

After the fire



PETER BALDWIN

Sorting it out: Firefighters Derek Bastein (left) and Joe Schnorack check the damage after an Oct. 20 fire at the Fairmont Park Apartments in the Nine Mile/Drake area of Farmington Hills. No injuries were reported. The fire was caused by "combustible (material) too close to heat," according to a Hills fire Department report.

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consider this in a vacuum. We know that the real world context is larger."
 "We can't wait!"
 Farmington school Superintendent Michael Flanagan said he initially supported Proposal C until he realized it could take years for the state to begin repaying local districts. "My responsibility to you is to tell you we can't wait a decade," Flanagan told school board members. "I can't, in good conscience, believe... the state's going to be able to reimburse the \$30 million loss to this school district."

this school district."
 Farmington Hills parent Jan Bennett who represents the local Advocates for Excellence in Education group, spoke out encouraging residents to get involved and understand the issues. "This is not just politics here — this is our children," she added.
 Like many out-of-formula school districts, Farmington has been hard hit in recent years by a number of "Robin Hood" laws enacted by the state legislature which have taken money away and redistributed it to in-formula districts. Those laws are currently costing Farmington about \$10

million per year, officials said. "Farmington schools has been one of the hardest hit, if not the hardest hit by the Robin Hood proposals," Barrett added. "Cut and cap would put Farmington Public Schools in a position of dependence on the state."
 Farmington school trustee Helen Fruton, president of the Michigan Association of School Boards, foresees major problems for the future if either of the proposals pass. "This will be devastating," she said. "When it comes time it will not be politically feasible for the state to assign money. There will be new, creative

measures of recapture."
 Because of the loss of write-offs on state and federal income tax returns, Barrett said the actual tax cut to the average person will be lower than it appears. "One of four dollars of tax relief will be eliminated due to credit reductions," he added.
 Trustee Susan Rennels said she had no problem with property tax relief. "That is not the question here," she said. "It's how that relief occurs and who the cost is," she said. "This is no time, if there's any time, to significantly impact children in their educational careers."

Beautification award goes to Irv and Darrel's

This year's Farmington Hills Beautification Award went to Irv and Darrell's Shell gas station on Orchard Lake and 12 Mile roads. Lincoln Avery, chair of the beautification commission, said Irv and Darrell's Shell was selected the winner about six weeks ago. But the commissioners kept their lips sealed until the awards ceremony Oct. 22.
 "It's great," Avery said of the gas station. "One of the propositions for the year 2000 committee was to have Orchard Lake developed. Irv and Darrell's is the entrance to Orchard Lake from 12 Mile — they're the beginning. So we're very conscious of their presence."
 Darrell Marx, who didn't know his gas station had won until the ceremony, couldn't stop smiling and shaking his head in disbelief

as he accepted the award. "Wow, what a shocker," he said. "I just wish my whole family was here. The (Beautification Commission) called me to make sure I would be here, but they didn't say anything else."

Marx: his father, Irving; his brother, Jerry; and his sister, Pam Migliore operate three Shell stations. Between the three stations, they planted 400 flats of flowers as part of a Shell program called Flower Power.

Marx said that beautification is worthwhile because it's "more pleasing for everyone."
 Avery said, "If you stop to think about it, we're all winners to work and to live and to play in this beautiful city."

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