

# District from page A1

resident students and 80 resident students, Maxfield said. Another 800 residents attend regular district schools, enrolled in specialized classes.

"I think the governor's stance, from the beginning, has been 'If we lose this case it'll come out of education,'" Maxfield said. "And yet, his defensiveness about this really sort of mystifies me. It's really not John Engler's problem. John Engler didn't create this problem. It goes back to the Milliken administration."

Farmington was among 84 Michigan districts to sue the state in 1980. At dispute was the

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must only pay \$210 million — only for the years between 1991-92 and 1993-94 — and is not responsible for accrued interest.

Farmington schools stood to receive slightly more than \$20 million, Maxfield said; instead the district will get about 40 percent of that amount.

"Now the question is, will it be paid immediately, or paid over time," Maxfield said. "And really, it's in the hands of the Legislature to figure that out."

Even though the amount to be returned is much lower than expected, Maxfield said, "There's an important legal victory that's been won. . . Not only did the state err in the past, but they have an obligation in the future to meet the standard that was established" at the time of the Headlee Amendment in 1976.

According to Maxfield, the uncertainty surrounding amount and timetable of reimbursement poses a question mark about the Sept. 16 bond issue.

Whatever the district receives could be used to pay for some of the facilities needs included in the \$93.1 million two-part package. In that case, the Farmington school board could simply decide not to sell the maximum amount of authorized bonds.

"But we have no idea what that amount (from the state) will be or when it will come," he said.

# Downtown from page A1

that has to be subsidized in some fashion."

Council has spurned setting up a DDA in the past, but some members indicated they at least be willing to listen. Council members asked City Attorney John Donohue to look into the pros and cons of DDAs and TIFs and report his findings in late September before setting up a study session.

Such a study session wouldn't take place until October.

TIFs do not raise taxes, but allow municipalities to earmark

revenue growth for designated areas.

The city of Farmington has a DDA and collects tax revenue growth from a designated principal shopping district. Proposal A severely limited the amount of tax money DDAs could collect, mainly revenue from the public schools. As a result, Farmington's DDA established a principal shopping district.

One Hills council member was puzzled as to why the developer is exploring the idea of such a district.

"If the only thing they're talking about is (collecting revenue) from the growth on this project, I can't see why they're spending a lot of time of this," said Nancy Bates, councilwoman. "That can't be a lot of money."

Malan figures a DDA and TIF could raise \$7 million, which would help pay for buying existing property, Lichtman said. Malan is likely to pay three times what a residential developer would pay if they were just developing the residential portion by itself, Lichtman said.

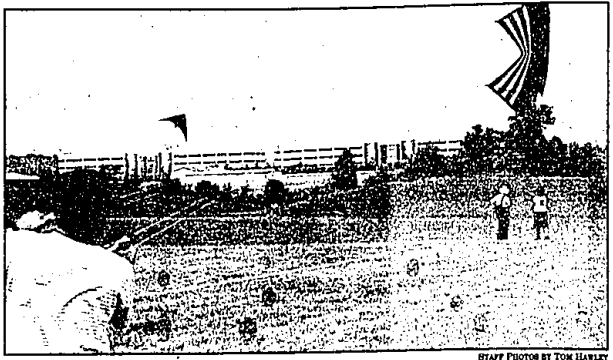
"That means the commercial

component must subsidize the residential component," he said. "In order to make the project feasible, there has to be some relief valve for the developer. A DDA would be a very viable alternative."

At Monday's meeting, Councilwoman Vicki Barnett urged her colleagues to carefully consider all the ramifications involved.

"You can only have one area designated," Barnett said. "I'm cautioning council, if we choose to go in this direction, to be real careful where you choose your downtown."

# Let's go fly



**Taking flight:** Randy Latochi of Farmington Hills tries out his five-panel, quad-line kite on Saturday at Schoolcraft Community College. Latochi, who designed the kite himself, just happened to be out testing his creation even as the Michigan Sport Kite Classic was under way on the fields behind the college. At right, Latochi shows his two-handed steering style.



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