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THE WEEK AHEAD

SUNDAY

Watch It: *Farmington Players perform "The Heiress" at the Players Barn, 32332 W. 12 Mile, west of Orchard Lake Road. Showtime is 8 p.m.*

MONDAY

Dig It: *Farmington High battles cross-city rival North Farmington in girls volleyball while Harrison High hosts Westland John Glenn. Both matches start at 6:30 p.m.*

TUESDAY

Shake It: *Tangerine Trousers perform 8 p.m. at the Cadillac Cafe on Grand River Avenue in Farmington Hills.*

WEDNESDAY

Sign It: *Author Jeffrey R. Caponigro signs copies of his new book, "The Crisis Counselor," 7-9 p.m. at Borders Books, Music and Cafe, 30995 Orchard Lake Road, near 14 Mile.*

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Officials predict quicker response to emergencies

BY RICHARD PEARL
STAFF WRITER

Farmington Hills residents should be seeing faster and better emergency medical service from their fire department by March 2.

That's when the city's new Advanced Life Support - or paramedic - service is expected to be operating, according to Hills Fire Chief Richard Marinucci.

"This is a big issue - a big step that makes us a better community in which to live," said Councilman Terry Sever as Farmington Hills City Council unanimously approved a new three-year contract with Community Emergency Medical Service (CEMS), Inc., Feb. 16.

"This is what government is really about: protecting the safety of the community," City Manager Dan Hobbs said in urging approval of the contract.

The pact, which will see the fire department provide first-response Advanced Life Support (ALS) in place of CEMS, is expected to cut ALS emergency response-time by almost 50 percent, according to Marinucci.

He told the council Feb. 16 response times will average four or five minutes, not the current seven or eight, because the equipment and crews now will be stationed in Hills fire stations.

Station Five, the headquarters at 11 Mile Road and Orchard Lake, will have an ambulance and fire truck equipped for ALS. The other four stations each will have one ALS equipped unit.

Please see RESPONSE, A3



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Bosch stays put; plans to expand

BY RICHARD PEARL
STAFF WRITER



Farmington Hills got ready to roll out the welcome mat in the wake of a \$31 million expansion announced Thursday by the Robert Bosch Corporation.

The expansion, expected to result in a net revenue gain of \$55.5 million for the state, was announced during a joint press conference at City Hall attended by company, city and state officials.

It meant that the Bosch Group, an automotive products-based manufacturing giant, had accepted a \$29.4 mil-

Hills to be home for company's braking division

lion tax abatement from the city and state and had decided to bring the research and development for its recently acquired braking division to Farmington Hills from South Bend, Ind.

In making the Hills its braking division headquarters for North America, Bosch was credited by the state with creating 826 new jobs in southeast Michigan, including 475 company jobs and 351 indirectly related jobs, such as those in construction and the restaurant and retail fields.

Hans Weckerle, president of Bosch Braking Systems, said the decision will result in the direct transfer of 40 jobs from Indiana.

Anticipating that at least 10 to 15 percent of the new job holders will take up residence in Farmington Hills, Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi said, "We wish them well and offer them a hearty welcome."

In referring to the Hills tax abatement, Vagnozzi said, "We're glad to be able to work this agreement out. Bosch has been in our community 16 to 16

years and they are being a good corporate citizen."

He told the gathering of officials he saw no losers.

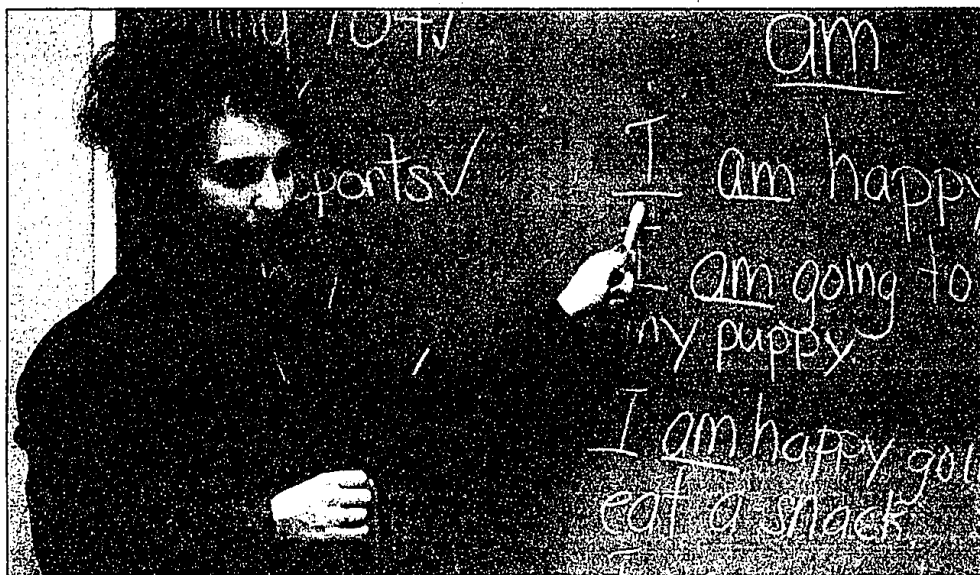
"If there are any losers, it's the state of Indiana," he said.

State Sen. Bill Bullard, R-Milford, said he doesn't like tax abatements "but in the real world we're competing with other states and tax abatements is what we have to do."

The firm's decision to nearly double the size of its existing Hills Tech Drive campus development with a new 250,000-square-foot facility will mean a net state revenue gain after abate-

Please see BOSCH, A2

A lifesaver



STAFF PHOTO BY SHARON LEMLEY

Writing's on the wall: Laura Hryczyk, who teaches at Our Lady of Sorrows, is still coming to grips with the feelings associated with her role as a lifeguard the day Melissa Garr was struck by a fallen tree branch. Hryczyk's quick reaction is credited with saving the girl's life.

Time makes it easier to relive pool rescue

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

The words written on the chalkboard in teacher Laura Hryczyk's second-grade classroom at Our Lady of Sorrows in Farmington seemed to appropriately reflect how her moods have changed since a fateful day last summer.

"I am happy,"

For the 26-year-old Hryczyk, happi-

ness was often fleeting during the months that followed a tragic poolside accident July 23 at Farmington Glen Aquatic Center - even though Hryczyk was hailed as a lifesaver for her quick CPR on seriously-injured Melissa Garr.

Melissa was knocked into a coma that cloudy afternoon, after a fully vegetated tree branch fell for no apparent reason, striking her on the

skull behind the left ear.

The 16-year-old Farmington High School student probably would have died had lifeguards Hryczyk and Melissa McKay, 18, not swung into immediate action. As it was, Garr spent several months in an Ann Arbor hospital, with her prognosis for recovery unknown.

She finally improved enough to leave the brain injury rehabilitation

wing at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, move into a Farmington rehab center and then, earlier this month, return on a limited basis to FHS.

But for such a long time, Hryczyk, 25, wondered and worried about whether she did everything she could in the frightful, frantic moments after the thick, heavy branch swung down on Garr's head like an 18-foot-long

Please see LAURA, A3

Police ticket 20 stores for selling cigarettes to minors

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

When it comes to underage smoking, Farmington Hills police went to stub out the habit at the source: those who sell cigarettes to minors.

Police ticketed 20 out of 63 businesses Thursday in the sting. Similar sweeps are done for liquor sales to underage teens, but this was one targeting cigarettes.

Two decoys, ages 15 and 17, went into convenience and drugstores and gas stations in an attempt to buy cigarettes. They were successful in nearly one-third of the cases.

Those ticketed are set to appear 9 a.m. March 2 at 47th District Court. Selling tobacco products to minors is a

misdemeanor and, if convicted, punishable by up to 90 days in jail and a \$500 fine.

"It's more productive to go after the people who are the sellers - the retailers," Hills police Chief Bill Dwyer said. "Notwithstanding, we're still going to enforce the state law for as minors being in possession of tobacco. We're still going to do that."

The operation was prompted by complaints from merchants, but also by a community wide initiative by police, city and schools officials to curb alarm-

ing trend. Smoking - in addition to being a health hazard - is considered a "gateway drug," which can lead to other narcotics use by teens, Dwyer said.

While adults are smoking less, their children are not. Since 1991, smoking among eighth- and 10th-

graders has risen 50 percent, a national survey said.

A survey conducted by the Farmington Hills Commission on Children, Youth and Family in 1995 and Hills police found that 80 percent of eighth-graders and 98 percent of 10th- and 12th-graders said cigarettes are "fairly

easy to very easy" to obtain.

Education and rehabilitation are keys to reversing teen smoking, Dwyer said.

The Hills police chief and Farmington Public Safety Director Gary Goss will meet with 47th District Court officials Tuesday to talk about the issue.

One proposal is to make it a civil infraction for those under 18 who smoke. First-time offenders would be fined \$50 but also required to work hours in a hospice, nursing home or long-term care facility.

Teens under 17 are ticketed for minors in possession of tobacco under state law. Offenders are prosecuted through Oakland County Probate Court, where police say there is a backlog of such tickets.

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Vandalism follows downtown ban on skateboarding

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER

Two days after Farmington's city council approved a ban against skateboarding in the downtown business district, four newly-installed benches around the Downtown Farmington Center fountain were vandalized.

"They replaced the benches yesterday," Public Safety Director Gary Goss said Friday. "And within hours, the boards were broken on them. It was intentional, no question about that."

Skateboarders typically use benches along with

curbs and ramps to perform stunts.

In addition, several other vandalism reports were received by the Farmington Public Safety Department, including:

■ Damage to a Detroit Edison meter at Grove Orchard streets.

■ A bent light pole and broken bench outside the Masonic Temple at Grand River-Farmington.

■ Placement of a "Motor City Gold Skateboards" bumper sticker on a sign in the public safety parking lot.

"They did leave us a calling card," Goss said. "... It certainly gives us a direction to look at."

The amount of damage was not yet determined. But Goss indicated the vandalism potentially could hurt whatever progress was made by youths and city officials at the council meeting.

The city, particularly JoAnne McShane, expressed a real willingness to work with the skateboarders to find an alternative site," Goss said. "But if this continues, I don't know how that's going to affect this."

Goss emphasized that it was probably the work of a few teens with unresolved anger about the ban. "I don't want to reflect on all of them, because there are a lot of good kids out there."