



**'Our seniors relied heavily on this mobile service and their ability to get to a post office is minimal. They are trying to live in an independent setting.'**

— Elaine McDermott  
Marian Oakland  
administrator

# Seniors miss mobile post office service

By Susan Duck  
staff writer

Farmington area senior citizens living independently are looking for ways to make up for the loss of a handy U.S. postal truck service.

The Senior Citizen Express Mobile Post Office truck made its rounds at least once a month to 100 locations in the four-county metropolitan area.

The service has not been replaced since it was eliminated June 22. Christopher Carlisle, the Royal Oak branch manager of postal operations, informed senior centers of the cut.

Carlisle was one four Royal Oak postal employees who died Nov. 14 when disgruntled former postal employee Tom McIlvane

went on a shooting rampage at the Royal Oak sector center. Carlisle had signed McIlvane's termination notice.

Seniors at seven congregate housing units sorely miss the service, according to Elaine McDermott, administrator of Marian Oakland West in Farmington Hills. She also serves on the Farmington Area Commission for Aging, which is studying the seniors' postal needs.

IN ADDITION to Marian Oakland West, the following Farmington-area senior units also are without the service: Carrington Place, American House, Baptist Manor, Halstead Place, Grand River Village, Taploia Village, and Farmington Place.

McDermott took issue with the cutback in a July 16 letter to U.S. Rep. William Broomfield, R-Birmingham, after she read

of his "dissatisfaction with the recent decision of the postal service to grant their management staff \$20 million in bonuses." Elimination of the full-service truck represented a \$54,000 annual savings, according to Leonard Gay, a Royal Oak congregate manager.

"Our seniors relied heavily on this mobile service and their ability to get to a post office is minimal," McDermott said. "They are trying to live in an independent setting to maintain their dignity as productive members of society."

Stamps by consignment is one suggestion posed by Mark Bate, the officer-in-charge of the Farmington-Farmington Hills post offices. Mail-post offices could be set up at each housing unit, Bate said.

BUT, McDERMOTT said that she and her

staff don't have the time to start selling stamps.

"It's a partial solution," McDermott said. "They're not being very creative." She's hoping for a joint meeting with Bate and senior representatives soon.

Of 34 units at Marian Oakland West, 15 seniors are over age 90, McDermott said. Some seniors, because of their physical restraints, cannot even use the van which transports seniors to different locations, McDermott said.

Gloria Lieu, who's lived at Marian Oakland West for more than two years said that she now has to rely on other people. "The van doesn't go (to the post office) often," Lieu said. Lieu routinely sends letters and packages to her relatives in Hong Kong.

Seniors combined a visit to the post office at Seven Mile and Middlebelt when they

made a trip to Livonia Mall. But, that post office recently moved, she said.

Nevertheless, it's still difficult to wait in line, Lieu said. "When we had the (truck) service, it was mostly letter mail, Gay said.

He suggested the "Stamps by Mail" program as an alternative. Postage free envelopes can be obtained from letter carriers to order stamps. The normal turn-around time is three to four working days, he said.

He also suggested another option. Seniors can give their packages to be mailed with their postage money to their regular letter carrier who delivers mail. That carrier could then take the packages back to the post office to be weighed and mailed. On a return trip, the carrier will return the change with a receipt, Gay said.



Eleanor Smith and Gloria Lieu (right) talk with Elaine McDermott (left) about postal problems some senior citizens experience in the Farmington area.

SHARON LEMIEUX/staff photographer

# Taxi program reduces hours, raises its fares

By Casey Hans  
staff writer

Dramatic changes will be made to a local, subsidized transportation program beginning in March, limiting taxi ridership hours for seniors and increasing fares for handicapped residents.

Changes are required to the program, which serves seniors and handicappers in seven area communities including Farmington, Farmington Hills and Livonia, because of the federal American With Disabilities Act. Communities had to "make serious financial considerations" said Farmington City Manager Robert Deadman, because the federal law forces such programs to equalize access for everyone.

"We don't have a choice," he said, "both budgetwise, and to comply with the act." He said the only other option, because of cost, would be to "terminate the whole system."

The program is funded with regional transportation money allocated to these communities, and Deadman said the budget has not increased in five years.

THE CHANGES were recommended by a committee of all the member cities and include:

**All subsidized transportation users will pay \$1.50 for the first three miles and \$1.20 for each mile thereafter. Services will operate Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.**

- All users — both seniors and handicappers — will pay \$1.50 for the first three miles and \$1.20 for each mile thereafter. Previously, wheelchair-bound residents using the ill-equipped van paid a flat rate of \$2 per trip.
- All services will operate Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The senior taxi service currently operates 24 hours per day, seven days per week.
- All services will be on a demand/response basis. Operators of the program encourage those needing a lift van give as much notice as possible because only one vehicle serves all seven communities.

Deadman said he does not expect the limited hours to be a problem, because 85 to 99 percent of the seniors use the program on weekdays during the hours noted. The committee recommended the 7 a.m. to 7

p.m. schedule because the service is used by many people for work trips. There will be no more weekend service.

The changes were presented at the Jan. 6 meeting of the Farmington City Council, which adopted the changes and recommended they be sent to the Livonia City Council for approval. Livonia administers the transportation program for the consortium of cities.

The program is of particular importance to Farmington residents, Deadman said, because the average age of citizens is older here, and because Farmington has the heaviest per capita usage of the entire system.

Filers detailing the changes will be sent to regular users of the program.

# Live & learn Community ed offers practical fun

Farmington Public Schools begins classes this month through its Adult and Community Education Department, including workshops on grandparenting, computers, and how to write a "smashing resume."

- Courses in computer aided design, accounting, Word Perfect 5.1 and introductory accounting, beginning typing are all scheduled to begin this month. Entertaining classes including weaving, cooking fun with Judy Antishin, basket weaving and chair caning are also scheduled.
- A FEW highlights include:
  - Plot a course at Farmington High School Saturday mornings from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., where a walking course map will be available.
  - Also at Farmington High on Saturday mornings, grandparents will be introduced to ways of creatively entertaining and enjoying visits with their grandchildren through "The Grandest Kids" workshop.
  - Two different parent/toddler classes for children aged 24-26 months and 37-48 months are being offered. Here, parents and children take part together in a variety of activities to encourage creative art exploration, social development and group participation.
  - "Writing a Smashing Resume" will help those seeking a new job develop special skills and talents to produce a results-oriented cover letter and resume.
  - "Talking With Your Kids About Alcohol" is de-

signed to teacher parents what to say to their kids about alcohol and how to say it.

Beginning sign language will teach the American Sign language and include beginning level conversations, deaf culture and general awareness of deafness.

In addition to other languages, Intermediate German is being offered, which will continue teaching of grammar and conversation for those with a knowledge of basic German.

An advanced camcorder workshop will teach the elements of good video production, camera angles, shot composition and encourage discussion of typical problems and solutions.

For area anglers, an "Ice Fishing for Family Fun" class will teach parents and children how to catch a variety of fish with minimal equipment. Children may attend free with a registered parent.

A brochure detailing these and other classes was mailed to area residents in December. Residents can get more information about any class by calling the Community School at 489-3333.

The Community School is at the site of the former Shawwassee Elementary, where many classes are held, is at the corner of Shawwassee and Tuck in Farmington Hills.

Senior adults aged 60 or over are eligible for one free registration except in limited enrollment classes.

## on the agenda

Below are highlights from the preliminary agenda of the Farmington Hills City Council. Meetings are open to the public.

Farmington Hills City Council  
Council chambers  
31555 11 Mile  
7:30 p.m., Monday, Jan. 13

In unfinished business, the council will consider enactment of:

- an ordinance amending the city code for buildings and building regulations and existing structures.
- an ordinance amending the city code to conform with the new state law to provide mandatory child restraints and penalties for violators.
- an ordinance amending the

city code to conform with the new state law to provide for the wearing of seat belts and penalties for violators.

• an ordinance amending the city code to regulate drivers overtaking or meeting a school bus under certain circumstances.

The council also will consider a resolution from Novi in opposition to Senate Bill 522 regarding local wetland regulations and diminution of home-rule. Members also will receive a final report of the Carrington Place committee.

The council will also consider mailing applications for absentee voter ballots for the presidential primary election, March 17. The council will consider introduction of ordinances:

- to amend certain property descriptions for certain enumerated districts only.
- to provide penalties for driving without a license and for impounding of motor vehicles under certain conditions.
- for the prohibition against operating or permitting the operation of a vehicle while under the influence of alcoholic liquor or controlled substance; operating a vehicle with unlawful blood alcohol level; or operating a vehicle while visibly impaired.
- to prohibit the transporting or possession of open alcoholic liquor within a passenger compartment of a vehicle.

**TEN MILLION DOLLAR FUR FANTASY**

**\$1 WORTH of FUR for 40¢**

**up to 60% Off EVERY FUR REDUCED**

**5.9% FINANCING\***

Oscar de la Renta  
"COUTURE"  
FEMALE  
MINK COATS  
NOW ONLY \$3,797

"DITTRICH QUALITY"  
FEMALE  
MINK COATS  
NOW ONLY \$2,497

**BLOOMFIELD HILLS ONLY**  
642-2000 January 9-11

Thursday & Friday 10 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.  
Saturday & Monday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
Special Sunday Opening  
Nonon - 5 p.m.  
(both stores closed Jan. 14  
Bloomfield Closed Jan. 13-19)

*Dittrich*  
Since 1899

\*All sales FINAL  
up to 60% Off on  
1300 Furs  
+5.9% Financing for 1 year  
every payment on time