

# Split vote OKs fax machines for schools

By Casey Hane  
staff writer

A heated discussion among Farmington school trustees Tuesday ended with a 4-3 split vote of the board approving \$64,000 to put facsimile machines in every school in the district.

A vote on the purchase was tabled Sept. 11, after some board members complained of not having sufficient bid information and rationale.

"I don't find much support for it," said trustee Jack Cotton, who opposed the vote Tuesday, and said he had talked with a number of other school district officials and residents. "I came to the conclusion the quality is going to increase and the

price is going to go down.

"I think there's a fax in our future, I'm just not sure it's now."

Trustees Cotton, Jack Inch and James Abernethy opposed the purchase of the 27 units made by Fujitsu Imaging Systems of America, including stands and three-year maintenance agreements. They listed several concerns, among them: hidden future costs, security issues surrounding the machines, and some negative reaction from the community.

In addition, Cotton said, no other school district in Oakland County has yet installed a network of the facsimile units, commonly known as fax machines.

THOSE VOTING to approve the measure believe they will serve as educational tools, helping students and teachers obtain research materials. Trustees Helen Ditzhary, Janice Rolnick, Susan Rennels and board president Helen Prutow supported the measure as requested by administration.

"I really hate that age-old philosophy," said Rolnick. "I don't think this is an enormous expense. It's not tomorrow's technology, it's yesterday."

Rennels, who said she had changed her mind about the purchase since the board's last discussion, called it "a small price to pay to add this to the district."

"Our educational institutions,

whether we like it or not, are being left behind," added Ditzhary, who said computers and fax machines are becoming commonplace in individual homes. "We should at least keep up with the leading edge of parents in our community."

THE DISTRICT will spend \$1,795 per facsimile unit, plus \$185 per year, per machine, for a three-year service contract. Of two companies submitting bids, the low bidder was Stockton Office Systems of Farmington Hills, which bid \$63,963. An independent dealer, Stockton underbid the Fujitsu Imaging branch bid of \$68,580. Industry sources speculated the district likely selected the equipment first, then bid out the specific

brand. Peggy Schmidt, media resources coordinator for the Farmington district, explained that each school would have access to public and university library materials. "There is an instructional impact here," she said. "It will increase access to resources beyond the district."

Other districts, including Walled Lake, Rochester and Troy, are also looking into similar networks, she said.

But trustee Inch said "there is a lot of ill feeling" about the fax purchase. "It takes one minute to learn to use the fax machine," he said. "I don't see that's going to be a valuable experience."

SEVERAL RESIDENTS in the audience spoke against the purchase, citing the purchase price, future costs of telephone usage, future access fees, and coated paper expenses associated with increased use of the machines.

"There are costs associated here that perhaps somebody is not aware of," said resident George Notarianni, a parent with a third grader in the district. "I think that's excessively expensive. I also question the need to have a maintenance contract — that's money down the drain."

Notarianni asked if the fax purchase would eliminate interdepartmental mail in the district — a question that was not answered.

## police/fire calls

Listed below are some of the Farmington-area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week:

### • LOADED GUNS

A 29-year-old Detroit man faces a

high misdemeanor charge after three loaded rifles were found in his car during a traffic stop by Farmington Hills police.

According to a Farmington Hills police report, Surveillance officers noticed a

car, with four occupants, cruising the Nine Mile-Farmington Road area at 3 a.m. Sept. 21. A check revealed the license plate had been stolen in a holdup in Detroit.

Officers stopped the car at Eight Mile and Evergreen in Detroit.

The driver faces a charge of possessing a loaded firearm in a non-game area, a high misdemeanor that carries two years in jail upon conviction.

### • FESTIVAL TROUBLE

Farmington Hills police handled two incidents at the St. Alexander Catholic Church Fall Festival on Sept. 23.

In one, an 8-year-old boy was knocked down and hurt; in another, a 17-year-old man was ticketed and escorted from the property after a fight, according to police reports.

At 8:40 p.m., the 8-year-old boy suffered mouth cuts and had a tooth knocked out as he walked on a sidewalk between the church and rectory. A 17-year-old youth running through the crowd knocked the boy down. A 15-year-old youth running behind the 17-year-old then stepped on the boy. The boy was treated at the scene and taken to Botsford General Hospital, Farmington Hills.

Another 17-year-old youth was ticketed for interfering with a police officer and was escorted from the grounds after becoming involved in a verbal and physical altercation. He elbowed and shoved an officer as he was asked to leave the area, according to police.

### • DRUGS FOUND

Drug paraphernalia, cocaine resi-

due and a small cocaine rock were found during a traffic stop near Orchard Lake Road and Astor in Farmington, Sept. 17.

Three Detroit residents — a 25-year-old woman, a 31-year-old man and a 35-year-old man — were arrested and released pending warrants, according to a Farmington Department of Public Safety report.

### • SCHOOL BREAK-IN

A jar of money used for student donations was stolen from Gill Elementary School, 21195 Gill, Sept. 22-24.

According to a Farmington Hills police report, the jar held \$100 in coins. It was found outside the school, on the north side of the building, by a nearby resident. When found, it had \$50 in pennies.

A window on the north side of the school was found broken, apparently the entry and exit point for the thief.

### • THEFTS REPORTED

A revolver valued at \$200 was reported stolen from a car parked on Gettysburg, Farmington Hills, Sept. 14-24.

Two chainsaws valued at \$950 were reported stolen from a garage on the 26600 block of Inkster, Farmington Hills, Sept. 17-24.

A wood chuck valued at \$800 was

reported stolen from the Greenpoint Condominiums construction site on 13 Mile, near Haggerty, Farmington Hills, Sept. 20-21. The vehicle was removed from the low bar of a dozer.

A bicycle valued at \$180 was reported stolen from a garage on Westmeath, Farmington Hills, Sept. 22.

Cash totaling \$585 was reported stolen from a house on Kendallwood, Farmington Hills, Sept. 22.

Two bicycles and an electric engine valued at \$840 were reported stolen from a garage on Tuck, Farmington Hills, Sept. 22-23.

A 1989 Ford Ranger valued at \$11,000 was reported stolen from Timberidge Apartments, Farmington Hills, Sept. 22-23.

A boat, two outboard motors and a trailer valued at \$1,800 were reported stolen from a house on Ontaga, Farmington Hills, Sept. 23-25.

A gold watch valued at \$350 was reported stolen from a house on Colgate, Farmington Hills, Sept. 24.

A personal computer valued at \$4,175 was reported stolen from a suite at 30500 Northwestern Highway, Farmington Hills, Sept. 24-25.

A VCR valued at \$250 was reported stolen from a house on the 57300 block of 12 Mile, Farmington Hills, Sept. 25.

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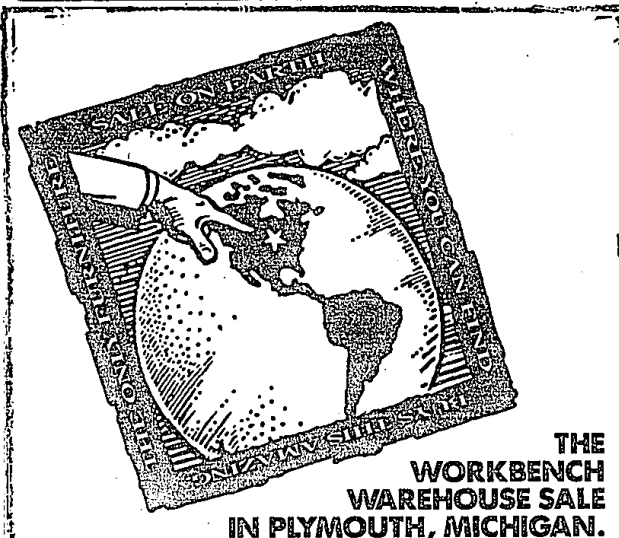
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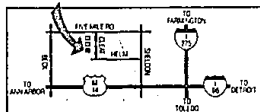


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