

Developers donate cash for new Players theater

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER
LOCONNOR@EHOME.COM

Farmington Players see a \$175,000 donation from a soon-to-be neighbor as swinging open the barn door to future contributions.

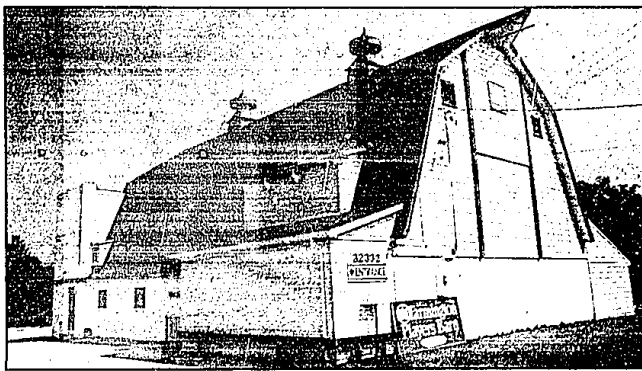
A new theater for the community group is expected to run \$1.4 million.

Officials from Sunrise Development, which is building a 76-unit senior assisted living center next door, will present the check to the theater group at 3 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 9, at another of its facilities under construction on Middlebelt Road.

"From a seed grows..." said Phil Hadley, Farmington Players building project manager. "It's kind of the first big chunk toward our fund-raising efforts. We have a large fund-raising campaign ahead of us."

As part of the planned unit development on 12 Mile Road, the existing 173-seat Farmington Players Barn theater will be torn down to make room for the assisted living center.

The group has performed in the former dairy barn since



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL HAZEN

CASH: Sunrise Development will build a 76-unit senior assisted living center next door to a new Farmington Players theater, which will replace the existing barn.

1960, averaging 6,000 patrons a year for its productions.

Sunrise Development officials pledged money to the Farmington

Players some time ago, Hadley said. The Fairfax, Va.-based company and the theater group have worked together throughout the city planning approval process.

Hadley termed the developer-theater group's relationship "mutually beneficial."

The senior development company found a site next to the present barn. Sunrise also learned the Farmington Players wanted to upgrade their theater.

"They contacted us that it might be an interesting proposition to approach this as a joint project," said Laura Hester, Sunrise spokeswoman. "That's how it started."

"We like to be part of a neighborhood when we come into the community and saw this as an

opportunity to reach out."

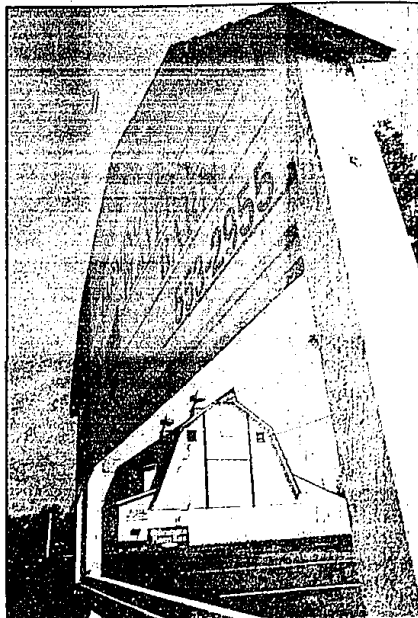
Sunrise expects to start construction in July 2000. Farmington Players will move productions to a yet-to-be determined site while the theater is being built.

The new 240-seat theater will feature air-conditioning and handicapped access while retaining its rural charm.

"It's still going to look like a barn," Hadley said. "We expect it to be a sophisticated theater."

At Thursday's check presentation, Sunrise officials plan to offer tours of suite models planned for its newest 72-unit Farmington Hills North senior center on Middlebelt. Tours take place 3-5 p.m.

For information, phone Sunrise of Farmington Hills North at 248-638-9200.



Unknown: Farmington Players still aren't sure where they will hold their productions as construction gets under way for a new theater.

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Laura Hester
—Sunrise spokeswoman

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