

Knollenberg gets powerful committee slot

U.S. Rep. Joe Knollenberg, R-Bloomfield Township, said his upward mobility in Congress should translate into results for the 11th District he represents.

Knollenberg made the announcement at a luncheon in Farmington Hills where details of a plan to ease traffic at the M-6/Grand River interchange were announced Friday.

"This is a big plus," he said of his appointment to the Appropriations Committee. Knollenberg, who will begin his second term in Congress in January, said he had worked hard for the past 10 months to be part of the powerful committee, which has jurisdiction over all federal government spending. The assignment will put Knollenberg in a position to forward Republican efforts to reduce the size of government in the next Congress.

The Republican Steering and Policy Committee selected Knollenberg.

"Being selected to the Appropriations Committee is a great honor for me personally and for the citizens of the 11th Congressional District," he said Thursday. "My constituents sent me to Washington to make fundamental change in the way the federal government spends their hard-



Joe Knollenberg

earned tax dollars and that is exactly what this committee assignment will allow me to do."

The House Appropriations Committee made up of 13 subcommittees with specific jurisdiction over areas of federal spending - is expected to take up a reversion bill early in the 104th Congress. Subcommittee assignments have not yet been made, but are expected prior to the beginning of the next legislative session.

CLARIFICATION

A story in Thursday's Observer should have said that among proposals for road improvements would be the possible widening of Orchard Lake to six lanes between 14 and 16 Mile roads, not the widening of 14 Mile to a six-lane boulevard. The proposal, which will be based on local input, would widen 14 Mile at its

intersection with major roads such as Halsted, Drake and Haggerty, and provide passing lanes at subdivision entrances.

The Michigan Department of Transportation will present the results of the input and ask the West Bloomfield and Farmington Hills councils for their input in early 1995.

Hill spills



Snow daze: The season's first major snow brought sledgers out in abundance to Shiawassee Hill last week. Above, Dante Neberveld of West Bloomfield gets a jolt after taking a jump Thursday. At left, Jon Hawthorne of Redford heard about the notorious Farmington sled hill and decided to take a snowboard down one of the jumps created out of bales of hay.



STAFF PHOTOS BY ANN HEALY

Hills library renovation to pile on new carpeting

The lower level of the Farmington Community Library branch on 12 Mile in Farmington Hills will be closed to the public Dec. 16 to Jan. 2 for recarpeting.

The children's department is scheduled to reopen Jan. 2. Library director Beverly Papai said the recarpeting is the first step in the library's renovation plan.

"The Farmington Hills branch was last recarpeted in 1980," she said. "We are looking forward to a cleaner, less worn environment and also a fresh look. The worn spots in the carpet testify to substantial public traffic and the results of flooding in 1981 and 1989."

The Farmington and Farmington Hills city councils approved \$242,000 for capital improvements that will mostly

go toward the renovation. The library will also replace some furniture and buy audio-visual equipment with part of the money, Papai said.

Along with the major expense of the carpeting, some furniture also will be replaced, some rewiring will better accommodate information technology in the building and the primary staff work area will be moved.

When Papai joined the library in 1973, five people shared the space that 15 people now share, she said.

The Oakland County Library for the Blind and Handicapped moved to a new library in Pontiac in August, leaving behind 2,000 square feet that had been occupied by the special library since 1974. The Farmington li-

brary will reclaim that space for staff and volunteer use, and for the technical services department, which orders, receives and processes library materials for both branches.

In late February 1995, the Hills branch will close again for the second phase of the renovation, the recarpeting of the upper level. Books, shelves and furniture will be moved and some public areas formerly used by the staff will be opened for public use, expanding access to the periodical and audio-visual collections.

The Farmington branch will be open during regular hours during the December renovation to assist children and parents while the Hills branch children's department is closed.

DDA officials agree to trim '95 special assessment bills

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

Those in a Farmington SAD (special assessment district) will likely be happy with a reduction in next year's tax bill.

The Farmington Downtown Development Authority agreed to cut a special assessment in Central Business District by 77 percent at its Dec. 6 meeting. Instead of \$117,000, the DDA will only collect \$27,000 from property owners in 1995.

They were paying what amounted to a 9-mill special assessment. A mill equals \$1 of tax for every \$1,000 of state equalized property value.

The reduction is the result of unexpected tax increment revenue made available through Public Act 280, which allows cities and authorities to capture TIF money from school taxes for "pipeline projects."

The DDA instituted the special assessment in the wake of

Proposal A, which reduced school property taxes, and as a result, TIF revenue.

At its Dec. 5 meeting, Farmington City Council OK'd the DDA's borrowing of \$100,000 for a pipeline development project at 5.7 percent from the Michigan Municipal Bond Authority in order to meet the Dec. 31 deadline.

Additional TIF spells relief for many business owners. Another reduction will take place in 1996. After that, the special assessment will return to its previous level, city officials said.

"I'd like to remind board members to remind business owners this is only temporary," City Manager Frank Lauhoff said. "This special assessment will come back. This will be the way we fund the DDA."

The DDA expects to capture \$100,000 in TIF revenue next year, but decided against reducing the special assessment by the same amount. Instead, the

reduction is \$90,000.

Attorney and engineering fees were one reason why, DDA officials said. Also, the DDA wanted enough money to continue event programs and to have a contingency fund.

TIF allows authorities like the Farmington DDA to capture a portion of property taxes levied by school, city, county and state governments. Cities then use the money to pay for development projects.

Farmington has three pipeline projects, totaling nearly \$200,000.

Two involve streetscape improvements for east Grand River and Liberty Street.

The other calls for the removal of a house on Orchard Street. The DDA has bought the house from the owner.

Initially, the plan was to use the vacant lot for additional parking. New plans call for a picnic area to be put there. Total cost of the project is \$24,000, including demolition of the home.

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