



Worker Dan Right uses a Vermeer trencher for the new Crossroads shopping center.

CAMILLE MCCOY/Staff photographer

## Working in the mud a way of life

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James, laying a mud-caked finger an inch or so into the freshly dug trench where the earth seemed to harden to the consistency of chocolate ice cream. "That keeps everything up."

BOTH MEN were dressed for the job. James wore a heavy plaid shirt and oversized yellow rubber boots. Vagnetti wore an old army field jacket, blue jeans and work shoes. His brogans, of course, were covered with mud. "This time of year, it's like this anywhere," James said. "It's real bad. You wait until it freezes or dries up."

The sandy soil of the area provides "the best working conditions you can get," James said. "It's the best for dig-

ging... no clay." Both told you-ain't-seen-nothin' stories about working construction in nasty weather.

"We were pouring a job at 12 and Farmington where you had to be pushed in and pulled out," Vagnetti said. "The mud was up to the frame of the truck."

Meanwhile, back at the Crossroads, a worker operating a Vermeer trencher completed gouging a long, straight slit. James then used a surveyor's transit to "shoot grade" — make sure the ground is level before the concrete is poured. Vagnetti hopped into his huge cement mixer truck and managed to slip-slide it close to the trench so that his "ready mix" (a mixture of sand, cement and water) could be poured

down the chute and into the hole.

Other workers sank the steel reinforcing rods and slabs of Styrofoam insulation. About 45 yards of concrete was poured that day, Vagnetti said.

"They must have a tight deadline on this job," he added. "They've been pouring every day."

BOB PORIS, vice president for Weatherford/Walker, a Farmington Hills company that is developing the shopping center, said he wasn't "100 percent sure" when the project will be

completed. "I thought it was supposed to be for the fall of 1985, but I don't have an exact date. In general, we're proceeding with the leasing, and the construction is going well. I don't know of any problems."

"Of course, construction in rain or snow is always kind of messy," he said. "You never really know, because somebody may take a larger store."

## Improvement plan lives

Continued from Page 1

THE COUNCIL recently agreed to defer setting up the special taxing authority for five or six months. One reason was the strong school district oppo-

sition to the plan. Another was the delay in getting cost estimates for the projects along the corridor.

If approved, TIFA would help finance drainage and road repairs along the growing office strip.

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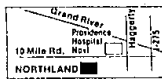
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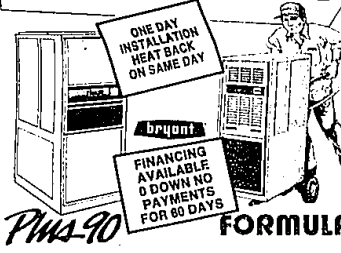
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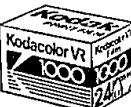
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