

1 less barrier

Hills city hall installs phone for the deaf

By Lisa Simon
staff writer

The recent purchase of a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) will enable Farmington Hills city personnel to communicate by telephone with hearing-impaired or deaf residents.

The TDD is connected to a telephone, and messages are typewritten on the TDD sent to a person with a TDD, who answers in the same fashion.

A direct line, (474-6308) has been installed in the Department of Special Services at City Hall to avoid going through the central switchboard.

"We're really excited about it. It makes City Hall accessible to the hearing impaired, as well as normal resi-

dents," said Loretta Conley, Farmington Hills senior adult supervisor.

"IT IS STRICTLY informational, not for emergencies," Conley said. The Farmington Hills Police Department has its own TDD for emergencies, which is available 24 hours a day.

The \$504 device involves a standard telephone and a specialized keyboard. The keyboard resembles a typewriter except for a few additions, like a key with GA, for "go ahead or hello," and SK for "goodbye."

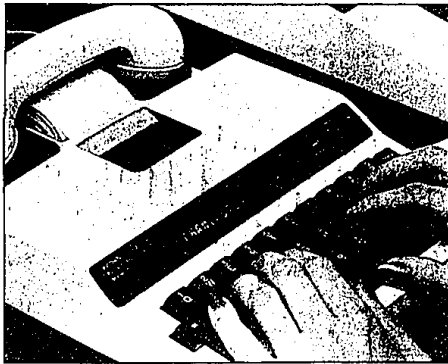
Although not all TDDs are equipped with a print-out tape, the one at City Hall has one, so communication can be monitored. The device plugs into a tele-

phone jack and has a small display screen.

Laurie Hall will run the communication device, but everyone in the special services department will be trained to use it. Information on taxes, zoning, senior programming and recreation will all be available through the TDD, Hall said.

"THE DEVICE will also be useful for speech-impaired people, who may have difficulty communicating on a standard telephone."

According to the 1980 census, the city of Farmington Hills had 3,019 hearing-impaired residents and 570 deaf residents.



Farmington Hills has recently installed a special communications systems for receiving calls from deaf and hard-of-hearing residents who contact City Hall for information.



Delbert Scott practices using the new special telephone system to receive calls from the deaf typist, and Mary DiManno, senior citizens outreach coordinator, under the supervision of Laurie Hall (left), clerk.

photos by RANDY BORST/staff photographer

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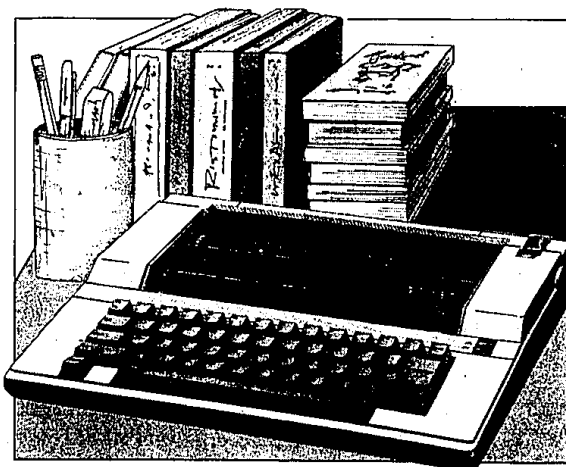
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