

THE WEEK AHEAD

Making some noise: Residents from Farmington Hills and Livonia concerned over excessive noise coming from I-275 will meet with officials in Lansing Thursday to express their concerns. See page A7

MONDAY

Farmington City Council: Agenda items for Monday night's meeting, which begins at 8 p.m. at City Hall, include consideration of reappointments to the Farmington Historical Commission, consideration to amend taxicab rate structure and consideration to introduce ordinance amendment, regarding minimum employment standards for Public Safety Officers.

WEDNESDAY

Open House: Staff from the City of Farmington Hills will meet residents and answer their questions during an Open House at the Costick Center tonight. See page A4

CLARIFICATION

In the Feb. 11 Observer, in a story on page A5 about a peer mediation assembly at Beechview Elementary, captions were placed under the wrong photographs. We regret any inconvenience to our readers.

INDEX

Apartments/E8
Arts/C1
Automotive/H4
Classified/E, G, H
Classified
Index/E4
Crossword
Puzzle/E5
Jobs/Q1
Malls/C6
Movies/C4
New Homes/E1
Obituaries/D8
Real Estate/E1
Service Guide/H3
Sports/B1
Taste/D1
Travel/C8

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Administrator of the Year



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRISLER

Helping kids succeed: Award-winning East Middle School principal Gene Seaborn isn't above keeping an eye on lunchtime activity. He shares his Administrator of the Year award with the staff and students.

East principal shares the glory

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER
tsmith@ooh.com

Gene Seaborn doesn't like to brag. He'd rather let his work as East Middle School principal speak for itself.

It does more than speak, it resonates throughout the building and out into the community. For example, there are several artistic murals Seaborn created on East corridor walls, evidence of his desire to do much more than just administrate.

Seaborn's originality as a principal undoubtedly was a factor in being selected Michigan Association of Middle School Educators Administrator of the Year. The Farmington Board of Education recognized his selection last week.

Also, the board honored Steve Koponen, Jerry Morrissey and

Ninette Soares of Dunckel Middle School, as MAMSE's Middle Level Teaching Team of the Year.

"The award was a surprise," Seaborn said. "I'm very grateful to my staff for nominating me. I said at the (board) meeting that the support I got from the school board, (Superintendent) Bob Maxfield and central office makes it a great place to work."

But Seaborn is modest about his own contributions. Enabling students to connect with the concept of diversity remains a priority with the principal, who came to East from a Rochester Hills elementary school during the mid-1990s.

He accomplishes that through his murals — three are already completed and two more are works in progress — as well as through The Mosaic Club, one of the programs

initiated under his leadership.

Other school accomplishments listed by Seaborn include mentoring and conflict resolution programs and the implementation of a fine arts program that he calls "one of the best in the state."

In fact, he points directly at his staff for his own award.

"It's not only an award for me, it's an award for the school and the staff," Seaborn said. "Part of the reason I won the award are all the great things the staff are doing here."

"My mission has always been that every kid has some kind of success when they go to middle school and we have some great teachers who help do that. I get to stand back and watch all the great programs they've initiated."

Seaborn lives in Detroit with his wife, Sandra. They have two children.

Court building may serve schools

BY TIM SMITH
STAFF WRITER
tsmith@ooh.com

Oakland Intermediate School District is seriously interested in purchasing the lame-duck 47th District Court facility in order to branch out regional services it now provides to 28 local districts, including Farmington.

"We've had some discussions in a classic win-win way that appears will involve the Oakland Intermediate School District in purchasing the courthouse," said Farmington schools Superintendent Bob Maxfield Tuesday night.

Maxfield was updating the school board and city councils of both Farmington and Farmington Hills during the annual joint governmental meeting, held at Farmington Training Center.

The cramped 47th District Court facility, on 10 Mile east of Farmington Road, would be used by the intermediate district for a variety of reasons, while Farmington schools would become "more of a tenant," using part of the old courthouse for instructional media and science department storage.

In turn, as part of the complicated arrangement Maxfield described, Oakland Schools would use offices and conference rooms at Farmington Training Center, which is about to undergo renovations.

That would become part of a regional staff development consortium, used by people from other districts," Maxfield explained. "It's part of an emerging philosophy of working much more collaboratively" with Oakland Schools.

Spin-offs

Plans are for the new 47th District Court to be built and be available for use by the fall of 2002. It will be located on the Farmington Hills city campus on Orchard Lake Road south of 11 Mile.

Both cities would be required to approve any sale of the existing court facility. Maxfield, who noted that a land contract arrangement might be made, said further discussions about the potential sale will take place in the next week or two.

A professional appraisal would determine the purchase price, said Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff, who also sees the possible sale to Oakland Schools as a positive

Please see COURT, A3

Olympia condos denied

■ Even though Farmington Hills officials turned down a plan Monday for five site condos in a northern neighborhood, they directed the city manager to negotiate with the developer to place all five homes.

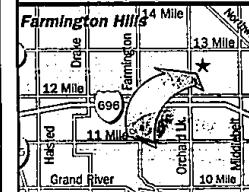
BY JONI HUBBED
STAFF WRITER
jhubb@ooh.com

City officials in Farmington Hills have told residents who object to a site condo development on Alycekey that if they want to stop the project, they're going to have to take the developer to court themselves.

Although the site plan was denied on a 4-3 vote, officials directed City Manager Steve Brock to meet with the developer and come up with a plan to place five homes on the 4.8 acre property, located east of Orchard Lake and

Please see OLYMPIA, A2

Olympia development draws fire
Neighbors fight developers over condo site at Patricia and Alycekey intersection



Cities expect Detroit water, sewer hikes

BY RALPH R. ECCHINAW
STAFF WRITER

The cost of water and sewer service is probably going up this summer in Farmington and Farmington Hills.

The Detroit City Council is expected to approve water and sewer rate hikes Feb. 21 that would take effect July 1.

The water rate in Farmington is expected to rise from \$7.93 to \$8.16 per 7,500 gallons (11.19 percent), and in Farmington Hills from \$10.24 to \$11.51 per 7,500 gallons (12.4 percent).

Sewer service costs are expected to rise by a lesser amount, from \$6.46 per 7,500 gallons to \$6.86 per 7,500 gallons (3.1 percent) for both cities.

Those are the rates the cities will be charged for the services. Whether the city governments pass any or all of their increased cost on to residents remains to be seen.

Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff said he will reserve comment

Please see WATER, A4

Hills sticks to its deal with Bosch Corp.

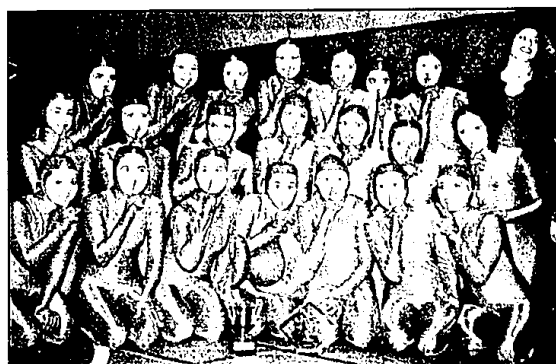
BY JONI HUBBED
STAFF WRITER
jhubb@ooh.com

While they may not have been crazy about the process, Farmington Hills City Council members stuck to their end of the deal with Robert Bosch Corp. Monday night, granting an amendment to a tax abatement agreement passed in 1998.

The change reflected an increase in the company's investment, from a proposed \$37 million facility to one valued at \$69 million. Increasing the size of the project slowed construction, which cost the company \$117,000 of its original \$396,730 abatement. However, the increased amount of the abatement will make up that difference, while costing the city \$330 less in lost taxes than what was originally

Please see BOSCH, A3

Are they blue?



Bluewomen: On Nov. 13, 2000 the Mercy High pom-pom team won first place at the Mid-American Dance Championship competition. Their unique routine was choreographed by senior Alexis Thebolt. The squad is coached by Heather Carney.