

It's A&P changing time to Farmer Jack

By LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Grocery shoppers were used to the two initials, but they still think the switch from A&P to Farmer Jack is OK.

Store officials joined Farmington Mayor Arnold Campbell and City Manager Frank Laubhoff for a ribbon-cutting ceremony Monday at the Downtown Center store commemorating the conversion.

The city of Farmington has two Farmer Jack stores. The other is in the Crossroads Center on Farmington Road and Nine Mile.

Farmer Jack is owned by The Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company Inc. At one time, there were concerns the parent company might close the Downtown Center outlet with a Farmer Jack outlet nearby.

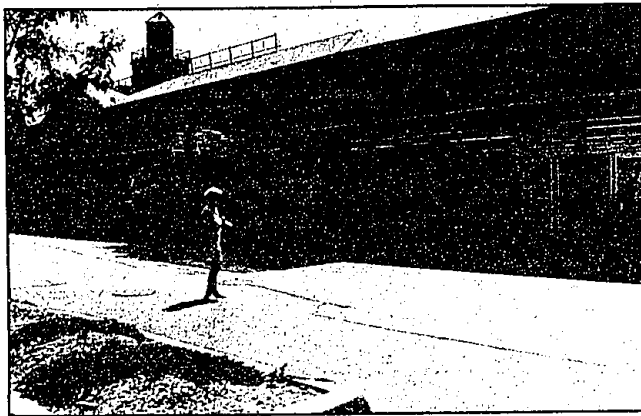
Those worries proved unfounded.

"Right now, it's beautiful," said Frieda Zak of Southfield, wheeling out her grocery cart. "You notice the red and white right away. It's so clean."

Zak was also pleased with the selection and prices. "Right now, it's fine," she said.

Added Farmington resident Maryanne Spooner, who shops at the Downtown Center outlet: "I had no trouble finding anything. I don't think they rearranged everything."

Many Farmer Jack stores are being renovated or converted from existing A&P outlets.



JOHN HEALEY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Now it's Farmer Jack: Former A&P shoppers now shop at Farmer Jack in downtown Farmington. A truck hauls away the A&P shopping buggies.

"It's more or less sheer economics," said Farmer Jack spokesman Paul Coleman. "The A&P entity is small and kind of going away in this market."

"Farmer Jack is a dominate chain. It's just make good sense

for our company to concentrate our efforts under one banner." Farmer Jack specialty shops and services are included in the transformation. Customers are able to pay electric bills, buy stamps and have film developed

as well as buy groceries. Regular customers Diane and Jack Murphy don't mind such corporate maneuvers.

"... As long as it reflects on the customers," Diane Murphy said.

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