

Teaming up to lure the business traveler

By Bob Sklar
staff writer

AMECCA for tourists or vacationers it's not. Still, there's plenty to do in Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi, says the Ad Hoc Committee on Tourist and Community Promotion.

And the collective selling of the area is the purpose of the committee's planned promotional brochure — a marketing tool under development for two years.

Botsford Innkeeper John Anhalt, newly installed Michigan State Chamber of Commerce president, provided the impetus for the envelope-sized card or brochure. His intent: to actively pursue the tourist dollar by promoting the Farmington area.

"When John first called the group together in early 1984, he had four-hundred representatives in to identify the kinds of things they look for in a community," said JoAnn Soronen, Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce executive director and an ad hoc committee member.

But making a bus tour's itinerary isn't the ad hoc committee's major goal. Luring the business traveler is, particularly in light of the corporate growth along the I-496 corridor.

THE BROCHURE is intended to "encourage people coming to metro Detroit on business to not only stay in our area, but also bring their family," Soronen said.

She cited a study showing southeast Michigan as the destination of most of the state's overnight trips and business/pleasure trips.

"It was the consensus that while no one of us had enough alone, the three communities, linked by common roads and access to the freeway system, did indeed offer some attractive and interesting hotels, historic sites, eating places, and recreation and shopping opportunities for the business traveler," Soronen said. "We don't have to be just a pass-through."

Elaborating, Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman said, "With the location of many national and international company offices in Farmington Hills and Novi, as well as several hotels and motels, it is obvious to us that there will be numerous first-time visitors to the area."

"We also recognize that the city of Detroit convention business can impact on our community if we are able to promote the shopping and restaurants which are available in the tri-city area."

After visiting, corporate representa-



business talk

A page of local business news

tives hopefully will recognize the tri-city area's uniqueness and its proximity to the airport, Detroit and major outstate cities — and consider locating a business or office here, Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick said. That, he said, would help expand the tax base.

SCHEDULED FOR the printer by year's end, the brochure will find a home in display racks at chamber offices, tour offices, travel agencies, car rental agencies, city halls, convention planning centers, hotels and motels. Area businesses also will receive copies to distribute.

Although coordinated by the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with the Novi Chamber of Commerce, the 20-member ad hoc committee represents a broad public/private research and planning alliance.

Committee members include the three city managers and representatives of the Southwest Oakland Cable Commission, the Farmington Hills Historical Commission, the Farmington Observer, hotels and motels and other businesses.

Both Thompson Advertising Productions of Farmington Hills and St. Clair Advertising of Novi provided the brochure format. Ad hoc committee members recommended Thompson's proposal Nov. 7.

Titled "For a Better View of Metropolitan Detroit . . . Stay in Novi, Farmington Hills or Novi," the format would turn the spotlight on "the area's best," profiling the area's demographics and history.

AS PROPOSED, the brochure would play up the area as the "heart of the action," stressing its accessibility and its entertainment, shopping, lodging, recreational and dining opportunities.

The brochure would include a list of major nearby attractions: the Grand River Museum of Science in Bloomfield Hills, Meadow Brook Hall in Rochester Hills, Greenfield Village and the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Kensington Metropark in Brighton, De-

troit's Institute of Arts, Greektown, Renaissance Center and Science Museum. It also would include a map detailing such local points of interest as parks, golf courses, city halls and historical sites. Individual card inserts would offer dated information on restaurants, shopping, lodging and special events.

Soronen heads a subcommittee that will pinpoint what material the brochure should contain. The subcommittee also will review options for raising money for reprints. The \$10,000 cost for the initial printing of 100,000 copies is slated to be paid by the Economic Development Corporations in Novi, Farmington and Farmington Hills. Based on \$1,000 contributions and assessments reflecting each city's state equalized value, Farmington's share works out to be \$2,800, Novi's \$4,600 and Farmington Hills' \$2,120.

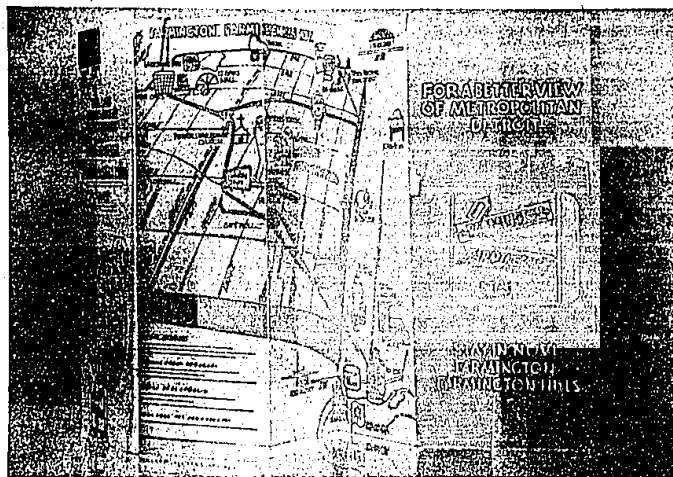
ALL THREE EDCs have tentatively approved funding. Final approval hinges on EDC acceptance of the brochure's revised content and artwork, due from Thompson Advertising Dec. 4.

Although a booster of the brochure conceptually, Farmington Hills EDC chairman Robert McConnell said, "We're concerned about the potential legal aspects."

"We've asked our bond attorney — Paul Wyszogol of Dickerson, Wright, Moon, Van Dusen & Freeman of Detroit — to take a look into the ramifications of our support. We don't know if there are any. But we always try to check things out very carefully first. We want to make sure whatever funds we spend are spent in the community's — and our — best interest."

The Farmington Hills EDC has a fund balance of \$412,500. Other community-oriented programs the EDC has earmarked money for include the Orchard Lake landscaping study, the 12 Mile Road corridor study, the Grand River beautification project and the Orchard Lake Road/I-496 alignment project. The EDC also published a brochure designed to promote the Farmington area as a desirable place to do business.

IN FARMINGTON, the EDC "is very



A preliminary rendering of the proposed Farmington/Farmington Hills/Novi community promotional brochure.

supportive of the idea of a brochure," said Arnold Campbell, assistant EDC secretary and newly elected city councilman. "We need to advertise what we have, and one of the best ways to do that is offer some kind of a brochure to describe what we have to offer."

Campbell doesn't foresee any legal hitches. "What we understand from our bond attorney — Joel Piell of Miller, Canfield, Paddock & Stone of Detroit — is that the purpose of an EDC is to stimulate business growth in our community."

Farmington's EDC has a current fund balance of \$23,000. The brochure is the first community-oriented program it has financially supported.

An EDC is a municipal corporation that provides a mechanism to allow a bond purchaser to enjoy tax exemption on interest earned in exchange for issuing a more-favorable lending rate to the developer.

WOULD the planned brochure help promote regional conventions? Absolutely, says Peggy Brody, Detroit Con-

vention & Visitors Bureau media relations manager.

"There are conventions, corporate travelers, even individual tourists with specific interests. And there are many communities within the tri-city area that can meet those needs. A brochure like the one proposed can address those needs," Brody said.

She added, "You have to look on the national scope when selling the metro area. The more diversified our area, the better for us all. And any way we can sell the business traveler on one aspect of the area, the entire area stands to benefit."

A BROCHURE of this type is a relatively new marketing device among smaller cities, said Teri Spinelli, assistant professor of marketing and management at Oakland University in Rochester Hills and president of West Bloomfield-based Spinelli Associates marketing consultants.

"Typically, we see this approach at the big city level — New York, San

Francisco," said Spinelli, who has counted among her clients the city of Plymouth.

But to be successful, Spinelli advises, the brochure must be supported by promotions that differentiate the Farmington and Novi areas from neighboring cities.

"Just letting people know the cities are there isn't going to be enough," Spinelli said. "To lure the business traveler away from familiar lodging places in Detroit or Southfield, you're going to have to offer something special, some sort of promotional deal — special pricing, champagne in the rooms, even, like the Mayflower Hotel in Plymouth once offered, exotic airport pickup service (a London Taxi)."

The Michigan State Chamber of Commerce and Michigan State University have co-produced a videocassette outlining steps a community should follow to investigate its appeal as a tourist attraction. To borrow it, call the Farmington/Farmington Hills chamber: 474-3440.

short takes

If you recently opened a shop, captured an award, earned a promotion or are planning a new venture or project — and there's a Farmington-area business angle — we'd like to hear from you so we can share your news item with other Farmington Observer readers. Send items to: Short takes, Farmington Observer, 32203 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

• NAMED DIRECTOR

Gregory Knudson was named director of marketing services at Percepton, a machine vision company based in Farmington Hills.

The Grosse Pointe Farms resident also manages Percepton's new international operations in Munich, West Germany.

Knudson joined Percepton in 1984 as a strategic marketing specialist. He was later named group leader of marketing services. Previously, he was vice president of an export marketing firm and was a senior marketing analyst for General Motors Corp. overseas marketing operations.

Arthur Smith III was named chief operating officer of the first business unit at Percepton.

The first business unit is the first step in Percepton's growth strategy to establish autonomous units, each focused on a particular market niche.

Smith joined Percepton in 1984 as director of sales and customer support. Since then, Percepton's sales have almost tripled.

The Ann Arbor resident was previously with Control Data Corp. as marketing manager for its Business Information Division in the Data Services Group. Previously, he held area sales and management positions for other high-technology firms. Smith is also a board member of several small high-technology companies.

Founded in 1981, Percepton specializes in the design, integration, and marketing of machine vision systems, which provide solutions for manufacturing process management in the durable goods industry. Percepton is a major supplier of machine vision systems to the stamping and assembly market, with 65 MV-300 and MV-600 systems operating in the United States and Canada.

• COUNSELING FIRM

Ditty, Lynch & Associates, specialists in the training of the traumatically brain injured, announced the selection of Farmington Hills-based Bunnell & Co. as its communications counseling firm.

Founded in 1983 by psychologists Jeffrey Ditty and Kevin Lynch, Ditty, Lynch & Associates deals with the private sector in assisting the traumatically brain injured adjust to normal social, vocational and residential environments.

In addition to day treatment and research facilities at the company's Royal Oak headquarters, Ditty, Lynch & Associates operates residences for head injured patients in the western and northwestern Detroit suburbs.

The firm also trains community treatment facility personnel nationwide on the rehabilitation of closed-head-injury patients. Ditty, Lynch & Associates does periodic security clearances for Bechtel Power technical personnel.

Firm principals Jeffrey Ditty and Kevin Lynch

are members of the adjunct medical staff of Rehabilitation Institute, Detroit.

Ditty, a Grosse Pointe resident and clinical psychologist, received both his undergraduate and doctorate degrees from Wayne State University, Detroit.

Lynch, a Northville resident and rehabilitation psychologist, earned his undergraduate and doctorate degrees at Ohio State University, Columbus. He is national vice president of the American Association of Mental Deficiency and a consultant to the Ranch Treatment Center in Austin.

• GIVES SPEECH

Joy Schmidt, president of Joy Schmidt & Associates Inc., Farmington Hills, was one of nine speakers for a two-day program sponsored by MB Valuations.

The program, titled "Dimensions of Value," was presented primarily for asset-based lenders from around the country to teach the aspects of valuation. Schmidt told the lenders how they can assist borrowers present financial statements in an easy, understandable manner and learn to make their companies more profitable.

"Too often, companies get by and do not know that they can be more profitable with a little forethought and planning," Schmidt said.

A writer and consultant, Schmidt in the past 13 years has assumed financial responsibility for a mortgage banking corporation in Chapter 11. It was able to successfully reorganize.

Schmidt has helped many companies strengthen working relationships with their banks, negotiating favorable loans and lines of credit. She has developed methods to analyze corporate financial operations — which has helped executives increase the profitability of their companies.

Schmidt is working with small and medium sized businesses — assisting these companies in developing planning and directives to achieve their financial goals.

• LARGER OFFICES

Logical Design Corp. has moved to larger offices in Farmington Hills.

The supplier of manufacturing and accounting software has seen an increase in business following sale of its automotive release accounting system. Logical Design provides application and communication software to auto suppliers. Its first customer installation was in 1977.

In the early 1980s, Logical Design expanded its product line to full manufacturing control systems for multi-user hardware, as well as quality control software for microcomputers.

The company is a value added dealer for the IBM PC-XT, PC-AT and the Burroughs 320 family of microcomputers. It offers the Release Management System and Quality Assurance as application software products.

A module for printing bar code labels has recently been added to all Logical Design software programs. Announcement of a new Unix-based manufacturing and accounting control system is expected soon.

Logical Design's new address is 23933 Research Drive. The telephone number is 474-8340.

The All-Occasion Dress



IT'S ALL YOU

NEED FOR DAY,

FOR EVENING,

FOR HOLIDAY

One dress that functions on several levels. A soft, feminine look that switches from day to night with the simple addition of a gold link belt. It's the right dress to wear anywhere . . . you want to feel special. Polyester crepe de chine dress from Chaus with sleeves that can be left long or buttoned up. In coral or blue. Sizes 0 to 8. Imported. \$78. Dressess.

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