

Volunteer support

Festival 'only as good as the people involved'

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"A thing like this is only as good as the people involved," he said. "If you keep good people, it will continue."

There was a time when the future of the festival was uncertain.

CURRENT CHAMBER of commerce president Jon Grant was one of those who came forward in the

early 1980s when the festival was foundering. As a core group worked to keep the festival afloat, Grant said he took the issue to the chamber of commerce board, which agreed to once again sponsor the program as a service to the business community.

"It was always a hybrid of the chamber," he said. "It's a lot of work — and it seemed like an impossible job

to put this thing together. We have revisited that issue every year and have decided it is an important function of the chamber."

Grant recalls childhood years enjoying the Ox Roast, carnival and other activities. But since the chamber's involvement, the focus on art has become more important. The art show at the festival is now juried.

"One of my big emphases, years ago, is what direction this thing was going in," he said. "Did we want it to get bigger? The problem was there was no place to locate it. We don't have a piece of property big enough."

TODAY, THE festival is centered in downtown Farmington area, with activities being held throughout the area at various shopping centers.



The photo

Former Farmington Hills firefighter Carro Hajjar (left) and current firefighters Al Smolan, a district chief, and Leo Panoushek, now a full-timer, splash it up on Grand River during the Founders Festival parade.



Task force preparing a wish list for community

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needs of the future. Use this as your guide of what the people want," Lampi said.

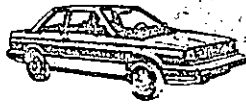
While the sky's the limit now, Costick said that, at some point, realism will have to kick in, even though task force members are trying not to be stymied by old perceptions of what a community can do.

"Certainly we'll have to bring it

back to a sense of reality at some point. The future challenge will be implementing the plan," he said.

Future plans also include cataloging the information gathered by the task forces to build up a library that can be added to as the future rolls by. "I think we're going to come up with a good working document. We're taking stock and trying to develop a realistic approach to the future," Costick said.

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