

## 3 plans examined

# Cable bidding procedure surprisingly 'clean'

By Craig Piechura staff writer

Competition for the cable television franchise to serve the citizens of Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi so far has been surprisingly "clean," say two city managers presently evaluating the bids.

Three cable companies — Omnicom, United-Nederlandian and Metro Vision — are vying for the franchise to serve Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi. Thirteen firms were invited to bid but only three companies submitted bids by the 2 p.m. July 30 deadline.

After hearing of such unscrupulous business practices as "rent-a-citizen" and allegations that cable representatives in nearby communities arranged clandestine meetings with city councilmen, city managers in Farmington and Farmington Hills were prepared for the worst.

So far, say Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman and Larry Sav-

age, Farmington Hills' city manager, the competition has been clean but honest.

"It's been an extremely clean process," says Deadman. "The cable companies have just followed our guidelines to the letter as far as no contacts with city officials, no attempts to rent-a-citizen or any of the other things you hear about when it comes to cable."

One of the reasons the bidding process has been so smooth, explains Savage, of Farmington Hills, is that a tri-city alliance (Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi) gave all applicants a professionally-prepared document asking for specific answers spelling out certain procedures. The danger, says Savage, is when cities wait for cable companies to come courting them with a dizzying array of options.

THE BID specifications were drawn up by Harold Horn, who works for the Cable Television Information Center (CTIC) in Washington D.C., a firm

which acts as consultant to municipalities evaluating bids for cable TV franchises.

The three bids submitted for the Farmington, Farmington Hills and Novi franchises are being analyzed right now by CTIC consultants. A report and recommendation by CTIC on the three bidders is expected to be delivered to the three city governments by October.

The municipalities will then give the companies a chance to respond to the critique, public hearings will be conducted to allow citizens to voice their opinions and finally, city councils will vote to award the franchise to one of the bidders.

Awarding the franchise is not simply a matter of choosing the lowest bidder. That's one of the reasons most cities hire a professional consultant firm to help officials make sense out of detailed financial, engineering and community service specifications.

Deadman notes that experience has

shown that some cities that selected the low bidder "were low-balled initially" and found the franchise holder raised rates soon after starting cable operations.

THE COST of researching the background and performance record of bidders by Cable Television Information Center Associates, a profit-making offshoot of the non-profit Cable Television Information Center Organization, is borne by the companies involved in the bidding. The three bidders were required to post a \$3,500 non-refundable check when they submitted their bids and the firm that wins the franchise contract will pay the remainder of the consultant's fee, says Deadman.

Two or three thick volumes submitted as bid documents by each of the three companies are in the hands of city clerks in the three cities and copies were sent to the consultants at CTIC.

The company proposals list ownership and explain where funds for devel-

oping the cable systems will come from. Metro Vision, according to the documents filed by the company, runs 22 cable systems in 18 states, including systems in Eaton Rapids and Redford Township, and is headquartered in Atlanta.

Eighty percent of Metro Vision is owned by Newhouse Broadcasting of Syracuse, N.Y. which also owns radio stations in Syracuse, Birmingham, Ala. and Harrisburg, Pa. along with large corporations such as Ballantine Books, and the Alfred A. Knopf publishing house.

Newspapers owned by Newhouse include The Plain Dealer in Cleveland, the New Orleans Times-Picayune and State Item, Ann Arbor News, Flint Journal, Muskegon Chronicle, Jackson Citizen-Patriot and St. Louis Globe-Democrat. Magazines owned by Newhouse include Vogue, Self, Glamour, House & Garden and Mademoiselle.

OMNICOM of Michigan, Inc., a whol-



ly-owned subsidiary of Capital Cities Communications, Inc., operates 51 cable systems in the country. Capital Cities corporate headquarters are New York City and the company owns radio stations in New York, New Jersey, Texas, Rhode Island and Louisiana as well as Detroit's WJR AM-FM.

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# Incumbents in city unopposed

By Gary M. Cates staff writer

The race for three Farmington City Council seats will only be a formality for the three unopposed incumbent candidates.

The three incumbents — Alton Bennett, William Mitchell and Richard Tupper — were the only candidates to file for the Nov. 3 ballot, says City Clerk Josephine Bushey.

The candidates had to submit petitions signed by at least 50 and not more than 75 registered voters before 5 p.m. last Friday.

Here is a brief profile of the candidates.

ALTON BENNETT, 51, has served on the council for six years, and anticipates this to be his last term.

Bennett, an ordained Methodist minister, attends Ward Presbyterian

Church in Livonia and hopes to work in the church after his final council term.

"The church has been asking me to come back and work," he says.

The continuation of a downtown shopping area is of vital importance to Farmington in the next four years, Bennett says.

Also maintaining a good tax base and dealing with the rising cost of water and sewage are most important issues facing the council, he says.

"Of critical importance is solid waste disposal," says Bennett, who considers himself a political moderate.

Not having an extending political ambition is an asset, Bennett says, along with being well known in the community.

"I have a real keen interest in the city of Farmington," he says.

His decision to run for re-election was based on wanting to stick around to see the completion of two projects.

"I want to see the completion of Warner Mansion and cable television," Bennett says. Warner Mansion was the home of former governor Fred M. Warner and the city is in the process of turning the mansion into a historical museum.

Bennett is married, has two children and two grandchildren. He enjoys bowling and golfing, and has an undergraduate degree from Houghton College in New York, a master of arts from the University of Michigan and an education specialist degree from Wayne State University.

Currently a school administrator in Farmington, Bennett has worked as an administrator in Jenison schools, and as pastor and youth minister at Westland Methodist Church.

WILLIAM MITCHELL, 42, was appointed to the council last February to replace Councilman Warren Buckler.

Mitchell is the president of MB Associates Inc., a manufacturer's representative agency dealing with auto part production.

Becoming interested in civic affairs while a Jaycee, he served as a member of the Farmington planning commission for nine years.

"I don't see anything that major or controversial coming up for the city. We are pretty well already developed," he says.

"More of the same," is what Mitchell says faces the council in the next four years. "The city is well run by (manager Bob) Deadman.

"We're going to have to be cautious about any changes made at the state level," he says.

Bringing 20 years of business and management experience to the council is an asset, says Mitchell.

Mitchell has been the president and owner of his firm since 1968. He holds an undergraduate degree in chemical engineering and a MBA from the University of Michigan.

A resident of Farmington for 20 years, Mitchell attends Ward Presbyterian in Livonia.

RICHARD TUPPER, 48, has been a member of the council for nine years.

Tupper, who considers himself a conservative, sees no major issues facing the city in the next four years.

"Maintaining the status quo, keeping the conservative ideology in and liberal ideology out," is what Tupper says the main task of the council will be.

Bringing conservatism and council experience is what Tupper considers his strong point.

"Conservatism and experience are very important in maintaining the status quo," he says.

A desire to serve the community and personal satisfaction during the past terms are the reasons Tupper decided to run for re-election.

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

One of the holes in the fence that surrounds Boy's Republic.

# Boy's Republic security rapped

By Gary M. Cates staff writer

Some homeowners in the Nine Mile Inkster area are complaining about juvenile residents of Boys Republic leaving the center and roaming through an adjacent ravine.

Boys Republic, at 28000 Nine Mile, is a residential center for male wards of the state between the ages of 12 and 18. Boys sent to the center have either been through the court system or have been neglected or abused.

"I've seen the kids in the past walking across the yard," said Gary Leebor of 28400 Nine Mile. "The ravine is not like a wilderness woods. It's like a city where the boys come and go as they

please. We see them all the time."

Although the Republic is a minimum security institution, boys are prohibited from leaving the center.

"They have come through here," said Beatrice Bennett of 27169 Spring Valley. "One time a fella came walking up in my yard. I told him he better not do it anymore because I have a dog. He said he was lost."

"WE KNOW WE have a lot of kids, and some can squirt out," said Gordon K. Boring, Republic director. "However, we have checkup systems everywhere."

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Alton Bennett



William Mitchell



Richard Tupper



DAVID FRANK/staff photographer

## You're on

All the world will be a stage this fall, with producers putting their best feet forward in simple but elegant productions. The directors are the international and domestic designers, and the cast is headlined by such classic names as challis, paisley, suede and leather. The settings are brilliant, done up in shades of gold, bronze and the autumn

hues, with lavish layerings of fur and velvet. Fashion writer Rustie Shand and her critics preview the latest presentations in the Fall '81 fashion section, which appears in today's newspaper. Says Mrs. Shand, "It's not a season to be shy. Break a leg!"

## what's inside

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