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already on the road when a call comes in are several factors contributing to the achievement, said Public Safety Director Gary Goss.

But Goss, who Monday night made a presentation and showed a video of the report to the Farmington City Council, lauded his department for the achievement. There are 22 full-time officers (including seven who are fully licensed emergency medical technicians) and another 20 in reserve.

House fire appears to have been accident

An estimated \$100,000 damage was done to a house by a fire Sunday night.

Firefighters were called to the house on the 6000 block of Inkster, south of Maple in West Bloomfield. Four people — two adults and two children — were in the house, but had been awakened by a smoke detector. They escaped unharmed.

It is believed the fire started in a utility room near the center of the house, said Pat Riney, fire investigator. The fire is still under investigation and appears to be accidental, he said.

"The majority of the credit has to go to those guys on the street," Goss said following the meeting. "They have a multitude of tasks to perform and they do them all well. One word to define them all is caring ... I'm proud of the job they do."

Several city council members were pleased with Farmington's top ranking.

"There's no way you can put a price on that until you are there and need your help," said Mayor Mary Bush to Goss shortly after his presentation. "It is one of the fine examples of why Farmington is the best place in the state to live."

Council member Arnold Campbell called it "a tremendous achievement" that Farmington finished first.

With its average of just over two minutes, the public safety department finished well ahead of the competition.

The second-best response reported by Channel 50 was Inkster, at 3:48. The response by Livonia firefighters was four to five minutes, while both Troy and Westland took five to six minutes.

Although the televised survey did not refer to the city of Farmington Hills, Lt. Michael Garr

estimated that the average response time for that larger city is 4 1/2 minutes. He said that mark is an improvement over previous years, because of the addition of Station No. 5 on Orchard Lake near 11 Mile Road.

Also in the report, it was estimated that firefighters typically should take no more than six minutes to arrive at the scene of a blaze.

"If you can get there within six minutes you can normally maintain and extinguish a fire," Goss said.

The first Farmington officer to make it to a scene, while not equipped with ladders or fire hoses, can immediately call in for additional help. And there is equipment (including Automatic External Defibrillators) ready for use in patrol car trunks.

"We have a system in place," Goss said, "where the dispatcher receives a call (from the first-responding officer) when there's a situation of smoke or any indication of a fire. She immediately begins calling back people from home."

The city has up to four platoons and three engines to combat blazes, depending on size, of course, Goss said. The Farmington Hills Fire Department is available as backup for major fires if needed.


The first officer on the scene surveys the situation and coordinates the units in," he continued. "If there's a rescue, if there's someone inside, he has turn-out gear and can get inside the building and begin rescue procedures."

Farmington Hills' Garr, however, noted that comparing fire service in different-sized cities such as Farmington and Farmington Hills is like comparing apples and oranges.

He said responding Farmington Hills Fire Department units have equipment and resources to immediately begin dousing flames and saving people when they get there. In smaller cities with public safety departments, the first officers at a scene often must then radio in for additional help, such as fire engines.


"In a small territory," Garr said, "the (patrol) officers are their firefighters, they're on the road. But it's not the fire truck."

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RECREATION NEWS

Each week the Recreation Division of the Farmington Hills Department of Special Services presents a synopsis of upcoming activities. For further information regarding programs, contact the recreation office at 473-9570. Pre-registration is required for most activities. For matters regarding Farmington Hills City Council agenda items, call the news line at 473-9532.

OPEN SKATE
The Ice Arena is open for skating. Fee is \$3 for Farmington Hills residents and \$5 for non-residents. Skate rental is \$2 per person. A concession stand is also open. For specific days and hours call 478-8800.

DOWNHILL SKIING
The Farmington Hills Recreation Division is offering a complete

Downhill Ski Program for all participants, fourth grade through high school, each Friday night starting Jan. 9 at Mt. Brighton. The bus will leave designated locations at 4:30 p.m. and return at approximately 10 p.m. Fee is \$50 for a two-week session. The fee includes lift ticket, ski lessons and bus transportation. The \$11.60 ski rental is not included and will be collected on the bus. Call 473-9570 for exact dates and departure sites.

CO-ED & MEN'S VOLLEYBALL
The Farmington Hills Recreation Division is offering Men's and Co-Ed's Open Volleyball Leagues in the gymnasium at the Costick Activities Center, located on Eleven Mile Road between Middlebelt and Inkster. Games will

be on Tuesday evenings and will start Jan. 6. The fee is \$225 per team.

MOTHER & SON DANCE
Moms can enjoy a fun-filled evening with their sons from 7-8:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 23. The price is \$15 per couple. Registration deadline is Jan. 16 at Special Services.

CHILDREN'S THEATER
Children and parents will be delighted through the animation of six colorful puppets which tell a story of a little boy who refuses to eat his vegetables, but by the end of the show realizes their benefits. The show is at 11 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 17, at the Costick Activities Center in Farmington Hills. Advanced tickets are \$4/adult, \$3/child; at the door \$6/adult and \$5/child.

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