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would've done that," said Chellstorp, taking a break Friday morning. "When we look at it now, we can still see the fine work."

Said Joppich: "It's as fresh now as it was when we started. It is still a vital piece of artwork."

Most of the touch-up work involves repainting the original's color scheme to include more oranges and greens, which is part of the children's section new decor.

As a guide, they're using their original smaller-scale rendering. A street car, a hot dog vendor and 1920s police officers are depicted along with children and a tree house. The approaching 1976 Bicentennial served as inspiration for the mural.

The montage became a popular feature in the Farmington branch children's section, said Rev Papai, Farmington Commu-

nity Library executive director. A painting on a wall is more vulnerable than one on canvas, Papai said. The library's basement once had a water leak, which heightened fears the mural would be damaged. Papai didn't want the mural left out during renovations, which are being paid for through voter-approved bonds.

"I think it is remarkable that we have two artists ... who are still actively involved in our arts community who are willing to come back to work and refresh this wonderful piece of artwork 24 years later," Papai said.

In those years, Chellstorp and Joppich have honed their respective crafts.

Chellstorp is an assistant professor in Madonna University's Art and Humanities Department. She's also past president of the Farmington Artists Club. Her paintings have been fea-



Guide: An artist's rendering of the finished mural helps guide the artists.

tured in several statewide and regional exhibits, including Joppich's Bay Street Gallery in Northport, Mich. Joppich was Farmington Arts Commission and Michigan Council for the Arts 1978 "Artist in Residence."

She's gone onto global renown. One of her most recent works has been accepted by the International Society of Experimental Artists Exhibit, which is featured in the Huntsville (Ala.) Museum of Art.

Chellstorp and Joppich own Wall-Art, a company specializing in murals.

As they work together, they mirror patience and mutual respect. Once in awhile they even have an audience as children watch with amazement.

Both artists inspire each other with ideas, they said.

"We're better together in a way," Joppich said.

"I think so, too," Chellstorp said.

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been, where he's at and where he plans on going in the future."

Hartsack might have to wait only until 7 p.m. Wednesday, when city council candidates are scheduled to participate at a Farmington Democratic Club-sponsored forum. The debate will take place in the Farmington Hills City Council Chambers, Orchard Lake and 11 Mile roads.

Dibert, Hartsack and incumbents JoAnne McShane and Jim Mitchell are seeking election to three Farmington council seats. Three city ballot proposals also will be decided Nov. 2.

On Thursday, Dibert staunchly defended his literature and said he is ready and willing to step into the ring against Hartsack and the other two incumbents.

"The reason they're upset is they can't handle the truth. The truth of the matter is, one of the reasons they lost (a grocery store) in downtown Farmington was because of a lack of economic foresight when Farmer Jack and A&P merged."

"When they merged, you had two stores owned by the same company within a mile. At the same time, the city council was fighting Kroger over their abandoned storefront at Grand River and Halsted. ... A light should have gone off in somebody's head that said 'Wait a minute, we're going to have a problem here and we better get at it.'"

If the flyer ruffled a few feathers, so be it, Dibert said.

"The photograph was to make a point," Dibert said. "And the point is that our seniors in this community have - at least in my complex - to take taxi cabs whenever they go someplace."

"... Every day, I see the taxi cabs coming into my complex. And, I'll tell you something: I wouldn't put my 30-year-old sister into one of those, let alone my grandmother."

Dibert defended the content of the flyer.

"Everything in there is 100 percent true," he said. "The only thing they have to complain about is the lack of creating an economic vision for this community. Thus far, they're content with the status quo."

Hartsack lamented that the kind of politicking taking place in state races now seems to be

taking place in local elections.

"It's discouraging and disappointing that it's come down to a local level what we've seen at the state level," Hartsack said. "slamming things and not providing a solution. I'd hope that local elections would be more thoughtful, more intelligent and more real when it comes down to the campaign and the issues at hand."

Dibert said those senior citizens who have received his literature have complimented him. It is an issue seniors say the city council has ignored over the past five years, he said.

"This is politics," Dibert said. "If you want to be a politician, you have to learn how to deal with it. If you're not going to go out into the community and really talk about the issues with people, or find out what the issues are from the people, then you don't deserve to be an elected official in this community."

According to Dibert, the only other candidate going out into neighborhoods to discuss issues with residents is McShane. "There are only two people out knocking on doors in this campaign, and that's JoAnne McShane and myself."

But both Hartsack and Mitchell denied a lack of contact with residents during the campaign. They did say they were planning on doing most of their campaigning between now and the election, because it would be more effective.

"Everybody's been out," Hartsack said. "And, as a matter of fact, most of my campaigning is going to be in the last two weeks. To be more effective as far as campaigning, you have to do it closer to (the election) when people are paying attention."

About not going door-to-door yet, Mitchell said "It's not true ... He started awfully early, but that's his decision."

"You don't want to start too early with the election still being a ways off. Otherwise, it's meaningless," Mitchell said.

Staff writer Larry O'Connor contributed to this report.

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election since 1993 is trying against incumbents Bill Hartsack, JoAnne McShane and Jim Mitchell for three seats in the election. The top two vote-getters will receive four-year terms; the third-place finisher will earn a two-year term.

Outspoken and brash, the six-year resident of Farmington said the city council is "very standoffish when it comes to seeking public participation," and "needs to be more visible" to quell any lack of identity and attract the type of businesses that will bring in consumers who now go to Northville or other downtowns.

"The effects of urban sprawl are coming down Grand River and people are moving out of Farmington and Farmington Hills," Dibert said. "Farmington now isn't the little mecca out in the middle of nowhere that it was 30 years ago. Now it has to compete with other small towns."

Dibert doesn't think city officials have had a cohesive business vision for a number of years. He cites "cyclical overabundance" of businesses.

"Ten years ago it was (bringing in) a lot of discount stores. Then it was antique stores. Now, we're dealing with bakeries and bread shops," he said.

Attracting businesses to give consumers more "bang for our buck" could happen with a different approach.

"We need to make the DDA more accountable to the general public," said Dibert, who lives in Farmington with his wife, Danielle. "One way to do that is re-charter the DDA, so you have more residents on the committee. Right now it's made up ... of business owners."

Downtown's business district also could be boosted by the lifting of a "quasi" 10 p.m. curfew Dibert said now exists. "It's an outdated crowd-control concept."

City officials also need to "start following the visioning committee's recommendations. They had some great ideas. And, contrary to what the council may claim, buying the Civic was not one of them," said Dibert, who participated on the business-restaurant task force during the strategic planning process.

"I sat on that committee for six months of meetings," Dibert said. "The Civic was never mentioned."

(Hartsack, McShane and Mitchell all disputed Dibert's claims, as did City Manager Frank Laubhoff and Assistant City Manager Bill Richards. There was no specific mention of

the Civic contained in the official visioning report, based on those meetings. But all of the officials said discussions did take place during the visioning meetings, linking the future success of the Civic to the viability of downtown Farmington.)

Include public

According to Dibert, a feasibility study - with input from residents - should have been conducted prior to any theater transaction. Also, he said the lack of an open bidding process was a mistake.

"I thought it was a bad idea," said Dibert about the city purchase of the theater. "I'm fundamentally opposed to government running a for-profit business."

Dibert said he has contacts in the film industry who told him that celluloid itself soon will become obsolete, with movies being shown over a satellite feed.

The cost for an aging theater such as the Civic to make the conversion, continued Dibert, probably was too much for former owner Greg Hohler and probably will eventually take a million-dollar chunk out of the city's financial coffers.

Because of that, Dibert said a five-star restaurant might have been a better alternative for the

Grand River landmark theater, which was sold by Hohler to the city this summer for \$316,500.

Dibert isn't down about everything in Farmington, however. The public safety department, which provides police, fire and medical assistance under one roof, is "very effective for Farmington." He wouldn't call for merging into the larger Farmington Hills police and fire departments.

Roads, sidewalks and sewers are in good shape, he continued, and "the DPW does a very good job of maintaining everything."

Meanwhile, city council aspirations aren't the only things on the agenda for Dibert, a graduate of Oakland University with a major in political science. There is time to serve on community committees and organizations and also roll up his sleeves and talk to the public, he believes.

Besides participating in the visioning process, Dibert currently holds a seat on the Farmington Hills/Farmington Commission on Children, Youth and Families. He also owns Interiors/Exteriors Ltd. and is employed in the senior loan office at Livonia-based First Community Mortgage.

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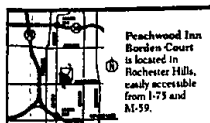
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October 16-31

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