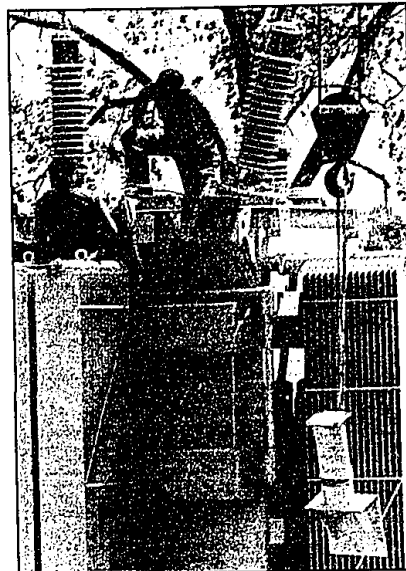


Towers of power: Goalposts for gridiron giants? No, just part of a Detroit Edison substation under construction at Freedom and Drake roads.



Powerful project: Workmen assemble the components of a Detroit Edison substation that hopefully will eliminate power outages in parts of Farmington Hills.

More power to customers when towers plug in

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

EDISON

Edison substation.

The facility, still under construction on the northwest corner of Freedom and Drake roads, has drawn some curious responses.

And some predictable ones. "I think they look terrible," said Merry Bialek, John's wife.

When completed, the twin towers will help make Farmington Hills residents less susceptible to power outages, an Edison spokesman said.

A 1991 summer storm affected 680,000 Edison customers, including many Farmington-area residents.

The \$5 million Drake substation should be completed by fall. Construction began last year and is part of a \$236 mil-

lion reliability program by Edison.

"This will not only lower the number of outages that people in that area experience, but we will be able to restore them faster when outages do occur," Detroit Edison spokesman Scott Simons said. "So it's a many-pronged benefit for customers."

The facility will serve residents in the eastern and southern part of Farmington Hills

and provide six new distribution circuits.

The average distribution circuit carries 13,200-volts on a line.

A substation steps down the power it receives on transmission lines from the power plant and distributes the electricity to customers.

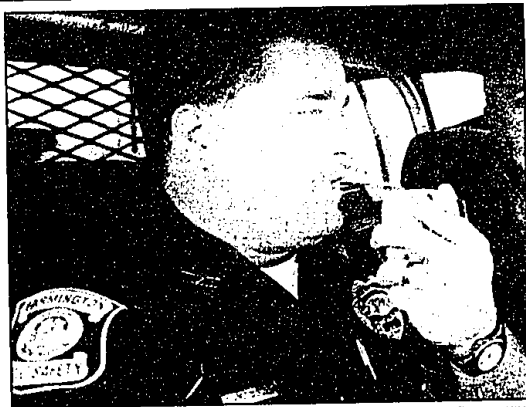
The area is served by a substation on 12 Mile Road, which operates on 10 different circuits. "So not only will there be six

new circuits to serve this group of customers, customers on the other 10 circuits will have fewer customers on it and see an improvement in service reliability as well," Simons said.

Customers will not see a change positive or negative on their monthly electric bills.

Simons said the upgrade is part of Edison operation and maintenance costs.

Reserve strength: Mike Laird, a reserve officer with Farmington's Department of Public Safety, can handle a call in a squad car on a ball field.



JOHN STORZBECK/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Department wants residents to get blues, serve in reserves

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Away from his full-time job, Mike Laird's life is more than a little blue.

When he's not umpiring collegiate baseball games, Laird switches blue uniforms to that of a Farmington Public Safety Department reserve officer.

The department is looking for a few more like Mike, who can handle a call now and then.

An orientation meeting is planned for those interested in becoming a reserve public safety officer at 7 p.m. Thursday, June 16, at City Hall, Grand River and Liberty.

Farmington has 13 reserves, down from its usual contingent of 20 or so. They are people who, in some cases, volunteer up to 200 hours a year or a few hours a month.

Reserve officers perform a myriad of functions, including help direct traffic and coordinate crowds at such functions as The Founders Day Parade and Kids Day in the Park. They also ride with officers and carry their own weapon.

More importantly, they're available to fight fires.

"He's settled in what he's doing," said Commander Charles Leo, describing the typical reserve, "but he wants to come out and give something back to the community and augment the police and fire department."

"For the most part, they don't want to become a full-time public safety officer."

A few requirements apply: A person has to be 21, undergo a physical and submit to a background investigation. The individual must also live within a six-mile radius of Farmington. Training is provided.

Applicants go through 100 hours of reserve police training at Schoolcraft College or Oakland Community College. There's also 150 hours of fire-fighting training at the Oakland Fire Training Academy.

Firefighting is what appealed to Laird, who served in the Navy and works in sales at a computer-operated design company. He volunteers four to eight hours a month. He's paid on call for firefighting; police work is volunteer.

In nearly two years as a reserve, Laird has responded to fires and been involved in chasing a shoplifting assailant. He's also a trained paramedic.

"To sum it up, I just enjoy being able to know I'm out there helping, perhaps making a difference in someone's life," said Laird, 29. "I'm not a thrill seeker."

Laird usually rides with a full-time officer, which allows him to see various approaches to police work.

Veteran officers often take a more patient, smooth tack when tackling crime, Laird said. The younger ones tend to be more aggressive. Yet both ways succeed, he added.

Laird said he has a good rapport with the full-time officers, though some take time getting to know.

"I hope it makes them feel secure . . . what they do," Laird said. "Some of the guys don't care for the reserves, because they think we're taking work away from them. You have to gain their trust."

Not many companies would advertise that they are sponsoring a project that could make their products obsolete. But, that's just the way Saturn is.

Saturn is proud to sponsor the 1994 Hybrid Electric Vehicle Challenge. You know, it's not so odd that Saturn is supporting research into automobiles that could replace the standard internal combustion engine. With the state of the environment and a questionable supply of oil, it is inevitable that someone will develop a new way for us all to get around. Saturn just wants to be a part of that process. Because, once again, that's just the way we are.



United States
Department of Energy



Natural Resources
Canada



The 1994 Hybrid Electric Vehicle Challenge: June 14-17 and 19 Lawrence Technological University
21000 West 10 Mile Road, Southfield Michigan
For more information, please call Bruce Annett 313-356-0200 ext. 2200