

OAKLAND DIGEST

Oakland Digest features a roundup of some of Oakland County's top news stories as reported in the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers in the last week.

MOM IS SUSPECT
A 16-year-old Troy girl died in William Beaumont Hospital-Royal Oak Sunday afternoon, and her sister and father remained hospitalized after being shot in the head earlier in the day. Troy police have the mother of the family in custody in connection with the crime.

The shootings occurred in a secluded house in southeast Troy sometime before 8:46 a.m. Sunday when the 45-year-old woman now in custody "called police to say that she had shot three family members," according to Troy police spokesman Lt. John Knechtges.

The woman surrendered to police officers without incident, he added.

DEVELOPMENT EXPECTED
Expect to see a site plan for Rochester's Water Street development project this year.

"It's big and it's coming fast," said Robert Donohue, director of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA). "It's moving significantly. It's one of the most exciting things we've ever done here."

He expects the Rochester Planning Commission will view a site plan for the project sometime in December "if everything goes well."

First the DDA must sign a "preferred developer agreement" with Crosswind Communities, Inc. It selected the Novi firm last week to build living quarters, offices and stores in the old Western Knitting Mill building and on surrounding property, currently owned by ITT Automotive.

Then it will hash out details, including a site plan and cost estimates.

POLICE BILL PAPERS
The Detroit Newspapers strike has put police agencies in a difficult position, not only in terms of protecting people and property, but economically.

Farmington Hills police chief Bill Dwyer said that after eight weeks of overtime, his department is feeling it. The strike, which has cost Farmington Hills "thousands of dollars" in police overtime, he said, ultimately comes out of the taxpayers' pockets.

For that reason, Farmington Hills is joining the list of departments trying to recover money from the Detroit Newspapers Agency.

"The bill is in excess of \$30,000," Dwyer said. "It's up to them to pay or not."

THEATER SUIT
The Franklin Foundation, which holds a consent judgment blocking a \$30 million Southfield theater project, is prepared to withdraw its opposition in exchange for various prerequisites — including a \$225,000 donation — but would like the Franklin Village council to first assume authority in the matter.

The foundation, a private, non-profit citizens group, met Wednesday and determined that the village "is a more appropriate body to decide the best interests of the village residents" in the case.

If the council does not accept the authority, the foundation said it will amend the consent judgment to permit the 178,000-square-foot project, which will include 21 theater screens and a number of restaurants, to be built.

If the council accepts the authority and supports the project, the foundation said it would work with the village in an effort to get the best settlement possible. If the village opposed the project, the foundation said it would be willing to pay up to one-third of the costs of expected litigation, up to a limit of \$20,000.

FINDING FIRST NIGHTERS
Birmingham's annual First Night New Year's celebration will be concentrated downtown this year, but organizers hope a streamlined event will actually increase attendance.

The change was made in an effort to increase First Night's visibility by drawing more foot traffic downtown, according to Robert DeLuca, a member of the Cultural Council for Birmingham's Birmingham committee that is working to revamp the celebration.

native to typical New Year's parties.

Organizers claim that last year's fifth-annual event drew between 7,000 and 8,000 people. Attendance exceeded the previous year's turnout, said Zina Kramer, executive director of First Night. But some performance sites were half-empty.

Cultural council leaders have said they would be interested in turning over the celebration to another group. The event has grown to a point that other organizations need to become involved, they say.

SCHOOL FUNDING
After the third bond issue attempt in 16 months was defeated last February, Walled Lake school board members said they would exhaust all alternative space-creating measures before making a fourth try.

So far, they are following through on those words. At Thursday's regular meeting,

board members unanimously approved schematic designs to add four classrooms to each of the three buildings in time for the 1996-97 school year, authorized the \$240,000 purchase of 14.21 acres of land, potentially to build a smaller, K-1 elementary school.

ADAMTATION TALKS
People who think a tax abatement for General Motors is a good idea argue it's great to encourage one of the Big Three automotive companies to expand close to home.

People who think it's a bad idea ask why should Orion Township agree to give away tax revenue when it's unclear what they're getting in return.

The Orion Township Board and General Motors plan to come to the bargaining table and work out an agreement at a special meeting tonight at 7 p.m.

The issues that need to be ironed out promise to be as difficult to negotiate as a prenuptial

property settlement.

General Motors is seeking a tax abatement for the 185,000 square foot expansion of the Orion Assembly Center which will house a new "agile" lexible body shop.

CHURCH: NO BAR
Clarkston Free Methodist church is leading a crusade to stop a sports bar from opening in the vacant grocery store at Sashabaw and Maybee roads in Independence Township.

The Rev. Roger Allen, church pastor, has sent a letter to the Michigan Liquor Control Commission urging it to refuse a Class C resort liquor license to restaurateurs wanting to open a 10,000-square-foot bar and restaurant called Couples in the Former Food Town store.

Allen also attended the Independence Township Board meeting last week with a petition signed by about 120 members of his congregation.

— compiled by Suzanne L. Parker staff reporter

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