

# Cities prepped for keeping roads plowed

Continued from Page 1

Farmington Hills plows subdivisions when snowfall reaches 3-4 inches, and residents are advised by the Michigan Emergency Patrol and local radio stations, plus the local cable-TV station, which are all contacted in a snow emergency.

"We don't want to tow cars, we just want to get the job done," Rooney said.

FARMINGTON HILLS handles snow removal for "the lion's share" of 33 square-mile city sections — about 270 miles, Rooney said. Forty-two of these, plus all school bus routes, are considered "major roads" and are handled accordingly.

Other Hills' priorities, in descending order, include: major gravel roads, haz-

ard locations, such as tight curves and steep inclines, clearing of side roads, and snow removal on the remainder of the road network. When snowfall reaches 4-5 inches, the entire network is done, Rooney said.

About four to five of the city's square-mile sections are done by a private contractor during snow emergencies, declared by either the director of the public safety department or the city manager.

The city's engineering staff and parks and grounds crews also help, Rooney added. The entire 18-person public safety staff works in two 12-hour shifts, so a 24-hour period can be covered. Farmington handles snow emergencies in a similar manner.

During routine snowfalls, crews from both cities and the county begin

sailing within one hour of the snowfall's beginning. After one inch has fallen, plowing begins and salting continues, according to Dennis Pajot, communications officer for the county road commission.

"We begin on our critical priority routes at the beginning of bad conditions until the roads are safe," he said. Pajot said the county considers a road with "clear wheel tracks" a minimum safety requirement.

FARMINGTON contracts out snow removal on five miles of roads within the city to other agencies. Oakland County handles winter maintenance on Farmington Road from Eight Mile to Grand River, and the state handles Grand River and M-102 west to Gill Road, Deadman said.

Farmington's six-member Department of Public Works crew handles 33 miles of roads, placing emphasis on main arteries and heavily killed subdivisions at the west end of the city. The type of snow is also a factor in Farmington snow removal activities, which are viewed on a storm-by-storm basis, Deadman said.

"We have a long-term reputation of having one of the best snow removals in the area," Deadman said. "Most of our pavement is kept bare."

Regardless of reputation, some residents have annual complaints involving snow removal. One includes trucks plowing "throwing the snow a long way."

"It requires a certain amount of speed to keep the trucks under control," Deadman said.

The speed sometimes causes snow to be thrown a long distance away from the truck, he explained.

PAJOT, DEADMAN and Rooney said they experience the most common annual complaint — residents who don't like the pile of snow left at the end of driveways after plowing. The resident is responsible for removing this snow," Deadman said, noting in Farmington alone there are more than 3,500 driveway approaches.

Rooney suggests residents "abovel to the right of the driveway, facing the road," so the plows don't catch the pile the next time snow removal is done.

"If they (the residents) can, they should wait until we're done. They'll only have to do it (abovel) once," he added.

Another complaint regards the use of salt. Some residents don't like it, and others called the county wondering why it wasn't used during December's recent cold spell.

"Salt is the only cost-effective mea-

sure for this area," Pajot said, because of the "crush" of rush hour traffic. Salt use costs the county \$1 million per year of the \$4 million snow removal budget.

It is "relatively inexpensive" because of Oakland County's proximity to the salt mines, he added.

The county does not use salt when the temperature falls below five degrees Fahrenheit on the normally salted 600-800 miles of paved county roads.

"IN VERY cold weather, salt is not too effective," Pajot explained. "Salt is used to turn ice to water, so it dries up or runs off the roads. In cold weather, all we do (by using salt) is create moisture for snow to stick to."

Some professional snow removal services hired by residents cause problems for the cities, according to Deadman. They're not allowed to dump across the street blocking a neighbor's drive or vision.

Commercial services are also not allowed to push accumulated snow across main streets, he added.

## Michigan's economic forecast bright



RANDY DORST/Staff photographer

Michigan State Chamber of Commerce executive director James Barrett addresses the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce in the Botford Inn.

Continued from Page 1

should pay into the fund, Barrett added.

Despite some of Michigan's problems, an 83-percent increase in new business openings was reported by Dun and Bradstreet during a one-year period from May 1984 to May 1985, Barrett said.

Barrett quoted U. S. Chamber of Commerce projections for automotive production, which he says will remain stable at 11.2 million in 1985 and 11.5 million in 1986. A 19-percent decline in the trade weighted exchange value of the U.S. dollar "should hold back imports," he said.

FEDERAL ACTIVITY on a balanced budget, deficit reduction and tax changes are "major concerns" for Michigan businesses, according to Barrett. Changes in investment tax credits allowed to businesses, and an accelerated depreciation allowance "could serve as disincentives, during a time when investments are very necessary," stressed Barrett, who heads a committee working to make the federal government more efficient.

Congress recently passed legislation calling for a balanced federal budget by 1991, Barrett cautions "this is merely an act of legislation, not a constitutional amendment, and can be changed."

He urged business leaders to stand firm on the balanced budget issue, but noted that a \$2.5-trillion deficit will be accrued by that time, and there will be "a lot of interest to pay off."

In federal spending, \$130 billion in interest alone was paid this year — the fourth-highest expense for the government. "Unless we turn around the trends, we're mortgaging the future for our children and grandchildren," Barrett added.

Barrett predicts a small number of ballot issues in 1986. Some may include capital punishment, a part-time legislature and a constitutional amendment not allowing state utilities to charge consumers for new facilities. A total of 300,000 petition signatures are needed to place an issue on the state ballot.

Also in 1986, the state chamber will continue working for reforms and changes in the definition of workers' compensation, Barrett added.

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