

## Growth

### Better news on the job front

**C**heerful holiday news comes to the suburbs of metro Detroit packaged by the job and population forecasters of the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments. After two decades of stagnant population changes and a loss of manufacturing jobs, things are looking up, literally, from now to 2020.

SEMCOG's regional development forecast, now circulating to cities and townships, shows "a positive economic future" — an 18 percent growth in jobs and a 13 percent growth in population in the quarter-century ahead.

Job growth will be particularly strong in suburban Wayne County (18.3 percent), Oakland County (29.7 percent) and Livingston County (83.2 percent).

Among the top 10 job growth communities will be Canton Township (119 percent), Rochester Hills (100.5 percent), Bloomfield Township (96 percent), Novi (67.1 percent), Troy (19.6 percent) and Livonia (18.4 percent).

Sad to say, Detroit is projected to continue losing jobs, and manufacturing will decline — no surprise there. But services, retail and fi-

nance are projected for healthy increases.

Significantly, the percentage of working-age adults holding jobs will increase from 81 percent in 1990 to 88 percent in 2020.

In the population charts, Livonia is likely to dip below the 100,000 mark, and Southfield below 75,000, though that's due mostly to shrinking family size. Westland, Canton, Farmington Hills and Troy will continue to see more faces, as will northern Oakland communities.

The nature of public services will change. Households with children will decline 5 percent by 2020. Better health care will mean more older folks, particularly in the 85-and-up category. Elementary schools will be converted into senior citizen centers.

Builders of houses and apartments should continue to prosper as population rises and average household size shrinks from 3.49 persons in 1960 to 2.66 today to 2.47 in 2020.

Now if we can refrain from paving over too many farmfields and slicing up too many lakes with powerboats, we may have a nice environment in which to enjoy our prosperity.

## Best of 1995: it's turning to '96

The winds of change are blowing — howling? — through Michigan. But will change be improvement or deterioration for the suburbs in metro Detroit. Answer: both.

Republicans this year took control of both chambers of the Legislature for the first time since Gov. George Romney's era, but they weren't Romney Republicans. Their agenda was worked out in closed-caucus retreats fueled by ideology rather than knowledge, experience and public input. That's the chief reason why it's difficult to predict the results of their changes.

**Bad: roads, schools**  
Our state and local roads and bridges are an embarrassment. It looked as if there might be movement toward a fuel tax increase in fall. But talks broke down over the issue of whether the state should get the lion's share of any new money.

Who's at fault? Anyone with eyes and a sensitive spine knows both state and local roads need help. Gov. John Engler's position that the state roads should be favored is based more on tax-cutting ideology than the public good. We remind the governor and Transportation chief Pat Nowak that a smaller fuel tax hike, enacted five years ago, would have been sufficient. Instead, it looks as if more road deterioration is in store for 1996.

After Engler, lawmakers, educators and voters performed heroically in 1994 to fix public school funding, Lansing took the low road in 1995. Fortunately, Engler's goal of ripping up the School Code and opening up the floodgates for state aid to charter (private) schools was tripped up in the House, but not entirely derailed.

Public schools are getting better. People like them; neighborhood schools are more popular than ever. Only hard-core, private school zealots on the State Board of Education and the Senate Education Committee are continuing to push for lower curriculum standards, lower teacher certification standards, segregationist "choice" schools and a thinly-disguised evangelical mantra called "parents rights."

In the same way Vienna in 1629 halted Suleiman's Turkish invaders at the gates, public education in 1995 was wounded and threatened but survived. There will be more fights,

but the worst may be over.

The Legislature spoke with forked tongue on the issue of crime. It stayed up at night to concoct new racketeering, juvenile punishment, license-lifting punishments. But it barely kept up State Police strength, and it actually hurt law enforcement by cutting local revenue-sharing. And lawmakers are squeamish about adding more prison beds, which have tripled in a dozen years.

Lawmakers cut arts and cultural funding 26 percent this year. Then they cut several state taxes. Now they are moving to thrust the duty of preserving our heritage onto the counties through more property taxes. We see through this sham.

The jury is out on whether Engler was right to split off a new Department of Environmental Quality from the Department of Natural Resources. Their missions are related. Unfortunately, DEQ answers directly to the governor with little public input whereas DNR has a commission. With his abrupt executive order splitting up DNR, Engler provided little public education and no public debate on the question of whether our air, land and water will be better protected or not by DEQ. His style is abominable.

#### Now the good

The state will junk the shady practice of allocating aid to local units on the basis of "relative tax effort," a procedure that rewards high local taxes and punishes low local taxes. Kudos to Engler if it sticks.

Our leaders hiked aid to public schools, community colleges and universities 2.7 to 3-plus percent. It's not much, but in an era of low inflation with many other demands on the budget, it shows a little respect for public education.

Engler and GOP lawmakers jammed through their welfare reform plan in a month. It's hard to say that those affected understand how the new system will work.

But conceptually, Michigan's new welfare system makes sense. No longer will aid be doled out as an "entitlement," a system which apparently rewarded promiscuity and careless child-rearing. The new system calls for a contract — albeit required by government — for the needy to plan steps to get out of poverty.



WILLIAM HANSEN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Back to the future: *Merlin the Magician*, above, held forth during last year's *First Night* festivities in Birmingham. The successful, family-oriented program for ringing in the new year will be held again this New Year's Eve.

## LETTERS

### Terrific teacher

**O**ur terrific teacher, Mrs. Williams, born on April 24, 1962, started teaching when she was 23 years old. She taught at Warner Middle School for two years and then she went to Beechview for 10 years. She went to U of M and studied education. She got her master of arts in teaching at Oakland University and her bachelor of arts at University of Michigan.

Mrs. Williams loves the art of teaching but dislikes the ever-increasing paperwork. She is interesting and good at explaining things. She wants to get to know and love kids better. She loves to teach reading and writing. She also likes to teach herself to write better.

She substitute taught for two years for the following communities: Rochester, Pontiac, Lake Orion and Clarkston. She taught all grades at these communities. Her main career is teaching fifth grade at Beechview Elementary.

When Mrs. Williams retires, she wants to become a mom of four children. In her spare time, she wants to write children's books, teach herself how to play instruments of all kinds and travel worldwide, especially to Israel.

Danny Snyder and Steve Denton, 5th grade, Beechview Elementary

### Elves are thanked

**T**he 1995 Goodfellows year is coming to a close, and our pledge of "No Child or Senior without a Christmas" has been completed.

It all happened because of the great volunteers (Elves) we had helping us this year. The greater Farmington Area is truly blessed with people who want to help others.

The economy was better this year, and the numbers were down, but still there are many families and seniors in our community that need help. We delivered packages and gift certificates to 230 families and 151 seniors.

We want to thank many people again this year, especially the folks that helped us sort out goods, pack toys, make out gift certificates, deliver the packages, send out thank-yous, and of course those who made donations of food, toys, and money through our "All Community Mailing."

There are 15 standing committees to do the work needed to complete our mission, with more than 130 people involved. We can always use more help, so if you would like to help us next year call the Chamber of Commerce today (474-3440) and get on our mailing list for next year.

Each year we have outstanding volunteers, and this year is no exception. First, we want to thank Bob Chappell of Farmington, who served as our warehouse manager. Bob was at the Headquarters Building everyday for three weeks directing operations.

Second, we appreciate the time and talent of Frank Grady, of Farmington Hills, for his great work on our "All Community Mailing," for taking pictures of the various events, and going on.

Third, is our ever-faithful Lisa Ellis, a Farmington resident, who takes care of our correspondence. This is a big job as it includes letters to all committee workers, and the vast number of Thank-Yous we send out each year to those who donate toys, food and money to our organization. We get many cards and letters from recipients each year thanking everyone who helped make their Christmas a happy one. Some of the notes we get tell of situations and problems which most people can't imagine. But for the Elves it makes the time and effort worth while.

All of us on the board of directors want to extend our most heartfelt thanks, to all those who helped this year. We hope you enjoyed what you did and will consider helping again next year.

We trust you had a wonderful holiday and that the new year will be good to you.

Richard L. Tupper  
president and general chairman,  
Farmington Area Goodfellows

### Where was photo?

**A**s a member of North Congregational Church, so aptly described in a recent article as the "perfect Christmas-card picture," I was disappointed that there was no photograph and, indeed, that the article was somewhat lost in the newspaper.

Recognizing that a religious facility is more than a beautiful building, North Congregational Church, its pastor, staff and members, has a long history of community involvement.

In addition to all of the commitments listed in the article, North Congregational Church also housed and financially supported the Ecumenical Institute for Jewish-Christian Studies, provided space for other fledgling religious groups, and opened its doors to AA, Al-Anon, and other organizations.

In the months and years ahead I hope the community will become more familiar with North Congregational Church and know they are welcome there not only on Sunday mornings but throughout the week.

Barbara G. Yuhns, Farmington Hills

## COMMUNITY VOICE

### QUESTION:

What are your goals for 1996?



"To stay healthy, I guess."  
Ann Salran  
Farmington Hills



"To be happy in our new home on a lake."  
Nina Cedar  
Farmington Hills



"To be healthy. That's the most important thing."  
Al Prienskom  
Farmington Hills



"I'd like to see the economy continue to improve through '96."  
Thomas Gerwatowski  
Farmington Hills

## The Farmington Observer

TOM BARR, COMMUNITY EDITOR, 810-477-5450

ROBERT SHILAS, MANAGING EDITOR, FARMINGTON OBSERVER, 810-901-2563

ROBERT KAMPEY, RETAIL ADVERTISING MANAGER, FARMINGTON OBSERVER, 810-901-2501

MARY SCOTT, MANAGER OF CIRCULATION, FARMINGTON OBSERVER, 810-901-2548

JOHN FREEDY, VICE-PRESIDENT, PUBLISHER, FARMINGTON OBSERVER, 810-901-2561

JOHN SILVERSTEIN, ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER, 810-901-2595

STEVEN K. POPE, GENERAL MANAGER, OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC NEWSPAPERS, 810-953-2252

SUBURBAN COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION

PHILIP POWER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

RICHARD AUBURN, PRESIDENT

Our Mission: "Because we publish community newspapers, we think about community journalism in a fundamentally different way than our bigger competition. They consider themselves to be independent from the stories and communities they cover, swooping in to write the unusual or sensational and then dashing off to cover something else. We regard ourselves as both accurate journalists and as caring citizens of the communities where we work."

— Philip Power