

# The Farmington Observer

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# The Farmington Observer

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## Edison official faces tough audience

BY JONI HUBBARD  
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■ 'For every hour my electricity is off, I'll guarantee you I won't pay for it.'

Barry Brickner  
—Hills councilman

Call them "skeptical." Farmington Hills City Council members listened intently Monday night as Detroit Edison's Bob May talked at length about his company's efforts to improve service and reduce power outages in their community. Unfortunately, several council members have already experienced power outages in the first four months of this year.

May knew he was facing a tough crowd. He said the company's goal is that no customer should experience more than two outages annually.

"I think over the course of time, we need to work hard to redeem ourselves in your community," he said. "This is our step forward."

The stop has brought line crews from other communities into Farmington Hills and stepped up a tree-trimming program to deal with the most common source of outages, May said.

All circuits that have had repetitive outages have been examined and, in some cases, repairs or replacements have been made.

Of the 55 projects Detroit Edison has undertaken in response to complaints evaluated by the

Public Service Commission, the lion's share should be resolved by June.

"We want to try to get as much of that work done before the heat and summer storm season begins," May explained.

Detroit Edison has also made improvements designed to get power back on line sooner when storms occur, he said. Since last fall, the company has added 70 customer service representatives and the average wait for callers has dropped from upwards of 20 minutes to just over one minute.

Storm damage will also be managed differently, with storm-related outages included in the company's design plan for the future, rather than being treated as an "anomaly."

While May couldn't promise no more outages in the Farmington/Farmington Hills project areas, he said he expects people to have improved service. The Public Service Commission is also looking at developing a set

of standards for utility companies, which will include power supplies throughout the state.

"If you don't live up to them, are there any ramifications?" asked council member Chris McRae, whose home has experienced an outage this year.

"The standards the PSC is creating will come with penalties ... I'm not sure how all that will play out," May replied, noting the funds would likely be returned to the customer.

Council member Barry Brickner, whose home has been without power twice this year, said he had a penalty in mind.

"For every hour my electricity is off, I'll guarantee you I won't pay for it," he said.

Brickner asked whether the company would consider providing dry ice stations during extended outages, but May said Detroit Edison hadn't gone into the dry ice business. The company's main focus, he explained, is to restore power as soon as possible.

May said there may be something the company could do, working in conjunction with the city. Detroit Edison also has a reimbursement program for damage caused by outages, he said.

Later in the meeting, Oakland County Commissioner David Moffitt said commissioners formed an Electrical Energy Evaluation Task Force late last year to spearhead a countywide response to the large number of complaints. Farmington Hills is well represented; he and Commissioner Terry Sever were both appointees.

"I think we are beginning to get a bit of action," he said. "I don't, by any means, feel this job is done."

For one thing, Moffitt said he feels Detroit Edison needs to do a better job of promoting its reimbursement program.

"I think there are a lot of claims out there people just aren't aware they can get compensation for," he said.

The task force is preparing recommendations and wants to hear from residents about their experiences and suggestions. They can call task force Chair Sue Douglas, (248) 858-0100; Moffitt, (248) 644-0880 or Sever, (248) 615-9094.

## Have a ball at the Warner Mansion

The Governor is having a ball. The Governor Warner Mansion in downtown Farmington that is, and it's all for a worthy cause. The Governor's Ball 2000, a formal dinner dance and auction, is to raise money for the renovation of the Mansion's Carriage House, to be used as an expanded education facility.

### COUNTY NEWS

The mansion showcases life during the community's early days from the time of Michigan's first three term Governor, Fred M. Warner. It is a piece of living history, donated by the Warner family to the city.

The mansion committee, under the auspices of the Farmington City Council, plans to expand the Mansion's educational role by renovating the Carriage House to be used as a classroom, seminar and meeting rooms.

The Governors' Ball 2000 will be held on the grounds of the home on Saturday, Aug. 12 and will include dinner, dancing and an auction to raise money for this very worthy cause.

For further information call Penny Lehto at 480-8785 or Jim McGlinchy at 477-4688.



### Signing

Bear-y good: Deb Watson (left), owner of Deb's Crafts in Farmington, and Carol E. Kirby pose with some of their prized custom-designed teddy bears. Kirby and Lorriane Chien will appear at a special bear signing event 3-8 p.m. Friday, May 5, at Watson's store, 33317 Grand River in the Village Mall. In addition to their signing of cottage collectible creations, there will be food, fun and prizes. For more information, call (248) 477-5837.



## Children Share Easter Baskets. Everyone Shares Easter Joy.

We all remember coloring eggs, eating chocolate bunnies, and wearing our finest. But the true excitement of Easter is the hope it brings.

As we reflect on Christ's Resurrection and see the coming of Spring...we receive a promise of future joy. Easter is a reminder that even life's deepest sorrows can be followed with a new beginning.

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Have a joyful Easter.

### Arthritis Today

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### WHAT IS AN AUTOIMMUNE CONDITION

You may have heard the phrase "autoimmune condition" applied to diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis and lupus erythematosus. What does the designation mean?

It refers to an inappropriate response by the body's immune system. When physicians discuss immunity, they are speaking about the ability of the white blood cells to respond to threats to the body. Most often these threats come from bacteria, viruses, and other infectious agents such as fungi. At times, the immune system is a little too zealous.

The body responds by mobilizing lymphocytes to seal off these enemies to body stability. There are two forms of lymphocytes: the B-cells and the T-cells. B-cells make antibodies that circulate throughout the body. T-cells secrete substances called cytokines that stimulate cells to create defenses against the threat of virus-cellular invasion by the offending agent.

In Lupus erythematosus, the autoimmune problem is that B-cells make antibodies not against an infection by against the body's own cells particularly the kidney. In rheumatoid arthritis the T-cells are overactive and cause joint lining cells to make cytokines that irritate local inflammation.

At present, researchers have not identified what signals set off the lymphocytes to activate inappropriately. So preventing autoimmune disease is not possible.

The medical community has at hand medications such as steroids and methotrexate, which can slow activation of the lymphocytes. However, the need remains for therapies that can act more specifically and with less toxicity.

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