

# Farmington Observer

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## Ambulance letter raises big flap

By Craig Plechura  
staff writer

A bitter battle between two ambulance companies serving the Farmington community is brewing over which firm has the right to use the word "Community" in its advertising.

The dispute appears headed for court, according to spokesmen for both sides in the competition for ambulance service customers.

The latest salvo fired in the competition between Community Emergency Medical Services (CEMS), a firm headed by Boisford Hospital employee Edward Bartel, and Novi Ambulance, owned by John Early, concerns a flyer Early has been distributing.

The wording "COMMUNITY AMBULANCE SERVICE" printed in capital letters at the top of Early's flyer is called "a deliberate attempt to mislead customers" by Greg Beauchemin, director of operations at CEMS.

When asked to respond, Early called Beauchemin a "crybaby."

If anyone is misleading the public in the matter, said Early, it is CEMS directors with ties to Boisford Hospital

and predecessors who ran the now-defunct Am-Care Ambulance company. CEMS, Early claimed, "amounts to nothing but a new-old Am-Care."

CEMS opened for business in October. Novi Ambulance is 10 years old.

Charges and countercharges by the two men against each other's firm were flying Friday, with each alleging the other provides substandard emergency care.

Beauchemin rapped Early's \$10 discount ambulance care coupons, saying the offer is inappropriate for professional health care services.

"I'M HOPING EMS is one step above fast-food restaurants," said Beauchemin, commenting on the coupons sent out by Early.

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The city of Farmington contracts with Novi Ambulance, or Farmington City Ambulance as it's known in the city, while Farmington Hills safety officials have licensed CEMS to be the primary health care provider.

Novi charges customers \$110 for advanced life support runs plus \$2.50 per mile, according to Early. Beauchemin said the average cost of an advanced life support run by his company is \$140, including mileage.

Basic life support unit runs for runs that don't require medical attention are \$80 plus \$3 per mile at CEMS and \$95 plus \$2.50 per mile at Novi.

The city of Farmington is participating in a study with Novi, Northville and Northville Township to determine whether the four should bid on a regional ambulance service.

## Merchants brace for shoplifters

By Scott Adler  
staff writer

"Tis the season to be jolly for the man holiday shoppers in the area, but for the local merchants it's the season to be cautious.

As the stores fill up for December gift buying, they also fill up with another type of patron: the shoplifter.

To combat the increased number of shoplifters, store owners try to match forces by increasing either the store security or the amount of sales personnel.

"(Shoplifting) is always a problem, but if you prepare for it, you can cut the problem down," said Dave Drew, manager of Kappy's men's clothing store in Hunter's Square Mall.

According to Marge Robbins, owner of Let's Entertain, a novelty shop in Hunter's Square, shoplifting hasn't increased in her store because of the type of merchandise she carries.

"People are frightened to take big things out of our store," she said. "Most of the merchandise that is taken is small, so I would say our shrinkage (loss) is very nominal. Probably less than 1 percent (of the profit)."

Robbins said that she does increase personnel during the holiday season, but no security guards are hired because of the expense.

"We boost up sales personnel during Christmas time and hope our employees and customers are honest," Robbins said. "We try to treat our customers with respect so they will respect our merchandise."

The Detroit Area Chamber of Commerce estimates that shoplifting is a \$400,000-a-day problem in the metro Detroit area. Shoplifting arrests have increased 15 percent in the Detroit area, according to Bob Guernier of the Retail Merchants Association of the Detroit Chamber of Commerce.

The figure (\$400,000) is not up excessively (in the past two years) but the figure is

a little low because supermarkets are included and that is where a lot of the shoplifting occurs."

In the Farmington area, shoplifting arrests are up slightly for December. Farmington police Lt. Frank Lauffoff said. During November, five shoplifting arrests were made in Farmington while through the first half of December, nine arrests had been made, Lauffoff said.

Don Smith, corporate director of Crowley's, said he doesn't think there is an increase in the percentage of shoplifting, only the amount taken increases proportionately because there are more shoppers at Christmas time.

William Helke, a security officer at J.C. Penney's in Twelve Oaks Mall, disagrees. He said he sees a rise in the percentage of shoplifters.

"We get more people wanting more things they can't afford," Helke said. "Teens are a large problem all year round but even more so this time of year. There is also an upsurge of pros coming into the stores."

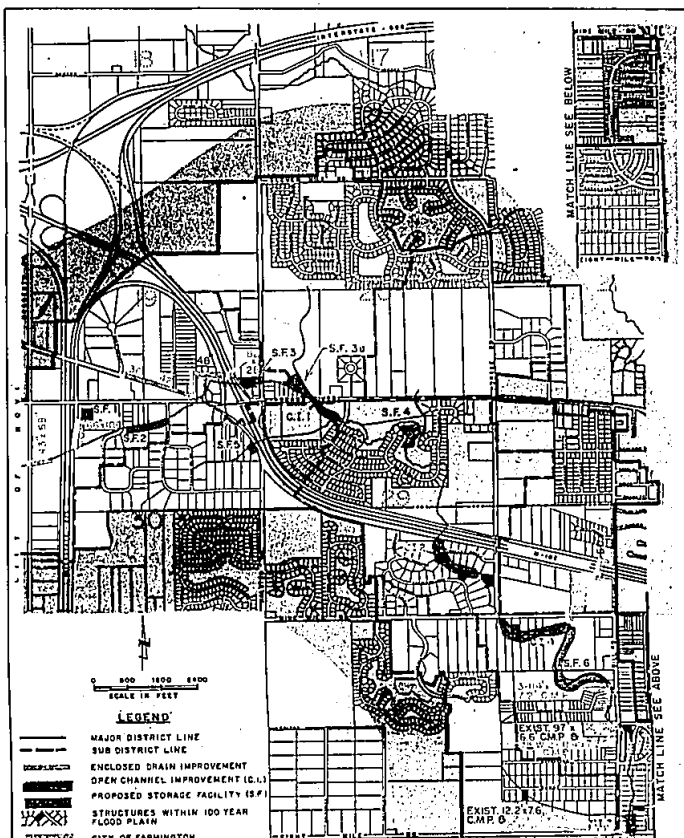
To stop this increase in the number of shoplifters, Penney's increases the security personnel hours and hires a larger number of part-time help. Many of the part-time helpers are off-duty policemen, according to Helke.

The store managers agree that the items taken most often are the smaller things that can be stuffed into purses and pant pockets. The stores also agree that plain clothes security officers are a better way to catch the shoplifters than uniformed guards, because they are less conspicuous.

The best deterrent to shoplifting, however, is attentive sales personnel, according to Helke.

Shoplifters come in all ages so there is no general description of a shoplifter that is applicable, a security guard at Crowley's said.

"They aren't mean or vicious," she said. "They just want something for nothing."



A 4.45-mile area called the Tarabusi Creek District two months ago by the Oakland County Drain Commission. plagued in the past by severe flooding is the target of a \$5 million improvement plan instituted

## Major flooding curbed near M-102, Grand River

By M.B. Dillon Ward  
staff writer

For Farmington Hills' Red Roof Inn and Mountain Jack's restaurant, the days of severe flooding are over.

A \$130,000 project designed by the Oakland County Drain Commission and paid for by the city of Farmington Hills

## Armed rapist escapes

The second rape in the city in a week was reported by a 14-year-old Farmington Hills girl Dec. 11.

The youngster told police she was walking up the sidewalk to her home about 8:30 p.m. with her arms full of Christmas packages when she was grabbed from behind by an armed white male approximately 6 feet tall and 30 years old.

The man was described as black-haired with a heavy build, dressed in a brown waist-length coat and a black knit hat.

Police said the man clamped his left hand over the girl's mouth and held a kitchen knife in his other hand. He then told the girl to put her bags down, and led her to the corner of the backyard.

After asking if anyone was around and how old she was, the suspect raped her. She was afterwards told to count to 100 and not to call the police because "I know where you live," police reported.

The girl watched her attacker, whom she said she had never seen before, walk out of sight before notifying police, who met her in the emergency room of Boisford General Hospital.

now provides relief for the volume of water generated by a 10-year storm.

Completed last fall, the Caddell Drain (known also as the Tarabusi Creek District) improvement entailed the installation of a pipe under the lowing an Oakland County Drain Commission appointment hearing at 1:30 p.m. Jan. 26 at the Public Works Building in Pontiac.

Total cost for the proposed upgrading of the Caddell Drain District is estimated at \$5,135,000. The construction of five storm water storage facilities along the Tarabusi Creek (which traverses Novi, Farmington and Farmington Hills), and the removal of debris from several open channels and enclosed drains will complete the project.

Farmington Hills has worked independently with consulting engineers Hubbell, Roth and Clark Inc., which, at a cost of \$130,000, drafted a master storm drain plan for the city.

Yet to be adopted by Farmington

Hills, the plan represents a shift in strategy, Biassell said.

"Drainage studies done in the past used different criteria. They anticipated all drains being enclosed with no storm water detention areas."

"The conclusion we've come to is to live with the water. We consider it a resource, not just something to get rid of," he said.

"Storing water in detention areas cuts costs, added Biassell, because it lessens the volume of water flowing through pipes, which can then be constructed in smaller diameters. By properly anticipating water volume travelling downstream from West Bloomfield into Farmington Hills and Livonia, the plan achieves "a balancing act," he said.

The master plan attempts "to minimize the impact on the land" by designing storage facilities along flood plains, constructing dams in streams and utilizing open fields and commons areas.

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## Hills seeks appointees to program committee

If you're a person who's always wished you had more of a say in television programming, here's your chance.

Farmington Hills is looking for appointees to its Metropolitan cable TV access committee. The nine-member board will decide which programs are aired and at what times they'll be broadcast.

ject, according to Farmington Hills City Manager Lawrence Savage.

Because Novi and Farmington have entered simultaneously with Farmington Hills into an agreement with Metrovision, appointees will be sought from those cities as well. Farmington Hills will name four persons to terms ranging from one to three years, Novi will name three people and Farmington two.

The board will meet monthly as operations get underway (broadcasting by Metrovision is slated to begin on Jan. 1), and quarterly thereafter.

City officials are seeking representation from the general public and perhaps someone from the League of Women Voters might be advantageous in view of their continuing interest in the franchise operation."

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