

IN THE PAPER TODAY



Happy birthday! The after-school program for middle school youth celebrated five years of success with a birthday party Thursday. See *HomeTown Life* / C7

Rocky road: Farmington Hills city officials have changed the way they pay for dust control on gravel roads after years of assessing residents who live on them. / A3

OPINION

"This stinks": We don't like the settlement Hills officials reached with Oakwood Hills, but they didn't have a choice. / A8

Nursing homes: Our columnist responds to an industry critic. / A9

ARTS & LEISURE

Dance: Students and faculty at Livonia Churchill High School present "Jazz Blowout," an evening of music and dance. / B1

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LOW PRICE



City settles with Oakwood Hills



Farmington Hills officials aren't happy about an amended settlement agreement in a long-fought court battle over the development of a 27-home subdivision on Power Road and felt they had no choice but to approve it.

BY JONI HUBRED
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Farmington Hills City Council members have ended a four-year battle over a development on Power Road that has had the city, developers and even residents in the courts.

Officials voted Monday night to approve an amended settlement agree-

ment with Oakwood Hills Limited Liability Partnership. The original consent judgment was filed in 1997, but ended up back on the table because of a sewer project tied to the 27-home development.

Under the original agreement, the developer would have been responsible for all but about \$300,000 of the sewer installation. Bids came in at a staggering \$1.2 million, due to soil conditions,

ground water problems and fiber optic cable laid after the project was proposed.

"(They) asserted there was a mutual mistake of fact," explained city attorney John Donohue. "That is a basis for appeal of a consent judgment."

Donohue said it took about six months of meetings to re-negotiate the settlement. In the end, the city will assume the greater liability - and likely the greater share of costs - for infrastructure, and Oakwood is relieved from having to comply with the city's stringent tree replacement ordinance.

"We think we can reduce the cost sig-

nificantly," Donohue said of the original \$1.2 million bid. He added city officials believe city sewer and water are necessary improvements, because of concerns about existing septic systems and wells.

The developer will still adhere to a landscaping plan that includes replacement of some trees; however, he won't be required to replace trees on each home lot, Donohue explained.

Officials expressed concern about payback of the developer's \$400,000 obligation, paid in \$14,800 increments as each lot is sold. Donohue believes,

Please see OAKWOOD, A2

Telethon 2001



Young stars shine as telethon raises \$12,300

BY TIM SMITH
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Thanks to the efforts of students behind the scenes and in front of the camera, the second annual 24-hour TV-10 telethon raised \$12,300 for middle school after-school activities.

This year's event raised more than the inaugural event in 2000, when about \$10,000 was generated.

"It's for something that is not only wonderful, but necessary," said par-

ent volunteer Julie Devine, who helped recruit talent for the telethon.

"It is a necessity to have a place to go for these kids that's safe and fun."

Proceeds benefit the Farmington Hills Youth and Family Services Program, which provides an after-school destination and activities for people age 11-15 at the Costick Center, YMCA, Farmington Hills Ice Arena (on Eight Mile Road) and Warner

Please see TELETHON, A7



Action! At left, Allen Wertheimer shoots video of the Hillside Harmony Chorus. Above, Audrey Bloomberg mixes sound and Andy Ludwig handles video switching as Dean Cobb directs.

Voters face levy June 11

BY TIM SMITH
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Property owners in Farmington Public Schools won't just elect two school board members at the Monday, June 11, election.

They also will probably decide a property tax renewal proposal.

Language of the tax-renewal proposal is being firming up for final board approval, which could take place at the Tuesday, March 27, regular meeting, set for 7:30 p.m. at the Farmington Training Center.

"This millage represents 45 percent of the district's foundation grant (for per-pupil spending)," said Cheryl Cannon, assistant superintendent of busi-

ness and operational services.

By including the tax renewal in the regular June election rather than holding a special election, Cannon said the district will save money and also hopefully increase voter participation. Recent school elections have been plagued by turnouts as low as 2 percent.

More than \$54.2 million for operations would be generated for the district in 2002 if the tax renewal is approved, according to the proposal presented at the March 13 board meeting.

Presented by representatives from the district's Blue Ribbon Financial

Please see LEVY, A2

Hills man arrested after Internet liaison with child

Farmington Hills police arrested a 33-year-old Hills man Tuesday after an 11-year-old girl from the Flint area identified him as an Internet acquaintance who had sex with her at least twice and may have tried to kill her.

Farmington Hills Assistant Police Chief Chuck Nebus said the man and the girl met in an Internet chat room in February and began a relationship that led to phone conversations and several meetings in person.

The man would pick up the girl near her home and give her gifts of clothing and shoes while taking her out to eat and to the movies, Nebus said. He also took her back to his residence at least once.

The last time the two were together, the man bound and gagged the girl and attempted to smother her with a pillow, Nebus said.

Farmington Hills police along

Please see INTERNET, A7

Archer accepts honor for Detroit's 300th

BY TIM SMITH
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The hub of southeast Michigan has at least one solid suburban spoke in the city of Farmington - which Monday night welcomed Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer while presenting a proclamation celebrating Detroit's 300th birthday.

In the proclamation, signed by Farmington Mayor Bill Hartsock, it was stated that Detroit is an "inextricable part of the lives of everyone who thinks of any southeastern Michigan community as home."

Archer walked into the council chambers at 8:10 p.m., receiving a round of applause. He shook resident Bill Liba's hand and then proceeded to the front of the room.

There, he received the proclamation from Hartsock, had his photograph taken with the council, and expressed his gratitude for being invited to the Farmington City Council meeting.

"Frankly, you're Detroiters," Archer said. "You care about our city and we really appreciate the honor you have bestowed upon



Happy 300th: Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer accepts a congratulatory proclamation from the council including JaAnne McShane and Mayor Bill Hartsock.

STAFF PHOTO BY BILL HAZLEDA

Please see ARCHER, A3