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Cotton to retire as Farmington AD

By Tom Baer
staff writer

Jack Cotton had an answer ready when asked why he decided to call it quits after spending the last 27 years as the director of athletics and physical education for the Farmington Public Schools.

"After 36 years of watching basketball games, I'm ready to go," he said with a laugh Tuesday night.

But the 59-year-old Cotton, who'll step down at the conclusion of the school year in June, quickly added, "I'm just being facetious. I loved eve-

ry minute of it. It was nothing special. The time just came."

Cotton's wife of 37 years, Lois, also will retire from the Farmington schools in June. Lois Cotton, who has spent 20 years in the system, visits hospitals and homes of children who can't attend school as a home bound teacher.

"AS THE YEAR progressed, it became more and more evident that we wanted to (retire), so we made the decision," said Cotton, who lives on Oakland in the historic district of Farmington.

"We have no special plans yet. We're going to stay right here in the ghetto."

Cotton, a member of the Representative Council of the Michigan High School Athletic Association for 16 years, helped guide the progress of the state's high school sports during the period of their phenomenal growth as girls' competition was added.

COTTON WAS AN associate professor and an assistant football coach at Wayne State University in 1956 when he was tapped for the Farmington position by Gerald Harrison, then principal and athletic director of Farmington High School.

"I've seen a lot of growth here," Cotton said. "When I came, there was one high school, one junior high and about seven sports."

"Now we have something like 122 school sports teams. That's a heck of a lot of clothing to buy."

Cotton, who was named Michigan Athletic Director of the Year in 1975, said he was proud of the "athletic establishment" in Farmington.

"Despite the fact that we've been closing schools and the student popu-

lation has been going down, athletics hasn't gone down at all. We continue to have as many contests as ever."

Asked to name the biggest change in school sports in his tenure as athletic director, Cotton didn't hesitate in saying, "The advent of women's sports."

"I feel very happy about the role I've played in that, both here and at the state level. It was during my presidency (of the MHSAA's Representative Council) that we initiated all the state tournaments (for girls' sports)."

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Jack Cotton: "It's been great here in Farmington. We have a lot of friends on staff."

'Service with Love' reaches out to elderly

By Diane Gale
staff writer

A daily telephone call from city volunteers is reassuring to the aged clients in the Service with Love program.

"The program prevents some clients from being institutionalized prematurely," according to Loretta Conway, Farmington Hills senior adult supervisor.

"It's one of the support systems that can be offered, and since it's done through a volunteer program, there's no cost," she said.

The purpose of the program, which is a satellite of the Sinal Hospital volunteer community outreach, is to assist the lonely, handicapped or homebound older adults by providing a seven-day-a-week telephone call.

MOST OF the volunteers make the calls from their homes.

"The nature of the call is warm and friendly, and reassures the person that someone cares," Conway said. "It also relieves them of the fear of being un-

able to obtain help when incapacitated."

The 14 Farmington Hills clients all happen to be senior adults, and Conway stresses they are trying to "double" or "triple" the clientele.

"There have been some situations where the clients didn't answer their phones, and were sick," Conway said. "When we got to them we were able to help."

The volunteers and the clients only know each other by their voices, and in most cases have never seen each other.

"One gentleman wasn't answering his phone, and when we called his neighbors they said he was taken to Botsford Hospital," Conway said. "He has no family in the area and he couldn't believe it when we took a bouquet of flowers. When we went into the room we recognized each other by our voices."

Program workers were recently awarded a certificate of appreciation from the Sinal volunteer guild for their first year in the program.

"We couldn't have the overall program without the volunteers," Conway said. "They're the unsung heroes, and they're doing the job."

THE VOLUNTEERS talk about the people they call as if they were part of their own families, Conway said.

"We find our volunteers get a lot out of the program too," Conway said. "The people become very important to them."

Anna Karabin Molteni, who calls the clients on Tuesdays, said the volunteers her time because she likes people and she likes to feel like she's helping those who are less fortunate.

"They are very lonely, and they need somebody," she said.

If the volunteers find out that the client could use other services, they inform a supervisor who tries to fill the need.

If you would like a daily telephone call or know someone who would, call Service with Love at 474-6115 ext. 286.



RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Anna Karabin Molteni volunteers her time to reach out and touch a homebound senior adult

through the Service with Love program.

Farmington moves to help flood-plagued residents

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington taxpayers will pay approximately \$398,000, more than half of the cost of drainage improvements to help alleviate basement flooding in homes west of Farmington Road.

Slated for construction this summer, the approximately \$737,000 worth of improvements are designed to separate a combined storm and sanitary sewer

system, built in the 1930s, that serves close to one-fourth of the city's residents.

"Over the years the system has deteriorated," said David Mariner, Farmington's consulting engineer. "The system just can't handle the amount of water that's coming into it."

Flooded basements have been a periodic problem in an area west of Farmington Road to Gill and north to Alta Loma to Shilawasse Street, Mariner

said. But homes on Liberty, Alta Loma, State, Orchard and Cass bear the brunt of flooding when storms hit because they are located in low spots.

Following a public hearing Monday, Farmington City Council members unanimously established special assessment districts for homeowners in the affected area. Council members also authorized the sale of general obligation bonds at a 10-percent interest rate to pay the city's 54-percent share of the project's cost.

In determining the breakdown of residents' \$338,000 share of the drainage improvements, city officials divided the 98-acre problem area into two districts. Homeowners in District A will receive immediate benefit from the project and also pay the greatest share of the homeowners' costs. Homeowners in District B will only receive a future benefit from the improvements but will pay a lesser charge.

DISTRICT A'S boundaries are Alta Loma on the south, Wilmarth on the

west, Oakland on the north and Farmington Road on the east. District B covers homeowners in an area bounded by Oakland on the south, Gill on the west, Shilawasse on the north and Farmington Road on the east.

Some of the approximately 30 homeowners attending the public hearing complained about their inclusion in the assessment districts when their homes either lacked a basement or they would not receive direct benefits from the improvements.

"You have failed to convince me this is going to do me any good," said Louis Doyle, 33936 Schulte Drive.

And David Smith, of Oakland, complained that his backyard, rather than his basement, floods after heavy rains. But city officials were quick to point out that drainage improvements will be of little help to such a problem.

"WE RECOGNIZE that in any drain district there's going to be differences at the fringes," Deadman said, admitting some homeowners won't receive direct benefits from the improvements. "But we recognize there's some general benefit to the entire community."

In awarding the construction bid to M. D. Taddle & Co. of Ypsilanti, city officials were able to reduce costs. In District A, costs dropped from an original estimate of \$18.50 per square foot to \$13.58 per square foot. In District B,

costs dropped from \$5.5 per square foot to \$4.17 a square foot.

"Commercial property will be assessed in each district at the residential property as it has been determined by the engineers that commercial property contributes at least twice as much storm run-off as residential properties," Deadman said.

Homeowners will pay for the drainage improvements over 15 years with the first payment due August 1. The interest charged will be determined by the interest rate charged on the general obligation bonds when sold, Deadman said.

City officials expect to sell the bonds in late June and once the money is in hand, construction should begin sometime in July, Deadman said. Improvements are expected to be completed by winter.

Some streets in the construction area are expected to be closed during the day, but at least one lane will be opened at night, Deadman said. Concrete streets, such as Slocum and State, will be repaved so residents will have to stay off those for about four days after the concrete is laid.

If a storm hits while the new system is under construction, basements most likely will flood again because the old system won't be disconnected until the new one is operating, Mariner said.

CEMS now serves Farmington

City switches ambulance service

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Out of a four-city emergency services consortium, Farmington is the only community which has made the switch from Novi Ambulance Service (NAS) to Community Emergency Medical Services Inc. (CEMS).

Although a formal contract is yet to be signed between city officials and the

non-profit subsidiary of Botsford Hospital, CEMS began providing service to Farmington residents April 15, said Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman.

Originally, the switch from NAS to CEMS was dependent on whether Northville and Northville Township — two members of municipal consortium — followed Farmington and Novi's lead in approving the CEMS emer-

gency service proposal.

Although Northville Township has since approved the CEMS proposal, Northville City Council members this week tabled the issue for further information until May 2 when a vote is expected.

"We had hoped they would act as a regional group," said Ed Barter, CEMS president, indicating CEMS officials expected service to begin once all four cities had approved the emergency service proposal. "I don't think they wanted to limit themselves to an all or nothing approach," Barter added.

BUT WITH Farmington officials giving CEMS the green light last week, the joint switch to CEMS as originally planned now will be handled piece-

meal, Barter said.

And even though Novi approved the CEMS proposal over NAS at the same time Farmington did, officials have decided to wait and see what Northville's action will be before formally signing on CEMS, said a Novi spokesman.

"Novi was going to start as soon as Farmington did but they've decided to wait to see what happens," Barter said. Although Barter is willing to go along with each city's wishes, "it's more efficient to do it on a regional basis."

Nonetheless, CEMS "will still honor the rates we've committed to," as well as a two-year guarantee that rates will remain unchanged, Barter added.

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Layoffs hit schools

"Regretfully" was a word on the lips of just about everyone who sat at the table in the library of the Fairview Early Childhood Center in Farmington Hills Tuesday night.

The Farmington Board of Education, meeting in regular session at Fairview, was considering item 8-C — teacher layoffs — on its agenda.

"Something like 80 teachers must be considered excess baggage for the coming school year because of declining enrollment," said Lew Schulman,

Farmington's superintendent of schools. "Regretfully, we have to take this action."

The layoff list includes teachers who have been in the system since 1971, said Robert Coleman, the district's director of personnel. Coleman said he hoped that "half the teachers" could be recalled after mandatory transfers were carried out.

The board voted, 5-1, to approve the layoffs. Trustee Michael Shippe cast the lone no vote.

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oral quarrel

Would you support governor's recall?

Since Gov. James Blanchard won his battle in the legislature to increase the state's income tax, a movement has developed to recall the newly elected executive from office.

Many persons believe that the new governor broke his promise to concentrate on creating more jobs. Still others are upset with his budget cuts — especially the educational ones.

Today's Oral Quarrel question is:

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT RECALLING GOVERNOR BLANCHARD? WHO WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN HIS PLACE?

To answer this question, call 477-5498. You have until 1 p.m. Friday to answer the question. To see how your neighbors feel about this issue, look in Monday's Farmington Observer.