

Retailers say road work taking big toll

BY CASEY HANS
STAFF WRITER

Dan and Sandy McPhail want you to know they're still in business.

The owners of Dan's Giant Submarine, more commonly known as Dan's Sub Shop, say they have lost two third of their business since the project to widen Orchard Lake Road tore up the roadway in front of their business.

County officials say with good weather, they could complete the project yet this year. But bad weather could push completion into next spring, according to the project engineer.

"It's devastating to our business," restaurateur Dan McPhail said about the project, which has taken a good part of the past two years to construct. It was originally slated for completion in 1991.

Dan said his only option is to hold on. "You've got to stay upbeat about it," he said.

Dan's Sub Shop is on Orchard Lake just north of Grand River, and has lived for weeks with a one-lane access roadway north from Grand River because of the project, which was stalled for a while and started up again last week.

They have been at that location for 17 years, and have been in business in Farmington for 26 years.

Critical to the McPhails is their seasonal holiday ham business, for which the season is just starting. Sandy McPhail said the customer lunch count is so low, that she and Dan know most of the customers' first and last names.

"I'm just fearful it's not going to get done," Dan said. "This business is losing money now. We've been able to weather the storm so far."

The project has shut the restaurant down several times, including when there was absolutely no street access to the shop, and other times when the

water was shut off. Other businesses along that stretch of Orchard Lake have also suffered, the McPhails said.

Dave Reed, owner of the Farmington Bike Shop at Orchard Lake and Shiawassee which has been in his family since 1957, said his business also has been hurt by the extended construction. But he was pleased to note that construction began again last week, saying that's a "good sign."

"It has definitely hurt people's driving pattern," he added. "We kind of depend on that. The more flow of traffic the more exposure you get."

The Orchard Lake Road widening project from 10 Mile to Grand River has taken much longer than anticipated to complete due mainly to contaminated soil found under the road. That caused time delays and involved of state and federal environmental officials.

Those delays prompted the cement contractor to move on to other projects. But last week, Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman said he was told the contractor would be back on the job and that the county would attempt to complete the construction work by Dec. 1.

Oakland County Road Commission engineer Lisa Duckin said the county was hopeful with good weather, that the project could be totally completed, including work on the east side of the road which has yet to be torn up.

The contractor can pour concrete into December, she added.

Worst case, she said, would mean paving the westerly two lanes of Orchard Lake, leaving gravel access driveways for businesses to the east, for the winter months, and completing the project in the spring.

Landscaping and sidewalk work along Orchard Lake is slated for completion in the spring.

The project is one Farmington



STAFF PHOTOS BY SHARON LEMIEUX

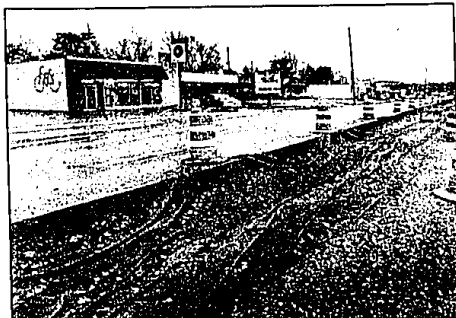
Sub shop: Dan and Sandy McPhail stand outside their Farmington business, Dan's Sub Shop on Orchard Lake Road.

city officials have been pushing to get done for years, and plans for the widening were finally completed in 1989. The cost is being shared between city and county governments.

Ironically, for as long as the project has been dreamed about by officials, the McPhails have maintained their business in Farmington. Dan, a graduate of Farmington High School, said he always dreamed of owning his own business. "We began making submarine sandwiches long before they were a popular item," he said.

Despite the problems, the McPhails maintain a pleasant attitude about the whole thing. Sandy said she just pretends the torn up roadway is not there.

"We're encouraged that when the road re-opens business will come back," Dan added. "It just doesn't seem right that it should have dragged on this long."



Cramped style: A bicycle shop and a flower store are affected by the construction along Orchard Lake Road.

POLICE/FIRE CALLS

Listed below are some of the Farmington-area police incidents, fire calls and court cases reported during the past week.

TEEN REPORTS GUNFIRE

A 14-year-old Farmington Hills boy told police that someone fired a gun at him while he was riding his bike on Independence and Hamilton Nov. 5, a police report said. The boy swerved in front of the driver of a red mid-sized two-door car. The driver stopped the car and called the boy a "son of a bitch" to which the boy replied, "Screw off."

The boy told police that as he was riding away, he heard the man say, "I'm going to kill you." The boy then said he saw a flash of light and heard a loud bang from the direction of the driver.

The driver was last seen heading toward Middlebelt on Independence Road. He was about 5 feet-7 and weighed about 160 pounds. He had a stocky build and short straight dark hair. He was last seen wearing a purple sweater and dark jeans.

ARRESTS

A 26-year-old Detroit man was arrested Nov. 3 after police stopped his car for a loud exhaust and a broken windshield, according to a Farmington Hills police report. A police check found that the man was driving with a suspended license and that a misdemeanor warrant out of Highland Park for driving with a suspended license had been issued for his arrest.

In unrelated incidents, a 48-year-old Lincoln Park woman was arrested Nov. 3 after police

stopped her Ford Escort for an expired license plate. A check found a misdemeanor warrant with a \$50 bond issued for Lincoln Park for her arrest.

A 32-year-old Farmington Hills man was arrested Nov. 4 on two misdemeanor warrants out of Redford after police stopped his Ford Fiesta for having an expired license plate.

A 23-year-old Farmington Hills man was arrested Nov. 5 on a warrant with a \$1,500 bond when police stopped him for a traffic violation at 12 Mile and Orchard Lake roads.

THEFTS

A Cass Road resident reported \$4,276 worth of tools and equipment stolen Nov. 3 from his garage.

German golf clubs valued at \$600 were reported stolen Nov. 4 from a van parked in the driveway of a Caryn Road resident.

A man driving a burgundy Toyota Camry failed to pay for \$10.21 worth of gasoline at the Mobile gas station on 12 Mile. A station attendant told police that the man was seen headed south on Middlebelt south of 12 Mile.

VANDALISM

The Chinese Bible Church on 10 Mile reported a shattered window Nov. 4. Police believe the window was broken by a BB gun.

CHILD

Farmington Hills police were called to Forrest Elementary School when an 8-year-old child began running around the school and waving a knife at those who tried to stop him, a police report

said.

Witnesses told police that the child had been removed from a music class for improper behavior and then disrupted an art class by walking in and pretending to stab himself with a pair of scissors.

The child then ran into the teachers' lounge, climbed over furniture and swore at teachers in the room.

After a school psychologist had restrained the child, he escaped, entered the library and grabbed a knife used earlier to carve a pumpkin.

When police arrived, the boy was restrained and turned over to a case worker.

HIT AND RUN

A 31-year-old Farmington Hills man was taken to Botsford Hospital Nov. 4 after being struck by a pickup truck, a police report said. According to witnesses, the man had an argument with the driver of the truck after the truck passed the man's Acura in a no passing zone on 12 Mile.

The truck cut the Acura off again at 13 Mile and Haggerty. After the Acura got in front of the truck, the Acura driver stopped at 13 Mile and Farmington roads. The truck also stopped.

The Acura driver got out and punched the truck driver while he was still seated in his truck. When the Acura driver walked back toward his car, the truck struck him.

The pickup truck was reported to be a blue and white Chevy, 1970 to 1980 model. Witnesses told police they last saw the truck headed east on 13 Mile from Farmington Road.

Hills, WB cops nab robbery suspects

Farmington Hills police assisted the West Bloomfield police department in the arrests of two 23-year-old Farmington Hills men and a 29-year-old Detroit man in connection with an armed robbery Nov. 5, a police report said.

After receiving information on a white 1992 Ford Escort GT at 12:10 a.m., a Farmington Hills officer was able to locate the vehicle in the driveway of a Cora Street house, the report said.

While monitoring the activities

of the house, police saw three men get in the car and head south on Cora, the report said. Police stopped the car and the three occupants matched the descriptions they had received.

The men were then arrested and taken to the West Bloomfield Police Station.

Later, when police searched the house, they found several pieces of stereo equipment, a VCR and a speaker system along with other items, according to the report.

Police were unable to locate the gun used in the West Bloomfield robbery, but 9-mm ammunition was found next to the garbage can in the driveway, according to the report.

Police Chief William Dwyer commended the officers involved and said that through the joint effort of the patrol division and the surveillance unit and through "good police work, those persons responsible in these robberies and burglaries are apprehended."

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