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compatibility (EMC) chambers.

These aluminum-tiled room can, for example, test the interactions of antenna, cables, wires and components, said David F. Keeney, vice president of engineering.

"You've heard about the situation where the use of a cell phone can interrupt the electronic systems inside a car," Keeney explained. "The EMC chambers allows us to test motors, sensors, switches and electrical systems and evaluate their resistance and emissions to meet the auto-makers strict controls."

The wind-environmental chamber - better known as a wind tunnel - simulates weather conditions up to a wind velocity of 95 mph and the extremes of

summer and winter temperatures. A test inside the tunnel could measure the ability of a car's climate controls to keep the driver comfortable inside the vehicle, as well as the engine's cooling systems to maintain performance under extreme conditions.

Yasuo Yamauchi, president of Calsonic North America, said the company is a \$400 million, tier-one automotive supplier of climate-control, engine cooling and exhaust-control systems for equipment manufacturers around the world.

"We moved to Farmington Hills because we recognized the need to be located near our customers and available for their

research and development," Yamauchi said in a speech to mark ribbon-cutting ceremonies.

"We intend to develop our global market and employ even more people here, but the accomplishment of our business goals is not enough, unless we also make contributions to our community," Yamauchi said.

State Rep. Andrew Raczkoewski, R-Farmington Hills, said Michigan's current 3.7 percent unemployment rate is the lowest in 30 years because of companies like Calsonic.

"In Michigan, we applaud the great investment this corporation brings and we welcome the multi-cultural influences they offer to us," Raczkoewski said.

Farmington Hills Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi said the opening of this business is one of many in the city this year, including the impending relocations of the headquarters for A & W Inc. and Gale Research.

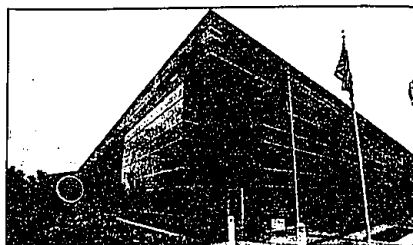
"This is good for our schools,

our libraries, and our citizens, and it shows that our community is a great place to live," Vagnozzi said. "We have so much to gain from the business and cultural enrichment and we are looking forward to them."

Jody Soronen, community affairs director of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce, said Calsonic has already been an active member of the chamber for over a year, joining the 600-plus Farmington and Farmington Hills members.

"Of course, we are delighted they've chosen Farmington Hills as the home base for their facilities. They bring employment opportunities, and this gorgeous new building and landscaping is beautiful. Calsonic joins many multi-national companies already here from Japan and Germany," Soronen said.

Calsonic representatives said examples of cultural exchanges are found in the design of the building itself, including the



STAFF PHOTO BY BRIAN MITCHELL

Melting pot: The new Calsonic headquarters mixes Japanese and American influences. It's on Hills Tech Drive, south of 12 Mile and west of Halsted.

combination of right-angles from American architecture and curved walls prevalent in Japanese building design. The walls are covered in a fibrous material, as is customary in Japan.

Inside the building, cultural exchange fits into the working

process as staff members from the engineering, design, sales and marketing, product development and testing work in platform teams which take a product from concept to production. The interdepartmental staff work in a shared open office environment called "neighborhoods."

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Hillside open house shuts out some voters

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

Some would-be voters in the Farmington school bond issue election pulled up to Precinct 7 after work on Tuesday only to find no place to park.

Instead, they found the Hillside Elementary School parking lot jammed, largely because of a curriculum open house taking place at the same time.

According to one resident, who asked to not be identified, a few

apparently decided it wasn't worth the trouble to park a block away from Hillside Elementary School and walk to the voting place. One resident proceeded to drive home and rode his bicycle up to the precinct.

"I don't think it was deviousness," the resident said. "But they could have changed it. What's more important to the school, to have everybody vote or have the open house?"

Hillside Principal Jan Colliton, however, said school parents were notified by mail that the two-hour open house was taking place at the same time as the bond issue election, and to arrange their schedules accordingly.

The principal also was worried about the parking situation, but noted that there were separate, well-marked parking lots for the bond issue voters and open house.

Colliton said the curriculum

night was planned last spring, well before the Sept. 16 election date was set and when it was thought the election would be held a week later.

Changing the open house date, she said, would have caused scheduling problems for the people who agreed to give presentations to parents about grade-to-grade curriculum, technology, gym, art and music.

And Hillside had to be concerned with what other events and programs schools in the district had planned for the days surrounding the bond issue.

"We had this plan in place and we also had coordinated it with so many other people," Colliton said. "To change the open house date 'would have been disruptive to so many things we were trying to do.'"

Hillside's open house was the only one scheduled for the night of the \$83.1 million bond issue, which was approved.

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