Teamwork *from page A1*

adding that fire and police also received above 90 percent positive ratings from the public.

Development and redevelopment is on an upswing, he noted of the Northwestern/ Orchard Lake corridor and the expansion of the 11 Pines Golf Course.

The diversity and size of the population makes overseeing the city "fun and interesting," he said.

Continuing issues include more funding for road improvements and delivering cable Internet service to areas of the business community where it is lacking.

City happenings

Farmington Mayor Jim Mitchell said his city's Downtown Development Authority is seeking state grants that would allow for technical support in marketing.

He mentioned the Civic Theater, which the city bought in 1999 and refurbished, has grown in popularity.

"We plan to establish a Friends of the Civic Committee to help come up with ways to use the theater more," he said.

Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff said the Farmington Road expansion will start soon. Plans call to widen certain sections to five lanes and close a portion of southbound traffic during construction.

"It will present some difficulties," he said. "We believe it will work out all right.

"It has to be done prior to the Founders Festival," he said.

Redevelopment is a hot topic for the community, the city manager said, considering the city is nearly fully developed.

"It's important to work out a balance with adjacent areas (being redone)," he said.

Lauhoff noted a remodeled Irish pub is planned for Cowley's Old Village Inn and two new condominium projects are in the works.

Farmington has also established its own Brownfield Authority, which uses tax credits to redevelop contaminated property.

"In summer 2004, the downtown center will be redesigned," he said.

"There's a lot of things that are going to change, but you have to keep changing," he said.

In the schools

Farmington School Board President Cathy Webb said that it's important the community and businesses work together to help kids succeed in school.

A new district goal is to fine-tune a system that makes each child successful in his or her ability to learn.

"Each student comes with a different set of issues," she said.

Throwing foreign students into a standardized testing system doesn't work, she said regarding the MEAP test. Considering there are so many students in the district who take English as a second language, she believes it wasn't fair that they take the standardized test with only a dictionary in their language and English to guide them.

"Is that an accurate account of their learning?" she asked.

Also speaking was Farmington Schools Superintendent Robert Maxfield. He mentioned the positive changes including joining a new national accreditation program, and a high school graduation requirement program.

The economy affects the school districts as well, he said, and it will be the district's job to find ways to cut the budget soon.

"Our expectations are always higher than our revenues," he said, adding that an efficiency committee is forming to see what can be cut from school programs. He said the district is investigating a shared learning program with local parochial schools.

"We're looking to eliminate programs that are redundant," he said.

The chamber co-sponsored the event along with Calsonic North America, LOC Federal Credit Union and TDS Metrocom.

The event will be broadcast in the coming weeks on local cable channels.

Donations sought for Turn Around program

Local sponsors are still being sought for a program that recognizes those kinds of "non-traditional" achievements, which will honor 26 students at a March 5 luncheon held at Farmington Hills Manor. Local service organizations and businesses can help either through financial contributions or donating items for "goodie bags" that will be given to each student.

Turn Around Achievement Award winners were nominated by teachers from Farmington, Harrison and North Farmington High Schools, the Alternative Academy, Farmington Community School and Dunckel, East, Power and Warner Middle Schools. All students have made significant life improvements, such as positive changes in grades, attitude, attendance and behavior.

Three students from each high school and middle school and one student each from the alternative programs will receive a Lucite "Turn Around" star and recognition certificate.

Donations for the "goodie bags" may include passes to movies, miniature golf, skating rinks or other recreational activities, gift certificates for music or books, pizza or other "fast food" coupons.

"Contributing to this program gives you a chance to make a difference on behalf of the entire community," said Superintendent of Schools Robert Maxfield.

Farmington Public Schools, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, the Farmington Public Safety Department and Farmington Hills Police Department are co-sponsoring the Turn Around Awards. For information, call Maxfield at the school district offices, 248-489-3339 or the Farmington Observer, 248-477-5450.

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