



Phil Power, chairman of Suburban Communications Corp. which owns the Farmington Observer, chats with Pat Desana, of the Wayne County Executive's office, Bill Costick, Farmington Hills City Manager, and Bob Deadman, Farmington city manager, at the Citizen of the Year Banquet Thursday. Power spoke at the banquet.

Challenge to businessmen: be activists for education

By Casey Hans
staff writer

FARMINGTON business leaders were challenged Thursday to take control of their future by becoming activists in education.

"We have designed an education system in America in which there is no determinable relationship between school and the world of work," said Philip Power, chairman of the board of the Livonia-based Suburban Communications Corp., the parent company of the Observer & Eccentric newspaper group.

He is also the incumbent Democratic candidate for the University of Michigan Board of Regents the Nov. 6 general election.

"We can show kids no relationship. No wonder the kids drop out. They're smarter than we think they are."

Countries like Japan, Germany and France "are beating our pants off in world competition," he added. "All of our international competitors have an objective way to assess the skill levels of their 15-, 16- and 17-year-olds."

"America is the only one who doesn't do that."

POWER ADVOCATES creation of a Michigan Certificate of Opportunity, which students would achieve after passing a test for basic literacy and numeracy skills, and test a student's capacity to "think and deal with people."

"There are many, many hours being spent on school reform from the supply side" of teachers and administrators, he said. "But notice, please, there is almost nothing

coming from the demand side" where business needs to take a stand.

Power offered his challenge to business leaders during a Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce annual dinner where he was the keynote speaker.

AS A MEMBER of the National Commission on Skills in the American Workforce, Power said he discovered that business is changing the workplace to accommodate entry level employees. Instead of insisting on skilled workers. "We were assuming what we would find is employers not finding enough skills," he said. "What we found is that 80 percent said all they wanted to hire was amiable, dumb bunnies."

His proposed Michigan Certificate of Opportunity testing program could easily be paid for and controlled by the business community, which would ultimately benefit from the program by getting skilled workers, Power said.

"The employers ought to control it," he said, "rather than the state board of education who have been unable to do anything up until now."

Power said he has pitched his plan to a number of area civic groups, because communities are where he believes the plan can be effective. "There are signs of progress," he said. "People are pretty excited. If we can keep it out of the hands of the bureaucrats and in the hands of business, maybe we have a chance."

"We cannot tolerate a nation where workers are undereducated, underemployed and overpaid," he added.

Top Citizen ill, sends thank you

The 1990 Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year couldn't be present at a Thursday dinner given in her honor, but sent a message saying she was "deeply honored" to receive the award.

Farmington Hills resident Betty Nicolay, honored for her work to local schools, churches, and for her many years of anti-drug activities with the Farmington Families in Action group, was taken ill while out of town and could not attend the dinner at the Clarion Hotel.

Nicolay attributed much of her success and honor to other parents involved in the Farmington Families in Action group. Her son, Nick Ni-

colay, and group president Sue Dolesch accepted the honor on her behalf.

Nicolay "enriched and inspired" the community with her dedication, chamber President Bob Heinrich said in presenting the award.

DURING ITS annual dinner, the chamber also highlighted accomplishments from the past year and gave other awards.

Immediate past president Mary Bush was honored for her service during the past year. Farmington city manager Bob Deadman and local businessman Walter Sundquist were also honored for their years of service as their terms ended on the group's board of directors.

The Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce added 276 new members this year, while retaining 80 percent of its membership.

The group started a spring business show, Networking '90, continued its annual Founders Festival, and started an annual fall golf outing this year.

Also new this year was the chamber's Ambassador's Club, which has 19 active members who act as a public relations arm of the organization. Three members, Nurtan Ural of Ural Interiors, Jim Knapp of McNabney Real Estate One and Teresa Davis of Executive Printing were given Ambassador of the Year awards.

Wolf seeks second term, better constituent linkup

By Joanne Maliszewski
staff writer

Donn Wolf describes county government as a sum of money said rounded by people who want some of it.

"We can't legislate, we appropriate," said the Republican Oakland County commissioner for the 27th District, which includes Farmington and Farmington Hills.

Wolf, 55, is seeking re-election to a second two-year term to the 27-member county board of commissioners. His Democratic opponent D. Eugene Kuby has not returned the Observer's inquiries or request for an interview.

A former eight-year Farmington Hills councilman and mayor, Wolf knows that residents are less in touch with county government than their city government.

"It's just a laid-back, mystery government and it shouldn't be. I want to hear from people. Nobody knows what a county commission does. Sometimes I know what I would do. But I want to hear what people say," said Wolf, who holds office hours and tries to reach his constituency through newsletters, the media and speaking to groups.

"I want to make people aware of what a county commission does," said Wolf, who sits on the Michigan Association of County Board of Directors' energy and environment committee, and the National Association of Counties.

WITHOUT A doubt, Wolf said, major issues facing the county are still roads and solid waste. In his first two years as a commissioner, he spent time learning about the other 26 commissioners with whom he works.

"No one does any one thing. I've tried to establish a rapport. You need 14 out of 27 votes or you're not going to get anything done. You can get things done, ramrodding things through. But you have to get cooperation from everyone."

The father of five grown children,

Wolf is a community and government affairs representative for Detroit Edison in Ann Arbor.

Nothing comes about without negotiation and compromise — something Wolf claims he's learned to be good at through his public service and his Detroit Edison work, which includes involvement on the Ann Arbor crime and energy committees, as well as the Washtenaw County Community Services Agency.

"People want immediate answers. But you have to negotiate and work things out," he said. "I'm always going to meetings. But I've gained a lot that I can bring back to Oakland County. I think Oakland County is the best."

An example of compromise and negotiation, he said, is the county's solid waste plan. In order to get the ball moving, the controversial incinerator was removed from the plan's first phase, which includes waste-to-energy, source separation and composting.

A LONGTIME ardent anti-tax crusader, Wolf is resolved that the plan can be accomplished without raising taxes.

Roads, of course, remain a major problem and issue for the county and for Wolf. He sees the day coming when some of the county commission's money — which is separate from the road commission — will be devoted to roads. But, Wolf adds, that means county commissioners will have more say in the road business. A change in the formula used by Lansing to distribute gas and weight taxes is a possibility that should be investigated, Wolf said.

County government operates in committees and Wolf serves on the general government and personnel committees. And he wouldn't mind serving on the finance committee, which just about every issue has to go through.

While he supported the county parks renewal this year, he was opposed to any new tax. "I had some real concerns. Any tax increase . . .



Donn Wolf
Republican incumbent

you'd better aim it at the priorities." Public transportation and crime are two important issues for Wolf. He believes an east-west public transportation route is needed. He supports the use of smaller buses and thinks that particularly, with the high price of gasoline, public transportation is more important than ever.

ON THE CRIME scene, Wolf supports the county's boot camp program, and supports looking into alternatives to jail, such as electronic tethering.

Wolf has never met his opponent Kuby, but that isn't allowing him to sit back and comfortably drift through the campaign season. He expects to spend \$3,500-\$4,000, which is less than his campaign almost two years ago.

"You jump for the stars and you might just jump over the fence," Wolf said, adding he's put up campaign signs, is sending out brochures and mailings and walking door-to-door. "I enjoy it. I get to meet the people."

In his almost two years as a commissioner, Wolf said he's proud of helping to maintain local control of the Farmington Hills Senior Adults Program hot meal program. "A lot of seniors came out. They showed up and did a great job," Wolf said.

Though politics fills Wolf's life — he's a Republican precinct delegate and former national delegate — the 15-year Farmington Hills resident also finds time for his love of classical music and the theater. And he and people probably aren't aware of it, but Wolf also writes poetry — for himself, he quickly adds.

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— Donn Wolf
seeks re-election