

Moving houses is business as usual for family

By MARY KLEMIC

When it comes to a home, you can take it with you. Just ask Mrs. Ruth Porter of Westland, who, with her husband James and two daughters, comprise the J.D. Porter House Moving Company, 8792 Gray.

The Porters had two houses of their own moved, including the one they use as an office, before they got into the business 10 years ago.

"My husband said, 'I'd like to do that,'" Mrs. Porter said. "He loves it." Mrs. Porter said that more and more people today prefer to move their entire house rather than build a new one,

for practical as well as sentimental reasons.

Some people want (to move the house) because it has been in the family for a long time," she said. "Some do it because it's cheaper."

The company moves at least 50 buildings a year all over the state, Mrs. Porter said. Distances moved range from half a block to 60 miles.

The moving company has moved gas stations, garages, barns and churches, she said.

It has even moved historical buildings. Last August the company moved the Henry Ford Church from Dearborn to Belleville. This year it moved a house in Grosse Ile which was built in 1883.

According to Mrs. Porter, it costs about \$5,000 to move a house, much less than it costs to build one.

"The price of houses is going up," she said. "It's a lot cheaper to move one. You have all your wiring (already) in, all your heat wires in."

The price depends on the size of the building and the distance it is being moved.

Moving a house, or any type of structure, is easier than it may appear, Mrs. Porter said. The house is raised by hydraulic jacks and put on steel beams or skids. The skids are put on wheels, which are hooked up to a truck.

"Getting (the structure) up and onto the skids is the big problem," she said. "We don't have that much trouble once it is put on the beams. We have moved houses with coke bottles in the windows and had them still standing when we arrived."

Usually, however, the homeowners empty the house completely before it is moved. Any bricks on the outside of the house are taken off before it is moved, Mrs. Porter said, because otherwise it would be too heavy.

The company must arrange a moving schedule and route with the telephone company and Edison. It must also obtain approval from the county

road commission and notify the police and fire departments.

"The telephone company raises the wires (along the way) so the house can go under them," Mrs. Porter said. "The road commission is more or less there to see that things are done according to safety rules."

The fire department must be notified which roads will be blocked by the building. Wayne County sheriff and police departments escort it on the road. Mrs. Porter, or one of her daughters, also accompany the building for protection, in case the police are called away.

Connie, 26, usually directs traffic during the move, while her 24-year-old sister, Judy, is one of the escorts.

"My husband has the prettiest flag-women in the state," Mrs. Porter said. The women use bright red flags to direct traffic.

A weightmaster also goes along to see that the weight doesn't exceed the limit.

The company must also obtain permits from the city it is moving to.

According to Mrs. Porter, ranch style houses are the easiest to move, because they can go under telephone wires without difficulty.

"It took about three hours to move one from Belleville to Huron Township," she said.

Block houses, which are built in block sections, are the only type of house that cannot be moved. This is because the cement holding the sections together won't hold during the move.

The entire moving procedure usually takes less than three weeks. Mrs. Porter said it is obtaining official approval that takes the most time.

"It took us four hours to move (a home) 18 miles," she said. "There was a

lady who ate breakfast in her house in Monroe in the morning and had supper in it in Belleville that night."

Mrs. Porter said that their biggest challenge so far has been a large 52-by-86 foot — historical church in Dexter.

The church was too large to put on the wheels and had to be slowly carried on the skids.

"It just took up everything," she said. "We only moved it half a mile but it took almost two days."

Handicapped help helpful?

Educators and government officials seem to be successful in legislative attempts to meet the needs of handicapped children, says a University of Michigan psychologist, but at "cross purposes" in some of their methods.

"In the past decade, schools have been trying to move away from the testing and labeling that has been shown to stigmatize students who are physically, mentally or emotionally handicapped," said Prof. Calvin O. Dyer of the U-M School of Education.

"But the federal guidelines outlined in Public Law 94-142 require that a child be tested and his needs be 'certified' before the government will allot money to the school district for special services."

"We seem to be moving in two opposite directions at the same time. The new state and federal laws which expand services to the handicapped are clearly in our best interests and represent a real breakthrough. But the procedures — testing and labeling — in some respects contradict the goals."

Dyer directs the U-M's program in

school psychology and is a member of the executive council of the American Psychological Association's Division of School Psychology.

He notes that the expanded federal funding, combined with a number of new state laws increasing mandatory education for the handicapped, are creating a nationwide demand for school psychologists.

"However, often these jobs are for people at the lowest level of training because of school district salary restrictions," says Dyer.

"The profession is so narrowly conceived in some school districts that the school psychologist spends the majority of his or her time going from school to school and administering psychological tests to a few children."

"Often there are so many students per psychologist that the professional has time to do little more than test the children and write the reports, let alone meet with the parents and teachers to discuss the test results and help develop an individualized program for the student."

CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS PLANNING COMMISSION

CORRECTION OF PUBLISHED NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Please take notice that the City of Farmington Hills Planning Commission will conduct its Public Hearings on July 19, 1979 at 8:00 p.m. at Farmington Hills City Hall, 3155 Eleven Mile Road, Farmington Hills, Michigan 48018, and not on July 17, 1979 as originally published.

The matters to be considered on July 19, 1979 shall be: Rezoning Requests 3-5-79, 4-5-79, PC-6-79, and 6-5-79, and a Text Amendment providing for a new Industrial Research Office District.

FRED HUGHES, Chairman
City of Farmington Hills
Planning Commission

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Ruth Porter (left) and daughter Connie study a travel route for a housemoving. (Staff photo by Art Emanuel)

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