Sign language

New historic markers add value

New Farmington Historic District signage, designed to help both residents and visitors more readily identify the six sites, was approved Monday night by the Farmington City Council.

The oval-shaped markers, the first to be installed in at least 20 years, are the product of the first-ever joint effort by Farmington's historical and beautification commissions, which coordinated their efforts with Public Services Director Kevin Gushman.

The signs will be installed in late summer or early fall, according to Mike Harrison, historical commission chairman.

"As a homeowner in the Historic District, I like what it (designation) does for property values," said Harrison. "It works wonders.

"Other cities like Livonia and Novi, which don't have traditional downtowns, look at Farmington with envy."

The site-designations were established by the historical commission and complement state designations such as the Gov. Warner Mansion and the Masonic Temple.

The joint commission looked at site markers in Northville, Plymouth and Southfield before choosing a design.

Each 28-inch-by-24-inch oval proclaims "Farmington Historic District, Est. 1824" in raised gold and white letters etched on a dark-green background.

The older, smaller signs – most of which have disappeared, according to Harrison – said simply "Old Village of Farmington."

"I think there's maybe one or two of the old signs left," he said, the rest apparently having become souvenirs.

That isn't likely with the new signs. Four of them will be mounted on 4-inch-by-6-inch fluted posts standing about 6 feet high. The other two will go on existing utility poles.

The signs, costing about $550 apiece, will be made by Trikes Sign Company of Farmington, whose owner, Tim Trikes, worked with the two commissions on the design. Bids and designs were sought from other companies, Harrison said.

Funding for the signs is contained in the 1998-99 city budget.

The one-sided signs, to be sand-blasted on redwood and weather-treated, will be visible only to those entering an historic district site.

Installations will be on:

- Shiawassee at Warner, facing east for westbound traffic.
- Farmington Road at Shiawassee, facing north for southbound traffic.
- Farmington Road and Oakland, at Heeney-Sundquist Funeral Home.
- Shiawassee at Glenview, north of the Grand River intersection, facing west for eastbound Shiawassee traffic.
- Grand River east of Shiawassee, facing west for eastbound Grand River traffic.
- Warner at Thomas.

Harrison and Edwina Eggleston represented the historical commission on the project, while Harrison's wife, Joan, and Walt Gajewski represented the beautification commission.

'Clean Team' targets Eight Mile businesses

The 1998 Clean Team campaign for the Eight Mile Business Association runs July 25-31, challenging businesses to do their part to help maintain the 27-mile corridor as a clean and safe place to live, work and shop.

For the third consecutive year, businesses, local governments and residents will roll up their sleeves and spruce up Eight Mile Road. Members of the 8MBA include businesses, neighborhood groups, the 13 communities and three counties along Eight Mile and the Michigan Department of Transportation.

The association's mission is to revitalize and promote the Eight Mile transportation, business and residential corridor by linking the efforts of the public and private sectors.

"The streetscape is not unlike our own front yard," said Stephen Morris, campaign chair. "We should all care about the impressions that we give to our customers through our storefronts, because they determine our success."

Participating in the event can be as simple as picking up litter, or pulling up weeds and planting flowers. Businesses may also want to finalize major improvements, like upgrading signs, or repaving lots and sidewalks, during the campaign.

The event can create an active working environment, for employees or just provide an opportunity to get outside for a day.

The 8MBA would also like to encourage businesses to clean up neighboring properties. Association officials say one of the easiest ways to help out is to mow grass between the sidewalk and the curb. That patch of grass can become unruly when it is near vacant buildings, sabotaging the businesses near it.

"Neglecting the right-of-way has become a year-round problem but maintaining it on every property is one of those little things that can really make a difference in the overall appearance," said 8MBA Executive Director Sharlan Douglas.

Businesses may nominate themselves for beautification awards, or individuals may nominate an establishment on Eight Mile. Deadline for entries is July 10. For only $2, Clean Team participants can purchase commemorative Clean Team '98 T-shirts.

Members of the Clean Team committee will also serve as judges of the beautification awards. They include committee chair Steve Morris, Bill Dillon of Detroit Edison, Angeline Bynum of the city of Detroit, Brian Rarthum of Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, David Woodcox of the city of Livonia and Project Pride Director Sebastian Wade.

Last year, more than 100 participants from Harper Woods to Livonia joined in the effort. Nine businesses received Clean Team beautification awards.

■ **'We should all care about the impressions that we give to our customers through our storefronts.'**

Stephen Morris
—campaign chairman

Handicapped park free at festival

Handicappers are invited to park free-of-charge in Salem United Church of Christ's parking lot for the 1998 Farmington Founder's Festival.

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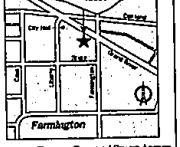

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