

Firefighters kept busy in 1984

By Julie Brown
staff writer

The Farmington Hills Fire Department responded to 2,554 incidents in 1984 — an increase of 9.94 percent from 1983.

Of that number, 1,420 were medical calls, 470 were fires and 664 were other responses.

"It's an indication that we're growing, the city is booming again," Fire Chief Richard Marinucci said of the increase.

"As the city continues to grow, we're going to grow with it. Our activity has to keep up with it."

An estimated \$1,326,455 worth of damage was attributed to fire in Farmington Hills during the year.

"Some years it's more and some years less," the fire chief said. The figure is "a little below average, for this community."

The information is included in the annual activity report for the fire de-

partment, which will be presented to the Hills City Council at tonight's meeting.

The annual report covers the areas of staff training, fire-fighting equipment, emergency medical services and fire prevention.

"The idea of fire prevention is very similar to preventive medicine," Marinucci said.

JUST as physicians encourage patients to follow good health practices to reduce the likelihood of disease, firefighters encourage residents to make their homes more "fireproof" by following basic safety advice.

"The more we prevent, the more we save."

It's difficult to measure the effectiveness of fire prevention efforts, Marinucci said, but the efforts appear to have been successful.

"We are not suffering the serious incidents. I think that's a reflection on our fire prevention activities."

The department's fire prevention efforts include inspection of buildings; 2,597 inspections were done in 1984.

"We try to get into every public building," Marinucci said. "It takes us about 18 months to get through all of our occupancies."

Inspections are done both to catch potential problems — such as stacks of accumulated papers near a heater — and to make sure exit paths are clear and usable.

"If there is a fire, we try to make sure it is small and under control." That includes such things as checking sprinkler systems and fire doors.

"We also try to do some arson awareness."

The department also investigates the causes of fires presumed to be accidental.

"Even if you don't determine a fire to be arson, an investigation is valuable," the fire chief said. Knowing the causes of accidental fires can aid firefighters in knowing what public safety measures to emphasize.

FIRE PREVENTION also includes taking programs into the schools. Several fire safety programs — "Crawling Low in Smoke," "Fire Fighter as a Friend," "Dangers of Electricity" and "Stop, Drop and Roll" — are taken into the schools.

The programs are intended to "try to get the children to establish good habits while they're young," Marinucci said.

"It has a dual function, too." Children can take what they have learned home to other members of the family.

"We can do that with the fire-prevention activities, tell people to be careful." The department also sends speakers to meetings of various community groups, and presents fire prevention information in the local media.

In the area of medical calls, the majority are for car accidents or heart attacks.

"Car accidents and heart attacks are probably our two biggest," Marinucci

said. "Those are the largest categories we have."

Approximately 60 percent of the calls the department responds to are medical ones.

"We provide a basic life support service to the community," he said. The department works with Community Emergency Medical Services, which provides advanced life support services.

"Because we are more strategically located than they are, we can get there first most of the time."

Training in emergency medical services is emphasized at the department.

During 1984, eight department members completed the required training for state E.M.T. Basic Licensure. An additional nine renewed their licenses by completing a department-sponsored refresher course.

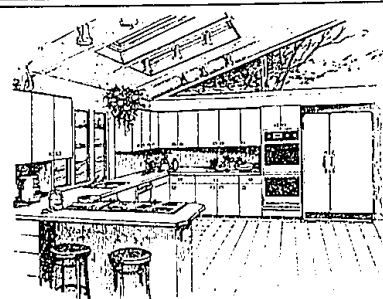
"WE KEEP training our people," Marinucci said. "We're not just sending anybody out there."

Of the department's 80 members, 32 are Basic Emergency Medical Technicians, six are paramedics and the remainder are Advanced First Aid certified. The fire department also has 10 CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) instructors and five Advanced First Aid instructors.

During 1984, the department taught approximately 150 students in CPR classes offered for the public.

"We've been involved in that for a few years with the Parks and Recreation Department, and then some on our own," Marinucci said. "Sometimes we get so busy, we can't handle all the requests."

Marinucci, who took over the fire chief's job in 1984 following the resignation of Lawrence Karon, describes the year as a good one for the department.



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To register, call 858-1280 or 424-7101.

Classes will be 7:30-9:30 p.m. and will be taught by public health nurses. There is no charge for attending the series of classes, but register in advance as enrollment is limited.

Topics will include maternal physical changes, good nutrition, growth and development of the fetus and the baby, labor and delivery, infant care and parenting.

The Health Division advises that you enroll as early in your pregnancy as possible.

Farmington Observer

(USPS 107-640)

Published every Monday and Thursday by Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150. Second-class postage paid at Livonia, MI 48151. Address all mail (subscription, change of address, Form 3509) to P.O. Box 2428, Livonia, MI 48151. Telephone 591-0500.

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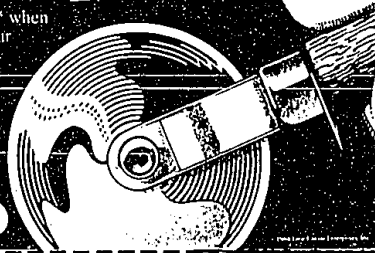
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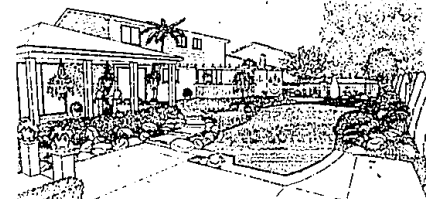
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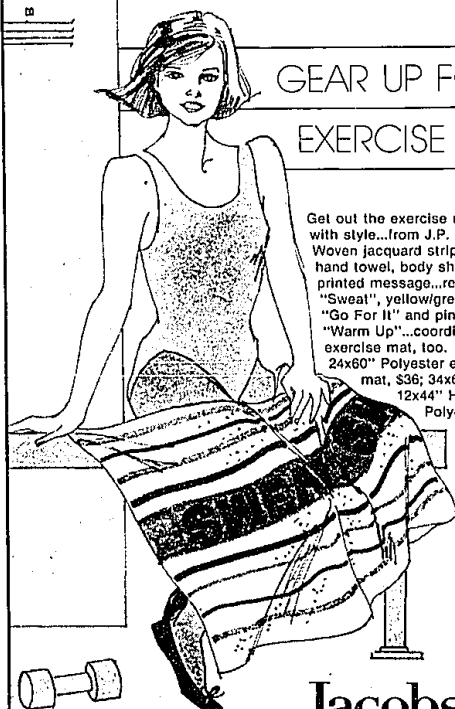
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