

Portables from page A1

secure and our program would be more integrated if we had them all in here," Smith said.

There are other drawbacks.

During inclement weather, students have to put on their coats and boots to walk outside to the portables and repeat the procedure when the class is over.

Sometimes, a 40-minute art class has dwindled to 30 minutes, Smith said.

Portable classrooms are isolated, making it difficult for integrated study of music or art with other subjects.

Safety is a constant concern too, Smith said.

Pupils also walk 26 yards across a parking lot. Though there is a crosswalk and cones cordoning off the area, there is a worry about vehicle traffic.

"Another fear of mine with portables, and this is the greatest fear I have, is in a tornado situation," Smith said.

"Those would be just like mobile homes. There's no way they would stand up to those winds."

The recommended \$92 million for building improvements proposed in the bond issue (\$23.45 million would pay for technological improvements) would create 22 additional classrooms.

The space would be needed to handle a projected increase of 500 students at the middle and high school level during the next five years. Some school officials, though, worry the number might be higher, Cowan said.

Instead of a liability, portable classrooms might be a security blanket.

"We will probably keep a few on hand just in case we need them," Cowan said.

Right-of-way from page A1

"We will come up with the money," Hobbs said. "This is a critical issue."

Some council members said going at the problem with 10 communities might not be as good a tactic as pushing the Michigan Municipal League, National League of Cities or other larger group to action.

"I really think we need to get active and get busy in Lansing and Washington," said Councilwoman Nancy Bates.

Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi agreed, but added that the PROTEC cities, and especially Troy, had to react immediately.

"What we're talking about is \$300,000 in franchising fees that would be lost if they (companies) could bypass payment for rights-of-ways," Vagnozzi said.

Troy is already involved in a dispute over franchise fees with

its cable company TCI.

"Troy really had to act," he said.

Councilman Jerry Ellis said the problem with joining such a small group would be the limited clout it would have in Lansing or Washington.

"I'm not sure that PROTEC, basically a few communities banding together, was the right way to go," Ellis said. "The MML has 534 communities. They (PROTEC) are 10 communities with \$250,000. That's not going to get them out of the box. Let's put our money where it will do some good."

Council members, who attended the National League of Cities conference in San Antonio, Texas last week, said they would find out what other cities are doing before taking any action beyond the resolution.

Chamber hosts annual holiday lunch Friday

Members and friends of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce are invited to join the Annual Holiday Luncheon at 11:30 a.m. Friday, Dec. 13, at the Botsford Inn, on Grand River just west of Eight

Mile.

Featured will be a holiday meal with turkey, stuffing and trimmings, plus a high school choir performance.

Tickets are \$20 in advance. Call 474-3440 for more details.

Fire Dept. urges check of smoke detectors

Farmington Hills Fire Department officials are urging apartment-dwellers to check their smoke detectors, after a fire Saturday at the Independence Green Apartments.

Firefighters responded to the fire at 8:42 p.m. and put out a fire in a living room of an apartment at the complex, off Halsted and north of 10 mile.

The fire, which involved a building with four units on McKinley, caused \$18,000 in damage to contents and \$8,000 in structural damage.

"We found that half of the smoke detectors in the building did not work," said Fire Marshal Steve Hume.

Hume said although keeping the smoke detectors operable is a requirement of the management, he recommends that residents make sure their smoke detectors work.

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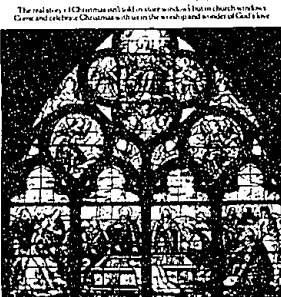
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