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to hawk talents, 4B



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for your sweetie, 1C



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Fifty Cents

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SO WHERE is Farmington's founder, anyway? Help locate that gentleman and you'll be helping the community celebrate its 125th anniversary as a village.

To celebrate the anniversary, downtown Farmington businesses will participate in a "Find Farmington's Founder" contest Feb. 17 through March 17. Participating businesses will have a "portrait" on display. Is it Nathan Power, a member of the founding family?

One grand-prize winner will be selected in a random drawing of contest entries on March 18. The winner will receive \$500 in "downtown dollars" to be used at participating businesses through June 30.

The event is sponsored by the Downtown Development Authority, an agency of the city of Farmington which attempts to maintain a vigorous downtown district while maintaining a small community atmosphere.

For more information on the contest, call the DDA at 473-7276.

WARREN RINGOLD and Monica Williams have that lucky touch — and they're lovingly touching their new cars as a result.

Both picked up new cars won in recent drawings at different Farmington-area dealerships.

Ringold, a physician and father of six from Farmington, won his 1992 Buick Skylark as Bill Cook Automotive Group of Farmington Hills celebrated its 125th anniversary with the giveaway.

Ringold walked into the Bill Cook showroom one recent Saturday and matched his sweepstakes number to the one displayed. "I thought I was going to faint when I saw my number matched," he said.

Sweepstakes numbers were mailed to 15,000 Detroit-area residents as part of the sales event.

Williams, a Detroit resident, won her car — a Suzuki Swift — at a drawing at the recent International Auto Show. She picked it up at the Bob Saks agency in Farmington Hills.

"I've never seen anyone so excited," said Tex Dziukinski, sales manager.

MEMORY LANE — From the Feb. 14, 1952 Farmington Enterprise:

• A record turnout was expected for the Feb. 18, 1952 election which would establish zoning codes for Farmington Township. Polling places were in the Township Hall and the Odd Fellows Hall.

• A fire at a business owned by Tony Carnevale caused about \$300 damage, according to Fire Chief Leo Hendryx.

• More than \$3,500 was collected in the Farmington March of Dimes campaign.

• Special noon luncheons were being served at 85 cents at the Grand View Bar, 34505 Grand River.

• New phone numbers for the Farmington police were 0036 and 0037.

• Farmington High's basketball team dropped a 52-25 decision to Walled Lake in the Inter-Lakes League.



photos by SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer



Family trees

Students in three fifth-grade classes at Larkhira Elementary recently studied their family trees, which helped them gain cultural understanding. At left is Nicky Duke, who pastes his family tree onto the classroom wall. Above is Olga Frankenstein, who was born in Russia, and holds up a garment to show the class. Teachers Karla Winkley, Norma McAlpine and Pat Weston organized the project.

Cities pinched by tax freeze, down economy

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

The cities of Farmington and Farmington Hills are sharpening their budget pencils in light of a down-turned economy and this year's statewide property tax assessment freeze.

"We are all in store for a challenge," Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick said.

Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman — who like Costick is already talking and preparing budgets for 1992-93 — would agree.

"These are just tough times," he said. "Government services can't fluctuate up and down like a company with sales as a product."

Despite the expected financial crunch, both Deadman and Costick say they aren't looking at increasing tax rates to offset the effects of the assessment freeze or the lagging economy.

A primary effect on the cities' budgets is the current one-year property tax assessment freeze, which freezes 1992 assessments at their 1991 levels unless specifically exempted.

Increased property values — on existing property and new construction — are something cities rely on financially.

"WE'VE RELIED on a 5-6 percent increase each year on the tax rolls. It's helped us respond to inflation and helped us meet the needs from growth," Costick said.

This year is another story. "With the assessment freeze and the slowdown in new construction we're not going to see an increase on the tax

roll in current values and we'll see less of an increase in new values," Costick said.

Consider that in the past three years, value of new construction increased \$100-\$110 million. This year, new construction has increased only \$30 million, said Farmington Hills finance director Charles Rosch.

The economic slowdown also has helped reduce revenues from building permits and engineering fees. In 1988-89, Farmington Hills received \$1.7 million from building permits. In the current 1991-92

'These are just tough times. Government services can't fluctuate up and down like a company with sales as a product.'

— Robert Deadman
Farmington manager

budget, \$800,000 in revenues from permits are projected. "We're not going to hit it," Rosch said.

Farmington faces the same picture. "The freeze will affect us pretty dramatically. Our SEV (state equalized value) will be status quo. I'm projecting we won't get any new construction revenue. If at all, we may have something relatively small, like a house or two," Deadman said.

THE BOTTOM line for both cities is that revenue will drop, despite continuing cost increases. The average 3-percent increase Farmington Hills receives on the value of exist-

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School aid cuts fought by parents

By Casey Hans
staff writer

A regional parent group is leading a grass roots push to keep the state from taking more money from wealthy local school districts. State officials are discussing even greater cuts.

The Coalition of Michigan Parents, which has an active Farmington-area contingent, has started a letter-writing campaign urging state legislators to lift a recently imposed cap on how much they will pay in employer Social Security taxes.

The cap is expected to cost the Farmington district \$200,000 this year and possibly more in the future, school officials said.

"We want to stop it (cuts) altogether," said Farmington Hills parent

Jan Bennett, who is working with local parents Debbie Lukasiak and Kerry Kelly and a number of regional parents to halt current Social Security cuts, which they believe is a foot in the door for even more cuts.

In the past, the COMP group sponsored petition drives protesting state aid cuts to out-of-formula school districts and is still working on a plan to reform school financing across the state. That issue is expected to be addressed in more detail after the November election, when voters will likely vote on several property tax reduction proposals.

IN PAST YEARS, the state paid employer Social Security taxes. The fear is that state officials will dump

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Hills finally wins state OK for 12 Mile wetlands plan

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

A sigh of relief could almost be heard Wednesday when Farmington Hills received its long-awaited permit to fill in wetlands along 12 Mile Road for the continuing boulevard construction project.

"My perspective was to obtain the permit. The door is open now," said Farmington Hills assistant city manager David Call.

The permit allows the city to fill-in regulated wetlands along the boulevard. Though it was expected the city would have to replace a maximum 7.6 acres, the permit allows the replacement of only 5.1 acres. The permit does not specify where the wetlands must be replaced. Once the wetlands are replaced, they will be monitored for five years, Call said.

Receipt of the permit means that the Peltz-MDOT committee, working with Call, has some time to develop alternatives to replacing the wetlands — all or part of the required replacement — on the parkland south of I-696, west of Farmington Road.

"They (DNR officials) indicated they would accept another plan for the mitigation," Call said.

WITHOUT THE replacement of wetlands along 12 Mile, the city stood to lose a \$3.6 million state grant that will help pay for the next estimated 77 million boulevard mile, Halsted to Haggerty, Call said.

The DNR permit also covers filling in wetlands along the third planned mile stretch of boulevard, Drake to Halsted, which is planned in the future.

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