

# Residents want buffer from noise on I-696

Continued from Page 1

Camelot Court residents, however, want more than two additional feet on the existing earth berm in their common area as proposed by MDOT, Costick said.

MDOT also plans to build a wall on the north side of I-696, west of Orchard Lake Road to the pedestrian overpass at Oakland Community College-Orchard Ridge Campus. These plans "generated favorable comments from residents" when announced at an informational meeting Jan. 24, Costick said.

THE FEDERAL Highway Administration, Funk said, may be willing to provide \$30,000 to help build a berm to buffer Howard Road residents, but Farmington Hills would

have to help pay.

"MDOT feels the cost in this area would exceed \$150,000; therefore, they abandoned this project. A reduced project providing relief to two homes would cost \$50,000," according to Costick's interim report.

He said MDOT officials feel a wetlands area between I-696 and Howard Road makes the costs out-of-reach.

Camelot Court residents, meanwhile, are working with city engineers to determine whether the widened I-696 was raised above its previous elevation. Consultant Barton-Ashman, Inc. also is obtaining field noise levels in the Camelot Court area.

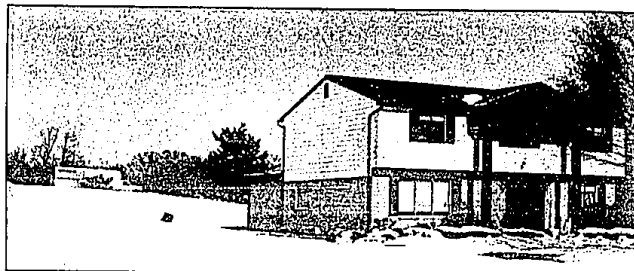
If the roadway has been raised, the berm should be raised to not only

be above the freeway but to provide a sound buffer, said Neil Swiacki, Camelot Court Homeowners Association board member and past president.

Funk said the freeway was raised six inches at the highest point and "tapers down to four inches at the lowest point." Plans of the freeway both before and after the widening have been sent to the city, Funk added.

"The way we are approaching it is on the basis of sound levels now. We want the highest berm possible," Swiacki said.

USING A computer, MDOT has determined that in 1985, prior to the widening, a noise level of 67 decibels emanated from the freeway. With the widening, the noise level is at 71



DOUGLAS SUSALL/Staff photographer

Camelot Court residents don't need an alarm clock in the morning. The traffic on I-696 does the trick. But residents, with the city of Farm-

ington Hills' support, are seeking a tall enough berm so they can't see the freeway, which is north of their subdivision.

decibels. "The berm (of two additional feet) is intended to bring it back to 67 decibels," said Funk of MDOT.

But Swiacki said residents want a berm that's much higher than proposed by MDOT, both to accommodate the higher road base and and

higher noise level. "We would like a berm where we can't see the expressway. MDOT won't do it," he said.

# Hills tax assessments up

Continued from Page 1

The assessment process determines the true cash value of property for the purpose of calculating property taxes. City, school and county tax rates are levied against the assessed value of property. An assessment is generally 50 percent of the "usual selling price" of a house.

"AN ASSESSMENT increase does not automatically mean that is equal to increases in taxes. It is your slice of the tax pie. It gives everyone a fair share of the tax burden. But it doesn't determine the amount of the tax burden," Babb said.

When property owners receive their assessment notices, they may

call the assessor's office with questions. Babb invites residents who question their assessments to review the public records.

"If they are not aware of how property is selling in their neighborhoods, they can come in and look at the neighborhood sales studies," he said.

Homeowners pleading hardship may pick up applications or have them mailed after Monday, March 5. Income tax returns must be attached to the returned forms. Homeowners are not required to personally attend the review board. "We will present it to the board of review on their behalf," Babb said.

While the housing market is now slowing, the market for commercial and industrial properties has been in

that state for some time, prompting only an average 3 percent increase.

"Their market is still flat. There's still a tremendous amount of vacancies in offices. And a lot of rent concessions are being given."

Commercial and industrial properties received large increases in 1985-87, the result of a major reappraisal of that property by the Oakland County Equalization Division.

"Since then, their market has changed dramatically. They are assessed on their own market. On buildings, the market value is impacted by the ability to produce income," Babb said.

Last year, commercial properties received an average 2 percent increase and industrial, a 5 percent increase.

# Rolnick won't seek 4th term

Continued from Page 1

Residents interested in running for the school board can obtain nominating petitions at the district's Lewis Schulman Administrative Center, 32500 Shawwassee, between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

To be eligible to run for the board, a person must be a resident of the Farmington district, 18 years old and a registered voter. A person need not own property in the district.

Completed petitions must be returned to district offices by 4 p.m. Monday, April 9. Nominating petitions must have the valid signatures of at least 20 registered voters

of the district.

Those turning in completed petitions can withdraw from the non-partisan race before 4 p.m. Thursday, April 12. Otherwise, their names will appear on the ballot. To vote June 11, residents must register by Monday, May 14.

IT HAS been five years since the Farmington school board had an open seat in which an incumbent did not run.

In 1985, 13 candidates competed for two open seats when trustees Emma Makinen and Richard Wallace decided not to run for re-election. Trustees Jack Cotton and Helen Dilthazy won their first-term,

and were subsequently re-elected in 1989.

Other current trustees serving staggered, four-year terms include Helen Prutow, Susan Rennels and James Abernethy.

The Farmington Board of Education meets regularly on the first and third Tuesdays on each month. It considers recommendations from the school administration and sets all district policies.

The district encompasses the city of Farmington, most of the city of Farmington Hills and a portion of West Bloomfield Township north of 14 Mile between Inlander and Middlebelt.

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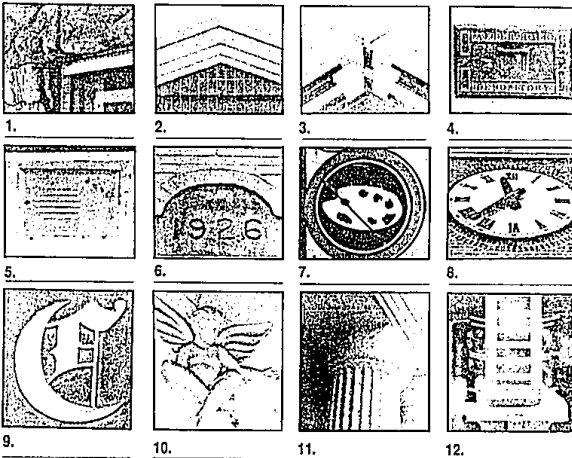
## I.D. (Identify Downtown) Contest

Sponsored by the Farmington Downtown Development Authority and the Farmington Observer

Here's how to enter:

Identify the following 12 photographs of parts of Downtown Farmington buildings and places for a chance to win "top of the town" prizes. Some of the angles are tricky so don't be surprised if you "find yourself in Downtown Farmington" trying to figure them out.

The I. D. (Identify Downtown) Contest Photos



Saluting Downtown Farmington, the I.D. Contest coincides with DOWNTOWN DAY, a special event on March 21, 1990 honoring the historic nature of the area. Contest winners will be announced on Downtown Day.

Here's what you may win:

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**2nd PRIZE:**  
Paint the town (or just your home) with paint and home improvement items valued at \$200 from DAMMAN HARDWARE in Downtown Farmington

**3rd PRIZE:**  
Listen to the sounds of Motown on five compact discs from HARMONY HOUSE RECORDS & TAPES in Downtown Farmington

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Address \_\_\_\_\_  
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Clip and submit photo I.D.'s and address form to:  
Farmington Downtown Development Authority (DDA)  
33411 Grand River Ave.  
Farmington, MI 48024  
Phone 473-7276

- Hand-print your name, address and phone number on entry blank (extra entry blanks available for pick up at DDA and Farmington Observer offices). Submit entry to DDA office. Only one entry per person. Entry must be received by 5 p.m. on March 19, 1990.
- Winners to be selected in a random drawing from correct or most correct entries. Winners will be announced as part of Downtown Day festivities beginning at 12 noon, March 21, 1990 in Downtown Farmington.
- Contest open to entrants 21 years of age or with a valid driver's license except contest sponsors and prize contributors and their families. Winners will be notified by mail.
- All decisions made by the judges are final.

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