

Kosovo from page A1

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Frank Lauhoff
—City manager

trying to stay here, is "not only seeking the opportunities offered by our country, but, more importantly, they are seeking asylum from persecution from within their country."

Ever since reaching this country, the couple have been taken advantage of.

First, they applied for and received a visitors visa, spending 17,000 in German marks (which translates to about \$10,000 U.S.) Later, they attempted to seek permanent citizenship; those efforts were stymied by a language barrier.

In 1998, after moving to Michigan from New York, they met a Hamtramck woman they only remember as "Elizabeth." She apparently took Sevdjic's original college degree and \$4,000, all while promising to help them. Of course, that help never materialized.

At the dry cleaners in Farmington, Sevdjic found a wad of money, totaling \$695, in a pants pocket. She contacted the owner, who came in to pick up the order only to find that the money was \$725 in the pocket. The woman opened up her till and made up the difference.

Maybe now, with the help of the Farmington city officials and Levin, their luck will change.

"They certainly have a clock running," said Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff. "And that's September. Things have gotten worse where they came from. So, certainly, there's a heightened concern that this get accomplished. And we're relying on Sen. Levin's office" to at least extend that deadline.

Lauhoff then added that the family members likely "aren't the only ones who need help."

Their situation is literally a life-and-death one, Lauhoff emphasized.

"Some people come here because they want to improve their life," Lauhoff said. "These people came here to stay alive. If they go back, it looks like a full-scale war is going on now ... These folks have a valid concern for their welfare."

City officials go to bat for family

By The Staff
Staff Writer

When a family of three was threatened with deportation, Farmington Mayor Paul Annunzio stepped in to help. He decided he could do more for his fellow citizens and his city than he could do for his family. He decided he could do more for his fellow citizens and his city than he could do for his family. He decided he could do more for his fellow citizens and his city than he could do for his family.

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Death from page A1

Police decline to specify what leads they're pursuing. They're also investigating a matter unrelated to the death investigation, Nebus said.

Authorities haven't released the name of the Hills man, who they say refused to help Yasa despite her threats to commit suicide.

In e-mail letters, the man makes references to calling each other fiancé and talks about a



Julie Yasa

trip to Toronto from Amsterdam

having a better life together in "our apartment."

Nebus said. He also paid for Yasa's plane tickets, which included a

after she was twice refused entry to the U.S. She was smuggled across the Detroit/Windsor border.

Police talked to people who met Yasa in her two-week journey from Toronto to Farmington Hills. Everyone took a liking to her, though she appeared to be troubled, Nebus said. Yasa did stay at Windsor hospital before she met her Internet lover. "She had every reason to believe this

'She had every reason to believe this man was going to take care of her.'

Chuck Nebus
—Assistant police chief

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CDBG from page A1

following year's budget for additional repairs.

The program provides assistance to low- and moderate-income homeowners for such things as minor repairs, roof and furnace replacements and sewer and water connections.

The city's Housing Rehabilitation Loan Board reviews and

approves applications, which are awarded based on income and ability to repay.

"It drastically reduces a program that has been very successful in our community," Mayor Aldo Vagnozzi said. "It's one of the reasons our older areas have rebounded where you have new homes going in and roads being

paved."

CDBG grants also have been used for fixups at Detroit Baptist Manor, a senior housing complex on 13 Mile Road, and for right of way improvements along Grand River Avenue.

City staff planned grant money to pay for road paving on Corn, Astor and Haynes streets and storm sewer upgrades on Moran Street.

In the 1999-2000 proposed budget, the city had \$200,000 planned for housing rehabilitation and \$320,000 for capital improvements. Those would be radically altered under the proposed cut, Brock said.

In addition to talking with U.S. lawmakers, city officials have fired off letters to Washington.

U.S. Sen. Pete Domenici, R-New Mexico, approved a budget resolution to cut HUD programs such as community development

block grants by \$3.5 billion — \$8.8 billion to \$6.3 billion for 2000. Cuts would continue during the next 10 years, eliminating CDBG grants altogether, according to the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

An amendment restoring that funding was defeated 60-49 in the Senate. U.S. Conference of Mayors intends to pick up the fight again during Appropriations hearings in May or June, a spokesman said.

Meanwhile, Hills city officials say they'll keep on top of the issue.

"If you let them get away it, they'll get away with it," Brock said.

Farmington's Lauhoff said that city's block grant money is earmarked for senior citizen recreational programs, held at the William Costick Activities Center.

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by Herbert M. Gardner, D.D.S.

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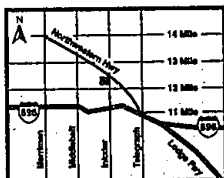
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