

# Storm blusters by, but hardly cripples Hills, Farmington

By BILL COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

Wednesday's wet, heavy snow knocked down trees and power lines in Farmington and Farmington Hills, but the streets were plowed and all power was restored by Thursday.

Lorie Kessler of Detroit Edison, said about 3,700 Farmington-area customers lost power Wednesday.

"Our aggressive line clearing program, a sub station, a new (120KV) line along the freeway and our program to split circuits really made a difference," she said.

Kevin Gushman, Farmington DPW director, said city crews were ready for the late winter storm.

"We were all cleaned up by 6 p.m.," he said. "We were ready for it."

Gushman said the warmer temperatures made the snow heavy and difficult to plow, but also made de-icing of equipment easier.

Traffic signals were out at several locations, but streets were clear within 24 hours in Farmington Hills, said Dan Rooney, Hills DPW director.

"It was heavy snow, so it was a lot slower going, especially for our smaller equipment," Rooney said.

A Farmington Hills man, 57, died of a heart attack believed to be attributed to the storm. The man had been shoveling the heavy snow before going into his Hunters Point Drive home. He was found unconscious in his bathroom Wednesday morning.

The storm, the biggest in the area in two years, caused the Farmington schools to close, along with public and private schools just about everywhere in the metropolitan area.

Farmington Hills firefighters made 33 runs Wednesday including 11 runs for downed power lines and six medical emergencies. The department average this year has been 14.3 runs a day.

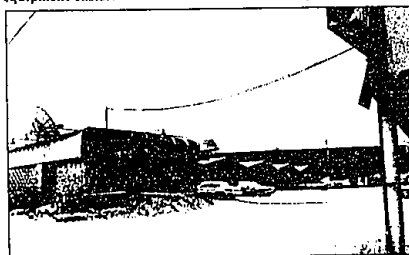


Blowing up a storm: This winter's worst snowstorm was still raging Wednesday morning when, with the Masonic Temple as a backdrop, the branch of a large maple came crashing down on some wires in Farmington.



STAFF PHOTOS BY SHARON LEMLEY

Putting around: Above, the West sisters, Ashley (left), 10, and Mindy, 8, know how to handle the aftermath of a snowstorm. They ride scaled-down snowmobiles around the front yard of their Farmington Hills house. At right, helpful Charlie Fellows of Farmington Hills and Rick Cray clear their driveways, as well as that of their neighbor who is home with her baby.



It's not the Bahamas: Wires near the Bahama Motel in southeast Farmington Hills are coated with snow and ice and whipped by wind.

## Thin Ice

### Ice Arena committee attempts to high stick council authority

By BILL COUTANT  
STAFF WRITER

The Farmington Hills City Council and the Ice Arena Advisory Committee are going to try it again.

The committee, charged with advising the council on policies, procedures and needs for the city's new multi-purpose ice arena, had run afoul of the council that created it over the issue of dry-floor activities.

At a previous council meeting, advisory committee members had argued that using dry floor activities would not be profitable, and worse, would turn away residents who would use the second sheet of ice.

But Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi told the committee the city had promised voters during the campaign for the arena, and the ballot language had specified that the arena would be used for other uses.

That set the stage for a conflict at the March 18 meeting when Councilwoman Cheryl Oliverio suggested the council consider disbanding the committee.

"(Going through the advisory committee) is an added step that we don't necessarily need right now," she said.

Councilwoman Nancy Bates said that it was difficult to find

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qualified people to serve on committees.

"We have a hard time involving citizens," she said. "When they get involved and take it seriously, we shouldn't change that."

Mayor Vagnozzi initially suggested "sunsetting" the committee in December, rather than when its 3-year term ends in November of 1997. He said the committee had spent its last meeting planning ways to reverse the city council's decision.

The minutes reflect a discussion of calling for a public hearing on the issue, but Fitzgerald said that idea was quickly put aside by the committee. He also called for a joint committee-council meeting.

The council took no action. Vagnozzi said he will meet with the committee and report back to the council.

In other action, the council:

■ Approved the introduction of an

ordinance requiring screening of Dumpsters in the city.

Dave Miles, representing one commercial property owner, called the proposal "an enforcement nightmare."

The ordinance would require screening from view of the Dumpsters both in residential and commercial areas.

Resident Betty Cook said businesses have already had more than two years to voluntarily comply with the ordinance.

■ Approved a dust control program for 1996.

Some residents objected to the use of calcium chloride as a threat to human health, plant life and wildlife, especially on some of the natural beauty roads where it would be applied.

But city DPW Director Dan Rooney said the chemical was a much safer alternative to oil or brine, which were previously used.

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## Focus from page 1A

### 'Meals' volunteers needed

The federal Meals on Wheels program is looking for volunteers to deliver meals to senior citizens in the community.

The program, which provides hot and cold meals to seniors at a nominal cost or free, feeds about 150 people a day in Farmington and Farmington Hills. The meals are prepared at the William M. Conlick Activities Center, where volunteer drivers pick the meals up and deliver them. Meals are delivered to feed people seven days a week.

Because of the shortage of drivers there is a waiting list for the program.

Anyone interested should call the senior nutrition program at 478-1825 or 473-1887.

### All about care

Area senior citizens take note: A class can teach you how to receive appropriate care in hospitals, nursing homes and from in-home nursing services.

The class will begin at 10 a.m. Tuesday, March 28, at the Farmington Hills Senior Center on 11 Mile Road east of Middlebelt. Call 473-1830 to register.

### Support group meets

An Alzheimer's support group will meet at 7 p.m. the first Tuesday of each month, April 2, at the Botsford Continuing Health Center, 21460 Archwood Circle, Farmington Hills. Call 477-7400 for more information.

### 'Trouble Free Travel'

Tony Thomas from Blue Cross/Blue Shield will lead a program on "Trouble Free Travel" for senior citizens at 10 a.m. Tuesday, April 2, at the Farmington Hills Senior Center on 11 Mile east of Middlebelt.

Medical, financial and practical tips will be offered to help ensure a safe trip. Participants will receive a free travel case. Call 473-1830 to register.

Items for Farmington Focus may be mailed to the Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington 48335; faxed to 477-9722; or dropped off at the newspaper office. For the computer literate, the Internet E-mail address is: packytoonline.com.