

Hughes outlines upbeat economic picture

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Coming out of the recession, 1983 was a "good year" — at least according to former Farmington Hills Mayor Fred Hughes.

"This improved economy and improved economic activity made our jobs easier," Hughes said Monday during his remarks on his year as mayor. "It is easier to manage an abundance than to manage a scarcity."

1983 was marked as a "period of economic recovery, renewed growth and somewhat financial success," Hughes

said. "From my point of view, 1983 was a good year."

TO BACK up his positive sentiments, Hughes pointed to a list of statistics comparing the slow economy of 1982 to the city's economic growth in 1983:

- 312 building permits were issued for single-family houses, compared to only 61 in 1982.
- 470 building permits for multiple housing units were issued, compared to 226 in 1982.
- Total new construction in 1983 reached 800 units, compared to only 330 in 1982.

- Industrial/commercial/office construction in 1983 totaled \$62 million, compared to \$24 million in 1982.

BUT FARMINGTON HILLS, Hughes said, made other types of progress during its 10th birthday as a city. For example, 7.1 miles of gravel roads were paved in 1983, while in 1982 only 2.7 miles were paved.

If repaving is included, he said, 10 miles received improvements in 1983, compared to seven miles in 1982. Total paving mileage in 1983 topped the 1973-80 average of 5.4 miles.

A highlight of 1983, Hughes said, was

the major improvements made in the Richmond Gardens subdivision, which received newly paved roads and storm drainage and water line improvements. Farmington Hills used almost \$500,000 in Community Development Block Grant money to improve the storm drains. More than 500 property owners in the neighborhood were assessed for the other improvements, he said.

ANOTHER \$25,000 in CDBG money was used to repave a sidewalk along 13 Mile from the "Baptist Manor" to Orchard Lake Road, Hughes said.

Hughes pointed to completing the

1982-83 fiscal year with a \$1 million surplus. "We underspent our budget," Hughes said. The lack of a lot of snow in 1983 helped save money, he said.

Of the capital improvement budget's \$1.5 million, about \$500,000 has been set aside to buy the Spicer property. Another \$500,000 is earmarked for planned 12 Mile Road improvements. Nearly \$1.1 million of the \$1.5 million is being used, he said. Both projects will enhance the city's value by about \$5 million, he said.

HUGHES CHARACTERIZED 1983 as a "planning year" with the city

council recognizing the city's need for certain capital improvements. Other progress was made by reviewing (although not yet adopting) a master storm drain plan and a Farmington Evergreen sewer program. Planning also started on a new or expanded police facility.

As the city celebrated its first decade, Hughes said, Farmington Hills showed signs of recovered economic growth as well as strong efforts toward planning for the city's future through its plans for improvements.

"I think the work the council has to do in 1984 is significant."

Snowmobile crash kills Hills woman

Ruth Ann Balardi, a 45-year-old Farmington Hills mother of five, was killed last Tuesday night when the snowmobile she was driving collided with a truck on U.S. 31 between Peloton and Brutus in Emmet County at the tip of Michigan's Lower Peninsula.

A spokesman for the Emmet County Sheriff's Department said that Balardi's snowmobile was struck by a northbound truck when she attempted to make a left turn from the shoulder of

U.S. 31 onto a side road at 6:55 p.m. Tuesday.

Balardi, who was accompanied by her husband and two other relatives, all riding separate snowmobiles, was taken by ambulance to Northern Michigan Hospital in Petoskey. She was pronounced dead on arrival, the spokesman said.

Neither the truck driver nor any of the others in the Balardi party were injured, according to the spokesman, who

said the accident is still under investigation.

The Balardis who have lived in the Farmington area since the mid-1960s reside on 11 Mile Road. Frank A. Balardi, 49, is a self-employed builder. The couple celebrated their 20th wedding anniversary last April 24.

THE BALARDIS owned a cottage on Burt Lane in Emmet County, according to son Victor, 21.

"A few years ago, my mother got her degree in counseling," he said. "She went to work at The Classic Look in the Millwood shopping center, and her job became the love of her life."

"We've received many expressions of sympathy from people who knew her at work and her many friends from all over the community."

Services for Balardi were incomplete as of Wednesday.

Wood is dethroned

Although tennis has seen many changes since its beginnings in the 14th century, wood remained dominant until the 1960s for the construction of tennis rackets, accord to Prince Manufacturing.

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