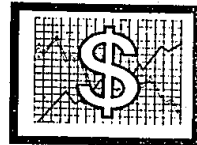


Monthly

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suburban life inside



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Drugs in the work place

A blue- and white-collar problem

By Tom Henderson
staff writer

How big a problem is drug and alcohol use in the work place? How big is \$98 billion? That's the estimated cost of lost productivity nationally because of drug-related problems by workers, according to U.S. Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, R-N.Y.

"It says American production by more than \$98 billion, or 3 percent of our gross national product, and every year adds \$37 billion to health-care expenses," D'Amato, former chairman of the congressional Joint Economic Committee, said in a speech to the American Corrections Association this summer.

That averages out to \$450 a year for every man, woman and child in the U.S.

D'Amato isn't alone when it comes to startling statistics. Repeated studies by private industry, health groups and government show that the drug problem is enormous, taking a toll in lost work time, increased health costs to the user, increased health costs to innocent victims of drug-related accidents on the job and shoddy products that must be scrapped or repaired.

The Michigan Substance Abuse Information Center says the drain on the state's economy is about \$2 billion annually.

"UNTIL RECENTLY, I don't think anybody realized how big a problem it is," said Lt. Michael Robinson of the Michigan State Police. Robinson, based in Livonia, is the commander of the state police narcotics unit in the eastern half of the state.

"It's a lot more widespread than anyone thought," Robinson said. "I had no idea, and I've been involved in narcotics enforcement since 1972. When I saw the figures, I was just amazed. It seemed incredible. And all the studies are coming up with the same figures."

Dr. Michael Walsh, an assistant director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, testified last month before a health and safety subcommittee of the House Education and Labor Committee that studies by the United Auto Workers and the auto industry show that about 35 percent of auto workers take drugs or alcohol on the job.

Walsh said that 35-40 percent of the auto industry's health-care costs are drug related, and that such use adds \$175 to the cost of the average U.S.-built car in lost productivity and added health-care costs.

That cost does not include other drug-related problems such as worker theft or poor job performance and substandard products.

ACCORDING TO ROBINSON, drug use is rampant throughout American business. "The problem cuts across all strata of the work force," he said. "It's not just the people in the assembly line. That's especially true with cocaine."

He said alcohol and drug abuse are the same problem. "That's what I teach in my seminars," said Robinson, who conducted a seminar on drug use in the work place at Madonna College in November. "Alcohol has to be looked at as a drug."

Robinson said that, depending on the study, 20-38 percent of American workers use drugs on the job. "And that doesn't include how many are using drugs at home and leaving them there when they come to work," Robinson said that job performance is affected dramatically by drug and alcohol use. He said that workers who use drugs or alcohol on the job:

- Are tardy three times as often as non-users.
- Use three times as much sick time.
- Are five times more likely to file worker's compensation claims.
- Are 3 1/2 times as likely to have an accident on the job.
- Are just 67 percent as productive when working.

JEANNE KNOPF DeROCHE, a former teacher, formed the Knopf Co. in Plymouth a year ago as a counseling agency focusing on the needs of families affected by chemical dependency of one or more members. DeRoche has training programs for schools, communities and industry, and runs support groups at nine clinics in Wayne County for children growing up with chemically dependent parents.

"One of the difficulties when dealing with chemical dependency is the myth that it is a lower socioeconomic problem. Executives are more protected, and drinking is more accepted. It's easy to drink in the afternoon when the secretary can say you're out for the afternoon. Blue-collar people can't do that."

DeRoche said that alcohol is by far the biggest problem, "but we see fewer old-time alcoholics anymore. Few use just one drug. Among many young people, marijuana is assumed to be a given in their lifestyle. And at a white-collar level, cocaine is assumed, too. It's considered one of the benefits of doing a job well. At parties for young executives, it is often assumed that cocaine will be there, just as you wouldn't have some parties without alcohol."

DeRoche said that despite recent publicity about the dangers of cocaine addiction, "We've just seen the beginning of the problem. As the price continues to go down, it will be more and more available to hourly workers."

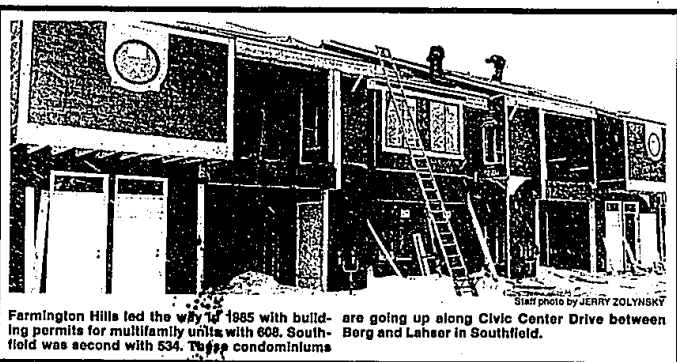
DeRoche said that businesses have begun to address the problem with employee-assistance programs. She said the old way of solving the problem — firing the worker — doesn't work. That worker's drug dependency hasn't been dealt with, and the replacement worker may have a problem, too.

She said the auto companies and Detroit Edison are examples of companies with progressive programs aimed at treating the worker and keeping him on the job.

"JOBS ARE VERY important to most people," Robinson said. "More important than their marriage, their family, their homes, more important than anything. Drug abusers will ruin their families, their wives will leave them, they'll lose their kids, but they'll still go to work every day. The job is the last thing you give up. People will get in the programs once their jobs are hanging in the balance."



Photo illustration by RANDY BORST



Farmington Hills led the way in 1985 with building permits for multifamily units with 608. Southfield was second with 534. These condominiums are going up along Civic Center Drive between Berg and Lahser in Southfield.

M-275 expansion pushed

By Tim Richard
staff writer

Platted land is in short supply as the house-building industry gets ready for a strong 1988. But buyer demand still is strong and mortgage money is available, say industry leaders.

"There is no area with a surplus of lots," said Irving Vackness, general counsel of the Builders Association of Southeastern Michigan, though demand is strong in northern and western Oakland County and western Wayne County.

BASM PRESIDENT Fred Greenspan, who heads his own Southfield-based development company, called on governmental leaders to build more suburban sewers.

The group strongly advocated extending the long-delayed M-275 freeway into Novi and Commerce Township in western Oakland County.

Vackness called Haggerty Road — which borders Farmington Hills and West Bloomfield on the west, and Novi and Commerce on the east — "hazardous for emergency services" because of its congestion. M-275 would follow roughly the Haggerty corridor across western Oakland County.

But the BASM official praised Wayne County for moving ahead on "super sewer" in the Haggerty Road corridor south of Eight Mile Road.

THE BUILDERS repeated more forcefully than ever their standing complaint that suburban communities are zoning too much land for large

Builders cite Haggerty congestion

houses of the larger families of the '50s and not enough for the smaller households and singles who loom larger in today's market.

"Communities don't follow demand," said BASM past president Paul Robertson Jr., a condo developer from Bloomfield Hills. "Household sizes are down. Consumers want smaller housing."

Greenspan said communities want to zone for four-bedroom houses, but the demand is for a one-floor, three-bedroom house with attached garage.

If buyers want smaller houses, they also want such luxury touches as fancier tile and fireplaces, added Dickstein.

GREENSPAN OPENED BASM's annual news conference with a prediction that the industry would expand a mild 3 percent this year compared to a 51 percent leap in 1985.

The wildly gyrating market for single-family houses hit a high of more than 19,000 in the region in 1978, plummeted to barely 1,700 in the recession year of 1982 and was back up to 10,262 in 1985.

Because of supply factors, Greenspan predicted the 3 percent increase to 10,570 units this year, although

there's still "a tremendous amount of pent-up demand for new housing." He declined to predict what 1987 would bring.

Issuing the most building permits will be Rochester Hills, Farmington Hills, Novi, Auburn Hills, West Bloomfield Township, all in Oakland County, and northwestern Wayne County, BASM leaders said. "The Oakland County market is sizzling," said Greenspan, crediting the location of the EDS computer systems facilities in Oakland.

THERE WAS an explosion of apartment building, particularly in Oakland County, last year. But the BASM leaders see that as temporary due to anticipated changes in tax laws governing deductibility of mortgage interest payments.

Permits for more than 10,500 multiple units were issued vs. the normal demand for 8,000 units.

"There was a bit of an artificial incentive for apartments that you won't see in 1986," said Robertson. "The baby boomers turned 40 last week," he said, referring to the children born after the end of World War II. "That's good for us."

THEY PREDICTED stable to slightly-rising costs, despite the platted land shortage.

"There will be slight rises in both labor and materials costs," said Herbert Lawson of Herbert Lawson Inc., West Bloomfield. "There will not be double-digit inflation."

Technique or mystique?

Will the real Lee Iacocca please stand up?

Portrayed as everything from villain to wizard, Iacocca is one of the most talked-about executives this area has seen. But if you read his best-seller, "Iacocca: An Autobiography," it's apparent that there are tales still to be told about the former Ford Motor Co. president who brought Chrysler Corp. from disaster to respectability again.

And that's where Maynard Gordon's "The Iacocca Management Technique" (Dodd, Mead) fits in. Gordon, a Farmington Hills resident, chronicles the Chrysler years from the time Walter P. Chrysler founded the company to the post-bailout years. As a former news editor of Automotive News and now publisher of the weekly newsletter, Motor News Analysis, Gordon is well equipped to provide the reader (especially those who don't live and die with every Big Three decision) with the scorecard that identifies the players. But it's the history that sometimes gets in the way of interpreting Iacocca as a manager.

The difference between Iacocca's management technique and personal style is fuzzy, and Gordon has a hard time distinguishing between the two. But the Iacocca trademark is unmistakable; Gordon tells us he sees the role of the manager as twofold: to decide and to manage. Iacocca's method includes:

business books

- Quarterly reviews.
- Top-down management.
- Individual decision-making.
- Assembly of a staff of loyalists.
- Good rapport with the media.
- Development of a strong system of financial, instead of accounting, controls.
- Emphasis on products.

WHAT DISTINGUISHES Gordon's book from the autobiography is Gordon's attempt to tell the other side of the story. For many of Iacocca's techniques, Gordon has found somebody (oftentimes unnamed) willing to criticize them.

Iacocca's quarterly reviews were referred to as management by intimidation; others saw them as discouraging teamwork out of fear that somebody might get a better grade than another; the top-down management style flies in the face of quality work circles; his outspokenness on Reagan's economic policies is portrayed as hurting Chrysler rather than helping it. Iacocca's ego takes a beating in the book, and his firing of Chrysler staffers is described as ruthless by some.

The book also points out a few Iacocca failures and foibles: his leading of the K-cars with optional equipment,

which placed them out of reach for many buyers following the car's introduction; his attempt at a Chrysler-Ford merger; his inconsistency in opposing the General Motors-Toyota merger for the production of the Nova while leading his products with foreign parts.

It's clear that the Chrysler comeback probably couldn't have happened without the man who peddles his own products in tough-talking messages. And Gordon acknowledges that. But, in keeping with the theme of his book, Gordon rewards his readers with a chapter on Ford AI — after Iacocca. His contrast and comparison of Iacocca and Ford chairman Donald E. Petersen demonstrates that a flamboyant management approach is not necessarily better. Matching the manager with the situation is more important. And along with Gordon, the reader gets to speculate on Chrysler's future following Iacocca's departure.

One of the strong points of the book is Gordon's restraint — considering the topic, probably not an easy task. He paints Iacocca neither as a total saint nor total sinner. And he pretty much sticks to evaluation of Iacocca as Chrysler president and chairman — not as possible presidential candidate or patron saint of the Statue of Liberty. For persons who are interested in the nuts and bolts of the Chrysler rescue without the hype, the Gordon book is one to add to the library.

— Marilyn Fitchett

REGIONAL RESIDENTIAL BUILDING PERMIT TREND
First Six Months of 1970-1985

