

Officials ask for funding veto override

BY SUE BUCK
STAFF WRITER

Each Farmington City Council member signed a letter Monday night addressed to state government officials asking for an immediate override to Gov. John Engler's recent decision to "again" reduce state revenue sharing.

Copies were sent to Engler, state Rep. Andrew Ruczkowski (R-Farmington Hills) and Sen. Bill Bullard (R-Highland) to protest the Governor's veto.

State revenue sharing has become a regular income source for local government budgets.

"The importance of these funds to the city's budget for services cannot be overstated," the council wrote. "State revenue sharing accounts for approximately 20 percent of

the city's general fund budget revenue. In Farmington, these reductions will result in approximately a \$500,000 budget shortage. Quite possibly, the loss of these funds will result in reduction of city staff, likely including public safety personnel."

Local communities have already shared in several previous state revenue reductions. "From our perspective this reduction is premature at best and unconscionably harsh at worst."

"To Farmington, both this reduction and any further reductions are entirely unacceptable."

Earlier during the meeting, state Rep. Gilda Jacobs spoke to the council expressing her displeasure with Engler's action.

"It looks like the outpouring

of outrage across the state has really worked," Jacobs said. "It looks like there is enough pressure of everybody in the state to override this veto. This is unprecedented."

"Why would a rational Governor do this?" asked Councilman Arnold Campbell.

"That's a political question and you want me to give you a political answer," Jacobs said. "I don't think the Governor was very rational. I don't get it. We worked very hard to broker a deal when they wanted to raise the cigarette tax."

"Revenue sharing was part of that deal."

At the time, revenue sharing had to be off the table, Jacobs said. "It was part of the deal," she said. "It was totally broken."

Councilwoman Joanne McShane called it "a shell game."

"It's taking the money citizens pay from Farmington and Farmington Hills, sending it to Lansing, putting it somewhere else and then we have to come back and beg for our own money. It's terrible."

"This isn't the time for cities to be faced with cutting police and fire when there is an ongoing war on terrorism with high costs," McShane said.

Councilman Mike Harrison said he wasn't so sure that Engler wasn't giving Lt. Gov. Dick Posthumus a chance to lead the Republican override.

"That's very well what he was trying to do," Jacobs said. "It all sort of backfired. It's the local officials who are the winners here. You went out and made all that noise. You are the people in the white hats."

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BILL BRISLER | OBSERVER

Oakland County Sheriff Mike Bouchard demonstrates the use of a cell phone to Detroit Baptist Manor resident Ruth Pribe.

FBI investigator to keynote prayer breakfast

Rob Casey, the lead FBI investigator for the Flight 93 crash in Pennsylvania on Sept. 11, 2001 will be the keynote speaker at the Farmington Area Jaycees Prayer Breakfast Sept. 5.

The breakfast will be held at 7:30 a.m. at the William Costick Activities Center on 11 Mile east of Middlebelt.

Now in its 34th year, the breakfast was

started by Dr. John Richardson of Plaza Vet in Farmington.

It's an effort to bring the Jaycees together with local business owners, government officials and religious leaders for reflection and rededication to the community.

Gerry Bok, the Michigan Jaycee president, will be the master of ceremonies.

The breakfast is being catered by Farmington Catering. Donating florists are Kay Masuda Florist and Little Flower Shop. The cost is \$15 a person.

For reservations, contact Christine Ruiz, chairwoman and individual development vice-president (586)264-1416.

Bouchard kicks off cell phone program

Sheriff Michael Bouchard announced Tuesday the 911 Senior Cell Phone Program, sponsored by the Oakland County Sheriff's Office.

The program is designed to equip seniors with a mobile means of contacting help in the event of an emergency.

"I hope the senior citizens of the County will take the opportunity to be part of this program," Bouchard said at a press conference held at Detroit Baptist Manor in Farmington Hills.

"Having a mobile, emergency means of communication is like having an insurance policy. You don't know if you're going to need it, but if you do, you're covered. It's quick, it's easy and it could save lives."

Bouchard said the department has been collecting unwanted, inactive cell phones from the community for the past several months.

"I'd like to thank the individuals and businesses of the community who took the time to donate their old cell phones," he said. "In many instances, people or companies donated several phones at a time."

The cell phones are available to any Oakland County senior citizen. Kept charged and in working order, the phones will dial and connect with 9-1-1 emergency personnel. The cell phones are not assigned a number, will not ring and will not receive any outside calls.

For more information, call (248) 858-5008.

RCOC ROAD WATCH

Information for Road Watch is supplied by the Road Commission for Oakland County (www.rcocweb.org). Information is subject to change.

FARMINGTON

■ Road: Farmington Road, south of Nine Mile to Grand River — This section of Farmington is closed to southbound traffic as the RCOC reconstructs and widens the road. During the project, the detour route for southbound traffic is Grand River, Drake and Nine Mile. Motorists trav-

eling northbound on Farmington should expect delays and are encouraged to use the detour route as well. Completion is expected Sept. 30.

FARMINGTON HILLS

■ Road: 12 Mile at Orchard Lake Road — RCOC is widening this intersection (adding a right-turn lane on eastbound 12 Mile and extending the right-turn lane on eastbound 12 Mile). Completion is expected Aug. 9.

JCC seeks authors

The Jewish Community Center of Metropolitan Detroit is seeking local authors to participate in the 51st Annual Jewish Book Fair.

The Book Fair will be held Nov. 6-17 at both JCC locations, the West Bloomfield campus and the Oak Park campus.

Local authors who are Jewish or have written a book of Jewish content are invited to participate in the Book Fair's seventh local author fair, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 10. Books must be published between November 2001 and November 2002. Deadline for submissions is Friday, Aug. 30.

The local author fair will feature 20 local authors. Book Fair patrons will have the opportunity to meet the authors and purchase autographed copies of their books.

Detroit's Annual Jewish Book Fair is the largest and oldest in the country. Thousands of Jewish books will be available for purchase throughout the 10-day event, which will feature more than 30 speakers. The Book Fair is open to the entire community.

Entertainment for children, families and adults will be featured throughout the event. Local authors interested in participating in the book fair should contact Elaine Schonberger at (248) 432-5577.

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