

incentives for veteran firefighters OK'd

By Joanne Mollezwski
staff writer

By the time part-time, paid firefighters reach the fourth, fifth or six years of service, many call it quits.

To put a crimp in that growing trend, Farmington Hills fire and city officials

are offering these firefighters a financial incentive to encourage these experienced and well-trained employees to stay on.

"They reach that point where they (firefighters) get tired of it," said Fire Chief Richard Marinucci. "We want to try to get them over the hump."

The incentive plan — approved unanimously by the Farmington Hills City Council last week — calls for giving firefighters with four or more years of service a bonus based on years of service and wages. Firefighters with less than four years service will not get a bonus.

The plan will take effect Jan. 1, 1986.

PART-TIME PAID firefighters with 4-6 years service will receive a 4 percent bonus based on the previous year's W-2 wage statement, those with 6-8 years service at 6 percent, those with 8-10 years at 8 percent and those with 10 years and more a maximum 10 percent bonus.

Part-time firefighters earn \$10.25 an

hour per call. For training and standby, they earn \$7.20 an hour.

Based on an average annual earnings of \$5,000, the bonus plan would provide \$200-\$500 per fire fighter, depending on length of service, said Karen Birkholz, assistant to the city manager, in a report to council. The plan in 1986 will cost the city approximately \$11,600. But city officials anticipated the plan's approval and included the amount in the current budget.

"Their (fire officials') concern lies in the fact that by the time someone has served for four years, they have already been through a substantial amount of training," Birkholz said.

PART-TIME PAID firefighters' beginning training includes at least 100 hours of state certified training, 200

hours of in-house training, as well as training in emergency and medical procedures. Firefighters also receive specialized classes in, for example, cause and origin of fires and advanced first-aid, Marinucci said.

"When a person with that much training quits, it is very time consuming and costly to replace them . . ." Birkholz said.

About half of the 82 Farmington Hills' part-time paid firefighters have put in four years of service. "I don't really expect it (incentive plan) to change everybody's mind. But it is an appreciative kind of thing. A lot of volunteer departments use this. It is important because you keep your experienced people around. And you need four, five or six years to know what you are doing," Birkholz said.

Ease traffic on Haggerty: Fessler

State Sen. Richard Fessler, R-West Bloomfield, has told the state Transportation Committee that action is required now to relieve the traffic pressures on Haggerty Road in Oakland County.

Fessler, who chairs the Senate Transportation Committee, proposed a plan that includes an interchange at I-696 in Farmington Hills and development of a parkway north to Richardson Road.

"Anybody who has to travel north and south between Telegraph Road and U.S. 23 knows how bad the situation has become," Fessler said. "It's a mess, traffic volume is ridiculous, and something has to be done. We have 20 years of studies. It's time for action."

Fessler said he and his staff have

been meeting for months with local officials, transportation officials and community leaders in an effort to make progress.

"I HAVE solid commitments from Gov. Blanchard and from the director of the Michigan Department of Transportation for support of a resolution to this problem. We are past the talking stages; it is time to take specific action. I am proposing a specific plan, seeking support from the state transportation commission, and shall focus my attention and that of my committee on this serious and growing problem."

The Fessler plan calls for a tree-lined parkway to meet the growing needs of Novi, Farmington Hills, West Bloomfield, Commerce and Walled

Lake.

Fessler cited increased traffic counts exceeding 20,000 vehicles per day, accident reports, increased housing starts and other data to support his position.

"The people of this area have suffered long enough with this traffic mess meeting them every morning and every evening. Nearly half a million people live in the area bound by Telegraph, I-75, I-96-696 and U.S. 23.

"ONLY ORCHARD Lake Road (carrying nearly 30,000 vehicles per day at times) has been expanded to carry north-south flows. The facts suggest this plan will relieve north-south flow problems for areas further to the west in Oakland County. These roads all need attention to handle local traffic

flow.

"I believe action to improve Haggerty Road must get under way before costs run even higher than they have already grown during the past decade. Every month we delay this makes our task even more difficult.

"SEMOG, local officials, transportation planners and politicians have worked at solutions for years. It's time for action now!"

Meanwhile, in Pontiac

The Astro Dome in Houston is kept at a constant 74 degrees F. by an air-conditioning system. If on a humid day this system were turned off and warm air were allowed to enter, it would rain in the stadium.

Seniors given discounts

Farmington-area residents at least 60 years of age can participate in the Oakland-Livonia Human Service Agency's discount program.

Identification card photos will be

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