

# Farmington Observer

Volume 95 Number 84

Monday, July 30, 1984

Farmington, Michigan

32 Pages

Twenty-Five Cents

## Federal law scrutinizes docs' charts

By Jean Adamczak  
staff writer

The next time your doctor checks your medical chart, you can bet he or she will be taking a more cost-conscious approach to curing your ills than last year.

Because of a new law designed to cut medical costs in the care of senior citizens and disabled persons, physicians and hospitals' spending habits are coming under harsh scrutiny by federal health officials.

Hospital officials are cautious — though optimistic — about the new program called the prospective pricing system.

The inspection process could result in lowering hospital bills. But also, it

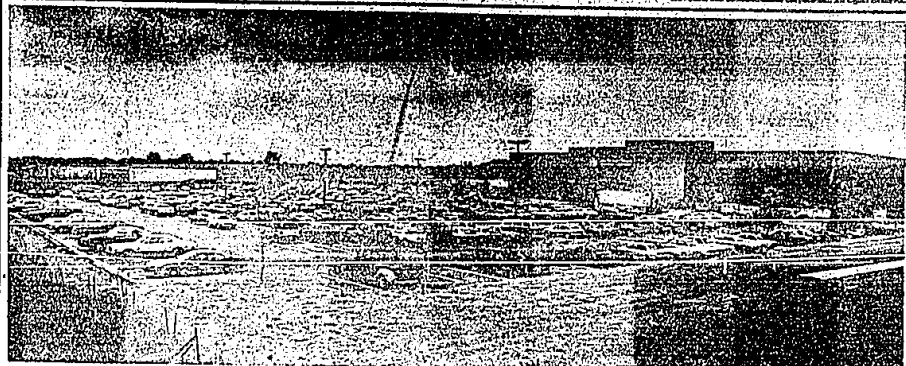
could change the way in which your ills are diagnosed.

Botsford General Hospital's Medicare (older and disabled) patients will have to get used to new regulations designed to cut hospital costs by reducing the time patients remain in the hospital without jeopardizing the patients.

"It is our (Botsford's) firm commitment not to reduce the quality of care for any patient as long as we are in existence," says Russ Tuttle, director of community relations at the Farmington Hills hospital.

The federal regulation places a ceiling on the amount a hospital receives for treating each ailment.

Please turn to Page 4



Growth continues at a rapid pace along the 12 Mile corridor. City officials are betting the growth will help in a major way offset the cost of operating the city.

## How development is paying tax bill for future residents

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

It's a simple truth. Without the new office development along Northwestern Highway and the 12 Mile corridor, homeowners would pay less.

Commercial development adds diversity to the whole tax base that you need to support (city) services, schools, isn't considered only by residential," said City Manager William Costick.

Certainly taxes would be higher if we didn't have an industrial-commercial base," he added.

But that doesn't mean "enormously" higher taxes, he said.

WHEN FARMINGTON Hills in-

corporated in 1973, commercial-industrial development accounted for 33 percent of the city's tax base. Then, 67 percent of the tax base was residential.

But when a subdivision building boom hit in 1980, the residential tax base rose to 78 percent, the commercial-industrial contribution dropped to 21 percent.

"That's when we realized the need to look ahead; otherwise the tax rate would have gone through the roof before now," said Robert McConnell, Economic Development Corporation (EDC) chairman.

The EDC was formed to attract commercial development, particularly to the 12 Mile corridor — the remaining strip of land available for in-

temative office development.

ALTHOUGH OFFICE development along both Northwestern and 12 Mile corridors is referred to as a "building boom," city officials say Farmington Hills always has been and always will be a residential community.

But there's no secret about the desire for office development along the two corridors to add to the city's tax base.

Because commercial land and buildings along Northwestern and 12 Mile are more costly than single-family homes, they are worth more in taxes to the city, Costick said.

"In general, residential land doesn't support itself," said city

planner Claude Coates. "It costs the city more (in providing services) than it returns (in taxes). So revenue producing lands are needed to offset it."

"THE BIGGEST" pay-off comes from office development, which new office buildings are expected to bring in \$100,000 to \$150,000 a year in taxes.

Land along Northwestern sells for \$150,000-\$175,000 an acre, according to Bill Bowman of Thompson & Smith. Along the 12 Mile growth corridor, an acre of land sells for \$47,000-\$130,000.

Added to the ever-increasing cost of land along the two major corridors is the average \$50 a square foot cost

Please turn to Page 3

## Chief resigns

Farmington Hills Fire Chief Larry Karon has resigned after holding the top firefighter's post for three years.

The announcement came in a press release from City Manager William Costick's office last week.

"Larry's decision to resign from service . . . is based on personal concerns that involve his family and matters of health," said Costick.

In the interim, the department will be run by Lt. Tom Shurtleff and Richard Marinucci.

Karon came to Farmington Hills on July 27, 1981, after having served as assistant fire chief in Birmingham.



Larry Karon

## They fight to save a piece of country living

By Tom Esler  
staff writer

John Williard, preservationist that he is, would like it very much if he somehow could be transported back to 1831, the year his Greek revival house on 13 Mile Road was built.

Williard, an automotive engineer, is attempting "very nearly a full-blown museum-type restoration" on the stately, two-story structure, one of the oldest in Oakland County.

Obviously, 20th-century suburban sprawl isn't something he'd welcome in his corner of Farmington Hills.

And his preservationist attitude extends to the road on which he lives — 13 Mile Road. That gravel lane, shaded on both sides by tall maples for most of its hilly, mile-long stretch between Drake and Halsted roads, has changed little over the decades.

"It's still very natural, still very much like it was 100 years ago," Williard said.

Because they want things to stay as they are (or worse), Williard and more than 70 of his neighbors have petitioned city council, asking that 13 Mile between Drake and Halsted be designated a Natural Beauty Road.

The move would prevent any modern-day plundering of the area, residents hope. A similar designation was given to Howard Road between Halsted and Drake.

"When the road is so designated, it means that you don't change things," said Hills Councilwoman Jody Soronen. "It's like having a home in the historic district. It's a preservation thing."

AND WILLIARD is one resident who'd like things around him preserved.

"The people who live along the road like the beauty and the natural set-

ting," he said. "We don't like cluster-housing. We don't like the Troy or Southfield atmosphere around here."

"It may be fine for other places, but for right here we'd like the real rural atmosphere. We'd somehow like to retain that flavor."

Neighbor Roy Stewart, who owns an old home on 13 Mile, also favors the Natural Beauty designation, hoping it will "keep a little bit of old America."

"This is a small piece of rural America," said Stewart, a real estate broker. "This road hasn't changed since the horse-and-buggy days. If you come out here in the fall, it's like a tunnel with

all these nice old maple trees. These trees are probably 85 or 90 years old.

"Out here on a Sunday, my God, every time you turn around there's a father and kid on bikes, or kids hiking, or people jogging. And that's good. It's a good, natural way for them to enjoy themselves."

But the designation of 13 Mile as a Natural Beauty Road won't be automatic, said city officials. First the matter must be studied, they said.

"Thirteen Mile is a main road," Soronen said. "There may be a possibility way down the line that we'll want to pave it. So before we do any designating, we want to make sure what the city's plans are."

CITY ENGINEER Dave Call said that 13 Mile is on the "urban system," meaning the city would receive federal funds for maintenance of the road — once it is paved.

"Normally, if a road is under the federal government, there are guidelines," Call said, "so we don't even know if the federal government would permit that road to become a Natural Beauty Road. We'd like to find out what their input is."

At present city funds are used to maintain the gravel road, Call said. He added that he'd like to see it paved for safety reasons.

"Speaking from an engineering standpoint, it's beneficial to pave gravel streets," Call said. "You get increased speeds on paved roads, but it's also easier for cars to stop on them."

Even little-traveled Howard Road, which was designated a natural beauty road two years ago, may be paved, Call said.

Call admires the natural beauty of that section of 13 Mile ("You get a rural feeling when you drive through there") — but he'd still like it paved.

RESIDENT JOHN Williard's name is high up on the petition presented to council. Of the 72 signees, 39 listed 13 Mile Road addresses.

Williard emphasized that he's not a "wild flower" or tree fanatic. "And he said he's not against the new subdivisions going in to the north and south of 13 Mile."

"For the most part, they (the subdivisions) are off the road, and the view from the road is much the way it's been for many, many years," he said.



This section of 13 Mile, between Halsted and Drake, is being eyed by residents as a natural beauty road. If successful, much of the foliage and trees would be preserved.

### what's inside

Amusements	30
Classifieds	Sections C-D
Community Calendar	6B
Crossword puzzles	20
Editorials	6A
Inside Angle	3A
Obituaries	4A
Oral Quizzes	6A
Shopping Cart	1-3B
Sports	1-20
Suburban Life	6-6B

### "OVER 200 CALLS!"

L. Fog was delighted with the reaction to the Observer & Economist Classified REAL ESTATE FOR RENT ad placed. "Response was overwhelming — had over 200 calls both sides of my advertising machine!"

One call...

NEWSLINE . . . 477-5490  
 CLASSIFIEDS . . . 681-9230  
 HOME DELIVERY . 891-0280

644-1070  
 One Call Real Estate Service  
 One Call Real Estate Service