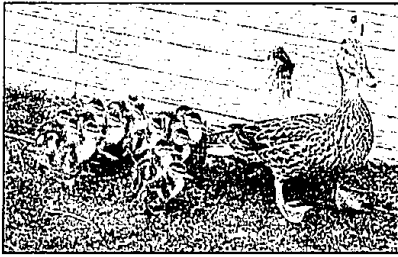


### Lucky ducks



**Rescue operation:** On April 28th, 13 ducklings were trapped in a manhole in Dr. Steve Harris' dental office parking lot at 34024 W. 8 Mile Rd. Farmington Hills. The Harris' stopped by the office Sunday afternoon to find a frantic mother duck; a peek into the manhole confirmed her dilemma. Upon returning to the office equipped with pry bars, net and his rescue squad (left to right: Megan Lockhart, Megan Harris, Melanie Lockhart and Robert Harris), Dr. Steve lifted the manhole cover and the kids made the rescue.

## Homeowners can save water with two meters

By PAUL R. PACE  
STAFF WRITER  
ppace@oe.homecomm.net

You could be throwing money away when you water your lawn this summer.

The city of Farmington Hills offers residents and businesses a chance to install a second water meter that only charges outside use for the water and not the additional charge of sewer use, since the water goes into the ground.

Sounds simple enough, but the start up charge of \$680 is something to consider when calculating the payoff, said Tom Biasell, the Hills director of public services.

He said residents who water their lawns often should calculate the cost vs. savings ratio.

Sixty-six permits were issued to Hills residents last year for the system. Since the option was introduced in 1992, permits for the additional meter average around 60 per year. In 1993, 116 permits were issued.

Jean Barrett, assistant director of public works said August seems to be time most people ask the department about the second meter.

"It's pretty weather dependent," she said of requests during dry summers.

The Oakland County Drain Commission actually installs the meter, said Biasell.

"It depends if you water a lot. If not, it might not save you much," he said.

The second meter can be used exclusively for sprinkler systems or for filling pools and it is intended for water that will not enter the sewer.

The fixed costs are the water meter and permit charges of \$405. Plumbing charges may vary depending on the complexity of the changes required to install the second meter (estimated at \$275).

Any water and sewer customer can take advantage of the program.

### Calculate savings

The city suggests using the following formula to determine possible cost savings, using 100 cubic feet of water as your measure:

1. Accumulate the total annual water usage on four consecutive bills for a one-year period.
2. Determine which bill best represents the winter months when sprinklers are not used.
3. Multiply this one winter bill amount by 4.
4. Subtract the total sewer portion (No. 3) from the total annual usage.
5. Multiply No. 4 by 1.693 (2002/03 rate)

This is the estimated amount that would be saved annually by installing a dual meter. Compare this savings with the \$680 estimated cost for the additional water meter.

Call the Hills Dept of Public Services at (248) 473-9521 to learn more.

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