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GOOD cause. The St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center of Farmington Hills will benefit from a 24-hour radio telethon starting at 3 p.m. Friday.

The telethon is sponsored by cable Channel 10, the Farmington area's education access channel based at North Farmington High School, 32900 13 Mile, Farmington Hills. Student disc jockeys will work throughout the telethon; organizers are trying to line up celebrities to become involved. Listeners will be asked for monetary pledges. The public is welcome to visit the station and take tours throughout the telethon. Call 626-7685.

SLIPPERY ending. Just before Detroit Red Wings coach Jacques Demers ended his remarks as keynote speaker at the Farmington Area Community Leadership Prayer Breakfast Tuesday morning, event chairwoman Kay Hinn handed him an octopus.

For years, Red Wings fans have tossed the eight-legged creatures on the ice during winning streaks, particularly during the playoffs. "Here's your octopus for a winning season," Hinn said to Demers, a Farmington Hills resident.

To which the Montreal native replied in his French accent: "I'm happily married. If I take this home, I'm divorced today."

FOOTNOTES: One year ago this week — The Farmington Hills Police Department, as part of a 13-point action plan to control teen-related rowdiness, particularly along Orchard Lake Road, has set up a 24-hour hotline to receive anonymous tips and help control rumors.

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Equality pledge

Hills' decree supports racial harmony

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Farmington Hills is a community open to people of all races, religions and cultures.

That official position taken by the Farmington Hills City Council Monday coincides with the federal holiday honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, the late civil rights activist.

"It's one of those things we have never had to do before," said councilwoman Jan Dolan, who drafted the resolution adopted unanimously by the council.

Dolan documented ethnic and racial incidents, particularly in the past year, that prompted her to suggest the council take an official position on the community's diversity.

She referred to ethnic slurs and symbols painted on the exterior of Adat Shalom Synagogue earlier this decade, alleged ethnic problems along Orchard Lake Road prompting a lettering ordinance in 1987 and, most recently, the spray-painting of ethnic slurs on the Farmington home

of a biracial couple two days before Christmas.

"Nothing has ever been said from this council table," Dolan said, referring to the incidents.

THE RESOLUTION declares Farmington Hills "an open community welcoming all persons choosing to reside here whether they trace their ancestry back to the Mayflower or are first generation arrivals including all races, colors and creeds."

The resolution states that the council will "do all in our power to facilitate the incorporation of all its residents into the mainstream of so-

cety by encouraging through cooperation, education and example, the understanding of its diverse cultures and religions into one caring, concerned community."

The council's public stand comes approximately two weeks after an official of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People said the Farmington area has a hostile image to overcome.

"You have a perception to overcome," Robert Willis, president of the NAACP southern Oakland County branch told members of the Cultural Awareness Committee Jan. 6.

Willis told the cultural committee that the Farmington area needs a

major public relations effort to let blacks and other minorities know the community is receptive to having them as neighbors and members of the community.

WILLIS MADE his comments during the committee's discussion of obscenities and racial slurs spray-painted on the Farmington home of Dianna and Derwin Success. The biracial couple lives on Shilohssee near Farmington High School, west of Orchard Lake Road.

Success said he is considering leaving Farmington and entering the ministry. The racially motivated incidents against his family played a part in his decision, Success said.

Farmington Department of Public Safety officers continue to investigate two incidents at the Success home, where windows were broken and aluminum and brick siding of the house were spray-painted with offending graffiti two days before Christmas. Officers think teenagers may be responsible.

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King's dream recalled

Farmington Hills Mayor Jody Soronen proclaimed Jan. 18 as "a day to remember the struggles, the goals, and the visions" of Dr. Martin Luther King and to "keep his dream alive."

The council-approved proclamation commemorates what would have been the slain civil rights leader's 59th birthday.

"Martin Luther King dedicated his life to erasing the racial inequalities in our society, and this day of his birthday reminds us that the struggle continues and that racial equality is still a dream," according to the proclamation.

The council's proclamation honors King's philosophy of non-violent activism. "... his words 'I have a dream that one day the nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed' ... will long be remembered," the proclamation reads.

Tax vote nears; boundaries debated

Renewal election is Feb. 9

By Casey Hans
and Bob Sklar
staff writers

Voters will be asked to renew 5.75 mills of Farmington Public Schools' operational tax levy at a special election Tuesday, Feb. 9.

The levy would run 10 years, from July 1, 1988 to June 30, 1998.

The millage represents \$6 million, or 12 percent, of the district's \$66 million operating budget. One mill is worth \$1.5 million.

"A sum that large affects everything," said Graham Lewis, superintendent of schools. "It is a large piece of our income. We're asking the public to continue this level of support for the schools."

The 5.75 mills represents a combination of 4 mills approved by voters in 1978 and 1.75 mills approved in 1979. Both millages expire this year. Farmington school district voters have never defeated a tax renewal request.

IF THE request were defeated, the \$6 million budget gap would affect programming directly.

Such a loss would have a "severe impact on the human resources," Lewis said. "It would be a tremendous blow."

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Harrison High principal Clayton Graham, high school subcommittee chairman, addresses the school board Tuesday night.

Parents say no to shifts

By Casey Hans
staff writer

Parents voiced a resounding "no" Tuesday to proposals that could shift Farmington school boundaries as early as next fall and affect some 900 elementary students at nine schools during the next two years.

Suggestions at the elementary level include boundary changes, the reopening of Shilohssee Center, and building a new school on the district's west side. A future shift of some North Farmington students to Harrison High is also included in the plan; no changes are recommended for the district's four middle schools.

The proposals were made by a citizens panel, which began studying boundaries and facilities last October. Panel members presented their report this week to the school board, which is expected to study the proposals, consider public comments and discuss its own ideas before for-



Robert Klatz

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Rise in assessments, as high as 20 percent, reflects housing boom

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

It was expected. With an incredibly healthy housing market, Farmington Hills homeowners shouldn't be surprised that they'll be digging a little deeper into their pocketbooks this year when their assessment notices arrive by early March.

Residential property assessments are going up again this year. The average increase is expected to range 12-18 percent, with some increasing as much as 20 percent, Farmington Hills assessor Dean Babb said.

"People should realize that's the average increase. There are going to be a lot of areas where it's not uncommon to see a 20 percent increase in the assessment," Babb continued.

Commercial and industrial property owners, however, will breathe a sigh of relief. They won't be getting assessment increases this year. Last year, they were faced with an average 35 percent assessment increase — the result of a reappraisal conducted by the Oakland County Equalization Division.

"Commercial and industrial is just coming off a complete reappraisal. We don't have any indication that show the level's need moving," Babb said.

ONLY PROPERTY owners whose assessments are increasing will be notified. Property owners who believe their assessments are out of line may appeal to the three-member

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Assessor Dean Babb says if the housing market continues to boom, property owners can expect assessment increases again next year.