

# 'Most Wanted Walkers' unveil downtown path

By Amy Rauch  
staff writer

**F**ARMINGTON AND Farmington Hills residents scrambled throughout downtown Farmington Saturday morning in search of the "Ten Most Wanted Walkers."

But residents weren't looking to turn them in. Instead, they were hoping for a signature.

The "Ten" local celebrities were part of a promotion to kick off the grand opening of a permanent walking path winding through downtown Farmington. The kickoff coincided with National Physical Fitness and Sports Month.

**THE PATH**, which features two routes — one-half mile and 1½ miles — begins at the Farmington Municipal Building.

"One of the main goals of our program is to make the area more pedestrian friendly. Additions such as new sidewalks and crosswalks have paved the way for the walking path," said Wendy Strip Sittsamer, DDA executive director.

Residents who collected one or more celebrity signatures were eligible for one of 10 prizes donated by downtown Farmington businesses. Top prize was a progressive dinner for four — appetizers at Dimitri's of Farmington, dinner at Maroo's Dining and Cocktails and dessert at Sweet Connection.

**THE "Ten Most Wanted Walkers"** were:

- Colleen Burear, WKQI-FM.
- Jan Dolan, state representative, 69th District.
- Kerie Dwyer, Miss Farmington 1989.
- Richard Headlee, Alexander Hamilton Life Insurance Co. chairman.
- Jimmy Launce, WJR-AM.
- Peter Nielsen, Mr. International Universe 1984 and 1985.
- Parkey the Panda, Farmington Hills Recreation Department mascot.
- Joe Polimeni, UPI photographer.
- Shirley Richardson, Farmington mayor.

• Scott Weiland, 1982-88 Guinness World Book record holder for backward marathon running.

"Promoting the downtown area is a great idea," Dolan said. "Anything they can do to promote downtown is super."

About 50 people walked through the downtown Farmington area with a group stretch led by Susan Ran, owner of Suzy Ran's Science of Slimming. Weiland sent off his cohorts with a backward run.

**DWYER DUCKED** into Dimitri's restaurant for breakfast with her mother, Marilyn Dwyer. They didn't remain in hiding long, however, before they were found by Scott Primeau, 8, and his brother, Kevin, 11. The pair later won a prize.

Headlee used his part in the walk as a chance to catch up on some shopping. He was caught looking at compact discs in Harmony House by Betty Derrickson of Farmington, who demanded his signature.

Derrickson enjoys walking and would enjoy the new path, she said. In fact, she walked seven miles before the event started.

Along the path, children could stop for snacks from area restaurants and passersby could enjoy songs sung by the Sweet Adelines of Farmington.

**AREA RESIDENTS** agree that the new walking path, part of a revitalization program by the Farmington Downtown Development Authority, will be a good addition to downtown Farmington.

"I think it looks pretty good," said Farmington Hills resident Louise Seffens. "It will be a nice addition to the downtown area. It might get people into walking downtown."

People of all ages joined the walk; some even brought their dogs.

"It's great so far," said Farmington Hills resident Norman Callin, who had completed the first stretch of the walk. "Anything to get the community out together. This is one

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— Wendy Strip Sittsamer  
DDA executive director



Betty Derrickson (left) of Farmington gets her first autograph from Richard Headlee, who was shopping for a Karen Carpenter album at Harmony House in the Downtown Farmington Center.

SHARON LEMIEUX/staff photographer



SHARON LEMIEUX/staff photographer

At least two quartets of Sweet Adelines were spotted along the walking path route Saturday morning.

of those communities that will never change.

Callin was accompanied by his wife, Anita, and their two dogs, Oreo and Cookie.

**SOME RESIDENTS** said the path would bring the community closer together, while others said it would

make downtown Farmington a more convenient place.

"I like to walk where there's a path," said Helen McGlennen of Farmington Hills. "I'll enjoy it. I'll come to town and shop along the way."

"The idea of it is great," said

Jayne Lanigan of Farmington Hills. "It's a nice community thing."

"It's better than (walking in) a residential area, where trees hang down and you have to duck them," said Kathy Bailey of Farmington. "And you can see, I'm not that tall."

"It's nice. We get a closer look at

things we usually drive by," said Paul Dabish of Farmington Hills.

The path's routes, designed by Botsford General Hospital's Total Rehabilitation and Athletic Conditioning Center, are designated by footprints on the sidewalk at key points along the way as well as one large sign at the city hall.

## Farmington taxes to rise despite drop in tax rate

By Susan Buck  
staff writer

No comment.

Neither residents nor council members expressed any opinion at a Truth in Taxation hearing Monday on Farmington's proposed 1990-91 city budget.

Farmington officials plan to cut the city tax rate to near inflation levels, but residents will still see taxes rise next year because of expenses over which the city has little control.

Residents will likely see a 5.1 percent increase in their taxes with the new fiscal year July 1, since property values have increased.

The Truth in Taxation hearing was required to explain why the city proposes to increase taxes more than the rate of inflation. Last year's inflation rate was 4.8 percent.

This was the last of several meetings at which city officials will address details of the budget before it's adopted June 4. Other special meetings were held April 19, May 1 and May 9.

A brief overview of major programs include continuation of existing service programs, the replacement of the heating and cooling system at the Department of Public Services Facility on Nine Mile, the improvements to the city's combined sewer system and replacement of the city's street sweeper, said Robert Deadman, city manager.

**HE SAID** that despite rubbish disposal cost increases and other increases, the city will still be able to

cut its property tax rate from 10.40 mills to 10.05 mills per \$1,000 of state equalized valuation.

One mill represents \$1 per \$1,000 of state equalized value of property. SEV represents 50 percent of what property will sell for on the open market.

Deadman's proposal calls for a \$9.2 million budget, with \$4.7 million for general operations, \$1.27 million for highways, \$960,000 in debt service, \$628,000 in the capital fund and \$1.65 million in the water and sewer fund.

Last year's budget total of \$6.8 million did not include figures for the debt service and the capital fund, which were detailed separately.

The largest item in the budget, \$1.6 million, is for water and sewer operation and maintenance paid for with usage fees charged to residents.

In the general fund, police and fire expenses handled by the public safety department total \$1.45 million, followed by public services department at \$741,000 and city insurance costs, which are estimated to top \$711,000.

**DEADMAN HIGHLIGHTED** major projects with budgetary impact for the 1990-91 fiscal year:

• Water and sewer rates will go up in the coming year, due to rate increases from both the city of Detroit and Oakland County. The last retail rate increase was in 1988.

• Sewer rates will increase 38 cents per 1,000 gallons used if a sewer bond issue was not approved during a special election Tuesday. The

city will undertake its largest sewer infrastructure project over this year, expected to cost \$12 million. Taxpayers will foot the bill, whether it is through increased debt service or sewer rate increases.

• Much of the \$627,000 in the capital fund is earmarked for the Orchard Lake Road widening project, scheduled to begin this year. Oakland County is still working to obtain the property rights of way for construction. The rest will be used to buy a new street sweeper costing \$110,000.

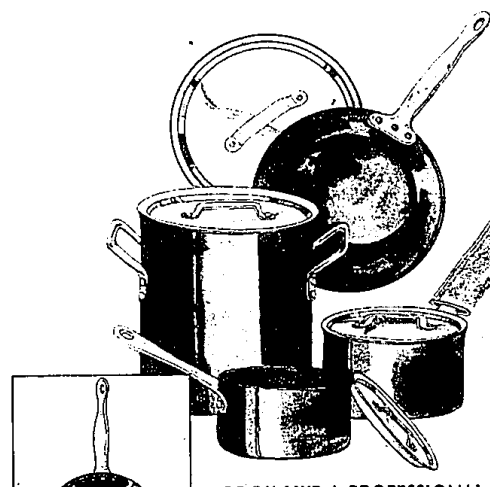
• The city also plans to continue levying a 2-mill tax in the Downtown Development Authority District. That tax is used in conjunction with tax increment financing, in which increased property values are captured within the district to pay for the rejuvenation project, which began in 1987.

• Garbage collection costs will rise by more than \$100,000 in the coming year, Deadman estimates in his proposed budget. Currently budgeted at \$425,000, the 1990-91 expenses are expected to top \$550,000.

Deadman said he expects the city to begin curbside recycling in 1991.

• General city employees are proposed to receive a 4.5 percent pay increase. Others range between 4 and 5 percent depending on collective bargaining agreements. Contracts with public safety command officers and officers unions expire on June 30.

Despite increased costs, the city would maintain a small surplus of \$62,000 going into the new year, Deadman said.



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## Kids help stock church pantry

By Susan Buck  
staff writer

The fruits of Eagle Elementary's first talent show went straight to St. Alexander's food cupboard last week.

Admission to "Good Old Vaudeville Show" May 17 at Warner Middle School in Farmington Hills was one canned good.

Some 700 people attended the all-school show and the pantry at the Farmington Hills church reaped the reward.

"I think every Eagle parent who could be there was," said Susan

Johnson, Eagle principal. "The fifth grade class hosted the show, narration and closing."

Some 125 kids, selected from 250 who tried out, performed a variety of acts for an hour-and-a-half. There were 27 acts ranging from lip sync to piano, to comedy, representing every grade level, Johnson said.

Fifth graders handled the production and lighting, according to music teacher Kathy Seremet, who coordinated the event.

**SOME STAFF** members performed a surprise, unadvertised dance routine, Johnson said.

The 70-member fifth grade chorus also performed.

An ice cream social followed.

The following morning, Seremet and five fifth grade students, who performed in the show, helped to deliver the canned goods to St. Alexander's. The students were: David Ragland, Lauren Jones, Mikki Mentzel, Lindsay Cole and Jim Bosker.

Peg Harris coordinates the continuous effort of the St. Alexander's food cupboard. "We've had the cupboard for last five years," Harris said. "We help about 35 people a month who have to be Oakland County residents."