Automation plan moves Hills forward

A personal computer network for city departments and employee training are key elements to Farm-ington Hills' future. These and other recommendations

These and other recommendations were stressed by the city's computer consultant Al Stahl in a recent report and presentation of a long-tern automation plan for the city. Stahl's 5-year Strategic Office Automation Plan — designed to lead Farmington Hills more efficiently into the future — was read and filled July 28, by city council. Development of the plan by Stahl's company, Creative Ideas, was authorized by the council last January. "Currently, the city has an excellent computer hardware base," city

officials told council in a report. The city recently purchased an IBM System 36 super mini computer, 12 personal computers (of which 10 are compatable with the 36), and four terminals linked directly to the 36, according to the plan.

An initial plan recommending the purchase of this equipment was developed by the accounting firm of Plante & Moran, based on a 1983 survey of city operations, and was approved by the council in 1985.

According to details of the plan,
"It is likely that the full storage
memory of the System 36 could be
consumed within the year." Stahl said the improvements proposed in the 5-year plan will make the Sys-tem 36 "adequate for city opera-tions" in lieu of purchasing a second

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> - Al Stahl Hills Computer Consultant

System 38, a mainframe computer, or other type of computer expansion.

"THIS YEAR we hope to expand upon that solid beginning with the development of departmental data bases, the addition of personal computers into new offices, improved, hard disc storage for some PCs, remote communications, and the best of the provided of the provided that the provided in the provided that the provided "THIS YEAR we hope to expand upon that solid beginning with the development of departmental data bases, the addition of personal computers into new offices, improved hard dies storage for some PCs, remote communications, and the be-

cent of unused land is developed. By 1991, a leveling off and acceleration of city services, common in a ma-ture community will be in place, the plan said.

plan said.
"Because the tax base for a ma-ture community tends to be fairly constant, it is unlikely that the city will . . . Increase its staff count be-tween 1986 and 1991, or thereafter," Stahl said in the plan. He calls for "maximizing efforts of current em-ployees, by investigating office auto-nation tools that would permit em-ployees to become even more pro-ductive."

ductive."

The five year automation plan offers 18 individual recommendations
during the current budget year, another 11 for 1987-88, nine for the
third year, four in the fourth and two
in the plan's final year.

DURING THE current year, the plane alls for expansion of personal computer including several in the police department, fine-tuning the city's voter registration and fire inclient programs, adding hard disstorage to the personal computers with the county assessor's computer. It also calls for bringing a registration system for the Parks and Recreation Department on-line, and

developing of a public works inventory.

Although the report recommends a trial period for departmental computer clusters this year, they will be fully developed during the plan's second year in the finance, police, public services and engineering departments and the city manager's office.

Within the clusters, each computerwould have access to the System 36, but could operate independently—an advantage if there were a problem with the System 36, Stahl said.

"This will permit more efficient operation of existing units, increase file security and still allow sharing of selected files," according to the plan. Stahl calls the cluster networking for the city "most cost efficient over time."

Networking is proposed because of

A cash register system expected to save \$10,000 in outside data entry costs was approved for purchase by the Farmington Hills City Council July 28. The new hardware and software package will cost \$40,000, and will interface will be expected becomputer, as well as the service burneau's computer, as well as the service burneau's and a city report. The new system will allow more time for dealing with residents and revenue collection functions. The new hardware and software will eight be ordered to the policy of a side of the computer of the policy of the system is a support. The proper of the policy of the system is a support of the property of the policy of the system is a support of the system of the syst New cash registers are part of the plan

cial services departments.

The new equipment was introduced last April, and has the capabilitles of storing more data, tranferring data to other computers, integrating cash receipts, automatically printing receipts, and allows a

Farmington **Observer**

CUSPS 187-840)
Published every Monday and Thuraday by Obsorver & Eccentte Novaspepers, 3825 Schoolcraft, Liventa, MI 48150. Second-class postope paid at Livenia, MI 49151, Address oil mail (subscription, change of address, Form 3569) to P.O. Box 2428, Livenia, MI 48151, Telephone 591-0500.

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cost of \$22,820; applications soft-ware will be purchased from Advan-tage Systems for \$15,000. Money will be taken from the following sources: \$9,900 from the 1986-67 budget; \$13,000 in unexpended funds from the 1985-86 budget; and \$17,400 from the city's fund balance.

In addition, a contingency fund of \$2,380 was authorized for "the pur-chase of any unforeseen equipment or software necessary for the opera-tion of the system."







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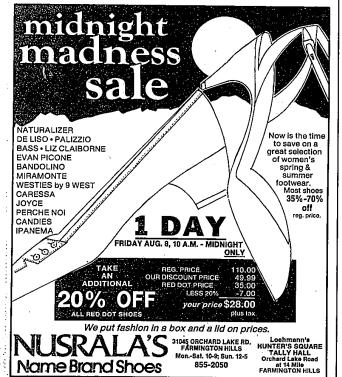
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