

# Farmington Observer

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## E-commerce makes first stop here



Farmington merchants will be first in Michigan to use an Internet sales device. The Web site will be called the "Downtown Farmington Market Place." Marketing Communications Counsel Inc. will design and operate the site.

BY TIM SMITH  
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E-commerce marketing is e-merging for downtown Farmington merchants. They now have an opportunity to be

the first in Michigan to tap into the growing, multi-billion Internet sales bonanza.

On Tuesday morning, the Farmington Downtown Development Authority agreed to back a proposal to establish

the "Downtown Farmington Market Place." Farmington's DDA thus apparently becomes the first in the state to officially establish such a Web site.

Marketing Communications Counsel, Inc. of Farmington will design and operate the site for the DDA.

"They (DDA members) really want to help the downtown merchants market themselves," Ron Baker, who heads up Marketing Communications Counsel, said following the approval. "Each mer-

chant will either say 'Yeah, it works or it doesn't.' That's really the ultimate criterion."

Baker added that he is "excited about it. It is revolutionary in a sense. No one else has done it in the state." Not too many are hooked up elsewhere, either. He said that, during extensive research about e-commerce, he could only "uncover one other similar program in existence nationwide, one established in

Please see **COMMERCE, A4**

### IN THE PAPER TODAY

COMMUNITY LIFE

A hit: *Pokemon* video games, toys and trading cards are a big craze with the pre-teen crowd. Is that a good thing?/ B-1

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## Observers' circulation has new manager

Troy Gibson has been named circulation manager of the *Observer* Newspapers. Formerly the area manager for the Canton *Observer*, Gibson succeeds Larry Geiger of Livonia, who has been named manager of consumer sales and marketing for The *Observer* & Eccentric Newspapers.

Gibson's new position was announced recently by Susan Rosiek, publisher of the *Observer* Newspapers.

"Troy's knowledge of the *Observer* circulation area along with his emphasis on customer service and his ability to organize and motivate employees and our youth and adult carrier forces makes him an excellent choice for the position," said Rosiek.

Gibson has worked at the *Observer* for the last six years as an area manager in Canton, Plymouth and Farmington/Farmington Hills. Before joining the *Observer*, he worked as the circulation manager for the *Observer* & Eccentric Newspapers.

Please see **OBSERVERS, A5**



Thinking about a new car or a good second car? You'll find a huge selection of auto ads in today's HomeTown Classifieds

## Civic steps back in time

BY TIM SMITH  
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Only one week into the new millennium, Saturday's auction and gala at the Civic Theatre will propel folks back into the 1940s.



Many vintage theater items will be on the block during the live auction, scheduled to begin at 11 a.m. Saturday, said Denise Tawyea, who is co-organizing publicity efforts for the Civic's weekend-long Grand Reopening.

These items could bring in about \$7,500, to be used primarily for continuing theater renovations.

According to Tawyea, the free auction will be nostalgic for community members who have spent time inside the Grand River movie house — purchased last summer by the city of Farmington.

"A lot of the local people who have been attending the theater," said Tawyea, "are excited about having a chance to own a piece of theater memorabilia that they've been exposed to all these years."

For starters, bids can be made to purchase up to 50 theater seats dating back to the Civic's 1940 opening. Or, Tawyea said, another gem might be the glass facade of the original box office.

Among other attractive auction items: Tiffany-style ceiling light fixtures with the "Drink Coca-Cola" inscription; a Paramount Pictures wall clock; original letters for the box office marquee; three glass wall marquee frames from outside the Civic; four miscellaneous 1950s advertisements featuring Marilyn Monroe and James Dean.

Meanwhile, Tawyea said space for the auction is limited and "we want to make sure buyers get into the theater." The lower auditorium, where the auction will take place, can only seat 268 people.

The general public can preview the auction items from 10-11 a.m. Saturday. During that hour, they can



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL HARPLEY

Prepare: With the Civic Gala just a few days away Andrew Reitley and Joel Hamilton (background) of Northwest Studios adjust weights on the Civic Theater's stage curtains.

decide which items they intend to place bids on, Tawyea said.

Professional auctioneer Rick Montgomery will handle the proceedings. The auction is only one highlight of the Grand Reopening weekend, which runs from Friday through Sunday.

On Friday and Sunday evening (and Sunday afternoon), current theatrical releases will be shown at 1940 prices. On those evenings, tickets will cost 25 cents for adults and 10 cents for children age 12 and under.

Saturday evening is the "gala," culminating at 9 p.m. with the showing of "The Philadelphia Story," a 1940 movie classic featuring Cary Grant, Katherine Hepburn and Jimmy Stewart.

The sold-out gala also will give patrons a chance to wear 1940s attire; go to a 7:30 p.m. reception next door at Legato for cocktails and hors d'oeuvres; and view the newly unveiled official Civic lobby mural.



Going, gone: Denise Tawyea, co-chair for the Civic Gala, displays one of the movie posters that go up for auction on Saturday night.

Please see **CIVIC, A5**

## Crash: Police have no motive

BY JONI HUBBARD  
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Farmington Hills Police still have no idea why a 16-year-old Detroit youth led them on a high-speed chase that resulted in a crash in Livonia that killed the youth on Dec. 29.

Chief Bill Dwyer said it would only be speculation to offer a reason for what appears to be a car theft gone wrong. Dwyer has since learned the boy, who had no criminal history, was a good student and worked at a video store.

"I don't know what happened to him," Dwyer said Tuesday. "Apparently, something went wrong. The medical examiner found no evidence of drugs or alcohol in his system. This was a real tragedy."

Authorities say Julian Griffin drove

Please see **CRASH, A4**

## Agreement comes with 3-percent salary hike

BY TIM SMITH  
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Seemingly with relative ease, the city of Farmington and its unionized public safety officers reached an amicable four-year contract agreement. The contract with the 16 members of the Farmington Public Safety Officers was approved during Monday night's city council meeting.

"We had fruitful negotiations," said Public Safety Director Gary Goes. "We have such a good working atmosphere."

Goes and union representative Terry Purves headed up the contract talks. Terms of the deal, which is retroactive to Jan. 1, 2000, and expires on Dec. 31, 2003, include: 3-percent raises for each of the four years; pension benefit improvements; graduate degree educational reimbursement; improved optical and dental reimbursement; and changes in medical insurance.

Goes said the public safety officers' contract is the second to be successfully negotiated, after one for the city's dispatchers. Still pending is a new con-

Please see **CONTRACT, A5**

## Welcome Millennium babies arrive

BY TIM SMITH  
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Expectant parents Mike and Barbara Crawford had no reason to pay extra attention to the flood of stories announcing the first births of the new millennium early Saturday.

But the Farmington couple has a New Year's Day baby nonetheless.

Their daughter, Kirsten Lorraine, arrived at 11:32 a.m. Jan. 1, 2000 at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak. She was delivered without complications, more than three weeks early by Dr. Laura Gruskin. According to Mike Crawford, the baby — the couple's first — weighed in at 8 pounds, 3 ounces.

"It was kind of a surprise to us," said Crawford, an engineer at Textron Automotive Co. in Plymouth Township. "We thought we still had three-and-a-half weeks to go in this thing."

"But it's kind of neat for her (Kirsten) to start her life in a brand new year, let alone a brand new millennium and a brand new century."

New Year's Eve started out with no hint of their child being born hours later. The Crawfords were attending the Detroit Red Wings-Chicago Blackhawks hockey game at Joe Louis Arena, sitting in the expensive lower bowl. It was Mike's first Wings game.

But more than midway through the contest, Mike saw the baby.

Please see **BABIES, A4**



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL HARPLEY

Hello: Barbara and Mike Crawford welcomed their daughter, Kirsten Lorraine into the world.



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