



## Welcome!

The eastern entryway to Farmington Hills has been spruced up, thanks to the several civic boosters. The Economic Development Corp. paid for the plantings that adorn the median strip of Grand River, just west of 8 Mile, near the Botsford Inn. Steinkopf Nursery of

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Farmington Hills supplied the flowers. Farmington Hills resident Frank Smith did the plantings. "We just wanted to clean up the entrance to Farmington Hills and make it look nice," said John Anhut, Botsford Inn innkeeper.

## Tips offered for coping with winter

Old Man Winter is hiding around the corner, and it is time to start thinking about battening down the hatches against the cold outdoors.

"The official arrival of fall does help you get in a better frame of mind to do the necessary work to prepare your house for winter's onslaught," said Jack Ratliff, district market services supervisor of Consumers Power's Livonia office.

"When thinking about the things that need to be done to protect your house, it helps to picture it as a hot air balloon that you don't want any air escaping from. The problem then becomes, what do I need to do to prevent any warm air from escaping?" Ratliff said.

With the thought of preserving that precious warm air, Consumers Power offers the following tips for preparing your home for winter:

- Among the major energy users in your home, the furnace is number one. Furnace filters should be replaced or cleaned regularly. Dirty filters make a furnace work harder and require more energy. Furnace air ducts and registers should be checked for possible blockage.

- Adequate insulation is essential for keeping the heat where it is needed — in the house. Consumers Power recommends a minimum of six inches (R-19) of insulation in the ceiling or attic. To help finance this, Consumers Power offers a special, zero-interest

loan program for qualifying gas space-heating customers. Family income is not a factor in determining eligibility. For more information on the loan program, call your local Consumers Power office.

- Putting weather stripping around doors and windows is necessary to keep out expensive drafts of cold air.

- Caulking around windows and door frames is also important to prevent heat from escaping.

- Heat can also leave through unprotected single-pane windows. Storm windows provide the best measure of protection, while plastic covering over windows can also prevent heat loss.

- Other escape sources that should be checked include the fireplace damper (make sure it closes tightly), exhaust fans for bathroom and kitchen, and the dryer vent.

- For homeowners who heat their homes with oil or propane, installing a high efficiency gas furnace can reduce heating costs. Contact the market services department at Consumers Power for more information.

- Have the heating system checked by a competent serviceman before the heating system begins.

"Winter always has a way of arriving a little earlier than expected. By doing some preparation work now, you can be ready when the cold winds start to blow," said Ratliff.

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