



**Steady as she goes:** Grant Wilcox, 6, and his 3-year-old brother, Mitchell, of Farmington Hills put out a pretend fire with the help of firefighter/emergency medical technician Andre Gardenhire.



**Right fit:** Above left, Sean Drew, 8, tries on the gear, while his brother, Chris, 7, hugs him. Firefighters (above right) demonstrate the use of equipment as they cut away the roof of a sport utility vehicle in order to free an accident victim.



## Big show

### Fire department open house entertains and educates

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A kitchen is engulfed in a ball of flame. People climb from a smoky house.

Fire trucks, ambulances and rescue units are everywhere as firefighter/paramedics use CPR on one victim and quickly cut apart a smashed vehicle to rescue another.

What is this, a major disaster? Nope, just Sunday afternoon's educational, fun and also memorable 22nd annual Farmington Hills Fire Department Open House.

Despite overcast skies and chilly temperatures, the big show drew 4,000-5,000 people from the Hills, the city of Farmington and elsewhere, according to Hills Fire Chief Rich Marinucci.

Many were children brought by parents or grandparents. Several were Cub Scouts working on merit badges.



BLAST PHOTO BY BLANCK LEBRECHT

**Watched:** Crowds weren't daunted by the cool weather, even though onlookers said they believed it was the coldest weather for the open house in years.

The open house, which caps Fire Prevention Week, draws on the public's curiosity and lets the department "sneak in some safety education while they're not looking," Marinucci joked.

Fire Inspector Larry Henderson said it was the first time in about 16 years the weather had threatened. Usually it is sunny and warm, he said.

Held at department headquarters at 11 Mile and Orchard Lake roads, the open house featured almost the entire 102-person Hills fire and rescue staff and a large display of its fire-fighting and rescue apparatus.

Departmental demonstrations included handling a kitchen fire and escaping from a burning building, plus techniques and equipment used in basic and Advanced Life Support and vehicle extrication.

Firefighters also gave a puppet show, dressed as Sparky, the fire department "mascot" and as clowns who sang and danced with the children.

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**Richard Marinucci**  
—Fire chief

A talking and singing mechanical fire hydrant and a firehouse "tattoo parlor" were there for the youngsters, while firefighters answered adults' questions on smoke detectors and dryer ventilation.

Various public and private agencies provided information on voter registration, recycling and fire insurance.

Others present included the

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