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ELECTION news. Farmington Public Schools voters who qualify to vote absentee in the special bond election Jan. 31 can pick up ballots at the Lewis Schulman Administrative Center, 32500 Silvaswisse, Farmington. Hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays. The office also will be open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 28, to accept ballot applications. Voters will consider a \$7.3 million bond issue to build a west-side elementary school near 11 Mile and Halsted to help reduce severe classroom overcrowding at the primary-grade level.

ON board. Sandra Peckens of Farmington Hills was named to the state Chronic Disease Advisory Committee by Gov. Blanchard. The National Kidney Foundation patient services director, she'll represent the public in the area of renal disease. **NOTABLE weeks.** Farmington Hills City Council has declared Jan. 15-21 as Farmington Area Jaycees Week in honor of the community service group and Jan. 23-27 as Junior Achievement Week in honor of the economic education program.

QUOTE of the week
"One of my top priorities is to build credibility, not only with the city council but with the city."
— Farmington Hills' new mayor, Terry Sever, in the wake of the controversy that rocked city hall in 1988. (see story this page).

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Alarm saves children from fire

By Bob Sklar
staff writer

Forty-five young children were safely evacuated after a blaring smoke detector alerted the caretaker to a fire in the office wing at an Orthodox Jewish center in Farmington Hills Sunday morning. No one was hurt in the fire, which caused about \$250,000 in damage to the east office wing at the Lubavitch Center, 28555 Middlebelt, said investigator Al Ellis of the Farmington Hills Fire Department. "The investigation isn't conclusive but there's a strong possibility a space heater in the office where the

A sofa caught fire at the Orthodox Jewish Center, forcing the 45 children to evacuate.

fire started caught a sofa and a stuffed chair on fire," Ellis said.

BECAUSE THE furnace in the east wing wasn't working, space heaters were being used in many of the rooms. Bill Siebert, central maintenance manager, was in his apartment in

the office area at 11:30 a.m. when he heard a hallway smoke detector blare.

When he looked into the hallway and saw smoke, he quickly notified Rabbi Berel Shemtov, and they evacuated the religious school students in the west classroom wing. Police officer James Skrzycki, on patrol when he saw smoke, assisted in the evacuation.

"The smoke detector no doubt saved the building from even more damage," fire chief Richard Marinucci said. "Had the fire gone unnoticed another five minutes, it might have popped through the roof."

"If the people hadn't gotten out as soon as they did, by the way the smoke was spreading when we got there, there could have been injuries," Ellis said. "Visibility (in the east wing) was nil when we got there."

"IT'S SMOKE that's the major cause of fire fatalities — people inhaling the toxic gases," he added.

The fire department ordered the hallway smoke detector installed about a year ago because the caretaker often sleeps in a small apartment in the east wing, Marinucci said.

The fire was extinguished within 10 minutes. Flame damage was limited to the office where the fire started and the roof above. But there was heavy smoke throughout the east wing, Ellis said.

There was lighter smoke throughout the cement-block building, which includes an auditorium and a kitchen, in addition to classrooms, Ellis said.

Firefighters had to tear part of the tar roof to assure the fire hadn't spread into concealed spaces, Marinucci said.

Sever outlines mayoral goals for Hills in '89

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Openness, fairness, integrity, honesty and improved communications are priorities in 1989 for Mayor Terry Sever following a year of battered credibility for the Farmington Hills City Council.

One of my top priorities is to build credibility, not only with the city council but with the city," Sever said. As mayor, the 38-year-old professional printer promised to "set a good example" by not doing business with the city. In the past, Sever has bid and completed printing jobs for the city. He also promised that the city will come before personal interests and expects the same from other elected and appointed officials.

The new mayor also promised to explain his decisions. Because of concerns about previous appointments, Sever explained his reasons Monday for his appointments to vacancies on certain boards and commissions. "I am going to be open with my decisions. As far as the appointments, I'll explain my reasons for changes. I know that's going to cause some criticism. But I believe decisions should be challenged by anyone who doesn't like it," Sever said.

SEVER'S GOAL is to rebuild the city's credibility and responsiveness to the public following a year of events and concerns, many brought to light by residents, that caused

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Farmington Hills Mayor Terry Sever (left) and Mayor Pro Tem Joan Fox share a lighter moment during a break in council deliberations Monday night.

Big tasks face Hills now and beyond

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Work on a 10-year plan of making Farmington Hills "the most livable city" will set the pace for the future as roads and solid waste disposal continue as top problems to be solved in 1989.

"I see this as an opportunity to examine where we are now, what's occurred in Farmington Hills over the last decade and allow us to establish clear-cut goals for the future," city

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Farmington Hills city manager William Costick believes the Year 2000 plan will provide an opportunity to establish clear goals for the city's future.



Farmington city manager Robert Deadman is looking for solutions this year to solid waste disposal and municipal sewer capacity.

City aims to keep the good from bad

By Casey Hans
staff writer

The established and smaller city of Farmington is bustling both above and below the surface as city officials look to the new year.

Downtown rejuvenation, commercial and residential development, plus major road, sewer and garbage removal concerns face the city in

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Local economist will now support new bond issue

By Casey Hans
staff writer

A Farmington Hills businessman has come out in favor of a \$7.3 million bond issue for a new westside elementary school, after contributing to the defeat of a larger Farmington Public Schools bond issue last fall.

Patrick Anderson, a Farmington Hills resident and an economist with Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Co. of America, read a prepared statement to the Farmington school board Tuesday night, lending his support and asking residents to vote in favor of the bond issue at a special election Tuesday, Jan. 31.

"With the understanding that the board will use existing funds to correct the safety problems, we support the \$7.3 million bond issue dedicated to building a new elementary school. We urge other Farmington citizens to inform themselves and vote 'yes' on this issue."

Anderson verbally added the "yes" — which was not in his prepared written statement — giving his support a stronger edge. Several members of the citizens group Friends of Farmington, who are working to pass this bond issue, appeared in the audience and said they were prepared to speak out on the issue had Anderson not supported it.

THE ECONOMIST spoke on behalf of his company, whose board chairman is Richard Headlee. Although the former company president, state gubernatorial candidate and tax limitation amendment author did not appear personally Tuesday, Headlee has publicly stated a new school is needed. He has reportedly told school trustees he was in favor of bonding for a new school. Both Headlee and Anderson appeared at a school board meeting

last September to speak out against a \$27.4 million bond issue, of which \$20 million was to be used for building refurbishments and safety repairs. The businessmen insisted the district use operating and capital money for these items. The bond issue was defeated by 218 votes.

The replacement of lighting ballasts, which could contain PCBs, and the containment of asbestos in school buildings are well under way in the district. According to deputy superintendent Michael Flanagan, the schools are spending about \$2 million out of operating funds for these safety projects.

ON TUESDAY night, Anderson also encouraged the district to continue its review of safety issues in the district. "We are happy to see that some repairs, such as lighting ballast replacement and asbestos abatement, are already under way," he said. "This commitment must continue."

Overall declining enrollment is a sign that no more new buildings should be needed in the future, Anderson said.

This second school bond issue would pay only for a new 600-student elementary school on a 12-acre site on 11 Mile Road, just east of Halsted — and not building refurbishing.

The site has about 10 usable acres, a rolling terrain and is heavily wooded with 50- to 75-foot trees. Soil borings were taken on the site before the September election, and the Grand Rapids architectural firm of Greiner Inc. has been selected to handle the design if the bond issue passes. The target date to open the school is September 1990.

The homeowners association of the adjoining Hunt Club subdivision has asked the school board to consider placing a berm and paving a walkway between the subdivision and the proposed new school.