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# Farmington Observer

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Fifty Cents



## City to audit housing rehab program

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Farmington Hills City Manager William Costick has retained auditors to review procedures — such as loan applications and construction bids — used in the city's federally financed housing rehabilitation program.

"This issue has not been a mishandling of money," Costick said. "The issue is how things have been processed."

Apparent problems with the housing rehabilitation program surfaced during a city council public hearing on the 1992-93 block grant program Monday night. Low-interest loans and grants are provided through the housing program for income-eligible residents who need necessary home repairs.

"Our association knows that at the present time there are some serious irregularities that

*'This issue has not been a mishandling of money. The issue is how things have been processed.'*

— William Costick  
city manager  
Farmington Hills

Ranesbottom, secretary of the Old Town-Meadowbrook Heights Homeowners Association.

During the public hearing, Ranesbottom made a lengthy statement on the failures of some portions of the block grant program, including problems with housing rehabilitation and code and zoning enforcement in the southeast section of the city.

MORE DETAILS of the program's problems came to light with responses to questions from resident Mary Duha about checks allegedly cashed by a contractor — who completed repairs on houses under the rehabilitation program — without the required signature of the homeowner.

"If a law has been violated, are we now in jeopardy of losing the federal (block grant)

fund?" Duha asked. "I wouldn't like to see us hiding something."

Two residents who received loans or grants through the housing program complained about what they believed to be contractors' deficient work, which was inspected by city staff. Costick said Tuesday he plans to meet with the residents and look at the reported deficiencies and to check into complaints about the quality of inspections completed on the rehabilitation work.

"I am concerned about this. I take it very seriously. We need to do everything we can to make people feel they want to take advantage of the program," Costick said.

He is also reviewing apparent statements by a contractor who implied he had seen bid prices and would underbid to get a job, Costick

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**L**ACE UP YOUR walking shoes. . . It's time to put your best foot forward for the March of Dimes Campaign for Healthier Babies.

On Sunday, April 26, March of Dimes WalkAmerica will take place in Farmington Hills and other metropolitan Detroit communities. Locally, the start and finish of the 50-kilometer walkathon will be located at the Orchard Ridge campus of Oakland Community College.

Some 1,500 people from the area are expected to participate in WalkAmerica this year. The walkers will include people like Joan Stec, a Farmington Hills resident and the mother of Dylan, 18 months, and Connor, 2 months.

"I feel very fortunate to have two healthy children now after having two miscarriages," said Stec. "I'm walking and supporting the March of Dimes as a way to give something back and, hopefully, to help someone else."

Last year, about 1,300 walkers in Farmington Hills raised more than \$125,000 to support March of Dimes programs to prevent birth defects, the nation's No. 1 health problem. In southeast Michigan last year, a total of 15,000 walkers raised \$1.3 million.

FARMINGTON HILLS is one of 12 host cities for WalkAmerica in the Detroit area.

"We are honored to be hosting WalkAmerica for the ninth consecutive year," said Mayor Jonathan Grant. "I'm pleased to see the residents, city employees, officials and community groups all working together for such a worthy cause."

Participants can walk as individuals or as part of TeamWalk, the corporate arm of WalkAmerica created especially for employees of companies and for members of organizations wishing to walk together.

"Being part of WalkAmerica has not only become a company tradition, but a way to give back to our home-based Michigan community," said Linda Duse, manager of public relations at Allnet Communications Services Inc. "Our employees walk and volunteer to run a checkpoint on the Farmington Hills route."

Walkers and volunteers are needed for the Farmington Hills walk. For information on how you or your company, club or organization can support WalkAmerica, call Patti Nadzik at the March of Dimes office, 423-3200.

**M**EMORY LANE — From the March 20, 1992 Farmington Enterprise:

Donald Sova, a 25-year-old Walled Lake resident, was fined \$35 for driving 70 miles an hour in a 35-mph zone on Grand River. He was spotted on westbound Grand River at Orchard Lake Road and paced between Lakeway to Mistle. He spent the night in jail, awaiting the opening of court the next day. City police issued a warning to motorists: Speeders will be dealt with severely.

Short item: "Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, Republican, is the new President of the United States — according to 281 anonymous votes of high school students at Farmington."

Items for Farmington Forum may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 21898 Farmington Road, Farmington 48336, or dropped off at the newspaper office.



SHARON LEMIEUX/staff photographer

You've probably heard Kathy Spratt play the violin and didn't even know it. The program director for treatment foster care at St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center has played in a lot of

the big shows that come to Detroit, such as "Los Miserables," "Annie," and "On Your Toes."

## Music maven Social worker by day is violinist by night

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Kathy Spratt has her plans for heaven. She's going to be the violinist in a string quartet — forever.

"I love classical the best," said the program director for treatment foster care at St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center, Farmington Hills. "It's what I grew up doing." Music has always been Spratt's

life — and her family's. But she's not torn between her two loves — her work at the center and her violin. Both are part and parcel of her life.

If you've been to the theater in the last few years to see "Les Miserables," "Annie," "Showboat," "Seven Brides for Seven Brothers," or "On Your Toes," you can bet Spratt was in the pit. And during the day she was right

### know your neighbor

back in her office working with children in the foster care program. Co-workers talk about the 17 weeks she played in the orchestra for "Les Miserables" doing eight shows a week.

her family always thought she'd do as a career. "I'm a real believer that it's in the genes," Spratt said.

HER FATHER played the string

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## Post office on wheels returned to seniors

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Farmington-area senior adults who have been faced with finding their own way to the post office since June 1991 can take heart. Their post office on wheels is coming back.

"I'm ecstatic," said Elaine McDermott, administrator of Marian Oakland West, Farmington Hills.

Ten months after its elimination, the Senior Citizen Express Mobile Post Office truck is hitting the road again beginning this week. The truck, which will make 70 stops in 65 senior adult centers and complexes in 20 communities, won't reach the Farmington area until Wednesday, March 25.

"It takes two whole weeks to make all the stops," said

Debbie Wodowski, a Royal Oak postal employee who will be back in the driver's seat of the post office on wheels.

Among Farmington-area senior adult complexes that will receive the traveling postal services every other week are Marian Oakland West, Detroit Baptist Manor — the one at 13 Mile and the other at Drake and Freedom roads — Mercy Center, American House, Farmington Place, Grand River Village, Carrington Place and Tapioja Village.

"EVERYBODY is getting it back," said Wodowski, who urged senior adults to write to legislators advocating the return of the traveling postal service.

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## Bush, Clinton triumph in area

By Joanne Maliszewski  
staff writer

Farmington and Farmington Hills voters followed electors statewide in their choice of Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton as the Democratic presidential choice and President George Bush for the Republicans.

After Tuesday's presidential primary, there's still little doubt the Farmington area is a Republican domain.

Yet Democratic voters made a strong showing in an election that some voters on both sides of the political fence wouldn't participate in because they were opposed to disclosing their party affiliation.

"They would not allow me to vote. I wouldn't disclose (party affiliation)," said one of several voters who called the Observer Tuesday. "They (election voters) were all very nice ladies. But when they asked me my party, I told them, I don't care to tell you."

The voter told the Observer that Tuesday's primary election was the first in which he had not cast a ballot for 30 years.

"If this is what politics is, OK. I had a suspicion it was going to be this way. With all the wackles in the world, I'm afraid to disclose anything like that."

BUT THERE were plenty of voters in Farmington Hills and Farmington who disclosed their party affiliation. According to unofficial vote tallies Wednesday, of 48,490 registered voters in Farmington Hills, 11,603 ballots were cast, which is a 23.93-percent turnout. Of 7,725 registered Farmington voters, 1,697 cast ballots for a 22-percent turnout.

Farmington voters still showed more interest in their local city council election in November 1991 with a 25-percent turnout. But more Farmington Hills voters turned out for Tuesday's primary compared to their November council election

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