

Yes! Farmington!

Brochure: Downtown, everything's waiting for you

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

A new brochure produced by the Downtown Development Authority gives a thumbs up to Farmington.

More so, DDA director Judy Downey hopes the guide will get proprietors to thumb their way to the central business district and open up shop here.

The brochure, titled simply "Downtown Farmington," gives an overview of the city as well as the business district. Facts and figures — as well as pictures of Gov. Warner, city founder Nathan Power and other historical figures — help sell the area's traditional aspects.

Downey designed the brochure with Howard Gelman. Some 1,000 copies were printed.

The whole project cost just over \$900. Downey said they will be sent off to prospective businesses, who may be looking to expand or move.

"You're not using this as a tool for people in West Bloomfield," Downey said. "They already know about downtown Farmington. This is for people around the state."

Downey said she designed a brochure to help business recruiting in Lapeer, where she worked in a similar capacity. This is the first time the Farmington DDA has designed a brochure.

The brochure is intended to be a general introduction to the city.

Mentioned are such things as the 522,000 square feet of "affordable" retail and office space, the

40,000 cars that pass through Farmington Road and Grand River and the business watch program that helps thwart crime.

Also touted in the guide are the \$1.5 million that has been spent on streetscape improvements and the downtown area's proximity to three major expressways (I-96, I-696 and I-275).

Overall, the DDA sells the

city's small-town charm and cosmopolitan flair. The brochure notes how family-owned businesses such as the Bon Ton Shoppe and Farmington Florist successfully co-exist with national chain stores such as Pier One Imports and T.J. Maxx.

"I like it," said city manager Frank Lauhoff. "It starts to explain to people what's here in Farmington."

Marks lobbies D.C. on tax proposals

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Last month Mr. Marks went to Washington — and got results. Farmington Hills councilman Ben Marks, who is also serving as president of the Michigan Municipal League this year, met with U.S. senators and congressmen to give them the views of cities and towns concerning President Bill Clinton's economic recovery plan.

Marks said getting rid of a controversial energy tax was a top priority.

"We're one of the biggest energy consuming states," Marks said. "The BTU (British Thermal Unit) tax would really hurt us."

Marks met with Sen. J. Bennett Johnston, D-La.; Sen. John Breaux, D-La.; Sen. Donald Riegle, D-Mich.; and White House staffers in an effort to head off President Clinton's original plan

to tax energy based upon its efficiency as measured in BTUs.

"I think it's dead," said Marks, who is running again for his seat on the Farmington Hills City Council. "I think it was too important to our local economy for me not to make the trip to Washington."

Marks has emphasized the need for local governments to have more say on legislation and regulations that affect them. During his tenure as MML president, Marks has visited more than 125 communities throughout the state, including the Upper Peninsula, with the idea of gaining the ear of state and national lawmakers when it comes to local government and home rule.

Marks said if municipalities are mobilized over issues like energy, then state and national leaders are less likely to push through



Ben Marks

unpopular legislation.

"This is a case where the president's energy policy would hurt the producing states like Louisiana, Texas and Oklahoma, and also the heavy users like Michigan," he said. "Michigan is one of the three top using states."

Marks, whose term as MML president ends in September, said he's running again for city office because the city's infrastructure is a concern.

"We've always been looking north," he said. "It's time we looked south. We don't have the big growth any more. We've got to take care of what we've got."

Time pressure rising on senior building decision

BY BILL COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

If Farmington Hills officials want to build a new facility for senior citizen programs, they will have to make that decision soon.

After the city council reviewed a report by a special committee that advised the city to build its own facility for senior citizen programs rather than continue to rent space, city manager Bill Costick said the city would have to begin construction next spring or early summer before the city's lease with the Mercy Center expires.

"By September or October we should be close to mapping our direction," he said. "We have to be under construction by next May or June."

The city's lease with the Mercy Center runs out in July of 1995.

The advisory committee's plan calls for a one-story, 39,200-square-foot building that would cost \$3,105,000 plus special equipment, furnishings, site development, fees, surveys and other costs that would bring the total to about \$5 million. That was the amount the city council

■ 'Council needs to be very careful not to generate revenues for programs offered by others, such as the YMCA . . . That would be something I would not want us to do.'

Jon Grant
Farmington Hills councilman

directed the committee to use as a guideline.

Councilman Terry Sever, who praised the report, said if spending more money to build a larger facility would also help it become more efficient to run and offer a better return of money for programs, the city should consider it.

"Would it (a larger building) pay for itself while offering more services?" Sever said. "It could have a basement that would offer more space for programs."

But councilmen Aldo Vagozzi and Jon Grant said the city should not step on the toes of other service organizations.

"We don't want to get involved

in a whole range of fund-raising activities," Vagozzi said.

"Council needs to be very careful not to generate revenues for programs offered by others, such as the YMCA," Grant said. "That would be something I would not want us to do."

Mayor Nancy Bates said providing more programs could cause the city more headaches than it would be worth.

"We'd have to have more staffing to administer those programs," she said.

The council scheduled an executive session for Tuesday night to review future sites and land acquisition options.

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