

# Post office cuts Saturday hours

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"We can do just about anything for them except where it involves money," Harris said.

ON SATURDAYS, patrons may still use the two contract stations in the Farmington area. The contract station in Farmington hills is in the Guaranty Federal Savings Bank, 31550 Northwestern Highway, and is open 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Farmington station is in Farmer Jack in the Farmington Crossroads shopping center, 22128 Farmington.

"We sign a contract with them to do business. They are like a postal unit but on a smaller basis," Harris said. "They (employees) are not postal people."

Harris said he expects some patrons to be annoyed. Yet on Saturdays, the busiest time is 10 a.m. to

noon. "It appears that Saturday . . . when you get down to actual number of people involved, it's the lightest day of the week," Harris said.

Mondays are the busiest day of the week, followed by Fridays, he added.

The Saturday closings have affected the postal staff. Some jobs have been restructured, Harris said.

The closings, however, are not expected to prompt employee layoffs. "Other cuts will come from not filling vacant positions, fewer hours for part-time flexible employees, cutting down on travel and training costs, and not updating computerized equipment," Harris said. "No layoffs are anticipated."

Staff writer Mary Rodriguez contributed to this report.

# Hills slates block grant hearing

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Farmington Hills will get less in federal Community Development Block Grant program money this year than it did last year.

"They keep extending it, but reducing it," said Richard Lampi, Farmington Hills community development manager, referring to the federal program that's continually targeted for reductions.

A public hearing is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Monday, March 21, in the council chambers, Farmington Hills city hall, 31555 11 Mile, to discuss the city's 1988-89 allocation.

City officials expect to receive \$297,000 in money from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. That's 5 percent less than last year.

In addition to its annual allocation, the city has about \$36,000 from repayment of low-interest loans awarded through the federally funded housing rehabilitation program. That brings the total available for program administration, housing rehabilitation and capital improvements in the city's low- and moderate-income areas to \$333,000.

At the public hearing, city officials plan to show how they will distribute the \$333,000. They propose to maintain the same spending level for housing rehabilitation as they did last year, Lampi said.

"WE TRIED" to hold rehab at about the same level and take the (5 percent) loss in capital improvements," Lampi said.

Of the total, \$191,000 will be distributed to the rehabilitation program, \$103,000 for capital improvements and \$39,000 for administration. Of last year's \$348,000, housing rehabilitation received \$191,000, capital improvements \$118,000 and administration \$39,000, which pays for salaries, supplies and legal notices.

In 1987-88, 20 housing rehabilitation projects were completed and five are still in progress. The program helps homeowners, whose eligibility is determined by income, rehabilitate their houses with improvements such as new roofs, heating, plumbing and electrical installations.

Eligible residents receive low-interest or deferred loans and grants needed to complete improvements.

Lampi expects that by June, the housing program will run out of its 1987-88 allocation. Unlike past years, however, this year the program received many early loan repayments. "We've been in a pretty good position," he said.

As in past years, city officials plan to use block grant money for capital improvements in the low- and moderate-income areas. At this point, "no subdivisions have come in and said they need a project," Lampi said. In the past, block grant money has helped improve roads and drainage.

City staff has targeted certain improvements as potential projects for block grant money in 1988-89. They include storm drainage improvements in Regal Orchards subdivision, on Randall and Parker, between Colfax and Folsom, and sidewalks.

OTHER PROPOSALS are intersection apron installations along Nine Mile at Cora, Haynes and Springbrook; storm sewer installation on Rhonswood, west of Gill; storm system improvements on Grayling and Rhonswood; and Robinson paving and drainage improvements.

City officials are studying whether block grant money can be used to pay for subdivision entrance signs or markers in the low- and moderate-income areas.

Mayor Jody Soronen recently asked the Farmington Hills Beautification Commission to consider how the mature neighborhoods, those developed before the onslaught of subdivisions in the 1960s, could put themselves on the map.

Many of the mature areas of the city are without a definite and recognizable identity. Soronen suggested naming the areas, erecting entrance markers and perhaps landscaping to give the older areas identity.

"We're looking at it. It may qualify in certain areas," Lampi said. "We may meet with HUD officials."

# EDC shifts gears, but remains committed to jobs, prosperity

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As of January 1987, changes in the new federal tax code eliminated commercial and office development, the majority of Farmington Hills' non-residential tax base, from tax-exempt bond financing. As of January 1988, the EDC also can no longer issue bonds for industrial and manufacturing development, of which the city has little.

THE INDUCEMENT for business was that developers could finance buildings and equipment at lower rates than those offered by commercial lenders because bond purchasers did not have to pay state or federal taxes on interest earned, McConnell said.

Now, the state controls what money is available from the federal government for bond financing for development. That means the Farmington Hills EDC is "in line with every other community in the state for that funding."

**The EDC has devoted more than \$40,000 to three major planning efforts along Northwestern Highway, 12 Mile and Grand River.**

"A project has to be really good to get in order to get that approval. And it's also a situation of the clock. If you're not on the schedule and timed in properly, you won't be considered," McConnell said.

The tax changes don't mean that the EDC has gone out of business. It has turned its attention now to putting money from EDC applications over the years back into the community.

The EDC has devoted more than \$40,000 to three major planning efforts along Northwestern Highway, 12 Mile and Grand River.

The Northwestern plan targets landscaping improvements along the median and edges. A computerized plan for 12 Mile analyzes proposed rights-of-way acquisition for a planned boulevard from Farmington to Haggerty roads.

The 12 Mile plan was started in hopes that it would speed up Oakland County's improvement process along the thoroughfare. The road is not on the county's three-year improvement list.

A third project involves the beautification of the median along Grand River. "We're hoping this seed money will generate interest on the part of property owners (to improve their areas) on Grand River, since that's an entrance to our city," McConnell said.

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