

Elected DDA officers face new challenges

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"I don't think you're going into an easy period. The market is shrinking, and shrinking and shrinking. It's not going to be a simple, quick fix."

HOHLER'S SEAT on the DDA has yet to be filled. Wingerter's replacement is DDA board member Craig Grace, a downtown insurance agent whose term will expire in 1994. Tuesday was his first meeting.

The resignation of the two DDA members was a big change for the board. Both had held their respective seats since the DDA was formed in 1988.



Robert Heinrich
DDA President

Both said they would stay active as downtown merchants in giving the board input. "I'm not giving up my energies or efforts," Hohlter said.

In the DDA annual report which was also presented Tuesday, DDA well, including some in promotions and marketing. Farmington's downturn has not been immune from the poor economic climate, she added project and look to future plan-

Some predict fallout from closings

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And that's not to mention the expected impact on the state's Department of Social Services budget. To keep that financed, other cuts — ones that could affect the Farmington area — will come down the line, Dolan added.

"It's a matter of time. We are still automotive. We have automotive suppliers here. This won't affect the hairdressers and restaurants," Dolan said.

Jody Soronen, director of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, said she sees businesses tightening up overall, but has heard no specific complaints about the GM downsizing and plant closings from the auto-related busi-

nesses in the Farmington area.

"We've not heard anything," she added. "But I believe there are businesses that will ultimately be affected."

A number of auto-related businesses based in Farmington Hills were contacted by the Observer. Most would not comment about their specific situations.

But Bob McConnell, president of the auto-related McConnell Product Sales and chairman of the Farmington Hills Economic Development Corporation, said there's no doubt business "is soft. It's off."

HIS COMPANY'S business is down 27-30 percent. And the EDC "has been groping with this issue (downturned economy) for the last

year. The EDC board has been reorganized and now has a committee devoted to expanding and retaining business in Farmington Hills.

He disagrees somewhat with Faxon's comments that the Farmington area has mostly stockholders in companies such as GM.

"There are professionals, yes. But take it from the point of view of the small business owner. They are feeling the pinch. Everyone is shifting to cut costs."

And word is out that the auto companies will take back design and engineering work that they had previously sent outside to other companies. That will hurt the smaller businesses, McConnell said.

Farmington Hills assessor Dean Babb says he expects the city to be

affected down the road.

"So far there's been nothing noticeable. It's too soon to tell. It is going to get into the third and fourth auto-related generations," he said.

Over at Oakland Community College, enrollments are at record levels which usually happens during a recessionary period, said spokesman George Carlsson.

"It's the cyclical thing," he said. "When times get bad, people return to school. Even people who are not laid off get serious, and make themselves more indispensable."

Although most colleges and universities prosper during bad times, "It's a painful process and a lot of people get hurt," he added. "I can't take a lot of pleasure in it."

Assessment freeze suits most

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ASSESSMENTS from the state Tax Tribunal — reductions from 1991 will be for 1992 — as well as new construction also are considered exclusions to the freeze.

It's also the time of year when the board of review meets in Farmington and Farmington Hills. Assessors Babb and John Sailer of Farmington don't expect an onslaught of appeals this year. But the freeze also limits the type of appeals the board can hear.

"Anyone whose assessment is frozen cannot appeal to the board of review," Babb said.

The Farmington Hills board will meet Monday, March 9, through Wednesday, March 11. The Farmington board will meet Monday, March 9, and Wednesday, March 11.

Though Sailer says every property owner has a right to appeal their 1992 assessment before the board, "no change can be made to a frozen 1991 assessment unless the property was acquired after Jan. 1, 1991," according to Sailer's report to the city council.

"The board will relay their recommendation to the assessor for consideration in the property's 1993 assessment determination. After a protest to the board of review, the taxpayer may appeal the 1992 valuation to the Michigan Tax Tribunal," Sailer continued.

The Farmington Hills board will

hear only appeals from property owners who fall into the exclusions class, such as property splits or combinations, or new construction, Babb said.

Farmington Hills property owners who are not part of the exclusions class may still provide the board with a letter of appearance — that would be considered for 1993. The forms are available at the assessor's office.

Keep in mind, however, that at least this year, board members' hands are tied. If under the freeze, you are not allowed to appeal, the Farmington Hills assessors' office will not make an appointment for you.

UNDER THE freeze you may appeal to a board of review if you bought a house, for example, in 1991, and the former owner didn't appeal in 1991.

"By law, you can appeal the 1991 assessment to the board. But tax day is still Dec. 31, 1990, and the board must review it as of 1990 and cannot use 1991 sales in their review," Babb said.

Here's what happens for all types of real property, including commercial, industrial, office, apartments and residential under the freeze:

- Property tax assessment on all real property will be frozen for one year as of Dec. 31, 1991, for the 1992 tax roll.

- The boards of review are limited in what they can do.

obituaries

MARTIN BEYER

Mr. Beyer, 75, of Farmington Hills died Feb. 28 in William Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak.

Born in Detroit, Mr. Beyer was a retired tool and die grinder for Stark Cutter Machine.

Survivors include his wife, Dorothy; son, Pete; daughter, Bette Cloud; sister, Margaret Snokes; brothers, Edward and Donald; six grandchildren.

Services were March 1 at the Thayer-Rock Funeral Home, Farmington, with the Rev. Brian Tweedle, of Ward Presbyterian Church officiating. Memorials may be made to the Heart Association or Cancer or Lung Association.

DOUGLAS S GROSE

Mr. Grose, 31, of Farmington Hills died Feb. 28.

Survivors include his parents, Donald and Jane; sister, Karen. Services were March 2 at the McCabe Funeral Home, Farmington Hills.

Memorials may be made to the Muscular Dystrophy Association in memory of Douglas. Envelopes are available at the funeral home.

GRACE MARIE PINTO

Mrs. Pinto, 93, of Farmington

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Hills died March 2 in Botsford Hospital, Farmington Hills.

Born in Bangor, Pa., Mrs. Pinto was a homemaker.

Survivors include daughters, Virginia Watkins and Lenore DiRocco; brother, Frank Rosato; seven grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren.

Mass was celebrated March 5 in St. Gerald Catholic Church, Farmington, with the Rev. Gerald McEnhill officiating. Burial was in Olivet Cemetery, Detroit.

LOIS ANNETTE WOOD

Mrs. Wood, 73, of Livonia died March 1 in Huron Valley Hospital.

Born in Detroit, Mrs. Wood was a homemaker.

Survivors include her daughters, Leanne Solider of Farmington Hills, Sherry Derderian; four grandchildren; longtime companion, Clyde Wilson.

Services were March 5 at the Heene-Sundquist Funeral Home, Farmington, with the Rev. Arthur J. Hunt of Ward Presbyterian Church officiating. Burial was in Grand Lawn Cemetery, Detroit.

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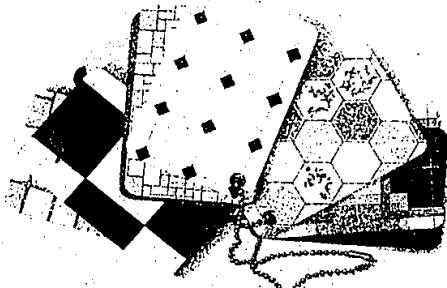
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