

road watch

This column was prepared by Farmington Hills city manager William Costick's staff.

This space will list current conditions in a "no surprises" campaign to inform motorists of the road improvements under way. Additional repairs and improvements will continue for the next two years; the city administration asks for your patience.

The end result will be less congestion, better traffic capacity and improved road safety in the community.

- I-696 - widening to eight lanes, Orchard Lake Road is restricted to three lanes during the bridge widening. The bridges that carry I-696 over Drake Road are being widened. Two new ramps at Orchard Lake Road are being constructed.

- 11 Mile and Middlebelt - intersection is being widened to five lanes. The concrete curb and gutters are complete with asphalt paving scheduled for next week.

- Drake Road paving, between 11 Mile and I-696 - the contractor is constructing the new bridge over the stream. The road is closed to through traffic until the end of October.

- Nine Mile and Farmington Road intersection - the north side of Nine Mile has been excavated and is scheduled for paving at the end of this week.

- 14 Mile resurfacing, between Orchard Lake Road and Farmington Road - the base work has been completed. The road will be closed for paving for two days beginning Saturday or early next week depending on the weather.

Farmington's Olympic connection

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By David Litogot special writer

The Detroit area is noted for producing Olympic gold medal winners. Among them are Eddie Tolan, Lorenzo Wright, Norbert Schenanski, Jean Omelenchuk, Cynthia Goyette, Mikki King, Henry Carr, Hayes Jones, Spencer Hayward, Steve Fraser, Steve McCrory and Frank Tate.

One gold winner, however, was from Farmington. In the 1984 Tokyo Olympiad, Warren (Rex) Cawley, alumnus of Farmington High School, gathered the gold in the 400-meter hurdles. The games in Tokyo are best remembered for the feats of Bob Hayes, Peter Snell, Billy Mills, Hayes Jones, Valery Brumel, Dallas Long, Al Oerter and Abebe Bikila. But our own Rex Cawley was on the minds of the entire Farmington community before, during and after the Olympics.

Rex was an outstanding high school runner in the late 1950s who set two state and one national record while still a junior at Farmington

footprints in history

High. His high school 400-meter hurdle record, in fact, was still standing five years later when he tried out for the Olympic team in 1984.

Rex decided to attend UCLA after high school to take advantage of the warmer climate. The move paid off, for in September 1984, he set the world's record of 49.1 seconds in his hurdle event during the Olympic trials, breaking the mark set by Glenn Davis. One month later, he would be in Japan representing the United States, UCLA and Farmington, Mich.

REX, HOWEVER, had a secret. He had been injured during training. He was suffering from leg-muscle pulls, a problem that has plagued him since 1981. But he kept the injury to himself. "You need every edge you can get in that kind of competition," he was quoted in the Observer. (The Detroit News and Free Press were on strike at the time.)

The pulled muscle had already kept him out of a couple of meets at

UCLA but he determined not to give up in Tokyo.

In two Olympic qualifying rounds, Cawley's performances were disappointing. Runners, coaches and officials on the scene saw that he was having trouble. Thousands of miles away in Farmington, the citizens also became aware of Rex's problem. Local officials expressed "guarded confidence" in his ability to "bring home the gold." Rex, nevertheless, made the finals.

For two hours before the finals, the 24-year-old runner felt nervous and jittery; 72,000 fans in the stadium would witness the events of that October day.

WHEN THE gun went off, Rex missed his step on the first six hurdles. Obviously things did not look good. As panic swept his mind, he over ran the pain and errors and took the lead on the next-to-last hurdle and won by three yards over runners from Britain and Italy. His time of 49.6 was not outstanding - a good half-second off his world record - but good enough to stand atop the highest step at the award platform.

Almost immediately, Farmington

received word of the victory and began to plan an organized celebration. His mother was especially excited. "He will be home with me for a few days," she reported. "He hasn't been home for five years."

Rex did return to Farmington in November with his wife, Judy. He was surprised how the town had grown since he left and was overcome by the reception he got.

He and Judy were enthusiastically received at the airport and given the use of a car; 600 people honored him that evening at a banquet. The next day, the Cawleys rode in a parade through the streets of Farmington and given the key to the city. From there, he went to see the Farmington-North Farmington football game where he spoke at half time to the crowd.

Shortly thereafter, Rex and Judy returned to California. He would run in some AAU meets and work in a bank and Judy would continue teaching at the elementary school. At last word, Warren Cawley is involved in medical electronics on the West Coast but that gold medal must still shine bright in this year of the Olympics.

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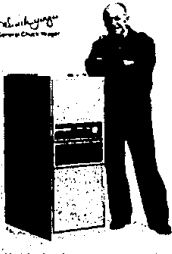
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