



Farmington Observer

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Twenty-five cents

Fighting snow is no big deal for road crews

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Despite the record-setting cold temperatures and more than 20 inches of snow so far this winter, both Farmington and Farmington Hills officials are reporting few, if any, problems in keeping up with Old Man Winter.

"We have had no undue problems this winter," said Earl Billings, director of Farmington's public works department. "It has been a normal winter."

Until midnight Dec. 28, 23.1 inches of snow had fallen so far this winter, said a spokesman with the National Weather Service at Detroit Metropolitan Airport. While "everything is relative," the spokesman said that the normal snowfall average for the area is about 40 inches. Last year, the Detroit area had 20 inches of snow and the year before 74 inches.

Even with the mounds of snow, the below-freezing temperatures of Christmas week caught just about everyone's attention. On Christmas day, with a temperature of minus 10, the windchill dipped to minus 58.

"ON THOSE four days (Dec. 23, 24, 25, and 26) we set records," the National Weather Service spokesman said, adding the average temperatures for those days was minus 9, minus 9, minus 10 and minus 8, respectively. "That is rather unusual."

Even with those cold days, Billings said, "there were no adverse conditions with the water and sewer (lines). We have been fortunate. There have been no main breaks."

Farmington Hills has been a little less fortunate and had "a number of (water main) breaks in a number of areas of the city," said Thomas Bissell, Farmington Hills director of public services. Because sewer lines generally are 10-15 feet below the surface, few ever freeze, he added.



TOM BAER/Staff photographer

Making the best of it

That's what Lisa and Tom Lokovich were trying to do during the early-winter onslaught as they took respite on the top of Shawwassee hill and watched their children enjoy the snow.

But with more snowfall this year already than all of last winter, both cities' road crews have been working overtime, particularly on days such as last Wednesday when it was difficult to keep up with the weather.

"Last night, we worked the crews into the evening — 10-11 p.m. — they went back home and were back at 5 a.m.," Bissell said.

Donna Pagot, Oakland County Road Commission spokesman, said county crews also have been working a lot of overtime to keep up with the snowfall. "It was unusual in that it was a long duration snow fall," Pagot said, referring to last Wednesday's snowstorm. By the time a crew plowed and salted a thoroughfare it was time to start all over again because of the continual heavy snowfall.

BECAUSE IT is still too early to determine how much salt county road crews have used this year, Pagot said figures are unavailable. But unlike several years ago when the county's stockpiles were low to start with, this year "there are no troubles." The county now has "two-thirds of a winter's needs" in salt, Pagot said.

Meanwhile, Farmington Hills road crews have used about 500 tons of salt so far. "That is a lot more than last year," said Walt Kroulcek, department of public works superintendent. "The average is about 1,000 tons."

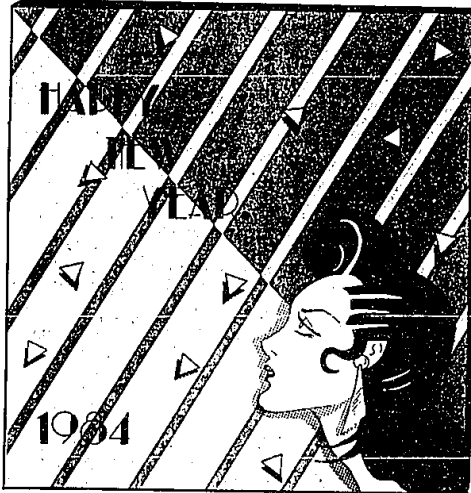
While salt helps to melt ice on roadways, it cannot be used when the temperature falls below 20 degrees, Bissell said. During the cold temperatures Christmas week, city crews used a sand mixture that although it does not melt ice at least provides motorists with some traction.

While Farmington and Farmington Hills crews are of course responsible for plowing and salting city roads and subdivisions, Oakland County is responsible for the rest of the area.

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A new resolve

With the chance of a new year we all have a chance to pause and make resolves in hopes of better times ahead. We take this space to wish our readership all the best in the coming year and hope that you stick to your resolves and that your wishes come true.



Resolve for New Year: Make cable users happy

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Residents in less densely populated neighborhoods who have protested a MetroVision \$200-\$300 installation fee will receive personal letters from the Southwestern Oakland Cable Consortium (SWOCC) once officials reach a decision settling the dispute.

SWOCC officials will make a decision on the systems configuration, said Lark Samouellian, SWOCC executive director. SWOCC officials are expected to review the results of a compliance study being conducted by the consortium's consultant, Harold Horn, and make a decision by mid-January, Samouellian said.

"The commission will review it and make a decision on what is best for the community," she added.

Horn's study will cover whether MetroVision has lived up to requirements included in the cable television ordinance adopted by Novi, Farmington and Farmington Hills. The consultant is waiting for "additional map (showing where MetroVision plans or

has laid cable lines) clarification," Samouellian said. "The commission will review it and make a decision on what is best for the community," she said.

ALTHOUGH A meeting had been scheduled for Jan. 10, Samouellian said, it will have to be rescheduled because some SWOCC members are unable to attend and Horn has not yet completed his study.

The dispute, made public by angry residents in Farmington Hills' Power and 11 Mile neighborhood in early October, concerns who will pay for the installation of cable and whether some residents in the less-populated neighborhoods of the tri-city franchise area will get cable at all.

Under MetroVision's "line extension policy," customers may be charged for cable installation in areas which have fewer than 30 houses in a linear mile.

In October after at least 20 residents attended a Farmington Hills City Council meeting protesting the installation fees, council members pledged their support for the potential cable subscribers.

Service offered for announcements

Anyone who would like to run a public service announcement on the MetroVision cable firm's community calendar should submit the announcement in writing to the public affairs department one week before it is expected to be broadcast.

The community calendar, which airs over Channel 3, is changed on Tuesdays and Fridays, said Lark Samouellian, Southwestern Oakland Cable Commission executive director.

All announcements sent to MetroVision should be "simple and concise" and should include the name and phone

number of a person who can be contacted in case of questions, she said.

Civic groups, organizations, residents and governmental officials may run public service announcements. Some examples include meeting dates, announcement of programs and events or even tips such as from a local heart and lung association.

Businesses may not use the community calendar for advertising.

Submit announcements to: MetroVision of Oakland County, Public Affairs Department, 37633 Enterprise Court, Farmington Hills, MI, 48018.

A visiting professor of political sci-

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Faxon attacks toxics

By Diane Hofess
staff writer

The Farmington areas two state lawmakers are at loggerheads over a proposed set of bills that would require certain Michigan businesses that handle toxic substances to buy environmental "malpractice" insurance.

The mandatory insurance would cover toxic chemical contamination in Michigan caused by business.

"Everyone wins and nobody loses with this insurance," says state Sen. Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, who introduced the bills.

But state Rep. Sandy Brotherton, R-Farmington, says otherwise.

Michigan would be better off to prevent toxic chemical contamination by enforcing existing toxic management laws, Brotherton says, rather than requiring businesses to buy environmental damage insurance in case of a mishap.

"The guts of the problem is to make sure toxic materials are carefully controlled to prevent pollution," says Brotherton, a former Farmington mayor.

Michigan already has a comprehensive set of toxic management laws that govern the handling of toxic materials "from cradle to grave," Brotherton says.

"IF EVERYTHING were done in accordance with our existing toxic management laws, there would be no malpractice," Faxon says. "The problem is what happens when businesses don't go according to rules. Then the safety of citizens is at stake." That's why we need to be prepared with environmental damage insurance, Faxon says.

Guidelines such as those established in Michigan's Hazardous Waste Management Act 64, which went into effect two years ago, are not enough, Faxon contends. Not everybody obeys them, and accidents do happen, he says, making environmental damage insurance necessary, especially in the state he called the "fresh water capital of the world."

Not even ballpark cost estimates for the environmental damage insurance exist at this point, Faxon says, because it's a new insurance field.

The insurance at any rate is likely to be costly and will be passed along to consumers by businesses, Brotherton says.

Keep the insurance optional, rather than mandatory as the proposed bills would require, Brotherton recommends.

The cost to businesses would be less because many groups would share the burden, Faxon said, comparing the environmental damage insurance to mandatory car insurance.

The five bills put before the state Senate Dec. 21 would shift the burden of financial responsibility for environmental protection from the state to the businesses manufacturing, transporting and storing hazardous waste and solid waste.

But Faxon adds that where the businesses could not pick up the tab, the state would ultimately be responsible.

IN 1983 Michigan spent \$8 million on toxic cleanups. For 1984, \$12 million

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Speaker will discuss Israel after Begin

Prof. Ira Shatzkany, who directed the master of arts program in public administration at Hebrew University of Jerusalem 1980-83, will discuss "Israeli Politics After Begin" at the delegate assembly of the Jewish Communi-

ty Council of Metropolitan Detroit on Tuesday, Jan. 10, 8 p.m. at Congregation Beth Achim, 21100 W. 12 Mile, Southfield.

A visiting professor of political sci-

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