

Farmington faces 10 percent hikes

By Casey Hens
Staff writer

When Farmington residents get annual assessment notices in mid-February, their property will likely be worth more.

That means higher property taxes for 1990. As in other cities throughout Oakland County, residents of Farmington have watched their properties increase in value steadily over the past several years. City assessor John Sailer said last week residential values have increased, on the average, slightly more this year than in 1989.

"It depends on the properties — for residential we usually stay with the county," Sailer said. "It's been a pretty steady movement."

The city has completed its residential property analysis and is in the midst of completing commercial and industrial property assessments in the city, he said.

THE OAKLAND COUNTY Equal-

ization Division last week released suggested average increases for each community, including a 10 percent increase for the city of Farmington. That compares with a 7.7 percent suggested average increase countywide.

Last year, residential increases in Farmington averaged 9 percent. Some properties, including a few condominium developments in the city, will see increases as low as 5 percent, while certain subdivisions may see increases as high as 14 percent, Sailer said.

Assessment increases are based on real estate sales during a 24-month period ending last March. Increases throughout the county show a continued, strong market.

After Farmington residents receive assessment notices, they will have the right to appeal through the Board of Review process.

THE 1990 Board of Review is



John Sailer
city assessor

slated to meet 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday, March 12, and 2-9 p.m. Wednesday March 14. Sailer said the board would meet additional days if appeals warrant the time. It is recommended that residents wishing to make an appeal call city hall for an appointment for either day: 474-5500.

Lower hikes expected in Hills

Continued from Page 1

"ALL INDICATIONS, from what I hear from Realtors, is that the market is beginning to stabilize. Sale prices are not going up hysterically like they once were. But we are still playing to that market, so the market's slowing down, that will be reflected in the future," Babb said.

For assessment purposes, Babb used a 24-month sales study. That includes housing sales in Farmington Hills during the last three quarters of 1987, all of 1988 and the first quarter of 1989.

The assessment process determines the true cash value of property for the purpose of calculating property taxes. City, school and county tax rates are levied against the assessed value of property. An assessment is generally 50 percent of the "usual selling price" of a house, for example.

Farmington Hills city council-

man Aldo Vagnozzi, long concerned with the effect increasing property tax assessments are having on elderly residents on fixed incomes, isn't surprised by the 9 percent increase.

Despite the fact that we are pretty well built-up — 80-85 percent — we still feel close to the top in new construction in the county," he said. "It's another increase. But I don't think we can keep going this way with this kind of cycle. It's going to be tough again on our homeowners."

BABB COULD provide few details about the type of commercial and industrial properties that will be hit with increases. But he said he expected apartment complexes to again escape increased assessments. Apartments didn't receive increases last year because of heavy vacancies.

"Occupancies are starting to get

better but with the rent concessions given, it still has an impact on income," Babb said.

While Vagnozzi acknowledged the 9 percent residential increase isn't as bad as in previous years, he's keeping his fingers crossed that legislators can develop some kind of relief for property owners.

He's hoping a good look is taken at Gov. James Blanchard's recently announced proposal to limit property tax assessments to the annual rate of inflation. Vagnozzi also would like to see the state Legislature increase the maximum \$1,200 state property tax rebate to a figure based on increases that have taken place in property values and assessments.

"Young families are moving in and older families are staying on. The assessments are a real burden on them. A major change is needed. It will need legislative action," Vagnozzi added.

Trial set on fondling charge

Continued from Page 1

"I finished taking my speed test," he said. "I was nervous. This had never happened to me before."

THE STUDENT then left the room and went down the hall, where she told a teacher about the incidents. Two adults, the learning center teacher and another paraprofessional, as well as about six students were in the room at the time of the alleged incidents, according to testimony.

Fifth-grade teacher Nancy Heilmann testified the student came to her on Nov. 9, said "the man in that room touched me," then gestured

toward her chest area as if describing the problem.

Prosecutors had requested Friday's examination be closed to the public, a motion opposed by Detroit defense attorney Gail Benson and denied by Harris.

Benson argued that the student's testimony was "clearly a lie," and wondered aloud about why she was able to complete her test without flinching.

"She didn't skip a beat. She didn't make a peep. She didn't move. She didn't do anything," Benson said. "What this young woman describes is an unhappy school circumstance. I think it's incredible a court could bind this over."

Hills resident recalls WWII dream come true

Continued from Page 1

tapes of war documentaries are at easy reach for visitors at Kory's home. Patriotism also takes a priority with Kory, who faithfully displays the American flag outside his home and on his mailbox.

"I love the Marines. My heart goes out every time I hear about a Panama or an El Salvador," he said.

His memory is vivid with the sounds and smells of the famous battle and even conversations he had with shipmates and the general aboard his ship. He recalls the general telling Kory that he should find cover because as a teenager he was far too young to die.

AND HE remembers the message coming across that the Marines had reached the top of Mt. Suribachi and a flag would be raised. The general told Kory to watch history in the making.

"I never thought it would be history," Kory said, adding he didn't see Roosevelt's photo until two months later in the "Yankee Magazine." The first flag was raised at 9 a.m. "Then a message came down that we were

going to put up a bigger flag at noon."

Kory has his own theory of why the Americans won the battle. "Personally, I think the flame thrower won the battle."

The Americans used flame throwers as they made their way up Mt. Suribachi. In fact, he said, some history books show Japanese soldiers burned at their posts.

Kory is full of details about two Jimas that aren't necessarily common knowledge about the battle and the men who fought.

For instance, Kory asked, how many know that when the Japanese commander ordered 500 troops to take down the American flag and regain control of Mt. Suribachi, it was a company of black soldiers who stopped them in their tracks.

"They were the only ones who got a presidential unit citation for two Jimas," Kory said.

KORY RECALLS first news of the atomic bomb when it was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He wasn't devastated by the news. "It was enjoyment. I didn't know about

it until a flash came over the radio."

At the time, Kory was in the Philippines with other sailors preparing for the invasion of Japan. "We practiced landings for two weeks. We were ready and then they dropped the bomb. If not, we would have easily lost 1 million men."

After the bomb were dropped, Kory recalled, his ship got as close as 30 miles from Hiroshima. "They wouldn't let anyone get any closer."

Kory also recalls the lasting effects of two Jimas many soldiers. With constant firing and bombings for days on end, many soldiers would drop to the floor for cover when a hammer or book were accidentally dropped.

"After the war, I was scared to death the Japanese were going to drop an atomic bomb here," he said.

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Rape suspect plans to enter guilty plea

Continued from Page 1

Psycho-neurological tests conducted on Steman recently showed that a head injury he sustained in a 1984 car accident did not impair brain or motor functions.

"We're run through all the testing, and there is no explanation for what happened. He is going to have to live with what he did," Kaluzny said.

In Steman's pretrial examination in December, Kaluzny indicated that he would be willing to enter into a plea bargain. Steman immediately replied that it was not a possibility.

"It came down to either we go to

court for a trial or we plead,"

Kaluzny said. "With the number of counts, he would have been convicted of at least one, maybe more because there were some pretty strong cases against him."

Prosecutor Steman said Friday he would not comment on the case.

Should Steman impose a sentence at the Feb. 2 hearing, Steman won't be able to begin serving time in Michigan for at least a decade.

Kaluzny expects him to return to Ohio to serve a 58-year minimum sentence on a rape conviction there.

"He'll be eligible for release after 10 years, but I don't expect him to be let out that early," Kaluzny said.

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ANEMIA IN ARTHRITIS
Why does your doctor check your red blood count if you have arthritis?
First, medicines used to treat arthritis can cause blood loss, and second, the arthritis itself, particularly rheumatoid arthritis, can stop the bone marrow from producing red blood cells.
If you have anemia accompanying your arthritis, and your red blood cells are "microcytic, microcytic," then possibly medication is irritating your stomach and causing you to lose blood.
It may be that you are anemic, and your red blood cells are "macrocytic." These findings could reflect that your arthritis medicine is interfering with the maturation of your red blood cells. Such interference is closely associated with methotrexate therapy.
If you are anemic, and your red blood cells are described as "normochromic, normocytic," then the red cells that you are making are normal. The problem is that you are not making enough of them. This situation occurs when the arthritis itself interferes with bone marrow production of blood cells.
Thus, taking your blood counts helps your doctor assess both the side effects of therapy and the impact of the condition itself. The cost of such testing is small compared to the knowledge gained.