



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRISLER

Pride: Judy Downey, Farmington Downtown Development Authority executive director, stands in front of the gazebo adjacent to the Village Commons parking lot on Grand River, between Farmington-Power roads. The hope is that the renovated gazebo will become a gathering spot.

By TIM SMITH
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Until now, the gazebo-pergola structure on Grand River in downtown Farmington was an almost-overlooked, or unknown, city oasis.

But thanks to the addition of a sparkling, cone-like roof, motorists and pedestrians should have no problem knowing what they are approaching, said Judy Downey, executive director of Farmington's Downtown Development Authority.

"You can notice it way down Grand River" with the gazebo roof, said Downey earlier this week as workers completed the project for Arky B. Construction Inc. of Redford Township. They were nailing some of the final few cedar shakes onto the peaked roof.

The structure, called a city "beauty spot" by Downey, is adjacent to the Village Commons parking lot on Grand River between Farmington-Power roads.

According to Downey, the plan to enclose the gazebo was hatched by architect John Grissim. It also was included in the DDA 10-year master plan and the city's visioning process,

City oasis

Gazebo gets new lease on life

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which was overseen by Wayne State University.

Besides the 14 1/2-foot-tall peaked roof, the project includes landscaping, brick pavers and a wall, to give users a more secluded setting.

The roof was deemed necessary largely to protect musicians who play electrical instruments during the summer concert series there, Downey said.

"The evening concerts have become more popular every summer and you hate to have to stop one because the musicians have their instruments plugged in and have to stop performing" in wet weather, she said.

Those concerts, and the weekly Farmers Market from May-October, enabled regular use of the structure, but the privacy-enhancing improvements are

intended to attract individuals on a spur-of-the-moment basis, perhaps for lunches or quiet moments.

Downey stressed that part of the Village Commons parking lot is set aside for gazebo use during events, thanks to shopping center owner Nu-Vest Properties. That arrangement has been in place for about five years, she added.

The improvements, continued Downey, are part of a "two-fold" DDA project, tabbed at an estimated \$60,000 for the current budget year.

In spring 1999, a brick, pedestrian walkway will be installed at Warner-Grand River, from Dimitri's to Starbucks. The walkway is intended to "make motorists see ahead of them that pedestrians are coming across."

The gazebo, the tallest element of the structure, and uncovered pergola extensions on either side (complete with park benches) was built in 1989 on the west edge of the Village Commons parking lot with the help of many donors — all listed on a plaque a short distance from the structure.

"To me, it's hometown America," Downey said.

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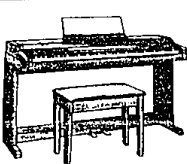
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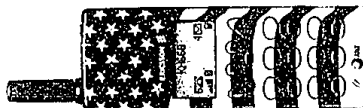
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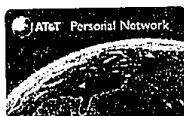
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