

# Pickets part of 5-state Bell walkout

By Amy Rauch and Casey Hens staff writers

Telephone service was disrupted in at least three area communities Tuesday morning because of what phone companies officials say was deliberate sabotage.

Telephone cables were cut Tuesday in the Long Lake and Adams area, along with the Troy and Madison Heights areas, just two days after Communications Workers of America went on strike against Michigan Bell Telephone Co.

There were at least three picketers were arrested at demonstrations in Southfield.

Telephone service to Oakland General Hospital in Madison Heights was out the entire day.

Phone company officials are investigating the incident as well as offering a \$20,000 reward. Bell is seeking information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for cutting cables said Dean Hovey, the company's media relations manager.

Hovey said the cable cuts were the result of the heated battle between striking phone workers and management, brought on by a five-state strike called Sunday night. Service was restored by Wednesday morning.

"There's no way to tell who did it and what their motives were," said Hovey on Wednesday. "They knew what they were doing and made the repairs as difficult as possible."

"I would like to think it wasn't any

of our people," responded Charlie Echlin, chairman of the CWA union's eight-member Michigan bargaining committee. "There are other people who have a grudge against the company. We certainly don't condone the cutting of cables."

Talks between the Communication Workers of America and Michigan Bell management came to a halt when the clock struck midnight Saturday, marking the beginning of a five-state walkout of 37,000 employees.

Most of the picketing is occurring at a main office in Pontiac, and a rally was planned for downtown Detroit today.

**THE THREE-YEAR** Bell contract with the regional parent, Ameritech, expired Saturday night despite nearly two months of negotiations. Ameritech employees in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Wisconsin as well as Michigan are striking for higher pay and a better wage and benefit package.

"Negotiations have been going on for some time," said Mary Jo Fikarek, public relations director for Michigan Bell Telephone Co. "Saturday night they basically ran out of time. Wages were still being negotiated when the clock ran out."

No further negotiations have been scheduled.

"We have not been in contact with the company (Michigan Bell) since midnight Saturday," said Echlin. "We anticipate (a contact) sometime this week."

**DEMONSTRATIONS** held in front



Michigan Bell employees Mildred Fuller (left), Edith Pioszak and Dave Thornton picket the Farmington Switching Office 1A at

of Michigan Bell's three Southfield locations and the Public Safety building of the Southfield Police have been anything but quiet.

A 33-year-old Southfield woman was treated for minor leg injuries and released from Providence Hospital Tuesday morning after she was struck by a car while picketing the Southfield Michigan Bell offices at 23500 Northwestern, according to Southfield police information officer Gary Conat. The woman apparently stepped into the driver's path, said Conat. The accident is still under investigation.

Three picketers were arrested Monday at the Michigan Bell Southfield locations, according to Conat. A 40-year-old Southfield man and a 31-year-old woman, 39, were arrested for minor offenses after disobeying a police officer's warning to let cars pass. One man was arrested for a felony. Gary Wilson, 42, of Royal Oak was arrested for malicious destruction of property over \$100. He

is charged with scratching a car with a can opener, Conat said.

Wilson, who was arraigned in Southfield's 46th District Court Tuesday, stood mute to the charge and a plea of not guilty was entered on his behalf.

Wilson, who will face a preliminary exam Aug. 24, was released on a \$1,000 personal bond.

Michigan Bell Telephone Co. is a subsidiary of Ameritech that handles up to 40 million direct-dial calls and 900,000 assistance requests statewide every day. The telephone company handles more than three million customer accounts across the state and about 88,000 residential and business accounts throughout Southfield, where 1,600 employees are on strike.

**CUSTOMERS CAN** expect a delay in all services that require personal assistance.

"Basically what they're going to be faced with (are problems with)

Grand River and Power in Farmington Tuesday morning. Thornton is a switching technician there.

operator assistance, directory assistance and repair services," Fikarek said.

The company is asking that customers request assisted services only in an emergency. "Unless it's an emergency, delay placing an order for services," Fikarek said. "It would be greatly appreciated."

In Michigan, about 4,500 management employees will be stepping in to take the place of the 12,800 non-management employees that walked out, Fikarek said. The management employees will handle emergency requests first, she said.

"They (customers) are apt to have a delay in operator services, credit card and person-to-person calls," Fikarek said. Direct local and long distance phone calls should be completed without a problem.

"It's in the specific service where there's a need for personal assistance," she said.

**THE STRIKE IS** going to cause

major problems for the telephone company, Echlin said.

"We don't believe that the management people who are filling in have the skills to keep the systems working," he said. He added that operator-assisted call delays will come first.

"As time goes by, repair and installation services will be delayed," he said. "Any service requests will be delayed."

The biggest hang-up in negotiations is the wage dispute, Echlin said. Union negotiators are asking for a minimum of a 9 percent base pay increase, equivalent to a contract AT&T employees recently received.

Echlin also said the union will not go for some of the changes that Ameritech wants.

For example, Ameritech is looking to begin rating employees as satisfactory or unsatisfactory, the latter group receiving less pay, according to Echlin.

# Hills says 'no' to cablecasting meetings

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and an estimated \$12,000 in audio (microphone) equipment, City Manager William Costick said.

Council members Jody Soronen, Ben Marks and Philip Arnold joined Mayor Terry Sever in balking at the \$80,000 price tag.

Council members Paul Soverby and Jean Fox were the only ones to back a motion allowing the city to at least solicit bids to determine actual cost of the cablecasting project.

"We've got to get out to the people," Soverby said. "It's as important as a stretch of sidewalk. You can't just have tunnel vision; you have to look at the broad picture."

"Television has been used to enhance our understanding of low government works," Fox said.

The project could have been financed from \$250,000 in unanticipated interest earnings for 1988-89, Costick said.

**UNLIKE MANY** communities, Farmington Hills, Farmington and Novi didn't include the plans and costs of such cablecasts in their 15-year franchise agreement with MetroVision of Oakland County.

Council members said they felt new sidewalks and drainage improvements are more pressing needs. "The city has too many problems, too many places to put this money," said councilman Ben Marks.

"I think you need to spend money on sidewalks," said John Trotter, Farmington Hills Planning Commis-

sion chairman. Calling plans to cablecast council meetings self-aggrandizement, he added, "When people are concerned, they show up."

Mayor Terry Sever voted against the project because he thought it was too costly. "I'm very much in favor of the idea of putting city council meetings on television," he said. "But I really need to see a proposal at \$30,000. It's a matter of dollars and cents with me."

Farmington Hills supporters of the plan, including Citizens for a More Responsible Government and the Committee to Increase Voter Participation, maintained that cablecasting on MetroVision's public access Channel 12 would make city government more accessible.

**RESIDENTS MIGHT** be more inclined to watch the council in the comfort of their homes, said Julie Hovanecian, president of Citizens for More Responsible Government. By her count, 32 communities in the area cablecast council meetings. She hopes the issue stays alive in Farmington Hills.

"People increased their interest in their community government, and have come to expect to watch," she wrote Sever in January.

"In many cities, it is the number one program of the cable station in terms of the number of viewers," she added.

The plan rejected by the city council called for four color video cameras — "good mid-range cameras that shoot real well in low-light situations." In the council chambers, said David Tietmeyer, Farmington Hills video production supervisor.

Two cameras would be positioned on the wood slat wall to cover both sides of the council table. Another

would be installed behind and above the table. The fourth would replace the overhead projector.

The plan called for a monitor inserted into the council table to allow the mayor, mayor pro tem and city attorney to see the images projected on the monitor inserted into the wall behind them. A monitor also would have been in the lobby.

The chamber's audio systems would have been replaced to include ceiling speakers, new microphones and a microphone mixer.

# Seniors continue to seek on-site academic classes

See related opinion, 10A

By Louise Okrutsky staff writer

Once again, the fight to keep high school completion courses in senior citizen apartment complexes surfaced at a meeting of the Farmington school board.

But trustees stuck to their earlier decision to centralize classes leading to a high school diploma. This fall, those classes will be held with other adult education programs at Farmington Community School, Tuck and Shawwasee.

Unlike last week's force of 30 senior citizens who picketed outside the Lewis Schulman Administrative Center, Tuesday night's delegation of 10 senior citizens restricted their protest to the public comment section of the agenda.

Pamela O'Malley, school/community relations director, will meet Thursday with a representative of the Michigan Department of Education. Board members don't expect the outcome of that meeting to affect the decision to move high school completion classes.

Community education classes will be offered weekly on-site at senior citizen apartment complexes for \$8 per eight-week session.

"There will be on-site programs. They won't be high school comple-

**School administrators say state scrutiny of the high school completion program requires the district to centralize the classes or risk losing them.**

tion programs," said trustee Helen Ditzhary.

School administrators say state scrutiny of the high school completion program requires the district to centralize the classes or risk losing them. They want to avoid the possibility of financial improprieties similar to those discovered in an on-site program in Wayne County.

**THE HURON** Valley Schools adult education program, with which Farmington is in a consortium, requires the classes to be centralized in a designated school building.

Senior citizen residence program administrators argue the move will make it nearly impossible for many senior citizens to continue with the high school completion program because they're physically handicapped or have transportation problems.

"If the district's not willing to take

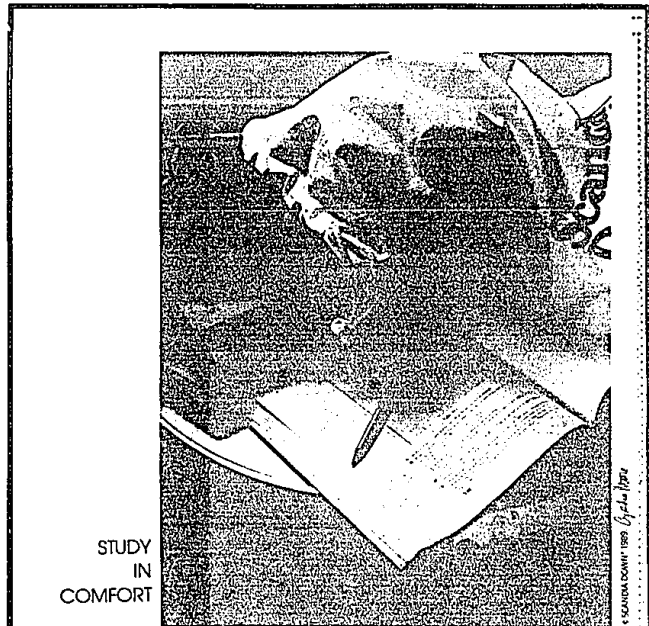
the program, why not give it to another district willing to take it over?" asked Diane Trostle, a teacher in the Farmington program.

Like most who spoke Tuesday night, she also commented at last week's session.

Before it pays for a high school completion program, the Michigan Department of Education requires schools districts to prove people taking academic classes intend to complete high school, trustee Susan Renolds said.

Jeannie Allen, an adult education teacher, argued that the notion just one senior citizen has graduated from the program in the past 10 years was untrue. The program has averaged two senior citizen graduates each year, she said.

"Even if their bodies are frail, their minds are active," said Penny Osterbeck, a long-time Farmington teacher.



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# Vandals pelt cars, apartments

More than a dozen cars parked at a shopping center and a nearby apartment complex received broken windows or were spray-painted in a vandalism spree last week.

Two apartment units also received broken windows in the vandalism, which began Friday afternoon and lasted into the night.

Two teenagers are believed to have hurled large rocks at car windshields and windows and spray-

painted cars parked at the Orchard Place shopping center and at Hunters Ridge Apartments, both near Orchard Lake Road and 14 Mile.

Damage was estimated in excess of \$3,000.

Police believe teenagers hiding behind a fence at the apartment complex threw rocks toward cars parked on the west side of the lot at Orchard Place. The vandals hit at least four cars.

A store employee chased the attacker away from the store. They soon returned, spray-painting at least nine cars.

At Hunters Ridge Apartments, rocks pelted two cars parked on Ridgeside Drive. Three cars parked in Pleasant Run and one on Hunters Drive were spray-painted. Rocks smashed two apartment windows on Hunters Drive and one apartment window on Point of Woods Drive.