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Magician Doug Shoer will use his illusionary expertise to teach fun science lessons to youngsters who attend "Mysteries of Science" at 10:30 a.m. and noon Wednesday, Aug. 9, at the Civic Theater in downtown Farmington.

The program, sponsored by the Farmington Downtown Development Authority, closes out the Wednesday Summer Fun Series. For more information on what's going on in downtown Farmington, call the DDA hotline. 473-7283.

Opinions on Edison?

Residents who wish to air their views on Detroit Edison and the recent power outages in the Farmington area should mark Tuesday, Aug. 22, on their calendars.

The Michigan Public Service Commission will hold a hearing on the matter from 2-4 p.m. Aug. 22 in the city council chamber at the Farmington Hills City Hall, 11 Mile and Orchard Lake roads.

"The recent storms that swept through the

FARMINGTON FOCUS

area certainly had an effect on many citizens," said State Rep. Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills, who helped organize the hearing.

"The public hearing will provide a perfect forum for customers of Detroit Edison and Consumers Power to discuss their experiences," Dolan said.

The Public Service Commission will ask speakers to describe the utilities' response to outages caused by the storms and the safety procedures used to protect the public, Dolan added. Participants also will be asked to suggest changes needed to deal with future storms.

Another hearing on the subject will be held 7-9 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 15, at the Oakland Intermediate Schools headquarters, 21900 Pontiac Lake Road, Waterford Town-

Patterson, commissioners at odds on well policy

BY PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER

The reluctance of commissioners to adopt a well inspection program has rankled Oakland County Executive L. Brooks Patterson who said the policy "puts a significant number of citizens at risk."

In a strong message delivered Thursday at the regular meeting of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners, Patterson warned that not having a well inspection policy could lead to families becoming chronically ill from drinking contaminated water.

Commissioners, however, insist the executive is exaggerating the problem and trying to push a needlessly expensive program.

"I might support a well inspection program, but it would have to be better than the one I've seen so far," said commissioner Sue Ann

Douglas, R. Rochester.

At issue is whether Oakland should establish a unit to inspect new wells.

Some commissioners, including Ruth Johnson, R-Holly, said Oakland doesn't need such a program, at least at the county level.

Oakland averaged less than five cases of contaminated wells for each of the last five years, she said.

Commissioner Lawrence A. Obrecht, R-Lake Orion, said the county should consider an inspection program, but not the one supported by the executive.

At present, Oakland is one of 13 counties in Michigan that does not have a well inspection program. That means no state or local agency oversees the use of proper materials and grout with new wells to prevent contamination.

tion.

Nobody knows how many wells are located in Oakland County, Patterson said, because accurate records are not available. But the Michigan Department of Public Health estimates that Oakland has more on-site residential wells than any other county in Michigan, he added.

Not having a county inspection program puts new homeowners at risk if their wells fail, Patterson said. Failed wells can mean contaminated water and an expensive repair bill, he warned.

Patterson said he wants it fully understood that commissioners — by rejecting a well inspection program — "... must bear morally the responsibility for placing a significant portion of our population at risk.

"Public health functions, such as well permitting, are the responsibility of the local County Health Department, not local cities, villages or townships," Patterson said. "Further, such responsibility cannot be delegated to them."

Commissioners have been reviewing a proposed inspection

program that includes a nine-person inspection unit. The cost per inspection is estimated at \$170 each, with the state and the homeowner each paying \$85.


But after months of review, the county board's finance committee voted against adopting the policy 5 to 4. That vote, on July 20, was probably not the final word on well inspection. Patterson's strongly-worded message probably guarantees the issue will be revisited.

"I think there's room for compromise," said commissioner Larry Crake, R-Waterford, board chairman.

Everybody seems to think Oak land should have some inspection system, said Commissioner Obrecht. "Even well diggers believe there should be some inspection."

The main question, he said, is what kind of system and how much will it cost.

"I could support a system that requires homeowners to pay less than \$60," said Douglas. "But \$80 is simply too much."



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