the new law

will hurt small bars more than the larger establishments, because the server bars usually have a regular clientele.

BOB McDONALD, owner of McFrocks' and the Roman Terrace on Orchard Lake Road, said he's in favor of the law. Their serving policies won't

change much, he said.

"We monitor it as best we can right now, and if someone gets close to being intoxicated, we ask them if they want coffee," McDonald said. "If they want a ride home, we make sure they get it, because we're close to our customers."

Bar owners aren't only morally responsible for limiting their patrons'

drinks, but they're also legally liable, Ginopolis pointed out.

"If a person is visually intoxicated, the law says we're not allowed to serve them, but sometimes you can't tell, especially if they're sitting down," he said.

"But, if they go out and have an accident, then we'll get sued."

## Tougher penalties for drunk drivers

## New law will add to local coffers

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Farmington and Farmington Hills' coffers will reap the financial benefits of a new state law substantially increasing the penalties for people convicted of drunk driving or driving while under the influence of drugs.

Both cities' officials this week amended their traffic codes to conform

with the recently enacted state law governing drunk driving and the one which went into effect in 1982 providing for mandatory child restraints in motor vehicles.

"This is an effort to provide more uniformity," said Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman.

BY AMENDING THE local traffic codes, Deadman said, offenders would

be prosecuted by city attorneys rather than Oakland County prosecutors. Revenues garnered from convictions under the new state law and city ordinances would be held by Farmington and Farmington Hills, rather than by the state, Deadman said.

"It's a matter of local jurisdiction," Deadman said. "Revenues from any fines help fund the court (47th District Court)."

In amending the Farmington Hills traffic code, a spokesman for city Attorney Paul Bibeau said that because of the serious efforts behind controlling drunk driving, "We feel the safer way to go is to mirror the state law."

Farmington's new ordinance will take effect when the state law becomes effective April 1. Farmington Hills' drunk driving ordinance takes effect April 11.

## oral quarrel

## How do you feel about big penalty for drunks?

Automobile Club of Michigan officials say the new, tougher state laws on drunk driving are aimed at deterring those who drive while inebriated off the road.

Beginning next month, those convicted on drunk driving charges will face stiffer penalties. Although many persons favor the stiffer penalties, some object saying it will only serve to hamper the business community.

Today's Oral Quarrel question is:

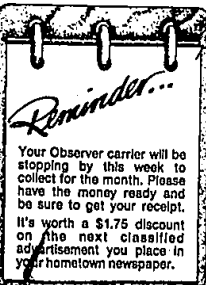
HOW WILL THE NEW LAWS AFFECT YOUR SOCIAL DRIVING HABITS? NOW FAIR DO YOU THINK THE NEW LAW IS TO BUSINESS?

To answer the Oral Quarrel question call us at 477-5498 until 1 p.m. on Friday. Look for your answer in Monday's Observer.

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## Hit teens' wallet to make the point

By Diane Gale  
staff writer

When Chuck Moran lectures about drunk driving to area high school students and driver education classes, he usually strikes a nerve when he mentions the high fines and embarrassment.

"I try to nail the kids in their cool and in their wallet," said Moran, a member of the Oakland County chapter of Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD). "Talk about the dollar figure and how stupid they'll look, and you

have them eating out of your hand." Moran estimated the average 17-year-old student driver convicted of drunk driving pays about \$3,500 before the whole ordeal is over. This includes lawyer fees, fines, insurance increases and towing charges.

"THE EMBARRASSMENT HAS no dollar amount," Moran said. "For one ticket, that's a lot to pay." Moran, 37, said he redirects his own bad feelings about drunk drivers in a

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