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THE new stop signs at West Lyman at Drake, north of 11 Mile, have done the job, say Drake residents Michael and Kathy Kelly. In a letter to the city council, they report that "overall speeds are down. Drivers just cannot reach 50-60 mph from a stop." Drag racing has ceased. And passing of school buses and residents turning left into driveways also has stopped. It's also safer for school buses exiting Old Homestead or Pleasant Valley subdivision from East or West Lyman, the Kellys report.

BOARD of Zoning Appeals member Masie Kurzeja doesn't like the new artwork ordinance enacted by the Farmington Hills City Council April 24. The ordinance requires the Farmington Area Arts Commission to pass judgment on any "art object" that building owners propose for their front yards. "An art object is an art object... I don't find art of any kind demeaning," she told the city council.

QUOTE of the week

6 This is good news. This is great news. Ever since I've been here, the city has never had, other than I-696, a good east-west corridor.

— Farmington Hills assistant city manager David Call, reacting to news of state funding to help improve 12 Mile (see story this page)

what's inside

- Around Farmington . . . 4B
- Classifieds Secs. C, F, G, H . . . 3G
- Auto . . . Sec. H
- Real estate . . . Sec. E
- Employment . . . Sec. G
- Creative living . . . Sec. E
- Crossword puzzle . . . 7F
- Entertainment . . . 7C
- Obituaries . . . 15C
- Police, fire calls . . . 4A
- Sports . . . Sec. D
- Suburban Life . . . Sec. B

don't miss this marvelous special section in today's issue...

Greater Livonia Expo

Budget up \$8 million

Schools cite higher costs, repair needs

By Casey Hans staff writer

Increasing financial pressure from the state and the need to repair and renovate buildings have prompted the Farmington school board to consider updating next year's school district budget.

Trustees propose increasing the operating budget for the year beginning July 1 by \$8 million, leaving the maximum allowable millage under

the Headlee Tax Limitation Amendment. The total operating budget would be \$85 million.

The district is eyeing a potential \$6.5 million per year liability if the state requires local districts to pay for Social Security and retirement benefits. These are now paid by the state.

"We need to take a direct position on going to the limit," deputy superintendent Michael Flanagan told the school board Tuesday. "What really

increases me about this . . . is that we've got a state that can do this at the stroke of a pen. It doesn't require a referendum. It doesn't require anything."

The district is also hoping to use several million dollars in the coming year to make a dent in \$20 million in building renovations and repairs still pending after last fall's defeat of a bond issue proposal. Those opposing the bond issue suggested that the district use operating money instead of

bonding to pay for the improvements.

THE PROPOSED budget calls for the Farmington district to levy 32.39 mills, the maximum allowed by law. It is still nearly five mills below the 37.29 mills approved by voters but which had to be rolled back under the Headlee Tax Limitation Amendment.

Please turn to Page 4



Michael Flanagan

12 Mile to become 4-lane boulevard

Project to cost \$6.1 million

□ Haggerty corridor to be improved, 2A

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

It's no longer a pipe dream. The heavily traveled 12 Mile Road office corridor in Farmington Hills will be widened to a four-lane boulevard with the help of more than \$3 million in state transportation money.

The Michigan Transportation Commission late last week informed city officials that the 12 Mile widening project and the Haggerty Road connector will be financed with matching grants. Work is expected to begin next year.

"This is good news. This is great news," Farmington Hills assistant city manager David Call said. "Ever since I've been here, the city has never had, other than I-696, a good east-west corridor. And I-696 never really served as a good east-west corridor because of the lack of interchanges."

Business owners along the south



This is a view of 12 Mile, looking west from the Farmington Road intersection. The road will be widened to a four-lane boulevard

side of the 12 Mile corridor were equally excited.

"It's kind of a shame it took so long. Thank God it finally happened," said Peter Burton of the Arboretum Office Park, on 12 Mile east of Drake. "We're quite happy it's finally coming to fruition."

He applauded the boulevard plan.

"It will buffer the residents (on the north side) from the offices on the south side. It will make life for the residents easier," he said.

THE CITY will receive a \$3.2 million matching grant from the new Michigan Transportation Economic Development Fund for the first of

four planned construction phases along 12 Mile in Farmington Hills and Novi.

How the city will pay its share of the \$6.1-million first phase is still uncertain, pending discussions about right-of-way acquisition along 12 Mile and the Oakland County Road

Commission's involvement in the project.

The state also approved \$11.5 million in economic development fund financing for work in 1990 on the proposed \$73-million Haggerty Road boulevard connector.

Please turn to Page 2

Tax rollback may not mean a lower tax bill

□ Hills sends tax message to Lansing, 8A

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Chances are many Farmington Hills residential property owners won't benefit from a 6.1-percent city tax rate rollback in 1989 designed to offset increased property tax assessments.

"Residents are going to bear the brunt of increases this year in real dollars," a councilman Paul Sowerby said at a study session on the proposed 1989-90 operating budget Monday.

City administrators are proposing a \$28.2 million budget — a 9.1 percent increase over 1988-89 — supported by a tax rate of 8.8 mills.

As promised, city administrators rolled back the city's tax rate from 9.4 mills this year to 8.8 mills in 1989 to offset an average 6.2-percent property tax assessment increase. A Truth-in-Taxation public hearing is not required because the city will not receive the additional revenue generated from increased property assessments.

That means that city officials rolled back the rate to the level where those property owners who received the average assessment in-

crease won't pay more in city taxes in 1989-90.

In other words, the city is using only the increase in state equalized value on new construction rather than taking revenue generated from increased property tax assessments.

The city's SEV on new construction is \$104 million. The city's total SEV increased from \$1.77 billion in 1988-89 to \$1.99 billion in 1989-90.

BUT NEWS that the rollback that council members had asked for wouldn't necessarily help residential property owners, faced with an average property assessment of 9.4 percent, didn't sit well.

Please turn to Page 8

Setback change OK'd for school

By Casey Hans staff writer

A setback variance was granted by the Farmington Hills board of zoning appeals Tuesday, putting plans for a new west-side elementary school back on schedule.

"That sure helps us out a lot," said Farmington school board president Jack Cotton, upon hearing of the approval.

The district will now step up planning activity surrounding the \$7.3 million school, holding a special meeting May 31 to open bids at the recommendation of Greiner Inc. of Grand Rapids, architects

for the project. Bids are expected to be awarded in early June. The district is aiming for a fall 1990 opening date.

"They (the architects) think if we can do this, maybe we can make up the time we've lost," added assistant superintendent Lynn Nutter, who attended Tuesday's zoning board meeting on behalf of the school district. The district is at least two weeks behind on an already tight schedule, officials said.

Site plan approval was granted by the Farmington Hills Planning Commission, contingent on Tues-

Please turn to Page 4

Serial rape suspect to undergo psychiatric exams

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

The former West Bloomfield resident accused of being Oakland County's serial rapist will be evaluated by an independent psychiatrist at a state psychiatric center to determine his criminal responsibility.

Oakland County Circuit Judge Robert Templin Wednesday ordered Steven A. Szeman Jr., 25, of Rocky River, Ohio, to be evaluated at the Center for Forensic Psychiatry in Ypsilanti as well as by Dr. Sol Forman of Southfield.

"I believe he is competent. But I'm not so sure about criminal responsibility," said Szeman's court-appointed attorney, Lawrence Kaluzny of Bingham Farms. "The issue is, does he know right from

wrong? And if so, can he control his behavior?"

Szeman awaits trial on 49 counts of rape, robbery and burglary involving 10 victims, ages 13-41, in Farmington Hills, West Bloomfield, Birmingham, Bloomfield Township and Independence Township in late 1987 and spring 1988. In April, he waived his right to preliminary exams in three district courts.

Pale, handcuffed and dressed in navy blue prison garb, Szeman appeared in a fairly empty courtroom Wednesday. Kaluzny wasn't going to have Szeman brought over from the Oakland County Jail, where he is being held in lieu of a \$7.9 million cash bond. But Templin asked that Szeman attend the motions.

Initially, Templin ordered Szeman to be evaluated only at the state forensic center. The judge said he

would later determine the need for an independent psychiatrist. But Szeman's court-appointed attorney asked for both evaluations simultaneously.

OAKLAND COUNTY assistant prosecutor John Stevin had no objections to the independent psychiatric evaluation. But he asked Templin to make Szeman aware of the delays the evaluations will cause. "It won't be counted against the time allowed for (a speedy) trial," Stevin said.

Templin asked Kaluzny if he thought a psychiatric evaluation in Ohio, where Szeman pleaded guilty Jan. 4 to a raping a suburban Cleveland woman in November and received a 58-to-140-year prison term, was sufficient.

"I don't think they went into as great a detail as they should have," Kaluzny responded.



Steven A. Szeman

Kaluzny also is asking for medical records from Szeman's physician in Ohio, particularly regarding a head injury and subsequent treatment after Szeman's car left a West Virginia mountain road in 1984.

Kaluzny said he is considering a request for Szeman to undergo a complicated neurological examination at the University of Michigan, one of three to four centers in the country equipped to do the test.

"I want to see if there's a basis to request it," Kaluzny said.

WHILE SZEMAN is undergoing evaluation, Stevin will ask Templin next Wednesday to schedule an evidentiary hearing to determine the admissibility of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) evidence gathered from

Please turn to Page 2